

10 OF THE BEST

By Nikki Wallman

Indulgent wellness retreats

New year, new you? How about deliciously well-rested and much happier you instead? These luxe destinations offer well-being with no lack of earthly pleasures.

IF YOU'RE SINGING from the obligatory self-improvement song sheet through gritted teeth, a reminder: wellness doesn't have to mean deprivation, whether of the gastronomic kind or the more general pleasures of the good life. Try forest bathing in Malaysia before partaking in a Michelin-starred chefs' series dinner; book yourself in for a weight-loss journey at a Philippe Starck-designed private villa within paparazzolens distance of glittering Saint-Tropez; or immerse yourself in a Portuguese world surfing reserve before cooling off with a well-earned bespoke craft beer, brewed just for your hotel. You can have your cake (or wine and fine-dining) and eat it too at these top-notch wellness destinations around the world.



1 FUTURE FOUND SANCTUARY BY TIME + TIDE, SOUTH AFRICA

The rolling lower slopes of Cape Town's Table Mountain have long been home to a cornucopia of earthly delights, including storied vineyards (hello, Groot Constantia), and hot restaurants (think La Colombe). But 2023 sees an exciting wellness-focused addition in Future Found Sanctuary by Time + Tide, a sprawling estate celebrating local design and craftsmanship alongside its signature "whole-being" approach – including a dedicated well-being director to help craft your experience. Future Found's ethos is guided by the nature that surrounds it, alongside a feast of treatments for those seeking mind-body betterment – from sound healing to tai chi, personal training to biokineticist consultations (off-site excursions include foraging at Cape Point or ziplining in the Hottentots Holland Nature Reserve). Food is based on a regenerative farming approach, including honey from the estate's beehives, and focuses on how it can enrich your life. Two lovely large villas (available by individual room or full buyout) are surrounded by gardens populated by squirrels, bees and butterflies and interspersed with spring water plunge pools and healing plants such as pineapple sage and pelargonium. Complimentary sundowners are served daily, and it's hard to think of a prettier spot to enjoy them (those vineyards are in easy reach, too). futurefoundsanctuary.com

TREE CHANGES

Above: Four Seasons Naviva is set on a private peninsula in Mexico.

Top: Future Found Sanctuary by Time + Tide on the slopes of Cape Town's Table Mountain.

2 FOUR SEASONS NAVIVA, MEXICO

Set amid the forest on private peninsula Punta Mita, Four Seasons Naviva ushers in a generous, untamed and free-spirited approach to high-end wellness in Mexico. This luxury tented (with plunge pools) newcomer is based on biophilic design principles – an interpretation of the human desire to interact with the natural world – offering guests the chance to embark on a journey of discovery, with moments of varying spontaneity promising much more than either your standard fly-and-flop or fitness-fanatic retreat. You'll have the chance to truly spread your wings here, and perhaps open your mind: think shamanic-sound journeys, energy-healing sessions and customised visits to the temazcal, a "transformational house of heat" offering ceremonies focused on gratitude, devotion and rebirth, all aimed at mind-body reawakening. Cocoon-like pods proffer forest-inspired spa rituals, and those wanting a more adventurous experience can opt for pursuits like spearfishing or nature hikes to Aztec ruins, "seacuterie" tastings, or sessions in the outdoor gym with ocean views, where strength training incorporates trees and boulders. All this soul-searching and muscle expansion is readily rewarded. Stays are inclusive of meals, snacks and drinks around the clock; and culinarily-curious guests might chance upon small-batch Mexican wine tastings or a visit from a local fisherman, farmer or coffee-roaster. fourseasons.com

PHOTOGRAPHY BY YOSHIHIRO MAKINO (NAVIVA) & ENRICO COSTANTINI (MIRAMONTI)

3 MIRAMONTI, ITALY

This boutique South Tyrolean bolthole presents more Nordic-chic than typical alpine chalet, bringing a fresh, modern and joyful sense of the good life to this top-of-the-world locale. Wellness here is found in miraculous moments spent soaking up this incredible spot, seemingly floating atop the city of Merano at more than 1200 metres above sea level and surrounded by ancient woodlands. A recent revamp of the rooftop loft rooms follows the addition of a dreamy onsen pool set in the mountainside near the existing saltwater infinity pool and forest sauna (a sleek "box" built among the trees), and steps away from a wooden walkway that will lead you to the perfect spot for some elevated forest bathing. The impressive spa blends indoor and outdoor, heat and cold, activity and rest. Some treatments incorporate local thermal waters and stone as part of massage and facial rituals. Food is slow and soulful – from pastas with a twist (gorgonzola ravioli with pumpkin, speck butter, spiced wine gel and pear powder) to honey and pollen parfait with gingerbread sable and pears in spiced red wine at the aptly named Panorama, and "good and healthy" options at restaurant Klassik (trout gravlax, saffron celeriac, marinated pears, wasabi crumble) or heartier fare in South Tyrolean-style diner Stube (goulash, raclette – need we say more?). A true feast for the senses. hotel-miramonti.com

4 WILDFLOWER FARMS, AUBERGE RESORTS COLLECTION, USA

Newcomer Wildflower Farms lures harangued New Yorkers (and those from further afield) seeking a dose of wholesome Hudson Valley wellness in cossetting surrounds. That it looks incredibly chic and offers a mean cocktail surely doesn't hurt its appeal to the style set. But what this working farm offers, above all else, is the chance to slow down and soak in the "wild comfort of nature": hiking miles of scenic trails, being shown the ropes (literally) by a rock-climbing guide on the Shawangunk Ridge, or slowly recalibrating yourself to the rhythm of the seasons via guided farm walks or botanical baking. At Thistle Spa, an apothecary specialises in hand-harvested oils, scrubs and ointments and botanical remedies (wild rose, herbal poultices), while a host of outdoor treatments promises to reconnect you to your natural self. Clay restaurant dishes up rustic new American cuisine, finely attuned to the growing seasons of the valley and the farm itself. Executive chef Rob Lawson works closely with Wildflower's "founding farmers" to use the best of the land. Expect the likes of pork chop with chicory, Anson Mills grits, and lardo; or honey milk with lemon, coconut and poppy seed for dessert. Meanwhile, the wine list places farming practices at the fore, featuring both stalwarts and up-and-comers. Guest chefs such as Gramercy Tavern's Michael Anthony are yet another reason to make a beeline for this buzzworthy new retreat. aubegeresorts.com

5 SIX SENSES CRANS-MONTANA, SWITZERLAND

This new deep dive into luxe bliss combines the famed Six Senses approach to wellness with alpine adventure pursuits and serious après-ski remedies. Wellness here takes myriad forms, from fabulous runs via the resort's ski-in, ski-out access just above the main gondola in Crans to specialised treatments aimed at post-skiing recovery: think stretch pod, hammam, hot tub and cold pool, and – perhaps most excitingly for ski bunnies – the Biohack Recovery Lounge featuring NormaTec compression boots, a Hypervolt percussion massager, and Venom back wrap, which harnesses heat and vibration to melt away tension in the lower back. Summer brings further opportunities to explore the storybook alpine surrounds, from paragliding to gentle hikes, and lakeside pursuits like pedalos and paddleboarding. There's no hunger quite like mountain hunger, and dining at Japanese-influenced Byakko restaurant is nourishing and perfect for the task, with hotpots, grilled meats and fish, Takayama-style ramen and sake-based cocktails. More traditional, wood-fired dishes and wines from Valais and further afield are served at the Wild Cabin brasserie, which takes its cues from the wonderland outside. sixsenses.com

6 IMMERSO, PORTUGAL

Set in the charming coastal enclave of Ericeira, Europe's first world surfing reserve, this new hotel aims to imbue wellness throughout every experience in a kind of communion with nature that echoes that of surfing. While Ericeira is already a magnet for clued-in wave-chasers, Immerso offers those keen to try the sport a beautifully exhilarating way to dip their toes in the waters, including surf lessons with local hero Tiago Pires. Those less thrill-seeking and more chill-leaning will delight in the slower pace and contemplative vibe fostered here, with tailored excursions from yoga, hiking and horse-riding to visiting a sanctuary for endangered Iberian wolves. The menu at Emme restaurant – developed under Michelin-starred chef Alexandre Silva de Loco in Lisbon – draws from the abundant local waters and spotlights local produce such as aromatic herbs, citrons and vegetables. Hence, charcoal-grilled octopus with potatoes, turnip greens and roast capsicum, and Portuguese lobster ravioli with smoked broth and sautéed mushrooms. Recently launched Emme on Fire stokes the connection with nature further via outdoor events – who doesn't love a good bonfire post-beach? – and a bespoke Bica Mar lager has been brewed to capture the essence of the location, with a hoppy aroma and citrus notes. immerso.pt

7 PONANT WELLNESS CRUISE, CROATIA

Those seeking both an outbound and inward journey of discovery will no doubt delight in Ponant's new wellness-themed offering, set to be showcased via the likes of Best of Croatia – a mid-year voyage that aims to combine the beauty of the Adriatic with the ever-elusive balance of mind, body and soul. Ponant has partnered with French yoga guru Elodie Garamond, founder of Le Tigre Yoga Club, on this savvy foray into the increasing demand for high-end wellness travel that also taps into a sense of real exploration. The Best of Croatia voyage promises island-dotted bliss (the beauty of Hvar, the vineyards and olive groves of Korcula) on board *Le Lyrial* with the optional add-on of an on-board yoga and a wellness retreat under the guidance of Garamond and naturopath Leila Nasri. Participants can immerse themselves in two yoga and meditation classes each day, led by Garamond, and a daily "mini naturopathy and well-being conference" (think facial yoga, self-massage and guided walks) and a dinner and lunch with the group. Optional shore excursions to the waterfalls of Krka, sea-kayaking, or hiking the ancient walls of Ston will round out a trip that's bound to leave you breathless in more ways than one. ponant.com

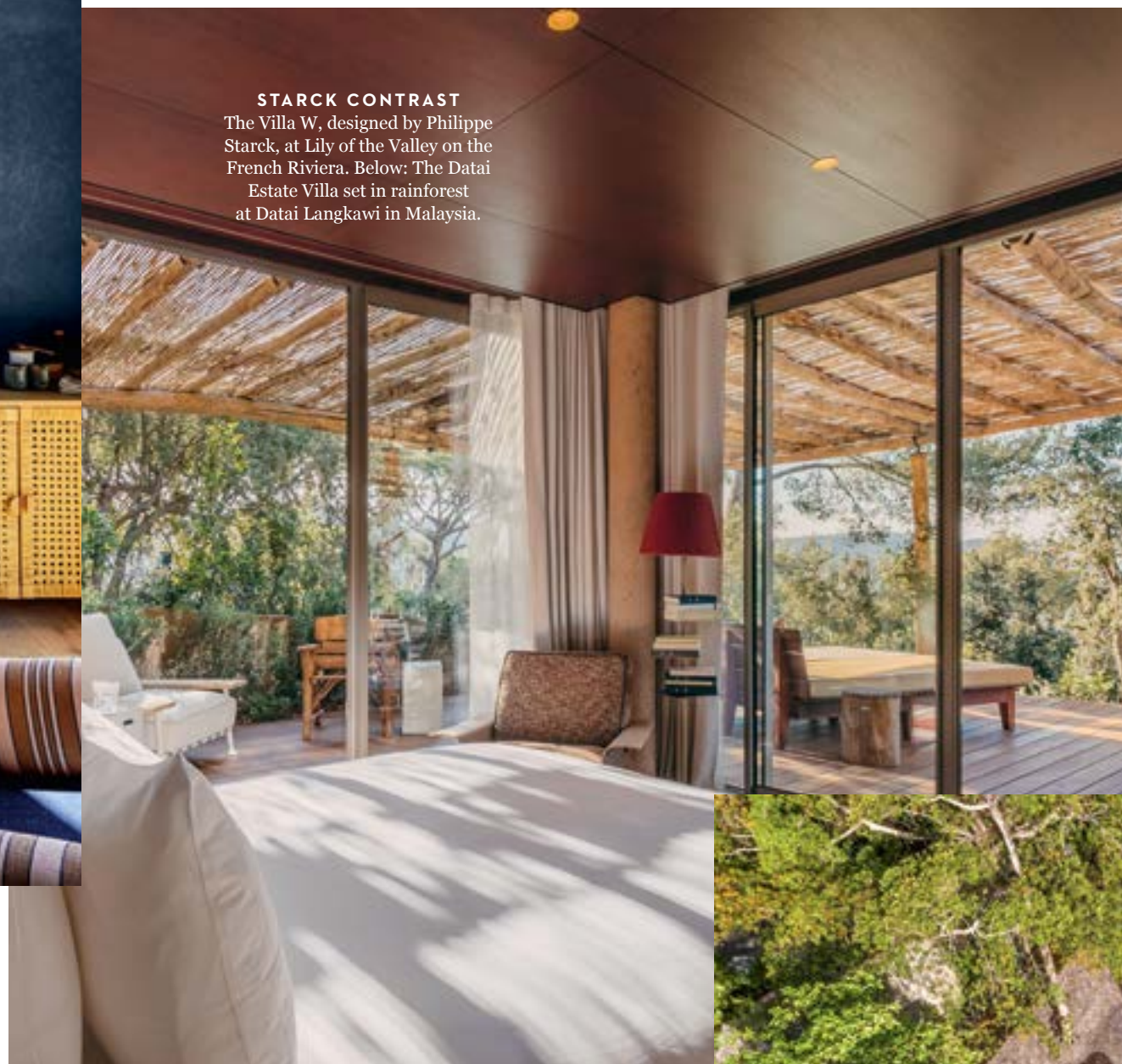
FULL IMMERSION

Above: Wildflower Farms in Hudson Valley offers wholesome getaways in cossetting surrounds. Left: Like the food menu, cocktails at Immerso showcase local produce.



STARCK CONTRAST

The Villa W, designed by Philippe Starck, at Lily of the Valley on the French Riviera. Below: The Datai Estate Villa set in rainforest at Datai Langkawi in Malaysia.



9 HARBOUR BEACH CLUB HOTEL & SPA, UK

This new bijou British beachside getaway combines a sweetly eclectic seaside aesthetic (the sort of textural layering and playful patterns seen at Halcyon House in Cabarita Beach) with thoughtful opportunities for both (body) work and play. A few hours by train from London delivers you to Salcombe in Devon, where the resort stands in prime position to soak up views of the ocean. Its spa has the requisite sauna, steam room and hydro pool along with treatments including a marine-inspired ritual. Complimentary sunrise yoga sessions run in summer and guided coastal walks in winter, and wellness devotees will delight in extras such as ocean swimming hosted by local outfit Wild Beings that explore secluded swimming spots. The hotel recently launched a series of retreats for 2023 that include yoga and fitness getaways. All that fresh ocean air stokes the appetite, and the dining options here gladly answer the call. The seafood-leaning restaurant helpfully lists calories per item (knowledge is power, etc) – though the mussels with local cider, chorizo, leeks and cream sounds hard to go past, and the Friday lunch "fizz and chips" special (fish, chips and a glass of bubbles) shows this place is just as much about fun as finding your best (wellness) angle. harbourhotels.co.uk



10 DATAI LANGKAWI, MALAYSIA

As the Datai Langkawi celebrates its 30th year, the Malaysian stalwart has unveiled both its latest wellness offering and its 2023 chef series line-up for wherever you sit on the health and indulgence spectrum. The new Malay Wellness Journey harnesses the resort's spectacular natural location in a deeply immersive way. Sunrise heralds a sensory journey into the rainforest, soaking in views of the Machinchang mountain range. Breathing and stretching precede the "mandi maul hayat" ritual: bathing in the "water of life" (in this instance, the Datai's own jungle stream), believed to help regulate one's circadian rhythm for better sleep and well-being. A gentle trek returns you to the resort's spa for a deep-pressure massage using oils infused with local herbs, before a nourishing lunch based on six taste sensations – hot, sweet, sour, salty, bitter and astringent – with a side of sea views over Datai Bay. Still hungry? The culinary talent lined up includes powerhouse French father and son duo Michel and Sébastien Bras (December) along with new-wave cuisine from Malaysia (April). Menus will feature organic produce grown in the resort's zero-waste permaculture garden – another feel-good reason to visit. thedatai.com

PHOTOGRAPHY BY NOE DEWITT (WILDFLOWER) & FRANCISCO NOGUEIRA (IMMERSO)