For the first time, BILL SIMMONS reveals plans for his new HBO talk show — but not before he relives the exquisite agony of his bitter ESPN breakup. “Ask yourself this: ‘Who would work there that you respect right now?’”
SORRY, YOU CAN’T REACH ME.
I’M BUSY FLOATING

The town’s newest getaways are purely mental as saltwater tanks, “sound baths” and escape-room games become the new starry antidotes to anxiety by Joe Shapiro

WHEREAS ONCE-upon-a-time movie stars did the trick, with today’s 24/7 connected culture and TV and media oversaturation, who could blame Hollywood for seeking out more novel escapes? "Treading out the whole world," says "Orange Is The New Black" actress Jessica Pimentel, can be a blissful side effect of the following new therapies.

FLotation Therapy

Back in vogue, flotation therapy—which involves floating on one’s back in an enclosed pool or pool filled with buoyant saltwater—sprinted in popularity in the early ’90s before unbound AIDS fears took hold; now new centers are cropping up on both coasts. Spurred by Ultimate Fighting Championship commentator Joe Rogan, who advocates on his podcast the mind-clearing benefits of floating, Pimentel has been heading to Brooklyn’s Float Tank (973-548-8537). The 60 minutes of isolated "me" time (199) relaxation stems from being submerged in water, coupled with sensory deprivation, with nothing to distract you save for the ceiling of the pod, says co-owner David Leventhal. “The environment makes it easier to meditate." Adds Pimentel: "It’s like resting on a cloud, with a good hour to yourself where you can indulge in a weightlessness, beautiful environment.” According to a recent study from Karlstad University in Sweden, "recreational environmental stimulation technique (REST)" a flotation tank can generate a multitude of beneficial effects like pain reduction and stress reduction.

In fact, Jen Hafner, CEO of Just Float in Pasadena (8600 3rd St; for 60 minutes), says his facility particularly appeals to creative types because “by removing outside stimulation, it frees up resources to the brain to solve problems like writer’s block.”

Sound Baths

Originally founded in Tibet or Nepal, this trendy new healing modality—featuring the playing of metal bowls to create vibrations that induce relaxation—has been taking luxury hotel spas by storm. At Faena Hotel Miami Beach (Frequent Reader: Frida Tingeu, John Legend and Chrissy Teigen), a 10-minute sound-bath segment is incorporated into all bodywork treatments (185 for 60 minutes). Vibration from the bowls (which sound like softly swirling hums) start immediately into the theta waves, which are part of your sleep pattern, in the brain,” says wellness director Viviane Garcia-Torres. “People who don’t sleep enough at night don’t get those theta waves.”

Nina Dobrev had a massage that started and ended with sound baths at the same in Bali, which she called "rest and relaxation at its finest." Meditation centers around Los Angeles offer group sessions: stepping in Bunker Hill features a Saturday night 20-minute sound-bath special session for $10. Charlie Theran and Robert Downey Jr. has made the pilgrimage to the Integratron, near Joshua Tree, Calif., which claims to be an acoustically perfect space. With sound-bath sessions starting at 85 for 60 minutes, 30 minutes of live playing followed by recorded music for the rest of the session, the desert setting is a popular stop for Palm Springs regulars.

Escape Rooms

In Hollywood, the mingling of office fun with networking has migrated from after-work drinks to group spin classes to, now, staff outings at escape rooms. The venues—where about 10 people voluntarily lock themselves in rooms as small as 10 feet by 10 feet and have 60 minutes to solve puzzles and logic games to find an exit—have started springing up around L.A. and attracting stars to boot. (If you want out, there’s an emergency exit button, an unlocked door or a staff member present to get you out.) "Don’t miss downtown’s Escape Room L.A., which has been around for 12 years but has lost none of its popularity, has hosted teams from DreamWorks, CAA and Sony Pictures. "Perhaps it’s because of the entertainment connection in L.A., but people here like things that allow them to escape from their regular lives," says John Harmony, founder of Escape Room L.A., where the toughest room has a completion rate of only 8 percent. (Tickets cost $90-$145 per person.) "Team-building is such a chic hobby," says Ed Adams, executive producer of ABC’s "The Chew," who can bond with work friends, and "we’ll see them in a different way." Opened in DTLA in June, Escape Room L.A., 3840 Broadway, where Dax Shepard recently celebrated his birthday with wife Kristen Bell and friends; it has a new room debuting later this summer.

Forest Bathing

Don’t think hot-tubbing among redwoods. With roots in Japan (where it’s called allelopathy), forest bathing includes immersion exercises paired with a nature walk.

At Uliveto de Sardina in Sardinia, Italy, where John Cusack recently stayed, forest bathing (1080 for one hour for up to four people) involves a leisurely stroll in the woods plus "a series of invocations like, ‘I invite you to close your eyes now and listen to the sound of the creek.’" or communion with a "celebration tree," says Catherine Fraser, the spa director. Tree-hearing might sound hokey, but it sure beats our heading to the 100,000 square-meter “It can be magical for people from urban environments”}

Frequent Reader: Frida Tingeu, John Legend and Chrissy Teigen.

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