



Rustic-chic villas are designed with natural materials and overlook the Aegean coast (left)



CNT
EXCLUSIVE

Canyon Ranch Wellness Resort at Kaplankaya

KATIE SILCOX finds herself relaxing at a new wellness retreat in a picturesque corner of Turkey

As we jet along the Aegean coast in a 68ft yacht, breathing in the sea air and gazing out at the open waters dotted with battered fishermen's boats and little lighthouses in the distance, I can't help but feel instantly uplifted. And this is only the journey from the airport. I've landed in Bodrum on Turkey's south-west coast and am taking a rather unique high-speed transfer across the Turkish riviera to the new Canyon Ranch Wellness Resort at Kaplankaya.

Canyon Ranch has long been sought out in America for its specialised wellness holidays that offer guests a chance to disengage from the stresses of modern life, enjoy some downtime and begin on the path to achieving personal health goals. The property at Kaplankaya is the first international outpost

for the brand, and as we speed across the ocean I begin to understand why this quiet corner of Turkey was chosen. With a few additional minutes of on-ground jeep transfer to reach the hotel, I take in the landscape: tree-covered hills as far as the eye can see and a certain sense of peace that only such rugged nature can bring.

On checking in, I'm introduced to the on-site doctor who arranges an optional, hour-long consultation during which we discuss my current health and goals for the week. I'm told weight loss is a common request, though the staff hope to help you achieve much more, so that you walk away with real knowledge for a healthier lifestyle. The programme for my stay includes one-on-one yoga, cooking lessons

with the chef, hiking to explore the local area and treatments in the extensive spa.

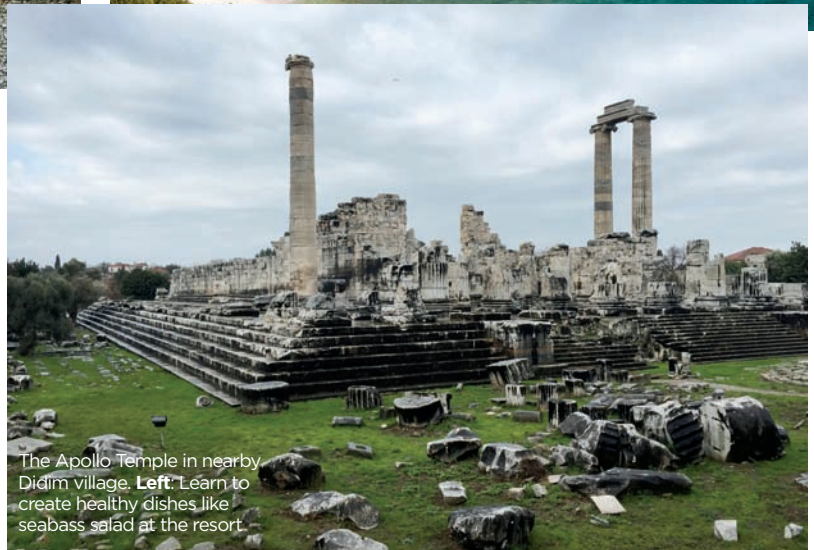
The four floors comprising the main hotel building is built into a cliff-side, each level with huge glass walls proudly showing off spectacular views over the ocean. The villas and bedrooms are designed using natural materials, with a rustic feel and showcasing the same jaw-dropping view. From the lobby at the top of the building, each staircase down leads to a different zone, including a relaxation room serving teas and juices, a restaurant and the spa and fitness centre, the latter of which forms the heart of the hotel. Spread across an entire floor, the spa comprises 41 treatment rooms where you can relax with everything from a Swedish massage to the traditional Turkish hammam. I opt for a facial and a hammam, both of which, after a consultation with my personal spa-programme advisor, are tailored to my needs (tight shoulders and dehydrated skin from travelling). Local elements are also incorporated, with products made from olive oil and rose-essence.

Going local is clearly of importance in the kitchen as well, a place from which an endless array of soul-cleansing, clean meals emerge, including Turkish *meze* made from eggplant, spinach, beans and other home-grown vegetables mixed with natural yoghurt and seasonings; seabass farmed off the property's coastline (in fact, I can see the farms from the dinner table), plus local olive oil and honey. I'm later driven around the area where villagers tend to beehives, and sprawling valleys are bursting with the twisted trunks and bountiful green leaves of olive trees, some up to 400 years old, interspersed only by a few

PHOTOS: KATIE SILCOX, CORBIS



Canyon Ranch is perched above a white sand beach. **Left:** Views of Kazikli Port from the hotel's upcoming El Captain restaurant



The Apollo Temple in nearby Didim village. **Left:** Learn to create healthy dishes like seabass salad at the resort.

small farming villages and the occasional spike of a mosque minaret.

Keen to learn more, I step into the kitchen for a cooking lesson with the chef, where I prepare – admittedly with a lot of help – a dish of grilled eggplant garnished with pomegranate, cucumber, mint and lime zest, as well as a salad of spinach, lettuce, toasted almonds, pine seeds and baked seabass. Better yet, the chef emails me the recipes, so the healthy habits can go home with me.

It's tempting to stay put and recharge, but it's worth exploring this pretty slice of the world. The hotel offers a host of options, including yacht charter and helicopter-hopping to the nearby Greek islands of Kos, Symi and Rhodes, as well as private tours to places like Didim, a village that is home to the ruins of a 6th-century BC temple dedicated to the Greek god Apollo.

This is yet another reason why this corner of Turkey, with its historic ties to

The spa forms the heart of the hotel. Local elements are also incorporated, with products made from olive oil and rose

Greece and the Mediterranean, seems a natural extension for the wellness chain. Healthy living and eating is already deeply ingrained in the culture here – the Mediterranean diet has long been lauded for its health benefits. Add to this the fresh mountain and sea air and the expertise at Canyon Ranch, and the pairing seems natural.

Officially opens on July 1; doubles from AED 2,460; 0090-252-511 0051, canyonranchdestinations.com/kaplankaya CNT

The Aegean region is rife with olive trees

