



SPA, AHÓY!

Discover on-board wellness at Mandara Spa as you sail along the Gulf of Mexico on the *Norwegian Getaway*

BY CHARUKESI RAMADURAI

As I lay on the massage table, feeling the warmth of the medicated bundle gently loosening up the aching muscles on my back, I was glad for the expert recommendation of the crew at Mandara Spa. When I first stepped into the expansive wellness area on the 15th level of *Norwegian Getaway*, the cruise ship that was taking me along the Gulf of Mexico, my heart was set on a ‘Bamboo Massage’.

‘Imagine warm bamboo shoots of various sizes soaked in essential oil rolling, sliding and massaging your muscles into pure bliss,’ read the alluring description of this treatment. However, I was dissuaded by the consultant, who surmised correctly after a brief chat that I was not looking for intense pressure during the therapy.

That is how I happened to choose the ‘Thai Herbal Poultice Massage’ instead. In the course of this hour-long treatment, my masseuse first spread generous quantities of medicated oil for pain relief, then massaged, with varying levels of pressure, the spots around my neck and spine that were in particular need of tender loving care. She followed this up with an application of the heated bundles (*potli*) along these very points, getting them to unknot and breathe.

Mandara Spa, which originated in Bali, is now present all over the world. The brand is also associated with the

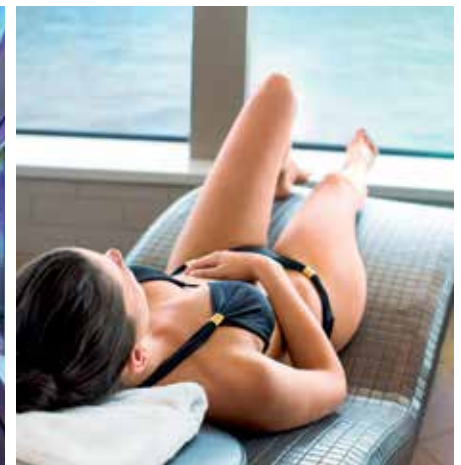
Norwegian Cruise Line, and on this ship, the spa and fitness centre together span over nearly 23,000 square feet. The spa menu covers a wide range of offerings from massage therapies and manicures to haircuts and acupuncture treatments. Needless to say, Mandara Spa turned out to be easily one of the highlights of my on-board experiences during the week-long cruise.

The relaxing massage aside, my favourite part was the day (or as much of it as I had to spare) I spent at their Thermal Suite. With access only to a limited number of guests, who paid separately for use of this space, the

thermal suite had, within its confines, jacuzzis and jet sprays of cold, warm and hot water, sauna and steam rooms along with a space for salt therapy. I soaked and sweated in each of them by turns, before finally plonking on one of the heated wooden deckchairs by the bay windows to soak in the mild autumnal sunshine. 🌿



Clockwise from here: The sauna at the Thermal suite; and a typical spa experience comes to a close with stunning views of the Gulf of Mexico from the extensive relaxation areas at Mandara Spa



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