

# Retreat, relax and revive

**T**HERE are health retreats and then there's Chiva Som. The world's original luxury destination spa in the seaside village of Hua Hin, Thailand, attracts big-name celebrities and Fortune 500 folk.

If it's good enough for Kate Moss, Elle Macpherson, Posh and Becks, Liz Hurley and their pals, surely it's good enough for me.

It has been my lifelong dream to stretch out by the Chiva Som pool and nibble on tasty non-calorie treats whipped up by dedicated chefs who concentrate purely on shrinking my waistline in seven days.

When that dream came to fruition in December, peak celebrity month, I imagined swapping wheatgrass recipes with Jude or mud wraps with Orlando.

Sadly it was a celebrity-free zone during my visit, but that left me more time to think only of myself.

The whole point of destination spas, otherwise known as health retreats, health resorts or lifestyle retreats, is to allow you to take time out from your daily life.

It's about cleansing the body and mind and invigorating the spirit. At Chiva Som, this is serious business.

Whereas some health retreats encourage a group atmosphere by checking everyone in on the same day for the same length of time, at Chiva Som you arrive and leave when you want.

Your stay is designed for you,

A resort that helps you lose 4kg in a week is a winner with **Rachael Oakes-Ash**



**Relax:** health resort Chiva Som has yoga among its offerings.

whether you need pampering, relaxation, fitness, weight loss, detox, anti-ageing or a combination of all six.

This not-so-little pumpkin took the hardcore fitness option: a three-day juice cleanse, three colonic irrigations, three personal fitness training sessions, one power oxygen training session and one outdoor training session that involved cycling up hills and running up the stairs to a Buddhist temple on a nearby

mountain. A daily massage is de rigeur and I threw in some acupuncture, myotherapy and a chi nei tsang (stomach organ massage) for good measure.

Add morning meditation and yoga and my week was taken care of.

When I needed a good lie down, I only had to look at a poolside lounge and the pool staff had chilled water and frangipani-scented towels laid out before I could say "virgin mary, hold the tabasco".

I may be Little Miss Have-a-Chat, but not everyone enjoys group dining. This is where Chiva Som excels — the food, I mean.

For those travelling alone there's a "talkers table" where guests can dine with fellow solo travellers, though some choose the peace of dining alone.

Meals are served over a leisurely three hours, so you can arrive when you feel like it.

The two restaurants serve a la carte and buffet. Every item of cuisine is marked to indicate fat, protein, wheat, dairy and nut content, plus calories.

It's possible to have a three-course meal worthy of any good Thai restaurant and still be struggling to fill your daily calorie needs.

At no point did I feel hungry.

The wine list is impressive and freely available, but most choose not to imbibe.

It's the freedom of choice and the fact guests are treated like adults (not children at fat camp) that allows them to truly relax.

Add the renowned Thai hospitality and seriously impressive practitioners who lead their holistic field and it's easy to see why it's still at the top of the market after 14 years.

If I sound as if I'm gushing, it helped that I lost 4.1kg in seven nights. What woman isn't going to love that?

**The author was a guest of Travel The World, Jetstar and Thai Tourism**

## THE DEAL



LdS Herald Sun 6/6/2008

➔ **Getting there:** Jetstar Star Class will have you arriving in style and saving dollars. [www.jetstar.com](http://www.jetstar.com)

➔ **Staying:** Travel The World is the exclusive representative of Chiva Som in Australia, and can help with fly/stay packages.

A range of tailored packages is available. Three nights start at \$1745 a person for stays until September 30, plus taxes and service charge.

Ph: 1300 766 566, [www.traveltheworld.com.au](http://www.traveltheworld.com.au)

➔ **More information:** Chiva Som, [www.chivasom.com](http://www.chivasom.com) [www.tourismthailand.org](http://www.tourismthailand.org)

## Perfect escapes

### Airfares

Auckland	return from	<b>\$595*</b>
Bangkok	return from	<b>\$929*</b>
Gold Coast	one way from	<b>\$99*</b>
Hong Kong	return from	<b>\$1025*</b>
London	return from	<b>\$2089*</b>
Los Angeles	return from	<b>\$1675*</b>
Perth	one way from	<b>\$199*</b>
Singapore	return from	<b>\$765*</b>
Sydney	one way from	<b>\$99*</b>

### Business class

Bangkok	return from	<b>\$2099*</b>
Hong Kong	return from	<b>\$2765*</b>
London	return from	<b>\$5779*</b>
Los Angeles	return from	<b>\$5715*</b>
Singapore	return from	<b>\$2065*</b>

### International

**Bali 4-Star** from **\$1349\***  
**INCLUDES** Return airfare, 8 nights accommodation at the 4-star Ramayana Resort & Spa with full breakfast daily and return airport transfers. **UPGRADE** To a Resort Club room including a **FREE** dinner for two adults from \$217\*.

**Malaysia Double Indulgence** from **\$1425\***  
**INCLUDES** Return airfare, 5 nights accommodation at the 4-star Holiday Inn Penang **PLUS** 2 nights accommodation at the 4-star Melia Kuala Lumpur with breakfast daily.

**New York City Ministay** from **\$1199\***  
**INCLUDES** 4 nights accommodation at Hotel Metro with breakfast daily, a 3-day New York Pass, ticket to Broadway show 'Spamalot', **PLUS** a Manhattan Comprehensive tour, an All Loops Hop-on Hop-off tour, a Showbiz Insiders tour and return airport transfers. Airfare is additional.

**New Zealand Fly/Drive** from **\$509\***  
**INCLUDES** Return airfare to Christchurch and 7 days car hire with unlimited kilometres.

**Phuket 5-Star 10 Nights** from **\$459\***  
**INCLUDES** 10 nights accommodation at the 5-star Indigo Pearl in a Kelly Quarter room with breakfast daily. **BONUS** Stay 10 nights for the price of 5 and receive a bottle of wine. Airfare is additional.

### Australia

**Gold Coast** from **\$149\***  
**INCLUDES** 3 nights accommodation at the 4½ star Mantra Legends Hotel. **ADD** A Warner Village Theme Parks Escape pass with single day entry to a total of 2 parks from \$105\*.

**Port Douglas 4-Star** from **\$149\***  
**INCLUDES** 4 nights accommodation at the 4-star Bay Villas Resort in a Studio Apartment. **ADD** A Quicksilver Outer Barrier Reef tour from \$191\*.

**Red Centre Adventure** from **\$639\***  
**INCLUDES** 2 nights 4½-star accommodation and a 3-day camping adventure with camping equipment, some meals and transfers. **HIGHLIGHTS** Kings Canyon, Kata Tjuta (Olgas), Kings Creek Station and Watarraka National Park. Airfare is additional.

### Cruise

**Alaska Fly/Cruise** from **\$1149\***  
**INCLUDES** 7-night cruise on board *Golden Princess* with all on-board meals and entertainment. **VISIT** Juneau, Skagway, Tracy Arm Fjord, Ketchikan and Victoria.

**Riviera Highlights** from **\$1039\***  
**INCLUDES** 7-night cruise on board *Costa Concordia* with all on-board meals and entertainment. **VISIT** Savona, Naples, Palermo, Tunis, Palma, Barcelona and Marseille.

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Susie O'Neill



\*If you book a holiday (comprising airfares and/or accommodation) with Escape Travel and it is not the holiday you paid for in your itinerary, then see us in-store up to one month after you return from your holiday, and we will give you a \$100 voucher per booking (not per person travelling) for use towards your next holiday package. Issue of the voucher is not an admission of liability. We reserve the right to withdraw this offer at any time. \*Travel restrictions & conditions apply. Please ask us for further details. Prices & taxes are correct as at 4 Jun 08 & are subject to change without notice. Prices are per person & are subject to availability. Accom (if included) is based on twin share unless otherwise stated. Seasonal surcharges may apply depending on date of travel. Additional levies, government charges & other applicable fees may apply & are beyond our control. Additional taxes specific to your flight routing may apply (where airfare is included). Payments made by credit card will incur a surcharge. Service charges from \$10 per one way domestic airfare & \$15 per one way Trans-Tasman airfare apply to in-store & telephone bookings. Online air bookings will incur a non-refundable booking and credit card fee of \$15.95. **Northern Territory:** Valid for travel 1 Jul-31 Mar 09. **Gold Coast:** Valid for sale and travel 30 Jun 08. **Riviera Highlights:** Valid for departures 1, 8, 15 and 22 Nov 09. Valid for sale till 1 Aug 08. Includes port charges and government taxes. Advertised price is for Inside Cabin Cat 11. **Phuket 5-Star 10 Nights:** Valid for travel till 30 Jun 08 and 1 July-31 Oct 08. Valid for sale till 30 Jun 08. **New Zealand:** Valid for travel 1 May to 18 September 08. Airfare surcharge of \$30/pp/sector applies when travelling between 22 Jun-15 Jul 08. Vehicle insurance excess of NZ \$1800 applies. **FROM:** MELBOURNE Lic. No. 31089. Lades Pty Ltd trading as Escape Travel. mbs\_06jun\_19x7\_et

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