

LIVE WELL EAT WELL TRAVEL WELL

wander

Elevate Your Wellness

FAIRMONT CHATEAU LAKE LOUISE



CAVING IN TUSCANY

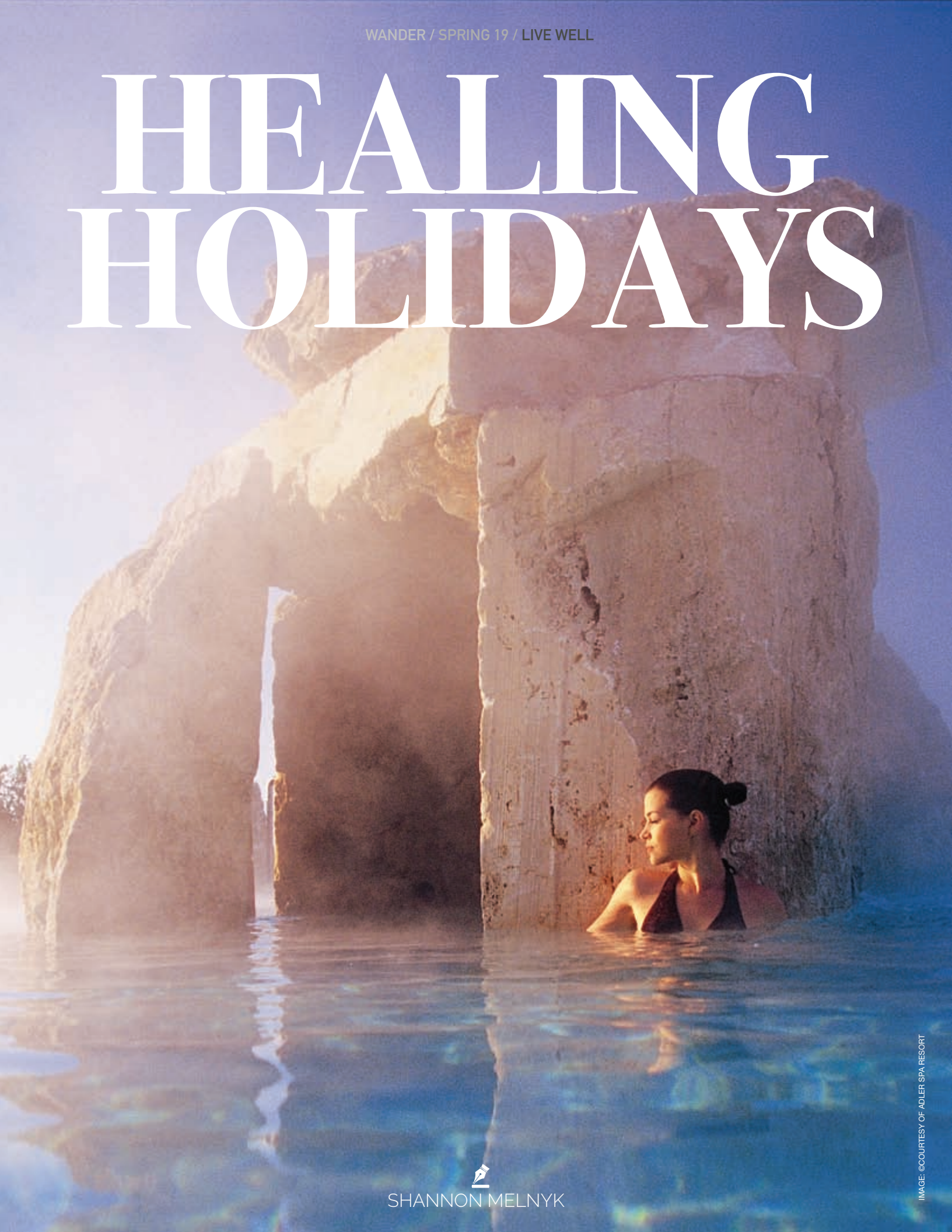
NUTRITION FOR YOGIS

SPRING HEALING

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HEALING HOLIDAYS



SHANNON MELNYK

IMAGE: COURTESY OF ADLER SPA RESORT



In a world where med-spas are becoming masters of the bucket-list vacation, wellness-seekers are increasingly crossing borders to pursue good health. But would you give up your precious holiday to see a foreign doctor? At the Adler Thermae Spa Resort in Tuscany, you don't have to. Why not take a proactive approach to your health - all while basking in a five-star spa environment with four-course meals? And while you're waiting for test results and doctors' consultations, you might choose to go truffle hunting or wine-tasting at the Spa's own vineyard. It's the new healing holiday – and it works.

White lab coats and Chianti are an uncommon combination, even if you're a veteran of wellness travel. Yoga retreats, fitness vacations, detox programs and spiritual quests all suggest a kind of discipline, and sometimes, deprivation. Often, we want to feel we're nurturing our health without sacrificing the sense of indulgence that a traditional holiday offers. But can we have our cheese and eat it, too? An increasing array of med-spa offerings says yes, we can.

What exactly is a medical spa? Loosely defined, it's a zen-like environment that offers procedures or expertise typically only found at a doctor's office. In North America, the term used to be largely associated with aesthetic beauty treatments, but now encompasses everything from ancient medicine to stem-cell therapy to treatments for addiction and chronic illness - and the list is rapidly growing. No longer are resort spas only catering to the detox bootcamp crowds or robe-clad turtles lounging about. There's a place for play and even hedonist pleasures when it's time to get serious about your health.

Given the choice between the token lettuce leaf on a plate vs. a white truffle pappardelle, which one would you choose?

Enter Adler Thermae Spa Resort (adler-resorts.com) in the healing thermal water region of Bagno Vignoni, Italy. Its location is no mistake, given the therapeutic benefits of the mineral-rich natural pools that have soothed Etruscans for thousands of years. It is here in Tuscany's picturesque Val d'Orcia countryside, tucked amongst olive groves and cypress-lined fields, that a team of doctors, an in-house laboratory, cutting-edge diagnostics and 24-hour support await those who want to get serious about two things: their health, and their vacation.

Adler's in a position to address many needs. Guests fall into many different categories: there are those who come to take advantage of the thermal waters, the extravaganza of steam, sauna, vinotherapy, traditional and ancient spa menu offerings, state-of-the-art aesthetic beauty treatments, the innovative medical programs or the home-base for the perfect Tuscan holiday. I decided I would experience it all.



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Stop. Breathe. Reflect.

Pravassa's vacations change lives. Every accommodation, wellness treatment, meal—even the bike paths you'll traverse—has been vetted, in person, by our seasoned travel experts. Leaving you the time and space to reconnect with yourself and the world around you.

"Pravassa provided one of the most positive, informative experiences I have ever had. I brought home so much energy and new tools to deal with everyday life."
—Leila Lederer



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IMAGE: ©COURTESY OF ADLER SPA RESORT

I'm probably a poster-child for modern dis-ease. I juggle two careers, experience elusive sleep, travel too much and like many, have chronic issues there seems to be no sure cure for. Autoimmune issues, unexplained exhaustion. In my own estimation, I eat pretty clean, exercise and know the importance of stress-relieving activities, yet the vitality I desire escapes me. Adler's new Preventative and Diagnosis Medical Program takes a comprehensive look at wellbeing and includes advanced testing technology afforded to astronauts and Olympians that my doctors back home haven't even heard of. Could I leave Italy with some answers and new tools?

In a fluffy robe and embraced by the intense fragrance of Sangiovese grapes, I'm under the care of Dr. Stefania Mazzieri, a medical doctor who has an extensive list of credentials and questions about my medical history, personality and lifestyle before conducting a myriad of

tests scheduled throughout the duration of my week's stay. This includes blood and urine exams, analysis of my body composition, internal organs, nervous system and cell nutrition.

Between tests I spend my time enjoying the spa menu (I indulged in an Ayurvedic massage and a non-invasive sour grape stem cell slimming treatment) and invitations to tour a saffron farm, hunt for truffles, enjoy authentic Tuscan cooking classes, make use of the complimentary e-bikes and guided hikes and visit the resort's own family vineyard. I also take full advantage of the neighboring Renaissance towns of Pienza and Montepulciano, exploring the region's history and stocking my luggage with artisanal leather, scarves, fragrances and truffles. Back at the resort, I'm welcomed with five-star, four-course farm-to-table cuisine that includes the region's famous Chianina beef, hand-made pastas, sun-ripened vegetables and an endless array of local wine, cheeses and cakes.




IMAGE: ©COURTESY OF ADLER SPA RESORT

Back in Dr. Mazzieri's office, I express how spoiled I feel and don't imagine I've been dining according to her wishes. She reassures me this is ok; I'm on vacation, after all, and the information I was about to receive is for a lifetime, not a week according to the Adler philosophy. It's all fine and well to go to a spa with strict regimens, but often they represent a bubble. Adler represents the real world, where you're surrounded by choices. Life is about balance, and yes, indulgence from time to time.

It's the moment of truth and I learn the distribution of energy in my body is in disarray. My brain is utilizing too many calories, my muscles and metabolism are compromised and my cortisol is very high, as is my level of inflammation. The information is overwhelming, but Dr. Mazzieri is nurturing

and explains my organs are in good shape. This state is reversible, she says, and knowledge is power.

She provides me with a comprehensive nutrition, exercise and lifestyle plan that emphasizes that the timing of types of food and activities in the day is important, which is a new concept for me - and I learned that every ten seconds in the body the brain, heart and blood pressure should synchronize. When they do not, you're asking for tremendous fatigue. The culprit? Very poor breathing habits. This is empowering, given I think I've held my breath through most of my life. Dr. Mazzieri says many people do not realize what effect poor breathing has on the body. I feel empowered and will be taking this to heart. Right after my last serving of buffalo mozzarella. 



From spa marathons in the South Pacific to leopard-lurking in the Sabi Sands, Vancouver-based journalist Shannon Melnyk seeks to share experiences with her readers that challenge convention, inspire curiosity, induce joy and soothe the soul.

Check out her adventures at shannonmelnyk.com.