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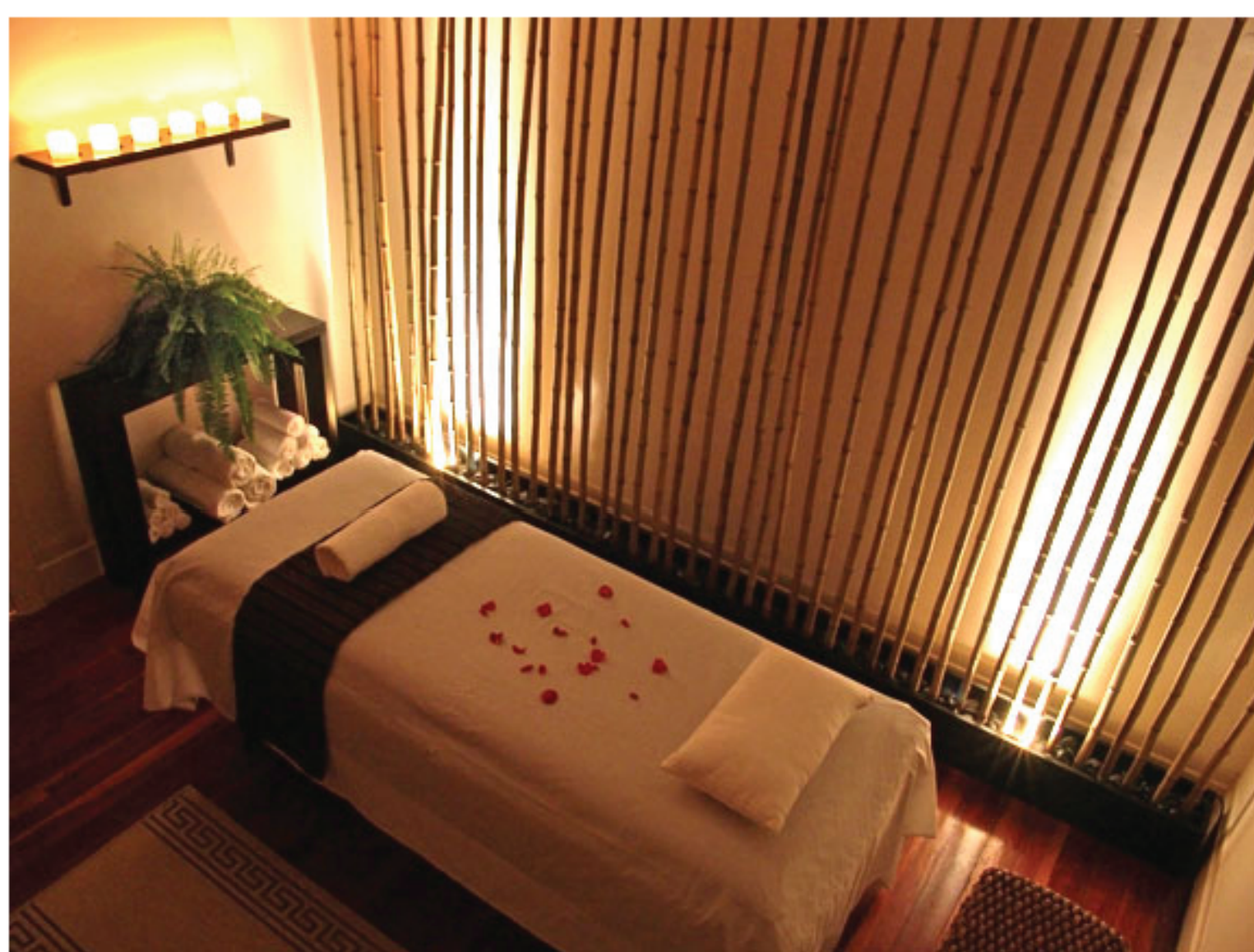
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Win a relaxing spa treatment

BY ANNABEL MCALEER

Auckland-based readers, leave a comment below and be in to win a wonderful Sandalwood Relaxing Facial at Tamara Spa in Ponsonby.

Plus, **subscribe** to *Good* by September 12 and receive a whopping \$50 off any treatment at Tamara Spa with the next issue.

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The rooms at [Tamara Spa](#) are dark, quiet and warm. Indian music tinkles, barely audible, in the background. It is a perfectly calm, soothing environment.

I'm at Auckland's new Ayurvedic spa for a Sandalwood Relaxing Facial—and believe me, I need it. My shoulders are so tense they are up around my ears, and even as I lie down in this supremely tranquil room for an hour of blissful pampering, I find myself still well and truly locked into work mode.

Here's a tip, then: Tamara Spa is on Blake Street, just off Ponsonby's Jervois Road. Don't rush there—or to any other relaxing treat—straight from a busy day at work! Ease yourself out of work mode with an extra half-hour to browse the shops beforehand, or grab a cup of tea and read a magazine at a nearby cafe.

The facial begins with an aloe vera and cucumber cleanser, to take off makeup and dead skin cells. Tamara Spa only uses natural products based on traditional Ayurvedic ingredients, herbs and essential oils, and they smell good enough to eat.

I can't tell when the cleansing ends and the almond oil massage begins; before I know it, Neelu (the owner of Tamara Spa and one of its three therapists) and her capable hands are doing their best to untangle my knotty shoulders. The face, neck and shoulder massage seems to last an age, and by the time the treatment moves on to the next phase I feel like the past few weeks of too much computer-time have been lifted from my shoulders.

Next, there's an apricot and honey scrub to scruff off rough skin, along with a steady stream of steam to help oust blemishes. The sandalwood part of the facial follows, together with saffron in a mild, antibacterial face mask to moisturise dehydrated skin and help regulate oil production.

While the mask does its thing, the relaxation continues with a head massage. Every Tamara Spa facial includes an Ayurvedic head massage. Not only a great tension reliever, head massage also stimulates blood circulation, which is good news for your scalp and hair. My last vestiges of tension dissolve into a mess of almond-oily bed-hair.

We're onto the home stretch now, which is probably just as well since I'm about to fall asleep. Pure fresh cucumber pulp is used as a toner, and it smells like a breath of longed-for summer. Cucumber slices are well-known for de-puffing under-eye bags, but pulped cucumber flesh, applied over gauze for tidiness' sake, is cool and refreshing all over the face, as well as softening the skin.

The 60 minutes of relaxation finishes with aloe vera moisturiser and eye gel—and a nice cup of herbal tea. It's lovely to sit unhurried in the comfortable reception room (since the spa is a re-purposed Ponsonby villa, it's really more of a living room) and sip tea while chatting to Neelu and another client, cosy in the spa's bathrobe with my hair sticking up at impossible angles.

Next time, I'll invest in a back massage as well—and I'll know better than to rush in straight from work.



Latest issue

From allergy prevention to zero waste, the second issue of *Good* tackles home renovation all the way from A to Z. We've also got the dirt on dairy farms ... and on dirt, with our eight-week guide to getting your veggie patch ready for a summer of home-grown goodies.



LATEST COMMENTS

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GOOD CAUSE

Building houses, building hope



New Zealand has some of the least-affordable housing in the developed world. High rents, overcrowding and cold, damp, uninsulated homes are an everyday reality for many low-income families. *Good* magazine has teamed up with Habitat for Humanity to help families help themselves into new housing.

Inside the magazine is an 8-page supplement to promote Habitat for Humanity in New Zealand. And for the next two months, *Good* will donate \$9 from each one-year subscription to Habitat for Humanity, and \$16 from each two-year subscription.

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