

W A N D E R

TRAVEL WELL



THE
PASSION
ISSUE

\$6.95

VOLUME 6 • ISSUE 1



RUN TECH-LESS

FOR A MORE MINDFUL EXPERIENCE



The sound of running shoes crunching the soft pine needles lining the loamy trail lulls the women taking part in a trail running and wellness retreat into a relaxed rhythm. There's no sound of cars or traffic of any kind. Their inhalation and exhalation breath cycles fall into a similar rhythm. They're not all running at the same pace, yet somehow are in a shared state of flow.

That is, until, a digital female voice says, "workout paused." "Workout resumed," the voice followed up.

"Ping" goes another watch from the back of the pack. "Beep, beep beep!" goes another device.

The runners stop at a viewpoint, pull out their phones to take photos of a waterfall, while others also press the "pause" button on their GPS watches. A few reply to text messages flooding in thanks to the random 4G connection.

The technology seems radically out of place in this serene natural environment. More than half their time standing at the lookout is spent looking at glowing screens. Not only are these runners seeing and experiencing less than they would without their devices, but they are also checking their time, mileage and pace-per-mile, even though, it could be argued, such metrics detract from their actual experience.



The voice of wellness travel. A badge of credibility.
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Running Tech-Less For A More Mindful Experience

A trail running and wellness retreat is not only a journey to a beautiful new destination, one that offers scenery and cultural experiences you can savour and enjoy. It also offers space to be more mindful and present, if you make space for it.

Watches, GPS fitness trackers and phones interfere with that experience in a number of ways:

1. When you don't know your pace per mile, you are better at noticing the body's natural feedback system to gauge your effort level. Feeling tired, you slow down. Feeling charged up, you speed up.
2. When you no longer hear a "ping" for each mile completed, you are better able to focus on the process of running rather than the progress from start to finish. Knowing that your running guide is keeping you on track leaves you more open to taking in your surroundings, your fellow runners and notice how your body is feeling.

3. Replacing digital cues and alarms with the sounds of nature and your own body's movement is a powerful experience. When you pay attention, you can hear your breath (is it soft and even, or shallow and ragged?) and the sound of your feet on the ground (are they pounding or tapping lightly?). These sounds are key indicators of the quality of your running form.

4. On retreat, we encourage a type of success measurement that can't be quantified: your degree of joy. And joy has everything to do with how running makes you feel, and nothing to do with how far or fast you ran.

Science Supports It: Ditching Devices Can Help You Run Better

Fitness writer and author of the book, *Peak Performance: Elevate Your Game, Avoid Burnout, and Thrive with the New Science of Success*, Brad Stulberg reported having performance

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breakthroughs when he ran by feel (slowing when he felt tired, and speeding up when he felt strong) rather than by pace-per mile.

Noel Brick, a sports psychologist at Ulster University in Northern Ireland, explains why: "Relying on a watch excessively can promote unhelpful thoughts and emotions, such as anxiety. This anxiety can even occur on a subconscious level, fueling negative self-talk or judgment without you even realizing it's happening."

Another side effect of metrics-driven anxiety is physical tension. "In a recent study, Brick and his colleagues found that runners were a whopping 10 percent faster when they were focused on relaxing or the act of running itself versus external metrics like pace," reports Stulberg.

Enter: The Presence Policy

With that in mind, Run Wild Retreats recently introduced a Presence Policy that enhances our clients' personal experience on and off the trails. The policy includes things like keeping their phone in airplane mode on the trail, at meals and during group time so they can fully be present in the experience. It asks that they leave their GPS watches and all distance and time trackers at home.

As a result, our runners report feeling more present, more relaxed and happier overall with their running experience, so much so that some have made running tech-less a regular part of their routine. 

Run Mindfully at these Upcoming Retreats



Moab Mindful Running Retreat

March, April, October
This four-day, women-only retreat features guided trail runs in Utah's stunning desert of red rock, soaring cliffs, wellness workshops, restorative yoga, and great food.



Mediterranean Mindful Running Retreat

May 2020
Run village to village along the Mediterranean Sea while staying in boutique hotels overlooking the bay, eating gourmet Spanish tapas, traditional paella and much more.



Iceland Trail Running + Wellness Retreat

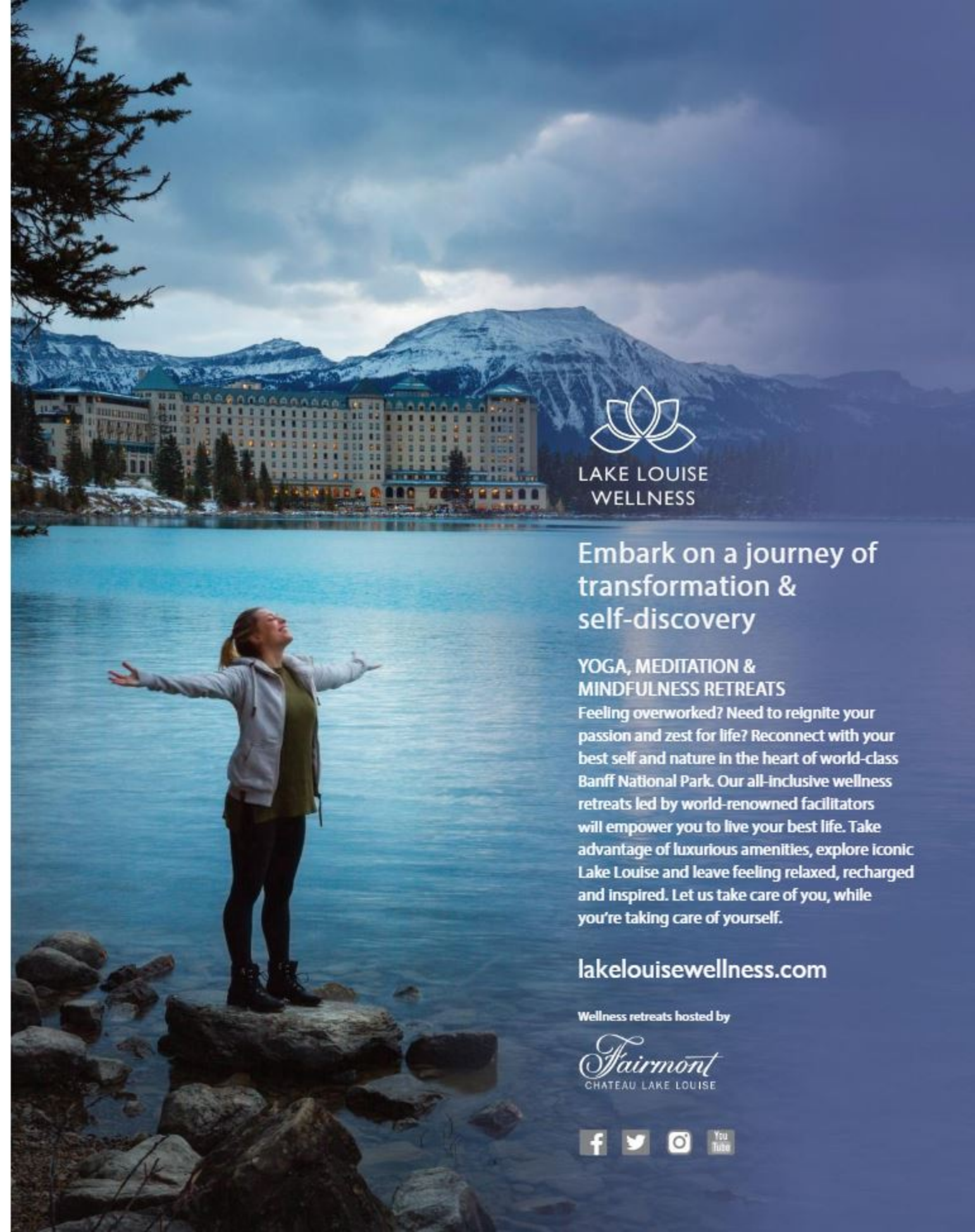
August 2020
This seven-day retreat takes you along Iceland's southern coast where you'll see glaciers, black sand beaches, and volcanos. Every run is a different adventure!

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Founder and CEO of Run Wild Retreats, Elinor Fish has worked in the travel, tourism and running industries since 1999. The Canadian ex-pat who now calls Colorado home has long been an avid trail runner, writer, and champion for women's trail running. She founded Run Wild Retreats + Wellness in 2010, offering running tours in some of the world's best trail-running destinations.



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