

Condé Nast Traveller

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
Healing  Holidays

LOSE WEIGHT
IN THAILAND

MINDFULNESS
IN PORTUGAL

BOOTCAMPS
IN MEXICO

MEDICAL
CARE
IN SWITZERLAND

DETOXING
IN AUSTRIA

YOGA
IN INDIA

The Spa Guide 2018



PLUS: THIS YEAR'S PRIZE-WINNING SPAS AROUND THE WORLD

LEFAY

WEIGHT
LOSS

LAKE GARDA, ITALY

CHINESE WISDOM WITH A SUNNY MEDITERRANEAN OUTLOOK

Lefay is serious about its Classical Chinese treatments and beauty procedures, but is never proscriptive about what you do the rest of the time. So as you dutifully spoon your low-cal butternut-squash soup and beetroot spaghetti in the restaurant, you may notice a trolley trundling past bearing a bottle of Chianti and a steaming platter of roast beef, on its way to the less stringent guests behind you. An admission that you've not touched a single drop during your stay is met with baffled surprise – and the advice to at least try the Franciacorta before you leave. Set high on a terrace above Lake Garda, Lefay has become a favoured weekend retreat for Milanese couples, who arrive with children and *nonna* in tow, and are soon robed-up and roaming the relaxation area. Any child under the age of 80 will be besotted with the swimming pool, which flows outside through an open-sesame sliding door to an infinity pool where you can lean your chin on the side and peer at the colour-changing lake and watersporting village of Gargnano below. Next to this is a bubbling hot tub carved out of the rock, while the five meditation gardens lead from

THIS GENTLE-SOULED, FRIENDLY PLACE
WILL LEAVE YOU DESCRUNCHED,
UNHUNCHED AND LIGHTER ON YOUR FEET

high Alpine pasture to flower beds and a mystic woodland grotto fringed with cascading ivy, just the place for any young Jedi to train in. New five- or 10-day programmes include weight-management and detox, which mix bespoke diets with a busy schedule of draining and energy-boosting treatments. But you can also come for just a quick break, exploring the psychedelic sauna and steamroom nooks, whizzing mountain bikes over the hills and signing up for drop-in exercise sessions. The personable staff are mainly from the region and stay for years. Fitness live-wire Veronica Tonni, button-bright and brisk, will have you bent backwards over a fitball in no time. 'And now we use our nose as a pen,' she says, instructing the class to draw numbers in the air with heads to loosen stiff necks; softly spoken Teddy Trevison knuckle-kneads joints with a tuina massage and leads prowling qigong classes. Regulars love the way everything threads together at Lefay, from the herbal teas and fresh, Mediterranean menus prescribed for each guest – 'salty' stimulates the kidneys, 'spicy' the lungs – to the clean-aired nature hits. Locally pressed olive oil is drizzled over bread and backs alike. Family suites are in a low-lying, stone-and-timber-fronted building with parquet floors like a cigar box and bath tubs with those far-reaching valley views; there's babysitting, a children's club for those aged three to 12, and junior treatments that include foot massage and facial cleansing. Lefay is a gentle-souled, friendly retreat that will leave you descrunched, unhunched and lighter on your feet – and as a place where you can stand in a pair of disposable briefs in a Zen garden, watching the sun curve behind stencil-black, yodelsome mountains, there's nowhere better. You may want to give the cigar bar a miss, though.

INSIDER TIP Make sure you experience the freefall sensation of the private saltwater flotation cave, set-designed with its own little moon – it's a 25-minute experience you'll remember for the rest of the year.

BOOK IT Healing Holidays (+44 20 7843 3592; healingholidays.co.uk/condenast) offers a five-night Spa Integral programme from £2,369 per person, full board, including flights, transfers and all treatments according to the programme.

HEALING HOLIDAYS EXCLUSIVE Book the five-night LeFay Spa Method Programme and receive a room upgrade.

