

Travel Does a Body Good

Nancy Irsay's retreats pack philanthropic punches.

Nancy Irsay is the host and sponsor of Nancy's Retreat, a series of women's getaways with philanthropic bents. (Charities receive \$100 of each traveler's package fee.) Here, Irsay talks about how getting away with the girls is sometimes all a gal really needs. As told to Traci Cumbay

I was never a "groupie." If you'd told me 10 years ago that I'd be going on a trip with a group of women, I would have thought, "No way." But I was asked in 2004 to do something in conjunction with Riverview Hospital—something like Mickey's Camp, which is a weekend for men. They were looking to go to Brownsburg, but I thought, "Women need to get away." The only way to get a woman to totally relax is to get her out of her environment. We needed not a camp but a retreat. So we went to the Mayan Riviera, which worked so well we're going back next year.

We have three to five different speakers who talk on health and lifestyle issues. That happens during a seminar in the morning, and then the rest of the day is yours. If people are trying to get away, we want them to have time on their own. If we're going to lock you up in a conference room somewhere, why go?

We've had belly dancing, swimming with dolphins, and—What is that? With the needles?—acupuncture.

The focus is on ourselves, our own needs for that time, and—by the way—we make a charitable contribution. We've raised between \$25,000 and \$30,000 so far. It goes to a different charity each year—last year for heart disease and child abuse and neglect, the year before that for breast cancer. We stay in smaller hotels so we can encourage the women to interface with each other and keep the cost down so younger women have access to the business owners and speakers.

I've made some interesting friends. There's just—oh, wow—such a wonderful synergy when you get women together. They're generally more open than men, and as women become more independent, more successful, they become more appreciative of other women.

And they really need to get away. Don't you need to get away?

Nancy's next retreat is scheduled for Nov. 7–11 in Cancun. Call 581-1122 or 800-225-9919 or go to ambgi.com/nancy for more info.

