

# A SEASIDE 'I DO'

**Giles Selves**, Area General Manager, Anantara Peace Haven Tangalle Resort, Anantara Kalutara Resort, and AVANI Kalutara Resort, Sri Lanka, elaborates on the possibilities the region holds for destination weddings.



Anupriya Bishnoi

## What would attract a potential client to your resort for a wedding?

In my opinion, all three hotels are very different, which is important for us to be able to provide different venue options to potential guests. In Kalutara, we have AVANI and Anantara. Kalutara properties are just an hour and a half from the airport. This is a convenient distance for group arrivals. At Anantara Kalutara, our events space is equipped to hold functions of various formats. Given the variety of venues we have for guests, they don't have to use the same venue over and over again. Our Executive Chef at Anantara Kalutara is Indian, adding a lot of value from an experience point of view. It gets easier for us, as a hotel, to connect to the customer. Anantara Peace Haven Tangalle Resort is completely different. It is slightly compact and we haven't been able to use the beach in the same way as we did at Kalutara.

## Please elaborate on the challenges you face in this segment.

The biggest challenge we face is getting people to understand the expectations of an Indian wedding. If we look at it from a management point of view, the chefs, director of rooms, etc., understand the requirements of Indian weddings as we have conducted a few in the past. However, getting everyone on the same page about the guest's requirements takes a lot of time and energy. The feedback we have got from the first few events has been fantastic, with food being particularly appreciated. At times, getting a stock of some of the Indian food items is not always simple, so we find ways around it and make it work, though it is not the easiest thing to do. Another challenge we face is keeping an event going into the wee hours

of the morning, where we need to explain to the staff why an event needs to continue that far as it is not something that they are used to.

**What initiatives have been taken by the government to promote the hospitality industry in the region?**  
The government in Sri Lanka is

reviewing how it can assist the hospitality industry. In my opinion, the fact that they are talking about it is itself a positive move.

There is a possibility that the government will review some of the taxation policies that affect the hospitality industry; it is too soon to say anything. The hospitality

industry will rejoice if the taxes are looked into. It would be great if they are looked at from an immigration perspective as well, as this would add value to the sector.

Overall, the government has been displaying positive signs and is aware of the opportunity that exists in this industry. 🇱🇰



Giles Selves

