

Turn back the clock

COMO Shambhala Urban Escape in London has hosted the first Time Well Spent wellness day. *European Spa* met the experts sharing their natural beauty solutions and meditation tips

[Report by Sarah Camilleri]

In a bid to promote the benefits of good nutrition and a mindful approach to everyday health, COMO Shambhala Urban Escape, at the chic Metropolitan hotel off Park Lane, recently hosted its inaugural Time Well Spent wellness day.

The brainchild of health and nutrition consultant Karen Cummings-Palmer and founder of wellbeing brand Tri-Dosha, meditation expert Sunita Passi, the women-only event introduced guests to the benefits of meditation and optimised nutrition. It also offered advice on facial massage techniques and bespoke, equilibrium-balancing massages courtesy of COMO's spa director Corrina Yap.

Karen Cummings-Palmer started the day off with an engaging discussion on beauty perception and the ageing process, also offering the opportunity to receive one-to-one nutrition advice.

"Beauty is about being comfortable in your own

skin," she told guests. "Women, like great wine, can improve with age. We have to understand that management of age should be a daily concern. Wellness is our most valuable commodity."

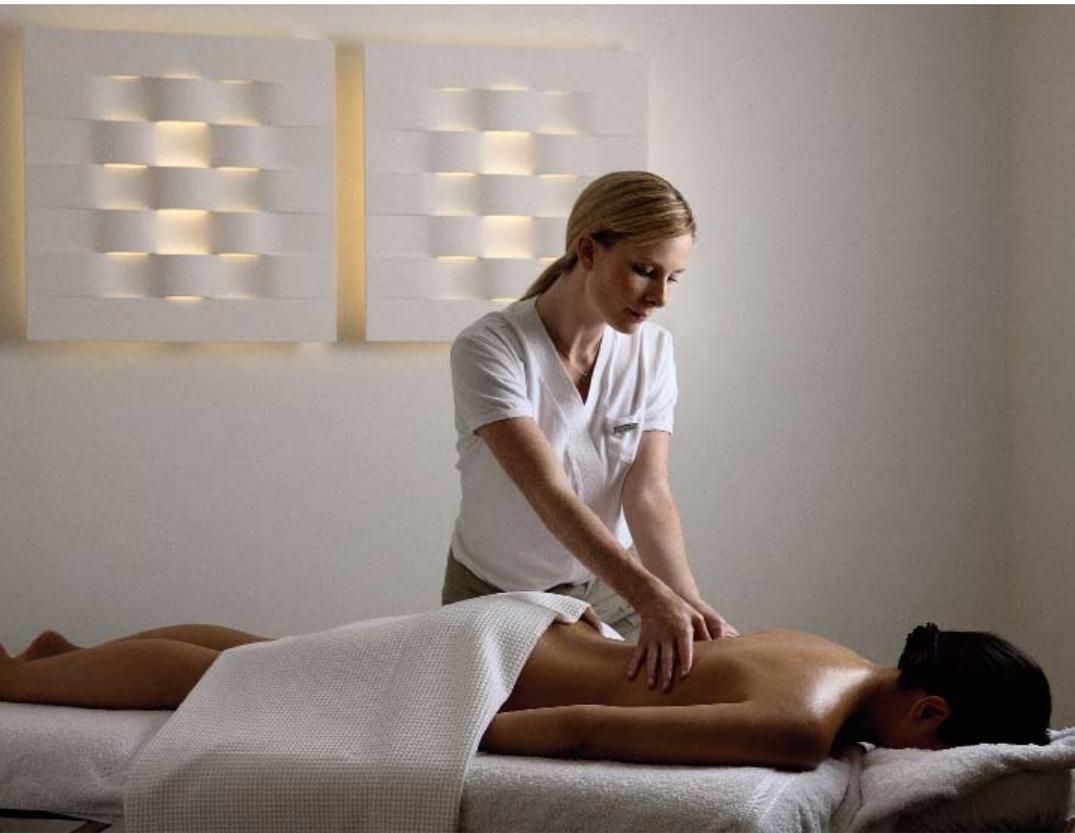
Guest speaker, osteopath and naturopath Christopher Lambert, also shared his thoughts on the body's ability to self-heal once the underlying cause of pain or discomfort is identified.

Moving on to mindfulness, Sunita Passi revealed how even a short time spent meditating each day can decrease the amount of the stress hormone cortisol in our bodies and increase DHEA and melatonin, which help regulate sleep patterns.

After a nutritious lunch courtesy of COMO's chefs, some memorable, detoxing Waterfall juice and delicious ginger, lemon and manuka honey tea, *European Spa* asked the Time Well Spent experts what they felt the event had offered guests:



Corrina Yap
Spa director, COMO
Shambhala Urban Escape



Above from left: COMO Shambhala at the Metropolitan, London; meditation expert Sunita Passi; nutrition was a focus of Time Well Spent; massages were offered; nutrition consultant Karen Cummings-Palmer

What prompted you to offer Time Well Spent?

Corinna Yap: “COMO Shambhala has always had a healthy living philosophy. With Karen and Sunita we had the perfect combination to provide the option of a short day retreat to time-poor women in London and the Home Counties.”

What elements were crucial to the programme?

Karen Cummings-Palmer (KCP): “It was essential that our guests felt comfortable and engaged. Once women see taking time out to look after themselves as not only legitimate, but crucial, they are open to making positive changes and healthier choices.”

Sunita Passi (SP): “We wanted to share information, enjoy a relaxing lunch and offer bite-sized sessions to leave guests feeling rejuvenated, but also wanting more. As the focus was anti-ageing the natural way, we decided to share the rituals that have kept back our own wrinkles, improved our facial contours and relieved stress and tension. We gave special tips on vitamins, diet and exercises for health and beauty to give guests ideas for a more youthful appearance.”

What are the main concerns women have?

KCP: “Not all women want or need to look ten years younger, but they do all want to look great.”

SP: “As women age, saggy skin, double chins, jaw lines and neck areas become more of a concern than hips, thighs etc. With facial massage techniques, I can teach clients how to build and strengthen these areas. Meditation can contribute to hormone balance as well as help guests self-regulate their emotions and stress levels.”

What beauty myths would you like to dispel?

SP: “You won’t change the way you feel about yourself through cosmetic procedures. For a woman to look and feel her best, she needs to love herself from the inside, develop wisdom and compassion, and maintain her mind-body connection, which is crucial to self awareness.”

What ‘takeaways’ did you give your guests?

KCP: “We wanted to encourage guests to build on the work, so we offered them a complimentary session with any package purchased. In addition, we gave them a wonderful Como Shambhala bag filled with products from Tri-Dosha, Ayo Beauty, Better You and the spas signature body products.”

Will there be more Time Well Spent events?

KCP: “Yes indeed. Our next will be held at COMO Shambhala on Saturday, September 6.”

Meditation at spas

Sunita Passi suggests three ways in which spas can help their guests work towards a stress-free body and mind.

- **Pre-treatment**
A ten-minute guided visualisation can be facilitated before a treatment
- **One-to-One sessions**
Individual group sessions with a qualified teacher can be held, in the same way that yoga is offered in spas
- **Retreat meditation**
A retreat-style programme, like the sessions at sunitapassimeditation.com, is the ultimate offer. Full wellness coaching within a spa environment can ensure a high quality, holistic service.

www.tri-dosha.co.uk
www.karencummingspalmer.com
www.comohotels.com/metropolitanlondon/wellbeing