

elite traveler

RESPONSIBLE LUXURY LIFESTYLE

SUMMER 2023

Leaders in Luxury

EMERGING TRENDS, THRILLING
LAUNCHES AND REIMAGINED
CLASSICS: THESE ARE THE
PIONEERS OF LUXURY

LEADERS IN LUXURY
SPAS

Transformative retreats



Blame the pandemic — but we've begun to think of spas differently. In 2023, spas have become a portal for transformation in all its range of meaning, whether in mind, body, spirit — or all three combined. Spas are at the forefront of what philosopher Eckhart Tolle calls creating "a space for transformation to happen, for grace and love to enter."

Redefining wellness to be something as simple as sitting by the sea, hypnotized by the sound of the waves, or wandering through a garden, spas also provide a safe place to change direction or try something new, supplying the tools to make new habits for a lifetime or simply allowing for guilt-free disengagement from the infernal ding of texts and whir of social media.

by Becca Hensley

In a clamorous world that spills out of control with work, stress and responsibility, a spa can simply give us quietude and a moment of peace — or that "space" as described by Tolle. While record numbers of jet-set travelers have reported booking wellness travel for this summer, those salutary holidays may include weeklong detox programs, a foray into a new culture, a med-spa procedure and recovery week, the chance to shift into holistic awareness, or the opportunity to step out of a safety zone. From immersing yourself in Ayurveda and yoga in India, to learning to intuitively connect with a horse in Arizona, to walking the garden with a chef in Mexico, to delving into sauna culture in Switzerland, these inspirational, trend-setting spa destinations have a safe place waiting for you.



THE RANCH MALIBU

When you're ready to make something happen fast, even prepared to test your mettle, head to The Ranch, an upscale hideaway that's less about the luxurious cabins than the program. It's set on a bucolic working farm immersed in nature, but just a short distance from the contrasting decadent hedonism of day-drinking, latte-swilling, beachy Malibu. Here, you'll have no alcohol, meat or dairy products, soy, gluten, or caffeine. Meals will be organic and creative, made with products grown on-site. By the second day, the signature snack, six almonds sprinkled with black sea salt, will feel like a sinful indulgence. You'll be grateful for them and for the zen way you've taught to employ all five senses as you devour each nut, surprised to discover that six is all you really need to keep going. At The Ranch you'll learn, among other things, what you can live without and how good that makes you feel. You'll be so tired at night you'll sleep, you'll wonder why you ever spent time on social media, you'll feel energetic without caffeine, and you'll leap joyfully through the day. In programs that range from four to nine days, you'll hike four hours a day, get massages and have time to ruminate on life. You'll end with astonishing results — lost inches, more muscles and more resolve. The Ranch is ideal for brides- and grooms-to-be, executives needing to recalibrate, extreme fitness buffs looking for fun, people who have lost their way in the ranks of healthy living, and anybody yearning for group support in resetting their lifestyle with a bang. From \$7,600 per person per week. Contact guestrelations@theranchmalibu.com, +1 888 777 2177, theranchmalibu.com



From above: Boney Mountain, The Ranch guests hike up to four hours a day

↓ ANANDA IN THE HIMALAYAS

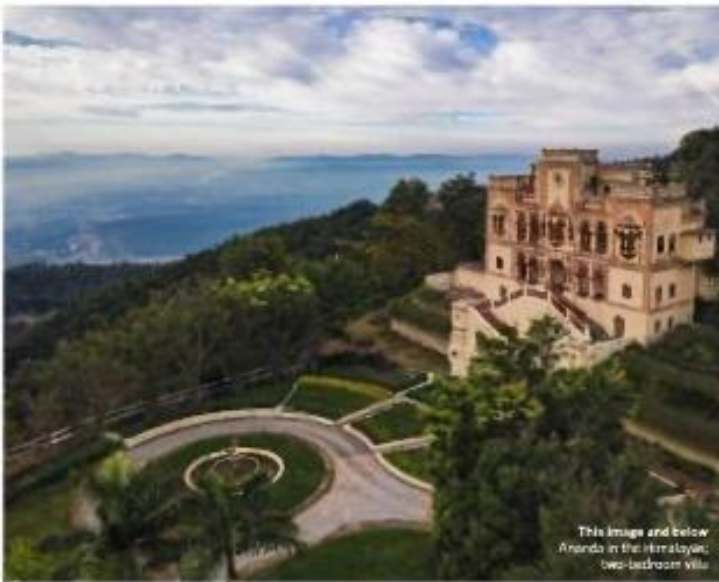
Breathtaking views of the holy river Ganges and the sacred city of Rishikesh, 100 acres of garden space for yoga practice, peacocks galore, a looming Maharaja's palace, and a sprawling 25,000-sq-ft spa building with 24 treatment rooms combine to convey guests into an exotic world of 10,000-year-old Ayurvedic cures. Enlisting yoga, meditation and treatments appropriate to one's dosha (your element-related body type: Pitta, Vata or Kapha), this elegant retreat aims to supply harmony and grounding during your stay. After a consultation with a staff Ayurvedic doctor, you'll receive a customized program drawn from more than 80 treatments and activities, personal meditation and yoga instruction, as well as a menu plan prepared for your personal dosha. Experience Ayurvedic rituals such as Shirodhara (an oil-forward massage that focuses on your 'third eye' with enlightening results) and Ku Nye (a Tibetan practice that employs hot Himalayan salt poultices infused with cardamom and lavender) or traditional Chinese medicine in pursuit of goals from rejuvenation to immunity. New this year, Ananda's Sleep Enhancement Program addresses insomnia, something experts consider a worldwide phenomenon. In 7-, 14- or 21-night stays, sleep-deprived guests have the chance to take the night back as they adjust their meals to match their body type; practice breath work, meditation and yoga (including sunset Yoga Nidra); and partake of spa treatments aimed to eradicate emotional and physical symptoms that cause sleep problems, bringing balance back to the body. From \$1,150 per night. Contact reservations@anandaspa.com, +91 116 121 0000, anandaspa.com



Sensei Porcupine Creek sits in the shadows of the Santa Rosa Mountains.



The yoga pavilion.



This image and below: Ananda in the Himalayas; two-bedroom villa.



Photos: © Ananda in the Himalayas

↑ SENSEI PORCUPINE CREEK

Move, nourish and rest. These are the bywords of the Sensei Way — and a mantra you can carry with you when you return home from Sensei's new mainland retreat. Sensei Porcupine Creek near Palm Springs. Converted from a 230-acre private estate set in the shadows of the Santa Rosa Mountains, previously a popular gathering place for athletes, dignitaries and celebrities, the intimate hideaway — replete with three world-class tennis courts and an 18-hole golf course — comprises a main house (with 10 guest rooms) surrounded by four casitas and eight capacious private villas. Like its sister hotspot in Hawaii (the flagship, Sensei Lānaʻi, A Four Seasons Resort), this health-seeker's haven in California was founded by technology maven Larry Ellison in collaboration with popular physician and scientist, Dr David Agus. Rerouting the concept of luxury travel to embody wellness and well-being as its main goal, both Sensei properties offer a plethora of groundbreaking programs, state-of-the-art fitness facilities and activities, and results-driven spa experiences. Ever tied to science, Sensei invites guests to set a goal, then be led by their sensei (a word used in traditional Asian culture to mean wise guide, particularly in terms of a quest), who customizes a salubrious itinerary based on the guest's personal — and the sensei's suggested — goals. Consider the Optimal Wellbeing Program, in which a complimentary wearable device measures health biomarkers, with results monitored by an integrated team of health experts who adjust your activities accordingly. For meals, Japanese chef Nobu Matsuhisa brings Sensei by Nobu's seafood-rich, farm-to-plate, nutritious cuisine — which doesn't feel like deprivation at all. From \$1,600 per night. Contact porcupinecreek@sensei.com, +1 760 684 8832, sensei.com





From top
Outdoor dining at Miraval
Arizona

← MIRAVAL ARIZONA

Long a place to escape into the desert to recast — or at least reevaluate — yourself, Miraval is a sleek retreat on a swathe of 400 glorious Sonoran Desert acres, north of Tucson, that has been fortifying souls since 1995 beneath the purple-hued light of the Santa Catalina Mountains. Like most marvelous places, it began as a personal sanctum, later shared with heartfelt generosity via 146 guest rooms designed to harness the drama of the desert. Meant to awaken balance and healing, this flagship Miraval hasn't strayed away from essence. While offering all the direct ways to assuage grief, addiction and disconnectedness and to offer repose and balance, it also tempts guests with exploring new, sometimes scary activities. At Miraval, guests can bolster their self-esteem, open their minds and gain peacefulness with more than 120 varied activities, from mountain biking to morning hikes to aerial yoga to past life regression workshops. Adrenaline-boosting options, such as zip lining or lightrope walking above the cacti-peppered terrain, and reflective options, such as walking a labyrinth, join instructive sessions in cooking or creativity to round out stays. Equine activities remain a mainstay. The Way of the Archer, a highlight this summer, teaches mindfulness, breath work, intention and focus through archery.

From \$800 per night. Contact arizona.experience.planning@miravalresorts.com, +1 855 234 1672, miravalresorts.com

Spas have become a portal for transformation in all its range of meaning

→ RANCHO PESCADERO

Fans of the original Rancho, an earthy, elegant enclave on the sea in Baja California near the enchanted artists' village of Todos Santos, need not fear. Expansion from 2009's initial 12 suites to 2023's newly opened redo, a 30-acre marvel with 103 design-centric, water-facing rooms (including 12 villas), has kept the sanctum's spirit intact — even enhanced its storied healing power. A lyrical place envisioned by its founder, Lisa Harper, to initiate and support deep-rooted change within, Rancho draws deeply on its landscape and surrounding local culture. The first shift happens at arrival when guests, weary from travel, push open an unmarked door amid scrubby terrain to reveal an otherworldly desert realm, swirled with nine interconnected gardens, rapped with low-rise, tower-like rooms that mirror the watchful Sierra de la Laguna mountain backdrop and meld with the seascape. Harper calls it "crossing over," a through-the-wardrobe moment. The first step is into an outdoor anteroom with colorful art and an altar. "Make an intention," someone will say. The magic continues at the 25,000-sq-ft Botánica Spa, ensconced among herb and flower gardens. With two yoga studios, a Pilates studio, state-of-the-art fitness center, lap pool, apothecary and more, it aptly sustains guests on their self-defined spiritual journey. Whether that means sipping a mezcaltita by the pool, waking early for meditation practice, roaming the garden with a staff member and shears to cut your own bouquet, creating D-I-Y scrubs or lotions in the apothecary with house-grown herbs, or indulging in a treatment like Albahaca Santa (which uses oil-soaked fresh-cut basil leaves in a massage), the journey to well-being at this inspirational retreat has many paths. Best bets: a stroll through the gardens with the chef to forage for ingredients for your breakfast, including eggs from the hen house, and an empowering, ruminative Cacao Ceremony, inspired by Mayan culture.

From \$1,100 per night. Contact reservations@ranchopescadero.com, +52 612 689 0043, ranchopescadero.com



Above and right
The Cacao Ceremony
Rancho Pescadero



page, clockwise
 Bürgenstock's infinity pool, the
 Alpine Spa sauna, one of the
 100 Rooms, the indoor pool



BÜRGENSTOCK RESORT

Your inner metamorphosis begins as you cruise on glistening Lake Lucerne, accompanied by swans aplenty, toward Bürgenstock, a village-like resort that was once home to Audrey Hepburn. It straddles the top of a mountain cliff and is surrounded by acres of pine trees and a wildflower-flecked meadow full of bell-bedecked cows. When you disembark from the boat and board an old-style funicular to ascend the steep slope to the hotel complex, you'll further feel your personal gears begin to alter. Upon arrival, you'll step into what can only be called both an homage to nature and an extravagance of subtle luxury. Once a retreat for the heyday haute monde, now reimaged and renovated to be a state-of-the-art bastion of wellness and lavish coddling, Bürgenstock holds three hotels, two spas and a slew of inviting restaurants. Though buzzy, it feels impossibly tranquil and soul satisfying. The Bürgenstock Hotel's 107,000-sq-ft Alpine Spa embodies three stories of wellness bliss. Guests can self-direct their experience: Sit in the plethora of saunas, relax in the nap pods, enjoy a saline float in a darkened room, do a Kneipp water course, or renew with a first-in-class facial or body treatment in the stately spa. A holy grail, the grand, cliff-hugging infinity pool — surely the world's most Instagrammable water feature on Earth — heals with the best views in Switzerland. Steps away in the Matteo Thun-designed Waldhotel Health & Medical Excellence center, well-being takes a more focused approach under the tutelage of experts and top-notch doctors. Here, guests looking for supported medical recovery options or wishing to address long-term, goal-oriented programs — from detox to weight loss — will benefit from the center's high-tech, scientific and holistic approach. Just launched, the center's Waldhotel Color Cuisine program, an innovative method of detox and alkaline-building through single-color ingredients, promises to be all the rage.

From \$2,350 per night. Contact information@buergenstockresort.com, +41 416 126 000, buergenstockresort.com