

HEALING AS A DESTINATION

Why Ayurveda, longevity and preventive health are Sri Lanka’s most valuable — and least copied — tourism asset

HEALING WITH AUTHENTIC AYURVEDA • ADVOCATING SIMPLE, CONSCIOUS LIVING

Most Countries Sell Their Beaches.

Sri Lanka can sell something far rarer — the ability to send a visitor home measurably better than they arrived.

A quieter kind of tourism

That is not a marketing line. It is the quiet economic logic behind wellness tourism, medical tourism and the fast-growing global search for longevity, healthy aging and preventive health — and it deserves a far more central place in how this nation plans its tourism future. For nearly six decades, one Sri Lankan organization has been proving the point along the island’s western and southern coasts.

The vision began in 1968

The founders, the late Sudana Rodrigo and the late Chitra Rodrigo, opened Barberyn Reef in 1968 — the first hotel in the Beruwela and Bentota area to do business with international tourists, and the beginning of a trade that would eventually stretch all the way down the southern coast. They were there before the industry was.

And in 1984, a second leap

Sixteen years later they did something no one anywhere had done — Ahead of time, the second generation to the extended third generation brings their unique skills. It is a blend of ancient wisdom and modern expertise turned that hotel into a resort built entirely around authentic Ayurveda. Sudana Rodrigo received the Tourism Legend Award for it. Twice, then, the same family saw something before the rest of the industry did.

Barberyn Reef, Beruwela

The Source of Authentic Ayurveda in Sri Lanka. Standing on the Golden Mile at Moragalla, bordered along its length by a natural reef that forms a calm swimming lagoon, Barberyn Reef opened in 1968 as a beachside hotel. In 1984 it began operating as a health resort built entirely around Ayurveda — the first Ayurveda resort in the world.

Barberyn Sands, Bentota

Opened in 2018 on a peninsula with the Bentota River at its back and Bentota Beach in front — water on both sides, and a stretch of sand that feels almost private. The smallest and most secluded of the resorts.

Barberyn Beach & Barberyn Waves, Weligama

Together, the group’s flagship and property. Barberyn Beach, established in 2003, and Barberyn Waves, opened in 2023 — a 55-room separate resorts widely regarded as one of the most magnificent of its kind anywhere in the world, where crescent bays and rhythmic surf meet deep, transformative healing.

Diyabubula, Dambulla

Inland, away from the coast entirely — a jungle hideaway where ancient art meets

the wild, for those who seek the healing that comes from nature.

“The Barberyn vision is human Development. It goes beyond the economic, social & environmental dimensions, and includes the sanctity of life & inner peace.”

— The Barberyn Vision

The nation’s highest environmental honour

In 2016 Barberyn Beach achieved what every Sri Lankan company in this field aspires to — the Gold Award at the Presidential Environmental Awards, the country’s most prestigious environmental recognition, organised by the Central Environmental Authority.

Powered by the sun

The commitment behind that Gold has only deepened since. In August 2026 Barberyn Beach commissioned a rooftop solar installation of 547 panels and five inverters, running on net accounting and generating an average of 1.5 MWh — 1,500 units — of clean electricity every day.

A building designed to breathe

Barberyn Waves carries the Green Building Council of Sri Lanka’s Platinum rating for energy performance, placing it among the most energy-efficient resorts in the country. Open to light, air and sea, it turns out that the most healing way to build is also the most efficient.

What a stay actually includes

All guests take Ayurveda treatment. So apart from full board accommodation a stay covers doctors consultations, a personalized treatment plan, daily oral herbal medicines, Ayurveda therapies, together with yoga, meditation and acupuncture. The minimum stay is one week, for the simple reason that meaningful Ayurveda cannot be done in less.

Who comes, and what they come for

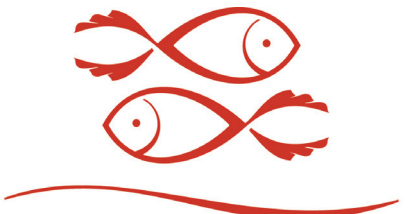
Most guests arrive with lifestyle-related chronic conditions — the slow, accumulated complaints of modern working life that rarely resolve on their own. Digestive problems bring a great many. Others come with chronic joint and inflammatory conditions, including rheumatoid arthritis, where a longer programme of around a month tends to give the best results. And many arrive with nothing diagnosed at all, seeking better energy levels, sharper mental clarity, deeper sleep, relief from stress and burnout, or simply a reset toward healthy aging.

Curative & Preventive

You do not need a medical condition to come. Ayurveda is as much about purification, rejuvenation and prevention as it is about treating disease, and a substantial number of guests arrive purely for detox, immunity, weight management and longevity. What every guest receives is the same: an individual consultation, a plan built for them alone, and an honest account from the doctor of what can and cannot be achieved in the time available.

The fourth pillar

Ayurveda holds that genuine healing rests on four pillars — the physician, the patient, the therapist and the medicine. Barberyn built the Institute of Ayurveda



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Healing with Authentic Ayurveda
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and Alternative Medicine to secure the fourth. Behind every treatment given at a Barberyn resort stands an institution most guests never see.

Several traditions, one panel

More than thirty doctors work across the group, and the breadth of that panel is unusual anywhere in the world. Graduates of Sri Lanka’s Ayurveda universities holding the BAMS degree and Ayurveda Sashtree. Traditional physicians carrying knowledge passed down through generations of family practice. Doctors registered with the Department of Ayurveda. And doctors of Chinese Medicine. Four streams of healing knowledge, consulting under one roof.

Medicine made in-house

The medicines are prepared at a separate facility in the historic “Sirivilasa” residence — registered with the Department of Ayurveda and accredited for Good Manufacturing Practices by the Sri Lanka Standards Institution. Herbal oils, arishta tonics, churna powders, kalka pastes, swarasa juices and phanta infusions, all made under the supervision of Ayurveda doctors. Very few wellness operators anywhere control their medicine supply to this degree.

It began with one man planting

Long before conservation became a corporate word, Manick Rodrigo began planting medicinal plants. He had seen something others had missed: that Sri Lanka’s traditional doctors could once treat a great many illnesses using only what grew in their own gardens, and that this quiet sufficiency was disappearing. If the plants vanished, the knowledge would follow. No system of natural healing can survive without them.

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Seven Cultivations, one Mission

From that conviction grew Barberyn Eco Properties — seven cultivations across the island at Imbulgodawatta, Pahirukanda, Meegoda, Owita, Batukanada, Dedduwa and Hettimulla, managed entirely using organic methods with compost made from Barberyn Reef’s own biodegradable waste, a nutrient-rich liquid biofertilizer derived from its biogas waste-to-energy system, and coconut husks for mulching. Field surveys across the estates have identified 307 medicinal and commercially valuable plants, with their conservation status assessed against the National Red Data Book, including species listed as critically endangered on the IUCN Red List.

Rare herbs, protected

Among them are rare and high-value herbs nurtured for their therapeutic properties — Sandalwood, Kaluvara and Kekatiya among them. The mission was never only to grow. It was to educate: to make people understand what these plants are worth, so that the next generation inherits both the species and the knowledge of how to use them.

Guardians of the island’s plants

Sri Lanka is home to more than 1,300 medicinal plants. The Institute created the country’s first online scientific database of them, catalogued with scientific names, families, botanical descriptions and traditional uses across the Deshiya Chikitsa, Ayurveda, Siddha and Unani systems — free to anyone, at www.instituteofayurveda.org.

Validated at Kew

A Large number of individual scientists & organizations contributed towards the development of the data base. The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, in London is one of the world’s foremost botanical research institutions and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, holding the largest collection of plant knowledge on earth. Through Kew’s Medicinal Plant Names Services, Barberyn submitted Sri Lankan medicinal plant names for global taxonomic validation — giving this island’s botanical heritage international scientific standing.

A decade as a national exporter

For more than a decade of consecutive years, Barberyn Reef and Barberyn Beach have received the Sri Lanka Export Development Board’s Presidential Export Award for Best Exporter of Health and Wellness Services, as leading foreign-exchange earners for the nation.

National Recognition — Almost Without a Break

At the National Tourism Awards, organised by the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority, Barberyn Reef and Barberyn Beach have been named Best Ayurveda Resort in every year the award has been contested but one — an almost unbroken run that reflects not a campaign, but a standard held consistently across two properties and many years.

Why a healing guest is a different guest

A guest who travels for healing behaves nothing like a guest who travels for a holiday, and that difference reshapes the economics of an entire property.

• They stay far longer — around sixteen days on average, against the handful of nights typical of leisure travel.

• They come all year. People do not schedule their health around the monsoon, which smooths the seasonality that destabilises conventional



Consultation with the physician



Pure herbal medicine



Shirodhara treatment



Gentle exercise with yoga



Space and light – rooms at Barberyn Waves



Luxury redefined – Barberyn Waves suite room

resorts.

• They come back, and they bring others. Word of mouth from a recovered guest is worth more than any campaign.

• They earn the country real foreign exchange — the reason the Export Development Board has recognised these resorts year after year.

Medicine, not decoration

Wellness travel, health tourism and the search for natural healing are among the fastest-growing motivations in global travel, and with growth comes imitation. The single greatest risk to Sri Lanka’s position is the drift from medicine into decoration — an oil massage renamed a wellness retreat, a menu of treatments with no diagnosis behind it.

A health resort and hospital, not a spa

At Barberyn, every guest begins with an individual consultation with a doctor and receives a personalised treatment plan; therapies and medicines differ from guest to guest. Barberyn Reef Ayurveda Resort Hospital (Pvt) Ltd is a certified institution registered as an Ayurveda hospital under the

Department of Ayurveda in Sri Lanka — a medical facility for natural healing and preventive health, not a spa or a wellness hotel.

Unique Advantage

If Sri Lanka wants to own this space globally, the industry and the regulator must hold that line together: clear standards for what may be called Ayurveda, properly qualified physicians and therapists, and verifiable quality in medicines. Authenticity is not a constraint on growth. It is the only durable competitive advantage, because it cannot be replicated by a destination with no living tradition behind it.

Part of the treatment

A guest who travels across the world for health will not accept diesel fumes, plastic and a polluted shoreline as the backdrop. Environmental performance is not a side project in wellness tourism — it is part of the treatment.

Every Drop from the Sky Preserved

At Barberyn rainwater harvesting systems capture it across the property, and a man-made wetland was created to hold and clean water naturally — a



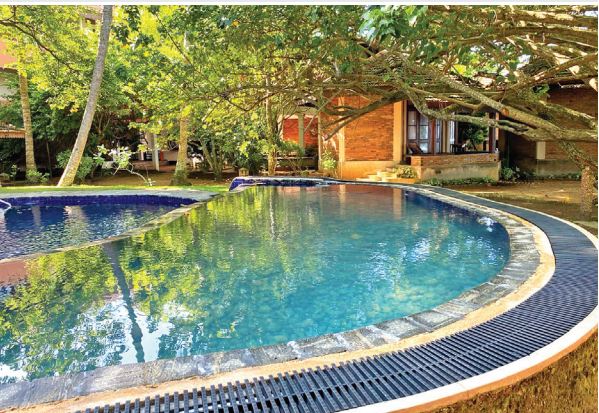
Protective Reef – Barberyn Reef



Infinity pool – Barberyn Waves



Nestled among the trees



Free flowing pool – Barberyn Reef

living filter that has become a habitat in its own right. Nothing else is wasted either: waste-to-energy systems convert food waste into biogas for clean cooking gas and biofertilizer produced from the biogas system, and garden waste is returned to the earth as compost.

Gardens without poison

The grounds are landscaped without toxic chemicals — no synthetic pesticides or herbicides. Mosquito control follows the same logic. Rather than fogging the gardens with diesel smoke, as most resorts still do, Barberyn Reef uses sustainable mosquito traps. Diesel fogging kills far more than mosquitoes; it takes the bees, the butterflies and the insects the birds depend on with it. Protecting guests and protecting biodiversity need not be opposing aims.

Sunshine, stored

Solar-thermal arrays heat the water for herbal baths and treatments. The move to solar electricity began modestly in 2024 with a 10.2 kW grid-tied rooftop system — a first step taken to learn before committing. It worked, and a second phase followed: a 113 kWp array generating roughly 150 MWh of clean electricity a year, paired with a 241 kWh Battery Energy Storage System believed to be among the first in Sri Lanka’s tourism industry, storing the day’s surplus sunshine and releasing it through the evening peak, when a resort needs it most.

Reef, mangrove and garden

A long Reef Protects & guards the Barberyn Reef. A protected mangrove belt extends some 3.5 km around Dedduwa Island, replanted each year with guests. In the gardens, individual plants are labelled with QR codes, so any guest can take a self-guided medicinal-plant tour simply by scanning with a phone.

Audited, not asserted

None of this rests on self-declaration. Barberyn Reef holds three ISO standards awarded by SGS Lanka — ISO 14001 for environmental management, ISO 45001 for occupational health and



A room with a view – Barberyn Reef Beruwela



Diyabubula jungle and art abode

safety, and ISO 22000 for food safety — alongside Travelife Gold, EcoLabel Sri Lanka, 5S Platinum, Verified GHG emissions, etc. Currently, we are pursuing Zero Waste to Landfill (ZWL) certification, ISO 9001 for quality management, and ISO 50001 for energy management. More than twenty-five environmental and tourism honors have followed across the group.

A national capability, not an amenity

Sri Lanka has beaches that many countries can match, and a healing tradition that almost none can. As the world turns toward longevity, preventive health and natural medicine, the opportunity is to stop treating Ayurveda as an amenity on the itinerary and start treating it as a national capability — one that earns foreign exchange, employs villages, fills rooms out of season and, uniquely among our exports, sends people home well.

By Thilak K. Illeperuma
0772 881 966