
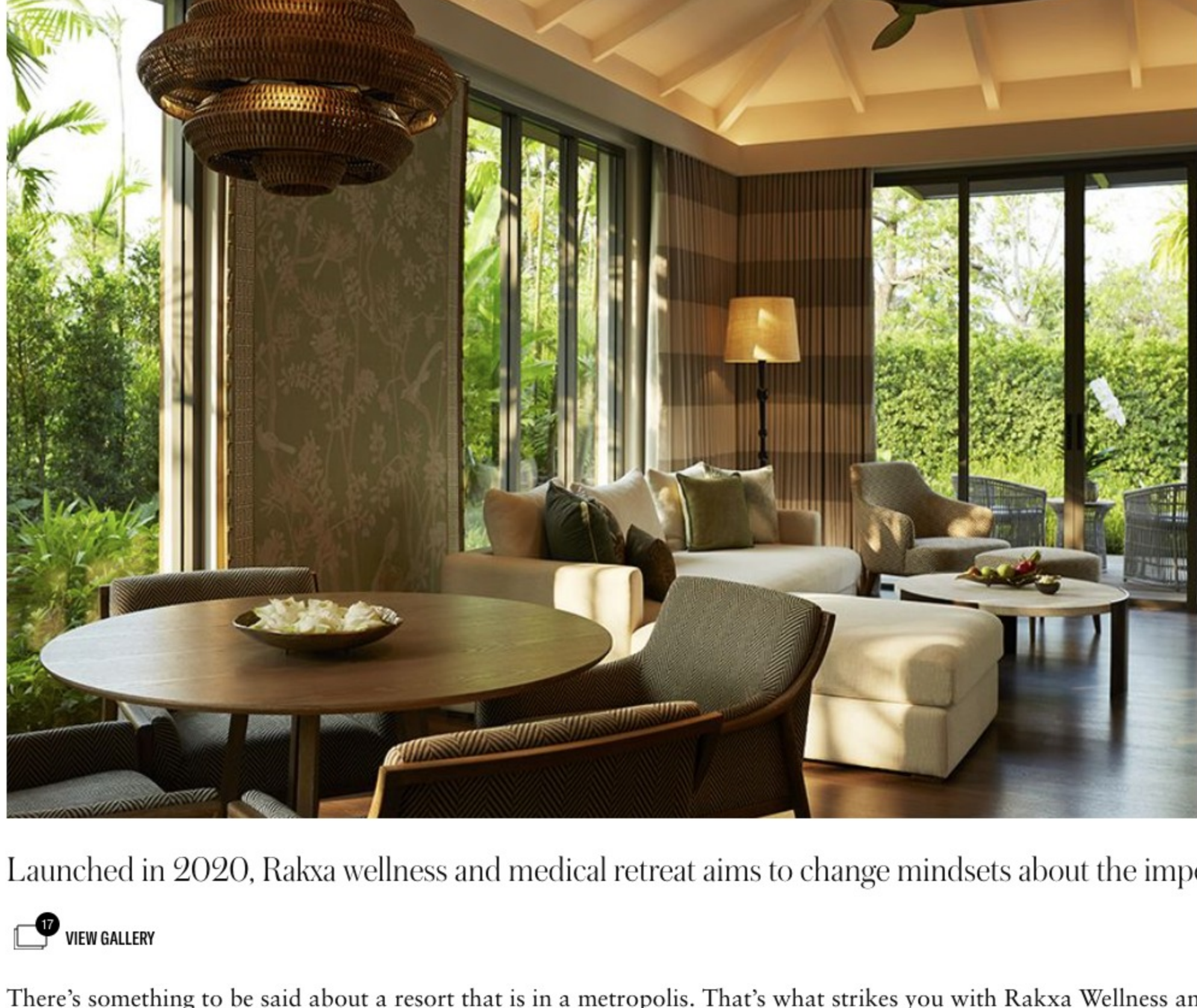


CULTURE | TRAVEL


Review: Bangkok's Newest Wellness Retreat Is What You Need For a Luxurious Recharge

Words by SANDHYA MAHADEVAN | June 22, 2022





Launched in 2020, Rakxa wellness and medical retreat aims to change mindsets about the importance of wellness

 VIEW GALLERY

There's something to be said about a resort that is in a metropolis. That's what strikes you with Rakxa Wellness and Medical Retreat in Thailand. Nestled on the banks of the Chao Praya river, it sits on the island of Bang Krachao across bustling Bangkok. You can muse over the city skyline as you enjoy a healing cup of tea at the tea lounge (or any of its other lounges), or when cycling around this verdant property.

One of the first in Thailand to house a medical and wellness centre, Rakxa is a partnership between regional hospitality giant Minor Hotels, leading Thai developer MK Real Estate, and VitalLife Scientific Wellness Clinic, which is part of Bumrungrad International Hospital, one of Thailand's most renowned healthcare institutions. Merging these resources with science and the healing philosophies of the East and West, Rakxa takes a full-spectrum approach to wellness.

Read more: [The Best Wellness Retreats To Visit In Asia](#)



First impressions

It's a hot day in Bangkok as the airport transfer organised by the retreat weaves through infamous Bangkok traffic. The landscape changes dramatically as we move past the concrete jungle and enter the green enclave of Bang Krachao—it's like a green lung on the other bank of the river, and the slower pace is like a teaser of what's to come.

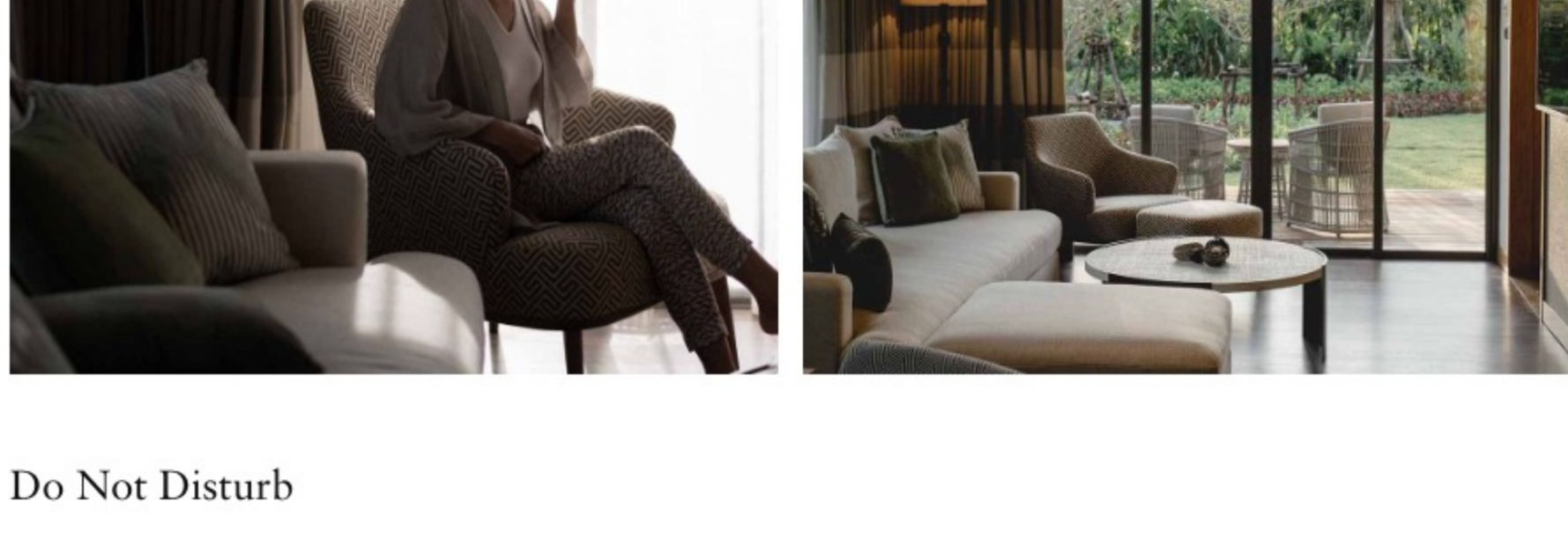
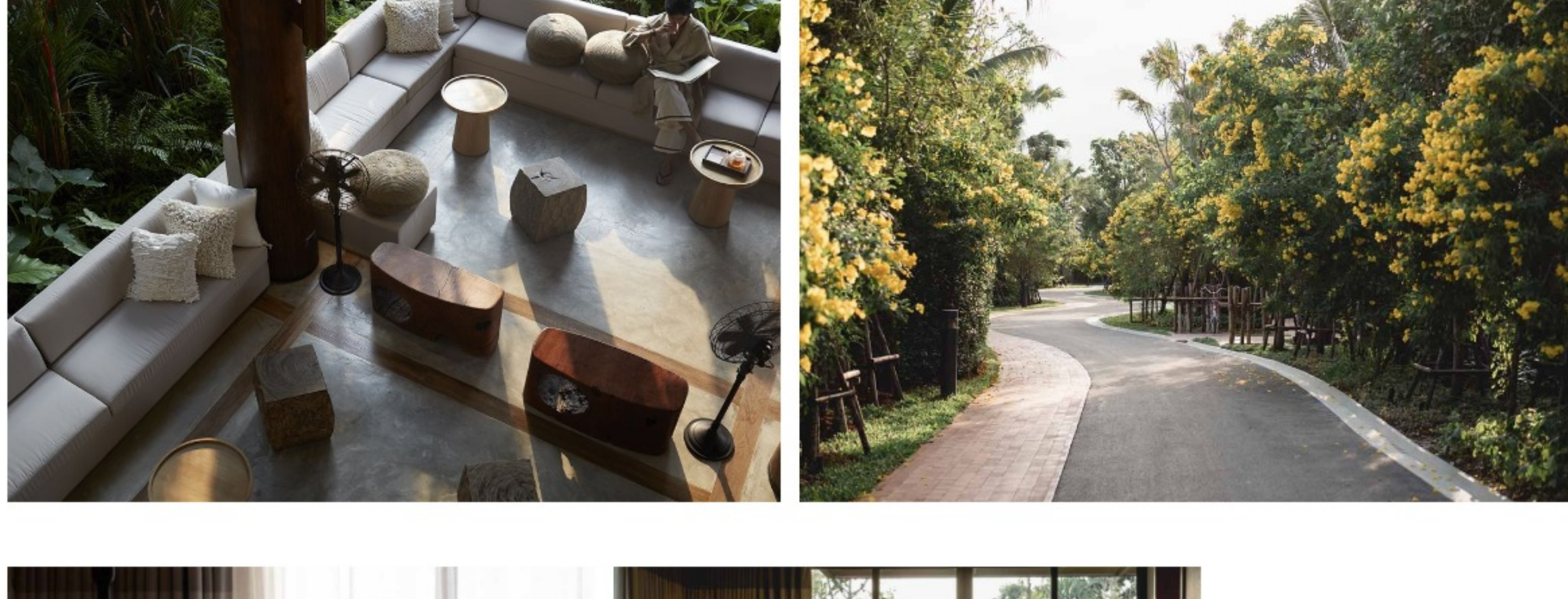
Rakxa Wellness and Medical Retreat blends into the vibe in its concept and design perspective, which pays homage to its surroundings while enhancing its appeal.

"Creating Rakxa involved restoring the natural area in which we sit. We have planted over 4,000 trees and 400,000 bushes and plants to create a Botanical Landscape," shares the resort's managing director, Kh Dusadee Tancharoen.

Sure enough, the Welcome Pavillion opens its doors to a lounge area overlooking two lakes exclusive to Rakxa. There is nothing extraneous or excessive as seen in the muted and neutral tones, and the architecture, which carries contemporary undertones while cloaked in tradition.

"Wellness is sensory and at Rakxa we consider all the senses—taste, touch, sight, smell and sound. Our design team gently infused the beautiful green space with soft, neutral tones that blend with nature and to not create too much stimulation in the brain. Guests come here to relax and they need to feel enveloped in tranquillity—so we kept the design to a minimum, letting the natural green surroundings be the design," explains Tancharoen.

The refreshing welcome drink is a precursor for a weekend of kombuchas, artisanal teas and healing cuisine complementing indulgent and curative therapies.



Do Not Disturb

The 63-acre resort spreads out like a mini city with villas situated within *sois* (side street in Thai). Buggies and very attentive staff are there to direct you at every juncture, but if you want to feel a bit more independent, you can walk or cycle around the property. Every villa—they have garden and pool villas—has two retro-looking bicycles parked in the front garden—in an almost Kinkadee-sque setting.

Inside the expansive one-bedroom villa, the reverence for nature and local materials is evident from the roof rafters to the furniture and décor highlights—all without compromising on the luxury and comfort factor. French doors invite the outside—a verdant lawn saturated with colourful flowers and the chirping of birds—inside.

"We chose local materials found in Bang Krachao where possible, and other parts of Thailand. The use of natural materials such as driftwood, rattan and bamboo was important to create that feeling of being immersed in nature," says Tancharoen. The décor around the resort embraces Thai craftsmanship where possible with "pottery from local potters, art from local artists" and more.

Read more: [Why You Should Design Your Bathroom as a Haven for Wellness](#)



Food and Drink

Ask any chef what elevates a dish to its highest form and choice ingredients and the immediate response would be quality ingredients. Rakxa's executive chef Attaporn Petthong is no different.

The edict of the food plan was to serve healthy and wholesome food that did not skimp on taste and presentation. This philosophy filters down from the array of juices at breakfast, the nutritious breads and the delicious multi-course spread through the day that are as much a visual delight as they are soothing for the body and soul.

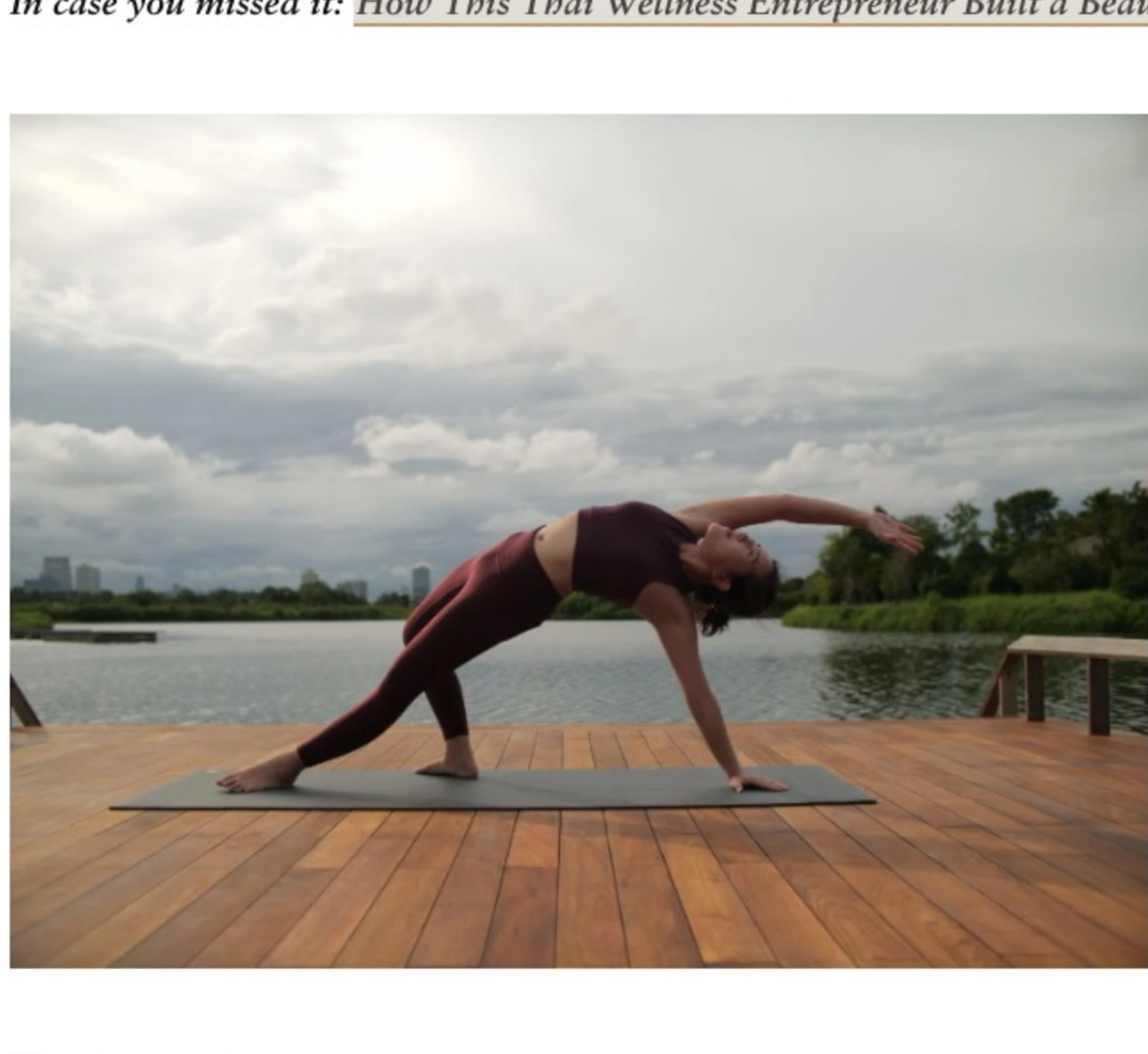
"Healthy food doesn't have to be bland," says chef Petthong. "There are many exciting flavours and tastes out there without the need to use unhealthy seasoning ingredients."

Backed by that attitude and skilful application of food chemistry and culinary know-how, the food speaks for itself. As someone with food sensitivities, their gluten-free and vegan food options were a cosy affirmation of a healthy lifestyle.

"Our overall approach to food is guided by an anti-inflammatory philosophy. Macro and micronutrients are calculated to optimise and support each guest with their health goal," explains chef Petthong.

The team worked with doctors, nutritionists, and health and wellness advisors on the menus and planned it so that local ingredients were honoured completely in the way they were cooked.

In case you missed it: [How This Thai Wellness Entrepreneur Built a Beauty Empire From Scratch](#)



The Attraction

Research has proven that one's fitness levels have a bearing on our wellness. To that end, Rakxa clubs fitness with wellness and medical technology.

Your orientation at the resort starts with a menu of fitness activities that you can fill your days with, following an all-encompassing fitness analysis at the gym by trainers who are motivating as they are demanding—to push yourself to your best.

Nothing beats starting the day with an intensive fascia stretch or a chair stretch routine to wash away all the strains of urban life and it slowly but surely gets you into mindful wellness mode. This is besides ashtanga, aerial yoga and Pilates sessions and whatever the trainers recommend based on your fitness evaluation.

Following that are your consultations with the wellness coordinator and medical doctors who will assess and recommend from its 10 unique programme based on your lifestyle, challenges and goals—Including Detox, Weight Management, Gut Health, Mobilisation, Immunity Booster and a Discover RAKxa programme—and help you set long-term health wellness goals. This includes the one-of-a-kind preventive Your DNA programme—a blood analysis of diseases, ailments ad conditions that you could be at risk of.



Photo 1 of 6

Rakxa's therapy and massage menu runs like an indulgent spa menu—but it's more than that. All the therapies here are strongly backed by ancient philosophies—from Thai Traditional Medicine (TTM) to Traditional Chinese Medicine and Ayurveda—with the aim to boost detox and set your body on the path to renewal. Doctors who specialise in each will recommend treatments, which come as part of your package—you can add on to take the feel-good journey a little further.

During my stay at Rakxa, I went through a transforming Traditional Thai Ya-Pao Detoxification Therapy—a cocktail of herbs were lit on fire on my belly, before a massage to clear blockages and stomach discomfort—and a Taoist traditional abdominal massage, the Chi Nei Tsang. I also went through a colonic hydrotherapy, a liver detox treatment where I also spent a refreshing afternoon at the retreat's water therapy area. The word 'suite' describes it better as there's a heated vitality pool, steam room, herbal steam as well as chill shower and cold plunge pool—which can all be enjoyed as part of the package.

Post-pandemic, Rakxa has introduced a series of three completely personalised holistic wellness programmes: Sense of Rakxa, Rest & Reset and Cleanse & Purify. Blending eastern remedies, therapeutic massages and physiotherapy, the programmes aim at total detoxification and resetting of the immune system.

The three days that I spent at Rakxa were packed with wellness, fitness, holistic and scientific programmes. I caught myself rushing to keep time more than once—something that would stress me otherwise, but I was strangely driven by a rush of motivation to feel better about myself. The oddness from having days to "myself" soon settled into a blissful awareness that wellness should never be an afterthought—I left the place rejuvenated and with a resolution to not take it for granted.

Read more: [Wellness Experts Share Their Tips for Holistic Health](#)



Tatler Tip

Rakxa's selection of teas can be enjoyed with every meal at Unam restaurant. It's well worth it to chalk some time, in between massages and hydrotherapies, for the Tea Lounge itself. The cosy tea parlour is designed with a 'bar' area at the centre and offers 360-degree views of the retreat's lush surrounds and Chao Praya River. Their extensive tea menu of "healing herbs in cups" as it introduces itself is worth a whole afternoon.

If tea lounges in history were tools for systemic social change (for women), this could be one where you contemplate a lifestyle change in general.

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