

# POST TRAVEL



PT1

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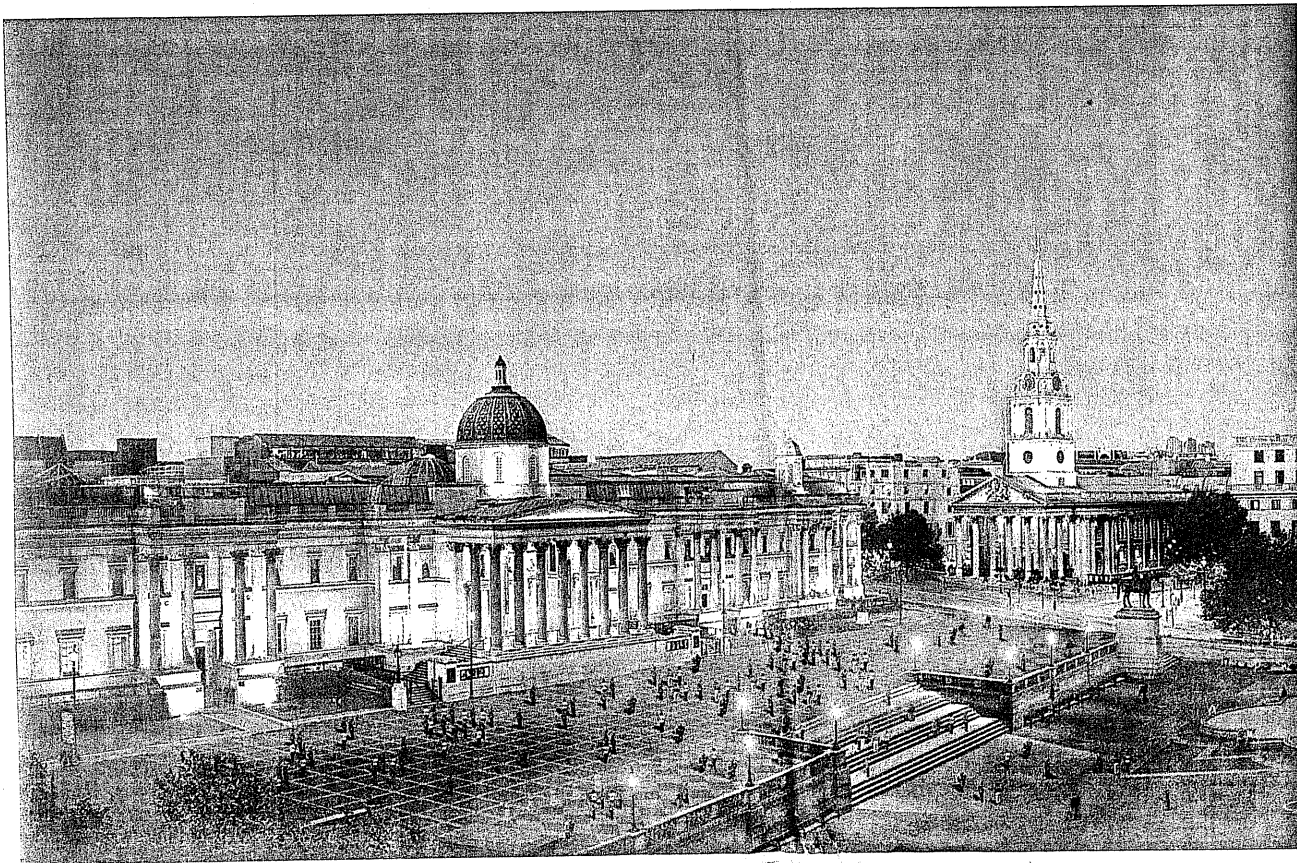
## Swamis and sanctuaries

Yoga retreats are becoming the new spas. A look at five to try. Page PT3

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## DESTINATION: THE UNITED KINGDOM



Trafalgar in transformation: An artist's rendering of the pedestrianization of London's most famous square. Nearly complete, the plan includes wide open spaces, and the restoration of its original

### Up close and personal with Will



CLEO PASKAL  
in London

No! Do not grab his hand! Bad move! Stop! Damn it. You did not listen. Now let us see where it gets you. That is right. They are coming to stab you. Who is the smarty pants now, eh, Richard?

intellectually curtsy, then move on to less daunting playmates.

Until now.

I am standing at the foot of the stage of the Globe Theatre, on the South Bank of the Thames in London. And Richard II is about to get stabbed to death. Oh, we have warned him.

The Globe is a meticulous recreation of Shakespeare's original theatre, built in 1599. The walls are of plaster, goat hair, lime putty and sand. There are cushioned hardwood benches — around the outer edge of the circular theatre, huge, oak beams supporting the stage, and an open roof that lets in the pigeons.

I am among the "groundlings," a Tudor term for the hardy (broke) folks who forsake a seat in favour of standing at the foot of the stage

Trafalgar Square, at the heart and soul of the British Empire, is being transformed

## The people's piazza

JOHN GEIGER  
in London

Trafalgar Square was, of course, named to honour the historic naval engagement off Cape Trafalgar on the southwest coast of Spain on Oct. 21, 1805, where the British fleet under Horatio Nelson defeated the allied French and Spanish fleets. It is mildly ironic, then, that the major feature of the square honouring

the Landseer lion sculptures, before fleeing to Covent Garden, St. James's Park, Jermyn Street or some other, more pedestrian-friendly precinct. As an example of urban planning, however, it was simply an abomination. Except for protest marchers, natives of London rarely set foot in the place — if only to avoid the pigeon droppings.

When opened in 1840, it was intended as a symbol of the might of the British Empire. Trafalgar Square has on either side of it the high commissions of two great dominions, South Africa House and Canada House. But

LIVE

Named Capital in

BY ARI

On June 5, Secretary of C that Liverpool as the Capital it marked the nary journey 20 years ag brink of suicid Since the il shipping ende World War, I besieged by in unrest, and a northern t happens to b the Beatles. A decade ag to look to the

## DESTINATION: SPAS

## Five retreats for the inner you

BY LISA CHERRY

The definition of a relaxing vacation is changing. A decade ago, this typically meant lying on a beach in the Caribbean. Then came the active vacation, with tennis, golf or some other recreational draw the highlight of the trip. Next came spas, with their blend of pampering and rejuvenation.

But with more people discovering the mind and body benefits of yoga, a new vacation trend is emerging for those on the cutting edge of relaxation: the yoga retreat. From the novice, to the truly addicted yogis, here are five yoga retreats to soothe the soul.

**Sivananda Ashram Yoga Camp** In the countryside of Val Morin, Que., in the Laurentian Mountains, the Sivananda Ashram Yoga Camp is the place to go if you want to immerse yourself in the strict yogic way of life. Sivananda is renowned for its discipline and teaches not just the *asanas* (poses) but other ancient elements of yoga, such as meditation, *pranayama* (breathing), exercises and the healing power of chanting.

The volunteer cook/receptionist showed us into a broad, beige, straw-baled building, and to the Spartan, yet cozy rooms. There was a 4 p.m. yoga class in a room surrounded by expansive windows on to the Laurentians. In summer, classes are held beneath the skies, on one of four Olympic pool-sized yoga decks.

Be prepared for the rules: Wake-up at 5:30 a.m., meditation at 6 a.m., asana and pranayama at 8 a.m., brunch at 10 a.m., karmic yoga from 11 a.m. to noon, philosophical class at noon, free time till 4 p.m., yoga at 4 p.m., dinner at 6 p.m., meditation at 8 p.m., chanting at 8:30 p.m.

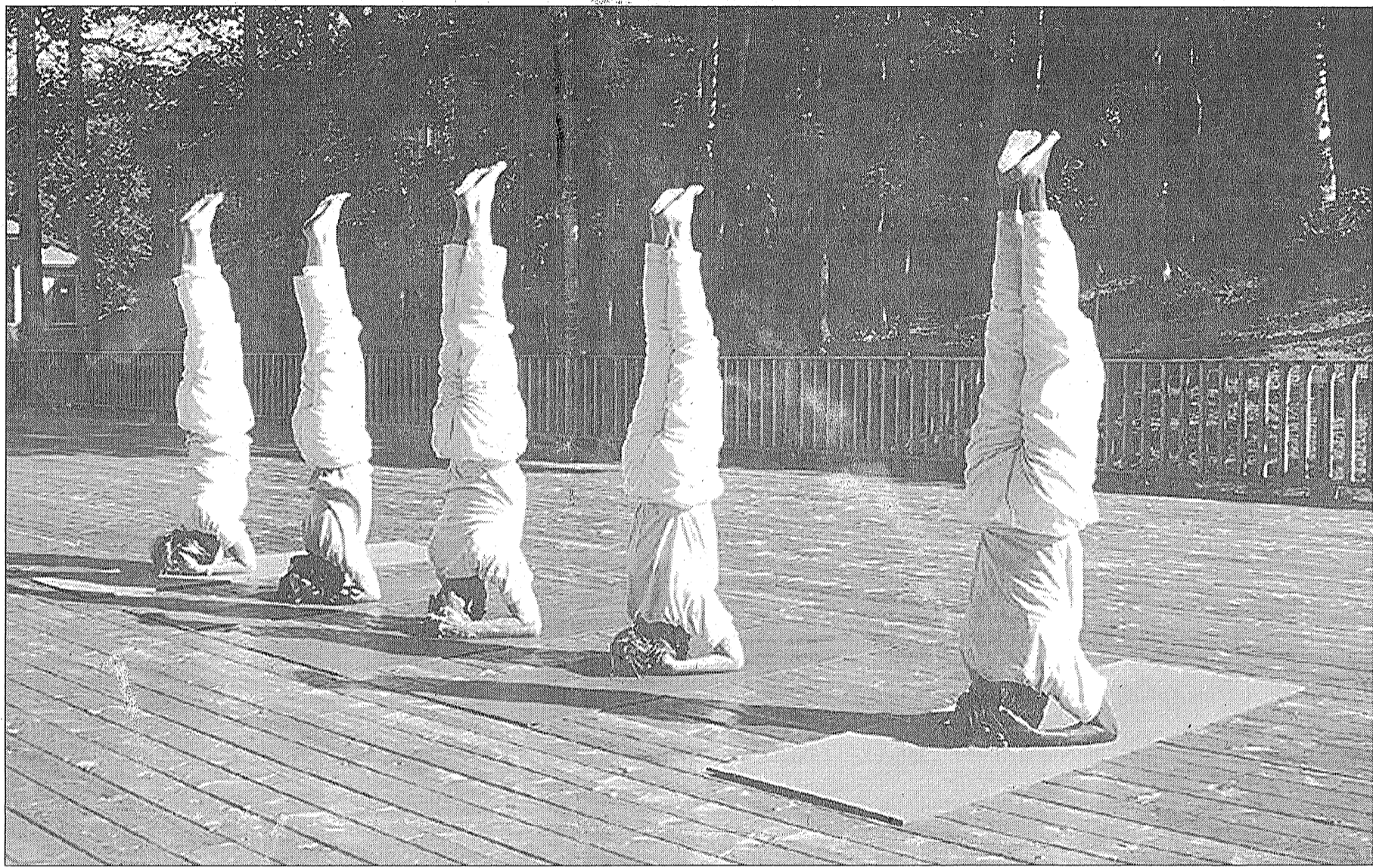
Then, off to bed at 10 p.m. in a semi-private room to sleep on futons set above a heated cement floor. I proudly followed all the rules except one evening, when I cheated on the vegetarian diet by slipping out to Cal's Pizza.

Others on the retreat included an occupational therapist, a publicist and geobiologist. The swami led us in a discussion on fear, life, death. The disciplined schedule stayed with me on my return home. I was doing yoga every morning.

**Ananda Yoga Spa** In Codrington, Ont., the Ananda Yoga Spa focuses on Ayurvedic lifestyle principles from which yoga first emerged. The ancient yogis fed the body and soul through diet, detoxifying, pranayama and meditation — just some of the principles passed down in the 5,000-year-old Vedic scriptures.

Linda Quinn opened the spa two years ago "as an extension of myself, and because people want pampering." Far from the austere lifestyle of Sivananda, however, Ananda is a 3,000-square-foot retreat graced with Buddhist statues, Guest suites are equipped with terry cloth slippers, robes, a silk-covered duvet, bath salts, Indian silk wall hangings, and fireplaces.

Atop the queen-sized bed is a questionnaire to help determine: what *dosha* (body/mind type) we are. *Yatta* (air)? *Pitta* (fire)?



SIVANANDA ASHRAM YOGA CAMP

Are yoga retreats the new spas? At Sivananda Ashram Yoga Camp, in Quebec's Laurentians, visitors immerse themselves in a strict yogic environment as a soothing getaway.

one of the most renowned yoga centres in Canada, the Salt Spring Centre of Yoga.

The setting is a sprawling, 28 hectares of meadows and gardens against a backdrop of 400-year-old trees. The meditation sanctuary and main hall/dormitory offer classical yoga and Ayurvedic treatments.

We learned from the legendary 80-year-old Baba Hari Dass, the centre's spiritual teacher, and mingled with dozens of fellow yogis in colourful hippy garb camping or living in dormitories. Intense, but informal, the centre offers classes in a variety of yoga styles, from ashtanga to kripalu to Ayurvedic yoga.

There, doing yoga in the breeze under huge white tents, meditating in the gardens and listening to the wisdom of Baba Hari Dass, is where I learned about the long-term benefits of bringing yoga into your daily life.

"Do it at least one hour every day," said Lila Osterman, 83, one of the profoundly wise and energetic teachers. "It is vital for your life."

**Hollyhock** Glaciers pounded and carved out the island of Cortes in B.C. Gulf Islands, but the energy at Hollyhock is gentle and comforting. Formerly called the Cold Mountain Institute, Hollyhock offers more than 100 courses each year in various areas of self-growth. Yoga, of course, is featured in many of them. No guru is espoused here, except for the one people find within

themselves during their yoga poses or while meditating.

**Omega Institute** The Omega Institute is a much larger version of Hollyhock, drawing 20,000 visitors a year to Rhinebeck, in the heart of the Hudson Valley region of New York. The centre, one of the most renowned holistic retreat centres in North America, is located at a former summer camp — and still resembles one — with 60 hectares of rolling hills and woodlands, dotted with rustic cottages and dormitories.

Like Hollyhock, Omega is a retreat for people from all walks of life seeking inner peace or those just wanting to expand their yoga repertoire. And they can do so in more than 250 courses.

One of them, entitled Ocean of Yoga, is led by T.K.V. Desikachar. His renowned father, Krysnamacharya, taught B.K. Iyengar, K. Pattabi Jois, and Vanda Scaravelli, who also went on to become teaching legends. Truly his father's son, Desikachar encouraged us not to try to fit into the perfect poses of our neighbours, but to adjust them for our individual bodies.

There are medical doctors learning shamanism, lawyers, bankers, neurosurgeons and psychologists taking yoga. They have come to Omega for growth and healing. And that, I have learned, will come with yoga.

National Post

■ Lisa Cherry is working on her upcoming book *Stories from the Yogic Heart*.

## IF YOU GO

**Sivananda Ashram Yoga Camp** Upcoming courses: Yoga Teacher's Training Course, June 29 to July 26, Sept. 7 to Oct. 4; Advanced Yoga Teacher's Training Course, Aug. 3 to 30; Raja Yoga Intensive Course, Aug. 3 to 30; Summer Symposium: Yoga and the Frontiers of the New Sciences, July 27 to Aug. 2. Contact [www.sivananda.org/camp](http://www.sivananda.org/camp); 800-263-9642.

**Ananda Yoga Spa Weekend** Spa Package starts at \$550 a person, double occupancy, and includes a \$250 spa voucher, two nights accommodation, six meals, two yoga classes, two

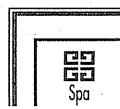
Ayurvedic workshops. Spa services include: Abhyanga/Swedana (Ayurvedic massage and steam), Pizzichilli (simultaneous flow of warm oil and Ayurvedic massage and bath), Mithi Chikitsa (Ayurvedic mud application, mud bath and massage), Royal Milk Bath (rose milk bath and massage). Contact [www.yogaspa.ca](http://www.yogaspa.ca); 888-815-9772.

**Salt Spring Centre of Yoga** Upcoming events: Baba Hari Dass Summer Yoga Retreat, July 31 to Aug. 10; Women's weekends Sept 26 to 28, Oct 24 to 26, Nov. 14 to 16. Contact [www.saltspringcentre-ofyoga.com](http://www.saltspringcentre-ofyoga.com); 250-537-2326.

**Hollyhock** Upcoming courses: Yoga for Optimal Health, July 3 to 6; Yoga Intensive, July 20 to 25; The Alchemy of Yoga and Kirtan, Aug. 3 to 7; The Essence of Yoga, Sept. 11 to 14. Spa services: Sea stone massage, aromatherapy, lymphatic drainage, reiki, reflexology, scalp massage, essential oil wrap, and honey facial. Contact [www.hollyhock.ca](http://www.hollyhock.ca); 800-933-6339.

**Omega Institute** Upcoming courses: Yogilates, June 27 to 29; Introduction to Yoga, Aug. 15 to 17. Contact [www.omega.org](http://www.omega.org); 800-944-1001.

25 Million Reasons



Spa



duvet, bath salts, Indian silk wall hangings, and fireplaces.

Atop the queen-sized bed is a questionnaire to help determine: what *dosha* (body/mind type) we are. *Vatta* (air)? *Pitta* (fire)? *Kapha* (earth)? One's dosha determines one's treatments at the spa, as well as the intensity of yoga exercises. I discover I am a *vatta/pitta*; my mind is more focused when I do gentle yoga.

The day starts at 7 a.m. with a Scaravelli-style yoga class. This is a slow, gentle yoga with a focus on breathing rather than on the perfection of the pose.

After a quick consult with Linda, detoxifying and pampering treatments begin. Among them is *shirodhara* (continual flow of oil on the forehead to aid the nervous system) and *abhyanga/swedana* (Ayurvedic massage and steam).

At nighttime, worn out by massages, yoga and rosewater footbaths, the day ends with a workshop on Ayurvedic medicine. What we take away is the idea of comfort within ourselves: when we honour our bodies according to our particular dosha, health will follow.

**Salt Spring Centre of Yoga** The largest of B.C.'s Gulf Islands, Salt Spring Island is home to painter Robert Bateman and dozens of other artists. It is said to be one of the spiritual energy centres of the world, apparently sitting atop a huge, rose quartz crystal. It is home to ancient Native lands, a Buddhist monastery perched on top of the stunning Mount Tuam, a cluster of energy healers, and



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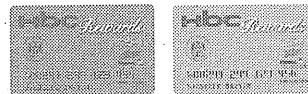


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