

DEPARTURES

OCTOBER 2008

beyond Bangalore



The open-air reception area in the Soukya's treatment center and the spa's pool

The Spa

Soukya Healing Center

A 30-acre garden oasis in Samethanahalli, an hour's drive east of Bangalore, Soukya is one of the most acclaimed holistic health centers in the world, endorsed by none other than Deepak Chopra, among others. Derived from the Sanskrit word *soukhyam*, meaning "well-being," the spa's name reflects its mission to restore the body's natural balance by blending medical treatments with more comprehensive therapies.

The six-year-old center, run by homeopathic doctor Isaac Mathai, draws a clientele—more than half of which is international—that includes celebrities (Sarah Ferguson, Duchess of York) and business executives (the founder of Aveda, Horst M. Rechelbacher). Despite its fame, the 24-room Soukya remains under-

stated, providing intensive treatments for all guests, whether they stay for months, days, or just a few hours.

All the food served here is vegetarian and sourced from the spa's organic farm, and in addition to the main treatment center, there is a pool, an alfresco yoga hall, and a small gift shop selling the spa's line of essential oils, candles, and books. The property has both residential programs and day packages—day visitors may join the 7:30 A.M. yoga class or the 4 P.M. meditation—all of which begin with a lifestyle consultation led by a senior physician. (Mathai is available for individual one- to two-hour consultations for an additional fee of \$250.) Book the Soukya Special (\$230), a combination of, among other offerings, an Ayurvedic hot-stone massage, reflexology, and mud packs, plus breakfast and lunch. *Treatments, \$210–\$1,300. At Soukya Rd.; soukya.com.* —F.C.