

# The Cricket Club Café

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The Cricket Club Café, a new concept in the local hospitality and restaurant trade, has been drawing crowds since its opening in August 1996. A Board of Investment (BOI) venture, the Cricket Club Cafe is owned and operated by James Wright, an Australian with extensive experience in the restaurant trade. His earlier responsibilities included the planning, design and launch of restaurants and food courts at the Melbourne Airport.

One of the restaurants at the airport was an “Olympians Club” dedicated entirely to the 1956 Olympic Games held in Australia. This concept of restaurants, cafes and pubs revolving around a sport or a specific sporting event are common in the West, and the BOI invited Wright to introduce this concept to the Sri Lankan consumer. “It didn’t take much time or thought to decide on the sporting theme! Since I had a personal collection of Cricket memorabilia, a Cricket Club it had to be”, said Wright.

The Cricket Club Cafe is comfortable and airy and is packed to the brim with cricketing memorabilia. No one who is even remotely interested in the game could remain indifferent to the dozens of autographed souvenirs, newspaper articles and photographs which line the walls, and every nook and cranny of the Cafe. A world of cricketing history is contained in the autographed bats, gloves, pads, jerseys, and of course, those inimitable red leather balls. There’s a large dining area, a bar section dedicated to Sir Don Bradman named the Bradman Bar, and a take-away counter.

As can be expected, the Bradman Bar is filled with autographed photographs, newspaper articles and memorabilia of this great and inspiring cricketing hero. The menu too, reads like a concoction of cricketing personalities. You can begin with Murali’s Mulligatawny, and move on to Greig’s Garden Salad or a Border Burger, and there’s also Gooch’s Fish ‘n Chips and Mushtaq’s Matriciana to try out for starters! The prices are very competitive, and their service is quick and efficient, making the Café an ideal place for a fast lunch or snack.

At a time when the investment climate in the country is far from stable, or even predictable, and many in the restaurant trade having to fold up and admit defeat, it is surprising to see a foreign national venturing to introduce new concepts to the trade. “It certainly took longer than we expected to get everything going, but the

investment has been worth it. We certainly have no regrets about investing in Sri Lanka”, said Wright.

Indeed, the Cricket Club Café has attracted both the cricket lovers who find it impossible to keep away for too long, and also others who simply appreciate a comfortable, spacious restaurant where the quality of cuisine and service is above reproach. An ideal place also for family dining and entertaining visitors, the cricket matches on the TV screens spread out through the dining area and the many sporting highlights found on the walls will keep you fascinated right through your visit. [REDACTED]