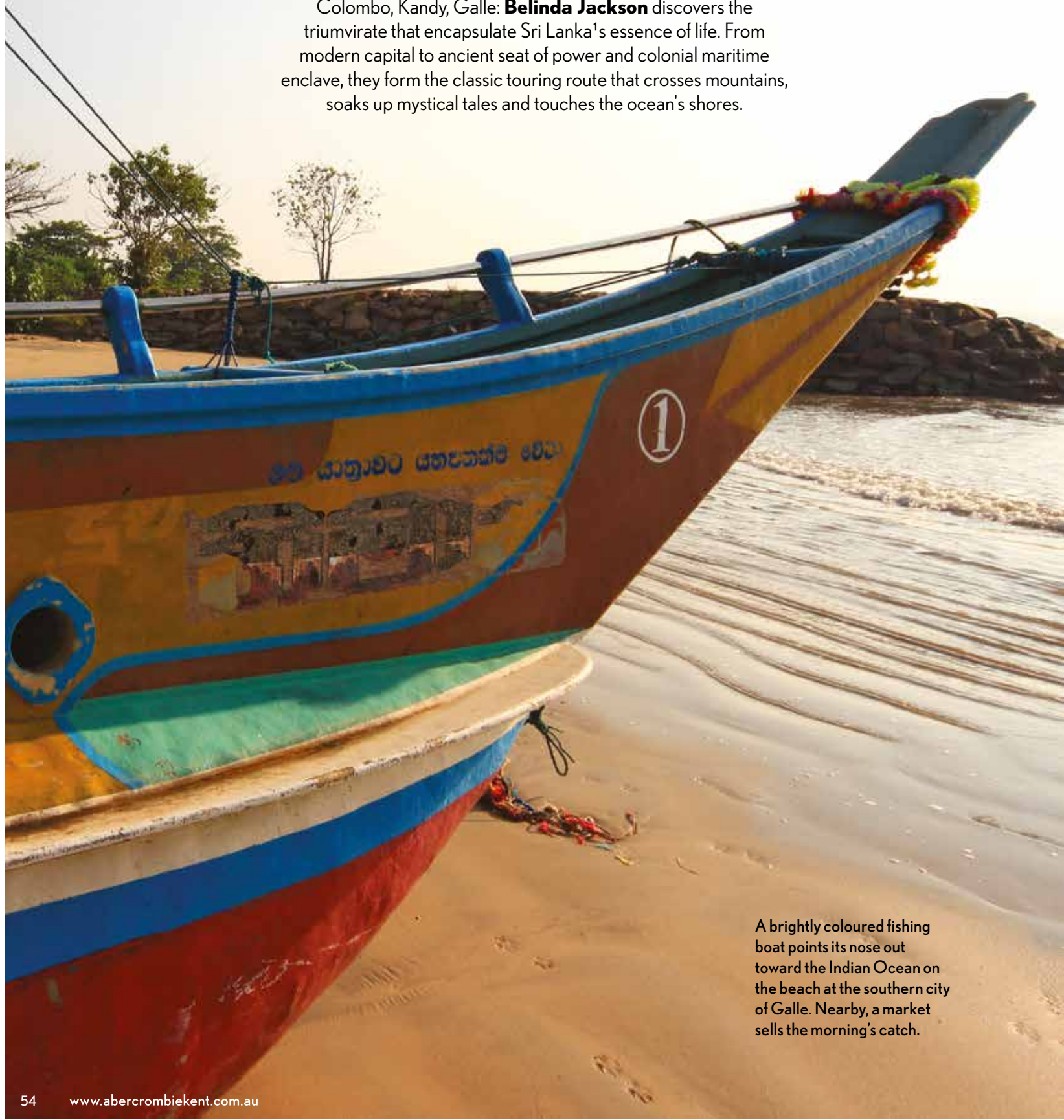


TALE OF THREE CITIES

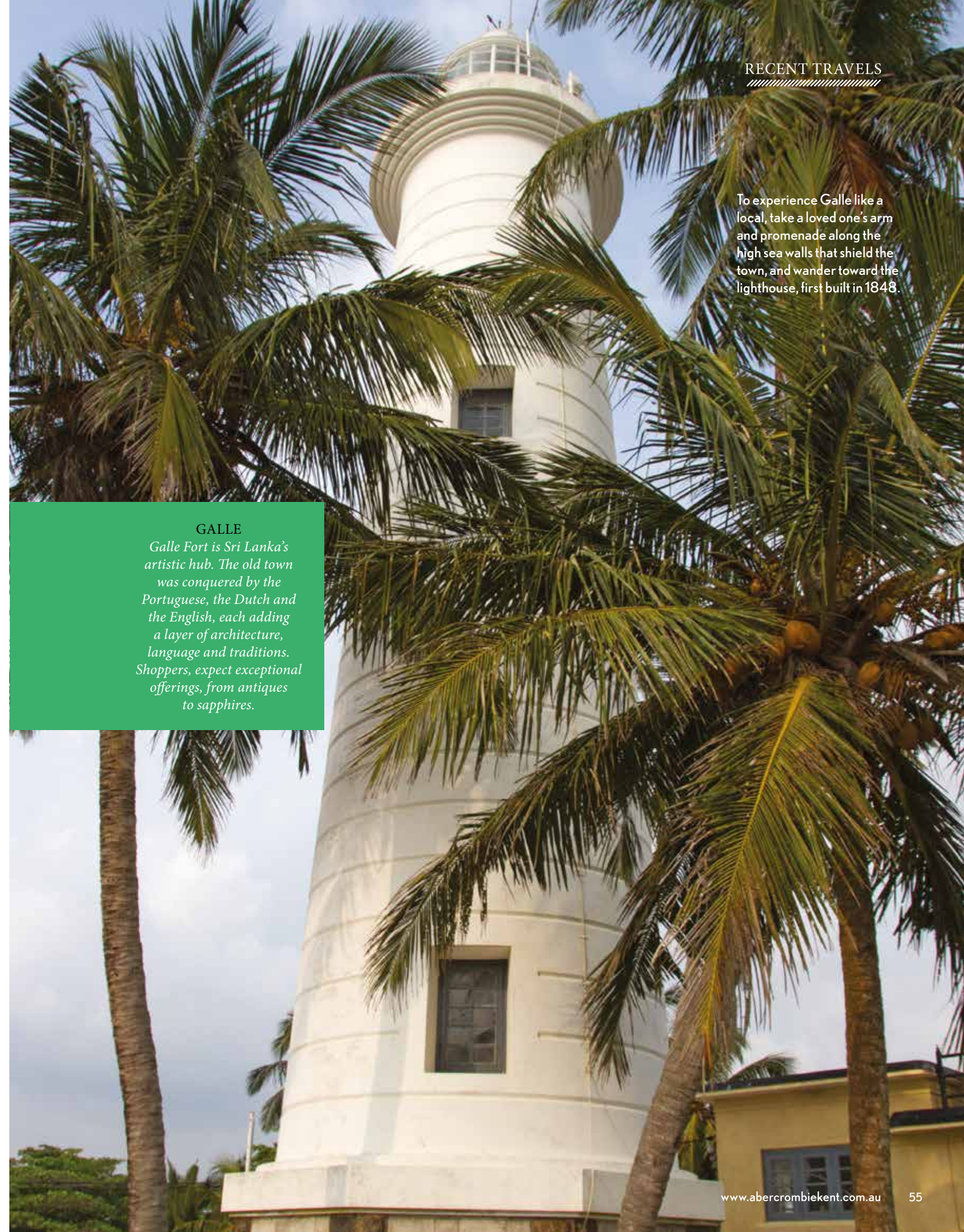
SRI LANKA

Colombo, Kandy, Galle: **Belinda Jackson** discovers the triumvirate that encapsulate Sri Lanka's essence of life. From modern capital to ancient seat of power and colonial maritime enclave, they form the classic touring route that crosses mountains, soaks up mystical tales and touches the ocean's shores.



A brightly coloured fishing boat points its nose out toward the Indian Ocean on the beach at the southern city of Galle. Nearby, a market sells the morning's catch.

To experience Galle like a local, take a loved one's arm and promenade along the high sea walls that shield the town, and wander toward the lighthouse, first built in 1848.



GALLE

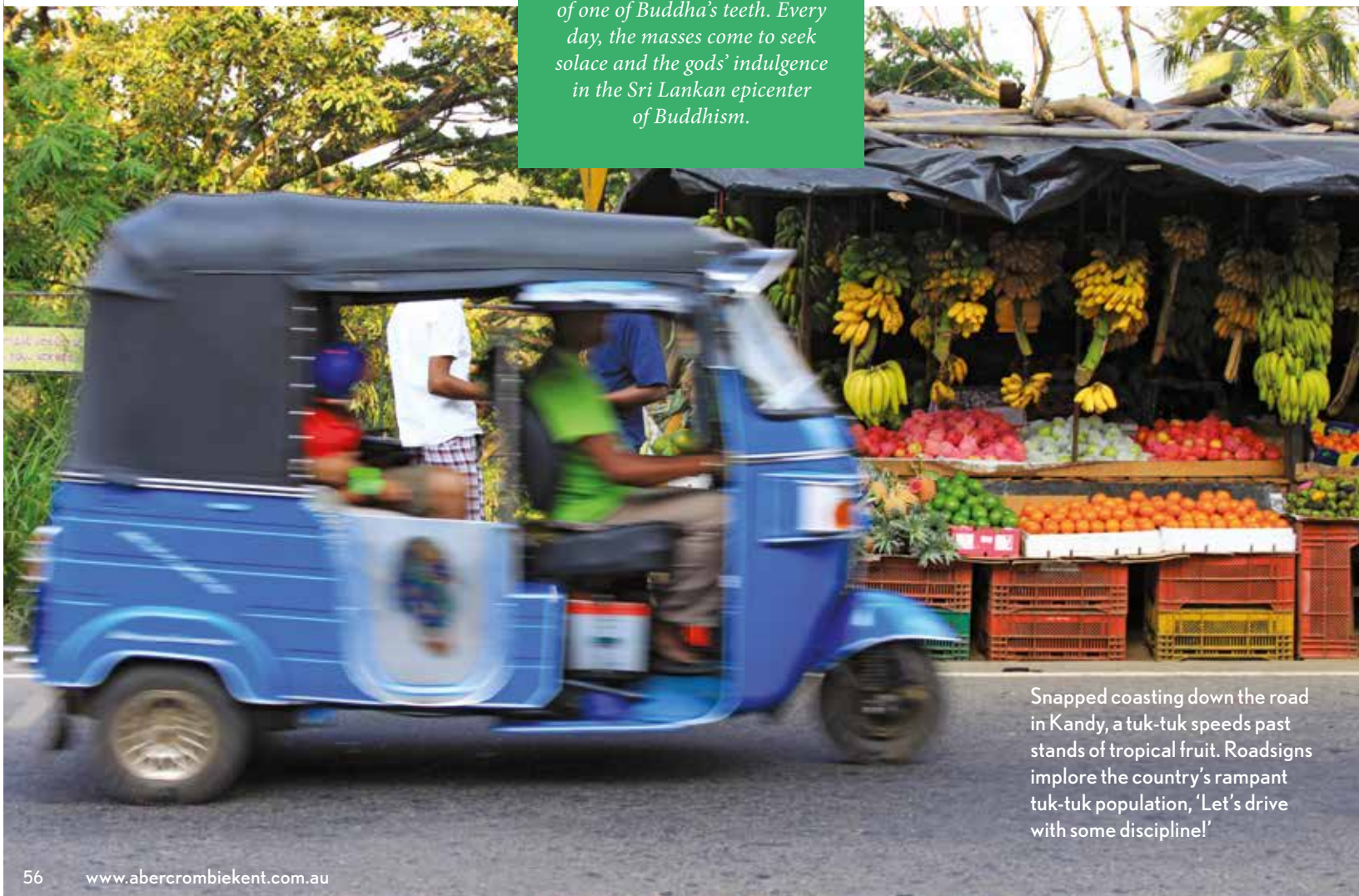
Galle Fort is Sri Lanka's artistic hub. The old town was conquered by the Portuguese, the Dutch and the English, each adding a layer of architecture, language and traditions. Shoppers, expect exceptional offerings, from antiques to sapphires.



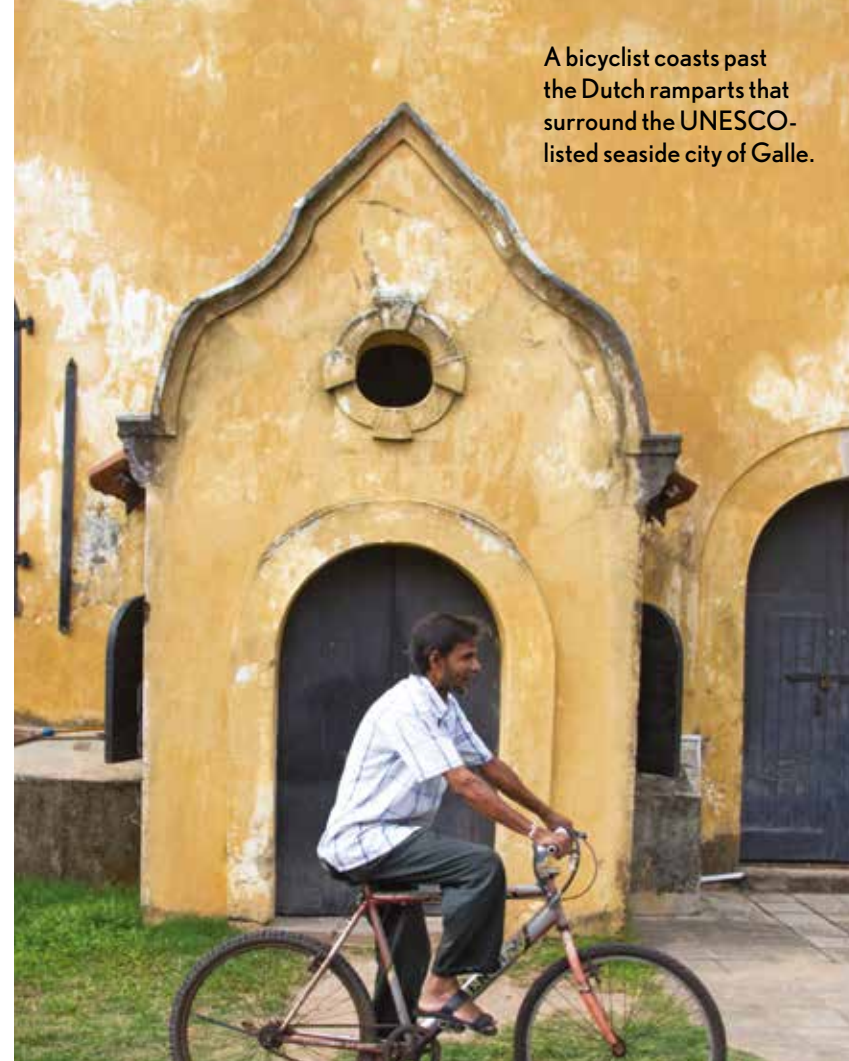
The locals say Helga's Folly is haunted, but the hotel isn't fussed: Gandhi's slept here and Stereophonics have written a song about the eccentric brainchild of its regal owner Helga de Silva.

KANDY

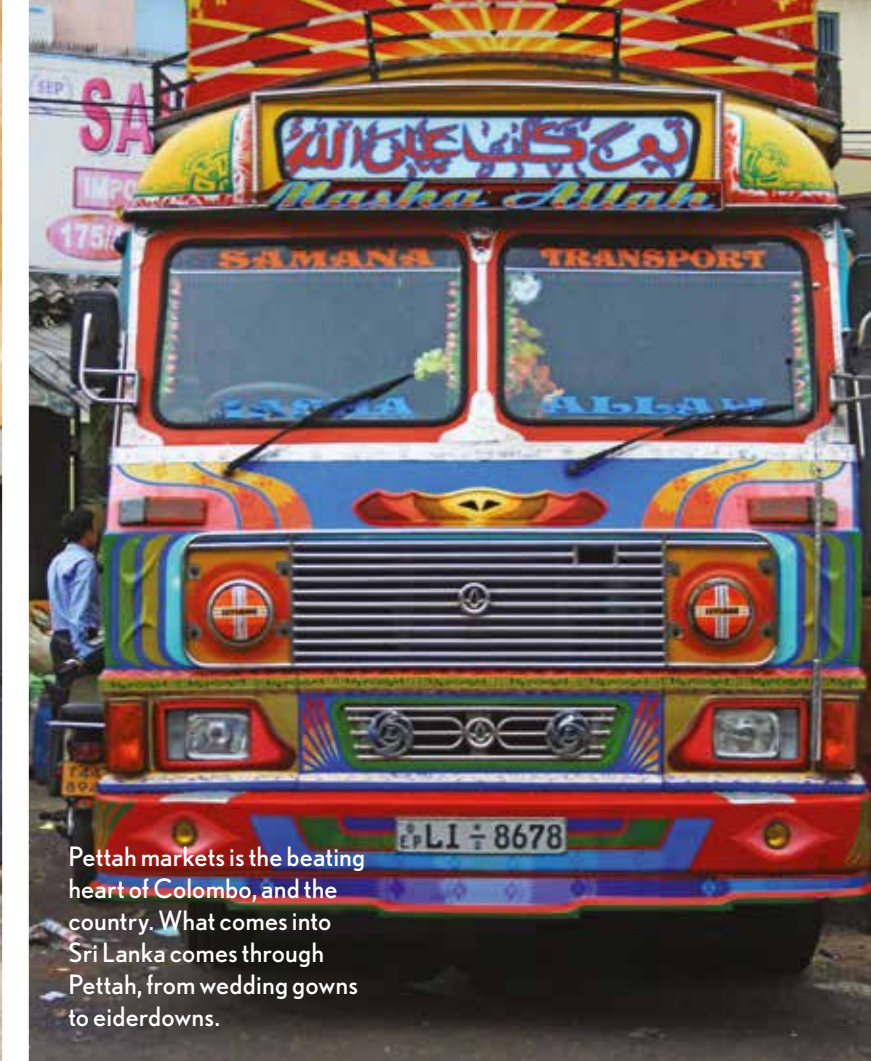
A kingdom in the 15th century, daily life in Kandy revolves around the Temple of the Tooth, said to house the sacred relic of one of Buddha's teeth. Every day, the masses come to seek solace and the gods' indulgence in the Sri Lankan epicenter of Buddhism.



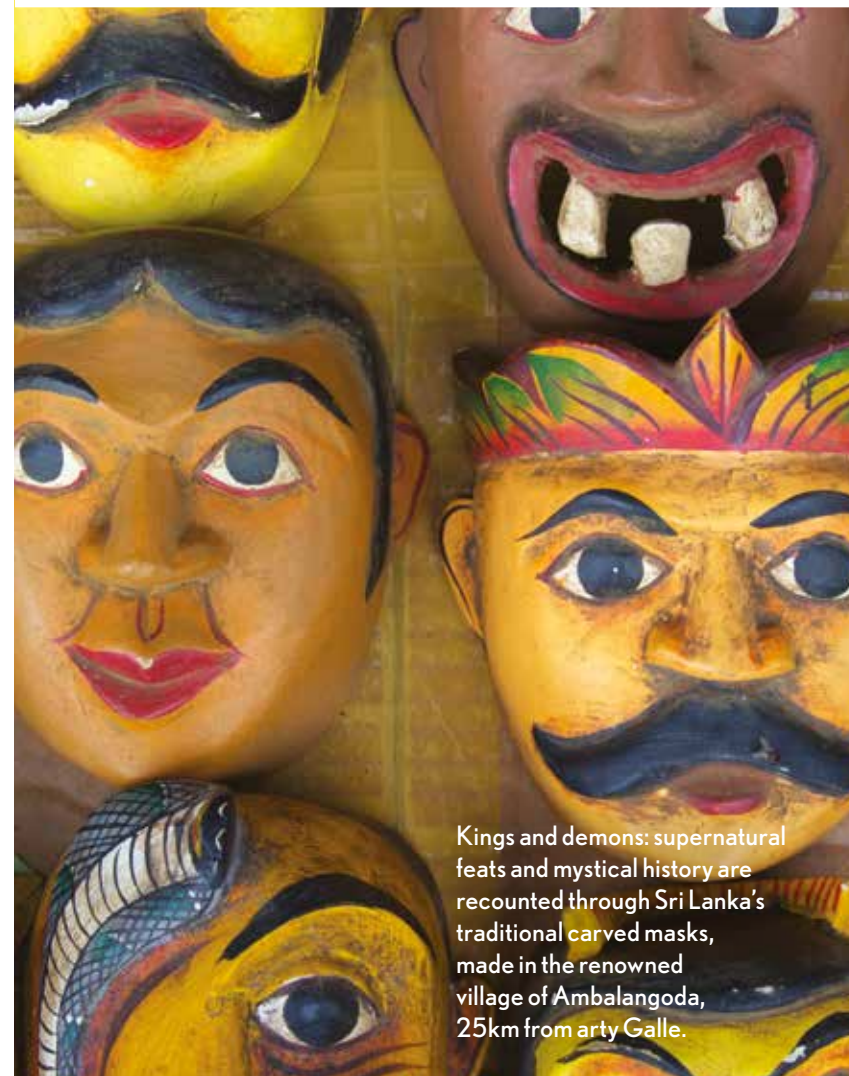
Snapped coasting down the road in Kandy, a tuk-tuk speeds past stands of tropical fruit. Road signs implore the country's rampant tuk-tuk population, 'Let's drive with some discipline!'



A bicyclist coasts past the Dutch ramparts that surround the UNESCO-listed seaside city of Galle.



Pettah markets is the beating heart of Colombo, and the country. What comes into Sri Lanka comes through Pettah, from wedding gowns to eiderdowns.



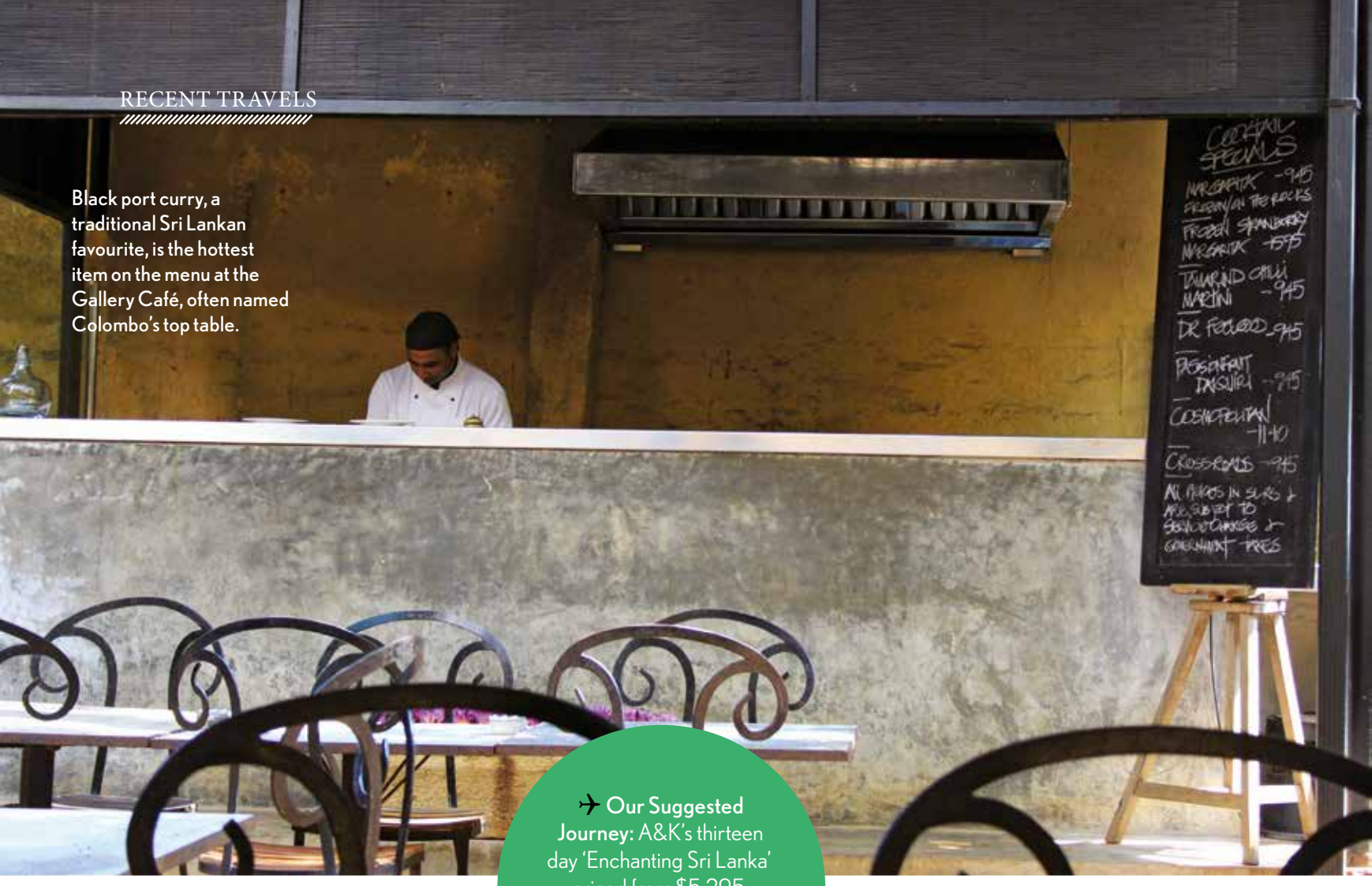
Kings and demons: supernatural feats and mystical history are recounted through Sri Lanka's traditional carved masks, made in the renowned village of Ambalangoda, 25km from arty Galle.



A wooden horse, salvaged from the ruins of a temple, rears up in its new home, the chic Colombo boutique hotel, Tintagel.

RECENT TRAVELS

Black port curry, a traditional Sri Lankan favourite, is the hottest item on the menu at the Gallery Café, often named Colombo's top table.



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i For more information call A&K on 1300 551 541 or your local travel agent.

The air around Kandy's historic Temple of the Tooth is scented by flower stands selling trays of sweet jasmine, which is strewn around the 16th-century temple by devotees.

