

Pics: Sanjay MD



GREEN AND BEAUTIFUL: The 25-acre property that makes up Shreyas Retreat is a haven for green-lovers



A scene from the Ramayana



The meditation hall



The performance theatre



Beach chairs lined-up



The yoga session hall



A yoga session in progress



The ayurvedic massage centre

This soothing sanctuary

Straight out of a fantasy, this yoga and health resort tucked away on the outskirts of Nelamangala, 45km away from Bangalore — **Shreyas Retreat** is the perfect destination for that wholesome relaxation getaway — for the mind, the soul and the body



A pool of lilies

ignored as other appointments crowded our schedule. First up, an introductory class in yoga! We are yoga virgins and have never even thought of assuming those postures and poses at any point in our lives. Shreyas Retreat, a property under the Relais & Chateaux group is, however, being marketed as a wholesome wellness resort and a yoga resort and this claim rings loud in every activity that the resort organises and offers. All employees in the resort practice yoga and every morning, one gets to indulge in a display of the yoga session at the open air practice space — beautiful and energising. We were obviously invited to a session and now proudly stand as young yoga novices. If you are however already into yoga,

like this and the air fresh and fragranced by the mélange of perfumes from the herbs growing all around you. Occasionally, you might also hear the distant strains of prayers and chants being recited at the prayer hall — another daily ritual that the employees of the resort practice.

This can only be followed by a leisurely swim in the infinity pool as *champa* blooms loosen themselves from trees and

fall all around you, as you float around imbibing in all this mesmerising beauty. As the sun slowly set that evening and we prepared to leave, it dawned on us that Shreyas is the kind of place you can come back to again, and again, and again. Leaving with a bag of warm, freshly-baked cookies and a few bottles of cold water, as we left we realised that this was a home away from home and all this luxury was aimed at just one amazing, soothing goal — the ultimate happiness of the mind, the soul and the body.

Be at Shreyas Retreat, Santoshima Farm, Gollahalli Gate, Nelamangala or visit www.relaischateaux.com/shreyas or www.shreyasretreat.com and email re-india@relaischateaux.com or call +911244309400

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Other health resorts

SOUKYA — an International Holistic Centre and Resort, Soukya Road, Samethanahalli, Whitefield

Call 28017000 or visit www.soukya.com

AYURVEDAGRAM — Heritage Wellness Centre, Hemandanahalli, Samethanahalli Post, Whitefield

Call 65651090 or visit www.ayurvedagram.com



The welcome

L Romal M Singh

YOU step out of your vehicle onto lush green lawns, the smell of flowers perfuming every breath of fresh air you breathe in. The alarming quiet, especially for frayed nerves is suddenly soothing and the world around you lights up. A smile erupts on your face as you see two *kurta-pyjama* clad men approach you, warmth and positive-energy exuding, almost emitting a summery-bright aura around them — and you know you are going to love this place already.

The welcome

Soon you're entrenched into the simple but refreshing *aarati* ritual being performed in your honour. You are garlanded with a chain of fragrant blooms and your forehead smeared with *kumkum*, before a small-bright flame is circled in front of you to ward off all evil that has attached itself to you through the journey.

Once cleansed, you are escorted to the library and lounge area, where a Zen-like energy pervades. If you'd asked for a meal as you arrived, and we recommend you do, in no time, once washed and changed, you are

welcomed into the dining room and served a meal that will stay with you as one of the best memories from this all-indulgent quick getaway.

We arrived at night and so after a scrumptious dinner with a pure-vegetarian set-menu presented and cooked to perfection, we retired. The food was nourishing — home-grown vegetables, cooked in mild spices and oils paired with warm broths, crunchy salads and desserts that herald the finesse of healthy Indian cooking. This was culinary heaven.



The ambient garden

Day 1

After a night of sound sleep, we woke up to loud bird-calls and a cool breeze-caressing the whole 25-acre property. Our room opened up into the all-weather infinity pool with four rooms around it. The glistening clear water was tempting, but had to be painfully



A home-grown greek salad

then you've found your dream destination as the staff and trainers at the resort will work out a session suited to your needs.

Yoga done, we moved onto the next must-do, the meditation. Several structures have been built around the property, where one can indulge in some peaceful, quiet and insightful meditation. The general silence and serenity on the property only adds to the experience. The resort also organises meditation walks — an indulgence you must give into.

Stretched and calmed in the mind, the only thing left was a massage and while Shreyas offers you a whole range of massages, facials and combined therapies, the ayurvedic massages are administered only after a



A double bedroom suite

thorough check-up, where the best treatment is ascertained for the client. We, therefore, decided to go in for a Balinese full-body massage followed by an hour-long steam and the effect was simply mind-blowing. Following that up with a home-theatre experience, watching a favourite, seemed the best way to end the day.

Day 2

Day two began with a walk in the sprawling gardens on one end of the property, followed by a breakfast served in one of the many thatched tree-houses located conveniently across the property. Sit back, relax on the mattresses and cushions, read a book or watch a train go by — this is the life. The breeze is constant in areas



A view of the pool

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C. HOTEL MANAGEMENT

D. FASHION

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