

<http://www.bangkokpost.com/leisure/restaurant/17161/thai-spa-global-appeal>



The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying an article from Bangkok Post. The article is titled "Thai spa's global appeal" and is categorized under "Leisure » Restaurant Review". The author is Amy Wang, and it was published on 22/05/2009. The article discusses the holistic nature of Thai spa treatments and mentions the Thailand Health and Beauty Show 2009. A photo of a spa tray with various herbs and treatments is included. The right sidebar features a "Most Viewed" section with an article titled "THE FACE OF THE BODY" and a "Forum" section with links to local pubs, Thai food, dining out, Thai food wholesale, buffet restaurants, Phuket, and learning chess in BKK.

Leisure » Restaurant Review
SPA Trek

Thai spa's global appeal

Its heritage of holistic healing coupled with modern comforts has made Thailand the world's favourite destination for healthy holidays

By: AMY WANG
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Newspaper section: Realtime

The term "Thai spa" does not mean only traditional Thai massage to relieve symptoms or restore health; it means holistic health care too. Thai spa treatments relax the body and the mind with energising power that enhances beauty and health through the intricate blending of herbal treatment and therapies.



Herbs also play an important role in the Thai spa industry today.

To mark another step towards the Thai spa's world-class status, Thailand's Department of Export Promotion under the Ministry of Commerce is organising the Thailand Health and Beauty Show 2009 (Thailand HBS 2009) at the Royal Paragon Hall Exhibition & Convention Centre, Siam Paragon shopping complex from June 5-7. The theme of the show is "Thailand as a Spa and Beauty Destination", and it will coincide with the launch of Thai Spa Day 2009 as a parallel main event.

"Thailand's health and beauty industry incorporates health care, health promotion, and health products," said Rachane Potjanasuntorn, director-general of the Department of Export Promotion. "They give rise to many related businesses

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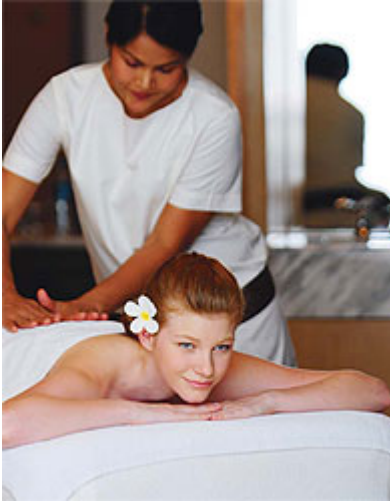


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many related businesses such as spas, weight-reduction, Thai traditional massage, private hospitals, dentistry, herbal medicine, food supplements and cosmetics.



The success of Thai spas lie in the beauty of Thai culture which cannot be copied anywhere else.

"The industry is one of the country's big foreign income earners in the service sector, and we are distinguished by the quality of our services and the unique Thai identity which has enabled us to grow much further in the international market."

The highlight of Thailand HBS 2009 will be Thai Spa Day 2009, which will see a big gathering of spa businesses around the world with professionals flying in to share their knowledge and expertise. It will be a one-stop service centre for sourcing, services, products, and franchises in the health and beauty business such as spas, hospitals, clinics and fitness centres.



"The modern spa business began in Thailand in 1992 and reached its height in 2002," said Andrew Jacka, president of the Thai Spa Association, a key participant in Thai Spa Day 2009. "The business continues to grow steadily, and its success lies in the beauty of Thai culture which cannot be copied anywhere else.

"Growth in the spa business also depends on the creative services that set Thailand apart, new opportunities in new markets to expand its customer base, and the ability to create new trends to answer lifestyle needs with value-for-money services.



The world-renowned traditional Thai massage helps relax tense muscles and stimulate blood circulation.

"When a modern spa is enhanced by age-old Thai traditional health care, it gains uniqueness in the world arena. The Thai spa industry has therefore been growing by leaps and bounds, and the marriage of modern spa with nature-based health care is now a global trend."

Despite the global economic downturn, Jacka remains positive with the spa business outlook in Thailand.

"We must turn crisis into opportunity. We must improve the quality of our spas and open new business opportunities," he said. "Apart from serving tourists and foreign visitors, we must focus more on Thai customers. That's why the association has been organising more spa promotion activities to create new markets, while at the same time working with travel agents to increase our customer base."



Rachane Potjanasuntorn, director general of the Department of Export Promotion.

Thai Spa Day 2009 will be a one-stop service for spa product manufacturers and those who want to start spas and related business. It is also a forum to add value to health and beauty products and services such as health and beauty care, cosmetics, health foods and drinks, herbs and herbal medicine and Thai traditional massage, including the court and mainstream massage which are now well-known worldwide.

"The Thai folk wisdom in massage therapy goes back much further than the hermit yoga statues at Wat Pho," said Charatsri Suwannatap, vice president of Thai Spa Association.

"There are records of Thai traditional massage in stone inscriptions from the Sukhothai period and in ancient palm-leaf books from the Ayutthaya period. These show that our cultural heritage of holistic health care probably dates back thousands of years before being recorded in stone inscriptions."

Some of this age-old wisdom is manifested in the 127 massage positions of the famous Wat Pho hermit statues, and this treasure trove of knowledge will also be exhibited at Thailand HBS 2009.

"There are two types of traditional Thai massage: nuad raja samnak or royal court massage, and nuad chaleuysak, mainstream massage," said Charatsri. "Though different in style, both help relax tense muscles, stimulate blood circulation, and help the body return to balance."

In the royal court massage, masseurs and masseuses had to adhere to court protocol, moving in a kneeling position, keeping their elbows close to their bodies and maintaining a proper distance from their royal and noble charges. Given these strict constraints, there are not many masseurs and masseuses in the nuad raja samnak school today.

"The popular massage or nuad chaleuysak allows the use of hands, elbows, knees, and feet to add pressure," said Charatsri. "It also allows body bending and stretching, which is popular with Thais and foreigners alike."

Today, health has become part of tourism. Most tourists want to integrate health elements in their travel, and Thailand is the destination of choice for this. The Thailand HBS 2009 and the Thai Spa Day 2009 will be a forum where people in the industry can learn from one another in order to grow with international quality.

Thailand Health and Beauty Show 2009 and Thai Spa Day 2009 will be at Royal Paragon Hall, Convention & Exhibition Centre, Siam Paragon shopping complex, Rama I Road, from June 5-7. The event is open to the trade on June 5-6 from 10am-6pm. The public is invited on June 7 from 10am-9pm. For more information, please call 02-741-5212-5 ext 107, 115.