

Finding balance on the Costa Blanca

In an industry overwhelmed with wellness, a clinic on Spain's white coast is offering something different

Words : Emma Hodgson





From perfectly filtered images of avocado on toast to the millions of posts depicting athleisure-clad women doing yoga, Instagram has inadvertently fueled the current wellness boom (indeed, 83% of users say Instagram helps them to find out about new products and experiences). No doubt buoyed by the social media revolution, the global wellness sector is now worth more than AED 15.4 trillion dirhams, according to the Global Wellness Institute. However, the deregulated nature of social media leaves users at risk of being duped by people looking to make quick money on the platform. Indeed, a nationwide case in the US earlier this year saw a fitness influencer known online as Brittany Dawn Fitness face backlash from fans who claimed she had mis-sold them fitness programmes in an ongoing case which has seen the influencer lose hundreds of thousands of followers.

While there is still an appetite for wellness, there is also a greater desire for accountability within the wellness industry, which exactly why facilities such as SHA Wellness Clinic in Spain are in more demand than ever. The Alicante-based clinic has a strict policy of recruiting the best medical and fitness professionals amongst its army of staff, (a policy which has arguably paid off, the clinic recently celebrated its ten-year anniversary with discussions about opening a second clinic. *L'Officiel Arabia* decided to visit the flagship clinic to learn more about its practices.

The City of Light

It's not difficult to see why CEO and founder Alfredo Bataller Parietti decided to base SHA Wellness Clinic on Spain's Costa Blanca. Known in ancient times as Lucentum ('the City of Light') the cascading Spanish landscape is drenched in near year-round sun, with pleasant 20°C+ temperatures for much of the year. A world away from Benidorm, the British party town down the coast, the complex overlooks the majestic Puig Campana mountain, the Mediterranean Sea, as well as the lush green Serra Gelada Natural Park.

What perhaps is most poignant however, is the story behind the conception of SHA Wellness Clinic. Bataller Parietti experienced a series of tragic personal losses, losing his mother, aunt and sister at a young age to cancer. His father also suffered from ill health from his forties, suffering from ALS (Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis). Parietti himself battled with serious health problems for decades before being diagnosed with the early stages of colon cancer. It was then that he decided to overhaul his lifestyle and diet which he attributes to regaining full health. As a result, he decided to undergo a personal journey which resulted in the combined physical, dietary and psychological programme used at SHA Wellness Clinic.





What can you expect?

The clinic advocates something it calls “the SHA 360° method”, which focuses on a range of physical and psychological treatments to treat the body as a whole. The clinic has several different bespoke packages, which focus on different aspects of health and wellness (a full list of the various programmes is available on shawellnessclinic.com), all of which include a medical consultation, a session with a nutritionist and an alkaline balancing diet which is central to the clinic’s philosophy. There are several different food plans available: the SHA diet, (which is a balanced diet devoid of sugar, dairy and meat) along with the biolight plan (designed for gentle weight control goals) and the kushi diet a strict weight control (which avoids oil, baked flour, nuts, pasta and oats along with other foods). Therapies available aim to blend both Western and Eastern methods and include stress management classes, yoga, meditation and cooking classes. While medical services cover everything from dentistry and anti-smoking classes to non-invasive aesthetic treatments and diagnostic tests. Regardless of the package you choose, you can join in with the group exercise itinerary (which includes activities such as beach walks, hikes to the local lighthouse, brain stimulation exercises, movies and more yoga).

The building which houses the clinic is a modernist architectural masterpiece, with floor to ceiling windows offering 360° views over the surrounding landscape. Along with indoor facilities, the clinic also offers an outdoor infinity pool with views out to the Mediterranean Sea. For those looking for something extra, guests can try the clinic’s recently launched ‘SHA Residences’. These residences are divided into three types (Garden, Premier and Penthouse), which all come with their own private treatment rooms (think saunas and hammams) along with beautiful gardens, terraces and a glass infinity pool.

Forward-thinking therapies

One area in which the clinic really excels is in forward-thinking, innovative therapies. The clinic specialises in - amongst other things - regenerative and age reversing technologies which target degenerative diseases. A cognitive therapy used at the clinic includes a non-invasive brain stimulation technique which was developed by NASA and Harvard University and helps conditions such as anxiety, memory

loss, depression and low energy levels and helps to balance cellular recovery. The treatment pulseates light frequencies through the brain to help regenerate malfunctioning cells.

Although preventative care is gaining real traction in mainstream medical advice, in the mid-noughties when Battaller Parietti first set up SHA Wellness Clinic, his ideas were far less widely accepted. Ultimately SHA Wellness Clinic is about regaining balance, resetting the body through detox and diet and tuning in with yourself through talking with professionals as well as Eastern methods such as mediation and yoga.

“From the beginning we wanted to develop a concept with a real fusion between Eastern and Western medicine under the same roof. Usually if you go to a natural health doctor and a scientific practitioner, you may get two different approaches, and they may even criticize each other. We’ve managed to get them together working toward the same goal,” explains Battaller Parietti. “Some people take a more flexible approach, while others make more dramatic changes, but everyone changes something,” he continues. “Our main focus is to work not only in the short term but also in the long term by giving tools and knowledge so guests can maintain the lifestyle after their stay. Ultimately, when you find something positive, you want to share it with others,” Battaller Parietti explains. We couldn’t agree more.

For more information, to make an enquiry or book a trip visit shawellnessclinic.com



