



Soul Searching

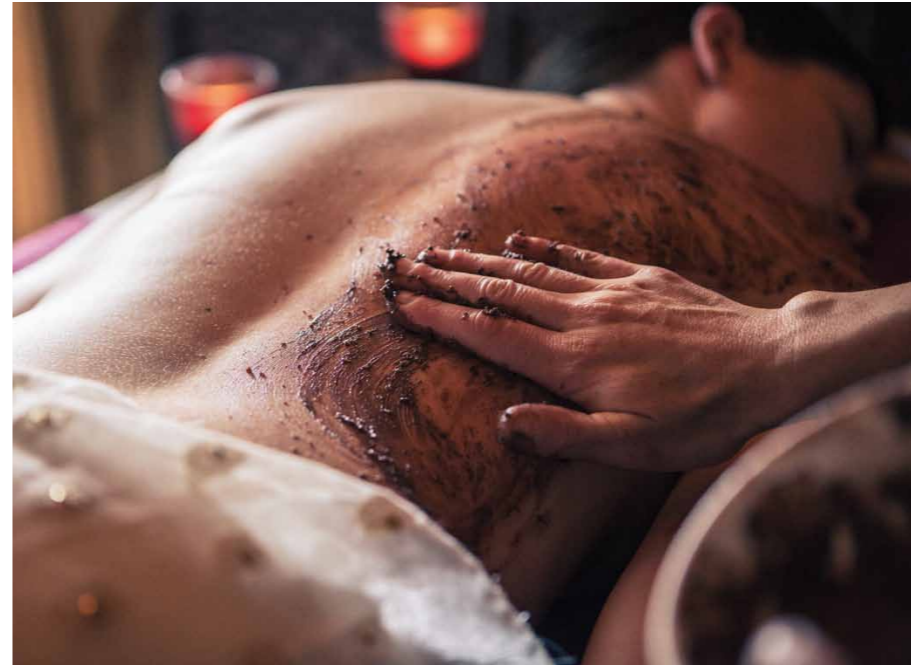
Soul Sanctuaries is a new luxury wellness travel company specialising in self-healing, yoga, meditation and detox and fitness retreats on private islands, vintage sailing yachts and luxury tented camps across Asia. The company is also set to offer extended “Soul Retreats,” such as the transformational “Self Healing Retreat” with yoga and meditation, which will take place from September 15 to 21 on a private island off Java in Indonesia, reachable via a British vintage sailing yacht. Those interested in Buddhism won’t want to miss the June retreat at the world’s largest Buddhist monument, Borobudur, where meditation classes will be held with a revered Bhutanese Rinpoche, one of the greatest living teachers of Buddhism alive today.

soul-sanctuaries.com

Brazilian Beauty

The Botanique Hotel & Spa in Brazil’s Campos do Jordão region, amid the Mantiqueira mountain range in the Atlantic Rainforest, has launched the country’s first fully Brazilian spa, dedicated to native Indian healing and Afro-Brazilian relaxation rituals. Set over two levels, the spa comes with wet and dry saunas, an indoor pool, fitness pavilion and an isotonic pool, surrounded by a swimmable lake and a resting area overlooking a forested valley. Book a wet treatment room and you’ll also have access to a flotation pool, a Co2 bath, a milk bath and a thermal bath. Signature treatments include the “Terra Brasilis” massage, inspired by Native Americans and incorporating movements that emulate the grip of a puma.

botanique.com.br



Thank the Lord!

On Australia’s Lord Howe Island, Arajilla Retreat has relaunched the wellness program at its Ayurvedic Day Spa, which means a new range of holistic treatments to enjoy within the spa’s yurt – yes, yurt! Yoga and extended wellness programs are complemented by Ayurvedic treatments including Shirodhara, a therapeutic and rejuvenating ritual using medicated oil to correct imbalances, and beauty rituals using Ayurda Ayurvedic skincare products, sourced from the Himalayan mountains and blessed before shipment.

arajilla.com.au



The Midas Touch

The newest outlet from Hong Kong’s luxury day spa operator Sense of Touch sits in Tseung Kwan O, between Kowloon and Clearwater Bay, and offers seven Balinese-styled pavilions and a spacious relaxation room. The spa’s series of signature rituals take inspiration from Southeast Asia: the “After Touchdown” is ideal for frequent travellers and begins with a bath infused with Dead Sea salts and cydonia clay, followed by a stress-relieving massage to reset the body clock. The facility uses Elemis products in beauty rituals such as the “Revitalizing Glow,” involving a lime-and-ginger scrub, Elemis anti-aging facial and warm basalt stone massage.

senseoftouch.com.hk

Oh, Okura

One of Bangkok’s newest hotels, Okura Prestige Bangkok, is also home to one of the city’s newest spas. The Okura Spa takes much of its inspiration from its Japanese owners, with treatments including acupuncture and *ta-ke* massage – a ritual that sees heated rods of bamboo rolled across pressure points to relieve tension – and the “Okura Getaway,” where amethyst stones are placed on chakras to balance physical, mental and emotional energy. Five signature scents, meanwhile, are infused with everything from white tea to sandalwood, jasmine and lavender.

okurabangkok.com



Take Two

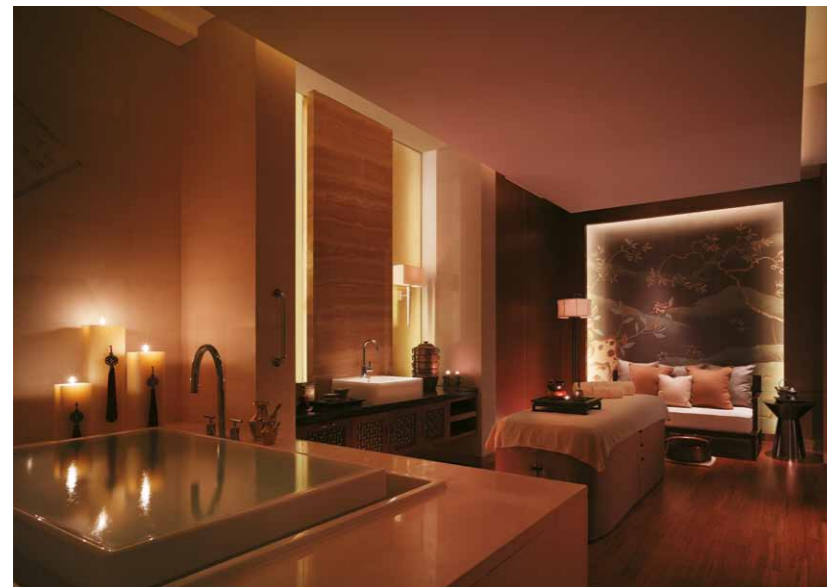
FINDING SHANGRI-LA IN BEIJING AND HONG KONG.

By Natasha Dragun

BEIJING Chi, The Spa

One of the newest spas to open under the Chi brand – signature to Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts – the spacious spa at the China World Summit Wing, Beijing hotel is like a Himalayan oasis. Guests are whisked to the facility on the 77th floor of the tower, the tallest building in the Chinese capital, in a matter of seconds before being offered a window-side perch to gaze down on the snarling traffic below while sipping mint tea from fine jade bowls. The spa suites are among the largest we’ve come across, replete with a private changing room – where wardrobes are stocked with oh-so-soft chenille bathrobes and slippers – plus shower and soaking tub. All rituals begin with a foot bath and many take their inspiration from China: the “Chi Balance” treatment, for example, involves acupuncture to stimulate yang and relaxing massage to calm yin; the *tuina* channels Chinese pressure-point massage; and the goji berry body scrub incorporates local berries (high in antioxidants) plus red rice and coconut milk. We opt for the “Jade Stone Massage,” an indulgent 90-minute treatment that incorporates smooth jade stones, some warm, some cool, used in long strokes and pressure-point techniques. If time is not an issue, book one of the half-day journeys such as the “Ultimate Indulgence,” featuring an aroma bath, milk-and-honey wrap, chi-balance massage and oxygenating facial.

shangri-la.com



HONG KONG Island Shangri-La Spa

While it’s not a Chi, the spa at the Island Shangri-La in Hong Kong is impeccably fitted out with steam rooms, a jacuzzi, experience showers, and a changing room offering every amenity under the sun. Arrive a couple of hours before your treatment to make the most of the water facilities, not to mention the fitness centre and complimentary guest yoga classes. The spa suites are neat and minimal and come with niceties including a heated massage table – a welcome addition during Hong Kong’s chilly winter months. Half a dozen massage options range from deep tissue to foot reflexology and hot stone, alongside body wraps and facials (the “Crystal Caviar Soothing Facial” is pure indulgence). We suggest booking one of the 150-minute packages that incorporate all three components: the “Detoxifying Body Recharge” ritual, for example, begins with a luscious oxygen clarifying facial before moving on to an aromatherapy massage and ending with an algae body wrap – while you’re cocooned in heated blankets you’ll be treated to a scalp massage and face mask. Pure bliss.

shangri-la.com

Krip Rojanastien, CEO of Chiva-Som, Thailand



Chiva-Som is one of Thailand’s, indeed the world’s, top wellness retreats.

Why Hua Hin?

Hua Hin is a town with strong historical significance, from both a socio-economic and tourist perspective. Founded by King Rama the VII, the birth of Hua Hin also coincided with the establishment of the main rail line linking Bangkok with the South of the country. King Rama the VII felt a particular fondness for the area and directed by royal decree the construction of a royal residence named Klai Kang Won (in English, “Far From Worries”). Subsequent to the establishment of the royal residence, the elite of Bangkok society began flocking to Hua Hin, at first to stay in hotels and later in private bungalows they built along the beach.

Over the years, Hua Hin has displayed a particularly balanced approach toward tourism development, allowing visitors to experience classic old-world atmosphere, pristine beaches and a distinctly temperate year-round, tropical climate. Only two and a half hours by car or around 20 minutes via private charter flight from Bangkok, Chiva-Som’s location in Hua Hin affords a level of convenience and accessibility for guests. It is easy to reach and yet

private enough to make you feel like coming back to your second home. At Chiva-Som guests can enjoy a wellness lifestyle as well as the tropical sun and sea. Apart from this, there are other local attractions and activities, such as world-class golf courses, a Thai vineyard, the elephant village, the floating markets, Pah La-Oo Waterfall and the stunning scenery on Hin Lek Fai Hill.

With so many wellness retreats in the area now, how does Chiva-Som stand out?

Unlike others that focus on specific components of wellness, Chiva-Som offers a range of services comprising six modalities including spa, holistic, physiotherapy, fitness, nutrition, and aesthetic rejuvenation in order to meet guests’ needs and to help them achieve their goals of each visit. We use an integrative approach to customise each guest’s wellness program.

What do most people want to get out of a stay at Chiva-Som?

Guests who visit Chiva-Som mainly come with personal goals that they would like ranging from relaxing and recharging to rejuvenating, de-stressing, weight management, or exploring wellness services for the first time. At the end of

the stay, they often feel satisfied with what they’ve achieved and look forward to accomplishing more. On top of that they look for the sense of belonging to a community of like-minded individuals.

Plans to expand the Chiva-Som brand?

We are open to considering the right partners and locations. But we do not compromise our standards and integrity. To us the brand comes before the dollar.

Aside from Chiva-Som, where do you go when you need time out?

Generally I find myself on the jogging track, the badminton court, in the music studio, or the library pursuing my hobbies of exercise, rock music and reading.

chivasom.com