



My Time at The Ranch {4.0}

I'm pretty sure there's no one more hardcore than myself when it comes to fitness. I don't really mean "in shape" it's more that I am game to try absolutely anything. Hip hop cardio? I'm in. Torture crazy chair pilates class? Sign me up. Tracey Anderson Gilt City deal? Done and done. So when I was asked to head out to Malibu, California to try out **The Ranch at Live Oak's** newest 4.0 program I started packing my suitcase almost immediately even though the trip wasn't for another month.

4 weeks before the trip I received a welcome package on how to prep for my stay. "Start cutting these things from your diet now to make the transition easier," read the papers.

-Sugar, Dairy, Caffeine, Artificial Sweeteners, Wheat, Meat/Animal products, Nicotine

It even listed a workout program to prep yourself for the hikes and things you'd be doing while at the ranch. Holy crap... what had I gotten myself into?

M

MAGRINO

Susan Magrino Agency
352 Park Avenue South, 13 FL
New York, NY 10010
212.957.3005
www.smapr.com



I pulled into the Four Seasons in Westlake (stunning by the way) not quite knowing what to expect, all while chowing down on a turkey sandwich like it was my last meal for weeks (not recommended, whoops!)- and ran into others who were also there for the program, warily greeting each other with a bit of hesitation. I mean, these were complete strangers that I would be spending a lot of time with and a lot of them had come with at least one other person. We spent Thursday afternoon being tested (body fat, measurements, weights) on our fitness level. There was also yoga and a short really nice hike. Dinner involved this incredible baked falafel. I began chatting with a few people and we decided that we were all in this together.



M MAGRINO

Susan Magrino Agency
352 Park Avenue South, 13 FL
New York, NY 10010
212.957.3005
www.smapr.com

With a 5:30am wakeup looming I crashed around 8:30pm- this, highly recommended. At 6am on Friday I found myself in a yoga class, 7am had us sitting down to a breakfast of granola, fruit, and green smoothies. Off we went to pile into the bus that would take us to the first "short" hike of the week. Short being around 8 miles or so. At the hike site we quickly fell into groups, making our way up the mountain, and around the middle of this hike I found myself insanely excited by the promise of almonds at mile 5. We walked, got to know each other.. and ended with a beautiful lunch on the beach in Malibu. The afternoon was spent in various workout and yoga classes- with an awesome massage in between. Dinner at 7pm found me deliriously tired (still on East Coast time and from lack of caffeine). I fell into bed and have never slept so well in my life.



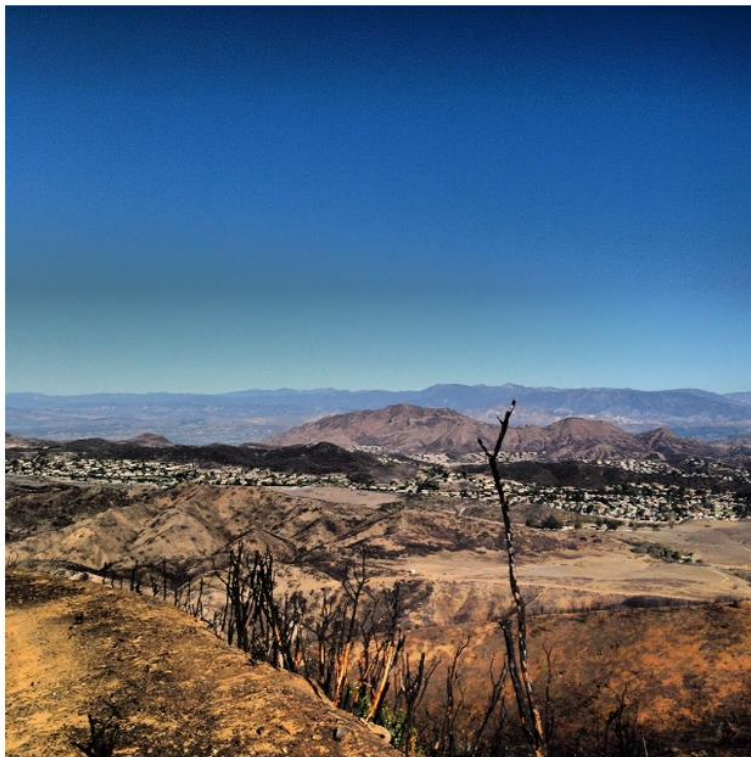
M

MAGRINO

Susan Magrino Agency
352 Park Avenue South, 13 FL
New York, NY 10010
212.957.3005
www.smapr.com



Another 5:30am wakeup for Saturday. I was a bit nervous about the hike and rightly so as I was kind of warned that it would be the worst of the bunch. 12 miles, 1 of those miles being straight uphill (yes, yes it was) and the day promised to be in the high 80's. Not preferable. Let me tell you, Saturday almost broke me. Around the middle of the hike I was so hot I felt like I was in the desert, my knee was giving out on me, and did I mention I was in the middle of losing a toenail? I stopped for a moment, convinced I really couldn't go any further (not really an option on the side of a mountain) when one of the women started saying, "Kris! You can do this... go on, we are almost there!!" Here was someone that I hardly knew... giving me support. I pressed on and returned to the van that day so exhausted and slightly broken. Not sure if it was from all of the hiking, being tired, lack of caffeine/sugar/dairy/meat. My spirit wasn't there-and for those that know my perpetually happy self, this wasn't normal.



M MAGRINO

Susan Magrino Agency
352 Park Avenue South, 13 FL
New York, NY 10010
212.957.3005
www.smapr.com



I barely made it through dinner on Saturday and when the alarm hit at 5:20am on Sunday there was no way I was getting out of bed. By 5:40 I was almost in full on panic mode, knowing that we had another 12 mile hike ahead of us and not knowing how I would get through it. I was cranky, hungry, exhausted- and my body felt broken. I walked into yoga slightly late and was greeted by smiling faces of the others- people who had oddly enough become a family to me in the past few days. My mood shifted, we were all in this together.

On that last hike we all hit points where we didn't think we could push on any longer- and yet we did. Everyone encouraging the others along the way. I learned things about my walking partners that I didn't even know from some of my closest friends. 5 hours of hiking will do that to you- it becomes a group therapy session of sorts. I mean, what else can you do when you've got endless miles ahead of you and the promise of carrots, sea salt, and an apple in the middle?



M

MAGRINO

Susan Magrino Agency
352 Park Avenue South, 13 FL
New York, NY 10010
212.957.3005
www.smapr.com



The last hike ended with cheers and comparisons of blisters and injuries. We still had an afternoon to get through and yet the mood had shifted. This group of 15 had become a wolf pack- a little family of people that I never would had met in real life.

Monday morning came with more yoga, breakfast, and tears. These people, all of us strangers, had become so close. We had helped and supported one another through our breaking points.

I am so happy I got to experience this- something I never would have done. I pushed myself past my breaking point, and met some incredible people....

Side note? The Chef created insanely delicious vegan food and sent us home with some of the recipes I can't wait to recreate. Cauliflower steaks, spiced lentil meatloaf, sunflower seed risotto... the most fresh salads I've ever eaten.

I returned home yesterday evening sore, mentally lighter, and with many new friendships. So thank you, Ranch 4.0, I'll never forget this.

The Ranch 4.0 is located at the Four Seasons Westlake Village in California. For more information check out their website [here](#)