

BAZAAR

Harper's

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MARIAH CAREY

On divas, dressing up
and dangerous men

MENTAL WORKOUT

Decoding the science
of brain health

SISTER ACT

Michelle Dockery and
Laura Carmichael return
to Downton Abbey

FASHION FAVOURS THE BRAVE

*Bold shapes, bright colours, tactile textures:
introducing the new collections*

. THE . inpatient

Avril Mair embarks on a Swiss sojourn that combines state-of-the-art clinical testing with targeted lifestyle recommendations

The name Clinique La Prairie has always been synonymous with medical excellence – founded in 1931, it has a reputation as the world's most exclusive health destination. Located beside the picture-postcard Swiss town of Montreux, with just 38 rooms alongside a sleek wellness facility and its own hospital (staffed with more than 50 specialists), it's the original medi-spa, built on pillars of evidence-based medicine, wellness, nutrition and movement. These have been refined over time – the famous revitalisation programme, which once involved foetal-lamb injections, has become about genetic testing and stem-cell therapy. Now, it has a groundbreaking new offering: for the past two years, the venue has been working with neuroscientists at the University of Lausanne on what it says is the best brain-enhancement programme in the world, using the most in-depth set of diagnostics available. There is, they claim, no other clinic where you can be tested so comprehensively.

As someone who can instantly visualise the Prada autumn/winter 2019 show but struggles to remember the ending to last night's Netflix series, I felt a sense of trepidation as I received my schedule, a series of blood tests, body scans and medical appointments. 'This is not about a diagnosis for dementia,' Olga Donica, the director of longevity innovation, reassured me. 'It's about neuro-protection and neuro-enhancement, analysing cognitive strengths and weaknesses, then building a plan for optimisation.' The seven-day programme begins with an in-depth health screening – the Longevity Master Assessment – that sets out to uncover 300 biomarkers, covering genetic profiling, microbiome analysis, neuromuscular assessment, nutritional evaluation, mental-wellbeing checks, biochemical testing and inflammatory readings. If that sounds serious, it is. 'Until now, most spas have focused on generic lifestyle advice such as relaxation, exercise and nutrition,' explained the CEO Simone Gibertoni. 'These are important, but without real data, it's difficult to create lasting impact. These tests allow us to offer truly bespoke care with real medical depth.'

At 7.30 on my first morning, I had 18 vials of blood taken for analysis and was given sealed plastic pots for, er, other samples. I was sent off to see doctors, psychologists and physical therapists. I talked about my sleep patterns (bad), my stress levels (worse) and my diet (averagely good). I had my reactions, memory and peripheral vision tested using a sensory-evaluation machine, which felt a bit like playing video games. My heart was screened, as was my brain. The latter was truly terrifying, involving an MRI scan designed to show areas

of white-matter atrophy associated with cognitive decline, increased stroke risk and dementia. I spent a sleepless night (very bad) until I discovered that my brain health was on the high side of normal.

What would have happened if the news had been less good? I joked to the clinic's medical director – the charming, very human Dr Heini – that I'd presumably have forgotten about it by the time I reached Geneva airport. In fact, there are relatively simple things that can be done: maintaining friendships, keeping moving, eating well, remaining curious and continuing to stay intellectually active are all ways to nurture the brain as it ages. As for my short-term memory? The brain prioritises. Sometimes it just ditches the excess stuff it doesn't value. I left with Clinique La Prairie's new epigenetic supplements, which should compensate for my lifestyle shortcomings, and a sense of overwhelming relief.

Clinique La Prairie Brain Potential Programme, from £26,000 for seven nights (cliniquelaprairie.com).



BEST OF THE REST...



EXOMIND

Using electromagnetic pulses, patented ExoTMS technology stimulates areas of the brain responsible for cognitive function and emotional regulation.

From £500 a treatment at the Dr Preema London Clinic (drpreema.com).



MAYRLIFE DAY CLINIC

Expect nutritional counselling and IV infusions at this destination for Mayrlife devotees. mayrlife.com.



HOOKE

This membership programme gives you access to a team of doctors, psychologists, fitness and sleep experts who provide medical advice to promote mental and physical health.

From £21,450 a year (hooke.london).



SOLICE HEALTH

Members of this private-medical club benefit from access to in-house doctors who carry out a detailed assessment (including full brain mapping) and make referrals to experts.

From £5,950 a year (solice.health).

THINK AHEAD

The supplements to take for a sharper mind and enhanced focus



Heights Hydrate+ Electrolytes, £36



Mother Made PM: Mushroom Powder, £60



Vida Glow Women's Health Multi 360, £30



Clinique La Prairie Energy Focus & Performance Supplements, £290