

Outdoor Recess

Connecting to nature has become a central tenet in a new wellness travel wave.

BY NORA ZELEVANSKY

Most hotels and resorts give a token nod to wellness with ubiquitous yoga classes, basic massages, and in-room amenities like lavender bath salts. The following nine restorative properties take into account that spending time outside decreases anxiety and blood pressure and increases immunity and self-esteem. Expert practitioners and intentional, often al fresco facilities ensure healing is not just an added benefit of being on vacation but rather a goal and an expectation of the journey. →



Montage Healdsburg

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SHOU SUGI BAN HOUSE Water Mill, New York

Also opened in 2019, this retreat off a main Hamptons drag is driven by Japanese principles of *wabi-sabi*, or the beautiful impermanence and imperfection of nature. Passing a large lava stone Buddha, guests enter a world—at once geometric and organic—based on the elements of earth, wind, air, and fire. During curated overnight retreats or spa days, a sense of clarity, openness, and precision pervades the large windowed spaces.

“From the architecture to the treatments, our intention is to connect our guests with nature,” says Jodie Webber, creative director and head of healing arts, who notes that the resort has added more outdoor experiences since the pandemic began. “We host oceanside meditations and movement classes.” The 13 guest studios have Japanese hinoki, or modern air massage tubs, with windows that face a private courtyard, so, even in winter, “guests see the sky, trees, and climbing hydrangea while they relax.” In-room soaps are crafted with the fragrances of local flora.

Among the range of available services are hydrotherapy treatments, massages, bodywork, facials, breath work, yoga, and self-care workshops incorporating sound baths, shamanic healing, and even plant spirit ceremonies. “When we disconnect from the natural world, it is very easy to lose a sense of belonging and balance,” Webber says. “Reconnection with nature is a beautiful process.” shousugibanhouse.com

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