

The Lady



4 JANUARY 2013

SAVE OUR GREEN AND PLEASANT LAND

by Sir Andrew Motion

PUZZLE SPECIAL

Meet Lady Crossword
PLUS triple Ladygram

10 decisions
that will
improve your life

VALENTINO

Dressing Audrey
Hepburn and
Princess Margaret

Travel Extra

BRITAIN'S BEST CULTURAL
MINIBREAKS

A very charming traveller:
Patrick Leigh Fermor

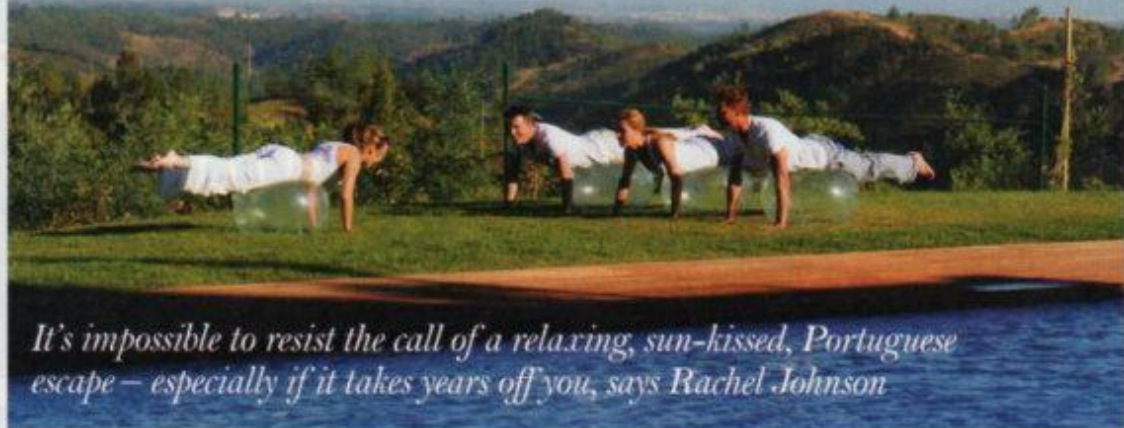
20 PLACES YOU
MUST VISIT
IN 2013

BRITAIN'S BEST CLASSIFIED SECTION

£2.50



HOW I GOT 15 YEARS YOUNGER – ON HOLIDAY



It's impossible to resist the call of a relaxing, sun-kissed, Portuguese escape – especially if it takes years off you, says Rachel Johnson

What do women want? Let me tell you. They want longevity. And they want wellness. And they want people to tell them they look 'incredible for their age'.

Which is why this new resort in the hills of the Algarve, a few white-towelling-slipped steps from the pretty spa town of Caldas de Monchique, might be a winner. It is actually called the Longevity Wellness Resort and after only 24 hours there, I promise you I was 15 years younger. I may not have looked it, but apparently I am 32. Total result!

You may laugh (my husband roared and said, 'How much are they adding to the bill to tell you that?'). Indeed, I laugh like a drain whenever I read those interviews with Nancy Dell'Olio in which she claims to be a teenager and says, 'I know. I've been tested!' But now, after three days at Longevity Medi-Spa – and this is a new kind of spa, a fun one, which actually makes you *well* and *fit* rather than incredibly *bored* listening to tinkling music while a younger and dewier female places hot stones on your spine and talks fluent New Age – you really do feel rejuvenated and springy again.

After massages, osteopathy, salt scrubs, facials, not to mention a diet of grains, fresh fish and vegetables, I felt better than I have for years, and not just because they told me I was 15 years younger than my chronological

age, and told the girlfriend I came with that she was – whisper it – 52.

So how do they know I got younger? Well, after arrival, you are shown around the complex, which is three different buildings: the spas, the medical centres, pools, gyms, the all-white, fine-dining restaurant, to your sumptuous bedroom suite, with balcony overlooking the hills towards the sea; and then it's show time.

We had hours and hours of tests and consultations; a biophysical evaluation with electrodes, which told them something, then you got on a machine that told them how much water was in your cells and outside your cells, and the same for fat all over your body, how it was distributed in your trunk and limbs. Then I had to run 1.5km on the cross trainer, which gives them all they need to know about your cardiac fitness, blood pressure, etc.

Well, the good news was that did I mention this already? my biological age is 32. The only bad news was that 1) I am very dehydrated and 2) not very fit.

But still, I felt so smug that during the preventive medicine consultation with the white coat, I admitted I drink half a bottle of white wine a night. 'White wine!' shrieked Dr Manuela Figini. 'That's why you have too little water, and wrinkles!' she shouted, looking at my upper lip and crinkly eyes. 'Too much alcohol.'

So I was put on the 'wellness diet',

which meant that when we wanted a glass of wine, we had to sneak up the road to the little *finca*, and only have red (it's *much* better for you – something to do with antioxidants). I was also told I had to eat fat, which was important for the membranes of the cells, the brain, and so on.

I recommend going with a girlfriend, especially if she's roughly the same age and shape as my poor chum who is one of the most beautiful and desired women there's ever been, but was not only told she was 52, but also that she needed to lose 7kg.

'Why oh why did I come here?' she wailed, 'and why did I come here with you?'

I couldn't say, but we are already planning a return visit next year. ♦

♦ *Longevity Wellness Medical Spa, Monchique, Algarve, Portugal: +351 282 240 155, spa.reception@longevity.pt, www.longevitywellnessresort.com*

LONGEVITY WELLNESS TIPS

1. Drink two litres of water a day.
2. Eat five meals a day (three meals and two large snacks, such as walnuts or a smoothie made of milk, oats, and strawberries). Don't eat carbs in your evening meal.
3. Don't exercise too much. Your cells have to recover. Rest is as important to weight loss as calorie control.
4. Have a mammogram and an ultrasound every two years.
5. Drink no more than one glass – of fabulous organic red wine – a day.