

# Getting with the Program

Day spas are fantastic for a quick fix, but for results that are longer-lasting – even life-changing – consider a wellness retreat.

BY TIFFANY FIGUEIREDO

**T**HE IDEA OF AN ANTIGUAN GETAWAY BRINGS TO MIND LAZY DAYS spent sunning in a beachside hammock while sipping something fruity from a coconut shell. And yet, during the five days I've spent on this lush, British-flavored island, my body has yet to swing in a hammock. Instead, it's been put through its paces in the gym, rubbed down by a muscular massage therapist, tossed about the deck of a racing yacht, subjected to the commands of a celebrity yoga guru, and bent and stretched in ways I never thought possible. Though my body is tired, my soul has rarely felt more invigorated.

I had recently found myself with a few days off and a serious case of the blahs precipitated by too much work, too many obligations, and one too many economic outlook reports. Normally, in such circumstances, I would've headed somewhere warm

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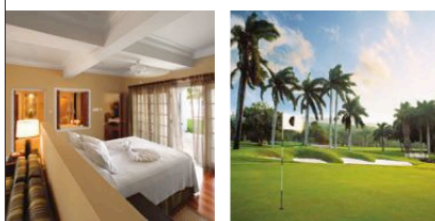
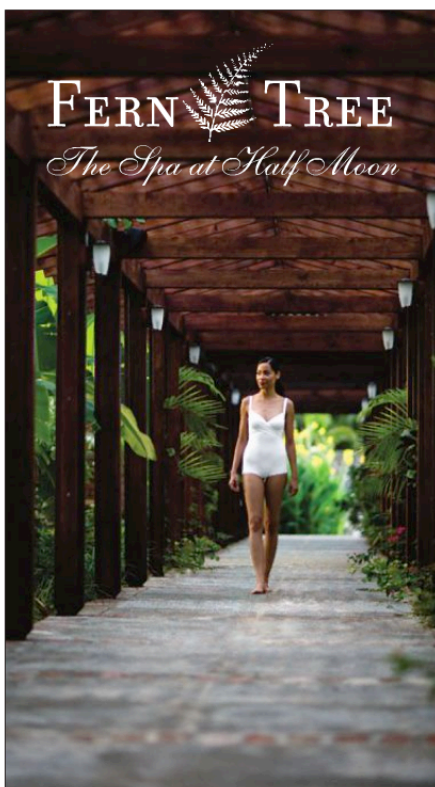


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## HOW THE OTHER HALF LOOKS OUT FOR #1

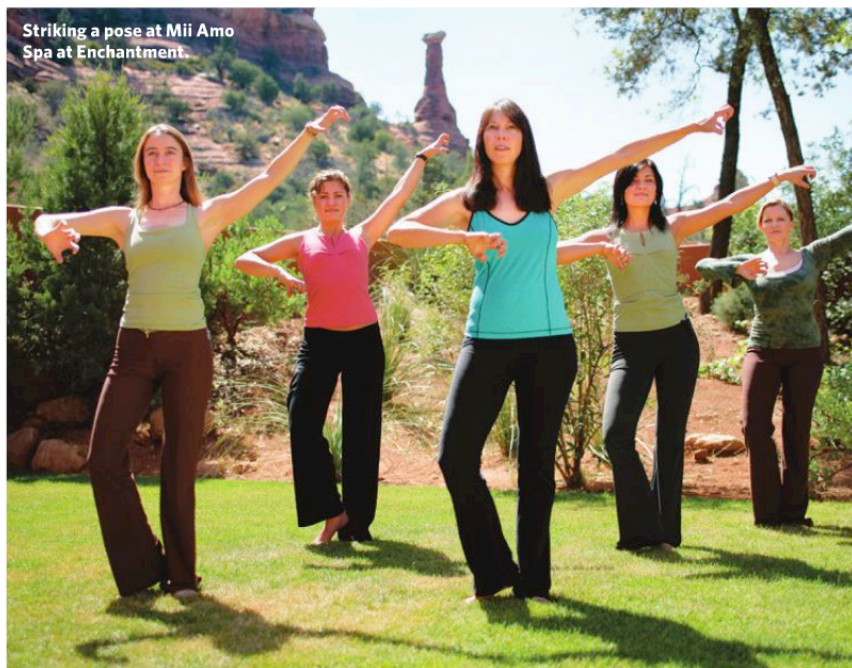
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## WANDERLUST WELL TRAVELED



and set about eating and drinking my way back to a rosy outlook. But this time I needed a more fortifying trip, one that would see me through whatever might be on the horizon. Enter Carlisle Bay's Vitality Weeks, a year-long series of customized getaways meant to uplift the spirit and revitalize the body.

Upon arrival in Antigua, I'm driven through the thick rain forest, reaching Carlisle Bay just in time for a cocktail reception and beachside dinner with other program participants, members of the resort staff, and visiting instructors, one of whom is Maya Fiennes, a well-known London kundalini yoga teacher and this Vitality Week's biggest draw. At seven the next morning and twice each day during my stay, I learn why Fiennes has such a large celebrity following (apart from the fact that she is the sister-in-law of actors Ralph and Joseph Fiennes). A free spirit, inspirational instructor, and classically trained musician, Fiennes sings her own songs throughout the sessions, which are both joyful and challenging. I make a note to buy one of her DVDs for when I need a stress reliever.

During my personal goal-setting session with trainer Gary Hickling, the preternaturally chipper Brit kindly breaks the news

that in order for me to weather life's stresses gracefully, my diet could use a bit of work and my fitness routine a major overhaul. To that end, I and the other participants start off with a healthy-cooking demonstration by executive chef Alex Grimley, who turns us on to a quick and flavorful chickpea salad and sends us on our way with a packet of easy, good-for-you recipes. Then it's back over to Hickling, who gives us a schedule for the next four days that is jam-packed with physical activities, ranging from gym circuits, morning beach runs, and cardio tennis matches to bay swims, rain-forest zip-lining, and hiking. All activities are optional, but I try to do as many as I can because each one teaches me something I can use back home. Fortunately, the fitness and yoga sessions are interspersed with relaxing massages, an occasional nap, and many, many espressos from the automatic machine in my soothingly contemporary room.

One day we drive to English Harbour and split into teams aboard two 40-foot yachts that we race out to the open sea and back. It is an exhilarating way to learn about sailing, complete with rum punch, a fun, young crew, and a picnic lunch on a lovely beach. Later in the evenings we gather for group



A soothing soak at Marbella Club Hotel.

dinners, where the mood is uplifting and festive, with everyone exchanging tales of the day's accomplishments (and their resulting aches and pains). The food is sensible and healthful, yet delicious and highly creative. The champagne is crisp and cold and the wine list deep, all ensuring that a day spent improving the body is rewarded with the things that make life great. Better still, this week I've spent investing in myself – kick-starting a fitness routine, learning to make food that fuels my body, meeting new people, and discovering how to quiet my mind – is time that will offer rewards for months to come. *Doubles from \$416, including breakfast and one spa service for up to two people per suite. Vitality Week prices from \$2,110 for four nights.*

#### SPIRITUAL SEDONA

##### Mii Amo Spa at Enchantment Resort

Although Arizona's Canyon Ranch and Miraval are more widely known, nearby Mii Amo at Enchantment is a gem nestled in the red rocks of Sedona. The contemporary Southwestern-style resort offers three-, four-, or seven-night "journeys" that focus on healthy living, rejuvenation, stress relief, ayurvedic balancing, or even spiritual

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## WANDERLUST WELL TRAVELED



Traditional treatments reign at Mandarin Oriental Dharma Dhevi, Chiang Mai.

exploration. Customized itineraries allow guests to choose options from the various programs and do as little or as much as they want. Since Sedona is a hot spot for alternative healers, open-minded guests can take advantage of some of the country's leading practitioners of psychic massage, body feng shui, meditation, shirodhara, and cranio-sacral therapy. *Doubles from \$332, including breakfast and a \$50 resort credit. Journey packages from \$2,190.*

### RUSTIC RETREAT

#### **The Lodge at Woodloch**

Spring breathes new life into the lakes region of northeast Pennsylvania, making it a perfect time to visit the area's Lodge at Woodloch, where personal awakening through a variety of healthy pursuits is the goal. The lake resort takes full advantage of its 75-acre mountain woodlands setting with outdoor activities ranging from kayaking to organic gardening to stargazing. Indoors, guests awaken their creativity with drawing, watercolor, photography, storytelling, and cooking classes. Fitness offerings include qigong (an ancient Chinese healing art), drumming, line dancing, and water toning. Frequent guest speakers explore everything from past-life regression to keeping romance alive. Although the activities here

are seemingly endless, curling up in front of the homey fireplace in the lodge living room and simply doing nothing is tempting. *Doubles from \$525, including all meals and a one-hour personal training class.*

### MOUNTAIN TIME

#### **The Greenbrier**

At The Greenbrier, a stately, centuries-old Allegheny resort in West Virginia, guests feel better with medically supervised wellness programs that address issues such as stress management, weight loss, smoking cessation, and overall well-being, and look better with the latest cosmeceutical treatments, including Botox and dermal filler injections, medical-grade microdermabrasion, and laser photorejuvenation. Program participants are encouraged to round out their experience with indulgent spa treatments that take advantage of the resort's indigenous sulfur springs and mineral waters, as well as off-road driving, horseback riding, mountain biking, or golf on any of three championship courses. *Doubles from \$279, including breakfast.*

### SPANISH SOPHISTICATION

#### **Marbella Club Hotel, Golf Resort & Spa**

The heart of Spain's Costa del Sol is home to the elegant Marbella Club Hotel, where the

warm Mediterranean Sea provides a bounty of curative ingredients such as saltwater, seaweed, and mud, used to great effect in the hotel's Thalasso Spa. Three weeklong programs centered on the centuries-old idea of "taking the waters" promise to wash away the side effects of modern-day life. All three programs (Well-Being and Relaxation, Beauty and Rejuvenation, and Detox) feature two or three spa treatments daily, ranging from aqua massage and Vichy showers to algae wraps and pulverized seashell facials. Between treatments, guests enjoy cutting-edge Spanish cuisine, ride horses, play golf, stroll the gardens, or simply lounge on one of the most beautiful stretches of beach in the region. *Doubles from \$469, including breakfast and a Thalasso Spa treatment.*

#### EASTERN PROMISES

##### **Mandarin Oriental Dhara Dhevi, Chiang Mai**

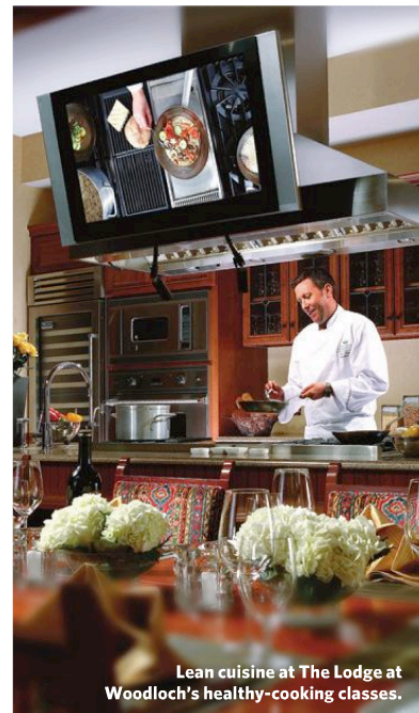
The captivating, colorful beauty of Thailand's Chiang Mai is mirrored at the opulent Mandarin Oriental Dhara Dhevi,

particularly in its Burmese palace-inspired spa, where traditional northern Thai treatments are the cornerstone of five- to ten-day rejuvenation, stress-relief, and weight-control programs. Extensive classes focused on women's health issues, the practice of yoga, and chakra energizing and balancing are also available. And because life is all about balance, seriously good shopping awaits at the resort's own Kad Dhara market, where more than 20 shops offer a carefully edited selection of goods ranging from jade jewelry and silk table linens to custom suits and antiques. *Doubles from \$408, including breakfast and a \$100 spa credit.*

#### CARIBBEAN CALMING

##### **Half Moon**

A lovely crescent-shaped beach in Montego Bay, Jamaica, serves as an outdoor studio for participants in Half Moon's Ultimate Yoga Escape. Two yoga sessions, held either beachside or in a covered outdoor pavilion, bookend each day of the yoga-centric program at this resort. A spa elder skilled in



Lean cuisine at The Lodge at Woodloch's healthy-cooking classes.

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## WANDERLUST WELL TRAVELED

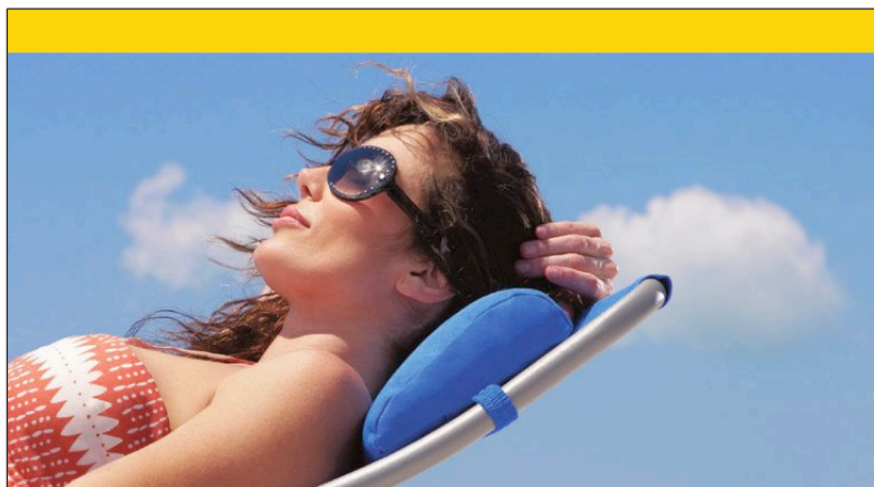


traditional Jamaican holistic healing arts uses a personal consultation to match each guest with the optimal wellness treatments. Whether the elder prescribes massage, energy work, guided meditation, or just a long soak, treatments are given in the spacious Fern Tree Spa. An outdoor meditation labyrinth completes the experience by calming the mind. *Doubles from \$205, including breakfast and private transfers.*

### ISLAND TIME

#### Parrot Cay & Como Shambhala Retreat

The private-island resort of Parrot Cay in the Turks and Caicos offers one of the most healing experiences anywhere. The draw here, aside from the turquoise water, snow-white sand, chic accommodations, and solicitous staff, is the serene, Asian-influenced Como Shambhala Spa, where an ayurvedic doctor oversees three- and five-day programs meant for detoxification or rejuvenation, complete with consultations, massage treatments, yoga, and healthy meals. Each year, the award-winning resort also offers several weeklong, intensive yoga retreats led by renowned guest instructors. Pilates, tennis, and diving and sailing excursions are also available, though many guests spend their days at this retreat doing very little and enjoying every minute of it. *Doubles from \$518, including breakfast and either one lunch for two or a snorkeling trip for two. VI*



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