

## A smorgasbord of experiences & therapies with Ibiza Retreats



Happy to discover the other side of Ibiza, Caroline Phillips experiences Ibiza Retreats.

'My smorgasbord of therapies/experiences leaves me reeling but conscious of aspects of my life that I need to change – which is a good thing'

After a challenging start, [Caroline Phillips](#) and her daughter find the therapies they really need on a wellbeing break with [Ibiza Retreats](#)



Serene accommodation on the white isle

Ibiza. Hmm, clubs, not my kinda thing. Raving, drinking, drugging. None of it my style. An island where people like doing those things? I don't think so. Don't like hippy dippy either. I'm the close friends, good books, feet-up and to bed early type. And anyway it's probably called the White Island because it's covered in coke.

So when I was invited to write about Ibiza Retreats' Tailormade Wellness Retreat in yes, you guessed it, Ibiza, I didn't jump at

it. But then my younger daughter Ella, 15, did one of those teenage pouty-it's-the-best-place-in-the-universe-please-can-we-go-I'll-never-talk-to-you-again-type routines.

Ella is not one of those kids who is half sofa half spotty adolescent. In fact, she's accompanied me to several spas, knows her Downward Dogs from her Sun Salutations and adores kale crisps and Naturya's Cocoa Nibs more than life itself. Plus she's at one of those schools where they take Oxbridge entrance aged 11ish – so a little stress-free time is in order. And we're very close, so any Mummy/daughter bonding-even-more time is always welcome.

So we set out to Ibiza on one of those cheap-deal horribly early flights from one of those faraway airports, the kind of flights that are designed to ruin your holiday. Any holiday. On the plane we bump into some Notting Hillie Billie friends who have a second home in Ibiza. She looks at my Ibiza Retreats itinerary: "8:30am herbal teas, light fruit bites..." she reads, "...right, don't bother waking me for that." The way I'm feeling I'll want a quadruple-decker sandwich with chocolate sauce. Plus my wellness retreat schedule looks pretty light – there's a bit too much 'relax and just be' time for my taste. (In the event, I change this and cram in far more than they recommend.)



Caroline Phillips and her daughter

Larah Davis – part of the duo who set up Ibiza Retreats; the other half is yoga teacher Susie Howell – meets us at the airport. Larah speaks and is wearing white in that sort of ethereal I'm-a-healer-cum-wannabe-angel-cum-guru sort of way. She hands us each a bottle of water. Ella's is labelled, 'Love', mine is labelled 'Peace'.

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Larah life coaching with a retreat guest

Let's get this out the way. Shamanic heart chakra jewellery made by indigenous Mexicans, Angel Cards, eating brown food: not me. Life coaching or anything that is instantly psychologically intrusive with someone I don't know: not me. I'm also getting the feeling that it will help on this retreat if I am very into unicorns, orgasmic white light experiences and higher beings. Larah encapsulates a lot of this. Hence the poor woman doesn't stand much chance with me.

So it's delightful soon to find myself being pampered, making some real psychic shifts and meeting some excellent therapists on my four-day retreat. And I find myself reminding myself that contempt prior to investigation is a naughty thing.

Ibiza Retreats lure burnt out city bankers who want to do very little to wanna-do-tons folk. Mostly women in their 40s and 50s who have been through trauma, whether that be of divorce, say, or a new job. The focus is on identifying participants' needs and bringing the mind and body back together. This is done with a mixture of yoga, treatments and meetings with 'Mother Nature'.

My highlights? Ranjith Chambers gets my first prize. He's a traditional osteopath, healer, intuitive masseur, energy worker cum cranial sacral specialist. He's instinctive in his work and needs little guidance. He corrects my skeletal structure, releases myofascial tension, offers nutritional advice and tips for mental strategies. He even repositions my organs – who knew the liver or kidneys, say, can move centimetres after pregnancy an accident? And he helps Ella with a medical condition. "AMAZING," reports Ella.

Tara Frederiksson gives us both transformational card readings – a bit like Tarot. She is also very talented. ("Spot on," agrees Ella.) And she's a mine of helpful dietary, bibliotherapy, film viewing and medicinal tips. Her insights help me make psychic shifts.

Excellent too is Marion Stone who does luxury organic facials. Known as LIA Therapy (lymphatic drainage, incandescent massage and acupressure, since you ask) –this a 'holistic treatment for mind, body and skin' that ends with a Bee Venom Mask (which stimulates collagen). My skin really does look younger and brighter afterwards. So those are my top choices.

We stay in two places – both homestays – to get a taste of what's on offer. One is **Casa Corazon** – a rather crumbling but charming finca. The other is **Can Amonita** – which is more comfortable and has a lovely pool (and where do some excellent work with addicts).



Caroline's cosy bedroom at Casa Corazon

In Casa Corazon, the food is brown (but good brown) – think brown rice, veg curry. Plus smoothies – including a great Sharon fruit, bulgar wheat porridge and sheep's yoghurt one. In Can Amonita the food is also good brown – tofu, rice, hard spelt bread. It's macrobiotic with an ayurvedic twist and the delightful chef Eduardo puts meditational vibes and conscious energy into it. This is said to improve it.

But let's return to the therapies. I also have a session with Nora Belton (a Californian known locally as the Tofu Lady because she used to make it and supply the island) who gives me a mixture of reiki, cranio sacral and intuitive massage under the fig tree. And Faye Reason, a warm soul who gives me an al fresco reiki treatment – again under the fig tree. I'd have both of these again and would opt to have all treatments henceforth under a deliciously pungent tree, were that possible. There seems to be an endless supply of spiritual, thought -provoking women: sensitive and energetically attuned or misfits, depending on your viewpoint.

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It's also uplifting doing yoga by the poolside among the purple morning glory or on a yoga deck, the breeze tickling our toes – alternately with Larah and Susie, both good teachers. In fact I try lots of things with Larah – she majors in NLP, yoga, life coaching, energy work – from a lifestyle audit 'wheel of life' (which doesn't do it for me) to MET – Meridian Energy Tapping – which is a simple and powerful version of emotional freedom technique, and which I find very helpful.

In addition our retreat includes what Larah calls "the healing power of nature." Namely a natural salt body scrub and clay body mask on the beach with Susie. There's a sunset hike with Larah where we throw rocks off a cliff (relieving ourselves of psychic burdens, apparently) in a beautiful location. And a heavenly horse ride with Larah – sorry, equine therapy – past fields of fennel, almond groves and old fincas.



Susie and Larah do yoga by the pool

My conclusions? I am detoxing from coffee and work overload and heading into Autumn, a bad time of year for bi-polar folk like me – so I am not in a positive frame of mind. Nonetheless it's very kissy kissy huggy huggy – so you have to be into that. (I'm not.) It's also intense and there's no place to hide: so don't do this retreat if you don't want to face yourself.

There are 50 therapists on tap: you choose, guided by Larah and Susie's intuitive feel for what might work for you – even before they've met you. Their approach is not formulaic – but, rather, highly flexible/personalised. They approach their work with love, experience and wisdom – and genuinely want clients to have the best possible experience. My smorgasbord of therapies/experiences leaves me reeling but conscious of aspects of my life that I need to change – which is a good thing. But you have to be happy to go with the flow – especially some haphazard time keeping (which they blame on the full moon.)

In terms of Ella, the retreat is faultless. She's given hot tips on what she needs emotionally, physically and energetically. She learns tools and strategies for dealing with exam stress – from mind maps to breathing. She gets help on dietary changes for her medical condition. She is invited – and accepts with great delight – to return to do work experience with Ibiza Retreats. She'll go back, for sure.

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The sitting room at Can Amonita on Ibiza