

STYLE

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THE LUXURY SPA GUIDE

DESTRESS
WITH DAVID
WALLIAMS

WORK OUT
WITH CLAUDIA
WINKLEMAN

HIPPIE BOOTCAMP
WITH STYLE'S
BEAUTY BOSS

RESET + REBOOT
WITH LORRAINE
CANDY

ECO LUXURY
WITH DOLLY
ALDERTON

WATER
THERAPY
WITH JEREMY
CLARKSON



SARAH JOSSEL GOES TO GROWN-UP SUMMMER CAMP



year of “ranching”) and you’ll be privy to insider secrets such as the peanut butter hidden behind the counter and the daily 2pm chips-and-dips rendezvous.

Everyone has their red-brick casita, more of a freestanding villa than a room — most with their own fireplace. In the evenings I either relax by the fire with a book, or I join the rest of the crew for Bingo with Barry (their local celeb), or movie and popcorn night.

There’s no need to sneak booze into the rooms, as there’s a *bazar* that serves delicious Mexican wine and cheese plates daily until 10pm (this is where my boyfriend spends most of his time — he’s more into the pinot noir than the Pilates).

One similarity to summer camp in the 1990s is no phones. After locking them up in mini “sleeping bags”, we actually speak to people. I meet the friendliest of faces, with names like Crystal, Tigger and Pud (as in pudding). Apparently, you sometimes bump into the founder, Deborah Szekely, now 96, who has been dubbed the “godmother of wellness”.

I love the fact that the Ranch still has its soul. Few places in the world have “soul” now, and those that do are besieged by selfie-takers faking zen and uploading #blessed #namaste Instagrams. Not here, though. The ranch isn’t fancy or trendy, but it’s beautiful and colourful; it’s where many go to soul-search and escape from reality. Just like 20 years ago, I leave with memories I will never forget.

■ Sarah Jossel was a guest of Rancho La Puerta; seven nights cost from £3,095pp, full-board, including a private casita, more than 60 different fitness classes a day, evening programmes and lectures, and transfers from San Diego airport; rancholapuerta.com

Every year from the ages of 13 to 16, I was schlepped by my family to summer camp in North Carolina for four weeks.

Twenty years later I’m back at summer camp, only this time it’s a little different. I am at Rancho La Puerta — a celebrated spa, now 79 years old, spread out over 4,000 acres in Tecate, Mexico, that is something between a hippie commune and an organised fun retreat for adults.

Every day I’m given an action-packed activities menu, but instead of thrill-seeking sports such as wakeboarding or mountain biking, the choices include sound healing, yoga or gentle circuit training with the wonderful 60-year-old Norma. The hikes are not to be missed. I would have moaned about them when I was growing up, but now they are a highlight. I switch it up daily between the arduous sunrise 5½-mile Coyote hike up Mount Kuchumaa and the 1¼-mile silent Dove meadow walk.

When I’m not playing Pickleball (a sport that is a combination of table tennis, badminton and tennis), I’m at the spa. I try a mountain-sage hot-stone massage and a signature Rancho facial by Elva, who has been with the Ranch for 20 years. “My mother worked here her whole life, and I’ve done the same,” she says. “We count ourselves incredibly lucky. This is a very kind place.”

The food is simple: tuna tacos for lunch, basic vegan concoctions for dinner. The dishes are mainly vegetarian or vegan with fish options on some days. Top tip: get chummy with long-standing guests such as Mina from Michigan and Jan from Kansas (some people are on their 20th

THE AT-HOME ENERGISERS



Aman Purifying Ocean Face Mist, £75

Like a salty, ‘good for the soul’ wave kissing your face, this is cheaper than a plane ticket and it’s full of antioxidant goodness.



Origins Drink Up Intensive Overnight Hydrating Mask with Avocado & Swiss Glacier Water, £22

Convoluted name aside, this is the skincare equivalent of a holier-than-thou diet, giving skin the boost it (might) need.



Jog On by Bella Mackie (HarperCollins £12.99)

How a run can change your life — seriously. No need to move right now, though.



Kérastase Cicafash Intense Fortifying Treatment, £26.50

The repair capabilities of a mask, in the form of a conditioner.