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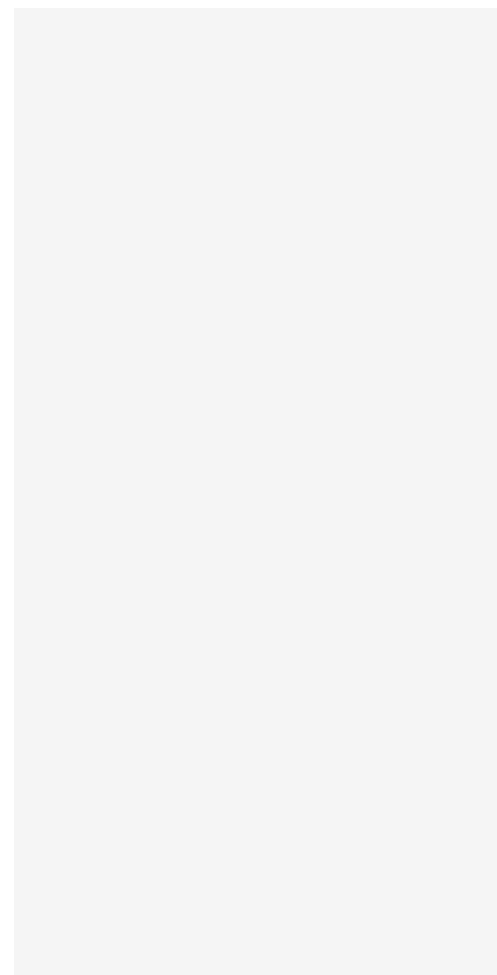
The return of The Chedi

There are some places that just fill you with joie de vivre, we revisit The Chedi... [Discuss this article](#)



There's no denying a quick jaunt away is good for the mind, body and soul. Even if you've chosen a fairly dishevelled spot, rammed with screaming urchins and a busload of teens, there's still something about getting away from it all that leaves you brighter than a 100-watt bulb.

That's where The Chedi comes in. Plonked on the Gulf of Oman and just a short hop, skip and flight (45 minutes to be exact) from Dubai, this five-star sanctuary is just what the doctor ordered. According to the old adage, 'you get what you pay for' – and at Dhs1,640* a night, you certainly pay – but The Chedi has been touted as one of the hottest spots for positive energy, or chi.



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So what is chi? According to feng shui expert Shivani Adalja, founder of Pathwood Feng Shui it's a Chinese word, meaning energy flow, and it's believed that channelling it correctly can alleviate minor symptoms – be that through acupuncture, herbal medicines, martial arts, massage or reflexology. And while such theories are not recognised in scientific clinical trials, there is plenty of anecdotal evidence that suggests it works.

As a feng shui practitioner, Shivani believes that a physical space can help to manage chi flow as well. 'If you combine a location, which has bags of positive energy, with massage, lots of fresh fish and a bit of yoga, you'll feel really energetic and sprightly', she assures.

Time Out has long been sceptical about the seemingly endless number of spas, retreats and resorts across the globe that claim to 'heal', but if what Shivani says is true, the Chedi Spa, could be the ultimate chi spot. The decor, with its beige walls, Omani wall hangings and rustic furniture, is certainly calming, while the heady mix of jasmine and eucalyptus that infiltrates every inch of the place offers an immediate olfactory lift.

The Balinese massage – the spa's signature treatment – kicks off with a hot towel rub down and a spot of deep breathing. 'This channels energy to all the tired parts of your body', says our therapist. 'If you have medical problems, always start with your breathing, then diet and massage should follow.'

The literal translation of chi is 'air', 'breath' or 'gas', and its original Latin translation is 'breathing'. 'The art of breathing is something that has been practised for years and there are even centres [Art of Living at www.aol.com] dedicated to it across the globe', says Shivani.

After one hour of massage, followed by a warming vat of ginger tea and a slow meander along the Arabian Gulf, we are certainly feeling restored, but whether this is down to the effects of The Chedi's 'energy' alone, we're still not so sure.

'Simply living by the sea can reduce stress levels significantly,' says Shivani. 'Of all the five chakras – water, fire, earth, wind and metal – water is the one that aids the healing process the most.'

'Just bathe in the sea for an hour a day and you'll see the difference on your skin – the minerals and salt are one of Mother Nature's best beautifiers,' notes Katrina.

The jury is probably going to be a long time out on whether or not feng shui-ing a room – or even an entire hotel – can have a discernible benefit on your physical wellbeing. What is undoubtedly true, however, is that environment definitely affects mood, which, in turn, has been scientifically proven to affect emotional wellbeing (happy people generally have stronger immune systems. Fact). 'It's like anything,' notes Katrina, 'it depends on what you value. For me it's the best quality food, the finest products and a mini break at somewhere like The Chedi every once and a while'.

As *Time Out* sits, post-massage, gazing out to sea and feeling what can only be described as (much as we usually hate the term) re-energised, it's hard – even for a dyed-in-the-wool sceptic – to disagree.

www.chedimuscat.com; www.pathwood.ae. Contact Katrina Valente on 050 565 7679 *Price correct at time of going to press



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