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THE WEEK

JOURNALISM WITH A HUMAN TOUCH



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Bowled over

Camilla's tryst with ayurveda in Bangalore

By Mini P. Thomas

She looked as happy as a princess in a fairy tale.

Duchess Camilla Parker had all that she wished for during her stay in Bangalore: a rejuvenating session of ayurveda, sunny days and pleasant evenings with friends in the lush green 30-acre compound of Soukya, a holistic health centre in Whitefield. The four-day-long rejuvenation therapy gave a much-desired break for Camilla, 62, wife of Prince Charles, and the second highest lady in the British royal family. She was getting ready for the hectic Commonwealth Games schedule.

Soukya, which practises integrated medicine, offered a combination of therapies to the Duchess of Cornwall. The treatment included *abhyanga* (massage with medicated oil) and *shirodhara* (pouring warm, medicated oil on the forehead).

"The princess was keen to understand the concept of ayurveda and how it heals and cures. She was surprised to find that ayurveda is practised by qualified doctors. Though it was the first time that she underwent an ayurvedic treatment, she had read a lot about this traditional system of medicine," said Dr Issac Mathai Nooranal, medical director and founder of Soukya.

Camilla attended the yoga sessions in the morning and evening religiously. Soukya gave her customised yoga



Royal treatment: Camilla and Prince Charles on an earlier visit to India

lessons. "She could do the difficult *asanas* with ease. It seems she has done yoga before," said a source.

Camilla was amazed to see the yoga hall at the centre, with walls studded with mirrors from Gujarat.

The duchess became quite close to Suja, wife of Mathai, and they discussed farming, gardening and

cooking. A lover of organic farming and eco-friendly living, Camilla was thrilled to see the organic patch right in front of her room. The duchess has an organic farm of her own back home, and the money raised from it is given for charity.

Guests at Soukya are usually served customised south Indian ovo-