

RETAIL DETAIL

Finding calm amid the bustle: 'I don't live in a bubble'



MAXINE MENDELSSOHN

Name: Serge Lusignan, owner and founder of Ambrosia Holistic Health Centre, 4150 St. Denis St., 514-504-7886. The website is at www.ambrosia-health.com

What is this place, exactly?

I'll be honest: I'm selling health and wellness in the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual sense.

How do you go about "selling" health? What type of services do you do for your customers?

People come here for a massage, a sweat in the infrared sauna or a one-on-one yoga class, but it's so much more. I advocate a holistic approach. This is not about massaging their backs and stripping their credit cards; it's so much more. I help people release the pain they're carrying with them.

That sounds very esoteric. How do you go about releasing people's pain and how much does it cost?

Individual services have their price here like at any other business. But the pain release and sense of well-being is free. It starts with the decompression chamber, which some would call a waiting room. For our customers it's a short time to change gears, to begin decompressing: soothing music and herbal tea starts the journey.

So how are you qualified to "release people's pain" and give them well being?

I'm a life coach. I have a doctorate of yoga and meditation from Shri Mata's University, in India. I'm a massage therapist, a yoga in-



Serge Lusignan, yoga instructor, massage therapist and owner of Ambrosia Holistic Health Centre: "If you have time to read this article in the paper, you have time to meditate. I know all about modern, fast-paced stressful life."

VINENEO D'ALTO THE GAZETTE

structor and a personal trainer: I also have a 5th-dan black belt in Tae Kwon Do.

So how did you come to own this holistic health centre?

I was in India for a long time searching for balance. It was quite a journey; a journey where I ultimately accepted myself. I've walked the road and now I want to help others walk the road, too. For me it started with yoga. I was doing yoga in the 1980s when it was still obscure. There were maybe five schools in Montreal; now there are five schools on every street.

What do you think about the fact that yoga is so mainstream now?

It's wonderful. Yoga is a tool for mental, physical and spiritual growth. The negative is that some people take a two-month course and then teach it without knowing enough. Doing yoga under a teacher without proper knowledge can be harmful. It's the same with meditation. You need to be in qualified hands or else you might sit there and feel nothing. If you trust me, I can guide you into deep aspects of your mind. When you're talking

about anything related to holistic health, you need to make sure you feel trust and a centredness coming from your coach. My job is to lead people to centredness. Is that a word? Well, if it's not, I just invented it.

Yoga is so female-dominated. Why do you think that is?

Women are more attuned to the quest for centredness. They are more sensitive to their hearts, and their egos are not as strong as men. They connect more to activities like yoga than they do to boxing and weightlift-

back straight up against the wall and close their eyes. Draw in breath from below your navel, and breathe up to the top of your head, then pause. When you exhale, let all your conscious pains leave your body. Do this for five minutes two times a day and you're on the way to becoming a relaxed, chilled-out person.

When you teach people to meditate, do you think they go back to their busy lives and actually do it?

If you have time to read this article in the paper, you have time to meditate. I know all about modern, fast-paced stressful life. I don't live in a bubble. I know all about rushing from here to there and taking a 15-minute lunch before a meeting. I know about traffic and family problems. The point is not to leave that behind; the point is to find joy and light heartedness in all that through meditation and proper breathing. People come here to learn proper breathing, you know breathing to bring life breath in to our bodies, not just gasping for air. I can help you to breathe properly.

Proper breathing? You mean that inhaling and exhaling thing I've been doing for almost 30 years probably isn't proper breathing?

It's okay to hide behind humour, as long as you're open to listen. So, about breathing. Breath is the vehicle that brings the mind to rest. Think about it. When you're upset, it's your breath that goes wonky. Meditation is about focusing on your life breath to get into yourself and come out calmly. Maybe this is too much information for now. I hope I haven't alienated you. I'm just very committed to this holistic centre, and I want to share the good vibes with everyone.

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