

SPA TREK: PREIDLHOF, SOUTH TYROL

*In this month's Spa Trek, **Kate O'Brien** lets her troubles melt away at Preidlhof: a holistic heaven in the South Tyrol hills...*

My life has long been lived in overdrive and now in my fifties, it is impacting my sleep and health at large. I do try to be still, even for a few minutes, but my doing mind really doesn't know any other way.

Having previously visited [Preidlhof](#) in the mountains of South Tyrol I had an inkling that this just might be the place to recalibrate. This slice of alpine charm overlooks the lush Vinschgau Valley, with orchards, olive trees and scores of medicinal plants that are tastefully moulded into healing remedies and exquisite feasts. I also knew that transformational coach Patrizia Bortolin and Italian spiritual shaman Stefano Battaglia, the healing duo long whispered about in wellness circles, had recently joined the Preidlhof team curating [bespoke transformational journeys](#). Along with an elite team of therapists including the softly spoken Dr Angerer who offers worthwhile medical assessments including Heart Rate Variability diagnostics, masseurs, naturopaths and yogis amongst others, therapies are precisely tuned to open our hearts and welcome in the joy.

After detailed sleep and body analyses, I am told (in Chinese medicine speak), that my Yang (dominant, male, doing) and Yin (recessive, female, being) energies are completely out of sync, even through the night, which would explain my ongoing disturbed sleep. I'm so busy doing the Yang, there is little left to nourish my softer, more receptive Yin. I started to imagine what I could do with this excess Yang energy if it was steered in the right direction! 'You can't find it in books – you have to find it in your body,' Martin Kirchler, Preidlhof's Chinese Medicine expert clarifies.

'It's about opening our hearts,' explains Bortolin. 'This is the key to living a happy, more joyful life.' To this end, shiatsu expert Elisabeth Raich guided me through a

gentle Kokoro (heart opening in Japanese) session. Holding my head in her hands she sensitively eased my tightly clenched jaws, reminding me to honour my heart and bring myself home.

Later that afternoon, after deep abdominal delving and, at times not-so-gentle neck manipulations (to release my super-tight Yang jaws), Battaglia cut to my core, while reminding me that I am the alchemist of my soul. Thankfully in such a nurturing environment I was able to process these experiences in a safe and mindful way. He reaffirmed what others had said, that the real genius in life is the Yin and I need to nurture her by smiling more, laughing more and letting the beat move me. This I did over the following days in Preidlhof's six floors of dedicated sauna and steam experiences, with evenings spent stargazing from the rooftop pool. Of course, there were facials, massages, outstanding Ayurvedic treatments and many other rituals of self-discovery too.



Transformational coach, Patrizia Bortolin, at work at Preidlhof

As with the best destination spas, Preidlhof's food is superb and after early morning yoga, hiking or scooting through the olive groves on the coolest canary yellow Vespa scooters, a healthy hunger is worked up. Chef Brano's omelettes

whipped up from happy hens (naturally) didn't disappoint, nor did the just baked bread smothered with local butter and healing raw honey.

Opening our hearts and minds is very much the Preidlhof prescription and the kindness and care shown here is rare, and although my sleep isn't what it once was (yet), my Yin is rising, slowly and organically – of course.

Book it: [Healing Holidays](#) offers a four-day [Preidlhof Transformational Journey Programme](#), from £1499 pp, including flights, transfers and certain treatments.
healingholidays.com