

# VOGUE

AUSTRALIA

**WHY 40  
IS THE  
NEW  
BLACK**

**WHERE  
HAVE  
ALL THE  
GOOD  
MEN  
GONE?**

**COVER  
GIRL  
ALICE  
BURDEU**

**THE  
POWER  
OF 10**  
Fashion  
classics  
you just  
can't live  
without

**THE AGE OF  
INNOCENCE**

Dark lace,  
wild florals,  
understated  
luxury

**IN PARIS  
WITH  
AUSTRALIA'S  
NEXT TOP  
MODELS**

\$7.95 JUL '08 NZ \$9.90



07

9 312966 801005

# return to golden door

Time changes everything, even the spa experience.

It's been 14 years since my friend Jane and I visited the original Golden Door spa retreat in the Gold Coast hinterland. We spent a week, lost a few centimetres off our waistlines and gained a fervour for healthy living that lasted at least six weeks. The intervening years have seen us gain a whole lot more – children, mortgages, stress, a better appreciation of red wine and various floppy bits. With Jane about to move to New York, it seemed the right time to spend a week together again at the Golden Door retreat in the New South Wales Hunter Valley, looking after ourselves, each other, and our future.

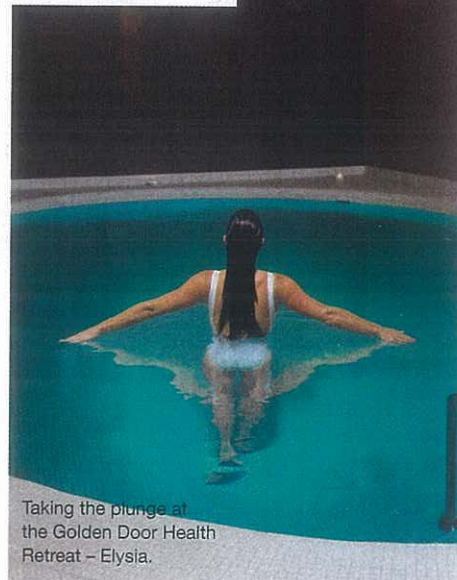
We arrive in time for lunch. We're starving, having resolutely ignored the siren calls of the cellar doors we passed, but we don't have high expectations. Our first Golden Door adventure was in the Age of the Carb. Dietary orthodoxy at the time held that fat was the devil, carbs were the saviours and protein could be safely ignored. The idea was that as long as you stuck to "good" carbs you could essentially eat as much as you wanted. We spent a week with buckets of wholegrains flavoured with way too many dried herbs. Fortunately, we're not the only ones to have changed over the years, and as we dive into stir-fried calamari we appreciate that new thinking on spa food sees an emphasis on fresh vegetables and herbs,

low-fat and good-fat protein sources such as seafood and nuts, and balanced portion control.

Ideas about exercise have changed, too. Back in those old days, if you wanted to lose weight you were told to lower intensity to stay in the "fat-burning" zone. Since then, exercise physiologists have discovered the benefits of interval training and resistance work. Not that their prognostications have much impact on our movement choices. We do what we like, when we can, rather than what we're told.

The first time I went to Golden Door, what I wanted was weight loss. That's all: I just wanted to leave smaller. Older and more settled in my body, this time I'm looking for more. I'm not that settled: I still want to leave smaller, but what I really need is respite. As workers, mothers, wives, we spend our days, like so many other women, at the pointy end of the demands of others. We need a few days out of the loop.

So we are not on Golden Door's famous program. Instead we wake without alarms, phones or children. We take advantage of all the exercise options we like: walking the bushy perimeter; practising tai chi; sweating through circuit class and spin classes; and experimenting with belly dancing. We get the respite care we need. We reset our palates to a healthier position. We are kneaded, rubbed



Taking the plunge at the Golden Door Health Retreat – Elysia.

and smoothed in the spa. We remember that it is possible to enjoy a sunset without a cold glass of riesling. We catch up on sleep, and each other, and this time when we leave – once again thinner, fitter, less lined, better rested and less stressed – we promise not to leave it so long next time.

*Robin Powell*

**Golden Door Health Retreat – Elysia, Thompsons Road, Pokolbin NSW; [www.goldendoor.com.au](http://www.goldendoor.com.au).**