

## CHIVA-SOM

HUA HIN, THAILAND

WEIGHT  
LOSS

### ASIA'S STAR PLAYER STAYS AHEAD OF THE GAME

Call it the Selfridges of spas. Year in, year out, Chiva-Som remains a destination with something for everyone, the go-to weight-loss centre/medi-spa/comprehensive wellness retreat/health resort in the sun that is safe to recommend to absolutely anyone. Anyone with the wherewithal to check in for a week at least, anyway. A stay here is all about success and results, and you can't expect that in any less time. But for everyone from out-of-control oligarchs and burnt-out City strivers to fed-up flabbies and the weepy and weary, this fabulous and much-loved favourite just keeps delivering. It was pioneering and purist when it opened in 1995, and the key to its success has been its relentless evolution. More relaxed these days, it keeps on top of every trend. Tecar massage therapy for muscular regeneration? As standard. A Winback machine to accelerate the work Tecar does? You're booked in straight after. And if you're of an age where a little filler or tiny tweak appeals, then that's on offer too. Cosmetic enhancement and non-invasive facial improvements, Botox and laser

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treatments – inconceivable at the launch – are now very much part of the programme. Think of any therapy or treatment and if its efficacy is proven, Chiva has it on the menu. The food remains deceptively delicious, startling first-timers with the revelation that yes, really, one can eat well and not feel hungry while losing weight, and is especially pleasurable when served at a table with a sea view. In the state-of-the-art gym, tough Thai trainers greet work-out addicts with a challenging grin. Open-air pavilions for early-morning yoga or late-afternoon meditation bring mellow guests face-to-face with the sweetest therapists. And all this is on offer in a permanently breezy beach-side location on the long stretch of sand at Hua Hin. The brightness of the setting is reflected in the lightness of touch at the top. It's reassuring to know that the serenely calm and collected one-time general manager of Grayshott, Sheila McCann, is still in charge. But while it's the ability to adapt that has made Chiva such a survivor, there is a downside to its progression. After years of postponing the room revamp because all 54 were permanently booked solid, a slow and subtle refurbishment means most have now been updated. Just the original 16 Thai pavilions rooms at the heart of this seven-acre resort await their transformation. As this can't be done without major disruption, the resort is closed – shock horror – between May and October this year. At least that gives everyone a chance to go quickly while they can – or start saving for the autumn.

**INSIDER TIP** This is the place to coax your unwilling other half to join you. They will leave as a convert to the genuine joys of yoga in the fresh air, daily massages, acupuncture or zumba. Stealthy health is a speciality.

**BOOK IT** Healing Holidays (+44 20 7843 3592; [healingholidays.co.uk/condenast](http://healingholidays.co.uk/condenast)) offers a seven-night stay from £4,679 per person, full board, including flights, transfers, a wellness consultation, weekly activities and daily spa treatments, plus a £625 voucher to use towards treatments.

