

# Jettisoning jet lag in Hanoi



Left, a treatment room in Le Spa du Metropole in the Sofitel Legend Metropole Hanoi hotel in Vietnam. The spa opened in 2009 and offers a 90-minute Jet Lag Recovery massage. Above, a Grand Premium guestroom in the 116-year-old Sofitel Legend Metropole.

By Kristy Alpert

I half-stumbled my way into the lobby of the Le Spa du Metropole, still weary from spending the better part of 24 hours on a plane. My arrival in Hanoi, Vietnam, had been smooth, but it didn't take long before the hours caught up with me, bringing the familiar package of stiff limbs and deep dehydration.

I had only been at the Sofitel Legend Metropole Hanoi for a matter of hours before the lure of a spa treatment drew me out of my suite and into the fragranced halls of the hotel's spa. Compared to the hotel's nearly 116-year history, Le Spa du Metropole was a relatively recent addition, opening its doors in 2009 to an eagerly awaiting list of celebrity guests, affluent locals and relaxation-seeking travelers.

The spa's arrival acted as the finishing touch to this hotel's already very sensory experience, where the tropical sunshine seeps in through green, shuttered windows to warm the dark, hardwood floors throughout the hotel's suites, and the French colonial facade takes guests back in time to an era of Indochine beauty and French *joie de vivre*.

I sat in the bright and airy relaxation room, hot tea in hand, as my therapist re-

counted the treatments available. I stopped her at "Jet Lag Recovery massage" and swooned as she explained how the treatment, like many offered at the spa, blends Eastern holistic rituals with Western methods. Many of the massages and treatments at Le Spa are customized with Clarins and Ytsara spa products, but this a la carte option needed no additions, as it was precisely what I needed.

I followed my therapist past two couple-size spa suites — one featuring an Asian theme, and the other evoking a more French neoclassical aesthetic, each with its own large whirlpool tub — into the fifth of six individually designed spa suites. The

warm flicker of candlelight dancing off the ecru, wooden wall panels welcomed me into an ambience already set by soothing tunes and thick linens draped over a decadently plush massage table.

The treatment lasted 90 minutes and began with a soothing massage with one of the spa's exclusive oil blends created by renowned perfumer Laurent Severac from Grasse, France. I caught myself dozing off once more but stopped as I heard my therapist reach for a small metal bowl on the counter. "Is that a singing bowl?" I drowsily asked.

"It's actually a Kansu bowl," she replied. "It's an ancient ayurvedic remedy for inflammation. Want to see?"

I cupped the small bowl in my hand and felt the weight of it

shift as I moved it around my palm. Kansu bowls have been used in the Far East for centuries and are made from copper, bronze and zinc by expert artisans in India. Each bowl is unique and carries its own special vibrational energy. The metals used play a specific role in fighting off the effects of jet

## The 90-minute Jet Lag Recovery massage blends Eastern holistic rituals with Western methods.

lag when rubbed on the soles of the feet, with copper absorbing the excess body heat and removing inflammation in the joints, zinc stimulating the muscular tissue and acting as an antiseptic and bronze sealing all the elements together for lasting wellness. I let myself drift back into my Zen state once again as she completed the treatment.

Normally after a 90-minute massage, I leave feeling ready for a nap, but after the Kansu bowl massage I couldn't help but feel renewed and ready to see what else this amazing facility offered.

The entire spa area spans about 4,300 square feet, with three levels holding the different treatment rooms: a manicure and pedicure booth, a humid zone with steam bath, a sauna, a relaxation room and gender-specific shower facilities. Just outside the spa are the hotel's heated pool and luxury fitness center, So Fit by Sofitel, as well as an underground bomb shelter that was discovered only years earlier during a renovation of the Bamboo Bar.

The 90-minute Jet Lag Recovery massage is priced at about \$100. For more information on the Sofitel Legend Metropole Hanoi and the Le Spa du Metropole, visit [www.sofitel-legend.com/hanoi](http://www.sofitel-legend.com/hanoi).

## Aruba Marriott commits to clients' routines

By Eliza Krpoyan

Have you ever said "I just came back from vacation" to justify your unhealthy diet or lack of exercise while traveling? For guests of the Aruba Marriott Resort & Stellaris Casino, "vacation weight" excuses just might be a thing of the past.

Helping guests stay healthy and stick to their wellness routines is part of the resort's new initiatives.

"We have seen that over the past couple of years our guests have become more health-conscious," said Tom Calame, general manager of the 411-room property on the island's Palm Beach, northwest of the town of Oranjestad. "People are more aware of what they eat, especially if they have dietary preferences or restrictions, and how much physical activity they do, even on vacation."

Want the Baja fish tacos but are vegan and gluten-free? They will cater to dietary restrictions at no additional charge.

On Sundays there are 95 to 110 items on the resort's brunch menu, with fresh fruit, smoothie and gluten-free stations and an extensive salad bar.

Miguel Garcia, the resort's executive sous chef, said he gets special requests all the time.

Garcia said he once went back and forth via email for a month with a guest who was going to be honeymooning at the resort. The guest needed to adhere to a strict calorie count and a gluten-free menu. Together they designed a weeklong menu including breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks that were under 700 calories and gluten-free, too.

In addition to sticking to a nutritional routine, guests can stay active with beach

tennis taught by professional tennis players and paddleboarding offered by Vela Aruba, located on the resort's beach. Stand-up paddleboard yoga is a favorite activity, said Calame. "There's no better *shavasana* than when you're floating on a paddleboard on the gorgeous, calm waters of Palm Beach," he said.

Of course, the resort didn't forget about mental well-being and honors it with a designated area referred to as the Happy Zone. The space features two hammocks hanging between palm trees.

"It provides a place for guests to unwind and relax in a comfortable and cozy setting," Calame said.

The wellness initiatives aren't finished. On the horizon is a total makeover of the resort's health club. The space will take up an additional floor where it will provide cardio equipment that overlooks the pool

and the beach. At this rate, your beach body will end up better than when you got there.

Rates at the Aruba Marriott Resort & Stellaris Casino begin at \$239; for more information, go to [www.marriott.com](http://www.marriott.com).



A popular fitness activity offered to guests at the Aruba Marriott Resort & Stellaris Casino is stand-up paddleboard yoga in the waters off Palm Beach.