

Find yourself in a state of tranquility

Carla Grossetti visits a peaceful oasis for the weary.

It is mid afternoon at the Billabong Retreat and the day has unfurled itself gently. The only thing that could cause mild annoyance in such stunning environs might be overbalancing while attempting garudasana (the eagle pose) in your yoga class. Luckily, husband-and-wife team Paul and Tory von Bergen are on hand to help resolve such karmic crises.

Since opening in the Blue Mountains three years ago, the Billabong Retreat has become a peaceful oasis for the weary to unwind and unblock those precious chakras.

Paul leads the morning meditation class by asking everyone to focus on their breath: "Everyone, close your eyes. We are going to start with our consciousness. Listen to the different sounds, not only the more obvious sounds, but also the sounds in the distance. Each time your mind wanders, bring yourself back, listening to the sounds and being mindful of being in the now."

Billabong Retreat, overlooking a tributary of Cattal Creek, Maraylya, is all wooden floors, lush fabrics and strategically placed hammocks. Here, you can do as



Meditation amid the beautiful surroundings of the Billabong Retreat will help you find life's balance.

much or as little as you like, with activities including a bush walk through the Wollemi National Park, a holistic healing facial or a bush art workshop where you will learn to "paint from the heart".

"We get a lot of guests who are suffering from nature deficiency

syndrome and the first thing they notice here is the environment, where they are surrounded by frogs, birds and trees," says von Bergen, who lives onsite with his wife and three children.

"About 10,000 years ago, our stress responses were triggered

when we had to run away from a sabre toothed tiger.

"Today, those same responses are triggered when we open our email to find 500 messages," he says.

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Hope springs eternal at this Blue Mountains retreat. 103 Greendale Road, Wallacia, (02) 4773 8401
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Gaia Retreat & Spa

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gaiaretreat.com.au

Lilianfels Resort & Spa

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lilianfels.com.au

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