

Extreme Wellness

Innovations in wellbeing are approaching at warp speed at resorts, spas and clinics around the globe. Adriaane Pielou shortlists the latest and greatest options for rapid transformation



Clockwise from above: daybreak at Buchinger Wihelmi; serenely floating along the coast of Ibiza with Black Tomato; sunrise yoga at St Lucia's Body Holiday retreat; a meditation session at Vana, in northern India



After two years of disruption comes a widespread demand for self-improvement. Let's get fit – fast! Let's sign up for personalised get-nourished.com vitamin gummies! And those “results not promises” online or IRL gym sessions! Let's lose that lockdown weight – quickly! That, especially. Kickstarted by recent research showing losing weight to be an effective preventive measure against Covid as well as cancer and potentially more helpful in conditions from arthritis to diabetes than painkillers or medication, a slew of bootcamps, med-spas and new enterprises are catering for the healthy new trend.

This summer The Ranch Malibu (theranchmalibu.com), for instance, famous in LA as the bootcamp where Hollywood's A-listers go to get super-sleek before submitting to the ruthless scrutiny of an HD lens, expands operations into Europe. Replicating its rigorous seven-day regime of hours-long hikes and micro-meals, it's

launching The Ranch Italy at the splendid Palazzo Fuggi Wellness Medical Retreat outside Rome. For people who want to “permanently reboot their relationship with wellness”, Black Tomato (blacktomato.com), noted for its next-level challenges that take people out of their comfort zones, has launched Bring It Back immersive weeks in Ibiza that aim to provide a transformative spiritual, physical and psychological reset.

Madeira, increasingly wellness- and fitness-oriented thanks partly to the success of the Porto Santo Geomedicine Centre, is now home to the British company Yeotown (yeotown.com), which has just launched a second outpost for the intensive wellness weeks it's been running in Devon. Based in old stone farm buildings with fireplaces and huge views of the Atlantic, the five-night Yeotown Madeira programme sees days start with sunrise yoga and end with a sunset breathing class. Cramming the hours in between are coastal and mountain hikes, exercise classes, wild swimming

and massages. Acupuncture, facials and nutritional counselling are also on offer.

Wrapped around a ridiculously photogenic sandy bay in the Caribbean, Body Holiday in St Lucia (thebodyholiday.com) also draws couples and solo travellers for its intensive four- and seven-day Body Aware courses, large and lively daily classes – aerobic, cardio, step, spinning, dance, yoga – and the healthy fresh food served in its beachside restaurant. Besides the open-air exercise spaces and air-conditioned studios and treatment rooms, a mile-long trail snakes up the hill that guests can tackle as they please – trudging, striding or running – with exercise stations en route including a rope bridge, parallel bars and a tyre run adding to the possibilities. Meriting special attention this year, however, is the new addition to its WellFit programme, routinely run by former Olympian athletes and local heroes such as the current Caribbean middle-weight body building champion Julian Felix. The WellFit Families weeks aim to motivate children and



Above, clockwise from top left: the new Lanserhof, on the German islet of Sylt; vitamin-packed dining at The Original FX Mayr in Austria's Carinthia; hiking Malibu with The Ranch; the South Indian massage at Chiva-Som; right: the spectacular pool area at Zoya Wellbeing

parents into exercising together, enhancing family bonding via fitness classes, beach sports and island adventures.

To those who'd rather starve the pounds off while spending much of their days just resting or joining the odd yoga or Pilates class, med-spas exert a powerful allure. On the edge of the Black Forest, the Buchinger Wilhelmi clinic (buchinger-wilhelmi.com) is one of the few in the world to run closely monitored, doctor-supervised fasts of 10 days or more. For really quick weight loss, there's nothing more effective. Run by the great-grandson of the founder, who set up Buchinger in the early 1900s after being cured via a three-week fast of the rheumatoid arthritis that had seen him invalidated out of the imperial German navy, Buchinger routinely dispatches guests home having lost six to nine kilos – and all manner of health problems along the way.

Operating with similarly large medical staff in daily residence, but on more easy-going lines, are the various Mayr medi-clinics in Austria and Germany. These practice the philosophy of 19th-century founder FX Mayr, who maintained that most health problems originate in the gut as the result of poor digestion. The Original FX Mayr Clinic (original-mayr.com), the VivaMayrs (vivamayr.com), Lanserhofs (lanserhof.com) and ParkHotel Igls (park-igls.at) med-spas all have fervent fans for their intensive detoxes and nutritional treatment of chronic

health problems via this route, as well as for their diagnostic skills.

Just opened in the UAE, and also offering medically supervised therapeutic fasts and detox programmes along with a battery of health tests, is the high-tech Zoya Wellbeing resort in Ajman (zoyawellbeing.com). After seeing his wife and sister die of cancer, the owner, Ameer Said, is on a mission to make preventive care more prevalent. In Thailand, the long-standing medi-spas – super-sophisticated Chiva-Som Hua Hin (chivasom.com) and rustic, more spiritually oriented Kamalaya retreat (kamalaya.com) – both focus on turning around health issues via fresh, mostly vegan food, intense treatments and open-air yoga. And in northern India, at the splendid eco-retreat Vana (vana.co.in),

which has set new standards for inventive sustainability, it is wholly enthralling to be told by the Ayurvedic doctor, very matter-of-factly, at the end of a tentative, taster stay: "Come for three weeks next time, and we will make you new."

After that, one might even be ready to tackle the kind of scary challenges The Extraordinary Adventure Club (extraordinaryadventureclub.com) throws at people in its bid for total self-discipline and self-mastery. Former British Royal Marines officer Calum Morrison founded the club 10 years ago, and the bespoke treatments overseen here range from dog-sledding on Norwegian tundra to motorbiking across Mongolia, all with physical, mental and spiritual wellness in mind. >

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That Lactoferrin Feeling

“At the first sign of a sniffly cold, I chew on one of these orange pills – and it never develops. Kind of magic.” So said an early adopter of Leapfrog, a new supplement based on lactoferrin. Intriguingly, behind Leapfrog is not a massive pharmaceutical company but a London-based journalist, Stephanie Drax. She came across lactoferrin – a component of milk – while researching immunity-boosters for her cold-prone children. The sample she ordered stopped her own next cold, but it resembled icing sugar. Astonished to discover the flyaway substance didn’t exist in tablet form, Drax decided to turn entrepreneur. After a long, complicated process, she launched Leapfrog just as the pandemic hit. Now University of Michigan scientists have announced lactoferrin’s anti-viral properties make it “an exciting clinical candidate for the treatment or prevention of SARS-CoV-2”, and the price of raw, dried lactoferrin has rocketed – thanks to China buying up supplies. leapfrogremedies.com – AP



Sleeping Soundly

London luxury bedmaker Savoir has taken the idea of sleeping with a clean conscience to the next level. Its newest bed, The Reformer N°4v, is handcrafted entirely from all-natural, sustainable plant fibres found in nature – and certified by the Vegan Society. Tensions across the bed are adjusted for each client individually, and the natural materials, from flax and bamboo to Tampico and cotton, ensure temperature regulation across all seasons. savoirbeds.com – BN

Fermented Skincare



Kimchi and kombucha, familiar for centuries in Korea and Japan as aids to digestion, were slow to catch on in the West. But Japanese skin scientists’ discovery that fermented ingredients are just as effective on the skin as in the gut – prompted by elderly sake-makers’ aged faces but baby-smooth hands – means skincare with fermented ingredients has caught on much more quickly. As Karen Lee Thompson of WeAreWö (wearewo.com) explains, “Fermented ingredients encourage the growth of good bacteria on the skin’s surface, breaking down active ingredients into smaller molecules, making them much more easily absorbed.” Hence Organic Pharmacy’s hyaluronic acid serum (theorganicpharmacy.com), Kat Burki’s Bio-Correcting Face Crème (katburki.com), Drunk Elephant’s Sweet Biome Sake Spray (drunkelephant.co.uk) – and from beauty giant Estée Lauder, a new treatment lotion iteration of the fermented “miracle broth” that is La Mer. – AP

