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Newsletter

Impressions - Mr. Dimitris Apostolou

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A film director based in Athens, Greece, Mr. Dimitris Apostolou studied film direction in Lykourgos Stavrakos Film School. Honoured for his works in many film festivals, Mr. Dimitris is also an avid traveller, and finds Kerala a very special place.

The following candid thoughts of Mr. Dimitris unravel the instant liking for Kerala that he experienced during his visit last year, as part of the International Film Festival of Kerala.

"Incredible India! As the official tourist tagline of the Indian Government advertises, I have no other thought in my mind, but to agree. I visited Trivandrum in the Kerala region in southern

India in December as a guest of the Kerala International Film Festival. I'm a film director and my film was screened with a lot of success at the festival. I spent nearly a week there, which turned out to be one of the best in my life. I have to confess right away that I will definitely visit India again. Who wouldn't?

The locals in Kerala call their region 'God's Own Country'. Now I can see why. I have travelled all over the world and this place has more green and natural beauty than I have ever seen in my life. It can only be compared to the rainforest of Amazon in Brazil. And the people are really nice and polite too. Before I went to India, everyone told me that it's a dangerous place and I should be careful. What ignorance! From the moment I stepped on the airport I felt right at home. Everyone is so kind and helpful; in a way that is something I have to talk about. They want to give that something extra.

What impressed me the most is the literacy of the people in Kerala. The poor kids in the streets don't ask you for money but for a pen! That's amazing! They taught their kids not to beg for money but for things that are actually useful to them. I discovered that Kerala has 100% literacy, which explains it. I guess the poor are also very fortunate to live in God's Own Country. It has summer all year long, so even those who haven't got a place to stay can actually survive. I have to admit though that, for us Europeans, the humidity and the heat are almost unbearable. Don't even think about going to a place without air condition!

Trivandrum city is built right into the middle of the jungle. I mean, literally, exotic birds are flying over your head. I loved it. There's so much green in this city that many European cities would blush. If you're waiting to see the Asian Paris here, forget about it! This place has a beauty of its own. Apart from the breathtaking nature even inside the city, the place is noisy and crowded. I believe this sounds bad but it's not! After the initial shock you tend to like it more and more every minute. I'm sure you've all heard about the crazy taxi drivers in India. Well, I have news for you. They're even crazier than you heard! They're speeding like hell and use the horn more than the brake... But, yes, you tend to like it.

It's all part of the exotic beauty of India! Believe me, after day one you're going to feel like home. If India didn't have all these minor flaws maybe I wouldn't like it so much. Do you know what I mean? It makes the place more 'real'.

If you haven't been in the backwaters for canoeing you don't know what you're missing. There's so much beauty around, you just can't take it! The landscape is amazing. You can't actually believe that you're seeing all these. You can also stay near the rivers. You can choose between picturesque small hotels that fit right into the nature or rent a house. I'm talking about the best view you can ever imagine. You open the door and see the river in front of you! And the Indian Ocean is next to you. Take your canoe and go for a swim! Huge, paradise beaches with palm trees everywhere, just for you. No crowd, just the sound of the waves. If you like a quiet and relaxing vacation, I can't think of a better place in the whole world.

For those who like the tourist beaches, there's no better place than Kovalam beach. The sunset in the sea is something to

remember. And the spicy seafood is delicious. Don't go there to eat pasta! Eat it at home... Try the local spicy food and you won't regret it.

All of these wouldn't matter to a lot of people if the price wasn't right. So, yes, the price is right. Actually, I can say that it's the cheapest place I've been in the whole world and with the best hospitality. Do yourself a favour and go to India. You won't regret it and it's something that you'll remember for the rest of your life. As for myself, I'm counting the days to go back."

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