

BEST FRIENDS FOREVER / MISSING PERSON MYSTERIES / ADAM LIAW'S LEBANESE STEW

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life

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"I AM AT THE POINT IN MY LIFE WHERE I HAVE TO START AGAIN"

WISH



now and zen

Roll out your mat, disconnect from tech and hit “pause” on your day-to-day with an immersive yoga retreat, says *Paul Ewart*.

With a greater spiritual awareness sweeping Western society, modern-day travellers are increasingly forgoing their annual beach or city holiday in favour of more meaningful and transformative experiences. And among the most popular of these “fit-cations” is a yoga retreat. Ranked one of the fastest-growing fitness activities in Australia, a raft of retreats has popped up to cater to this demand, including the one I’m at – Krishna Village Eco Yoga Retreat.

Set in NSW’s Northern Rivers, in the foothills of Wollumbin/Mount Warning (an easy 40-minute drive from Gold Coast Airport), this property of more than 400 hectares comprises a community centred around the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Here, retreat guests, volunteers and spirituality-seekers from all over the world gather to immerse themselves in the retreat’s “love life, live yoga” lifestyle.

Soon after arriving, the 15 or so other retreat attendees and I quickly

fall into a routine – albeit one that’s very much “choose your own adventure”.

Every day there are three yoga classes: a gentle 5am sunrise session, a 6.30am hatha flow, and a more dynamic vinyasa lesson in the afternoon.

Throughout the day there are also workshops and lectures, and at lunchtime we participate in Kirtan (communal singing). One evening, I join an immersive sound-healing experience by candlelight before floating back to my room.

Krishna Village also houses a small wellness centre. Here, a small team offers treatments ranging from therapeutic massages to energy healing sessions, all designed to complement the yogic practices. There are tech-y wellness treatments, such as the LED light bed, alongside ancient practices like Vedic astrology.

Beyond yoga and meditation, the village offers a glimpse into a different way of life. The accommodation – small cabins scattered around the grounds – is simple and meals are buffet-style

vegetarian, prepared from fresh produce often sourced from the village’s gardens.

Over meals, conversation flows easily among city dwellers craving stillness, seasoned yogis deepening their practice, and those curious about a different way of being. There’s a palpable sense of connection here, a feeling of being part of something larger than oneself – after all, the literal translation of yoga is “union”.

“One of the by-products of yoga practice is that you’ll notice freedom from negative behavioural patterns,” retreat facilitator Michael Kubitzky tells me. “You’ll make better choices and decisions in day-to-day living.”

True to his word, by my final morning I felt lighter, brighter and full of energy. And while I’m far from becoming a Yoda-like sage who has discovered happiness, I do know that a yoga retreat can spark the beginning of a journey if you let it.

The writer was a guest of Krishna Village Eco Yoga Retreat.