

Seaside Surrender

by Lara Potgieter

Arriving at The Beach House in Britannia Bay, I knew I had stumbled upon a true West Coast gem. Combining the luxury and style of a five-star hotel with the laidback ease of a holiday home, the house offers the best of both worlds. The sweeping view of the Bay erases any lingering city stressors, the beautiful kitchen inspires the mindful creation of nourishing meals, and the lovingly chosen details invite relaxation at every level. Think comfy deck chairs and beanbags dotting a sunlit patio, cosy corners for reading or watching the sunset, comfortable bedrooms with down duvets and heated towel rails for deep sleep, and a sparkling courtyard feature pool for summertime fun. Best of all, a short private boardwalk leads directly onto the beach, where guests can enjoy the stand up paddle boards, boogie boards and kayaks all provided in the house. For indoor entertainment, an infrared sauna and pool and table tennis table are on hand to make sure there's never a dull moment to be had.

Myriad offerings aside, the real reason I find myself in this little slice of paradise is, of course, for the yoga. People attend yoga retreats for all sorts of reasons – to gain a foundation and understanding of the discipline, to deepen an already existing practice, to recover from or prepare for a challenging life period, or simply to escape for a few days of restoration. While I've been practising for years and my own intention was simply to relax and reset, I was surprised by how much I learnt in the two days with retreat host and yogi extraordinaire Joëlle Sleebos.

The morning vinyasa and evening yin offered the perfect balance of strength and surrender.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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Joëlle is a prime example of the dynamite in small packages adage. With a Masters Degree in Economics, she's spent many years navigating the two worlds as both an economist and a yoga and fitness instructor. I am probably one of hundreds of students who is grateful for the fact that she took the plunge to fully immerse herself in the latter, where her true passion and purpose are palpable.

She's a RYT 500 certified vinyasa, budokon and suspension yoga teacher, as well as a personal trainer and freestyle aerobic instructor. The morning yoga and evening vinyasa classes offered the perfect balance of strength and surrender. The intimate nature of the retreat allowed her prioritisation of correct alignment and execution to really come to the fore, and she adjusted and guided me in ways I had never experienced (or even thought of) in my usual studio classes.

Between the juicy evening yin and meditation sessions, the dynamic morning vinyasa and the totally indulgent free time for blimping in the house or enjoying the exclusive strip of beach, there was time for one more very important thing – food! The weekend was catered for by the inimitable Arabella Parkinson of 'Eat to Thrive'. An integrative nutrition and health coach and holistic chef, Arabella specialises in deeply nourishing, seasonal and sustainable eating that also happens to be incredibly delicious. Between her feast-worthy brunches, colourful snack platters and decadent dinners, I ate far more than I expected to on a health retreat! Add to this the virtually unlimited supply of treats from the likes of Wazoogle, Herbivore, Native, One-Juice and Uber Flavour, and you've got a healthy foodie's dream come true.

All told, I couldn't rate the experience more highly, and would recommend that anyone treat themselves to one of Joëlle's exclusive upcoming retreats in drool-worthy destinations...

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