

## Treatment review: Warming Herb Ritual at Ushvani Spa

London day spa Ushvani offers a range of treatments inspired by Malaysian traditions. We test run one of the most comforting



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**The Story:** A trip to Ushvani is almost worth it for the building alone. Not many spas can boast grade II listed status.

Built in the late 1880s for the 5<sup>th</sup> Earl Cadogan, the building is still owned by the Cadogan family. The sweeping wooden staircase, marble carvings, and beautiful tiles are a joy to behold, and make you feel like you are walking in the footsteps of minor royalty, which I suppose you are, really.

The spa facilities are small, but perfectly adequate; it has a hydrotherapy pool that's about 3x3m, and a small steam room. The spa facilities are reserved for ladies only, but men can have treatments. There is also a couples suite with its own jacuzzi.

It's an independent spa, not part of a chain. Founded four years ago by Malaysian former-lawyer Usha Arumugam, it has a Malaysian theme, and it's own range of South East Asian inspired products bearing the spa's name.

**The treatment:** Choosing was difficult. Should I go for the Nutmeg Flower Bath Ritual, or a Malay or Balinese massage? In the end, given the chilly weather we were experiencing when I visited, I went for the Warming Herb Ritual which promised to "help get you through the cold, dark, months" with a massage incorporating warm herbal compresses, combined with some stretches.

The treatment started with an inhalation of Ushvani balm. Based on a traditional Asian cure-all, the balm contains rosemary, thyme, eucalyptus, and menthol combined with camphor, and it is said to help soothe aching muscles, ease tension and stress and alleviate cold symptoms.

It then progressed with a series of stretches before the therapist broke out the warm herb compresses. I could only smell cinnamon and cloves, but my therapist told me there are other herbs and spices in there as well.

As she worked the compress up and around my back, powdered spices escaped through the mesh. When she put the compresses down and followed up with a massage using Ushvani coconut and hibiscus oil, the spice powder was picked up in the oil, and made its way into the body that way.

She alternated between a massage with compresses and pummeling and stretching me with her hands for the remainder of the treatment. I was so relaxed when I came out I could barely remember my own name.

**Business boost:** The Knightsbridge location must surely help, surely rounding up spa customers in SW3 is akin to shooting fish in a barrel, but of course, those visitors will have expectations, and Ushvani's spectacular building, unique products, and interesting range of treatments will meet them.

*Tried by Frederika Whitehead*

The Warming Herb Ritual lasts 90 minutes and costs £200 at Ushvani Spa, London.

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