

Style BreakTM

The style journal



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BALIBECKONS

A Balinese massage at Sohum Spa in Gokulam Grand Hotel and Spa in Bengaluru is the best way to pamper yourself

Words | Bindu Gopal Rao
Photographs | Gokulam Grand Hotel and Spa

A particularly hectic work schedule for the last few weeks ensured that I had several aches in different parts of my body especially my shoulders and lower back. So when I had the opportunity to visit Sohum Spa at Gokulam Grand Hotel and Spa, it felt like a Godsend.



Temple Architecture

The spa is designed by architect Kaushik Mukherjee, and has a design philosophy inspired from the ancient temple architecture of Southern India. A statue of Sri Dhanvantari (the God of Health) made out of local stone, right at the entrance opposite the reception welcomes you to the spa. The spa is divided in various functional sections like reception, consultation room, ayurvedic massage rooms, facial rooms, hydrotherapy area, salon and relaxation room. Each room has mythological animal figures signifying different moods in each room. The spa has an old world charm that is reinforced through the decor that has textures of old stone, old timber, kalamkari designs on the ceilings and beaten copper. Incidentally, the ceiling murals have the tree of life motif by famous Kalamkari painters from Machilipatnam and the work has been done by a NGO that works to uplift village artisans. The treatment rooms have muted lighting that is controlled through the use of soft linen blinds behind louvered shutters and a painted ceiling hung with a white panel on above the treatment bed. Ceramic sculptures by artist Rahul Modak depicting artefacts like ayurveda jars and containers have been used to liven up the timber screens as dividers between various spaces inside the spa.

The Treatment

I am welcomed at the spa with an organic cold tea made with cranberry and apple that is comforting. I am first asked to fill a consultation form where I list out the areas I need my therapist to focus. Since I opt for a medium pressure massage, I am recommended the traditional Balinese massage which is a continuum of relaxing acupressure, skin rolling and firm, smooth strokes along specific energy channels. This ritual is a confluence of the best of healing traditions of erstwhile Siam, China and India. My therapist Namita from Assam shows me to my room and asks me to change. Once done I am asked

to soak my feet into a bowl of warm water with rose petals and I am given a soothing foot scrub. After patting my feet dry, she asks me to lie face down and covers me with a towel. As I settle in, I notice an urli with beautiful marigold in orange and yellow on which the sun rays are streaming in. The beautiful sight immediately has a calming sense on my mind. The massage begins with a high-pressure dry massage where Namita starts from my foot and reaches my neck



massaging my entire body on the towel. This gets me ready for the oil massage to follow. Using aromatic aromatherapy oil with an olive oil base she first starts massaging my back using firm strokes with her hands, palms and even fingers applying pressure with her thumbs. She massages both the left and right side of my back using elongated strokes and then moves to my legs and uses her hands deftly to remove all the strain and stress from the muscles. After my hands are massaged, I am asked to turn over and my legs and hands are massaged again. She then asks me if I need an oil or dry massage on my head and as I opt for the latter Namita carefully massages my forehead and head that feels deeply relaxing. Post the session, she wipes off all the oil using a hot towel. It is ideal to retain the oil for a few hours unless you need to shower immediately so that the oil is well absorbed into the pores. Post

the session I feel relaxed and rejuvenated and ready to take on work headlong. **SS**

FACT FILE

Name of The Spa: Sohum Spa

Established: 2006

Founders: Sanjeev Mansothra

Architect: Kaushik Mukherjee

Area/Size: 2050 Sq. ft.

Treatment rooms: 8

Number of estheticians: 8

Signature Treatment: Sohum Signature

Timings: 8:00 am to 11:00 pm

Contact: Dr. Narendra K Shetty: 9972215079

Address: 115, BEL Circle, HMR Layout, Gokula Extension, Mathikere, Bengaluru, Karnataka 560054