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WABI-SABI AND WELLNESS: HEALING IN THE SIMPLICITY OF THE PRESENT MOMENT

Are you ready for a wellness retreat in the Hamptons?

By: rē•spin



After a year like 2020, you deserve a spa getaway — and [Shou Sugi Ban House](#), a boutique wellness retreat in the Hamptons, belongs on your shortlist. The experience begins with the aesthetic experience, featuring minimal design, a soothing, neutral color palette, and earthy, reclaimed wood finishes. Surrounded by the ocean, beaches, skies, and farms, [nature](#) adds to the getaway's therapeutic appeal. At the core of the property's concept is the Japanese principle of wabi-sabi, which the lawyer-turned-founder, [Amy Cherry-Abitbol](#), who lived in Japan for many years, describes as, "[celebrating] the beauty in what is natural, even that which is imperfect and impermanent."

Beyond the retreat's outward charm, Cherry-Abitbol wants clients to rē-imagine their wellness within a meticulously designed, healing environment that fosters connection. "The idea from the inception of the project was to create an environment and programming that would bring people back to a simple appreciation for their natural surroundings," she tells rē•spin. "We offer intimate yet comprehensive programming which allows for meaningful connections with fellow guests and our resident experts, as well as visiting chefs, teachers, and revered practitioners."

Their spa services include hydrotherapy, massages, facials, healing arts workshops, [yoga](#), meditation, [breathwork](#), nutritional guidance, and [fitness](#) classes, with a dine-in restaurant and the opportunity to stay for multiple days. "It's unlike any other location in the area," she says. "I believe that our multi-pronged approach of offering wellness programming, alongside a world-class culinary program and our substantial healing arts modalities, all set within a beautifully designed, sustainable environment, creates a holistic experience which sets us apart."

As mentioned, the philosophy of wabi-sabi — an aesthetic principle characterized by raw, rough edges, and organic asymmetry — dictates the property's vibes, its elegant simplicity lending a distinctive sense of calm. As for the grounds, this translates into pebbled pathways, a meditation bench, a gathering lawn, a cherry blossom orchard, a fire lounge, and several spots intended for contemplation.

Shou Sugi Ban House's Core Pillars of Wellness

Similar to rē•spin's philosophy, five core wellness principles dictate the retreat's intentions and interactions with guests. Their goal is for guests to awaken to deeper healing through outer nourishment and inner connection through the following insights:

- To combine a strong sense of self with humility.
- To rise above societal expectations, restrictions, and boundaries and live life by one's instinct and not formulaic moves.
- To work with people you respect and enjoy being around, and treat everyone equally, regardless of position.
- To help and mentor others by exemplifying a balance of strength and caring while exhibiting empathy and non-judgment.
- Above all, to keep a sense of humor and perspective to persevere through challenges – as a team, we laugh a lot and that is the highest form of self-care.



rē-Learning Food As Medicine, Sustainability As Wellness

Rooted in the belief that both nature and food are forms of medicine, their philosophy on foods adapts to nature's cycles. Not only is nutrition healing for the body, but syncing to the earth's availability incorporates a philosophy of "sustainability as wellness" into their cuisine. Hence they offer seasonal menus and a farm-to-table approach, featuring Nordic-inspired dishes with Japanese influences created by the Michelin-starred Chef Mads Refslund.

Upon arrival, Shou Sugi Ban House wants its guests to experience harmony with nature through sustainability in cuisine and lifestyle. For instance, the culinary team forages the grounds of the property for wild ingredients, such as young spruce tips, cattail shoots and stalks, and birch tree sap. They also harvest ingredients in the property's biodynamic gardens which grow medicinal herbs and plants, as well as nuts and berries for use in meals and spa treatments.

In addition to using reclaimed wood and repurposed floorboards, you might spot cedar stools and altars recovered from old trees from the property. They also have solar panels to offset a portion of their electricity, geothermal wells to make their heating and cooling more efficient, a structured water filtration system that minimizes the use of chlorine, and three electric cars (and car chargers) on-site.



rē-Imagining Work As A Wellness Practice

In a final testament to the non-negotiable importance of self-care in a lifestyle that prioritizes wellness, [Cherry-Abitbol](#) lives the principles of wellness through her devotion to the property. rē-imagining her career as a form of self-care, making it possible for her to exercise, meditate, eat well, spend time outdoors, and live in accordance with the guidelines of a holistic doctor, she says, "I find that being fully immersed in the development and operations of [Shou Sugi Ban House](#) is the best way for me to practice self-care." She pays it forward, too, stating that, "I put great focus on caring for our staff as much as I possibly can and that brings tremendous satisfaction to me."

This past year, "well-being" took on a greater significance. At Shou Sugi Ban House, connection and nourishment permit guests to prioritize wellness as they awaken to the interconnectedness of mind, body, and spirit, facilitated in rē-treating from the demands of the conventional lifestyle in an intentional setting.