

## Ranweli Holiday Village 'Bird-Friendly' Eco Resort



**R**anweli Holiday Village is an Eco-friendly resort committed to protecting the environment, situated 50 km from Colombo in a small peninsula between two rivers, a lagoon and the sea. The hotel is a recreation based Eco tourism oriented facility with a tranquil and relaxing atmosphere that fosters a harmonious relationship with nature.

The journey to Ranweli began when I boarded the private ferry of the Holiday Village. Once setting foot on Ranweli Holiday Resort it was a delight to hear only music of classical Sinhala songs via the sound system in all areas of the resort.

This resort is amidst an expanse of land over 22 acres surrounded by the sea, river and the lagoon. The resort environment has a rich mangrove community and is home to over 130 birds, over fifty butterflies, squirrels, lizards, water monitors, over ninety plants and shrubs and flowers. It is a delightful experience to watch birds around you when sitting in the open snack pavilion by the sea.

The resort is a pioneering venture in Eco tourism in Sri Lanka and has received numerous international and national awards and accolades for ecologically friendly tourism. The World Tourism Organisation (WTO) also has recognised Ranweli Holiday Village as one of the top 55 "good Practices" enterprises in Eco tourism around the world.

Their vision to be a trail blazer in Eco tourism and mission is to create an up-market Eco tourism products as their contribution to sustainable tourism in Sri Lanka. "This hotel was started on 1976. We have 84 chalets, 1 cottage an Ayurveda centre which has qualified doctors. Guests can do birding, go butterfly watching, nature walks and boating. Our conference hall is suitably geared for 30 pax" said Wimal Dassanayake, General Manager of Ranweli Holiday Village.

The Fine Dining Restaurant is the place which I liked most in this resort. This was covered by various kinds of mangroves. A bridge made of wood leads to this place. It was faced towards the river and has no disturbances except sound of birds and the waves of the river. This place appeared to me more suitable for diners and for honeymooners.

Every place opened out to the extensive garden and a small fruit stall called Palathuru Messe, located next to the lobby, offers freshly prepared fruits, juices and herbal drinks of medicinal value. Pots, brass lamps, and hand made local fabric can be seen everywhere in this resort. The architecture blends with the unique and rich natural environment.

The path that leads to the reception is covered by huge trees and mangroves. The reception area faces a pond. The mangrove area consisting of over 17 true mangroves and associates have a special significance, as their Ecosystem supports a variety of plants and animals.

Living with nature is the specialty of the Ranweli Hol-