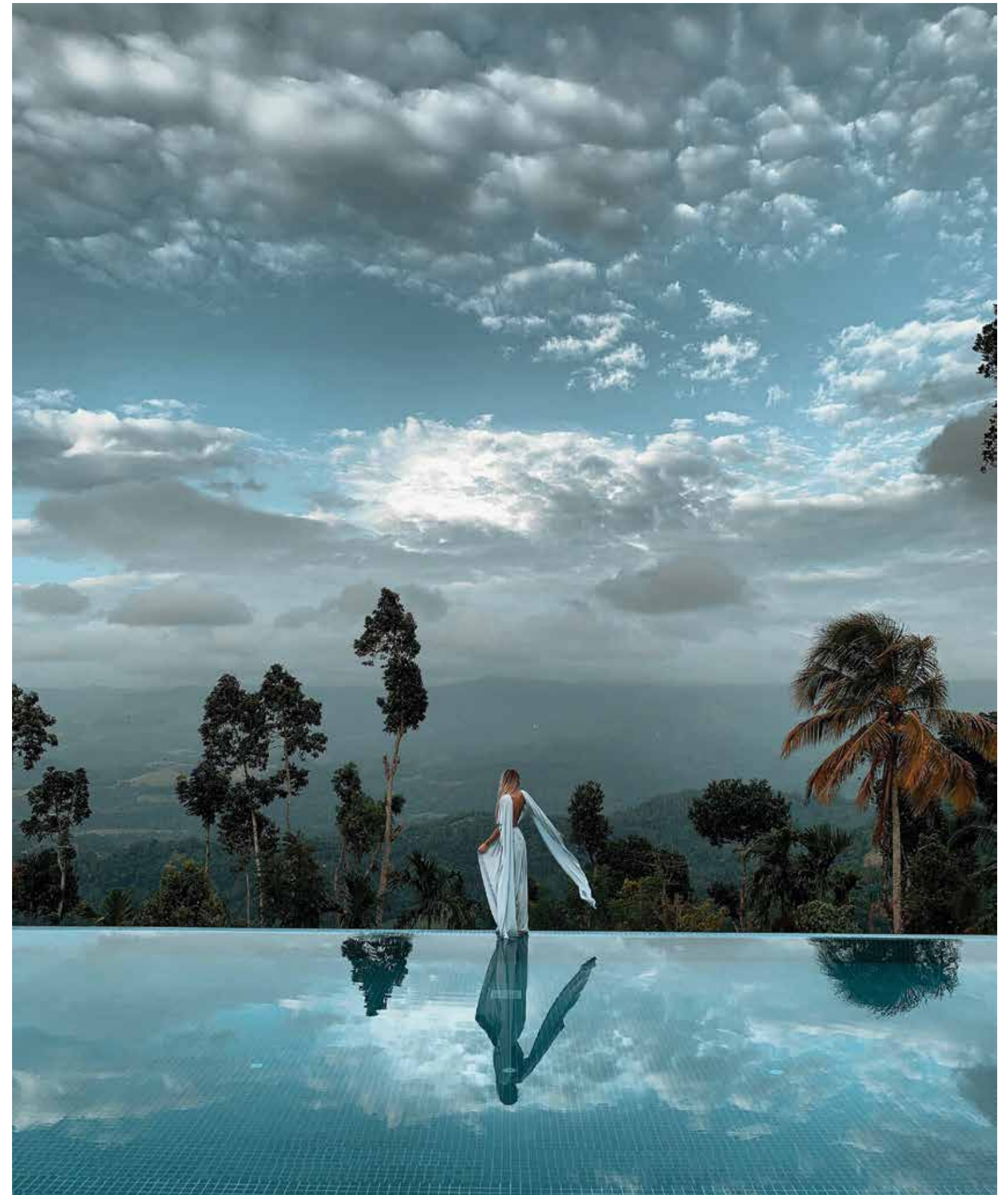


Words: Ziga Colja
Photography: Aahaasa

Aahaasa Collection: A Hospitality Language Shaped by Place

Aahaasa Collection is not a hotel brand assembled around a single location, but a deliberately choreographed circuit across Sri Lanka, designed to be experienced as a sequence rather than a stay. Conceived by architect Nath Rankothge, the Collection unfolds across three distinct landscapes of the island: mountains, coast, and tea country. Each property functions independently, yet together they form a coherent journey shaped by geography, design discipline, and a regenerative hospitality framework.



Perched within Sri Lanka's Cultural Triangle, Aarunya occupies land shaped by spice cultivation and tea rather than cleared for development. Villas are positioned according to sunrise alignment and wind movement, reducing the need for mechanical cooling while framing the Knuckles range as a living backdrop rather than a view.



The resort's elevation naturally reduces humidity, limiting the need for mechanical climate control.

Aarunya's original structures were built by villagers with no prior luxury construction experience, trained on site into specialist artisans.

The Collection comprises three properties, including one recently renovated and scheduled to be unveiled in February 2026. Aarunya Nature Resort, near Kandy, is the original flagship, set within the Cultural Triangle and embedded in spice gardens, tea, and conservation forest. It established the architectural and philosophical foundation of the brand: low-density villas aligned with topography, hand-built by trained local artisans, and programmed around wellness, food, and stillness rather than activity. Aarunya's positioning is deliberate. It is not remote for spectacle, but secluded to allow immersion in climate, sound, and rhythm.

On the southwest coast, Aavya Cove Villas translates the same ethos into a maritime setting. Located in Balapitiya near Galle, the property occupies a naturally sheltered cove and is structured around twelve private villas, a three-bedroom residence, and a single honeymoon suite. The landscape was designed by the late Dooland de Silva, long associated with Geoffrey Bawa, resulting in a European-leaning tropical modernist language that is rare in Sri Lanka's coastal hospitality. Operations are intentionally small-scale, allowing for highly personalized service through a dedicated Island Concierge model rather than standardized guest

programming. The third chapter, Aadya Tea Bungalows near Hatton, is scheduled to open as a tea-country retreat within a rehabilitated 200-acre estate. It represents the largest tea revitalisation project of its kind in Sri Lanka, combining contemporary private bungalows with employment and training for surrounding rural communities. The property integrates a private nine-hole golf course bordering a UNESCO-listed wilderness reserve, and revives traditional Appu butler service, anchoring luxury in local custom rather than imported convention.

Aahaasa's brand language intentionally avoids English naming, anchoring every experience in Sinhala linguistics.



NATH RANKOTHGE

If Aahaasa Collection feels less like a hotel group and more like a way of thinking, it's because it began as one. Its founder, Nath Rankothge, is an Australian-Sri Lankan architect whose work resists spectacle in favor of meaning. Before hospitality, there was design; before design, there was an instinct to observe how people live within landscapes rather than on top of them.

Aahaasa was never conceived as a portfolio. It emerged as a response — to overbuilt luxury, to extractive tourism, to places that arrive loudly and leave little behind. Nath's vision is grounded in regenerative hospitality, not as a slogan, but as a discipline. Architecture is used to reveal context, not dominate it. Communities are collaborators, not background. Cultural references are contemporary, living, and quietly confident rather than nostalgic.

What binds the Collection together is restraint: buildings that listen, materials that age well, and experiences that unfold at a human pace. Nath doesn't design sanctuaries to escape the world, but to re-enter it with more clarity. In that sense, Aahaasa is less about where you stay — and more about how you arrive.



Across the Collection, materials are sourced locally and left largely untreated. Timber, stone, lime plaster, and woven elements are allowed to weather naturally, ensuring that buildings age alongside their environment instead of resisting it.



Aahaasa operates differently at each property, not as a menu but as a sourcing system. Ingredients are drawn from estate gardens, nearby farmers, and fishermen, with recipes adapted to regional culinary memory rather than standardized across locations.

Aarunya was conceived without a fixed guest itinerary, allowing days to unfold according to light, weather, and appetite.

Across all properties, Aahaasa operates through a shared experiential framework. Culinary identity is expressed through Aahaara, which adapts Sri Lankan cuisine to each region using estate-grown or locally sourced produce. Wellness is delivered via Aarogya, blending traditional Sri Lankan healing practices with contemporary design and treatment protocols. Aaloka introduces elemental fire-based dining, while Aarambha structures arrival rituals to mark transition rather than check-in.

Underlying these guest-facing elements are two operational pillars. Aayusha governs sustainability, regeneration, and community engagement, extending from reforestation and biodiversity to artisan training and agricultural rehabilitation. Aarivya focuses on cultural learning and contextual exploration, ensuring that each stay functions as an exchange rather than consumption.

Aahaasa positions luxury not as scale or excess, but as precision: limited keys, slow development, and architecture that defers to land rather than dominating it. The Collection's ambition is not rapid expansion, but the creation of a recognisable Sri Lankan hospitality language that can travel globally without losing its origin



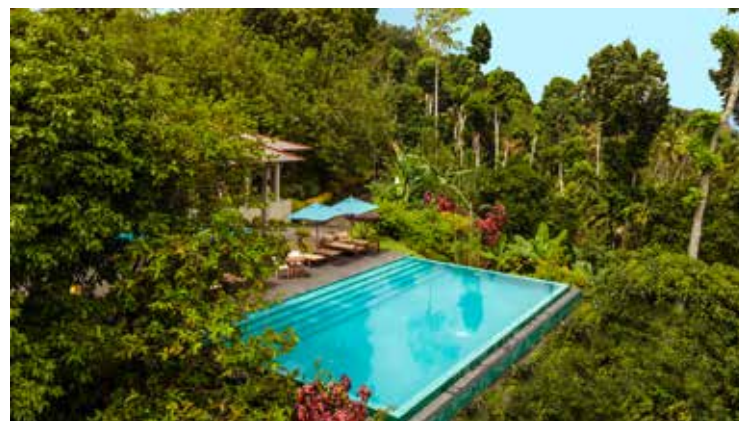
Set apart from the main circulation of the resort, Sol Sanctuary is designed as a place of pause rather than activity. Sunbeds are positioned to follow the arc of daylight, encouraging stillness instead of routine. The space is intentionally quiet, shaped by elevation, breeze, and filtered light, allowing rest to unfold without instruction or schedule.



Wellness areas are positioned away from guest circulation zones, emphasizing separation rather than convenience. Treatments incorporate local botanicals such as spice leaves, citrus, sea salt, and tea, depending on the property's landscape.



Aadya's tea estate rehabilitation includes agricultural zones not accessible to guests, reserved entirely for community use.



The pool at Aarunya is embedded into the hillside rather than placed upon it. Its elongated form mirrors the natural contours of the land, directing the eye outward toward forest and valley. There are no visual anchors competing for attention, only water, horizon, and shifting cloud cover, reinforcing the resort's commitment to unmediated landscape presence.



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