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Previously based only in Austria – in Vienna and at two lakeside sites, Altaussee and Maria Wörth, below – the Vivamayr clinic now has a site on London’s Harley Street, below right



AUSTRIA → LONDON



It was clear that I had slipped when I ate lunch staring at my computer. I’d fallen off the Vivamayr wagon. Did I chew each mouthful 40 times so as to start the vital process of digestion in my mouth? No, I wolfed it down. Exhaustively masticating an alkaline diet and eating “no raw after four” are mantras Vivamayr aficionados take home with them, following the famous detox programme known as the Cure. But as of this month, you no longer need to visit one of Vivamayr’s three Austrian sites to learn it, as its first clinic outside the country opens on London’s Harley Street.

The number of English checking in to the Austrian clinics is growing, and already a third of all guests – who fly in with exhaustion, chronic indigestion and stress – come from London, so it makes sense to have an outpost here. As well as an introduction to the Vivamayr principles for those who have never been, the London centre will provide a refresher for Vivamayr alumni like me, and you can also stock up on its famous acid-busting alkaline base powder and other vitamin, trace-element and mineral supplies. On-site doctors offer medical checks, kinesiology, stress tests, intravenous infusions, oxygen therapy and food-intolerance assessments.

It seemed so easy in Austria. Sitting in the calm of the Vivamayr detoxification dining room, overlooking the pine-bordered Altaussee lake, being served herb-scattered potatoes and avocado for breakfast by dirndl-wearing waitresses. I was serene, until I sneaked a banned peek at my mobile phone and felt the familiar tug of indigestion.

However beneficial the treatments are, their value will lessen over time unless, as Dr Harald Stossier, director of Viva Centre for Modern Mayr Medicine impresses, you do the homework. There are lectures about the diet and hormone regulation and, for those who’ve lapsed (like me), hints about incorporating the Vivamayr principles into everyday life.

With that computer-lunch in mind, I book into one of the new culinary courses to learn

the highlights of cooking and preparing food the alkaline way. Like the fresh pumpkin soup with cold-pressed hemp-seed oil I ate in Austria, prepared by Martin Stein – a former two-star Michelin chef in Vienna, before he changed lifestyle and moved to Altaussee.

Stein, who flies in to London to lead the courses, offers the antithesis of the current

**I was serene, until I sneaked a banned peek at my mobile**

food trend for chia seeds and bee pollen. “Potatoes are your friend,” he begins, whipping up a delicious potato-based beetroot soup, “it just depends how you cook them.” Who knew that millet seed is a nutritional alternative to rice? In between scooping tastes of quinoa risotto and courgette spaghetti we learn useful health tips. Discard onion and garlic for fennel, and

always cut out a tomato’s green stalk; “It turns toxic in the cooking process,” explains Stein. “The first time I saw Jamie Oliver on TV putting the whole tomato in his spaghetti sauce,” he puts up his hands in horror, “I thought, ‘What the fuck?’” And the chia-seed trend? “There’s no sense in importing food,” he replies. “Always use local food first.”

Their menu plan is not only designed to help physically, the link of a healthy gut to the brain is proven. It improves your mood and thinking. “That’s also why it’s helpful to take a lunch break,” chips in Stossier. “You need to concentrate and focus on food.”

Back in the office, with a renewed resolve to resist acid-forming temptation, I’m looking forward to my recommended one espresso a day (never instant and always with cream rather than milk) when an email – “Cake by the printer” – pings into my inbox...

Vivamayr Clinic, 15 Harley Street, W1

# Balancing ACTS

*The Austrian clinic Vivamayr is opening a London outpost. Get ready to detox in the city, says Carol Woolton*



The Vivamayr’s famous alkaline base powder and vegetable mousses