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East COAST CALM

Ina Baja's East Day Spa group have their feet firmly planted on Australian soil, writes **Ashleigh Sharman**.

Located in the city's grandest heritage hotel, InterContinental Melbourne The Rialto, East Day Spa Melbourne has been carefully designed as a haven from the hustle and bustle of the central business district yet only steps away from the vibrant Southbank — catering to both tourists and local office workers.

The group's only Australian location, initially launching in Wellington, New Zealand, in 2002, East Day Spa Melbourne opened in January 2010

with five treatment rooms including a luxurious double suite for couple's treatments and a relaxation room.

"East Day Spa had been growing rapidly in the New Zealand market and we were excited about expanding it into Australia. I was attracted to the vibrant cultural flavour and diversity of Melbourne — a perfect fit for our style of spa treatments. In terms of location we wanted to partner with a hotel that would offer beautiful premises in the heart of the city; we found that with Melbourne's grandest heritage hotel, Intercontinental Melbourne, The Rialto," says owner and founder, Ina Baja.

East Day Spa is a pan-Asian inspired spa, offering luxury treatments to the most discerning of clients. Treatments combine a unique blend of ancient holistic healing and modern spa therapies — relaxing the body, calming the soul and clearing the mind. East Day Spa is also a destination for skin and beauty brands, including Elemis and the Clarisonic Skin Cleansing System and for tea — Harney & Sons — which has developed a cult following amongst guests.

"I had the idea for East Day Spa when I experienced a luxury spa treatment in Singapore and realised there wasn't anyone offering the same level of service in Australia. I spend a lot of time at our luxury villa accommodation in Bali, East Residence, which informs both our brand and style of treatments. I bring an international flavour to all my spas and this is strongly influenced by the places I've been and the people I've met."

"Melbourne clients however are very beauty-orientated — they know their brands. This is why we make an effort to introduce treatments and retail products from only the best. Our pan-Asian treatments are very popular in our Melbourne spa and I believe we have a unique positioning in the market in terms of our treatment journey," adds Ina.

With a veritable mix of spa and salon-style treatments available, the extensive East Day Spa menu includes massage, facials, waxing, hand and foot offerings that delivers a steady stream of regular weekday clients and weekend hotel guests in addition to special occasion bookings.

"At East Day Spa we cater to the senses, sight, sound, touch and smell, within every treatment — waxing and nail treatments included. Despite

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our corporate clients preferring express treatments, with lunchtimes and after work hours the busiest, we try and incorporate these elements at every opportunity even if it is simply the offering of tea in our relaxation room,” says spa manager, Stephanie Cox who joined the Melbourne spa from her experience with the group in New Zealand.

Stephanie’s previous working knowledge has enabled her to pass on training tips and methods to the seven staff at East Day Spa Melbourne, complementing the extensive training delivered by Elemis. Above all, the team look in-house to share and improve training with Ina maintaining a strong relationship from her base in New Zealand.

“As with all our spas, I maintain our exceptional standard of service by hiring and retaining only the best people in the business. The spa is overseen by our expert spa manager, Stephanie Cox, who has over eight years working in the spa and beauty industry in the Australasian market. I visit the Melbourne spa between four and six times a year to touch base with Stephanie and ensure she has all the support she needs to provide the best spa journey in the city. We also have exceptionally strong auditing systems in place, which Stephanie oversees,” Ina explains.

With five spa locations that span Australia, New Zealand and Bali, Ina attributes her successes to continually improving quality of service, keeping up to date with the latest beauty trends and products, and regularly up-skilling therapists. Above all, Ina seeks to hire the very best and works hard to retain them. Wise words from a woman who, owing to a calm and cool head for business, has amassed a successful spa empire only in its infancy. ■

Contact: East Day Spa, Intercontinental Melbourne
The Rialto, 495 Collins Street Melbourne, (03) 9620 5992,
www.eastdayspa.com

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