

## **SERENE ESCAPE**

Retreat into a calming, rejuvenating and healing cocoon at the Ritz-Carlton Battery Park in New York City

BY CHARUKESI RAMADURAI

ne day in New York City recently, I decided to listen to the Ritz-Carlton and 'leave the world behind' (as suggested on their website). So, I headed to their Battery Park property to pamper myself with a luxurious massage.

For the next couple of hours, I was cocooned in their spa – located right around the corner, but seemingly miles away from the bustle of Wall Street and the contemplative silence of the 9/11 Memorial. The spa itself was an

intimate and cosy space on the top floor of the hotel, with classy and subdued white interiors, which instantly gave me a sense of what was to come.

Given the limited time on my hands (I was, after all, in one of the busiest cities in the world, and some of that energy had rubbed off on me), I had to choose one specific treatment that would allow me to experience the best of this spa. I debated for a while between their specialty 'Lagoon Hydration Facial' and multiple massage options, and finally





zoomed in on a perpetual favourite, the 'Hot Stone Caress'.

After all the walking of the last few weeks in the USA, I felt I could do with some serious relaxation, and, in my experience, this treatment would be best suited. Surely enough, my hourlong hot stone massage left me feeling

rested, not to mention recharged for the week ahead.

I must begin with a special shout out to my therapist Geanina Belu, in whose hands the massage turned into a soothing and recuperative caress. After offering me a glass of refreshing infused water, Geanina, who hails from Romania, began with understanding my preferences for pressure, heat and so on. She then offered me a selection of aromatherapy oils, from which I chose the lavender; after all, what better fragrance for someone seeking relaxation? And then, over the next several minutes, Geanina worked magic on my muscles, using her hands and the heated stones in combination.

Right at the beginning, I had particularly requested her to focus on the painful areas of my back and neck. At the end of the massage, I thought I heard a distinct vote of thanks from all those muscles, abused by bad posture and stress - not surprising, given that Geanina has graduated in massage therapy from the prestigious Swedish Institute in New York City.

The session ended with a long hot shower and another glass of the infused water, after which I took up their kind offer of a snack. I was famished since I had not eaten breakfast, and the massage had only added to that empty feeling in the stomach!

The Ritz-Carlton restaurant 2West is not associated with the spa, but the chef whipped up a steaming plate of pasta with vegetables (despite the fact that they were only serving drinks and small eats at that time, way past lunch and way too early for dinner).

I emerged into the New York sunshine all sleepy and smiling undoubtedly the best outcome one can get from any spa treatment.

## THE RITZ-CARLTON BATTERY PARK

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