

ELUXE

M A N E

*Pamela
Anderson's*
**Animal
Roar**

*Awesomely
Eco*
OMAN

Madeline
Shaw's
Favourite
*Vegan
Recipes*

The Wisdom of
*Audrey
Hepburn*

The Eternal
Style of
Yves Saint Laurent

Liquid



Assets

Longevity Vilalara Thalassa & Medical Spa

Europeans have long trusted thalassotherapy's healing properties. **Chere Di Boscio** tests out some water therapy in Portugal's verdant Algarve region.





Apparently, water is a sentient creature. Or so I had just learned in an amazing documentary about the work of Japanese scientist Masaru Emoto. In a unique and rather bizarre experiment, Emoto had subjects concentrate thoughts of gratitude and peace on a jar of water, and then asked them to focus hateful, angry thoughts around another jar. The results? Positive energy projected around water forms beautiful, snowflake-like crystals. Water surrounded by 'low frequency' negative energy remains a mass of random, blobby molecules—in short, water reacts to energy around it.

Fascinated by the notion of 'living waters', I was delighted when I had the opportunity to stay at the Longevity Vilalara Thalassa & Medical Spa in the Algarve region of Portugal.

Most Europeans are well familiar with the thalassotherapy concept, also known as 'taking the waters.'

The term "thalassotherapy" covers a variety of treatments involving sea water, marine minerals and water jets. Thalassotherapy has long been popular with celebrities and the well-heeled: Jennifer Lopez, Vanessa Paradis and Catherine Deneuve have long been fans, for example.

The treatments are based on the idea that the minerals and trace elements in sea water, such as magnesium, potassium, calcium sulphates and sodium, are absorbed through the skin. The Longevity Vilalara Thalassa & Medical Spa offers an abundance of water based treatments: cold freshwater pools, warmed salt water pools, hammams, steam rooms, and strongly powered massage baths.

Thalassotherapy is often used purely as a detox, but is said to be effective in treating all kinds of conditions including eczema, psoriasis, back and muscular pain, arthritis and stress. As the metabolism is improved, this can lead to weight loss and even a reduction in cellulite.

But water therapy isn't the only health treatment available here—far from it, in fact. Forget a spa treatment menu: there's an entire treatment book here, including everything from Reiki and reflexology to aesthetic dermatology and vitamin therapy here, and more.

Busy Getting Healthy

Upon arrival, I was given a full schedule of activities for my requested Longevity program. Designed with anti-ageing and prophylactic wellness in mind, the program involved visits to myriad experts every day of my stay: a nutritionist, osteopath, medical doctor, fitness expert, masseuse, beautician and more.

I won't go into all the details—they're kind of personal—but I will share what surprised me.

Firstly, the osteopath. I had gone to an osteo after my first marathon, so I was expecting a bit of stretching and massaging on a knee that likes to act up after a long run. but almost as soon as I entered his office, he asked: "How long have you not been breathing well?" Taken aback because there were no breathing related questions on the form I filled out prior to my visit, I asked how he knew (I have asthma) and his reply was a shocker: he could tell from my posture alone that I sometimes struggled for breath. He then proceeded to gently 're-educate' my muscles to allow my diaphragm more room to help me breathe. The hour and a half I spent with him was more than worth my visit to this spa alone.

The second surprise was my metal toxology test. I expected to have some mercury in my system after some amalgam fillings had been poorly removed, but it turns out it isn't just mercury I should be worried about: it was aluminium. I'm full of the stuff, which is astonishing because I've never cooked with aluminium pots, nor used a deodorant containing it. So what's the cause? I was told that 'most Europeans' but very few Arabs and Africans have high levels of it in their system, leading me to believe even more strongly that those long-lasting, irregularly patterned vapor trails we're seeing more of in the sky aren't from plane contrails as people claim: they're the chemtrails independent journalists have been warning us about. I decide to do more research on chemtrails--its seems the 'conspiracy theorists' may well be right once again.



To detox my system of these heavy metals, I am told to drink mineral water with a high silica content, eat a lot of coriander and take selenium supplements for a month. I make a note to buy these once I'm back in London. Or perhaps, to just move from Europe all together.

The same bad news about metals is delivered to me the next day by the wonderful Bianca. A highly experienced practitioner of integrated therapy, Bianca snipped a lock of my hair to see which toxins I've been ingesting over the years, and again aluminium and mercury came up. But Bianca's real specialty is a kind of therapy pro sportsmen, supermodels and the mega-wealthy undergo regularly: ozone therapy.

Shunned by conventional doctors as being anything from ineffective to dangerous, as ozone is highly oxidizing and high concentrations can be toxic.

However, small ozone doses can increase some naturally occurring antioxidants in the body which helps fight cancer and benefits the body in other ways as well. For therapeutic use, ozone is made in a clinical generator which turns oxygen into ozone in particular concentrations, which is then mixed with your own blood and delivered directly to the body.

I'm not a huge fan of having blood taken, but Bianca's touch is so light I barely notice the needle going in, let alone around a pint of blood coursing through the tube into a glass canister, being mixed with ozone then returned to my system. Instantly, I feel refreshed, as though I'd just taken a deep breath of sea air, and this clear-headedness and incredible energy remains with me for several days.

In between all these treatments, I plunge into the hot and cold Thalassotherapy pools dotted throughout the verdant grounds. There's no way a single toxin could withstand this assault!

Family Time Too

You needn't be on a designated wellness holiday to enjoy the Longevity Vilalara Thalassa & Medical Spa; it's a relaxing luxury resort in its own right. Rooms are spacious and minimally decorated, having undergone a refurbishment about three years ago. Perched atop immense cliffs, there are spectacular views from just about anywhere. If you're not kept busy in the spa having treatments as I was, days can be whiled away on the tennis courts, lounging on the beach, or reading on one of the heavily pillowed beds scattered around the lush, fragrant gardens. Evenings are spent on the terraces overlooking the sea, savouring sumptuous dishes served by expert staff whilst being serenaded by the strains of sweet Bossa Nova singers.

The entire time I was at the resort, I felt genuinely cared for by the truly gifted experts and highly trained staff. The beauty of the grounds, comfort of my room and mineral richness of the pools all became a kind of healing meta-cocoon from which I emerged a healthier, fresher me. The Longevity Vilalara Thalassa & Medical Spa feels alive; not only in terms of its nourishing waters, but from the energy of its talented experts, amicable staff and thriving gardens. And I bet if its pools were all frozen, they would form stunning crystals, just like Emoto's happy water jars. 



