

IN Tibetan Buddhist tradition 'Shambhala' is known as a mythical kingdom hidden somewhere in Inner Asia and is understood to be a place of peace, tranquillity and happiness. So when I arrived at COMO Shambhala Estate, set on 90 hectares of steamy rainforest outside of Ubud in central Bali, I found a paradise completely deserving of the title.

This unique property, nestled in its own private sanctuary beside a sacred spring and overlooking the Ayung River, offers a tranquil and nurturing environment to rejuvenate the body, mind and spirit. As soon as you enter the grounds, you know you've arrived somewhere extraordinary.

Bali's COMO Shambhala Estate is the COMO Hotel and Resort group's flagship property. COMO Shambhala's vision emphasises holistic wellness, encompassing healthy eating, exercise and self-development. And what better place to



DE-STRESS — BALI STYLE

tackle a wellness program than an inspirational setting such as this?

Renowned for its friendly locals and a culture of ceremonies, Bali's relaxed and slow rhythm of life is enough to make any stressed out urban dweller park poolside and chill out for the duration of their stay.

The Estate caters for up to 60 guests and apart from restaurant visits or group activities you can feel as though the property is your own. Accommodation includes a collection of garden rooms, terrace and Estate suites, and private villas which are all luxurious and spacious and contained within five residences clustered throughout the property.

There are several programs on offer but spa manager, Sally Halstead, says that the stress management program is very popular. Most people I chat to during my stay are here to de-stress. The spa menu is extensive, offering a myriad of heavenly massage, body and facial treatments.

Included in all programs is an initial meeting



More people are seeking out spa treatments to help reduce stress.

with a doctor or nutritionist. I meet with Dr Deepak, an integrative doctor, practising both Western and Ayurvedic medicine. By the end of our session, he has designed a restaurant and spa treatment menu for my stay.

Programs run for three, five or seven nights, and deliver a combination of meals, treatments and activities. Therapies are angled towards a specific purpose as guests are here for different reasons.

Individual programs are tailor-made, but Sally informs me that popular stress relief treatments include the COMO Shambhala massage, which is perfect for guests who release stress through feeling nurtured, deep tissue for guests who hold stress in the deep tissues of the body and can relax through a strong pressure massage; and the Indian head massage for those who manifest stress in their head, neck, shoulders and upper back. To compliment the relaxing spa treatments, activities such as tai chi, yoga, Prahna meditation, Pilates (specially designed studio with state-of-the-art equipment), water therapy, and bike riding are on offer. There is also

a well-equipped indoor gym and an outdoor gym and climbing wall along the Estate's walking track. A resident counsellor is available for coaching sessions and guests receive advice on restoring inner balance and strategies aimed at maintaining a stress-free life when back in the real world.

The resorts cuisine uses raw, organic foods rich in vitamins and living enzymes to create a healthy delicious menu. Instead of a wine list (although wine is available) expect to find an extensive juice menu to complement the nutritional dishes. Ingredients are sourced locally and the meals are so fresh and tempting, you'll want to try every dish.

The residences have everything you need: a shared infinity pool, sun lounges, a communal lounge and dining area, room service, as well as your own lavish suite with a king-sized four-poster bed, flat screen TV and a deep stone bath to soak away city stress.

The COMO Shambhala Estate may well be the mecca of relaxation and rejuvenation. ■

“The Estate delivers a revitalising and personalised approach to wellness. Its serenity and beauty makes it a place you'll feel reluctant to leave.”

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RELAX, UNWIND, ENJOY

In addition to stress management, other programs available include:

- **Cleansing:** a wellness consultant works on the lymphatic system, liver, bowels, kidney and skin through the use of exercise, good nutrition and treatments.
- **Rejuvenation:** focuses on improving diet, weight and energy levels, combining spa treatments with healthy eating and positive thinking.
- **Ayurvedic:** an Ayurvedic doctor assesses a client's constitution through a series of questions and prescribes a therapy program accordingly.

For more information visit www.como.bz