



**A** small but noticeable gust of air blew west across the canal on Tumbleweed Tuesday. Though easily mistaken for a light breeze, it was instead the effect of the whole East End breathing a collective sigh of relief. Summer is a blast. Fall is the time to get re-acquainted with goals, dreams and inner fulfillment. For the uninitiated: It's time for yoga.

"Yoga is extremely therapeutic," says Jenna Raynell, who teaches yoga at studios across the East End and will soon be a part of Well Within, a new studio opening in Springs later this year. "It has a way of penetrating all your layers, opening you up, and making you more flexible—in your body and in your mind. It's a science designed to stop that constant chatter in our brains, and it really integrates body, mind and spirit. Yoga fosters peace and serenity of mind."

Raynell was one of a number of instructors who led yoga at Wölffer Estate Vineyards over the summer. The Yoga in the Vines program was new this year, and classes will

continue at least through the end of September, with October classes weather-dependent.

Now that fall has brought a sense of calm, many East End instructors note that the upcoming months are the best time to practice. "There's nothing like fall in the Hamptons," says Jimmy Minardi, who will teach at Yoga Shanti in Sag Harbor and Mandala Yoga in Amagansett this fall. "You still have the great weather, the beautiful beaches, and things are a little more relaxed than in the summer. You couldn't have a better playground for any athletic endeavor you choose to do."

Minardi is a former professional athlete and, in addition to yoga, he teaches cycling, weight training and his year-round beach workouts. He advocates yoga not only as a way to open up the mind, but also as a supplement to other sports in order to prevent injury. "Incorporating yoga into your workout routine is a great way to improve your core, giving you overall body strength in very specific muscle groups. It also increases flexibility, stability and mobility, allowing for greater range of

motion; but most importantly, it will keep you out of the injury bin," says Minardi. Yoga slows your body down, in addition easing your joints through their full range of motion.

Practicing outdoors became a noted trend this summer, as Wölffer was one of many East End wineries that offered yoga; Bridgehampton's Channing Daughters and Laurel Lakes Vineyards in Laurel were among the others.

"Yoga poses are designed in nature, so being able to practice surrounded by the elements—feeling the wind, feeling the sun—it has a huge impact on the body as well as the mind," says Raynell of the benefits of practicing outdoors. Even as organized outdoor classes become less frequent, heading outside on a whim is a good way to reap yoga's benefits. "Beaches are empty and serene this time of year," Raynell continues. "Grab a mat or a towel and do a couple sun salutations in the sand, practice your handstands, meditate on the crashing waves. It's amazing!"

However, if an organized class is more your speed, Minardi will be hosting his Beach Work-



# Yoga on the East End

/ by Kelly Laffey

outs at Main Beach in East Hampton—yes, that's outdoors—throughout the fall and winter. The class is a combination of body weight training, cardio and agility, allowing you to achieve peak fitness with the use of heart-rate monitors. Though it's not yoga-centric, it does allow you to reap the benefits of year-round beach time. And afterward you can head to a yoga class for a well-rounded approach to fall fitness.

"The best part of practicing yoga on the East End is the scenery," says Erica Velasquez, a yoga instructor and coordinator of Wölffer's Yoga in the Vines. "We are surrounded by miles of outdoor beauty. Gazing at the sunset or breathing in the ocean air is a unique way to deepen your practice."

The Parrish Art Museum is also trying its hand at outdoor yoga, as classes with Southampton-based studio Ananda Yoga are being offered on the Parrish's terrace on Sundays. Yoga at the Parrish will continue through September 28.

In addition, the Parrish hosted a special outdoor yoga event on August 27. The class benefited the

museum, as well as Donna Karan's Urban Zen Integrative Therapy (UZIT) program at Southampton Hospital. UZIT is an innovative initiative that strives to fill a void in healthcare, incorporating yoga and other wellness techniques to treat the whole patient and not just the disease. Famed yoga instructors Rodney Yee and Colleen Saidman Yee, of Yoga Shanti, direct the UZIT program and led the Parrish event.

"If any world is going to solve the problems in the world today, that's the yoga world," said Karan, an East Hampton resident, prior to the Parrish event. "I've been gifted. A blessing has been given to me and I have to give back," she said of her inspiration for starting the UZIT program.

"The gift of life is happening right now, and unfortunately in life we're looking at the past or future," Rodney Yee noted. "Yoga releases tension in the body and teaches you to meditate with your mind."

"The greatest benefit is the feeling yoga gives," echoes Velasquez. "Whether you feel restored or energized, each class and teacher has a different gift to offer."

The difference in the instructors and studios is a major benefit of yoga, as it's very welcoming to beginners. For people who feel self-conscious in a class setting, individual instruction is another option.

"Figure out how you want to feel after class, and go to classes that make you feel that way," says Raynell. "You can get a killer workout in a yoga class, but you can also leave feeling like you just had an hour massage."

Another benefit of fall yoga on the East End is that traveling to studios to figure out which one is the best fit is much more feasible with the lighter traffic. And, many studios run offseason specials. Hot'tauk Yoga on Montauk Highway in Montauk will host Community Yoga Mondays, where the 10 a.m. Bikram Hot Yoga and 5:30 p.m. Hot Vinyasa class are donation-based. Yoga Shanti will also have by-donation community classes on Tuesdays and Fridays at 7 p.m.

*For more information on East End yoga studios, visit [DansLists.DansPapers.com](http://DansLists.DansPapers.com).*