

SAMUI UPDATE

Holistic health retreat, **Kamalaya** (tel +66 (0)77 429800, www.kamalaya.com) has revamped its Alchemy Bar & Tea Lounge. Scheduled for a December 2008 opening, the redecorated Alchemy will continue to serve organic wines and traditional tonics based on Taoist and Thai herbal recipes.

While you're there, nurse a drink at another Kamalaya favourite, Amrita Cafe. Set amongst lotus ponds, Amrita serves detox meals and rejuvenating juices. Try the Detox Berry Coco made from coconut water and blueberries – or Green Power, which contains essential greens like apple, parsley, cucumber, broccoli and lime.

Elsewhere on Koh Samui, **Magnolia Spa** (tel +66 (0)77 601133, www.magnolia-spa-samui.com) on North Chaweng is offering specialised treatments using products from the Dead Sea. The Dead Sea Exfoliating Mud Mask (*below*, 1,500 baht) contains 21 minerals from the depths that leave skin supple and glowing.



FAST FACTS

Fasting retreats are becoming ever more popular as people travel to Thailand for detox holidays. **Nadia Harper** is executive health

advisor at The Spa Resorts (www.thesparesorts.net), which runs live-in fasting programs in Koh Samui, Koh Chang and the recently opened retreat in Chiang Mai.

Here she explains fasting and its benefits:

What is fasting?

Fasting or cleansing is a time to give your digestive system a rest. Apart from cutting out food altogether, one can abstain from solid foods or eat things that are very easy for the body to process. It's not about losing weight.

How did fasting for health come about?

Fasting is an instinctive practice that's been around since the beginning of time. When a wild animal is injured and in need of healing it will retreat and stop eating so its body can redirect its energies to heal.

Elders from generations back knew the benefits of fasting, as do medicine men from many native tribes.



Why is fasting good for you?

Digestion takes a huge amount of energy, especially when less-than-best foods are eaten. When the body is trying to break down one meal after another (sometimes even before the previous meal has been fully digested), it has to slow down other processes.

Fasting allows the body time to concentrate on cleansing, healing and detoxifying.

How do you fast?

I do a seven-day fast once or twice a year. But it's also important to make fasting a part of your regular routine; so, for example, one weekend a month I'll eat only liquids and raw foods like fruit and vegetables. There are cleansing kits which you can buy to help you fast at home like The Spa Resorts' 7-Day Follow Up Cleanse which is available at www.thesparesorts.net/products