

For digestive health, guests at Mayrlife are told to chew each mouthful 40 times

MAYRLIFE *Altaussee, Austria*

Every guest is here looking for the same thing – transformation. This may involve detoxifying while doing low-impact exercise in the pool overlooking the mountains or, better yet, strolling around the crystalline Lake Altaussee. The clinic sees health as holistic, requiring a long-term plan, with anything happening here just the beginning of change; so its holistic therapists and doctors see you daily, using their time to educate. A stay of seven-plus days is recommended and, during that time, the focus is on eating small portions and chewing thoroughly. You'll likely be hungry – the calories aren't abundant – but fortunately, between appointments and enjoying the lake, you won't have time to think about it too much. And results speak for themselves: you'll emerge with bright eyes, fizzing with energy – and that hallowed few pounds lighter. *Doubles from £501 (mayrlife.com).*



Buchinger Wilhelmi offers meditation and pranayama sessions to start the day

BUCHINGER WILHELM

Überlingen, Germany

Since 1918, when its founder Dr Otto reportedly cured his arthritis by fasting, this medically supervised retreat has adhered to his principles. But it's also a pioneering research centre; to spend time in the orbit of director Dr Françoise Wilhelmi de Toledo is a privilege. With the Alps in the distance and Lake Constance in the foreground, guests find everything at Buchinger Wilhelmi is just-so, from blood tests with a personal medic on arrival to the white-coated nurses who take blood pressure readings every morning. So it's easy to adapt to a restricted diet. Every aspect of this retreat, normally lasting a minimum of 10 days, is calibrated in a clever way. Book early for a week of silent hikes with Buddhist monk Lharampa Tenzin Kalden, during which meditations and Tibetan lu jong yoga is also practised. *Healing Holidays (healingholidays.com) offers a seven-night Time Out programme from £6,199, full board, including transfers.* □

TATLER

DHARANA AT SHILLIM *Maharashtra, India*

Tranquilly ensconced in 2,500 acres of wilderness and framed by the Sahyadri mountains of India's Western Ghats, the newly relaunched Dharana at Shillim is an eco-retreat that has evolved into a wellness resort. The concept is based on five pillars – preventative medicine, physical restoration, healing nutrition, emotional balance and spiritual harmony – and programmes addressing everything from stress and age to fitness and weight-management last between five days and a month. Guests find their bodies detox as a result of the wholesome cuisine and ayurvedic treatments, and though one can expect moments of lightheadedness, the empathy of the team led by wellness director Dr Arun Pillai provides reassurance. It helps that the hillside, forest or garden villas – some with pools – ensure total privacy. But the estate is a joy to explore, from its organic kitchen garden to the hydrothermal pavilion, meditation cave and an open-air YogaShala where sunrise classes start the day. *Healing Holidays (healingholidays.com) offers a seven-night Art of Detox programme from £2,999, full board, including transfers.*



At Dharana at Shillim, detox is delivered through a clean cuisine regimen

KINTSUGI SPACE *Abu Dhabi, UAE*

A pink rendered townhouse sitting amid the glass skyscrapers, Kintsugi Space is truly an oasis in the desert. Named after the Japanese art form of repairing broken vessels with gold, the spa is exclusively for, and run by, women. Each retreat begins with a Quantum Assessment, measuring everything from energy levels to hormone imbalances and gut health. Next, a treatment plan is devised that combines both ancient techniques – such as Chi Nei Tsang abdominal massages, onsen baths and exhilarating Aufguss saunas – with an ultra-modern approach that incorporates LED beds, infrared saunas, oxygen chambers and a groundbreaking Koepe machine. The signature Matri treatment rebalances hormones and restores energy, employing not only laser acupuncture and light therapy but also five-kosha reflexology, a warm Himalayan salt scrub and Kintsugi's artisanal, adaptogenic products.

From £936 per day (kintsugispace.com).

*Japanese-style gardens
and intimate pools
enhance the calming
aura of Kintsugi Space*



*Six Senses Vana has to be
seen to be believed –
literally, as photography
is not allowed here*

SIX SENSES VANA *Uttarakhand, India*

Ever since its inception in 2014, this sanctuary on the outskirts of Dehradun in northern India has wowed wellness seekers, and, in 2023, it became part of the Six Senses group. Devotees will recognise one of the brand's signature touches in the hi-tech screening guests are given on arrival; and from then on, you are on a personalised journey integrating ayurveda, yoga, natural healing therapies and the Tibetan branch of healing known as Sowa Rigpa. The latter is the spa's USP, as it's rare to find treatments of this type in a five-star setting. The therapists – all trained at the Dalai Lama's medical school – deliver traditional massages such as *dhug*, using herbal poultices for detoxification, and *ku nye*. But for those wanting to reach even deeper levels of inner peace, private sessions with a meditation teacher can sow the seed of a daily practice. Other highlights include the Five Elements Acupuncture ritual, courtesy of Dr Dimple Raghuvanshi; and watsu, a blend of shiatsu massage, stretching and flotation therapy in a heated pool. Reminiscent of a womb-like experience, it can result in a powerful release. *Healing Holidays (healingholidays.com) offers a seven-night Personalised Wellness programme from £2,499, full board, including transfers.*

PHOTOGRAPHS: MATTHIEU SALVING; SANDA VUCKOVIC

FOUR SEASONS RESORT THE NAM HAI *Hoi An, Vietnam*

There's a special alchemy at play in the spa's Heart of the Earth programme, which follows the teachings of the Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh. Treatments here are unparalleled. You detoxify with ease under the care of the naturopath Dr Sudha Nair, who prescribes an Oligoscan to analyse mineral and vitamin levels, heavy metal accumulation and oxidative stress in the body. Still, it's impossible not to eat well in the Lá Sen restaurant, where the beef pho is as restorative for your soul as all those hours spent lying horizontal. The spa floats above a lotus-scattered lagoon where out-of-body crystal-singing-bowl experiences are performed by the spa manager Oanh Ngo. Therapies are tuned to his mystical 432hz bowls, with further stimuli for deep cleansing provided by tuning forks struck and placed on each chakra. In the signature Five Elements bodywork treatment, you are smudged with agarwood ash before crystals are laid on your body and ginger paste stroked down your spine. *Original Travel* (originaltravel.co.uk) offers seven nights from £5,085, including flights and transfers.



Spa treatment pavilions float on a lotus-scattered lagoon at the Four Seasons Resort The Nam Hai



Spiritually transformative: Ananda in the Himalayas overlooks the Ganges and the holy city of Rishikesh

ANANDA IN THE HIMALAYAS

Uttarakhand, India

Famed for its magical setting in the Himalayan foothills, overlooking the Ganges and the holy city of Rishikesh, the maharaja's palace-turned-spa retreat has been a go-to wellness destination for 25 years. Its blend of ayurveda, Oriental therapies, yoga and Vedanta philosophy draws the royalty of Hollywood and Bollywood, and Oprah has described her visits as 'spiritually transformative'. During the British Raj, it welcomed Lord Mountbatten and Mahatma Gandhi; and on the terrace is a guesthouse built for Anandamayi Ma, a venerated mystic. The serenity of her humble abode is one you'll find in yourself during your stay in decidedly more luxurious accommodation, enjoying blissful massages, yoga and meditation sessions, sound healing, and walks through gardens. For those needing guidance in finding renewed headspace, there's an effective emotional healing path that involves counselling, hypnotherapy and mantra 'setting'. And if you can bear to leave the premises, an early-morning hike to Kunjapuri Temple and its views of snow-capped peaks is a delight. *Healing Holidays* (healingholidays.com) offers a seven-night Holistic Detox programme from £5,399, full board, including transfers. □