THE SOUL OF KERALAM

Nine Lives. Nine Traditions. One Spirit of Hospitality.

*At **Leela Raviz Hotels & Resorts**, we believe destination hospitality is not only about showcasing Keralam, it is about **giving back to the destination that welcomes us.***

*For Kerala Travel Mart 2026, we present **Nine living embodiments of Keralam**, people whose lives represent music, tradition, celebration, craftsmanship, sustainability, care and the timeless spirit of welcoming a traveller.*

They are not merely Custodians of Traditions.

They are Custodians of the Keralam Experience.

Their stories remind us that authentic hospitality cannot be manufactured.

It is lived, shared and passed on.

Kovalam | Ashtamudi | Kadavu | Calicut



NELSON MASTER

In the historic lanes of Mattancherry, **Shri Nelson Xavier, fondly known as Nelson Master,** has kept the music of Keralam alive for nearly six decades.

Introduced to the clarinet by his father at the age of ten, he later mastered the saxophone and became a respected musician, teacher and mentor to generations of local artists. His soulful rendition of Malayalam melodies, particularly "**Pranasakhi Njan,**" is more than music.

It is Mattancherry remembering.

For Leela Raviz Hotels & Resorts, supporting stories like his is part of our commitment to make tourism a bridge between travellers and the communities that give a destination its character.

For a traveller, meeting Nelson Master is an invitation into the cultural soul of Keralam.

"Music isn't just Nelson Master's passion. It is a lifetime of devotion woven into Mattancherry's cultural fabric."

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MITTAYI BASHEER

Some memories have a taste. In Kozhikode, that taste is **Panchara Paal Mittayi.**

For more than five decades, **Shri A. T. Basheer, lovingly known as Mittayi Basheer,** has preserved a sweet tradition inherited from his father, who learnt the craft in the 1930s. Sugar, water and lemon juice become rings, watches, birds and playful shapes through his remarkable skill.

But his greatest creation may be something less tangible, **a childhood memory passed from one generation to another.** For the traveller, meeting Basheer is more than tasting a sweet. It is discovering the people behind Kozhikode's living culture.

At Leela Raviz Hotels & Resorts, we believe destination promotion should create visibility for such local custodians and help their stories travel further.

“A childhood memory survives because Basheerikka refuses to let tradition disappear.”

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TONY C S

Every Onam, Thrissur transforms into a celebration of colour, rhythm and the unmistakable roar of **Pulikali.** Behind every tiger is an artist.

Shri Tony C S of Ollur is among those who keep this extraordinary folk tradition alive. Six to seven hours of painstaking preparation transform a human body into a tiger, ready to dance to the thunder of chenda, thakil and udukku.

Pulikali is more than entertainment. **It is endurance transformed into collective joy.**

For visitors, experiencing Pulikali is experiencing Keralam at its most vibrant, where community, culture and celebration come together.

Leela Raviz Hotels & Resorts believes in promoting Keralam not merely as a destination to visit, but as a culture to experience and celebrate.

“It takes hours of stillness to paint a tiger, but only one beat of the Chenda to bring it roaring to life.”

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PURUSHAN MARARIKKULAM

There was a time when a child's toy came not from a factory, but from a tree, and from the hands of a craftsman.

Shri Purushan Mararikkulam keeps this disappearing tradition alive through **Olapeeppi** and other traditional toys made from coconut leaves.

With little more than a pocketknife and a fresh coconut frond, he creates whistles, birds, animals and pinwheels. Simple. Natural. Ingenious.

He also conducts workshops and participates in cultural programmes, ensuring that this knowledge reaches another generation. For a traveller, an Olapeeppi is more than a souvenir. **It is a piece of Keralam made by hand.**

For Leela Raviz Hotels & Resorts, celebrating such artisans is part of our responsibility to promote sustainable, community-rooted tourism, where local knowledge becomes part of the visitor experience and remains relevant for the future.

“In Purushan's hands, a coconut leaf becomes a toy, a memory and a lesson in sustainable living.”

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SATHYAN EDAKKAD

Hospitality is also about making people feel safe, welcome and connected. **Shri Sathyan C. (Sathyan Edakkad)**, a highly decorated veteran of the Keralam Police, became known for doing exactly that.

His service to tourists earned him several recognitions, including the **Best Tourism Police** honour and the Chief Minister's Police Medal.

But beyond the uniform, Sathyan is a historian, researcher and author who helps travellers understand Keralam's heritage and stories.

Because a great host does not simply tell you **where to go. He tells you why the place matters.**

For Leela Raviz Hotels & Resorts, promoting destinations responsibly means helping travellers discover not just places, but the people, stories and heritage behind them.

“Sathyan Edakkad doesn't merely welcome travellers to Keralam. He helps them understand the Keralam they have come to discover.”

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SUDEVAN & FAMILY

Perhaps no experience captures Keralam's imagination quite like a **houseboat.** But every houseboat has a story.

From **Alumkadavu in Kollam, Shri Sudevan and his family** represent generations of traditional boat-building knowledge that helped transform the kettuvallam from a cargo vessel into one of Keralam's most iconic tourism experiences.

Traditional craftsmanship met modern hospitality. Wood, coir, bamboo and generations of knowledge were adapted to create floating homes for travellers, without losing the soul of the original vessel. What was once a cargo boat became a destination experience.

What was once a declining craft found a new purpose. This is the kind of destination evolution **Leela Raviz Hotels & Resorts believes in, where tourism creates relevance for traditional knowledge, communities and local livelihoods.**

“Sudevan did not merely build a boat. He helped transform Keralam's traditional wisdom into one of the world's most distinctive tourism experiences.”

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AARAMAM

At **The Leela Raviz Kovalam**, hospitality begins long before a meal reaches the table.

Aaramam, the resort's organic garden, connects the guest experience with Keralam's soil, growing vegetables, herbs and greens with care and respect for nature. Here, the journey **from soil to kitchen to table** becomes part of the story.

The garden offers travellers something increasingly valuable: **the opportunity to see where food begins and understand the importance of seasonality, freshness and responsible cultivation.**

Aaramam reflects Leela Raviz Hotels & Resorts' belief that luxury hospitality must also respect the environment that makes the destination special. **Because promoting Keralam also means protecting the land that nourishes it.**

“Aaramam is where the soil of Keralam becomes part of the experience of Keralam.”

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THAZHAVA

In **Thazhava, Kollam**, the humble screw pine has given an entire community its identity.

For generations, local artisans, traditionally women, have transformed its leaves into **Thazhappaya,** intricate mats woven entirely by hand. The process is patient and deeply connected to nature: harvesting, preparing, drying, colouring and weaving each leaf.

Today, this traditional craft has found new expressions in beach mats, cushions, hats, bags and lifestyle products. For the traveller, discovering Thazhava is not simply shopping. **It is meeting the hands behind the craft.**

At Leela Raviz Hotels & Resorts, we see destination promotion as an opportunity to **connect travellers with local communities, encourage appreciation for indigenous craftsmanship and create greater visibility for traditions that deserve to survive.**

“In Thazhava, the leaves of Keralam become more than a mat. They become a story woven by hand.”

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SABU NARAYANAN ASHARI

In the backwaters of Keralam, some traditions are not simply remembered, they are still being **built by hand.**

Kozhimukku Sabu Narayanan Ashari, renowned master craftsman and architect of traditional **Chundan Vallams,** belongs to a legendary family of Keralam boat builders. He carries forward the legacy of his father, the iconic **Kozhimukku Narayanan Asari.**

For a traveller, witnessing a Chundan Vallam is to experience Keralam in motion: rhythm, teamwork, craftsmanship and community coming together on the water.

For Leela Raviz Hotels & Resorts, celebrating Sabu Narayanan's story is part of a larger commitment, to take travellers beyond the postcard Keralam and connect them with the people, skills and living traditions that make the destination unique.

"He does not merely build snake boats. He keeps alive the hands, knowledge and spirit that make Keralam's waters come alive."

Leela Raviz

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NINE STORIES. ONE KERALAM.

Nine people.
Nine traditions.
Nine different corners of Keralam.

Yet they share one profound idea:
They welcome the world by sharing a part of themselves.

This is the Keralam that cannot be built overnight.
It cannot be replicated through architecture.
It cannot be manufactured as a tourism product.

It lives in people, memory, craftsmanship, generosity, community and pride of place.

And that is where ***The Leela Raviz Hotels & Resorts*** *sees its responsibility, not simply to promote Keralam, but to connect travellers with Keralam, celebrate its people, support its living traditions and encourage tourism that gives back to the destination.*

Because when we promote Keralam, we must also protect what makes Keralam worth discovering.

REAL KERALAM HOSPITALITY

Come as a Visitor. Leave with a Memory!

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