

Himalayas in 1982 and married in 1993. A synthesis of his spiritual background (he's a former yogi monk) and her integral-health expertise (she's a nutritionist and a master of acupuncture and Oriental medicine), the resort's programs are informed by Eastern and Western healing modalities. Carved into a hillside and centered around a cave where Buddhist monks used to meditate, the property has staggering sea and sunset views—even from the colon-hydrotherapy rooms—and attracts a sophisticated, international crowd, from social and fashion types (not too long ago, a certain famous designer came to stay following his well-publicized fall from grace) to corporate honchos. “Our strength is our soft touch,” Karina says. “We empower people; we don't force them. Everyone has the opportunity to run with the health program as much or as little as they want.”

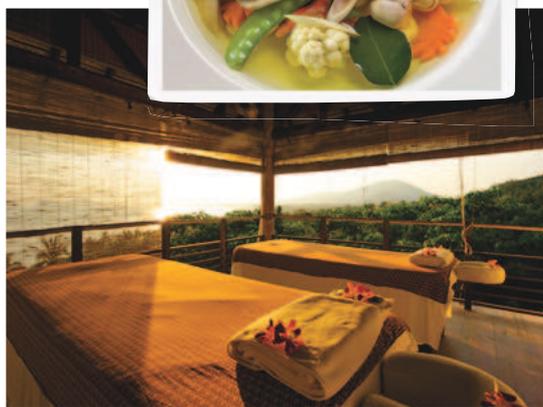
Food is a serious part of the proceedings, and chef Edmond Kwan makes vegan fare taste almost decadent. There are exotic salads, soups, and juice concoctions, as well as yummy Thai- and Indian-inspired curries and stir-frys. “Our approach is more scientific, the opposite of counting calories,” Karina explains. “The aim is to increase cellular metabolism, minimize toxic intake, reduce inflammation, and improve digestion and organ functions.” Treatments like Taoist abdominal massage, colonics, herbal supplements, and lymphatic drainage work in tandem with the diet.

The place seems to have something for everyone, including special programs like Comprehensive Detox, Ideal Weight, Embracing Change, Stress and Burnout, Sleep Enhancement, and Optimal Fitness. You can also create a custom itinerary, weaving as many (or as few) therapy sessions, activities, and fitness classes into your schedule as you like. Some people (like me) cram in loads of coaching and energy work, while others prefer to just do yoga or hang out by the pool.

Caroline had given me a short list of her favorite practitioners and modalities, with one mandate: “You *must* see Dr. Song Qinggeng. He's a human scanning machine, and there is nothing he can't see or treat.” She also suggested I do chakra meditation with Rajesh, the resort's meditation and life-enhancement mentor, and try some release therapy and past-life regression with Wayne Walker, a spiritual healer.

It sounded a bit out-there to me, but I took her advice and booked the three wise men. Dr. Song peered at my tongue, listened to my pulse, and basically looked right through me before announcing that my yang was completely overpowering my yin and that my hormones were out of whack. He said I needed more sleep and that I should start meditating. Walker and Rajesh both went deep into my psyche, with results too personal to reveal. Suffice it to say that after several days of being tended to by healers (and massaged and cosseted by one incredible therapist after another), I felt physically lighter, spiritually more connected, and more mentally centered. I became mindful enough to recognize how scattered I'd been.

Usually, I can't wait to detox after detoxing, but not this time. I would have willingly stayed at Kamalaya for another month. “It's incredible how everyone looks so much healthier,” Eva said as we were packing to go. “Our skin looks better; we all seem more relaxed.” I thought about my final session with Dr. Song. I had asked him why he chooses to work at Kamalaya, when he could be anywhere else. “I've been here for nine years,” he said. “I go away, but inevitably I miss it. Something always draws me back.” I know just what he means. ♦



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THE RETREAT, ALTO DEL MONTE, COSTA RICA

theretreatcostarica.com

Everything from the whitewashed decor to the breathtaking views of the Pacific whispers, “Chill out.” Days begin with meditation, followed by one of several different types of yoga. Facials and massages are on the menu at the spa, but we were more tempted by the kitchen classes, including the subject du jour, *Feeding Your Microbiome*.

GOLDEN DOOR, SAN MARCOS, CALIFORNIA

goldendoor.com

The crown jewel of American spas since the 1950s, Golden Door recently underwent a \$15 million facelift. Some aspects didn't require much updating, however, like the Inner Focus program, which features biofeedback, tai chi, and silent-meditation hikes, or the theme weeks, like Inner Wisdom, led by the Door's mind-body guru, Annharriet Buck.



ABADIA RETUERTA LEDOMAINE, VALLADOLID, SPAIN

ledomaine.es

Surrounded by 1,700 acres of vineyards, this five-star resort offers Iyengar, Ashtanga, and hatha yoga, as well as meditation and pranayama-breathing classes. Tucked beneath the former stables is a spa focusing on treatments including *Le Grand Cru*, a two-and-a-half-hour body exfoliation, wrap, and massage with grapes and grape seed.

EREMITO, PARRANO, ITALY

designhotels.com/eremito

Eremito was built to resemble a 13th-century monastery, with stone walls and single-occupancy “cells.” Delicious vegetarian dinners are eaten in silence, and there are plenty of nooks for reflection and reading.



KICHIC, MANCORA, PERU

kichic.com

This sleepy seaside stretch on Peru's northern coast brings to mind Tulum before it was colonized by the masses. Offerings include Ashtanga yoga and poolside stretching, healthy-cooking classes, and kayaking. For the more adventurous, surfing, snorkeling, and whale watching are a five-minute drive away.

From top: Tom kamin pak, a soup served at the resort; the vista from one of the on-site treatment rooms; the pool at Kamalaya; an ocean-view villa nestled in the trees.

