



REVAMPED

SANTE WELLNESS RETREAT

WEIGHT
LOSS

FRANSCHHOEK, SOUTH AFRICA

WORLD-FIRST INNOVATION THAT DRILLS RIGHT DOWN TO THE CELLS

Don't be put off by Santé's incongruous, faux-Tuscan architecture in a sea of indigenous Cape fynbos. It's as South African as its new owners, the lean and lovely Graham and Ingrid Hindle, who've cut no corners in transforming the previously mothballed property on an eight-acre wine estate near Franschhoek into the first proper destination wellness retreat in Africa. The 18 specialised treatment rooms in the labyrinth-like spa include two vinotherapy bath houses, where a free-radical-fighting concoction of grape powder, grape-seed extract, essential oils, spring water and organic red wine – from fruit grown on the Hindles' farm – hydrates while also improving circulation and tone. There are also smoothing body wraps, head-to-toe massages and hard-working facials (if the skin-rolling technique is painful, it means you're harbouring more toxins than you'd care to know). The after-glow of a 90-minute muscle-easing session with lashings of subtly fragrant oil is euphoric. A raft of hydrotherapy rituals in the hammam, rassoul and Kneipp-therapy chambers, steam and sauna rooms, and indoor and outdoor pools add clout to the 40-plus treatments administered by exclusively South African-born therapists, handpicked as much for their emotional quotient as for their experience. But what sets the three- to 14-day programmes apart (choose from detox, stress-relief or anti-ageing) is the combination of conventional spa indulgence with bio-energy healing, in which electromagnetic waveforms neutralise distressing patterns in the body, reducing their disruptive effects and helping natural reparative responses to kick in. Add in technology-based, hardcore but non-invasive holistic healing under the direction of charismatic, straight-talking Dr Helen Muir in the Health Optimising

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Clinic and you've got a very good reason to book a flight to Cape Town. Muir studied conventional medicine, homeopathy and functional medicine before training in preventative health-optimising treatments under Norwegian guru Thomas Aksnes. Investigating at a cellular level the triggers that cause our biological system to become dysfunctional in the first place is a godsend for anyone feeling defeated by fatigue, insulin resistance, thyroid problems, stress, burnout, or even cancer. Santé has a machine that boosts nitric-oxide levels within minutes to improve cardiovascular health and heal diabetic ulcers; pulsed plasma light technology that destroys micro-organisms with Pac-man glee; and a Heidelberg test for diagnosing the amount of acid in the stomach – the origin of so many ills. At Nourish restaurant chef Terrence Ford only uses organic, unrefined ingredients, and zero sugar, dairy, gluten,

preservatives, colourants or additives. Instead, vegetables are shaved, pickled and fermented to add texture to flavour-packed dressings and pestos and dainty portions of seared tuna or lean ostrich fillet. This is the only

Health Optimising centre attached to a full-scale spa and residential retreat in the world. Nowhere else can you check in for a few days or weeks while being treated, not even in Norway where it all originated. A thrilling discovery.

INSIDER TIP Take advantage of the daily complimentary yoga class with lyengar expert Tanya Glazer in the glass-walled studio attached to a turbo-charged gym with Pilates reformer beds.

BOOK IT Healing Holidays (+44 20 7843 3592; healingholidays.co.uk/condenast) offers a seven-night Detox programme from £3,575 per person, full board, including flights and transfers.