

Georgie White

Founder of Ocean Soul Retreats balances the professional and personal, but still knows when, and how, to reset

Writer Samantha Coomber

“I looked at all the elements I wanted to have in my life and then made a conscious effort to create one that incorporated them,” says Australian Georgie White. She manages to achieve what many of us only dream of. A free spirit, White founded Ocean Soul Retreat (OSR) in 2015 in Bali, a holistic, wellness, surf and yoga retreat for women.

While there are many surf and yoga retreats in Bali, OSR stands out from the crowd with its gentle, holistic, healthy approach to well-being geared towards like-minded women seeking to relax, reset their mind, body and soul, acquire inner balance and new life skills to take home – all in luxury.

White has achieved professional success by doing only what she loves, while helping to empower women who wish to recharge and reenergise their lives in the process (the rave reviews bear testament to that). OSR focuses on four interrelated components of wellness, nutrition, yoga and surfing – important factors in White’s personal life and major contributions to her well-being and enviable lifestyle.

Reaching this point in White’s life, was not part of any grand scheme. She reflects, “It has definitely been an interesting journey, and I had to literally piece everything together to make sense of it all. It was very much a case of one thing leading to another, following my heart and trusting the process. Luckily, straying from a path can sometimes lead you to the right one.”

The Melbourne native got the taste for

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the healthy life from an early age, growing up on a farm. During her 20s – spurred by an allergic reaction that required a visit to the emergency room – White began exploring ways to cleanse and detox her system. Naturopath consultations inspired her to embrace clean eating and holistic healing to prevent similar physical reactions.

“It was a defining point in my life,” says White. “It became clear that what you put in your body directly affects how you feel, and that food can be a form of medicine. That experience heightened my awareness of the importance of nutrition, and I’ve made a conscious effort ever since to consume the right food to fuel my body.” Consequently, nutrition is one of the main pillars in OSR’s integrated approach to healing, where she collaborates with a naturopath and holistic nutritionist to formulate the retreat menus.

Another defining moment for White occurred while working in the events industry in 2010.

After experiencing a seismic upheaval in her personal life, she realised she needed to hit the reset button. This involved embarking

on a global journey of self-discovery and connection, from Brazil to Bali. The latter provided a personal epiphany; inspired by a surf retreat she attended in 2011 and re-energised by the Island of the Gods, she stayed to embrace the idyllic lifestyle.

“In Bali, I discovered the elements that helped me establish life balance: the beauty of the ocean, the challenges and rewards of surfing, a grounding dose of daily yoga and holistic therapy, and food that nourishes and strengthens inside and out” – elements White now incorporates in OSR for other women to experience.

OSR came about as a combination of White’s passions and personal experiences. Bali is conducive to wellness and healing, a deeply spiritual Hindu island and hotbed of yoga and surfing. This sets the tone for OSR and lends itself to reset, detox and life balance – themes which are important to guests, often at a point in their lives where

they need to get back in balance and make healthy choices.

“I want every retreat to be a moment to reset and to reconnect with mind, body and soul,” says White. “OSR is a reflection of how I found my healthy living and life balance. These elements are all related and I believe you need them to feel balanced – whole food nutrition, holistic therapies, exercising the mind and body through yoga, meditation and cardio. In our case, surfing adds a fun activity.”

Nowadays, this global nomad divides her time between New York City and tropical Bali, which presents a new learning curve. Bali is her “work place”, with daily operations during the retreat’s April to October seasonal programmes. These are dedicated to establishing OSR as a sanctuary that creates impact to initiate change in women’s lives. And there are also perks to working in Bali – the freedom to ride

around on a scooter, catching a yoga class and a wave, and sipping on a fresh coconut at sunset.

Conversely, New York represents downtime for White, who finds the metropolis “a crazily busy place with frenetic energy with an incredible wellness scene”.

Yoga is a particular passion of hers. She says, “It teaches you to approach life in a more placid, non judgemental way”. Having studied at the acclaimed Yoga Works in New York’s SoHo, and maintaining a regular yoga and meditation practice during the retreat’s off season, it’s no surprise that along with surfing, garden yoga sessions are a key activity at OSR.

“Life balance is so important, even more so after starting my own business,” White reflects. “We are all extremely busy, and that’s when we end up sacrificing the daily rituals that bring us peace. The

main elements that help us create balance are making time where we connect with ourselves and a greater source, whether that’s nature or a spiritual connection. Learning boundaries have been instrumental for this stage of my life. It’s been a wonderful learning tool, which I implement through OSR – a business venture that, after all, is all about balance and wellness.”

White appears a vision of serenity and composure, but can she gauge when she has reached her limit? “I know when I start getting frenetic in my actions and not looking after myself – sleeping less, making bad food choices, less exercise and work taking priority over activities that maintain balance. That’s the time I hit reset and focus on practicing yoga, exercising, meditation, eating well, detoxing and spending time with family and friends – getting the tools back in place that help to centre me again.”

www.oceansoulretreat.com

