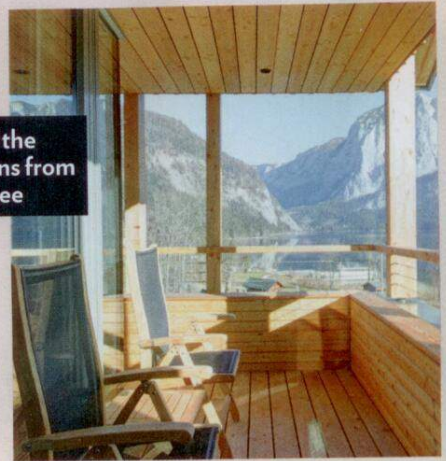




Stunning views of the Austrian mountains from Vivamayr Altaussee



## Vivamayr Altaussee, AUSTRIA

BEST FOR GUT HEALING

### MY VISIT TO VIVAMAYR COMES AT JUST THE RIGHT MOMENT.

Friends had raved about 'The Cure', devised by Dr Mayr in 1901 to cleanse the gut and improve digestion, but I'd never seen what the fuss was about. Stale bread in a dour Austrian clinic – I'll pass, thanks. So what changed? IBS or candida – who knows. Certainly my GP didn't, but I'd been dogged by swelling and bellyache for a few years, and had had enough.

Set on the shores of Lake Altaussee, the resort looks like a giant ski chalet, but is spectacularly modern inside. Clients see a doctor daily so I join Dr Prinz for a medical assessment. She massages my belly and tells me my body is tired and too acidic. I'm to use a hot water bottle compress and eat nothing that night but broth – resting my gut will allow it to heal and aid long-term health, a Vivamayr theory that applies to everything from insomnia to hormonal imbalance.

At supper I'm given a teaspoon for my vegetable broth and a buckwheat 'training roll' on which to practise chewing – at least 30 times every mouthful. In

the eerily quiet dining room, reading and chatting are verboten and the menu shows a mobile phone with a red line through it – too digestively disruptive. The drill is the same at breakfast and lunch, although I'm allowed protein supplements of

sheep's cheese, chicken or yoghurt. I'm also to drink four litres of water throughout the day. The next few days pass in a flurry of toxin-eliminating therapies – salt wraps, saunas, a soothing foot bath that pings ions through the soles of my feet, and a compress of mountain herbs on an airbed that cocoons me like a baby. It's all rather lovely, but the bellyache is still there and I haven't, you know, gone.

Dr Prinz ups the magnesium citrate in the colon-cleanse remedy I have been drinking, there's a gurgle, a whoosh, and from then on I'm attached to the loo as if by elastic.

But now there's a headache niggling away so I'm ushered in for a colonic, apparently a sure-fire cure. The therapist chats as if there were nothing more fascinating than the contents of my colon, and afterwards I feel clear headed, my stomach flat and all pain gone. Practically skipping around, I can see why people stay for weeks. At my medical checkout Dr Prinz repeats the motto of eating less and chewing more. If it helps me keep up this Vivamayr high, I'll be happy to oblige. *SHARON WALKER*

### Home remedies

Drink plenty of water and herbal tea during the day but never at meals, as the fluid can dilute your digestive juices



Sharon, left, was put on a special food plan to aid digestion



### What to pack

Water bottle, £25, BKR

Hooded top, £319, The White Company



Boots, £389, Penelope Chilvers

The clinic sits on the shores of Lake Altaussee; the sleek indoor pool

