

Condé Nast Traveller

in association with
Healing  Holidays

THE SPA GUIDE 2017



LEFAY WEIGHT LOSS LAKE GARDA, ITALY

IN BRIEF ANCIENT CHINESE KNOW-HOW WITH ITALIAN FLAIR

Strip away the heated massage beds and white coats and this Alpine eyrie would still make guests bounce. Set high above the quick-silver vastness of Lake Garda, the imperious views fit the Romantic notion of the sublime – towering rocky crags, volcanic skies and mist-shrouded islets. But it's the treatments that have made Lefay a close-to-home favourite with Kamalaya and Chiva-Som devotees, and a weekend retreat for stressed-out Milanese in need of an acupuncture-facelift. The framework is Classical Chinese Medicine, backed by up-to-date medical research and lightened by an Italian playfulness. Don't expect miraculous quick fixes or a sudden need to take in your trousers – the message here is about embracing long-term change. The new detox course is a hit, but the five-day sports/posture option is much more fun, beginning with moxibustion, in which red-hot herb cigars are passed over qi points like fireflies, and continuing with precision-guided massages that are *al dente* without inflicting the authentic pain of Chinese practitioners. 'We don't want to make guests cry,' says one staff member. They all have

IT'S THE TREATMENTS THAT HAVE MADE THIS A CLOSE-TO-HOME FAVOURITE WITH KAMALAYA AND CHIVA-SOM DEVOTEES

tales to tell. Effortlessly serene senior therapist Teddy Trevisan spent seven years learning t'ai chi in a forest, Luke Skywalker style; Dr Tolja demonstrates how cycling with longer handlebars can prevent tiredness with an anecdote that conjures a wonderful image of this donnish figure pedalling down the Rhine on a Chopper. 'Make every movement a meditation!' he declares. The sauna space is thrilling, like a nightclub for troglodytes with disco colours and a trippy salt-bath experience in which you float weightlessly beneath a huge artificial moon. And swimming between sliding doors to the outdoor pool never loses its appeal. The spa menu has its highlights, but ingredients used on the à la carte are just as fresh and local: pasta with artichoke sauce and black truffles; short rib with beetroot ketchup. And surely it's only a matter of time before the health benefits of molten chocolate cake are proven? While you're eating, peer down to the village of Gargnano: DH Lawrence came here for a day and stayed six months. As you walk away, taller than before and with renewed purpose, you may well feel the same way inclined.

INSIDER TIP Avoid snarled-up roads by coming at the end of the year, when the Mediterranean microclimate is still sunny and bright. **BOOK IT** Healing Holidays (+44 20 7843 3592; healingholidays.co.uk/condenast) offers a five-night fitness programme from £2,430 per person full board including flights, transfers, all treatments and activities as per programme. **HEALING HOLIDAYS EXCLUSIVE** A complimentary treatment, salt-lake session and herbal infusion, plus guaranteed room upgrade.



NEW LANSERHOF LANS WEIGHT LOSS INNSBRUCK, AUSTRIA

IN BRIEF TRANSFORMATION IN THE TYROL

Hunched over a computer half the time, you have a permanently stiff neck and shoulders. You have digestive issues. You know you drink far too much coffee but just can't cut down. You often wake at 3am for no apparent reason. Your joints ache. Maybe you're even recovering from a serious illness. It is precisely these kinds of complaints – the type our GPs never seem hugely interested in – that you might want to get sorted before they deteriorate into something more serious. The newly relaunched Lanserhof Lans has always been an exceptionally worthwhile destination, but today it's better than ever. Opened in 1984, it unveiled a €25 million transformation in late 2016. Rates for its 67 rooms haven't changed much, but now every guest also has to book a basic treatment package, which does at least guarantee slots for whatever your personalised package prescribes (there's nothing more irritating than being at a spa and finding that all the star therapists are fully booked). Given the on-the-spot access you get to a range of brilliant medical expertise, it's well worth paying full whack if you do have serious health issues. A key change is that the doctors are now specialists, covering cardio problems, internal medicine, rheumatology, orthopaedics, sports injuries and sleep disorders. Additionally, they're all trained in the Mayr method, which puts good digestion at the centre of good

ACHING JOINTS, DIGESTIVE ISSUES: COME HERE TO SORT OUT THE COMPLAINTS OUR GPs NEVER SEEM HUGEY INTERESTED IN

health. It's cards-on-the-table time if you want to get the most out of a stay. The medical consultation, half physical examination and half discussion about what ails you, is your big opportunity to be frank, open and un-British. The spa also offers the latest cutting-edge treatments, including whole-body cryotherapy for pain relief and reducing inflammation. And there's a sleek new five-storey wing with an indoor-outdoor salt-water pool, and steam and sauna complex. Sixteen rooms and suites on the upper floors bring added glamour to the retreat, but it still feels cosy compared to the spectacular chunk of steel-and-glass modernism of its sister property, Lanserhof Tegernsee in Bavaria. Lie in bed and look out through floor-to-ceiling windows at the snowy Patscherkofel peak before padding upstairs to the roof, where you get your own private hedged terrace. It's a good spot to top up your vitamin D while deciding, what the hell, to stay for 10 days rather than seven. After all, money spent on the future you isn't any old purchase. It's an investment.

INSIDER TIP What you eat once home is crucial, of course, so pick up *The 50 Healthiest 10-Minute Recipes* cookbook.

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