

WELLNESS WILL PLUNGE INTO
GREATER DEPTHS

FROM STEM-CELL FACE THERAPY AND EPIGENETIC TECHNOLOGY TO PROFOUND SILENCE
AND SHAMANISM, FEEL-GOOD SPACES ARE BECOMING EVEN MORE FOCUSED



PHOTOGRAPH: 'BLUE' BY ALICIA TAYLOR

THE FUTURE OF TRAVEL

ALL-OUT LAGOONS

Sure, it's cold outside in Iceland, but bubbling below the surface, geothermal energy is turning up the heat on wild-water dips in the land of fire and ice. Since the 12th century, Icelanders have soaked in silica-rich pools and hidden hot springs. But a new generation of super-spas is delivering greater comfort without making the experience any less rugged. By the same architects that created Keflavik's Blue Lagoon and the recent Geosea baths, **Forest Lagoon**, ensconced in rock and wood, is a timber-clad complex that seems to have emerged out of the sap-scented deep. Overlooking Vaðlaskógur forest's birch and pine, the Eyja fjord and the city of Akureyri, it includes a restaurant, two infinity pools, two swim-up bars, a cold tub and sauna. An hour's drive north-east in the town of Husavik, **Geosea's** cliff-side seawater pools overlook a bay visited by humpbacks; while further east, near Egilsstaðir, **Vök Baths** have two pools suspended in a lake with water clean enough to drink. Down south, Reykjavik's **Sky Lagoon** has mastered the holistic hot-spring experience. A seven-step ritual includes a circuit of sauna, rain room and body scrub, waterfall shower and drinks at a swim-up bar: good vibes all round. SARAH MARSHALL forestlagoon.is; geosea.is; vokbaths.is; skylagoon.com

CUTTING-EDGE EPIGENETICS

At the new Chenot Molecular Lab at **Chenot Palace Weggis** in Switzerland, epigenetics has gone up a notch. New mRNA-based technology at the brand's sleek flagship on Lake Lucerne analyses gene activity, determines biological aging and prescribes treatment via supplements, nutrition, stress control and lifestyle changes. Inflammation, oxidative stress, hormonal imbalance and the structural integrity of tissue are highlighted. It's a modern approach, says Dr George Gaitanos, Chenot's chief scientist and COO, "where health is defined as what is unseen". Plus, it's not all doom and gloom, because the epigenetic picture is dynamic and "totally malleable", he promises. "DNA is static, the 21,000 piano keys you were born with. But then you play the piano and create the melody. Are you hitting good notes, or are you too aggressive?" The idea is to uncover the causes of aging and health issues years before the onset of decline. LYDIA BELL *Healing Holidays* can arrange a seven-night *Advanced Detox programme* from £6,449 per person full board; healingholidays.com. The *Chenot Molecular Lab* costs an extra £1,050 ➤

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SOUL SEARCHING

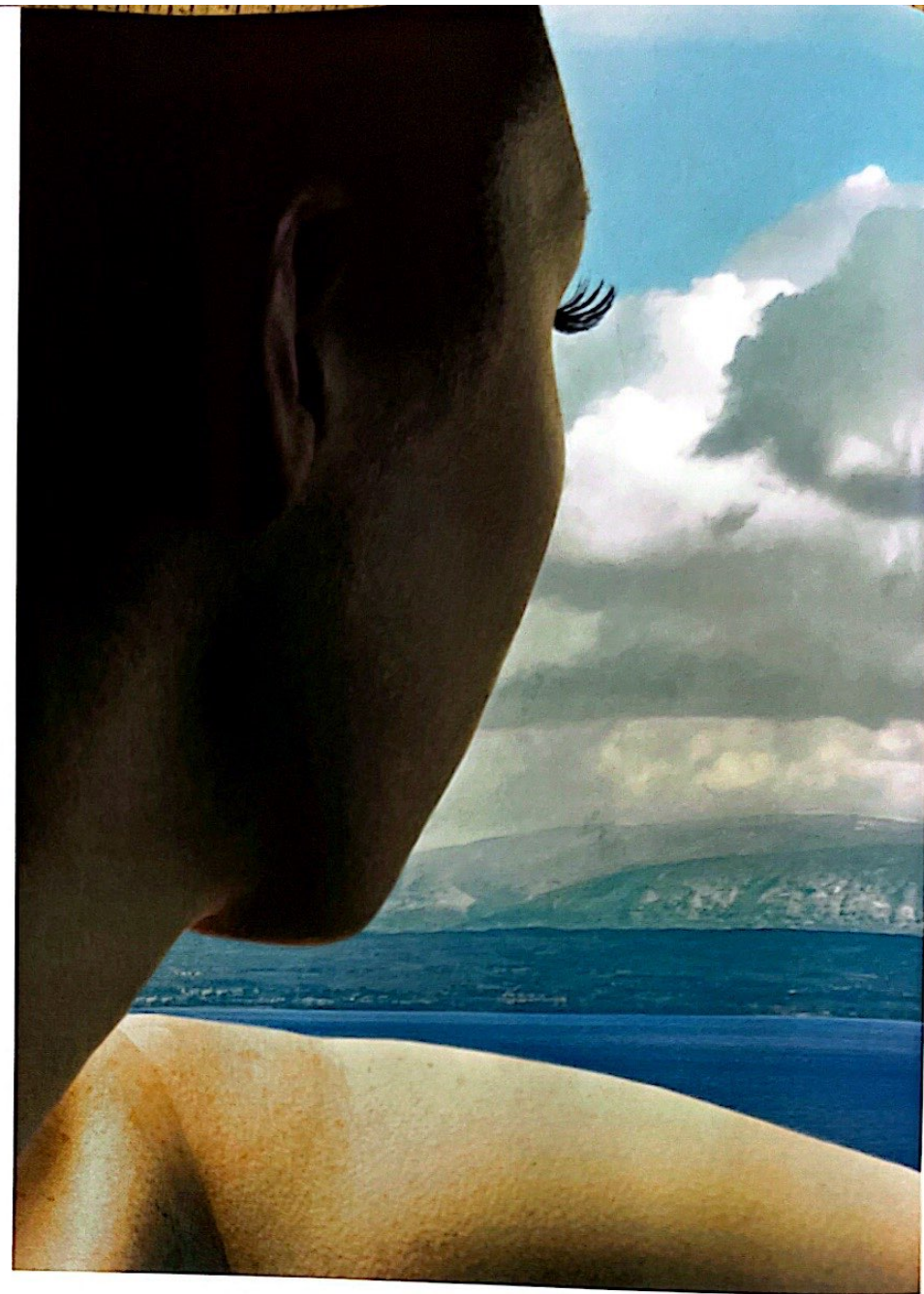
The meditation of the future is about diving deeper, a plunge into existential fathoms rather than a fey skip through the shallows of mindfulness. **Mandali**, a seductively minimalist new retreat in Italy, slides a side order of sybaritic comfort alongside pristine meditation instruction, with stunning views over Lake Orta inspiring guests into awed silence. At **Eremito**, Umbria's monastery-meets-eco-hotel, meditators sleep in celluzze, or hermit cells, and the aura of peace here is palpable. **Zenways'** life-shifting and intensive three-day retreats (in the UK, mainland Europe and the USA) are definitely not for the faint-minded. The schedule runs from dawn to nudging midnight, with 13 sessions every day. As you sit in pairs, it kicks off with a simple question: "Tell me who you are?" The idea is that the ego plays Twister with itself before finally giving in and settling into Zen awakening, or satori. It works – and it's often the beginners who get it first. **JANE ALEXANDER**
mandali.org; eremito.com; zenways.org

CALI FITNESS IN EUROPE

Having honed Hollywood's highly insured bodies, **The Ranch**, known for its earthy fitness – small, zesty-fresh plant-based portions and ferocious group hikes in nature – has been airlifted to the sylvan surrounds of Palazzo Fiuggi. This frescoed haven outside Rome is best known for pristine medical attention and Heinz Beck's carnivorous cuisine. **The Ranch Italy at Palazzo Fiuggi** is an unusual pairing but the proof is in the pudding. A 5.30am wake-up call heralds a stretch class followed by homemade granola and almond milk before a gruelling four-hour mountain hike that has some quitting after day one (there's more cardio and optional yoga later). Vegan fare such as macadamia Parmigiana is on the table throughout, with zero caffeine and

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alcohol. Daily deep-tissue massages and restorative plunges into Kneipp pools take the edge off. For those who last the ride it is game-changing, with inches lost around midsections and bottoms hewn as lithe as lazio oak. **JEMIMA SISSONS** *Healing Holidays* can arrange a seven-night programme from £7,519 per person full board; *healingholidays.com*



LOW-EGO YOGA

Yoga as a gymnastic ego trip is losing its grip, while somatic movement, embodiment, fascial unwinding and pandiculation are edging in. At **Yobaba Lounge** in south-east France, embodiment pioneer Gertrud Keazor guides you to inhabit that soft animal of your body rather than bludgeoning you into the perfect Warrior II. Eyes are kept shut, all the better to enjoy birdsong and the soft

or strength so works for beginners, or anyone sick of yoga-sculpt. "Gone are the days of gurus, lineages and the same set of pre-defined poses," says trailblazer **Gillie Sutherland**, who runs retreats in Croatia and online workshops. "It's about working with the body's natural intelligence, wild and free." *JA yobabalounge.com; malabar-retreats.com; Gillie Sutherland (behappyfit.co.uk)*

THE SECOND SHAMANIC COMING

The frenzied whirl of crystals and cacao, geometric grids and gong baths that characterised the first neoshamanic flurry is calming down, allowing deeper transformative work to rise. There's a growing emphasis on pure energy work, where the shaman journeys to other realms for healing, soul retrieval and finding spirit allies. **Lucyne Jade** is a compassionate shamanic healer and psychotherapist whose retreats help heal grief and anxiety. Old-school retreat centre **Middle Piccadilly** in

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➤ Dorset is homely rather than chic but its shamanic healing is stellar thanks to Eliana Harvey, who encourages guests into physical contortions on her sofa to expose emotional blocks; a love-smash of compassion and catharsis where old hurts are sloughed away.

Christa Mackinnon combines her practice with Sacred Earth Activism, a gentle reminder that the heart of shamanism will always remain rooted in the earth. *JA Lucyne Jade* (heartfirehub.com); *middlepiccadilly.com*; christamackinnon.com

MENOPAUSE ROAD MAPS

Navigating the menopause with poise requires an individualised, multi-layered approach that isn't available on the NHS. The top medispas come into their own, with most now offering a nuanced blend of medical diagnostics, complementary hard hitters (herbalism, acupuncture) and road maps for the hormone/not hormone route. **Preidlhof** recognises that seismic psychological shifts often erupt around menopause, so psycho-emotional stress expert **Patrizia Bortolin** focuses on loosening blocked emotions as part of its six-day Menopause Programme. The Your Voice sessions are legendary for freeing women to speak (yell or sob) their truth. Other major players in Europe include **Clinique La Prairie**, **Longevity Escapes**, **SHA Wellness Clinic** and **Palazzo Fiuggi**. Classical Ayurvedic physicians treat menopause in the same way as they would any imbalance: by using panchakarma, diet, pranayama, meditation and herbal remedies. **Ananda in the Himalayas** offers a customised hormonal imbalance programme, while **Ayurveda Resort Mandira** in Austria has a 10-night Change of Life stay that includes uniquely tailored treatments. *JA All spas can be booked through Healing Holidays; healingholidays.com*

STEM-CELL BEAUTY

Since **Clinique La Prairie** opened in Montreux on the shores of Lake Geneva in 1931, cellular therapy has been part of its DNA. Now the clinic is offering the ultimate anti-aging treatment: harvesting stem cells and reinjecting

them into the face, neck and hands. It is, according to Dr Stéphane Smarrito, its co-creator, "the most effective anti-aging treatment in the world today". It is also illegal in the EU at large. Europe, Smarrito says, "is not ahead of the game in terms of fatty-acid



"IT'S THE MOST EFFECTIVE ANTI-AGING TREATMENT IN THE WORLD" – AND A SECRET HOW MANY PEOPLE HAVE HAD IT

treatments". Mini-liposuctions collect the fat, which is reused in micro-injections. The stem cells can be stored for up to 30 years and reused à la carte at any time. **Clinique La Prairie** keeps secret the number of people who have undergone this treatment, but it is scientifically proven to pep up skin trophicity, vascularisation and collagen. *LB Healing Holidays can arrange a three-night Beauty Stem Cells programme from £34,599 per person full board; healingholidays.com*

PSYCHE PURGING

Deep-dive psychological retreats offer a year's worth of therapy in one week. The group dynamic increases the effectiveness and few

walk away unchanged. The current darling of psyche detox is **Path of Love**, co-created with Turiya Hanover. About 30 people gather and a DJ presides over mammoth freeform cathartic sessions where tracks trigger emotions. A battalion of helpers (with nearly a one-to-one ratio of staff to guests) is there to stroke, soothe and help create a safe space. It can be physically demanding – there's even a medic on hand to patch up bruises and scrapes. Smaller groups create bonds tighter than family or friends, as deep fears and shameful secrets emerge. **Path of Love** runs internationally, and has found a natural home in the UK at **Broughton Hall**, where Roger Tempest, with his partner Paris Ackrill, has imbued his family seat with an esoteric ambience. It's about being deeply held, deeply seen, and at the end, deeply joyful. *Path of Love (pathretreats.com) can be booked through Avalon Retreats; avalonwellbeing.com*

HI-TECH HEALING

On an island associated with downward-facing dogs and shamanic healing rituals, **Sanctuary** at Bali's forward-thinking **Desa Potato Head** takes wellbeing into an unmapped higher-tech zone. Developed with the sound-healing masters of Ubud's Pyramids of Chi, this turbo-smart wellness hub sits at the crossroads of spirituality and science – beach-front ice baths, mood-lifting breathwork and sound therapies. None is more enlightening than **Sistrum**, a dark, cavernous room with six waterbeds that are straight out of a sci-fi film. In each 90-minute session the beds deliver synchronised light and sound frequencies to induce a deeply meditative flow and higher consciousness. Sessions range from gentle relaxation to hypnotic high intensity blasts to unleash creative energy. It all chimes with the hotel's plant-based dining at **Tanaman** and sun salutations on its Brutalist-looking rooftop. **CHRIS SCHALKO** sanctuary-experience.com

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