



Chuan Spa: It's Elementary

Review by Vicky Wong

Adhering to the principles of traditional Chinese medicine and philosophy, Chuan Spa at The Langham Plaza Hotel, Hong Kong shows the contemporary world a few wellbeing tricks.

Over the last week, have you found yourself becoming easily: a) Angry, b) Over-excited, c) Anxious, d) Melancholic, or e) Fearful? Without hesitation, I chose b) in the questionnaire I was given at Chuan Spa to determine which of the five elements was best suited for my treatment. After answering questions like what time of the day and which season I preferred, my therapist chose the fire-blended massage oil with an enticingly unique aroma.

She then led me through an elegant wooden space that resembled a Chinese garden, complete with water features. In fact, all five elements were present here: including wood and earth from the bamboo; gold as a subtle ornamentation for the wood; and fire from the candles, strategically placed for creating a tranquil atmosphere and for burning essential oils in the corridor. The serene interior is a contemporary interpretation of classical Chinese architecture, combined with the sight and sound of flowing water.

Chuan is the Chinese word for flowing water - the source of life, and its three vertical hieroglyphic strokes reflect this spa's purpose: to rebalance your mind, body and soul. Chuan, which sits at the top of The Langham Plaza Hotel in Hong Kong, offers an extensive range of therapeutic treatments based on a holistic philosophy of well-being, as practised by traditional Chinese medicine. The spa has its own label for aromatherapy and treatment products based on the concept



of Yin and Yang and the five Chinese essential elements: Water, Fire, Metal, Wood and Earth.

As we entered the VIP room, I was stunned by the spectacular panoramic night view. With two massage beds placed facing one another beside a floor-to-ceiling window and a private double Jacuzzi, the space is perfect for couples. The therapist, Michelle Au greeted me with a warm smile, and once I had lain down, she asked me which part of my body I would like her to



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focus on. I pointed at my upper back and my 'scapulars,' as she called them. Having taken a Swedish massage course myself, I was very impressed by the therapist's thorough knowledge of anatomy, as well as her massage technique. Michelle has been through extensive training in Australia and London, and even came first in a worldwide beauty therapy exam held by City & Guilds.

Post-massage, I was led into the wet room by another therapist, Anna, for 'Chuan Senses,' a body and hair treatment with facial. Just as Hong Kong offers the best of the East and West, Chuan combines the use of their own scientifically-proven products with Thalgo - natural French products pack-full of marine minerals. Lying down in an egg-like capsule, Anna first scrubbed my whole body with large granules of sea salt, then set about me with a moisturising body wrap composed of sea algae. Thanks to osmosis and the sauna-like conditions, my body was soon evicting toxins as well as surplus fluids.

Previous page, top: Chuan's circular entranceway.

Bottom: A massage room.

This page, clockwise from top left: The relaxation room; the enticing Oriental Hot Spring; and the Chinese Garden-style corridor.

A relaxing scalp massage followed, and then a hydrating hair mask infused with essential oils of jasmine, sage and sandalwood. Talking to Anna about how to care for my skin and hair was like doing a crash course in beauty therapy.

After a shower, Anna took me to a dry room and gave me an aromatherapy facial. The smell of the fire-blend oil immediately soothed and calmed me. Anna then surpassed herself, giving me a great light face massage, using a moisturiser instead of the usual oil. When she peeled off the mask, I found myself radiating more intensively than the average nuclear power station. 🌿



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