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Oasis of peace

Pañpuri Organic Spa promises serenity amid the bustle of George Town. **BY Petrina Fernandez**

Much of Penang's appeal lies in its heritage, food and a thriving arts and culture scene, but all that activity inevitably takes its toll. When mind and body can take in no more and rest is needed, the discerning traveller needs to look no further than the Eastern & Oriental Hotel.

On the sixth floor of the grand Victory Annexe is the sumptuous Pañpuri Organic Spa, composed of a medley of all the elements essential to relaxation. Wood, stone and soft furnishings bathed in the glow of soft light invite the weary to relax and the tense to unwind.

A warm welcome. The fragrance of essential oils, herbs and spices drifts through the reception area. Specially blended organic tea is the prologue for a session of rejuvenation, the possibilities of which are described in an enticing menu. If you find yourself lost amid the myriad of choices, the friendly spa manager is on hand to walk you through the list of facials, massages and body treatments. A tray of organic infused aromatherapy oils allows you to determine the scent most suited to your mood, from the delicate, lingering embrace of jasmine to the piquant accents of lemongrass.

Follow your masseuse to a treatment room with expansive windows looking out over the sea and enjoy the view during an organic tea tree foot ritual. As you bask in the soothing exercise, your therapist walks through your preferences in sweet and sensitive spots and areas of focus and pressure

intensity to create the perfect experience.

THE SPA OFFER. The Thai-born Pañpuri Organic Spa is renowned for its exquisite Asian-inspired spa treatments and natural plant-based products, which are stocked by Harrods in London and Barney's in New York. Should you opt for a facial, Pañpuri's anti-ageing skin care combines jasmine essences with eight essential amino acids and five red fruit compounds to purify, restore and hydrate the skin for plump youthfulness. Signature facials include the Maliwan Invigorating Facial with Eye Lift Treatment for mature skin, Montra Visibly Youthful Facial for normal and dry skin and the Mali-Amata Eternal Facial for combination or oily skin.

Capable hands knead and stroke your stress away with practised techniques in the deeply relaxing rituals inspired by traditional Thai and Oriental therapies, complemented by the soothing scent of jasmine, lemongrass, vetiver, rose or geranium oil. The Prana Stress-Relieving Massage is a notable favourite for its natural healing forces, employing a combination of Thai and Balinese acupressure techniques to stimulate blood circulation and increase muscle flexibility.

Highly recommended are the comprehensive packages that wholly ease body, mind and soul. The Cerita Dogeng couple's ritual is particularly fantastical: the signature foot ritual is followed by a honeymoon bath, an organic milk sea salt body

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scrub, the honeymoon shower, an organic milk salt body wrap and the Soontharee Absolute Well-Being Massage. Exclusive to Penang are the Ropaya Jet Lag Renewal, which pairs the foot ritual with a warm body cleanse, a choice of body scrub and a massage, and the Sod Sai Soothing Body and Face After Sun Treatment. This comprises a Thai herbal steam bath with jasmine milk and a wrap rich with aloe vera, sandalwood, geranium and lavender. Gentlemen are not excluded, with the Chivit Chiva Sports Massage and the express Mali-Anantara Gentlemen's Energising Facial promising deep, efficient therapy.

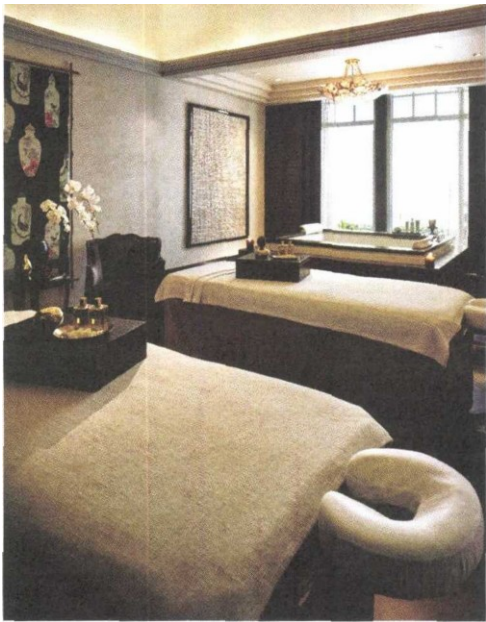
Facials start at RM373.10 while massages are priced between RM221.55 and RM408.10. The packages will set you back RM559.70 to RM932.80 for two to four hours of pampering.

The finer details. Elevating Pañpuri to a superlative destination is its eye for detail. Its organic stance extends beyond ingredients and treatments, to its bathrobes, towels, sheets and the refreshments served. The therapists are exceedingly knowledgeable and obliging, allowing for an experience tailored to your exacting requirements.

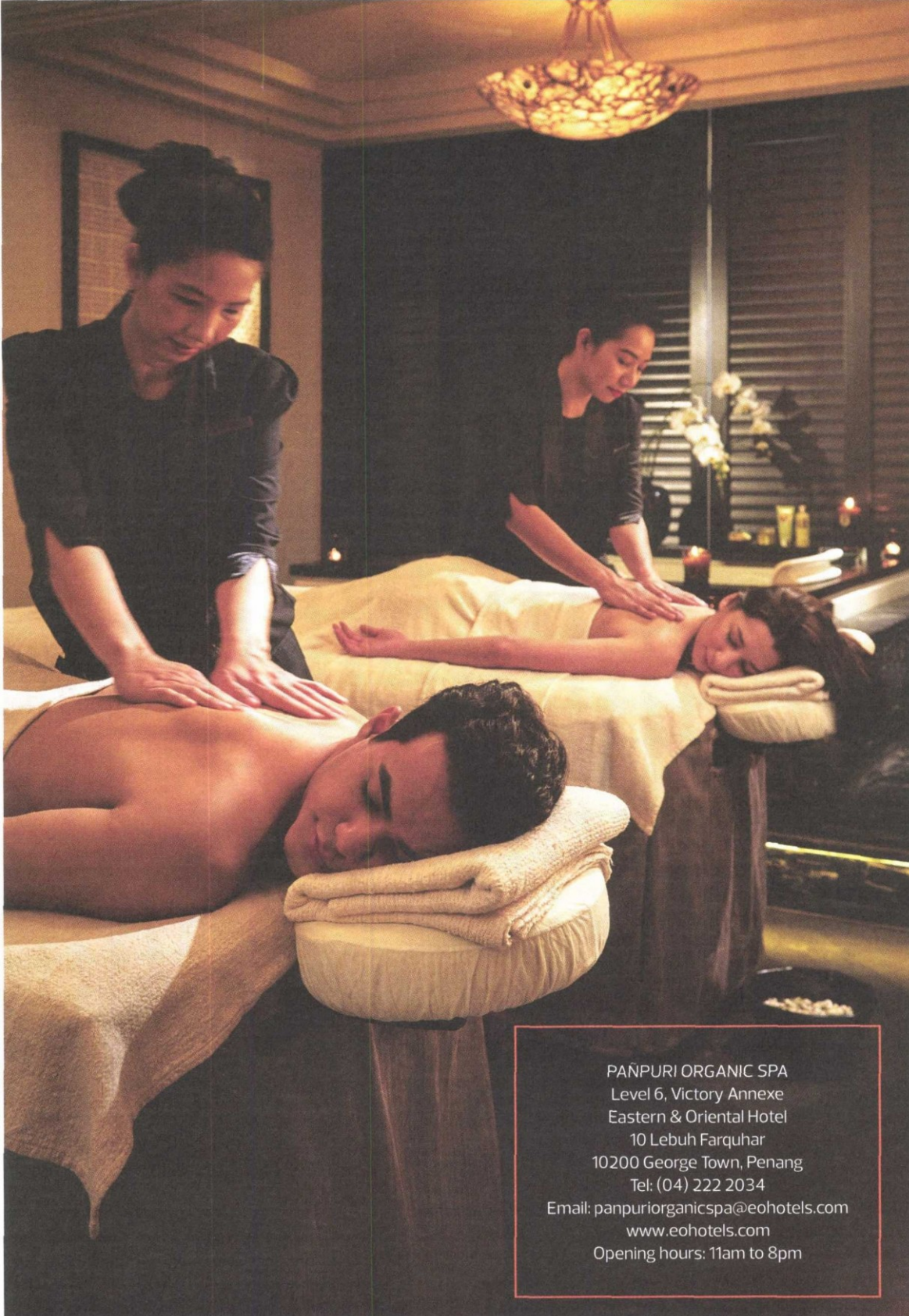
Stave off the inevitable return to reality by lingering in the lounge post-treatment, where hot tea and fresh fruit await. If your appetite has been stirred, retire to the Poolside Terrace, Sarkies Corner or Farquhar's Bar for a bite. Better yet, time your session to precede tea or dinner and have reservations made at the elegant 1885 restaurant to prolong this indulgent escape. The bustle of the city does not penetrate these walls, preserving the charm and glamour of the E&O Hotel. **E**

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Natural essential oils and expert techniques make for a memorable session at the sumptuous spa



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