

Core Control

PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD ARE COMING TO THE MOUNTAINS OF POLLENSA TO DISCOVER THE BENEFITS OF CORE CONTROL. MANDY VAN ZUYDAM MEETS TOP LONDON INSTRUCTOR SARAH ROSENFIELD AND FINDS OUT WHAT SHE LOVES ABOUT PILATES AND MALLORCA.

“If more men knew that Pilates offers them the chance to do sport and improve their sex life, we'd probably have a much larger group with us today,” remarks Sarah Rosenfield as she wanders around the recumbent women in Mallorca's idyllic La Serrania retreat. Instantly, the tummies we have been trying to tighten relax as we burst out laughing.

It's day one of Sarah's week-long Pilates and massage retreat. The early morning sunlight is streaming through the windows of La Serrania and Sarah is keen to get us to zip in our abs and concentrate on our breathing. It's a perfect, late

summer Sunday in Mallorca. I'm keen to know more about the sex benefits, but it seems improper to ask in such a serene, meditative environment. I can't help observe, however, that Sarah Rosenfield, with her energy, her long painted nails, her curvy frame and Sarah Jessica Parker good looks, does seem like a 'Sex and the City' sort of girl.

As I later discover, she's certainly lived the glamorous London lifestyle that would be at home in the series. She worked in the music business for many years, helping promote artists such as David Bowie, Toni Braxton and Dr Alban, and tour managing Dee C Lee.

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◀ page 58 She then got involved with the London Film Festival. "It sounds fun but it was really hard work. From August to December I would disappear and disconnect from friends while I worked on arranging eight premieres over a two-week period. I had to get everything right – opening night, closing night, the seating plans for the stars, the after parties. At the same time I was working on the Paris and Berlin Film Festivals."

Inevitably, the long hours at a desk, and the running around with laptops and equipment took its toll, and she suffered back and neck problems. Sarah had, on the recommendation of an osteopath, already been doing Pilates for many years and found it offered a great deal of relief, but when she collapsed on the floor with back pain and found that she couldn't get up, she knew it was time to think of a career change.

Teaching Pilates seemed the obvious choice because Sarah knew how effective it could be. She also felt she would have an empathy with people in stressful careers and the resulting aches and pains. "I'm passionate about Pilates because I know how it's changed my life and my body shape. I'm fitter and have a lot more stamina and I'm also a lot calmer. A lot of my clients are in the mad show business world – actors, musicians, etc – and say they enjoy the element of calm and focus that Pilates involves."

One of Sarah's best-known clients is the actress Annabelle Apsion who starred in the popular UK soap drama *Coronation Street* and the movie *From Hell* (2001) with Johnny Depp.

Sarah discovered La Serrania retreat centre, something of a hidden secret in the mountains of Pollensa, through a friend and fell in love with the venue and Mallorca on her first visit. "It's something about the sea, the mountains, the old" ➤ page 62





< page 60 city and the people that exerts such a strong pull. Since I discovered La Serrania, I've been coming back three times a year and ultimately my goal is to set up my own studio on the island."

For the retreats, Sarah has teamed up with UK holistic therapist Juliet Howles, who also fled a high profile job in the music industry, and now offers aromatherapy massage and reflexology.

"There is something very satisfying about the retreats because clients seem to get so much out of them and develop at such a fast pace which can, at times, be quite emotional and even life-changing for them. Juliet and I work with clients to show them that you don't have to be stuck with a problem or injury. Most stay in touch and continue with Pilates and regular massage at home.

"Most of my clients find me through word of mouth and I normally have a great mix of ages. In this group one client found me on the Internet and flew from LA to Mallorca to join the retreat."

Sarah particularly enjoys working with small, intimate groups and feels it's the best option for beginners. "I often hear about people who started out in a large class and did not get anything out of it so stopped going back. What people can learn in a week of intensive instruction is often more than they learn in a year of group classes. Ultimately the challenge is to take Pilates to an advanced level where it become almost aerobic, but you can't do this if you don't understand the basics."

Sarah's clients are mainly women but about 25% are men. "I always stress that Pilates isn't for weight loss. It works the core of the body through very small, controlled movement. It tones you and makes you feel good about yourself mentally. It's great for posture and helping you to stand taller and hold yourself better. I'm getting a lot of recommendations from doctors, physiotherapists and osteopaths who have seen how well it works."

After the class, as Sarah shows me around the grounds of La Serrania and I'm feeling totally relaxed from a



< page 62 message with Juliet, my curiosity gets the better of me and I ask her how Pilates can improve the sex life. She tosses back her glorious mane of hair and gives me a knowing look: "Women will definitely feel the benefits of improving the strength of the pelvic floor muscle - and men learn that they have a pelvic floor muscle too! When both sexes become aware of this muscle and take control of it - sex can become a lot more interesting." I take her word for it and wonder if this could just be the motivation to exercise that some people need! ■

Sarah Rosenfield's next Mallorca retreat is April 16- 23 2005 and June 4-11 2005. She is happy to accept local residents on a daily basis or run tailor-made, three-hour workshops for a maximum of 12 at the retreat or another venue on the island.

She is also doing a 10-day retreat in Bali in January. For more information on Sarah and her retreats visit <http://www.sarahpilates.com> or call + 44 020 7722 4373

For more information on La Serrania in Pollensa visit. <http://www.laserrania.com> or call + 34 639 306 432

ALSO AVAILABLE AT LA SERRANÍA

When?	What?	Leader(s)
Mar 12 - 19	Tai Chi, Mountain Walks & Massage	Angus Clark
Apr 30 - May 7	Creating Sanctuary through Writing and Art	Sharon Bray & Heidi Darr-Hope
May 7 - 14	Profound Change & Self Discovery	Rebecca Ward, Peta Jacobs, Lisa Poole & Raina Nahard
May 14 - 21	Yoga: Practicing a New Way of Being	Thomas Michael Fortel
May 21 - 28	Art & the Attentive Traveller	Sas Colby

CONTACT INFORMATION

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