

DREAMSCAPES

TRAVEL AND LIFESTYLE

WINTER/SPRING 2013

WARM UP TO
FLORIDA

CARIBBEAN
GEMS

ROCKY MOUNTAIN HIGHS IN
COLORADO

'TRIPPEN' THROUGH
SOUTH CAROLINA

THAI SPAS

THE COLOURS OF
GUATEMALA'S
CHICHICASTENANGO

WIN A TRIP
FOR TWO TO
ARUBA

TABLE-HOPPING

THE ULTIMATE IN MASSAGE THERAPY

BY CHRIS RYALL



"I HAVE A DREAM."
THOSE SEMINAL AND
RIGHTEOUS WORDS FROM
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.'S
1963 SPEECH STILL
RESONATE TODAY.

My dream however is more basic and utterly selfish. I want to be massaged, kneaded, stretched, wrapped and pampered on a spa holiday. It's not every middle-aged man's dream but it's mine.

I confess. I have a spa addiction. My body needs to be kneaded. What better place to satisfy my addiction than Thailand, a dream destination with its vibrant culture, flavour-bursting cuisine and diverse landscape.

Thailand treats you to a sensory spa adventure. Dozens of spa resorts and hotels along with hundreds of day spas wait for the arrival of your stressed body.

What makes Thailand, at least to my eyes, the world's top spa destination? They have the best-trained

IN THAILAND



therapists who go through rigorous training before they are certified. And Wat Po Thai Traditional Medical and Massage School in Bangkok is considered one of the world's best.

BACK TO SCHOOL

The school is not just for career-seeking therapists but tourists as well. Here, both singles and couples can learn the basics of Thai massage and other disciplines over the course of a week. In a classroom-like setting where mats are strewn across the floor, one discovers the complexity of the techniques, the strength involved and how much work is required in a proper Thai massage.

I listened and watched carefully as master

instructor Virachatanon showed me how to position my body, when to pull and stretch, and various other techniques. Soon thereafter he had a petite Thai woman in her 20s lie face down next to me and placed my hand squarely on her bum. So much for formal introductions. Soon my thoughts turned to fear. My Homer Simpson-like body could crush this tiny Thai woman with my body weight. I positioned my legs on her legs and pulled her arms and body back as instructed. Thankfully she didn't file any charges against me on deliberate attempt to injure.

Appreciative of my new-gained knowledge I ventured off to S Medical Spa in Bangkok for my first spa visit.

left: The spa suites in the S Medical Spa are well-furnished, luxurious and offer beautiful views of the outdoor garden. Chris Ryall

top right: Writer Chris Ryall works his massage magic at the Wat Po Massage School in Bangkok. Virachatanon

above: Contemplate the sweet life at the Rarinjinda Wellness Spa Resort in Chiang Mai. Rarinjinda Wellness Spa Resort