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# vegan health & fitness

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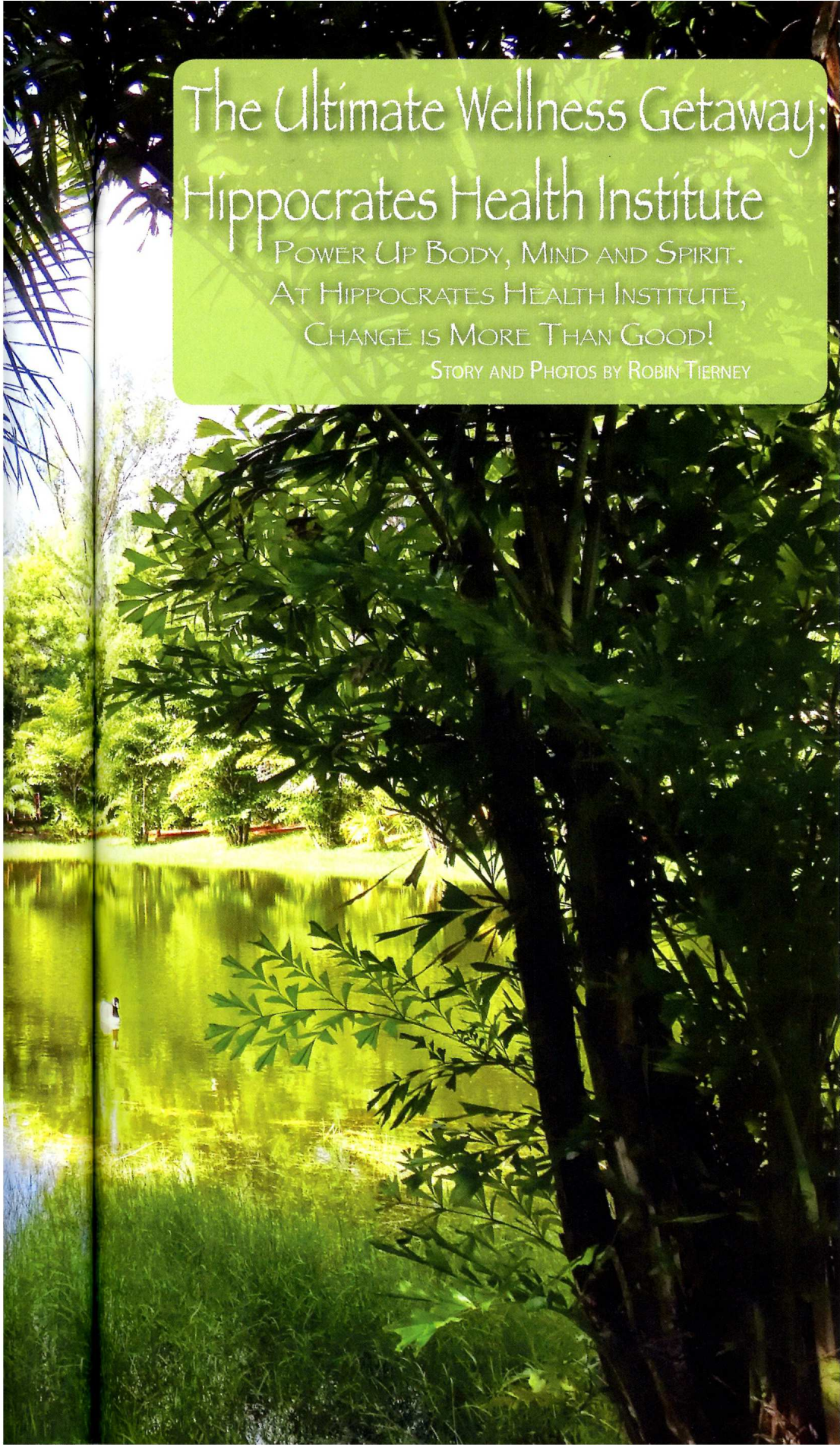
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# The Ultimate Wellness Getaway: Hippocrates Health Institute

POWER UP BODY, MIND AND SPIRIT.  
AT HIPPOCRATES HEALTH INSTITUTE,  
CHANGE IS MORE THAN GOOD!

STORY AND PHOTOS BY ROBIN TIERNEY

When joint pain from an autoimmune disease threatened to sideline her tennis career, Venus Williams headed for Hippocrates Health Institute in West Palm Springs, Florida. But this is no celebrity rehab resort. It's a place where people from all walks of life—super-fit to seriously ill, singles, couples and families, homebodies to jetsetters from around the globe—come for life-changing results. What they have in common is the desire to turbocharge their health through a high-nutrition raw vegan diet, eclectic aerobic exercise choices and advanced noninvasive therapies to strengthen body, mind and spirit.

HHI evolved from a natural healing practice opened in 1956 by Ann Wigmore after she healed herself of colon cancer using wheatgrass and vitamin- and enzyme-rich raw foods. Dr. Brian Clement and Anna Maria Clement assumed leadership of the nonprofit in 1987. They moved it from a Boston brownstone to tropical Florida. They fortified the Institute's life transformation program with wellness practices derived from cultures worldwide and decades of research. The focus remains on "helping people help themselves," says Dr. Clement. They remain deeply involved, giving lectures on topics from juice fasting to home remedies made from common plants.

The wellness mecca takes its name from the legendary physician of ancient Greece, who issued the ultimate prescription: "Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food."

## RAW VEGAN'S JUST THE START

HHI's raw vegan diet is prepared with living, enzyme-rich foods. The cornerstones: fresh wheatgrass, truly green juice, and legumes, beans, seeds and vegetables that have been freshly sprouted. This diet is paired with immune system-boosting, detox and energy therapies, colonic cleansing, exercise and counseling aimed at reducing stress, resolving emotional issues and moving forward. The idea is that strengthening the immune system and spirit will lead to optimal health.

The core program lasts 21 days, the time typically needed to form a new habit, but one- and two-week stays are offered. "It makes a wonderful vacation," says Hanna, an avid cyclist/runner from Denmark, referring to the combination of health-boosting activities enjoyed "in this sunny, beautiful place" and enlightenment that you can take home.

Guests receive a thick binder of wisdom to help them continue the wellness program at home. Here's a peek through the palm trees at what's happening on HHI's eco-friendly 50-acre tropical campus.

### NUTRITION THAT STRENGTHENS BODY & MIND

Sprouts, nutmeat loaf, sunflower seed "Better Than Tuna," cabbage wraps -- these aren't your typical gut-busting resort dishes. The drinks are green, not fruity, with no alcohol -- or even fruit. The signature high-octane thirst-quenchers made from select protein-packed, enzyme-laden sprouts, cucumber and celery. Instead of coffee and soft drinks, there are distilled water stations around campus, there is lots of green juice and two ounces, morning and afternoon, of wheatgrass juice, which is especially sweet because it's made fresh daily from grass harvested at the on site greenhouse.

"Two ounces of wheatgrass juice packs the nutrition equivalent to five pounds of the best organic vegetables, says garden/greenhouse director Brian Hetrich. This nature-made detox agent is a superb source of living chlorophyll, which helps oxygenate the body, purify blood and liver, cleanse the digestive tract and rebuild tissues.

A greenhouse tour reveals a dizzying array of sprouts a-growing. The nearby garden's planted with stevia, thyme, vegetables and other plants grown for supplying organic produce for the kitchen, which serves the nutrient-dense lunch and dinner buffet-style.

At the buffet guests get their fill of sprouts, organic raw veggies such as okra, a probiotic in the form of fermented raw red cabbage, and what are deemed "side-dishes" at HHI, such as raw tabouleh, raw pizza, nut pates and kale/butternut squash salad. The diet minimizes fruit (their theory is that fructose can feed disease and thwart appetite management), processed oil (obtaining it from whole foods, unextracted, is so much healthier), added salt (save that for baths, use the chips of dulse, a sea veggie instead), vinegar (save that for skin care), potatoes and pastas, grains (swaps include sprouted buckwheat "buckwheaties" and sprouted nut dehydrated crackers). Within days, the body's pH balance makes a desirable shift to a more alkaline state.

### UNEXPECTED EXERCISE CHOICES FOR A GUILT-FREE BREAK FROM YOUR ROUTINE

"Here you can make things happen, in a healthy environment and community of like-minded people," says Jack Kasinski, a ballroom and salsa dancer, runner and cyclist visiting from Alberta, Canada, for the second time. After first going raw vegan, he attained the weight and energy level he'd had in his high school sports days. "Fitness alone won't make you slim and strong," he says.

But HHI offers plenty of engaging fitness choices. You're likely to discover new muscles after taking classes such as belly dancing (expect to sweat while undulating those shoulders, hips and even your hands), rebounding on a mini trampoline (a fun way to flush the lymphatic system and fortify cells), and the "cold plunge," jumping 7 times between the ozone hot tub and cold-water immersion pool. Other choices include yoga, qigong, hula hooping, jogging around the campus's woodlands and ponds, and occasionally, "Laughter Yoga."

### NONINVASIVE ALTERNATIVE THERAPIES TUNE UP BODY AND SPIRIT

The HHI menu of services, which include several you're not likely to find anywhere else, are offered to reboot the immune system, remove toxins, enhance clarity and help build inner and outer strength.

Infrared saunas stimulate the body to release toxic contaminants, including mercury and lead, which affect body and brain. Oxygen therapies range from exercising with oxygen to lying in a pressurized hyperbaric chamber. Athletes use the latter to help heal wounds, fight inflammation and recover faster from injuries.

Then there's H-Wave, a hot new sci-fi-worthy technology. H-Wave's varying frequencies and intensities initiate dynamic muscle contractions that help stimulate lymphatic drainage, improve circulation, accelerate tissue healing 40 to 60% faster, and even not only alleviate, but remove the cause of pain. It's being used by athletes from football players to ballerinas.

Each Friday, departing guests attend "graduation," a time to celebrate progress and friendships made. "Be an example" says director, Dr. Brian Clement -- after all, these graduates are living proof that you can take control of your health. When it comes to transforming resolutions to reality, Hippocrates offers a fine, fit example.



Photos by Robin Tierney

More info:  
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