

THE ART OF AYURVEDA

One morning as I was walking through the lobby of one of our hotels, soaking in the serene and peaceful atmosphere I wondered: Where does this come from? What is it that creates this sense of peace and serenity?

WRITTEN BY ANNE BIGING

PHOTO

A pine-based treatment at Arosea Life Balance Hotel, a member of Healing Hotels of the World.

While searching for clues, I looked at the waiter who wished me a good morning with her bright smile. I wandered off to the breakfast room, which is very cozy, but yet light and airy. The breakfast that was served reminded me of what a lot of people casually describe as “comfort food”: warm, soft and sweet. As I watched people around me taking in their food, mindfully enjoying each mouthful, all of a sudden I understood where the peace was coming from: the people themselves.

The hotel I was visiting has been for many years the best destination spa in the world and has kept the lead in setting standards for the modern practice of Ayurveda across the globe — Ananda in the Himalayas. Ananda means “bliss” in Sanskrit and bliss is

Himalayas in the distance. On top of the hill, where the original palace stands strong and mighty, you join your first yoga class.

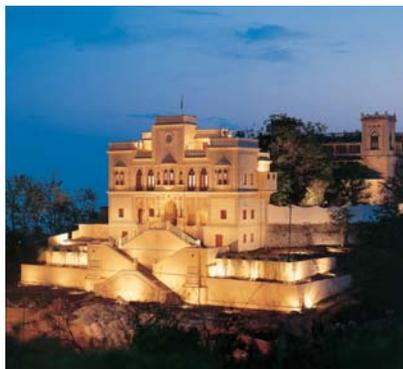
Ayurveda is one of the oldest sciences known to mankind and its literal translation means “the science of life.” This holistic approach to health focuses on maintaining a physically and emotionally balanced state.

“Ayurveda has played a vital role in holistic health and prevention for more than 5,000 years,” says Carina Preuss, the 27-year-old and next generation of the family who owns the Ayurveda Parkschlösschen Bad Wildstein in Germany, one of the leading Ayurveda resorts in the country.

Most people who come to Ayurveda Parkschlösschen have one goal: to go on an

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all you feel when you are there. The day starts with an early morning knock on your door when your ginger-lime-honey tea is served fresh. You may follow that call and wander up the hill while watching the first pinkish streams of the rising sun gently caress the wide sky. You spot the first foothills of the



Ayurveda cure, the Pancha Karma Cure. The Pancha Karma Cure is the king discipline of Ayurveda and a very effective detox program ranging from one to three weeks.

“Every healthy person should have an Ayurveda cure at regular intervals as a preventive measure to free the body of any toxins and harmful substances that have been deposited and then to stimulate the reconstruction of healthy cells,” states Carina.

The Ayurveda Parkschlösschen came into being when the founder, after taking his first Pancha Karma Cure, was so enthusiastic that he wanted to create a place where he himself and other people could take this cure in a high quality and luxurious environment.

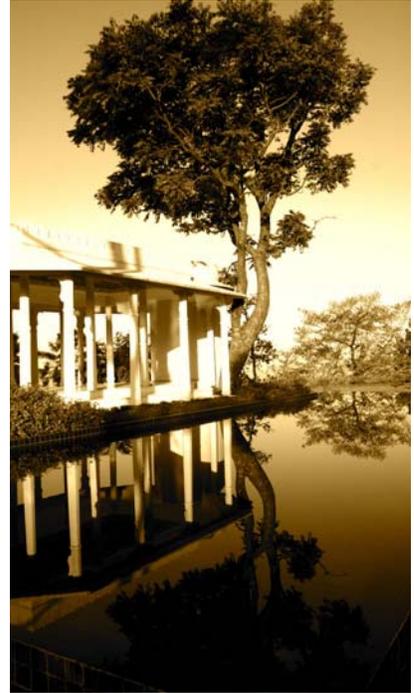
Should Ayurveda only be experienced in India where it stems from? Yes and no.

Ayurveda resorts are found all over the world. Still a tropical environment might help

RIGHT

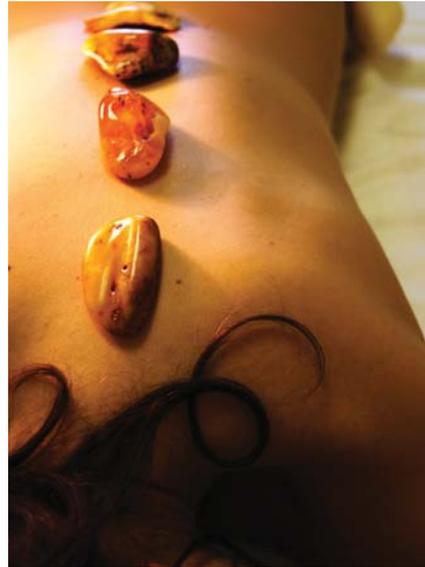
Located in the tranquil Himalayan foothills, close to the mythological cities of Haridwar and Rishikesh, Ananda is the spiritual pathway to the ultimate, discovered through the union of body, mind and soul.





RIGHT

(clockwise from top)
 Set in the forests of Alsace, La Clairière is in complete harmony with its sylvan surroundings; Amber Spa Boutique Hotel, a hidden gem tucked away in a beautiful sea-side town Jurmala, Latvia; Thailand's luxurious Dhara Dhevi Chiang Mai resort.



All photos courtesy of Healing Hotels of the World

to relax. For Western travelers it is also helpful if they find an environment that suits to their standards. Therefore it is an art combine high standards of accommodation with traditional Ayurveda. Sukhavati Ayurvedic retreat in Bali has the warmth of a tropical environment, is very luxurious and it pays respect to the Balinese culture. Here, like at all serious Ayurvedic retreats, guests receive at the beginning of the program a detailed consultation with an Ayurvedic practitioner who will create a personally designed treatment program to rejuvenate the whole system, purify the body and relax the mind.

Ayurvedic practitioners have a very thorough training in one of the many Ayurveda Universities. Their knowledge is complex, and they are also able to treat serious and chronic diseases. For example they are very effective with burnout, high blood pressure and cardiovascular diseases.

The first thing an Ayurvedic practitioner will do is to diagnose your body and character type. Ayurveda originated from the basic principle that the universe is made up of five elements: air, fire, water, earth and ether. These elements are represented in humans by three “doshas,” or energies: Vata, Pitta and Kapha. Each individual has a distinct balance of the doshas and if any of them accumulate in the body above a certain limit, the body loses its balance. The Ayurveda approach to health focuses on getting the right balance of the three doshas or “tridoshas.” In finding the right balance and to reduce excess dosha, your Ayurveda cure will then consist of food, herbs and special treatments according to your dosha.

An Ayurveda cure may be the answer for those of us who feel stressed, are always in a hurry and do not have the time to cook food that is healthy for us. Of course, there might be times where we miss certain food “addictions,” but having gone through this phase we experience new levels of well-being. Not to speak of the treatments that are also as purifying and relaxing — so many of them in such a variety — this alone is heaven. Experiencing food that is as tasty as it is fulfilling leaves us with a pleasant feeling. Add to that exercising with yoga and finding peace in meditation and you will look forward to repeating the

Pancha Karma Cure every year.

So why not treat yourself to a better life of well-being? Whether you have health issues, want to de-stress or want to experience the uplifting effects of purification — many Ayurvedic retreats offer you a place where you can find silence and peace, like the brand new Shillim Estate in Maharashtra, India. Spread over a vast area of land in the unspoiled Maharashtrian mountain ranges, Shillim Estate provides guests with unspoiled natural beauty in the garden of a modern villa with super elegant design and über-luxury ambience.

The effects of an Ayurveda treatment allow you to go deeper and deeper into yourself for a feeling of calm and peacefulness. Most of all, it allows you to enjoy everything around you. This is the ultimate goal of Ayurveda, not only to restore your health, but to provide you with a happy and truly healthy life!

ABOUT ANNE BIGING

Anne Biging is the founder and CEO of the global brand Healing Hotels of the World, which has more over 90 partner hotels and resorts, offering holistic health and well-being all around the globe.



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