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Today, Ayurveda is witnessing a revival and nowhere is it more apparent than in South India. The fact that it has moved into five-star resorts and hotels means that it is far more accessible to the public than ever before especially since one does not have to be ailing to check into an Ayurveda clinic for its rejuvenation treatments. Indeed, these oases of self-indulgence, we discovered, strip away the years along with the dust, toil and disillusionment's, and help you retrieve the youthfulness you lost somewhere along the way.

On a recent trip to Karnataka, we got to press the unwind button at Indus Valley Ayurvedic Centre (IVAC) in Mysore, one of the finest spas in the southern part of the country. Ayurveda is serious business at this luxurious resort on the outskirts of the city, where the 5,000-year-old health regimen, finds expression in its purest form. Here, they insist that whoever checks in must have an ayurvedic massage treatment from their a-la-carte menu.

They, however, recommend a stay of seven days if a lasting change is to be wrought. They believe that this is the minimum over which an unhealthy lifestyle



can be corrected with the help of an ancient course of therapy, which includes following a strict diet, natural herbal remedies, exercise and meditation. One must make an effort to banish all manners of needling thought (living in luxurious room's help here) and during the treatment, tea, coffee and smoking are to be avoided. Forget French fries, lobsters and non-vegetarian fare, for in this sylvan resort one's diet is strictly non-spicy vegetarian Ayurvedic.

Everybody, we were told, gets the body he or she deserves. We looked at ours: the



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Travel abroad and in India

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THE AYURVEDIC WAY!



Text and Pics: Gustasp & Jerroo Irani



result of gross over-indulgence and neglect, and decided to entrust our physical and mental well-being to the young therapists at IVAC, which has been adjudged one of the top hundred spas in the world by Harpers magazine, UK. And we were amazed how by just feeling our pulse they could diagnose the problems we faced.

Set in a dream location against the backdrop of the Chamudi Hills with the charming historic city of Mysore within arm's reach, the spa has a Zen-like simplicity. The use of natural materials like thatch for the roof of the villas, rich earth

floors and the resort employs a striking vernacular style.

After a chat with and an examination by an Ayurvedic doctor, we headed for the peaceful treatment rooms where we opted for 'Patra Pinda Sweda', a rejuvenating therapy, which removes aches and pains, and is great for circulation, improves skin tone and generates a feeling of well-being. Magical hands spun their enchantment over our supine bodies, which we surrendered to our therapist who had by then acquired almost divine dimensions. Our bodies were then pumelled, scrubbed and exfoliated.

The massage was the answer to every under-exercised and over-toxed person's dream. But there was more! The kneading and pressing of warm poultices (a mixture of rice and herbs) followed the full body rub down on our bodies by four therapists working as one. Indeed, they synchronised their movements so beautifully that it felt like ballet dancers tiptoeing on our bodies.

Yes, at IVAC, we learnt a simpler approach to life where everything is in harmony with Ayurvedic principles.

