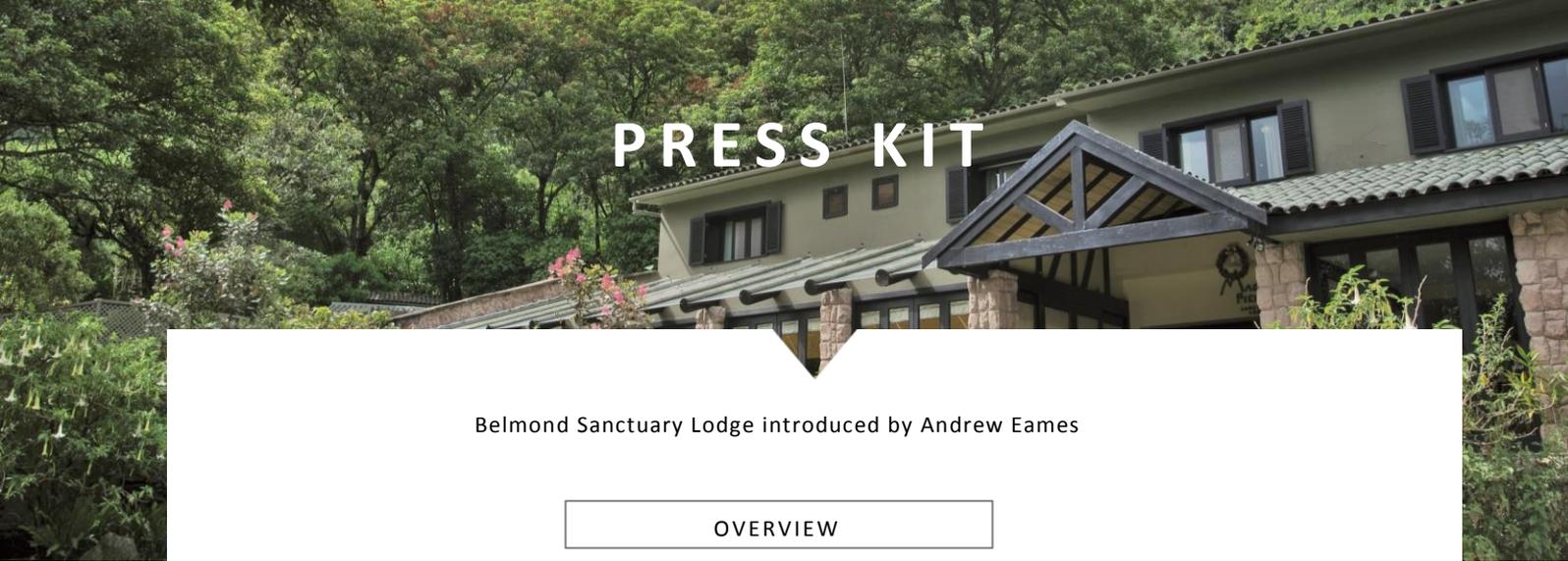




BELMOND
SANCTUARY LODGE
MACHU PICCHU



PRESS KIT

Belmond Sanctuary Lodge introduced by Andrew Eames

OVERVIEW

Where in the world can you luxuriate in an outdoor Jacuzzi, surrounded by ferns, butterflies, and darting hummingbirds, but with the intricate labyrinth of hand-carved and hand-polished stonework of an ancient Inca citadel visible through the trees over your shoulder?

From a temple closer at hand the chanting of a shaman performing an ancient Pachamama ritual for private guests will come drifting through the foliage. There'll be the option of a massage later on against a backdrop of Andean peaks, before heading off into that intricate citadel once the crowds have gone.

That citadel is, of course, Machu Picchu, one of the wonders of the world, and a name on every traveller's bucket list. There can't be many, if any, other places which are the main reason for visiting not just a country, but a whole continent. If you're going to make a journey all the way across the world to get the flavour of this place, then you might as well get to see it both in its most mystical light and at its people-free best, which is early morning and late evening. To do that, to pre-empt the crowds that make the half-hour journey up by bus from the railhead of Aguas Calientes in the valley below, you need to book into the only hotel which sits right outside the entrance: Belmond Sanctuary Lodge.

This hotel's location confers huge advantages. Of being the first in when the gates open at 6am, when Machu Picchu is often still veiled in a diaphanous petticoat of mist, and having the place virtually to yourself for that moment of sunrise, which itself was hugely significant to the Incas. And of going back in, refreshed after a day of relaxation, in the late afternoon, when the crush of day guests has gone.

Belmond Sanctuary Lodge mountain retreat has a foot in two worlds. All the coming and going to Machu Picchu passes its front door, with some of those visitors stepping inside to experience the sanctuary of its restaurant and bar. Meanwhile, out the back of the property are quiet orchid-rich gardens exclusively for the Lodge's guests, with sun loungers, the Jacuzzi in the trees, and the hidden temple-with-a-view for shamanistic rituals and massage.

The inside of the property is very select, with just 31 rooms and suites. Here the décor emphasises traditional fabrics and elegant wood, with marble bathrooms. The hotel is careful to maintain its eco-credentials, which means, for example, only providing walk-in showers instead of bathtubs, in order to control its water consumption.

HISTORY

The Lodge started life as a basic little hut for the very first guardians of Machu Picchu, not long after the American explorer Hiram Bingham first discovered the Inca city back in 1911. In 1950 the Peruvian government made a decision to build a hotel on the site, mainly intended for the benefit of researchers, guards and VIP visitors, for whom its position was key.

In the more recent past the property was redeveloped to reach out to mainstream tourists, and the latest chapter in its history began in 1999, when Belmond (formerly Orient-Express Hotels) took the concession and started to remodel the buildings under the name Belmond Sanctuary Lodge. That remodelling is a continual process, as Belmond sets about creating an intimate retreat where guests can unwind over stunning sunrises and mystical moonlight nights in the shadow of the Lost City.

PEOPLE

Marc Yerian, General Manager

Marc Yeterian was born in the town of Lyon, France, but grew up in Nice on the French Riviera, where he studied for five years in Nice's hospitality school. His initial experience of the hotel industry took him to work in two of Europe's best addresses, the Hotel de Crillon in Paris and Loew's Hotel in Monaco. With that experience under his belt, he set out to discover the world through his profession.

As a food and beverage manager, he worked in countries such as Mexico, Dominican Republic, Italy and Ireland. In 1994 he got his first hotel manager position – but this time on cruise ships travelling all over the world, but particularly the Mediterranean, the Caribbean, the United States and Canada and South America. That was followed by what he calls his “French Polynesian odyssey” where he spent nine years managing cruise ships, a hotel and luxury yachts in the South Pacific.

Back on land, 2008 saw him start his Peruvian period, initially managing an Inkaterra hotel, before moving to the Belmond Sanctuary Lodge where he is today.

Special staff member biography – Leonidas Torres

Leonidas Torres is in charge of the orchid garden at Belmond Sanctuary Lodge. A native of Cusco, he originally studied to be a mechanic, working on the railways and for an international petroleum exploration company before deciding that it wasn't for him.

With significant change in mind, he decamped to Lima's Universidad Agraria to study the cultivation of plants. Returning to Cusco, he was recruited to work in Machu Picchu's maintenance and restoration department. During his four years here, he met a Japanese landscaper who taught him landscape design with orchids. His developing passion for these rare and delicate flowers inspired the next change and in 2000 he went back to Lima to study at the Peruvian Club of Orchids. A year later, he started to work at Belmond Sanctuary Lodge; that was 15 years ago.

Leonidas' main preoccupation is the nurturing of all the orchids in the garden surrounding the Lodge. He is responsible for bringing the flowers to the stage where they are good enough to show guests. And he is also responsible of the preparation of the bird waterer for the hummingbirds that fly around the Lodge, adding that little extra splash of colour to the setting.

FEATURES

Sunrise at Machu Picchu

Getting into the site when the gates open at 6am is the main reason for being here. The temples and the sacred rocks, with their symbolic shadows at key positions of the sun, are much more mystical when they're not crowded with people. Its mystery – why did the Incas abandon it so suddenly? - seems more striking when it is empty.

Early (and late) hours also allow more time to walk a small part of the Inca Trail, particularly the short section up to the Sun Gate (Inti Punku), the location which gives Trail hikers the first

view of their ultimate destination. Or even to climb up Huayna Picchu, the stump of a mountain which rears up out of the back of the site.

Pachamama Ceremony

This magical ceremony, led by a shaman (Andean priest) consists of making offerings to the Inca gods while requesting health and prosperity in return. Pachamama herself is a mother earth figure, a fertility goddess revered by Andean people who gives and sustains life on earth. Her shrines are legendary trees or hallowed rocks and she is usually depicted as an adult female bearing harvests of potatoes and coca leaves. Belmond Sanctuary Lodge can arrange this ceremony on its temple platform, with the backdrop of the distant mountains. Guests will be asked to blow on coca leaves (coca is symbolic of community and respect) and make a highly decorative offering of cereals, confetti, herbs, sweets and wool.

Renewal Vows

This ancient ceremony to renew and revive marriage vows was practised in the Andean world. It is conducted by a shaman who leads a prayer for the couple and presents offerings to help strengthen their feelings and commitment to each other. The shaman makes a small offering of cereals, grains, fruits and coca leaves.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY & ENVIRONMENT

Belmond Sanctuary Lodge supports a foundation for children, Corazones para Peru, near the town of Urubamba. The foundation runs a home for 70 children aged from 2 to 18 years who have been removed from their families after suffering domestic abuse. The hotel offers the children the chance to discover Machu Picchu and helps the foundation generate revenue by giving baking classes so the organisation can provide bread to surrounding poor communities. It also purchases little ceramic bulls made by the children and gives them to hotel guests.

The little town of Santa Teresa, 30 minutes' train ride from Machu Picchu, is one of the poorest in the region. In partnership with Care Peru the hotel is working with farmers' wives from the community to improve their understanding of the paperwork required by the government in order to sell their agricultural produce.

Belmond Sanctuary Lodge, in cooperation with PeruRail, runs a project that teaches organic agriculture to young farmers from several communities located along the railway. The idea is to generate local produce that will supply the Lodge's kitchen, thus limiting food miles. Meanwhile organic food waste from the Lodge's kitchen is sent the other way, and fed to local livestock.