

AUSTRALIA SONOMA KOREA PITTSBURGH NEPAL

TRAVEL+ LEISURE

WHAT'S NEXT

36 Places,
Things, and
Ideas That Are
Changing
the Way We
Travel

Illustration
and Photo: [unreadable]

the swimming pool. I climbed into bed with a Donna Tartt novel, unsure of what the coming week would hold.

The days that followed were long and languorous. They kicked off at 8 a.m. with a brisk, silent group walk through the cherry, olive, and almond orchards that surround the farm. The point was to stop thinking so much and just be there, but in the first days, my mind caromed from my family to my career to the NBA playoffs. Goodin told me the “monkey brain” would improve as the week progressed.

After the walks came two hours of yoga led by Caroline Dollar, a management consultant who also teaches in London. She explained that she would rely on a range of styles to help us “break the unconscious drive to reach for the screen.” I knew what she was talking about: the urge to scroll through Instagram in the middle of a chess game with my son or to check e-mail while working on watercolors with my daughter. If I couldn’t shake it here, was there any hope?

After breakfast, most of the day was ours to do with as we pleased. I settled into the rhythm of the place.

I swam in the pool and lounged in the sun with my book. I worked in the garden, gathering greens for the evening meal. I learned how to curl dough for fresh orecchiette. There were group trips, like a ramble along the craggy coast followed by a picnic at the beach and a dip in the cool waters of the Adriatic.

At 5 p.m. each day, we had 90 minutes of unwinding yoga and meditation. By the middle of the week, I found myself outside of class thinking about the questions Dollar would ask: *Is the breath you’re breathing right now a long breath or a short one? Can you direct your breath into the bottom rib?* While pacing the grounds, I tried centering myself. The world became vivid: birds of paradise in the garden; butterflies flickering above a field of fennel; a hummingbird buzzing around the flowers that climbed the porch lattice-work; bees loitering around the lavender; diaphanous sea clouds. One night I sat staring up at the stars, trying to figure out the most distant thing I could hear. There was a faint volley of barking. Mindfulness achieved.

Corny as it sounds, when the retreat was over, I felt cleansed. I didn’t crave the meat and alcohol I’d forgone. I hadn’t checked the news but I didn’t fear that the world had fallen apart. I felt recharged, not anxious about the work I’d missed. And I had a plan for sustaining those feelings: No phone in the bedroom. No work e-mails on weekends or after hours when my family is in the house. Digital-free meals and bathroom breaks. Occasional digital detoxes. Just before I left for the airport, Goodin handed me back my phone. For a second, I was tempted to tell her to keep it. ■

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SPOTLIGHT
BEAUTY

Germany and Austria are anti-aging meccas



→ These two countries are at the forefront of skin care and medi-spa technology, blending homeopathy with traditional science. After learning that fern extract can protect cell DNA from the harmful effects of UV exposure, Timm Golueke, a Munich-based dermatologist, developed Royal Fern (royalfern.com), the world’s only skin-care line based around the plant. His hydrating serums and creams both stimulate collagen production and inhibit the loss of elastin. Barbara Sturm (dr-barbara-sturm.com), who has clinics in Düsseldorf and Munich, has similarly earned raves for her cream MC1, which A-listers like Gwyneth Paltrow pay for in blood—literally. Sturm extracts proteins from her clients’ own plasma and then whips them into a bespoke facial cream, which acts as an inflammation-reducing cure-all. For an immersive experience, Lanserhof Tegernsee (lanserhof.com; seven nights for two people from \$3,996), a two-year-old medical spa in the Bavarian countryside, offers genetic testing, a “pill

cam” (you swallow it, allowing a physician to diagnose gastrointestinal disorders), and interval hypoxic-hyperoxic oxygen therapy designed to boost your cells’ metabolism. At Austria’s intimate Hotel Post Bezaú (hotelpostbezaú.com; doubles from \$187), Susanne Kaufmann sources ingredients from the nearby Bregenz Forest and her own herb garden for her products and services, ranging from a detoxifying alkaline liver wrap to an hour-long hand treatment that minimizes age spots. —*Didi Gluck*

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