

San Francisco Chronicle

1.2.2005

STYLE

Section M



MIKE KEFKA / The Chronicle

Out with the stress: A four-hand massage at Kamalaspas, the new spa on Union Square in San Francisco, is a relaxing way to spend personal time.

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

Learning to take time out in 2005

By Carolyn Zinko
CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

As Baby Boomers grow older, the latest trend to appeal to their aging sensibilities is not a bubble, a specialty drink, or a line of high-priced clothing, but something that money can't buy: the extravagance of spending time on themselves.

Antidotes to the go-go lifestyle are cropping up everywhere, from two-hour massages at Kamalaspas on Union Square to an aromatherapy garden and rooftop soaking tubs at the forthcoming Hotel Vitale on the Embarcadero to the increasing proliferation of yoga studios across the Bay Area.

Boomers, it seems, are coming to terms with the great unmentionable: their own mortality. Having spent years ignoring family, friends and even themselves for the sake of their careers, they are now seeing that time isn't necessarily on their side — and want to make the most of it before even more ships away.

"As people are forced to slow down, lose their jobs or get their hours cut, they feel much better taking time for themselves."

DEBBIE BRIM, logistics manager

"There's an old Johnny Cash song that says you can't miss an old friend you never had," said time-management consultant Peter Turla, who's currently more in demand in Silicon Valley than in years past.

Workers whose hours have been cut back in the economic slump are paradoxically clamoring for time-management classes, now that they remember how precious personal time is. The losses and lingering stresses associated with Sept. 11 are

causing people to seek calming alternative therapies. Hoteliers are beginning to bank on the idea that business travelers and other guests increasingly prefer peace and quiet over a piece of the action, trading pulsating in-house bars and restaurants serving lavender martinis for wellness spas, Zen-inspired settings and herb teas in the rooms.

Time is the new luxury.

At Effective Training Associates, a Los Gatos company that provides professional development training, demand for Turla's time-management classes has tripled this year over 2003, said Debbie Brim, a logistics manager for the company. High-tech firms such as Cypress Semiconductor Inc. have used Turla, while eBay, for instance, has him come in to lecture twice a month, Brim said.

"When people had time to take time, they realized what a wonderful commodity it is," Brim said. "As people are forced

► TIME: Page M4

Time is the new luxury

► TIME
From Page M1

to slow down, lose their jobs or get their hours cut, they feel much better taking time for themselves. As they look for new employment or avenues to explore, they put value on personal time. It's not the chase for the almighty dollar."

Turla, a former rocket designer for NASA, says America in general has a problem with time, owing to the work ethic brought over by the self-motivated and driven people who founded the country.

"We're competitive, too," he said. "Part of our culture is to be No. 1, to be the best. We're also very time-driven because we live in a society that is technological. People were not concerned with time until railroads were built

"People want high-quality time off, but they don't have a clear picture of themselves actually having it, so it's a fuzzy goal, and it's hard to get excited about it or motivated to achieve it."

PETER TURLA,
time-management consultant

across America. People had to be on time to catch the train."

Time management comes down to setting priorities and becoming conscious of what needs to be changed.

He said people mistake working longer hours for working harder, and self-sabotage in four common ways: underestimating how long it will take to get something done, procrastinating, trying to do too many things at once and setting unjustified expectations of perfection on certain jobs.

In some companies, he has noticed a culture of bragging when it comes to working overtime. There's a problem with that thinking, he said, because work expands to fill the time allotted to its completion. Employees have to set their own limits.

"You wouldn't brag about how inefficient you were, would you? You wouldn't boast about how much you neglected your health and your personal life, would you?" Instead of this being a badge of honor, it is an indication of an out-of-balance lifestyle, he said. "You risk being judged if you leave earlier, but ultimately you're judged by your productivity. You'll find that working a more sane schedule and getting a balance in your life will actually make you more productive and help you to avoid burnout."

Learn to say no, to avoid an unrealistic workload.

"It's important to learn to manage the expectations of others who are demanding too much from you," Turla said. "If you can't say no, you might say something like,

'Yes, I can do it — if you don't mind this other project being delayed.' Or, 'Yes, I can do it if you extend the deadline, or get me some help with my other project, or let me work on just the critical part of it and do the rest later.' Or 'Yes, if it doesn't have to be done to a high level, I'll do the whole thing as a quick-and-dirty version.'

"Give options to people demanding you do something right way," Turla said. "Let them know that you have other projects that also have to be done in a timely manner, and that adding a new thing to your list will mean that something else will have to be postponed."

He recommends creating a master list for unfinished items and another list for daily tasks — leaving room for unexpected things that always crop up.

He also suggests "emptying the brain" at the end of the day by writing down anything that needs to be followed up on. Trying to remember everything only leaves you with nagging thoughts for the rest of the night, which prevents relaxation, he said.

A high-quality personal life depends on advance planning and visualizing what you want, as well as the steps necessary to achieve it. That is how Turla makes time to practice yoga and to meditate daily.

"People want high-quality time off, but they don't have a clear picture of themselves actually having it," he said. "So it's a fuzzy goal, and it's hard to get excited about it or motivated to achieve it. Anyone can loaf, but only the organized can loaf with peace of mind. You have to make it OK to take time off."

Off the clock

Away from work, some are turning to leisurely ayurvedic treatments for rejuvenation. The 5,000-year-old system of healing therapies from India is based on a person's biophysical energy patterns, applying specific herbs and oils, and ingesting certain foods to treat various conditions and to create more balance between humans and nature.

While trendy with celebrities such as Madonna, Naomi Campbell, Demi Moore and Cindy Crawford, such treatments are available in the Bay Area from ayurvedic physician Reenita Malhotra Hora, who works at the Institute for Health & Healing at California Pacific Medical Center in San Francisco. She teaches ayurveda to medical students, and has just come out with a new book, "Inner Beauty" (Chronicle Books), which tells readers how to use ayurveda to change their lifestyles from the inside out.

She also owns Ayoma Life Spa at the Hotel Valencia in San Jose's Santana Row shopping district, one of only a few ayurvedic spas in the Bay Area, where local customers and clients from out of state come for a variety of treatments that can stretch up to four hours at a time.

The emphasis, she said, is on healing. "We don't use the word pampering here."

Hora said her clients are increasingly interested in self-care, prompted by dissatisfaction with

More people trying yoga as stress reducer

► TIME

From previous page

She started with one client two years ago and now has 20, which required her to hire two assistants to handle the growing workload.

Not all of her clients are Boomers, but Caytie Bagatelos, co-owner of an educational publishing and sales company in Foster City, said she feels just as old. She works 65 to 70 hours a week, driving from Mendocino to Monterey on business, and pays Tunney several hundred dollars for 20 hours of work each week, such as scheduling corporate events and travel, and buying and wrapping 100 or more holiday gifts, as well as assisting with personal projects including Bagatelos' wedding, grocery shopping for parties and a surprise home remodeling project for Bagatelos' parents.

"It's about trusting somebody else to accomplish something as good as or better than what I would do myself," said Bagatelos, "and that's what gives me the time to do the things I need to do for myself — spa treatments, taking a vacation, going to the gym, the things you need to make yourself balanced."

Slowing down

There are other lifestyle changes to help leave the hurry-burry, not all of them glitzy or commercial.

Yoga is prime among them. A nationwide survey of 4,000 adults commissioned by Yoga Journal in 2003 found that more than 7 percent of respondents practiced yoga, an increase of 28.5 percent from the previous year. One in 6 respondents said they intended to try yoga within a year's time.

"The No. 1 reason people study yoga is stress reduction," said Day-

na Macy, communications director at Yoga Journal. "As Boomers get older, one of the things they realize is their own mortality: that life doesn't last forever; it isn't a dress rehearsal. If you're not taking care of your body, it shows up with insomnia, anxiety, depression, weight gain, heart disease. And yoga can address every single one of these issues."

Macy, 44, herself feeling pressured from the demands of a full-time job and motherhood, pared her work to part-time to make room for daily meditation and yoga three times a week.

With less income, she has had to pare down on shopping as well, but said she found that with more time for reflection, she no longer years for material goods for fulfillment. "People want their lives filled with something greater, and I think this is one reason that attracts Boomers to yoga," Macy said.

Linda Montgomery, 47, of Menlo Park, works in finance at her husband's new law firm and handles most of the duties of driving their two tween-age children to and from school and sports activities. She recently turned to yoga to find peace of mind. It didn't come easily because of a nagging sense of guilt over taking time for herself, but the mental and physical rewards of 90 minutes of stretching and letting her mind wander have since helped to erase the pang.

"As a mom, I give a lot to my kids and husband, and I don't have someone coming up to me and rubbing my back," said Montgomery, noting the yoga teacher does that. "One of my favorite times is at the end of class. You've got a lavender-scented eye pillow on your face, a bolster under your legs and a blanket over you. It's almost like reverting to a baby. You



JOHN STOREY / The Chronicle

Brachman takes advantage of the sunny weather to just sit in her backyard and do some calming meditation.

stay nice and cozy."

Betty Brachman, a residential real estate agent with Sotheby's International Realty in San Francisco, who has chalked up more than \$250 million in sales in the past four years, built a gazebo onto her country getaway home in Glen Ellen, christening it her "permanent sacred space" for yoga and meditation.

Her gazebo is complemented by an outdoor meditation spot consisting of a small rock wall, a patch of grass and a bench for reflecting under a canopy of trees.

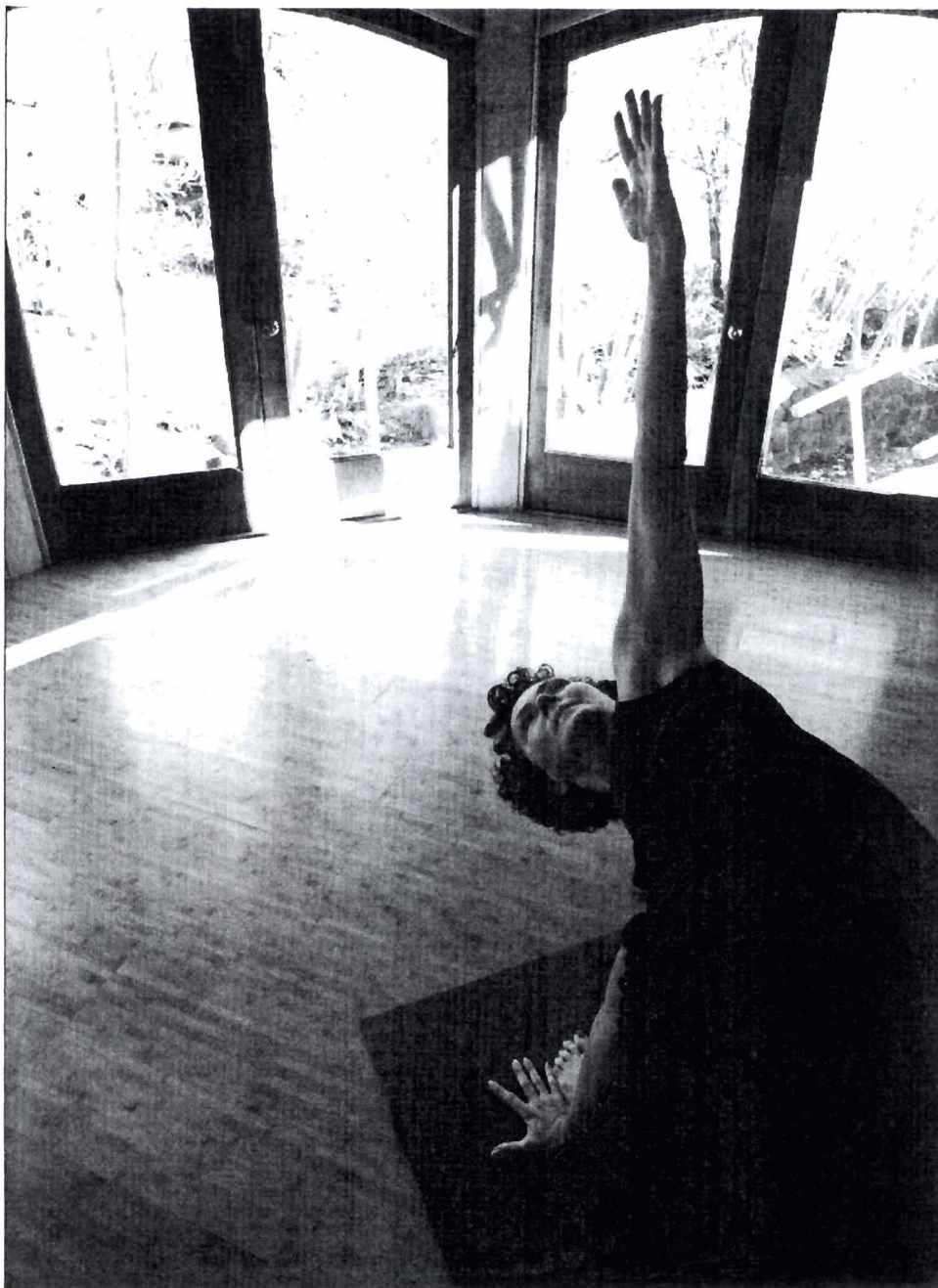
Once, at Paris's Orly airport, where international travelers can

take baths and freshen up, she booked a shower room, threw her yoga mat down and stood on her head, trying to calm down on a stopover after a 12-hour flight from San Francisco on her way to Nice.

Most people think of yoga as a supplement to their daily routine, but for Brachman, it's the other way around.

"I need yoga to be balanced and grounded, present, so I can live my life effectively," she said. "Otherwise, the tail's wagging the dog."

E-mail Carolyn Zinko at czinko@sfnchronicle.com.



JOHN STORBY / The Chronicle

Betty Brachman takes time out from the stresses of the day to practice yoga in a gazebo that she built near her home in Glen Ellen.

rapid-fire diagnosis methods in Western medicine, cutbacks in what health insurance will cover, and the deep-rooted, long-term effects that terrorist attacks and the persistent fear of a repeat have had on her clients' mental and physical well-being.

"Many people are increasingly disillusioned to go to a doctor and be seen for 15 minutes and given a pill that kills the symptom, like a headache, but doesn't get at the root of the problem," she said. "I have seen with a lot of my own clients, since 9/11 . . . more questions like, 'The danger is not going to go away, my husband flies for work all the time, what are the tools I can acquire to help me and my family deal with this on a daily basis?'"

In San Francisco, Christopher and Amber Marie Bently's ayurvedic Kamalspa, a day spa that opened on Union Square on Dec. 1, offers four types of two-hour, \$245 massage treatments in a sensuous Indian setting.

Walls and ceiling are draped in billowing fabric, much like a Maharajah's tent; a "rasi" room simulates an outdoor patio at night, with ceiling lights forming Vedic constellations, and the sound of running water and crickets piped in for a tranquil effect. A waiting room doubles as a tea room, with carved Indian furniture, Oriental

carpets, drapes and a saltwater fish tank. (Studies have shown that gazing at aquariums lowers the blood pressure, the Bentleys noted.)

The spa apparently has struck a chord: Days before its opening, receptionists had already taken six reservations for the Abhyanga Four Hands massage (with two therapists rubbing simultaneously), the Shi-rodhara massage (in which oil is poured on the head for 30 minutes, followed by a massage and time in a steam room) and the Bindi Body Treatment (steam, herbal body pack, dry-brush massage, warmed-oil massage and botanical face mask).

Complimentary tea, champagne and wine will also be offered, all the better to help customers relax, unlike at the Ayoma spa, where Hora does not recommend alcohol as a supplement to treatments.

"We encourage people to come ahead and stay well beyond their treatments," Christopher Bently said.

Break time

Meanwhile, hotel developer Chip Conley predicts that his Hotel Vitale on the Embarcadero, due to open in March, will fit a need which he said is distinct and currently unfulfilled: a nurturing experience, rather than an enter-

taining experience, for aging Gen X and Baby Boomer travelers.

"There's more to life than increasing speed," said Conley, on a recent walk-through. "The corollary for a hotel is: There's more to a hotel than packing a bar."

The multistory hotel, located diagonally across from the Ferry Building, will be an "experiential hotel" for guests who want to be both active and relaxed, and who want to center themselves by concentrating on the present moment, rather than constantly talking on their cell phones or checking their Blackberrys and worrying about the future.

The hotel will have an aromatherapy garden where guests can pick echinacea, lavender and rosemary for their own herbal nose-gays; a top-floor yoga spa with bamboo-shaded outdoor soaking tubs; 440-thread-count sheets on the beds, in soothing beiges, steely blue, cream and taupe tones; and four types of weekend packages with gourmet cooking classes, couples' massage and yoga sessions, kayaking and cycling, and historical walking tours led by Conley himself.

He is also discussing a partnership with Richard Latham's www.meditainment.com to provide guests with customized meditation sessions by way of in-room

computers.

Conley, who owns 25 boutique hotels in Northern California and the Kabuki Springs & Spa in Japantown, said the concept for the hotel was born of his own needs as a 44-year-old, and of the success of the bathhouses, where bathers make 70,000 visits a year — not to mention his ambition as a developer in coming up with a new concept in lodging.

When he returns from business trips, he said, he finds himself not only tired, but also in the "double deficit" of having missed his regimen of massage, yoga, exercise and eating healthfully, and then trying to catch up.

"I decided to create a hotel dedicated to making the hotel experience a revitalizing experience," he said. What he learned from Japantown, where people pay \$16 or \$20 to spend hours soaking in the baths and pop into the steam rooms, is that "we're packaging serenity," he said. "It suggests there are a lot of people thirsty for luxuriating with time and themselves."

Still other businesses banking on the idea that time is the new luxury include the Personal Concierge, a budding San Francisco company created by former events planner Lisa Tunney, who does chores and errands for her clients.

► **TIME:** Next page