

THE BUSINESS TIMES  
**Weekend**

Jan 14-15, 2017

**Wellness –**  
**The New Luxury**



**Nordic Design**

Cool hotels in Iceland

THE WEEKEND INTERVIEW

**Dennis Tay**

Founder of Nalisse

PHOTO: JONAS HANSEN FOR THE BUSINESS TIMES



Whatever your health  
and sybaritic needs,  
Judy Chapman shortlists the  
best places to check into.



### Absolute Sanctuary

KOH SAMUI

When weight gain, digestive issues and fatigue get you down, this is a value-for-money, medium-priced retreat. Previously yoga-centric, Absolute positions itself as a fitness/wellness resort (there's a fully equipped Pilates studio on-site). The three-day detox is the most popular and is a gentle way to enter the world of detox broths, colon therapy and Chi Nei Tsang (a stomach massage designed to shift toxins). From nutritional consultations, smoking cessation, NLP and crystal surgery, they've got the holistic side of things covered. The design might not be to everyone's taste but you're not here for the luxury villa. Yoga classes led by international instructors are first class. Meals at the Love Kitchen are all about cocoa, chia and quinoa. Want a career change? It offers a yoga teacher training course. Priced from \$81,700 for a 3-night/4-day detox retreat. [www.absolutesanctuary.com](http://www.absolutesanctuary.com)



### Amatara Wellness Resort

PHUKET

This seafront luxury resort was recently rebranded with a focus on preventive medicine, particularly on brain longevity. Wellness director Phoebe Boonkerd explains: 'We are living longer but suffering cognitive diseases like Alzheimer's and dementia which is why we have partnered with the Bangkok Phuket Hospital's Brain Health Institute to launch Thailand's first 'Brain Health Enhancement Program'. The first three days consists of blood testing, MRI, MRA, cognitive tests and a sleep test by neurologists and sleep technicians. This is followed by five days at the resort where your personalized retreat is supervised by certified practitioners. Includes nutritional meals, movement, meditation and treatments. Priced from \$815,405 per person/single occupancy for the Brain Health Enhancement Program (plus taxes). [www.amataraphuket.com](http://www.amataraphuket.com)





## Aro-Ha

SOUTHERN ALPS, NEW ZEALAND

If you like small groups, cozy fires and rugged hikes, Aro-Ha is for you. Your day begins with deeply nourishing yoga guided by co-founder Damian Chaparro, and flows seamlessly from there. There's no set schedule as the intention of the retreat is to encourage one to be in the moment (you are tapped on your shoulder when it's time for your massage). The veggie-botany cuisine is phenomenal — most of it is grown on-site. Watch out for caffeine withdrawal symptoms unless you weaned yourself off the week before. The rigorous sub-alpine hikes will distract you. All the facilitators are refreshingly down to earth (and make excellent hiking guides). Digital access is limited, which is the whole idea. *Priced from \$56,251 per person for a 7-day wellness adventure. [www.aro-ha.com](http://www.aro-ha.com)*



## Atmantan Health And Wellness Resort

PUNE, INDIA

India has long been revered for oil-dripping Ayurvedic retreats but recently, a crop of holistic integrative retreats have opened up, led by the luxury Atmantan. Touted as the new Chiva Som of South East Asia, you check in for the five to 14-day Master Cleanse or Weight Management retreat. Explains Health and Wellness Director Dr Manoj Kuterrri: "We have six naturopathic and Ayurvedic doctors here alongside a team of nurses, physiotherapists and certified fitness trainers and therapists." The consultation covers everything from your diet to sleep patterns and even emotional wellbeing, after which diagnostic tests analyzing your fitness, posture and body composition are performed. What makes Atmantan also appealing is its mountainous location and cooler climate. *Priced from \$83,000 per person/twin share (plus taxes). [www.atmantan.com](http://www.atmantan.com)*

## WeekendFeature



## Fivelements

BALI

If you are partial to the raw food movement and seek to understand more about yoga and spirituality, then Fivelements is one of the most unique sanctuaries on the island. A cluster of riverside bamboo villas, the focus is on holistic healing so you won't find any medical check ups here. Instead, healers lead you on a more internal journey. The spa is somewhat unconventional with fire ceremonies, water rituals, martial arts and native Balinese healers. At its heart is the alkalizing gourmet plant-based meals curated by LA-trained raw food chefs. Although yoga is not on the daily schedule, you can book classes with local teachers and if you seek a detox, then colonic hydrotherapy is available. The energy here feels very calm and works for those who crave downtime. The buzz? Fivelements will open their first urban retreat in Hong Kong next year. *Priced from \$88,138 for a 7-night signature detox (single occupancy). [www.fivelements.org](http://www.fivelements.org)*



## Como Shambhala Estate

BALI

Nature takes centerstage in this crown jewel of lifestyle retreats that features stunning Retreat Pool Villas. Operations are seamless and it feels safe to hand your being over to the holistic experts and let them sort you out. COMO is big on Asian modalities so Ayurveda, yoga and Traditional Chinese Medicine are central to its detox, stress management and rejuvenation retreats. Food and beverages at the famous GLOW are clean, green and raw, but wine and coffee are available too. Treatments are well executed (massages are devised to counter our digital lifestyles), while the yoga decks, hydrotherapy-pools and Pilates studio overlooking jungle greenery are ideal for body-mind regeneration. COMO recently opened in Phuket and the Maldives, with a second Bali property opening in 2017. *Priced from \$55,000 per person for the 5-night Stress-Management retreat (plus taxes). [www.comohotels.com/comoshambhalaestate](http://www.comohotels.com/comoshambhalaestate)*





Gwinganna

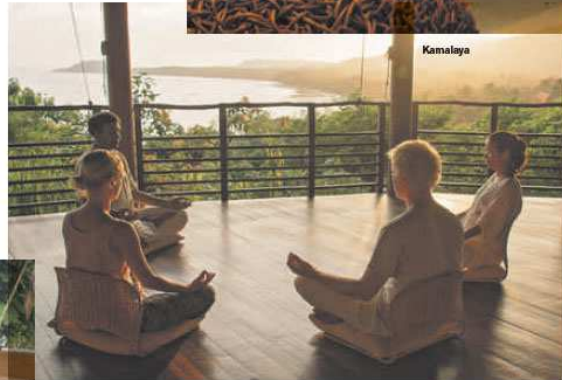
## Gwinganna Health Retreat

**GOLD COAST, AUSTRALIA**

When you're exhausted, suffer from adrenal fatigue and can no longer ignore your body's signals, then Gwinganna is the go-to place for your annual overhaul. Set on 200 hectares of native bush, Gwinganna has a gold star reputation for its seven-day detox. While not a medical facility, you receive a comprehensive consultation and can add on other assessments including Live Blood Analysis, nutrition and Iridology, to name a few. The program is fairly structured and there are counsellors and nurses on hand to provide support. Standouts are the discourses on sleep, sugar and heart health delivered by experts and all the food is organic. This is more of a group retreat with up to 60 guests there at a time, but you can still slip away for sacred me-time. Even a three-day detox will leave you feeling replenished. But if you just need a good break, there's nothing quite like awakening your body with sunrise Tai Chi, while the morning hikes are just what the doctor ordered. Needless to say, the return guest rate is high. *Priced from S\$3,700 for a 7-night signature Gwinganna Detox. [www.gwinganna.com](http://www.gwinganna.com)*



Kamalaya



## Oneworld Ayurveda

**BALI**

Oneworld Retreats has been hosting affordable yoga and meditation retreats since 2003 and its newly opened second venue is Bali's first Panchakarma



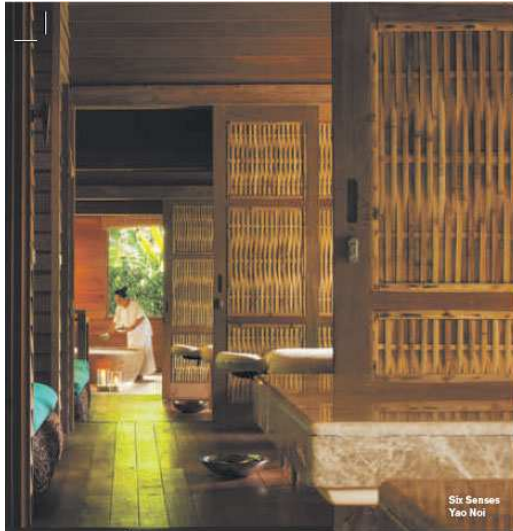
Oneworld Ayurveda

detox retreat destination. This is not a luxury resort and anyone who has ever braved a Panchakarma will know that, depending on the level of toxins in your body, this is one serious purge. This is why a nourishing environment is essential and guests checking into a 7, 14 or 21-day program here will spend regular time with doctors who monitor your progress. True to Ayurveda, the consultations will be thorough and treatments, meals and activities individually prescribed. Says co-founder Claude Chouinard who turned to Ayurveda after his own life-changing Panchakarma in Sri Lanka a few years ago: "People do Panchakarmas to detox and lose weight. However, they can also treat asthma, thyroid, anxiety, insomnia and stress." A bonus is that guests have the option to do the entire retreat or part of it in silence. *Priced from S\$2,634 for a 7-day Panchakarma detox (plus taxes). [www.oneworldayurveda.com](http://www.oneworldayurveda.com)*

## Kamalaya

**KOH SAMUI**

Prefer your detox or de-stress in island surroundings? The high-end holistic retreat offers a sublime backdrop with tropical villas, yoga decks and a healing spa overlooking a secluded cove. On arrival, a naturopath assesses your health, after which a registered nurse performs the Body Bio-impedance Analysis to measure your hydration, body fat, metabolism, toxicity and cellular vitality. The detox retreat focuses on the essentials – diet, exercise and sleep. What feels good is that the vibe is very relaxed and the medical doctors, TCM, naturopathy and Ayurveda practitioners can adjust your program at any time. All the fitness trainers are certified. *Priced from S\$2,700 for a 3-night detox program. [www.kamalaya.com](http://www.kamalaya.com)*



Six Senses  
Yao Noi

## Six Senses Yao Noi

THAILAND

With slow food and sustainable design, Six Senses has been in the luxury wellness scene for some time now. On top of spa, yoga and meditation retreats, it recently collaborated with experts to devise the Yogic Sleep program. During the 3-14 day retreats, you are introduced to slow-yoga, deep breathing, yoga nidra and relaxing treatments. The resulting sleep is deep and delicious. While Six Senses luxury resorts have traditionally appealed to couples and families, an emerging market is the solo retreat-goer. A bonus for returning guests is the Wellness Screening — a sophisticated diagnostic machine at all properties that allows one to monitor their brain, body and nutritional health on a regular basis. *Priced from \$81,215 per person excluding accommodation and meals.* [www.sixsenses.com/resorts/yao-noi](http://www.sixsenses.com/resorts/yao-noi)



Hotel Komune

## Surf & Yoga At Hotel Komune

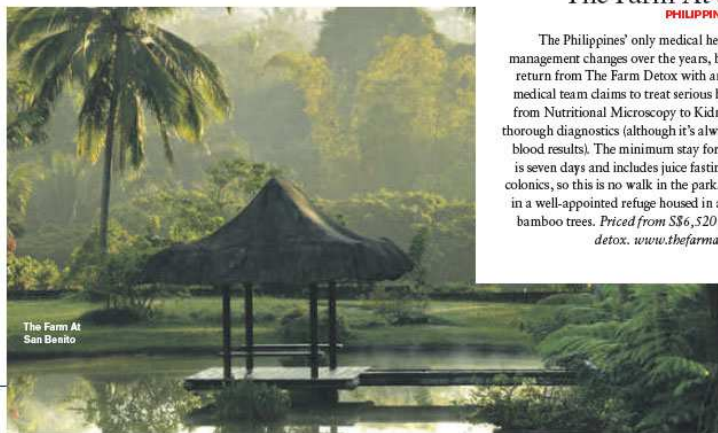
BALI

This beachfront resort deserves inclusion as it represents the rising genre of healthy hotels where wellbeing for the entire family is a given. The beachy vibe is upbeat with the Health Hub offering daily yoga, fitness, boxing and meditation for all ages. Nutritious meals and coconut water are on tap but the real draw is the surf (yoga surf retreats are a big trend) and Komune boasts the world's first permanent night surfing installation. Wellness-minded parents can exhale in relief, knowing there are no iPads or Playstations at the Free Range Kids Club. Says co-founder Tony Cannon: "As a parent I've never felt comfortable offloading my kids in hotel kids clubs where they play inside. At Komune it's all about an active lifestyle for the entire family." Retreats here are fitness-focused and include personal training sessions, spa and surf lessons. *Priced from \$82,195 per person/twin share for a 6-night/7-day yoga and spa program (plus taxes).* [www.komuneresorts.com](http://www.komuneresorts.com)

## The Farm At San Benito

PHILIPPINES

The Philippines' only medical health retreat has seen a few management changes over the years, but it hasn't stopped guests who return from The Farm Detox with an enviable glow. The extensive medical team claims to treat serious health issues (diagnostics range from Nutritional Microscopy to Kidney Cleansing) and offers fairly thorough diagnostics (although it's always advisable to bring your latest blood results). The minimum stay for their signature detox program is seven days and includes juice fasting, wheatgrass shots, yoga and colonics, so this is no walk in the park. However, you get to do all that in a well-appointed refuge housed in a secluded oasis of coconut and bamboo trees. *Priced from \$86,520 per person for the 7-day farm detox.* [www.thefarmatsanbenito.com](http://www.thefarmatsanbenito.com)



The Farm At  
San Benito