

SUNDAY, JANUARY 25
MONDAY, JANUARY 26

The New York Times

Une sélection hebdomadaire offerte par *Le Monde*

No Talking. No Eating. No Fun. It's Called Vacation.

By KAREN ROBINOVITZ

Right after the new year, Tracey Ross, owner of the Los Angeles boutique that bears her name, traded her designer shoes for hiking sneakers and headed out to the mountains of Calabasas, California, to check into the Ashram, a military-style spa where the motto is "To become, we overcome."

For seven days, Ms. Ross, 42, had to wake at 4:45 a.m. to do yoga before a spartan breakfast (one scrambled egg, three slices of apple and herbal tea), hike for hours up a steep trail, grab an equally spartan lunch, and then endure five more hours of intense physical activity — from aqua aerobics to weight training — before having a bowl of lentil soup for dinner and crawling wearily into bed. She endured blisters, an array of aches and pains, chapped lips and no-frill accommodations that were nothing like her experiences at the top-tier hotels she frequents. She paid \$3,500 and called it a vacation.

"I needed a timeout from my busy life," she said. "I can't get that in St. Barts, where I wind up hopping and going out every night. I needed to get



Kevin Moloney for The New York Times

back to the basics and nature. I needed sweating and a sense of accomplishment, not to mention a week without makeup and getting dressed up."

Ms. Ross is hardly alone. Many travelers are heading to places like the Tree of Life Rejuvenation Center, an ayurvedic medicine-yoga-meditation-fasting oasis in Patagonia, Arizona, (\$1,420 for a seven-day stay). They are signing up with Vladi, a German company that offers stays on the remote island off Chile where Alexander Selkirk, the inspiration for "Robinson Crusoe," was ma-

Some vacationers are trading relaxation in the sun for rigorous discipline. Guests during a dining ritual at Shambhala Mountain Center in Colorado.

roned (\$140 a day, plus \$250 for a survival kit). They're meditating, handling kitchen duties, and sleeping in tents at the Shambhala Mountain Center, a spiritual retreat in the Colorado Rockies (\$200 for a weekend to \$1,805 for a month).

"There is an enormous trend of people who have the need to get out and do something different," said Gary Mansour of Mansour Travel in Beverly Hills. "They're looking for any kind of escape, and if that means, 'beat me up a little bit,' so be it."

Josh Bernstein, president of Boulder Outdoor in Colorado, said he believed that "since 9/11, people have re-evaluated what's important, and that applies to their vacation time."

"Ten years ago, it was a fringe group of outdoor adventurers," he added. "Today, mainstream people who have lavish lifestyles are coming to find a way to get to know themselves more deeply."

AHIER DU « MONDE » DATÉ DIMANCHE 25 - LUNDI 26 JANVIER 2004, N° 18351. NE PEUT ÊTRE VENDU SÉPARÉMENT