

CONTENTS

Preface, *p04*

Introduction, *p08*

Colombo, Colpetty

- 01 The Gallery Café, *p32*
- 02 Geoffrey Bawa's Town House, *p36*
- 03 The Deraniyagala House, *p40*
- 04 Ladies' College Classroom Block, *p42*
- 05 Ladies' College Vocational Training Centre, *p43*
- 06 Stanley de Saram House, *p44*
- 07 Chloé de Soysa House, *p46*

The Beira Lakes and Union Place

- 08 Wiemanne Flats, *p48*
- 09 The YWCA, *p49*
- 10 The Seema Malaka, *p50*
- 11 The Jayakody House, *p52*
- 12 The State Mortgage Bank, *p54*

Cinnamon Gardens

- 13 The Raffle House, *p56*
- 14 The David Spenser House, *p60*
- 15 St Bridget's Montessori School, *p61*
- 16 The Agrarian Research and Training Institute, *p64*
- 17 The Ratnasivaratnam House, *p66*

Outer Colombo

- 18 The New Sri Lanka Parliament, *p68*
- 19 The Sunethra Bandaranaike House, *p74*
- 20 Steel Corporation Offices and Housing, *p76*
- 21 The Leela Dias Bandaranayake House, *p79*

The North and Centre

- 22 The Polontalawa Estate Bungalow, *p80*
- 23 The Anuradhapura Pilgrims' Rest House, *p83*
- 24 The Kandalama Hotel, *p84*
- 25 The Strathspey Estate Bungalow, *p88*
- 26 The Nazareth Chapel of the Good Shepherd Convent, *p90*

The South Coast

- 27 The Jacobson House, *p94*
- 28 Claughton Bungalow, *p95*
- 29 The Ruhuna University Campus, *p96*
- 30 Office Building, *p101*
- 31 The Jayawardene House, *p102*
- 32 The ASH de Silva House, *p104*
- 33 The Lighthouse Hotel, *p106*

The West Coast

- 34 The Triton Hotel, *p108*
- 35 Club Villa and Mohoti Walauwe, *p110*
- 36 Villa No 87, *p112*
- 37 The Bentota Tourist Village, *p114*
- 38 The Serendib Hotel, *p115*
- 39 Lunuganga, *p116*
- 40 The Ena de Silva House, *p122*
- 41 The Neptune Hotel, *p124*
- 42 The Blue Water Hotel, *p126*
- 43 The Institute for Integral Education, *p128*

Appendices

- Bawa At Risk, *p130*
- Bawa Transformed, *p133*
- Lost Bawa, *p136*
- Bawa Abroad, *p139*

Maps, *p142*

Image Credits, *p143*

Further Reading, *p144*

Acknowledgments, *p144*

A TALISMAN BOOK FOR LAURENCE KING

First published in 2016 by

Talisman Publishing Pte Ltd
talisman@apdsing.com
www.talismanpublishing.com
ISBN 978-981-09-9972-8

Laurence King Publishing Ltd
enquiries@laurenceking.com
www.laurenceking.com
ISBN 978-178-06-7913-6

A catalogue record for this book
is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2016 Talisman Publishing Pte Ltd
Text © David Robson
Photography © Sebastian Posingis
Editor Kim Inglis
Designers Norreha Sayuti, Stephy Chee
Studio Manager Janice Ng
Publisher Ian Pringle

All rights reserved. Apart from any fair dealing for the purposes of private study, research, criticism or review as permitted under the Copyright Act, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the written permission of the publisher.

Printed in Singapore



Preface

Some 20 years ago Geoffrey Bawa, then approaching the end of his career, asked me to help him write a monograph on his work. We started on this in 1997, but our collaboration was nipped in the bud in early 1998 when he was felled by a stroke that left him almost totally incapacitated. However, the Bawa Trust encouraged me to continue with the project and the book finally appeared in 2002 under the title *Bawa the Complete Works* (Thames & Hudson). Geoffrey survived to see the book finished and attended its launch, though we don't know what he thought of it. Although I tried to present his point of view, it's certain that, had he been able to take part in its production, it would have become a different book.

Bawa died in 2003 and his practice ceased to exist. Since then many of his buildings have been altered by their owners, some beyond all recognition, while a number have been demolished or have fallen prey to termites and the relentless cycle of tropical sun and monsoon rain.

This book was the brainchild of photographer Sebastian Posingis and is intended to complement the much larger book of 2002. It focuses primarily on Geoffrey Bawa's built works in Sri Lanka and offers a catalogue of those that have survived the depredations of two decades while issuing warnings about those that no longer fairly represent his original design intentions. They are arranged, not chronologically, but geographically, as a series of circuits: one within Colombo, one around its outskirts and one around the island.

It also seeks to address some recurring questions: who was Geoffrey Bawa? What inspired his shift in mid life from mediocre lawyer to master architect? What were the qualities that distinguished his work? It doesn't attempt to describe his unbuilt designs — many of these were featured in *Bawa the Complete Works* — nor does it speculate about his influence on other architects — this was discussed in the book *Beyond Bawa* (Thames & Hudson, 2007).

There can be little doubt that Geoffrey Bawa was a towering figure in post-independence Sri Lanka and, indeed in the wider context of South and South East Asia. It's also clear that he exercised a huge influence on succeeding generations of architects. For this reason it is indeed regrettable that so many of his buildings have been altered or lost during past decades. This book will hopefully help to draw attention to their plight and will result in at least a few of them being conserved to delight future generations.

Bawa believed that architecture could never be fully understood through written descriptions or pictures and should be experienced face-to-face. We hope that this book will encourage you to visit his buildings and explore them for yourselves.

Page 1 Geoffrey Bawa with his dog Leopold, 1985.

Previous page The staircase in Geoffrey Bawa's townhouse.

Left Donald Friend urn in the Lunuganga garden.

Overleaf The veranda of the Cloughton Bungalow.



Lunuganga

Three kilometres inland from Bentota
1948

Geoffrey Bawa bought an abandoned rubber estate in 1948 with a view to transforming it into a landscaped garden that would evoke memories of the English and Italian gardens that he admired. He named it Lunuganga or Salt River.

The estate covered an area of about eight hectares and straddled two hills on a promontory that projected out into the Deduwa Lagoon, about three kilometres inland from Bentota. A dilapidated bungalow sat on the summit of the northern hill with limited views of the lake and was surrounded by a forest of tired old rubber trees.

Over the next 50 years, the garden project would take much of his free time and money. It evolved as a serendipitous journey without a fixed plan, though its progress was recorded in a series of beautiful drawings, executed at ten-yearly intervals.

The garden evolved over a long time. The contours showed what the first moves must be. As the land was cleared a wide and splendid view of the lake emerged. Once the initial clearing was done, the main views established themselves.

Bawa replaced the drive with an arrival court, hidden in the trees below the southeast corner of the bungalow and turned the original *porte-cochère* at its north-western corner into what would become the main sitting area. The car court was linked by a series of terraces and broad staircases that led to an entrance loggia formed beneath a guest bedroom and then finally to the bungalow's south terrace.

He then cut a swathe through the trees to open up a vista across the southern hill towards the other side of the lake and a distant *dagaba* (stupa). The

Opposite Plan of the Garden from 1985. Bawa Archive.
1 The first view of the House and the North Terrace as glimpsed from across the lake.

2 The araliya (*Plumeria* sp) on the North Terrace. Below Section through the hill looking north. 1989. Bawa Archive.