



## Give Me Four

By Jeerawan Duangnam

**T**he world it seems is on speed, hurtling at breakneck pace through the morass of time and human debris, towards a destination yet to be established and goals yet to be set. No one has the time to stand and stare at 'a host of golden daffodils' let alone read Wordsworth's paean to the humble bloom. Saving time is what it's all about as gadgets packed with options heroically take up cudgels in a losing battle... given this scenario, could the spa advocating 'taking time off' escape? Not likely! Now even 'healing' can be delivered in a hurry by simply doubling the number of hands at work... in a technique referred to rather simplistically as the 'four-hand massage', a routine that perfectly serves today's hectic lifestyle.

As the name suggests, the massage involves two therapists who synchronise every stroke to deliver in half the time. After trying the four-hand massage a few times, I have learnt that there are certain prerequisites: the therapists should ideally be the same height and weight for the best results. Like other forms of massage the aim

is to promote healing by increasing blood circulation and releasing muscle tension, but as a quickie!

Four hands or two? Linger or get it over and done with? In both cases the process is just as enjoyable and if the therapists get it right, four can never be a crowd. It depends on what you are looking for: a four-hand massage gives almost the same benefit as a classic massage, but in less time because of the additional hands. The synchronising can be a remarkable experience, truly enjoyable as the therapists turn the massage into a ballet of movements with your body serving as the performance arena. The emphasis is mainly on the back and shoulders using a combination of Swedish massage, sports massage and Royal Thai massage to relieve pain. Though the pleasure doubles, the price is generally higher than other classic massages: additional manpower and complicated massage training sessions.

To enjoy this synchronised performance, go with the flow and don't forget to tip double.



## The Bangkok Oasis Spa

Escaping the chaos that is Bangkok, The Bangkok Oasis spa ([www.bangkokoasis.com](http://www.bangkokoasis.com)) lies in the embrace of a fairly big green space and in the shade of a giant tree. Step into the reception area within the white bungalow and warmth envelops like an old friend. Cosy. Comfortable. Warm tea is served while I select from what the Oasis Spa menu can offer; enough options to spend the whole day here if you mix and match wisely.

The treatment rooms are in the newly built building nearby. The interior is tropical-modern, relaxing yet stylish. The therapists ushered me to the treatment room just steps away from the reception area. The room is big enough for two massage tables and a sofa; a big glass window revealed the outdoor Jacuzzi that is decorated with tropical flora.

The **Hair Spa Treatment** (60 minutes, USD45) was the appetiser of the day to set the mood. Rich avocado oil was slowly poured on and followed by a gentle head massage which made the hour-long massage seem shorter than expected. After a quick shower under the tree I was more than ready for the main course, the **Oasis Four Hands Massage** (60 minutes, USD63), the signature massage here. The aromatic oil warmed in the hands of the therapists was gently applied to my back; stroke matched by stroke, weight matched by weight... almost feeling like the same pair of hands.

On a different note the towel changing skills at Oasis Spa deserve a mention, it was quick and amazing. I barely needed to move except to turn over. The '60-minute session' is a good beginning for the four-hand virgin but if the session isn't long enough to finish off, you will be looking for a longer session.



## The Banyan Tree Spa Bangkok

**T**ruly an ideal escape for day spa-ers. The newly renovated Banyan Tree Spa ([www.banyantreespa.com](http://www.banyantreespa.com)) features a total of 16 treatment rooms on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> floors. Designed by Architrave Design and Planning Pte Ltd, the three new Grand Spa Suites reflect Asian rejuvenation and are well equipped. The treatment rooms located on the 19<sup>th</sup> floor are peaceful. An installation of bamboo art greets the guests. The first timer here should experience the signature Royal Banyan but in my case, **Harmony Banyan** (3hours, USD270) was the choice.

The harmony started right when the therapists gave me an apple and green tea foot-bath followed by a turmeric and honey cleanser applied to soothe the skin: rich unlike the rough scrubs normally used. Your skin actually feels smooth and flawless afterwards. Then it was time for the harmony massage by two therapists. The massage brings about a harmonious sense of wellbeing from each side of the body and from the top to bottom to ensure total relaxation. The massage session is finished off with a head and foot massage. Then the therapists ran an apple and green tea bath in a jacuzzi and left me refreshments to make sure that I enjoyed every aspect of the harmony they had tried to create.

## Sivara Spa, Amari Watergate Hotel & Spa

When it comes to massage, Sivara Spa at the Amari Watergate Hotel & Spa ([www.sivaraspa.com](http://www.sivaraspa.com)) is one of the best venues in town for a number of reasons, chiefly its prime location and the well-trained hands. The atmosphere is friendly, stylish yet private. Ginger tea is served on arrival while you chit-chat with the therapist about the pros and cons of lavender oil over ylang ylang oil.

Though Sivara Bangkok has been servicing both Bangkok and non-Bangkok residents for quite sometime now, new treatments have added to serve today's needs. **Synchronised Massage** (60 minutes, USD85) a.k.a the four-hand massage was recently introduced and aims to reduce stress, and balance loaded schedules with a healthy outlook. Before discovering the pleasure of the four-hand massage, it's recommended to have a **Milk Body Scrub** (30 minutes, USD40), a blend of milk protein and vitamin E enriched with amino acids that are a component of any kind of cells. Marine collagen helps to encourage healthier, softer and smoother skin. Stroke after stroke, and an hour of synchronised massage will loosen tense muscles. The well-trained therapists gave a flawless massage, so good that I wanted to peek and learn the trick of those synchronised hands.

