



Spa Catcher



Spa from Heaven

Review by Jeerawan Duangnam

The just-opened Devarana Spa in the resort town of Hua Hin reveals a striking design that owes a debt to history and Buddhist fables.

The world is fast filling up with spas, but it is always exciting to find one which boasts something unique and not relying on tried and tested formula, especially in design terms.

Devarana's conceptual design was undertaken by one of Thailand's renowned female writers, Ploy Chariyaves. Ploy's initial inspiration came from the name of the hotel in which the Day Spa is based. *Dusit* translates as 'heaven,' and the writer-designer began to study ancient Thai literature which narrated stories about heaven.

Ploy based the spa's garden concept from an ancient piece named *Tribhumphraruang* by Phraya Lithai. Devarana (pronounced Te-wa-run) is derived from Thai Sanskrit, meaning, 'garden in heaven,' and conjures an image of lush gardens surrounded by ponds with a heavenly scent and a nurturing environment.

In 'heaven,' the gardens are said to glimmer with silver and gold, and are filled with natural stones and gems. The real thing is not quite as utopian but *is* exceptionally well conceived, intricately manicured, and restful on the eyes. The element of water has always held an important status in Thai symbolism, and the lotus flower is used here in the meditative pond to convey a sense of spirit and serenity.

Tribhumphraruang was based on the Sukhothai period in Thai history, and Ploy focused on the minimalism of that era in her design, but modernised the concept in a funky way it to create an effective example of contemporary Thai décor. In fact, at first glance, Devarana appears like a large, postmodern loft space, with cement-colour paint on the wall, adorned sporadically with luxurious strips of light-reflecting silver.

Unlike the other spas in Hua Hin, which are built in a Balinese style, Devarana's muted, natural colour, textures and lighting creates a very different kind of harmony; very Thai, but completely unique, creating a soothing, stress-relieving environment. As with the décor, the massage treatments that can be enjoyed here hark from age-old disciplines, with natural Thai herbs utilised for heavenly body scrubs. 🧘



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