



The latest pampering places, products and treatments



SPA OF THE MONTH

**Vilalara Longevity
Thalassa Resort &
Medical Spa, Portugal**

We all know how to be fit and healthy but, too often, life gets in the way. At Longevity, you get a taste of how to improve your wellbeing and, more importantly, how to integrate it into your lifestyle when you return home.

As its name implies, this medical spa specialises in anti-ageing, with a goal of preventing disease before it happens. Last season, Longevity teamed up with the Vilalara Hotel and Thalassa Centre to create a remarkable healing destination in the Algarve. The surroundings are lush with beautiful gardens leading to a wide Algarvian beach. There's a fitness centre, at least 20 treatment rooms, three pools and several tennis courts.

THE PACKAGE

Longevity offers a huge menu of programmes including wellness, detox, fitness, weight loss, anti-ageing, mindfulness, holistic rebalance, stress management and a complete medical check-up. If none of these suit, it will design a bespoke programme for your

needs. Before my visit, I'd completed an extensive medical form, which was passed to the resident doctor to check whether I was a suitable candidate for the liquid detox. I was.

On arrival at the wellness centre, I'm given a biophysical evaluation to determine body composition, measure body fat,

alternating detoxifying and anti-inflammatory shakes, juices and soups, with names including Green booster and Golden delicious. They're colourful but slightly bland, but I find I'm never hungry. Luckily my liquid diet didn't start until the day after my arrival so I could sample the low-calorie menu which many guests opt

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muscle, body mass index, basal metabolic rate, distribution of fat, muscle mass as well as my metabolic versus chronological age – the results are too embarrassing to reveal. Next comes a personal health check with a lifestyle questionnaire, blood pressure check, basic blood analysis (for cholesterol, glucose and uric acid), plus height and weight measurements. I then see the delightful doctor who cheers me up while examining me and asking about my health problems. I'm ready to detox!

THE FOOD

During my three-day liquid diet on the Juice Fasting Detox, I'm allowed a daily supply of alkaline water at 9.5pH, herbal teas and detox supplements. I get seven 'meals' a day – something every two hours,

for. The delicious lunch menu was minestrone soup, followed by guinea fowl supreme stuffed with spinach and sun-



TRY THIS...

Feel the need for a detox treatment but can't get to a spa? Try

Botanicals new Spa Detox Body Oil (£12.50 for 50ml; botanicals.co.uk).

This luxurious, aromatic body oil blend uses the power of plants to bring beauty, health and wellbeing to your skin (whatever your skin type). It uses detoxifying essential oils such as lavender, sweet fennel, rosemary and peppermint to pep up circulation, blast toxins, boost capillaries and discourage fluid retention. It also contains natural vitamin E to give your skin a boost.

This 100 per cent natural and 99 per cent organic treat is great for helping fight cellulite. Just massage the gorgeous-smelling blend all over your body straight after a bath or shower while your skin's still warm and slightly damp, then let it work its magic...



WORDS: Emma Lewis

'IT WORKED FOR ME'

H&F writer Eva Gizowska tries an energy rebalancing treatment

What? Buqi Therapy. Prices start from £45 for 60 minutes.

Where? To find a practitioner near you, contact The Buqi Institute on 07979 771199 or visit buqiinstitute.com.

'I'm about to have Buqi Therapy – a healing system based on secret energy work from the martial arts, t'ai chi and Chinese medicine. Sheila, the therapist, was taught Buqi by the founder, enlightened master Professor Shen Hongxun.

There's no touch involved. All I have to do is sit in a chair while Sheila performs various martial-art-like movements around me. I think of the film *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*! While she swishes and whooshes round me, she repeats different mantras and sounds. The idea is that this combination of movement and sound opens up body channels, and the vibrations help



release stuck energy and pathogens (that can lead to illness and emotional problems). I'm surprised how much I'm enjoying the treatment. I can really feel different vibrations going right through my body and it's incredibly relaxing at the same time. I could sit here all day! Another benefit of Buqi is that it realigns the body and improves posture. And, yes, I do feel as if I'm walking taller and straighter afterwards! I also feel very clear and invigorated.'

dried tomatoes with celeriac purée. Dinner was roasted aubergine with garlic on a bed of rocket, followed by roasted salt cod, creamed celeriac, cherry tomatoes decorated with edible flowers.

THE TREATMENTS

My programme includes access to the relaxation area (including sauna, Turkish bath and fitness area) and daily group activities such as Slim Circuit, Burn It, Cardio Boost, Power Hike, Shape It, Beach Walk, Fit ball, Pilates, Yoga and Stretching.

My treatments include an osteopathy session; one manual lymphatic drainage; an exfoliation in the tepidarium to renew the skin; one multijet bath which relaxes muscles and joints and one bubble bath to treat cellulite.

The highlight of my stay is a session with Ricardo Rosa, a gifted physiotherapist and osteopath who manages to shift the pain I've had in my back for years. The night after my treatment is the first time I've slept without pain for three long years.

I also have a memorable aromatherapy and exfoliation massage using orange oil and sea salt in one of the thalassotherapy steam rooms. It's super relaxing and afterwards my skin feels silky smooth.

WORDS: Judy Basyra

THE VIBE

Longevity is clinical but nurturing and the staff are amazingly caring. This is not the place to go for a sociable holiday (or wasn't when I was there off-season, but perhaps in the school holidays it would have a different vibe). It's ideal, however, if you have a health goal in mind, whether it be weight loss, detox or wellbeing. Most people come to rest and reboot and, when

they leave, there's always follow-up and support by email. Back home, I feel lighter (and I do weigh 2kg less) plus there's a spring in my step.

THE PRICE

A junior suite with garden view costs from £2,650 for a double room, including set treatments and relevant drinks and food. Visit longevitywellnessresort.com.

