

FOR A FITNESS KICK

INVIGORATING DESTINATIONS JUMP-START NEW ROUTINES AND TACKLE OLD CONCERNS



LEFAY DOLOMITI

TRENTINO, ITALY

TRADITIONAL CHINESE TECHNIQUES AT A FRESH ALPINE HIT

Last summer's big European spa opening, this hideout in the Alps breaks new ground in a part of Italy where ultra-luxe outfits are a rare species. The Trentino region is a glacier-pure land of waterfalls, winter ski runs and tiny mountainside churches, with woodsmoke-furled villages beneath granite peaks. One of these is Pinzolo, above which Lefay Dolomiti stands, its glass-fronted hub flanked by two wings of timber-covered bedrooms, an indoor-outdoor swimming pool cast in front. The wide-open interiors are planed from wood, Scandi-style, with carpet that resembles the forest floor and conker-toned furniture. The scene outside at nightfall, with braziers glowing poolside and swimmers half-hidden amid the jade water and rising steam, could be one from a Roman bath circa 79AD, were it not for Gaius and Aurelia's mobile phones. The original Lefay lies 55 miles to the south, above Lake Garda, and has carved out a reputation for health programmes inspired by Chinese medicine. Its Dolomiti sibling is a more informal, less medically minded concept, better suited to weekend visitors, summer hikers and skiers who don't want to pack their days with treatments, nor completely ignore the pudding menu. Those on a fitness

THIS IS A MORE INFORMAL, LESS MEDICALLY MINDED CONCEPT THAN ITS LAKE GARDA SIBLING, SUITED TO HIKERS AND SKIERS

mission can sign up to a variety of daily classes such as pre-ski stretching, Pilates, and a one-on-one exercise of hamstring-punishing poses that you'll feel for days. The aufguss session in the sauna is huge fun: gym maestro Enrico Milani sprinkles eucalyptus and pine oil on the coals then walks around wafting participants with a large fan. Everyone applauds at the end, a rare moment of communal theatre in the hush-hush spa world. The hi-tech gym isn't banished downstairs, but has picture windows that frame gardens and snow-smudged peaks. Stride out with young Marco Filosi on an eight-mile woodland hike to the grand waterfall. Like the majority of staff (and much of the food and wine), he's from the region and will show you secret spots for foraging for porcini in the forest. The spa has four clearly defined spaces, each one devised for a different energy type with colour-therapy rain showers and matching treatments. Green Dragon, for the impulsive, is a cauldron of bio-saunas; White Tiger, for the melancholic, is a lighter relaxation experience, filled with steam rooms; busiest is the larger Red Phoenix, designed to tackle anxiety, with freezing and piping hot Kneipp pools and Finnish saunas. The Black Tortoise, meanwhile, can be booked for small groups, a sparkling salt cave with a Dead Sea-style lake to float in. Therapies are deft, subtle performances: reflexology switches the body into calm mode with a tiny twist of the toe; facials leave you slack-jawed and smiling. The invigorating, fascia-kneading massage is a wake-up call for sore muscles. For so long, Rosa Alpina has been the wellness go-to in the Dolomites. But a little healthy competition now from this immersive new hotel can only be a good thing.

INSIDER TIP Italians are set in their ways about when they visit the mountains – August for summer hikes; December for the ski lifts. Come in May or September instead, and stop by the village's Renaissance church paintings by Simone Baschenis, with memento mori skeletons dancing all around.

BOOK IT Healing Holidays (+44 20 7843 3592; healingholidays.com/condenast) offers a two-night Scents of the Forest programme from £835 per person, including flights, transfers and breakfast.



PHOTOGRAPHS MATTIA AQUILA PHOTOGRAPHY