A Chat With Jermaine Jackson



We all know who he is, Jermaine Jackson, needs no introduction. He shot to fame as one of the lead singers of the Jackson Five and he is still very much a part of the music industry. Having flown into Sri Lanka on SriLankan Airlines on a visit, he had much praise about the Airline and Sri Lanka.

By Udeshi Amarasinghe
Photography Menaka Aravinda

You flew into Sri Lanka on SriLankan Airlines. What was your experience flying with our national carrier and what are your thoughts on the services and facilities?
My experience flying with Sri Lankan Airlines was a wonderful one. I had just flown from China to Thailand where I boarded SriLankan Airlines and I thought yes! The reason is because I had been flying a lot of dated airplanes. The whole fleet of the airline on which I flew, from China to Thailand was dated. But, SriLankan Airlines was just incredible; great service, beautiful stewardesses with their smiles who were amazing and the airplane itself was very comfortable. It made me so joyful inside because I'd flown many airlines, this one stood out the most. I felt that SriLankan Airlines was right up there on par with Emirates and other international airlines.

I'm very happy to have met Nishantha Wickremasinghe, Chairman of SriLankan Airlines. He is a wonderful human being and he has very good plans for the future.

Will you be flying back on SriLankan as well?
Yes that is my plan.

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What are your impressions of Sri Lanka?
My impression of Sri Lanka is very good, because the people are very nice and very warm. We have many friends from Sri Lanka that live in California. This is my first trip here, but it is definitely not my last. I am here with my wife, Halima.

I love a place where you can come and feel welcome and the people are sincere. You know that the welcome here is very sincere and real. During my entire stay everyone has been hospitable and caring.

As you know it has been four years since the end of conflict in Sri Lanka. In your opinion what does Sri Lanka have to offer to the world?
Sri Lanka has a lot to offer, because it is a place where you feel like you are cared for. Beautiful beaches and places along with smiles on the faces of people who really want to give their service at a high standard.

There is so much economic growth in Sri Lanka. This is because of President Mahinda Rajapaksa, who is doing a wonderful job. He has a positive attitude and a vision, which is important to take a country that has been through a war to the next level. It takes a vision and the determination of the people and I see this as an opportunity. I would love to be a part of that vision and to be an addition to the success of Sri Lanka.

Can you tell us about your visit to Sri Lanka?
We are looking at some property, because we are interested in entering the hospitality business in Sri Lanka. I am very excited about this because I love the sunshine. This is a place of beautiful palm trees, greenery and sunshine. Tourism is definitely going to be booming due to the way the country is developing.

I came here also to look at opportunities of doing entertainment and music. We have looked at a couple of venues for concerts and we have selected CR & FC. It is very feasible for us to bring my brothers here and for The Jacksons to perform in Sri Lanka.

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All of us knew about you, but if you could tell us a little bit about yourself?
I am the fourth child of the Jackson family. There are six of us (brothers and sisters) in the family. I consider myself as the caretaker of the family and I am most concerned about keeping our family's legacy very strong in an integral way, so we can let the world know who we are as human beings. Michael, I and all my brothers are very close. It was Michael and I who did everything during the Jackson Five days

and I’m sure everyone remembers the songs that they have heard and grown up with. We were the two lead singers and Jackie, Marlon, Tito and Randy also sang lead vocals in the group. Then from that point my sister Janet too came up in the music industry. She started singing and she became a mega success. Then there is La Toya and Rebbie.

Our whole family has been around music all our lives. We were raised like any other family to respect our mother and father, to love each other, to really stick together as a family. My father recognised that we had musical talent at a very young age and he got behind us and started supporting us in our music. We got our first big break with Berry Gordy in Motown Records – who happens to be my ex-father-in-law because I married his daughter in 1973 – and from that point on we had God’s blessings to keep going. And it was the Jackson Five that gave Michael the platform to become what he became.

What are your plans in relation to music, can we expect something new?
My brothers and I have started on some new music tracks in the studio. I am going to do a solo project as well. Our plan is to keep the message in our music, to educate and enlighten people through our music. That has been our message since day one to give back to the people.

We do a lot of charity work and Michael is considered as the number one humanitarian in the world. We feel that God has blessed us and in order to receive those blessings, we have to give back to society.

My wife and I were in Bangladesh doing a lot of charity work and this is what we do, on an on going basis.

Will you be visiting Sri Lanka more often?
Yes. I will be coming back as soon as my concerts are over.

I am very happy that I got a chance to come to Sri Lanka. I wish I could stay longer. The reason why I have to go back is because I have a concert in Canada.

At some point I would love to be involved with the growth of Sri Lanka and what is being done here because I think it is fantastic. Sri Lanka is situated in a great location




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