



A RESTAURANT CRITIC GOES COLD TURKEY



WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU SEND A MAN WHO EATS FOR A LIVING TO SIMPLY HEALING DETOX RETREAT? WELL, ALLOW **NOAH MAY** TO EXPLAIN

LUNCH WAS MY DOWNFALL; THERE WERE JUST TOO MANY LUNCHES.

Glorious, lingering, booze-soaked lunches that were in no way consistent with sensible modern attitudes. Champagne, Burgundy and Port all quenched my thirst. Beef fillets, pâtés, game meats and mountains of cheeses all entertained my palate and added to my girth in the kindest manner.

I decided it was time to lay off the sauce so I did something I've never considered doing before. I decided to detox. I searched high and low to find the best detox retreat in the country and one name kept popping up: Simply Healing Detox Retreat. This, I decided, would be my sanctuary. Simply Healing is a holistic, residential detox retreat housed in a country manor in the Sussex countryside. Vivien Kay is the wise,



'I FEEL BRIGHTENED AND ENLIGHTENED; FRESH AND ALIVE'

inspiring owner and one of the world's leading healers and detox specialists. The central focus of their program is a three, five or seven-day fasting, juice-based diet, which is accompanied by a

short course of colonic hydrotherapy.

On arrival, Vivien greets me with a hug and a knowing look. Straight away, I sense that she is employing certain skills, looking at what I might need to get the optimum benefits from my time here. After a calming conversation I am sent off for my preliminary juice – the first of many. My biggest fear about engaging in a fasting diet is the fear of starvation. My evening meal is generally the highpoint of my day, whether out at a restaurant or with loved ones at home; there is generally wine, conversation and a joyful sense of conviviality.

The next five days are defined by very different rhythms. Each day is punctuated by five unique antioxidant-filled juices and three rounds of dietary supplements, including capsules filled with probiotic bacteria and a combination of Psyllium Husk and Bentonite Clay – supplements that help fill the stomach and draw toxins from the colon. In between juices and supplements, I am treated to a range of holistic massages, meditative sessions and somewhere around the middle of my stay, an initially terrifying, but ultimately soothing round of colonic hydrotherapy.

Am I starving, desperate for Stilton and gallons of gin? Not at all. I feel calm, vivid and alive. By the end, I have broken some of the bad routines that hitherto ruled my day. The colonic hydrotherapy is challenging, but afterwards I feel great. There is a palpable sense of renewal, of purging and giving oneself a heightened understanding of one's body and the fascinating grey areas where mind and body seem to become one.

"This life is meant to be good, to be fun, to be a pleasure," explains Vivien, "but there must be balance." Without this balance, I suspect even my most cherished pleasures could, in time, become diluted – something I'm not prepared to risk. I feel brightened and enlightened; fresh and alive – and that is how I wish to remain.

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