

« STORE REVIEW: SO SPA & SUKHO THAI

SO PLUSH!

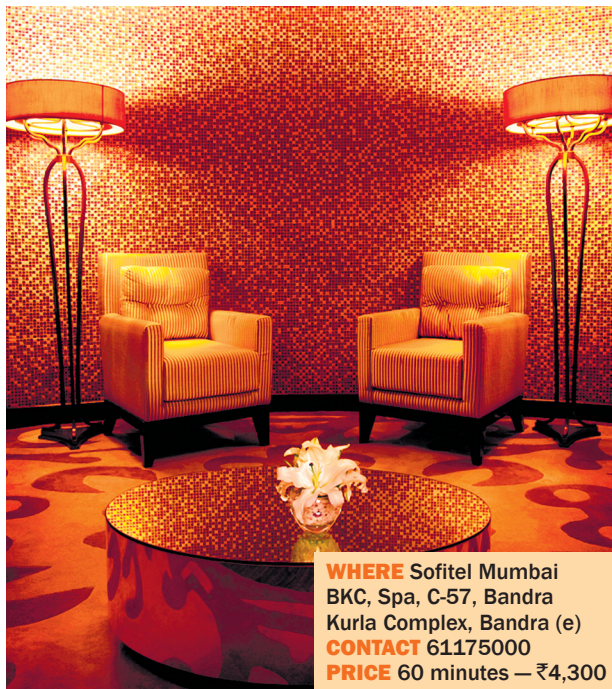
With high ceilings, ample space, luxurious interiors, subtly scented French and Indian spa products and quiet personal niches, **Rhea Dhanbhora** tells you why **So Spa** is a great indulgence, despite its price

The one thing that Bandra Kurla Complex has going for it, is space. Smooth, wide roads lead up to an equally well spaced out Sofitel hotel, which is fast becoming one of my favourite haunts – whether it's for an indulgent meal, a quick midnight coffee or, as I discovered most recently, an after-work spa treatment. Travelling from the cramped, rain-ruined suburbs and sauntering into the wide, spacious spa, with high ceilings and marbled floors is relaxing in itself. Encased in stimulating silence, on its very own floor in the hotel, the spa is sprawled over 6,000 square feet, but has only six treatment rooms, so you can see how they have space for a private Jacuzzi in their exclusive couple's area. After a delicious cranberry drink, while walking from reception to room, I stopped several times, just to gaze at what they call the Golden Drops of Luxury, which are massive gold blobs floating over a water fountain.

WHAT'S NEW

So Spa is not new, but there are a range of new treatments, men's specials and my favourite change of them all – new timings. The spa is now open 24/7. Yes, you read that right. All you workaholics whining about tired feet and aching bones, now have somewhere to escape to, no matter what time it is. In a city that burns itself out of midnight oil and sees more incidents, accidents and traffic on a daily basis than it should, anything that's open 24 hours a day is a godsend – and places like this are unfortunately, few and far between. The spa has also introduced a special treatment designed to make travellers feel more comfortable. Called Traveler's Bliss, it claims to overcome the sluggishness and fatigue that is commonly associated with jet lag. Whether you're getting ready for a long flight or just stepping off one, this is the treatment for you. But, city slickers need not feel left out; travelling to BKC during monsoon is enough of an excuse to settle into the plush spa and opt for this 60-minute treatment.

The Cing Mondes and Gemology cosmetics used at So Spa, both look and smell delicious and several of the products have



WHERE Sofitel Mumbai BKC, Spa, C-57, Bandra Kurla Complex, Bandra (e)
CONTACT 61175000
PRICE 60 minutes — ₹4,300

traces of precious and semi-precious minerals.

TIME TO SPLURGE

The menu at So Spa is not as inviting as the treatments or the ambience, especially when you glance past the attractive descriptions and towards the prices. Sure, you can get a 15-minute massage when you're in a hurry or take your time and relax for 90 minutes, but no matter what, you will be shelling out a pretty penny. There are a few massages that dance in the

under ₹2,000 range, but if you look at the menu, you'll know why we think you should go prepared with at least ₹3,500 in your wallet.

GETTING PERSONAL

If my treatment hadn't been good enough, you would have heard about it by now. With the heady scent of citrus lemon leaf oil mixed with the more down-to-earth camphor and sunflower seed oil, my relaxing crème de massage peridot was perfect. With my preferences for dim lighting and spa special music all set, I was led to a room fit for a princess, with an attached bathroom, a closet and nook to do your makeup and brush your hair after your treatment is done, complete with a jewellery box and a plush white stool placed in front of the mirror.

My session lacked the traditional pre-treatment foot soak, but started with a warm towel pressed delicately on my feet instead. With slow, but steady pressure, I felt the stress, tiredness and muscle ache slowly leaving my body, as promised. Absolutely nothing was amiss with the treatment, but I felt at certain points as though a little more attention could have been paid to my neck and shoulder area (whatever time was devoted to it was a dream and left me aching for more) and my arms and hands felt disappointingly devoid of attention. If the rest of the treatment hadn't been so good, this would not have mattered.

THE END, BUT NOT QUITE

Those of you who are always close to tears at the thought of getting up and rushing into the chaos outside once your treatment is done, will be thrilled to be led past sheer curtains into a semi-private post-spa lounge. Sit on the plush seats, gaze out at the fast-growing commercial hub of the city and sip on a large pot of green tea while snacking on almonds and flipping through magazines. It is the perfect touch. Try this one whether you're ready to jet set around the world or not.

« NEW LAUNCHES:
FIND OUT WHAT'S JUST OUT

TRIKINIS BY NIDHI MUNIM

Designer Nidhi Munim has introduced a wide range of Trikinis for women who are ready to experiment with something different. The collection features various shades of mint, black and white and Nidhi has experimented with different types of cuts. From exotic prints to monochrome designs, you can pick up any trikini of your choice.

WHERE Selected stores and online sites
PRICE On Request



Relax like a CEO

Sukho Thai has introduced a new treatment called the CEO massage. **Dev Goswami** visits their Bandra outlet to find out whether it is a unique massage or just another gimmick

Walking into the soothing atmosphere at Sukho Thai after dealing with torrential rain and unruly drivers on the road, I was very excited to try their new CEO massage. After all, it promised deep relaxation that would not only loosen up sore muscles, but also de-stress your mind and body.

The CEO massage is a full-body massage, but since Sukho Thai is a foot-massage chain, almost of half of the massage is focussed on your feet and calves. In fact, the massage takes place in a foot-massage armchair, instead of a traditional spa bed. But, you won't find me complaining! Their expertise really shows during the first half and apart from just relaxing your feet and calf muscles, the masseuse goes over several important pressure points, pressing them either with her fingers or a small, wooden massage tool. The technique is excellent and you can actually feel a relaxing sensation making its way up your back, instantly relaxing you.

The treatment also includes a head and shoulder massage that is so relaxing, that it can put you to sleep. This is followed by a full-body stretch that stretches almost each and every muscle of your body – which to me, is one of the most important aspects of the massage. Even though they didn't tell me, it was easy for me to

realise that the stretching was aimed at counteracting the effects of sitting in a chair the entire day. The stretching lasts for a good 10 minutes, is thorough and loosens up your body, leaving you feeling rejuvenated and energised. The massage ends with a strong but delicious ginger tea and bowl of fresh fruit – something that is quite necessary, because the massage leaves you feeling hungry.

I am really happy with Sukho Thai's new addition to their menu. The massage delivers on almost all of its promises. However, I don't see why the massage is predominantly aimed at men and while they won't stop a woman from getting the massage if she wishes to, it is strange that they are promoting it as a men's massage. From the technique to the results, there is nothing men-specific about it. The second problem I have with it, is the CEO moniker. What the massage does is counteract the problems that arise from sitting in a chair all day and refreshes and rejuvenates you, leaving you energised enough to go back to work. This would be beneficial to any working professional and not just CEOs – though I'm willing to overlook this, as it's probably just a way to make the therapy sound more interesting.

On the whole, the CEO massage is one of the best treatments I have experienced. It costs



>> The new CEO massage at Sukho Thai is suitable for both men and women

₹2,650 for 90 minutes, and though it's a bit expensive, it is worth the money. Whether you are a woman or a man, a CEO or a mid-level manager, this massage is an excellent way to relieve pain that arises from the physical problems that we face while working in a city like Mumbai. I wholeheartedly recommend it.

WHERE Sukho Thai outlets in the city
CONTACT www.sukhothai.in