

New York, New York!

From the very beginning, when I received a call at 7.30am, still half asleep, the voice on the other end of the phone saying "Pack your bags, your off to New York!" I had just won a place in the top 10 best Spa therapists of the world, through a company called Spa Finder. I thought I was still dreaming, I couldn't believe it, how did I win this, who was running the award, I had so many questions. I had never even left the country before, who can believe a little country spa therapist could be recognised globally, this was amazing! I knew I was in for an experience of a lifetime.

The day before I found out the great news I was a regular spa therapist working at the Reef House Spa, I had been there for 3 years and had gradually worked my way up from just graduating college having no experience in spas, to becoming a new spa therapist, learning all about the Li'Tya product and treatments.

After 18 months of learning the ropes of the Spa I was promoted to Senior Spa therapist, being a leader of a team of 10 girls, finally working my way up to Spa Supervisor 6 months later. So this is where I was when I got that fateful call that day.

From that 1st phone call in late August, I had until Oct 14th to get my passport and to get my head around winning the award, the award that has been described to me as the academy awards for Spas. As you can imagine this was a lot to take in.

4am Oct 11, it all starts.

My bosses, Jeff and Carol Fleming, arrive to pick me up, we head to the air port and here our journey begins. Carol is travelling with me, we fly from Brisbane to LA, this was to be our stop over for 2 days before heading to New York City. Here we visit Disney Land and take in my first sights of USA, I can't believe I'm actually here, in a complete different country.

From LA we head to New York City, from the moment I touched down I was swept away by this amazing place. We took a cab into the city and were dropped off at our home for the next 5 days. We were so excited that we dropped our luggage off and went out to explore this fabulous city. There were people everywhere, buildings that looked like they would never end, so many lights, cars everywhere, completely different to home. We made our way to the Rockefeller Centre and I saw the ice skating for the first time it looked so fun. It was finally starting to hit me that we were in New York.

A couple of days sightseeing, The Statue of Liberty, Stanton Island, The Empire State building, Brooklyn Bridge, Grand Central Station, Central Park, just the city itself was so exciting. Oh and of course The Waldorf Astoria where the awards ceremony was to be held. I couldn't wait to go and meet the elite of the spa industry, and then I realised, I was a part of the elite in the spa industry. Still couldn't believe it but this left a big smile on my face.

The night finally came I was really nervous, this was going to be so fancy, I have never been to anything this fancy before, luckily I had Carol there to help me along the way. We stood outside the Waldorf and couldn't believe we were here. Once through the doors we were in awe at the amazing interior design of the hotel, so intricate in detail, you felt like royalty. We waited a moment to take everything in and then made our way to the prestigious Guerlain Spa.

We had only just walked in and hadn't even collected our name tags yet, when we overheard a man asking if Michelle Cameron had arrived. I was beside myself and this gave me goose bumps all over, I walked straight up and introduced myself, I felt so proud. This man turned out to be the chairman of the Ragdale Hall Health Retreat in the UK, who also uses Li'Tya and read about me in the Li'Tya newsletter. It felt very surreal to have someone from the other side of the world to be waiting to meet me, I was honoured.

We collected our name tags and started mingling with all the other people there. I met 2 of the other best therapists, and many more category award winners, it felt so good to be a part of this. The spa was sophisticated and elegant with many treatment rooms, marble benches, the design definitely reflecting the Waldorf, it exceeded all my expectations.

The ceremony started and you were able to put a face to all the important names that you only hear about in magazines. It finally became time for the best therapist category, I was beside myself with excitement and couldn't wait for my name to be announced. Finally it was....."All the way from Australia." It felt so great to go up and join all the other important names and have all the photos taken, I felt like a celebrity. After the ceremony all the international guests were invited to a dinner to further celebrate the award. The whole night was amazing and it will stay as one of the most memorable moments of my life.

The day after we were invited to attend a tour of the Spa Finder office, we got to see where all of this started and took off. The Office was amazing as you walk in you feel like you have walked into a spa, the staff were all so accommodating and friendly, we felt very welcomed.

The time had come for us to go home and as I look back on our trip I still can't believe that something like this happened to me. I love what I do and love working at the spa and I give everything 100%. With all the study, training and passionate dedication this is the greatest reward that I could have ever asked for.

Michelle Cameron