



BALINESE BLISS

Experience traditional healing techniques and immerse yourself in a luxurious environment conducive to wellness at Fivelements, Puri Ahimsa

BY CHARUKESI RAMADURAI

As I lie on the massage table with my eyes closed, I feel myself slipping deeper and deeper into a state of near slumber. Pak Wayan, my Balinese healer, is performing the 'Panca Mahabhuta', a traditional Balinese healing ritual, which is also the signature therapy at Fivelements, Puri Ahimsa. We have begun this session with a small prayer, with Wayan explaining the ritual; he runs his hands in the air a couple of inches above my body to cleanse the energy in my system. 'Panca Mahabhuta' is about channeling a connection between the five elements within the body and without.

At the end of the hour-long session, Wayan talks to me about my health. "Too much thinking," he says right away. "Too much headaches?" True that. And it also probably explains why Wayan tapped the top of my head often during his healing session, murmuring soft mantras as he did so. Pak Wayan is a third generation healer from Bali, whom locals trust more than they do doctors.

Talking about the 'Panca Mahabhuta' later, Natasha, the marketing manager at Fivelements, says that guests have often told her it was a life transforming experience for them. "Even





SPA REVIEW



though Wayan does not touch them at all during the therapy, people are often able to sense the energy passing from his hands into their bodies.” While I didn’t have any similar sensations, I do feel a complete sense of relaxation and wellbeing after the session.

A couple of hours later, I head to my ‘Balinese Massage’ with Sayu, who first washes my feet with warm water mixed with salt and flower petals. “Your pink nail polish is very pretty,” Sayu giggles as she wipes my feet. Before beginning the actual massage, Sayu tells me to hold her hands and take deep breaths with my eyes closed. After a minute of this calming technique, she begins the massage, a typical Balinese technique combining acupressure, reflexology and different levels of pressure. Sayu has a light touch, just the way I like it, and I can actually feel the muscles on my back unknitting, as the cares of the outside world begin to seem very far away.

The spa resort itself, built almost entirely of bamboo, radiates a sense of calm throughout. It is perfectly quiet, but for the occasional birdsong. My

cottage, one of nine exclusive suites there, and set at a discreet distance from the others, faces a gurgling stream. The soft babble of the water keeps me company through the day and soothes me to sleep at night. The bathroom is al fresco – the shower in the middle of an open space, separated from the outside by just a stone wall.

Right after my massage, I take a dip in the outdoor bathtub on the verandah outside my room, which offers views of the dense shrubbery and a mini waterfall. This verandah soon becomes my favourite space, where I sit on a cane chair, sipping on herbal tea, until it becomes completely dark outside and is time for dinner.

Dinner is a delightful meal of mostly raw (and some heated, but not quite cooked) dishes that Fivelements calls Living Foods, providing life force. As I browse through the menu, it is clear that each item has been thought through carefully and is in line with their principle of “Let Food be thy Medicine and Medicine be thy Food.” The Sakti Dining Room, like all the other places

in the resort, is open to the elements as much as possible, and with its quietly flickering candles, radiates the general sense of tranquility felt elsewhere. The crickets have come out in full force by then, and I tuck into my fragrant mushroom coconut soup, followed by a curry laksa to the accompaniment of their chatter. I end the meal with an utterly delectable serving of coconut-cashew ice cream in vanilla flavour.

Since my stay is only for a day, I do not get to try the other signature beauty therapies on offer. All too soon, it is time for me to head to the airport, but I leave with the feeling that Fivelements, Puri Ahimsa is a destination spa that cleverly integrates luxury living with holistic healing principles and eco-consciousness. 🌿

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BANJAR BATURNING, MAMBAL
BALI, INDONESIA - 80352
PHONE: +62 36 14 69 260
WWW.FIVELEMENTS.ORG