



Far left and below: Halas 71, the 51m luxury yacht chartered by Vivamayr

GUT INSTINCT || This Austrian resort offers an energy-boosting dietary detox on a classic yacht. By Zöe Dickens

The outside of your thigh is connected to your large intestine, and the inside to the small intestine,” my masseuse is explaining. “So if you’re ever having trouble going to the toilet, just give your leg a rub and you’ll be fine.” Welcome to Vivamayr, the health clinic where even the most intimate bodily functions are up for open discussion.

Based on the Mayr method – developed by Dr Franz Xavier Mayr in the early 20th century to improve well-being by focusing on digestive health – Vivamayr is one of the most highly regarded complementary medicine facilities in the world, successfully treating everything from diabetes to infertility. Counting royalty, Hollywood stars and supermodels among its clientele, the method usually involves an intense three-week detoxification process at one of its facilities in Austria. Last spring, however, the clinic decamped to Turkey with its best doctors and most loyal clients to experience Vivamayr at Sea on board the 51-metre classic yacht *Halas 71*.

“We want to provide a different way of motivating people and offer a holiday for health,” says Dr Harald Stossier, medical director at Vivamayr’s Maria Wörth clinic.

The onboard programme includes the most effective treatments: a daily routine beginning with light exercise on the sundeck, followed by a detoxifying massage chosen to target your specific health concerns, with options including reflexology and lymphatic drainage.

There are daily abdominal examinations and progress meetings with Dr Stossier, the first of which involves a session of “functional myodiagnosics” to examine the body’s reaction to common allergens and medicines. I am surprised to be told that the eczema I’ve suffered on and off since childhood is actually a growing intolerance to lactose – resulting, horrifyingly – in a ban on cheese and chocolate.

Nutrition is extremely important at Vivamayr. Having heard tales of restrictive diets and minuscule portions, I was surprised to find the food (while restricted to 1,100 calories per day) varied and satisfying, with typical meals including sea bass with broccoli, artichoke and an olive-and-mushroom tapenade. “The key is to keep things simple and easy,” explains executive chef Emanuela Fischer. “No foods are off limits, but we use organic, seasonal ingredients and avoid adding lots of components that are hard to digest.” I notice that the mints in my cabin’s amenity

kit mysteriously disappear on the first morning.

While my fellow patients, some of whom have been returning to Vivamayr annually for more than a decade, inform me that the menu on board is more generous than at the clinics, what you eat is perhaps not as important as how you eat it. It is drilled into us that proper digestion relies on a few simple rules: chew 30 times per mouthful; don’t drink with meals (to avoid diluting stomach acid); have a big breakfast, an average lunch and a small dinner; and avoid raw foods after 4pm, as they won’t be digested overnight. “The principles of eating slowly and chewing well are not new – it’s what your grandmother would have told you,” explains Stossier. “But you must consider your body’s ability to metabolise food at the moment you want to eat it. New habits, such as snacking and eating quickly or very late, are the cause of many modern illnesses.”

Whether overzealous or common sense, these measures do work. By day three I am sleeping better, my stomach is flatter, my eczema is clearing up and I have enough energy for a hike up a steep cliff to some ruins. The opportunity to head ashore, enjoy the sights and forget about cleansing and detoxifying for an hour is undoubtedly one of the greatest benefits of Vivamayr at Sea.

To recreate the experience on your own yacht you’ll need a crew strong-willed enough to keep you on track. And, while Vivamayr offers training for private chefs, personal trainers and massage therapists, it isn’t yet possible to bring your own Vivamayr doctor on board. Pay a visit to one of its day clinics in London or Vienna and a doctor can offer recommendations for your trip. It may not be the full Vivamayr experience, but it’s guaranteed to be a lot healthier than the usual decadent alternative. vivamayr.com



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