

You At Your Best

Middle East

# Women's Health



## HEAD-TO-TOE HOT

The One Move That  
Tones All Over

QUANTICO STAR

*Priyanka  
Chopra*

HOW SHE LOOKS THIS  
GOOD ON NO SLEEP →

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# Eastern Promise

Looking for a little R&R just a hop and a skip away from the city lights? We discover an urban sanctuary in the heart of the capital.

*By Diane Brereton*

After a crazy working week that had left us feeling somewhat worn down and in need of some perking up, it was easy to hop into a car and leave the hustle and bustle and twinkling lights of Dubai and take the one hour journey to the Eastern Mangroves Hotel and Spa by Anantara in Abu Dhabi.

Our mission was to experience luxury and total relaxation, and this was delivered to us in style.

The moment you enter the elegant and chic lobby with its Arabian accents, the calm atmosphere and understated luxury is immediately evident with staff on hand to greet you and give you a warm welcome. This hotel offers guests a unique location surrounded by a vast expanse of lush green mangrove marsh. Guests can seize the opportunity to have a guided tour across the waters, or if you are feeling more

energetic, you can dabble in a spot of dragon boat racing or kayaking in the only kayaking venue in Abu Dhabi. Our deluxe mangroves balcony room added to the experience, offering a romantic view of the mangroves with its earthy rich tones, sumptuous fabrics and authentic Arabian art work, reflecting the magnificence of the region's desert and mangroves.

The bathroom, complete with

a rain shower and oversized bath tub, made it impossible to resist taking a long soak. The welcome treats of fresh fruit and chocolates ensure that you feel thoroughly spoilt.

With the temperature finally subsiding to allow for some serious sunbathing, we hurried down to The Pool Deck. This tranquil family friendly area with an infinity pool was the ideal place to finally finish reading my half-read novel





whilst sipping on freshly-made drinks and tucking into some delicious food made by highly efficient staff. We munched our way through a light and fresh panzanella made with Tuscan bread, tomato, cucumber, marinated peppers, tuna, confit red onions and basil leaves. This Mediterranean influenced restaurant is a great spot for a relaxed and informal lunch.

Alternatively, you can enjoy a very reasonably-priced traditional afternoon tea at The Mangroves Lounge, which offers a selection of finger sandwiches, pastries, raisin and apple scones with clotted

cream and marmalade, along with yummy Opera cake and your of choice premium tea.

**Exotic Elegance**

The Eastern Mangroves offers casual and fine dining that sets it apart from many other hotels. For us, the ultimate culinary experience was our dinner at the Pachaylen Thai restaurant. If you are a foodie and a lover of the exotic taste of Thai food, then this is a must.

The décor is an eclectic mix of modern elegance with a Thai twist and it is obviously a popular choice, as it was fully booked with groups and

couples delighting in the consumption of some mouth-wateringly good food served from an open kitchen.

The menu features a uniquely presented starter, flavoursome curries and spicy salads. We had the privilege of eating KhungYang Naam Ma -Kham: Grilled ginger prawns presented on a bed of steamed bok choy in a sweet tamarind pepper sauce. This dish was cooked to perfection, allowing you to savour every bite. It is a fabulous setting for a date night. The attention to detail and excellent service make it a cosy experience that you would

not hesitate to sample again on a regular basis. After dinner, we headed to Impressions, a lavish rooftop lounge where we enjoyed an exclusive selection of grape along with cheese, and relaxed in plush sofas, taking in the nighttime view of the mangroves—which was so far-flung from the ordinary that it made us feel like we had actually left town.

**Rise and Shine**

The excellent cuisine from the night before had us waking up the following morning thinking about food (let's be honest, it is usually one of the things we

one priority. This bespoke private session offers two hours of cleansing and relaxation, where you partake in an ancient Turkish six step ritual including a Moroccan mint tea and olive foam cleansing massage and an hour long invigorating massage with essential oils. I guarantee that this will leave you and your partner feeling thoroughly cleansed and relaxed at the same time and very reluctant to leave. This is definitely one for your bucket list.

**Location, Location, Location**

Whilst we were happy to stay cocooned in the hotel, if you actually contemplate venturing out of this haven, the hotel is just 15 minutes from the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque or 20 minutes from downtown, where you can go shopping at various malls including The World Trade Centre and Marina Mall, or you can take a stroll along the corniche.

The quality of service, always accompanied with a genuine smile, may be the reason why this hotel sees many returning guests and local diners. We are already thinking of revisiting this unique spot (whether it be for a relaxing escape or to celebrate a special occasion). If you are looking to spoil yourself without having to hop on plane, this slice of paradise is waiting just an hour's drive from Dubai. ■

**The hotel is surrounded by a vast expanse of lush green mangrove marsh, and it's the only kayaking venue in Abu Dhabi**

look forward to the most when we stay in a 5-star hotel!). As we ventured down to breakfast at Ingredients, we were not disappointed we were spoiled for choice with organic delights from around the world and we indulged in a leisurely feast out on the spacious al fresco terrace. We took in the sunshine and listened to the birds chirping in the distance before

venturing off to the in-house spa for some well-deserved pampering.

A stay here simply would not be complete without a visit to the spa—it is undoubtedly the stand-out feature of the hotel and was the climax of our trip. Incorporating the spirit of its Thai origins, the spa offers a range of ageless rejuvenating experiences. It is the perfect

place to soothe tired muscles and cleanse your body and soul in a luxurious setting. It is also the home of the largest and most authentic Ottoman style hammam in Abu Dhabi.

The Arabian couples' experience is the pinnacle of ultimate indulgence and extravagance delivered by expert therapists, who made us feel like we were their number

PHOTOGRAPHY: SUPPLIED.