

The weekend yoga place

Michael and
Camilla Balshaw



Head to Norfolk for a relaxed insight into Iyengar. By Martin D. Clark

It's not often that the name of a yoga retreat centre doubles up as a headline. But the Weekend Yoga Place (theweekendyogaplace.com) is exactly what it says: a place for yoga at the weekend (although it's also something of a misnomer: you can do yoga during the week there as well, not just on Saturdays and Sundays).

When I visited (at the weekend), it was my first Iyengar experience. For some, there's still this lingering perception of Iyengar yoga as being stiff and regimented, even humourless. No one doubts the healing powers of the system, but it's nice to have a bit of fun sometimes too.

At the Weekend Yoga Place you can have it all. Owners Michael and Camilla Balshaw are highly qualified and committed Iyengar instructors (they both studied in Pune at the Iyengar Yoga Institute last year, a must for any serious Iyengar practitioner), but they do it all with a smile and a big heart.

The husband and wife dynamic works extremely well; two accomplished Iyengar teachers but with very different styles and personalities. On the mat, it makes you feel safe knowing you're in such capable hands; off the mat, it's fine to have a chat and a giggle afterwards.

In fact, the centre is located inside the couple's beautiful home in the quiet market town of Swaffham: a Grade II listed Georgian house with oak flooring and fireplaces, making for a distinctly homely feel. The pair relocated from London to experience a different rhythm of life in the country, and that comes through in the retreat's vibe.

The studio itself (located upstairs) is modern and kitted out with all the equipment you'd expect to see in an Iyengar studio (although we didn't use half of it), and is flooded with natural light.

Whatever day you choose to visit, it's a great way to get an insight into all things Iyengar. This quintessential English house offers a yoga experience for all (beginners or advanced), while groups are small, so you'll never be lost in the crowd.

And the weekend drive through the beautiful East Anglian countryside is another highlight. If you're keen to escape the city for a while then it's well worth the effort. ॐ



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