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SPECIAL FOCUS



Alternative weekend

Experience something different at this Betty's Bay retreat.



An alternative weekend away

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The idea of going away for a weekend is always exciting, but when I heard that my **getaway to Betty's Bay included a few Pilates training sessions**, my enthusiasm fizzled slightly. It's not that I dislike exercise, it just doesn't feature high on my list of things to do after my morning cup of coffee.

Nonetheless, I have always loved a challenge.

So focussing on the beauty of this little coastal town I set off to The Palace, a quaint boutique-style guesthouse that was to be my new home for the weekend.

Owners Steve and Beate (pronounced Be-Aa-Tay) Jordan made me feel right at home. Our first night included a beautiful balcony sunset as we enjoyed a few drinks and snacks. I headed to bed early - something I rarely do - but then there was that early morning Pilates induction to take care of.



Despite my apprehension, I was up at dawn and with surprising enthusiasm joined the 8am session, complete with puffy eyes and random yawns. The studio is a **bright and sunny glass walled and roofed Pilates studio** and fully equipped with all the latest and best Pilates equipment.

It took a few awkward laughs and uncomfortable moves to get us started.

"You can try it without the weights if it's too hard for you"- I was told politely, an embarrassing indication that my arms are incapable of even exercising with 1.5kg weights! There were quite a few uncoordinated mishaps, with limbs circling in all directions. But a patient Steve kept saying: "The other way around".

Steve Jordan has been **teaching Pilates for over 19 years** and has established his unique brand of "**Steve Jordan Pilates**" in London. Last year, he decided to return to his native country and establish a guesthouse in Betty's Bay that offers exclusive Pilates weekend retreats throughout the summer. His idea is to create a relaxing getaway for men, woman and couples who want to have fun and get in shape at the same time.



His experience was apparent in the deceptive ease and strength with which he demonstrated the movements. He would talk the group through all the exercises, motivating and commenting on each individual. We literally became looser and more aligned, some of us even so much that our untrained eyes could notice the difference.

Unlike traditional Pilates, Steve combines **elements of Pilates, personal training and dance** (something that was a big concern for one of the men, until Steve assured him it did not include Plié's and Pirouettes). This combination promotes cardio fitness, postural alignment and strength training all at the same time.

The **class proved challenging but not impossible**, thanks to the individual assistance and encouragement to work according our own ability. Attendance is kept to a maximum of six participants, enabling a high degree of personal care and attention.

Typically a weekend would include **four Pilates sessions** with some recovery time in between for either relaxation or exploration of the idyllic surroundings.

The house itself is situated a three minute long walk from the beach and has a crisp interior punctuated by stylish modern art and atmospheric lighting. The roof features not only a Jacuzzi, but also panoramic views of both the ocean and surrounding mountains. The **general feel is one of peace and tranquillity** and sets the ideal platform for a weekend of wellness. **Take a look at the**



gallery here

In their spare time, guests are free to enjoy the rich, abundant fauna and flora of Betty's Bay. Your to-do list could also include a visit to the nearby adorable **Jackass penguin colony** or an afternoon stroll in the **Harold Porter Botanical Gardens** where you can enjoy a quiet lunch followed by a scenic hike to the waterfalls. If you're the outgoing adventurous type you could try your hand at sandboarding on the giant dunes of the Silver Sands beach, surfing the waves, or attempt the kayaking and mountain biking trails offered by the Kogelberg biosphere reserve.

After all the excitement, I paid a visit to the rooftop Jacuzzi, the warm water a relaxing balm for my now-aching muscles. A light dinner was welcome before I slipped easily into a peaceful night's rest.

I woke up **energized and refreshed**, the aches of the day before almost non-existent. Saying my goodbyes, I headed back home, feeling recharged and ready for the week ahead. Considering my initial apprehension, the weekend turned out truly magnificent, an experience I would wake up early for any day.



Silver Sands Dunes.
Jolandi Morkel



Betty's Bay



Steve and Beate. By
Jolandi Morkel



Steve on the machine



Stylish decorated
bedroom



Guesthouse bedroom



Waterfall. Jolandi Morkel



Outside view of the studio



jacuzzi



Jackass Penguin Colony. Enjoying the sunset on the Penguin colony at Betty's
By Jolandi Morkel balcony. By Jolandi Morkel Bay. By Jolandi Morkel



Betty's Bay view



Penguin colony. By
Jolandi Morkel



Guest house interior. By
Jolandi Morkel



Pilates studio