

TRAVEL SOUTH AFRICA



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Work, rest and play

Organic food growing where you eat it, acro yoga on the lawn, and a chance to find the centre of the maze make for a rewarding retreat in the Western Cape

Overberg literally means “over the mountain”, and heading to the Overberg Highlands for a yoga retreat certainly felt like a mental leap, leaving city stresses behind in the 90-minute drive from Cape Town. But, tranquil and isolated though it is, the Drift Farm Homestead is no ashram. It’s a working organic farm and winery, making it the perfect location for one of Satori Africa’s wellbeing breaks, which combine restorative practice with the good things in life – even wine, in moderation.

The 10 attendees were a mix of couples and singles. After settling in to the modern, luxurious guestrooms, we were all keen to explore the organic garden, to sample and savour what would later make its way onto our plates. This already involved some level of body bending as we climbed onto each other’s shoulders to reach the few remaining tamarillo fruit in the trees, or crouched down to pick gooseberries and snap peas straight from the ground, inhaling the delicious fragrances from several different herbs.

For the duration of the retreat guests were treated to a specially prepared vegetarian feast by chef Lindy Aronowitz from Zooop, an organic deli in nearby Caledon, incorporating the farm’s produce and “prepared with love”.

On any other occasion the Drift Farm has all food and drink bases covered with a pantry that includes the farm’s wines, ciders and other produce for sale. Guests can also opt for pre-prepared meals or dine at local restaurants, of which there are several excellent choices.

The weekend involved different styles of practice led by Cape Town yoga teacher Will Lindeque and Satori Africa’s founder, Mark Bland. A highlight was a playful session of acro yoga on the lawn – sometimes referred to as partner yoga or the yoga of trust because the idea of ‘flying’ while you rest your pelvis on a stranger’s lifted feet

requires giving up some control. There we were on the lawns doing somersaults, handstands and other things adults don’t do nearly enough, if at all.

One of the key points of the retreat was also to go offline; three days with phones on flight mode, laptops packed away and without hearing the sound of a car.

Returning to the world of traffic – both online and off – can be a task. A lesson learned was to incorporate some quiet time into daily life. It doesn’t take much.

You might take two minutes at the top of every hour to turn off your phone, close your eyes, and breathe. Or perhaps eat your lunch outside or, if you’re lucky to be near a park or beach, take off your shoes and sink your toes into the grass or sand.

The weekend of mindfulness can be summed up in the Do Hyun Choe quote at the entrance of the Drift Farm’s maze, fringed with trees symbolising the twelve zodiac signs: “Stillness is what creates love. Movement is what creates life. To be still and still moving – this is everything.” ●

Eugene Yiga in Overberg

