



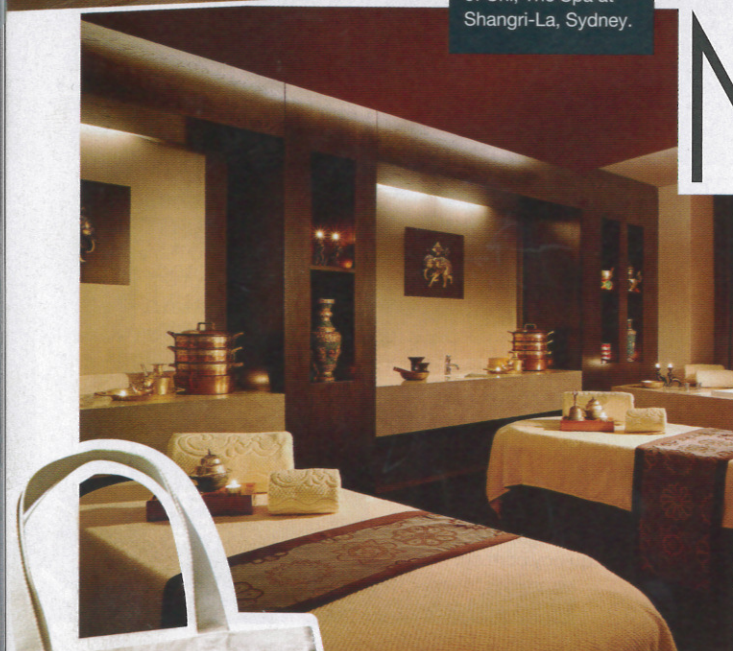
Ila products are used at Chi for their holistic healing properties.

Pure indulgence

Chic treat

A new inner-city hotel spa offers guests and visitors alike a unique take on indulgence.

The oriental interiors of Chi, The Spa at Shangri-La, Sydney.



More and more it seems that there is nothing new under the sun when it comes to spa experiences. In a valiant effort to provide their clients with the best in the business, many feature the same spa brands on their menus, as well as similar treatments dictated by their use. There is also a profusion of white on white decor that can come off as clinical rather than restive.

The newly realised Chi, The Spa at Sydney's Shangri-La Hotel is resolutely bucking the trend. Offering treatments that cater to the Chinese theory of the five elements – water, metal, wood, fire and earth – the Chi approach is designed to harmonise the body's positive yin and negative yang energy. The revelation upon visiting is the discovery of a new spa brand, exclusive in Australia to Chi. Ila is a range of formulas hand-blended in the bucolic English countryside of all places, utilising organic ingredients sourced directly from the producers and containing no synthetic chemicals.

In keeping with the brand's mystic Indian philosophy (the place of *Ila* is a sacred location in the north of India where the Sarasvati and Drishdvati rivers converge), the products are packed into vividly hued boxes of blue, yellow, orange and pink ("the navy blue of India" according to Diana Vreeland). Ila's jasmine candles launch an assault on the senses as soon as you enter the hushed space, and, according to spa manager Marie Adele Hames, are being snapped up by converts determined to take a small sample of the serenity on offer at Chi, The Spa with them into their everyday.

The Ila products are put to good use in a menu of Asian-influenced treatments, while the Sense of Place menu, a hallmark of Chi around the world, features uniquely Australian natural botanical products and recipes.

The interiors of Chi, The Spa are also very different from the minimalist formula that many spas adhere to, with warm dark wood panels and intricate metal Chinoiserie screens giving the space the feel of an indulgent opium den.

Chi, The Spa at Shangri-La, 176 Cumberland Street, The Rocks, Sydney, NSW, tel (02) 9250 6000.



LOLA & BAILEY HAS RELEASED A LIMITED-EDITION TOTE IN HOMAGE TO THE BRILLIANT ALEXANDER McQUEEN. VISIT WWW.LOLAANDBAILEY.COM.

Sleeping beauty

A four-star Queen Anne townhouse at the edgier end of London's Mile End Road, entering 40 Winks is like slipping down *Alice in Wonderland's* rabbit hole. Man of the house and interior designer David Carter has turned his home into a witty and whimsical two-bedroom boutique hotel. It's quirky but beautiful, with an eclectic mix of old and new, bashed bronze roll-top baths, gold-leaf de Gournay wallpaper, one of The Beatles' drum kits, *trompe l'oeil* on the ceilings and Wi-Fi throughout. If peace is what you're after, take yourself off to the first-floor panelled music room with a good novella or sip tea in the cobbled garden. It's London Fashion Week's favourite – editors clamber to secure a night or two upstairs. Bedrooms are unique and theatrical. There's a chic black-and-white-striped-wallpapered single room or the bright, whitewashed Victoriana double with stripped wooden floors. And if you stay during one of Carter's infamous "bedtime story" nights, you'll bump into Helena Bonham Carter *et al* in their pyjamas – surreal. Visit www.40winks.org.

