



# THE SUNDAY TIMES

## Jamie Oliver

on his lifelong struggle with dyslexia

**Magazine**

## Sydney Sweeney's blonde ambition

**Style**

## Junior doctors' threat to bring NHS to standstill with co-ordinated strikes

**Shaun Lintern Health Editor**

Doctors have warned they could co-ordinate strike action in an attempt to bring the NHS to a near standstill this winter after Wes Streeting, the health secretary, refused to negotiate over pay.

Junior doctors, now known as resident doctors, are voting on whether to walk out in response to the government's offer of a 4 per

cent pay rise plus an extra £750. Although this is the highest pay award in the public sector, the British Medical Association (BMA) says it does not go far enough to restore the real-term value of their pay to 2008 levels.

Ross Newwood, 29, and Melissa Ryan, 45, co-chairs of the Resident Doctors Committee, have urged doctors to vote yes to strikes before the ballot closes on July 7. If indus-

trial action goes ahead, it could last into January 2026 – one of the busiest periods for the health service.

In an interview with The Sunday Times, the doctors warned that if consultants and specialist doctors also voted to strike, the BMA could co-ordinate action to reduce the NHS to a Christmas Day service. This would lead to the cancellation of thousands of operations and sink Labour's hopes of reducing

waiting lists. Ryan, a paediatric registrar in Nottingham, said: "I'm hoping the government will be doing the same sort of analysis that we are to try to avoid strike action, because it's immensely costly from a fiscal point of view – but also from a patient care disruption point of view – and none of us want to get there."

A new analysis shows the extent of pay erosion for doctors varies

considerably depending on the calculation method and the starting point chosen, suggesting that the union's claim is arbitrary.

The BMA says since 2008 the value of junior doctors' pay has fallen in real terms by more than 20 per cent, according to the retail price index measure of inflation. It believes a 29 per cent rise – not necessarily in one year – is needed. However, the Nuffield Trust

think tank said that by the consumer price index measure, the fall was only 4.7 per cent. Since 2015 pay has increased in real terms by 7.9 per cent.

Newwood and Ryan met Streeting twice in May. They say they asked on both occasions for formal talks on increasing the pay offer, but he evaded the question and refused to agree even to ask permission from No 10.

Newwood, who works in emergency surgery and trauma at Aln-tree hospital in Liverpool, said: "[Streeting] seems to have gone from being the guy that was saying, 'Get in the room; talk it out; solve the problem', to the guy that's not even willing to have that conversation with us."

**Streeting won't talk to us, page 5**

## British fighter jets to carry nuclear bombs

Ministers seek airborne tactical weapons in biggest defence expansion since Cold War

**Harry Yorke and Tom Newton Dunn**

Britain wants to buy combat aircraft capable of firing tactical nuclear weapons in a huge expansion of the nuclear deterrent to counter the growing threat from Russia.

Sir Keir Starmer's government is in highly sensitive talks over the move, which would represent the biggest development in the UK's deterrent since the Cold War and a recognition that the world has entered a more dangerous nuclear era.

John Healey, the defence secretary, and Admiral Sir Tony Radakin, the head of the armed forces, are looking to acquire American-made combat aircraft capable of launching bombs with less power than conventional nukes. Starmer has given his backing and discussions with the Pentagon are believed to have taken place.

It comes as the prime minister is preparing to reveal the results of the strategic defence review tomorrow at a British dockyard.

The review, while not committing specifically to air-launched capabilities, recommends that the UK looks at expanding its contribution to Nato's shared nuclear deterrence in Europe. In an interview

with The Sunday Times before publication of the review, Healey refused to comment on the talks but acknowledged that Britain must adapt to the "new era of threat" it faces.

"The world is definitely becoming more dangerous. Nuclear risks are rising," he added. "We face now, for the first time since the end of the Cold War, seriously increasing risks of state-on-state conflict."

The review also seeks to put Britain on a pre-war footing, recommending sweeping proposals

for rearmament and the revival of an "always-on" defence industry. Healey added: "The lesson from Ukraine ... is that a country's armed forces are only as strong as the industry that stands behind them."

In other developments:

● The government will invest £6 billion on munitions to replenish UK stockpiles, with £1.5 billion earmarked for six new factories that will sustain 1,000 jobs.

● The review will commit to new defensive shields to protect Britain against enemy ballistic missiles.

● It recommends the re-establishment of a civilian home guard to protect national infrastructure.

● It backs a resurgence in shipbuilding: the Royal Navy wants to increase the number of destroyers and frigates to 25, up from 14 now.

● A new underwater surveillance programme, known as Atlantic Fusion and overseen by the navy, will guard against Russian sabotage of internet cables and energy pipelines.

● Healey will focus on fixing the armed forces recruitment crisis but is expected to set a longer-term target for increasing the size of the British Army.

Radakin, who is stepping down in the autumn, is said to view the

**Continued on page 2**

**NEWMAN'S VIEW**


## SIR CHRIS HOY: I'M BUSY PROVING LIFE DOESN'T STOP



The Olympic cyclist Sir Chris Hoy enjoying a half-term break in Greece with his wife, Sarra, and their children Callum, nine, and Chloe, seven. He tells Decca Aitkenhead about living his life to the full, despite his diagnosis of terminal prostate cancer. **News Review, page 17**

## Mother's plea for curbs on released killers

**Katie Tarrant**

The mother of 17-year-old Ellie Gould, who was stabbed 13 times by her teenage ex-boyfriend, has called for killers to live in restricted areas after leaving prison in her latest attempt to tighten the law around violent crime.

Carole Gould has successfully campaigned for several legal changes since her daughter was murdered at the family home in Calne, Wiltshire, by Thomas Grif-

fiths in May 2019 – the day after Ellie ended their three-month relationship.

Griffiths has served about half of his 12½-year sentence, but Gould, 55, fears he could be eligible for transfer to an open prison and weekend visits to his family home in about three years. She lives a few miles away. "Can you imagine how traumatic it would be for us and Ellie's friends to see him walking around here?" she said.

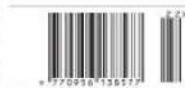
Gould said criminals who had

committed murder, manslaughter or stalking offences should be forced to live, work and travel in specific areas for the rest of their lives. Offenders can already be subjected to restrictions on their movements and contact with victims, but Gould wants to see stricter measures following a spate of killings involving ex-partners with previous convictions.

In an interview with The Sunday Times, Gould also called for the minimum tariff for murder in the

home to be increased to 25 years, equal to street murder where a weapon is brought to the scene.

**My nightmare is seeing killer walk down the road, page 9**


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There is no word I could find that quite summed up how I was feeling last summer. It wasn't just stress, but it wasn't burnout or breakdown. Yet it felt like more than normal tiredness. Perhaps it was facing up to the teeth-grinding malaise of middle age, and a nagging dissatisfaction with life among other things. But wonderfully – and thankfully – the Greeks, who might not have a word for that wobbling state of mental and physical health, do have a cure: the Euphoria Retreat.

It is a fitting name for the resort tucked into the unfashionable but beautiful foothills of Mount Taygetus in the Peloponnese, about three and a half hours' drive from Athens, and an hour by airport pick-up from Kalamata.

Today we use the word euphoria to describe an extreme state of happiness (or a drug-induced high), but, like many of the good things in life, it derives from the ancient Greek: *euphoros*, meaning "healthy". I landed in the high heat of summer when the temperature starts climbing from 30C from 10am, so indoor treatments and a swimming pool were essentials.

I felt threadbare. I was unhappy in my skin, and worn down mentally due to the lingering impact of a long-ago trauma. I wanted not just to let go of my internal "to do" list of how to be a better person and slump down and doze in the sun, but also to rejuvenate in as meaningful a way as I could manage. I wasn't up for the authoritarian rigour of a medi-spa or the breathless physicality of a bootcamp, but Euphoria hits the sweet spot in the middle.

Everyone – singles outnumber couples



# Breathe in ... hold ... and relax

**Helen Davies gets her mojo back at a rural retreat in mainland Greece**

– staying at the 45-room spa hotel is encouraged to do so too. It goes a long way to create an atmosphere, where under an endless blue sky and the near constant chorus of cicadas, everyone is invested in feeling better. Mobile phones are barely seen and alcohol is rarely drunk, though you can purchase it with dinner. Meals are a slow, civilised affair on the terrace with as much oregano-infused water as you can manage. (It does help with the buckwheat crackers.)

My room was comfortably large and serene, with light touches of local Greek design and lots of marble in the bathroom. Most of the day is spent in the spa itself, where you also find the pool and loungers, but I became addicted to an early night and deep sleep – you can choose from a pillow menu.

The passion project of Marina Efraimoglou, a former banker whose life was laid low by a cancer diagnosis, the resort is the culmination of years of research exploring and studying wellness practices. The result is a feat of engineering as well as ambition, where the building's design, as well as every therapy and every meal, are governed



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A yoga class at Euphoria Retreat, left. The infinity pool and terrace, above. Below, healthy dining and the spa pool



by a blend of ancient Greek and Chinese philosophies that centres on five elements: fire, water, earth, wood and metal.

At Euphoria's heart is the spa, a concrete cocoon where shadows ripple across the white walls as light floods the central atrium. There are treatment rooms and specialised facilities, as well as two large spaces for complimentary lectures and sessions including sound healing meditation (deeply relaxing), freeing your voice, starting with breathwork and ending with a theatrical singing exercise that ran through the full range of my voice and finished as loudly as possible (uncomfortable), and what I came to really look forward to: yoga nidra. Led by Chryssi, I had an unusually deep sense of semi-conscious meditation where I felt my physical body disappear and my mind float away.

Tall, resplendent in colourful kaftan and a halo of hair, Marina visits at least once a week and is constantly looking for new techniques and improvements when it comes to wellness. Her mission is a belief that healing does not have to mean suffering. It is a task that the Euphoria team take up as a vocation, reflecting another Greek word, *philoxenia*, which

describes the respect extended to strangers, a gesture that is more seriously felt than simple hospitality.

But could good intentions, crystal water, a gong bath and a massage really deal with the mini crisis of confidence I was having? Namaste never did it for me before.

After a phone questionnaire, I had signed up to a bespoke package offering not just a detox programme, now fairly standard for such a luxury-level, award-winning spa, but also emotional wellbeing. I rocked up to a detailed timetable for my ten-day stay that included lectures, treatments and even a respiratory test that would guide the Mediterranean menu drawn up by the in-house nutritionist.

An analysis of my glucose, glutathione and glycogen levels was apparently going to detect any "energy disorders". Hmm. The results, however, told me that my metabolic rate was average, but I needed to eat more protein. Cue plump steak and sweet potatoes for dinner, but also, far less appealing, daily vegan protein powder smoothies with beetroot and chia seeds for the mandatory mid-morning snack.

Sitting cross-legged on mats, a small

group of us answered a series of basic questions, such as "what do you have for breakfast?", or "what do you do after work?". We all opened up and it was thanks to this straightforward process that it struck me that the person sabotaging me was not a friend leading me astray, but myself acting the part. It broke the ice and the three of us in that room felt closer for the remainder of the holiday.

You don't have to share, but bonding over a starter of quinoa crackers and a teaspoon of sundried tomato tapenade or cashew dip, enjoying vegan carrot and ginger soup and surprisingly tasty buckwheat patties is a reassuring way to spend the evening. You can choose to sit alone, or join others.

I met an exhausted mum whose anxiety caring for her daughter had almost broken her; an executive whose stress was causing bloating and constipation; another who needed a break from her job in elderly social care. Everyone has a story. There is support to be gained in gradual conversation.

Then it happened. Any nagging cynicism about the boundless wellness industry that has sprung up now that spa breaks seem to be a hallmark of hen-dos faded as I fell into a reassuring timetable of massages – cupping, scrubbing, reflexology, acupuncture – and a good night's sleep. This was as relaxed as I had ever been, and I felt that my mind and body were beginning to reconnect.

That's not to say there weren't moments when the "science" left me giggling with the silliness of it all. How else was I supposed to respond to the biofeedback analysis? During an appointment with the resort's medical director, Dr Konstantinos Dardagiannopoulos, I gripped a Qest4 copper bioresonance device – imagine an old-fashioned gaming console with copper tubes for handles – with both

hands and connected to a computer program. It determined that I was very stressed, and I had a slightly weakened liver and pineal gland. A "parasitological test of a stool probe" was recommended. To be honest it all felt a bit lost in translation.

Odder still was the "Symptom-Emotion Correlation". Still holding the same device, parts of the body lit up on the doctor's screen and were converted into feelings and behaviours. I know, I know. More than a hundred descriptions flashed up including "Bunions 2", which was decoded to mean "being stubborn and inflexible in your direction"; "Hay Fever 2" was translated as "unresolved feelings of grief or sadness"; and "Peptic Ulcer 2" was "feels responsible for pleasing everyone".

It was unnerving. The method felt woo-woo, and up there with astrology and tea leaves. The prescription to "focus only on the positive matters and thoughts – to trust only them, not the negative ones" is not exactly cutting edge, but it all felt so credible in the setting. And still does.

The environment and ambience seem to be as much a part of the relaxation process as the treatments. But it was my three sessions of emotional transformation – a unique course offered at Euphoria – with Mary Vandaorou, a former dancer and confidante of Marina, whose gentle, probing counselling and Reiki-like physical therapy as well as nourishing meditations left me

weeping. I felt a weight was lifted ever so slightly as Mary advised me to "breathe out sadness, breathe in hope".

I arrived home and was inspired to make my own thyme or oregano-infused water with dried herbs from the

retreat. I ate sweet potatoes and steak, no takeaways or alcohol passed my lips. I began to walk taller, and started swimming. My fridge filled with feta and I was still filled with a sense of optimism.

Naturally, the scales tipped, and the energy I had soaked up in Greece eventually disappeared like the fading of a summer tan. But that's OK. The philosophy of Euphoria Retreat is not to sell a cure, but to be part of the process of rejuvenation, and at least I know where to go now for that profound boost we all need from time to time.

**“  
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reconnect**”



Helen Davies was a guest of Healing Holidays, which has two nights' full board from £1,999pp on a Wellbeing Detox programme; four nights' B&B from £2,699pp on the Emotional Harmony programme ([healingholidays.com](http://healingholidays.com)). Fly to Kalamata