

# The Spa Review

**Amara Spa, Park Hyatt Dubai**  
**Dr KC Barker, TheSpaReview.com**

“Just relax!... It is so easy to say and not so easy to do!” Jason Sloan, Director of Amara Spa is explaining to me the Amara spa mission - to create a “spa journey” that promotes a sense of stimulated relaxation. Does that make sense? Well, yes when you think that it really isn’t easy to shut out work and family pressures, to turn off the busy mind, and to simply enjoy a sensory day trip. It takes practice in a specially-crafted ambience, and Amara Spa is the place to studiously practice relaxation.

Arriving at the Park Hyatt is like travelling to North Africa or Moorish Spain – clean white walls, deep blue tiles, filigreed iron, gentle palms and dark-stained terracotta jars. The elegant simplicity of the design of Amara is immediately calming, and I take my first deep breath inside the large reception area. Do I smell frankincense? All day I will ask “what is that lovely scent?” and I will learn that some are natural oils, others are combinations of essential oils designed to create a distinctive signature scent for the spa. Frankincense, it could be said, is the signature scent for the region, having been the major commodity of trade and commerce in the Middle East for in centuries past.

As I’m guided past quiet relaxation courtyards of pristine toweled recliners by reflecting pools and blossoming shrubs – a combination of indoor and outdoor rooms and open doors and hints of breeze – I wonder, “where is everyone?” We are so accustomed to crowds in Dubai that we are almost intimidated to be alone, but over the day it becomes really comfortable to be alone with myself in the peace that is Amara.





No spa day is complete without the opportunity to empty my mind of worries, to meditate for a bit on possibilities and pleasures, to find a moment of serenity and well-being. Amara Spa does not seek to attract crowds of people, focusing on quality rather than quantity. Like a Moorish princess, I spend solitary time strolling the marble halls, deep breathing by burbling fountains, lunching on lime and chili-chicken glass noodles secluded in a curtained terrace, finally sipping Turkish coffee by the torch-lit pool of aqua ripples.

To help me focus on breathing and to create my meditation moments, on my iPod is the soothing voice of Hilary Adele, my breathing coach from Inner G. Hilary's technique is my recommended tool for stress reduction and wellness through concentrated deep breathing. No doubt you've heard that, typically, we don't breath properly, that we need to practice bringing more oxygen in to our bodies and brains. Amara spa is a lovely place to breath deeply and nourish the brain and the soul to manage big city stress.

Sometimes, I think, we take our lovely weather for granted – our Dubai blue skies and Gulf breezes and desert sunshine. We retreat to sealed and air-conditioned buildings – and spas – that simply can't be good for us. It is absolutely delightful, at Amara, to step into the sunshine on my private terrace from the teak and glass, granite and linen treatment room. I have just been cleansed with a vigorous "salt and pepper" scrub, rinsed in a rain shower in the sunshine, and rendered immobile by a mesmerizing massage. I fall back on "my" silk cushions and I am startled by the silence here in the heart of the city, then suddenly aware of chirping and cooing birdcalls – something else we don't often hear in the city. My eyes are drawn to the undulating movement of the palms as the breeze moves the fronds like the sensuous hands of an Arabian dancer – is that where they find inspiration? Reaching for the tray of dates and almonds, I'm inspired to find more time for palm trees in my life.



When I spa, I'm seeking the sense of physical and mental well-being that comes from a balance of fitness, beauty, serenity and indulgence. I've started my spa day with a workout – the gym facility has enough machines that I can adapt to my daily fitness routine of treadmill and body work. I've had my face exfoliated with ground seashells and hydrated with a seaweed masque – creating a radiance I hope to maintain by using these products I can purchase as I leave. I've retreated to my inner mind, uninterrupted, then tended to by confident and competent spa staff anticipating my needs for sips of mint water or slippers to cross a shower-splattered floor. My mind has switched off and my body has been switched on by sensory delights. I'm learning to relax through an Amara spa journey, but I believe I'll need another lesson when Amara reveals the new spa menu in March. Amara – the jewel in the Hyatt crown – will launch a new menu of gem stone treatments and a fresh new look.



At the end of my spa day, I feel like a total noodle – no strength in my totally relaxed body. Jessica and Olivia send me on my way out into the Dubai traffic, where I vow to let the bliss I've achieved make me a more tolerant driver – Inshallah.

**Amara Spa at the Park Hyatt is rated by TheSpaReview as a 5 Crown Spa - the five silver crowns indicating that you can expect Absolutely Royal Treatment.**

