

COUNTRY & TOWN HOUSE

Looking
for rest and
renewal? Dip
into the best
in intelligent
wellness
and emerge
refreshed

**THE
REGENERATION GUIDE**

Edited by Daisy Finer

Contents

- 103 **EMOTIONAL HEALING**
*Clover Stroud on the agonies and the ecstasies of *The Path of Love* at Broughton Hall*
- 109 **LIFECHANGING LEGENDS**
*Daisy Finer finds a new look – and feel – at the *Original FX* Mayr*
- 114 **ACTION STATIONS**
Hollywood's favourite fitness retreat has come to Italy. Harriet Compston gets fit fast
- 118 **NATURE NURTURE**
Reconfiguring our relationship with our most important asset
- 124 **MINDFUL MOVEMENT**
Anna Pasternak learns to follow her own lead at Mandali
- 128 **BRAIN SPACE**
Rules-free meditation is a revelation for Daisy Finer
- 132 **WELLNESS A-LIST**
Wellness practitioners at the top of their game



FASHION TEAM
Photographer: Trisha Ward. Styling, hair and makeup: Camilla Hewitt using NARS and Davines. Model: Danielle Copperman. For stockists see p166.

WRITING TEAM
Harriet Compston, Kate O'Brien, Anna Pasternak, Clover Stroud, Lisa Grainger, Nicola Cornfield and Alice B-B

EDITOR'S LETTER



In early June I visited the Aegean Island of Hydra. As you approach by ferry from Athens, the rugged car-free beauty of the landscape rises like a myth of hope from the ocean. Hewn raw and strong by relentless currents, you step into the Greece you long to find: white-washed houses and washing lines, streets of cobble slabs which gleam in the sun like giant blocks of tofu, jacaranda trees, sleeping cats, donkeys with bells. Suddenly, I am living a different life, liberated from my desk of duty and any lingering memories of lockdowns. Every morning I rise with the sun while my three children, star-spangled, sleep on bedsheets twisted in the heat of the night. I walk to the port where wizened fishermen are starting their day with cigarettes and coffee in cafés once frequented by Leonard Cohen and movie stars. I cross the horseshoe-shaped bay until I find the nearest rocky platform where rickety metal steps lead straight into the sea. The deep blue sea and me. Icy, invigorating, fresh, alive – I don't think there is a better way to start the day. I emerge oblivious to time – wind, salt and freckle swept. I dry off with the rising temperature; meditate with sea gulls circling overhead. For the remainder of the day I feel hungry for life itself, reborn to the technicoloured magic of the smallest scented petal. The water affords, each time and without fail, a baptism of the spirit. The light, liquid and luminosity of the moment are nature's wild tonic bottled.

We each of us can explore our own definitions of what the word 'regeneration' might mean to us. This guide is for anyone engaged in such a quest. As we emerge from the challenges of the last couple of years, it feels like no exaggeration to say that the narrative of the human race

has never been more up for grabs or more precarious. We know we need to think and do differently. To reel out another 'spa' guide instigated by multiple trips to facility-busting five-star hotels seemed outmoded and outlandish for these times. We wanted to delve deeper, look at preventative health care measures, the art of self-care, the inner journey and the undeniable and interconnected mind-body-spirit-heart-gut connection. As Fiona Arrigo, one of the doyennes of the British retreat scene, says, 'When we talk about true holistic wellness, we can no longer look at just the personal self. We must look at the personal, collective, planetary and energetic. We need to connect to our intuition and instincts, so that we can live with spontaneity and flexibility and so that our bodies can continue to adapt to the endless changes and pressures that are affecting all our lives.'

Once we understand that healing ourselves is the first step towards healing our world, the search for personal regeneration becomes a profound one. The intersection where travel and wellbeing overlap is a landscape where every journey offers the opportunity for a pilgrimage of self-renewal. The trick is to be discerning about which direction will suit you and which everyday tools to pack in your suitcase. You'll find plenty of recommendations within these pages but the invitation, always, is to use your own curiosity compass. Experiencing the new opens a treasure box of revelations – and without revelation there is no regeneration. My dear friend Cornelius (find him in the 'Brain Space' section, p130) acknowledges that 'with all the decay we are witnessing in the world, the birth of what's new is arising at the same time. The idea is to hitch a ride on the new and ascend into it. Because we can't expect the outside world to transform until we regenerate on the inside. Inner regeneration of the heart is the solution to everything.'



Bikini top and
briefs, **Matteau**
@ Matches Fashion

Nature, as ever, provides us with a template for what regeneration can look like. Indian activist Satish Kumar agrees. 'We plant one apple seed. That seed regenerates into a tree and the tree regenerates leaves year after year. The leaves become compost, regenerating the soil. At the same time, from that one seed, the tree annually produces apples to feed other living beings. This is a perfect example of the regenerative power of nature.' The elegant simplicity of this kind of circular cycle is something we can each try to replicate in our own lives, from how we cook, travel and shop to the wisdom teachings we pass on to our children. When we take the macro down to the micro level like this, our task feels far less daunting. As Armando Kraenzlin, the inspirational GM of Four Seasons Landaa Giraavaru in the Maldives (one of my favourite spa hotels in the world), says, 'No one can do everything, but everyone can do something.' Something is indeed what we each need to do. One step forward at a time. Together.

This year Deborah Szekely, co-founder of the oldest destination retreat in the world, Mexico's Rancho La Puerta (which opened in 1940), celebrated her 100th birthday. Her advice? 'Don't wait to look back on what you did. Regenerate by looking forward. I lie in bed each morning when I awake and contemplate the day ahead of me with gratitude. When you do this, you just want to wiggle your toes for the sheer pleasure of it all. You have the whole day ahead of you.' Herein lies that very same toe-tickling lesson Hydra reminded me of – when we start each day afresh we can start to appreciate the living second. Let's not waste it. Not a single drop.

Welcome to the 2022 *Country & Town House* Regeneration Guide. The start of something new.

Daisy Finer

EMOTIONAL HEALING

Clover Stroud delved into the darkest recesses of her being and resurfaced joyful and enlightened

A line from the German poet Rilke, ‘Go to the limits of your longing’, rang in my head as I took a train from King’s Cross to Skipton in Yorkshire, then a taxi to Broughton Hall, to join a seven-day process called the Path of Love. I knew little about what it involved, but was intrigued and, crucially, open, to a process described as the most intensive and life-changing meditation and personal growth process in the world today. I was curious, too, about the ‘deep inner work’ it offered. I have had decades of therapy and am a writer specialising in confession. Most recently, I’ve written three memoirs, examining with unflinching honesty, the way trauma, motherhood, sex, grief, adventure, death has shaped my life. I’m 47, and since I was a teenager my life has been coloured by high levels of trauma and loss. I’ve also created a life rich in colour. I have five children and I want it all. Confession and self-examination are where I work and live every day, and thought none of my cupboards were closed. How could the Path of Love, hosted by Broughton Sanctuary, take me further?

Joy, though, had been in short supply, for a while. Standing in my kitchen at home, surrounded by the children and horses and energy I’d created or invited in,



I’d been feeling numb and lost, separated from a joy I knew was there, but couldn’t touch or taste and certainly couldn’t see. A non-specific but pervading misery had coated everything around me, like lightly falling rain.

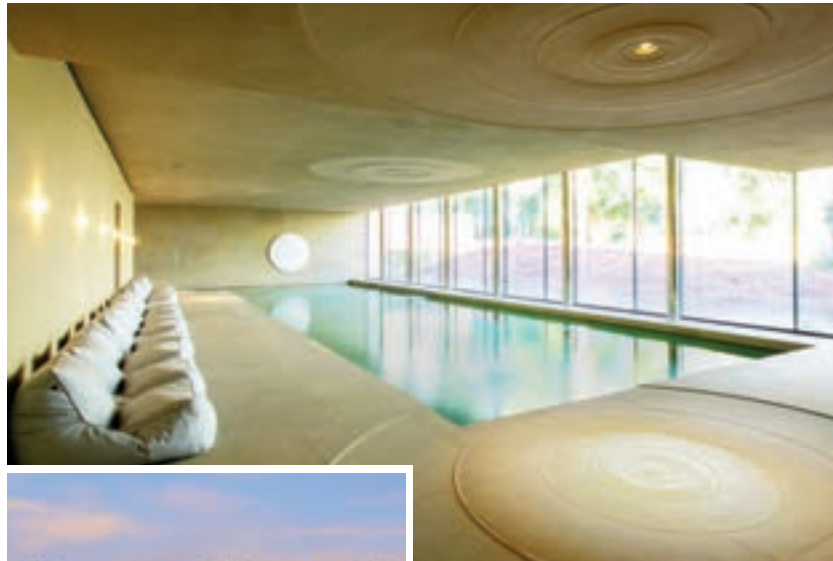
You could say I went into the process with a pounding, wounded heart, sitting in that big room on the first morning, beside 32 other wounded hearts. Each had been through a rigorous selection process involving a Zoom interview with one of the facilitators, because the process is demanding, but deep longing and deeper pain had brought them all there. I didn’t know, on that first morning, that over the course of seven days, we would walk

together into the blackest, darkest, and whitest, brightest corners of our lives. Path of Love demands bravery. There’s nowhere to hide, and you have to want to do this course.

In so-called normal life, we shy away from pain. We retract our hand when the flame burns too fierce. We shut down or shut away to protect ourselves, but we do the same with acute joy, too, perhaps for fear of looking ridiculous or silly, or simply because we forget what it feels like. What I witnessed around me, and underwent myself, was a process which enabled me to feel all that pain and all that light again, and not snatch my hand away, but instead dwell in it and watch the burn of the >>

flame, while rediscovering pure golden joy. The group of 32 was broken into three smaller groups, each with a pair of ‘facilitators’ who supported and held, often quite literally, each participant as we went through hours of highly confessional, demanding group sharing every day. Beyond our facilitators was a staff of just under 30, so every single person in that room had a sense someone was there for them. The process is led by Rafia Morgan and Turiya Hanover, nothing short of the high priests of dark pain and highest joy, who founded the programme. Their work is a calling, not a job, inspired by years of inner work and a shared commitment to ‘wake up’ in this life. They met in the 1970s after joining Osho, in Pune, India. Over decades they honed a deeply wise, genre-defying, mind-blowing and somewhat iconoclastic process which broke me to my core, and took me to the heights of ecstasy, too.

Surprise is important in this process, so that, as in life, you don’t know what’s coming next. It’s enough to say that the process uses intensive confessional group therapy, combined with both dynamic and peaceful meditation, and sessions of extreme physical movement and dance; over a week, we were all completely altered, bonded and, in so many ways, reborn. With them all, yet also entirely alone, I went through a cumulative process of grief, shock, joy, frustration, fury, frustration, rage, bliss and the purest ecstasy, culminating in a day so surprising and so beautiful, during which I reached a place where I became the actual embodiment of joy, it will enrich my life forever.



This is hard work, too, and the sumptuous surroundings of Broughton Hall, where Paris Ackrill and Roger Tempest have developed Avalon, a stunning, purpose-built space for self-exploration and transformation. After long days of pain and pleasure, returning to extra comfortable beds and eating delicious, vegetarian food surrounded by grandeur of the hall, was welcome. Outside the group rooms, we were sworn to silence, but there were gardens to walk

in, woodlands to forest bathe, and many distant horizons where I could retreat for quiet contemplation to extend my vision. The days, however, were long and gruelling, so most often, I simply flopped into my delicious four poster bed.

In my life full of extremes, Path of Love was unquestionably among the most extreme, most demanding, and most beautiful experiences of my life. It has completely changed me. The process exploded chambers I’d held locked deeper inside me which even my confessional writing hadn’t visited; greater than that, it showed me the source of a deep spring of joy and ecstasy I keep inside me but had completely lost. It’s helped me understand so much about the way I communicate, and I feel much gentler and calmer in the way I face the world.

I’m in nothing short of awe of the work Rafia and Turiya are doing. It defies definition, and is, quite literally, mind-blowing. I’ve returned to my family a much, much happier person, with old anguish and pain worked out of my body, clasping a talisman of pure joy that’s sitting inside me, infinitely precious. My husband says I’m happy in a way he hasn’t seen for a long time, freed from a certain crushing responsibility the world imposes, as if I am drunk on joy.

And the limits of my longing? Oh yes, I went there, and much, much further, too.

BOOK IT: The Path of Love 7-Day Retreat costs from £1,850 + VAT. Price does not include food and accommodation at Broughton Hall. Email uk@pathoflove.net for details. avalonwellbeing.com



PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES

Top and skirt, Atoir



» FEEL ALIVE AGAIN

EUPHORIA RETREAT, GREECE

Euphoria's much-loved founder, Marina Efraimoglou, spent many years studying both Greek and Chinese healing traditions and shares the best of this timeless wisdom with the weary and confused at this magical hideaway on the edge of must-visit UNESCO-protected Mystras. The new four-night Feel Alive Again programme, created in the midst of the pandemic, offers a chance to reconnect with your inner spirit. Blending Five Elements-based meditations, breathwork, expressive dance, journaling, yoga, music and vision boards, this is a chance to reframe your life with optimism, passion and joy, and be drenched in that special Greek light. *Singles from £202 per night. euphoriaretreat.com*



A HELPING HEART



» LEGENDARY SHAMANIC HEALING

PREIDLHOF, ITALY

Stefano Battaglia's understanding of the emotional language of the body is quite rare, as is his ability to uncannily release deeply held trauma using gentle osteopathically based manipulation. Alongside an elite team of unfailingly intuitive therapists, this slice of alpine charm, sitting snug in the hillside beauty of South Tyrol, is all about reigniting a lighter, happier, more joyful connection with the heart. As well as saunas, pools and soul-nourishing food, what sets Preidlhof apart is that kindness and compassion here comes straight from the heart. And, along with the tears (there will be tears!) and emotional freedom, the body softens and graciously bends to this profound healing. The release is palpable. *From £,2479pp for a five-day Integrated Healing Retreat, incl. flights. preidlhof.it*



» PROFOUND GRIEF RETREAT

THE ARRIGO PROGRAMME, SOMERSET

This five-star grief rehab is life-changing. Run by psychotherapist, Fiona Arrigo and Nici Harrison, the retreat involves five days in a divine manor house in Somerset. With daily group therapy expect instant bonding as, weeping, you listen to each other's stories of death, betrayal, abuse and obliterated hope. There's no attempt to fix grief but to witness and acknowledge it. The key is not to let it solidify in our bodies as disease. Breathing exercises, yoga, brilliantly intuitive massage and shamanic ritual all help dislodge shock and trauma. The nervous system is given time to recharge, aided by TRE - trauma release exercises - a form of autonomic body shaking to discharge adrenalin. Miraculously, you touch joy as you are aided by these skilled professionals to integrate your loss. *£2,550pp for four nights, next dates 13-17 Oct. thearrigoprogramme.com*

PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES



↑ SOUL CONNECTOR

ANANDA IN THE HIMALAYAS, INDIA

One of India's star spas, in the foothills of the Himalayas, has upped the ante in response to the growing collective need for emotional healing. Yes, enjoy the yoga, Ayurvedic food and breathtaking views of the Ganges, but be sure to book in for some emotional wellbeing coaching sessions. Spearheaded by Dr Roma Singh and Chandana Ganguly, these sessions use deep subconscious

work, such as hypnotherapy, to help you overcome personal challenges and any blockages. It's transformative not just mentally and physically, but for work and relationships too. Also, keep a look out for Dr Jitender Uniyal, who has just come on board to head up Ananda's new range of traditional oriental therapies. These include TCM, Tibetan Kuu Nye and Japanese Shiatsu – which can all help chronic pain, migraines, anxiety and depression. *Doubles from £702. anandaspa.com*

SPirit SOOTHER »

THE HEARTBREAK HOTEL, NORFOLK

If you're suffering from a broken heart or are unable to overcome a personal betrayal, then check into the Heartbreak Hotel, a three-day residential retreat set in a swish Norfolk barn. Run by psychologist Alice Haddon and coaching supremo, Ruth Field, this is a therapeutic process aimed at supporting and re-empowering betrayed women. With group therapy, nourishing food and EMDR sessions, healing is fast-tracked. Move from excessive rumination about your ex to radical acceptance and belly laughter in 48 hours. Along with beach walks, the whole experience is a true tonic leaving you emotionally strengthened yet lighter-hearted.

*£2,500pp for three nights.
theheartbreakhotel.co.uk*



THE POWER OF SOUND HEALING

Sound Healing is a wonderful way to reduce pain, stress, anxiety and depression. By taking you into another weightless dimension and synchronising your cells with the pure frequency of sound you can come back to your true self. Cultivate inner calm at the glittering **ESPA Life at Corinthia London** with a Harmonising Gong Bath, a brilliant combination of sound therapy and acupuncture (*espalifeatcorinthia.com*). Or head to **Coworth Park** where Hebridean seaweed skincare brand Ishga has collaborated with DJ Brian D'Souza, to create an all-out soundscape experience where music and treatments work together in harmony (*dorchestercollection.com*). Across the channel, Denise Leicester, the visionary founder of beauty brand **ila**, is making musical waves with intimate **Maison ila**, a green-shuttered hideaway in magical Cathar country (*maisonila.com*). Or, if you want to learn the craft yourself, check out **Crystal Singing Bowls Europe** in Brussels (*crystalsingingbowlseurope.com*). Founded by Yin yoga teacher Shannon van Staden, it's a one-stop shop for all things sound healing, with training courses, workshops, a serene sound temple and the chance to buy the Chanel of crystal bowls, infused with semi-precious stones, minerals and gems.

Surrender to the sound
at Coworth Park



RETREAT RADAR

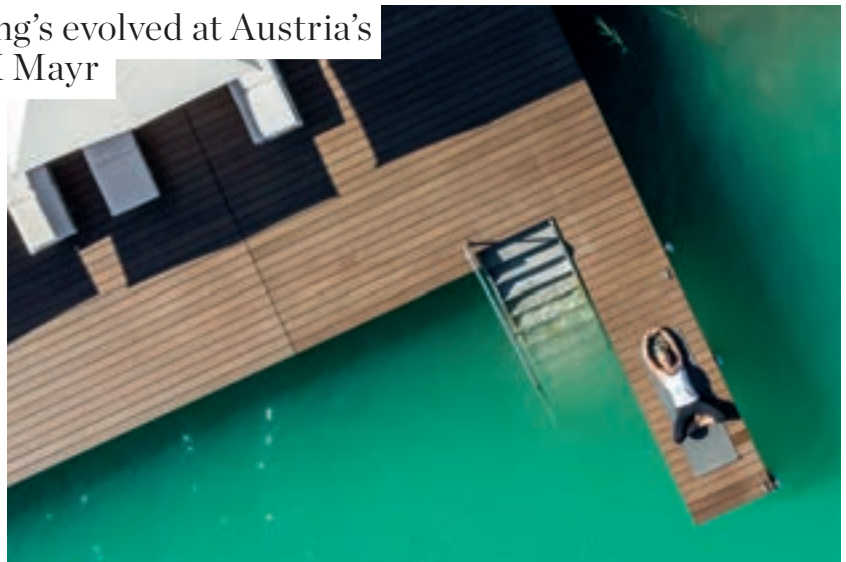
When you need to step back and take stock, a specialised retreat can be just the antidote. Whether you are dealing with anxiety, exploring a new career path, in need of an exciting yogic adventure or have latent issues to resolve, there are over 90 retreats to inspire you on the Queen of Retreats platform. Explore unknown gems at refreshingly affordable prices as well as more luxe discoveries – perhaps you'll go for Abergavenny, or maybe Zimbabwe instead? Indispensable. *queenofretreats.com* ■

LIFE-CHANGING LEGENDS

Daisy Finer finds everything's evolved at Austria's venerable The Original FX Mayr

The only constant is change,' smiles Henry, my mainstay waiter at Austria's most legendary cleansing clinic – The Original FX Mayr. Henry has been working in the dining room here since 2012, the year of my last visit. His laugh bubbles up as deliciously as the soup saucepans in the kitchens. We discuss the clinic's recent transformation. It's not just the interiors that have undergone a dramatic facelift, the entire delivery of the famous Mayr 'cure' has been softened, personalised, and updated. Known for dramatically cleansing the digestive system and triggering satisfying weight loss, ardent fans of the Mayr have long viewed a stay here as an annual MOT endurance test, worth it mostly for the post-stay feeling of champagne-on-ice. Yet, here I am, 2022, and I discover the era of sufferance is over. Perhaps I shouldn't be surprised. There are many Mayrs but 'The Original', which first opened as a residential clinic on the shores of Lake Worthersee in 1976, has always been progressive. Henry and I are agreed, it's important to move with the times.

Many of the changes, including the divine new beach house and jetty, have been orchestrated under the elegant umbrella of Gabriella Schnitzler, who



once worked for Prada and came to the helm in 2015. Slowly and gently, Gabriella has sprinkled her fairy-dust. Goodbye orange pine, hello muted dreamy creams, flickering candles and blankets I'd like to smuggle home. It's almost enough to help you forget about the gnarling stomach, Epsom salts, blood tests, metabolic measuring and the lesson in 'chewing a raisin' (actually that was unforgettable). New vitamin intravenous drips help alleviate the physical symptoms of detoxing. The exercise quota has been revved up with aqua fitness, Pilates, E-bike tours, yoga with Eva and hiking with Helga. Cookery workshops perk up an evening. Meditation, breathing

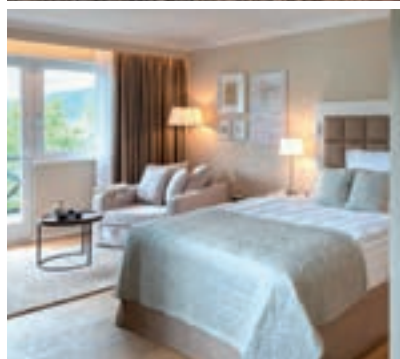
sessions and sound healing all help you to decompress. Don't miss the extraordinary Ortho-Bionomy with Bernhard.

The food is also hitting new heights. None of the usual culprits are allowed – wine, meat, sugar – but what's remarkable is that the chefs don't use anything that might upset the digestive system, so no onion, garlic, or chilli. Don't fret, magnificent morsel-sized meals are full of not just flavour but alkalising, immune-supporting goodness. Breakfast might comprise a buckwheat pumpkin seed roll with a sheep's curd tomato spread. Sometimes there are ice-thin crackers with divinely decadent portions of salmon. For lunch, perhaps parsley soup with »

lemon foam or delicately grilled char with loyal pumpkin. Dinner, the lightest meal, starts as bouillon (sometimes with ‘a taste of ginger’ – my, the excitement), but towards the end of a stay broth is upgraded to vegetable soups eaten as mindfully as a concentrated toddler.

The seamless communication between the doctors and the kitchen staff is the invisible honey that makes the newly evolved Mayr run so smoothly. Look around the dining room and everybody is eating something different. It’s all about balancing the communication between individual hormones, gut, microbes, immune system and brain so that each member of the orchestra can contribute to the harmonious whole. After just a few days, purified taste buds are zapping with happiness. Meals are artfully presented, and menus share ‘Good to Know’ pointers, for example, that ‘mushrooms are low in calories but high in vitamin D’. Helpful when your doctor has reminded you that even a sun factor of SPF 15 reduces your production of Vitamin D by 90 per cent and stress reduces it even further. No wonder my levels are low. I return home with a weekly pill, which I am encouraged to take every Sunday, ‘like going to church’.

Many compare the camaraderie between guests at The Original FX Mayr as akin to that at a boarding school. It is true to say most conversations here run deep. Everyone has a story to tell. Gone are the guests trying to stop smoking like it’s the 1970s. And it is not all about weight loss either. Mostly what the doctors are seeing is people who are struggling with stress, with



their relationship with alcohol, or with themselves. Ninety-eight per cent report tension in their neck and shoulders and there are also now Long Covid sufferers reporting an improvement in energy levels after just a week.

The process of detoxing can bring to the surface the darkest debris of our subconscious and, after the past two years, when it comes to emotional recovery, one of The Original’s most welcomed secrets is lifestyle coach-meets-therapist Claudia

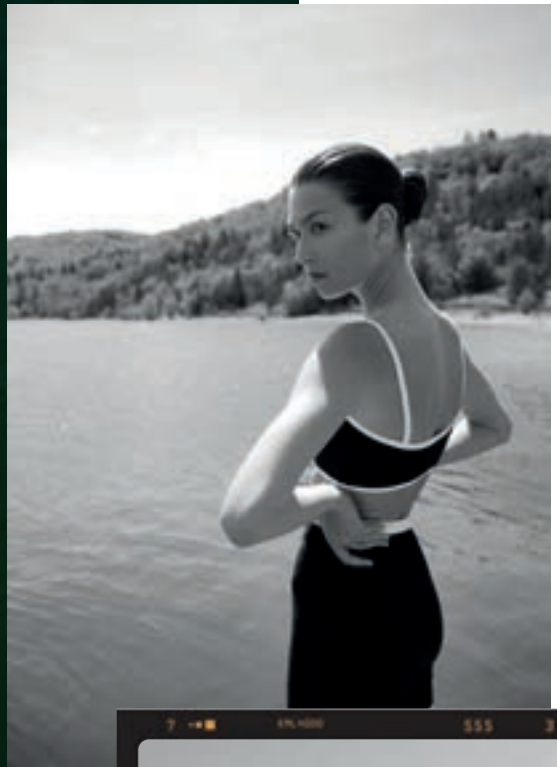
Waldner. She breaks through defensive walls as easily as cracking a walnut (it’s not unusual for tears to flow) and brims with astute wisdom. So much so that many clients keep up their sessions over Skype once home.

I don’t know whether it was purposefully planned, but in what was once a male-dominated arena, there are now women at the helm. Between Claudia, Gabriella and the leading female medic, Doctor Ursula, guests are gently handled and supported throughout their stay. I believe the current safety net provided by The Original FX Mayr is what truly sets it apart. Yes, the surface impressions are enough to make you want to move in, but it is the heart and soul of the staff that nourishes on a deeper level.

As I immerse myself into the waters of one of the cleanest and prettiest lakes in Europe, I wonder, does the ‘Mayr cure’ work? I’ve been told about previously unknown cancers being detected (skin and bowel are the most common) and I know that there are miracle babies conceived post a stay here. Some find their arthritis eases. Others give up sugar. It’s a great motivator. A place to retreat from normal life, adopt new habits, reduce inflammation in the body and let your central nervous system settle and expand. The Original FX Mayr – a place where everything can change, but where deeply rooted principles remain the same. That’s cure enough for me.

BOOK IT: The seven-day Original Mayr basic cure starts from £2,754pp, including accommodation in a single room. original-mayr.com





Bralette and shorts,
Del Moment



RAKXA
THAILAND

RAKxa is another hard-hitting resort with a results-driven spa fusing technology and tradition. Set on an island across from Bangkok on the Chao Phraya River, this fully integrative retreat tackles every inch of you: physical, emotional, mental and spiritual. And, even better, it comes with impressive medical back-up from the country's distinguished Bumrungrad International Hospital. rakxawellness.com

**MAKE
THE
CHANGE**

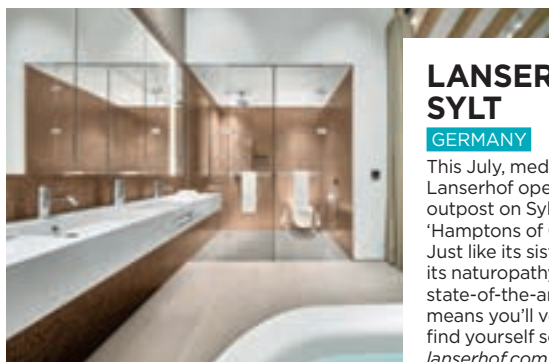
SONEVA SOUL
VARIOUS

Famed for its sustainable approach to barefoot luxury, Soneva now offers Soneva Soul, a new wellness concept that blends ancient healing wisdom with the latest scientific techniques (such as cryotherapy and ozone therapy) to reconnect mind, body and soul. soneva.com



LILY OF THE VALLEY
ST TROPEZ

Despite the challenges of the last few years, there's been a bumper crop of new openings across the globe. Lily of the Valley, a Starck-designed Babylon-inspired hotel, has set the bar high. But really it's all about the vast wellness village which specialises in rapid and long-lasting weight loss, through a combination of sport, healthy food and treatments - book the 14-day Intensive Programme. lilyofthevalley.com



LANSERHOF SYLT
GERMANY

This July, medical spa Lanserhof opened a new outpost on Sylt, aka the 'Hamptons of Germany'. Just like its sister resorts, its naturopathy meets state-of-the-art approach means you'll very soon find yourself sorted. lanserhof.com



Curative experiences at Kamalaya

TRIED & TRUSTED

Since opening over 25 years ago, grande dame of wellness resorts **Chiva-Som** in Thailand (chivasom.com) has led the way and, now, fresh from a rolling four-year, £20 million refurb, it's better than ever - complete with Tecar therapy, crystal massages and acupressure reflexology. Also in Thailand, **Kamalaya** in Koh Samui (kamalaya.com) continues its reign as a glorious holistic haven. Originally a Buddhist shrine, this big hitter now shines with an impressive combination of Ayurvedic, Chinese, Indian and Thai therapies, alongside Western philosophies. Elsewhere, **Vana**, in North India (vana.co.in), packs a slick punch - it's a modern ashram, with transformative results thanks to a fusion of Ayurveda, Sowa Rigpa and Yoga (plus super nourishing cuisine). For somewhere closer to home, opt for **Longevity Health and Wellness Hotel** in the sunny Algarve (longevitywellnessworldwide.com). This ground-breaking resort delivers on every front, with its state-of-the-art wellness centre embracing some of the most advanced therapies on the planet.

Sustainability and nature are at the heart of some unique slow travel retreats from **Balance Holidays**, whose emphasis is on wellness with purpose. Themes range from rewilding (think forest bathing and barefoot woodland walks) in the English countryside to female hormonal health workshops in Ibiza (balanceholidays.com).



Cutting-edge care at Longevity Health and Wellness Hotel

NEWSFLASH GRAND HOTEL TREMEZZO

This ravishing Belle Époque-style beauty on the shores of glittering Lake Como has a glamour which is hard to match. Its new wellness offering is equally impressive. Keep a look out for zingy fresh programmes which include mountain hikes, wild swimming, personal training and yoga, complemented by blissful soul-soothing treatments. grandhoteltremezzo.com ■



ACTION STATIONS

Harriet Compston feels the fear and does it anyway at The Ranch

Acqua, acqua, acqua' crackled through my walkie-talkie as I trudged my way uphill through a breezy ancient forest, the fearsome Italian sun peeping through branches. I was on Day Two of The Ranch, Hollywood's hardest-hitting fitness retreat. Known for transforming the bodies of A-listers, this boot camp has spread its wings and opened an outpost in Fiuggi – a medieval town known for its healing water, just an hour from Rome.

Set in the towering Palazzo Fiuggi with its calming rooms and bells-and-whistles medi-clinic, the focus is on losing weight while learning to be more mindful of your health. But it doesn't start as you go through the grand gates and into the verdant parkland. Instead, the hard work begins 30 days beforehand with their pre-arrival programme: 16,000 steps four times a week, four sets of ten crunches and 10 push ups twice a week and ten breaths before each meal. And that's just for starters.

There were 23 of us 'Ranchers'. Nearly all high-flying workaholics



searching for life change. Some were there for weight loss, others to jump-start their fitness regime, another just for an all-out body reset. My goal was to lose the pounds I had put on over lockdown. All confirmed as I was weighed and measured on my first day, before being whisked away for an ECG and blood tests.

The programme is centred around the early morning hikes – deep in The Apennines with its sweeping valleys, lush meadows and glorious views. And,

PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES, PALAZZO FIUGGI



despite the 6am hour-long stretch, it was a challenge: super steep rocky inclines (and declines) – up to 12 miles a day. Camaraderie was encouraged rather than competitiveness so I could go at my own pace, sometimes trekking alone, other times chatting with fellow walkers. A few days in, I began to feel more energised, able to tackle the unstable terrain and the never-ending uphill slowly felt manageable. Even my mind became clearer.

Food was always the big talking point. The Ranch is legendary for its exquisite plant-based cuisine using seasonal ingredients from local farms. Whipped up by three Michelin-starred chef Heinz Beck, meals are eaten communally with, perhaps, a zucchini banana muffin with homemade jam for breakfast. Lunch? A (tiny) quinoa and kale caesar salad and, for supper, delicious aubergine parmigiana stacks with macadamia ricotta.

The afternoon was filled with brilliant HIIT classes alongside calming yoga. Or take time out and lounge beside the glistening pool or in the spa with its three thalassotherapy pools, using Fiuggi's healing water. Then there was Dr Di Salvio who combed through my test results – most came back as normal except I needed to eat more protein. But the main event was the daily massage where the therapists (ask for Tamara) go deep into your sore limbs. And it worked – my legs never ached in the morning. It's all about being looked after '360' here. This means the enthusiastic staff do everything, right down to 'foot care' (they take an industrial approach to blisters).

As the days went by, my legs were looking more toned. The food was actually filling me up plus the hikes and workouts got easier. On my last morning, I stood on the scales. Over the week I had lost five pounds – and 12 inches across my body in total. But, perhaps most importantly, I returned home with a new mindset, determined to eat healthier and stay fit and slim. Despite the gelato I thoroughly enjoyed at the airport before flying home. I really felt I deserved it.

BOOK IT: From £7,226pp (\$9,100 USD) based on double occupancy.
theranchmalibu.com

Swimsuit,
Talia Collins

» WHERE THE WILD ONES GO

CRETE

This all-singing, all-dancing fitness camp has been transforming lives for over 20 years. The outpost in western Crete, set in a charming farmhouse in the mountain hamlet of Milia, will whip you into shape. With an action-packed programme, explore gorges and peaks, climb and swing from gnarled olive groves and chestnut trees, swim in turquoise waters and jog past curious goats – before stretching out with a spot of yoga. In your spare time, hotfoot it to one of the stunning beaches or head for a massage to ease out any aches and pains. Skip off home several kilos lighter and loaded up with movement videos, recipes and much more to make sure you stay on track. *From £2,250 for six nights.* wildfitness.com



FIT WITH PURPOSE



» FAMILY FUN WITH FITNESS

CRETE

With an expansive new wellbeing bent, Daios Cove is adding some serious physical activities to the family fun. Attracting the boxing gym experience of BXR London, expect trailblazing fitness combined with innovative medical technology, alternative health practices and an intriguing calendar of Healing Masters. Outdoor training sessions come with Mediterranean views and three dedicated zones cover cardio, strength and conditioning. Achy hamstrings are more than worth it for a dose of BXR trainers' infectious enthusiasm. Kids are kept casually happy and you and your tribe will never want to leave the upside down, double storey villas with pools and cove views. *From £330 per night half board with wellness programmes layered as extra.* daioscovecrete.com



» DANCING SHOES

IBIZA

If you're looking to get your mojo back, what could be better than an early morning Argentine tango session on Ibiza's north coast? Santhosh offers everything from ballroom to Latin, disco and jive, taught by professional competition and show dancers. This isn't about performance though – instead the remit is connection, self-discovery and the joy of movement. Four-night retreats in locations such as the new Six Senses Ibiza feature a dynamic schedule of three daily group classes, individual tuition and social dancing until the early hours. *From £2,500pp to include group classes, two private lessons and accommodation.* santhoshdance.com

PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES



⤴ **SAY HELLO TO YEOTOWN ABROAD**

Five days of hiking, yoga, soaking in a hot tub, no sugar, dairy, or meat and being massaged till your mind's blown. Move more, eat well, feel nurtured. As of this year, Yeotown's phenomenally fit and gorgeous owners, Simon and Mercedes Sieff, have set up their second

site on a pretty farm in the temperate climate of Madeira. There's probably no better way of getting to know this island than hiking the dramatic cliff paths, dancing in enchanted forests, bathing in coastal pools and scoffing sunshine-filled veggie bounty. And as ever - like attracts like; so the Sieffs have unearthed a phenomenal bunch of local therapists and practitioners. Leave fitter, healthier, clearer and a little slinkier. *From €2,795pp. yeotown.com*

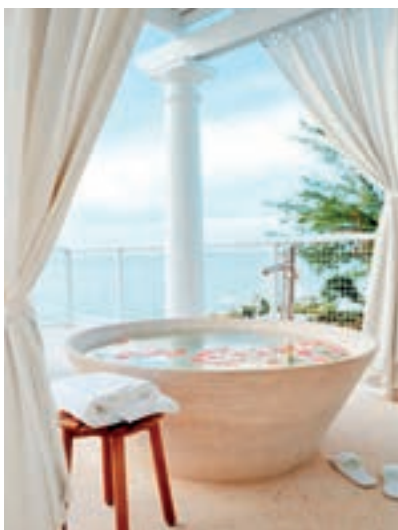
TRAIN LIKE A WOMAN

At just £30 a month for three classes a week, Jenni Rivett's online sessions are a brilliant self-investment. Streamed live straight from the sunshine of South Africa, Jen combines joint mobility, conditioning and strengthening with her famous 'The 8s' - a HIIT routine which only takes 11 minutes and burns more fat than running on a treadmill for two hours. Emailed recordings mean no excuses. *jennirivett.com*



⤴ **PSYCLE WITH YOUR CYCLE**

Working alongside NHS doctor and personal trainer, Dr Frankie Jackson-Spence, Psytle has explored the science connecting our hormones with exercise and performance, helping women to 'period-proof' their workouts. Live in flow. *psytlelondon.com*



⤴ **NEWSFLASH PALM HEIGHTS**

The Cayman Islands' first all-suite boutique hotel on heavenly Seven Mile Beach is getting ready to sets hearts racing with its spanking new 60,000 sq/ft garden-inspired spa, opening this summer and a whopping athletics club. Ready, steady, go! *palmheights.com* ■

**TAKE THREE:
NUTRITIONAL
BOOSTERS**

⤴ **1 THE LATEST
IN GUT SUPPORT**

Backed by science, Swedish KÄLLA delivers meticulously formulated probiotics with the best live bacteria to help relieve the symptoms of digestive imbalance, support immune function and repair damage caused by low level stress. *From £39 a month. kalla.com*



⤴ **2 INSIDE
OUT SKIN
HYDRATION**

Created by Dr Neil Gibbs, a leading skin biologist, Pellamex is a new category-redefining supplement for dry, sensitive and eczema-prone skin. *From £49.99 a month. curapella.com*



⤴ **3 SELFCARE
SUPERCHARGE**

Launching this summer is a new breed of superfood drinks. Phyto Nectars nutritionally and deliciously support your varying states. The meticulously calculated botanical formulations cleverly combine science, nature and flavour with intelligent infusions of plants, mushrooms, nutraceuticals, vitamins and minerals. *£14.95, phytonectars.com*



NATURE NURTURE

Take a mountain hike from
the Happy House, Nepal

Immerse yourself in the wildest natural hideaways and disconnect to reconnect



^ THE AERIAL, BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

BEST FOR: A LIFE-CHANGING ISLAND ADVENTURE

This super cool private island retreat is not only seriously beautiful but deeply transformative. Owned by 34-year-old Nashville-based entrepreneur Britnie Turner (see her website, britnieturner.com, for more info). The Aerial is a place to 'connect back to nature, find your breakthrough, stay present.' Mexican-chic bedrooms with stunning sea views blend seamlessly into surroundings; food is farm-to-table, created with produce from the island. There's sailing, loads of water sports (try glow-in-the-dark paddle boarding) and a roster of wellness treatments. Most interesting of all are Britnie's Elevate Summits. Based around five core pillars – Dream, Abundance, Presence, Strength, Love – these life coaching courses focus on making sure you are fulfilled in every area of your life. And they don't hold back. You'll even find yourself writing your own eulogy to help you work out what you truly want in life.

BOOK IT: Rent the entire island from £30,500 per night. aerialbvi.com

^ THE HAPPY HOUSE, NEPAL

BEST FOR: A SACRED
HIMALAYAN EXPLORATION

The aptly-named Happy House (so-called by explorer Edmund Hillary) is a heart-warming, peaceful haven where nature and nurture happily cohabit. Set in the quiet Nepalese village of Phaplu, this 10-bedroom private Sherpa home, embellished with prayer flags, can be booked out exclusively or by the room. Days take shape around individual preferences and tend to begin with yoga and meditation before a generous breakfast of porridge, seasonal fruits, fresh juices, coffee and ginger tea under the blossom tree. There's a choice of alluring walks – through holy forests, river beds, ancient yak trade routes and rhododendron-filled paths to Tibetan monasteries, or, for those seeking something more intrepid, a three-day camping trip to Pikey Peak reveals magnificent panoramas of the eastern Himalayas. Time feels indulgently slow. Browse the library, enjoy candle-lit massages in the Mongolian yurt, or share stories by the roaring fire before a hearty meal by chef Mingmar. The real beauty here is the inherent generosity, charm and kindness of host Ang Tshering and his team, who make guests feel at home from the moment they arrive and ensure their hearts are full by the time they leave. **BOOK IT:** Rooms from £405 including all activities. happyhousenepal.com

PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES

Bikini top and
skirt, **Matteau**
@Matches Fashion





⤴ SANTO MARIS OIA LUXURY SUITES & SPA, GREECE

BEST FOR: A GLAMOROUS GREEK ESCAPE

You won't find a better spot for a sundowner than the Akrotos Bar at Santo Maris, with a front seat ticket to the best sunset in town. The approach to wellbeing here is light, bright and breezy with a dash of Santorini rosé. An immaculately white-washed enclave is nestled among 30 acres of Grecian fig trees, hibiscus, and herb gardens brimming with aloe, thyme and lavender – all of which end up on your plate. Vinyasa and hatha yoga soothe the central nervous system and simple touches in the suites include private hydromassage pools, oil diffusers and journals. The highlight is a five-hour bike ride to the neighbouring island of Thirassia where you can discover smaller, unexplored villages and enjoy a picnic lunch under a tree. Reconnect to both land and sea.

BOOK IT: Wellness Suites from €885 per night, (minimum four nights). santomaris.gr



⤴ THE WELL AT HACIENDA ALTAGRACIA, COSTA RICA

BEST FOR: A RAINFOREST SWITCH OFF

As Costa Rica's jungle wakes up, flocks of birds squabble and squawk. Then the monkeys start: hooting and barking. Welcome to Hacienda AltaGracia in the foothills of the Talamanca Mountains. This is the first international branch of The Well, the acclaimed New York wellness retreat. In the morning, after meditation and yoga classes, walk with knowledgeable guides in ancient cloud forests, sucking in forest air and bathing in crisp river pools. In the afternoons, heated marble slabs warm your muscles before a float in the pool surrounded by greenery or invigorating horseback ride through coffee plantations. By evening, indulge in a massage with wooden tools used by women here for generations. What we need is to unplug from electronics, breathe in forest air and sleep deeply. To live well – which is what The Well is all about.

BOOK IT: Doubles from \$5,640 for five nights. the-well.com

Beach-side wellness at St Michaels in Cornwall



UK BOLTHOLES

Keen hikers will love **Buxton Crescent's** super revitalising Peak Health in the Peak District programme (ensanahotels.com). It combines privately guided, invigorating local hikes with altitude-focused treatments at this Georgian masterpiece's show-stopping spa, which uses mineral-rich Buxton water straight from the ground. Also brilliant for embracing the Great Outdoors is **Tudor Farmhouse** in the splendid Forest of Dean (tudorfarmhousehotel.co.uk). Originally a 13th century working farm and now known for its culinary prowess, this charming boutique hotel offers wonderful forage-then-feast culinary experiences led by impressive names including Liz Knight (one of the country's top wild food experts) and BBC star and 'wildlife detective' Ed Drewitt. Down by the Cornish coast, **St Michaels**, with its lovely new beach villas and recent addition of a spectacular spa, is pushing the boat out with a series of new coastal wellness retreats – think wild swimming, yoga, paddle boarding and restorative Pilates (stmichaelsresort.com). Or plump for one of **Zest Life's** fabulous

yoga and wild swimming retreats at stylish country house Plas Cadnant in Anglesey where all your stress is washed away by the crisp, clear waters (thezestlife.co.uk).



Find your wild side in Anglesey at Plas Cadnant



« **WATER**
REWILDRESTORE,
GREECE

Mexican-American artist Patricia Garcia-Gomez shares the restorative powers of the Aegean Sea at RewildRestore. Set amid the unquestionable beauty of Koufonisi, a tiny Cycladic island, this is a place where time seems to slow down and connect you back to yourself. Expect soul-feeding morning swims, adventures to hidden places, time and space to just be, and beautifully fresh Cyclades-sourced meals. rewildrestore.com



^ **FIRE**
FIRE CEREMONY - MEA, USA

Nestled on the beachfront of Baja, California, the Modern Elder Academy (MEA), the world's first midlife wisdom school, offers sabbaticals and workshops dedicated to living a life that is as deep, meaningful and purposeful as it is long. Integral to the programmes is the fire ceremony, where students gather around the firepit at sunset to examine their mindsets, habits, obligations and ways of being that no longer serve, before writing down and burning the baggage they want to release. modernelderacademy.com



^ **AIR**
THYME, COTSWOLDS

Drawing on her years working as an obstetrician, Caryn Hibbert, founder of Thyme, knows just how powerful breathing techniques can be for managing pain and stress. The recently opened Botanical Bothy offers specific treatments combining diaphragmatic breathing, pressure-point massage and jade combing to destress deeply exhausted bodies and minds. thyme.co.uk

FIND YOUR ELEMENT



^ **EARTH**
HABITAS AIUIA, SAUDI ARABIA

Rest comes easily at this pristine 96-room, low impact eco lodge, with tent-like suites snaking along the desert sands, as does pure alchemical nourishment, courtesy of the nearby native Moringa tree whose roots, leaves and seeds continue to nourish the local communities in an area where organic is the only way. Sleeping under those same bright stars that have safely guided the ancient Bedouins, you naturally start to blend into their drumming heartbeat and connect with your spirit. ourhabitas.com



^ **ICE**
ICE FLOATING, VAL D'ISERE

While the Brits have been championing wild swimming, Val d'Isere has taken things one freezing step further with ice floating on the glistening Ouillette Lake. Originated from Finland, this teeth-chattering activity is celebrated for boosting endorphin levels, stimulating blood circulation and relieving pain. Don one of the bright red dry suits (you'll look like a lobster but it means you don't feel cold), then slide into the crystal-clear waters and float freely while soaking up the spectacular mountain scenery. evolution2.com ■

PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES; © SUSSIE BELL



MINDFUL MOVEMENT

Align body, breath and inner healing at Mandali, Italy's newest retreat centre, says *Anna Pasternak*

By the time you reach Mandali, high on the edge of the Italian mountains overhanging Lago d'Orta, you feel as if you have ascended into heaven. It's like staying at an exclusive eagle's eerie, where everything is geared towards tangible spirituality. It's not just the welcoming stone walkway studded with amethysts, or the monastic chic of your room but the intention of the Dutch owners embedded in the architectural vision. This isn't a mere yoga or meditation centre with sensational views. Energetically, it's a container – a brilliantly conceived space – where you choose your own experience to aid reconnection to your light. My inner pilot light was sputtering when I arrived; menopause had crushed me with its relentless, sleepless, sweat-filled nights.

Here, you are instantly grounded, while the magic of the space – all birdsong and chiming church bells – holds you. We were encouraged to listen within and do whatever we required to drop into ourselves. The daily schedule offers morning vinyasa yoga, meditation, and afternoon restorative yin yoga, with Qigong, sound baths, sound healing and mantra singing, slotted in between. But if you want to diverge from the routine, walk out of a class, lie down if tired, or take a swim and a sauna, the idea is to do what feels natural to you. The only prescriptive element was to follow your own lead. The liberation of this alone had the greatest impact

Top, **Matteau** @ **Matches Fashion**.
Hat, **Lack of Colour**.
Bikini briefs, **Talia Collins**





Nurture and nourishment leads Mandali's culinary ethos

on me. When I left yoga mid-class on the last day because my body needed a rest, it felt like a massive breakthrough. Finally, I was heeding my own wisdom, not relying on others' opinions or external authority.

Every day, morning yoga and breakfast is held in silence. To prolong internal questing beyond 9.30am, we wore 'In Silence' badges. Some stayed in silence the whole week; I dipped in and out. It was a joy not to have to engage in sapping mindless chatter at mealtimes. The vegetarian and vegan buffet meals were outstanding. A kaleidoscopic feast of colour and vibrancy. The ethos is nurture and nourishment, without the slightest whiff of punitive deprivation. While there are gifted energy

workers like Alexander Sohn, who tunes into your body's frequency to remedy its optimum vibration through sound, or gentle, profound shiatsu with Tiziana, we did the real healing ourselves. They helped us shift the emotional gunk. Through the stillness and my strengthened awareness, I listened keenly to myself and knew exactly what I needed to return to alignment.

Admittedly, sometimes the group felt too large at 40 guests. Yet the layered holistic approach and the physicality of the yoga, which so profoundly affects both mind and heart, left me with a joyous inner lightness that felt all my own. I recalibrated my inner frequency, soothed my erratic hormones and slept like a log. The real homecoming was not returning to home soil, but to the newly refreshed version of myself.

BOOK IT: A six-night Mandali Experience Retreat costs from €1,344pp full board in a lake view room. mandali.org



Take time to sink into yourself at Mandali



THE INSIDER ADDRESSES

THE HOTLIST

Book into the secret gem that is The Coach House Retreat for personalised yin yoga with Olivia Clarke and exceptional body treatments (thecoachhouseretreat.co.uk). A two-bedroom bolthole in Wales, it's the ultimate reset, with catered meals and beautiful walks. Speaking of which, watch out for Hill Yoga breaks with Amber Scott at Trasierra (trasierra.com). Two classes a day, hill walking and Spanish sunshine. Further afield, Koh Samui's Absolute Sanctuary offers a host of daily yoga and Pilates classes, amazing paper-light food and top-level treatments all at exceptionally good value - think £15 for an hour of reflexology (absolutesanctuary.com).

KEEP ON MOVING



THE FLOW

MOVEMENT FOR MODERN LIFE

Kat Farrant is passionate about making yoga accessible for everyone. Subscribe and you'll never look back. This is the Netflix of yoga - there are classes for everything - neck ache, anxiety, the menopause, pregnancy as well as the new series 'Ageless Movement', designed to see you through midlife and quite literally regenerate your cells. movementformodernlife.com

THE STUDIO: LOVE SUPREME PROJECTS

Londoners, listen up. Love Supreme Projects, on buzzy Golborne Road, is causing a stir with its inspired yoga, meditation and dance classes. While all the usual suspects are here, get out of your comfort zone and try the likes of Jivamukti yoga, kirtan chanting and 'Enlightened Electro' and disco dancing. lovesupremeprojects.com ■



THE PRACTICE

THE HUMAN METHOD

The Human Method, brainchild of the beautifully intuitive Nahid de Belgeonne (above), transforms the health of anyone burnt out or dealing with stress and anxiety. Blending yoga flow, somatic movements and restorative poses with breathing techniques and meditation, this revolutionary system harmonises your nervous system and reboots brain-to-body communication. thehumanmethod.co.uk



Make a mountain backdrop at Alpina Gstaad

THE QIGONG TO LU JONG CRAZE



Katie Brindle is the founder of Hayo'uFit

Developed thousands of years ago as part of traditional Chinese medicine, Qigong uses meditation, controlled breathing and flowing movements to lessen stress and anxiety, increase focus and improve balance and flexibility - all without sprains or strains.

Just ask practitioner Katie Brindle, who started streaming her morning Qigong practise to her Instagram followers in the first lockdown. It was such a success that she launched Hayo'uFit - now the UK's leading online Qigong platform (hayoufit.com). Or head to the spa stars - Italy's Lefay Resorts (lefoyresorts.com) or Switzerland's Alpina Gstaad (thealpinagstaad.ch) - both offer group classes. Meanwhile, for something truly unique, Malabar Retreats run date-led immersive retreats centred on learning Lu Jong (Tibetan healing yoga) and held in Greece, Mozambique and founder Bibi Schofield's glorious home in Zimbabwe (malabar-retreats.com). Meditate under the moon while lions roar.



Meditation with a view at Malabar Retreats



BRAIN SPACE

Learn one of the world's oldest meditation techniques and you'll find the space to effect real change. *Daisy Finer* discovers mental magic at the London Meditation Centre

I've tried varying forms of meditation over the years but none has ever progressed beyond the initial love affair. To everything there is a season. Or at least, that is what I used to think, before I discovered Vedic meditation, as taught by Jillian Lavender and Michael Miller of the London Meditation Centre. When Jillian told me as easily as the sky is blue, 'You do the course and then you do the meditation for the rest of your life', I laughed, nervously. It sounded more long-standing than my marriage. Meditating not just once, but twice a day, for 20 minutes a pop? Surely impossible? But if I have learnt anything from the heartache of endings, it is that they can also provide a portal to determinedly



remould ourselves.

After several tipping point moments, including an evening spent shouting at my ten-year-old daughter for losing her school uniform (I am convinced she will mention it in therapy in years to come), I decided it was time to make time to create time for a better time for me. Less panic, more calm. As Michael says, 'Everyone who learns to meditate does so because they want to change.' And so I found myself in London for four afternoon slots of carefully calibrated lessons in the art and science of Vedic meditation.

Dating back to the ancient Sanskrit scriptures of India, the Vedas (which formed the foundation of Ayurveda, yoga and vast swathes of Eastern philosophy)

PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES; UNSPLASH

Bikini top, **Talia Collins**.
Trousers, **Silked London**



Vedic meditation is a methodology that has been passed down for thousands of years. In honour of the masters who have been before, the course begins ceremoniously, with an offering, incense, chanting and an invocation on our knees. Sometimes I think the smell of sandalwood could convert me to anything. But there is nothing religious or cultish about the process – it’s all about setting the intent. Each participant is then taken individually into a separate room and given a mantra – a single, treasured, subtle, meaningless sound which you do not utter aloud or share, but use as a vibrational thread upon which to weave your practice.

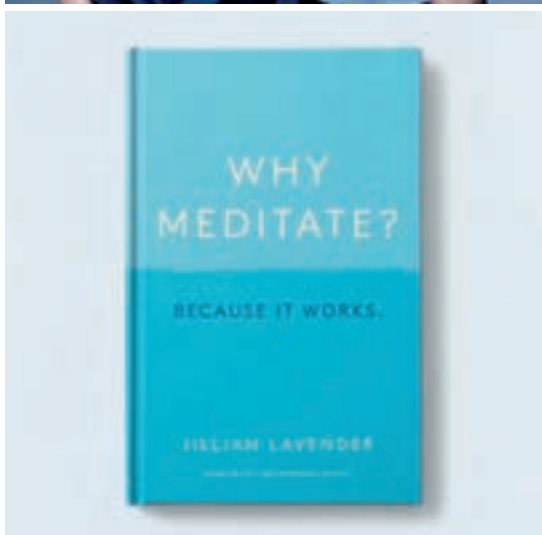
What I like about Vedic meditation is that beyond the prescribed twice daily routine, there are so few rules. You can do it anywhere, you don’t have to sit bolt upright, you don’t need any tools (alarms to mark the time are actively discouraged), and you can – and should – be sloppy with your mantra; it has a tendency to go off-piste. While transcendence, that blissful lake state of the mind, is a legitimate experience, it is not the goal. As a perfectionist, I try to remind myself to let go. Forget being in charge, instead, simply be. Michael is a wise and witty teacher – ‘If you’re gritting your teeth and sweating bullets you’re doing it wrong.’

The course isn’t just a lesson in how to meditate, but also why, which is very much a lived experience – the benefits revealing themselves subtly but powerfully within even a few days. Studies show that this type of meditation is five times more restful than sleep (yes, you read that correctly). As the mind settles, the body falls into unprecedented rest. During this process, obstructions to the purity of consciousness leave your system – stress, anxiety, worry – all wave their goodbyes (I even pictured lorries driving straight towards me) and Jillian and Michael reassure that if you are thinking, you are simply witnessing an active purification process.

After five months of practice and having missed only a handful (it’s all in the planning), meditation is now for me the bedrock of my daily sanity. I don’t think any area of my life is unaffected. I sleep better, I play better, I work better, I eat better, I think better, maybe, even, I am a better person? I certainly feel to be operating from a place of self-assured inner knowing with a greater sense of trust in myself and my own life navigation skills. Joining Jillian and Michael’s online weekly gatherings helps me to feel a part



Jillian Lavender and Michael Miller run the London Meditation Centre



of something bigger than my own solo performance. And I find reassurance in knowing that wherever I may be, however I may feel – I have a safety raft to jump on.

Vedic meditation is a powerful reminder that however hard the storms rage, however dark things may seem, our inner essence – the spirit of the divine inside us – remains the most steadfast light of all. Sometimes I think all the rest of it is just a theatre of lessons guiding us towards the fullness of ourselves. Michael is fond of saying, ‘It is always possible to find something else to do, but there is never anything better to do.’ I couldn’t agree more. Jai guru deva om.

NEED TO KNOW: The first step is to join a one-hour Intro to Vedic Meditation talk. From there you can sign up for the course which is taught in-person in London over four days — each session is about two hours. The cost of the course is based on a sliding scale according to circumstances, with payment plans available. Once you have learnt, you will be invited on numerous retreats from the UK to the source of the tradition in Rishikesh. You can also refresh your learnings with Jillian’s bestselling book *Why Meditate? Because It Works* (Hodder & Stoughton, £16.99). londonmeditationcentre.com



THE CENTRE

DZOGCHEN BEARA

The land where Europe meets the Atlantic on which Dzogchen Beara retreat was built is a 'power place' of renewal and healing. Everyone who visits comments on the extraordinary atmosphere of peace shrouding these simple white buildings, perched on Ireland's Beara Peninsula. In this environment of deep spiritual ritual, compassion comes centre stage as every practice begins with a wish to benefit others. The centre offers daily drop-in guided meditations (in person and online) along with onsite retreats. Stay either in the hostel, spiritual care centre, or one of the three cottages overlooking the wild Atlantic. Hike or curl up by a wood-burning stove, watching the ever-changing light on the waves below. Leave in harmony with yourself and the world. dzogchenbeara.org



THE INSIDE TRACK

HOW TO BEAT BRAIN FOG

Professor James Goodwin's advice to combat brain fog includes lowering calorie intake, avoiding a sugar rush, exercising consistently, sleeping deeply and visiting a sauna two to three times a week. Discover more tips on the Brain Health Network, a digital platform which provides advice from the world's leading brain health experts to help lower neurodegenerative diseases and keep ageing brains healthy. For example, did you know that, at any age, your memory will be better if you are sexually active? No excuses. brain.health



THE SAGE

CORNELIUS O'SHAUGHNESSY



Influenced by Buddhism, Advaita Vedanta, Sufism and Mystical Christianity, Cornelius O'Shaughnessy is an experienced meditation, stress management and Eastern philosophy teacher. This guru in a hoodie and tracksuit has that rare gift of meeting people where they are at, whether it's a global

CEO or a 12-year-old child. After suffering a severe breakdown at 21, O'Shaughnessy lived through many years of treatment resistant depression. In 2007 he underwent a powerful awakening in India: 'Looking out over the rice fields at Arunachala in Tiruvannamalai I realised that life was doing what life was doing and I was a speck of dust screaming about it. I just let go of the feeling that anything needed to change and started to show up with less desire and more peace.' With our world in deep flux, his path of wisdom begins with acceptance. *One-to-one guidance and UK retreats available. bodhimaya.com*

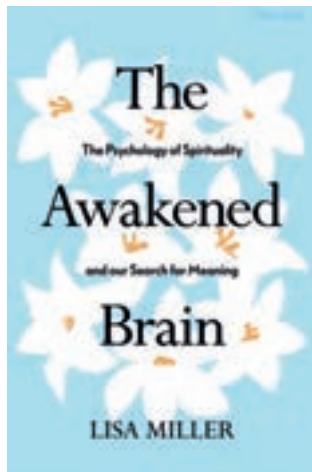
HEALTHY MIND...



THE SUPPLEMENT

INDI

Fight fatigue and find focus with plant-based powder Indi Mind. Add a heaped scoop to almond milk and discover a sweet, fragrantly floral afternoon uplift, complete with Haskap Berries (containing four times the anthocyanins of blueberries), magnesium, Coenzyme Q10, beetroot, Lion's Mane mushroom and cocoa. £45, indisupplements.com



THE BOOK

THE AWAKENED BRAIN by Dr Lisa Miller

Clinical psychology professor Dr Lisa Miller, founder of the Spirituality Mind Body Institute at Columbia University, guides us through the science of spirituality and shows us how to enhance our mental health through a life filled with greater meaning and contribution. (Allen Lane, £20) ■

WELLNESS A-TEAM

The transformation specialists to dial-up for extra A-grade support

THE ART OF TOUCH

SARAH WATSON

When you need a massage to feel more like a return to source, call Sarah Jane Watson to your London abode. Sarah's signature approach is a soothing, compassionate melody which powerfully transports you back to self. Expect a transformative treatment which takes you beyond intellect, where moments of stillness further define the movement, and where the body is treated with reverence as a vessel for the soul. Authentic, soothing, masterful. *From £450. sarahjwatson.com*

BUSINESS ALCHEMY

ANDREW WALLAS

If you are stuck in a professional rut, witty psychotherapist Andrew Wallas is the man to re-set your business mojo. This engaging corporate shaman blends his fast-paced City life with a more spiritual and considered excavation of your subconscious blocks to prosperity, drilling down to discover the soul of your business, illuminating the hidden shadow dynamics and together setting the intention for how to maximise full potential. *Priced individually. andrewwallas.org*

CELESTIAL SUPPORT

DEBBIE FRANK

Legendary astrologer Debbie Frank's searing intuition maps out your soul's journey and her lyrical words resonate to your core – personalised readings are heaven sent. A gifted herbalist and homeopath, she also creates bespoke remedies which work with your subtle energy fields to bring you back into alignment, banish Covid symptoms, cool hormonal hot flush inner fires and soothe anxiety. Some of her esoteric remedies have been channelled from sacred sites, works of art and even the planets and cosmos. Stellar indeed. *£180 for an hour-long reading. debbiefrank.com*

NUTRITION FOR ADOLESCENTS

CHARLOTTE FRASER

With a brilliant ability to get behind your teenager's emotional wall indirectly, Charlotte Fraser is a naturopathic nutritionist and founder of the Whole Student Programme. Conducted electronically with no scary forms or waiting rooms, consultations integrate quick and fun online cognitive performance assessments – this is not an IQ test, it's about finding the 'nutritional gaps' for teenage problems as varied as acne, anxiety, stress, sleep and low moods. Charlotte then offers invaluable advice often prescribing, in the short-term, supplements for therapeutic effect. A lifeline for worried mothers. *Four-month core nutrition programme from £330. naturopathic-nutrition.com*

NATURAL SKIN AESTHETICS

JO AKINLOYE

A glowing advert for her trade, Jo Akinloye is a trained nurse whose expert approach is drawing the country set to her idyllic, flower-strewn clinic near Malmesbury, while she also runs remote clinics in Ramsbury and Marylebone. Her discreet treatments, which range from Prophilto to the Golden Glow facial, are all about skin rejuvenation. Try the ultimate in non-surgical face lifts, the skin tightening and lifting ULTRAcel Q+. Kickstarts fresh collagen and elastin. *ULTRAcel Q, from £480. naturalfaceaesthetics.com*

EMOTIONAL RECOGNITION

TOVE FRISVOLD

Psychotherapist Tove Frisvold, or 'The Elder' as some of her clients call her, helps you to clean up your past, your relationships with others and your sense of self. She's all about recognising and understanding our hidden emotions and the invisible walls we put in place to survive. Professional but unconventional, she's the perfect mix of sparkle and seriousness. If you're dealing with grief, potential divorce, debt, narcissism, midlife blues? Join her secret inner circle. *Priced individually. Email tf@amberbridge.co.uk*

TRAUMA RELEASE

STEVE HAINES

A chiropractor and author of the award-winning *Anxiety is Really Strange* (Singing Dragon, £13.99), Steve Haines is changing the way we deal with stress through tension and trauma-releasing exercises. It's a reboot to the nervous system, using a simple set of seven self-healing exercises which set up natural tremor mechanisms inside the body to create new neural pathways and switch off the threat detector inside you. Result: significantly reduce stress, anxiety and pain in just ten minutes. Skip off grounded and fully connected. *From £140. bodycollege.net*

FUTURISTIC HEALTH MOT

DR SABINE DONNAI

Founder of London clinic VIAVI, the world's top health assessment service, Dr Sabine offers a serious appraisal, fusing cutting-edge science with a variety of disciplines to understand absolutely everything about your health. Think cardiovascular, cancer, nutrient absorption, musculoskeletal, DNA profiling, in-depth cognitive testing, brain mapping and more. The end result is a super-personalised 12-month health strategy. *From £13,500. viavi.com*

THE HEALTH DE-CODER

PIPPA CAMPBELL

Dreaming of more energy, confidence and sleep? Wondering what's happened to your thighs since the perimenopause? This is your woman. A superstar at creating the perfect landscape for your hormones to find their balance, Pippa is a pioneering Nutrigenomics practitioner and Functional Nutrition expert with an interest in female health, metabolic balance and brain function. Using the results of cutting-edge DNA testing, Pippa develops plans with recipes to suit your unique biochemistry. *From £225 for an initial consultation. pippacampbellhealth.com ■*

PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES



Shirt, **Asceno**.
Bikini, **Talia Collins**