

# Meditate on this

Feeling a little overindulged (aka tired and festively bloated)? Or just burnt out and need to get away from it all before a new year begins? Either way, this week's cover story takes a look at the latest offerings in wellness travel. Wellness can mean many things – be it simply getting away from it all, going bush, island time, or active trips and yoga retreats with dietary advice or a detox. While I've never been one to go cold turkey on anything like coffee, tea, sugar, or dairy, I know others who swear by holidays that restrict one from dangerous distractions such as carbohydrates and wine. (But is that really a holiday?)

It's a good time of year to reflect and relax. When I think of travel that helps me unwind, I have to admit I'm one of those odd people who finds long-haul flights relaxing (particularly if I'm flying in business class, for work, without my kids). To have the luxury of stretching back in a comfortable seat, with your feet up, and a lovely flight attendant at your service is about as relaxing as things get for a mum on the go. (And if it's Emirates, an airline that buys more Champagne than any other in the world, your glass will be topped up with either Dom Pérignon, Veuve Clicquot or Moët & Chandon – the only commercial airline to serve the three until at least 2024.)

But what I love most of all is to be free of contact with the outside world – no emails, texts, or calls to tempt you – and a load of movies to catch up on, with plenty of time to do it.

I certainly don't travel business class all the time, and even on an economy flight I love the quiet. It may be punctuated by a kid kicking the back of my seat, or my neighbour coughing loudly, or those suction toilets flushing constantly, but headphones, a screen and no emails still mean most economy flights are relaxing.

Qantas recently released data that showed its customers

spent more than 60 million hours using the airline's in-flight entertainment (and, gulp, in-flight Wi-Fi) during the year. Interestingly, usage had doubled compared with 2019. But what fascinated me the most was what got top billing: *Top Gun: Maverick*, the big Hollywood action blockbuster and a mighty fine movie, shared the top spot with a little-known meditation album for the most used in-flight entertainment on Qantas flights in 2022.

Yes, a meditation album tied with *Top Gun*, which was watched more than 750,000 times. Australian films *Elvis* and *Falling for Figaro* were also hits, while the top TV shows were *Succession*, the *Sex and the City* revival *And Just Like That*, and *Yellowstone* prequel *1883*.

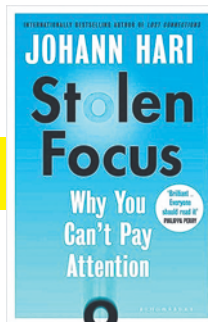
That album taking health and wellness all the way to 38,000 feet was *417 Hz Mindfulness by Miracle Tones & Solfeggio Healing Frequencies MT*, the first time meditation topped the in-flight audio charts, with 1.7 million hours listened to over the year.

What does this mean? It's probably down to a mix of nervous flyers, traumatised post-lockdown travellers, sleep seekers and a sign wellness has truly gone mainstream. Airport lounges increasingly cater to this need with spas on site, and when I flew to Rome via Perth with Qantas last year, I took the opportunity of a quick beginner yoga class to relax pre-flight at the Bodhi Wellbeing Studio (left). Now, if only we could make airports themselves relaxing...

**Kerrie McCallum**  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



## THE ESCAPE TEAM'S HOTLIST



### Focal points

**Felicity Harley** / Contributor



No holiday is complete without a juicy book and my current favourite is *Stolen Focus: Why You Can't Pay Attention* by UK writer Johann Hari. Brilliantly researched

and written, the book takes a deep dive into the breakdown of our ability to maintain focus, with expert advice on how to get it back (and still keep your phone) – a must for any wellness vacay.



### Packed for pampering

**Ingrid Sant** / Deputy Art Director



If you're like me and love to pamper yourself while on holidays, then look no further than Drunk Elephant's limited-edition skincare set, available at Mecca. It has everything you

need to cleanse, exfoliate, brighten, replenish and moisturise, keeping your skin its happiest and healthiest this summer. What's more, it's packed in the cutest insulated cooler I've ever seen.



### Making my day

**Simone Mitchell** / Associate Digital Editor



The pursuit of a travel bag that's just the right size to carry the essentials for a day exploring a new city (umbrella, sunscreen and a water bottle) has come to an end with the discovery of

the Go! Crossbody Bag (\$159) from Brissy brand Bon Maxie. The "all-day runaround bag" is water-resistant and chic enough to morph into an evening bag. It's set to become the MVP in our suitcase.



### California dreaming

**Jenny Hewett** / Contributor



I've never skied in the US, so to kick off 2023 I'll be stoked to see how Americans do après-ski. California's Mammoth Lakes recently beat big-hitters Aspen, Jackson Hole and Park City to

be crowned "best ski town" in North America in 2022 (according to readers of *USA Today*), noting its laid-back charm, a lengthy snow season, and new luxe lodgings as some of the deciding factors.



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**Editor-in-Chief** Kerrie McCallum **Content Director** Jana Frawley [jana.frawley@news.com.au](mailto:jana.frawley@news.com.au) **Creative Director** Baz Goodwin **Digital Director** John Hannan [john.hannan@news.com.au](mailto:john.hannan@news.com.au)  
**Managing Editor** Kelli Armstrong [kelli.armstrong@news.com.au](mailto:kelli.armstrong@news.com.au) **Editor** Susan Bugg [susan.bugg@news.com.au](mailto:susan.bugg@news.com.au) **Chief Subeditor** Toni Mason **Picture Editor** Vashti Newcomb  
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