As my taxi pulled into Atmantan, a destination wellness resort about 130 kilometres from Mumbai off the Mumbai-Bengaluru highway, I felt an instant gratification of the non-digital kind sweeping over me. The green expanse of the Sahyadris was broken only by the countless waterfalls (27, I was told at check-in) and the waters of the Mulshi lake that glimmered at the foothills. The mountains seemed to be sulking as monsoon clouds threatened to obscure them with their thick blanket and occasional rain. The setting seemed perfect for a wellness resort.

Located in a hush valley adjoining the Mulshi lake, Atmantan opened in April this year, filling a void of such getaways in the western region (barring the popular ones in the South, the other two such are located in the North—Vana in Dehradun and Ananda in Rishikesh). Wellness retreats signify a new trend in the hospitality landscape, spurred by the increasing interest in organic food and alternative therapies, as well as relaxing and healing getaways that offer a holistic experience for the mind and body. Among the largest of its kind in Asia, Atmantan is spread across 42 acres, its 106 rooms strategically designed to provide an uninterrupted view of the lake. The carefully designed architecture incorporates large vistas and open spaces while the wellness infrastructure includes 23 customised therapy rooms, including a hammam. The wellness packages at Atmantan combine naturopathy, ayurveda and other alternative healing methodologies (pranic healing and spiritual cleansing) and there are time-tested fitness regimes (yoga, pilates, aerobics). As part of the three-night Atmantan Living package which I had opted for (there are also Spa Life, Master Cleanse, Weight Balance, Journey through Yoga, Fitness Challenge as well as an Ayurveda

Clockwise from bottom left: Atmantan has 106 rooms, including presidential one-bedroom suites like the Mango Tree Villa, offering a stunning view of the surroundings; the wellness resort offers packages that combine alternative healing techniques and tested ones like yoga and meditation; a spa room for couples and an indoor salt water pool at the property.
at least three a week,” says Nikhil, a triathlete who recently completed his Ironman in Sweden.

In fact, it was athletics that got Sharmilee and Nikhil interested in pranic healing, a method that uses energy (prana) to cleanse the aura. Sharmilee recalls how Nikhil had a minor sports injury and pranic healing helped him immensely. After that, he even participated in the Ironman last year. Sharmilee is a pranic healing practitioner too.

The resort’s wellness principles extend to the food as well. “Eat only three-fourths of your normal diet,” says my wellness consultant, as a general rule of the thumb. The restaurant serves really small portions, in line with the philosophy of eating more attentively.

The meals served at the Vistara restaurant, one of the three restaurants at the resort, are delicious. From egg white frittatas to grilled coin-sized pita bread with three types of hummus, and green tea soba noodles, the food did make me desperate for more, but my body soon got into the rhythm of moderate consumption and my cravings stopped.

During the monsoon, I often go trekking and here, the Sahyadris beckoned, but the ergonomically-designed mattress, “providing zone support to the entire spine” were too much to resist after the relaxation therapies. I did take short walks across the property, and sat by the lake or took it all in from my spacious balcony.

My instant gratification turned into something deeper as my departure date approached—my minor skin conditions vanished, my sleep pattern fell into place and the meditation practice brought a sense of calm. On the third and last day, a complimentary warm herbal bath rounded it all off. As I made my way out of Atmantan, with a bulleted list comprising ‘general rules for health and longevity’ which was given to me at the departure wellness consultation session, the sun came out, revealing the Sahyadris in all their monsoon-soaked glory. A faint smell of the aromatherapy massage I’d had earlier lingered and as I saw red-whiskered bulbuls flitted among pearly white elderberry flowers, basking in the brief sun, I found myself thinking that no stress or anxiety stood a chance against such natural beauty.