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## A one stop spa shop worthy of an all-day splurge

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It's too hot to play outside and too much of a bother to drive somewhere for a spa treatment; by the time you get home the tensions have built up again. There is nothing spoiling about a treatment fitted in to a hectic schedule and body maintenance is an increasingly time consuming affair.

In Abu Dhabi, I have a favourite place where I like to spend the whole day combining a little exercise with several hours of relaxation, a facial, a body scrub and a little reflexology and return home having ticked the maintenance list – hair, manicure, pedicure. Not only will I have eaten healthily, I will also have spent fewer dirhams than I would have during a few hours of retail therapy in the mall.

Sharanis market themselves as the only Asian wellness day spa, but the real lure is that it's a one-stop shop. Mind you, by the time you have driven to Khalifa City, you need to get more out of it than one measly treatment, however good it might be.

The suburb has the Disney feel of a toy town – wholesome houses with green gardens, wide avenues and no people. You keep expecting the extras to turn up. As you drive down the lane there is no hint of what is to come. Housed in a three storey, 15 room villa in a residential area with its own front yard for parking and a large landscaped garden at the back, Sharanis from the outside looks like all the other domestic houses in the street.

But inside it has been converted for its purpose – a task that took eight months – and is unmistakably Asian: Indian furniture statues and artefacts, lots of pinks, oranges, golds, and whites and six Asian-themed treatment rooms with traditional furniture and art from each country.

On arrival, guests are provided with fluffy slippers and are encouraged to think of themselves as princesses. There is a Ranis treatment room and a Ranis all day ritual. It last eight hours, during which you have a floral foot bath, Sharanis Touch, rosebud bath soak, an oriental herbal body polish, a natural body mask, a pomegranate and jasmine cream massage, an anti ageing facial, a manicure, pedicure and wash and blow dry – all for Dh1,290.

There might be an emphasis on traditional treatments but pampering is the order of the day. You can have your manicure while you sit on "intelligent chairs" that massage the backs of your legs while a therapist massages your neck and shoulders. All this while watching Desperate Housewives or listening to your iPod.

Not surprisingly, Sharanis does a brisk business for brides and girls days out. You can hire the whole place for half a day and have the works in the company of your friends. In the cooler months, the garden is a fabulous sanctuary in which to lounge around and sip herbal tea after your body is worn out from all that massaging.

Does it work? Yes, it does and it's unique in the spa-booming UAE. The owner/manager Sharon Moore is a committee member of the international business women's group in Abu Dhabi who has spent years in India and Thailand in spa related industries. Sharanis is her dream and it's based on her own needs.

"I did not want to go one place for yoga, another for a treatment, somewhere else for my nails and a fourth place to get my hair done," she said. "Our focus is on health, not beauty, but its so much easier to have it all under one roof." Clients with memberships can come as often as they like to use the facilities.

There is also an underlying seriousness to what is on offer. The spa has its own ayurvedic doctor and it's a great place to do the full two or three week ayurvedic courses. They deliver results normally only achieved by going away on an expensive two week holiday. The package involves 90 minutes of massage a day for 21 days as well as nutrition advice in keeping with your particular body dosha. One happy client who has just finished it lost 6 kilos. With opening hours 9am to 9pm, you don't even have to take time off work.

Clients tend to be women who are juggling careers and family but also realise that time out for themselves is crucial in making both happen. Moore is already talking with an Abu Dhabi company that has a lot of women employees about providing the same sort of facilities within the office. Now that's a thought.