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ON THE COVER

Joao Lindem created Camp Reveille, a women's spa camp in the US (see p46)

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For a first-person account of the Camp Reveille experience turn to p50

JOAN LUNDEN & JEFF KONIGSBERG

US TV star Joan Lunden and her camp-owner husband Jeff Konigsberg believe camaraderie and playfulness are just as important to wellness as fitness and spa treatments. Here, they talk about the 'spa camp' concept they created and how they plan to roll it out

It's safe to say that Joan Lunden knows about multi-tasking. As the presenter of *Good Morning America*, Lunden, 60, was the sweetheart of US breakfast TV for 17 years, and in the 13 years since she resigned she's never been far from the small screen stateside. In addition, she is the author of eight bestselling books on healthy living and parenting; has a packed nationwide speaking schedule;

and champions numerous campaigns – all while being the mother of seven children: three daughters from her first marriage and two sets of boy-and-girl twins (aged five and seven) with Jeff Konigsberg, who she married in 2000. "It's a little bit of a noisy household," laughs Lunden, "but we run it like camp!"

This is something Konigsberg, 50, is certainly well equipped for. As the owner and director of two summer camps for children

in Maine – the 65-year-old Camp Takajo for boys in Naples and 100-year-old Tripp Lake for girls in Poland – Konigsberg is a lifetime believer in the power of the American camp concept (where parents send their children during the summer break from school) to mould boys and girls into well-adjusted men and women. This is not just marketing spiel – Konigsberg himself was a camper at Takajo from the age of nine, and later a camp counsellor, then associate director, before he finally purchased the site in 1988.

It was Lunden, however, who first came up with the idea of holding a weekend wellness retreat for women at Camp Takajo, and in August 2007 – at the end of the children's camping season – the first Camp Reveille ('reveille' meaning 'wake-up call') was launched at the site. Now in its fourth summer, the four-day, three-night camp attracts around 150 women a year (see p50), and last April Lunden and Konigsberg took the concept on the road for the first time, launching a Reveille retreat at the Ritz-Carlton Dove Mountain in Arizona. Speaking to *Spa Business*, the couple explain their vision for a wellness concept that has fun and community at its heart.



Camp camaraderie encourages women to try out new and different activities (above)



While Jeff runs the children's summer camp, at spa camp he steps back and lets Joan take the lead.

HOW DID YOU COME UP WITH THE IDEA FOR CAMP REVEILLE?

Joan: Every summer, I would go up to Camp Takajo with Jeff and our family, and by the end of the season, I'd think, 'Wow, I'm in the best shape! I'm happy, relaxed, fit and healthy, and at peace with nature, my body and myself. If only I could bottle this and sell it!' So I said to Jeff, 'Look, I'm all across America, speaking to women's groups and appearing on TV, campaigning about the importance of staying healthy, and you have this amazing facility - I'm going to run a women's wellness camp right here.' The following summer we ran the first Camp Reveille.

HOW DO YOU SPLIT THE RESPONSIBILITIES?

Jeff: I'm the back-of-house guy. All summer long, I'm the camp director, the one in front managing everything. So at Camp Reveille I happily take a step back and support Joan while she leads the walks, participates in classes and lends every aspect of her body and soul to this venture.

"At the end of [kids] camp, I'd think 'wow, I'm in the best shape... so happy, relaxed and at peace with my body... if only I could bottle this and sell it'"

HOW DO YOU STAFF THE CAMP?

Jeff: We select Camp Takajo counsellors to assist the specialist staff that Joan hires.

Joan: I have a wonderful personal trainer, who helps me put together a programme and hire all the other fitness instructors. Murad sends me aestheticians [Joan is the face of Murad's Resurgence skincare line], and for the last two years, I've also hired a dermatologist to do melanoma skin checks.

WHAT MAKES THE REVEILLE CONCEPT DIFFERENT TO OTHER WELLNESS OFFERINGS OUT THERE?

Joan: One thing it has over the spa experience is that if you go to a spa, once you're in your room, you close the door and you're

alone. When it comes to dinnertime, if you're travelling by yourself, you have to walk into the dining room alone. That can be very hard for women. At Reveille, the women all arrive together and share bunks [in dormitories] so no one has to be alone - whatever you're doing, there's a whole bunch of you, and that makes it so much easier to challenge yourself and try new things. You know the old saying, 'It takes a village [to raise a child]?' Well, at Reveille, at the bottom of the climbing wall or on the tennis courts, there is a village. These women are cheering each other on and it really boosts their confidence and self-esteem.

Jeff: We also offer added-value components, which you don't usually get at spas, such as campfires under the stars and the Reveille Relay, a 'wacked-up relay' where every camper has the opportunity to complete an event as part of a team. That doesn't mean they have to do something out of their comfort zone, such as running around a field - it might be something simple or silly such as whistling a song...

Joan: ...or eating six saltine crackers and then whistling a song!



The spa camp is more than just a holiday or break, it's a bonding experience that boosts self-esteem.

► Jeff: Overall, it makes for a very special, even life-changing experience for these women.

A RITZ-CARLTON RESORT IS VERY DIFFERENT FROM A CHILDREN'S CAMP - WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THAT FOR YOUR FIRST REVEILLE-ON-THE-ROAD?

Joan: We've been marketing Camp Reveille through SpaFinder Inc for the last couple of years, so when we started to think about rolling out the concept they put out feelers to a number of different spas and resorts, all of which were interested in working with us. Ritz-Carlton was looking for ways to build awareness of its Dove Mountain resort and they really rolled out the red carpet - so it was a very comfortable way to dip our toe in the water.

Jeff: Also, Ritz-Carlton is known for its great service, and if I was going to lose my back-of-house role, we wanted the comfort of knowing the programme would be run in a very professional manner. Ritz-Carlton gave us that comfort.

HOW SIMILAR WAS THE RETREAT TO CAMP REVEILLE IN MAINE?

Joan: We have more sporting facilities at Takajo, so we couldn't offer as many activities at Dove Mountain. But in addition to tennis clinics, Murad facials and inspirational campfires, we were able to have a golf clinic

"We're in talks with half a dozen resorts... The goal is to hold four retreats a year in different parts of the country, and maybe one in the Caribbean"

which was unique to that venue. We had about 45 women, so it was a smaller group - though that's partly because we didn't start marketing it until about three weeks before! But they've asked us back again next year, so it worked for them and it worked for us and it worked for the women who came.

WHAT'S THE NEXT STEP IN ROLLING OUT THE CONCEPT?

Joan: We're in talks with half a dozen resorts, looking at business models that will work for them and for us, while still keeping the price palatable for women, who often feel guilty about spending money on themselves. The ultimate goal is to hold four retreats a year in different parts of the country, and maybe one in the Caribbean.

Jeff: The immediate goal for 2011 is Dove Mountain in the springtime, Takajo in the summer and a third camp in the fall - we currently have a shortlist of places we're entertaining for next October.

Joan: We'd also consider holding a second session at Takajo if the demand was there.

AT US\$1,500, REVEILLE AT DOVE MOUNTAIN IS MUCH MORE THAN THE CAMP IN MAINE AT US\$899 PER PERSON. HOW WILL YOU KEEP PRICES DOWN IN OTHER LUXURY RESORTS?

Joan: I think there are two marketplaces. There were some women who came to Reveille in Arizona who we couldn't talk into coming to camp in Maine, but they said, 'tell us when you're holding one at another Ritz-Carlton and we're there!' At the same time, I know many of those who come to Maine would be put off by the price in Arizona, and quite frankly wouldn't be that enticed by the experience anyway. So we're exploring all kinds of venues - the only restriction is to keep it below a certain price point.

WHAT'S IT LIKE WORKING TOGETHER?

Joan: He totally gets how I want to touch the lives of other women and supports me 100 per cent, so it's been a lot of fun and I've learned a lot from him. I've been a TV host and an author and a speaker, but I've never run a business. Jeff has a great business mind and I couldn't have done this without him. Jeff: When you share a passion as a couple and then share it on a larger stage, that's very exciting. Also, we're both very busy people with seven children, yet we have to find time for each other and take care of our own health and wellness. This is a great opportunity to do that. ●



The camp has been created for women to take time for, and better care of, themselves.



Every morning between 8-9am, Lunden (far right) leads a walk or running session.



The medical clinic is turned into a spa offering Murad facials.



CABIN FEVER

Susie Ellis bunks down at Camp Reveille, a women's only spa camp ran by TV personality Joan Lunden, and shares her experience of cabins, treatments, creativity and bonding

As those in the spa industry will know, two powerful trends have been on the upswing over these last couple of years: hybrid spas, ie spas that strongly incorporate another element such as medicine or wellness; and social spa-ing. In Spafinder's 2010 trends report, we noted that spa has increasingly become a hyphenated affair – think spa-yoga, spa-fitness, etc – and that the industry is getting pretty creative at inventing new you-name-it hybrid models. And in our 2010 State of Spa Travel report, travel agents worldwide ranked social spa-ing as the number one trend gaining ground, reporting they see significantly more friends, groups and families hitting spas to connect or 'play'.

So, it's not surprising to see 'spa-camp', a concept that so neatly straddles both trends, hit the landscape. I always try to sample as many emerging spa trends as I can, but recently I was fully immersed in a spa camp, spending four days at Joan Lunden's Camp Reveille in Maine in the US. I'm recounting my personal experience there to offer a little first-hand insight into the special qualities and appeal of this concept.

RESOLVING THE PARADOX

Joan Lunden, a well-known TV personality in the US (see p46), approached Spafinder two years ago to help her market her Camp Reveille, a four-day summer camp for women that she created out of her passion for helping women take time for, and better care of, themselves. This summer she invited my colleague Sallie Fraenkel (COO of Spafinder) and me to join her and 140

"Will spa camps become a full-blown trend? The jury is out. Will more models – from luxury or family-focused ones to boot camps – appear? Without a doubt."

other women at Camp Reveille, explaining that the experience would feel like an adult version of a kids camp, but one that included massages, facials, and a heavy roster of fitness, sports, activities and social experiences. So, I decided to sew my name into my gym clothes, pack my duffel bag and give it a whirl! I was exceedingly curious to

see how this nascent trend, this interweaving of 'camp' and 'spa', would play out.

On the drive up to Maine, I thought about what seemed like some obvious paradoxes. I hadn't been to camp since I was a young teenager, and remembered loving the swimming, canoeing and eating s'mores [marshmallows and crackers] around the campfire, but not relishing the hard bunks, the bugs, the poison ivy and sharing showers.

Spa, of course, connotes pleasure and the luxury, pampering touches. When we arrived at Camp Reveille, I saw that some of those paradoxes were resolved. It's held at a posh boys' camp owned by Joan's husband, Jeff. When regular camp season is over she adds extra touches like foam padding and comfy bedding for the bunks – and latte machines, lamps, and surprise gifts in each cabin. The medical clinic area is transformed into a spa where women can receive massages and facials.

It became immediately apparent that the staff at Camp Reveille were top notch: the therapists, aestheticians and fitness instructors are all personally selected by Joan – and many are 'her people', ie her celebrity hair stylist and makeup artist. It's probably the

Joan Lunden will be offering additional spa camps in 2011. To find out more about her and the Reveille-on-the-Road rollout, turn to p46.



Being surrounded by nature has a profound effect on women at the camp, many of whom live in cities

best collection of spa staff I've ever seen. And, surprisingly, at US\$899 (£643, £571) for four days/three nights (which includes all the fantastic food and a facial), it's really quite a bargain!

A typical day at Camp Reveille includes the following:

7am: breakfast
7.30-8am: tai chi on the beach
8-9am: walk with Joan or morning run
9.15-10.30am: pilates, beach yoga, cardio, core and sculpt class, or arts and crafts activities
10.45am-12pm: archery class, Zumba, yoga, self-defense or arts and crafts activities
12.30-1.30: lunch in the dining hall
1.30-2.15pm: rest, Eat your Way Fit talk or Unclutter Your Life Lecture
2.15-3.15pm: the Reveille Relay
3.15-4.15pm: boot camp challenge, archery class, canoe class or arts and crafts activities
4.30-5.30pm: volleyball, Zumba, gentle yoga stretch or arts and crafts activities
5.30-6.15pm: shower time
6.30-7.30pm: dinner
8-9pm: dance party
9pm: campfire and eating s'mores and after that playing cards and games and watching movies in the late evening.

Other interesting offerings throughout the four days included: a mole check by a dermatologist, tribal drumming, a pontoon cruise, LifeBreath (a unique breath-work practice taught by the woman who originated it), sing-a-longs, an insight into Joan's make-up secrets, meditation, climbing walls, and tennis. And of course, facials and massages that could be scheduled any time – a 30-minute Murad facial was free, but massages cost US\$70 (£50, £44).

EMBRACING CREATIVITY

Whew... as you can see the daily agenda was completely packed, however, we were also encouraged to do as we pleased, even if this meant doing nothing at all. It wasn't long before I realised that the schedule I was opting for looked suspiciously similar to my favourite spa routine: long early morning nature walks, some cardio classes, a massage – and in the afternoon, maybe a stretch class followed by a nap.

On the first day, Sallie noticed that I had quickly reverted to my typical spa routine and suggested I shake it up a bit. She nudged me – or maybe dragged is a better word – into the arts and crafts centre. When there are spa activities available, the last thing

I really wanted to do was sit in a barn-like structure stringing beads or working with clay pots. I noticed that lots of women were participating – they seemed to be having fun – and the sparkling assortment of beads and baubles looked interesting, but nevertheless, I passed.

That afternoon an odd thing happened. I attended the Chakra Balancing session, where the instructor had us lie down and then passed a pendulum over our various chakra points to check our energy. Well, my chakras checked out pretty well over my body. Then she reached the chakra point over my head and all of a sudden – nothing. No swinging. No energy.

She gently mentioned that this chakra point represented creativity and that possibly the imaginative part of me was suppressed. Yeah, right... if you believe that kind of thing. But later that night I got to thinking (a left-brain activity, hint, hint) that indeed much of my life is filled with lists, emails and analysis. I embrace very little right-brain activity: virtually no music, painting, drawing or dance (and definitely no arts and crafts).

So, reluctantly, the next day, I accompanied Sallie to the jewellery-making room, ▶



Susie (far left) and Sallie (third right) found the four-day spa camp fantastic fun and filled with laughter

▶ thinking that injecting a little creativity into my day might do me some good. Well, the beautiful blue and white speckled stones, silver pearls and sparkly beads became mesmerising. Before I knew it, a couple of hours had passed and I had created an attractive piece of jewellery. In fact, Joan's mother-in-law liked it so much she asked if she could copy it!

When Sallie and I left camp four days later, we drove off feeling truly renewed. And although I haven't tested my creativity chakra post-camp, I do feel that my inner child was positively nudged at Camp Reveille.

UPON REFLECTION

Several months have now passed since my summer spa camp experience, giving me time to reflect on how it affected my life and what, specifically, is so different about spa camp, compared to other spa experiences. Three things stand out:

Firstly, **camp was fun!** I have been to many spas and they have all been relaxing, restful, gorgeous and inspiring – but rarely fun. I have not laughed hysterically with a group at a spa for days on end, played volleyball, told stories by the campfire and cheered for my relay team. Laughing and hearing laughter was truly refreshing!

Secondly, the **creativity element**, in my case, the jewellery making, added a dimen-

sion that is on the rise, but still too rare at spas. While destination spas (in particular) are beginning to offer creative programming like drumming, journal writing, photography, cooking classes and gardening, other spas could put more emphasis on offerings that elicit people's creative and emotional sides. For so many of us, especially the tech-connected and work-obsessed, they have unique therapeutic value.

"Spas could put more emphasis on creative programming like drumming, journal writing and photography as they have unique therapeutic value"

Thirdly, **being immersed in nature** had a profound effect on me: the trees, grass, clear sky and the way the campfire danced against the backdrop of the dark lake, remain emblazoned in my mind. While nature is a part of many spa experiences, it's usually limited to a hike, an occasional outdoor yoga class, or a view from a window. Lying in the grass, climbing a tree or sleeping under the stars are too rare experiences and they have a powerful effect on a person like me who resides in a concrete city.

Were there any negatives? Well, the greatest challenge came from something inherent in the camp group-lodging scenario. I shared a cabin with five other women, and the positives were laughing, sharing life stories and bonding – but the downside is that we're older adults and inevitably someone would have to use the bathroom in the middle of the night and a couple of my cabin-mates snored. Several of us couldn't sleep, and while I don't have a solution to this aspect of spa camp, it's an issue, because sleep is such a crucial part of de-stressing and rejuvenation.

THE CAMP TREND

Camp Reveille was an extraordinary way to immerse myself in the intersection of spa and camp, and it's a marriage of concepts that has come to my attention more widely recently. Luxury hybrids include: the Four Seasons Tented Camp Golden Triangle in Thailand, with open-air spa salas blending into the bamboo forest; and The Resort at Paws Up in Montana, which has an entire 'spa town' comprising individual treatment tents. And there are now many spa-focused camps for kids and teens.

Will spa camps become a full-blown industry trend? The jury is out. Do I think more spa camp models – from luxury or family-focused ones to weight-loss/fitness boot camps – will appear? Without a doubt. ●