



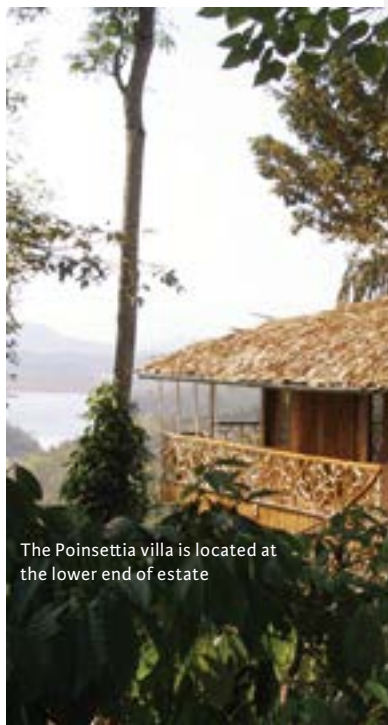
# A villa in the trees

Enjoy home-cooked food, stroll through the vast estate or stay in rooms high up in the trees at this unique homestay in Wayanad

BY BINDU GOPAL RAO

**T**hink Wayanad in Kerala and the imagery that unfolds is that of swaying coconut palms, pristine waters, jaw-dropping green foliage and essentially everything beautiful. Located on the border of Kerala and Karnataka, Wayanad district is all this and more – it is one of the leading locations in Kerala for homestays.

Continuing with the trend is Amaryllis, a new boutique homestay in the district. It is a dream come true for planters Victor and Ranjini Dey who have built this property ground up converting an abandoned coffee and rubber farm to an oasis of uninterrupted peace and quiet. The property is named



The Poinsettia villa is located at the lower end of estate

Wayanad is 84 km from Kozhikode. SpiceJet offers direct flights to Kozhikode from Bengaluru and Chennai, along with convenient connections from other cities too. For details, log on to [www.spicejet.com](http://www.spicejet.com)

after the stunningly beautiful red Amaryllis flower that incidentally was the first shrub to be planted on either side of the driveway. Because the flower blossoms for a long time, it symbolises achieving success after a long and difficult struggle and perfectly matches the couple's hard work and dedication to build this homestay.



Camellia is a luxurious suite

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**All the rooms are named after flowers that grow on the property. There are a total of five rooms here. In addition, there are two other unique accommodations in the form of tree villas. The experience is personal with warm hospitality and attention to individual needs**

The mist-covered mountains, Karapuzha Reservoir and Western Ghats make for great spectacular views from here. The Deys bought the property in 2008, laid roads, sank wells, landscaped the area and planted a variety of new crops. “We decided to share our home with like-minded folk,” says Victor Dey. “Guests who were looking at a few days of peace and quiet in pristine natural surroundings, and who would like to enjoy the old world charm and luxury of a planter’s home – leisurely breakfasts, lazing around the pool, sleepy afternoons, tea on the verandah, evenings under the stars, followed by dinner and all this with an unmatched view.” The best part is that the experience is personal with fresh home-cooked meals, friendly conversations, warm hospitality and attention to individual needs all of which are the hallmark of an excellent homestay experience.

#### UNIQUE ACCOMMODATION

There are a total of five rooms in the

property. In addition, there are two other unique accommodations – tree villas. The top tree villa (Solandra) is built at a height of 35 feet and is an all wood tree villa that you can access via a gradually inclined walkway that takes you to the split-level room, with a small lounge below. The northern verandah overlooks the calm waterbody and hills and on the right is an impressive view of the gigantic Manjapara Rock. The bottom tree villa (Poinsettia) is located at the lower end of the estate and can be accessed through an easy and short stairway. Set at a height of 25 feet the rooms have walls of bamboo and a wooden floor and comes with a wide verandah and a spacious bathroom with the same panoramic views.

All the rooms are named after flowers that grow on the property. The Terrace Suite (Camellia), a super luxurious and elegant room with a view, has polished wood floors that accentuate the white cedar furniture. The large glass doors open up onto a spacious



Driveway to the main house



Victor and Ranjini Dey bought the property in 2008



The homestay is recommended for nature lovers

verandah, from where the views of the lush countryside below are unmatched. The L-shaped private terrace offers you the space to relax and unwind and enjoy the breathtaking view of the meandering waters of the Karapuzha Reservoir, with the Velaranmalai Hills beyond. The spectacular sunset is a must-see from here and the en-suite bathroom with its spacious jacuzzi adds to the luxe experience.

The Annexe (Strelitzia) is situated adjacent to the main house and the all wood room comes with a private sit-out looking onto a tropical garden with views of the backwaters beyond. The Superior Garden rooms (Begonia) is located within the main house, but with independent access through the South garden and has a private sit-out filled with exotic plants. The second Superior Garden Room (Calliandra), is at the entrance to the main house, with a view of the garden on one side and the internal courtyard on the other.



The property has been built on an abandoned coffee and rubber farm

Furnished with old world rosewood furniture, this is the perfect space to de-stress and the verandah adjoining the room is an ideal place for you to reconnect with yourself over a cup of morning tea or coffee.

#### DO MORE WHEN HERE

Located in the lap of nature, there is much to do on your stay here. Highly recommended for nature lovers is a walk amongst the various fruit and plantation crops or on the backwaters of the reservoir or simply stroll along the country roads above the property. For the more adventurous, a trek to Chembra Peak can be arranged. You can also relax at the black and grey rectangular swimming pool that seamlessly blends into the natural surroundings. The property has a wide variety of fruit, spice and flowering plants and trees. Apart from a wide range of birds that you can spot on the property, you will find a number of aquatic birds on the backwaters of the Karapuzha Dam.

#### LOOK ALL AROUND YOU

A 15 minute drive away is one of the



The lounge for leisurely afternoons

**A tour of the property is highly recommended. It has a wide variety of fruit, spice and flowering plants and trees. There are also many different types of birds that you can spot on the property**

wonders of the Wayanad, the Edakkal Caves & Heritage Museum. The rock etchings in these caves date back to the Neolithic period between 5,000 to 10,000 years old. You can also visit the Muthanga Wildlife Park as well as the Tholpetty Wildlife Park and the ancient Thirunelli Temple situated in the Brahmagiri Hills. The Banasura Sagar Dam and boating will appeal to families. There is also a ninth century Jain Temple here and the Chembra Peak, the highest peak in Wayanad. ■