



Spa time

The latest pampering places, products and treatments



SPA OF THE MONTH Surf & Turf Fitness Retreat at Bailiffscourt Hotel & Spa

Sometimes you need a little boost to your fitness, but don't want to go too hardcore – and the Surf & Turf retreat at the delightful Bailiffscourt Hotel & Spa is perfect. Just two hours by train from London, in Climping on the south coast, this weekend retreat combines fresh air, exercise, great food, a drink or two and time to spa. You'll leave feeling rejuvenated and energised; and a little bit achey, with an achievable action plan on how to spice up your fitness.

THE HOTEL

Bailiffscourt is a privately owned, 39-room luxury hotel set in 30 acres of glorious parkland in Climping, West Sussex. The hotel is right on the sea – you can't quite see the water, but it's just a short walk away. Lavender-lined pathways lead to the spa with indoor and outdoor pool and hot tubs, and there's a tennis court, gym, vegetable garden, woodland walks, resident peacocks and even a heli pad, just in case you fly there!

THE PROGRAMME

The Surf & Turf retreat is run by PTs Natalie Bennett (who's also a yoga instructor) and Ross Wilhelm (who trains in martial arts and loves extreme sports). Over three days we stretched, boxed, jumped, ran, pulled and down-dogged our way to fitness.

'The outdoor hot pool and hot tub were particular favourites of mine, followed by the steam room, to ease aching muscles'

Starting on a Friday with one-to-one sessions to assess our fitness goals and lifestyle habits, followed by a gentle stretch before supper, we went full-tilt into a boxing class followed by HIIT training on the beach on Saturday morning, and yoga in the afternoon.

The different fitness sessions aimed to address aerobic, strength, endurance and weight loss – while getting us to spend as much time outside as possible. Bailiffscourt is extremely dog-friendly, so I took my Rhodesian Ridgeback, Thala, along – and she gamely joined in all the sessions (we could have done with her help in the tug of war in one session!). Sunday morning started with a jog and stretch in the hotel grounds to ease aching muscles, followed by an outdoor HIIT session, then spa time.

THE FOOD

Unlike other fitness retreats I've tried, we weren't put on a strict diet. While it was refreshing not to be limited to juices and sugar-free, carb-free meals, it did mean I slightly over-indulged in the likes of homemade bread rolls and delicious

puddings (the banana soufflé was a particular hit), feeling I'd 'earned it'. There were plenty of lighter and healthier options, as well as delicious venison, lamb and the

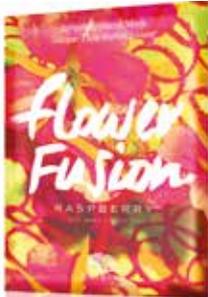


TRY THIS...

We find we relax into our pampering more readily when our conscience is eased with the knowledge that a product is as eco-friendly as possible. That's why we love the new, single-use Origins Flower Fusion Hydrating Sheet Masques, £5; origins.co.uk.

The soft sheets are made with 100 per cent recycled natural bamboo, and flower wax (a by-product of the essential oil distillation process used to harness the aromatic fragrances found in Origins products), plus pure flower extracts and natural essential oils. Choose from relaxing Jasmine, antiseptic Lavender, mood-boosting Orange Flower, refreshing Raspberry Flower, hydrating Rose and plumping Violet, according to your needs.

Carefully unfold the masque and apply to clean skin. Relax for 10 minutes, then remove and discard the masque. Massage the remaining essence into your skin. Ta-dah!



Words: Emma Lewis

'IT WORKED FOR ME'

H&F writer Abigail Butcher

What? Rolwing Structural Integration; 60-minute treatment, £90.

Where? Breathe in The Colombo Centre, London; rolwingtaichilondon.co.uk.

'Described as "like a 100,000-mile service for your body", rolwing was invented by American biochemist Dr Ida Rolf in the 1940s. It uses hands-on manipulation and movement "re-education" to balance the body's fascial (connective tissue) network.

'Experienced rolfer Keith Graham began my session with a brief history of my (many!) sporting injuries and niggles, including continual neck and shoulder pain from various whiplash and compression injuries. He then asked me to stand in front of him, turn to the side, then with my back to him as he looked at how my body's aligned, making a simple drawing to show me. I knew my head is slightly crooked and pelvis twisted, left leg and arm slightly weaker than the right. I didn't know my spine was slightly twisted, pulling everything out

of alignment nor how badly 'winged' my shoulder blades were – from falling on my head three years ago.

'I lay on my back as Keith slowly worked on my shoulders by pressing almost beneath the blades and at pressure points around them, releasing knots that have built up in the fascia. Keith's hands were virtually still, fingers moving very slightly on the pressure points, almost prising apart the knotted tissues.

'It was a little sore at the time, but after, both shoulders had dropped significantly, the tension I'd been carrying gone. Keith gave me some postural homework and I've signed up for 10 more sessions! Visit rolwinguk.co.uk for a registered rolfer.



like, with the chef also gamely catering for gluten-free, vegan and vegetarian guests.

With a full day of exercise ahead, I couldn't overindulge at breakfast, my favourite meal of the day, sadly. It was plentiful, with options of porridge, fresh fruit and yoghurt, pastries, as well as meat and cheese and every cooked option under the sun. Delicious!

THE SPA

While we were kept busy over much of the weekend, there's still plenty of down time to enjoy the spa and its facilities. The outdoor pool and hot tub were particular favourites of mine, followed by the steam room – perfect for aching muscles. Not once did I venture into the gym though, a refreshing change for a fitness retreat. Treatments aren't included in the Surf & Turf package, but you get a discount. A massage would be the perfect addition.

TAKE HOME

At the end of the retreat, Natalie and Ross devised a personal training plan for me, which focused on yoga and stretching as part of my weekly workout plan. They'd listened to my desire to slow things down in 2017 – I need to be fit for my job and

travel a lot so tend to hammer my fitness at times, then work long hours at others. I also often over-do things, so I'm trying to find a sustainable way to keep fit this year.

Nat suggested I try Qigong to help me maintain consistency and take things more slowly 'balance the yin with the yang!' and to start each day, wherever I am in the world, with three rounds of sun salutations. I'm going to give it a go.

THE PACKAGE

The Surf & Turf Fitness Retreats cost £945 for double occupancy (£645 single) and include a two-night stay, light spa lunch and three-course dinner both nights, unlimited use of the spa, nine fitness sessions, private consultation and personal fitness plan to take home. Retreats run May 3-5, June 7-9, Oct 11-13, Nov 10-12 and Nov 22-24; hshotels.co.uk.



Words: Abigail Butcher