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inside: CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION CALENDAR

Dr. Lili Nasseri is a primary care specialist. She frequently writes about her travels, including a monthly travel column, "The Maritime Traveller," for the Times and Transcript newspaper in Moncton, NB. She is currently working on her first book.

yogic weekend

BY DR. LILI NASSERI

Yoga + wine in Canada's only desert

When I told my husband Jonathan that we'd be going to the South Okanagan for a weekend of relaxation and yoga, his only comment was "What do men wear to yoga?"

We drive in to Osoyoos, 400 km east of Vancouver, a small patch of desert laden with vineyards. The weekend starts on the rooftop of Spirit Ridge Vineyard Resort where we'll be spending the night. Tina, a petite woman with dark locks, is our yogi master. She explains that the word *hatha* comes from the Sanskrit terms *ha*, meaning "sun", and *tha*, meaning "moon" and that hatha yoga is the basis for all forms of physical yoga such as Power, Bikram, Ashtanga and Kundalini. Our focus is on breathing, alignment and posture breakdown.

As we begin our sun salutation, my eyes are transfixed on the view: grey rocky desert against a backdrop of baby blue sky, lined by a majestic mountain range. I continue with my deep breathing and feel all my tensions slowly melt away. Hatha yoga, Tina tells us, helps achieve balance between body, mind, and spirit. Through the continued practice of asanas, or poses, we gain

flexibility and strength, relieve tension and stress and become more centred and aware.

It's only half past seven in the morning, but it's already 30°C. "It's like hot yoga," says Jonathan with a wink. I'm relieved when we end with corpse pose, flat on our backs.

After yoga? Wine (with breakfast in between!). A path lined with purple robe lotus leaves leads the way to Nk'Mip cellars, North America's first Aboriginal-owned and operated winery. It produces 18,000 cases of wine annually from approximately 6,000 tonnes of grapes. The vineyard on site, planted in 2000, has over 21 acres of land. It consists mainly of Syrah and Cabernet Franc. The reserve also owns 340 acres north of Oliver, where they've been growing Pinot Noir and Riesling since 1968 (most contracted out to other vineyards such as Jackson Triggs and Inskillin).

We settle into our wine-tasting seats with 7 tall Riedel glasses before us. The Pinot Blanc 2007 is first. It's crisp, fresh with a hint of citrus. Next is the Riesling 2007 which has a stronger acidic taste, mixed with orchard fruit and berries. My favourite red is the Syrah 2006; it's smoky, spicy and has plum

flavours. Last, is the Nk'Mip Ice Wine. I've been spitting out the wine so far, but I can't bring myself to spit this. It seems sacrilegious. The ice wine is decadent. There are notes of lavender and rosewater mixed with honey. It tastes like heaven.

Feeling slightly giddy we head out to the Nk'Mip patio facing the orchards. A flute plays its melancholic melody and suddenly I feel a million miles away from home, work and reality. It's blissful. I order the grilled bison steak served in blue cheese butter and accompanied by herb corn bread and grilled asparagus. For dessert, we have another glass of ice wine. Why resist?

To end the day, we head over to Sonora Desert Spa. I've booked a lavender body wrap and my husband eagerly reserves a gentleman's menu deep-tissue massage. We slip into our terry-cloth robes and go our separate ways, each with a glass of lemon-flavoured water in hand. As I slip into my lavender-scented reverie, listening to birds chirping in the background, and feeling soft masseuse hands on my back, I can't help but ask myself: "Why we don't go away every weekend?" ●

+ if you go

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fitness; spiritridge.ca/yoga **NK'MIP**
CELLARS nkmipcellars.com



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