



At the heart of Siam Kempinski Hotel Bangkok lies a refreshing sight that transports your mind from the busy streets of Bangkok to a tranquil oasis with lush greenery and three saltwater pools. — Photos: Siam Kempinski Hotel Bangkok

Rest  Relax

'Spa' no expenses

The Siam Kempinski has a restorative and relaxing health and beauty facility to pamper guests.

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I COULD go on and on about the tranquil cerulean blue oasis at the heart of this luxury hotel framed by sky-high ceilings and pillars wrapped in marble. Or of luxury at first sight at a lobby with spiralling staircases and ornate brass lamp fixtures that mirror traditional Thai dancers' fingernails.

But the thing that struck me the most about the Siam Kempinski Hotel Bangkok was the impeccable service, which I was pampered with during my stay.

You know that uncomfortable and uneasy feeling you get sometimes entering a place in which you become increasingly aware of people you don't know hovering over you with over-attentiveness. Thankfully, it is a feeling I scarcely, if ever, felt here thanks to the intuitive service of visibly experienced staff.

The warmth in service was delivered with an elegance that is a Kempinski signature. A well-honed ability to fuse long-standing cultural traditions with fine European standards – a trademark since 1897.

Setting down my luggage in the room, I now had a mission to find out what makes Siam Kempinski's luxury spa so memorable. Hint: it's the seasonal massages.

As I set foot on the seventh floor, I discovered a space perfumed with customised scents that include a hint of lemongrass as a nod to the country that hosts the property. While lotus flower motifs can be

seen around the room and hotel, they are also an artistic reminder of the hotel's association with royal ancestry. As I learnt later, the hotel was built on part of the grounds on which the Sra Pathum Palace or Lotus Pond Palace used to stand.

Ushered into the Relaxation Room with chaise lounges, I thought it was wonderfully ironic to be brought to a room to unwind; the before and after treatments are specifically tailored to do just that.

A set of juices and colourful macarons were brought in. With it came a questionnaire and a short consultation process. A therapist shelves out their "menu" of treatments inspired by the European cycle of seasons. They then assess the season best suited to balance your body and mood, and to treat problem areas.

I picked the summer massage because of its interesting use of cool stones as opposed to the all too common hot stone massage. For a later session I opted for the contrasting winter massage for its energising deep tissue massage.

Everything from the strength of pressure applied, to the room temperature and mood music are tuned to your fancy. A heated massage bed and an en-suite shower are added considerations.

I was especially pleased by the thoughtfulness of the therapists who at all times paid special care to keep me comfortably covered where necessary. At first I was quite sceptical about the summer treatment. I anticipated being blitzed with ice-cold stones like a hailstorm.



An artist's impression of 8 Conlay's branded residences in two landmark tower blocks linked by two sky bridges and complemented by the Kempinski five-star hotel. — KSK Land

Instead the therapist used cool therapeutic oils made from natural botanical and herbal ingredients to help the body get accustomed to the temperature before rolling the cool stones over. It ended with cool rose quartz stones being used for light massage on the face. Not what I had expected at all, but it left me completely refreshed.

The winter massage was a different experience entirely – with warm butter balm massaged and wrapped around my feet. Although with both treatments the adept fingers, palms and forearms of the therapist pinpointed just the right spots, the winter massage had an added pressure that left me melting into bed.

As for the other seasons – the detoxifying spring massage works on the lymphatic system with a dry body-brushing technique. And the autumn emphasises an aromatherapy massage that includes work on cranial pressure points for complete relaxation. All the sessions last 90 minutes.

Despite being in the centre of the entertainment and shopping district in a city renowned for its attractions (or distractions!), I was perfectly content spending all my time not moving a muscle.

But due to the copious amounts of food available to me and fellow media friends, we had to turn to the immaculate saunas, gym facili-

ties and three saltwater pools at the hotel to ease our full bellies (and mostly guilty conscience).

Checking in and out was a breeze, facilitated by hotel ambassadors in striking red dresses. You can't miss them. They are simply known as the "Ladies in Red" and they can speak at least three languages.

But at the end of the trip, checking out was the last thing on my mind.

However you won't need to head to Bangkok in the future to have the pleasure of such an experience. Come 2020, Kempinski will have a property in Kuala Lumpur. The hotel will be part of KSK Land's foray into the property arena with its maiden project, 8 Conlay.

What makes the luxury mixed-development stand out are its designer landscape, architecture and interior decoration. All the while boasting a new way of living, with Kempinski's seamless service standards for the residences.

"It is the golden thread of service going throughout the development, but separate behind-the-scenes team for the residences," said Kempinski South-East Asia Operations senior vice-president Samir Wilderman.

"The residents will have the services of the hotel, ala-carte, even though they are not staying at the



The lobby of the Siam Kempinski is impressive, with its sky-high ceilings, vast open space and an intricate design blending European and Thai aesthetics.



Using purely natural ingredients from Harnn therapeutic oils, each scent has a specific purpose, be it for relaxation or to invigorate the senses.



In expert hands: The masseuse has at least 10 years' experience and has also undergone refined training provided at Kempinski The Spa.

hotel," he said, referring to the personalised service at the fully integrated development.

There will be five-star facilities, as well as services like concierge, housekeeping, even on-demand dry-cleaning, catering and babysitting.

KSK Land managing director Joanne Kua pointed out that 8 Conlay is designed with balance in mind – with the retail component being the liveliest part – as they are trying to push the boundary a bit. She added that it was redefining luxury as liveable architecture that will be always contemporary.

The two residential towers represent the Chinese characters for the number eight. It is balanced by a third, which will house Kempinski Hotel, tailored to the mood KL exudes, to make it feel like it is still part and parcel of the city.

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