

Wellness Living & Travel

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MAGAZINE

## THE Complete Wellness ISSUE

**SETTING  
FITNESS GOALS**

*Sustainable Workout Wear*

**RADICAL SELF-CARE**

John Mayer's  
Dirty Little Secret

**Serene Seaside Spas**

FEBRUARY 2022  
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Laurence Carr



Libby Langdon

Every day we see the very real impact of being careless with our environment and, in an industry where we are always creating newly built environments for our clients.

—LAURA HODGES, SFC AMBASSADOR

The job of being responsible begins with caring but also requires taking action.

—JOHN EASON, SFC AMBASSADOR

It's important to always continue learning and striving to do better, which includes making efforts to do what is best for our planet, the place we ultimately call home.

—THOM FILICIA, SFC AMBASSADOR

Clients care what I'm bringing into their home and they want it to be safe and healthy for their families.

—LIBBY LANGDON, SFC AMBASSADOR



Background photo courtesy of Framedbridge

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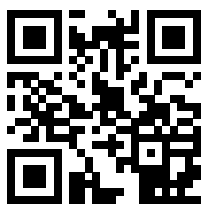


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## On the Cover

It's no surprise that wellness, wellness travel and mental health will be huge growth areas in 2022, as we all lean into finding our inner resources and renewed strength. For the past several years, we've dedicated our Jan/Feb issue to up-to-the-minute wellness coverage, and this is one of our favorites!



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## editor's letter



It feels like everyone is breathing a sigh of relief, now that the new year is here. The usual “fresh start, new beginnings, breath of fresh air” sense of optimism and resolve that we’re used to feeling this time of year, has somehow spilled over into a big, bubbly broth of anticipation, positive thinking and well wishes for 2022.

If it’s been a tough year for you—for everyone?—and you are focused on easing stress, calming yourself down and bringing more wellness into your life, the

whole world is with you. According to the latest research from the Global Wellness Institute (GWI), the global wellness economy is projected to grow to \$7 trillion by 2025. Other takeaways and trends:

1. “90 will soon be the new 60,” given medical advancements expected over the next decade. Our stories on Radical Self-Care and Calming the Vagus Nerve will help with a road map to enhanced energy, pain relief and paving the way to wellness.
2. Healthy buildings are having an impact on both public health and the real estate market, and wellness real estate and design is a growing category. In our Wellness Real Estate & Design column, we tackle the importance of creating “A Healing Home,” with tips on how to do it.
3. The rising role of mushrooms, psychedelics and psilocybins in healing trauma and mental health is gaining momentum. Stay tuned for our upcoming feature in the March/April issue and visit [organicspamagazine.com](https://www.organicspamagazine.com) for past articles on the topic.
4. Women’s health affects 50 percent of the global population but is seriously under-resourced and in need of dedicated research. In Tapping into Empathy and Compassion, we discuss how women have an edge on empathy and ways that it keeps us well.

Plus, in The Sleep Doctor, our columnist, Dr. Michael Breus, shares ideas on how to center sleep in wellness. And more: Going Dry, about the move toward non-alcoholic drinking; Setting Fitness Goals for the new year; Sustainable Workout Wear. Sit down, settle in and enjoy the read.

Sending well wishes for a better year ahead for all of us!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rona".

**Rona Berg**

Editorial Director

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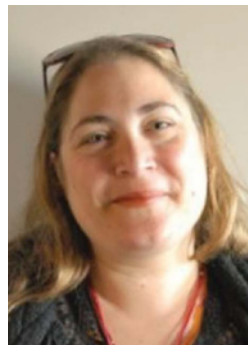




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**Mim Senft** is a cofounder of Motivity Care, a company focused on taking the complexity out of caregiving management for adults at all stages of life and a co-founder of the nonprofit, Global Women 4 Wellbeing (GW4W). She is a regular speaker at conferences and has provided workshops and trainings for Fortune 500 companies.



**Lambeth Hochwald** is a New York City-based lifestyle reporter who covers health, fitness and issues of importance to women. Her stories have appeared in *The New York Times*, *ELLE*, *USA Today*, *Architectural Digest*, *Marie Clare* and *Women's Health* magazine. She's also an avid runner who truly believes that it's never too cold to be outdoors working out in nature—provided you have the right eco-friendly workout clothes.

## OSM love notes

I have a huge family and they are all coming to us for the holidays. We are foodies, and I was struggling with what to make. Turkey again—boring! I loved A Sustainable Feast, because the chef has a beautiful story, and I now have Green O on my list of places to visit in 2022. But your writer also handed me my holiday menu: Duck! And that cake! Thank you.


♥ **Morgan | New York, New York**


I can always count on you to lay things out in a clear and interesting way. The Beauty of Probiotics did just that. I wanted to let you know how much I enjoyed the article, and the product recommendations, which I am going to try.


♥ **Celina | Santa Fe, New Mexico**

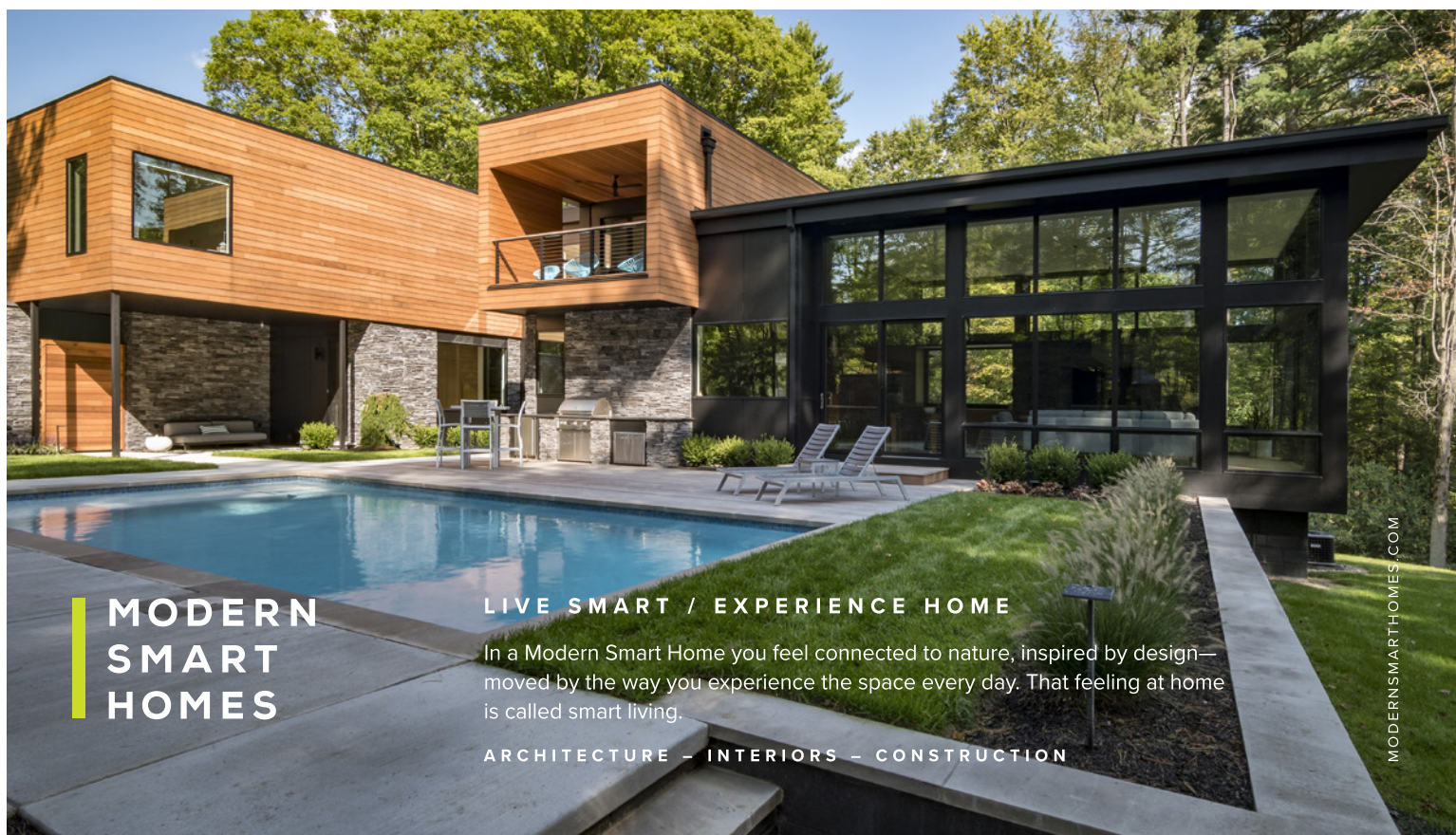
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renew



## ODE TO THE GOOD LIFE

At the new Montage Healdsburg, in Sonoma County, a celebration of wine country wellness awaits

The first thing you notice at the new Montage Healdsburg is garrigue, the heady smell of rosemary and lavender warming in the sun, triggering a scent memory that transports you to the South of France.

In fact, the Montage is set in a charming California town in Sonoma County's wine country, though the evocation of Provence is not entirely unintentional. But it is done so well—and the landscape here is so achingly beautiful—that you are thrilled to be just exactly where you are.

The 130 guest rooms, newly built, include 34 suites with extraordinarily high ceilings and spacious open layouts showcasing a choice of views: mountain, vineyard (with more than 15 acres of vines on property) or forest, where 22,000 oak, heritage oak or manzanita trees wrap around long, private terraces. At night, when a chill nips the air, it's time to gather around the firepit.

Tour the wine country by day, or stroll to the apiary or vineyards. Loll around the pool, then enjoy a healing Sonoma Blend Massage (with local olive oil) or delicious Harvest Honey Ginger Infusion Ritual at the handsome 11-room spa. Eventually, guests will be able to tag along with Beau, the lively Lagotto Romagnolo canine ambassador, who is trained to sniff out truffles on property, amidst 450 hazelnut trees. At night, lie down in a meadow in the vineyards and enjoy stargazing through a partnership with the Robert Ferguson Observatory in Sonoma. And, of course, there is wine tasting: "Meet the Maker" features a visit from a local winemaker each week.

Outdoor dining—at Scout Field Bar or the signature restaurant, Hazel Hill—is at the heart of the elevated culinary experience here. But first, cap the day with a signature Violet Beauregarde or Basil Gimlet cocktail, relax, take in the picturesque surroundings and savor your stay in paradise. [montagehotels.com/healdsburg/](https://montagehotels.com/healdsburg/)

—Rona Berg





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# restore



## RETREATS IN MOTION

Lexus creates a wellness sanctuary on wheels

What if traveling to your vacation hotel was just as relaxing as being there? It's an idea Lexus is aiming to make a reality with its Retreats in Motion program. First launched in California and then expanded to the East Coast last year, the wellness-focused package includes overnight stays at two luxury hotels (usually about three hours apart) and the use of a Lexus car to drive in between them. The hook, though, is that the car itself becomes a sanctuary—and an integral part of the trip—thanks to custom content created for Lexus.

Instead of fiddling with the radio dial or cursing the traffic, you'll be listening to guided meditation and breathwork sessions, a sound bath created by sound healer Sara Auster and talks with restaurateur Dan Barber and golfer Annika Sorenstam on topics related to wellness and sustainability. You'll get a mobile wellness kit featuring a yoga mat and bands, herbal tea and a mini essential oil diffuser that can be plugged into the car's USB port. Drivers will also receive a route map and suggestions of mindful stops you can make along your journey—if you can tear yourself away from the peaceful bubble of the car.

—Veronica Mullen





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# recharge



## AN ELEVATED EXPERIENCE

La Cantera Resort & Spa, perched high above the San Antonio skyline, offers a serene sanctuary and a rollicking good time

Tucked into the Texas Hill Country, La Cantera Resort & Spa is perfectly poised to overdeliver on anyone's expectations. The 550-acre resort, set on the highest point of elevation in San Antonio, Texas, with views of the city skyline in the distance, also offers a true retreat experience at its stylish Loma de Vida ("Hill of Life") Spa.

The Spa features 15 treatment rooms, including two couples suites and two Sky Lofts—truly unique (and private) outdoor lounge and treatment cabanas overlooking the natural beauty of the Hill Country. While families gather around the waterslide at the kids' pool on the opposite side of the resort (there are five pools on property), the full-service spa offers a relaxing and restorative escape for couples, girlfriends or solo spa-goers seeking quiet time. Loma de Vida boasts 25,000 square feet of indoor space and a vast menu of treatments, including some inspired by the area. A stunning common

space known as The Gathering Place, entices, encompassing a vast fireplace and terrace with sweeping big-sky views. Soak in the serene infinity-edge pool, practice yoga in the grotto, clear your head—and sinuses—in the herbal sauna room.

An elite world-class golf course—along with a driving range, practice area, pro shop—will get you on your game. And with no less than nine food and beverage outposts—from SweetFire Kitchen, with a wood-fire oven; to Sire, a lobby bar featuring craft cocktails and small plates; to Primero Cantina, a Tex-Mex style sports bar—your appetites will be well-satisfied.

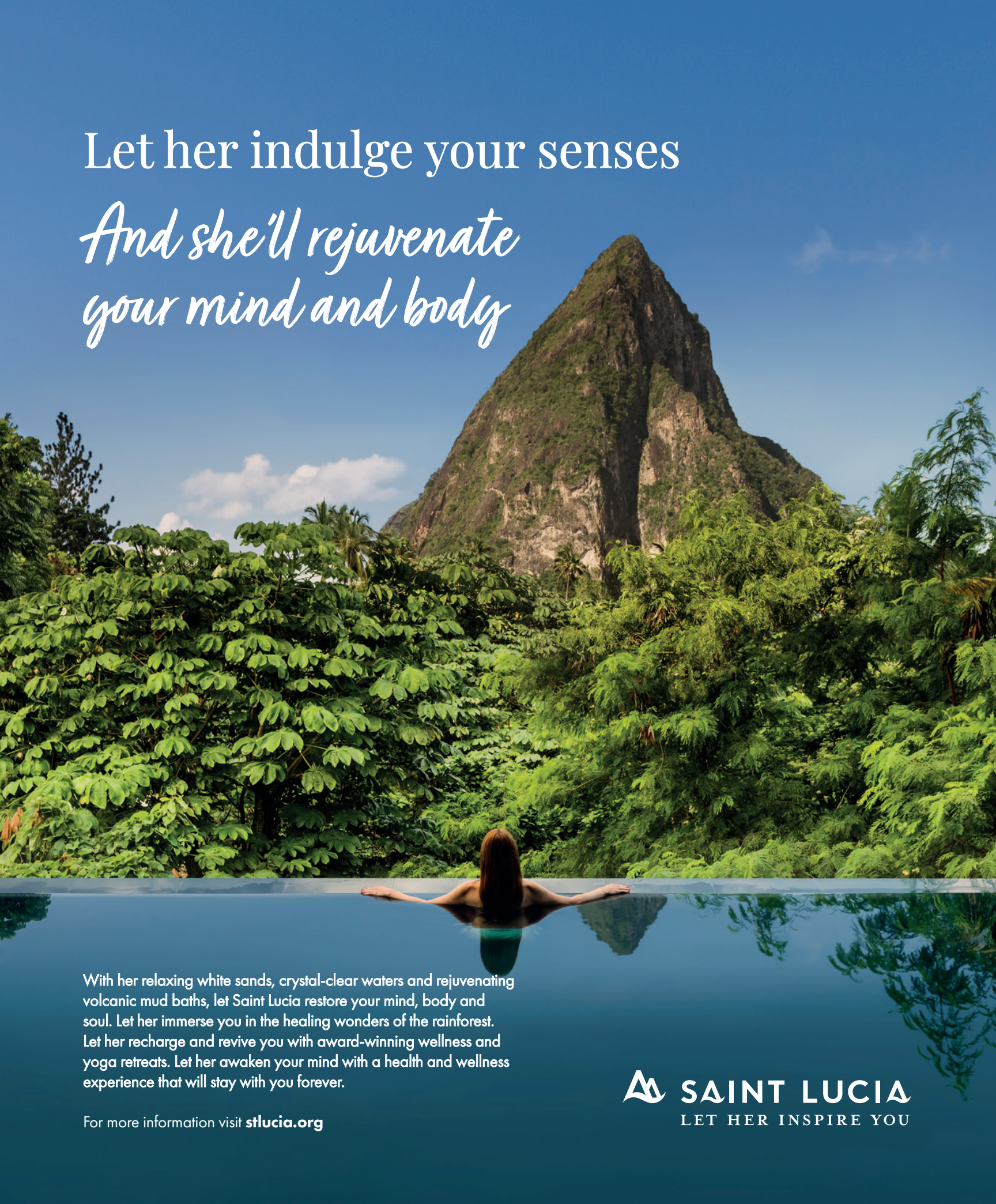
It's the perfect perch from which to explore downtown San Antonio, the famous River Walk and, of course, the historic Alamo, all less than 20 minutes away. [lacanteraresort.com](http://lacanteraresort.com)

—Rona Berg



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# Designing a Wellness Oasis

A New York City-based designer creates a holistic haven for healing

By Rona Berg

Award-winning interior designer Gwynne McCue is the visionary behind interior spaces that range from an urban brownstone triplex to a Manhattan pied-à-terre to a sprawling coastal home.

The founder of Gwynne McCue Interiors, a New York City-based boutique interior design firm based in downtown Chelsea, McCue's passion for wellness consistently comes through in her design aesthetic, including this serene Japanese-inspired bathroom, intended to create a wellness oasis for the owner, a two-time cancer survivor.

"I have a penchant for Japanese design, and I love onsens," says McCue. "The Japanese conserve energy by using hot springs. They don't have a lot of wood, so they don't build a lot of furniture. They use less energy in the home."

McCue enlarged the existing steam shower and added a deep, Japanese-style Ofuro or soaking tub—with a waterfall tub filter, supportive shower seat, low-flow handheld and rain shower heads and cutouts that provide natural light and vitamin D. The Ofuro works well in a small bathroom, due to its compact footprint. Used in Japan for centuries, this type of tub is viewed as an indoor extension of bathing outdoors in the abundant hot springs all over the country. In Japanese bathing culture, the bath plays a significant role as a place to purify body and soul. On the tech side, a waterproof TV and speakers were built in, along with LED chromotherapy lights that change color. There is also an on-demand water heater to conserve energy.

But the pièce de résistance is the beautiful ceiling made with hand-painted cherry blossom-inspired tiles from Kibak Tile, a woman-owned studio in Oregon that specializes in custom work. "People are craving nature," says McCue, "and this adds a meditative art inspiration." River rock floors not only bring nature indoors, they encourage reflexology, and a Buddha sculpture, inset near the tub, evokes peace and tranquility.

A live edge elmwood countertop was reclaimed locally to update the separate toilet room. Live edge wood maintains the natural beauty of the forest by preserving the tree in its circumferential entirety with the outer edges of the trunk visible. Some cultures believe that the native spirit of the wood is kept alive when the tree edges remain untouched.

McCue was raised in a family with sustainable values, and that inspires every aspect of her work because, as she says, "There aren't







unlimited amounts of anything.” She sews and reuses textiles for her clients—upcycling and altering pillow shams. She has replaced a countertop with a reclaimed tree from a New York park, and thinks about how to reuse and refit materials, restuff sofas and work with vintage furniture. “There’s nothing more sustainable than what’s already here,” she says.

After she received a business degree, McCue worked in advertising, but says she was drawn to something more creative. Her design trajectory took her from Savannah, Georgia, to Oregon, Boston and now New York City. She worked at Chilewich, Jonas Upholstery, Nest Interiors and, in 2014, received a New York Design Award and won Apartment Therapy’s Big Reveal Makeover Contest in 2015.

McCue has a special affinity for working with individual clients and designing personal residences. “I often work with small spaces, bathrooms and textiles,” she says. “I pull out the best of the individual. Whether they like to entertain at home or take baths, I meet their needs. I’m really about exploring the senses, and that’s where this bathroom came from,” she continues. “It’s my passion to set up a home environment where people can recharge and be happy.”





# Coming Clean

Grammy Award-winner John Mayer's dirty little secret

By Rona Berg

John Mayer, the seven-time Grammy Award-winning singer, songwriter and guitarist, is renowned for hits that range from his breakout, “Your Body is a Wonderland” to Sob Rock, his latest album. Widely considered one of the most gifted guitarists of the modern era, Mayer has also shared the stage with heavyweights B.B. King, Buddy Guy, Eric Clapton and the Grateful Dead.

Anyone who follows the brooding, baby-faced, 44-year-old artist knows about his complicated dating history. Mayer, now living quietly in Montana, has been involved with some of the world's most famous women—i.e., Jennifer Aniston, Taylor Swift, Katy Perry—and those high-profile relationships always ended publicly and not always well.

Though pretty much an open book, what no one would ever suspect until now is that John Mayer has a penchant for laundry. Indeed, he loves handwashing, especially when he's out on tour. “I never cleaned my room as a kid or cleaned up after myself,” he says. “When I got older, I found it really interesting.” So interesting, in fact, that Mayer teamed up with Lindsey Boyd, cofounder of the eco-friendly company, The Laundress, to create the new Way Out West collection. Inspired by Mayer's home state, Way Out West includes a laundry detergent and fabric spray with a warm woody fragrance—created by Mayer—featuring notes of sandalwood, neroli, black pepper and cedar.

Mayer first discovered The Laundress products over six years ago and felt a kinship for the brand's philosophy: if you love fashion and textiles, you should be into fabric care. In fact, he says, “I find something meditative about the process, which makes laundry day a very soothing ritual for me.”

“I do appreciate the unlikeliness of this,” he admits, “but I really got into taking care of my stuff. When I realized that I didn't have to send my clothes out on the road, it made my experience less lonely and isolating.”

Also appealing to Mayer is the sustainability piece. “I realized that I don't need an endless acquisition of things,” he says. “People think they have to throw things away, but as soon as you learn how to care for them, it shuts down the endless acquisition. I wanted to take the same four shirts and wear them on the road. I realized you can wash something a thousand times, and it stops the cycle of having to get new things all the time,” he continues.

Working on Way Out West tapped into some of the gifts that make Mayer so successful as an artist: “In a song, or anything, I always wonder, ‘Does this lock together in a tight dense package that makes you really like it and get it?’” Well, yes. Especially if you want your clothes to smell like John Mayer's.



John Mayer and The Laundress Cofounder Lindsey Boyd





# FOCAL POINTS

Take time for contemplation and reflection in the new year with these cozy home accents

By Jennie Nunn



## Abstractions

Inspired by ancient abstract symbols, the **Square Ivory and Black Symbol Menes Pouf** is handcrafted by artisans in India and filled with recyclable beads. [worldmarket.com](http://worldmarket.com)





## Pull Up a Seat

The **Foundry Ottoman** by Gus Modern is made with kiln-dried 100 percent FSC-certified hardwood. [burkedecor.com](http://burkedecor.com)



## Armchair Traveler

Made in Lima, Peru, by pedal loom weavers, the **Canyon Pillow** is made of 100 percent cotton. [minna-goods.com](http://minna-goods.com)



## Wrapping Up

Meticulously crafted by a cooperative of women in Chiapas, Mexico, the **Pantelho Throw Peach+Sage** is handwoven on a backstrap loom in separate panels and embroidered together. [minna-goods.com](http://minna-goods.com)



## Feet First

Handmade using a longstanding felting tradition, the comfy, chemical-free **Women's Wool Slides** in oatmeal are made with vegetable tanned leather soles and two pieces of felt cut and sewn together by artisans in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. [kyrgies.com](http://kyrgies.com)



## Camping In

Create your own personal campground at home with P.F. Candle Co.'s hand-poured **Campfire** candle, made of 100 percent domestically grown soy wax and paraben- and phthalate-free. [pfcandleco.com](http://pfcandleco.com)





## Get Warm

Place the cozy, ecru **Clara Chunky Wool Throw** to the end of the bed or as a throw for the sofa; it's handwoven by a group of 10 master artisans in Montevideo, Uruguay. [the-citizenry.com](http://the-citizenry.com)



## Vintage Style

Evocative of a vintage glass cloche, Skeem Design's **Fireplace Smoke Match Cloche** is made of handblown glass and fitted with a cork stopper. [skeemdesign.com](http://skeemdesign.com)



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## Sustainable Food Storage

Enjoying leftovers is something we all look forward to, and the new year is a good time to kit out your kitchen with reusable containers in a range of shapes and sizes, making it easy to store them. When you think about the fact that 50 percent of the plastic in the U.S. is only used once, the question of how to store leftovers on a regular basis becomes more pressing. Here are three brands that offer a range of sustainable solutions.



### U-Konserve

U-Konserve is B Corp-certified, which means they've met rigorous environmental standards. The stainless steel nesting containers come with sturdy silicone lids in a great selection of shapes and sizes, perfect for storing food for meal prep, picnics, lunch at work and, of course, leftovers, with zero waste. Plus, U-Konserve belongs to 1% for the Planet, and donates five percent of every online purchase to nonprofit partners. [ukonserve.com](http://ukonserve.com)

### Food Huggers

These whimsical, flexible containers, made of 100 percent BPA- and phthalate-free food-grade silicone, will keep fruits and vegetables—or any food leftovers, really!—fresh, and reduce waste. They look like colorful envelopes, in various shapes and sizes, and are a great alternative to plastic, aluminum foil and other single-use solutions. Food Huggers offer an airtight seal, and don't take up a lot of space, as they “nest” in four sizes—and even offer a hugger specially designed for avocados! [foodhuggers.com](http://foodhuggers.com)



### ECOLunchbox Splash Box XL

When it comes to food storage, we love to see XL! Made from stainless steel and food-grade silicone—with an embossed ocean-inspired design on the lid—the ECOLunchbox Blue Water Bento food container holds five cups, is dishwasher safe and, best of all, it's leakproof! Great for storage in the fridge, backpack or briefcase, and easy to open, too. [ecolunchboxes.com](http://ecolunchboxes.com)



## Heart in Mouth

Nestled away in Potter Valley, in California's Mendocino County, the McFadden family vineyard and farm, at the headwaters of the Russian River, is a hotbed of plant, insect and animal biodiversity.

In the vineyard, delicious wines are produced under three labels—Blue Quail, now celebrating its 50th anniversary; McFadden (sparkling); and Fontaine (rosé)—and all the grapes are estate-grown and organic. At their organic farm, the McFaddens grow garlic, bay leaves, herbs and more.

They've taken artistry to a new level with a range of edible wreaths, garlands and swags, made with fresh-picked bay leaves, chili peppers, garlic and herbs, including the beautiful Heart Wreath, pictured right, which is a unique and lovely gift for Valentine's Day—or any day! The wreaths are seasonal, harvested and handmade from October through January, and will maintain their structure until the bay leaves are used up in stocks, soups and stews.

Farming organically since the vineyard started over 50 years ago, patriarch Guinness McFadden, father of five, believes it is important to “leave the land better than we found it.” They were certified by the California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF) in 1991, but in practice, they've been organic since the first vines were planted in 1970. Says McFadden, “It just seemed like the right thing to do.” [bluequail.com](http://bluequail.com)



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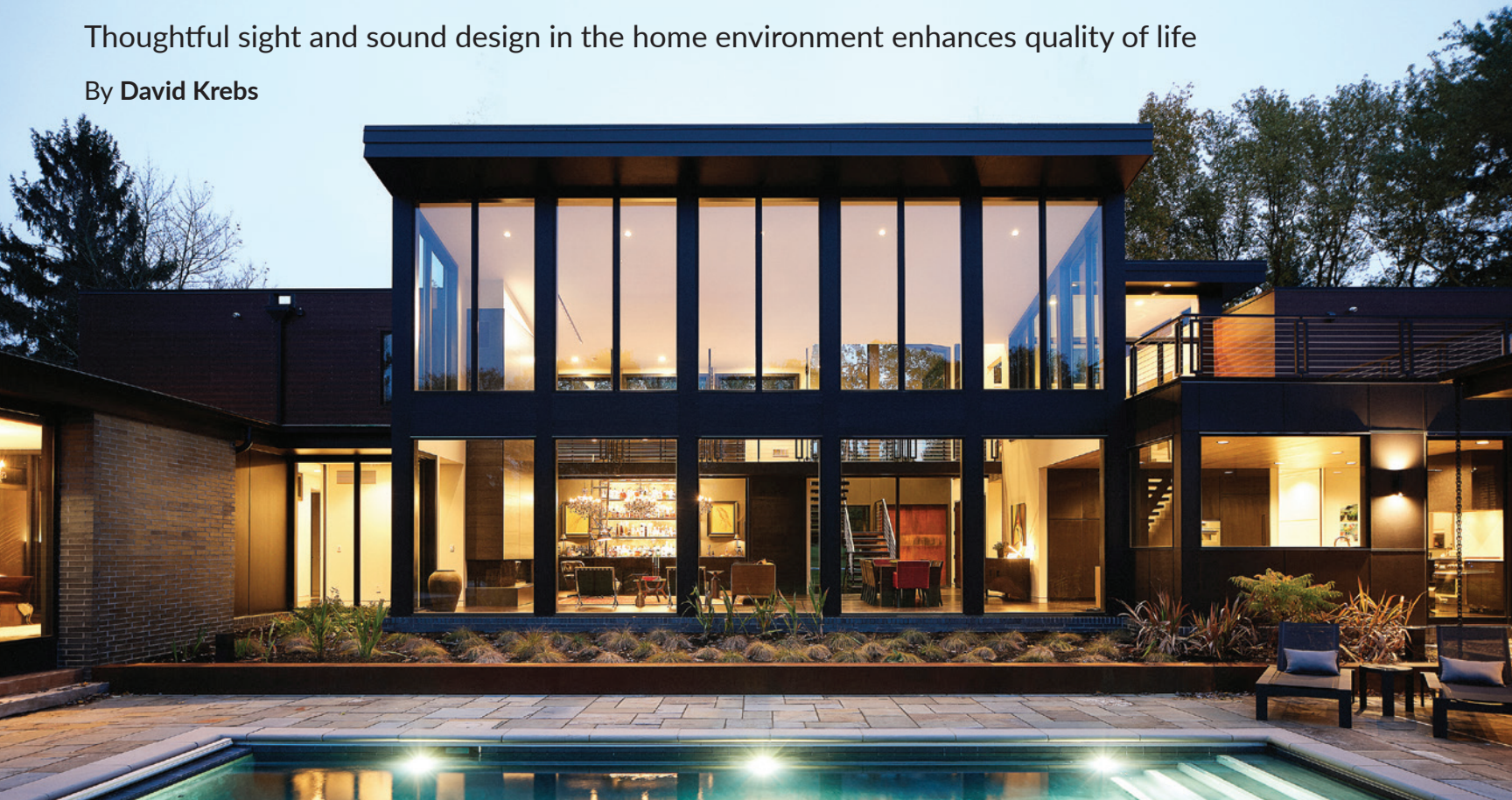




# A Home That Heals

Thoughtful sight and sound design in the home environment enhances quality of life

By David Krebs



The warm glow of light inside and out at the end of the day

Our sense of sight dominates our perception of what is happening around us. Because of this, design is typically focused on the materials, textures, shapes of what we see. What gets easily overlooked are our other senses and how impactful they are to our wellness. We often overlook great opportunities that are right in front of us, such as the quality of our light and the noises that we hear. In many cases, our lives can easily be improved with a low investment in any environment.

## Light

Light is one of the biggest design tools that we have. Often architecture is seen as the use of steel or concrete or wood in the design palette. Internationally renowned architect Steven Holl has said, “My favorite material as an architect is light.” Light connects us to our experience of the environment by revealing form, color, texture as well as time of day or season. It also affects our well-being, including our circadian rhythm, cognition, blood pressure, immune systems, metabolism, melatonin, cortisol and more. Light synchronizes our body every day.

There are two main ways we get light: from the sun and from a synthetic source. In nature, the sun has a daily rhythm of rising and setting while changing color temperature during the day. This

natural rhythm aligns our bodies’ rhythm. Warm light influences the hormone melatonin that slows down our body functions and helps us get a good night’s sleep. Bright light in the morning suppresses the melatonin and allows the cortisol to stimulate our metabolism to start the day.

**Natural Light** To magnify the benefits of natural light we need to understand the path of the sun in the region of the world we work in and take advantage of what is being offered. This can include bringing in natural light as much as possible throughout different times of the day to maximize its potential. For example, we may want bright morning light to be in the primary bedroom and bathroom to help to give us energy to start the day. We could place a home office in a location to have sun during the day to help maintain focus and give energy. A home can be designed to have the living room face the west to end the day with natural color tones warming through sunset to calm our bodies, decrease stress, release melatonin and prepare us to sleep.

Using natural light may not always be an option for everyone. Our homes may not align with the path of the sun to get the best effects. And, as the seasons change, the time of day and amount of light we get changes, affecting the natural body rhythm. During the winter season this balance can be off and some people can develop





Morning sunlight on a patio off the primary bedroom

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), leading to poor sleep, fatigue, sadness and mental health issues. To counter these effects, we need to use man-made light to help keep the rhythm.

**Synthetic Light** Synthetic lighting can be as simple as changing the light bulbs in our existing light fixtures or buying a lamp specifically designed for circadian lighting. There are light bulbs that can be programmed through an app or voice-controlled to automatically change temperature as the day goes on. This would include bright white light in the morning, dropping a little through the day and having a warmer light temperature in the evening as our internal clock switches to night mode.

GE has a light bulb named C-Sleep that has an app to control it. For an all-encompassing design approach there are full home-automation systems like Control4 and Savant. These systems are often used to control home entertainment, temperature, security and turn lights on and off. For our health, these systems are now integrating lighting controls that will automatically change the color temperature and intensity of light in the entire home throughout the day to maximize the potential of the uses in the spaces and maintain natural body rhythm.

## Noise

When we look at noise in terms of design, we often focus on keeping sound out or limiting transmission, but we can also use noise as a design tool. We understand that unwanted noise can be a distraction, reducing cognition, causing stress and bad sleep. When building a new home, one area that often gets overlooked is the insulation of the interior walls as well as the floors to isolate areas where sound transmission is important. If the home design has an open floor plan, the layout needs to be conscious of sound transmission as it may echo through the entire house.

**White and Pink Noise** There are many environments where noise levels are difficult to control, such as existing apartments or homes. Masking sound may be as simple as adding white noise or pink noise. White noise has been around for a while and there are devices that provide a higher frequency sound like the sound of static on a TV, a room fan or running air conditioning. Pink noise is a newer trend that has focused not only on masking sound but also is designed to find health benefits in the sound that is produced. This type uses lower frequencies to mimic sounds that are in nature such as rainfall, ocean waves and rustling leaves. While the scientific research is still in progress, some people find the lower frequencies more relaxing and there are new studies that show it will help sleep quality as well as build memory.

In addition to blocking out or masking sound, we can also look at adding sound that can benefit us. An indoor water feature can add many of the therapeutic benefits found in nature including reducing stress and increasing cognitive abilities. Additional side benefits to the water features is that they also add moisture to the air and clean the air. Water releases negative ions into the air to help neutralize the harmful effects of positive ions from pollutants like dust and dander. Water features can be as simple as a plug-in desktop to installing a built-in freestanding structure.

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*David Krebs is a registered architect and member of the American Institute of Architects (AIA). His company, AoDK Architecture, is based in Cleveland, Ohio.*



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# Sleep and the Spa

It's time to center sleep in wellness



There is no true wellness without great sleep, and wellness practices are the ideal place to start addressing sleep issues. Wellness interventions incorporating movement, nutrition, natural supplements, meditation and stress management reduce the need to turn to medication to resolve sleep problems.

Sleeping well is an integral factor in longevity and in protecting mental and physical health across our lifespan. A routine of plentiful, restful sleep helps to keep in check many of the forces that accelerate the biological aging process.

When we sleep, the body undertakes significant cellular repair and rejuvenation. Our glymphatic system—a waste clearance system in the body—goes into high gear, specifically during the sleep phase, to flush harmful waste and toxins from the brain. Our nervous system moves into low resting gear, stress hormones drop to their lowest levels and our immune system reboots. Cognitive and psychological health rely on the sleep phase for memory processing, hormone production and regulation, and the cellular renewal that takes place during sleep.

When we don't get enough consistent high-quality sleep, we miss out on the full impact of sleep's deeply restorative powers. Poor sleep increases inflammation, which is a driver of biological aging and a significant factor in age-related disease, from heart disease to cancer to neurodegenerative diseases including Alzheimer's. Poor

sleep—even a single night of it—directly affects the aging of our cells and increases the activity of genes that drive cellular aging.

Insomnia and other forms of disrupted sleep already existed at epidemic levels before the Covid-19 pandemic began. The pandemic has brought a new, disturbing surge in sleep problems. Multistudy, multinational research analyses have found that more than a third to more than a half of the global population is experiencing problems with sleep. Research also indicates there's been a significant rise in the use of sleep medication during the pandemic. One recent study found an increase of 20% in consumption of sleep medications since the onset of the pandemic. And another recent study identified a significant rise in prescriptions for z-hypnotics, benzodiazepines and serotonergic medications that are prescribed for insomnia as well as anxiety and depression.

Not surprisingly, research has found the escalation of sleep troubles in the pandemic is associated with higher levels of psychological distress.

Disrupted sleep often takes on a life of its own and persists even after the factors that trigger its onset have been resolved. The sleep difficulties unleashed and exacerbated by the pandemic will not disappear, even after Covid-19 has been controlled. There is—and will continue to be—an urgent unmet need to provide education and guidance to address sleep problems.

## How spas can help transform your sleep

The wellness community has a tremendous opportunity to educate people about sleep and help them make lasting changes to their sleep routines, for the benefit of their emotional and physical health, their longevity, their quality of life. Sleep education in spas is at its best when it combines knowledge and experience and puts sleep at the center of the wellness journey. I work regularly with organizations in the wellness industry to create sleep programs, and these are three questions I use as a starting point, when talking with spa professionals about their approach to sleep education.

**Is it comprehensive?** The science of sleep is constantly evolving, and spas must keep pace with the latest research to stay current and provide guests with best practices fully informed by the latest science. The public remains undereducated about sleep—how sleep works, the factors that undermine healthy sleep, how to make lasting changes to sleep. A sleep education program developed in collaboration with sleep specialists (preferably someone who is board-certified) provides spa-goers an opportunity to learn the fundamentals of sleeping well.

Comprehensive sleep education means not only helping spa-goers learn how to sleep better but also helping them identify specific



problem areas in their sleep, and offering guidance for follow-up consultations with board-certified sleep practitioners.

**Bottom Line:** Is the program developed with good sleep science in mind, from an actual sleep doctor? Does it screen for sleep disorders? (If a spa-goer has undiagnosed apnea, for example, no spa treatment will be nearly as effective as clinical therapy.)

**Is it integrated?** Healthy sleep is a 24-hour process. Our nightly rest is deeply influenced by every aspect of our waking lives, from the time we rise in the morning. Spas have a unique platform with which to incorporate sleep into the guests' experience. Movement and exercise programs, dining and nutrition education, mind-body and psychological wellness programs, can and should be actively sleep-informed.

There are countless ways to do this, from highlighting sleep-friendly food and drink on evening and room-service menus, to offering movement classes optimized for pre-sleep exercise and guided sleep meditations as an in-room amenity. By giving spa-goers the opportunity to interact with sleep information throughout the day, they learn new ways to tend to their nightly rest and begin the process of assimilating those skills into long-term routines.

**Bottom Line:** Many spa-goers never think about sleep until the end of the day. Use wellness treatments earlier in the day to educate and inform them about how daytime choices can help nighttime sleep.

**Is it personalized?** Sleep is not a one-size-fits-all endeavor. Our sleep is affected by our environment, our mental and physical health, our habits and routines, and, fundamentally, by our genetics. Individual biology has a profound impact on how each of us experiences sleep.

Some of the most interesting and exciting work happening in wellness today personalizes sleep education. Depending on an individual's travel and their biology, they'll have different needs for adjusting their circadian sleep-wake rhythms to align with your destination. (Beyond jet lag, most will be sleep-deprived and

out-of-sync with their sleep rhythms before they begin their journey.) Personalized recommendations for eating, napping, activity and light exposure will set them up for optimal sleep throughout their stay.

**Bottom Line:** Know the potential issues and know what the solutions are.

### Here are a few examples of how to help create a personalized sleep experience:

- Provide adjustable mattresses and customizable mattress toppers to help meet individual preferences for firmness, comfort and support. A "pillow, topper and duvet menu" enables guests to select the equipment that suits their sleep posture, sleep position and individual needs for head and neck support.
- Offer sleep tracking and analysis to help guests identify sleep issues, with customized sleep solutions to address them.

- Incorporate an understanding of chronobiology and individual chronotype—which captures our unique, genetically determined biological rhythms and preferences for sleep and nearly every aspect of waking life. Working with guests' chronotypes opens up a world of personalization, for optimizing daily routines for sleep, sex, movement, eating, light exposure, creativity, self-reflection, and deep-work productivity.

[www.chronoquiz.com](http://www.chronoquiz.com)

There's a deep natural alignment between sleep education and the wellness experience that is needed now, more than ever.

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*Michael Breus, PhD, is a double board-certified sleep specialist, founder of TheSleepDoctor.com, author of three books on sleep, including the latest, Energize! with Stacey Griffith, and has been in practice for 23 years.*

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# The Nature of Creativity

Animals who not only create art, but seem to get caught up in the creative process



Imagine a London art auction in 2005, where a virtually unknown and deceased artist outsold French Impressionist Pierre-Auguste Renoir and Pop artist Andy Warhol. Now imagine that this artist was a chimpanzee named Congo.

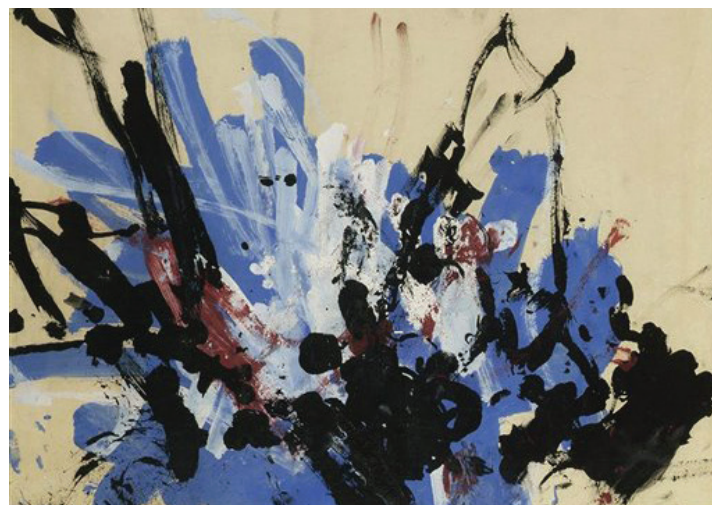
Born in 1954, Congo began painting at age two when his caregiver, British zoologist Desmond Morris, put a paintbrush in his hand. The young chimpanzee took to it immediately. He often asked to paint, disliked being interrupted while making art, and sometimes screamed if somebody tried to take a painting away from him before it was finished. It seemed to Morris that Congo—whose artistic style was described as “lyrical Abstract Impressionism”—found painting rewarding in itself without any outside reinforcement.

Congo isn't the only captive animal known to create art. Koko the gorilla and her gorilla companion, Michael, painted. Sometimes they painted objects or companions (such as a dog); other times they painted from their imaginations. We know this because both gorillas could communicate through sign language and often titled their work, which allowed their caregivers to know what their art might represent. For example, Michael named a painting of a bouquet of pink flowers “Stink Pink More,” and he titled a dynamic splatter of brown splotches tinged with black and green “Earthquake.”

Orangutans also appear to enjoy making art. Wattana, a female orangutan living at the Botanical Garden Zoo in Paris, prefers to work in fiber. She excels at knot-tying and uses her skills to create objects, adornments and installations. Her caregivers never showed her how to make a knot, nor did they reward her for doing so. Wattana ties single, double and triple knots, and combines them creatively to create simple weavings and macrame-like forms that sometimes incorporate beads and other objects. She so enjoys

knotting that sometimes, like a human artist caught up in the creative flow, she prefers to work on her art rather than eat.

How do scientists assess these captive apes making art? Many dismiss the behavior because these animals were given the tools for art-making by their human caregivers, and a few were encouraged by trainers. Some scientists, however, believe that the apes demonstrate authentic creativity and even aesthetic sensibilities in their art. Regardless of which perspective one takes, it is clear these captive apes not only developed an interest in creative activities, but also derived pleasure from it and actively sought it out.



A painting by the late Congo, a chimpanzee





A bower, made by a male bowerbird; they appear to rework their creations until they get it just right

But creativity in non-human animals is not limited to those in captivity. Wild animals exhibit creativity, too. Charles Darwin wrote that some birds have “fine powers of discrimination” and in some instances could be shown to “have a taste for the beautiful.” The best-known wild animal artist in the wild—the bowerbird—builds creations that inspire scientists and philosophers to rethink the definition of art.

For millions of years, male bowerbirds have been building elaborate and visually striking “bowers” with twigs, leaves, nuts, flowers, fungi, moss, shells, insects and other materials, in order to impress females. Each bowerbird species has a unique template for building their bowers, but individuals improvise within the parameters of their species-specific design plan.

Some species build spires; others build arbor-like structures, platforms or avenues. One species, the satin bowerbird, has an especially strong preference for the color blue, and collects blue petals, shells, feathers and human-made objects such as building materials. If there is a shortage of blue material, he sometimes crushes fruit pulp to make blue “paint,” which he then applies to his bower, occasionally using a piece of soft bark as a brush.

Bowerbirds—who can take as long as a month to complete a bower—arrange and rearrange their materials as obsessively as any human artist. During their bower building, the males appear to step back, consider and seemingly judge their own creations, deciding what looks right and what still needs work. This behavior has led some scientists and philosophers to surmise that these birds have an aesthetic sensibility.

Animal creativity isn’t limited to visual art. Everyone knows that birds sing and dance, but until recently, scientists believed that birds engaged in these activities solely to win mates. But recent research suggests that birds sometimes sing and dance not just to attract mates, but for the pleasure of the creative act. Humpback whales appear to have a creative streak, too. Scientists discovered that their songs even contain organized phrases that rhyme.

As we begin a new year, let’s set aside time to indulge our own creativity. From the knotwork of orangutans to the rhyming songs of whales reverberating through the oceanic depths, the creative impulse courses through all of us.

*Excerpted and adapted in part from Inside Animal Hearts and Minds by Belinda Recio (Skyhorse 2017)*

BELINDA RECIO, recipient of the Humane Society’s Award for Innovation in the Study of Animals, owns True North Gallery ([truenorthgallery.net](http://truenorthgallery.net)) in Hamilton, Massachusetts, where she exhibits art that connects people with animals and the natural world.

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# The Wellness Island

A sneak peak at new spas on the island of Lošinj in Croatia

By Becca Hensley



The regal Hapsburgs knew a thing or two about wellness. Back in the day, their spa or “Kur” vacations revitalized them for the daunting task of running that vast empire. Well versed in all the most salubrious locations, they retreated habitually to the verdant island of Lošinj in today’s Croatia, where a mind-boggling microclimate—with Aleppo pines, medicinal plants and the healing mist of the Adriatic’s mineral- and plankton-rich waters—continues to enrich the health of modern travelers.

Two spas in particular, each glamorous in its own way, were refurbished and reimagined during the pandemic. The stylish Bellevue Spa Clinic embraces sophisticated, state-of-the-art, result-driven remedies, from cryotherapy to chromotherapy, as a chic haven overlooking Čikat Bay. It customizes programs—such as detox—for goal-aspiring wellness travelers. At the adjacent Cube Spa at Boutique Hotel Alhambra, the legacy of bygone times dominates the mood. Step up to the Inhalation Bar, a contemporary interpretation of old-world cures. Here, guests can breathe in the beneficial, fine, seawater and plant aerosol mists found only on this unique isle.



# Stay in Touch

At Carneros Resort and Spa, connection through touch inspires a new treatment menu

By Nora Zelevansky

During pandemic lockdowns, people lamented the absence of all sorts of experiences: restaurant dinners, movie screenings, far-flung trips, live performances. So, naturally, dedicated spa-goers, accustomed to regular facials, bodywork or even just five-minute pedicure foot massages, found that gaping hole to be especially cavernous. After all, what they were missing wasn't only lavender mists and the resulting glowing skin; it was also physical contact in



the absence of hugs from friends and loved ones. It was a moment to decompress and release tension in someone else's care.

That's why, when Carneros Resort and Spa in Napa first reopened, the staff immediately noticed how ardently guests were craving connection, along with a moment to "switch off and relax." So, they concocted a new Return to Touch treatment menu, which includes multiple bodywork experiences, but also extended alone time for the visitor to simply bask in the calm of the suite. Touch is so important, especially in times of struggle. "It's a feeling of connection," says Kathleen McNichols, the director of spa. "With everyone having felt so isolated over the past year, they're holding on emotionally to so many things, so we wanted to create a space for guests to just be, and be taken care of by someone else, in order to feel that renewed sense of connection."

The spa itself, which was redone in 2019 just before the pandemic hit, sets the perfect stage for that deep exhale. Beside the hilltop pool, with rows of vineyard grapes as background, the space has an elevated farmhouse feel with lofted ceilings, natural woods in geometric slats, light neutral tones and sunlight streaming through expansive windows that look out onto a cushy open-air deck.

The new touch-inspired signature treatments include a 90-minute choose-your-own-intention Restorative Relaxation journey with a sea salt scrub, body and scalp massage, but the pièce de résistance is the 120-minute Self-Care Package, in the Farmhouse Suite, with a private outdoor deck with soaking tub and solarium shower. This much-needed escape from reality begins with an exfoliating sea salt body scrub with organic herbal extracts followed by a mineral sea salt open-air soak and, finally, a 60-minute "stress-reliever" massage.

Guests can choose either a Happy Heart (with ylang-ylang, cedarwood and patchouli) or Calm Mind (with lavender and sage) aromatherapy scent to be incorporated throughout, giving the experience an extra magic touch. [carnerosresort.com](http://carnerosresort.com)



## Foodie Beauty

Good nutrition is essential for all over health—and beauty. Here are some delicious treats that feed your beauty, inside and out.



### Cucumber + Greens

The super-duper non-greasy Odacité Green Smoothie Quenching Crème moisturizer literally melts into the skin. With cool cucumber, along with 16 greens and superfoods—and hyaluronic acid, it feels refreshing on the skin, soothes inflammation and moisturizes deeply.



### Avocado

A powerful organic plant cocktail, Avoila Nourishing Face Oil is not only a beautifully textured oil, it absorbs seamlessly to feed the skin a cocktail of fatty acids, vitamins and minerals that plump, nourish and protect. The perfectly calibrated calming essential oil blend evokes a feeling of well-being.



### Olive Oil

With an olive oil base, loaded with antioxidants and polyphenols, just a few drops of the Wonder Valley Wonder Serum beauty elixir truly work wonders. Sea lavender, hyaluronic acid and bioactive peptides hydrate and nourish the skin, with a soft scent from a blend of palmarosa, geranium, rosemary and lavender essential oils. Unisex, for all skin types, the glass bottle comes with a glass dropper.

—Rona Berg



## Home-Brewed Health

While in grad school in the '90s, Kamini Mamdani launched a home business making spices and tea gift sets to help introduce Indian chai to a then still-new U.S. audience—long before Starbucks chai lattes. Three kids and a career as a therapist eventually took over, and Mamdani put the business on hold in 2010. But then came the pandemic—and the chance to refocus. “The chai landscape now is really saturated, but it felt like the right time to revisit what I could offer that was unique,” the Dallas-based founder says.

Reintroduced in November as Heirloom Chai, Mamdani's product stands out in a lot of ways. Namely, she notes, is the fact that “few chai companies in the U.S. are Indian-American owned, and I wanted to bring that authenticity to my line, and share my family's traditions.” She also wanted to ensure that all the spices were organic, and that the tea came from India (it's also pre-brewed, flash-frozen and powdered so it retains its potency and dissolves well in water). Accessibility and ease were important (the mix comes with its own measuring spoon and can be made in the microwave or on the stovetop; just add water and your choice of milk). “I wanted people to be able to play around and adjust this to their tastes,” she notes.

Along with its delicious, just-spicy-enough taste—courtesy of a family recipe that migrated from India to Africa to the U.S.—Heirloom Chai is packed with health benefits. Black pepper helps oxygen flow to the brain, while clove aids in digestion, cinnamon helps stabilize blood sugar, ginger reduces inflammation, and Assam black tea is packed with free radical-fighting polyphenols. Mamdani has plans to expand the line into other flavor profiles, too—including a cardamom- and rose-infused Love Chai for Valentine's Day. [chai.com](http://chai.com)

—Sandra Ramani



There are many ways to live a lifestyle,  
but only a few ways to live a good one.



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# Radical Self-Care

Bring yourself back into balance  
with sacred healing

By Kristin Vuković



Deborah Hanekamp, aka Mama Medicine, a NYC-based healer



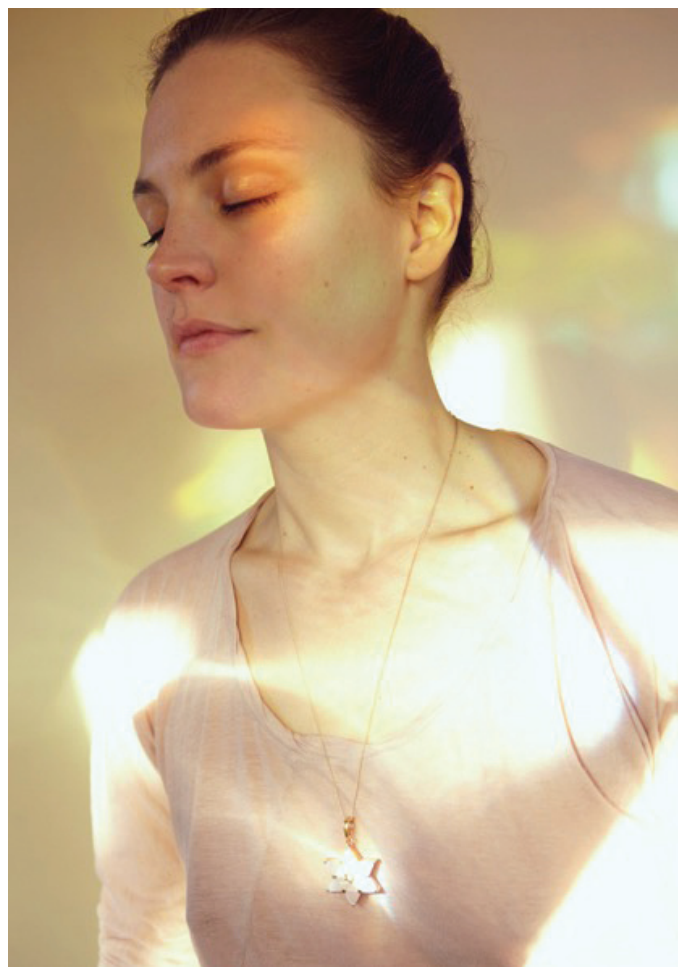
On a brisk fall day in New York City, I stretched out a blanket on an expanse of grass near the Hudson River and lay there with my eyes closed, taking in the city's panoply of sounds: birds chirping, jackhammers humming, children playing. Ssanyu, a bone healer shaman, told me to set an intention and hovered her hands over various parts of my body. A word emerged: release. After the session, she relayed the stories contained in my bones: My abdomen told her about my C-section, my knees told her about being bullied, the arches of my feet told her about feeling unsupported and my jaw held back things I needed to say and express. I was floored; at our first encounter, Ssanyu knew more about me than some of my friends.

Ssanyu holds an MS in Narrative Medicine from Columbia University and juggles many roles, including adjunct professor at Columbia University, where she teaches in the Master's Program in Narrative Medicine. She hails from a lineage of bone healers. Her father was chief of their Buganda clan in Uganda, and she felt the healing power in her hands at an early age. Her mother was her first guide, who attuned her to Reiki. She sees herself as an educator, healer and facilitator who strives to preserve ancestral wisdoms, traditions and spiritual practices.

Ssanyu believes we all inherently know how to heal ourselves, but, sometimes, we need a little help to move things along. "It's about learning how to write our own prescriptions," she says. Sharing our stories is crucial to our ability to self-heal. Story is our connection to Spirit; these stories live in the bones. Ssanyu sees moments in time, moments of past experience. "They come in like flashes and embodied feelings," she says. "We need to connect to Spirit to help us heal these wounds." Moving through the space of letting go leads to forgiveness, where we can let go of the things that no longer serve us.

Radical self-care is about balancing the system and bringing yourself into alignment, and there are many modalities to explore. I reached out to Deborah Hanekamp, aka Mama Medicine, a NYC-based healer who apprenticed in the Peruvian Amazon within what is called Mestizo Shamanism. Her intention is to create a space where you feel welcome, seen, loved and inspired. We connected on a Zoom call without video because she found she has been able to go deeper with the video off.

"This is really all about you being your own healer," Hanekamp says. "You will bring forward anything and everything you're looking forward to call in or clear out in life, and I'll read your aura. Based on what you said and what I see coming up in your aura, we'll have a whole conversation that helps click things into place and gets some clarity and perspective on different things in life. Toward the end, we'll do a healing ceremony and I'll send you on your way with some homework."



Chloe Isidora, a UK-based fashion editor-turned-healer





Ssanyu, a bone healer shaman from Uganda and adjunct professor at Columbia University

After relaxing into my body and taking a few deep breaths, Hanekamp saw a lot of green (creativity/nurturing/empathy) and blue (communication/communicating dreams) in my aura. “Blue has always been within you, but right now is just now starting to get the opportunity to come forward. We have to give your daughter a lot of credit with that energy coming through. I think she has woken this up in you—the ability to trust in what you create, to believe in what you create.” She added that my self-care practices should center around growing that confidence, trust and faith in myself. She recommended a bath with Epsom salts, a grounding essential oil such as vetiver and oak leaves.

To learn more about self-care practices, I connected via Zoom with Chloe Isidora, a fashion editor-turned-healer based in the UK. Through travels to Peru, Chile, Thailand, India and America’s coasts, she gleaned aspects of shamanism, crystalline consciousness and herbalism. In her book, *Sacred Self-care: Everyday rituals for a more joyful and meaningful life* (Octopus Publishing, 2019), she illustrates how rituals and ceremonies can nourish our bodies and spirits.

“For me, sacred self-care is about giving the most exquisite, impeccable love and care that you possibly can to yourself,” she writes. “It’s about bringing yourself from your mind into your body to feel what’s there and to nurture yourself tenderly.” Isidora advises doing the things you really like—for example, stretching, sighing, dancing, self-massage—all the ways you can physically bring yourself inward. She strives to create a cleansed, clear space to connect. “It’s really about allowing the energy to do the work,” she says. “For me, to empower is to hold up space so that another can meet her own self and receive guidance from deep within.”

To round out my healing journey, I headed to Naturopathica, where I indulged in a Chill Massage, which relieves mental and physical stress through a deeply relaxing, customized massage featuring Naturopathica Chill Full Spectrum CBD & Kava Balm, an endocannabinoid-activating full-spectrum CBD, kava and ginger balm with organically cultivated USA-grown hemp flowers. A new add-on, the Vie Meditation treatment provided an extra layer of relaxation—especially when paired with foot reflexology. Listening to the guided recording over a background of waves, I felt myself melt into the table and go deeper within, the noise and stress of New York City’s streets dissipating.

“As we opened back up we really wanted to meet our clients where they are [to] help them discover the wellness practice that works best for them—a really truly sustainable practice,” says Emma Froelich-Shea, president of Naturopathica. And that’s really what radical self-care is all about: identifying your individual toolkit of wellness options, and discovering our innate ability to heal ourselves.

# Calming Your Nerve

The vagus nerve is having a superstar moment for the many ways it can ease pain, anxiety, depression and gut distress

By Abbie Kozolchyk

The idea of any nerve achieving sudden stardom—let alone one that’s been known to anatomy students for around 2,000 years—is admittedly improbable. But there’s no denying that the vagus nerve is having a moment. From holistic practitioners to mainstream medical researchers, experts are increasingly excited about the possibilities of the body’s “information superhighway,” as this nerve has come to be known. Stimulating it may help alleviate pain, manage stress, reduce inflammation—and that’s just the short list. →







Dr. Sean Mulvaney, a former Navy Seal and Army physician



gammaCore, a noninvasive, hand-held vagus nerve stimulator

Of course, when a term starts trending, its definition doesn't always keep pace. So while even the casual observer of the wellness world has likely seen the words "vagus nerve," not everyone knows what they mean. And though the answer is the kind of thing some researchers explore over an entire academic lifetime, here's the quick version: The vagus nerve is the 10th cranial nerve—also known as CN X—the longest of the 12 paired nerves that link your brain to various parts of your head, neck and torso. In fact, that lengthy meander is the nerve's literal defining feature. "Vagus" comes from the Latin for "wandering," and when you consider that this system of sensory and motor neurons extends all the way to your gut, among other regions, the name makes perfect sense.

The vagus nerve is also a key player in your parasympathetic nervous system: the part of your autonomic nervous system that's responsible for the "rest and digest" response, as opposed to the more famous "fight or flight" response of the sympathetic nervous system. And sure, "rest and digest" sounds considerably less exciting, but recent findings tell a different story.

## Pain and headache management

For anyone who suffers from migraines or cluster headaches, few things are more potentially life-altering than a promising new therapy. And over the last few years, one has emerged. After doctors observed that vagus nerve stimulation helped combat not only epileptic seizures, but also headaches, the medical community took note.

"It's not uncommon for an individual with epilepsy to also have headaches," explains Andreas Alexopoulos, MD, MPH, a staff

physician in the Epilepsy Center of the Cleveland Clinic Neurological Institute. "And this device has shown some benefit beyond the seizures. It doesn't solve the problem, but it provides what we call a non-pharmacological approach."

With that in mind, researchers began to adapt the concept, originally an implanted device that administered periodic pulses of electricity. By early 2018, a new, noninvasive, hand-held vagus nerve stimulator—gammaCore nVNS—was FDA-cleared for the acute treatment of migraines. Later that year, the same device was FDA-cleared for the treatment of cluster headaches. By early 2021, vagus nerve stimulation was FDA-cleared for the acute and preventive treatment of migraines and cluster headaches in adolescents and adults. And the fall of 2021 saw two more kinds of headaches—paroxysmal hemicrania and hemicrania continua—added to the list. Meanwhile, doctors began considering the promise of vagal nerve stimulation for Covid-related headaches, among other manifestations of the virus.

Not that headaches are the only kind of pain your vagus nerve may help manage. After suffering for years from what turned out to be mold disease—with nothing easing the related stomach pain she was experiencing—the Chicago-based author and lifestyle reporter Jennifer Litwin turned to Dr. Sean Mulvaney. An Annapolis-based former Navy Seal and Army physician whose use of stellate ganglion block (a nerve injection) for post-traumatic stress disorder had earned him a national reputation, he'd been recommended to her because of his success in treating some of the associated pain as well. "It was serendipitous," he explains. "We treated people with PTSD and anxiety, who then also reported relief in gut symptoms."

Given his renown—and her dire situation—Litwin was willing to make the trip. “I was so sick for so long that I wasn’t getting better,” she says. “I couldn’t eat food, I couldn’t absorb food, and one of my biggest symptoms was pain.” Ultimately, what provided relief was a five-minute treatment: an injection into her vagus nerve, “a conduit between the gut and brain,” as Dr. Mulvaney explains.

While there were potential side effects to be aware of (temporary eye droop, for one), Litwin experienced no downside. She did, however, experience a bonus upside: “Arguably, I have some PTSD from the mold disease—I was not only sick, but I was having bad dreams and I wasn’t sleeping well. And this treatment helped reset my body from that really panicky state.”

## Relaxation

Clearly, the vagus-psyche connection is major—so much so, in fact, that vagus nerve stimulation has long been FDA-approved for the treatment of chronic or recurrent depression that has failed to respond to other interventions. But even if all you’re looking for is a little relaxation, minus electrodes or needles, your vagus nerve could still prove useful. And that utility might come from the simplest of breathing exercises.

According to the Harvard Medical School’s Harvard Health Blog, “belly breathing stimulates the vagus nerve” in turn “reducing your heart rate and blood pressure and lowering stress levels.” And though you may well know how to belly breathe already, here’s a trick shared in the same post: Sit in a chair and—leaning forward—place your elbows on your knees. “This position forces you to breathe from the belly,” explains Katherine Rosa, PhD, an instructor at the Harvard-affiliated Benson-Henry Institute for Mind Body Medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital.

If you want to add a little something to your relaxation ritual, consider the Vagus Nerve Collection—an oil, a pillow mist, and, soon, a bath product—from clean beauty icon Osea. Though admittedly unorthodox territory for a skincare brand, the vagus nerve has long called to Jenefer Palmer, Osea’s founder. “My background was studying the healing arts,” she explains. It was during an influential Biodynamic Craniosacral Therapy course that she really came to know and love the vagus. Though she relates to the nerve on every conceivable level, right down to the name (“I’m a wanderer myself!”), she also likes to call out a particularly endearing attribute: “When you activate the vagus nerve, you start to improve kind and loving thoughts.”

Researchers back her up. One of the main proponents of the vagus nerve’s connection to, well, human connection is Barbara Fredrickson, PhD, director of the Positive Emotions and Psychophysiology Laboratory at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. In her TED Talk on the topic, she notes that “when you’re really connecting with somebody else...even your neural firings come into sync.”

Little wonder that the idea for Osea’s Vagus Nerve collection was born of human connection, albeit the kind between aesthetician and client. “Everyone was coming out of the facial [which includes the professional precursor to Vagus Nerve Oil] asking, ‘where do I get that stuff?’” Palmer explains. Launching a collection seemed the obvious answer.



But even if there’s not another human around to ply you with Vagus Nerve Oil, you’ll be doing yourself a kindness by working this blend of lavender, juniper, chamomile, lime and rosemary (among others) into your own neck, particularly if you’re feeling stressed out or ready for bed. For an easy vagus nerve massage, says Palmer: Place two pumps of oil in your hands and inhale the scent deeply. Then, starting at your clavicle, gently massage in an upward motion along the left side of your neck and repeat on the right. Continuing upward and using two fingers, gently rub behind your earlobes. Now bring your hands to your chest, interlace your fingers and move your hands behind your head. Keeping your head straight, bring your gaze all the way to the right until you experience the sensation of swallowing, sighing or yawning. Repeat on the left.

## A range of additional benefits

There’s so much research in progress that experts won’t be surprised if the vagus nerve proves helpful in all kinds of additional health contexts. “There are many areas of study related to the vagus nerve, beyond the mood, beyond the headache pain and beyond the seizures,” says Dr. Alexopoulos. “There is work done in inflammation. There is work done in obesity. There is work done in rehabilitation.” And that’s just the beginning. “The autonomic nervous system is ripe for further study,” adds Dr. Mulvaney. “By manipulating it, we’re not affecting just the brain; we’re affecting other parts of the body in ways we haven’t yet studied.”

Wherever the findings lead, one truism is likely to stand. As many an expert loves to note, considering the nerve’s far-ranging implications: What happens in vagus doesn’t stay in vagus.



# A Profound Pause

Tapping into empathy by learning to listen

By Mim Senft

Imagine these everyday scenarios; they are all true.

- **A woman broke down in tears.** My partner and I were on a call with a potential client, and she was clearly stressed. Her mother had just been diagnosed with ovarian cancer. She apologized. We responded that it was normal given the circumstances. As primary caregivers to aging parents, we understood.
- **A new employee accidentally broke a \$150 piece of equipment.** He was afraid to let anyone know. His manager took the time to ask what had happened. It turned out the employee wasn't clear about how to fold it up when he wasn't using it. The manager showed him again and let him know that he could call him at any time if there was something he didn't understand.
- **A waiter was incredibly short with a table of diners.** The people at the table couldn't understand. They hadn't been demanding or rude. One of the diners asked the waiter to come over. "You don't seem like the kind of person who would treat customers rudely. Are you ok?" The waiter's face and demeanor shifted. He said he was taking care of an ill parent and it had been a particularly hard week. He apologized and thanked them for taking time to ask.

Do any of these stories resonate with you? In a world that seems like it is constantly trying to point fingers and create divides, we can all tap into our ability to be empathetic. It is a leadership skill that creates connection—in a family, community or business setting. Empathy can dial down fear and anger, and not only protect our own health and well-being, but also that of those around us. Becoming more empathetic can move us toward a world where people of diverse backgrounds can understand each other better.

"Cognitive empathy," sometimes called "perspective taking," is our ability to identify and understand other people's emotions. It means we are feeling with a person, not feeling sorry for someone.







Psychologists Daniel Goleman and Paul Ekman have identified three components of empathy: **Cognitive**, **Emotional** and **Compassionate**.

These translate into:

- Taking time to understand someone else's perspective
- Listening and asking questions without judgment
- Recognizing the emotion someone is feeling, even when it doesn't make sense to us
- Communicating back that you heard and understood that person

One of the best ways to build empathy is to tap into the power of the pause. You may have a meditation or mindfulness practice. This is a great way to use those skills in everyday life. The power of the pause is key to strengthening your ability to be more empathetic. Even if we are stressed, we can all learn how to pause. Just the act of recognizing how you feel in the moment, before you act or react, can be the start of building understanding and respect, and allow us to be present for someone else.

We also need to become empathetic with ourselves. If we aren't in tune with our own emotions, it is difficult to understand another person's view or pain. If we've been taught that empathy is "weakness," we cannot authentically understand someone else's experience. That can lead to broken relationships, workplace burnout, a resistance to engage people who are different from ourselves and ultimately contributes to the overall breakdown of trust in our society. We see examples of that every day.

But the more we develop a healthy relationship with our inner voice, the more of an opportunity we have to connect with others. It allows us to move into a place of deeper empathy.

Research shows that women already have a greater capacity to be empathetic. A 2003 study conducted by the Institute for Women's Policy Research found that women are more likely to make decisions that are ecologically more responsible and sustainable than men. The researchers found that "women's higher levels of empathy, altruism and personal responsibility make them more interested in environmentalism as a way to protect not only themselves and their families, but also others."

That doesn't mean that men can't be more empathetic, too. No matter where you are on the gender spectrum, if you are new to actively practicing empathy, that is OK. Like any new skill, it does take practice and you won't always get it right. But the more you do it, the more natural it becomes. We can all strengthen our ability to be empathetic and become part of building a more peaceful, sustainable future for all of us.

## Flexing the Empathy Muscle

The good news is that we all have the capacity to strengthen our ability to be more empathetic. It just takes practice. Here's how to get started.

**Listen.** When someone wants to talk to you, put down the phone. Turn off the television. Be present. Consciously look at them and try to turn off your internal "dialogue." Actively work to hear what they are saying and how they are saying it.

**Watch.** Pay attention to their body language and yours. Is their body tense? Is yours? Are they tearing up? Do they look flushed and angry? Try not to react or jump to a conclusion. Invite yourself to be present and observe.

**Respond.** Before sharing your story or your viewpoint, acknowledge what you've heard. "That must be very difficult." "I am so sorry to hear you are going through this." Try to envision yourself in their situation. Make sure that your response is genuine.

**Understand.** Ask nonjudgmental questions to learn more. This helps you get a better view of where they are coming from and they understand they've been heard, that you are genuinely interested in them and their experience.



# The Snuggle Season

Five easy ways to upgrade your bed this winter

By **Sandra Ramani**

Looking to hibernate this winter? You're not alone.

With colder temperatures, darker days and long stretches without a holiday in sight, the next few months will have us all wanting to take to our beds more often than usual. And when you do, make sure you're settling in to a cocoon that's comfortable, cozy and primed to help you sleep well.

You can do that even if the surface you sleep on needs an upgrade. From custom-made pillows to body-supporting toppers, here are five easy ways to create the perfect winter bed without needing to shell out for a pricey new mattress.



Custom-built pillow from Pluto Pillows

## Baloo Weighted Throw

By now, you've likely heard of the benefits of weighted blankets, which were first used in clinics to help those with psychiatric and depression issues, and are now widely available to all who might need a bit of a mood lift—or help falling asleep.

Designed to feel like a comforting hug, and available in 12-, 15-, 20- and 25-pound versions, the Baloo Weighted Throws are made with 100 percent cotton exteriors (no polyester or synthetic liners), natural and chemical-free materials, and glass microbead fills; they are also washer and dryer safe. The larger versions cover queen-size or king-size beds, but we like the throw size, which can be used on the couch or on the bed (by one person), and comes in three serene colors created using all-natural, plant-based dyes. [balooliving.com](http://balooliving.com)

## Pluto Pillows

While dealing with chronic neck pain in her twenties, Susana Saeliu found herself buying—and returning—a lot of pillows in search of that perfect amount of support. When she couldn't find a “simple, high-quality pillow at a fair price,” she created Pluto, the first pillow custom-built to your body stats and sleep preferences. Customers go online to answer a quick questionnaire—you'll input things like your height and weight, density preference and what position you sleep in—and, one smart algorithm and a few days (and free shipping) later, you've got a pillow made just for you. Pluto also recently launched Puff, a 100 percent hypoallergenic body pillow that offers cool, hug-like total body support without ever going flat. [plutopillow.com](http://plutopillow.com)

## Ettitude Comforter

This high-quality natural bedding line's Bamboo Comforter checks off all the boxes, as it's comfortable, sustainably made and makes you feel like you've checked in to a fancy hotel. Made from a 100 percent plant-based CleanBamboo and a bamboo lyocell fiber filling, the cushy, vegan down-alternative duvet—available in summer or winter weights—has a silky, plush feel that belies its relatively affordable price point. It also is breathable and keeps you from getting too hot, and is hypoallergenic and good for those with sensitive skin—especially if you add on the equally silky-feeling Signature Sateen Duvet Cover, also made from CleanBamboo. [ettitude.com](http://ettitude.com)

## Brentwood Home Mattress Topper

The easiest way to transform your bed while still keeping your current mattress is to add on a mattress topper, which—depending on what kind you get—can do everything from add height and help keep you cool to help ease body pain. One of our favorites is the Organic Latex Mattress Topper from the excellent bedding line Brentwood Home, which is made in Los Angeles using 100 percent certified GOLS organic latex (sourced from the brand's own rubber forests and factories in India and Guatemala) that's been wrapped in GOTS organic cotton jersey.

Unlike memory foam, which sinks you into the mattress, the latex core offers contoured support and helps relieve pressure points, while the open-cell structure keeps things breathable and cool. The two-inch version will accent your current mattress and is good for back and stomach sleepers, while the three-inch version is great for side sleepers and for those with older mattresses. While you're on the Brentwood Home site, check out some of its other game changers, like the Restorative Leg Lift Cushion and the Wedge Pillows, which make it easier to work and watch TV from bed, too. [brentwoodhome.com](http://brentwoodhome.com)

## Coyuchi Sheets

Sometimes the smallest thing can be transformative—and in the case of your bed that would be your sheets and pillow cases. Whether you want to lean in to the winter vibe and go for flannel, stay cozy with jersey cotton, or keep things cool with percale or temperature-regulating linen, Coyuchi has the sheets for you—and they're all made safely with GOTS- and Fair Trade-certified materials. Check out the online sheet guide to find the material best suited to your needs and sleep habits—and then try to decide between all the lovely, nature-inspired hues. [coyuchi.com](http://coyuchi.com)



# Going Dry

Beyond “Dry January,” non-alcoholic drinks are taking center stage

By **Sandra Ramani**

Recently, in Paris, the iconic, five-star Hotel de Crillon launched a new dining concept in its one-Michelin-star L'Ecrin restaurant. Instead of wine taking second stage to the meal, diners will instead first decide what wines they'd like to drink (with the help of a sommelier), after which the chefs will design the food menu accordingly. It's an interesting twist that's made even more notable by one thing: There's also a non-alcoholic version available, with special tisanes, teas, coffees and other soft drinks paired with the refined dishes.

The fact that a foodie-centric place like Paris, where even vegetarians were scoffed at in fine dining restaurants until not long ago, is now welcoming those who abstain is just further proof that the “dry” movement is gaining momentum. There's nothing new about temperance and being “on the wagon,” of course, but in recent years it has blossomed, thanks to both an increased focus on health and wellness and the availability of better quality, more flavorful alcohol alternatives.



On the surface, it may seem like Americans are imbibing more than ever, with alcohol even available at some Starbucks and fast-food chains. And generally, that's true: Drinking has been steadily on the rise for the last two decades, with statistics released in 2020 showing that per-person consumption was at levels not seen since Prohibition. Surveys showed that the average adult was downing about 500 drinks a year, or nine per week.

As with many things, the pandemic didn't help. "Unfortunately, we have been living in a very traumatic period of time for a lot of people," notes Sarah O'Brien, an addiction specialist at Bedrock Recovery Center, one of four addiction treatment facilities operated by Ark Behavioral Health. "In the past year or so we have been isolated, we have lost loved ones, and we have lost our economic stability. It is during this unusual time that some individuals start to cope with various challenges through alcohol."

But how do you know if your "Quarantinis" and Zoom wine hours have led to something more serious? O'Brien notes that some "good way to assess and check for warning signs is by looking at the frequency and level of alcohol consumption, the motives behind consumption, and any behavioral issues when trying to stop or when consuming a bit too much."

Some common warning signs of alcohol abuse include maintaining drinking habits even if it is causing problems in your life, increasing the amounts you drink to get the same effects, being

unable to limit your consumption, and avoiding other activities in order to be able to drink. (If any of the above signs and symptoms ring true for you or a loved one, a health professional can help conduct a substance-abuse assessment.)

Even if your relationship with alcohol hasn't progressed to these levels, it still might be worth taking a break to gain some clarity, as well as give your body a break. Those have been the driving motivators behind the Dry January movement, during which—following weeks of holiday indulgence—people opt to go alcohol-free for the first month of the year. The alcohol-free lifestyle has grown past this month, too, as more people make health and wellness a priority. According to Nielsen, non-alcoholic sales were up 33.2 percent in the last year, while a recent beverage industry poll showed that 52 percent of those surveyed are actively trying to drink less alcohol.

If you're looking to explore the NA world, this month is a good time to start. "Dry January represents a fresh start, an experiment to try life without alcohol, and a lesson on true self-care and nourishment," says Karolina Rzadkowolska, author of the new book *Euphoric: Ditch Alcohol and Gain a Happier, More Confident You*. "As we value mindfulness and healthy living, it's no wonder we're finally re-evaluating whether alcohol fits into that conscious lifestyle."

Read on for some tips and products that can help you on your alcohol-free journey, whether it's for January or beyond.

## An Alcohol-Free Road Map

For those considering going alcohol-free, for however long, Karolina Rzadkowolska offers these tips:

- **Get curious as to why you drink.** Asking yourself questions can help determine what needs you're trying to meet with alcohol, and how to meet those needs in healthier ways.
- **Find new drinks that you love.** There are thousands of alcohol-free drinks and health tonics on the market these days. You can still relax, socialize or decompress with a drink—just change the drink.
- **Explore what gives you pleasure and fun.** A big fear people have around taking a break from drinking is feeling bored. And yet, with all the energy and creativity you'll unleash, you may just discover a new passion!
- **Join a group to get accountability.** You might be the only one in your personal life embarking on this challenge and don't want to feel like a social outcast. Finding others on the same journey not only makes you accountable, it also normalizes this and gets you feeling empowered.







## Betera

Helmed by veterans of the restaurant, hospitality and beverage industries, Betera was originally created to offer alcohol-free options to restaurant clients—so it's been designed to accompany good food. Made of carefully sourced botanicals, including vitamin-rich rhubarb, antioxidant turmeric and anti-inflammatory ginger, the refreshing, low-sugar drinks are available in flavors like Elderflower-Lime, Ginger-Orange and Rhubarb-Hibiscus. [drinkbetera.com](http://drinkbetera.com)



## For Bitter For Worse

After deciding to go alcohol-free to help manage a chronic condition, Shelley Elkovich set out to find non-alcoholic options that, she says, “pleased my palate and met my ingredient standards.” Coming up empty, she and her husband Jeff created their own line of botanical-based drinks. Elkovich wanted the drinks to fit occasions where people might normally enjoy alcohol—there’s a sparkling Eva’s Spritz for celebrations, the berries-and-bitters-based Saskatoon to pair with food and the Smoky No. 56 to enjoy around the fire. [forbitterforworse.com](http://forbitterforworse.com)



## Gruvi

From stouts and pale ales to a bubbly rose, Gruvi has them all—in non-alcoholic versions, of course. Led by a brother-and-sister duo, the company offers alcohol-free beers on tap across Colorado—as well as the first alcohol-free tasting room and taproom in Denver—along with a consumer line of can “wines” and “beers” sold across the U.S., Canada and Australia. [getgruvi.com](http://getgruvi.com)



## Sori

Founded by Julia Littauer, a former sommelier, Sori is crafted with the same care you’d find in your favorite vintages—but this comes in a can and is only 25 calories. Made with premium, sustainably grown California grapes that are blended by winemakers using traditional methods, including oak barrel aging; a state-of-the-art process is then employed to remove the alcohol while preserving the aromas, flavor and structure you’d find in a glass of bold red wine. [drinksovi.com](http://drinksovi.com)



## Ritual Zero Proof

These drinks have the flavors and aromas of your favorite spirits minus the alcohol or calories. Based in Chicago and founded by three longtime friends, the line is the result of lots of experimentation and the input of bartenders, chefs and beverage experts. Try the vanilla, spiced Rum Alternative in daiquiris or punches; the smoky, tropical Tequila Alternative in margaritas; the bright and botanical Gin Alternative in your favorite classic cocktails; and the smoke-and-caramel Whiskey Alternative around the fireplace. [ritualzeroproof.com](http://ritualzeroproof.com)



# Setting Fitness Goals

Experts weigh in on how to establish and maintain realistic goals for the new year

By Rona Berg

The new year signals renewed optimism: a fresh beginning, clean slate, new start. As you begin to set fitness goals for 2022, your chances of success are greater if you keep those goals realistic and attainable. Rather than a complete and total overhaul, think about making small, incremental, daily lifestyle tweaks. Literally, one foot in front of the other, will get you the entire way. We spoke with two fitness experts, who shared their tips. →





## Kollins Ezekh

Kollins Ezekh is a Los Angeles-based vegan celebrity trainer, life coach and founder of Built by God TV. Ezekh, a boxer who was introduced to Muay Thai boxing at age 12, is the franchise owner of Mayweather Boxing + Fitness.

### In addition to physical training, working out takes mental focus and discipline. How can we stay focused and motivated?

It's important not just to take care of your body but also your mind. Athletes often train their mind by meditating and doing mindful practices. Another huge part of making physical progress is adopting an optimal rest and recovery strategy.

### What are your tips for setting realistic fitness goals for the new year?

It's important to remember what didn't work out the previous new year. Make sure to set easy goals you'll be able to follow through. As soon as those are complete you can revise your goals and make them more challenging to achieve.

### How to build inner and outer strength?

Focus on setting healthy habits and creating an inspiring environment. Surround yourself with people who make you feel your best and inspire you. Make it a ritual to exercise and a habit to eat fresh whole foods. Last but definitely not least, if you don't hold yourself accountable in any way, it's much more difficult to achieve your goals. Getting a coach or starting a challenge with a goal date are great exercises in accountability.



## Muscle Relief

Danna Pratte, left, owner and CEO of NB Pure, a supplement company based in Phoenix, Arizona, began to understand the importance of working out after college. "Hiking and being outdoors is so important here," she says. "Plus, the older you get, the more you realize, in terms of longevity, the value of living an active lifestyle."

Post-workout recovery now comes in all shapes and sizes. Here are some standouts.

### Practical tips on integrating a fitness workout into your life?

Understanding the benefits of regular fitness and daily exercise for your mind and body can be inspiring and incredibly motivating. Even low-intensity exercise is highly beneficial. Some of the mental benefits that come from a consistent exercise routine include having more energy, being in an overall better mood and having less stress.

Consistent exercise can also lead to better sleep. While exercise energizes you, regular physical activity can help you fall asleep faster and help you achieve REM sleep. Other health benefits include reduced risk for heart disease and stroke, high blood pressure, osteoporosis, and noninsulin-dependent diabetes. And reducing your risk for disease and disorders can help you avoid being put on a concoction of medication. For all of these benefits, it seems like a no-brainer to start exercising for just 30 minutes a day.

### For vegans, what is most important in terms of nutrition?

There is so much misinformation about how much protein we need to consume and what we should eat. Speak with your doctor or a nutritionist about your personal needs. I also suggest focusing on the full picture and looking at macros — the protein, carb and fat breakdown.

Don't be afraid to play around with your eating plan and meals, you don't need to be perfect. Even if you start partially eating more plant-based foods and still have some nonvegan products here and there to make up your protein, you are taking a step in the right direction. A plant-based protein powder can be super helpful for making up diet deficiencies. A couple of quick meals I like to whip after I work out are a tofu scramble or avocado toast with a protein shake.

### Tell us about your favorite no-equipment workouts.

I'd recommend walking for 30 minutes just to get the blood flowing. If you want to take it up a notch, you can try doing 30 jumping jacks and knee lifts, where you lift one knee to the opposite elbow. Finally, doing 30 squats in place is an excellent exercise for beginners. However, it's imperative that you get the form right. Beginners can do these anywhere—your bedroom, living room, hotel room or office.



### ROLL Recovery R8 Plus

Developed with input from professional runners, this recovery tool—and FDA-registered medical device—provides adjustable pressure. It helps improve circulation, reduces inflammation and provides myofascial release, targeting IT bands, quads, hamstrings, calves, arms.



### Antedotum Relief Body Balm with CBD

A luxurious balm with a proprietary complex of 80 percent broad spectrum CBD and 15 percent CBC to ease inflammation and provide sore-muscle relief. An added bonus: It nourishes the skin!



## Thomas Roe

Thomas Roe, an endurance athlete who regularly competes in triathlons, is a personal trainer and founder of TRoe Fitness and Local Moves Studio in San Antonio, Texas.

### You've been affected by mental illness in your family. How does this influence your approach to working out?

Having a sister who battled mental illness for 40 years and eventually took her life, I knew exercise was my go-to therapy. While others reach for drugs/pills (both recreational or Rx), I used sport and training as my coping mechanism. As an endurance athlete and triathlete, my personal training is a reflection of my teachings: strength, endurance, cardio and stamina.

### Tips for setting realistic fitness goals?

Consult a professional for help with setting a fitness and nutrition plan. How often you work out, train and follow your nutrition plan is contingent upon how committed you are to your goals. As a rule of thumb, two to four days a week for simple health and conditioning. But if you're committed to dropping weight or building muscle, your nutrition plan, training or workouts should reflect that.

Based on your mood and your day, you might not have energy for a kick-in-the-teeth workout but you can still go for a walk. If you feel the need for speed, hit a circuit training or boxing class.

### Tell us about your circuit training approach—you create a buddy system?

The buddy system keeps athletes motivated by being supportive and competitive with each other. Social connection is key because it supports mental health. It helps to call, DM or text to motivate each other to take classes together. Whether you're a weekend warrior or triathlete, classes are designed to push you harder than you ever would on your own. The "buddy system" keeps you accountable.



## Kneipp Joint & Muscle Arnica Intensive Cream

With powerhouse plants, including go-to arnica, this time-honored cream easily absorbs into the skin to soothe tired muscles and provide instant relief to workout warriors.



## NB Pure Plant Protein

"If you want to build and maintain muscle, you need protein," says Pratte. With only five ingredients in NB Pure Plant Protein (pea protein), it's easy to mix on the go—just add water.

## Jumpstart Your Workout

Roe shares his full-body workouts for jumpstarting the new year. Begin with three to five rounds of this yoga sequence to loosen up and stretch—Up Dog, Downward Dog, Cat Cow—then start the workout.

### Walking Lunges

These hit every muscle group in the lower body. Be mindful of keeping your shoulders above your hips, looking straight ahead and not down at your feet. A simple rep/set is a total of 20 exaggerated steps or standing in place for 20 per leg. Never let your front knee go past your front toe; your back knee bends until it almost touches the ground.

**How Many?** For a beginner or novice: 3x20; experienced: 5x30

### Air Body Weight Squats

Put your feet shoulder-width apart, arms at your side or out front and drop into a deep squat where your hamstrings are parallel to the ground or where your tailbone nearly touches the ground.

**How Many?** Beginner or novice: 3x15; experienced: 5x25

### Single Leg Step-Ups

Using a park bench or 12- to 15-inch wall, place your right foot on the bench or wall and step up as if you were running a flight of stairs. Note: never lock out your knee or the leg on the bench or wall. Also, for the opposite leg, never let the heel touch the ground when you step down.

**How Many?** Beginner or novice: 3x15; experienced: 5x25

### Military or Yoga Push-Ups

In a plank position with shoulders above your wrists, lower your entire body until your nose is an inch from your mat or the ground. If you need to minify, start in a knee position as opposed to your toes in the plank position.

**How Many?** Beginner or novice: 3x15; experienced: 5x25

### Wide Grip Pull-Ups

You'll need a bar at least six-feet high at a local park or playground. Reaching up with an overhand grip and hands slightly further than shoulder width apart, pull your body weight up until your chin clears the bar. This is a lot harder than you might think and will take time and effort to achieve.

**How Many?** Beginner or novice: 3x5; experienced: 5x10

### Core

Holding a push-up plank, either on the palms of your hands or forearms.

**How Long?** Beginner: 30-45 seconds; experienced: 60-90 seconds

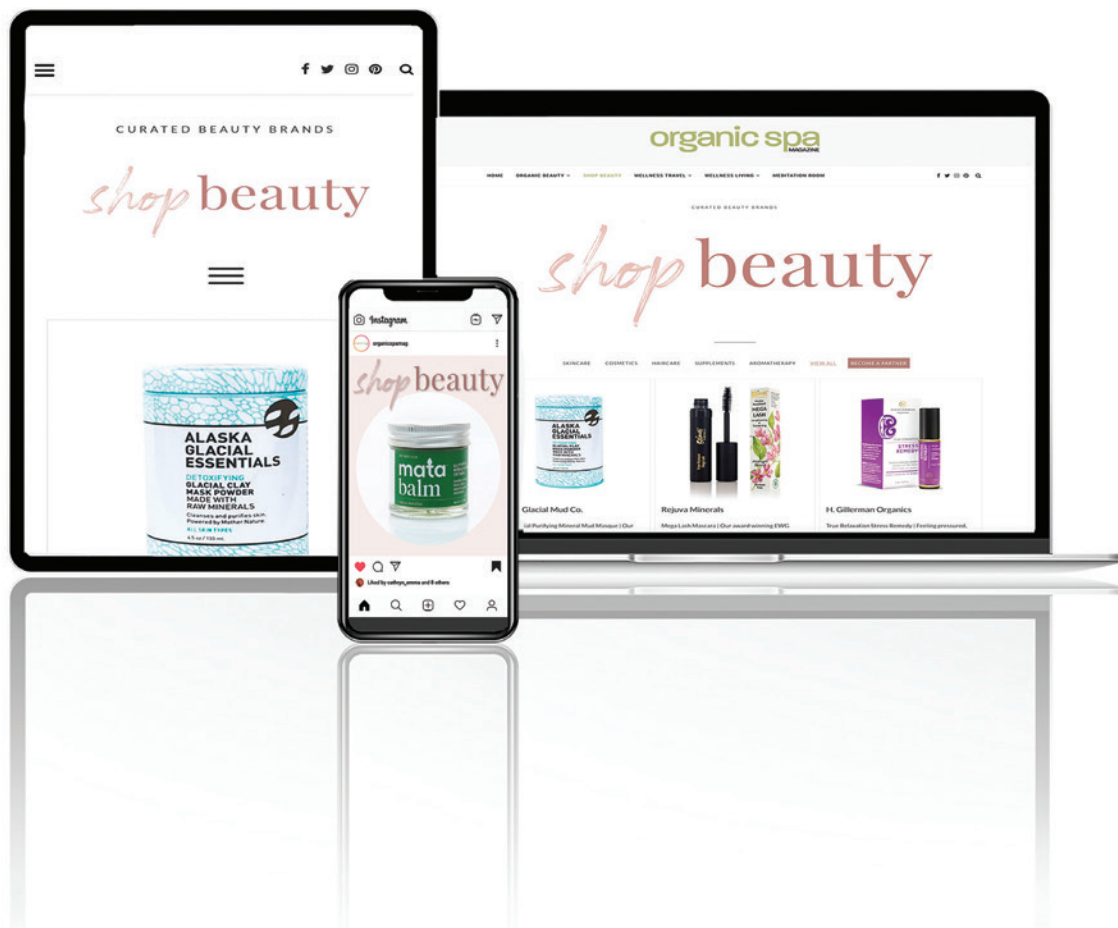


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# The Perfect Sports Bra

Expert tips on how to find what you need

By Rona Berg



Nora Minno, Daily Burn Trainer and Registered Dietitian, in a Lululemon sports bra

Finding a great sports bra isn't easy, but it is important. It can be as important—and satisfying—as it is to find a natural deodorant that really works. (But that's an entirely different story!) According to Nora Minno, Daily Burn Trainer and Registered Dietitian, the top two considerations in a sports bra are support and comfort.

“Your sports bra is the last thing you should be thinking about during your workout,” says Minno. “If you're constantly pulling on your straps, pulling up the chest, or feeling any discomfort in your breasts when you are doing higher-impact moves, you may want to look into a different sports bra.” Also consider fabric thickness or padding. “Some prefer a thicker fabric for a more supportive feel and others might prefer a thinner fabric to allow for more breathability,” she says.

There is a lot of confusion about how tightly a sports bra should fit. If yours fits like a compression bandage and you think it's supposed to be that way, think again. “A sports bra should fit snugly enough so you can get adequate support during your workout but should also be comfortable so that it doesn't dig into your ribs or shoulders,” says Minno, who offers these tips: If you find that you have deep lines in

your shoulders or around the top of the rib cage after a workout, you may need to size up, loosen the straps or find a different style that works for you. Look for a sports bra with different width straps, an adjustable back or a different size band around the bottom. There are lots of different style sports bras that you can adjust to make the fit just right for your body. You should also be able to get the sports bra on and off without having to battle it too much. “You don't need the idea of putting on a sports bra getting in between you and your workouts,” she says.

With no shortage of options these days—zip front, padded, adjustable straps, adjustable backs, thick or thin material; light, medium, high levels of support—it's easy to find the perfect sports bra for you. It just may take a bit of trying. According to Minno: “Take a few jumps around in the fitting room to test out the level of support. If you have tight shoulders or prefer a tighter sports bra for support, look for a sports bra that unclasp in the back or front to make it easier to get on and off.”

Most important: “If something feels uncomfortable or really tight right away, it probably won't get more comfortable, so keep looking until you find that Cinderella moment with your sports bra.”



# Sporty Support

Here are a few of our favorite sports bras



## Under Armour Infinity Bra

The brand worked with a breast health expert to create this innovative design with flexible cups engineered to offset impact across all levels and naturally mold to the female body as it moves. [underarmour.com](http://underarmour.com)



## Falke USA Versatility Maximum Support Sport-Bra

Ideal for medium to large cup sizes and a high level of activity. Front-fastening, fast-drying with a seamless finish. [falke-usa.com](http://falke-usa.com)



## Patagonia Wild Trails Sports Bra

A racerback design offers support as well as freedom of movement for a range of activities, with power mesh lining to keep you cool and adjustable elastic band for additional support. [patagonia.com](http://patagonia.com)



## Nike Swoosh Long Line Bra

Because it hits lower on the rib cage, it offers extra support, and is long enough to wear as a top with high-waisted pants. [nike.com](http://nike.com)

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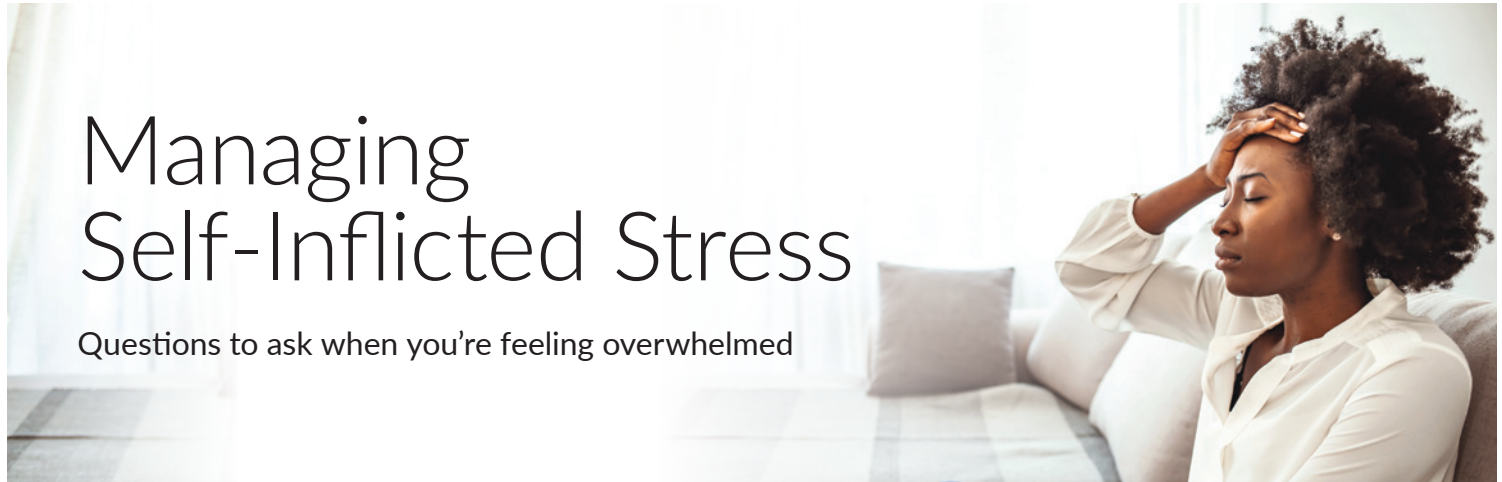
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# Managing Self-Inflicted Stress

Questions to ask when you're feeling overwhelmed



A lot of the stress that I experience in life comes from an overwhelming sense that I have more to do than I will ever actually have time to complete.

My inbox is overflowing, numerous projects with looming deadlines compete for my attention, and, both personally and professionally, people are constantly vying for my time. Of course I want to be able to respond to everyone in my inbox, complete all of my projects in a timely and efficient manner, and spend quality time with the people around me, but there is a constant and pervasive sense of time slipping away in a way that just doesn't allow me to keep up with it all.

This seems to be a common symptom of modern life. As the pace of change and technology has sped up, we can't help but feel more and more time-compressed. And the faster we go, the more the world around us accelerates. Do a good job of responding to emails and more will come flying back into your inbox. Do a good job of multitasking projects and more projects will surely come your way. Do a good job of being present with the people around you, and more people will yearn for your time and attention. Going faster may be admirable, but it doesn't alleviate the stress of trying to keep up with it all.

I was thinking about this on a recent Monday morning on my hour-long bus commute to the office. I could already feel the tightness in my chest from the anticipation of going into a busy week at the office where I would be "drinking from a fire hose," trying to keep up with the literal torrent of meetings, emails, projects, etc. It is not a good sign to feel dread on your way into the office, but this is exactly how I felt, knowing I would spend the week running a marathon without ever getting any closer to the finish line.

Normally in the mornings, I do some guided meditations on the Waking Up app, and that morning I tuned in to Tara Brach, a guest on the app who was talking about self-compassion. She introduced a meditation that she called RAIN, which encourages you to:

- R - Recognize what is happening
- A - Allow the experience to be there, just as it is
- I - Investigate with interest and care
- N - Nurture with self-compassion

I am not often motivated by ideas of self-compassion, but during the meditation, as I investigated these feelings of time compression, it occurred to me that much

of this stress is self-inflicted. Many of my projects, for example, are projects that I have taken on because I alone feel they are important (i.e., no one asked me to do these things, they are just projects I believe in). In fact, much of my to-do list is entirely self-generated: articles I want to read, people I want to talk to, projects I want to complete, writing I want to do, the list goes on and on. I could simply stop doing about 60 percent of the things on my list and the only person who would care would be me!

If you are also feeling the self-inflicted stress of wanting to do it all, consider the following questions to reflect on:

1. How much of your stress is self-inflicted? Where are you the cause of your own suffering?
2. What can you do to alleviate that stress? What would you have to let go of?
3. Am I willing to endure the necessary stress to accomplish my goals? Can I be compassionate with myself if I can't keep up with it all?

Most often, we have two choices: do less or forgive yourself more. What do you choose?

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*Organic Spa Magazine*, Vol 16, Issue 1, February 2021, is published six times a year by Organic Spa Media, Ltd., ISSN #1944-5644, 19537 Lake Rd., Ste 203, Rocky River, OH 44116. Periodical rate postage paid at Cleveland, OH and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Organic Spa Magazine*, P.O. Box 16536, North Hollywood, CA 91615

Canada Post: Publications Mail Agreement #40612608. Canada returns to be sent to Pitney Bowes International, P.O. Box 25542, London, ON N6C 6B2.

*Organic Spa Magazine* is printed on Pubmatte paper, which is made with 30% post consumer recycled content. The ink is soy based and is SoySeal certified by the American Soybean Association (ASA).

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Printed in the U.S.A.



# The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success

A blueprint on how to thrive in the new year

In *The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success*, a *New York Times* best-seller, Deepak Chopra suggests that personal success is not the outcome of relentless hard work or driving ambition, but of understanding our true nature as human beings and how to live in harmony with natural laws that govern all of creation. I learned these guiding principles many years ago through Ayurveda training at the Chopra Center for Wellbeing, and now teach aspects of them in my mind-body health programs.

In the natural world, creation comes forth with effortless ease. A seed doesn't struggle to become a tree. It simply and effortlessly unfolds. So too can we, with a little help from these seven guideposts, and an affirmation for each day of the week.

## Sunday's Law of Pure Potentiality

The source of all creation is pure consciousness, which is potentiality seeking expression from the unmanifest to the manifest. If you have the desire, you have the ability to manifest that desire.

**My Affirmation** I'll take time to be in silence each day and enjoy the moment. I'll meditate for 20 to 30 minutes twice a day. I'll commune with nature. I will practice non-judgment, and begin my day by saying: Today I shall judge nothing that occurs.

## Monday's Law of Giving and Receiving

When you give, you receive. If you want joy, give joy; if you want love, learn to give love. If you want appreciation, learn to appreciate.

**My Affirmation** Today, I'll bring a gift to whomever I encounter—a smile, a hug, a compliment or a prayer. I'll also gratefully receive the gifts that life offers me.

## Tuesday's Law of Karma or Cause and Effect

We reap what we sow, so plant good seeds. Choosing actions that bring happiness and success to others ensures the flow of happiness and success to you.

**My Affirmation** Today I'll consciously witness the choices I make in each moment. I'll realize that I often create whatever happens to me next. I'll ask myself: What are the consequences of this choice? Will it bring fulfillment and happiness to me and to those affected?

## Wednesday's Law of Least Effort

Nature's intelligence functions with harmony and love. When we harness these forces we create success and good fortune.

**My Affirmation** Today I'll practice acceptance—accepting people, situations and circumstances as they are, not as I wish they would be. I'll take responsibility for my situation and not blame anyone or anything for my situation, including myself.

## Thursday's Law of Intention and Desire

This is about creating an intention and directing our attention to it. Energy follows intention. Whatever we give our attention to grows stronger.

**My Affirmation** I'll make a list of my desires. I'll look at this list before going to sleep and when I wake in the morning. I'll release it, trusting that when things don't go my way there is a reason and that the cosmic plan has designs for me much grander than those I may have conceived.

## Friday's Law of Detachment

In order to acquire anything, we have to relinquish our attachment to it. This doesn't mean that we give up our desires, rather that we move away from an attachment to the outcome, which can bind us to doubt, fear and insecurity.

**My Affirmation** I'll participate in everything with detached involvement, allowing myself and others the freedom to be as they are without imposing my idea of how things should be. I will not force solutions on problems—but rather allow solutions to emerge out of a problem.

## Saturday's Law of Dharma or our Purpose in Life

All of us as spiritual beings have taken physical form to fulfill a purpose in life, possessing a unique gift or special talent to give to others. When we blend this unique talent with service to others, we experience ultimate bliss.

**My Affirmation** Today I'll awaken myself to the deep sacred stillness within my heart. I'll make a list of my unique talents—along with all the things I like to do while expressing my unique talents.

When I express my talents and use them in the service of humanity, I create abundance in my life as well as in the life of others. And last but not least, I will ask myself daily, "How can I serve?" And, "How can I help?"

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Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation. 1. Publication title: Organic Spa Magazine. 2. Publication number: 025-267. 3. Filing date: 10/25/21. 4. Issue frequency: bi-monthly. 5. Number of Issues published annually: six. 6. Annual subscription price: \$29.95. 7. Complete mailing address of known office of publication: Organic Spa, 19537 Lake Rd., Ste. 203, Rocky River, OH 44116. 8. Complete mailing address of headquarters or general business office of publisher: Organic Spa, 19537 Lake Rd., Ste. 203, Rocky River, OH 44116. 9. Full names and complete mailing addresses of headquarters or general business office of publisher, editor, and managing editor: Publisher—Beverly Maloney-Fischback, 19537 Lake Rd., Ste. 203, Rocky River, OH 44116; Editor—Rona Berg, 5 West 86th St., #15B, New York, NY 10024; Managing Editor—Rona Berg, 5 West 86th St., #15B, New York, NY 10024. 10. Owners—Beverly Maloney-Fischback, 19537 Lake Rd., Ste. 203, Rocky River, OH 44116. 11. Known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders: none. 12. Tax status: has not changed during preceding 12 months. 13. Organic Spa Magazine. 14. Issue date for circulation data below: Sept/Oct '21. 15. Extent and nature of circulation/Average no. copies each Issue during preceding 12 months: a) Total number of copies: 4,402, b1) Paid Outside-county mail subscriptions stated on Form 3541: 778, b2) Paid In-county subscriptions from Form 3541: none, b3) Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, counter sales, and other non-USPS paid distribution: 1,863, b4) Other classes mailed through the USPS: 250, c) Total paid distribution: 2,891, d) Free distribution by mail: d1) Outside county on Form 3541: 234, d2) In-County on Form 3541: none, d3) Other classes mailed through USPS: none, d4) Free distribution outside the mail: 0 e) Total free distribution: 234, f) Total distribution: 3,125, g) Copies not distributed: 1,277, h) Total: 4,402, i) Percent paid: 92.5%, 15. Extent and nature of circulation/No. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: a) Total number of copies: 4,363, b1) Paid/requested Outside-county mail subscriptions stated on Form 3541: 675, b2) Paid In-county subscriptions from Form 3541: none, b3) Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, counter sales, and other non-USPS paid distribution: 1,834, b4) Other classes mailed through the USPS: 203, c) Total paid distribution: 2,712, d) Free distribution by mail: d1) Outside county on Form 3541: 1,404, d2) In-County on Form 3541: none, d3) Other classes mailed through USPS: none, d4) Free distribution outside the mail: 0 e) Total free distribution: 1,404, f) Total distribution: 4,116, g) Copies not distributed: 247, h) Total: 4,363, i) Percent paid: 65.8%, 16. Total circulation includes electronic copies. Extent and Nature of Circulation/Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 months: a) Paid Electronic Copies: 443, b) Total Paid Print Copies + Paid Electronic Copies: 3,334 c) Total Print Distribution + Paid Electronic Copies: 3,568, Percent Paid: 93.5%, 16. Extent and Nature of Circulation/No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date: a) Paid Electronic Copies: 408, b) Total Paid Print Copies + Paid Electronic Copies: 3,120, c) Total Print Distribution + Paid Electronic Copies: 4,524, d) Percent Paid 68.9%. 17. Publication and statement of ownership required. Will be printed in the Jan/Feb '22 issue of this publication. 18. Signature and title of editor, publisher, business manager, or owner: Beverly Maloney-Fischback, Founder & Publisher, Date: October 25, 2021. I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including civil penalties).



# style

## Workout Wearables

Sustainable pieces that are good  
for people and planet

By **Lambeth Hochwald**

We've all seen the headlines about fast fashion. As an industry, it's the second largest consumer of water and is responsible for eight to 10 percent of global carbon emissions.

Happily, in the activewear category, change is happening, with more and more companies ditching spandex and polyester (neither naturally biodegrades) for sustainable fabrics such as recycled cotton or hemp.

But where do you start when searching for sustainable workout gear? Thankfully, we did the research for you. Read on for 10 of our new favorites.



### **Reebok Classics** Natural Dye Leggings

Not only are these sustainable cotton leggings ready to go the distance with you—they're incredibly stretchy—but they're made with dye that uses colors from natural earth pigments and minerals.  
[reebok.com](http://reebok.com)



### Reformation Gwen EcoMove Bra

Sports bras are a mainstay when you're working out and Reformation sports bras are super special: They're made from either EcoStretch, a soft and stretch performance fabric for low-impact workouts, or in the case of the Gwen, EcoMove, a sleek performance fabric with a slight sheen for mid- to high-impact exercise. All are sustainably made with REPREEVE, which calculates the number of bottles recycled and the savings in greenhouse gas emissions, water and energy for each item. [thereformation.com](https://thereformation.com)

### Allbirds Natural Leggings

While most leggings are made with plastic, Allbirds are manufactured with Tencel, a sustainably sourced eucalyptus tree fiber, merino wool and recycled nylon to cut back on virgin petroleum-based synthetics. PS: These carbon-neutral leggings are super soft and comfortable, too! [allbirds.com](https://allbirds.com)



### Everlane The Tread Runner

You'll flash back to those '80s track shoes you may have worn to do laps around your high school gym with these recycled sneakers that are earth-friendly and made with sustainably sourced materials, such as a low-plastic sole and a 100 percent recycled polyester lining. [everlane.com](https://everlane.com)





### Burgeon Flume ¼ Zip Base Layer

Handmade in Lincoln, New Hampshire, the top manufactured by this two-year-old company has become a favorite due to its sustainable Tencel, which is naturally breathable, odor-resistant, thermo-regulating and, frankly, truly comfortable—and cozy, especially while you're warming up. And, by manufacturing locally, Burgeon creates year-round jobs in the White Mountains and five percent of every sale goes back to supporting the local community and environmental efforts. [burgeonoutdoor.com](http://burgeonoutdoor.com)



### Daehlie Compete-Tech Base Layer

Highlighting a collection created by Norwegian cross-country Olympic champion Bjorn Daehlie beginning in 1996, this long-sleeve base layer top is so thin you wouldn't think it would keep you warm but it does. That's due to its ultralight Tencel blend which helps with temperature regulation whether it's cold or warm outside. [dahlie.com](http://dahlie.com)



### Hass Fleece Roll Cuff Short Sleeve Sweatshirt

Meet Hass, a new venture from Avocado Green Brands, the sustainable mattress firm. This responsibly sourced fashion collection harnesses natural, organic and recycled materials as well as nontoxic dyes making this short-sleeve sweatshirt a favorite for any mild day workout. Best of all: Every item is stitched in Global Organic Textile Standard-certified (GOTS) facilities in Los Angeles. [shophass.com](http://shophass.com)



### **Threads4Thought** Leanna Feather Fleece Tunic

This comfy tunic might just become your regular morning run go-to thanks to its super softness. Responsibly made from sustainable materials, including organic cotton, recycled polyester and Lenzing Modal, which uses beech tree bark that grows back naturally and ensures the tree is never cut down, every T4T factory holds the highest certifications in the industry, ensuring the best working conditions and the highest level of sustainable production processes. [threads4thought.com](https://threads4thought.com)



### **Forsake** Lucie Chelsea Sneaker Boots

Climate Neutral-Certified for two years in a row, the team at Forsake, a brand born from a love of the outdoors, is sure this fun walk-around-town sneaker boot will be your permanent go-to. The slip-on Lucie Chelsea is waterproof and features a memory foam footbed and a “peak-to-pavement” outsole. Bonus: You can feel good about every purchase since Forsake has maintained net-zero emissions since the company launched in 2019. [forsake.com](https://forsake.com)



### **Adidas** Terrex MyShelter PrimaLoft Parley Padded Jacket

Made of Parley Ocean Plastic, a material created from upcycled plastic waste that’s intercepted from beaches and coastal towns before ever polluting our oceans, and composed of 100 percent recycled fiber insulation, this lightweight jacket is just right for those brisk morning runs. [adidas.com](https://adidas.com)



great places

# By the Beautiful Sea

Seaside spas that take wellness to another level

By Becca Hensley





We can thank the English for seaside wellness retreats. According to historians, their 18th- and 19th-century doctors were among the first to suggest patients venture to the coast to partake of the briny, mineral-infused air, to bathe in the waves (the colder the better), to drink the seawater (often in a cocktail with ingredients such as milk and honey), to exercise and to consume healthful menus (which at the time sometimes meant no fruit or vegetables and a modicum of alcohol).

Whether it was just the respite from grimy city life or truly a cure, patients seemed to improve from ailments as diverse as tuberculosis, eczema, depression, leprosy and infertility. To wit, oceanside resorts were built on shores worldwide as the trend spread, and a habit of taking to the sea was born. We know many ancient cultures, from the Romans to the Hawaiians, turned to the ocean's trove for medicinal purposes, as well. Because we all feel better oceanside, here is some beach therapy for your travel list.

## Headland Hotel & Spa

NEWQUAY, CORNWALL, UK

A massive Victorian jewel, perched on a cliff above Fistral Beach, this five-star retreat was conceived in 1900 to capture turn-of-the-century wellness questers, who traveled to the coast by rail. Since then, it has welcomed A-listers and royalty aplenty.

Today, it continues to be an ideal place to base for exploring the Cornwall Coast. However, most come for the exceptional spa, the heartbeat of the curative hotel. Relax in the Cornish Salt Room and among the various water features. Sports enthusiasts can take to the sea with the hotel's own beachside Surf Sanctuary.

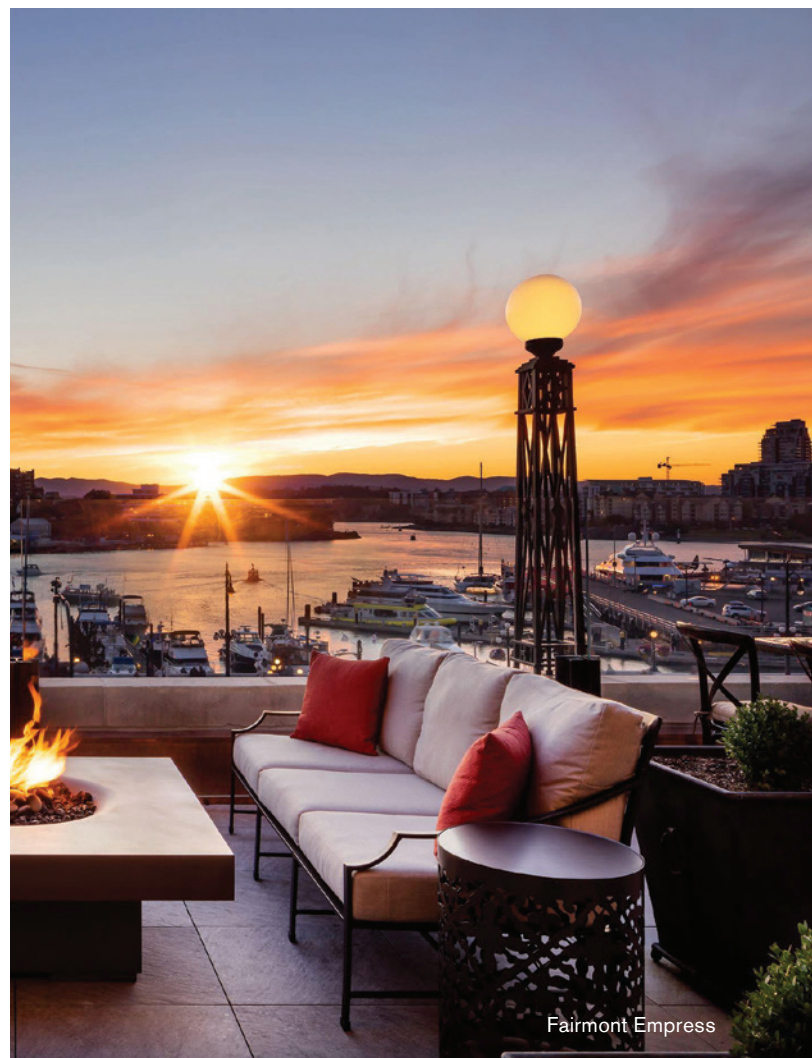
## Fairmont Empress

VICTORIA, CANADA

Forever simply "The Empress," this grand dame hotel rules the charming British Columbian town of Victoria, a buzzy place on otherwise unspoiled, nature-dominated Vancouver Island. Built in 1908 in chateau-style, its catalogue of famous visitors, from Shirley Temple to Winston Churchill, wasn't always in attendance for health reasons. Regardless, the adjacent sea, fringe of snow-capped mountains and fresh air surely restored them—as it does modern, wellness-minded guests. Stake out a spot in the tony Willow Stream Spa, an outpost known for embracing local ingredients and vendors.



Headland Hotel & Spa



Fairmont Empress





## Zemi Beach

ANGUILLA

Just a breath of Anguilla's seaborne air, awash in minerals, or a moment on any of its 33 transporting beaches feels like a bona fide spa treatment. But check into Zemi Beach House, a boutique sanctum on Shoal Bay Beach, and well-being soars to new heights. A paradigm for this generation's spa style, the savvy hotel features a 300-year-old structure, transported from Thailand as its Thai House Spa. Offering guests a blend of global healing motifs, it honors the island's First People with its Taino Bathing Ritual.

## Hotel del Coronado, Curio Collection by Hilton

CORONADO, CALIFORNIA, USA

Debuting in 1898 to be the "talk of the Western world," the Del (as those in the know call it) welcomed a slew of deep-pocketed wellness seekers to its crescent of pearly sand. Frequented by glitterati for more than a century (think Charlie Chaplin, Marilyn Monroe), minutes from downtown San Diego, it sports both original Victorian architectural bones, plus a few contemporary add-on wings, which the hotel refers to as neighborhoods. Partake of the ocean-inspired spa, with treatments such as the Restorative Ocean Facial, awash with algae.



## Rosewood Bermuda

HAMILTON PARISH, BERMUDA

Legend has it, this is the island that inspired Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Bermuda might be best known for its ballet-pink beaches, undulating, narrow island roads and British sensibilities. However, its unique location in the Atlantic between the continental United States and England has ensured its popularity as a decades-old wellness getaway for untold global travelers. At Rosewood Bermuda, on the Castle Harbour coastline, save time for Sense, A Rosewood Spa's treatments that reference the ocean. Try the comprehensive Sea of Life Ritual, powered by algae extract.



## Little Palm Island Resort & Spa

LITTLE TORCH KEY, FLORIDA, USA

Touted as the only private island in the United States, Little Palm Island Resort & Spa specializes in "Get Lost" adventures, meant to spark virtual detox, relaxation and reconnection. As part of the Florida Keys coastline, the 4.5-acre playground nurtures reset with no in-room telephones, alarm clocks or televisions. Remote, only accessible by boat or seaplane, it conjures Robinson Crusoe fantasies. Wellness buffs can hide away further in its SpaTerre. Yield to the Ocean Wave Four Hands Massage to further harmonize with the setting.



## Kurhotel Skodsborg

SKODSBORG, DENMARK

Just north of Copenhagen, this classic wellness hotel on the Øresund, a strait between Sweden and Denmark, dates back to 1852, when King Frederik VII purchased the property to be his personal retreat. In 1898, Danish physician and physical therapist Carl Ottosen turned the grounds into a “sanatorium” to heal the sick. Danes continue to follow his salutary program of light, air, water, movement, rest and diet. Check in to remedy modern maladies—stress?— with dips in the frosty sea, 16 diverse bathing pools and a multifaceted spa menu.



Kurhotel Skodsborg

## Mauna Lani, Auberge Resorts Collection

BIG ISLAND, HAWAII, USA

For the ancient Hawaiians, the Big Island represented fire and ice: both passion and peacefulness, which exists in us all. It remains a terrain that brims with palpable “mana,” the word the Hawaiians use for spiritual energy. Set where Hawaiian royalty turned for healing rites, the Mauna Lani honors Hawaiian traditions in manifold ways, none the least of which happens in the luxury property’s Auberge Spa. From beachside yoga to petroglyph hikes to cultural workshops, immersive activities embrace the outdoors. Inside, don’t miss the Hawaiian cure for everything: a lomi lomi massage.

## Hotel du Palais, The Unbound Collection by Hyatt

BIARRITZ, FRANCE

Originally the Imperial Residence of Napoleon III and Princess Eugenie, lavish Hotel du Palais, circa 1854, drew royalty and jet setters to Biarritz on France’s Basque Coast, setting the standard for salubrious getaways for decades to come. Known to be exemplar for its marine therapies, Biarritz, a former whaling village, grew to be one of the world’s most respected thalassotherapy hotspots. As the town’s crème de la crème, palatial Hotel Du Palais continues the marine traditions at its water-based, 26,000-square-foot Imperial Spa.



Hotel du Palais

## Condado Vanderbilt

SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO

Frederick William Vanderbilt knew his Gilded Age friends would come for the sun, when he envisioned what he predicted would be the ritziest hotel in Puerto Rico a century ago. Arriving in droves, they found repose in the Spanish Revival masterpiece on the beach in San Juan’s prestigious Condado District, designed by the same architects responsible for New York City’s Grand Central Station. Find quietude and more grandeur after play at the spa, which offers various treatments, including a stunning, sea glass-sheathed hammam.



Condado Vanderbilt



giving back

# Lessons from Our Fathers

Asha Chaudhary continues a legacy of giving with Enkay, a luxury home decor and handmade rug company

By Rona Berg

Asha Chaudhary is a very fortunate woman. She has an incredible role model in her father, N.K. Chaudhary. N.K. is the founder of Jaipur Living, India's largest manufacturer of hand-knotted rugs, who, Asha says, "founded the business on the principles of dignity, respect, compassion and love, working hand in hand with India's so-called 'untouchables' during a time when it was virtually unheard of."

When Asha decided to cofound Enkay, a home decor and handmade rug company, she wanted to model the work her father started, "fostering his personal and business values, supporting women and artisans, and continuing to use business as a force for good by leading with empathy, compassion and respect," she says. By employing over 85 percent women—40,000 artisans in rural villages in addition to 1,000 employees at a facility in northern India—the mission is clear: to support and empower women. "With our business model, we have converted thousands of women into entrepreneurs in India," she says. "These are women who may not have had the chance to attend school or be educated, yet they have become breadwinners for their families, are global award-winning artists and have earned a position of respect in their communities."

Each Enkay rug is extremely labor-intensive, the product of over 90 skilled artisans who work together on a handcrafted piece intended to last a lifetime. The designs are inspired by the beauty of the Himalayas. Beyond the creation of a work of art, the company is helping to preserve an age-old tradition. "Many of these weavers learned the craft from their own mothers, sisters, mothers-in-law and sisters-in-law," says Asha. "It's a powerful community of learning."

In addition, Enkay donates a portion of sales to the Jaipur Rugs Foundation, which supports artisans in rural India through job creation, business development, education opportunities and accessible health care. "Through the foundation's Bunkar Sakhi program, women can enroll in a leadership training course through which they become qualified weaver supervisors," she says.

Asha tells the story of Prem Devi, an artisan who began with her own weaving, then worked with a network of 10 women and eventually oversaw more than 100 women across other villages. "She is now a proud businesswoman who has not only uplifted her family, but also the whole village, and has inspired women in surrounding areas to become entrepreneurs themselves. All it took was believing in themselves and giving them the resources and opportunities to



Above: a handmade Enkay rug; right: Asha Chaudhary, CEO and cofounder



succeed. These women did it on their own. It was simply the belief and the mindset," she continues.

When it comes to making an impact, Asha is quick to share credit for her success: "It starts with surrounding yourself with like-minded people. You have to believe that you have the power to impart positive change. People are looking to invest in products that speak to their values—like supporting artisans and creators, sustainable production and conscious consumerism.

"I hope I can influence other business leaders to think differently and not fall into what they think the traditional business model should be. We have the power to think differently, even when it feels outside the norm." *enkay.com*



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