



THE BUENA VIDA PSILOCYBIN RETREATS



The world's most trusted gateway to experience Ceremony, Intention and Joy.



Why Choose The Buena Vida?

Since 2018, our Founder Amanda Schendel has been holding the safest retreats, training the most dedicated team of psychedelic leaders, and being witness to over 800 guests choosing to transform their lives with the power of psilocybin mushrooms. The retreats offer world-renowned, safe, and professional spaces that take this medicine to its deepest places.

Our team, comprising experts from diverse fields, blends decades of experience in modern well-being approaches and Indigenous wisdom traditions. Our mission is to amplify and provide a platform for women healers, focusing on the convergence of Mexican spiritual traditions and contemporary applications of sacred plant medicines.

At The Buena Vida, we merge the sacred with the modern, the traditional with a fresh perspective, and the divine with the everyday.

6-Week Program

Pre-Retreat prep

Open your heart and mind to your internal world.

- Group call with your leaders
- Application & Background call
- 7-day Online Prep Course to unveil your intentions, goals, and desires

In-Person Retreat

Time to experience the love, connection, and profound shifts during the group retreat.

- 2-3 Psilocybin Ceremonies
- Live SoundScape musical experience
- Somatic workshops
- Gorgeous private beaches
- Unique, chef-prepared cuisine
- Group trip to local site
- A loving group of leaders to guide, support and listen

Integration

Feel supported as you integrate the lessons and healing into your life back home.

- Personal & Group Calls
- Personalized 2-week "Daily Dose" Integration in our app
- 1-on-1 coaching and support offered
- Microdosing support, guidance and coaching



Schedule

DAY 1

Welcome to The Buena Vida

- Welcome Snacks with new friends
- Dinner
- Sound Bath
- "What is Ceremony?" meeting with leaders

DAY 2

Meeting the Fungi

- Morning yoga or Ecstatic Dance
- Healthy Brunch
- Orientation
- "Setting your Intention" guided meditation
- Sunset Psilocybin Ceremony

DAY 3

Going Deeper

- Morning Yoga Flow
- Brunch
- Massages with local healers
- Beach time
- Mindfulness Workshop for Integration
- Psilocybin Ceremony #2

DAY 4

Deep Relaxation

- Grounding Breathwork
- Integration meeting (Writing, Movement, etc)
- Day Trip: Whales, Catamaran or Local Town
- Closing Fire Circle
- Final Dinner

DAY 5

Sweet Goodbyes

- Fresh Breakfast
- Final meeting with leaders "Preparing for the Journey Ahead"
- Shuttle to Airport

Ceremony and Ritual

Safety.Sacrament. Specialness.

Our program prioritizes a thoughtfully designed container, encompassing guidelines and a shared group agreement, enabling our leaders to expertly hold the space. This intentional framework ensures a cohesive, supportive environment, promoting a secure and purposeful experience for all participants.

Guided by the spiritual traditions of the Camino Rojo and Indigenous wisdom, we pay homage to various elements:



Reverence for the land where we have the privilege to hold our ceremonies.



Acknowledgment and respect for the indigenous peoples of the land, particularly the Huicholes.



Commitment to reciprocity by contributing to elders, community centers, and scholarships.



Honoring the interconnectedness of all existence by recognizing the significance of the four elements, the seven directions, and the seven generations both behind and ahead.



Commencing and concluding our ceremonies with prayer, utilizing sacred tobacco to mark these sacred moments

In aligning with these principles, we strive to uphold and carry forward a profound sense of respect, gratitude, and harmony within the context of our spiritual practices.

PRINCIPLES OF CEREMONY

The Purpose of Sound & Music in Ceremony

Our ceremonies are deeply personal, and sound is our guide. From resonant chants to rhythmic drums, these sounds forge a link to higher realms, ancestors, and the divine.

Sound shapes transformative spaces, marking distinct phases of our journeys. Drums and rattles bring healing vibrations, fostering balance, harmony, and well-being.

In our ceremonies, sound becomes a guide into trance-like states, encouraging personal exploration of awareness, insight, and spiritual connection.

Sound, as traditional music and chants, is our cultural heritage, passing down personal knowledge, stories, and traditions.

In our ceremonies, music is our personal language of gratitude—conveying thanks and respect to the natural world, ancestors, and each other.

The Science of Sound

From a scientific perspective, Dr. Menolascino explains that the use of various sound frequencies has the capacity to stimulate the production of nitric oxide in cells. This serves as a vasodilator, promoting the opening of blood vessels, enhancing cellular efficiency, and mediating blood pressure at a cellular level.

Dr. Perez-Martinez emphasizes the impact of being in a parasympathetic state, affecting both emotional and physiological aspects. This state enhances antibody production, bolstering immunity, reduces cortisol levels to mitigate high blood pressure, and increases alpha and theta waves. These changes contribute to heightened alertness during the day and facilitate a deeper sleep for more effective healing.



PRINCIPLES OF LEADERSHIP

Trauma-informed touch

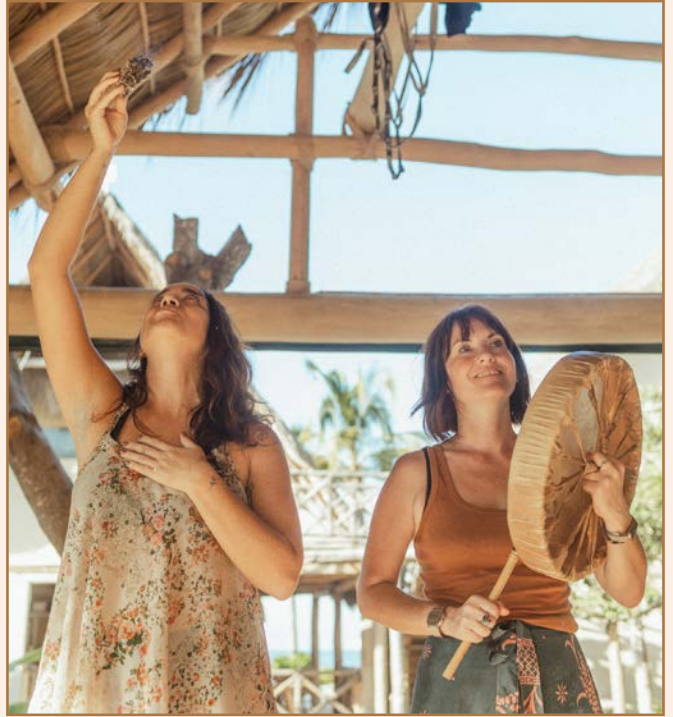
Trauma-informed touch is a caring approach to physical touch that considers the potential impact of past trauma on an individual's well-being. It emphasizes creating a safe and empowering environment, respecting autonomy, and being mindful of potential triggers to support healing and comfort.

Sacred Listening

"Sacred Listening" refers to the practice of being fully present and attentive when someone is expressing themselves. It involves creating a supportive and nonjudgmental environment where individuals feel heard, valued, and understood. When you hold space through listening, you are not just hearing the words spoken; you are actively engaging with the speaker on an emotional and empathetic level.

Teaching through stories

Stories wield a magical force, weaving threads that bind hearts and minds. In their embrace, emotions dance, perspectives bloom, and shared understanding blossoms. Through the art of storytelling, we embark on a journey where empathy thrives, cultural values breathe, and the winds of change whisper through the leaves of our collective narrative.



Vulnerability, honesty & unconditional love

In our community, vulnerability is the courage to reveal our true selves, and forming genuine bonds. Honesty becomes the bridge that connects us, building trust and understanding. Wrapped in the warmth of unconditional love, we find acceptance, value, and shared strength, creating a place where each individual is not just seen but truly belongs.

Reserving judgments & Diagnosis

Reserving judgments and diagnoses in a retreat group is crucial to creating a safe and non-judgmental space for individuals on their personal journeys. Doing so fosters an atmosphere of acceptance, allowing participants to share authentically without fear of criticism. It promotes an environment where everyone's experiences are honored and respected, contributing to a collective atmosphere of support, understanding, and personal growth during the retreat.

LOCATION

Casa Itzamara, Sayulita

Healing Retreats

Experience transformation at our newly renovated 10-bedroom villa with stunning 360-degree views of the Pacific Ocean, Sayulita, Sierra Madre jungle, and Monkey Mountain. Each bedroom features en-suite bathrooms and terraces, offering unique perspectives. Two pristine beaches, Pascuaro Norte and Pascuaro Sur, are a 5-minute walk away, creating an idyllic setting for our Healing Retreats.

Luxurious Amenities Await

- Infinity pool with starlit ambiance and hot tub
- Surround sound in common areas
- Cutting-edge gym and rejuvenating spa
- Expansive terrace for group activities with jungle and ocean views
- Secluded mini beach for private retreats
- Stylish indoor/outdoor dining space
- Professional kitchen for culinary adventures



Villa Papelillos, Punta Monterey, Mexico

Expansion Retreats: Dive Deeper, Go Higher!

Born from our guests' desire for personalized attention, Expansion Retreats offer a unique one-on-one experience. Led and hosted by Amanda Schendel, this intimate retreat, limited to 8 guests, unfolds over a 3-month container, culminating in a Small Group retreat. Villa Papelillos, nestled within the Sierra de Vallejo reserve, promises tranquility and luxury. Experience sunrise yoga, 360° views, and a deep, intimate journey with nature in the heart of Riviera Nayarit.





Ensuring Your Wellbeing

A Comprehensive Overview of Our Retreat Practices



Holistic Training

Our world-class facilitators, blending Indigenous wisdom with modern clinical expertise, create a transformative environment with decades of experience in guiding psychedelic journeys and holistic wellbeing.



Protected Location

In legal settings for psilocybin mushrooms/truffles, our retreat centers provide spacious, remote, and secure havens. In Mexico, collaboration with locals, elders, and medicine people ensures compliance with the legal framework for "ceremonial and sacramental use."



Dedicated Care

Maintaining a minimum 1:4 ratio, our facilitators prioritize your well-being during ceremonies. Hand-picked and trained by Amanda Schendel, our diverse leaders offer personalized support.



Access to Medical Care

In Nayarit, Mexico, a locally licensed on-call nurse and nearby urgent care facilities ensure medical care within a 15-minute drive.



Medical & Background Screening

Our meticulous application process guides safe program participation, with thorough assessments of personal, medical, and psychiatric histories (with consent). Applications may be declined for those with potential complications, especially regarding psilocybin consumption.



Safety Protocols

Our forward-thinking safety plan and regularly updated risk management protocols are communicated to retreat partners, operations staff, and facilitators, guaranteeing a secure and reassuring environment. Our exceptional safety record is a result of rigorous leadership training, thorough guest screening, and comprehensive preparation. We prioritize collaborative work with expected outcomes and clear intentions, emphasizing diverse healing modalities.

Our approach recognizes that the journey is a shared effort, and we echo the sentiment, "Drugs help us forget. Medicine helps us remember," encapsulating our commitment to a holistic and intentional approach to healing.



Founder and Medicine Woman

Amanda Schendel

Amanda, a seasoned Psychedelic leader and guide, is devoted to providing warm, compassionate service to humanity. In addition to administering unique medicine, she supports facilitators, fostering their growth and overall well-being.

Amanda's work focuses on revealing individuals' true nature, reestablishing lost connections, and equipping them with tools for sustained personal development beyond the retreat. A passionate advocate for safe psychedelic use, Amanda upholds ancient healing traditions.

With over 10 years of study in plant medicine and ceremonial healing across various locations, she brings a seasoned, diverse approach to profound medicine work. Having participated in over 500 ceremonies involving Ayahuasca, San Pedro, Psilocybin, and Cannabis, Amanda's wealth of experience spans retreats, events, and community happenings worldwide.

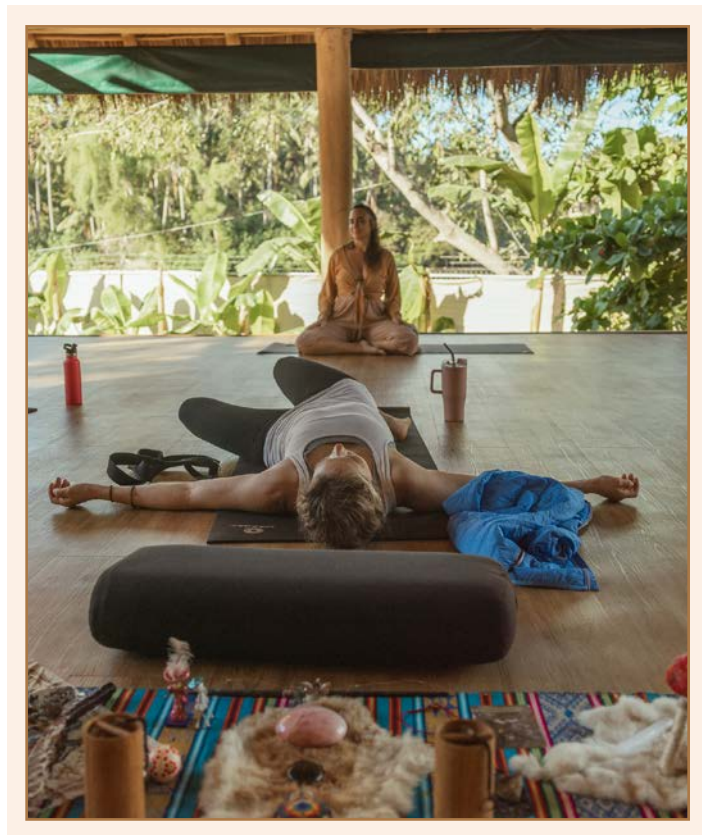
As the founder of The Buena Vida Psychedelic Retreats, she collaborates with private groups and esteemed centers globally, balancing her time between Punta de Mita, Mexico, and the Wolfpack Ranch in Joshua Tree.

Ceremony & Retreat Leaders

Sarah McCunn & Autumn Flory

Meet our dedicated Wellness Directors, Sarah and Autumn, who serve as the cornerstone of our retreat experiences. With a wealth of experience and extensive study in plant medicine, they seamlessly navigate their roles as ceremony leaders, workshop directors, and co-directors of our retreats.

Drawing from years of focused study, Sarah and Autumn craft and guide breathwork & meditation practices, shamanic ceremonies, and holistic wellness sessions inspired by global practices. Their expertise extends beyond mere facilitation; they create transformative spaces where healing unfolds.



Elevating Your Retreat Experience: Our Dedicated Support Team

In our retreats, a tailored support team of 4-5 leaders is carefully selected for every 10-15 guests. Amanda, having trained over 120 facilitators, manages our staff with a foundation in harm-reduction education.

The ceremonial experience combines native rituals with global modalities. While not traditional therapists, our team includes certified professionals in yoga, hypnotherapy, and nutrition. With a rotation of 10 seasoned leaders aligned with The Buena Vida's mission, we offer a dynamic experience year-round.

Our facilitators create a compassionate, non-judgmental space prioritizing your safety and empowerment. At The Buena Vida, we stand as your allies, committed to guiding you toward becoming your own healer.

Elders

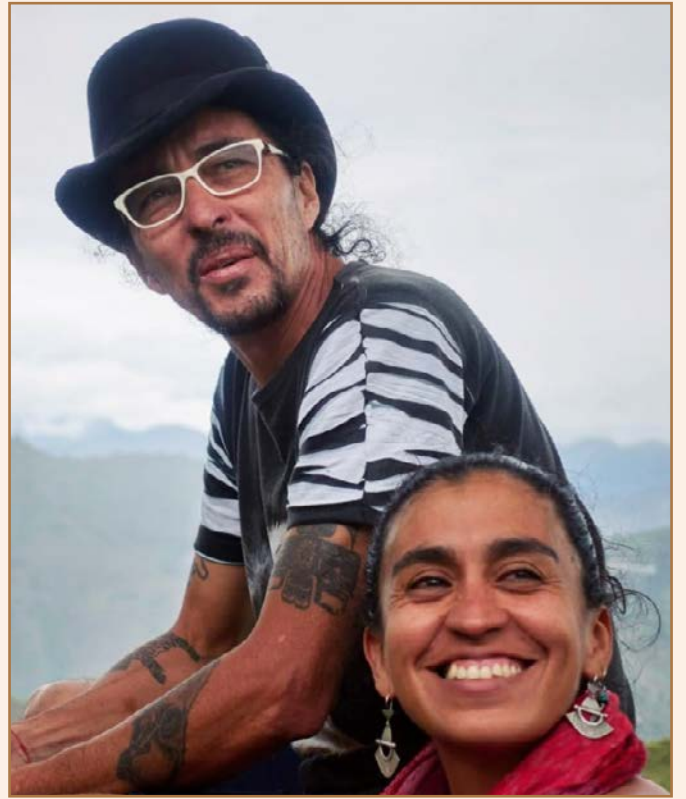
Elders carry the wisdom of time, their experiences woven into the fabric of their being. Their guidance becomes a beacon, illuminating the way forward with insights, stories, and a deep understanding of the spiritual terrain. In their presence, we find not just knowledge but a connection to something timeless, a bridge between the past and the unfolding present. Embracing the wisdom of elders is not just our honor; it's a key that unlocks the doors to a richer, more grounded spiritual exploration.

Santiago Ayala and Ximena Morales

Santiago and Ximena are certified Curanderos (healers) from Ecuador and Peru. They have lived in the sacred San Pedro Valley, Vilcabamba with their family for over 20 years. Their family rituals weave the rich traditions of North Native American and South American lineages to awaken our spiritual connection and expand consciousness. Together they have over 20 years of experience cultivating sacred space for physical, emotional and spiritual healing with shamanic medicine ceremonies.

Salvador VillaLobos

Salvador's devotion to medicinal plants began at a young age. Since then he has been able to work with many elders and masters of different ancient traditions. He is initiated into the practices and rituals of the Red Path such as the Sweatlodge, Vision Quest, Sun dance, Star dance, limpieas and various kinds of ceremonies, using power plants as Ayahuasca, San Pedro in Ecuador, Mexico and around the world. He and his family are the custodians of Hayulima Spirit Sanctuary.



Advisors & Research

Senior Scientific Advisor

Gregory Frederick Ferenstein, M.Sc.

Gregory Frederick Ferenstein, M.Sc. has been writing on innovation and psychology for over a decade. His peer-reviewed research was published in the leading journal of its field and his work appears in top media outlets, including New York Times, The Washington Post, and the BBC.

Gregory joins The Buena Vida to spearhead **randomized, controlled studies in the effects of psychedelic retreats for long-term wellness.**

After designing large-scale economic reform in Congress, he conducted field research in Silicon Valley and become convinced that mental health must be a national priority.

He is now dedicated to advancing world-class, personalized mental healthcare. He holds a Master's in Mathematical Behavior Sciences, taught statistics for journalism at the University of Texas and resides in Austin.

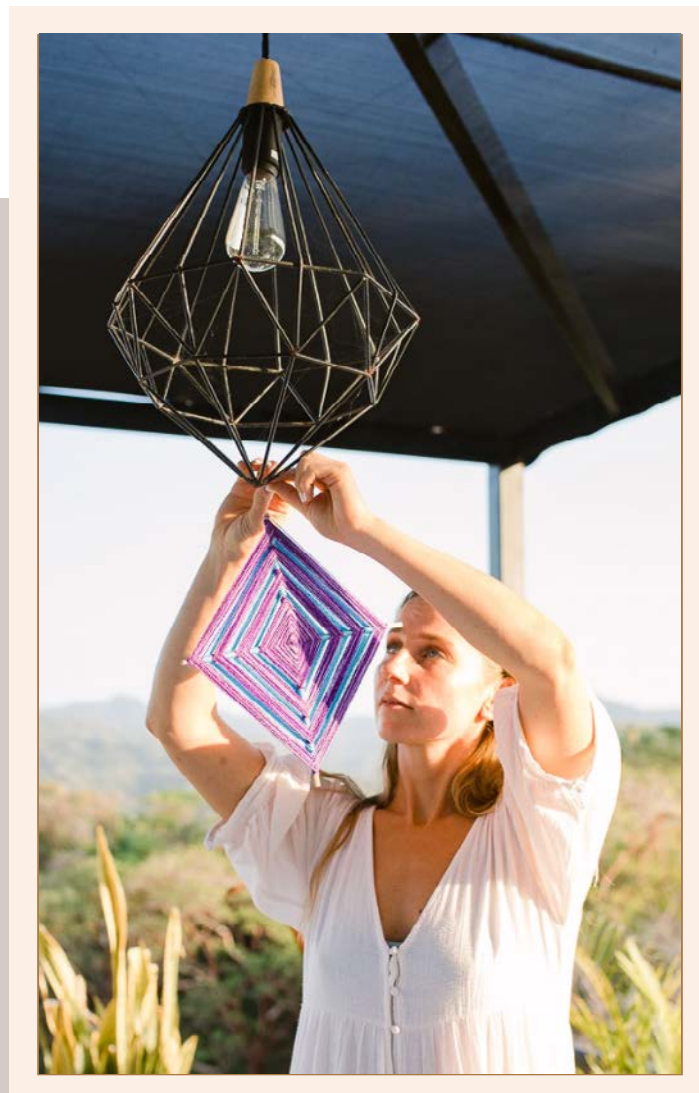


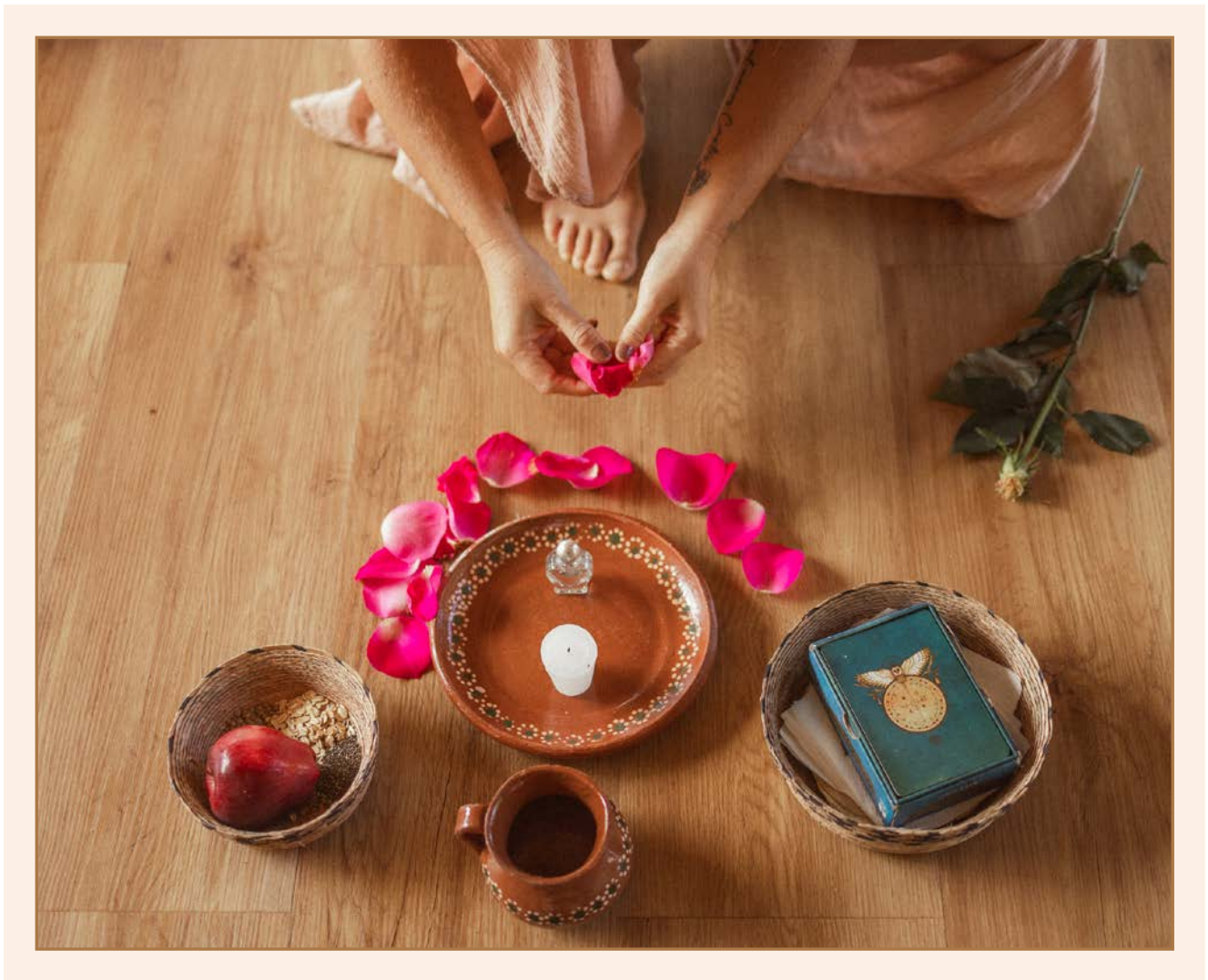
Academic Scientific Advisor

Rosalind Gabriella McAlpine, MRes, PhD

Rosalind completed her BA in Experimental Psychology at the University of Oxford, where she specialised in neuroscience, social psychology, and developmental questions in science and religion. She then completed her MRes in Developmental Neuroscience and Psychopathology at University College London, followed by a year working as a Post-Graduate Research Fellow at Yale University.

Her PhD research focusses on psychedelic mechanisms of action, as well the comparison between the use of psychedelic substances in traditional/ceremonial retreat settings and their place in Western psychiatric models. She is currently researching effective psychedelic preparation strategies (e.g., meditation, yoga, breathwork etc) as well as investigating the importance of set and setting for personal transformation, within both clinical and retreat settings.





THE MEDICINE

How do Muchrooms affect us?

Psilocybin, the magical ingredient in psychedelic mushrooms, engages in a mindbending dance with serotonin receptors, especially the whimsically named 5-HT_{2A}. Once consumed, it transforms into psilocin, a mischievous mimic of serotonin, stirring up a psychedelic symphony in the brain. This brew alters perception, cranks up the senses, and fosters a profound sense of unity by playing disruptor in the brain's usual communication channels. The journey, unfolds with mind-expanding insights and a playful distortion of time.

What does it feel like?

Experiences with psilocybin mushroom trips vary widely, as they are deeply personal and influenced by factors such as dosage, setting, and individual differences. However, some common themes include:

Altered Perception: Users often report changes in sensory perception, such as vibrant colors, enhanced textures, and intensified sounds.

Elevated Emotions: Emotions may become more pronounced, leading to heightened joy, awe, or even introspective moments. However, guests may also experience bouts of anxiety or fear. Safety and leadership in these moments are paramount.

Connectedness: Many describe a profound sense of interconnectedness with nature, others, or the universe, fostering a deep appreciation for the world around them.

Altered Thinking: Thought patterns may become more fluid, with enhanced creativity and the potential for introspective insights. However, this can also lead to confusing or challenging moments.

Time Distortion: The perception of time may be distorted, with moments feeling elongated or condensed.

Spiritual or Mystical Experiences: Some guests report having spiritual or mystical encounters, feeling a connection to something greater than themselves.

The Correct Dose

Opening your being to a new consciousness is brave. Retreat leaders ensure optimal dosing for the best psilocybin experience, considering individual factors. Despite age/ height/weight variances, we consult for the initial dose due to potency variations. We test and dose mushrooms, starting with a smaller dose (1.5-3 grams) during the first ceremony session. Guests usually stay between 2-5 grams, but we are able and experienced enough to give much higher doses when needed. The Medication person has the final say. This isn't about blowing your mind; it's a powerful yet gentle experience. Our 7-Day Preparation Course complements this journey, guiding you through setting intentions and discovering your truth.



What happens during Ceremony?

Ceremonies are led by medicine people who have deep understanding, experience, and sophistication with plant medicine. Amanda Schendel, Sarah McCunn or Autumn Flory will be assisting you in your preparation, dosing and preparing your sacred mushroom tea.

In a sacred space at the retreat site, guests experience their internal journeys within the supportive group setting. The sacred mushroom tea, prepared with ginger and lemon, is taken with respect and intention. The curandera sings traditional songs to invoke the powers of the fungi, guiding participants into their inner landscapes. Throughout the three to five-hour ceremony, the curandera and assistants ensure safety, offering individual healing. If needed, participants can request a break for fresh air or nature, staying within view of facilitators.



Buena Vida Sanctuary, Joshua Tree, CA

Nestled on a sprawling 5-acre ranch in Joshua Tree, California, this enchanting retreat boasts two spacious houses surrounded by the mesmerizing beauty of the desert. Wander through the expansive space and feel the serenity as you encounter a small herd of alpacas grazing peacefully, adding a touch of whimsy to the natural landscape. The ranch offers panoramic views of untamed nature, providing a front-row seat to the mystical allure of sacred desert lands. Immerse yourself in the tranquility of the surroundings, where each breath is filled with the essence of the desert breeze. This haven is a sanctuary, inviting you to unwind and connect with Joshua Tree's unique energy. Adding to the allure, discover our Mushroom Church sanctuary nestled on the land, offering a unique and sacred space for reflection and connection with the transformative nature of the desert.



Buena Vida Sanctuary Church

At the Buena Vida Sanctuary, we envisage a deep unity where every human is held in reverence as sacred and divine. Interwoven by a shared consciousness and an enduring spiritual connection, we recognize that everyone is traversing a spiritual journey, embodying the essence of Spirit, beyond the material world. The challenges life presents, fostering our soul's growth, invite reflection on our intrinsic divinity. Our mission is to strengthen the divine essence within each member and lead them toward spiritual awakening through our unique church services and events.

BVS constitutes a fellowship of spiritual explorers who engage with the Divine through prayer, meditation, ceremonies, and our sacrament of psilocybin mushrooms. Within our Sanctuary, members provide mutual support through shared ceremonies and integration. Our collective aspiration is to pursue Spirit together and mutually enhance our understanding and respect for ourselves, others, and the Divine.

