

COUNTRY & TOWN HOUSE

Immerse
yourself
in our
guide
dedicated
to personal
& planetary
health

Edited by
DAISY FINER

WELLBEING GUIDE

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ON THE COVER: Shirt & boxers **Frame**
Sweater **Navy Grey**

FASHION TEAM: Photographer: Trish Ward;
Stylist: Nicola Rose; Hair and make-up: Camilla Hewitt using Nars and Davines; Assistant: Saskia Willow; Model: Erin Harrison @ Premier.

CONTRIBUTORS: Harriet Compston, Jane Alexander, Kate O'Brien, Anna Pasternak, Fiona Duncan, Fay Maschler, Camilla Hewitt, Emma Love

Editor's LETTER



What does it mean to live an inspired life? Bringing our world back into balance is no small mission, sometimes it really does feel like an impossible one; as if humanity has created the tipping point of its own demise, from which there is no return. The disconnect is everywhere. Mountains of ultra-

processed food, equal amounts of under-processed emotions. Nature on the back foot, AI on the rise. And yet... The sun is still rising, the world is full of extraordinary people doing extraordinary things and wise discourse and action are finally entering centre stage.

Mahatma Gandhi said, 'Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever.' I couldn't agree more. I believe we each have the ability to create our own masterpiece. To make living itself a work of art. We know our individual choices matter: how we eat, shop, travel, talk, who we vibe with. But away from earnestly becoming small in the face of adversity or berating our lack of perfection, next-level living is not just about coming into awareness. It is about keeping ourselves open to change and growth so that we can contribute to the collective narrative.

For myself, I travel to seek out that which holds life, soul, hope, healing and teaching. The unknown terrain that travelling presents us with enables us to see anew, regenerate inner spirit, gather and harvest wisdom. When we head off the mainstream, we are more able to reconnect with the magic and mystery of the universe. With the beat of the human heart. There is no inspiration without heart.

The common denominator of all of the places signposted in this guide is that they seek to inspire. They offer a blueprint of travel that is about expansion rather than extraction. They actively nurture both personal and planetary wellbeing. What could be more purposeful and passionate than that? We cannot have healthy humans on an unhealthy planet. So, if we are going to travel, let's travel well.

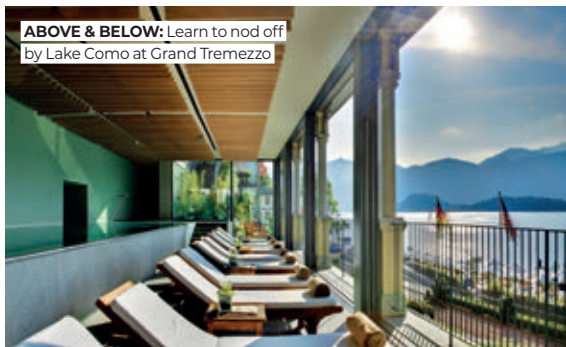
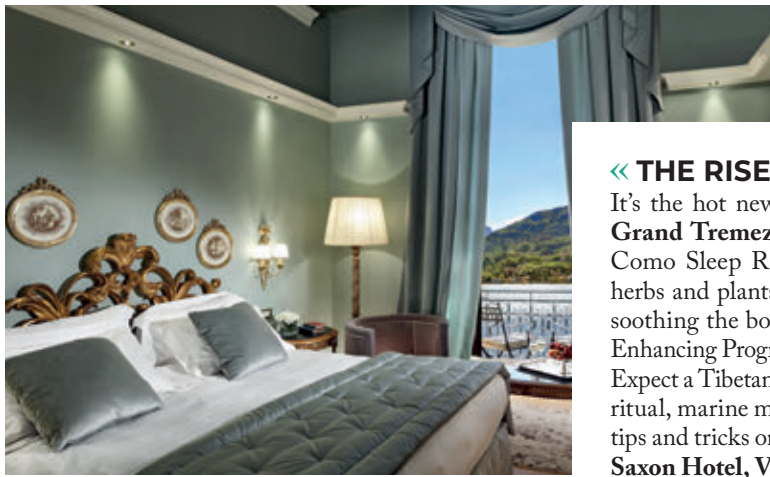
Welcome to the *Country & Town House Wellbeing Guide 2023*. For anyone interested in being, seeing and doing differently. Let's vow to keep on evolving and innovating. We can't leave anyone behind.

Daisy Finer



STOP PRESS

All the wellness news you need to keep you feeling healthy and in-the-know



ABOVE & BELOW: Learn to nod off by Lake Como at Grand Tremezzo

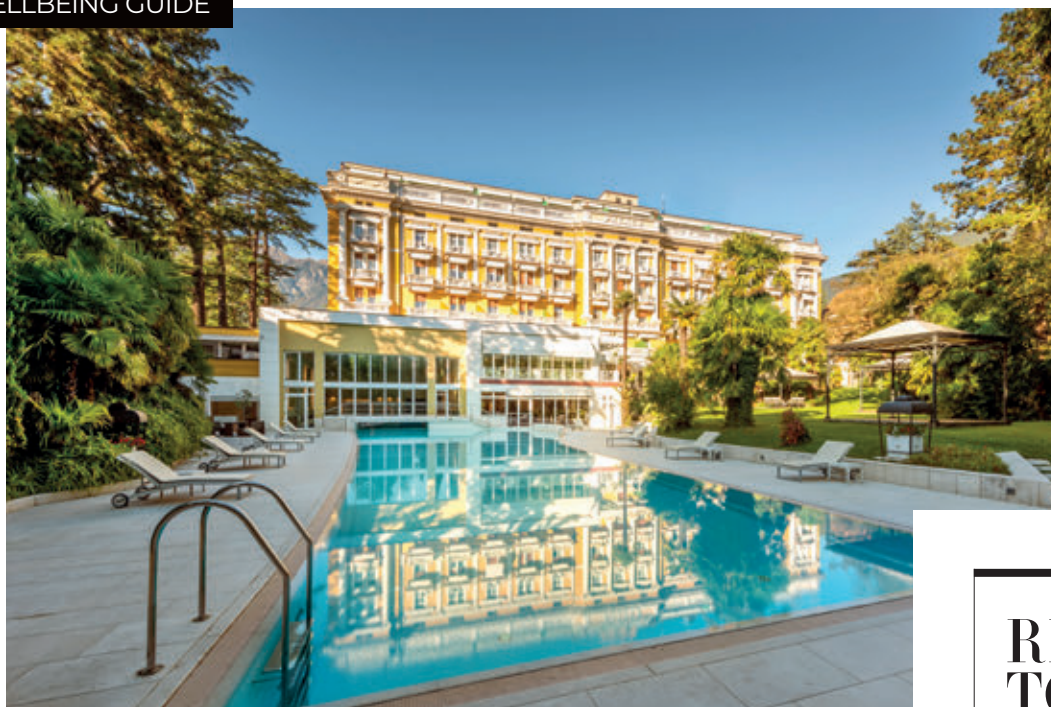
« THE RISE OF SLEEP TOURISM

It's the hot new trend rippling across the planet. Head to stylish **Grand Tremezzo's T Spa** (grandhoteltremezzo.com) for the Lake Como Sleep Ritual, a total body treatment, drawing upon local herbs and plants to promote deeper sleep by calming the mind and soothing the body. Equally restorative is the Tranquillity and Sleep Enhancing Programme at beachfront **Marbella Club** (marbellaclub.com). Expect a Tibetan singing bowl massage, hydrating facial, stress-reducing ritual, marine magnesium wrap and personal guided meditation plus tips and tricks on how to improve your sleep. Crossing continents, the **Saxon Hotel, Villas and Spa** (saxon.co.za) in Jo'burg is proving that Africa is not just about safari. Try the Sleep Therapy, a 30-minute treatment (equivalent to four hours of undisturbed sleep) on a floatation bed, with programmed lighting to help you drift off. **The Peninsula Hotels** (peninsula.com) are on it, too. As part of the new wellness and sustainability programme, 'Life Lived Best', the group has partnered with Breethe, a ground-breaking app, that provides guided meditations, relaxing bedtime stories and soothing music, either on guests' personal devices or in-room TVs. There's also a special 'Sleep Well, Wake Up Well' aromatherapy experience, featuring Ayurvedic essences from natural skincare brand Subtle Energies to encourage a good night's sleep and morning zing.

ARABIAN NIGHTS »

Saudi Arabia's epic family wellness destination **Amaala** (amaala.com) on the north-western coast has partnered with Clinique La Prairie to create an exclusive health resort. Alongside 13 villas and 52 rooms and suites, there will be a combination of medical therapies – think advanced diagnostics lab and radiology, physio, neuroscience, dermo, aesthetics and dentistry – and well-being offerings such as a cryochamber, hyperbaric suites and IV infusions.





« PALACE MERANO REBOOTED

The just-renovated Revital Spa of glitzy **Palace Merano** (palace.it) looks the business and delivers too – particularly the six-day Revital Detox for Longevity programme where no inch of you is left untouched, from pampering (get ready for lots of massages) to diagnostics (the medical department has 60 professionals) to diet, with a food plan rustled up post-treatment.



Enjoy farm-to-table dishes at São Lourenço do Barrocal

« FOOD GLORIOUS FOOD

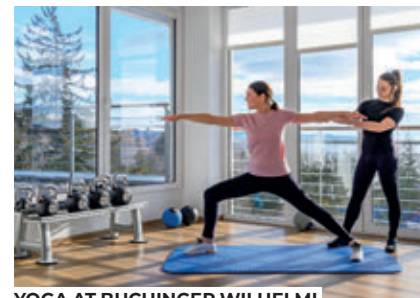
Across the globe, kitchens are getting innovative, knocking out delicious food that doesn't damage the planet. **The Sarojin** (sarojin.com), a hop from Phuket, has introduced a new plant-based menu with sumptuous dishes such as silken tofu and avocado, roasted black sesame and truffle oil. The restored 19th-century farmstead hotel **São Lourenço do Barrocal** (barrocal.pt) in Portugal's white-washed Alentejo also celebrates the importance of local with its farm-to-table cuisine highlighting the hotel's home-grown vegetables, own wine and olive oil. It offers a fantastic bee-keeping experience too.



THE REAL GREEK »

This untouched spot on the southwest Peloponnese is often celebrated for its history but now **Costa Navarino** (costanavarino.com) is grabbing the headlines for its planet-friendly approach, with a focus on preserving the region's remarkable 4,500-year-old heritage. And the clever thing is that it's a joint effort. This stunning destination is home to three five-star hotels plus over 20 restaurants. A Mandarin Oriental is throwing open its doors here this summer.

RETREATS TO BOOK NOW



YOGA AT BUCHINGER WILHELMI

Fasting clinic Buchinger Wilhelmi has a new spiritual string to its bow. Restorative yoga instructor Gilbert understands the body's subtle energies, so his mix of asanas, pranayama, meditation and chanting is exceptional. His intuitive expertise helps you to let go on every level. It's like shedding an old unwanted skin, enabling you to leave his classes supple, cleansed and hopeful. 12-17 December, buchinger-wilhelmi.com

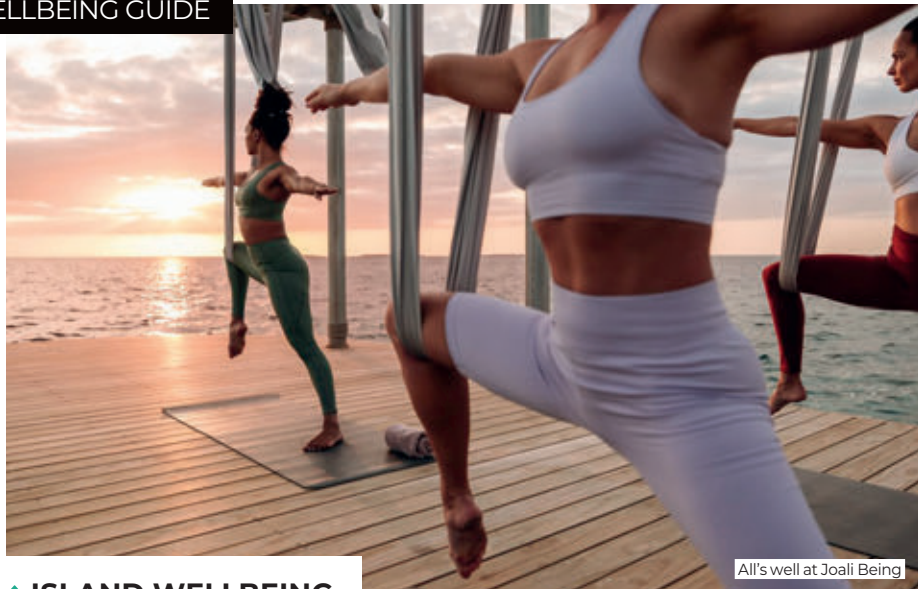


HEARTWORK RETREAT

Watch out for Heartwork Retreats in an exquisite property in southern France. Conceived by angel therapists Sophie Andrews and Pedro Morrell, expect a nurturing space where you can work at releasing deep-seated trauma and unhealthy patterns. Wrapped up in beautiful therapies, yoga, meditation, mountain hikes, wild swimming, a deliciously nutritious menu and time to rest and shed stress. 10-14 September, heartworktherapies.com/the-heartwork-retreat



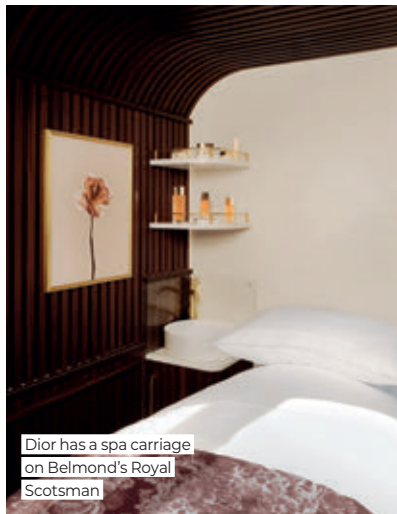
Sweater **Toast**
Bikini bottoms **Eres**



All's well at Joali Being

ISLAND WELLBEING

The Maldives is getting even more dreamy. **Anantara Kihavah Maldives** (anantara.com) has introduced Optimisation Retreats. An all-singing, all-dancing programme, it includes epigenetic testing, flower essence therapy, naturopathy and nutrition. **Joali Being** (joali.com) is taking things to another level, too, welcoming seriously good visiting experts – don't miss superstar neuroscientist Dr Tara Swart Bieber. The hotel has also rolled out new wellbeing programmes, from gut-resetting to weight rebalancing to reversing ageing. **Velaa Private Island** (velaaprivateisland.com) is also upping the ante, with a spanking new Wellbeing Village.



Dior has a spa carriage on Belmond's Royal Scotsman

IT'S DIOR, DARLING

Dior is having an action-packed year. Antibes' legendary **Hotel du Cap-Eden-Roc** (oetkercollection.com) has just revealed a brand new Dior Spa, with treatments inspired by its surroundings: the rocks, the sea, the garden and the sun. **Belmond's Royal Scotsman** (belmond.com) has also joined forces with Dior to open a spa carriage, with two lacquered treatment rooms, styled with the Maison's iconic toile de Jouy motif – perfect for winding down after a day exploring the dramatic Highlands.



THE RANCH GOES GLOBAL

Hot on the tail of **The Ranch's** (theranchmalibu.com) outpost in Palazzo Fiuggi near Rome, the A-list favourite is opening a new standalone property in Hudson Valley, New York this summer. Set within 200 acres, immerse yourself in nature and experience all the core elements of the programme: hiking, fitness classes, yoga, massage and plant-based diet. The Ranch will also be popping up at The Ritz-Carlton, Bachelor Gulch among the peaks of Vail in September and October.

IT'S NOT ME, IT'S THE MENOPAUSE

Menopause is the hot topic. **Palazzo Fiuggi** (palazzoofiuggi.com), overlooking the medieval spa town of Fiuggi, an hour from Rome, has launched 'Ageing Naturally', a week-long personalised longevity programme headed up by Dr Judith Bildau, a specialist in gynaecology and obstetrics. It provides all the tools you need during this life stage to regain relaxation and inner peace, increase vitality and put you in a good mood.

HOME CARE

The products to pop in your purse



HARMONIE AROMATHERAPIE DREAM DROPS

Dab into your palms, rub together and inhale, or pop onto pulse points. A support jewel. £19, michelinearcier.com



RELAXAYVOO FACE OIL

One for day and one for night, these are rich in antioxidants, fatty acids and the best and purest in essential oils, such as prickly pear, rosehip and evening primrose. From £58, relaxayvoo.com



DE-LIVER-ANCE

Restore balance to your liver, responsible for over 500 vital functions with this forward-thinking nutraceutical elixir that optimises and future proofs your liver. From £23.99, loveyourliver.com



ROSS J BARR

Meghan Markle's clever acupuncturist Ross J Barr has created a brilliant line of vitamins to boost immunity and calm adrenal overload. Their absorption is superior because they are naturally formulated, not a synthetic compound. From £26, victoriahealth.com

Mindful Adventuring

Where to rediscover yourself and our beautiful planet

FOUR SEASONS LANDAA GIRAAVARU, *Maldives*

Top-class doctors, a 'planetary wellbeing' approach and a profound respect for their location makes this Maldivian pearl an outstanding wellness star, says *Lucy Cleland*



I was told many moons ago at Germany's pre-eminent fasting clinic, Buchinger Wilhelmi, that practising yoga would ease me through my menopausal transition. I wish I'd listened, as my rage-filled moods, petty frustrations and disconcerting memory loss began poleaxing me earlier this year. Not to stress though (we know stress really is a killer), I'm here being earthed, anointed and enlightened at Four Seasons Landaa Giraavaru, a 3km coral island in the Baa Atoll, a Unesco biosphere reserve in the Maldives.

You don't automatically equate the Maldives with wellbeing, but Four Seasons is carving its niche cleverly by gathering the best of the best



Reconnect with yourself and nature in the stunning grounds of Landaa Giraavaru



doctors, practitioners and therapists in Ayurveda, naturopathy, yoga (as therapy – the yogis here have trained at the world's first University for Yoga, S-VYASA in Bangalore) and, by the end of the year, nutrition and homoeopathy too. The wellbeing centre, AyurMa, meaning 'mother of life', acts as the island's anchoring centre, spreading out over the pellucid ocean on one side to the lush interior on the other. The overarching ethos is based on what they call 'planetary wellbeing' – of not just healing and caring for ourselves through nature, but also for those around us and, most importantly, for our planet.

What does this mean in reality? It's a nature-connection approach – allowing our city-hardened souls to melt into the breeze, the bird chatter, the rustling leaves, the ocean swell, quieting our monkey minds for a while at least through what we eat, how we move our bodies, breathe, rest, reflect and recharge. If we are settled in ourselves, we have the capacity to care for others – and our environment.

Yoga always starts and ends with breathing practices and chants to centre us and tune us into our surroundings (not hard when it's a full moon swelling brilliantly in the inky sky or an egg-yolk sun lazily coming up for the day). Rituals have been created to balance chakras. 'Align with the Earth', for example, is the perfect regrounding kickstart. After a foot bath, you start by sitting on a chair over frankincense smoke (known in Ayurveda for its purifying effect on the mind and nervous system), wafting up to your root chakra at the base of your spine (Gwyneth would approve). It's then onto the



bed for a delirium-inducing four-handed slow massage for 90 minutes with the grounding oils of vetiver, ginger, patchouli and jatamansi. Your mind floats. Your body melts.

Complimentary consultations (for all guests) with both a naturopathic and an ayurvedic doctor (both outstanding) can offer a deeper exploration into any afflictions you may be suffering. My perimenopausal state was easily picked up through pulse readings – leading to being diagnosed as vata dominant, which negatively presents as anxiety, insomnia and digestive issues like bloating. Hell yeah. Menus at the four (incredible) restaurants flag the dishes best suited to your dosha, so choosing the foods to balance you is a doddle.

One of the more subtle ways of honouring this planetary ethos is a daily ‘earth ritual’ that you might think of skipping as woo-woo, but don’t – it’s an unveiling into spirituality. Every evening guests and staff sit together to sing a repetitive mantra giving thanks to the earth – even though it’s in Sanskrit, it’s easy to follow and soon you’re smiling (or crying) as voices rise up as one over the sea. It’s their way of giving thanks for the day, anchoring us once more to where we are in the here and now.

And that matters, because it is impossible to ignore the elephant in the room when it comes to these almost-impertinently pristine islands (on the surface at least), which are at the forefront of suffering the chilling effects of rising temperatures and sea-level changes. The first resort opened in 1972 and, since then, particularly in the past few years, new openings have proliferated at pace (there are around 160 resorts currently), luring those with disposable incomes, along with our polluting aeroplanes, our waste and our penchant for Norwegian salmon.

Around 90 percent of the coral reef has been bleached since 1998 in a series of natural – yet climate change-turbocharged – El Niño weather patterns (if you take a snorkelling trip, you can see



There is a turtle rehabilitation centre on the island caring for creatures injured by boats or fishing nets

this grey underwater world bereft of its healthy kaleidoscopic colour). And with everything in the Maldives dependent on its reefs, this is bad news indeed.

Four Seasons Landaa Giraavaru, though, takes its role as guardian and regenerator seriously. It provides funding, accommodation and salaries to NGOs such as Reefscapers (marine biologists who are recolonising the coral frame by frame, as well as rehabilitating turtles whose flippers have had to be amputated after getting caught up in fishing nets) and the Maldives Manta Conservation Programme, which conducts groundbreaking studies into this remarkable species so emblematic of the islands. We, as guests, are encouraged to learn about this work at the marine centre – and, hopefully, to fall in love with these mysterious sea creatures and therefore raise awareness and funds to protect them. They also have an excellent apprenticeship programme, taking on 60 local children every year who, by the end, are awarded a national certificate and very high employment prospects.

Resorts like this (just like any luxury brand) have power and influence – and therefore responsibility. For privileged guests, Four Seasons is to send them back rested, relaxed, with a renewed appreciation of our natural world and therefore more determination (and, frankly, with the means) to help protect it.

You can’t guarantee that, of course, but for those looking to reconnect with nature – and bring its teachings back home – it’s all there, wrapped up in those glittering surroundings and the kind hearts and healing hands of those who serve you. Just open yourself to receiving it – and pay it forward.

BOOK IT: Beachfront bungalows with pool from around £1,436 plus service charge and taxes. fourseasons.com



FROM TOP: Casa Chablé,
The Well, Eleven Rio Palena Lodge

CASA CHABLÉ

nr Tulum, Mexico

Just south of Tulum yet a world away, the Unesco World Heritage Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve is known for its mangrove-fringed turquoise lagoons, tropical rainforest and Mesoamerican Barrier Reef. It's also the castaway setting for the new Casa Chablé which sits on the site of a former hotel and has an eco-ethos at its core: solar panels provide energy for ten hours a day, electricity is off-grid, water is recycled. There are ten rooms, half in the Casa Principal, which has an open-plan living area and bar; the rest are Robinson Crusoe-style bungalows on the beach. Days are spent spotting frigates from sun loungers, riding fat bikes along the sandy track to the nearest fishing village or out on boat trips to see dolphins and turtles. Deep tissue and relaxing massages happen under a shady palm tree or on your terrace. At open-air restaurant K'uum, chef Williams Saurina uses herbs from the Ka'anche's (traditional, elevated Mayan gardens) and local fish for family-style suppers with dishes such as blue tuna marinated in kombu and mussels with tomato creole sauce. Afterwards, take turns using the telescope for a closer look at the star-studded, inky sky. A laidback hideaway that puts the planet front and centre.

BOOK IT: Doubles from £592 B&B. Full property buyouts available from approx. £6,616 for up to 22 people. chablehotels.com

THE WELL

Kolbotn, Norway

The Well plunges deep – from sustainability to spa immersions, there's nothing half-hearted here. The largest spa in northern Europe (13 kilometres outside Oslo) does the maths with aplomb: 11 pools + 15 sauna and steam rooms + 100 showers ÷ 10,500 square metres nudged up against a forest = bliss for newbies and spa pros alike. The choice is almost overwhelming – onsen or hammam; rhassoul or banya? Soft sauna with tropical soundscape or with gong meditation? Northern lights laconium or art deco tepidarium? Aufguss rituals? There's one for every mood and time of day. Every available centimetre of its roof is solar-panelled; heating is geothermal; 70 percent of water is purified and recycled, and heat is recovered from shower water (which can't be recycled). Even the in-house swimwear collection is made of 82 percent recycled materials. The ethos is Roman – spa as a place to meet, talk and read as much as to float, scrub, ablute. The food (robust brasserie or bijoux Japanese) is fabulous; the hotel is supremely comfortable with immaculate attention to detail. There's a side order of wow factor art (owner Stein Erik Hagen collects art alongside saunas); the staff are delightful and it's remarkably good value. All in all, a perfectly balanced equation.

BOOK IT: Doubles from £160 B&B. Spa day passes from £47. thewell.no



ELEVEN RIO PALENA LODGE

Patagonia, Chile

There is a reason why Patagonia piques the interest of intrepid souls. In an age when every corner of the planet is accessible, the vast landscapes that traverse Argentina and Chile still offer the kind of hard-to-reach remoteness that allows for a journey of discovery and reconnection. Perched on the banks of the River Palena in a pristine Andean valley, Eleven Rio Palena Lodge is best known among anglers for its bountiful fly fishing. However, the beautifully appointed seven-bedroom refuge is a perfectly placed portal for adventurers looking to explore the verdant forests, jagged peaks and glittering glacial lakes Patagonia is so famed for. Under the expert guidance of the Eleven Experience team, guests spend days hiking to tumbling waterfalls, kayaking the river and its rushing rapids, and embarking on flights with 'Ecocopter' to azure alpine lagunas high up in the Andes, activities described as an adventurer's equivalent of a beach day. Returning to the lodge just as golden hour gives way to a firmament aglow with stars, residents are invited to gather for a traditional asado (barbecue) before the generous supply of fresh air, locally farmed fare and pisco sours induce a deep night's sleep.

BOOK IT: Doubles from \$2,501, all inclusive, plus guided activities, drinks and ground transfers. elevenexperience.com





F ZEEN**Kefalonia, Greece**

Nestled in the hillside on western Kefalonia is a truly original health haven. Overlooking an unspoilt sweep of clear Ionian sea, it is both timeless and cutting edge. The ethos is to model the Good Life; a holistic existence enriched with healing. This child-free, family-owned resort boasts eight outdoor fitness decks, with a zinging menu of classes encompassing various yoga styles – from aerial to animal yoga – and from reformer pilates to hard core weights or gym workouts. Yet there is no punitive vibe. You melt into the softness with the wafting jasmine and orange blossom, birdsong and background thrum of the sea. Sustainability features highly. It's a luxury to drink the water from the taps, fresh from a mountain spring. The food, Greek with a fusion twist, is outstanding. There's an elemental pulse here, plugging you into nature and back to your best self.

BOOK IT: From €400 B&B. fzeenretreat.com

CLIFFS OF MOHER RETREAT**Co Clare, Ireland**

Set on ten acres of rugged Atlantic coastline, this niche collection of retreat buildings, gardens and yoga studio is just minutes from the captivating Cliffs of Moher and close to the grey limestone Burren, one of nature's most extraordinary phenomena. Retreats are a deep immersion into time-honoured yoga, breathwork and meditation practices, led by founder Michelle Moroney and a team of visiting experts. Nature remains the leading lady and you can't help but soak up her magnificence with unparalleled views from the glass-fronted shala and unforgettable daily hikes, swim spots, jumping piers and ice immersions, culminating in magical sound baths and hot tubs under the stars. Delicious vegetarian meals feature dahls, soups and seasonal salads. The mesmerising landscape, blazing fires and soft whispers from the Atlantic gently ease you into the deepest, soundest sleep.

BOOK IT: From €705 for a weekend retreat. cliffsofmoherretreat.com

SHOU SUGI BAN**Hamptons, USA**

This stylish wellbeing haven in the Hamptons straddles the line of hotel-retreat and spa. Designed around a series of thoughtfully renovated barns, the 13 zen-styled studios feature striking recycled blonde-wood furniture and floor-to-ceiling windows. The hydrotherapy spa merges traditional Eastern healing arts with functional high-tech experiences to recalibrate body and mind. Shou Sugi Ban tastefully blends into the landscape, but it's the plant-forward Japanese-Nordic-inspired cuisine that tells the story. Here, culinary director Mads Refslund (co-founder of Noma, Copenhagen) fuses wild foraged seasonal plants with sustainable local seafood and sublime renditions of the Japanese staple, miso. The results are exceptional. Sit in meditation around the firepit and succumb to sublime sound healing journeys, before soaking in a customised herbal infusion in your wooden Japanese tub and creeping under the cloud-like duvet to dream in a fresh new story.

BOOK IT: From around £640. shousugibanhouse.com



FROM TOP: F Zeen;
Six Senses Shahrut

SIX SENSES SHAHARUT**Israel**

For the ultimate in timeless regeneration, Six Senses Shahrut immerses you in a desert-scape so profound, it blows your mind. Deep in the Negev Desert, Israel, this futuristic resort blends into the vast bowl of land without another building in sight. It's so raw, so unbelievably beautiful that you want to weep. And that's before you've seen your room. All suites are visions of pitch-perfect, pared-down tawny beauty. The walls are in traditional tadelakt plaster, while the beds offer hand-made mattresses by Naturalmat. Everything is geared to sustainable comfort, made of local stone and recycled wood. The bleak moonscape land feels alien yet encourages you to come home to yourself. There is an ancient, grounding force here. If you don't want to tap into the monolithic stillness, even with raging desert winds, head to the spa. The daily classes on offer are stellar; aerial yoga and wall-based reformer pilates stand out. The relaxation room has a partial glass roof, so you can stargaze in the evenings, knocked out from wholesome intuitive massage. The food, fresh from the organic gardens, is another highlight. Zingy, robust flavours and a house-blend houmous to remember. But it's the light here you never forget.

BOOK IT: Doubles from approx. £746 B&B. sixsenses.com

PHOTOS: FREDRIKA STJARNE



CALABASH

Grenada

Tucked within beautiful Prickly Bay, on Grenada's serene south coast, Calabash has it all for the perfect island escape. Opened in 1987 by Leo and Lilian Garbutt, this Relais & Châteaux retreat triumphs, with the Garbutts' three daughters Adèle, Beth and Bobbie now joining the show. The 30 calming suites channel a contemporary look, and some have a private plunge pool and outdoor bathtub. The 130 staff are all Grenadian (bar three) and brimming with local knowledge. Gary Rhodes' chic open-air restaurant serves Caribbean fare while sushi and Latin-inspired small plates are found at newly opened Izakaya. The ocean-facing Beach Club knocks out king crab brioche and tapas using the daily catch of local fisherman. Indeed, local produce is a big thing here and 80 percent of the fresh fruit and veg comes from the family estate. Bobbie has also started chocolate company L'Estere, using the farm's cocoa beans. The Zero Miles Spa is a must-visit. Ingredients are sourced from local artisans to produce honey and moringa facials and deep tissue massages with lemongrass-infused cocoa butter. And there's much more to come, with 40 additional rooms on the horizon.

BOOK IT: Inspiring Travel offers seven nights from £2,899pp based on two adults sharing, half-board, incl flights and transfers. inspiringtravel.co.uk

PRIEDLHOF

South Tyrol, Italy

Nestled in the exquisite beauty of the South Tyrol, Preidlhof was the first well-being destination to receive an ISO wellness certification for its commitment to planet-positive values. All systems are designed to protect the environment. Furniture is made locally, pools are solar heated, the signature botanical skincare products are vegan and organic, and deliciously wholesome food is zero carbon. 'I don't eat anything that has a smile', says Chef Emanuele Giorgione who created the menu. Smile you will, at the plant-based Wellness Healing Gourmet Menu, which includes the likes of beetroot falafel with cauliflower tabbouleh. Guests on retreat eat in a separate 'Wellness Lounge' and it's these immersive programmes, of which there are nine, that people come for. Under the gentle genius of Patrizia Bortolin, one of the world's most beloved spa creatives, Preidlhof offers transformative journeys for inner spirit. A team of outstanding therapists offer experience, vision, intuition, authenticity and wisdom. Shiatsu, shamanism, sound healing, massages, miracles... you'll cry, laugh, come back to yourself, come out of yourself. Special classes, including laughter yoga, face gym, qi gong, dao yin and mindful eating, pass on powerful tools for sustainable everyday self care.

BOOK IT: Healing Holidays offers a five-night retreat from £1,945pp based on two adults sharing a double room, full board. healingholidays.com



RAKXA WELLNESS & MEDICAL RETREAT

nr Bangkok, Thailand

RAKxa's vision is crystal clear: scrupulously scientific modern medicine, nutrition and exercise seamlessly blended with ancient healing traditions. RAKxa took over a neglected 63 acres of Bang Krachao, on the outskirts of Bangkok, and planted 4,000 trees and 40,000 bushes that swaddle the low rise resort. Stays start with consultations from medical doctors (RAKxa is linked with Bumrungrad International Hospital), wellness advisors and physiotherapists. Blood is analysed; functional fitness is dissected. A plan emerges, a dance of high tech and human touch served with skyscraper levels of care and kindness. One moment you're disco-dancing in the cryo-sauna, the next your belly is (literally) on fire during traditional Thai Ya-Pao detoxification therapy. As more information is gathered about your health, tweaks appear in diet and treatments. Food here looks as good as it tastes – a plentiful anti-inflammatory diet. The attention to detail is exquisite – the DJ-composed music is blended with binaural beats; the height of the beds is precisely calibrated. Everything is scrutinised for its health-giving benefits. Low-key yet stunningly beautiful, it has no need to show off – it knows exactly how good it is.

BOOK IT: From £2,421 for a three-night Wellness Programme. rakxawellness.com



FROM TOP: Calabash, Priedlhof, RAKxa





MASLINA, *Stari Grad, Croatia*

Daisy Finer discovers new world
mindful luxury at a fresh resort on
Croatia's Hvar Island

I'm lying on a mattress on the floor of a treatment room which, unusually and rather sleekly, is painted entirely black. Yet behind my eyelids, I've never seen more light. Nor have my ears heard anything so exquisitely soothing. There are singing bowls to the left of me, singing bowls to the right of me, a gong at my feet and windpipes behind my head. Combined with the magic of reiki, Damien Truchi (he's French, handsome and had his time as a DJ), is transporting me into a blissful dream state. If such a thing as the gates of heaven existed, I believe this is what it would sound like when you reach them.

By the time Damien is finished, I feel wrapped up in the completeness of myself, expanded and with a greater sense of inner peace. Over the coming days, I notice that my daily meditation goes far deeper than it has done in months.

Sound healing is said to reduce energy blocks, fatigue and anger. Damien is introducing full moon and new moon sound gatherings for guests at Maslina, the newest outpost on Hvar, an idyllic Croatian island in the Adriatic sea. At Maslina, the love child of his sister Maud Truchi, peace is something you will find. The hotel sets a new benchmark in 'mindful luxury'. In both look and local materials, the architecture is respectful of the environment, solar panels are being introduced, the resort has provided a signatory for the Unesco Sustainable Travel Pledge and also



donates to the Island Movement foundation, a charity helping islands across Dalmatia to move to renewable energy sources. There are beautiful wooden bicycles for guests to use and regenerative principles flow throughout.

The Pharomatiq wellness centre offers a guest-centred approach, beginning with a health consultation where you can select an intent for your stay. The idea is to send you home with lasting lifestyle changes in how you manage stress, exercise, sleep and nutrition. As Damien says, 'it's all interconnected'. Guests can book private 'wellness time' or pick from body exfoliations, reflexology, facials by Biologique Recherche and a range of massages

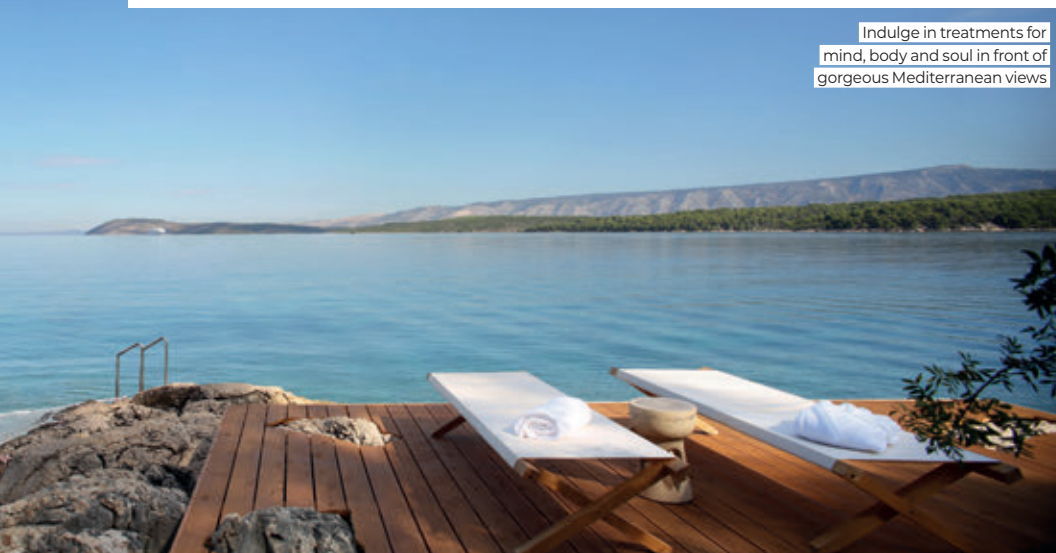
from deep tissue to intuitive. An Aquathermal Circuit includes a hydro pool, aromatherapy steam, Finnish sauna, cold water immersion and experiential showers. Private yoga and meditation classes are also available and there are plenty of activities for action bunnies: hiking, cycling, snorkelling, paddleboarding, windsurfing, kitesurfing. I wish I could report that I found kayaking around the Pakleni islands a transcendent, at-one-with-the-ocean experience, but whilst my guide seemingly levitated over the waves, I had to work like a Trojan. Which is not to say I didn't love the views, or the lost slice of beach where we lolled for a while, dipping into the crystalline waters

before the treacherous journey back.

As one would expect from a property under the umbrella of Relais & Châteaux, food at Maslina is taken seriously. A chunky beetroot salad comes glazed in honey with piped goat's cheese, caramelised walnuts and a zesty chervil vinaigrette. Delicate poached fish is served with a posh cauliflower foam and a happy summer ragout made from the freshest vegetables. Don't miss the hotel's stunning organic garden, with a California-comes-to-Croatia vibe it feeds into the kitchen, bar and spa, providing aromatic herbs such as clary sage, mint, oregano and thyme as well as potatoes, tomatoes, artichokes, salad leaves and strawberries. There are also five different types of lavender: 50 years ago, eight percent of the world's production of lavender oil came from this singular island. Forest fires have sadly put pay to the abundance that once was, but the island remains a living testament



Indulge in treatments for mind, body and soul in front of gorgeous Mediterranean views



to Mediterranean traditions with an untouched cultural heritage of immense beauty. Hvar boasts six Unesco World Heritage protections (more than any other island in the world), including the extraordinary lace made from fibres of the agave plant by Benedictine nuns. Covered in dense pine forests, with sparkly bays, pebbled beaches, hillsides carpeted in olive trees, grapevines and ancient stone walls, it is no wonder the island has been a famous wellness destination since the Austro-Hungarian era.

Maslina provides a blueprint for a sophisticated design-led property set amidst breath-taking raw island beauty. One minute you're lying on a rocky pier submerged in the sounds of the world waking up, the next you might be eating langoustine risotto. Wander into Stari Gran, reputed to be the oldest town in Europe (founded by Greek settlers in 384 BC, the same year Aristotle was born), and buy fresh nectarines and fig jam from local ladies at the market. It's all about outdoor-indoor living and finding a slower, more mindful way of living. As Tom Barber, founder of Original Travel, puts it: 'Done right, a trip abroad can send you home with a very different perspective than the one you arrived with.'

A stay at Maslina is a means to soak up the sensory medicine of another way of life: the scents and sounds of the ocean, herbs and healing, plus, should you wish, the added kick of contemporary cocktails. Come here to quieten the mind, rest the soul and return to balance. This is the legacy we need to not just leave for younger generations, but to embody and live.

BOOK IT: Original Travel offers four nights B&B from £2,900pp, based on two sharing and including flights, transfers, two tours and a massage each. originaltravel.co.uk ■

On Home TURE

Retreat and restore without the plane ride, in town or country

SERIOUS SOLUTIONS

Combe Grove, Bath, Somerset

Combe Grove, which opened earlier this year, is that rare thing: a new concept that addresses a growing modern crisis in a way that is rooted in nature, natural living and sustainability. An 18th-century manor with stunning views over both Bath and the Wiltshire countryside, this is Britain's first health retreat to offer its guests a real chance to 'rest, restore and reset' in a way that is both medical and holistic, with follow-up support that lasts for another 48 weeks.

Fundamentally, Combe Grove's six-night Metabolic Health Retreat programme addresses the epidemic of obesity and consequent ill health that assails our population, egged on by ultra-processed food manufacturers and pharmaceutical companies fuelling an overstretched, pill-doling NHS. If you arrive metabolically broken, on the day that you leave Combe Grove, you will be patched up and on the road back to good health. And if you are not broken, but would like to move the dial on how you perceive, experience and seek to heal yourself, or simply



Combe Grove is a first of its kind in the UK focusing on metabolic health



need a healthy week out, then the retreat, peppered with treatments and exercise, works just as well.

Unsurprisingly, Combe Grove is the creation of visionaries. The first is its owner, successful businesswoman turned philanthropist Helen Aylward Smith, whose dream to establish a 'health hotel', part commercial, part charitable, was realised when, before the pandemic, she bought Combe Grove, most recently a boutique hotel set in 70 acres of woodland.

The second visionary is Dr Campbell Murdoch, a natural communicator and leading expert on metabolic health. Their meeting was fortuitous; now you can spend a luxurious week learning how to right yourself medically (lowering blood pressure and blood

glucose, losing weight) while eating delicious, healthy food, swimming in the indoor and outdoor pools, doing yoga and meditation, having treatments such as naturopathy, acupuncture and reflexology, and going on long woodland walks.

Regeneration and a desire to return to a more natural environment is at the heart of Helen's vision. Everything on the estate and in the hotel has been subject to maintaining and improving environmental and sustainable responsibilities. A vast kitchen garden is being created, while throughout the 70 acres, biodiversity is being encouraged through conserving, enhancing and establishing habitats to contain a healthy ecosystem. In the house, too, a raft of measures have been introduced, from switching to a renewable energy supplier to eco-friendly uniforms for the staff. A week at Combe Grove is a week spent, put simply, learning how to live a healthier, more balanced and more natural life. *Fiona Duncan*

BOOK IT: The seven-day Metabolic Health Retreat includes a three-week lead in and 48 weeks of online support afterwards; three complimentary treatments or consultations; one-year membership of the Club at Combe Grove; exclusive access to return for a minimum three-night stay at a discounted rate. *From £2,600, combegrove.com*





INTO THE WOODS

Find a natural high in a treehouse

Look up for your next stay and hunker down in one of the six spanking new treehouses in the wildlands of stately home **Elmore Court** (elmorecourt.com) in the Cotswolds. Built with the environment in mind (British cedar cladding, corrugated roofs, cork flooring) in a natural colour palette, Scandi chic reigns here. Each abode sleeps up to four people with stylish wraparound decks where outdoor tubs and cooking areas mean you can fully soak up the verdant view. Meals are supplied and surpass the norm, with fresh pastas, market fish pie, triple chocolate brownies and mega breakfast hampers. There's plenty to explore too, with the estate's 250-acre strong rewilding project, including the spring-fed 'Bottomless Lake' surrounded by old oak trees with a wooden jetty and a wood fire sauna for wild swimming (rewildswimclub.com).

Fellow stately home **Cowdray Estate** (cowdray.co.uk), Viscount Cowdray's pad, is also celebrating four just-opened elegant treehouses, which slot seamlessly into a grove of beech trees. There's a lovely bright open-plan living area and kitchen – but really it's all about the balcony with its outdoor bath



FROM ABOVE: Wild swimming at Elmore Court; a treehouse on the Elmore estate; one of four treehouses at Cowdray Estate; the rustic interiors of one of the treehouses at Leckie in Scotland

overlooking the estate's famous polo fields. Dogs are welcome too.

North of the border, four treehouses have popped up on the estate of **Leckie** (leckietreehouses.co.uk) with its endless rolling parkland, ancient woodlands and dramatic crags in Stirlingshire. Brilliantly built into the canopies of oaks and sycamores, each is unique but all feature super king size beds, cosy wood burning stoves, sumptuous outdoor copper baths and decking areas with electric barbecues and outstanding views of magnificent Gargunock Hills. Families will love the two-bedroom treehouses with the handmade bunk beds.





CALL OF THE WILD

Reconnect with nature at its rawest

It's all about the restorative power of nature at **Rest + Wild** (restandwild.co). After an incredibly successful launch with its cabins in Shropshire, the latest cluster has just opened, with five new cabins on the edge of Exmoor National Park. Crafted from reclaimed and natural materials, each is deliciously cosy, with super king size beds, al fresco copper baths and roaring firepits.

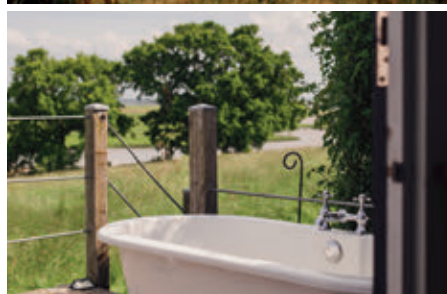
Unplugged (unplugged.rest) – the genius off-grid escape company founded by entrepreneurs Hector Hughes and Ben Elliot – has also welcomed a new cabin, named Peggy, with stunning panoramic views, just moments from Cheshire's renowned Sandstone Trail. And it's perfect for that 72-hour digital detox we all need, with the option to lock your digital devices in a lockbox for three days. But, don't panic, you're still connected to the outside world but with an old school Nokia mobile (Snake included) instead – plus a physical map to explore the scenic surroundings, an instant camera with film and a cassette player.

Rewilding pioneer **Knepp** (knepp.co.uk) of Knepp Castle in West Sussex is equally immersed in nature, with lovely shepherd's huts, bell tents and yurts. It's delightfully remote – however the luxury is all there for an amazing good night's sleep: feather duvet, down pillows, pure Egyptian cotton bed-linen and colourful recycled wool blankets.

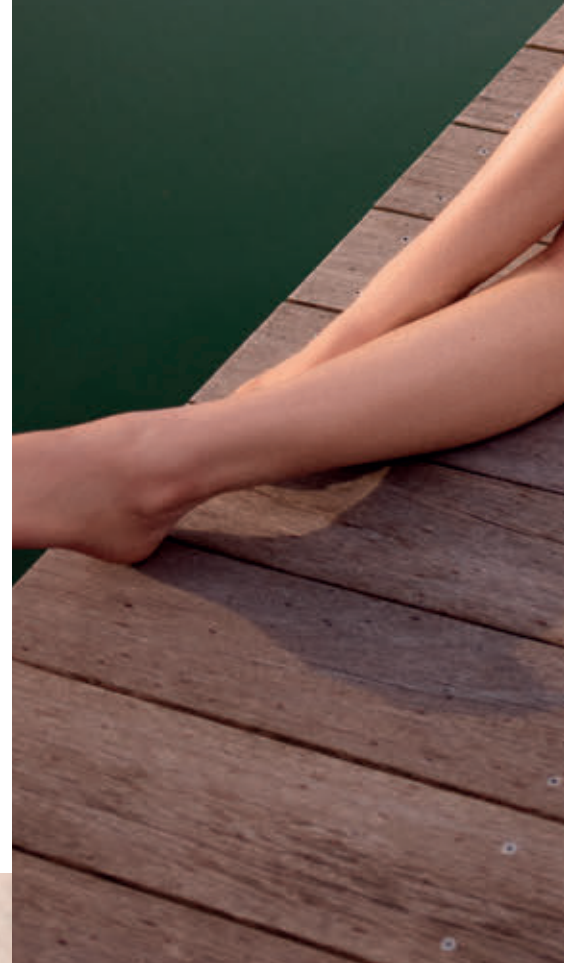
Also near the coast, albeit a plunge down south, is **Cabilla Cornwall** (cabillacornwall.com) with magical retreats on Bodmin Moor featuring some of the best yoga and breathwork practitioners, somatic therapists, sound healers and chefs out there. There's also forest bathing, wild swimming and sound experiences; just leave time to visit the two beavers – Sigourney Beaver and Jean-Claude Van Dam – in their enclosure whose presence is to encourage other species in the area to thrive.



FROM ABOVE: Unplugged at Unplugged; restore at Cabilla Cornwall; revive at Elmley Nature Reserve



When it comes to unwinding, family-run farm **Elmley Nature Reserve** in Sheerness, Kent (elmleynaturereserve.co.uk) has, quite simply, nailed it on the 3,300-acre estate. Now, it's added another string to its bow, partnering with award-winning, natural fragrance brand Verden and natural skincare brand Votary on a range of blissful treatments, which take place in Swale Studio, Elmley's newly renovated wellbeing space. But don't stop there. Guests are given a map of the nature trails, binoculars and personal journal – so you can slow down, switch off, and connect with nature among the hugely restorative landscape.





Bikini Medina



Avalon Wellbeing at Broughton Sanctuary takes wellness to another level

STAR PLAYER

Transform yourself at Yorkshire's Broughton Sanctuary

Whether you stay in a shepherd's hut, one of varying handsome rental options or in the 16th-century main hall, **Broughton Sanctuary**, set in 3,000 acres at the foothills of the Yorkshire Dales, continues to carve a name for itself as the UK's leading retreat centre. Avalon Wellbeing, the on-site wellness heart, is a design triumph, a slice of modern cool with swimming pool, sauna, steam and studios as well as a crystal light bed and Somadome meditation pod. Weekly yoga and meditation classes are a draw, as is the outstanding rota of umbilically attached healers and therapists. Co-founders and partners, Roger Tempest (whose family has owned Broughton since 1097) and holistic wellbeing guide Paris Ackrill are passionate about creating a space which people can drop, find inner peace, healing and transformative life change. Paris co-hosts some of the residential retreats herself, and regular takeovers with serious intent include The Path of Love, the Hoffman Process, Men Without Masks and Profound Rest: Fire of Wisdom (with non-dual teachings from beloved Cornelius O'Shaughnessy, of Bodhimaya). Broughton's grounds have been planted with over 350,000 trees in the last three years and outdoor immersions include wild swimming, a woodland sauna, forest bathing, sweat lodges, fire temple ceremonies, labyrinths, moon baths and woodland dining in the Cosmic Garden. The walled garden bistro, Utopia, serves divine plant-based delights. *For details on upcoming retreats, visit avalonwellbeing.com* ■

Me-moments IN THE CITY

Yes, you can carve out space and time just for you

UPPING THE ANTE >>

Hotfoot it to Mandarin Oriental, London's sparkling spa, which is taking things to another level this year. There's a new partnership with Clinique La Prairie, just-launched mind-bogglingly good sub-zero cryotherapy facials by Oskia and Biologique's revolutionary Remodelling Face. It is also rolling out Holistic Health longevity workshops and nutritional consultations. And keep an eye out for Mandarin Oriental Mayfair – due to open in the summer with a fabulous spa plus 25m swimming pool. mandarinoriental.com



<< GUERLAIN A GO-GO

It's the opening on everyone's lips: Raffles London at The OWO. And, now, the level of excitement is positively exponential thanks to the state-of-the-art Guerlain spa (a UK first). Set to be one of the largest luxury hotel spas in the capital at a whopping 27,000sq/ft, nine exquisitely designed treatment suites will offer exclusive Guerlain treatments – try the results-driven Royal Glow Tech Facial, which combines the power of microdermabrasion and the healing action of photobiomodulation light therapy with an exceptional facial massage. There's also a spectacular swimming pool, extensive gym and L'Atelier Guerlain, with personalised Guerlain make-up and perfumery services and express treatments. theowo.london



^ PLANTY FOR ALL

The ultimate meal delivery service for busy foodies, Planty delivers plant-based dishes straight to your door, cooked up by a team of Michelin-starred chefs. Try the likes of Not-A-Chicken Masala, Mac-No-Cheese and Shepherd-less Pie. Puds include divine Beetroot Red Velvet Cake and it seems too good to be true that breakfast highs feature a Chocolate and Date Caramel Oat Pot. planty.uk

^ SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE

The Mandrake in Fitzrovia promises guests an 'immersive experience'. Its new Spiritual Concierge menu is no different, with oracle card readings, celestial shamanic ceremonies and gong baths. themandrake.com

^ ON A MISSION

Mission, the largest yoga space in Europe, has just opened in a gigantic warehouse in Spitalfields. Alongside traditional yoga and complementary movement classes, enjoy a top-floor restaurant and roof terrace with fantastic city skyline views. mission-e1.com



^ GET HOOKED

Hooke, housed in a handsome town house in Mayfair, is taking the subject of wellness and longevity to another level, backed up by top-class doctors and scientists and offering the world's most advanced health screening. Disrupting the traditional medical model where symptoms dictate treatment, health assessments include everything from whole genome sequencing and colonoscopies to blood tests, bone density scans and ultrasounds of all the major organs. You can also have consultations with leading doctors from The Original FX Mayr in Austria. hooke.london

^ KAMA ON!

Rejoice! India's biggest Ayurveda beauty and wellness brand Kama Ayurveda is launching in London this autumn. The House of Kama will offer head and foot massages plus consultations with Ayurvedic doctors. kamaayurveda.in ■

