



Need a refresh?  
These holistic  
holidays will  
restore balance.



# Retreat YOURSELF

Switch off, recharge  
and reboot at a luxe  
health hideaway



## ESCAPE FOR THE WEEKEND Golden Door Elysia Health Retreat and Spa, NSW

Time poor? Sign up for Golden Door's two-night Lifestyle Weekend Program, which combines fitness, wholefoods, spa time and quiet reflection.

Your days start with a 6am wake-up, but the sunrise tai chi qi gong is worth it. Then, pick and mix your activities, which include everything from bocce to boot camp and water polo.

An à la carte facial or Swedish massage is included at Spa Elysia – Australia's largest day spa – but ask about botox meditation, which claims to smooth out fine lines through simple breathing. Or try signature treatment Watsu – a shiatsu massage in a private pool. On Saturday night, a guest speaker will ignite your thinking.

Vineyard views from east- and west-facing rooms might seem cruel, as alcohol isn't on the menu (nor are red meat, caffeine, sugar or saturated fat). But it's just two days; you can do it.

**1** Golden Door's Hunter Valley views.

**2** Spa Elysia's signature Watsu treatment includes a unique chest-deep massage in a private pool.

From \$905 per person. Visit [goldendoor.com.au](http://goldendoor.com.au). ▷





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## GET OFF THE GRID Pinetrees Lodge, Lord Howe Island

- 1** A typical day on Lord Howe Island includes kayaking on the immaculate reef.
- 2** Yoga instructor Charlotte Dodson strikes a pose in scenic surrounds.
- 3** The nourishing menu fuels the activity-packed wellness program.

No mobile coverage, no traffic and limited wi-fi. It sounds like the premise of a utopian YA novel, but it's simply Lord Howe Island, a paradise so safe that no-one staying at guesthouse Pinetrees locks their door. It could be the perfect place to restore your faith in humanity – and your yoga skills.

Pinetrees' Wellness Weeks yoga retreats are led by Charlotte Dodson, whose celeb students include Miranda Kerr, Lara Worthington and Middle Eastern royalty. Warm and witty, Dodson treats every client the same way, so even first-time yogis feel at home during the retreat's dynamic twice-daily sessions by the lagoon.

When not fine-tuning your camel or cobra poses, you can join co-owner Luke Hanson – wife Dani Rourke is the sixth generation to run Pinetrees – on challenging hikes or a snorkel on arguably Australia's most pristine reef. Cycling the 11km-long isle helps burn off wholefood-heavy buffet breakfasts, lunches and four-course dinners, not to mention expertly curated wines.

Downtime is covered thanks to a spa therapist fresh from luxury resort Qualia. Try the Kodo massage, which begins with an indigenous smoking stick ritual to fast-track ensuing bliss.

We love: the themed cooking classes, from Sushi and Sashimi to Harvesting Wild Produce.

From \$2760 per person, twin share, for six nights.  
Visit [pinetrees.com.au](http://pinetrees.com.au).



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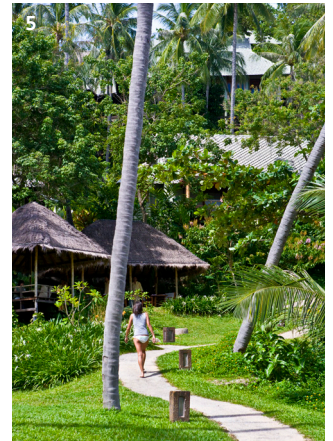


### BLISS OUT

Take a dip in one of Kamalaya's beautiful pools. **4** The retreat's private beach. **5** Lush tropical gardens set a slow pace.



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## FIND YOURSELF IN THAILAND Kamalaya, Koh Samui

Private beach? Check. Luxury digs? Check. Life-changing aha moments? Check.

In a secluded corner of Thai island Koh Samui, Kamalaya combines Western comforts with Asian healing to help you recharge, nix burnout, find peace and glow. Its newest retreat, Finding Emotional Balance & Freedom, is led by white-linen-clad mentors who have lived and studied in ashrams in India. Think: group talks (with a maximum of 12 people), one-on-one coaching sessions, guided meditations and all the spa treatments and fitness classes you desire.

Far from singing "Kumbaya" or walking on hot coals, the workshops deliver their charges with practical ways to cope with life's challenges.

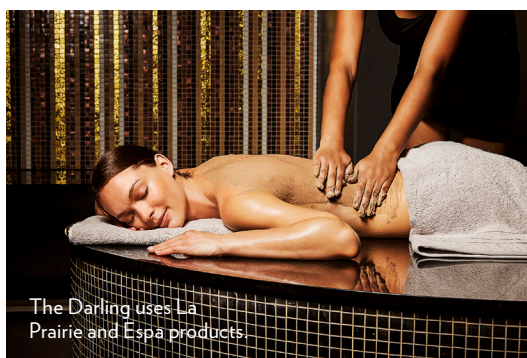
Try the chi nei tsang: unique to Thailand, it's a Taoist abdominal massage that, subscribing to the idea that the gut is one's 'second brain', aids digestive problems and stress. Then, follow it up with a bee pollen smoothie or banana flower salad from the clean-eating menu.

From \$4222 per person, twin share, for six nights.  
Visit [kamalaya.com](http://kamalaya.com).





Como Shambhala's heavenly pool.



The Darling uses La Prairie and Espa products.

### LOCAL TO LOVE The Darling at The Star

There is a dedicated men's treatment zone and two luxurious couple's suites, but The Darling at The Star in Sydney has girls' day out in its DNA. Sure, it shares its address with the frantic, fluorescent-lit casino, but the brooding, dusky spa is a world of its own.

The calm, floaty tone is set on arrival, where timber panelling and candles line the corridor leading to the change rooms. Before long, visitors find themselves decked out in plush robes and soft slippers, sipping herbal tea in the Zen room and choosing between the Pure Gold Radiance Facial (\$320) – containing real gold and brightening peptides – and the Platinum Rare Facial (\$490), which promises to restore glow. The spa uses luxurious La Prairie and Espa products, so it's high end all the way.

Bookend the main event with a scrub down on a heated marble slab in the Moroccan hammam and a soak in the jacuzzi. But after that session, you won't want to leave. Pre-plan for post-spa catatonia and book a room – and a morning-after massage beside the 25-metre outdoor heated pool.

From \$350/night.  
Visit [thedarling.com.au](http://thedarling.com.au)



The cliffside yoga pavilion at Nihi.

a schedule of unlimited yoga, spa sessions and surf lessons. Our pick of the programs is the Yoga Retreat (\$1300 on top of accommodation) for three days of salutations, hiking, treatments, Indian Ocean dips and food by the resident holistic chef. Rooms from \$1044 per night plus tax.

## MORE OF A GOOD THING

### COMO SHAMBHALA Bali

When Chrissy Teigen and John Legend needed to touch their pedicured toes on solid ground, they headed straight to this jungle haven. Check in for personalised meals by the resident nutritionist, Ayurvedic medicine and five-star service proffered by private butlers. Souls in need of professional cleaning should book in for a private water blessing performed by a local priest. From \$884 including food, classes and treatments.

### NIHI SUMBA ISLAND Java

*Travel + Leisure* named this boutique resort on the tiny island of Sumba the best in the world the past two years running. Nihi artfully weaves together luxury with a back-to-basics mentality to inspire lifestyle epiphanies on a regular basis. Guest itineraries are crafted by Nihi's yoga and wellness director Mary Tilson based around

### VANA RETREAT India

As this lush retreat is found in a forest at the foothills of the Himalayas, you'd expect thatched roofs and rustic charm. But instead clean-lined architecture preludes the cutting-edge approach to wellbeing inside. A visit to Vana starts with a doctor's consultation where guests are prescribed a treatment plan of traditional Chinese medicine, Tibetan healing, meditation, Ayurveda and daily massages. But all that bliss isn't cheap. Prices start at \$6600 per couple for seven days.



Ayurvedic eating is at Vana's heart.