

BANGKOK DENTAL SPA / THAILAND AS A MEDICAL HUB

Combining technology and luxurious ambience

JARUNEE TAEMSAMRAN

Thailand's ambition to become the medical hub of Asia has advanced another step with the launching of a dental spa which combines state-of-the-art technology administered in the ambience of first-class spa settings.

Apart from coming to Thailand for sex-change operations, medical check-up and spa treatments for which the country has acquired a name, foreign patients with a history of dental troubles can now come here for treatment.

"It's the first and its only kind in the whole of Asia," said Dr Watchareewon Porncharoen, who is known in her circle as Dr Lily, the founder of Bangkok Dental Spa located in Soi Sukhumvit 19.



Dr Watchareewon...the driving force.

With more than 15 years experience, Dr Lily is spearheading Thailand's to become a hub for dental care.

Her dental clinic also offers massage treatments. Realising the pain and agony patients have to endure when getting their teeth fixed, the clinic decided to offer soothing massage treatments to calm their frayed nerves.

The clinic has a well-decorated reception area with comfortable cushions, soft lighting and vases containing colorful flowers to the accompaniment of classical Thai music and the sweet aroma generated by the burning of oils. It looks more like a hotel lobby than a dental clinic.



Dental surgeons work on a patient.

"But don't mistake it for a spa. We are not a spa. It's just the atmosphere that we have tried to capture to reduce the stress of patients visiting dental clinics," she elaborated.

The clinic incorporates advanced techniques in dentistry.

Apart from the usual services, Bangkok Dental Spa offers cosmetic dentistry, laser teeth whitening and implant using technology acquired from Europe and the US.

Patients get a thorough consultation from a team of experts who perfected their skills in Germany and the US. Actually, Dr Lily herself will soon be attending an advanced training course at the World Clinical Laser Institute in San Diego, California.

"We always keep ourselves updated with emerging technology. It's our aim to offer services that are on par with international standards so that we can be competitive globally."

Dr Lily said the services available in Thailand can also be had in the US, Europe or Australia, but the cost here is four to five times cheaper than in those countries and they are delivered with the famous Thai hospitality.

Since it opened four months ago, Bangkok Dental Spa has been drawing a steady stream of clients from Europe, Scandinavia, Australia and Japan.

In fact, it has also attracted dentists and prosthodontists from overseas on educational trips.

Most of Dr Lily's clients are foreign patients. "Because the government wanted to promote Thailand as a medical hub, I saw an opportunity and went for it," she said.

Once she got her business on the website the response was tremendous. Foreign customers signed up immediately.

"When they saw that Thailand had this service, they responded in quick time because they have heard about the Thai hospitality and the service-minded approach of our people.

"Once they learned our services were on par with the US and Europe, but far cheaper, they didn't hesitate to come to us," she said.

For example, a 45-minute laser teeth whitening package at Bangkok Dental Spa costs 15,000 baht which includes massage. It may sound expensive by Thai standards but the cost is much cheaper compared to what you pay for the same service in other parts of the world.

Dr Lily is already thinking of taking her Bangkok Dental Spa to foreign countries next year.