



When Retreating is actually *Advancing.*

by Tara Klein

The very first time I attended a health retreat I was a little anxious about what would happen there. Would I be forced to do and eat things that I did not want? Would I have to subsist on lettuce leaves, weak herbal teas and watery lentil stews? Would my thirty something wilful self embrace the experience or storm out in a huff? Well apart from the odd uncomfortable moment, my time at Fountainhead Organic Health Retreat was a great experience. Taking me beyond my physical and mental comfort zones to a new me, or a more essential me stripped of bad habits born of short cuts to relaxation, like too many drinks after work, that never truly relax you anyway. These realisations were not forced upon me, rather the energy of the place expands your consciousness about one self and the facilities are there to give you real relaxation options to explore.

Meeting the founder Wayne Parrot was a big part of that, Wayne Parrot is an intensely alive person, and it is his vision and entrepreneurial dynamism that has created this unique healing paradise. Born out of the desire to keep his ailing mother alive, (she had cancer), Wayne sought out knowledge, natural health experts and found a very special piece of land to bring Fountainhead together. Located in the Glasshouse Mountains, near Maleny on the Sunshine Coast hinterland in Queensland, Fountainhead is visually rich. Uniquely designed and fitted out chalets, are strategically placed within an organic avocado orchard, with each chalet afforded complete privacy by the surrounding foliage.

Fountainhead accommodates between 10 to 16 guests at anyone time, so it is possible to feel like this is your own personal health farm. The name Fountainhead, familiar to readers of philosopher and novelist Ayn Rand, is testimony to Wayne's approach of self-determination in

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healing diseases and overcoming the root of diseases; damaged self-esteem. Like the characters in Ayn Rand's novels, Fountainhead attendees are given the opportunity to understand, mend and move beyond debilitating conditions that might be holding them back from the full enjoyment of a wonderful life - or in my case scrape back some of the dross, that modern life in big cities can contribute to accumulating - covering over my own sense of vitality with desensitising addictions like alcohol.

The food is fantastic at Fountainhead, organic and much of it grown on the property, the flavours are alive and absorption of the health knowledge behind the menu is available at the weekly organic cooking school. Fountainhead sees a succession of health experts visiting and sharing their knowledge. Renowned psychotherapist, Greg Neville ND author of *Our Emotional Links to Disease*, regularly runs programs at Fountainhead. All experts run programs, which address specific conditions like depression, cancers and weight loss. There are



lengthy 20 day programs available or you can come for a couple of days to test the waters, so to speak. Those waters are bubbling up from beneath the mountain in its hot mineral water baths and spa complex, the perfect antidote for stressed muscles and minds. A Turkish steam

room and Dead Sea salt spa are great detox options and I made it a bit of a daily routine during my stay at Fountainhead. You can swim laps in the beautiful blue pool or catch a few rays of sunshine stretched out on a lounge. Stretch, walk, run and jump with personal training coordinator

Dean, who pointed out to me just how important encouragement and informed discipline can be, to achieving goals you have set yourself around fitness and appearance. In fact Boot Camp programs are available at Fountainhead on a regular basis.

Fountainhead is a place that you can come to, both to find self-awareness, and the skills and facilities to explore healthier options in your own life. A health retreat is really that, a temporary retreat from the world to refocus on the essentials and structures in your life that can either make you healthy or unhealthy. Much of life is about established routines, and if the current ones in your life are not serving you as well as they could, or you would like to discover everything you possibly could be, then a time at the top of the mountain to reflect and explore could be just what you need. ■

www.fountainhead.com.au