

The best rejuvenating experiences to balance your health in 2019

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Healthy eating, rejuvenating beverages, spa, fitness and psychological wellness allure all the longevity seekers following these pages on La Muse Blue. Over the past year I was balancing my health when at home in the Mediterranean, on the road in Africa, America and Asia. Here, I share the best rejuvenating experiences worth investing in 2019.

Over two decades of nomadic lifestyle I learned that one has to be flexible when on the road. Directly from nature's pharmacy came mountain vegetables in Japan (*sensei*), while Naturopathica's herb bar in New York settled my urban spinning mind and the freshest spring (*pre-Qingming*) green tea detoxified me in China.

Seasonal opportunities to rejuvenate - from luxury to free for all healthy lifestyle

Winter's bounty stretched my legs on the Alpine snow in Austria (Lech Am Arlberg) and the Italian-Swiss [Engadin](#) mountains (the Celerina-Potresina cross-country marathon trails are impeccably maintained). Infra sauna après-ski in St Moritz warmed me deep inside more than mulled wine would. A truly royal hamam at the [Royal Mansour](#) Palace Hotel in Marrakech rubbed my skin to pristine cleanliness in balmy February.

The desert wilderness of Arizona in spring charmed my soul while hiking and relaxing during a crystal bowl concerto, while a seriously deep reflexology and organic face pampering inspired by the Siamese royal court with 'Erb' botanical potions beautified me in Thailand. Embalming my April chills in Japanese hot springs at Amanemu, I wrapped up my Asia trip.

In summer, returning to [La Reserve de Ramatuelle](#), my favourite hotel retreat in the Mediterranean, totally “happified” me - hiking, massages and swimming feel so ageless! The secret of the octogenarian Karl Lagerfeld, for he channels the creative energy here every August.

In fall, I retreated to the most celebrated and exclusive spa in America (read further down), checked up with my genetic health potential on a clinic in Spain, and bathed my mid-thirties in restored Roman Baths of old Girona (AQUA BANYS ROMANS).

In my quest to balance my body and mind, my best rejuvenating experiences over the past year holistically calmed or invigorated me when needed. This is balance, the equilibrium of health that we instinctively seek.

Psychological & physical wellness united: Finding mental balance through contemplating, hiking, meditation, running, water activities and quality sleep

Experts warn that anxiety is the pandemic of the 21st century and insomnia has spread with mobile phones. Seriously, now pricy sleeping retreats get booked months in advance. SHA Clinic in Spain is one of the most luxurious and tech-savvy spas in Europe offering such sonorous reeducation. I have not napped myself a decade younger and slimmer as some popular authors did and vividly described in their recent publications, but I might venture into a sleep program this year to knock/crack on their best tools. The 24/7 technology flood, family health and the endless to-do-lists can roll behind my closed eyes like an endless movie when trying to fall asleep. How many of you battle sleeplessness these days? One report says that about 70 percent people do not sleep enough. Are we living through an epidemic of the mind's restlessness?

A hermit might not have as many distractions as a social being, yet most of us crave balance between the two. Going to an ashram or having time on one's own may seem unrealistic for busy parents, but you can get your slice of peace in nature, cocooning in a meditation booth, contemplating at church, and even while meditating over the depths of life at a cemetery. The escape from the noisy urban world feels like bathing in cashmere wool after walking through a field of cacti.

In Morocco, I found my mental balance while **running** through the manicured olive orchards in [Marrakech](#). It's now safer than hiking alone in the stunning Atlas where recent incidents rattled safety-concerned travellers. Crossing over to Europe running (again!) through the olive trees laced sprawling farm in Portugal built my appetite for a generous, locally-sourced breakfast (if there exists one place to eat meat, it's in the Alentejo). While jogging the dirt roads shared with freely grazing cattle, I passed a lake and an ancient fortified village embellished my vista. At the historic [São Lourecao do Barocca](#), plumped up to a luxurious spa hotel, my mood was tuned to a mesmerised mode. The fragrance of ripe oranges and the vine-framed view from the bath keep you soaking for an eternity.

In California, a deep state of focus and inspiration blessed my weary mind. Discovering **traditional healing** powers of Native Americans, I found new ways to engage with my aching body and heal it rather than abuse it. Read about my transformative, weeklong stay at the [Golden Door](#) to spy on where the Hollywood and accomplished American businesswomen recharge.

After LA and New York, London finally got an excellent breath work, **meditation** and sound relaxation centre. ReMind nest near the industrious hub of the Victoria station, perfectly set for balancing the surrounding frantic pace. My frequent lunch reset, [Yeotown Kitchen](#) not only offers balanced and healthy food, but its underground meditation booth stills your spinning London mind before or after the meal.

Even Paris meditates. On chilli fall evenings I enjoyed the **yin yoga** and **gong meditation** at Omm in the Marais, a two minute walk from my superb Palais de la Reine hotel. Strolling the old Paris with a vintage Leica, snapping photos on a film connected me more with the City of Lights than a smartphone. Slowing down, paying attention carefully before pressing the shutter, felt so yesteryear, better to be precise.

In Vienna, [Shambhala Center](#) has for over three decades induced the stern Austrians to meditate in the hip *Josefstädt* near the museum quarter. Courses like art, *qi-gong*, *taichi*, yoga, enlightening lectures, traditional medicine education and concerts enrich one's city soul.

Soothing my mind was as important as tuning to my changing body. Muscle mass deteriorates after 30, and even the former model whom the agents bullied for being too toned has come to terms with the reality of having softer arms, bum and belly (very feminine and comfortable though). Loving one's body as it is, is even more important though than striving for improvements.

Going through physiological challenges with the **right attitude** illuminated new paths to wellness. Welcoming shortcomings works to your benefit, an opportunity to improve or find something else that feels right for you uniquely.

A wrist injury and chronic pain accelerated my transition from highly physically demanding workouts to more **mindful exercise** and **physical therapy** that cares about my body rather than abuses it. More hiking and walking, instead of hard impact boxing, tennis and running too often, ushered my mid-thirties. I noticed that I feel younger when tackling challenges outdoors, truly invigorated, injected with the solar Vitamin D and longer lasting endorphins than from the sweat-infused heavy weights in the gym or the gymnastics-like yoga of today.

I transformed my [yoga practice](#). Returning to the real yoga of the union between the body and the mind, [pranayama](#) breath training and with gratitude to my new Indian teacher Madhu, my spine (where all the chakras run) shed the tension accumulated from daily life.

I also love to jump in water with retirees during **aqua gym**. It boosts my confidence since, naturally, I am faster than everyone else in the class, save for the youthful instructors. My favourite pools for indoor water exercise are Thermes Marins Monte-Carlo and Terre Blanche in Provence. Outdoors, the [Golden Door](#) in California and Monaco's [Beach Club](#) for members-only, low impact exercise contrast with my free for all hikes. I have it all, yet I appreciate zero cost as much as the luxurious activities.

The best **HOLISTIC wellness concept** I discovered recently is the Viennese quartet by [Saint Charles](#). A transformed pharmacy (Apothecary) with history going back to 1886 was joined by organic cosmetics boutique (Cosmothecary accompanied by a beauty parlour called Hideaway), wellness centre (Complementary - alternative therapies, yoga, et al.), and a healthy herb-based organic seasonal bistro (Alimentary). All on *Gumpendorfer Straße* the concept has recently expanded to Berlin. As a truly, socially aware business model alleviating the current refugee crisis *"unaccompanied, underage refugees are given the opportunity to go on one-week holiday camps and experience an unfettered break from the constraints of everyday life surrounded by nature"* on a farm in Prigglitz, Austria.

At home, where construction sites recall Dubai in its peak, the Maritime Alps comforted me while **hiking** in solitude. My favourite new hikes in Europe straddled the rocky hilltops of the less populated, ochre-hued Esterel mountains in the South of France and along the westside of Lake Como. There, starting from the *Sentee di Sort - da Rovenna a Moltrasio* above Cernobbio, the gorgeous vistas from the poster rustic Italian villages and the well-marked trails to Urio's boat terminal reminded me of simple life in traditional communities.

In America, the Temescal Canyon above and in the Pacific fog hijacks you from the car maze of LA (don't do it alone as I did, find a pal). A 'wild-west' wellness week at the Miraval resort in Arizona was worth the trip. Their famous **horse therapy** program is booked months ahead, the best views from a yoga studio you can imagine and off-property hikes in the Sonoran Desert schmoozed with my soul. Hiking through the rocky Ventana Canyon spiked with millennial cacti impressed me the most.

In Japan, I rustled off far too many snakes along my route to one of the shinto shrines surrounding Ise, otherwise I would revel in this less populated hiking area. While the signage is legible for foreigners alongside the well-trod UNESCO World Heritage [Kumano Kodo](#), the most scenic stretches of the **pilgrimage trail** are now too busy for one to contemplate life. Cycling along the Kamogawa river North towards the mountains around Kyoto was the most authentic local exercise. This outdoor exploration is more interesting than being locked in a gym of one of the luxurious hotels that reshaped the imperial city recently.

Beware of the sharks in the wellness industry: what works and what siphons your money away

Flags up, in the wellness business there are many cash draining offerings. From pseudo science treatments like ozone blood cleansing, oxygen inhaling (Cannot go out to nature?), wellness gene sequencing tests (Only 5 -10% is your DNA, rest does lifestyle), fasting (First-timers, yes, the rest of you why paying for not eating?), to so much of the placebo (belief works), temporary or zero effect witchcraft, should keep your reason on alert.

The cure-all trends come with caveats. Personal differences must be considered. For example, I'm not the fasting type. For skipping only a meal can make me jittery, tired, nervous, "hangry". A broad genetic test confirmed my tendency for constant hunger, sigh. Although I am thin, have high HDL cholesterol (the good one), which the test did not grasp, my food cravings rarely hit pause. On contrary, my husband boosted his immune system, reduced his arthritis and chronic swelling by fasting at the best clinics in Europe (he recommends **Lanserhof**) and his strong will enabled him to continue at home. I bow down to his resolve. Health is an individual path and we must know and listen to our bodies in order to treat them right. Genetics reveal only a tiny part of the truth, so no excuses since we can influence our environment and our lifestyles that change the rest. Start now.