

rejuvenate



A Harmonic Convergence

As the clouds float over the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains, a sense of peace descends on The Art of Living Retreat Center, in Boone, NC, like a cozy blanket. Legend has it that the quartz in the mountains, said to be some of the oldest in the world, is supposed to hold spiritual energy.

The rolling 381-acre property outside Charlotte was originally built as a Transcendental Meditation Retreat Center by a follower of the Beatles' Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. In 2011, it was sold to the nonprofit, The Art of Living, which has more than 10,000 centers worldwide in 155 countries, but this is the centerpiece, built on the principles of Vastu—a style of Vedic architecture, based on harmony with the directions of the sun, for serenity and peace.

If you are seeking an authentic Ayurvedic detox (panchakarma), The Art of Living Retreat Center is a place to come back to, time and again. Acolytes also flock to the

signature Happiness Program, which features breathing exercises, yoga, meditation and shared wisdom. The Spa offers traditional Ayurvedic treatments like *shirodhara*, *abhyanga* and marma therapy, consultations with an Ayurvedic doctor and some of the best and most authentic yoga and meditation teachers anywhere. The Spa is undergoing expansion and, by early January, will feature a large hot tub, exercise pools, cooking demos and an Ayurvedic kitchen.

The cuisine is exclusively vegetarian, and floor-to-ceiling glass windows in the dining room showcase panoramic mountain views. There is a labyrinth for contemplative walks and meditation, an organic garden and a clay studio to encourage creativity. And, if you're lucky, your quiet day will end with spirited Kirtan and you will dance the night away. artoflivingretreatcenter.org

—Rona Berg