



The hills
are alive... ... with the
sound of Tara



HAPPINESS WEEKEND, HUNTER VALLEY, NSW

WHO WENT: *WH* features editor, Tara Ali, 34, NSW

TRIP NOTES

Getting there

The Golden Door Health Retreat is located in Pokolbin. 90 minutes drive from Sydney. Domestic airlines fly into Newcastle Airport from Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and the Gold Coast. Transfers can be arranged from Sydney or Newcastle airports to the resort, from \$86.

The cost

The Happiness Weekend program runs from Friday to Sunday and costs \$395. Accommodation starts at \$495 per night for a one-bedroom villa. Book four days in advance and get a two-share villa for \$365 per night. Both rates include all meals, snacks and drinks and full use of all facilities. Spa treatments are extra.

When to go

The Golden Door is open all year round. The next Happiness Weekend is 28-30th March 2008.

WIN! A HAPPINESS WEEKEND TRIP

For an opportunity to win a Happiness Weekend program at The Golden Door (total prize value \$1388) simply log on to yahoo7.com.au/womenshealth and click on "Golden Door promotion". Tell us in 25 words or less about your happiest moment. Competition closes February 10, 2008. For full terms and conditions, visit yahoo7.com.au/womenshealth.

FRIDAY: ROAD RECOVERY

"The NRMA will be with you within in the hour," says the voice on the end of the phone. Shit. I'm supposed to be at a happiness seminar in the glorious Hunter Valley in 15 minutes and I've locked my keys in my car. Then the heavens open. Is this a sign? After almost kissing the man who breaks into my car. I get there, sneak into the first class and listen to our happiness guru Dr Timothy J Sharp. Next, we all share one of our happiest moments. People talk about overcoming depression and caring for a son-in-law after a motorbike accident. Mine involves a *Sound of Music* road party. I feel like a fraud.

Today's best tip: Healthy living is essential for happiness.

SATURDAY: A MAN IN LEOPARD PRINT PANTS

After a breakfast of no toast and no coffee (The Golden Door's menu is strict) we get down to business. Today is all about perspective and gratitude. We're asked to recall a distressing thing that's happened lately (missing my sister's 30th birthday - she's in the UK) and rate it out of 10 (I give it a six). Some stats are flashed up on Powerpoint and we're asked what we now rate it. After a reminder that one billion people lack access to safe drinking water, mine drops, along with my head, to two. The guru teaches us a valuable lesson: when you hear about atrocities, say thanks for all that you have in your life. He also reminds us that great deeds happen every day, and recommends checking out gimundo.com, a positive news site.

That night, someone mentions that Rod Stewart's playing in one of the vineyards and we break out, drunk on herbal tea, "Wake up Maggie, I think I've got



something to say to yoooooooooo..."

Today's best tip: You can't see the light if you've not seen the darkness.

SUNDAY: SINGING MY HEART OUT

The guru asks us what we've learnt over the past two days. I volunteer that I'm already a pretty happy person, I just sometimes need reminding of life's good things. We learn about Pareto's Law: 80 per cent of our happiness comes from 20 per cent of our behaviours - you just need to identify what makes you happy and do it more often. Simple, really. Then we're given a list of 63 values and asked to rate our top five (I pick humour, love, friendship, physical health and creativity). We're told the top five that make it easier to be happier are: gratitude, optimism, zest, helping others and love. Hmm, I scored only one out of five, but decide it's all about perspective. I think I'm getting the hang of this.

Behind the wheel on my way home I feel the urge to do something that always gives me an extra-large burst of the H-word. I crank up *The Sound of Music* soundtrack and try (I said try) to match Julie Andrews note for note.

Today's best tip: Play to your strengths.



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