



Hotel pumps up pampering power

RETREAT ROOM WORDS: SIMON HOLT

IT'S trendy to relax. And why not?

People, it seems, are looking for more ways to pamper their hard-worked bodies.

Hair treatment, massage, manicures, pedicures – they're all part of the ritual for high flyers.

And if the simple economic principle of "supply and demand" is an indicator, we can expect to see more retreats popping up in the city.

Stephanie Shepherd has already tasted success in the spa industry with her Natural Beauty and Day Spa at Bulimba.

She has now teamed up with Sofitel Brisbane to bring her expertise to the heart of the city in a five-star environment.

Sofitel is spending a cool \$1 million to fit out a new retreat which will include a Rasul Turkish steam temple and Tibetan rituals. There will be seven suites, including a twin spa suite for friends or couples.

Fresh flowers, burning candles,

soothing music, CBD skyline views and a scent of essential oils are all part of the daily routine.

The Rasul temple experience is a warm mud therapy treatment in a steam environment and can be done solo or with a friend. It's a four-hand massage.

If that doesn't appeal, there is expected to be Thai and Tibetan options, Ms Shepherd's signature hand and foot treatments and European high performance skin applications.

In tune with consumer demand, the services won't be exclusively for hotel guests. Rather, hotel manager Geoffrey York says the majority of clients will come from the city's working community.

Hotel chef Marshall Orton is already working on a healthy menu which, incidentally, includes champagne.

Ms Shepherd says the intention will be to lower stress levels, and allow people to experience international skin treatment methods.

The spa is expected to open mid-year.



ALMOST THERE: Stephanie Shepherd massages carpenter John Durand, on the job at Sofitel.