

Modern Luxury

ORANGE COUNTY

Ray of Light

Anne Hathaway
Enchants Us All
Over Again

The It List

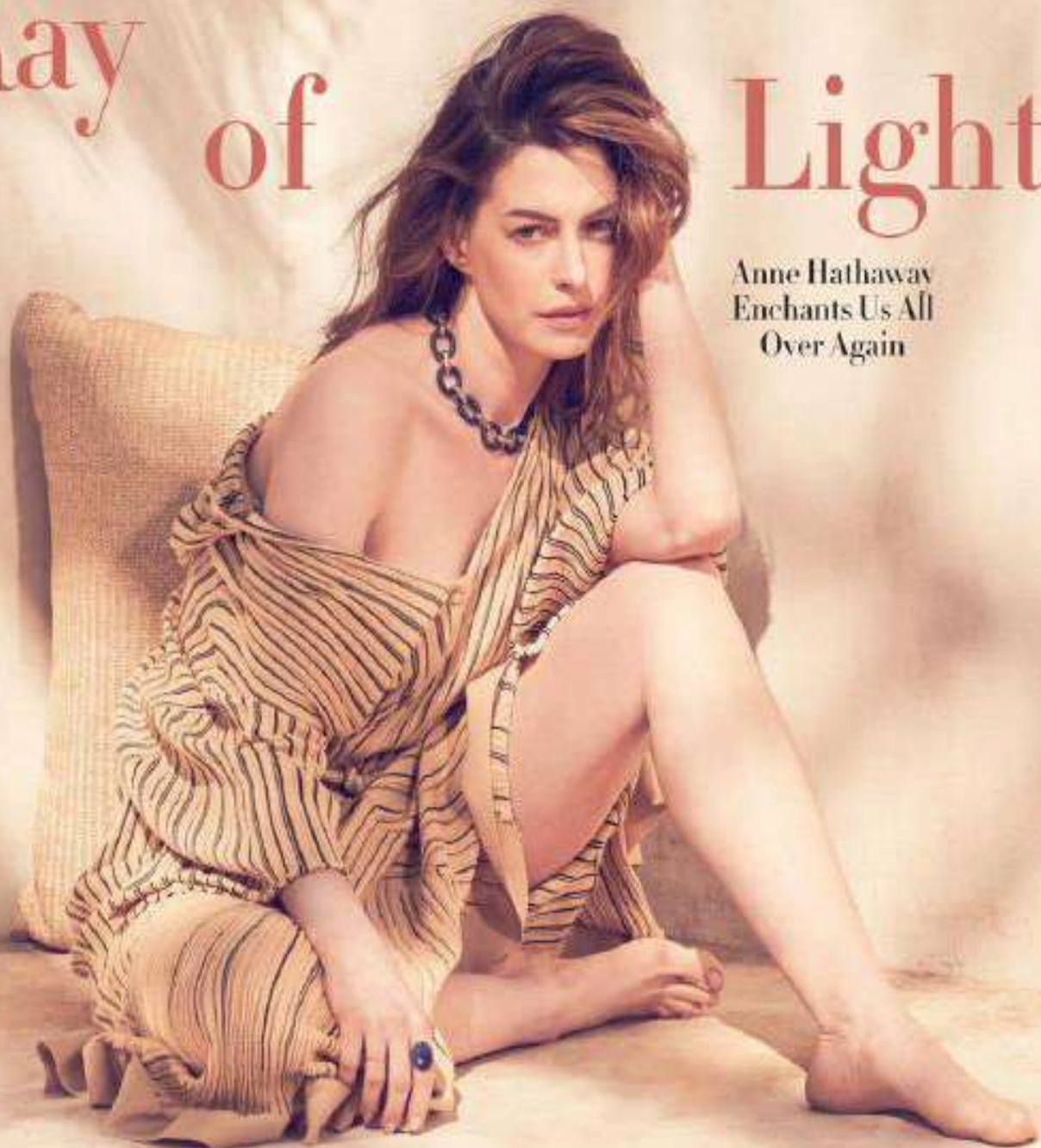
O.C.'S TOP PROS
FOR NUTRITION,
WELLNESS &
FITNESS

Summer Revival

DISCONNECTING,
RECHARGING
& IMBIBING
FROM AUSTIN
TO URUGUAY

Costume Drama

DIOR'S HAUTE
COUTURE GLAM



Plus
Laguna Beach's
Hotel Joaquin
& *Dirty John*'s
Debra Newell



Namaste IN BALANCE

Step into the bliss of Miraval Austin and leave with a newfound equilibrium in your life, a calm in your mind and a sleeping bag for your phone.

By Chelsea Vaccaro

IN THE AGE of Marie Kondo, I often find myself forgetting to clear the mess in my mind. There may be no better way to hit the reset button than four days dedicated to meditation, outdoor physical activity, and indulging in farm-fresh food and nightly spa treatments. As I begin my travels to the sublime Miraval Austin in the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve of Texas, I tuck into the reading materials meant to prepare me for the upcoming days. Large bold letters across the top of my booklet read, “Unplug. Be Present.” (Gulp.) That’s right, the very first step on your journey to wellness at Miraval Austin is to hide your phone away in a cozy “sleeping bag.”

Miraval Austin, the first spa and wellness resort outside its Hyatt flagship in Tucson, teaches guests how to create internal balance through a menu of health and wellness programming. There are enough experiences to fit the needs of every individual, ranging from well-being, culinary, nutrition and outdoor adventure to equine, yoga, fitness, sustainable living and body renewal. My itinerary opens with a serene deep-tissue massage and ends with a challenge course reminiscent of the game show *Wipeout*. Needless to say, as I arrive, I am excited and nervous about what I’m in for.

My days start early, each beginning with a meal at the Hilltop Crossings Kitchen, which serves healthy Southern-inspired dishes with locally sourced ingredients. Over the next few days, I develop an appreciation for what I choose to put in my body. This is established thanks to a visit to Miraval Austin’s on-property Cypress Creek Farm, an intimate five-course dinner prepared by chef Ben Baker and an array of instructional culinary classes. During The Joy of Food workshop, I, along with two others, am invited to consciously celebrate the stages of a meal. We’re challenged to appreciate our food by chewing slowly; engaging in thoughtful conversation; and being grateful for the entire preparing, eating and gathering process.

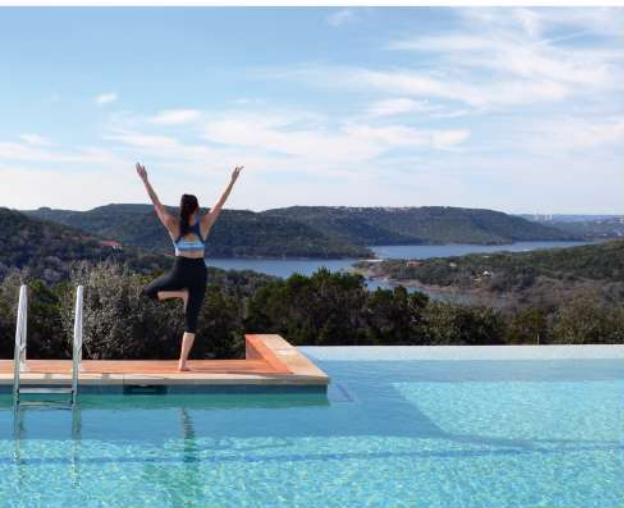
You are not your mind. This is something I take away from Wellness Specialist Steven Ross after a group workshop that explores tools for self-



BALCONES CANYONLANDS PRESERVE PHOTO COURTESY OF MIRAVAL AUSTIN

TRAVEL & WELLNESS

dispatch



Clockwise from top left: A unique ecosystem, Cypress Creek Farm provides a selection of produce and plants for Miraval Austin's kitchen; the brand-new Dreamcatcher room; the Wild Harvest Herbal Healer facial; Miraval Austin offers a variety of locally sourced, seasonal menus items, including this charcuterie board; one of two infinity pools overlooking Lake Travis and the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve. Opposite page: Miraval Austin sits among the hills of the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve overlooking Lake Travis.



reflection and encourages living with a deeper purpose by cultivating a healthy mindset. Miraval Austin teaches guests how to integrate such practices into daily life and offers many private sessions for the spirit and the soul.

My journey at Miraval Austin concludes with the ultimate physical and mental challenge—my perception of ability. I'm strapped up as if readying to climb Mount Everest and nervously giggling with a group of women from New Jersey. We climb a rope ladder and hop from one wobbly wooden plank to another until we make it to a landing. We're then faced with a tiny cable that we are to tightrope-walk across. I decide that surrounding myself with cheerleaders and slowing down to take a deep breath can get me through (almost) anything—especially if the reward is zip lining.

Taking in a final sunset over Lake Travis, I sip on a crisp glass of sauvignon blanc and ask myself, "Why can't I slow down like this all the

time?" After some guidance, the answer is easy, and this feeling of calm can be carried into my everyday. I recently learned a new word: equanimity. You see, my journey toward mindfulness began before this trip as I started taking yoga classes for the first time in years. Equanimity, the theme of our practice one week, is something I unknowingly aim to channel in my everyday life. This balance of the mind, as well as a transformative internal—and external—glow is what you leave Miraval Austin with in spades. Now that sparks joy. Rates from \$529 per person, including \$175 resort credit per night for all meals, complimentary classes, and transportation to and from the airport, miravalaustin.com ■

CYPRESS CREEK FARM, DREAMCATCHER ROOM AND WILD HARVEST HERBAL HEALER PHOTOS COURTESY OF MIRAVAL AUSTIN. POOL AND CHEESE BOARD PHOTOS BY CHELSEA VACCARO