

Feeling Stressed? Miraval's Equine Program (And Other Cool Activities) Provide The Perfect Antidote

Sherrie Nachman Contributor 

Follow

Sep 29, 2022, 11:31am EDT

0 



Listen to article 5 minutes



Travelers have been flocking to Miraval Resorts & Spas to improve their health and gain a renewed sense of joy for decades. Currently, many of us are feeling more anxious than ever as we try to recover from the Covid years and face a more unsettled state of the world. Miraval has created an innovative equine program to help instill a sense of control and calm to anyone who feels a bit unmoored. While it is no secret that being surrounded by animals can make us happy, Miraval's horse-centered experiences offer something more.



Get blissed out in the indoor/outdoor spa pool. MIRAVAL

The horse experts at Miraval have discovered that even a brief encounter with these beautiful animals can help relieve stress, improve leadership skills and teach us how to limit negative thoughts. Miraval's specially trained horses can teach you how to slow down in a busy world or put things into motion when things feel stuck. Guests learn to be more present, mindful and compassionate with themselves and others. Because horses are nonverbal and can read human body language, guests are taught essential skills before entering the pen such as breathing techniques, mirroring body language and relaxing their body in order to effectively communicate. If you have ever asked yourself, "why is no one listening to me?" or "why am I struggling to gain a simple result?" an afternoon with these horses might just provide a breakthrough. By trying to communicate with their horses, guests frequently discover barriers that are limiting their connections with those who are most important in their lives.



The equine program provides unexpected perks. MIRAVAL

In a program called “Common Ground,” a guest enters the ring with a horse and learns how to control the horse’s movement without touching or speaking to their horse. In fact, guests stand about 15 feet away and convince their horse to move by looking in a certain direction and pointing a crop-like device to indicate movement. If you move the device rapidly, your horse will start to trot; stand completely still and crouch down and your horse should stop. The highlight for me came after a few exercises when my horse turned to look at me as if to say “what’s next?” and then came over for a nuzzle. When I tried the same movements with a second horse, it was a bit more of a challenge. The message learned was to clearly show your intentions and understand that everyone in your life may require a slightly different approach. In the “Equine Experience,” you will spend time grooming your horse, leading him or her around the ring (more challenging than it sounds) and convincing your horse to lift up its foot by applying a bit of pressure to its leg. Guests can also gain focus by participating in “Centaur Meditation,” where you can focus on breathing and a few slow yoga moves while mounted on your horse. Other options include “An Unforgettable Canvas, where you paint your horse as you watch him respond to your touch.



Challenge your mind and body on the ropes course MIRAVAL

These equine experiences can be life changing, but you should also plan on taking advantage of some of the other terrific classes while at the resort. There are several different activities offered every hour that range from traditional barre classes to slow flow yoga to floating meditation. You can enjoy strenuous (or easy hikes), paddle-boarding, aerial Pilates, a ropes course or a wine tasting class. The spa is one of the most popular places to spend an afternoon. In addition to a deep-tissue massage, you can experience a Thai massage, vibrational sound therapy, an Ayurvedic treatment or an organic facial.



Enjoy a peaceful room with some outdoor space MIRAVAL

The accommodations and surroundings at all of the locations are peaceful and luxurious and the emphasis is on mindfulness, not restrictiveness. While portions are small, delicious desserts are plentiful and the fully-stocked bar serves specialty cocktails and healthy bar snacks. For lunch, you can expect a vegetable-prevalent buffet, but also a grass-fed burger and an Asian pasta salad and feel free to dine in your bathrobe. If you are visiting the Berkshires property from New York City, you can now take advantage of a door to door Jitney service which eliminates the stress of driving. After a few days, you will definitely feel a renewed sense of calm.