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SPA time

SPA OF THE MONTH LEFAY RESORT AND SPA, LAKE GARDA, ITALY

HEALING SPA

If there is a spa heaven, it must be like Lefay. Perched high in the hills above Lake Garda with breathtaking lake and mountain views, this temple of wellbeing doesn't just boast one of the most stunning locations in the world, it's recently been voted Best Spa in Italy by SpaFinder. The views, fresh air and tranquillity are a spa cure in themselves. But Lefay also has a world-class wellbeing programme.

THE RESORT: On the night of my arrival, we checked in to our spacious suite, threw open the floor-to-ceiling doors and stepped onto the lawn to see a full moon shimmering across Lake Garda, 200m below. Next morning, padding across the gardens for an early morning swim, I discovered Lefay is an eco-resort, built seamlessly into the hillside; all tumbling terraces and grass-covered roofs. Inside, the resort is flooded with daylight, while a pared-down design and natural fabrics give a peaceful, grounding feel.

THE PHILOSOPHY: The Lefay Spa Method combines principles of classical Chinese medicine

with Western scientific research. You can start your stay with an energy consultation with the spa doctor who'll prescribe you one of Lefay's programmes – from anti-stress to anti-ageing and sport – designed to rejuvenate your body and restore your vital energy with treatments, classes and outdoor activities. The sports programme, for instance, includes energy treatments to revitalise your muscle energy and circulation.

THE SPA: The heart of the resort, Lefay's spa is somewhere you can happily while away the days.



Forget the bustle of your normal life and unwind in the spacious accommodation

Must-have product

BATHTIME BLISS

Run a bath, turn down the lights and dream with Mandara Spa's Float Away Candles. Inspired by Balinese spa rituals, the pretty jasmine-scented candles are the perfect Xmas treat for a spa-loving friend – or you! The candles cost £4 for a pack of three; available from most Sainsbury's stores nationwide or from www.timetospa.co.uk.





Watch the sun set from the stunning thalassotherapy pool

There are three areas: Fire & Water, with indoor and outdoor salt-water swimming pools, an infinity pool, five saunas, a salt-water lake and relaxation areas; Nature & Fitness – the gym and exercise studio – and Silence Between the Stars, with outdoor running circuit, fitness path and energy gardens. We started each morning swimming laps in the sleek 25-metre lap pool as the sun rose over Lake Garda and ended each day in the bubbling outdoor thalassotherapy pool watching the sun set behind the mountains.

TREATMENTS: Lefay's signature treatments are Energetic Massages (from €105), which combine Eastern pressure-point therapy and Western techniques such as lymphatic drainage. The massages are soothingly gentle and deeply relaxing. For the anti-ageing facial (€105), my therapist applied aromatherapy oils on key pressure points and energy lines around my body, before moving on to a facial massage. The à la carte spa menu offers a huge range of Eastern

and Western treatments, from facials using Lefay's natural range of skin products, to ayurvedic massage, shiatsu, Thalgo marine treatments and firming body wraps. After your treatment session, relax with one of Lefay's herbal tea blends. You can have your free-radical levels tested with an Oxidative Stress check-up (€210), sort out back pain with a postural analysis session (€60) or simply have a general medical assessment (€60).

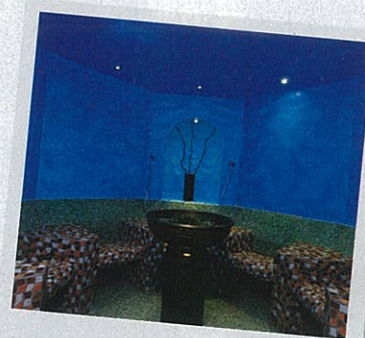
MUST TRY: For the ultimate chill out, get horizontal in the 37°C salt lake, set in its own underground grotto. Float effortlessly in the Dead Sea salt water (said to aid detoxification and improve breathing), then cocoon yourself on one of the relaxation beds. We then hopped between Lefay's five saunas, ranging from a temperate aromatic sauna (40°C) and olive tree bio sauna (50°C) panelled with olive wood and said to detox skin, to the fierce Finnish Sauna (75-90°C), rubbing our bodies down with crushed ice in between.

GET ACTIVE: Exercise is a key ingredient of Lefay's wellness cure. Hit the gym and work out on the latest Technogym equipment while you look out across the lake. Try circuit training, Pilates, Qi Gong and yoga (no charge; personal sessions also available for €50) in the studio or get outdoors for aqua classes (no charge), the 2.5km running/walking circuit that winds through the woods and hills or try the fitness path with 12 exercise stations. We loved the Symbol of Life Trail, which winds its way through Lefay's gardens and the surrounding wooded hills. The trail takes you on a meditative walk, designed to represent the rhythm

of life, through five stations, including a bright red energy garden on the hillside and a contemplative wooded valley.

THE FOOD: Love Italian food? Lefay has created a spa cuisine – Lefay Vital Gourmet – based around the famously healthy Mediterranean diet, using delicious, fresh local produce. Think olive oil (Lefay has its own), garlic, fresh tomatoes, fish and vegetables. At the huge breakfast buffet, we feasted on freshly pressed juices, omelettes, tomato and mozzarella salads and home-made breads and jams. Dinner is fine dining but, if you're trying to lose weight, avoid temptation by opting for the light menu, 'La Leggerezza nell' Essere'.

A four-night wellness programme (either anti-stress, anti-ageing, slimming and sports) starts from €1,250 per person. The price is based on two people sharing a Prestige Junior suite with breakfast and dinner. For reservations, visit le fayresorts.com. Lefay is one hour and 20 minutes transfer from Verona airport.



The temperate aromatic sauna is a pleasant 40°C

SPA HEAVEN:
STUNNING VIEWS,
FRESH AIR AND
TRANQUILLITY



TIP OF THE MONTH

Hair spa

Get lustrous locks for the party season with The Ultimate Protein Rejuvenate Treatment at Paul Edmonds. Relax while your hair is painted with a protein pack containing extracts from the moisturising Katera plant. A quick session under the dryer, followed by a rinse, and your hair is left bouncy, soft and shiny – for six weeks! Perfect for dry, damaged and coloured hair, it costs £65. 0207 589 8958; pauledmonds.com.