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WELLBEING
KELLY HOLMES ON
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CREATING
FIND COMFORT
IN CREATIVITY

LIVING
HOW FIKA CAN
BRIGHTEN YOUR DAY

ESCAPING
TAKE A DIGI DETOX
AND GO BUSH

IN THE *moment*

MINDFUL WAYS TO LIVE YOUR LIFE WELL

ISSUE #21 NEW YEAR 2019

Make a FRESH START

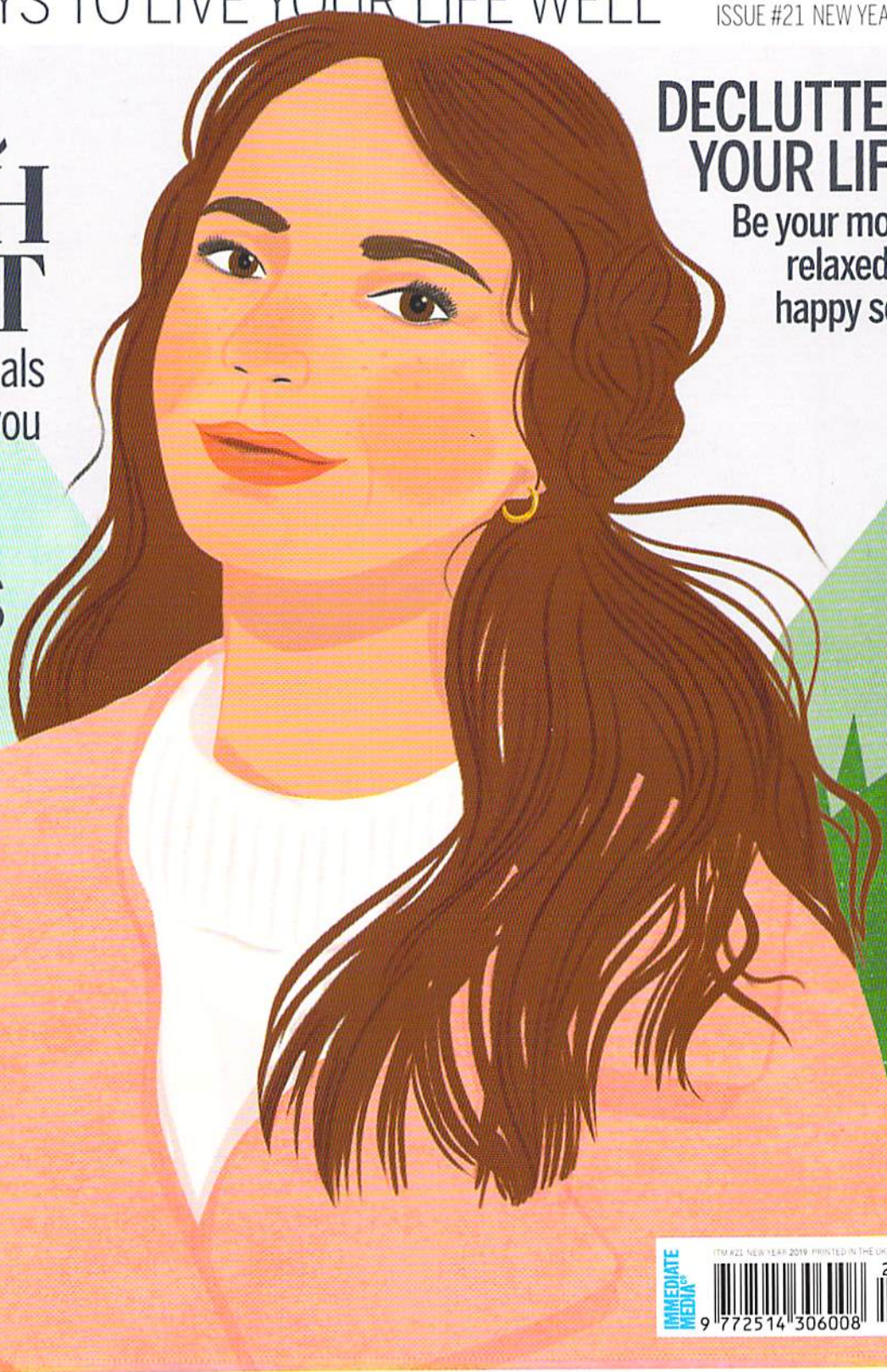
How to choose goals
to fulfil & enrich you

SLEEP SOLUTIONS

Could a sleep
retreat help you?

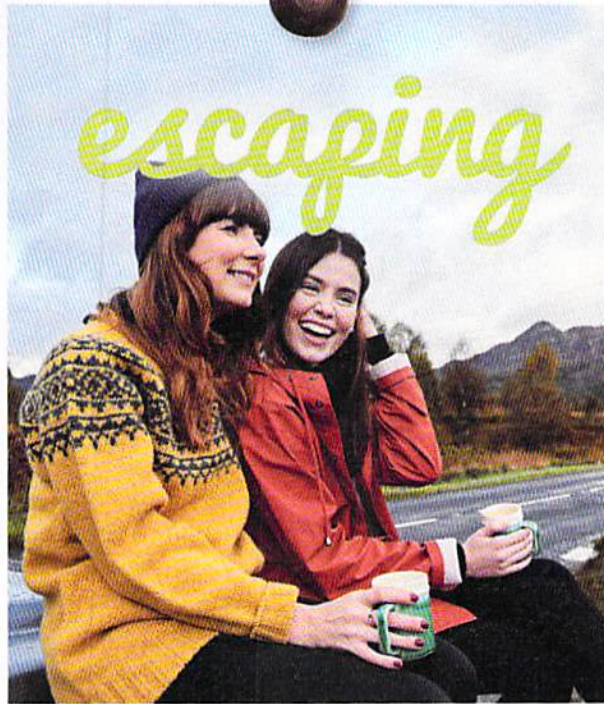
DECLUTTER YOUR LIFE

Be your most
relaxed &
happy self



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* SIMPLE WAYS TO WORRY LESS * LEARN TO LET GO OF NEGATIVITY * A RECIPE FOR A SLOW WEEKEND



COULD A SLEEP RETREAT HELP YOU? SKI-FREE SNOW
ADVENTURES; GET COSY WITH WINTER WARNERS;
PLUS, DISCOVER BUSH LIVING - THE PERFECT
ANTIDOTE TO A FAST-PACED LIFE.

escaping



The peaceful surrounds
of Tuscany, the principles
of Ayurveda and a sleep guru
guide can deepen your rest.



Sweet dreams in Tuscany

With a third of us not getting enough sleep, Jane Egginton shows us how specialised retreats can help us to rest easy

“Good sleep begins from the moment you wake up. Food, yoga and daily routine are all key to creating peaceful nights,” explains Anandi, a renowned Ayurvedic sleep expert. Although I have never had insomnia, I chose to go on a sleep retreat to learn how better nights mean better days, and vice versa. “We all need our beauty sleep,” Anandi tells our all-women group at Villa Verde, Montegonzi, in Italy’s Tuscan hills. “With good rest, nourishment and a quiet mind we can not only feel better, but also work and look better too.”

Britain is one of the most sleep-deprived nations in the world, with one in three of us not getting enough. All of us in the group have experienced difficulty sleeping at some time in our lives and our intentions for the week range from reducing sleeping pill dependency to increasing feelings of calm and concentration and looking younger. “Topping and tailing your day with a mindful practice is one of the things Anandi has taught me,” says Karen, an insomniac, who no specialist in the UK has been able to help.

Anandi, who was given her name by her teacher in India, works around the world offering practical and personal sleep programmes that combine

ancient Indian wisdom with state-of-the-art science. Using Ayurveda, the sister discipline to yoga, she establishes which of three body types we are (a simple test is also available for free on her website). Then we enjoy dreamy yogic sleep and candle-lit breath sessions as part of a holistic approach that advocates lifestyle enhancement as much as stress reduction. “Breath is actually your sleep guru,” Anandi explains.

We learn that we need to create a daily practice to support our system, known as *dinacharya*, the Ayurvedic daily routine. This means going to bed and getting up at the same time, even at weekends, and creating a ritual of regular meditation and exercise. Anandi advocates retiring at 10pm, when the sleep hormone melatonin is produced, and rising at 6am, when our body has the highest levels of mood-boosting serotonin. There is a clear scientific basis for living in harmony with these natural rhythms, just as our ancestors did.

Cities, technology and international travel all threaten to interfere, but creating daily sacred space can also support us. By coincidence, Anandi trained with Indian yogi and sleep guru Vishva-ji, who I also trained with in India when I qualified as

“It is important to really dial down stimulation several hours before bedtime and make your bedroom a sanctuary”

a yoga teacher. Vishva-ji created a system of yoga called Akhandia, meaning indivisible, or whole.

Anandi recreates many of the rituals and practices of Vishva-ji's ashram at the retreat. We chant a mantra together before our meals, just as we did in Rishikesh, the birthplace of yoga – a city that lies beside the Ganges River in the Himalayan foothills. This practice helps us to develop mindful eating patterns, in which we pause and appreciate our food, as well as creating positive vibrations and a sense of sharing, all of which set us up for a good night's sleep at the end of the day.

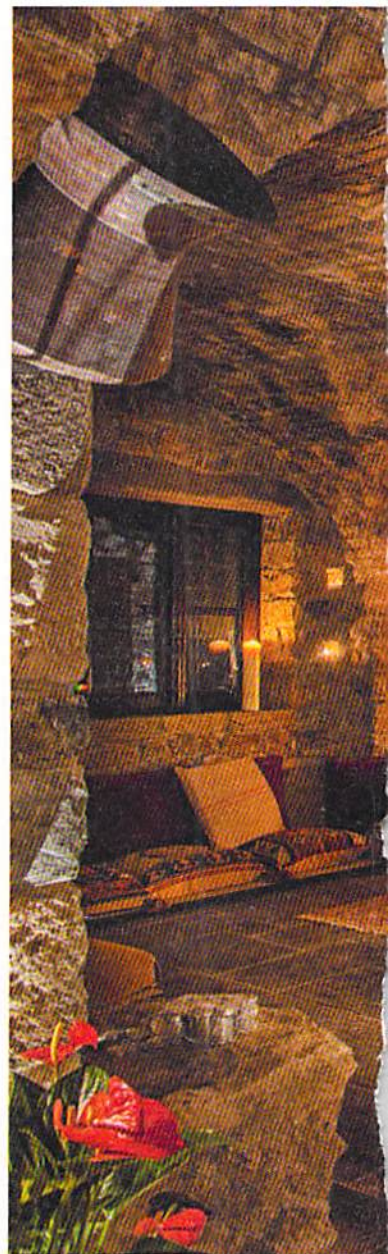
Creating a sense of ritual and quiet around the table can be as important as reducing stimulation before bed. Much has been made recently of clean sleeping, but it seems looking at our night-time routine is only giving us a fraction of the story. “It is important to really dial down stimulation several hours before bedtime and make your bedroom a dark and silent sanctuary,” says Anandi in a workshop after a silent al fresco breakfast. She emphasises that in order to attain deep and sustained rest,

we need to take a truly holistic approach and look at our daytime habits too.

Anandi recreates the magic of the Indian ashram fire *puja*, or worship, in the gardens of our beautiful hotel. Making offerings and intentions, we chant around the flames created with sticks collected from the boar-filled woodland. Immensely practical, Anandi tells us we can use candles or incense instead of fire to recreate the sacred ceremony and invoke peace, good sleep and even transformation at home. It is just one of a raft of accessible takeaways she provides to support us when we return to our daily lives.

Anandi also shares her knowledge at many of the growing number of shows dedicated to sleep health around the world, including Somnax in London. Here, all number of high-tech devices are on display, including a Philip Stein sleep bracelet. Madonna is apparently a fan of the faceless watch, which is said to channel the earth's natural frequencies to increase melatonin production.

Anandi offers a melatonin test from her site and prescribes the *Bhramari* breath, or ‘bee breathing’, technique to stimulate the sleep hormone: “It's so easy,” she says. “Close your mouth, inhale through your nose



JANE EGGINTON

Jane Egginton is a qualified yoga teacher and travel writer. She is the author of over 40 travel and health books published by The Sunday Times, Reader's Digest and Michelin.



**BOOK YOUR 2-4-1 TICKETS TO
THE BEST YOU EXPO NOW**

Don't miss Europe's biggest celebration of personal development and wellness. The Best You Expo will return to Olympia London on 15 and 16 February for two days of experts, interviews, yoga, meditation, food and wellbeing. Don't miss this weekend of empowerment, entertainment and influence at its best. Tickets are free.



Leave your comfort zone

GAIN THE CONFIDENCE TO SEIZE THE LIFE YOU CRAVE
AT THIS YEAR'S THE BEST YOU EXPO IN LONDON

Achieving the life you want, one that makes you happy and fulfils you, can sometimes feel so out of reach. Whether it's pushing yourself to the next level at work or taking up pottery, it can feel hard – or often impossible – to take the leap, even when it could lead to great things.

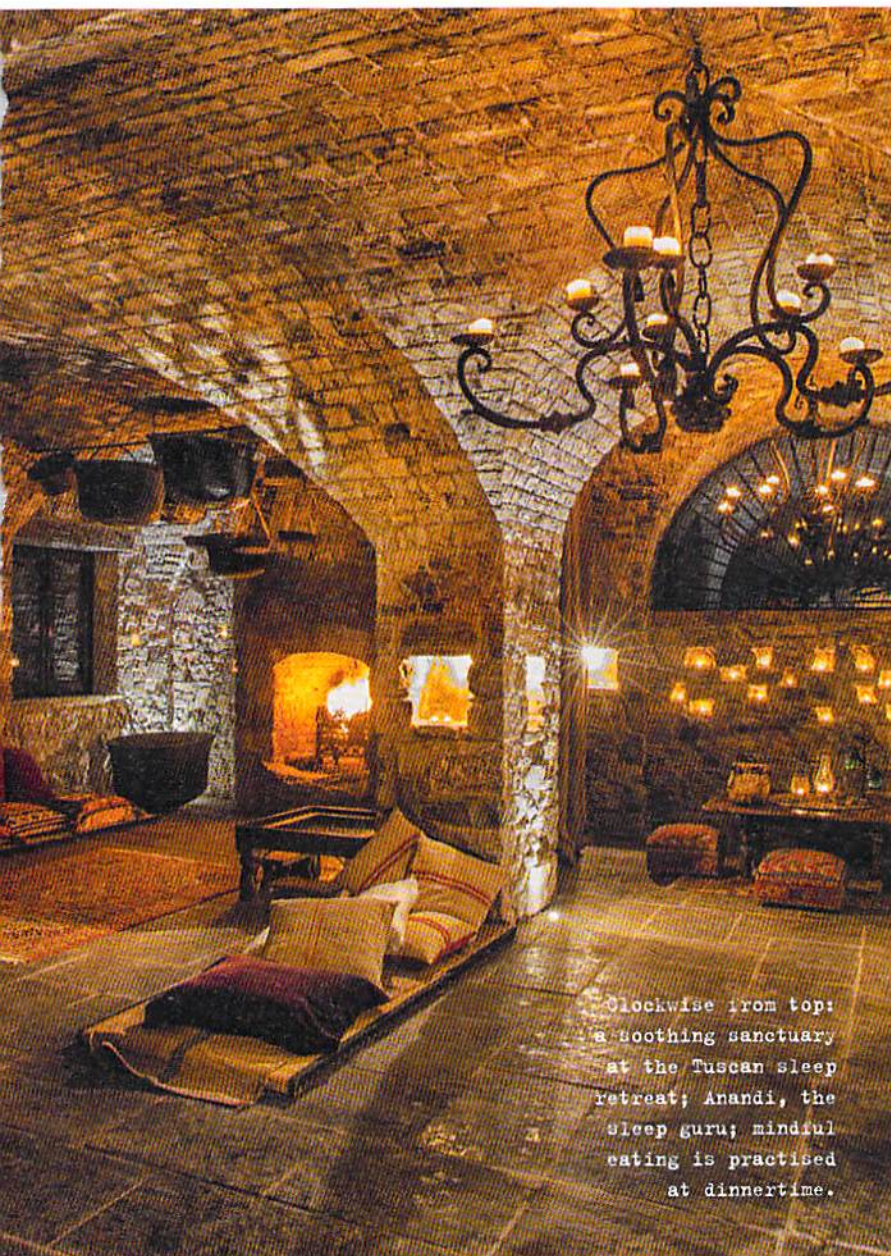
At The Best You Expo there are hundreds of opportunities to push past those mental blocks and try something new. Held in London's Olympia on 15 and 16 February, it's a festival of inspiration crammed with free classes where you can experience everything from Pilates to public speaking training – with zero judgement.

As well as more than 150 drop-in classes, there are over 180 talks from experts, including Bernardo Moya, a neuro-linguistic programming master who will inspire you to unlock your potential and overcome the fears holding you back. Internationally renowned therapist Marisa Peer will also share her simple steps to overcome unhelpful thought patterns and mental habits, with life-changing results.

The Best You Expo is a one-of-a-kind empowering event that will help you find the courage to be you. Because, once you learn how to get out of your comfort zone, you will eliminate fear and unleash purpose, passion and potential.

THE BEST YOU
expo
PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR PERSONAL ENTHUSIAST

*To view the full schedule of speakers and topics
visit thebestyouexpo.com/uk*



Clockwise from top:
a soothing sanctuary
at the Tuscan sleep
retreat; Anandi, the
sleep guru; mindful
eating is practised
at dinnertime.



and exhale by humming as if you were a bumble bee."

In a one-to-one consultation, Anandi suggests daily meditation, yoga and 15 minutes of *anuloma viloma* (alternate nostril breathing) to balance my nervous system. "You may be doing these things as your regular practice, but with what attitude and commitment?" she asks. It is firm, loving advice and feels like the wake-up call I need.

During the retreat, we enjoy talks on Ayurveda and nutrition and are supported in our goals. We have homework – to go out and put our bare feet on the earth – and we're introduced to diets and healing herbs specific to our body types. Anandi gives us an inspiring reading and music list, as well as a recipe for a night-time tonic with almond, saffron and Ashwagandha, an Ayurvedic plant that combats stress and boosts creativity.

"Commit to doing 10 things every day that are nourishing and that you enjoy," Anandi tells us on the last day with a smile. Smiling more may be one of them, she suggests, along with creating sacred space, self-care and living in harmony with the seasons. To keep us on the right track, we each take home Anandi's book, *Breathe Better, Sleep Better* and a personalised, integrated wellness programme that is designed to last a lifetime.

As for Karen, by the end of the week she has cut out all sleeping pills, concluding of Anandi: "This woman has literally saved my life." ☺

TRY FOR YOURSELF

As well as retreats in Italy, Anandi also offers one-to-one consultations in London. Visit Thesleepguru.co.uk for more details.