

## MENDING MY HEARTINTHE HIMALAYAS



Can massage and mindfulness fix a broken heart? Fong Chau went to Vana Malsi Estate in India to escape the now, but ended up returning to herself

didn't know it when I touched down in Delhi, but I'd come to India to find myself. It wasn't long ago that I'd known who I was - someone about to spend the rest of her life

> with the right man. On New Year's Eve we'd drunk champagne and watched fireworks pop over London. "Let's get married," I said.

Three days later, he left me. Over the previous

foothills of the months we'd lost our way, caught in a fog of sadness

Himalayas and apathy through which we no longer had the strength to seek each other out. My proposal was born out of love, but also out of desperation to save an eight-year relationship. So, when given the chance to fly out to Vana Malsi, a wellness retreat in the foothills of the Himalayas, I was

of my life? It was worth a try.

well-heeled clientele. From property developers to a smattering of celebrities, they come to find peace, clarity, and yes, themselves. The menu more than 10 pages long, incorporating Ayurvedic and Tibetan

The clean architecture and lashings of pale oak feel. It's a thoughtful paradise

unsure. Could a week of spiritual healing help me win back the love

Vana attracts a global and approach is holistic, with a treatment

What to pack

Chain, £95;

pendant, £39,

both Daisy

London

healing, fitness programmes, yoga, meditation and acupuncture.

create an airy Scandinavian through

which carefully cultivated pathways encourage mindful walking. Guests worry about nothing. My state-of-the-art bed moulded itself to my body shape, the air conditioning in my room was set to the requirements of my dosha (Ayurvedic mind-body type), even my clothes were picked out (all guests wear pyjamas of organic cotton). I ate richly hued and deliciously spiced thalis, also prepared to suit my Ayurvedic composition. Such detail made staying here a complete rest for my weary mind, though I still saw the world through his eyes. Would he like it here, too? A friendly but no-nonsense doctor

helped determine my retreat objectives. I want to fix us, I told her. "All well and good," she said, looking me square in the eye, "but right now you're not together. You have to heal yourself." Her words hit me like a sucker punch. I enrolled on a bespoke de-stress plan to address

Slippers, £75,

Uma

Pure Bliss

Wellness

Oil, £39

my emotional blockages. After taking my pulse, my doctor rightly determined that I was suffering from joint pains, and explained that my Vata (the Ayurvedic energy of movement) was imbalanced, as was my Tibetan wind energy,



le week a Taoist abdominal massage

intended to release emotional baggage Pushing down, my how firm I was.

When I said I'd been doing "Sad times crunches, she countered come and go. that it was because I was holding on to but LIVING life the past. Going to the means accepting bathroom after felt them and MOVING on"

like a life-changing moment - years of emotional baggage literally flushed away. When I returned home, I found he had a new girlfriend. It'll implode and he'll come back, I thought. Then I recalled that initial meeting with my doctor: "You have to deal with the situation as it is now.'

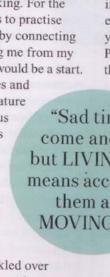
thoughts turn in the wrong direction. focusing on my body, even if it's

just drinking my tea in a mindful way, gives me the strength to return to myself. Sad times come and go, but living life means accepting them and moving on. Vana helped me take the first steps, more will surely follow.

## TRIP NOTES

at Vana







The retreat is

nestled in the