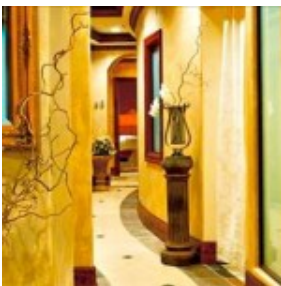


# Spa treatments run the gamut in Whistler

By Kathryn Reed

WHISTLER, British Columbia – It was a month ago today that I met Robert. He certainly made a lasting impression because I remember exactly how he made me feel by the time he was done with me.

He seemed to manipulate my body into pretzel-like positions. I was in heaven. I'm in heaven just reflecting on it.



Vida Spa at Whistler

My neck finally moved in all directions like it's supposed to. It did take some manipulation and patience on his part to get it out of creaky computer neck position – my name for the usual constant state of duress I find myself in.

Robert is one of the many massage therapists at Vida Spa inside the Fairmont Chateau Whistler.

This was the first Thai massage I had experienced. No wonder people rave about them. All that stretching was just what I needed that day – and every day.

At times when I was conscious of what was going on, I had flashbacks of previous massages of Shiatsu, Lomi Lomi and Watsu (even though the latter is in water).

Sue experienced her first hot stone massage. Fanny made her so relaxed she forgot about the stones between her toes until the therapist took them out.

The basalt rock that is used in hot stone massage is said to have energy. During full moons the rocks used at Vida are set outside to absorb that energy.



A client at Vida receives hot stone massage.

Photo/Provided

A slew of spa treatments are offered at Vida – including more traditional deep tissue massage.

As wonderful as Robert made my muscles feel, I do have two complaints. The first is where spa clients are supposed to change. (I came dressed in loose fitting clothing as is normal for receiving Thai massage.) But Sue and others who would be without clothes for their massage had to change into a robe in the hotel's changing area by the indoor pool-hot tub.

As guests of the Fairmont and not being that modest, it wasn't any big deal for her to walk in a robe through the hotel. For others, though, I could see the lack of privacy being an issue.

My other complaint is the price. The cost of each of our hour massages together is what I charge at A Massage at Tahoe for four one-hour treatments. Yes, the convenience of being at the

hotel has a price. But these fees are the same whether you're a guest or not – so not everyone would see the convenience in going to Vida like we did. Yes, Thai and hot stone take extra training. But, still – \$150 for an hour massage is too much.

I just hope Robert and Fanny got a higher cut than the spa, but that isn't always how it works at places like this.

Vida Spa, which has been operating since 2002, also has three locations in Vancouver and one in Seattle. For more information, [click here](#).

My other massage experience while in Whistler last month was at Taman Sari Royal Heritage Spa inside the Summit Lodge. Like at the Fairmont, the spa here is a separate entity from the hotel.

After filling out a short form, which is not uncommon, spa director Julie Wahono engaged me in conversation. She knew I worked for this website. That's why it surprised me how she went on and on about how much better the hotel was when it was owned by Kimpton.

Our experience at the hotel was great and one we would like to repeat, but without going to the spa.

Wahono talked about how it's the best spa in Whistler – that customers tell her that. Not this customer.

It was not the best way to start the massage. I'm there in a robe. I don't have a pen or paper in hand. This was not an interview, but still I got an earful. It was weird. I've been a massage therapist since 1997. Making clients relaxed is important. It wasn't working.

On the form it asked if I wanted my breasts and/or buttocks worked on. I had not seen that on an in-take form before. No to the former, yes to the latter.

I think a more relevant question is a person's occupation

because that can tell a therapist a lot about the likely aches and pains a person has.

Maryann was my therapist. She was good, but she wasn't Robert. I had the hour Javanese massage, a deep tissue where only the palms and thumbs are used. Unfortunately Maryann's thick accent prevented me from understanding her. She handed me something to begin with which I couldn't figure out what it was in the darkness of the room. After the massage I realized it was a pair of underwear. I'm still scratching my head on that one.

I have to disagree with the spa director. Taman is not the best place for a massage in Whistler. If I were to spend \$150 on a massage, my money will be given to Vida.