



spa | FEATURE



HIGH ON LIFE IN THE Southern Highlands

Deborah Mangum-Copelli leaves the city behind and discovers the joy of the well-heeled country life.

If you're a city girl like me then getting out of the hubbub is often left for too hard and too long between breaths; of fresh country air that is. So get thee to the Southern Highlands of NSW for a good dose of deep diaphragm filling gulps of CO₂. It's filtered through fresh; lush rolling green landscaped terra firma all dotted about with cows, horses, wombats and kangaroos.

As you turn into Horderns Road in Bowral, turn off your GPS, mobile and your music, roll down your windows and start to inhale. Notice the sounds of the crickets, the chirping of the lorikeets and the calls of the cockatoo. As you slowly and steadily drive toward the top of the hill your eyes are filled with scenes reminiscent

of the film 'Australia' and you can't help but smile with delight at the gated residences along your way. Nearing the densely wooded hilltop you are not sure if you are entering your destination or a mysterious dream, as the property is sparsely sign posted although it appears enchantingly open for visitors. And as you carefully drive along the thick-sided bush and narrowing roadway, it's as if you are in a trance like state, excitedly unsure of what you might embark upon.

At last you have arrived at Milton Park Country House Hotel and Wellness Spa, discreetly designed amongst the most magnificently created Edwardian gardens geometrically positioned with formal beds and low clipped hedges.

Surrounded by 300 acres of farmland, Milton Park is a destination sleep and wellness spa which launched its new scientific concept in wellness in August. Integrating the best from Europe, Australasia and the Americas; Milton Park takes wellness very seriously when it comes to serving their discerning guests and members.

Housed in a separate spa villa atop the grassy knoll and adjacent to the tennis courts, the Wellness Spa offers day packages, weekend wellness workshops and mid-week Well programs. And if one of their pre-planned events doesn't suit, then spa manager Maggie Hunter; whose passion for everything good is infectious, will customise a retreat just for you.

A winning wellness day at Milton, might include a gentle wake-up call from reception followed by a cleansing hot ginger and lemongrass green tea before you glide into your stretch and yoga gear and walk through the fairy garden and up to the spa where you will be met and warmly greeted. After a subtle yet invigorating group yoga session at an ideal offsite retreat location, you will be served a healthy and light spa breakfast before you're whisked off with one of wellness coach Richard Heidlmair or one of his highly trained coaches who will introduce you to a wellness intake by photo-scanning the skin of your hand to test your carotenoid and antioxidant levels in your living tissue.

Once Richard and his team have discussed your scanned readings (ranging from 10,000 for the lowest antioxidant protection to 50,000 plus for an excellent carotenoid and antioxidant intake, they will then design a wellness nutritional and lifestyle program you can easily take home with you. Notice I avoided the word 'diet' as the term doesn't exist at Milton where the focus is on taking little steps and making adjustments in your lifestyle to achieve your desired goals and objectives for a long, happy and fulfilling path forward while minimising those pesky disease causing free radicals.

You might then enjoy a guided brisk Alpine walk or a personal training session with some of the best trainers the Highlands has to offer. Following, it's time for a relaxing jacuzzi spa bath, dry sauna and aroma-steam room routine. You'll surely be ready for some spa lunch at this stage with seasonally fresh, locally sourced ingredients that the Milton Park wellness chef has prepared especially for you, all based on your food preferences chosen prior to your arrival. I enjoyed wild mushroom pureed soup with freshly house-baked rustic bread served with my choice of fresh sweet butter or extra virgin olive dipping oil. It was scrumptious.

It's then time to choose from some light educational workshops. These might include subjects like quick and healthy recipes, organic potted herb gardening, essential oils for health and wellbeing or even a guided-meditation workshop.

Coming next is your afternoon of spa treatments pre-chosen from the inspiring menu of services or customised just for you. Milton Wellness uses the naturally chemical-free Australian Spa brand, Sodashi, whose range is based on essential oils and plant active botanicals, as well as NuSkin's ageLOC anti-aging scientific skincare range, which includes the new Galvanic Spa Facial using the ageLOC handheld Galvanic Spa System device.

Maggie enraptured me with her magical touch in the awe inspiring 'Sensory Journey' package, a two-and-a-half hour treatment where she delivered a ritualistic and divine aromatic dance upon my feet, body and head. I'm still basking in the memories that the Sodashi scents of medicinal essential oil blends evoked. With headsets



gently placed on my ears and listening to the gentle de-stressing sounds of water for the foot massage, I was able to fully succumb to Maggie's strong focused accupressure style. Bringing genuine 'island'-inspired massage moves to her otherwise technical prowess, Maggie performs her treatments with a special connection soulfully orchestrated with perfect rhythm and grace. Need I say more; it was true bliss!

After your own blissful treatment, your spa cuisine chef will then delight you with something artistically appetising to all of your senses for a wellness inspired afternoon tea.

Feeling floaty and fabulous you will then still have time for a private guided meditation session customised to your own desires and goals whether they are to continue enjoying life to the fullest or to make adjustments, integrate or change whatever you want to improve (eg sleep better, de-stress, control a habit or even eliminate a fear). And best of all, as your session will be audio-taped, you will have you will be able to replay it over and over again when you are back home to reinforce the goals that you wish to instil in your life going forward.

Finally after such a long and fulfilling day 'dinner is served'. As all produce, fruits and meats are locally sourced and seasonal where possible, you will be guaranteed that your wellness spa cuisine selection is prepared with the utmost attention to your dietary wishes and requirements.

The chef delighted me with a starter of New Zealand grilled scampi placed around a rocket salad dressed with raspberry vinaigrette. This was followed by a main course of flawlessly cured and grilled king salmon served with



green mash, grilled octopus, flowering baby Italian zucchini and a pickled fennel and lime saffron vinaigrette, as well a plate seasonal steamed green vegetables. For dessert I indulged in the homemade quince and orange and Campari sorbet.

What a wonderful day for anyone wanting to take time out from their busy life. Milton Park is also an ideal location for business getaways.

What for me was a heavenly overnight and day at Milton Park, it will surely please for you and yours as well. So spread the word for wellness in the Southern Highlands and make Horderns Road, Bowral the right way to turn your day, weekend, week and life around. At Milton Park Country House Hotel and Wellness Spa each and every guest can transcend to this auspicious and discreet Highlands property with spa and wellness on a mission.

It is the perfect place to get together with some of your girl or guy pals (you could hire out the Carriage House for up to 22, share the Station Masters Cottage for six or simply book into the Country House Hotel for two) and partake in all that this five-star spa and wellness property wants to gracefully share.

Many of you would know and love Milton Park as an elegant French provincial country weddings destination as the property is much sought after by Sydney and Canberra brides. Further to this, Milton is also renowned for its eloquent and tastefully planned events, utilising one the many outside garden areas or elegant indoor estate rooms.

It also provides corporate wellness programs with private conference centres and self-contained facilities with paddock and mountain vistas which should inspire even the most well-suited and tightly strung executives. And Milton has a solution to de-stress, unwind and allow those professional creative juices to flow by transporting their body and minds to a nearby Highlands destination complete with studios for tai chi, yoga, meditation, martial arts and boot camps. Designed by champion trained veteran enthusiasts, these corporate packages and team building programs will accommodate the most assertive and competitive as well as those who prefer a more subtle experience. Milton Park Corporate Wellness suits the suits from the city; and is where the high heeled will soon be breathing a sigh of relief and chanting, 'om... shanti...om'

So whether you're interested in a getaway for you and a friend, a corporate retreat or a wedding reception be sure to bookmark miltonpark.com.au for all the latest updates on programs and packages and, Namaste! ■

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