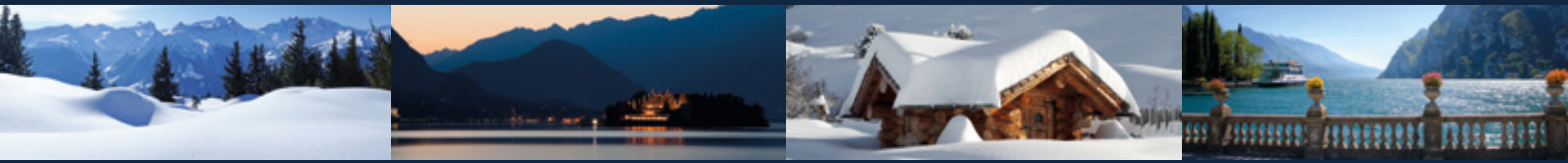


# Unforgettable Journeys

1



LUXURY LAKES & MOUNTAINS

*Lifestyle*



GARDENA GRÖDNERHOF - ORTISEI - VAL GARDENA •  
 1966' PORTILLO DOLOMITES - SELVA DI VAL GARDENA •

ALPINA DOLOMITES - ALPE DI SIUSI •  
 ALPEN SUITE - MADONNA DI CAMPIGLIO •

HOTEL CIASA SALARES - SAN CASSIANO - VAL BADIA  
 HOTEL LA PERLA - CORVARA - VAL BADIA

VALCASTELLO - DOBBIACO - VAL PUSTERIA

GRAND HOTEL SAVOIA  
 HOTEL DE LA POSTE  
 - CORTINA D'AMPEZZO

VILLA D'ESTE - CERNOBBIO  
 GRAND HOTEL TREMEZZO - TREMEZZO  
 GRAND HOTEL VILLA SERBELLONI - BELLAGIO

TRENTINO  
 ALTO ADIGE

DOLOMITI

VENETO

GRAND HOTEL COURMAYEUR MONTBLANC  
 - COURMAYEUR •

LAGO  
 MAGGIORE  
 124

LAGO  
 DI COMO  
 102

VALLE D'AOSTA  
 142

LAGO  
 D'ORTA  
 134

BERGAMO  
 LAGO  
 D'ISEO  
 &  
 FRANCIACORTA  
 90

MILANO  
 118

LAGO  
 DI GARDA  
 66

VERONA  
 86

TREVISO

64 VENEZIA

TORINO

LOMBARDIA

PIEMONTE

L'ALBERETA - ERBUSCO •

HOTEL RIVALAGO - SULZANO •

CHATEAU MONFORT - MILANO

VILLA E PALAZZO AMINTA - STRESA

VILLA CRESPI - ORTA SAN GIULIO

BELLEVUE HOTEL & SPA - COGNE

MONTANA LODGE & SPA - LA THUILE

GRAND HOTEL FASANO - GARDONE

GRAND HOTEL A VILLA FELTRINELLI - GARGNANO

LIDO PALACE - RIVA DEL GARDA  
 DU LAC ET DU PARC GRAND RESORT - RIVA DEL GARDA

BYBLOS ART VILLA AMISTÀ - VERONA

PLAN YOUR JOURNEY





PLAN YOUR JOURNEY



LUXURY LAKES & MOUNTAINS

*“Some of the places we recommend are often such well-kept secrets that we feel they deserve to be discovered by those who will love and cherish them as much as we do”*



This **LLM Lifestyle Book** is your source of inspiration for travel ideas in northern Italy. Not only will you find the exclusive hotels selected by **Luxury Lakes and Mountains**, but also an infinite variety of suggestions to create exciting and memorable experiences. Combining our extensive expertise and knowledge of individual territories, we will accompany you in a voyage of discovery and sensations that only mountains and lakes can offer: peace and serenity as well as sheer adventure, listening to silence after a snowfall, breathing in pure air that reaches the soul, revelling in a feeling of freedom and power.

World famous, exciting, inspiring and charming, **the Alps** often sound more like film stars than mountains. From north-west Italy and the picturesque Aosta Valley all the way to the staggering Dolomites in the east, via **Mont Blanc**, **Monte Rosa**, the **Matterhorn** and **Gran Paradiso**, you will find everything from National Parks to imposing castles, endless skiing options, history-laden territories and rich culinary traditions, scenic tours and exceptional panoramas, superb Spas and alpine cowbells: the Alps are extraordinary even when you're not wearing skis.

**The Dolomites**, defined as “the most spectacular natural architecture in the world” by Le Corbusier, stand proud and bring elated stories of impossibly beautiful rock faces, along with staggering vistas, a rich cultural and historical heritage, as well as dazzling gourmet options. Skiing opportunities abound in this magical region, where even the highest expectations are invariably met.

What happens when you throw in **some of the most enchanting lakes in the world**? **Orta**, **Maggiore**, **Como**, **Iseo** and **Garda** are renowned for their tranquillity and beauty, conjuring up chocolate box images of cobalt blue skies and romantically snow-capped mountains reflected in azure waters. This is a marriage made in Heaven.

Are you keen to see some local flora and – especially – fauna? An ibex, marmot or a deer? We will tell you where to go. Are you after some long-lost local tastes, but don't know where to start? We have it all covered for you. All the best-kept secrets, from a secluded mountain hut you can gaze at the stars from, to a delightful restaurant by the lake or an ancient workshop where boats are still made, are to be found here.

You will also enjoy looking at **our selection of extraordinary hotels**, whose credo is painstaking attention to details, excellence throughout, and whose experience is one you will treasure at length.

Light varying a thousand times in a day, sensational dawns and sunsets, ever-changing hues, the lull of the waves by the shore, a star-studded sky, savouring an outstanding meal: you will simply ask for more.

Welcome to our world

*Audie De Riu*

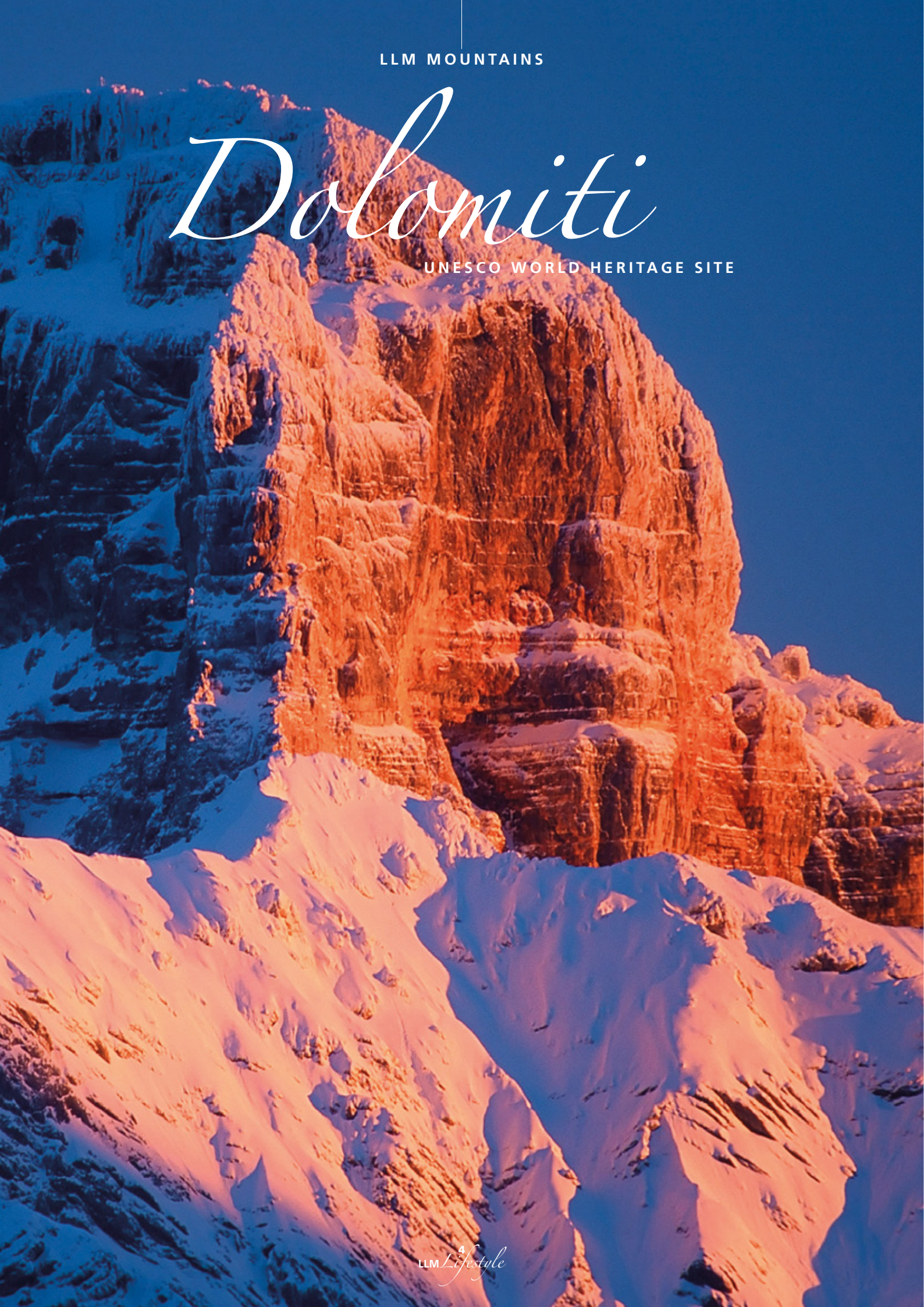
For your reservation requests or should you require further information on any Lakes & Mountains itinerary and beyond, please use LLMCODE19 and write to [info@llmcollection.com](mailto:info@llmcollection.com)



LLM MOUNTAINS

# Dolomiti

UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE





*T*

o sleep, perchance to dream. Shakespeare may spring to mind when the Dolomites come into sight in all their magnificence – be it the first or the hundredth time this happens. These dramatic dolomite rock formations crowning northeast Italy seem to erupt skyward and marvellously frame the region's verdant alpine meadow.

Spanning the provinces of Trentino and Alto Adige, and encompassing neighbouring Veneto, the Dolomites seem too good to be true. From highly hospitable resorts, outstanding settings and well-coordinated downhill ski networks, endless ski touring opportunities or freeride adventures in the winter to exceptional hiking and biking trails, via ferrata routes

and sublime walks among the local *malghe*, savouring exceptional, hearty food, prepared the ancient way. And what about old traditions? The Dolomites offer enchanting tales of fairies and gnomes, as well as potent Ladin legends, which resonated across the mystical landscape and inspired the likes of JRR Tolkien. Many people flock to the Dolomites to see the **Enrosadira**, the stupendous natural phenomenon which sets the rocks aflame at sunset and sunrise. Many others love the stunning scenery they are met with while ski-

ing on one of the 1,200 km of groomed pistes of the exceptional Dolomiti Superski area. It is no mystery that the Dolomites ski resorts steal the scene when it comes to unparalleled hospitality and the vast array of organised events. Themed culinary nights and wine tastings take place in the several hamlets: a paradise for foodies and wine lovers. Two ski day tours spring to mind: Sellaronda – 36 km across four valleys (Alta Badia, Val Gardena, Val di Fassa and Arabba-Marmolada), while the Great War Ski Tour packs in historical landmarks, several ski slopes and even a horse drawn "ski lift" over an arduous 80 km. You can be drawn by a horse in several other places in the Dolomites: a fairytale scenery right in front of your eyes.

In the Dolomites, you will be met with endless possibilities, making one day more exciting than the other.

Part of the UNESCO World Heritage since 2009, the listed Dolomites comprise of 18 peaks which rise to above 3,000 metres; nine areas whose outstanding natural beauty will leave you speechless. The sublime monumental and colourful landscapes of the Dolomites have long attracted hosts of travellers and their histories have created a vast array of scientific and artistic interpretations of their values. They are, truly and madly, an outdoorsman's Paradise. And a foodie's favourite playground, too, one may add. The finest restaurants, including several Michelin-starred ones, can be

## Christmas markets

Exquisite stalls selling local products and all things glittery, enchanting scents of roasting chestnuts or cinnamon filling the air, entire squares draped in a romantic Christmas mood with wooden toys, cloth or ceramics: these are the unmissable Christmas Markets in the Dolomites. The first Christmas Market is recorded as early as 1434 in Dresden, Germany, with others developing in the country shortly afterwards. These days, from late November to early January, several cities in South Tyrol and Trentino beam with these merry events. From Bolzano to Merano, Brixen to Vipiteno, Cortina to San Candido, it's all Yuletide. The Mountain Christmas market at Lake Braies, with only 30 exhibitors, is unique. The three villages of Ortisei, Santa Cristina and Selva di Val Gardena become a fairy-tale paradise, with Christmas melodies to be heard from all corners and a real draw for children, like the Letterbox containing letters for Father Christmas. The Christmas markets in the Dolomites are, well and truly, the experience of a lifetime.



*“Are they stones or clouds?  
Are they real or is this a dream?”*

DINO BUZZATI





## Enrosadira

Enrosadira – Alpenglow: does a sweeter word exist? Visiting the Dolomites, the sheer splendour of the dramatic rock towers erupting towards the sky is simply breath taking. Even more so, when the fiery sunsets glow in front of our eyes. The Ladin word Enrosadira means “turning pink” and defines a jaw-dropping natural phenomenon: at dusk and dawn, the rocks turn shades of pink, violet and red, a magical setting due to the calcium and magnesium carbonate found in the rocks, reflecting such vivid colours. The intensity and glow of the colours can vary according to the time of the year, as the sun’s position changes, and also from one day to the other. Getting up at the crack of dawn is certainly worth the effort: it’s a priceless, memorable show. Enrosadira can be seen all around the Dolomites, however it is best enjoyed in the Catinaccio (Rosengarten) from Pozza di Fassa, from the Alpe di Siusi looking at Sciliar and Sassolungo, from Campitello di Fassa towards Sass Pordoi, from Passo Rolle looking at Cimon della Pala; from Val di Landro towards the Tre Cime di Lavaredo and from San Martino di Castrozza gazing at the Pale di San Martino. Do not miss the chance to marvel at this wonder; this is where nature sets the tone and steals the scene. Be part of it.

found here and it will be an exquisite surprise. Tastes from far and wide, combined with local ingredients and an expertise handed down through various generations, contribute to the creation of a unique experience. Suffice to say that Trentino-Alto Adige produces more DOC wines than any other region in Italy, the most famous varieties being Pinot Grigios and Chardonnays, bright and aromatic from being grown at high altitude and in cool conditions. After all, vines have been cultivated here since Roman times, and the Romans knew a thing or two, that’s for sure. Tempted to find out more? Let the journey begin. —

## The Legend of King Laurino

Laurino was king of the Dwarfs and his reign, hidden among the rocks of the Rosengarten, was full of marvellous roses. One day, Prince Hartwig decided to marry the pretty Similda. He invited all the noblemen in his reign to take part in a joust, except for King Laurino, who decided to join the festivities nonetheless. When he saw Similda at the joust, her beauty struck him and he fell in love with her, taking her with him. Hartwig then asked the King of the Goths for help and they went in search of the pretty lady, ready to fight for her. King Laurino had become invisible but, alas, he was detected as they could see him moving among the roses. Laurino blamed the roses, who had betrayed him, and cast a spell on the mountains: from then on, nobody could admire those marvellous peaks during the day and night. He had forgotten sunsets and sunrises, and so from then on, the Rosengarten is bestowed with exceptional rose-tinted colours at dawn and at dusk. Every legend contains some truth... The exceptional Dolomites hues, which stand against the sky and set the scene aflame, are unique. When will you discover the magic?

Tre Cime, Drei Zinnen... Call them what you will, the Tre Cime di Lavaredo (left) are the undisputed symbol of South Tyrol. Proudly towering on the surrounding landscape, a trip here is one you will treasure at length. Stretching from the Sella Group to the rocky ridges of the Catinaccio massif, appealing Sassolungo (below) is the perfect summer and winter destination

## Messner

It is hard to think about alpinism today without mentioning the world’s most famous mountaineer: Reinhold Messner. The first man to climb all fourteen eight-thousanders – without oxygen; the first to summit Everest solo; his speed record on the Eiger north face, as a roped party, stood for a staggering 34 years... Did we mention his books? Messner has written dozens of exciting accounts on his adventures and is the most respected voice in matters related to the mountains. With a degree in architectural engineering, it was only natural for his several museums to be works of art in themselves: Firmian, Corones, Dolomites, Juval, Ripa and Ortles are all worth a visit and document the culture and history of high-altitude areas. Messner has travelled everywhere, but his heart remains in South Tyrol, his native region: the world of wonders that fascinated Messner ever since he was a child is yours to discover.





# Beyond *extraordinary*



Dolomite Mountains is the only high-end inbound tour operator based in the Dolomites, providing the benefit of local knowledge and expertise unlike any other: the real Dolomites.

Not only do their passionate, expert travel consultants hail from the region, the Italian Alps of Northern Italy, but they also have in-depth knowledge of the area, essential to fashion the perfect, tailor-made itinerary. Moreover, their local English-speaking professional Mountain Hiking and Skiing Guides hold the highest international certifications – UIAGM/IFMGA – and are fun to travel with! Their travel experiences unfold in areas of outstanding natural beauty, immersed in UNESCO World Heritage Site landscapes. Their tours are not only active, but also authentic, inspired by local culture and traditional cuisine to provide the most rewarding cultural and gourmet experiences. Their luxury trips are indulgent, with active and leisurely days, combining accommodation and an impeccable level of service, allowing guests to unwind and discover the Dolomites and their surroundings at a relaxed pace.

Imagine unique outdoor experiences: hike, bike, climb and ski in the Dolomites or explore Lake Garda and the Italian wine regions. At Dolomite Mountains, tailor-made luxury, gourmet, family adventures and more are crafted providing guests with the ultimate, exclusive, personal experience.



Strada Micurá de Rù, 18  
39036 San Cassiano (BZ)  
[www.dolomitemountains.com](http://www.dolomitemountains.com)





# Cortina d'Ampezzo

“The Queen of the Dolomites”

The “Queen of the Dolomites” is an upmarket ski resort set in a gorgeous background, surrounded by a stunning circle of mountains. Dubbed the Italian *supermodel* of ski resorts, Cortina d'Ampezzo lives up to its fame as undeniably beautiful. It acquired fame with the 1956 Winter Olympics and, since then, it transformed from a small resort to a city in the mountains; encouraging a kind of Hollywood existence, you will find the well heeled take residence here. Many films were also shot in the area, including *The Pink Panther* and *For your Eyes Only* in the James Bond series, as well as *Cliffhanger*

and *Ladyhawke*. Of the many people visiting Cortina each year, attracted by its magnificent position or to rub shoulders with the jet set, very few would expect to walk along fashionable Corso Italia and find a museum with masterpieces of early 20th century art.

The **Mario Rimoldi Museum** displays a vast





## *Winter sports in Cortina*

The moment we put our skis on, a new world opens up in front of us. Skiing is fun, exciting and cool. Nowhere more so than with the Dolomiti Superski pass: picture 1,200 km of groomed pistes, reached with only one pass, across 12 ski resorts. This is one of the world's biggest ski areas and certainly among the most picturesque. Cortina sits in an enviable position: wherever you look, it's astonishment personified. Pomagagnon, Cristallo, Tofane and Cinque Torri are not far, but what about all the other marvels you could reach? Will it be Marmolada, Fanes or Sassolungo today? Ice climbers will meet their match in Cortina, as well, with numerous ice waterfalls creating ephemeral natural formations, ice climbing is a delicate art and mastering it is challenging, however it can prove an exciting adventure. And of course cross country skiing, ski touring, freeride, snowshoeing, Nordic skiing, fat bikes, snow kite and ice-skating. Adventure is never far away in Cortina and you really are spoiled for choice. Take your pick and let the fun begin.



array of paintings by Mario Sironi, Carrà, De Chirico and De Pisis, to name a few, accompanied by foreign masters such as Kokoschka, Leger and Villon. Rimoldi was an entrepreneur and an art collector; he started acquiring paintings by his contemporaries in the 1920s and 30s, most of whom were unknown at the time, but are now highly sought-after.

Visiting the exceptional rooms, you may wonder whether you are in Venice or Milan, given the extraordinary quality of the works: this is an astonishing, exclusive journey into the figurative arts of the Italian Novecento, with the Dolomites as a staggering backdrop.

Anything is possible in Cortina, from a fanciful hot tub overlooking the Cinque Torri to marvelling at a waterfall in the Fanes Ravine, or a spectacular wedding on a horse-drawn sled. One lifetime seems not enough to savour Cortina fully. In the summer, too, Cortina loses none of its appeal and is a hot holiday spot for VIPs and discerning travellers: walking, hiking, trekking, sunbathing at altitude or outdoor sports are top of the list here in the warmer season. Gourmet lovers will also thrive with the outstanding offer of well over fifty exceptional restaurants and glamorous piano bars.

Cortina is the jewel in the crown of the Dolomites and you will soon discover where the attraction lies. —

## *Coppa d'Oro delle Dolomiti*

An exciting motor racing competition, the Coppa d'Oro delle Dolomiti was established by the AC Belluno, to this day its proprietor. Ever since 1972, this competition, defined as a historical re-enactment, is part of the international FIA calendar as a "Prominent CSAI Event". The first editions took place ten times, from 1947 to 1956, starting and ending in Cortina d'Ampezzo. Launched by Ferruccio Gidoni, the then president of AC Belluno, it initially saw the legendary Tazio Nuvolari as the guest of honour. The Coppa was certainly "the most spectacular vintage car race on the most beautiful

mountains in the world" and its re-enactment on the third weekend of July is stunning. Not only is it a unique parade of exceptional cars, but also a stellar show, with people driving them and their passengers dressing up to recreate a bygone era, when those splendid cars were common ground. What started as a speed race, later evolved into a fixed date for vintage cars. The Coppa d'Oro delle Dolomiti is a mesmerizing competition where the best drivers race for the podium with outstanding models, the stars of the international automobile history.







Chef GRAZIANO PREST

## Chef & Stars Tivoli ❁

Tivoli has been shining in Cortina d'Ampezzo for more than twenty years. Under the guidance of Chef-Patron Graziano Prest, the restaurant has been able to revive its culinary offer while remaining a point of reference for haute cuisine. His dishes are based on balances which are not so simple, but typify and capture. One case in point: the *Summer walk in the wood*, an impeccable culinary device made up by venison tartare and tataki, *terra ai funghi del Cadore*, crusty puccia and yogurt mayonnaise. A rich, elaborate dish combining mountain tastes (venison), local products (mushrooms), traditional recipes (puccia from the Ampezzo area) and a technique belonging to other culinary cultures (the Japanese tataki). The excellent raw materials are a given, as is the sophisticated, but never forced character of his dishes. The same applies to the impeccable, generous and reliable service.



## Not to be missed

### Sunrise at Cima Tofana

The third section of the Tofana-Freccia nel Cielo cable car allows you to reach the highest peak in Cortina d'Ampezzo: the Tofana di Mezzo (3244m). From the vast terrace, a sublime 360° vista opens in front of you; the view is so unique and spectacular that the Cima Tofana almost feels spiritual. You will take the cable car in the dark and then reach the hut; from there, an easy path takes you to the top and the view is simply breathtaking!

### Step back in time to World War I

Do you feel like combining adventure and a love of history? Look no further than the Open-air Cinque Torri Museum. The area around this mountain played a part in World War I and you can learn about Italy's role, see the cannons which still dot the area as well as the trenches dug by the soldiers. A circuit of paths and trails of various difficulties – from easy to moderate – are to be found here. The area can also be reached in the winter, skiing along the First World War ski tour. Whatever the season, re-live history and be part of it.

### Take in the waters of the Lago di Sorapis

Lake Sorapis is so exceptionally coloured that you will utter "no filter" just by looking at it. The limestone sediments create an almost surreal colour which is a joy to look at. Allow some time to take in the immense beauty of the landscape. Start in Passo Tre Croci and then hike up to the lake: this is an experience you will treasure at length.

### Shopping

Before setting off for your next adventure, take a stroll along the famous Corso Italia. A treasure trove of quaint streets where shopping becomes a must. The most popular "sport" in winter and summer alike, here you can shop till you drop and then relax with a rich, dense, sublime *cioccolata*, a delicious tea or a tasty *gelato*. If you want to loosen up and take a break from the pistes or your hiking explorations in the Dolomites, there is no better place to go.

### Outdoor hot tub - Rifugio Scoiattoli, Cortina

Imagine relaxing in a hot tub at 2255m, sipping some champagne and looking at the amazing Cinque Torri. Are we reaching for the stars? Not quite, although they won't feel far away. The Scoiattoli Hut is the ideal starting place for many summer routes and can be reached from several passes, with hikes of various lengths, while in the winter it sits bang on the groomed slopes, part of the Cinque Torri ski area, linked to the Alta Badia one. You can also arrive at the hut in the evening with a chair lift, have dinner, soak in the tub and then go down with a snowmobile. Whatever the season, do not miss the chance to try this extraordinary experience. It's unique and it's waiting for you.



## Food & Wine

### Al Camin

You are guaranteed courtesy and quality here. Fabio, the chef and owner, offers traditional cuisine with an interesting, innovative twist. A warm and cosy setting with an impeccable service. The wine list is rich and refined. High-quality meat, poached eggs with taleggio cream and spinach with truffles are on offer, although the dishes change according to season.

### Baita Fraina

Set slightly outside Cortina, with a magnificent terrace overlooking the Tofane mountains. We've known Adolfo, the owner, and his family for over thirty years and we've always been fans. The menu is typical from Cortina, although you will find interesting variations. The deer ragu tagliolini are sublime, as are the codfish and the fried lamb bocconcini.

### Da Aurelio

A couple of hairpin bends under the Passo Giau, set in a picture-postcard landscape, this venue is pleasant, typical and smart, with a magnificent terrace. You will savour an extraordinary culinary experience, varying from fish to vegetables and game, always aiming at the same outcome: the exceptional celebration of tastes, aromas and techniques. At the end of the meal, your senses will be highly pleased. A meticulous service where everyone feels at home.

### Dolomiti Lodge Alverà

The Alverà brothers: one family, one name, a guarantee of a five-star welcome. The warmth of alpine tradition mingles with the elegance of modernity at the Dolomiti Lodge. Alverà is where you'll taste the best, traditional Cortina cuisine. Try the exquisite red turnip Casiunzei with poppy seeds. The wine cellar is exceptional.

### El Brite de Larieto

The ultimate holiday farm, on the road to the Passo Tre Croci: you simply have to try it! Located in the woods, where hospitality and the atmosphere are simply unique. Before dinner, slices of bread with butter and salt are served. All the products are top quality. The desserts should not be missed: try the Terina and the apple crust with vanilla sauce.

### El Zoco

A Cortina landmark for the past 40 years, El Zoco is the place to go for traditional Dolomites dishes, but also potato tortelli, grilled meat or peach and cherry strudel. A cosy, welcoming environment, where everything lulls you into a delightful experience. Pick a label from the rich wine cellar and it will all be hunky-dory.

### Enoteca Cortina

A milestone in Cortina, run by the mythical Gerry, who has welcomed guests ever since 1972 and will steal your heart with tradition. A unique, one-of-a-kind place where good drinking and the "right" bottles are to be found. Even the Venice cicchetti, bacaro style are simple but sublime. If you are a Cortina regular, this place is a sort of rite: you go to Gerry's for a drink, a glass with friends, to taste some nibbles or tapas or satisfy your appetite with a cured meat or cheese plate.

### Il Meloncino al Camineto

If you regularly visit Cortina, you'll know the food and wine history of the Melon family: always at the top of their game. A welcoming location with a staggering view, this restaurant should be on top of your list as the seasonal menu always shows an ace up its sleeve. The onion spaghetti or the Vodka mezzo pacchero are sublime. Advance booking is strongly advised, as the venue has always been popular.

### Peziè de Parù - Mountain Hut

Just about three miles from the centre of Cortina, this mountain hut restaurant lies in the superb Peziè de Parù meadow, on the road to the Passo Giau. An authentic place which aims to be what it actually is: a welcoming restaurant, with a no-frills, mountain-based menu which makes you want to go back. The inner Stube and the terrace overlooking the Tofane are splendid.

### Rifugio Averau - Mountain Hut

Directly on the slopes, it can be easily reached on foot, or with the Passo Giau chairlift. Paola and Sandrone take it in turns at cooking and are renowned for their highly refined cuisine, to be savoured on the big terrace with an astonishing 360° view on the Dolomites. The wine list is as wide as the surrounding scenery. This is surely among the finest restaurants at altitude in the entire Alpine region. The trout tartare is a treat.

### Villa Oretta

It is fair to say that Villa Oretta is a pleasant lounge where Piero, the host, is flawless and never makes mistakes. A cosy venue, popular with those in-the-know, with a marvellous terrace, offering simple, well-prepared dishes. The desserts are delicious, especially the crêpes. You may go a few nights in a row and you'd be impressed each time. This is a must in Cortina.



# A mountain of elegance

GRAND HOTEL SAVOIA



A historic, early 20th century property still holding charm and pampering its guests with state-of-the-art furnishing and décor. Located in the centre of Cortina, you will have the buzz of the Queen of the Dolomites close by, while cherishing a luxurious environment. The rooms feature hardwood floors and delicate colours, most of them have balconies overlooking the sublime Dolomites.



Children will be in their element in Giocolandia, the kids' garden, and pets are welcome: simply notify the reception of their arrival, and your four-legged friend will be provided with a gift. All sports can be played close by, from hiking or biking in the summer to skiing in winter, taking advantage of the in-house ski service. Gourmet lovers will revel in the Savoy restaurant, the trendy Giardino d'Inverno bar and a Cigar lounge. Relax in the luxurious spa, with an indoor pool, a sauna, a Turkish bath and a vast array of massages and personal treatments. The Spa can also be rented for private events, for a truly, memorable day.



## Xfactor

Enjoy the most striking Dolomites experience in this exclusive hotel set amid idyllic surroundings.

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121 rooms and suites  
Open from December to March  
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Via Roma, 62 - 32043 Cortina d'Ampezzo (BL)  
[www.grandhotelsavoia.cortina.it](http://www.grandhotelsavoia.cortina.it)







Step into *History*  
HOTEL DE LA POSTE



A Cortina classic, hospitality has been the trademark of this luxury hotel ever since it opened in 1835. Previously a refreshment stop for coaches transporting the post in the early 19th century, the chalet-style hotel sits bang in the middle of fashionable Cortina. Its somewhat retro atmosphere and charm recall the day when Hemingway was a regular guest. The well heeled stopped by this hotel back then as they do now: a visit is de rigueur for the glitterati. The Manaigo family, who has run it since it opened, goes at great lengths to make your stay a memorable one, with its friendly, professional staff and the utmost attention to details. Each of the welcoming rooms has a story to tell, featuring hardwood floors and vintage furniture. The Hemingway Room, named after one of the hotel's eminent guests, has remained unchanged since his last visit. You can choose among three superb restaurants with fine cuisine in a formal or informal atmosphere.



The recently renovated Cortina Cigar Club bestows a relaxed, exclusive atmosphere to its guests. Bask in the warm colours and the subtle contrast with dark cigars, as well as golden nuances of liquors. Step back in time, when Ernest Hemingway used to come and smoke cigars here.

*Xfactor*

Let Antonio, the most famous barman in the Alps, steal your heart away with a Mandarino Cocktail. Aperitifs in the renowned Bar Grill are a must.

Hotel de la Poste  
73 rooms and suites  
Audi charging station  
Open from December to March  
/ from June to September  
Piazza Roma, 14 – 32043 Cortina d’Ampezzo (BL)  
www.delaposte.it





# Val Badia

“I live not in myself, but I become  
Portion of that around me; and to me  
High mountains are a feeling” LORD BYRON

**B**ëgnodüs! Welcome to Val Badia. Touted as some of the most evocative places in the Dolomites, Val Badia and the adjoining high planes of Fanes will lure you and enchant you with their appeal; a sunny, 16-km long valley, it is part of the **Parco Naturale di Fanes - Sennes - Braies**. This is a most charming park, mostly covered by mountain pastures and meadows, characterised by a unique variety of plant life. Visit the Conturines Cave or the Armentara

Meadows and experience the explosion of colours, water and life found in the park. If skiing is your forte, look no further: Colfosco (1645m), Pedraces (1324m), La Villa (1433m), San Cassiano (1537m) and Corvara (1568m) form the **Alta Badia ski area**, a stunning 130 km of pistes granting staggering vistas. You will stop in amazement countless times, wondering how nature can put on such a memorable display.

Decidedly upmarket, this territory still retains some of its original, highly individual village character. The pure mountain air, the scent of hay and this traditional Ladin country will enchant you. This is Ladin country in its own right. The **Ladini** are a distinct cultural group and their language, a Rhaeto-Romance type, was once spoken all the way from Austria to

## Ski Gourmet

Gourmet food and outdoor activities live in unison in Alta Badia, the endless culinary options spoiling guests from far and wide. Winter sets the tone with excellent options: *A Taste for Skiing* sees thirteen Michelin-starred chefs, the likes of Matteo Metullio, Norbert Niedekofler and Giorgio Locatelli, recreating their childhood memories' dishes, which you can savour in one of the many fashionable refuges. Enter the classy Moritzino, Piz Arlara or Ütia Col Alt and you know you're in for a treat. You may also opt for a Wine Ski Safari (*Dé dl Vin*) or meet a sommelier on the slopes, where exciting wine tastings are organised. The *Gourmet Ski Safari* allows participants to *glisse* along fantastic pistes and have a sublime meal, with seven gourmet huts offering memorable dishes. Another gourmet highlight is the *Leitner VIP Lounge*, taking place during the Ski World Cup: a South-Tyrol inspired menu, prepared by yet another Michelin-starred chef and his Chef Patissier, offering a feast fit for a king. And then endless skiing opportunities, such as the *Skitour La Crusc* and *Skitour Lagazuoi*, to name a few. Why not get there before the crowds? *Breakfast with powder snow* means you take the snowcat up to a hut, savour a gourmet breakfast enjoying peace and tranquillity, then ski down! Need we say more? Take your pick and start exploring. The endless Alta Badia skiing opportunities will do the rest.





## Traditions in Alta Badia

Alta Badia is a treasure trove of traditions and folklore. Here are some of the most famous ones:

- **"Granara de saresc" also called "granara dal belori"**

On Palm Sunday, children bring a "palm broom" made from palm and olive branches with wonderful decorative bands to church, where it is consecrated by the priest.

- **"Pechè" or "cufé"**

At Easter the male inhabitants play "cufè" with coloured boiled eggs: with the tip of the egg the participant hits the tip of the egg of the opponent. The person whose egg does not break also gets his opponent's egg. The winner is the one with the most eggs.

- **"Ji a üs" – collecting eggs**

On Easter Monday the young boys go to the girls of the village and try to get as many eggs as possible as a gift, playing and dancing all along. This tradition is based on the fact that boiled eggs were once regarded as a delicacy – afterwards these eggs were used for the game of "pechè" and "cufé".

- **Santa Maria dal Ciüf Festival**

On August 15th the "Santa Maria dal Ciüf" Festival (Saint Mary of the Flower) takes place. This is one of the most beautiful festivals of the year. The female farmers bring a basket with medicinal herbs, flour, salt and flowers into church for the priest to consecrate. This basket is then kept at home and as soon as the first storm arrives the basket is burned in the fireplace.

the river Po. It now survives in Val Badia and Val Gardena in South Tyrol, as well as in Val di Fassa, Livinalongo, Ampezzo and the Grigioni canton in Switzerland. The history of the Ladin is recorded in their epics, which tell stories of battles, treachery and reversals of fortune. These days, the language, the culture, traditions and even Ladin cuisine is still alive and kicking, local inhabitants proud of their past.

**San Cassiano**, charming and cosmopolitan, has succeeded in combining tourism and mountain life. Classy hotels and Michelin-starred restaurants sit alongside farms and traditional shops, in a balanced harmony of vistas, so typical of the Dolomites.

Nature puts on its best show here, with the **Conturines**, **Lavarella** and **Lagazuoi** as a backdrop to breathtaking sceneries. Do you enjoy walking? Choose the Larch and Meditation trail or one of the superb routes in the



## Fanes-Senes-Braies Nature Park

The Fanes-Senes-Braies Nature Park was established in 1980 by the Province of Bolzano. It extends across a surface of 25,680 hectares and comprises the villages of Badia, Braies, Dobbiaco, La Valle, S. Vigilio di Marebbe and Valdaora. It is therefore one of the largest Natural Parks in the region. The phenomenon of karsification, which applies almost exclusively to easily soluble limestone, is the most typical occurrence in the park, making it of great scientific interest. This also means that the park features mainly underground drainage, while a normal water flow above ground can be observed in the Dolomites area in Braies. When visiting, you will observe many lakes (Limo, Parom, Piciodel, Fojedöra, Colli Alti). Lé Vert (Green Lake) is the only lake with a tributary and outlet system. Hungry for adventure and nature? Just start exploring.

Fanes Park. If you ski, you can reach the Sellaronda ski area directly from here: enjoy 40 km of pistes around the Sella Massif.

**Badia** is a mountain village with rustic charm, a gem of traditional Alpine rural architecture.

**Corvara** has welcomed tourists ever since the 18th century, mostly British geologists interested in the Dolomites. These days, tourism is its main draw, the picturesque landscape almost matchless. Exciting hiking trails will take you all the way to the high plateau of the Col Alt Pralongià or the nature reserve of the Puez-Odle. And this is just a preview of the marvel awaiting you. Val Badia and Alta Badia are simply matchless. *A tosc!* —

## Maratona dles Dolomites

Every time you hear "Dolomites", be it the title of a book, a film or the name of a race, you know you're in for a cool event. And if nearly ten thousand cyclists, coming from forty countries, take part in the Maratona dles Dolomites, it must mean something. This is one of the biggest – probably the most scenic – Italian Granfondo bicycle races and it is open to amateurs, as well. Covering the areas around La Villa, San Cassiano and Corvara via the many famous Pordoi, Giau, Valparola, Campolongo, Sella and Gardena passes, there are three different routes, the longest one of 138 km (4239m of ascent), the medium with 106 km (3130m of ascent) and the Sellaronda option with 55km (1780m of ascent). The first Maratona dles Dolomites took place on the 12th of July 1987, as a way of celebrating ten years of the Alta Badia Raiffeisen Cycling Club. The route and starting place were different from today's – albeit still along some of the Giro d'Italia routes – but the excitement was as strong then as it is today. The week prior to the race is called Riders' Week and sees a parade of famous cycling figures, events and parties organized every day. The beauty of the place, the thrill of taking part in a historic event and the exhilaration of riding with so many people attract cyclists, who endure the effort of riding on the many long passes, but are rewarded with staggering views.







Chef MATTEO METULLIO

## Chef @ Stars La Siriola ❀❀

In a hotel with staggeringly delicious gourmet options, Ciasa Salares in San Cassiano raises the bar even further with La Siriola. Head Chef Matteo Metullio, Italy's youngest Michelin-starred chef, puts freshness and passion at the forefront of his credo. He joined La Siriola in 2012 and he was offered to lead the Michelin-starred kitchen the following year. Under his guidance, obtaining the second star was only a matter of time. Matteo believes in sourcing the best raw materials available under the saying *Km Vero*: local ingredients are duly employed, but space is also given to excellent products coming from further afield. Enter the *Spaghetto freddo Km. 4,925* or Black cod from Alaska, topinambur, daikon, endive but also King crabs, red prawns, Belgian endive, green apple, celery, smoked sesame and oyster leaves. You may choose among four tasting menus, artfully named after a tree to identify their character. If you opt for the Grand Menu, you will also visit the kitchen and see where the magic happens. The astonishing Cheese Room and the famous Chocolate Room, where guests are taken for a pre-dessert, are also sublime: a staggering forty types of chocolate are on offer, which can be paired to wines and liquors in the adjoining tasting lounge. La Siriola, a triumph of flavours where attention to details is key in a sublime culinary journey.



## Not to be missed

### La Crusc/Santa Croce Church

Set in an idyllic place at the base of the Sas dla Crusc, the Santa Croce Sanctuary has welcomed pilgrims and curious folks for many centuries. There exist several legends on the origins of the church, the most accredited being that of the Count Volkhold of Pusteria. After returning from a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, he decided to donate all his belongings to the Benedictine nuns of Sonnenburg in Castel Badiato and retire as a hermit at the foot of the Sas dla Crusc. He built a small chapel, on what was believed to be a former place of pagan worship. A small church was then erected in the 15th century and, today, the place sees several processions, organized in the summer. If you want to stop for a meal, a picturesque refuge close to the church offers delicious dishes. There is surely no better place to reconnect with ourselves and nature.

### Audi FIS Ski World Cup - Gran Risa

Alberto Tomba, Bode Miller and Marcel Hirscher have all triumphed on the famous Gran Risa World Cup slope in the shadow of Piz La Ila in Alta Badia. Among the hardest in the world, this is an extremely technical descent and could be best defined as "mythical". The first World Cup descent took place in 1985: the rest is history. Gran Risa means "the great split", referring to a split in the forest used to transport timber from the top of the mountain to the bottom in the cold winter season, so that they could burn it to keep warm. These days, the Gran Risa epitomises Italian excellence in the guise of state-of-the-art facilities and gourmet events. In addition to the Leitner VIP Lounge, you can also enjoy Les Viles di Blizzard-Tecnica, home of Ladin moments, and the Red Bull Energy Lounge. It's adrenaline meets technology on the Gran Risa: next December, do not miss the chance to be part of history.

### Spëisa ladina: Ladin cookery course

Food conceals the culture of a land. What better way to find out about Alta Badia's rich and colourful Ladin history and culture than by taking part in a cookery course? You can choose between a *Spëisa ladina*, discovering the secrets behind an apple strudel, barley soup with turtres or puccia with crispy bacon, or a *Spëisa ladina moderna*, where traditional tastes are reinvented and presented with a modern twist. Put on your aprons and start cooking. Bun appetit!

### Hike and Fly

The new trend in outdoor sports sees adrenaline seekers hike to the top of a mountain and fly down with a paraglide, accompanied by an expert guide, a tandem flight on a two-seater paraglide will whizz you across the Dolomites in a memorable experience. From Corvara, you'll reach the top of Boé and then off you jump into the air! Enjoy the beauty of the Dolomites from a unique point of view in this exciting, unparalleled experience.

## Food @ Wine

### Moritzino - Mountain hut

Close your eyes and expect an extraordinary culinary experience. You will savour sublime squid ink noodles, layered upon the velvety carpet of clams and scallop carpaccio, and you will be enraptured. You will taste Chardonnay Kreuth of 2011 guiding you through this unforgettable journey. Now open your eyes – the dazzling whiteness of the snow will blind you for an instant. Then, suddenly, they appear in all their splendour – the majestic peaks of the Dolomites that stand out from the bluebird sky. The snow covers the meadows with its pure white mantle as far as the eye can see.

### L'Osti - Corvara

Not content with the exceptional Col Alt hut, the Targhetta/Vespani double act undertook a new venture, L'Osti, set in Corvara, surely one of the best restaurants in the delightful Alta Badia town. Featuring an impeccable, flawless cuisine and an original and stimulating wine list. The service is swift, yet attentive. A modern, stylish, cosy and welcoming location.

### L'Murin Osteria & Après Ski - Corvara

A rustic tavern offering guests a selection of traditional dishes, some of which have taken on a legendary status, such as the bean soup and the sour baby ribs with aromatic herb potatoes. In the winter afternoons and, occasionally, on warm summer evenings, L'Murin is transformed from a quiet and friendly inn into the most vibrant bar of Alta Badia. Host Mathias Costa is looking forward to providing our guests with unforgettable music, good mood, relaxation and precious moments to hold on to.

### Rifugio Col Alt - Mountain hut

Located at the arrival of the Col Alt cable car, with a panoramic terrace with views encompassing the Marmolada, the Sella and the Sassongher, this is a reference point for greedy folks who dare to challenge 2000m to have the unusual satisfaction of tasting oysters and champagne at altitude. You will find traditional dishes, such as sautéed potatoes with eggs and speck, polenta, finferli mushrooms, fresh tagliatelle with deer ragu, but also original dishes such as Kamut® spaghetti with new onions and sausage.

### Rifugio Scotoni - Mountain hut

At 2040m, you're in for an absolute treat at this rad mountain hut. Appealing and cozy, it offers BBQ specialities, home-made pasta and juicy desserts, combining Tyrolean tradition with sublime artistry and the finest local ingredients. Paying a visit is a must.



### Rifugio Crep de Munt - Mountain hut

It can be either reached on foot or a cable car. A spectacular setting, with an equally astonishing view. On the smaller size, meaning it's truly welcoming, conveying a Ye Olde feeling. The daily specials always vary and are distinct, original and include fresh ingredients. The Burger Crep de Munt is excellent, as is the Linzer Cake; the mugo pine semifreddo is a pleasant surprise.

### Rifugio Piz Arlara - Mountain hut

A sun-kissed terrace with a staggering view on the Marmolada and the Dolomites. Original wood sculptures, a dedicated area for our small guests, two hen and rabbit fences. Excellent food, served with care and attention to details. Mugo pine needle tagliatelle with game ragu are spectacular, the apricot and ginger tart and the apple pancakes with vanilla sauce simply delicious.

### La Stüa de Michil ❀ - Corvara

The Stüa de Michil is in itself a celebration of art and life. Imagine dining as if it were 1600, such is the splendid ambience afforded by the two Stuben dating to that time. Chef Nicola Laera's cuisine has all to do with creativity: his will to craft special treats for his guests never wears out. The seasons seem to blend in smoothly with the menu and each dish is prepared striving for perfection.

### Wine Bar Siriola - San Cassiano

An informal, versatile venue, perfect for happy hours right until after dinner. Aperitifs may be savoured on the terrace and are served with funky cicchetti. A great selection of cured meats and cheese with honey and mustard. You will find a vast selection of international choices with a touch of the Mediterranean on the menu. The wine list is extensive, as is the choice of wines to be savoured by the glass. After dinner, you will be amazed by the extraordinary selection of chocolate, to be paired with exquisite rum, cognac and liquors.





*A* taste for *all seasons*

**HOTEL CIASA SALARES**



Step into this "home" (*Ciasa* in dialect) and enjoy the fragrances of pine, larch and fir. The Wieser family, now in its fourth generation, goes at great length to satisfy its clients, starting with the rooms, all with mountain views, which radiate wellbeing, from the quality of the mattresses to the superb sheets, the warm décor and exquisite furnishing. It is, however, in the excellent food offering that the hotel truly stands out. A restaurant with two Michelin stars, a first-rate Wine Bar, the Salares and Terrazza restaurants, plus a staggering Wine Cellar with 1,800 labels, a Cheese Room with more than 70 varieties of cheese and the Chocolate Room, where over 40 types are laid out for you. Top it all off with a swim overlooking the Dolomites or a special treatment in the Beauty Spa Vives and you will float on cloud nine. Ciasa Salares is, well and truly, your home away from home.



Whatever the season, Ciasa Salares has an ace up its sleeve. Choose among a tailor-made ski experience, hike or bike directly from the hotel, walk up to their summer chalet Rumestluns, experience a cooking demonstration, enjoy a fondue and wine tasting, a cigar in their smoking and flirting room, plus grappa tasting or learn about the art of speck. It's experiences galore at Ciasa Salares and you have been invited.

*Xfactor*

The recently opened, 100 sq m *Rù Blanc* suite is a masterpiece and comes with all mod cons and even your own private outdoor Jacuzzi.

**Hotel Ciasa Salares**  
 47 rooms and suites  
 Open from December to March / from June to September  
 Tesla and Audi Destination Charging  
 Strada Prè de Vi, 31 - 39030 San Cassiano (BZ)  
[www.ciasasalares.it](http://www.ciasasalares.it)





# Where Hospitality matters



HOTEL LA PERLA

Enter 15th century "La c'iasa vedla" and you'll step back in time. Close to La Perla, this is where Ernesto Costa, its founder, was born. It is a quaint display of clothing and stoves, Ladin handmade games, ancient books and old skis; tastings, dinners and aperitifs can also be organised, upon request. An old-world, original mountain atmosphere, yours to discover.



## Xfactor

The Mahatma Wine Cellar is sublime: over 30,000 bottles and 2,000 labels in a sublime maze of smells, sounds and emotions.

Hotel La Perla  
 54 rooms and suites  
 Open from December to March / from June to September  
 Tesla Destination Charging  
 Str. Col Alt, 105 - 39033 Corvara (BZ)  
[www.hotel-laperla.it](http://www.hotel-laperla.it)



A surprise in every room and a smile far and wide. This may well define astonishing Hotel La Perla. Not only does this family-run Corvara establishment offer a Michelin-starred restaurant – La Stüa de Michil – an extraordinary wine cellar – Mahatma Wine – with over 2,000 labels, three other restaurants in the winter and four in the summer, a motor-bike museum, a rich shop with Ladin gifts, a fireside lounge, a Veranda where you can flick through books and glance at Sassongher, a funky après-ski in the winter, a Spa to restore your senses, but the hotel is also the home of genuine hospitality. Let the Costa family and its excellent staff take care of every detail and relax in the marvellously appointed rooms with a view. Individually furnished, they may feature an original headboard, hand-painted ceramics, rocking horses and dance to the tune of red, blue or yellow. If "travel makes the mind", as Bruce Chatwin maintained, you will find your answers here.





# Val Gardena

“Each mountain in the Dolomites  
is like a piece of art”  
REINHOLD MESSNER



## Gardena Castle

The Castle of the Wolkentein Earls, Gardena Castle is fascinating and charming. Located between Santa Cristina and Selva di Val Gardena, it was built between 1622 and 1641 by Engelhard Dietrich von Wolkenstein-Trostburg with the idea of having a summer castle and a hunting lodge. Solid and imposing, it was certainly inspired by medieval fortresses. Used as the seat of the court of Selva until the end of the 18th century, the Wolkenstein family put it up for auction in 1826. In 1863, Count Leopold von Wolkenstein-Trostburg donated the castle to the municipalities of Santa Cristina and Selva, to have it transformed into a house for the poor. Baron Franchetti, a well-known Africanist and father of the charming woman loved by Hemingway, Afdera, bought it in 1926 and then restored it. The family often resides here in the summer and the castle, with its attractive Renaissance architectural elements, can only be admired from the outside. Put yourself in the picture and marvel at this and other captivating castles.

Val Gardena epitomises all the charm and appeal the Dolomites are known the world over for: majestic scenery, vibrant colours, bluebird skies, dazzling, impressive peaks – Sassolungo, Sassopiatto and Sella to name a few – offering activities for everyone, all year round, from skiing to hiking, walking, cycling, climbing and via ferrata routes. Val Gardena proudly claims an identity of its own, due to the isolation given by the Sella Group and Sassolungo mountain chains. You will find age-old traditions here, allowing it to

flourish amid many pre-mass-tourism traditions. One of these is woodcarving. You will see pretty, bustling villages, where the Ladin heritage is strongly felt and heard in the local dialect, along with vernacular architecture.

Ortisei is the main village in the area and is





surrounded by the Rasciesa, Seceda and Mont Sëuc mountains. For centuries, it hosted a conspicuous production of religious sculptures and woodcarving is still going strong these days, offering a great deal more than nativity scenes. Tourism has been a main draw since the 19th century and you will find splendid residential buildings as well as classy hotels. Its pretty, quaint pedestrian area is one of the most picturesque in the Dolomites and you will find several shops selling arty wooden objects.

**Selva di Val Gardena** is another jewel: at 1563m, it is the highest village in the valley, splendidly set in the heart of a beautiful natural landscape, directly below the Sella massif, surrounded by the Puez Group and the the Cir summits. Part of the Sellaronda ski circuit, this is a preferred destination for discerning travellers who enjoy its many contrasts: modernity

## *Giorgio, by Moroder*

What do *Top Gun*, *American Gigolo*, *The Neverending Story*, *Flashdance*, *Metropolis* and many other films have in common? Even more so, how do the Dolomites fit in? Their soundtrack was written by **Giorgio Moroder**, who hails from Ortisei. This pioneering composer is considered the father of Disco music and his ground-breaking use of the synthesizer paved the way for future generations of composers. During his career, Moroder worked with exceptional artists, such as Barbra Streisand, Donna Summer, Janet Jackson and the Daft Punk. In the latter's exceptional album, *Random Access Memories*, their song *Giorgio by Moroder* is an eye-opener on the career of this influential composer and manager. Writing music means being free to explore tastes and interests: there is no rule setting out what is right or wrong, so Moroder decided that freeing the mind was the way forward. After studying in Ortisei and Bolzano, Giovanni Giorgio moved to Germany, where he broke new grounds. His music was appreciated by the likes of David Bowie and Brian Eno, who realised his was the "sound of the future". Moroder was awarded several Oscars for the many soundtracks he composed, and we can only be proud of this Ladin soul who found his way across music.

## *Gherdëina Museum*

Did you know that the Dolomites were an extensive coral reef over 200 million years ago? And that the famous film maker Luis Trenker was born in Ortisei? You will find these and other interesting facts and exhibits about the culture and natural history of Val Gardena in the Museum Gherdëina, right in the centre of Ortisei. It contains many unexpected treasures, from precious sculptures and paintings of local artists of the last four centuries to ancient wooden toys, as well as spectacular minerals and fossils. You can also discover rarities such as the Lent Cloth, coming from the church of San Giacomo, the only such example to be found in South Tyrol: recently restored, its twenty-four boxes thoroughly represent the Passion of Christ and are truly splendid. If you are a fan of mountain films, you will surely have heard of Luis Trenker, the renowned filmmaker of the 1920s and 1930s, who promoted Val Gardena and the Dolomites with his majestic films. A trip here wouldn't be complete without looking at the many fossils and various animals on display: the Dolomites have a fascinating history and your many questions will be answered here. South Tyrol is fascinating, under all aspects. Do not miss the opportunity to delve into the past of this most charming region.



The outstanding collection of local fossils held in the museum - here is an example - provides an unparalleled look at the history of the Dolomites



Set in the splendid Puez-Odle Nature Park, picturesque Sassongher was first climbed in 1900. Towering over Corvara and Colfosco in Alta Badia, it offers several ascent routes, granting scenic views from the top





Chef REIMUND BRUNNER

## Chef & Stars Anna Stuben

Reimund Brunner, a young, talented south-Tyrol chef, has led the cuisine of the gourmet restaurant "Anna Stuben" in Ortisei since December 2011. His is a modern, innovative, creative cuisine, based on the excellence of raw materials. It features the marriage of Mediterranean cuisine with his own from South Tyrol, and a blend of Italian fantasy and first-rate local ingredients, cooked and served with contemporary methods and techniques. The creative dishes exude a balanced taste: you will savour surprising, delicate flavours, which will grant new emotions. A simple, yet high-quality cuisine, linked to the area and the reinvention of forgotten products. The menus created by chef Brunner are a feast for the eyes and the palate: the chef will amaze you from beginning to end in a warm, hospitable atmosphere, with such exquisite and appealing creations that even the most demanding individuals will be pleasantly surprised.



meets bucolic settings here, with a state-of-the-art ski lift and gondolas themed with gourmet options, isolated meadows and paths combined with a superb infrastructure. Ladin is taught in schools here, as well as Italian and German, making it an official Val Gardena language.

**Santa Cristina** is the sun-kissed village at the foot of the Sassolungo: picture-postcard and simply awe-inspiring, traditions are held in high respect here – as everywhere in the Dolomites. The local choir has been around since 1972 and the village band since 1856: these and other associations make up the cultural life in Santa Cristina, with celebrations and festivities gathering the entire population. The inner peace you will sense in Santa Cristina is a treasure you will hold on to at length: verdant, blossoming meadows, covered by an attractive blanket of snow in the winter, make this an unforgettable destination.

Attractive **Sassolungo** (3181m) stretches from the Sella Group to the Catinaccio massif. Originally a coral reef, it hosts several climbing routes and via ferrata and was first climbed in 1869. Together with Sasso Piatto, it is a popular summer destination and grants gorgeous views from the top. Legend has it that that's where a giant rests, having been punished by his peers, since he had stolen goods from some men and then accused the local fauna. The peaks known as "Five Fingers" (*Cinque Dita*) are, in fact, said to be part of his body.

The Dolomites feel like a casket of splendid gems, with sublime landscape, age-old traditions, picturesque villages and that marvellous welcoming feeling that only Italian excellence can deliver. —

## Not to be missed

### Atelier Aron Demetz - Selva di Valgardena

The artist Aron Demetz is a symbol of the path some people have taken in Val Gardena, when craftsmanship becomes contemporary art. Aron may well be the leading authority of this movement, often led by young ones, where unconventional ways are explored, once the techniques of wood working are mastered. Aron's story sums up two routes: the one of craftsmanship towards its future and the one of the artist, who reaches the highest degree of artistry: the Venice Biennale and many other, significant international exhibitions.

### Judith Sottriffer, the toy maker of Val Gardena - Ortisei

In Ortisei, in the heart of Val Gardena, you will find a lab crafting wooden toys which bring back memories of the old days. Judith Sottriffer chisels and carves Arolla pine to craft hand-painted dolls. Anyone walking into her fairytale steps back in time, when wooden toys were a means of survival for Val Gardena inhabitants. Judith is sure that her workshop does not live off old-time traditions alone, in fact it looks to the future. She tells us that "In these years of activity and research, I wanted to discover ancient work traditions to combine them with modern ones. My biggest wish, today, is to pass on this knowledge to my children."

### The biggest nativity scene in the world - Santa Cristina

It was put together by a group of 18 sculptors from Santa Cristina and has been on display in the Iman sports centre since 2000. The first character in the project, which started in 1998, was the Madonna with Child. Then came Saint Joseph, the Magi, a shepherd, the donkey, sheep and other animals; this is the outcome of strong creativity, exceptional skill and artistic sense. The life-size nativity scene is enriched by new figures each year.

### Church of San Giacomo (Saint James)

This minute church dates back to the 12th century and it is truly interesting in view of its frescoes, both on the outside and inside. Set in a marvellous background, you will also get a stunning, breath-taking view. It can be reached going along the "Path of the Legends", linking the church of Santa Cristina to the small church of San Giacomo. The 16 panels, meticulously put together by school children, tell the legend of Count James of Val Gardena. A young man from the area, Count Jakob von Stetteneck, had the church built in the middle of the wood after his return from Santiago de Compostela, out of gratitude for his safe return home. He thus dedicated it to Saint James, the patron saint of walkers.



## Food & Wine

### Baita Sofie - Mountain hut

You will find this hut on Seceda, directly on the pistes at 2410m, right under the top station. Tyrolean specialities and a large selection of excellent wines.

### Rifugio Troier - Mountain hut

Simple, but exceptional home cooking on the Seceda, a little isolated but peaceful, offering a staggering view. At the base of the Cima Fermieda, it's your best bet if you want to avoid the crowds.

### Fienile Monte - Mountain hut

A gourmet hut, a genuine, one-of-a-kind treat. The cellar offers over 400 labels. A snowmobile may even take you here from the Salei Hut or the Passo Sella in the evening: those are nights to remember.

### Rifugio Comici - Mountain hut

With an Alpine pioneer as its namesake, this mountain hut has itself done a fair bit of groundbreaking. Original features can be found all over the hut: the photos of family, friends and notable personalities, Alpine traditions and the close bond to these lands give the place a haven-like atmosphere where mountain lovers, skiing fans and pleasure seekers all enjoy spending their time. You will also find fish-based recipes and the venue is known for its themed evenings. It's the cool place to be right now.

### Villa Frainela - Selva di Val Gardena

In Selva, at the entrance of Valle Lunga, close to the lower station of the Danterceppies run, Villa Frainela is a coffee teahouse where cakes are strictly home-made and are like grandma's ones. The sandwiches are exquisite, as is the choice of herbal teas. Sit in the amazing Stube to fully enjoy its cozy, welcoming atmosphere.



# Love at first sight



The new Gardena SPA, opened in 2018, is the jewel in the crown of the hotel. A unique, exclusive space where you can relax in the pool, the sauna or enjoy one of the many treatments, including Ayurveda programmes and Alpine Beauty with alpine herbs and plants. Reward yourself with a mugo pine bath or a blueberry oil massage.



## GARDENA GRÖDNERHOF

Focusing on the well-being of its guests, this Val Gardena institution dates back to 1923, but recently underwent a bold, radical refurbishment, with constant renovations to the highest standards. Surrounded by a beautiful garden and the exceptional Dolomites scenery, expect a journey of the soul and the mind. Revel in the spacious rooms, featuring hardwood floors, pine connotations and a lounge area. Restore harmony and joie de vivre in the Michelin-starred restaurant – Anna Stuben – and the hotel restaurant, plus a chic Lounge & Bar. Not to mention the outstanding wine cellar, where candlelit dinners can be arranged. The enchanting Dolomites on your doorstep, whether it's skiing in the superb Dolomiti Superski area in winter, hiking, biking or golf in the St. Vigil Seis 18-hole golf course in summer, they have you covered here. Highly praised, guided hiking tours and snowshoe excursions are also on offer. Gardena Grödnerhof, an enchanting journey awaits.



## Xfactor

Enjoy the art of living in a unique setting and atmosphere, where courtesy, charm and character triumph.

Gardena Grödnerhof  
54 rooms and suites  
Open from December to March / from June to September  
Tesla Destination Charging  
Via Vidalong, 3 - 39046 Ortisei (BZ)  
[www.gardena.it](http://www.gardena.it)



## 1966' PORTILLO DOLOMITES

# When Tradition meets local colour



Several famous skiers stem from the Dolomites. Carlo Senoner, the creative mind behind Hotel Portillo, is one of them. Born in Selva di Val Gardena, he won the gold medal in the Portillo World Championships, Chile, in 1966 and this smashing new hotel is dedicated to this victory. Carlo put sound dedication and enthusiasm into this establishment, where Val Pusteria fire wood, granite and natural stones are employed, as well as designer textiles and modern lamps. The common rooms entail lofty windows, granting natural light and superb views on the Dolomites. The Spa is dedicated to the Celtic divinity Belisana: restore your energies with experience showers, a Nordic sauna with spruce wood, a clay organic sauna, a steam bath with depurative salt-packages and an infrared cabin. Top it all off with an Alpine Spa in winter and you will be in your element. With its fusion of welcoming spaces and cosy atmosphere, 1966' Portillo Dolomites is, without a doubt, the place to be.



Travelling with children? In the exquisitely furnished Lodge Loft, kids will have fun sleeping in chalet-style bunk beds, next to a superb master bedroom with exposed beams, a lounge and a luxurious bathroom. All the other warm, welcoming rooms feature wood panelling and soft décor in a fascinating blend of traditional materials and modern style with a variety of colours and hues. From the Suite to the Garden Lodge, enjoy ample spaces and terrific views. You may also opt for an independent chalet, interconnected with the main building.



## Xfactor

Indulge in the brand new, exclusive outdoor heated "Cube pool" with salt-enriched water, overlooking the gorgeous Dolomites.

1966' Portillo Dolomites  
29 rooms and suites  
Open from December to March  
/ from June to September  
Str. Meisules, 65  
39048 Selva di Val Gardena (BZ)  
[www.portillo-dolomites.it](http://www.portillo-dolomites.it)



*“It's not the mountains we conquer, but ourselves”*  
SIR EDMUND HILLARY

# Alpe di Siusi

*E*

urope's largest plateau, it is hard to imagine a more vibrating or marvellous juxtaposition than the undulating green pastures of the **Alpe di Siusi**, dramatically ending at the base of the towering Sciliar Mountains. Imagine ponies galloping across endless pastureland, fields as far as the eye can see and pink hues at sunset. Here and in neighbouring **Catinaccio** is where, in fact, **Enrosadira** puts on its finest show, setting the rocks aflame with intense, red and violet hues. The Sciliar is one of the symbols of South Tyrol and is part of the first Nature Park (together with Catinaccio) to be es-

tablished in South Tyrol, in 1974.

The top of Sciliar (2563m) can be reached from Tires, Fiè allo Sciliar, or Siusi, all involving long, steep climbs to the summit. A single block, flanked by the Santner and Euringer peaks – named after the first climbers who reached the top, in 1880 and 1884 respectively – forms it. The locals call it “the mountain of fate” (Monte Destino) and, looking at it, you may feel in the presence of a guardian, standing vast and imposing, whose guise changes according to the position of the sun, sometimes appearing like a Gothic castle. The massif, a flat-

topped, sheer mountain flanked by a rocky plinth, sees spots of vegetation, dense and thick in places, enhancing the image of a wild and equally romantic mountain. The demanding, challenging routes leading to the various peaks may hint at an impenetrable fortress, and yet Alpe di Siusi epitomises charm and tranquil pastures, an Arcadian imagery of stark contrasts that only the Dolomites can provide.

The pleasant villages of **San Valentino** and **San Costantino**, with their onion-domed churches, conjure up this bucolic display. You may also choose to admire the fabu-

lous scenery from a **horse-drawn carriage**. In the winter, when the contours of the mountains stand proud and the snow crystals glisten under the warm sunrays, you can reach hamlets and villages comfortably sitting in a carriage. Wrapped in a warm blanket, you will enjoy the peace and immensity of nature from a different point of view. A romantic moment which knows no equal. And of course downhill or cross-country skiing and snowshoeing in the winter, hiking, climbing, biking, running or simply relaxing by a lake in the summer.





The jagged **Catinaccio** range lies to the south-east of the plateau and is equally stunning. The highest peak – Catinaccio d'Antermoia, 3004m – can be reached with a via ferrata route. A marvellous, panoramic path goes along this massif, starting in Vigo di Fassa and passing by the Gardeccia, Preuss and Vajolet huts, the Cigolade pass and back to Ciampedie. Exceptional Wuhunleger Pasture can be reached from Tires al Catinaccio: stay until sunset and you will see a marvellous game of red and orange shades against the rock.

**Castelrotto** is the largest location in Alpe di Siusi, brimming with a quaint historic centre – among the prettiest *borghi* in Italy – a Baroque church tower and traditions galore, being steeped in history.

Picturesque landscapes opening right in front of you: Alpe di Siusi, Castelrotto, Fiè allo Sciliar, Tires al Catinaccio and Siusi allo Sciliar offer endless opportunities, whatever the season. —

## The ride of Oswald von Wolkenstein

One of the biggest and most interesting equestrian performances in South Tyrol is the joust dedicated to the poet and storyteller Oswald von Wolkenstein. This famous ride is a marriage of medieval traditions and sport. This special event takes place around Castelrotto, Siusi and Fiè allo Sciliar – locations which played a leading role in the life of Oswald von Wolkenstein – and occurs between the end of May and the beginning of June; the knights and the horses require the utmost skill, speed and precision to succeed. The four tournaments take place at the base of the Sciliar: the first is the passing of the ring, then the labyrinth, where dexterity is crucial. The third one is the gallop, followed by the passage between the doors. Step back in time and re-live history with this most extraordinary tournament set within an impressive setting.

## Food & Wine

### Malga Gostner - Mountain hut

Culinary delights await at this fabulous malga on Alpe di Siusi. Employing products right from their doorstep, such as mountain saffron cream cheese and Tyrolean grey cheese, you will taste intriguing delicacies such as flower salad and hay-flower-soup.

### Malga Rauch - Mountain hut

A classic with a great view. It can be reached with a sled, a horse-trained carriage or on skis in the winter, on foot or by mountain bike in the summer.

### Restaurant Turm - Fiè allo Sciliar

If it's culinary delicacies you are after, look no further. Restaurant Turm prides itself in paying great attention to authentic cuisine. An award-winning restaurant that has been awarded 14 Gault Millau points and 3 Spoons in the Aral Guide, its main purpose is that all guests should feel at home. After many years of experience, they have created a special gluten-free and lactose-free menu, as well as special dishes for any other allergy or intolerance. Wines and fine spirits are stored and aged in the cellar, carved straight out of a rock face. A lovingly prepared romantic table awaits you in summer, set in the rose garden with stunning views of the Sciliar mountains; in winter in the traditional Stube. The bar lounge is lovely.

## Not to be missed

### Martha's herb garden - Sant'Osvaldo

Set on a steep side in the hamlet of Sant'Osvaldo, just below Siusi allo Sciliar, you will find the small Pflieger farm. Together with her children, the owner decided to dedicate herself to the cultivation of herbs and use them to make herbal teas, aromatic cushions and herbal salts, among other products. With more than 200 types of plants, the herb garden is certainly fascinating, being a triumph of scents, smells and colours.

### Swing on snow - March

Set in the stunning Alpe di Siusi scenery, Swing on Snow is the exceptional event where skiers, snowboarders and snow lovers dance on the snow to the beat of folk, rock and the most eclectic music genres. Eight days where music groups from all over the Alps give their best in this fabulous location, the biggest plateau in Europe. Outstanding open-air concerts which are a joy to watch. Are you ready for this striking extravaganza?

### Open Air Kastelruther Spatzen - June - Castelrotto

The traditional "Kastelruther Spatzen" party has become a must for folk fans of this music group. Every year, thousands of enthusiasts flock to Castelrotto to dance and sing to the tunes of this talented group. Do not miss the chance to experience music at its best!

### La Dispensa di Fiè - October - Fiè allo Sciliar

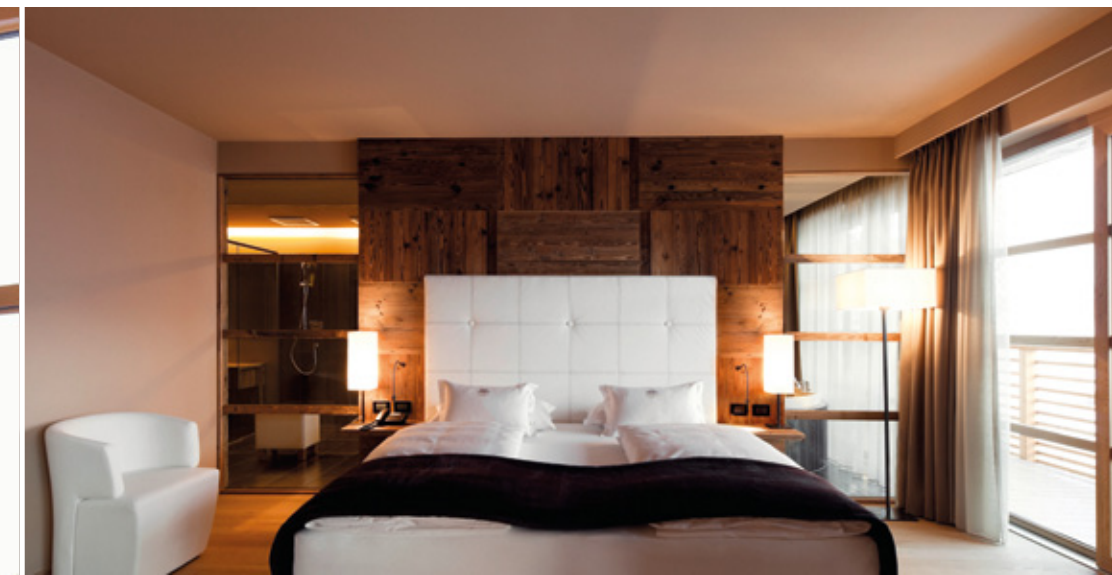
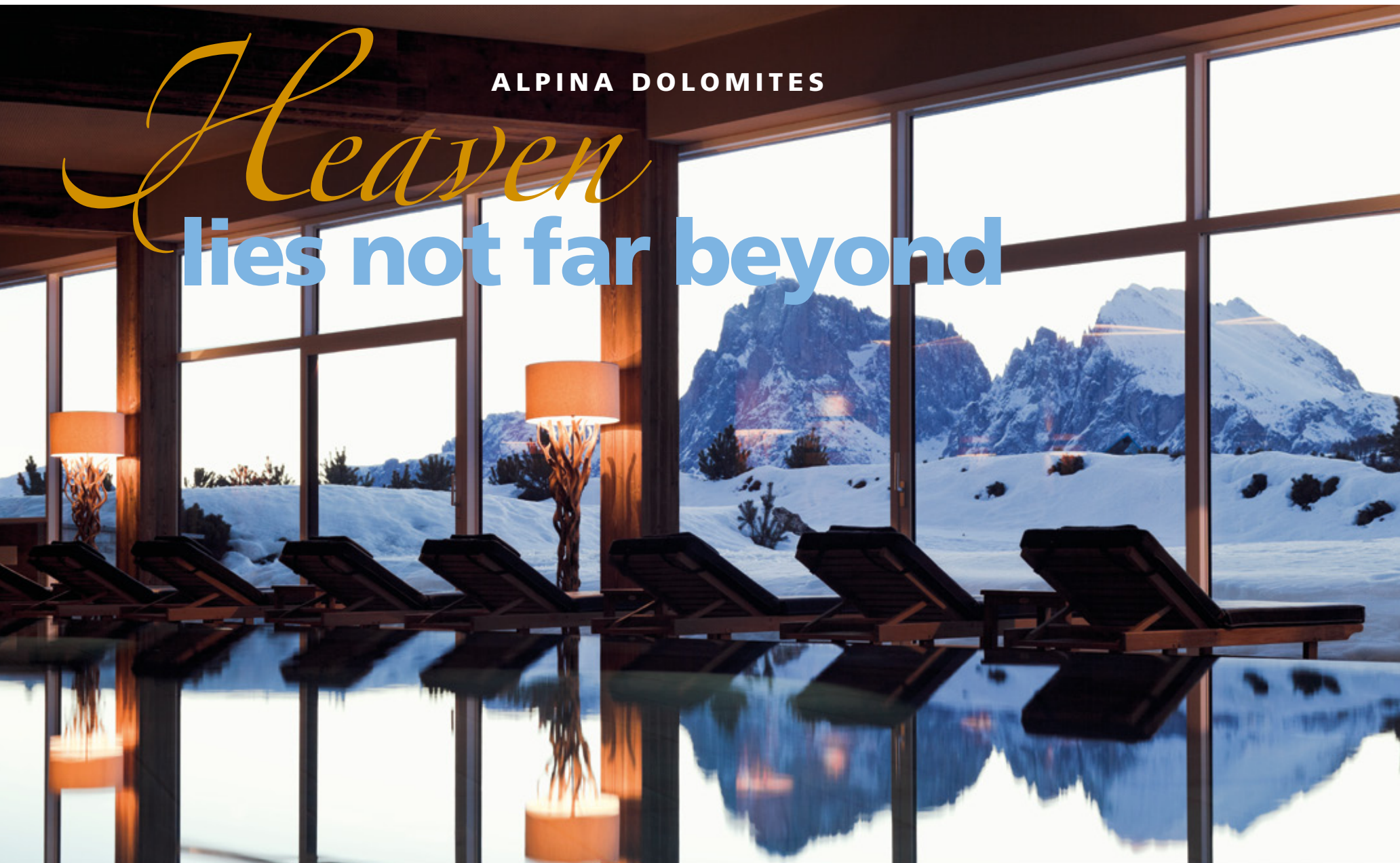
The Dispensa (Larder) di Fiè takes place at the end of the harvest every October; it's a chance to savour excellent, hearty local and traditional dishes, served in those days. The Larder in Fiè is renowned among gourmet lovers well beyond the region's boundaries. The culinary weeks go back a long way and have been held for the past forty years. The reasoning behind these October weeks is to use old recipes and adapt them to modern days; this way, you will enjoy innovative dishes, which will steal the heart of all palates, even the most demanding ones, with their unique blend of tradition and lifestyle.





## ALPINA DOLOMITES

*Heaven*  
lies not far beyond



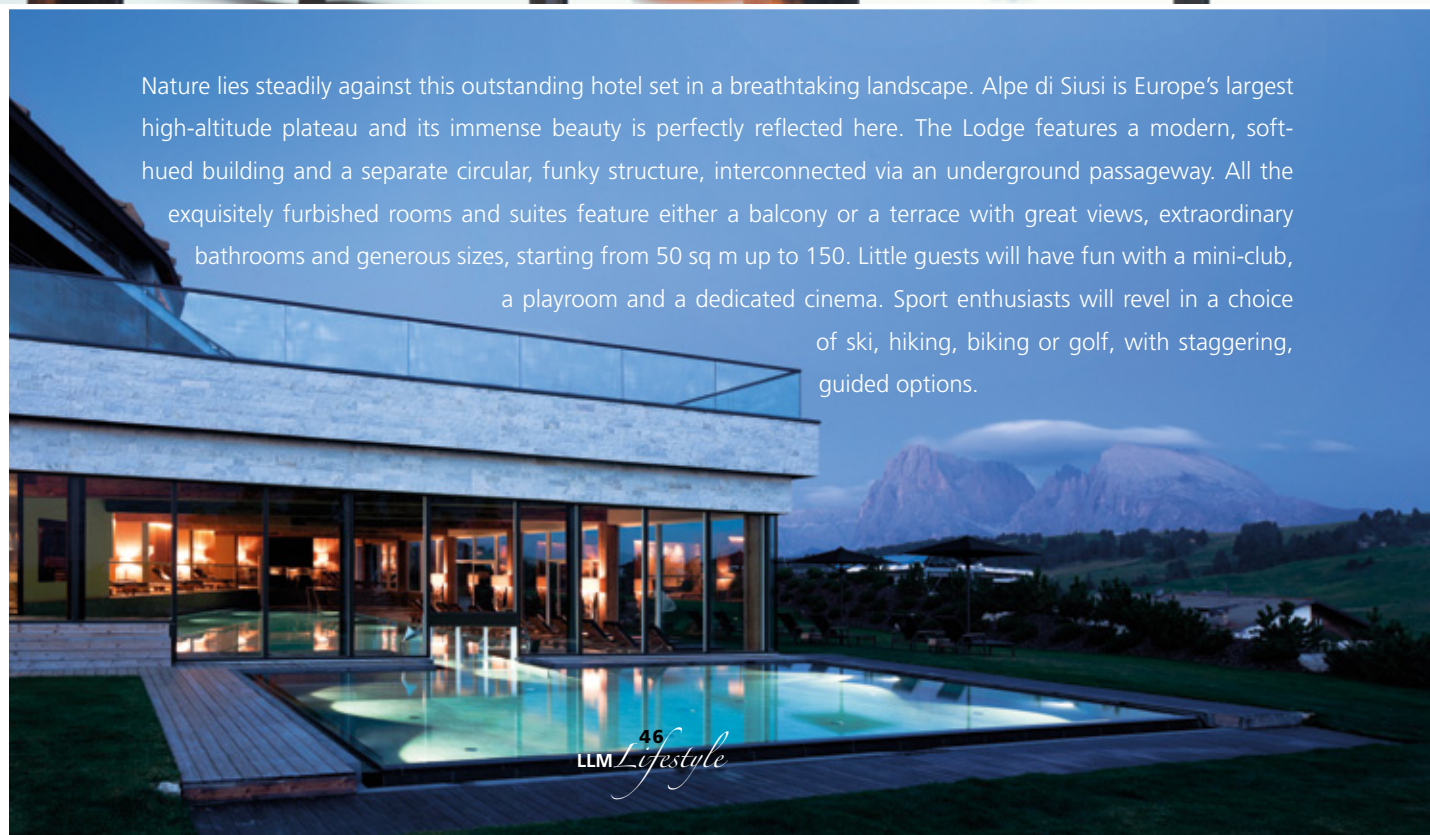
Ski service and rental, as well as ski lockers, are available. Enjoy the indoor pool and the sublime outdoor pool with staggering vistas, the Alpina Spa with delightful massages and treatments or a Finnish sauna. It's a culinary delight in the Alpina Chalet restaurant, Mountain Restaurant and Stuben, with the added Cigar Lounge and Mountain Lounge and Bar. Can Heaven be that far?

Environmental concerns lie at the heart of the owner's interest; the entire structure was built following environmental standards. Wood, stone and glass are employed in an aesthetically pleasing mix with large windows, cosy interiors, focusing on sustainability and low energy consumption. Harmony sets the rule and everything seems to lead to a perfect balance of nature, energy and well-being.

*Xfactor*

Sciliar is simply sublime. Gaze at this marvel from the hotel terrace or the exquisite outdoor pool.

Nature lies steadily against this outstanding hotel set in a breathtaking landscape. Alpe di Siusi is Europe's largest high-altitude plateau and its immense beauty is perfectly reflected here. The Lodge features a modern, soft-hued building and a separate circular, funky structure, interconnected via an underground passageway. All the exquisitely furnished rooms and suites feature either a balcony or a terrace with great views, extraordinary bathrooms and generous sizes, starting from 50 sq m up to 150. Little guests will have fun with a mini-club, a playroom and a dedicated cinema. Sport enthusiasts will revel in a choice of ski, hiking, biking or golf, with staggering, guided options.



**Alpina Dolomites**  
56 rooms and suites  
Open from December to March / from June to October  
Tesla Destination Charging  
Compatsch, 62/3 - 39040 Alpe di Siusi (BZ)  
[www.alpinadolomites.it](http://www.alpinadolomites.it)



# Val Pusteria

“The mountains are calling and I must go”

JOHN MUIR

Emerald-coloured, the Lago di Braies is a natural paradise. Ethereal in winter, when a blanket of snow covers the water, it is the starting point of many excursions

**V**erdant and lush, **Val Pusteria** is a valley of maize fields and hay meadows set around the northern edge of the Dolomites. The area is deeply Tyrolean, German is the predominant language and the stunning Dolomites do not fail to impress. The world famous **Tre Cime di Lavaredo**, in the Dolomiti di Sesto Nature Park, seem to erupt out of nowhere, offering a breathtaking, unforgettable view. Several *Alte vie* start from here, making this an exceptional destination for lovers of the outdoors. The atmosphere in the valley is nothing short of magical: **Dobbiaco** is where Gustav Mahler wrote his

life-affirming *Ninth Symphony*, inspired by the evocative surrounding. Listen to it and it will all become clear. The lake in Dobbiaco is a jewel set in a marvellous mountain setting. Akin to a fjord, it offers various walking opportunities and rowing boats can be hired in the summer: you will be gently lulled by the water and ex-

plore a stunning setting.

**San Candido**, a picture-postcard market town set in a valley offering plenty of cultural treasures, hosts several museums, attractive churches and even an ancient site with five mineral springs, dating back to the Middle Ages. The **Plan de Corones** area entails 14 villages,





Set on a hill above the town, Brunico Castle is imposing. It now hosts the fifth Messner Mountain Museum, "Ripa"

## Alte Vie

One of the best ways to explore and discover the marvellous Dolomites is to set off on a mountain path. Alte Vie – high routes – are itineraries at altitude going from hut to hut, all completed far from cars or other methods of transport. Forget timetables and stressful meetings: it is high time you discovered the joy of simple things. The Dolomites host an impressive eight Alte Vie. Five of them start in Val Pusteria. Nr. 1 from Lago di Braies, nr. 3 from Villabassa, nr. 4 from San Candido and nr. 5 from Sesto. The distances vary from 36 km (nr. 7) to 180 (nr. 2), the paths are well maintained and signposted; all you need to do is pick your itinerary, buy a map and wear the appropriate gear. Do not underestimate the elements and check the forecast carefully: the weather can change abruptly in the mountains, so you should be well prepared. Make sure the boots you'll be using are broken in: there's nothing worse than having blisters on your feet, thus ruining your holiday. More importantly, however, get ready to discover a world of wonders and fascination. Walking from one village to another brings satisfaction and joy: you will meet people from all over the world and may even make new friends. Everything in the shadow of the majestic Dolomites.

among which **Brunico**, the largest town in the province and home to the biggest market in Tyrol, the Stegener Market, taking place at the end of October.

The exceptional, high-tech Corones **Messner Mountain Museum** is in Pieve di Marebbe, not far from Brunico. Designed by Zaha Hadid, a visit here is one you will not easily forget.

**Terento**, set in a plateau at 1210m, sees the sun shining for up to 14 hours a day in the summer. As the saying goes: "The sun never

<<<<< Considered the Gate to the Dolomites, the beauty of Dobbiaco is renowned and several famous figures spent time here, including Gustav Mahler, who found inspiration for his works in its charming surroundings

## Lodenwelt

The world of Loden, the renowned, pretty unbreakable cloth, is a symbol of South Tyrol. Emperor Franz Joseph introduced this material at the Court of Vienna, giving it high prominence, becoming the preferred material of noblemen across Europe. Its origin, however, is humbler: being so sturdy, it was used by peasants and mountain farmers to protect themselves from the cold. If you visit the Lodenwelt in Vandoies, you can touch, smell, sense and imagine the world of Loden, past and present. Its history, the travels of the itinerant weavers and the processing methods are displayed in a path which starts from sheep wool until the finished product. Lodenwelt also offers several other traditional shops, making this an exciting outing.



## Dolomiti Balloonfestival

You will surely not want to miss the experience of peacefully floating, blown by the wind, on a hot-air balloon along the picturesque Dolomites of Val Pusteria. The Dolomiti Balloonfestival has become one of the main aerostatic events in Europe, the only one taking place in winter; it is held in **Dobbiaco** at the beginning of January, directly at the base of the Dolomites. You will be part of the team and, after a brief tuition, you will set off on a magical journey in the air, floating weightless while marvelling at nature. Silence and contemplation will make this a joyful experience. During these days, Dobbiaco becomes a "hot-air balloon village", offering sightseeing flights, competitions, music, eating and drinking and animation for children. As the pilots say, you do not fly on a hot-air balloon: you make a journey. Surely an extraordinary one!





Chef CHRIST OBERHAMMER

## Chef & Stars Tilia ❁

One word says it all: unique. Small, elegant and comfortable, the location is beyond belief. An intriguing game of lights played by the windows and only five tables, Tilia is an oasis of peace and haute cuisine in the heart of Val Pusteria. That's where you'll find the well-balanced cuisine of chef Christ Oberhammer. The piglet with a gourmand foie gras filling and fig mustard is delicious. The truffle-flavoured vegetable *caponata* with fresh goat's cheese is a masterpiece of taste and freshness. The *orzotto* with seafood and King prawns is unusual; the venison filet on a morel blanket and sautéed asparagus is astonishing. Leave some room for the sublime Vacherin dessert and enjoy a fine wine list.



sets in Terento". The town also brims with exceptional sights, such as the Fairy Chimneys, also called Pyramids of earth, pillars of rock created by the erosion of the water, and the perfectly preserved water mills. The red fir tree, shaped like a column, between Terento and Falzes, is the only one in South Tyrol.

**Anterselva** hosts an exceptional biathlon centre: the World Cup is a regular occasion, entailing several other events.

Castles stand proud all around Val Pusteria, their histories often long and troubled; fantastic manors set within the idyllic Dolomite surroundings. **Castle Tures**, imposing and massive, dominates Campo Tures and tells a history of several owners, with diverse architectural features defining its contours. Established in the 12th century, it was left in ruins and restored copious times. **Castel Rodengo** is another imposing affair, sitting on the Rienza gorge, famous for its fresco cycles. Only discovered in 1977, they represent the saga of Ivano (Ywain), one of the Knights of the Round Table. And then you are simply spoilt for choice: Casanova, Herbstenburg, Neumelans, Thurn and many more: a vast array of exceptional castles, adding a touch of romanticism to this spellbinding land.

Outstanding waterfalls are found in **Riva**, in the **Tures** and **Aurina** valley. Majestic and imposing, a path suitable for families and children goes via them, the third waterfall being one of the highest in South Tyrol and well worth a visit. Children (and adults alike) may experience the 850-metre long **fly-line** close to the third waterfall. Flying in the woods is now possible! Val Pusteria and its fabulous treasures offer year-round marvellous experiences. Get ready to explore it and be part of this superb scenery. —

## Not to be missed

### Dolomiti Snow Festival - San Candido and San Vigilio di Marebbe (January)

Despite the cold temperatures, many people take part in the International Snow Sculpture Festival, where participants challenge themselves crafting fanciful artworks sculpted in giant snow cubes, measuring 3 m on each side. Dexterity and meticulousness are key in these marvellous, yet ephemeral sculptures: the works keep until warmer temperatures kick in.

### Lago di Braies

At nearly 1500m, the Lago di Braies is the biggest in the Dolomites. Emerald in the summer, covered by a blanket of snow in the winter, it is the recommended starting point for hikes, mountaineering adventures and Nordic walking trails. You can rent rowing boats when it's warmer and relax in front of the imposing mountains: the famous Croda del Becco (Sass dla Porta in Ladin - 2810m) is impressive. Its German appellation – Torberg – indicates that, according to legend, the lake used to be a door (Tor) to the underworld of the Fanes.

### Alpentrail, a sled dog race - Braies and Sesto (January)

An international sled dog race takes place every year in Alta Pusteria. Husky and mushers (who lead the sleds) compete in perfect synchrony and harmony along 60 km in the splendid wintery landscape, with an elevation gain of 2000m. Watching this joyous race going via the splendid wintery scenery is a unique experience you will not want to miss.

### Gustav Mahler Festival - Dobbiaco (July and August)

Dobbiaco has hosted a music festival dedicated to the acclaimed Bohemian-Austrian composer Gustav Mahler, who found the calm and serenity to compose his masterpieces here, for well over thirty years. Here is a chance to listen to Das Lied von der Erde as well as the Ninth and Tenth symphonies. Extraordinary concerts, as well as Lieder-themed evenings, conferences and high-profile round tables take place throughout the summer in Alta Val Pusteria.

### The legend of Sares

Legend has it that a peasant from Sares found a Black Madonna in the freshly ploughed ground and took her home. The following day the Black Madonna was no longer there, but on a little hill nearby. This wise man realised that that was God's will so he had a sanctuary built in that place. The Santa Maria di Sares Sanctuary is still in place to this day and is well worth a visit. It dates back to 1653 and it contains the Black Madonna with Child. The best way to reach the sanctuary is to take the Via Crucis of Sares.

## Food & Wine

### Patzenfeld Restaurant - Sesto di Pusteria

Deep within the wood, the location itself is worth a visit. The food is excellent and the ambience is truly welcoming: the many different corners crafted with love and creativity, frequently evolving, make you feel like going back.

### Gustav Mahler Stube - Dobbiaco

This is where Gustav Mahler found refuge and composed his music. The maso is a sweet pad full of culture and tradition, where you'll savour the best Tyrolean dishes. A stone's throw from the restaurant, you'll find the wildlife park, deep within the natural setting of the valley. Deer, owls, wild boars and other endangered species live in this park and come so close that you could almost touch them. A short walk is all it takes to capture the magic of this park.

### Kugler's Speckstube - Dobbiaco

This pretty mountain Stube will offer an exceptional culinary experience in Val Pusteria. Do not miss the several tastings of homemade speck.

### Winkelkeller Restaurant - Dobbiaco

A quaint interior, the room with the Stube is relaxing and welcoming. Try the Canederli trio followed by venison sausage with polenta and cranberry mustard. The desserts are sublime, with an apple sorbet, chocolate flakes and vanilla ice cream with fruits of the forest being the crowning accomplishment of a memorable meal.



### Bike your way to Austria

The Val Pusteria cycling path starts in Rio di Pusteria and goes as far as Lienz in East Tyrol, in Austria. 150 km for an elevation gain of 500 m, this path is suitable for everyone. Parts of the route are part of the Drauradweg, which goes all the way to Croatia. If you feel too tired to go back, you can take the train and admire the splendid landscape from a different perspective.



# Be the *Lord* of the castle

VALCASTELLO



The property has its own, all-season polo field and a stable of exceptional polo ponies, looked after by a stable manager. Polo players will revel in the astonishing Polo Club, the only one on snow in the Italian Alps. Snow Polo tournaments run from December to March and summer polo from June to August.

An elegant 19th century mansion set on a private 5-hectare estate hosts a most spectacular castle and you can be the king of it. Sleep in one of the six sumptuous suites spanning over three floors, decorated with handwoven tapestries, hunting trophies and original oil paintings. The living and dining hall consist of a series of open-plan, wood-panelled rooms with floor-to-ceiling tapestries and historic artefacts. Meals are served in the exquisite dining hall with views on the outstanding Sexten Dolomites. The hotel can host unique events, making use of the distinctive Trophy Room banqueting hall. Guests can also make use of the private tennis court, as well as ski on the pistes close-by or hike in the summer. Step back in time and enjoy your very own piece of history: if this is a dream, though shalt not wake me up.



## *Xfactor*

Spring into your own fairy-tale and be the lord of the castle. A unique setting for a most exclusive venue.

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6 suites

Open from December to March / from June to September  
Via Costa dei Nosellari, 15 - 39034 Dobbiaco (BZ)  
[www.valcastello.com](http://www.valcastello.com)





# Madonna di Campiglio

“Two roads diverged in a wood, and I took the one  
less traveled by, and that has made all the difference.”

ROBERT FROST

W

elcome to bling Paradise. In this highly upmarket resort, ankle length furs are *de rigueur* during après-ski, where visitors may well be more concerned about the social whirl of Michelin-starred dining than the formidable,

simply outstanding downhill ski runs. Set in the magnificent **Dolomiti di Brenta**, northwest of Trento, Madonna di Campiglio offers enchanting scenery and a realm of traditions. The Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph set the tone



## The six hidden waterfalls

If you want to go off the beaten track and walk along untrodden paths, the area around Madonna di Campiglio offers many opportunities. The silence is punctuated by the sound of bubbling streams that make you contemplate the crystal-clear waters as they rush over smooth, rounded stones.

A secretive place, yet accessible to everyone, the Gorg D'Abiss waterfall (Valle di Ledro) comes unexpected, as the water seems to be gushing out directly from the rock itself. At the waterfall of Saent (Val di Sole and Val di Rabbi) you will find two small waterfalls and a narrow wooden bridge straddling the rushing cascade of water. The Varone waterfalls (Lake Garda) is a magical, almost mystical place, to say the least. It was the inspiration for some parts of "The Magic Mountain", the masterpiece by Thomas Mann. The Vallesinella waterfalls (Val Rendena) are a true gem for wilderness aficionados with their foamy cascades. The Tret waterfalls (Val di Non) are so hidden amongst the canyons that the curtain of water seems to appear from nowhere. A monumental fir tree, the rolling sound of the Rio Val Moena, stones blanketed in moss and lichen and, above all, the magical spectacle of the waterfall of Cavalese (Val di Fiemme) itself, make this place an absolute wonder. The Cascate del Lupo (Altopiano di Piné), meaning The Wolf's Waterfalls, are actually unknown to most people, even to those living in Trentino.

Welcome to bicycle paradise. Bikeland is the biggest bike area in Italy: from the Dolomiti di Brenta and the Adamello and Presanella glacier, it reaches Lake Garda, five areas in Trentino, from Tonale and Pejo to the Val di Sole, going via Madonna di Campiglio to Tione and Comano Terme as far as Riva del Garda. Get ready for mind-boggling figures: over 80 km of land extension, 4,000 m of descent, 40 cross country and marathon tours, 1,000 km for mountain bikes, 3 cycle paths covering over 100 km, 3 adrenaline-fuelled bike parks, 13 enduro all-mountain trails, 13 downhill trails and 14 lifts (licensed to transport a mountain bike). What's more, three ascents featuring in the coveted Giro d'Italia. You can get a single bike pass and off you go to explore this land of plenty. Don't forget that there are many bike-friendly hotels, where you can sit back and relax, knowing that your precious, two-wheeled friend will be looked after. Adrenaline seekers and gentle souls alike, look no further.

## Bikeland



## Habsburg Carnival

The Imperial couple of Franz Joseph and his wife Sissi, together with ladies and knights of their court, delight spectators and take them back in time each year during Carnival, recalling the atmospheric, princely ambience of the end of the 19th century, when the court met regularly in Madonna di Campiglio. The Habsburg Carnival is a splendid, historic re-enactment of life at the Imperial Court: a flamboyant fancy dress parade with theatre events, literary discussions, gala dinners, Imperial torchlight skiing and fireworks, communal dances and sumptuous receptions. The event ends with the traditional Great Ball of the Emperor at the Hofer Hall in the summer Habsburg residence, currently the Hotel Des Alpes.

when he visited in the late 1890s, together with his wife Elisabeth (Sissi); this magical atmosphere gets recreated in February, when fireworks and costumed pageants stroll through town for the annual Habsburg Carnival. A merry feast takes place, enhancing the charm of Madonna di Campiglio, overlooked by a pretty stone church and the rugged Dolomites.

60 km of ski slopes connect Madonna di Campiglio, with 30 km at Pinzolo and Folgariva-Marileva in the Sun Valley: all in all, 150 km of skiing Paradise. In the Grosté area, at 2500m, the Ursus Snow Park is one of the best freestyle areas in the Alps, with kicker, box, rail and jibbing features: adrenaline-seekers will float on cloud nine!

Pinzolo, a little gem in Val Rendena, at the bottom of the road leading to Madonna di Campiglio, is truly picturesque. An excellent starting point for many excursions in the Adamello and Presanella, it is a mecca for sports lovers. Its 72-metre bell tower is the highest in the region. In the church of San Vigilio, found-





Chef SABINO FORTUNATO

## Chef & Stars Gallo Cedrone ❁

Gallo Cedrone, located in Madonna di Campiglio, has always meant a celebration of the mountains, from hay smoke cooking to cured meats and cheese from Trentino and South Tyrol. The lake and freshwater fish are not far off, neither is game. Enter a new, young and talented chef, Sabino Fortunato, whose interest lies in foreign products, as well. A pretty location, chalet-style, to savour the delicacies of the superb traditional cuisine, paired with the new tendencies of International and Mediterranean ones. Refined choices, made with natural ingredients, unravelled in a marvellous fashion: here is where you'll taste a menu rich in unique delights.



ed in 1362 and expanded in 1515, you can admire a stunning *Dance of Death* by Simone Il Baschenis. Commissioned by the Battuti Confraternity and executed in 1539, it comes with a number of inscriptions in Latin and vernacular: it is a monologue, recited by the dead.

**Andalo** is located on the plateau stretching between the Brenta Group and the Paganella Massif. Next-generation sports facilities with ski lifts for downhill skiing and several cross-country skiing opportunities are on offer; some of the tracks are lit at night, making this a romantic, fun experience, especially when the moon shines.

The **Adamello Brenta Nature Park** will leave you speechless: the largest protected area in Trentino, it was established in 1967 and has an ace up its sleeve for everyone. From hiking, cycling and trekking in the summer to skitouring in the winter, highlights are the splendid Tovel Lake, Val Genova and Val d'Ambiez.

If skiing is its winter keyword, hiking, cycling and walking are just a few of the many summer activities undertaken in the area. And that's not all. The region is home to one of the highest altitude golf courses in Europe, the **Campo Carlo Magno Golf Club**. Developed by Henry Cotton, one of the icons of the golfing world, it is set above 1700m and was opened in 1921, then affiliated with the Italian Golf Federation in 1923. Playing golf while admiring the enchanting Dolomites becomes reality here. —

## Not to be missed

### The San Vili Pathway

The San Vili Pathway is a long route going from Madonna di Campiglio to Trento, covering an area of more than 100 km. The route is divided into six sections, each of them an outing in itself. The pathway follows the footsteps of the route of San Vili (St. Virgil), the first saint to face these mountain routes in 400 AD, while he was spreading the Gospel.

### Irone, the ghost hamlet

Irone (also called Iron) is a small medieval hamlet which can be reached along the San Vili path. It is one of the marvels of Italy and is known as a ghost hamlet because time seems to have stood still here: isolated and hidden by dense woodlands, it was abandoned after the 1630 plague. Several events are held here in the summer, aiming at promoting local traditions and popular culture.

### Profumo di Campiglio

An artistic perfumery lab which should be on your list. The scents experienced during your holiday take shape and are transformed into unique, original fragrances. Pure poetry you can wear on your skin: you will then think about the crisp, clean air of this marvellous region. You can find Eau de Parfum for men and women and cosmetic products for the body, as well as home fragrances.

### Sfizio da Marcello

A quaint, cute shop in the centre of Madonna di Campiglio where Marcello and Roberta offer several typical Trentino and South Tyrol delicacies, hand picked by them from the small artisan, traditional enterprises in the region. Delicious, long-established cheeses, classic and flavoured flour, artisan speck and the best local wines, offered with dedication and paired with several, exquisite products.

### Winter Marathon - January

The Winter Marathon is a vintage sports car race held in Madonna di Campiglio in January. The protagonists are front-wheel or rear-wheel drive cars, built before 1968, with an added selection of other models built up to 1976, which have a historic value and are of interest to collectors. Imagine a route of 400 km through 9 passes of the Dolomites and more than 60 trial races in two stages: the first one is held by night along the Val Rendena and the second along the roads and the most famous passes in Trentino Alto-Adige, with the evocative Dolomites sunsets as a backdrop.

### Tour of the Five Lakes

If you want to face a challenging path at altitude, going via granite rocks and suggestive alpine lakes, you should try the Tour of the Five Lakes. You will go via the Nambino, Serodoli, Gelato, Lambin and Ritorto lakes. The Lake Malghette, at 1900m, west of Campo Carlo Magno, is also exceptional and can be reached more easily.

## Food & Wine

### Il Convivio

You will find two different spaces here: the typical, natural larch Stube and the wayfarer's lounge. Two intimate areas featuring a fascinating, refined atmosphere, where creativity and tradition blend in and create an explosion of tastes. Chef Samuele Melani crafts a genuine, delicate cuisine, emphasizing natural, local products. Exquisite dishes to be accompanied by refined wines and, last but not least, the welcoming cigar lounge, with a choice of aged rums, to be savoured with Italian and Cuban cigars.

### Rifugio Patascoss

The hut overlooks the evocative Brenta Dolomites and is located directly on the snow slopes, part of the Madonna di Campiglio ski area. In the summer, a smooth car ride can take you there.

### Ristorante Cascina Zeledria

A small mountain haven, a short distance from the Passo Campo Carlo Magno. It can be reached by car in the summer and on skis or snowmobile in the winter. This is a must while holidaying in Campiglio. Featuring an exceptional cuisine, refined wines and a superb location.

### Stube Hermitage ❁ - Madonna di Campiglio

Chef Giovanni D'Alitta. In a region with an exceptional number of Michelin-starred restaurants, the Stube Hermitage is a pleasant entry. Giovanni cut his teeth in first-rate restaurants far and wide and welcomes you to a culinary journey, where the quality of the ingredients exudes sheer joy. Spend some time in the Spa before dinner: it will be an experience fit for a king.



### The eight paths of the Dolomiti Natural Wellness

Eight waymarked paths, where you can discover and take part in activities related to the world of Natural Wellness, combined with touching natural elements. Yoga, meditation, breathing techniques and many other activities can be undertaken both as part of a group, following the weekly programme, and on your own, with the help of descriptive panels.





**A *Soft glow* meets perfect peace**

Akio Fujita has been Alpen Suite's executive chef since December 2017. Blending his Japanese background with a passion for Italian gourmet food and Trentino delicacies, expect a triumph of tastes observing the simple ideas of simplicity, courtesy, taste and interpretation, making the Alpen Suite your preferred destination in the area.



**ALPEN SUITE**

A stone's throw from the hubbub of Madonna di Campiglio, the soul of this upscale hotel lies in its small, luxury details. You will sense the familiar, cosy atmosphere in the overall décor and exquisite suites, overlooking the Brenta Dolomites. Decorated with antique objects, valuable carpets, fir wood and fine tapestries, you may even choose to stay in the central turret and enjoy a staggering vista. Gourmet delights await in the Convivio Restaurant while it's traditional dining at the Alpen Suite Restaurant. Meet in the Lobby Bar for a stylish happy hour or enjoy a cigar in the dedicated Lounge. Revive your senses in the Alpen Beauty and Alpen Wellness Spa or the steam room and sauna. Ski bums will love the proximity to fantastic glisse, including the famous World Cup 3Tre slope.



*Xfactor*

Among the 28 marvellously appointed suites, the Regina Suite exudes aristocratic charm. The grace of a soft décor combined with the luxury of elegant details.

Alpen Suite  
28 suites  
Open from December to March / from June to September  
Viale Dolomiti di Brenta, 84  
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# A work of genius

La Serenissima, the City of Masks, the Floating City. Despite endless descriptions on canvas, paper and screen, **Venice** is, to all extents, a work of genius which always astonishes visitors. Made up by 118 islands and inhabited by 250,000 people, with the historic centre – the main island, shaped like a fish – being home to 55,000 people, a lifetime seems not enough to fully grasp the magnetism of this city full of surprises. You will see that all tourists flock to **Piazza San Marco** and that stands to reason. Colossal, magnificent, almost overwhelming, there is nothing quite like walking through the portico and beholding the immensity of it. You can then marvel at the sun lighting up the golden decorations of the **Basilica di San Marco**. The mausoleum of the city's patron saint, once the Doge's private chapel, the Basilica is the most exotic of Europe's cathedrals. While other countries have government buildings, Venice has **Palazzo Ducale**, a Gothic confection which will steal your heart. Of the many museums in the city, two should be on top of your list: the **Accademia** and the **Peggy Guggenheim Collec-**

## Murano glass

Venice is famous for its glass production the world over. A 13th century law restricted the dangerous glass furnaces to the island of Murano, to protect the main island from accidental fires, but also to keep the secrets of glass making on that island. This activity was historic and vital to the local economy then, as it is today. Don't miss the chance to visit one of the furnaces to see an artisan at work.



**tion.** The former traces the development of Venetian art from the 14th to the 18th century, the latter is a treasure trove of modern art. The best way to fully experience Venice is simply to get lost. Get off the main, tourist routes or, even better, stay for the night and you will fully grasp the magic of the city, when the ethereal swirl of misty canals, evocative small bridges and mysterious Gothic portals put on their best show.

Venice has a language of its own. You may hear locals say *Vien qua per un'ombra!* – Come for a drink. "Ombra" – shadow – is the name Venetians give to a glass of wine. A curious appellation referring to the Campanile in Piazza San Marco. Once a market square, stall owners used to move their place following the shadow created by the bell tower, so that their wine would always be in the shade – all'ombra.



## Venetian gondolas

A symbol of romance, Gondolas are icons of the Serenissima. In the 17th century, they were all-purpose vessels, with as many as 10,000 in the city. Today, there are less than 500 and are mainly employed by tourists. Gondolas must follow a specific design: a ferro, a set of six-iron teeth at the prow, said to represent the six Venetian quarters, the sestieri. They feature a flat keel, so they don't get beached on sandbanks. As touristic as it may sound, savouring Venice on a gondola is an experience you will not easily forget.



## Venetian masks

Venice has always been a trendsetter, unconcerned about conventions. A city with many faces, it gives you the opportunity to don a mask and do whatever you want. Ever since the Middle Ages, masks have been part and parcel of the city, being worn primarily during the extravagant and lavish Carnival, perhaps the most famous in the world. La Bottega dei Mascareri is one of the finest artisans workshops in Venice, even supplying masks for Stanley Kubrick's film *Eyes Wide Shut*. Masks are handmade from papier-mâché before being painted with gold leaf. Among the many models, the *bauta* is perhaps the most famous, historically used by Venetian officials to cast a vote anonymously. The perfect disguise in a city full of mystery and intrigues.

The only *piazza* in the whole of Venice, San Marco is a grand showpiece square, capturing the splendour of the city



# Lago di Garda





“A lake as beautiful as  
the beginning of creation”  
D.H. LAWRENCE

**T**

he largest and perhaps the most popular of the Italian lakes, **Lake Garda** attracts many visitors who love the variety of sports available on the water and the mountains around, whilst sipping a Bardolino, Soave or Valpolicella, admiring the magnificent lemon and olive trees which adorn the most sheltered stretch of the western shore. The climate is gentle in the winter and a pleasant breeze is felt in the summer – *sover* blowing from the north and *ova* from the south.

The lake is surrounded by three distinct regions – Lombardy, Trentino and Veneto – thus offering a cultural diversity which is hard to

match. You will find primarily Mitteleuropeans in northern resorts such as **Torbole** or **Riva del Garda**, while Italians and French flock to family-friendly spa towns like **Sirmione** and **Bardolino**.

Where is the attraction? Why has such a vast gamut of visitors, from divas to dictators, poets and politicians, been drawn to captivating Lake Garda? The answer is manifold. It may lie in the gentle, relaxing countryside, reminiscent of Tuscany; in the enchanting breezes which makes sailing or windsurfing a joy, not to mention the regattas; in the vineyards producing fine, award-winning wines; in the exquisite

## Goethe in Malcesine

Wherever the acclaimed German writer Johann Wolfgang Goethe went, he left enlightened tracks. When he was travelling in the area in 1786, he had left Torbole and wanted to reach Verona, but strong gusts of wind obliged him to stop in Malcesine, on the eastern shore of the lake. At the time, the town was still part of the Republic of Venice (in 1797 to the Austrian Empire, then in 1866 to Italy). Here, he was subject to a curious incident: he was briefly imprisoned in the 13th century Castello Scaligero, accused of being an Austrian spy. In fact, fascinated by the beauty of the turreted castle, he had started making drawings of it. The episode, narrated in his superb *Travels in Italy*, contributed to the fame of Malcesine. Perched on the shimmering water, Malcesine is a small medieval hamlet with imposing Monte Baldo and olive trees to the east and the beaches and lake Garda to the west.

Popular since the late 19th century, Riva del Garda is dramatically located under sheer cliffs. It still retains some stylish pastel-painted hotels and grants spectacular views onto the lake

food you will find all along the shore that will leave you speechless – more than thirty species of fish are to be found in the lake, to list but a few. The delicate and fruity, extra virgin Garda olive oil bears the DOP label; this is the northernmost region in Europe where olive oil is produced. And then flowers, glorious flowers. A Mediterranean climate means you will enjoy exceptional blooms – a visit to **Il Giardino di Delizia** close to Bogliaco di Gargnano, held in April, is simply unforgettable. The yearly event is dedicated to plants and flowers traditionally grown in aristocratic villas on the lake, as well as innovative trends.





Probably the best known of the lake's resorts, Riva del Garda embodies charm and attraction

**History** plays a part in Lake Garda's rich and varied heritage, tracing connections all the way to ancient Rome. Long before the well heeled decided to colonise this part of northern Italy, wealthy Roman senators and poets searched for holiday homes on the lakes. **Villa Romana**, close to Desenzano del Garda in the south, is a significant archaeological find. Dating from the 4th century AD, it used to be a large and luxurious home that preserves good mosaics. Perhaps even more striking are the **Grotte di Catullo**. Located on the scenic shores of Sir-

**mione**, the villa dates back to the 1st century BC and the beginning of the 1st century AD; touted as Catullus's villa, the actual owner is unknown. The ruins, scattered on the hillside among ancient olive trees, are enchanting, with views across the lake to the mountains. The town is also famous for its natural spring, the only one on the lake. The **Rocca Scaligera**, a fairy tale castle with boxy turreted towers and almost entirely surrounded by water, was built by the Veronese Scaligeri family in the 13th century.



## Lavender land

The fabulous and unexpected microclimate found on Lake Garda favours the growth of olive and lemon trees, making the landscape attractive and pleasing to the eye and the soul. What many people may not know, however, is that lavender grows on the morenic hills of the Brescia side of the lake. Organically produced, lavender is an exceptional flower, whose colour and scent is a treat for the soul. Liquors, jams, honey, candles and cosmetic products can be produced with it, creating an exceptional backdrop to walks and tours. Known since ancient times, lavender possesses undisputed calming and soothing properties for adults and children alike; it is also a natural antiseptic and bactericidal. Its colour is also considered the one of silence, contemplation and spirituality.

Of the many towns on the luxuriant *Riviera Bresciana*, **Saló** is worth a visit. Splendidly sited in a picturesque bay, it used to be the Venetian Empire's main garrison town. On the attractive lungolago you will see several palaces and an area beaming with activities, the old town a maze of quaint streets and alleys. The Saturday market is very popular and offers a glimpse into local culture.

If you are travelling with kids or just want to live a fairy-tale experience, head to **Gardaland**. Not far from Peschiera del Garda, this is Italy's most famous and visited theme park, jam packed with attractions of any kind: Kung Fu Panda Academy, Jungle Rapids, Space Vertigo and many more. A sea aquarium hosts a staggering 5,000 creatures and several themed shows are also on offer. Too tired to go home? You may stay in one of the beautiful LLM Hotels.

The landscape around Lake Garda varies greatly from one side to the other, with dra-

## Little harbours

Water sports are so common on Lake Garda that you can admire the boats easily cruising from one of the exceptional shore to the other. The lake boasts a staggering sixty-five harbours – divided between private and regional ones. Up to nine different winds blow on the lake, being at their strongest in the north, hence the ban on motor boats in the Trentino-Alto Adige side; notwithstanding, waves can be fierce and dangerous in the south, too, especially when storms come in from the north and the waves feature fetch, accumulating energy. Among the many picturesque harbours, **Gardone Riviera** is surely of interest. Famous for the consistency of its climate, it also houses the most exotic botanic garden on the lake, the **Heller Garden**. Defined as "a centre of environmental awareness", the garden hosts several works of art by the owner, the Austrian visual artist André Heller, as well as a kaleidoscope of different cultures, religions and floral interests, in a perfect marriage of art and nature. From a mini-Dolomite landscape to water lilies floating on water, Zen-like corners and flowers from all over the world, the garden reinvents itself each season.



Desenzano del Garda is home to a quaint harbour, a jewel among the many to be found on the lake



matic changes in scenery and vegetation. In the north, the **Ledro Alps and Judicaria**, you will go from stark limestone peaks and conifer forests via alpine pastures and vineyards, all the way to crystal clear waters amid a balmy Mediterranean climate. Arrestingly beautiful, the area was designated as a biosphere reserve in 2015 and it includes rare animals such as the lynx and brown bears; active and adventurous travellers will find something right up their



## Garda's Oil

A blossoming you wouldn't expect at such a latitude – beyond the 46th parallel - and yet the Mediterranean climate found on Lake Garda favours the production of olives, grown here since antiquity. Arco, Riva del Garda and Tenno are members of the National City of Oil Association. The extra virgin olive oil produced here is mild and delicate with a fruity taste, ideal for the many local recipes; its colour goes from marked to intense golden green, given the high chlorophyll content. The Garda olive oil received the DOP recognition from the European community and is thus highly esteemed, so much so that the eastern shore of the lake is called Olive Tree Riviera.

If you are tempted to find out more about this most precious and vital ingredient, a staple in the healthy Mediterranean diet, you can visit the **Olive Oil Museum** in Cisano, not far from Lazise. Highly informative, you will get a glimpse on the production process of olive oil with several instruments on display. Add in a tasting and a well-stocked shop, selling other products made with oil, and you will have a thoroughly enjoyable experience.



street wherever they go. And no, it's not only windsurf and riding at full sail: other sports such as canyoning, with a dozen fine locations within easy reach of the lake, rock climbing – Arco, a stone's throw from the lake in the north, being the mecca for climbers the world over and many other crags offering unparalleled lines - and paragliding will simply amaze you. Not to mention glorious hiking all around the lake, presenting astonishing views on the shimmering blue waters or, on the northern tip, dramatic vistas of jaw-dropping Dolomites. There is also an astonishing array of via ferrata routes, a series of protected climbing paths equipped with steel wires, steps, ladders, bridges and walkways. Scuba divers will revel in the crystalline waters of the lake, exploring its fascinating underworld. Lake Garda has an ace up its sleeve for all outdoor enthusiasts. As with most places in Italy, famous writers and poets fell for the charm of Lake Garda; from Catullus to Virgil and Dante, Lord Byron, Goethe and Tennyson, they all praised this corner of

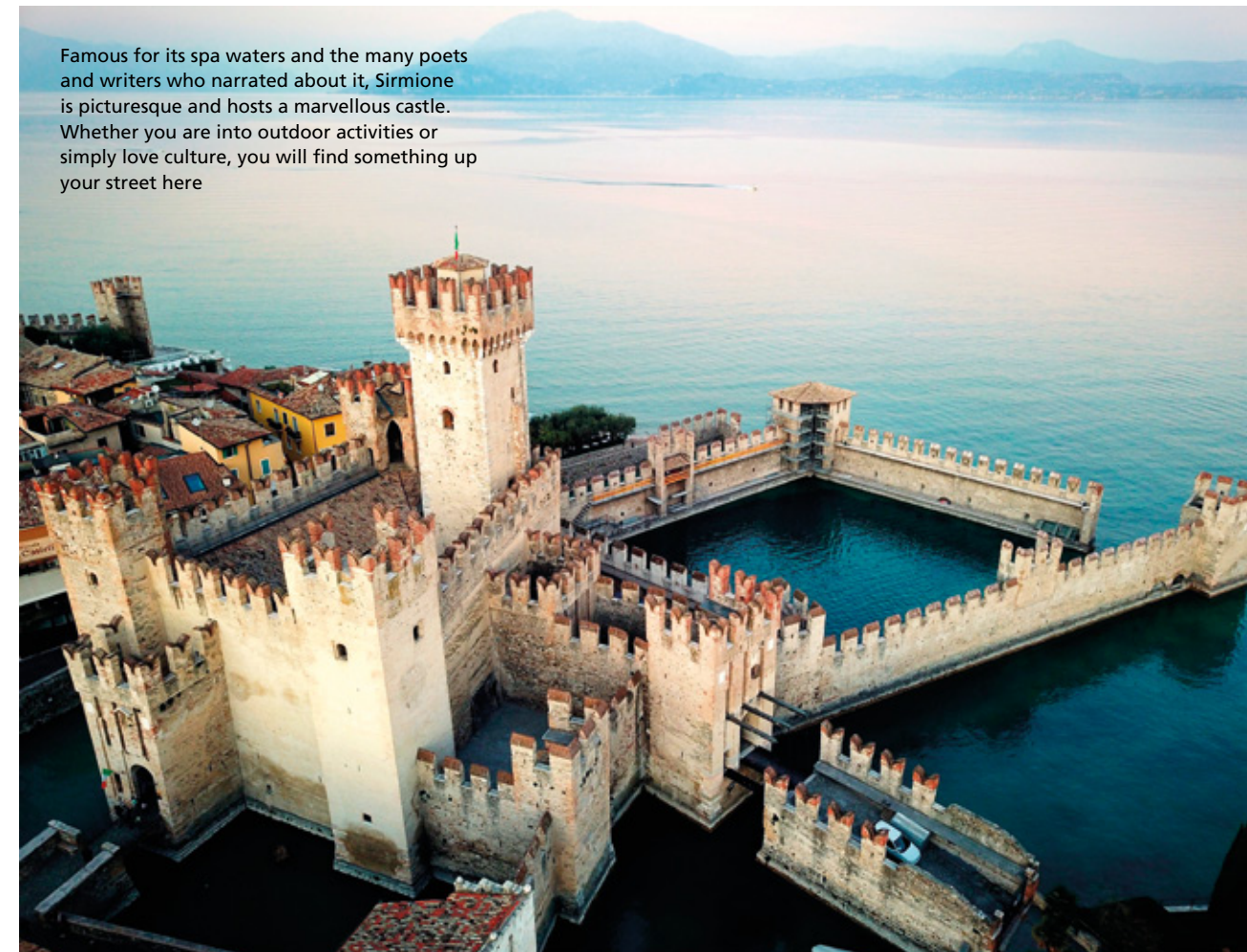
Evocative Punta San Vigilio is a little gem on the lake, with stunning emerald colours and a sublime game of light and shadows, to be admired at sunset and sunrise. An embarrassment of riches for photographers



## Limonaia del Castél

"Do you know the land where lemon trees blossom?" asks Goethe in his *Travels in Italy*, referring to Lake Garda. Famous for the production of lemons and citrus fruits, the area between Limone and Toscolano hosts an array of *limonaie* (lemon houses), peculiar pillars backed against the rock, a testimony to the glorious past of a traditional activity. Popular ever since 1600 – although fruit farming seems to date from the Quattrocento – lemon houses were built in a tier system – each terrace being called *còle*. In addition to lemons, lemon flowers were also precious, being employed in recipes or to extract their scent. Preserves, juices and perfumes were produced, as well, given the extreme versatility of this prized fruit. The most famous *limonaia* is the **Castél** one in **Limone sul Garda**. Splendidly located in the old town, it has been restored, its glorious past aptly shown; several citrus fruits also grow here, such as cedars, tangerines, clementines and kumquats.

Famous for its spa waters and the many poets and writers who narrated about it, Sirmione is picturesque and hosts a marvellous castle. Whether you are into outdoor activities or simply love culture, you will find something up your street here







## Castles

Populated since Roman times, Lake Garda is a treasure trove of adventure, marvellous landscape, delicious food and sublime castles. You will be surprised at the number of excellent fortifications you'll encounter all along the shores. Among the many interesting ones, **Torri del Benaco** is surely worth a visit. Torri itself is one of the prettiest towns on the Veneto side of the lake, the castle still showing imposing ramparts as well as three towers. **Sirmione** is home to the fairy tale Rocca Scaligera. In an excellent state of preservation, you will admire its courtyard, the dockyard – a rare case of a fortification for a harbour use – the evocative moat and the bravest may even catch a glimpse of a ghost during stormy nights! **Lazise**, once a major Venetian port, hosts a splendid 9th century castle. Now privately owned, it changed hands over the centuries and you can visit the external fortified walls, built to protect the first Free Italian Municipality in the Middle Ages. Evocative **Padenghe** Castle, on the western shore of the lake, dominates the town from a hill and was probably built around 1145 AD, with subsequent modifications over time. Visit this splendid castle – and the many others on the lake – and you will step back in time.

Splendidly sited on a bay at the foot of the luxuriant Riviera Bresciana, Salò (facing page, top) is a handsome town. Limone sul Garda (facing page, bottom) is a pretty, stone-built village with fabulous vistas on the lake

A magnificent castle and fortified walls encircle the old town of Lazise (below), a vibrant, attractive and historic small village on the lake, hosting a series of cultural events and offering gourmet delicacies



north-east Italy. It is, however, **D.H. Lawrence** who gave us what is perhaps the lake's most enchanting definition "A lake as beautiful as the beginning of creation." The English writer stayed in **Gargnano** from September 1912 until April 1913, in a house facing the lake. He drew inspiration from the enchanting aura of a place which still mesmerizes today's visitors, all of which can be sensed in his book *Twilight in Italy*. The town itself is often regarded as the prettiest village on the lake, and it's the perfect place to unwind for a few days.



The famous **Centomiglia** sailing boat race takes place here. Early September rhymes with epic adventure on the shores of Gargnano, attracting racers from all over the world, reaching an astonishing three hundred participants in the most popular editions, setting off from the Bogliaco harbour. Held since 1951, the race is the longest in Europe on closed waters

and has been a trend-setter, as far as sailing boats are concerned.

Visitors to Lake Garda may also want to take advantage of its proximity to Venice to include a trip to the Serenissima or to the Arena in Verona for the opera. Are you ready to embark on a journey of the senses? —





Chef STEFANO BAIOTTO



## Chef @ Stars Villa Feltrinelli ❁❁

It is hard to imagine a more idyllic setting than exceptionally charming Villa Feltrinelli. In Gargnano, on the shores of Lake Garda, the location itself would be enough to grant an outstanding culinary experience. And yet, this most extraordinary hotel restaurant has an ace up its sleeve: chef Stefano Baiocco, known as the "calm storm". He cut his teeth in the most disparate kitchens, from rigorous Alain Ducasse to mercurial Pierre Gagnaire, not to mention Ferran Adrià and his restaurant "more akin to a theatre": as a result, his dishes are genuine works of art. The true genius of Baiocco lies not only in his tireless creativity – salmon trout salad with avocado, green apple, sliced cucumber, cured pig's cheek and crunchy quinoa. Tortelli stuffed with roasted eggplant, cuttlefish, caper leaves and wild fennel. *Gold Bar* of white chocolate mousse and passion fruit sauce – but especially in his meticulous approach to every type of food. The restaurant has its own herb garden and Baiocco's "salad" – 130 different herbs, 40 flowers and thin champignon crisps with Noto almond oil – has become a signature dish. *Tutto pomodoro* shows 40 types of tomatoes processed in various ways, a result only achieved if meticulous organization is part of your DNA. With an eye on his native region, Le Marche, dining here is a journey of the senses you shan't easily forget.



## Not to be missed

### Punta San Vigilio

Considered the "Portofino on Lake Garda", this stunning peninsula, belonging to the Counts Guarienti di Brenzone, has always been popular with the glitterati, such as Winton Churchill, Prince Charles, Laurence Olivier and many others. If you are in the area, a visit is strongly advised, even more so when a stunning sunset is on view.

### Il Vittoriale degli Italiani - Gardone Riviera

The house museum of the writer Gabriele D'Annunzio is a fascinating example of an "artist's home". Visitors are astounded by the variety and originality of the thousands of objects kept inside; a section of a warship in the garden further increases curiosity, while the amphitheatre, smaller museums inside the property and other oddities make this a fascinating experience.

### Saint Mary Magdalene's Cathedral - Desenzano del Garda

Desenzano Cathedral was built between 1586 and 1611 on a project by the architect Giulio Todeschini. The façade features baroque decorations, while the interior is one of the best examples of late Renaissance architecture in the Brescia province. "The last Supper", a marvellous oil on canvas by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, dated 1738, can be seen in the Sacrament Chapel.

### Rabbit Island - Manerba del Garda

A stone's throw from Punta Belvedere rises the small island of San Biago, known as Rabbit Island. A small lake paradise featuring green meadows, cypresses and... many bunnies roaming free. It can be reached either by boat or on foot, when the tide is so low that the water rises up to your knees only.

### Sigurtà Gardens and Park- Valeggio sul Mincio

Tulip Mania, the Dutch financial craze for tulip bulbs in the 1630s gets re-enacted at the stunning Sigurtà Gardens each year. Such is the care and attention for flowers in this most extraordinary, award-winning garden located south of Peschiera del Garda that expectations for the best tulip are high each year. And with that glorious roses, dahlias, water lilies, lotus flowers, hydrangeas and daffodils, to name a few. Add to these a maze, a horizontal sundial, medicinal plants, a hermitage, even a lovers' bench and you'll have the perfect recipe for an awe-inspiring outing.

### Strada della Forra - Tremosine

Described as the "Eight Wonder in the World" by Winston Churchill, this road was built along the cleave of the Brasa river; it is a rock-encrusted jewel, recommended for expert drivers and bikers. Just like James Bond in the Quantum of Solace film, you too will enjoy breathtaking views on the lake, the small hamlets dotted along the road and the evocative hollows in the rock.

### The lake from the lake

Nothing beats an outing on a private Riva motorboat to get a bird's eye view on the exceptional natural and cultural beauties of Lake Garda. The unmistakable *Made in Italy* style, seen in the accurate finish and the timeless beauty of the boats, offers the ideal combination with the suggestive scenery of fortresses, islands and the hills surrounding the lake.

## Food @ Wine

### Azienda agricola Costaripa - Moniga del Garda

Mattia Vezzola's Costaripa farm was created in 1936 as the result of a family passion. It is set in Moniga del Garda, in the heart of the Valtenesi, in its own right the home country of the Gropello, which sees two wine productions - a red and rosé one, locally called *Chiaretto*. Of the several wines produced, *Rosamaria* and *Molmenti Rosé* are delicious. The latter, in the 2015 vintage, will be awarded three Gambero Rosso glasses in the 2019 guide.

### Montonale Wine Farm - Desenzano del Garda

Home of the *Lugana* white wine, the Montonale Wine Farm dates back to the beginning of the 20th century. The owners, the Girelli brothers, believe that the wine produced with the Lugana grapes is much more than a nectar to be savoured on the lakefront; it is, in fact, an enduring wine, full of character, which can improve over time and whose tasting will reveal unexpected surprises.

### Comincioli - Oil tasting - Puegnago

The authoritative *Flos Olei* confirmed this trade in the world's top 20, even because of the extraction process, i.e. where oil from pitted olives is produced, a method adopted by the firm for quite some time. The Gambero Rosso Oil Guide awarded it three leaves, equalling Three Glasses in the Wine industry: in a word, full marks. In the words of Gianfranco Comincioli: "Oil from pitted olives is like a mirror, allowing you to trace the exact profile of a product, highlighting strengths and weaknesses. Oil therefore symbolizes the tree, the soil and the microclimate."

### Corrado Benedetti - Salumi e Formaggi

#### - Sant'Anna d'Alfaedo

"Excellent food artisans" may be an apt definition. From the Lessinia plateau, in Valpolicella, Corrado Benedetti is still a trade which carries on a tradition: that of being a place of excellence where they produce, mature and refine first class cured meats and salami, prepare preserves and other fine delicacies with an eye on tradition. Outstanding tastings in the cellar.

### Capriccio ❁ - Manerba del Garda

Together with her daughter Francesca, Chef Giuliana Germiniasi always puts forward a vast array of proposals and activities. An exclusive venue, innovative cooking, striving for the great tastes in life, where you feel content thanks to the spectacular sensations aroused by food; words may fail to fully pay tribute to an alchemy of factors, which are part and parcel of this family, whose only outcome are unparalleled creations.



### La Casa degli Spiriti - Costermano sul Garda

Chef Michele Jaconeta. Imagine a terraced garden in bloom, like a natural patio on Lake Garda, the splendid view on the lake, thousands of coloured candles, a dream-like table in a fabulous place... this is La Casa degli Spiriti. A romantic escape from the present to fully savour the exceptionality of this location.

### La Lepre - Desenzano del Garda

"Passion for food is akin to that for nature, that is pure and pristine." Hidden within the small alleys in the centre, a stone's throw from the lake. A young, dynamic and modern restaurant, delivering quality and innovation in a smart, albeit relaxed atmosphere. Traditional Italian dishes are presented with a modern twist: this is a taste haven in its own right.

### La Speranzina - Sirmione

In the heart of Sirmione's old town, close to the Scaligero Castle. Friendly and refined, a splendid terrace overlooking Lake Garda welcomes you. What lies ahead is the discovery of new tastes, with fine cuisine dishes, accompanied by exceptional ingredients.

### Lido 84 ❁ - Gardone Riviera

Chef Riccardo Camanini. Among camphor and olive trees, this venue conveys understated elegance, offering a veranda and a garden on the lake, where you can also moor. Always on the lookout for inspiration from studies and culture, the personnel spends once a week one and half hours reading. Each cook is given a food book to widen his or her knowledge, arouse curiosity and open his or her mind. They take an active part in the service, working alongside waiters to thoroughly explain the dishes to the clients. They say: "You will find..., you will choose...: it's the sense of surprise and discovery!"

### Vecchia Malcesine ❁ - Malcesine

Chef Leandro Luppi. Stepping into the Vecchia Malcesine restaurant, you will enter a surreal world. This is where art, music and food speak to each other and tell a story. An alchemy is created when transforming the excellences of the area. Led by Leandro, the emotions will resonate strongly within you. There is a terrace with a superb view.





# Eternal Moments

GRAND HOTEL A VILLA FELTRINELLI



Set in a prestigious neo-gothic Villa dating back to 1892 amid impeccably kept grounds, shaded by magnolia, oak and olive trees, you will find outstanding service and Michelin-starred, unique cuisine to match. Timeless charm is felt throughout the villa, granting marvellous views onto the lake. The interiors, suites and park cottages are elegant, sophisticated and tastefully furnished, with intricate frescoes, high ceilings and a wide staircase leading up to the rooms, inlaid Venetian mirrors and grand Venetian chandeliers, adding grandeur. Enjoy the splendid Regeneration Lounge, a warm and relaxing space where you can delight in massages and Tata Harper signature treatments.

The hotel pays respect to nature, handing out freshly cut flowers to guests on arrival, and fresh lemons to take home when they leave. All the details are catered for, from complimentary wine in the rooms to organising everything and anything, including trips around the lake in the villa's water limousines.



## Xfactor

Exceptionally cosy, with a wood-burning fireplace, the library is lined with classic works of literature. Staying here feels like visiting a friend's smart country home.

Grand Hotel a Villa Feltrinelli  
20 rooms and suites  
Open from April to October  
Villa Feltrinelli charging station  
Via Rimembranza, 38/40 - 25084 Gargnano (BS)  
[www.villafeltrinelli.com](http://www.villafeltrinelli.com)



# Natural luxury

Formerly the hunting lodge of the Austrian royal family, this lush lakefront hotel dates back to 1888. Featuring bright and airy interiors throughout, light comes in naturally from the lofty windows and the soft-hued colours exude peace and tranquillity. Natural luxury meets history in this enchanting property, favoured by Klimt and D'Annunzio, where allure and seduction are sensed at every corner.

Now in its third generation, the Mayr family runs the property with impeccable charm. Immersed in a 1.2-hectare park, you can enjoy several culinary styles, from Il Fagiano restaurant and the flair of Chef Matteo Felter to Il Pescatore and Magnolia, as well as La Darsena Shore Club and an exclusive bar on a dazzling terrace. Take in Mediterranean colours and the decadent atmosphere and make use of the excellent gym and sublime Aveda Spa. Conferences and meetings are often held here. Refined elegance meets excellence on the shores of Lake Garda.



Revel in an impeccable, intimate space, the superb Gin Lounge. Highly sought-after materials and furnishing bring you along a journey, from the British-style counter to the various eras shown in the pictures hanging on the walls. The barman is a spirits savvy and his signature cocktails merge the alchemistries of tequila, mescal, infusions and various other spirits.



## Xfactor

An antique, early 19th century property, the rooms at Villa Principe are simply heavenly.

Grand Hotel Fasano  
75 rooms and suites  
Open from April to October  
Corso Zanardelli, 190 - 25083 Gardone Riviera (BS)  
www.ghf.it





Luxury, beauty and nature live in harmony in the CXI Centoundici Spa, a state-of-the-art 1500 sq m wellness centre with indoor and outdoor pool, which focuses on the well-being of its guests. Exclusive cosmetics, in synergy with organic products, enhance the sensation of comfort, employing exclusive treatments and age-old techniques.

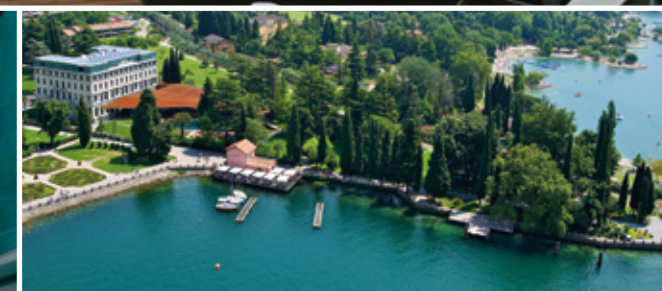


# A remarkable

# Surprise

## LIDO PALACE

Opened in 1899 as a resort for the European royalty, the hotel possesses a strong contemporary personality framed by the elegance and style of a bygone era. Set in an extensive garden and wooded grounds with splendid cedar, cypresses, yew and palm trees, the hotel was recently renovated and offers privacy and discretion to the nth degree. Two stylish restaurants, one with a terrace, and a bar with art nouveau frescoed ceilings will spoil you and are respectful of all dietary requirements. This grand hotel is also a splendid wedding location for precious moments to treasure at length, as well as gala dinners, briefings and corporate events.



## Xfactor

Sweeping views of the lake adorn the sleek, contemporary suites, featuring wooden floors and separate living areas.

Lido Palace  
42 rooms and suites  
Open from March to January  
Tesla Destination Charging  
Viale Carducci, 10 - 38066 Riva del Garda (TN)  
[www.lido-palace.it](http://www.lido-palace.it)



# Where Nature takes centre stage

DU LAC ET DU PARK GRAND RESORT



Set on 17 acres of woodland and landscaped gardens along the shores of Lake Garda, this upscale resort answers all your questions. Stay in one of the fashionable rooms or the several suites and bungalows, feeling the exclusivity of your own space immersed in the greenery of a luxurious park. Chef Marco Brink brings out the best in a voyage across regional, national and international dishes: you will find three restaurants including a pizzeria, a buffet-style eatery, a refined bistro plus a chic bar. Relax and unwind in the Armonia Spa & Fitness, a haven of peace and serenity, where Garda Trentino Extra Virgin Olive Oil is employed in many treatments.



## Xfactor

The perfect family destination, the Resort offers a vast array of facilities and sports activities for all ages.

Du Lac et du Parc Grand Resort  
220 rooms and suites  
34 bungalows  
Open from March to November  
Tesla Destination Charging  
Viale Rovereto, 44 - 38066 Riva del Garda (TN)  
[www.dulacetduparc.com](http://www.dulacetduparc.com)



Stay in one of the exquisite bungalows and you will deeply enjoy the close contact with nature. Equipped with all mod cons, they are the ultimate in sleek design combined with the love for natural things.







# Music & more

Fair Verona, the city of Juliet, exudes romance at the mere mention of its name. Beyond the inevitable image of the chocolate-box, romantic Italian dream, however, lies a splendid historic city, part of the UNESCO World Heritage Sites, with pink-hued medieval and Renaissance buildings and museums so rich in artefacts and works of art to be the envy of many other cities. And that's not all. Veneto is famous for its wine and food culture and in Verona you will find a vast array of outstanding restaurants, serving exquisite delicacies, including those coming from nearby Lake Garda. Verona is best experienced walking through its pretty alleyways, admiring the many palazzi, splendid churches and the attractive piazzas: Piazza delle Erbe, Piazza dei Signori or Piazza Brà. Mantegna in San Zeno and Pisanello in Sant'Anastasia. Modern Art at Palazzo Forti

or the exceptional collection of Castelvecchio. Dante, Giotto and Petrarch all found superb patrons here. Come and discover the rich legacy of a lively, historic, romantic city.

## Roman past and Divas

One of the richest collections of Roman remains in northern Italy is to be found in Verona, including Porta Borsari – the gate – Arco dei Gavi, dismantled in the Napoleonic period and rebuilt next to Castelvecchio in the 1930s, the Roman Theatre and the Arena. The latter, built in the 1st century AD, miraculously surviving a 12th century earthquake, is the legendary open-air opera house. Step into this marvel to fully grasp its majesty as this cannot be guessed from the outside. Even better, take part in one of the many shows staged during the Summer Opera Festival. A 44-tiered seating system, hosting a staggering 30,000 people, guarantees the experience of a lifetime. Will it be Aida, Carmen or La Traviata? The choice is yours.

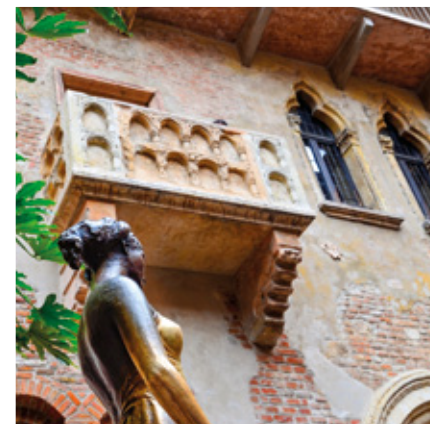


*“What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet,”*  
SHAKESPEARE, *Romeo and Juliet*



Visiting the Arena (above) feels like stepping back in time: its grandeur will beguile you

Stop by one of the several exquisite restaurants in Verona for a meal you will treasure



The most famous balcony in history, Juliet's house has captured the imagination of lovers the world over

## The city of lovers

Visitors flock in big numbers to see Juliet's balcony, her character made famous by William Shakespeare's ever-actual drama, *Romeo and Juliet*. Still, it's not only *"wherefore art thou"* in Verona. Head to the Giardino Giusti, mentioned by Mozart and Goethe, to find some romance. One of the best examples of a mannerist garden with a Renaissance landscaping, it is a curious Italianate mix of natural and manicured features. Legend has it that lovers who can find each other in the small maze will stand the test of times. Be as it may, the view from the belvedere is hard to beat and is most inspiring. Verona even has its own Tower of Love: Torre dei Lamberti. A staggering 86-metre tower begun in the 12th century will grant a 360° view on the marvellous city, the surrounding countryside and mountains. In the evening, the tower transforms into a sleek lounge, with a rooftop terrace that can host exclusive events. In the city made famous for romance and fatal family feuding, you will discover some new, exciting stories to tell.





Bright colours and intense hues feature throughout this sensational hotel. The soul of this hotel comes to the fore in the vivid contrast with the overall structure and the garden. The current building dates back to the 18th century; the singularity of the juxtaposition between ancient and modern makes this hotel a unique destination.

# Art & Design experience

BYBLOS ART HOTEL VILLA AMISTÀ

Set in an opulent 16th century villa close to Verona, the Byblos Art Hotel Villa Amistà has been whimsically imagined by designer Alessandro Mendini and triumphs with contemporary art. The extraordinary rooms and suites feature vibrant, bold colours and creative décor, with marble bathrooms, exposed beams and plush upholstery, as well as contemporary artworks. Savour delicacies from the Atelier restaurant, where vegetables grown in the private garden are used, or choose the Giardino d'Inverno restaurant for a relaxed meal. Even the exquisite Wine Cellar speaks the language of design and offers an enticing dinner venue. Relax in the mosaic-tiled Espace Byblos Spa where exquisite treatments are offered and Anmin Cosmetics employed. Weddings and ceremonies here will be the talk of town and you will treasure your memories at length.



## Xfactor

The superb Peter's Bar is simply staggering. Enjoy a sensational signature cocktail while admiring the surroundings.

Byblos Art Hotel Villa Amistà  
59 rooms and suites  
Open from March to October  
Tesla Destination Charging  
Via Cedrare 78, 37029 Verona  
[www.byblosarthotel.com](http://www.byblosarthotel.com)





# Lago d' *Iseo* & *Franciacorta*

*“The most beautifully romantic place  
I ever saw in my life”*

LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU







In June and July 2016, the Hungarian contemporary artist Christo made an interesting installation of floating piers, connecting Sulzano, Monte Isola and the island of Saint Paul

*F*ranciacorta, Sebino, Lovere, San Defendente. Evocative names which hide a secret gem. Lago d'Iseo (also known as **Sebino**) is one of the least known Lombard lakes and, perhaps because of this, it is absolutely alluring. Just over 60 miles from Bergamo and Brescia, it is a treasure trove of history, tradition, excellent food, refined bubbles and magnificent sights. Whether you are a foodie on the lookout for new inspiration, you are an explorer after ancient cave painting, you want to nurture your outdoorsy nature and hike, climb, cycle, sail or simply plan to whizz your way around an enchanting lake in style, we have you covered here. Fragrant scents and vibrant colours, the shimmering light on the silky water, a mild climate and the picture-postcard Lake Endine to

the north-west, rolling Franciacorta wine country to the south: you are spoilt for choice here and you will simply not want to leave. Start with venturing out on **Monte Isola**. Europe's biggest lake island, towering at the south end of Lake Iseo is, quite possibly, its most fascinating attraction. Francesco Sforza, the acclaimed Duke of Milan, granted the people of Monte Isola special fishing rights in the Quattrocento. To this day,

## Franciacorta Wine Route

When it comes to wine, Italy inevitably springs to mind. Franciacorta, a small corner between Brescia and the southern tip of Lake Iseo, is a little gem producing sublime bubbles. The Franciacorta Wine Route develops along 80 km and 19 municipalities; it is an excellent way to discover the area, delve into its history and savour local products. Gentle, rolling hills which are a feast for the eyes and the soul. Franciacorta wine is a symbol of excellence known the world over and this route allows you to discover other traits of this marvellous area: you can savour excellent dishes, as well, in a sublime marriage of tastes of local, peasant specialities, linked with more sophisticated flavours coming from the lake. Several events take place along this route, all year round, dedicated to various delicacies, but also flowers, organic agriculture, jazz music and even cars. Franciacorta can also be discovered on your bike, offering a series of interesting itineraries, with five main ones, starting in Brescia or close by. It is a chance to discover the several villages dotted along the route and – why not? – stop at one of the wineries for some tastings. Franciacorta is a gem and you will wonder why you haven't visited before.



## Lovere

The village of Lovere, in the northern part of the lake, is a pleasant discovery: elected one of Italy's prettiest *borghi*, you can take a look at its tourist harbour to admire the many attractive boats and walk on the splendid promenade, visit the imposing Saint Mary in Valvendra basilica, the Capuchin convent and the Accademia Tadini art gallery. You can also make your way to explore the many villas.







## Torbiere del Sebino

The Natural Reserve of the Torbiere del Sebino (peat bogs), on the southern shores of Lake Iseo, is an exceptional park. It has been declared “an internationally important damp area” and is considered a European paradise for birdwatching, with 17 species of birds nesting here. Equipped paths have been created all along the perimeter of the peat bogs; some footbridges and viewpoints are also to be found: seeing the birds living in this surprising reserve is a remarkable experience.



their handmade fishing nets are highly appraised. It is precisely these fishermen's villages which will steal your heart away: time seems to have stood still here, the hustle and bustle of bigger cities a long distance away. Now that 600-metre mountain does not seem that far, so off you go and discover the two magical sanctuaries, Cure and Ceriola, where marvellous vistas await. Monte Isola can only be discovered on foot or bike, no cars are allowed; a hike and bike path goes around the island for nearly ten miles and it is the perfect way to enjoy this most striking little jewel.

How to fully savour the charm of Lake Iseo? You can take a cruise



## Riva Shipyard

Pietro Riva, a young shipbuilder and craftsman from Laglio, near Como, was not to know that he would have fashioned a legend, when he decided to repair the damaged boats of the fishermen in Sarnico, after a violent storm had caused havoc. That was 1842 and the dawning of the celebrated Riva yachts. Right from the very beginning, the boats stood out for their painstaking attention to details, personality and finesse. The 1920s and 1930s saw the Riva shipyard dedicating its efforts to racing boats, as well, signing off several successes in national and international competitions. The bar was pushed even further with Carlo Riva in the 1950s: think *la Dolce Vita* meets Italian craftsmanship and you'll have dazzling icons of style and elegance, also thanks to the collaboration with the designer and architect Giorgio Barilani, which started in 1956. The overall Riva production oversaw everything, from the hull to yachts – 27 to 68 feet in length – and the idea was to look after the details as well as the functionality of each boat. Riva is now owned by the Ferretti group and holds a shipyard in La Spezia, as well, carrying on the utmost tradition of elegance, precision and the exceptional quality of the materials employed. Step into a true icon of Italian excellence and live the Italian dream.

on the lake, touching its major sights, or why not reach it via a steam train from Bergamo? The most striking feature of the lakes in northern Italy is the enchanting juxtaposition of diverse landscapes and the impeccable state of conservation of their villages; on Lake Iseo, even the tiniest of them boasts an elaborate church and medieval alleyways, not to mention the elegant mansions.

From **Sarnico** to **Iseo**, **Sulzano** to **Sale Marasino**, an attractive coastal road connects the towns, offering majestic views of the glittering water where nothing seems to disturb, besides birds happily tweeting or the odd church bell ringing.

Highly evocative because of the silence it is surrounded by and the marvellous views of the lake it offers, **San Defendente** sanctuary is set in a superb surrounding in Solto Collina, overlooking Riva di Solto. It can only be reached on foot or by bike with a short, one-hour path, but any effort will be highly paid off. Dramatic views of the mountains jetting off from the water will leave you speechless.

## Val Camonica

One of the world's greatest collections of prehistoric petroglyphs is found in Capo di Ponte, about 30 miles from the northern tip of the lake. Part of the UNESCO World Heritage Sites since 1979, you will find more than 140,000 symbols and figures carved in the rock over a period of 8,000 years, depicting scenes relating to agriculture, navigation, war and magic. These are remnants of the culture of the Camuni tribe culture who found refuge here to escape northern invaders.

The *rosa camuna*, one of the most famous carvings, has been adopted as the symbol of Lombardy.







Chef STEFANO CERVENI

## Chef & Stars Due Colombe al Borgo Antico

This superb restaurant in Borgonato di Corte Franca, deep within the heart of Franciacorta, is set in a recently renovated ancient hamlet. Informal, yet smart, it offers the ideal combination of tradition and modernity, crafting sensational dishes thanks to the creativity, rigour and experience of Chef Stefano Cerveni. "I would like my clients to revel in the pleasures of the kitchen in an informal atmosphere, where they can feel at home, as if among friends." *Purple potatoes, red prawns and Franciacorta* is his signature dish. The prawns are served raw and au naturel over a layer of vitelotte potato purée, chosen for their sweetness and intense taste, and a thin layer of Franciacorta-flavoured white butter (usually the Brut Il Mosnel variety), with a touch of barely-textured, raw demi-sec rosé. It embodies a fusion of France (the bulb variety, the Isigny butter) and Franciacorta (the wine) on a classic combination (shellfish and bubbles), via a rainbow of temperatures (cold on top, lukewarm in the middle and warm at the bottom), and a good balance between sweetness and fatness, sapidity and acidity, in the guise of a patisserie creation. Gualtiero Marchesi would have commented: "what looks good, tastes good", the separate ingredients put together the way he would have taught.



Perhaps unsurprisingly for a country where food is a real credo, Lake Iseo is an authentic foodie's haven. Not only are we talking about exquisite, local fish-based recipes, but also about the *salame* from Montisola which boasts a traditional processing method following the moon cycle, the *àole* – small fish which are sun dried, put in oil for a few months and then used as a condiment – or the *bigoi* – big, hand-made spaghetti made with a small press. Raise your hands for enchanting, exciting and surprising **Franciacorta** sparkling wine. Considered the undisputed land of high-quality bubbles – DOCG Franciacorta – wine-making traditions date back to ancient times in this area. The name itself – *corte affrancata*, free court – was attributed to it in the 12th century to identify a tax-free region, a benefit enjoyed by the Cluniac monasteries as a compensation for the land reclamation of territories destined to vineyards. These days, Franciacorta epitomises rolling hills, exquisite countryside and superb wine. The method used in the production of this refined sparkling wine is exactly the same adopted in France to make champagne, the *Méthode Champenoise*. Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Blanc grapes are primarily employed; the bubbles are then obtained by allowing a secondary fermentation to occur in the bottle. The wine comes both in vintage and non-vintage forms, with the standard white being complemented by a rosé version. Complexity and finesse are its trademarks, with the first sparkling Franciacorta created in the late 1950s, being promoted to DOCG in 1995. Gravelly, stony soils, rich in minerals, which are ideal for high-quality viticulture, feature in this wine region in the Brescia province, stretching eastwards for about fifteen miles from the Oglio river. Yet another instance of Italian excellence in a land sprinkled with charming, fascinating secrets and treasures. —

## Not to be missed

### Piramidi di Zone - Cislano di Zone

There's no missing this on Lake Iseo: you will find rare and spectacular views at Cislano di Zone, which you can reach from Marone. A stunning natural phenomenon, these are conical pyramids, protected by large boulders balancing on them, which stop the erosion process caused by the rain. When a boulder detaches itself, the earth pyramid slowly flattens due to water eating it away. A one-hour path from the little church of St George leads visitors to the Belvedere. The pyramids can also be reached by bike: the view from there is simply unforgettable.

### Naet d'Or

The Naet is one of the symbols of Lake Iseo, a boat whose shape is reminiscent of the better-known Venetian gondola. *Naet d'Or* is a long awaited competition, which takes place on Lake Iseo and recalls ancient traditions. The sports version of the Naet is 7.7 metre long, it measures 1.3 metres at its broadest point (0.80 at the base) and has a rather heavy minimum weight at around 216 kg. Two or more oarsmen row in the Venetian style standing up. The heats run over 150 metres from buoy to buoy with two or three laps round the buoys. The first boat to reach the finish line is the acclaimed champion. It's excitement galore on Lake Iseo!

### La valle del freddo - Cavallina Valley

Known as "Cold Valley", this may well be the most interesting natural phenomenon in the area. This 600-metre long depression sits at 360m above sea level and yet you can find flora typical of higher altitudes, such as rhododendrons and edelweiss. This is due to the complex structure of the soil, which allows the formation of large, underground blocks of ice in the winter season. In the summer, the air goes through these blocks and comes out through holes at the bottom of the valley at a temperature of 2-4 degrees. You could call this a natural refrigerator, where altitude flowers can resist even during hot summers. This phenomenon has no equals in Europe and it is best visited from May to July. Please stick to the marked paths, so as not to compromise the flora.

### San Pietro in Lamosa - Provaglio d'Iseo

The most ancient and the only recognised Clunisian monastery on Lake Iseo, San Pietro in Lamosa is perched on a rock spur overlooking the Torbiere del Sebino, in Provaglio d'Iseo. The monastery is remarkable not only in view of its position, but also for its exquisite decoration. You can find an – albeit partially lost – Annunciation, a Madonna with Child (end of the 13th century) and the face of another Madonna (14th century). Later additions show that Renaissance artists paid their tribute, as well, such as Domenico Toselli and Paolo da Caylina the Younger. Hungry for more? This monastery is an unexpected gem; visiting it and exploring the area will be a pleasant surprise.



## Food & Wine

### Barbogio De Gaioncelli - Corte Franca

Andrea is an oenologist and Lorenzo a chef: two faces, two colleagues with diverse backgrounds who could only fulfil their dreams by meeting each other. Imagine the rolling hills of Franciacorta, an ample courtyard setting the scene: that's where you'll find a venue full of character. Stone and wood, heavily featured throughout, seem to relate to the surrounding nature, the outcome being this exceptional restaurant, whose motto is "to promote and enhance attention for refinement and the utmost quality."

### Dispensa pani e vini Franciacorta - Torbiato

Dispensa Franciacorta, a place which wears many hats; a go-to spot for lovers of good food and wine in Franciacorta. Here, the Parzanini brothers work together and promote a 2500 sq m organic herb garden in Rodengo Saiano, where they work with passion and water it by hand, obtaining most of the vegetables served in their restaurant. Their menu is intriguing; the chef himself introduces it, accompanying every single dish to the table, talking about its origin and story.

### La Madia - San Zenone

Overlooking the valley and Franciacorta, this authentic country trattoria favours local and national exclusive products. A real journey of tastes: here, you will find exceptional dishes, crafted with simple ingredients. Each plate is accompanied by an explanation made by the friendly, helpful staff. The pork with dried, Lake Iseo *agone*, akin to a pilchard, is sensational.

### Panoramico - Fonteno

Perched on the lake, on a panoramic setting with an exceptional view, Panoramico is certainly a gift of nature. After half a century of activity, the restaurant had a revamp, albeit keeping an eye on tradition. The cuisine makes use of fresh, high-quality raw materials, but it also explores innovative ways and methods, thanks to chef Alberto Zanoletti. In the menu, in addition to the traditional, rigorously hand-made casoncelli, which are 50 years old, you will find the Sicilian pink prawns soup with a curry-flavoured cous cous, creamy Icelandic cod, porcini mushroom cream and crusty corn wafer, as well as "Two ways of saying rabbit: boneless, roasted and braised."



# An oasis of wellbeing



## L'ALBERETA

Set among vineyards and a botanical garden, this ivy-clad luxury relais possesses more classic Italian glamour than a Fellini film. With a history of internationally renowned chefs, the venue holds a soul and a personality of its own. A treasure trove of beauty in a splendid architectural frame, surrounded by rolling hills, towers, Renaissance and patrician villas. Exquisitely appointed rooms and suites will make your stay memorable. Leone Felice's talented Chef Fabio Abbattista finds most of his ingredients close by. A superb spa, two wineries and impeccable service, this is the de facto destination for discerning travellers.



A dream team of masseurs, beauticians, dieticians and even an osteopath are to be found on the Espace Chenot, which offers everything you could dream of, from sauna to Turkish bath, hydrotherapy pools and an outdoor pool. Absolute wellbeing and the search for harmony define this exceptional space, based on the principles of biontology to restore health and regain vital energy.

## Xfactor

**At the touch of a button, the roof of the Cabriolet Suite opens up to let the warm sun in over your king-size bed below. The suite also has a balcony.**

L'Albereta  
57 rooms and suites  
Open year-round  
Tesla Destination Charging  
Via Vittorio Emanuele, 23 - 25030 Erbusco (BS)  
[www.albereta.it](http://www.albereta.it)





# Peaceful Wonder



**HOTEL RIVALAGO**

Located in a marvellous natural scenery, the Hotel strives to care for the environment. The energy employed at the hotel is 100% renewable, guaranteed by TÜV SÜD. Their laundry has an environmental certification and the cleaning products are fully environment-friendly.

## Xfactor

The garden with swimming pool and Jacuzzi is a lovely spot for an *aperitivo*, a must at sunset.



Hotel Rivalago  
33 rooms and suites  
Open from April to October  
Repower charging station  
Via Cadorna, 7 - 25058 Sulzano (BS)  
[www.rivalago.it](http://www.rivalago.it)



Set on Lake Iseo overlooking Monte Isola, this genteel waterfront hotel is a pleasant surprise. Run by the Paggiarini family, it is located in a magnificently renovated period building, offering bright and airy rooms with noble hardwood floors, antique style furniture, linen curtains and a soft colour palette – save for a touch of bold colours in some rooms, creating a pretty contrast. The interiors feature Provençal style furniture, antique white lamps and dove-grey sofas, with a decidedly Mediterranean atmosphere. You may also opt for one of the marvellous annexes, decorated with the same refined style and character that define this oasis of tranquillity with sweeping views.





# Lago di *Como*



SVIZZERA

CERNOBBIO

COMO

MILANO

ISOLA COMACINA

TREMEZZO

MENAGGIO

BELLAGIO

VARENNA

MADONNA DEL GHISALLO

MANDELLO DEL LARIO

LECCO

MILANO



Italy's third largest lake, shaped like an armless wanderer – or an upside-down Y, Lake Como – il Lario – as it's known to locals, from its Latin name *lacus Larius*, comes most heavily praised, and that stands to reason. Despite the influx of tourists and the rich and famous having purchased a house or villa here, the area is still surrounded by abundant vegetation, and zigzagging across the water on a steamer can seem almost ridiculously romantic. The lake is set in the shadow of the Rhetian Alps, protecting it from extreme temperatures, and is hemmed in both sides by steep wooded hills.

Its winding shoreline is dotted with ancient villas and exquisite villages which, together with excellent food, add lure to

this magnificent natural setting. You will soon discover, however, that the lake is much more than sweeping vistas and serene tranquillity. In addition to indulging in Belle Époque dreams, in fact, you could venture off into one of the many walks through the lake's mountainous hinterland or be tempted by wind- or kite-surfing, especially in the north, between Colico and Domaso. The lake is also Italy's deepest, reaching a 410-metre depth between Argegno and Nesso.

From Verdi to Lord Byron and Stendhal, all fell prey to the charm of **Como**, the lake's main town, sitting where the southern and eastern shores converge. The town is the main European centre for the manufacture of silk, in fact fashion designers still ask for *Made in Como* silk and the Silk Museum is a testimony to the local's artistry. Como also hosts a splendid **Duomo**, a fabulous marble-clad cathedral where

several styles converge: Romanesque, Gothic and Renaissance, topped by a Rococo cupola all alternated during its construction between 1396 and 1770. Fairy tale pinnacles, rose-windows and gargoyles are seen alongside rounded portals and statues of Pliny the Elder and Younger – both born in Como – which adorn the façade. Inside, gold-woven tapestries from Ferrara, Florence and Antwerp decorate the aisles, as well as oil paintings by Bernardino Luini and Gaudenzio Ferrari. The **Tremezzina**, the shore above Isola Co-

macina, encompassing Lenno, Mezzegro, Ossuccio and Tremezzo is where the climate is at its gentlest, the lake at its most tranquil and the vegetation at its most lush. **Tremezzo**, quaint and quiet, has been rated as one of Italy's prettiest *borghi*, a title which goes a long way to disclose the appeal of this charming town on the lake. Time seems to have stood still here, the rhythm of life being peaceful, with people enjoying a morning stroll or perusing in the small shops, far from the madding crowds which can be found along the narrow roads on

“A treasure whom the earth keeps to herself”

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH



## Rogolone Oak

In the woods between the western shore of Lake Como and the eastern side of Lake Lugano proudly stands one of Europe's most imposing *Quercus Petrae*. Over three hundred years old, this giant tree is called *Rogolone* (*Rugulòn* in dialect) and gained the respect of local people over the centuries, so much so that there was a time when important decisions were taken under its shadow, as it was believed to hold magic powers. In Grandola ed Uniti, west of Menaggio, the wooded area called *Bosco Impero*, around this imposing tree, protected by a state decree ever since December 1928, seems to pay homage to its grandeur. Its 4,2-metre diameter is indeed striking, and six people are needed to embrace it fully. Next to it, you will find the Rogolino, its younger brother and fellow adventurer in the test of times.





Picture-postcard Varenna (left) is beguiling. Bursting with exotic flowery perfumes and birdsong, its pastel-coloured houses sit charmingly on the lake. Villa Carlotta (below) sits high on the must-visit list on Lake Como: a 17th century villa where the most amazing camellias and azaleas, among many others, bloom

the lake, especially in high season.

Tourists cannot be blamed, however, for the scenery here is simply breathtaking and the gardens lush and colourful.

One such example is **Villa Balbianello** in Tremezzo, which possesses cinematic pedigree: scenes from Star Wars Episode II and the 2006 James Bond remake of *Casino Royale* were shot here. The charm of this dramatic location will not fail to impress visitors in this stunning harmony of lake views and exquisite architecture. Its last owner was Guido Monzino, a renowned explorer and entrepreneur, who donated the villa to the Italian National Trust, the Fondo Ambiente Italiano, FAI. Built in 1787 by Cardinal Angelo Durini, the villa now houses a stunning collection of artworks and mementos from Monzino's adventures in Africa, the Himalayas and Polar Regions. The sculpted gardens are perfect for romantic elopers who want to

spend the day in this outstanding location. The villa can be either reached via a 1-km path amid florid vegetation or a taxi boat from Lenno.

Works of art by Canova, Hayez, Thorvaldsen and Andrea Appiani await you at **Villa Carlotta**, which sits high on Lake Como's must-visit list. A botanical garden as well as a museum, this place will astonish visitors. In its extraordinary, fourteen-acre botanical gardens you will find orange trees interlaced with pergolas, with some of Europe's finest rhododendrons, azaleas and camellias, with an added bamboo grove, a Zen-style rock garden and a luxuriant fern valley. Pink, white and Neoclassical, the villa was bought by a Prussian princess for her daughter Carlotta – hence the name.

Considering its beauty, the villa gets really busy at peak season, so if you're in a quieter mood, opt for the **Teresio Olivelli Park**, a short distance away. A hidden gem, the park sits direct-

## Leonardo's ferry

Are ninety pence too big an expense to travel on the work of a genius? Leonardo da Vinci's ferry, connecting Imbersago, about 13 miles from Lecco, to Villa d'Adda, on the opposite side of the river Adda, is a testimony to the talented genius, who spent quite some time in the region. In the past, the river had separated the Duchy of Milan from the Venice Republic, so it was of extraordinary importance. Leonardo left several marks of his presence in this area, which he visited between 1506 and 1513, from the big turning machine in the Garlate Silk Museum to explorations in the mysterious spring of Villa Pliniana.

It is, however, a sketch by the master held in the Milan Science Museum which leads us back to this extraordinary engineering feat. Although some experts maintain that Leonardo had worked on an existing project, it surely bears the master's touch. The ferry exploits a simple force, the one of water flowing: up to thirty people and four cars can find room on the 60 sq m platform and reach the opposite bank in five minutes. An exceptional stroke of genius in a splendid landscape, which still survives to this day.

ly on the lake and is charm personified. After having cherished in the serenity of what has been voted "Best park in Italy", enjoy one of the many open-air concerts organised in the summer or sip a fizzy *aperitivo* sitting on the terrace of the Acqua Cheta bar. Could life get any better than this?

Cradled by cypress-spiked hills on the tip of the triangle separating the lake's two branches, **Bellagio** is undeniably charming and alluring. A promenade planted with oleanders and limes, *fin-de-siècle* hotels painted shades of butterscotch, peach and cream, the hilly old centre of steeped cobbled streets and alleyways: surprise and admiration are guaranteed here. Of the many noteworthy gardens, pay a visit to **Villa Melzi d'Eril**. Built in 1808 for one of Napoleon's associates, it is a luxuriant affair crammed with azaleas, rhododendrons, ornamental lemon trees, cypresses, palms, camellias and even a sequoia. The statue-studded garden was the first English-style park on the lake. Walking to Villa Melzi from Bellagio ferry jetties, you will be rewarded with great views





## The Ernesto Riva Shipyard



When style meets tradition, that's where you'll find a Riva boat. Eight generations and counting for a genuine institution on Lake Como. Founded in 1771, the Ernesto Riva Shipyard still aims for the same principles: the utmost attention in the search for the finest materials and and striving for perfect lines whilst respecting traditions. To this day, the Laglio shipyard is still a place that time forgot, where the dedication and artistry of Daniele Riva is highly sought after, admirers and intrigued folks regularly passing by to observe him at work. Daniele mainly employs local chestnut, ash tree, durmast and larch wood; a selection of one-of-a-kind boats for selected national and international clients who seek exclusivity. In addition to crafting marvellous boats, *lancette lariane* (called Inglesine) and "Lucie" in the Alessandro Manzoni style, the shipyard specialises in the restoration of vintage boats, as well as looking after boats on a dry berthing. Daniele is one of the last boat-builders on the lake, his expertise a testimony to the rich Italian heritage of excellence.

of gracious, plush residencies.

Splendidly sited on a hill above the town, **Villa Serbelloni**, now owned by The Rockefeller Foundation, was once a favourite of monarchs and the jet-set. The Villa itself changed ownership and functions several times, being a fortress, then a luxurious palace, a monastery and now a philanthropic centre. Aiming at dialogue, study and fellowship among people from all walks of life, the Foundation is home to a staggering 50 conferences and 150 residents per year.

Fans of Guzzi motorbike will revel in the **Moto Guzzi Museum** in Mandello del Lario, close to Lecco, on the eastern branch of the lake. The legendary eagle brand was created by Carlo Guzzi, Emanuele Vittorio Parodi and his son Giorgio in 1931. The town, usually calm and tranquil, sees hoards of enthusiasts when the motorbike factory holds its Open House. The museum itself is set within the walls of the plant and it hosts about 150 models between prototypes and finished examples: among them, the coveted Falcone, the dream of every boy in the 1950s, or the 1928 Norge model, the first Gran Turismo in the history of motorbikes. The brand is now owned by the Piaggio group, and a trip to this museum will surely reward you with exciting memories of this Italian symbol of excellence.

The rugged beauty of the eastern shores of

the lake, often unjustly overlooked, will surprise visitors who usually flock to the western branch. **Varenna** is known as the pearl of the lake and it is well worth a visit. In the charm of either **Villa Monastero** or **Villa Cipressi**,



## Concorso d'Eleganza

If you are a vintage or sports car devotee, **Cernobbio** is where you'll be heading next. Set north from Como, the palatial 16th century **Villa d'Este** hosts the **Concorso d'Eleganza** each May, where fifty classic cars from the 1920s as far as the 1980s compete. The event started as early as 1929 and has been attracting participants from all over the world ever since. Winning the prestigious Villa d'Este Golden Cup is the ultimate recognition, although taking part is a reason of pride in itself. The crème de la crème of the car racing industry puts on a memorable show for three days of pure car engineering pleasure. Some of the models are produced in small quantities and you do not often have the chance to take a glance inside the bonnet of these jewels. Come shoulder to shoulder with the glitterati or simply marvel at the engineering artworks right in front of your eyes.



Pliny had one of his favourite villas in Bellagio, and that stands to reason. You will be love-struck by its waterfront, its maze of steep stone staircases, red-roofed buildings and rhododendron-filled gardens

you will enjoy exceptional gardens with exotic plants. *The Lover's Walk* is the crown jewel: starting to the right of the jetty and ending in the historic centre of Varenna, this romantic walk offers enchanting views on the mountains, stately mansions and Menaggio on the opposite side of the shore. Couples will be in their element here, rejoicing in tranquillity and peace, marvelling at the light changing by the hour and offering ever-changing glimpses of this enchanting corner of Lake Como. —



## Toy Horse Museum

Imagine stepping back in time and meandering around 650 toy horses. Wouldn't that be a dream? Grandate, a few miles from Como, deserves a detour, primarily because of this peculiar, most interesting **Museo del Cavallo Giocattolo** (Toy Horse Museum). A former stable where a thoroughbred called Tornese was born – known as the Flying Chestnut and which won several World Champion titles in the 1950s – the museum hosts this marvellous collection of toy horses. Of all materials and sizes, from 1700 to the present day, you will see carousel horses, tin toys, horses on wheels, rocking horses, carillons and many more, coming from all over the world. Founded by a clever entrepreneur, this is the place where the past is given prominence and culture is seen as a bond between generations. So it comes as no surprise that, in addition to the incredibly rich collection of toy horses, you will also find a garden of wonders, a playground for children, an arena for theatrical productions, a lab for families, schools and associations, with a big square where visitors can relax. In the words of the museum curators, this is a "unique place where growing up is a game and being a parent is a journey into happiness."





Chef ETTORE BOCCHIA

## Chef & Stars Mistral

The Michelin star of chef Ettore Bocchia has been shining at the Mistral in Bellagio for over a decade. Ettore is known as the father of molecular gastronomy and his menus embody the excellence of international haute cuisine. You will find dishes like *canard à la presse*, turbot fried in sugar with mashed potatoes, steamed vegetables and leek sauce. High-quality ingredients which are often rare and almost impossible to find. The Mont Saint-Michel lamb, grazing at low tide, its flesh naturally salty, is a treat, as are the foie gras from Spanish Extremadura free-range geese and the *free-hand menu*, an impromptu option, crafted according to inspiration and the time of the year. The superb setting of Lake Como is combined with live music (piano, violin and double bass), giving you the experience of a lifetime.



## Not to be missed

### Celebration of Saint John (end of June)

Thousands of visitors gather in Zoca de l'Oli, on the bay opposite Comacina Island, in the week-end close to 24 June, to celebrate Saint John. The festivities entail dances, singing and tastings of exquisite Lombard delicacies, ending up with spectacular fireworks on the lakeshore.

### Lunch at the Locanda on Comacina Island

The only island on Lake Como, Comacina is a small, picturesque and verdant rock granting exceptional views and experiences, such as the rite with which the innkeeper shoos away the old curse on the island. Its traditions galore here: a set menu has been going strong since 1947 and even George Clooney is a fan.

### Bottega del legno - Bellagio

Founded in 1855, the Bottega del legno is one of the oldest trades in Bellagio. From the smallest pepperbox to the biggest globes, the historic Tacchi family produces a vast array of objects with olive and other precious wood types.

### Palio Remiero of the Lario

Every year around 31 August, Saint Abbondio's day, the patron of Como, the municipalities of the area take a challenge in a spectacular regatta among traditional fishermen's barges, the so-called "Lucie". Two stand-up rowers are on each barge and race for the first place, aiming at the coveted trophy. After the regatta, celebrations continue with the toc, polenta with butter and cheese, eaten taking it with a spoon and the thumb and index.

### La Madonna del Ghisallo

Legend has it that, in medieval times, a local count was being attacked by bandits when he saw the Virgin Mary; he ran towards her and was then saved. The Madonna del Ghisallo became the first patron saint of travellers and, later, of cyclists. Since then, the small chapel has become a shrine to cycling legends and a regular stop of the Giro d'Italia.

### Como's covered market

A window on tradition and local culture is represented by this covered market, popular with locals, where the products are extremely fresh and sourced locally: thin-cut mortadella with pistachios, bresaola from Valtellina, pork sausages, honey from Cernobbio, mataloc bread, raisin cakes, freshly caught lake fish and many types of cheese.

### Kilometre of Knowledge

The Kilometre of Knowledge (Chilometro della Conoscenza) is a path on the western shore of Lake Como, starting in Villa Olmo, crossing a bridge through the municipality of Serre, Villa del Grumello and ending at Villa Sucota. Encompassing a landscape of rare beauty, embracing the first basin of the lake with gardens, historic villas, greenhouses and the most important monuments of the city. Not only is this a heritage of immense natural beauty, but it also has a cultural, historical and artistic resonance.

## Food & Wine

### Crotto del Misto - Lezzeno

Fine cuisine is a staple in this hotel restaurant. You will savour traditional regional and lake dishes, with an added original twist. We strongly advise you try lake fish suggestions, accompanied by a wine from their exceptional cellar, built in the 18th century.

### Il Cantuccio - Albavilla

Chef Mauro Elli. A "little nook" in its own right, i.e. a tiny, intimate and secluded place in the typical Brianza hamlet of Albavilla, surrounded by the mountains, next to Lake Como. Proudly bearing its Michelin star ever since 2007, tradition meets creativity and innovation here, so much so that every dish exudes style and sheer simplicity. The chef will take the orders himself, guiding you through the menu.

### Il Cavatappi - Varenna

Very small, secluded, secret and really unique. These four words best describe the Cavatappi restaurant, one of the food and wine pearls on Lake Como, in Varenna. Genuine and authentic, set within the walls of the small historic centre, this is one of those intimate, romantic restaurants which oozes tradition and hearty food, where you are guaranteed to leave gratified and pleased.

### Il Gatto Nero - Cernobbio

The restaurant lies on the road leading to Monte Bisbino, in a superb setting with breathtaking views. Il Gatto Nero features an elegant, refined atmosphere and epitomises Italian cooking and Mediterranean specialities, to be savoured with a careful eye for Lombard food and wine.

### I Tigli in Theoria - Como

Chef Franco Caffara. I Tigli in Theoria is set in a marvellous Bishop's Palace dating back to 1446, when the Bishop was Branda Castiglioni. The dishes vary according to the wishes of the clients and the time of the day. You will find an art gallery, a Stube and a lounge bar. Art, history and gourmet dishes contribute to creating an all-round experience!

### Materia - Cernobbio

Chef Davide Caranchini. Recently awarded a Michelin star, Materia proudly shines on Lake Como, only two years after its opening. A modern, minimal and welcoming atmosphere exudes extreme attention to details, carried out by Chef Davide Caranchini and his team. Every dish is the outcome of meticulous dedication and experimentation, respecting the rhythm of nature and employing only the finest available ingredients.



### Momi - Blevio

The small terrace "within" the lake is in itself worth a detour. The cuisine, expressing strong local influences, is equally impressive. The house speciality aside – whitefish roe as the perfect homemade pasta or rice relish – you simply must savour the local fish. You may even moor close to the site, if you notify the owners in advance.

### Silvio - Bellagio

The same family has always run this restaurant, which will celebrate a century of activity in 2019. Lake products are a dogma here, to the extent that themed evenings and boat trips with clients are organized. What about the menu? It all depends on the catch of the day. By all means, do not forego perch and Missoltini-based dishes: they are a treat.

### Trattoria del Glicine - Cernobbio

An exquisite venue, enriched by a summer terrace offering sweeping views on the lake and mountains. A seasonal menu is on offer, focusing on local traditions in the winter and Mediterranean flavours in the summer. Lake and sea fish are fabulous. The cellar is outstanding, offering about a thousand labels.

### Trattoria del Vapore - Cernobbio

Ninety years and counting for this pleasant trattoria on the waterfront: inside, in addition to exposed brick walls and vintage photos, you will also find a small canteen supplying exquisite wines. Dining on the veranda is the ultimate experience. The menu offers typical lake dishes, with many fish-based recipes, but you will also find wide-ranging suggestions.

### Vecchia Varenna - Varenna

In a 15th century building, this is a marvellous place with a generous terrace on the lake: you will savour seasonal dishes based on local products, with the odd modern twist. Examples are salt-encrusted salmon trout fillet or creamy rice with Lavarello fish and lime. The delicious smoked provola and Granny Smith apples by prior arrangement only.

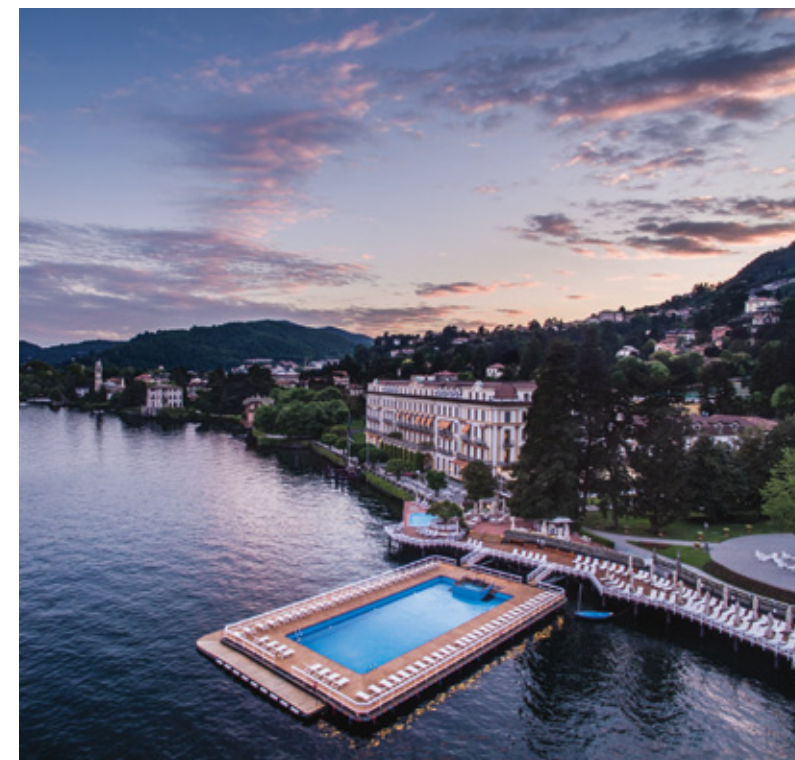


Timeless

*Elegance*

VILLA D'ESTE

Built in the 16th century as a summer residence for a wealthy cardinal, this luxury hotel in a 25-acre garden overlooking Lake Como is simply sublime. Think classic elegance, ultimate comfort and glamour. Graciously appointed rooms, filled with statues, antiques and Murano chandeliers convey an aura of a bygone era. With so many dining options, eating here is a "moveable feast". You will also find a Beauty Centre and a Sporting Club, as well as several banquet rooms. A protected heritage since 1913, Villa d'Este is more than a hotel, it is a destination in itself.



Every room has its own personality, based on period furniture, fine paintings adorning the walls, Como silk covered sofas and chairs. Featuring grand architectural details at every turn and old-world charm in abundance, it is no surprise that the hotel is still the favourite playground of celebrities.

*Xfactor*

**A floating swimming pool on the lake becomes reality in this most stunning destination, where allure and charm abound.**

Villa d'Este  
152 rooms and suites  
4 private villas  
Open from March to November  
Tesla Destination Charging  
Via Regina, 40 - 22012 Cernobbio (CO)  
[www.villadeste.com](http://www.villadeste.com)





# Endless *Beauty*

## GRAND HOTEL VILLA SERBELLONI

A truly magical property, this high-end circa 1850 Grand Hotel with Italianate garden is set on a promontory extending into Lake Como: the location couldn't get any better. An opulent villa with marble columns, Murano chandeliers and frescoed ceilings, this is a peaceful haven a stone's throw from the hubbub of Bellagio. The Hotel has been owned by the same family – Bucher – ever since 1918; its facilities are excellent, with a world-class spa, an inviting swimming pool on the lakefront, an outdoor tennis court, private beach and jetty. Style and character are reflected in the superb, Michelin-starred restaurant. Meetings and events are also hosted in the many conference rooms.



Grand Hotel Villa Serbelloni is one of the oldest and most elegant hotels on Lake Como. Built as a luxurious holiday villa for an aristocratic Milanese family in 1852, it was opened as a hotel twenty years later. Charm and timeless grace adorn the hotel throughout.



### *Xfactor*

The opulent interiors recreate a 19th century environment, with gilded frames, while the ceilings have floral patterns in light hues of pink and pearl grey

Grand Hotel Villa Serbelloni  
95 rooms and suites  
Open from April to November  
Tesla Destination Charging  
Via Roma, 1 - 22021 Bellagio (CO)  
[www.villaserbelloni.com](http://www.villaserbelloni.com)



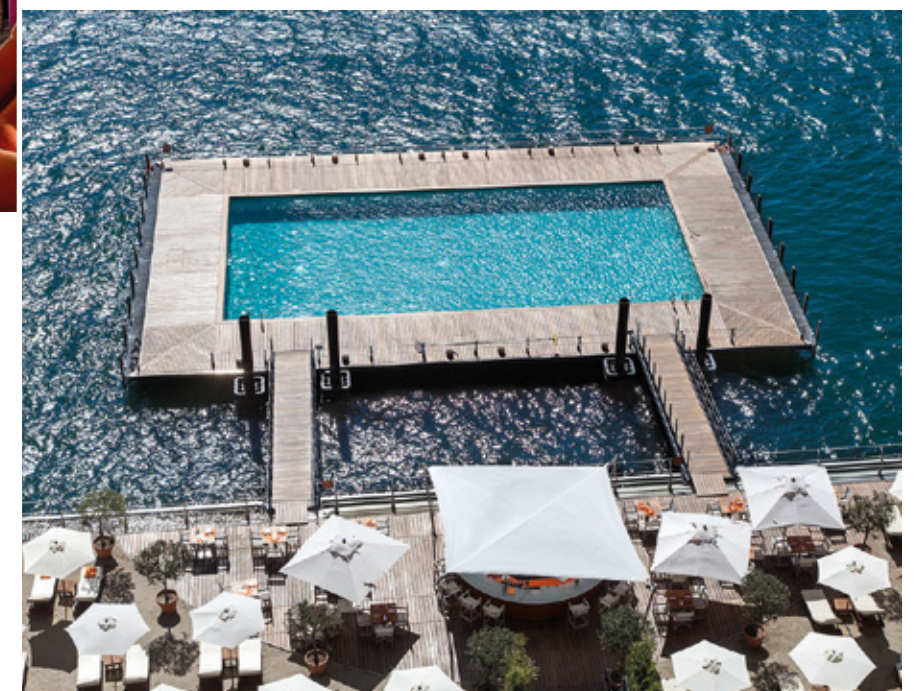
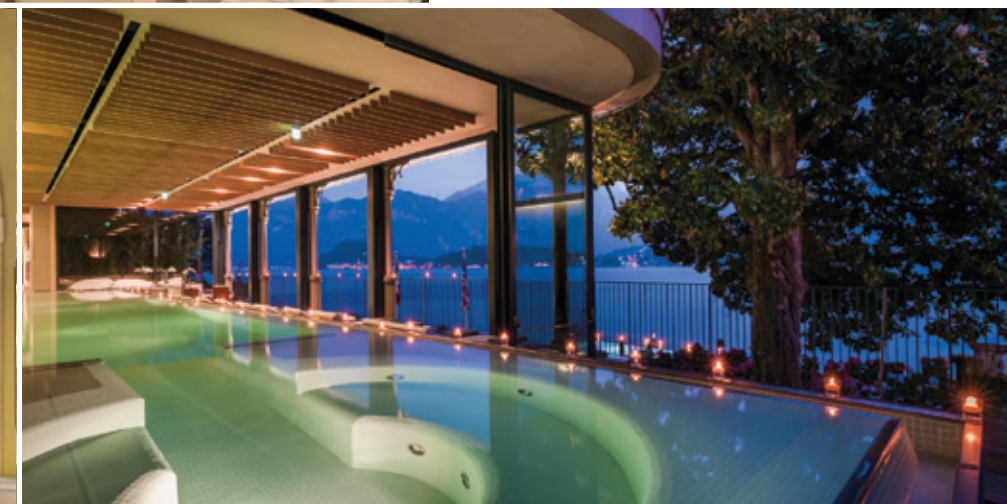


Choose one of the exclusive suites to have all your whims catered for: they come with private butler service. Eight lavishly-appointed Rooftop Suites, each with a private terrace and heated outdoor Jacuzzi, dominate the lake to offer a fabulous vista. The Historic Suites epitomise timeless charm and luxury. You will feel like you have moved into your own private lakeside property.

# A beacon of Style

Replete with stylish Art Nouveau touches, as well as 100 windows to bring the stunning outside in, this palace is steeped in history and epitomises a sense of mellow luxury. It boasts an enviable location, right in the heart of the lake, in front of Bellagio and the Grigne mountains. You could easily spend a day rotating between the hotel's three pools, one of which is the superb Water On the Water, straight onto the lake. Period furnishing, pastel colours and lovingly tended details, with truly blissful historic and rooftop suites, make this a unique experience on Lake Como. The T Spa and its Infinity Pool lull your dreams for a moment to treasure. Get lost in the marvellous private garden: 20,000 sq m of pure joy, with footpaths and steps leading to dazzling magnolias, tulips and azaleas or palm trees, their beauty radiating and changing as the day goes by, in a superb light show. Five different restaurants will suit all tastes for a truly memorable stay. Just minutes from the hotel, Villa Sola Cabiati is an icon of history. The fully staffed residence offers the utmost experience in aristocratic luxury with 6 suites, an Italian garden and a pool.

## GRAND HOTEL TREMEZZO



### Xfactor

The Water On the Water swimming pool is to die for. A blissful setting for this most extraordinary palace.

Grand Hotel Tremezzo  
90 rooms and suites  
2 charming villas  
Open from April to November  
Tesla Destination Charging  
Via Regina, 8 - 22016 Tremezzo (CO)  
[www.grandhoteltremezzo.com](http://www.grandhoteltremezzo.com)



# Fashion & Design

A futuristic city, where looking good is *de rigueur* and happy hour drinks are an art form. This is Milano, an Italian city like no other. Ancient roots meet dynamic paces in a maze of flagship stores, first-class theatres, fine dining, exceptional museums and art deco buildings. When visiting, you may find fast-moving rhythms are all the rage, impeccably well-dressed citizens dashing from one place to the other. In truth, beyond the somewhat moody face of a vibrant city, lie some exceptional treasures. The **Duomo**, with its spires reaching for the stars and the largest stained glass window in Christendom, is undeniably impressive – and staggeringly beautiful. The world's largest Gothic cathedral began in 1386, but was not completed until five centuries later.

The nearby **Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II** is a soaring, iron and glass neo classical arcade lined with expensive stores, antiquarian bookshops and classy restaurants. And then the world-famous **La Scala** theatre; Michelangelo's unfinished masterpiece, the **Rondanini Pietà**, in the **Castello Sforzesco** and Leonardo's **Last Supper** in **Santa Maria delle Grazie**, to name just a few masterpieces. The futurist artist Umberto Boccioni's 1910 **Riot in the Gallery** is a stunning depiction of a frenetic city. What will you find in today's Milan? Let the journey begin.



An ever-changing skyline, Milan is vibrant, exciting and bubbly

Proudly standing outside the historic centre, 15th century Castello Sforzesco (below) hosts masterpieces by seminal artists like Michelangelo, Leonardo and Mantegna

Started in 1865, the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele (bottom) is the heart of the city. A jewel of architecture and design, it embodies the class and style found everywhere in Milan

## Modern & Ancient

Dubbed as "the city of the future", Milan is home to tall skyscrapers, its skyline modelled by the likes of Zaha Hadid and Daniel Libeskind. Italian Design as we know it emerged here in the 1930s and hi-tech is a common by-word in the city. This avant-garde attitude, paired with exceptional art museums and exquisite *palazzi*, makes Milan a unique destination. In addition to the sensational **Pinacoteca di Brera**, home to masterpieces by Titian, Mantegna and Raphael, you are spoilt for choice at the **Pinacoteca Ambrosiana**, **Poldi Pezzoli Museum**, **Palazzo Bagatti Valsecchi** or exquisite **Santa Maria Presso San Satiro** church, hiding an extraordinary *tromp-l'oeil* apse into the back wall. It's ancient meets modern in Milan, where the contemporary music and publishing scene pays homage to a remarkable literary heritage. A trendsetter in every field, culinary boundaries are pushed here, as well, making this city the place with the broadest dining options. In Milan, the sky's the limit indeed.



## I Navigli

The unique character of Milan is seen in its ever-changing nature and vibrant atmosphere. Waterways have been exploited ever since the 12th century, the **Naviglio Grande**, to the south of the city, opened in 1386, linking it to the Ticino River and thus Lake Maggiore. The area was developed over the centuries, the canals becoming ways of transport – Prospero and Miranda escaped along the Navigli in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Once a working class district with ancient docks and canals, the area is now home to some of the liveliest bars, innovative shops and scenic dining. Definitely a must-see.





**A fairy tale**

*atmosphere*

**CHÂTEAU MONFORT**

In the heart of fashionable Milan, you will find a treasure trove of fairy tale spaces. An Urban Château with a vivid, dreamlike décor, where creativity and imagination are given free rein in an extraordinary journey of the senses. Named after famous operas and ballets such as The Nutcracker, La Traviata or Turandot, all rooms and suites are decorated to stir childhood memories and feature Made in Italy furniture and upholstery. Dinners and brunches are best enjoyed in the Rubacuori restaurant, while the Mezzanotte lounge is a matchless venue for trendy aperitifs. Cella di Bacco is a stupendous wine cellar where sublime tastings can be organised. Featuring a swanky Spa, take advantage of the saltwater swimming pool, sauna, Turkish Bath, Calidarium, emotional showers and a relaxation area. After having stayed in Château Monfort, a trip to Milan will never be the same.



Tired looking boardrooms are distant memories. Meetings and banquets can be arranged in the Sala dell'Incantesimo or Sala delle Segrete and they will provide exquisite surprises.



*Xfactor*

Let your phantasy travel far and wide in one of the many themed suites, where La Boheme or Cinderella live on.

Château Monfort  
77 rooms and suites  
Open year-round  
Corso Concordia, 1 - 20129 Milano  
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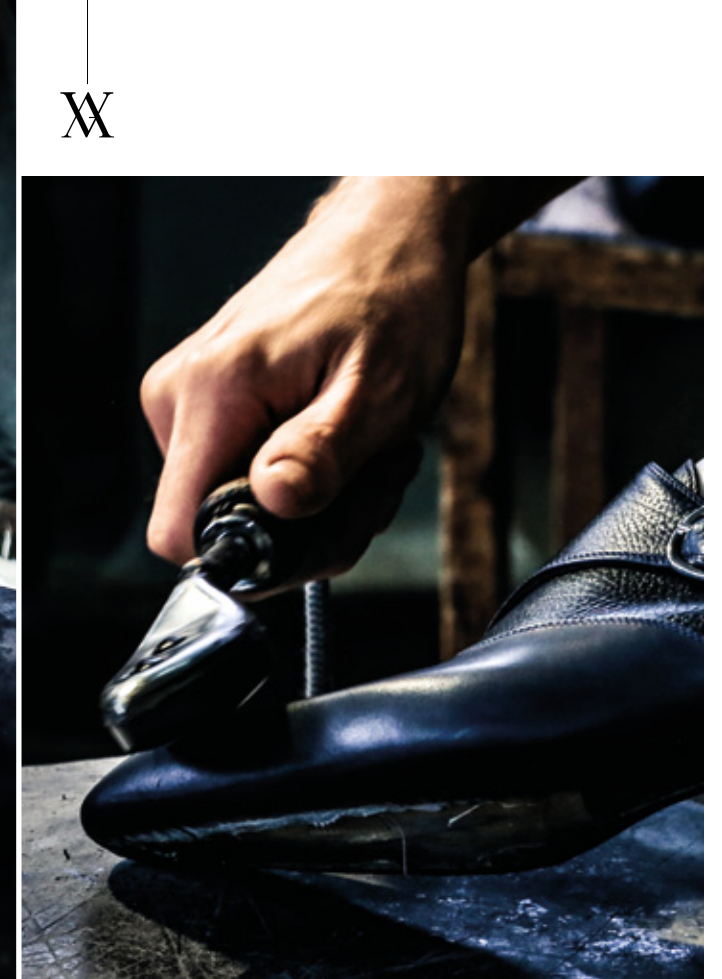
W

# Where Works of art take shape



Oscar Wilde once said that: "One should either be a work of art or wear one." The luxury brand Artioli crafts exactly that and has been doing so since the beginning of the 20th century. Italian excellence through and through, the story of this unique venture started with Severino Artioli in Ferrara in 1912, when he was working with his first master shoemaker. Quality, beauty and innovation are the credo of Artioli, whose shoes, manufactured in the Varese plant, seem timeless, their harmony making them modern today as it did right at the beginning. Artioli crafts sculptures; one could say works of art in their own right.

Combining tradition and modern technology, natural materials are employed, paired with long-established working methods, which have been improved and refined over time; the feet breathe and comfort is granted by a soft, flexible construction in front, together with a moderate arch support and a shock-absorbing heel.



Several models are fashioned and more than 200 operations are needed to reach the final product, many of which are still carried out by hand. The fact that these shoes are found as ready-to-wear is a miracle.

To this day, Andrea Artioli, the third generation of the family, carries on this undisputed legacy of excellence. Constantly rubbing shoulders with the well heeled, Artioli shoes have been much loved by film stars, politicians and even Pope John Paul II. Gary Cooper was a fan, favouring the "straight tip" model, whose allure is as strong today as it was in the 1950s. It is a real gem and the most precious asset of the firm. These days, Heads of State, the glitterati, various celebrities and sports personalities swear by Artioli shoes, which are complemented by other outstanding products like belts, wallets, bags, luggage, gloves, leather jackets and even socks, umbrellas and perfumes.

The luxury of Artioli belongs, to all intents and purposes, to another dimension.

W

## W ARTIOLI

A brand new showroom was recently opened in Milano - Via Bigli 15, by appointment only.

As a valued Luxury Lakes and Mountains client, please use this code to get your preferred rate for any purchase: LLMCODE19

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# Lago

# Maggiore





“I love not man the less, but Nature more”  
LORD BYRON

Think *Belle époque* and you are in for a treat: **Lago Maggiore** will spoil you with its immense and pristine blue waters, towering mountains rising proud from the water and its luxuriant vegetation. Ever since the Simplon Pass was opened in 1906, the lake became a major tourist destination: either by train or road, visitors from Switzerland wind down from the mountains and sidle up to this enormous stretch of blue beauty. The lake sits between Piedmont and Lombardy, each shore bearing distinct features: verdant, rich gardens, circled with palms and cypresses and an extraordinarily warm climate to the west, while a handful of gems with picturesque villages are dotted around the eastern shore, making this lake a most extraordinary journey's end. Start with *fin-de-siècle* **Stresa** and its delightful, grand hotels, a pleasant promenade epitomising an air of elegance and bygone decadence. Its easy access from Milan means the town was

a favourite for artists and writers since the late 19th century. From here, you can visit the exquisite **Borromean Islands**: like a fleet of fine vessels, they lie at anchor at the Golfo Borromeo, between Stresa and Verbania. Of the three visitable islands, **Isola Bella** is undoubtedly the most striking: the Borromean Palace is impressively baroque, hosting artworks by Rubens, Titian and Anthony Van Dyck, Flemish tapestries and sculptures by Antonio Canova. A glance at the Italian gardens and you will be struck: think white peacocks, endless rows of flowers and even a grotto studded with pink marble, lava stone and pebbles. Further north on the west bank, late 19th century **Villa Taranto** and its splendid grounds are among Lake Maggiore's most imposing highlights: the Normandy-style villa was bought by a Scottish captain, Neil McEacharn, after spotting an advert in *The Times* in 1931. Some 20,000 plants were added over thirty years and



## Stresa Festival

Plan a visit when a concert is held right here, during the Stresa Festival. Taking place each year between mid July and mid September, music lovers should not miss this extraordinary series of high-calibre jazz and classical music concerts, all held in fabulous locations on the lake, such as the Visconteo Castle in Vogogna, Villa Ponti in Arona, the Chiesa Vecchia in Belgirate or the Basilica San Giulio in Orta. The festival started in 1962 and it animates the lakeshores with prestigious artists and concerts, dedicating two evenings to J. S. Bach's cello suites each year.

the site is considered one of Europe's finest botanical gardens. The seasons dictate what you see, from the winding dahlia path, in bloom from May to October, to dogwood in April and May, Japanese lilies, or equatorial water lilies in the hothouses. All the flowers and plants are laid out with cool geometric accuracy around fountains and pools, making the setting even more impressive.

Facing Stresa, on the east bank of the lake, lies **Santa Caterina del Sasso**, one of northern Italy's most scenic monasteries. Founded by the Dominican friars in the 13th century, it was modified over time, yet its charm remains intact to this day. It can be reached climbing either 80 steps up – from the ferry quay – or 268 down, from the car park (a lift is also available). You will enter via a portico and a courtyard (with an 18th century wine press) and another portico. The church is a curious cobbling of several chapels, but the ethereal atmosphere is what





makes this place unique: the building sits right on the cliff and the views across the lake and mountains are simply magnificent.

Set on the eastern, quieter bank of the lake, chunky medieval **Rocca di Angera** fortress reigns on the town in no uncertain terms; it is, in fact, the first thing one sees from a distance. The 12-room Doll and Toy Museum (*Museo della Bambola e del Giocattolo*) is hosted inside and displays the Borromeo Family's priceless collection of dolls, counting more than 1,000 items, including a separate collection of French and German mechanical dolls and figurines (dating from 1870 to 1920). The Borromeo clan bought the castle from the Milanese Visconti family in 1449; of the various rooms inside, the *Sala della Giustizia* with its overarching vault and lively 13th century fresco is the most inspiring.



The name says it all, *Isola Bella* (top) is the centrepiece of the Borromeo Islands. It hosts a 17th century villa – a Baroque oasis – and splendid Italianate gardens with peacocks roaming free.

The *Isola Madre* (above) is home to another *palazzo* and a luxuriant, less formal garden, a triumph of colours in the blooming season



## Masolino da Panicale

An array of enthusiastic comments surround this secret gem in **Castiglione Olona**, not far from Lake Maggiore. "Thank you Masolino! I'm inspired by your exceptional, profound work." (Bill Viola) "An island of Tuscany in Lombardy" (Vittorio Sgarbi), "A very spiritual place" (Wim Wenders).

Together with Masaccio – famous for the *Cappella Brancacci* frescoes in Florence, Masolino was one of the fathers of the **Italian Renaissance**. According to Vasari, he "had started giving figures a softer connotation", and throughout the cycle you can admire the exceptional use of perspective, still in a sketchy manner, delicate colours and decoration, the search for beauty and graceful attitudes as well as the fairy-tale contours of the figures.

Castiglione Olona was erected between 1422 and 1433 upon will of Cardinal Branda Castiglioni, an erudite, well-travelled soul, whose family stemmed from that place.

The outstanding frescoes are dedicated to the Virgin Mary in the Collegiate Church and to Saint John the Baptist in the Baptistry; you can also discover the quaint borgo, together with another church (*Chiesa di Villa*) and the old vicarage. Unmissable indeed.



Graced with charming surprises, the small alleyways of *Isola Bella* (above) will steal your heart away in a maze of vibrant hues and flowery ornaments.

Sitting on the upper part of Lake Maggiore, *Cannero Riviera* (left) enjoys a Mediterranean climate with palm trees and luxurious vegetation. Enjoy sweeping views on the islands, the Castles of *Cannero* and *Luino*. Do not miss the traditional Spring *Camellia Show* and the famous *Citrus Fruit Festival*







Chef MASSIMILIANO CELESTE

## Chef & Stars Il Portale ❁

When talent and curiosity run in your blood, you can achieve great things. Chef Massimiliano Celeste cut his teeth in restaurants around Europe and beyond, learning the secrets of unusual, intriguing recipes, but most of all the art of fine cuisine. A Michelin-starred venue in **Pallanza**, his restaurant epitomises his fantasy, passion and dedication, with an excellent choice of fish – lobster, scallops, sea bass and sea bream, among the many options – and meat, like lamb and Iberian piglet, not to mention superb cheeses and fine wines. A dazzling setting with a friendly and welcoming service: you will simply want to come back, again and again.



Only 5 km south of the Swiss border, **Cannobio** is the most charming place to stay on the Piedmontese shores. Its cobblestone streets are delightfully old-fashioned. Nicely set apart from the busier towns in the north and south, it offers peace and tranquillity and it is a charming lake base. You will find a public beach at the north end of town, which is also the departure point for a scenic walk along the Cannobino river.

**Arona** on the west bank is also worth a visit, tranquil and splendidly set on the lake, and especially the **Sacro Monte di San Carlo** – known as *San Carlone*. After Milan's bishop San Carlo Borromeo (1538-84) was proclaimed a saint in 1610, his cousin Federico ordered the creation of a Sacro Monte in his memory, composed of 15 chapels lining a path to the church. A special extra was added to this: a hollow 35-m bronze and copper statue of the saint. You can climb up it and enjoy marvellous views through the giant's eyes and even ears.

If you are into exploring true wilderness, look for the **Val Grande National Park**. Far removed from the sophisticated beauty of the lakes only a short distance away – Verbania is 10 km on its south-eastern edge – it covers 150 sq km and the area has been largely inhabited since the 1940s. The last of them were partisans who fought during WW2 and the whole park has a true air of wilderness. Climb up steep and panoramic paths to enjoy marvellous views across the lake, Monte Rosa and other surrounding peaks. The absence of humans in the park means wildlife has proliferated, chiefly chamois, peregrine falcons and golden eagles. Wolves are also believed to be present, although seeing one is highly unlikely. Information centres are located in four villages surrounding the park, the handiest being Intragna and Cicogna – both close to Verbania. An experience you shan't easily forget. —



## Not to be missed

### Pallavicino Villa and Park - Stresa

Created as a residence in 1855, the Pallavicino Villa and Park were transformed into a fauna museum open to the public a century later. Here's your chance to spend an unforgettable day among paths in bloom, centuries-old trees, a stunning botanic garden and numerous species of mammals and exotic birds.

### Mottarone

Mottarone is a rounded, noble mountain behind Stresa. A treasure trove of activities for outdoor enthusiasts, from skiing in the winter to water sports and hiking in the summer. A cable car connects Stresa to it: you will go from the lake to the mountains in only twenty minutes, with marvellous views opening in front of you.

### Private visit and aperitif on Isola Bella

You can visit Isola Bella during the day, but why not make it extra special and organise a private visit? A guide will show you the marvels of the palaces and gardens, illustrating their great art and histories. An exquisite aperitif is then served on the panoramic terraces, adding a note of style and elegance to this most extraordinary experience.

### Helicopter flight

Admiring the Borromeo Islands, the lakeshores and the numerous marvels on the lake from above is simply priceless. The best way to gauge at churches, architecture, monuments and exceptional landscape is with a helicopter flight: a unique experience and the best solution if you want to reach all the stunning sites in the northwest in a short time.

### Spring flowering on Lago Maggiore

Warmer temperatures, blue skies, a soft breeze in the air and the doors of the most splendid gardens on Lake Maggiore open. From Angera to Laveno on the Lombard side, Stresa to Verbania on the Piedmontese one, it's gorgeous blooms galore. Camellias, rhododendrons, azaleas, hydrangeas and other splendid flowers put on their best show, for you to enjoy. The various villages on the lake are linked with a scenic road, or you could visit them by boat, savouring marvellous moments. Bear in mind that some gardens, such as Villa Taranto, have organised their display so that every month sees a different bloom. A feast for the eyes and the soul.

## Food & Wine

### Hostaria La Speranza - Solcio Lesa

The Hostaria La Speranza is a Ye Olde tavern, which will leave a mark the moment you walk in: pleasant, welcoming and solemn at the same time. Fabrizia Lavorato is the Chef Patronne and tells her fascinating story, from the origins of the name to the great success it holds today: "This restaurant is female territory, you will find only ladies work here, all united by a great sense of solidarity and a tight-knit team. We believe the clients perceive this harmony, which contributes to the appreciation of our venue".

### L'Angolo delle Fate - Baveno

You won't find pasta, pizza and neither fish on this attractive, welcoming venue in the centre of Baveno, on Lake Maggiore. Cured meats and cheeses are the leading actors in this accurate, rising spiral of tastes, and will accompany you in a supreme culinary journey. The owners are friendly and attentive; they stop at each one of their six tables and explain the individual features of the products, showing thorough competence and passion.

### La Chocolaterie des Iles - Stresa

The great passion for the chocolate and patisserie world fashioned the Chocolaterie des Iles. An on-going search for the best products aiming at offering ever delicious and refined ideas, without foregoing careful attention to quality and packaging. A visit to the marvellous shop in Stresa should not go amiss.

### Lo Scalo - Cannobio

Right at the centre of the charming lakeshore village of Cannobio, a pedestrian paradise, the Ristorante Lo Scalo offers fine modern cuisine that speaks of a truly authentic concept: taste and territory. The dishes are the result of the young chef's creativity, full of fragrance and colour, prepared respecting the seasons, using the ingredients of the rich lands around the lakes and mountains, with particular attention for those grown and produced locally. This is traditional cooking with a modern, creative twist that will satisfy all tastes.

### Verbano Restaurant - Isola dei Pescatori

Set on the tip of the Isola dei Pescatori, in the heart of the Borromeo Gulf. Choose an outside table and gaze at the exceptional Isola Bella, right in front of you. The island can be easily reached by boat from Stresa.



## LAGO MAGGIORE

A supremely exclusive resort, granting the finest view on the Borromean Islands in a triumph of Murano chandeliers, silk curtains, acres of velvet and gilt, mirroring Stresa's Belle Époque. With a private beach and docking, heated pool and fitness centre, this hotel hits all the right notes. Its two superb restaurants will leave you speechless. Individually appointed, ornate, fresco-lined rooms and suites offer sweeping vistas, fresh flowers and an evocative reading area.

Its gloriously lush garden is full of colourful and fragrant plants and flowers.

Villa e Palazzo Aminta loves dogs and a full set of services is provided, from a vet to a dog menu; medium and large-sized dogs can be accommodated in Villa Amintina and will run free in the garden.

# Gold & Blue Lake

## VILLA E PALAZZO AMINTA

## VILLA E PALAZZO AMINTA



The Beauty & Spa at Villa e Palazzo Aminta is the most luxurious on Lake Maggiore. Restore your harmony in an energetic balance through massages, baths, a combination of movement and energy, relaxation and nutrition.

The Camelia Grotto offers a path of health and wellness with a steam bath, ice waterfall, Aromarium and Scottish showers for reviving hot/cold sensations.

### Xfactor

Liz Taylor stayed here in the 60s and two fabulous suites are dedicated to her. Revel in an opulent setting and admire the view from the large, private balconies.

Villa e Palazzo Aminta  
73 rooms and suites  
Open from April to October  
Tesla Destination Charging  
Via Sempione Nord, 123, 28838 Stresa (VB)  
[www.villa-aminta.it](http://www.villa-aminta.it)





# Lago d'Orta



*“God’s watercolour, painted on a silk backdrop,  
with its sacred mountain behind”*

PIERO CHIARA







## *Nonio, the hamlet with two sunsets*

Italy is a land of unexpected gems and you can even find a place where the sun sets twice. **Nonio**, majestically overlooking Lake Orta, can boast this exceptional feature: for a few days in winter, the sun sets behind Monte Castello and then reappears a few minutes later, to then set completely, crafting an attractive double sunset. And that's not all. Lush woods are found around the pretty hamlet, with several paths to be enjoyed in peace and tranquillity. The area is also rich in artistic expressions, such as the Parish church in Nonio, while in Brolo, close to it, the parish church of Saint Anthony, built in the Settecento, hosts an important relic: a small splinter of the Holy Cross, upon which Jesus Christ was crucified. Oira, another picturesque hamlet nearby, is famous for its Serpentine mines, a green-coloured, precious stone used to decorate churches and palaces, also found in its oratory, dating back to the 13th century.

Orta San Giulio is a jewel you wouldn't expect. Approaching it from the road is simply stunning. A romantic little village where narrow streets run between pastel-washed houses and palaces with elaborate iron-wrought balconies. Reach Piazza Motta for an extraordinary view onto the lake and the exquisite island of San Giulio. A short boat ride from Orta, the "Island of Silence" bestows moments of tranquillity in a timeless, evocative atmosphere



# D

Deep blue waters, reticent beauty and an intriguing island: **Lago d'Orta**, known as "Cinderella" by the locals, epitomises charm and captivating tranquillity. About 70 km from Milan and 120 from Turin, this little gem sits in one of the most fascinating corners of north-west Italy. Quintessentially fairy tale Piedmont. Measuring 13,4 km with a width of 2,4 km, the lake is separated from its bigger eastern neighbour, Lake Maggiore, by Monte Motarone.

Driving along it, you will be simply overwhelmed: the way mountains, weather and light are forever in counterpoint to the water itself is striking. Whether it's the enchanting autumn light or the crisp early spring morn-

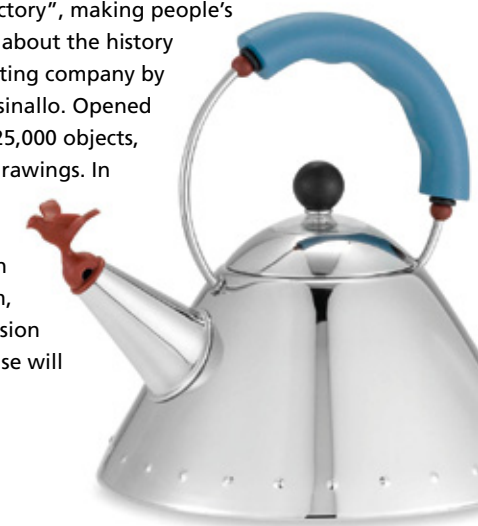
ings, this lake has an ace up its sleeve any time of the year. It is precisely this ever-changing light – misty in the morning, shining bright by midday and ethereal in the evening, not to mention the seasonal variations – that surprises and enraptures: you'll never want to leave. Popular with writers, Lake Orta has seen several noteworthy guests, from Nietzsche to Lord Byron, Robert Browning to Balzac, who all fell in love with its magical atmosphere and captivating glow. A British-run poetry festival takes place in September and poets from the four corners of the world gather to celebrate this idyllic spot.

Overlooking the forest-lined banks of the shimmering lake, **Orta San Giulio** is a romantic little village where narrow cobbled streets



## *Alessi Museum*

Alessi is an undisputed symbol of sleek design and Italian artistry. We all have at least one Alessi item in our homes, and yet not everyone knows that the company stems from a small village close to Lake Orta: Crusinallo. Founded by Giovanni Alessi in 1921, it was originally a foundry and a workshop producing mainly brass and silver objects. When his son Carlo joined in the 1930s, things started to evolve and then, with the introduction of stainless steel in the 1950s and the collaboration with famous designers such as Ettore Sottsass, Mario Botta and Franco Sargiani, Alessi became the true icon of Italian style. The constant reconciliation between art and industry is at the core of Alessi's production, so much so that Alessi has been defined as a "Dream Factory", making people's dreams come true. You will learn about the history and constant research of this exciting company by visiting the Alessi Museum in Crusinallo. Opened in 1998, it contains a staggering 25,000 objects, 20,000 photographs and 19,000 drawings. In the words of Alberto Alessi, "A true design work must convey emotions and go against common thinking". By visiting the museum, open by appointment only, the vision of this pioneering Italian enterprise will be revealed.





Chef ANTONINO CANNAVACCIUOLO



## Chef @ Stars Villa Crespi ❀❀

From southern to northern Italy, meet a fusion of taste and pleasure: Antonino Cannavacciuolo, Chef-Patron of the Two-Michelin-starred restaurant within the luxury five-star Villa Crespi in Orta San Giulio. Through his cooking philosophy, Antonino embodies his career as well as moments from his life, in an unrelenting journey of discovery from the traditions of Southern Italy, chiefly his hometown Naples, to the shores of Lake Orta, where he now lives with his wife Cinzia and their children. The dishes display ingredients which are blended in a perfect marriage of tastes: the cheeses and meats of Piedmont are combined with Mediterranean pasta and fish. The exceptional outcome is an engaging, exciting and creative cuisine.



run between pastel-washed houses and palaces with elaborate iron-wrought balconies. Built on the slopes of a steep hill, tourists fill its alleyways at weekends in the spring and summer months, while it gets quieter in the evenings. 294m above sea level, the village boasts a wonderful position. The view from its central **Piazza Motta** directly onto the lake and the Isola di San Giulio is simply breathtaking. **Palazzo Motta**, also known as Broletto or Palazzotto, is a squat, fresco-enlivened structure with a portico, built in 1582. Once the seat of the local council, it occasionally hosts exhibitions. The Palazzo also stands for Orta's proud history: from 1345 to 1753, Orta San Giulio was allowed to have its own by-laws, being akin to an independent state. But it's the way it fits into the square, like a jigsaw piece in a fairy tale puzzle, which astonishes. Eating in one of the square's restaurants or simply strolling along this quaint piazza, intrigued by passers-by: this is how life should be lived.

Above the town is a sacred mountain, a *Sanctuario* dedicated to Saint Francis. The **Sacro Monte di San Francesco** is part of the UNESCO World Heritage Sites and became national park in 1980. You reach it from Piazza Motta along the Salita della Motta, a cobbled hill among centuries-old houses and enchanting vistas. Twenty chapels are dotted around, some of which boast marvellous frescoes: a wonderfully tranquil way to pass a few hours, enriched by captivating views.

A short ferry ride from Orta, the **Isola di San Giulio** stands ethereal on the glaring waters. Legend has it that evil creatures once dominated the island; in 390 AD, San Giulio crossed the stormy waters floating on his cloak and defeated the monsters. He then decided to stay on the island, where he founded a church. The present-day basilica dates back to the 12th century and you could say that the tranquil-

lity brought by the Saint all those centuries ago still reigns. The island of silence is, well and truly, more than a lovely definition: a small path runs along the island and it is called, in fact, the Way of Silence. The island hosts a convent, as well, where eighty nuns live.

Visiting at twilight means discovering the houses take on alluring pale sand, terracotta and amber hues, and you can almost smell the scent of flowers hanging on the balconies and trailing on the water. Is this a dream? Come and discover yourself. —

## Not to be missed

### Profumo di Orta - Orta San Giulio

The unusual scents created by the continuous interweaving of odours of lake water, moss, osmanthus, cypresses and lovely flowers like hydrangeas, give Lake Orta its unmistakable, enchanted feel. Profumo di Orta produces fragrances inspired by this jewel enclosed by the mountains for modern day travelling princesses and princes. Let yourself be lulled by fresh and captivating essences.

### Legro, the painted village

Imagine strolling around a village and contemplating images of famous films on the walls of the houses. In 1998, the local council embarked on a plan to set its village, close to Orta San Giulio, on the map again. "Cinema against the Wall" sees forty-five colourful frescoes decorating the historic centre of Legro. Legro is thus a *paese dipinto*, a painted village, part of the Painted Hamlets scheme. Inspiration did not merely stem from films set in the area, such as "L'amante segreta" or "La stanza del vescovo", but also from local writer and poet Gianni Rodari, famous for children's books. Walking through the streets of Legro is like re-enacting modern history.

### Enchanting vistas - The village of Pella

Pella is a delightful, tranquil village on the western bank of Lake Orta, directly facing Orta San Giulio. The earliest evidence of human presence in Pella dates back to the period between the 4th and 1st century BC, and its first documentation goes back to 1039 AD. A tower in Piazza Motta is all that's left of its medieval past, and is set on the waterfront. Visiting Pella means letting go and reaching out to your inner soul. Let the sound of the waves rolling in lull you. Encircled by a splendid lake and charming mountains, Pella will bestow its allure upon you, so much so that a visit to Lake Orta would not be complete without stopping in this fascinating hamlet.

## Food & Wine

### Al Boeuc - Orta San Giulio

A stone's throw from the main square in Orta San Giulio, walking in a small alley, you'll catch a glimpse of the tiny, candlelit door and a small board promising typical cured meats and cheeses as an accompaniment to wine. Stepping in, your attention will be caught by the antique masonry, the wooden tables and the several bottles which adorn the walls like enticing flowers.

### Giardinetto - Pettenasco

Expertly managed by Ezio Primatesta, assisted by his young, dynamic staff. The chef skillfully combines tradition with a modern reinterpretation of Piedmontese dishes and Mediterranean cuisine, in all likelihood inspired by the native land of Ezio's prestigious brother-in law, Antonino Cannavacciuolo. Ezio makes research and selection of ingredients and raw materials one of the main elements of the genuine authenticity of the Giardinetto's cuisine. His passion for organic and biodynamic farming also extends to choices he has made in the extensive wine list. During the summer months, the terrace with its shady gazebo makes a lunch or a candlelit dinner an unforgettable gourmet experience.

### Locanda di Orta ❀ - Orta San Giulio

Under the accomplished, watchful eye of the chef, Fabrizio Tesse, you will enjoy the Locanda for its innovative, modern cuisine and authentic flavours. There are two different ways to savour the cuisine at the Locanda di Orta: a superb, less formal meal in the relaxed atmosphere of the fourth floor *gastro bistrot*, with stunning views over the lake, or a full-blown gourmet experience that will appeal to all five senses in the main restaurant. The fine wine list offers over 250 Italian labels and many from abroad, as well.

### Taverna Antico Agnello - Miasino

The Taverna Antico Agnello is set within the secluded charm of historic Villa Nigra in Miasino. Its cuisine is sober, but extreme care is taken when choosing the freshest, best ingredients. The dishes are decidedly Piedmontese, chiefly from the Novara area, and make use of local products from both the mountains and the plains, such as the excellent local wines.



# Arabian Nights Italian style

VILLA CRESPI

Next door to splendid Orta San Giulio, this five-star Moorish extravaganza is the amusingly eccentric dream of cotton trader Benigno Crespi, who had it built in 1879. Recently renovated, the style and passion of the past are epitomised by the current owners, Cinzia Primatesta and Antonino Cannavacciuolo. The Two-Michelin-starred restaurant is led by the chef patron in an extraordinary culinary journey across Italy. Relax in the sublime Ayurvedic wellness suite and fantasise about the extraordinary surroundings. The history, art and nature of a sublime venue leave guests with lasting memories in what used to be a meeting place for artists, poets and the royalty.



Villa Crespi, a dream come true. The aqua-coloured onion-dome spire anticipates the marvel ahead. A discreetly tranquil atmosphere resounds in the Moorish rooms, ideal for weddings and business meetings alike. Unique moments lived in a stunning setting, thanks to the superb service, exceptional cuisine and elegant ambiance.



## Xfactor

Opulent interiors, silk walls, four-poster beds and sprawling gardens. Villa Crespi is a star that shines on the international hospitality scene.

Villa Crespi  
14 rooms and suites  
Open year-round  
Tesla Destination Charging  
Via Giuseppe Fava, 18 - 28016 Orta San Giulio (NO)  
[www.villacrespi.it](http://www.villacrespi.it)



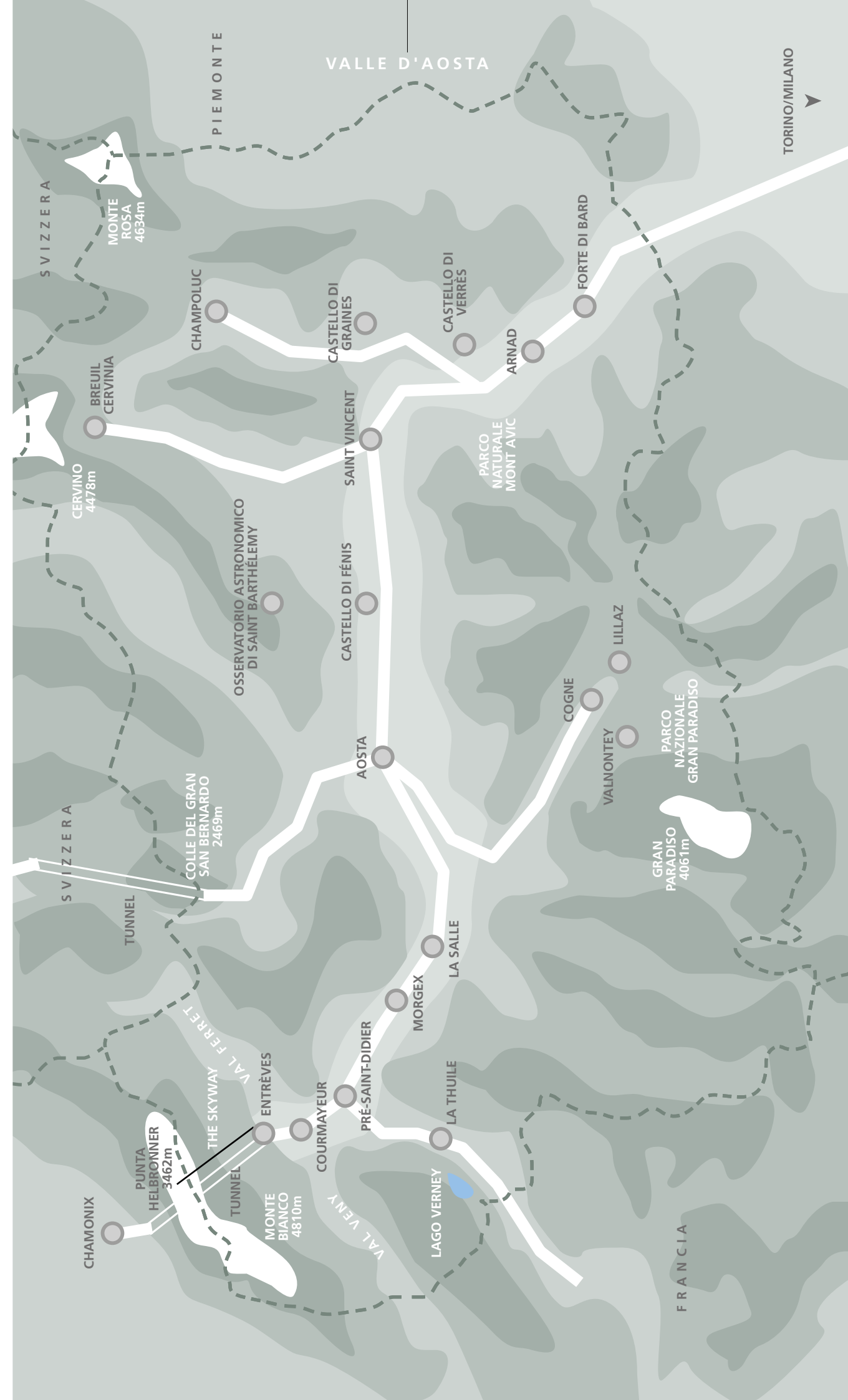
# Valle d'Aosta



*“Great things are done when men and mountains meet”*

WILLIAM BLAKE

Alpinists going up and down from the Aiguille du Midi onto the glacier. Uniquely set at altitude, it can be reached from Punta Helbronner, above Courmayeur, in a sensational gondola ride above eternal glaciers. That's where several pages of mountaineering history were written



SVIZZERA

PIEMONTE

VALLE D'AOSTA

TORINO/MILANO

MONTE ROSA  
4634m

CHAMPOLUC

CASTELLO DI GRAINES

CASTELLO DI VERRÈS

FORTE DI BARD

BREUIL CERVINIA

SAINT VINCENT

ARNAD

CERVINO  
4478m

OSSERVATORIO ASTRONOMICO  
DI SAINT BARTHÉLEMY

PARCO NATURALE  
MONT AVIC

CASTELLO DI FÉNIS

COGNE

LILLAZ

SVIZZERA

COLLE DEL GRAN  
SAN BERNARDO  
2469m

AOSTA

PARCO NAZIONALE  
GRAN PARADISO  
4061m

TUNNEL

VAL FERRETT

VALMONTÉY

LILLAZ

TUNNEL

THE SKYWAY

VAL FERRETT

ENTRÈVES

MORGEX

LA SALLE

CHAMONIX

PUNTA  
HELBRONNER  
3462m

TUNNEL

VAL VERNY

MONTE  
BIANCO  
4810m

COURMAYEUR

PRÉ-SAINT-DIDIER

MORGEX

LA THUILE

LAGO VERNEY

FRANCIA



If JMW Turner hadn't come to the Aosta Valley during his Grand Tour, he probably would not have fallen in love with the rugged beauty of the Alps. Think grandeur, breathtaking mountain faces and fearless men attempting to reach them. Then think harder, because the Aosta Valley is all this and more. The smallest Italian region, perched high on the north-west corner of the peninsula, French flair is undoubtedly in the air here. Bilingual road signs and the local Patois – a combination of Italian and French – hint at the not-so-distant *La République*. Yes, this is a melting pot and you can see that Switzerland and neighbouring Piedmont to the east and south all bring in their culture and traditions, as well.

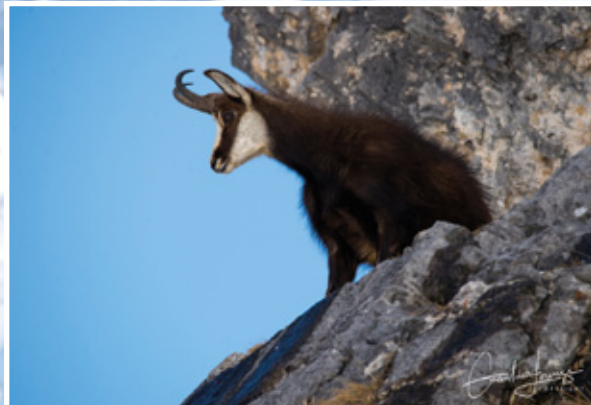
The Aosta Valley, or *Vallée* as the locals call it,

offers everything, from gentle strolls to engaging alpine routes, exciting mountain bike trails or cycle paths, and of course some of the most outstanding piste and – especially – off-piste tracks in the Alps.

The main valley follows the Dora river up to Mont Blanc, and the foremost – or only – big town is **Aosta**. *Augusta Praetoria Salassorum* was founded by the Romans in 25 BC and you can still breathe history here. A triumphal arch: check. An ancient theatre: check. Roman walls: check. *Porta Pretoria* tops it all off with two impressive parallel arched gateways that served as the main entrance into the Roman town. Of the several interesting churches in the city, two are well worth a visit:

Sant'Orso, a collegiate church with its Romanesque, quaint cloister and exquisite capitals, and the Cathedral, with an impressively decorated narthex and an imposing Latin-cross map. Good shopping and fine dining aside, Aosta will be the starting point for your explorations and you will be spoiled for choice, any time of the year.

Getting up close with **Mont Blanc** – il Monte Bianco – is the top activity in the area, especially after the new Skyway lifts opened a few years ago, and rightly so. Famously sitting between France and Italy, Europe's highest mountain (4810m) is an alpinist's Paradise. You can climb on top of it, hike or ride your bike around it with the world famous Tour du Mont Blanc (165 km, highly recommended), ski down or around it from Courmayeur and Chamonix, gaze at its stunning profile reflected in a lake (Lake Arpy), fall asleep in a mountain hut while looking at it (Rifugio Bonatti) and even play golf while contemplating it (Val Ferret). Need we say more? Of course the Aosta Valley sees other exceptional 4000-metre peaks, such as Cervino (the Matterhorn), Monte Rosa and Gran Paradiso.



## Parco Nazionale Gran Paradiso

Italy's oldest national park, it was created in 1922, after Vittorio Emanuele II gave his hunting reserve to the State. It runs over the Cogne valley, Valsavarenche and Val di Rhemes, plus Soana and Orco in Piedmont. Respect for the fauna and flora are key and you will see many animals, from lovely marmots to fascinating ibex. The park is centred around the only 4000-metre peak entirely on Italian soil – Gran Paradiso, 4061m. Although the valleys get crowded in the summer, there is still an air of tangible wilderness here, so rare and precious these days. Remember that dogs are only allowed in the park at certain times of the year in some restricted areas. Welcome to Paradise.



The Vedette del Rutor are attractive peaks on the Rutor Glacier. Several ascents and ski touring routes in the area go via them



Hiking or climbing are, however, not the only reasons why people come here. Skiing, in fact, almost outmatches other sports in the area. From cross-country to serious off-piste, back-country, ski touring, resort skiing, snowshoeing and even the recent fat bikes on snow - it is an embarrassment of riches. You can ski across several valleys, overlooking Monte Rosa and the Matterhorn in the Monterosa Ski area, marvel at *la gran Becca* in Cervinia or stunning Mont Blanc in Courmayeur, not to mention Pila with its bird's eye view of all the most beautiful 4000-metre peaks and other smaller lifts in the valley. What more could you wish for? The smartest and most popular ski resort in the area, **Courmayeur** brings a wealth of opportunities, from adrenaline-fuelled off-piste skiing, snow-shoeing and fat bike trails to challenging, world famous alpine routes, golf courses in neighbouring Val Ferret, an exciting cultural offer with stellar chefs, book presentations and

discussions, political encounters and scientific conferences. What about the recently opened Skyway? You can reach **Punta Helbronner** (3462m) and marvel at Mont Blanc and its stunning chain, from the Aiguille Noire, Dent du Géant, Grandes Jorasses... Do not venture out unless you are an expert or ask the local Mountain Guides: the *Guide di Courmayeur* group was the first to be founded in Italy, back in the 1850s: they clearly know their mettle and you are encouraged to seek their advice. Several hairpin bends take you to **La Thuile**, where superb skiing and a World Cup piste - linking the resort with neighbouring La Rosière, France - are combined with exciting mountain bike trails and hikes in the summer. It's history galore at the Little Saint Bernard Pass, where remains of the Celts, Salassi and Romans were unearthed. You will be met with bluebird skies and deep, blue lakes, such as **Verney**, one of

Majestic Mont Avic Natural Park, in the lower part of the valley, reaches evocative lakes, with splendid panoramas from the Matterhorn as far as multi-peaked Monte Rosa

the biggest in the valley, and unforgettable vistas, from Mont Blanc to the Rutor glacier and its imposing waterfalls. Pré-Saint-Didier and its world famous Spa is a ten-minute drive: an experience you will not want to miss. A dramatic section of the the Gran Paradiso National Park, the lower reaches of the Cogne valley are narrow, with the road running above the fast flowing Grand Eyvia river. Once you reach **Cogne** itself, the majestic setting of the immense Sant'Orso meadow opens in front of you, overlooking Gran Paradiso. Internationally renowned for cross country skiing, ice-climbing also gathers climbers from far and wide. **Lillaz**, where many waterfalls form, hosts an ice climbing festival at the beginning of December.



## La Foire de Saint Ours

Aosta hosts one of the most renowned artisan fairs in Europe, the Foire de Saint Ours. The saint, a monk of Irish origin, lived in Aosta and died in 529 AD. He is celebrated on February 1 and the fair is held on January 30 and 31, welcoming a staggering 150,000 visitors each year, despite the freezing cold in those days. A splendid collegiate church is dedicated to the saint in the centre of Aosta and that's where he was known to help the needy, offering them clothes and food; that is also where the fair is said to have started. La Foire, which was established in the year 1000, is an exceptional display of the best traditional arts in the valley, from wood to iron, leather to rattan, culminating in a very emotional - albeit crowded! - artisan and culinary feast. The fair takes place along the pedestrian area within the city, making it a special event. On the night of the first day, the *Veillà* takes place: meaning "vigil", this is the chance to go around the city, meeting in the various wine cellars, dancing to the tune of folk songs and rejoicing in a marvellous atmosphere. The Foire is preceded by the Foire de Saint Ours in Donnas, taking place in the lower valley, and a Foire d'Eté is held in August, as well; albeit with a limited number of participants, it still keeps the spirit of the saint alive in a merry celebration of Aosta Valley traditions and craftsmanship.



## Skyway

Skyway is a marvel of engineering and technology, offering an unforgettable experience. 15 minutes is all it takes to be whisked to Punta Helbronner (3462m). The vista from the top is unique: you will feel like touching the top of Mont Blanc. From here, many high-altitude, glacier routes start - Dent du Géant, Tour Ronde, Grand Capucin and many more. Do not underestimate the dangers of high altitude and always use the appropriate gear.





Picture-postcard Petosan, close to La Thuile, is a sweeping plain with marvellous views on the Mont Blanc massif



In the summer, easy or more challenging hikes from either Gimillan, above Cogne, Lillaz or **Valnontey**, 3 km from Cogne, will take you amid marvellous peaks and mountain huts. Adventurers may opt to climb Gran Paradiso from this side, although it's an intimate affair; the *Ghiacciaio della Tribolazione* hosts only a handful of ascents each year, while thousands reach the top from neighbouring Valsavarenche. You can find local products in the fascinating craft and antique shops found here, as well as precious lace making. Fine dining is also on offer, a gourmet journey amid a stunning alpine setting. Headed by the huge mass of Monte Rosa, large, open and flanked by thickly wooded slopes, Val d'Ayas is simply stunning. Renowned for its outstanding off-piste scene, **Champoluc** is the first of the three valleys linked by the Monterosa Ski Area (the other ones being Gressoney and Alagna Valsesia) and it is charm personified. Excellent après-ski scene and fabulous

food aside, this resort is the starting point of various ascents, from Monte Rosa peaks to Testa Grigia or Corno Vitello. You'll experience an authentic mountain atmosphere with chalets and small hamlets dotted around the valley, and will wish you had discovered this little gem before.

Known as Breuil, year-round skiing is **Cervinia's** main draw point. Set in the lee of imposing Matterhorn, the landscape surrounding the village is simply magnificent. Cervinia was one of Italy's first ski resorts and its grand hotels ensured the patronage of Europe's wealthy in its heyday. The village sits at 2050m and its highest lift station – **Plateau Rosa** – is at 3480m: the skiing season lasts from November until late May and summer glacier skiing is also on offer. Summer is a triumph of flowers, marvellous hikes and more challenging alpine routes: pick your flavour and start dreaming. The coveted *Gran Becca* awaits your visit. —

## The Castles

Italy is a stunning kaleidoscope of cultures and traditions, famous landowners marking their presence with imposing castles, both as a way of protecting their lands and showing their wealth. The Aosta Valley has often been subject to invasions from neighbouring territories, which explains why there is such a vast and extraordinary array of castles, some of which are still exceptionally preserved. Start with a bang in Bard with the **Forte di Bard**: a stunning example of 19th century military architecture, it was recently restored and now hosts several, internationally recognised art exhibitions and an interactive museum of the Alps. **Fénis** is your next, obvious choice: along with Verrès and Issogne, it is a stunning medieval castle, commissioned by the most important family in the region, the Challand. Visit the interior to marvel at stunning Quattrocento frescoes, breathing in castle life. Issogne conceals a courtly mansion inside, with a picturesque well and stunning frescoed porticoes. **Verrès**, perched on a rocky spur at the beginning of the Ayas Valley, is striking: its construction began in 1390 and its image as a giant, squared block still stands today. Picturesque Saint Pierre with two castles (Sarrion de la Tour and the Disney-like higher one), Introd, Aymavilles, Ussel... you are spoilt for choice when it comes to fairy tale structures, still remarkably preserved. Although not fully intact anymore, **Graines Castle** in the Ayas Valley is worth mentioning because of its splendid position, overlooking Monte Rosa and the verdant, lush valley. If you are curious and want to find out more, tours can also be organised; you will marvel at the glorious past of this small, albeit prominent region.

Mighty and imposing, the Forte di Bard is a gem. With panoramic escalators and an impressive Museum of the Alps, the many events and exhibitions make this a must-see



Among the most famous in the Aosta Valley, Fénis Castle is exceptional in view of its splendid decoration and preserved turreted walls





Chef FABIO IACOVONE

## Chef & Stars Le Petit Restaurant

Inside the luxury Bellevue Hotel & Spa in **Cogne**, the intimate Le Petit Restaurant hosts only six tables, with a cuisine crafted by the fusion of mountain traditions and Mediterranean flavours. The chef Fabio Iacovone and his brigade are always on the lookout for new inspiration, without straying from tradition, employing first-rate ingredients, some of which come directly from the nearby herb garden – in the shape of a half moon and a sun, paying homage to nature. *Oeuf à la neige*, Foie gras palette, Fassone beef filet cooked in rock salt and mountain hay crust with Torrette Supérieur wine sauce are mere examples of the delicacies you will encounter, without forgetting the staggering selection of cheeses, assembled by the maître fromager Roberto. The *Eggs à la Vittorio Emanuele* are a classic, signature dish, paying homage to Emperor Vittorio Emanuele II, the former King of Italy, who donated his game reserve to the State and became Italy's first National Park, the astonishing Gran Paradiso National Park. Desserts employ local apples, among other delicacies: a bite is all it takes to understand that the magic happens here.



## Not to be missed

### Vallée Blanche

The Vallée Blanche is one of the most exciting off-piste skiing routes in Europe. Imagine *la glisse* among exceptional glaciers, Glacier du Géant, du Réquin, du Tacul, the north face of the Grandes Jorasses and the Dru. Snow permitting, you can ski all the way to Chamonix. The route can also be undertaken from the French side, going up the Aiguille du Midi from Chamonix.

### QC Terme Spa - Pré-Saint-Didier

Imagine contemplating Mont Blanc, immersed in lovely, thermal spring water, enjoying the many beneficial treatments like sauna, hot/cold leg therapy, salt scrub and revelling in the tranquil corners of this majestic area. This Spa in Pré-Saint-Didier is unique. Massages and various therapies are also available, making this a truly exceptional journey of the senses.

### Saint Barthélemy Astronomical Observatory - Lignan, Nus

A Heliophysics Laboratory, a Teaching Balcony, a Star Theatre and a Planetarium await you in a stunning scenery in picturesque Lignan, a hamlet in Saint Barthélemy, above Nus. This exceptional venue exploits the favourable position where the skies are not polluted by light and makes for stunning, exceptional astronomical observations.

### Gervasutti Bivouac - Val Ferret, Courmayeur

The Giusto Gervasutti bivouac sits bang in the middle of the Frébouze glacier at 2870m. Installed in October 2011, its streamlined design and the avant-garde materials employed allow it to better stand the test of times and the harsh weather conditions at altitude. Say goodbye to tin and wood huts: spending a night here will feel like a step into the future.

### Jambon de Bosses - Saint-Rhémy-en-Bosses

Saint-Rhémy-en-Bosses produces one of the finest delicacies to be found in the Aosta Valley. Awarded the DOP identification, the ham epitomises traditional tastes and flavours – natural herbs are employed and aging takes place on a bed of hay at altitude. A festival is organised each year in the summer: a chance to taste this delicacy, along with many other local specialities.

### Les Dentelles de Cogne

The tradition of bobbin lace traces back four centuries in Cogne, when some Benedictine nuns reached the village from the Cluny monastery in 1665. The tradition is passed on from generation to generation, with 40 ladies working at this precious lace today. You can visit the Cooperative and see many examples of this sublime artistry.

### Lard d'Arnad

The Aosta Valley comes with a vast array of typical mountain flavours and wines. Among the outstanding products, the Lard d'Arnad deserves a special mention. The only DOP lard in Europe, recognised in 1996, the Lard d'Arnad is the result of a meticulous process: aging varies from 3 to a maximum of 12-15 months, the taste being extremely delicate. Try it with local honey and chestnuts: this is food for the soul.

## Food & Wine

### Cave Mont Blanc - Morgex

Europe's highest vineyards are to be found in Morgex. Overlooking stunning Mont Blanc, here is where the *Blanc de Morgex et la Salle* wine is produced. The gravelly soil in the vineyards allows the heat to be stored by day and released by night. The very dry climate favours the cultivation of Prié Blanc, a strong type of grape which can endure diseases. The Cave Mont Blanc has been working grapes since 1983 and its majestic setting welcomes you for a delicious tasting of this unexpected delicacy. Its production – 150,000 bottles per year with contributions from about a hundred vigneroni – means it's a treat you should not miss.

### Distillerie Saint-Roch - Rosset Terroir - Aosta

Think mountain liquors and Gênépy springs to mind. The funky, state-of-the-art Saint Roch Distilleries offer an exciting journey into the history of this famous liquor, which grows at an altitude of 2000m. Combining the roughness of the mountains and the freshness of still water, the Valle d'Aosta Gênépy is a unique blend which was recently granted the European Geographical Identification, offering clients an exclusive product. Founded in 1968, tradition and quality are at the core of the Distilleries and a visit is simply extraordinary. Rosset Terroir – the vineyards belonging to the same company, also produce award winning wines, such as the Cornalin and Chardonnay Muscat DOP.

### La Cave de Cogne

Would you expect to find Pienza sheep ricotta or Porto Santo Spirito red prawns in a restaurant in Cogne? These, and other surprising local delights - *Buche de Chèvre* cheese, *Riserva Bosses* DOP Ham from Saint-Rhémy en Bosses, Sant'Orso wild herbs ravioli – offer a sensational experience deep within picturesque Cogne. The venue started as a Wine Cellar in 1970 and expanded in 2011, to include a refined restaurant. Since then, it's gone from strength to strength, offering the freshest, high quality products in a sensational setting.

### Bar à Fromage - Cogne

Step into a Ye Olde atmosphere and savour ancient recipes, lulled by a roaring fire; discover simple, authentic tastes and give in to temptations. Le Bar à Fromage – Restaurant de Montagne – is a pleasant discovery: let your hair down and enter this delightful venue. A distinctly alpine restaurant, most of the ingredients are sourced locally – goat's and sheep's cheese, fontina, lard and exquisite apples – or from nearby Piedmont – truffles, mushrooms – in a marriage of tastes and flavours which is hard to forget. Gaze at marvellous Sant'Orso meadow from the window, looking at the various traditional objects hung on the wall, the ideal ornament to a sublime culinary experience.



### Lou Ressonon - Cogne

More than fifty years old and still going strong, Lou Ressonon is where you'll go to savour the real alpine taste of a mountain hamlet. Traditionally furnished, this welcoming restaurant hides many surprises, such as the *Seupetta à la Cogneintze*, a local stew made with rice, whole wheat, white toast and fontina cheese, as well as Gressonara carpaccio with *Bagna Cauda* dip, regional charcuterie and a roasted lamb saddle in a bread crumb and red wine sauce. The Irish Angus, Chautobriand and locally farmed fish also deserve a mention.

### Pierre Alexis 1877 - Courmayeur

A cosy atmosphere for this sophisticated, yet very welcoming restaurant in the centre of Courmayeur. The freshest ingredients are employed, sourced locally whenever possible, offering an exceptional blend of traditional Aosta Valley recipes with funkier, more creative ideas. Knowledge, experience and passion lay at the heart of the cuisine, focusing on the harmony of tastes and high quality. From Irish beef to crayfish, local cheeses and pumpkin gnocchi, this is a triumph of tastes which will surprise you.

### Rifugio Bonatti - Loc. Malatrà, Val Ferret

Walter Bonatti was an adventurer, an exceptional mountaineer, a gifted writer and a sensitive soul who loved Mont Blanc. This modern mountain hut, dedicated to him, allows you to get close to the spirit of yesteryear alpinists. In the sublime Italian Val Ferret, facing Mont Blanc and the Grandes Jorasses, the hut is in the Malatrà valley, at 2025m and can be reached with an easy, one-hour walk. Expect stunning scenery, refined food and that genuine, sincere mountain atmosphere. Set on the Alta Via, the high-mountain route connecting the high passes in the valley, this gem offers delicacies in a sensational setting.

### Rifugio Magià - Loc. La Servaz, Nus

"You can be the moon and still be jealous of the stars" goes the saying. Gazing at the stars is a joy for everyone and the Saint Barthélemy valley is famous for its clear skies, making star gazing a joy. This exceptional hut, set at 2007m, offers 13 rooms, some of which are en suite and features exposed beams, wood panelling and a cosy ambience. Expect hearty, local specialities and refined wines, as well as delicious cakes and desserts.



# The View is everything

An upscale, five-star hotel overlooking the Mont Blanc massif, close to the coveted ski slopes and a short walk from smart Courmayeur. It's all glitz and awe-inspiring mountain views in the Alpine-sleek rooms with soft wool blankets, lightwood and dark furniture. Sublime floor-to-ceiling windows in the airy restaurant and the exquisite cuisine make this a marvellous gourmet experience. Add a funky lounge bar, the rejuvenating Elysium Spa, an indoor pool and gym to make this the perfect venue. The hotel also hosts stylish events in the tasteful meeting rooms, as well as banquets and weddings. You are a valued guest at this Grand Hotel, where nothing is left to chance.



Love for the mountains is felt throughout the hotel and Courmayeur, where alpine tradition meets Italian style, together with its happy bustle, are the exquisite frame to this superb hotel. From here you can get up close to the Mont Blanc massif with the state-of-the-art Skyway cable car, ski in the winter and hike or climb in the summer amid eternal glaciers. After all, if the oldest Mountain Guide Group in Italy resides in Courmayeur, there must be a reason.

## GRAND HOTEL COURMAYEUR MONTBLANC



### Xfactor

In a sublime union of glass and wood, sophisticated elegance conveys attention for details and tasteful choices.

Grand Hotel Courmayeur Montblanc  
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# Unpretentious Luxury

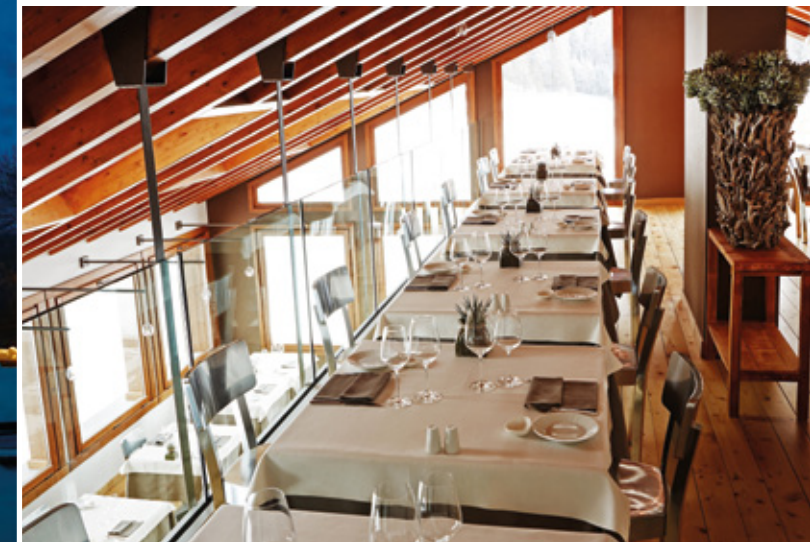


MONTANA LODGE & SPA

"Dedicato al Grande Ottavio" stands proud at Montana Lodge & SPA. The venue is dedicated to him, who was born in a Sicilian village and is the inspiration behind the hotel. You may also choose to stay in a chalet, part of the adjacent, upscale Jardin des Alpes, a high-end residential development integrated with the hotel. Marvellously appointed apartments with staggering views and a modern décor.

## Xfactor

The hotel operates a high-efficiency biomass heating system and an electricity saving infrastructure, solar panels as well as a water-saving system.



Bringing the best of contemporary design and innovative materials, this eco-chic five-star hotel is set within picturesque La Thuile. A stone's throw from world-class on- and off-piste slopes, taking you to neighbouring France, the hotel is the ultimate destination for savvy, refined travellers. Respect for nature and the traditional mountain hospitality are the credo for the award-winning interiors, where history and innovation live in harmony. Walk barefoot on the wooden floor of a chic room or rejoice in the superb Spa for a moment to treasure. The chef employs local ingredients, granting an exceptional gourmet experience in the splendid restaurant and smart Alpine Bistro. Cutting-edge conference facilities ensure your event will be a memorable affair. The future has landed at Montana Lodge & SPA.



Montana Lodge & SPA  
55 rooms and suites  
Open from December to March / from June to September  
Tesla Destination Charging  
Frazione Arly, 87 - 11016 La Thuile (AO)  
[www.montanalodge.it](http://www.montanalodge.it)



VALLE D'AOSTA

# A Journey to Paradise

BELLEVUE HOTEL & SPA

BELLEVUE HOTEL & SPA



The recently opened **Angel's Nest** is a true corner of Paradise. Imagine sweeping views on the valley, a suspended bath-tub that can slide outside, a water fireplace, an outdoor patio and a four-poster bed: immerse yourself within an idyllic surrounding, kissed by Mother Nature.

## Xfactor

Cogne has a proud history, felt in the traditional décor of the Bellevue rooms. Feel the warmth of mountain culture, surrounded by majestic mountains.



Bellevue Hotel & SPA  
39 rooms, suites and chalets  
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Tesla Destination Charging  
Rue Grand Paradis, 22 - 11012 Cogne (AO)  
www.hotelbellevue.it

The world-renowned extensive plains of Sant'Orso form the majestic backdrop for this rustic-chic Spa hotel, set in a premium position within the Gran Paradiso National Park. Opened in 1925, traditions still hold centre stage here, paired with state-of-the-art facilities. The wood-panelled, ornate rooms entail diverse traits, most of them have balconies and some suites feature a private sauna. The Spa is to die for: choose among 6 types of sauna, 2 steam baths, 2 swimming pools and many gorgeous treatments with luxurious cosmetics. Indulge in one of the exquisite four restaurants, including the Michelin-starred Petit Restaurant with only six tables – with the added, summer-only *Maison à l'alpage* – or the wine cellar with 2,000 labels. At Bellevue, Paradise cannot be that far.





## CLAUDIA DA RIN

Born and bred in Cortina d'Ampezzo, Dolomites, I spent nearly a decade between London and Paris and I am now based in Milan. I have 30 years' professional experience with a strong initiative and willingness to succeed in highly competitive environments. Passionate about assisting brands connect with their customers and helping them achieve their goals and targets, I love design and have a keen interest in creative work. Years of successful operations and experiences in the international marketing of Italy's finest hotels and destinations to discerning travellers and their chosen advisors have inspired me to found Claudia Da Rin Luxury Hotels & Villas, in the firm belief that my personalized style of sales and marketing activities does not only highlight and promote the beauty and unique character of the hotels, but also significantly enhances their business. In 2013 I founded **LLM - Luxury Lakes & Mountains** to showcase the best the Italian Lakes and Mountains have to offer, satisfying sophisticated travellers and their travel advisors' need for reliable assistance, offering an inspirational guide to designing unique experiences. LLM is an outstanding meeting place for a collection of exclusive hotels, villas and chalets and **LLM Lifestyle Book** is a purpose-made guide to authentic experiences in LLM lake and mountain destinations.

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## LUCIA PROSINO

Born and bred in Valsesia (Northwest Italy), I spent over a decade in the UK, gravitating towards the art sphere – BA in German and History of Art (Reading University), MA in Arts and Heritage Management (SDA Bocconi, Milan), MA in 15th century Florentine Arts (Courtauld Institute of Arts, London).

Working for art dealers and galleries in London, mainly Old Masters paintings and drawings, taught me to be a careful observer, capturing the essence of the people I meet and the places I visit. Travelling broadens the mind and the many cities I lived in, from London to Edinburgh, Munich to Rome, Hamburg to Banff, gave me an insight into diverse cultures.

I am now based in Aosta and work as a translator and journalist for the outdoor and travel industries. This LLM Book Lifestyle was the chance to delve into the undisputed splendours of a land so rich in culture, heritage and savoir faire.

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## BLU GRAPHIC DESIGN / MONICA CITRO & GIORGIO PAGNI

"Let me not to the marriage of true minds Admit impediments." It is easy to be romantic when your name is William Shakespeare. Perhaps a little less so when you share your working life with your partner. And yet, as a married couple, we achieved a successful enterprise thanks to our passion for design, the arts, drawing and photography. After having graduated from the prestigious Brera Academy and SPD-Scuola Politecnica di Design in Milan, we opened **Blu**, our graphic studio, in 1993, and are based in Milan. Being acute listeners and observers, we clearly identify our clients' needs, taking an active, strategic role with our ideas, suggestions and our long-established expertise. We can contribute to the development of a project and individual brands alike, with custom-tailored brochures, catalogues, packaging, logotypes and editorial products.

**Mo&Gio**, founded in 2005, is another venture born out of our keen interest in the arts. Through paintings, we express our emotions and are particularly concerned about tones, hues, movement and light. Our creative team is always on the lookout for new, inspiring and challenging ideas, where we can show our mettle.

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## OSCAR PAGANI

I personally and fully oversee a cutting-edge, flexible and pioneering enterprise.

Our clients require more and more ad hoc solutions: I believe best meeting their demands is key. I believe in imagination, innovation, in good outcomes achieved with dedication, but most of all I believe people are priceless. The best results and significant goals are always reached working together.



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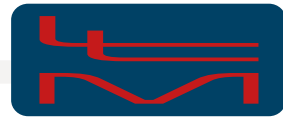
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Where works of art take shape



LUXURY LAKES & MOUNTAINS

Luxury Lakes & Mountains


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160  
LLM Lifestyle

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