

Welcome to Gateway Bekal Spa—Kottakkal Arya Vaidya Sala’s first luxury outpost

This spa getaway sits on the edge of the river, seamlessly encompassing Ayurvedic principles and luxury in God’s own country.

Words | Bindu Gopal Rao



Gateway Bekal, a riverside retreat in North Kerala, is located alongside the River Bekal, making it a serene escape. The electrically designed cottage-style rooms are a perfect antidote to urban chaos.

The Décor

The spa sits at one end of the resort, and as the golf cart drops me off there, it is impossible to miss the large elephant heads made from the lantana weed on either side of the spa reception. A large brass urli with colourful hibiscus, a brick-like wall, blue-hued fish metal craft, and comfortable seating make for a pleasing sight. The spa rooms are well furnished, with ornate wood cupboards. The muted, warm grey and brown colour scheme makes the vibe easy and relaxing.

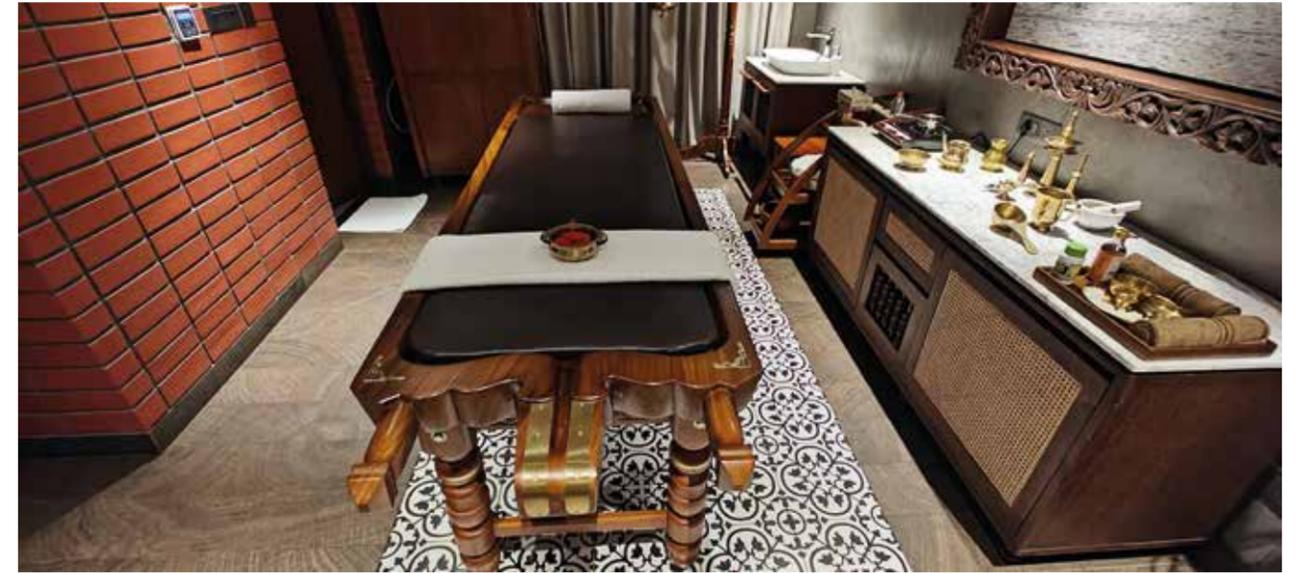
The People

The two-storied structure has five rooms dedicated to ayurvedic treatments on the ground floor and five rooms on the first level for Western therapies. The staff is regularly trained in-house in soft skills (including etiquette and guest behaviour) five or six times a month. The initial training takes place in Bengaluru for three months, which ensures uniformity in quality assurance across the Taj & Gateway brands.

The Ayurveda team is trained at the hospital at Arya Vaidya Sala, Kottakkal and is then assigned to work at different properties. Dr Sinjith K.P., Deputy Medical Officer, Arya Vaidya Sala, Kottakkal, Gateway, Bekal, says, “It is a big shift from hospital to hospitality, and we aim to make things comfortable for the guests. Our staff are from Ayurvedic colleges and are trained specifically to deliver an authentic Ayurvedic massage.”

The Products

All Ayurvedic products, including the oils, are from Arya Vaidya Sala, Kottakkal. For the non-Ayurvedic treatments, the team follows an organic structure, making sure they use sun-dried, organic, and chemical-free products. The aroma blends come from Australia, and facial products come from London, and all of them are tested, chemical-free, and organic. Looking ahead, the spa is focusing on offering detailed treatments like the panchakarma. A wellness restaurant serving cuisine focused on Vata, Kapha and Pita body types.



My Session

Once I fill in a basic health assessment form, I am served a warm tea made of honey, lemon and jaggery. Then I am escorted by my therapist, Drishya, to the spa room. The session starts with a face massage using **Ksheerabala thailam**. I am then seated on the spa bed, and she uses warm **Eladi thailam** to start with the back massage. I am told that this is an Ayurvedic herbal oil used for skin health, that helps alleviate allergies, rashes, dullness and pigmentation by detoxifying, nourishing, and improving skin texture. The back massage is done using long strokes that are deeply relaxing. Once done, I lie on my back, and she does a complete body massage, sweeping her hands from my shoulders to my feet. After I turn over, the same is repeated on the back as well.

Wiping off the excess oil from my feet and hands, I then sit for a steam in a traditional Ayurveda wooden steam box where the temperature is carefully regulated. After 15 minutes, a towel is used to wipe off all the oil. I am asked to change and shower after an hour. Before I leave, she puts a little Rasanadi churnam – a powder that is known to prevent cold. I leave the spa with the memory and fragrance of Ayurveda in mind. **SS**



Fact File

- **Name of The Spa:** The Spa at Gateway Bekal
- **Established:** 2024
- **Founders:** Gopalan Group
- **Architect:** Gopalan Group
- **Area/Size:** 5000 sq. ft.
- **Treatment rooms:** 10
- **Number of estheticians:** 10
- **Signature Treatment:** Abhyanga + Shirodhara
- **Timings:** 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
- **Contact:** 1-800-111-8251
- **Address:** Gateway Bekal, Malamkundu, Post Bekal, Kasaragod, Kerala 671318
- **Website:** www.gateway-hotels.com