

# HOUSE of COCO

THE PURPOSE ISSUE

£5.95

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# DESTRESS IN THE DOLOMITES

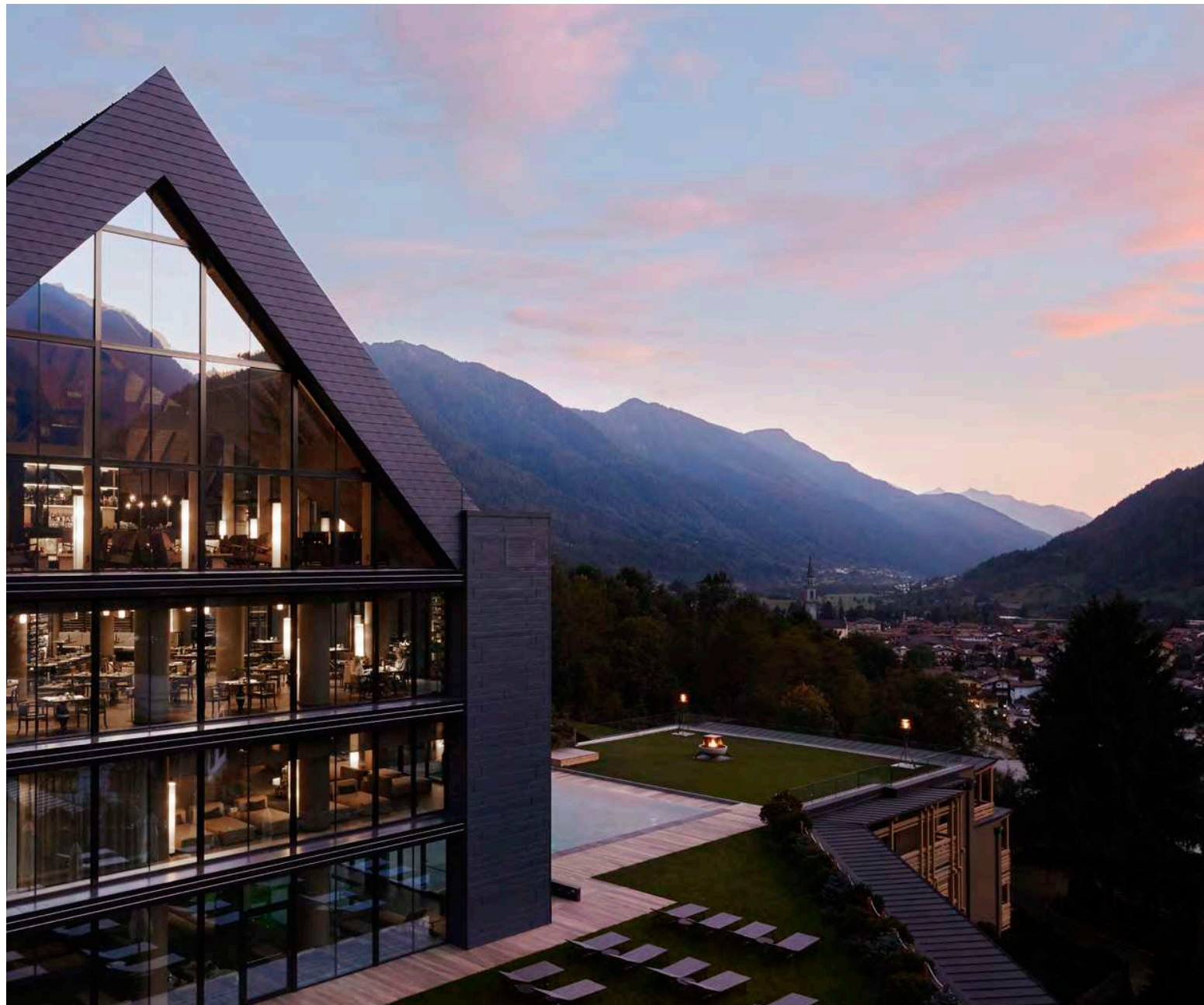
After a sudden bereavement, our resident wellness expert's world was turned upside down. You can't pour from an empty cup and **ANJI MCGRANDLES** found her cup was running on empty. An invite to Lefay Resort and Spa prompted Anji to pack her bags and head to Italy to find herself again

**A**s our resident wellness expert, I try to stay on top of my emotional and mental health. At the end of the summer, I suddenly lost my dad and at the same time my mojo. For someone who is normally positive with a zest for life, I felt like my whole world had been turned on its head. My wellbeing was shunted to the bottom of my to-do-list while I focussed on getting through each day without having a melt-down. *House of Coco* Editor and Founder, Laura, who had also recently lost her dad, invited me to take a wellness trip to the Dolomites to reset.

Just three hours north of Milan is Lefay Resort and Spa, a stunning luxurious alpine lodge situated in the ski area of Madonna di Campiglio and located in Pinzolo, the largest town in the Rendena valley. The resort is immersed in the striking scenery of the Dolomites, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The stylish hotel reflects the extraordinary beauty of the area, bringing the outside in. The bar, restaurant and communal spaces are a combination of dramatic floor to ceiling windows and plush soft fabrics creating a cosy, yet elegant ambiance which continues throughout the resort to the bedroom suites.

Checking into my room brought instant





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zen to my stay with the light and airy suite using natural fabrics and local materials such as oak, chestnut wood and stones. It was spacious with a walk-in dressing room, balcony, lounge and bedroom area complete with a wall mounted fireplace. Expansive windows looked out on the azure blue sky, surrounding lush woods and mountains. A glass walled bathroom welcomed me to soak in the tub using spa products while taking in the panoramic views.

Getting out in nature is a great way to de-stress and relax and the location of Lefay Resort and Spa is everything. Out of ski season, there are incredible hiking routes to explore; from the steepest paths to meandering walks among the valleys, rivers and crystalline lakes. These lush green mountains provide the ideal setting for hikers of every level. During my stay I discovered foraging and



some unbelievable walking routes. With spectacular views of the Brenta Dolomites as a backdrop, I found that walking in this beautiful part of Italy quietened my thoughts and the ache in my heart eased a little as I let go of the pressure that had been building up inside me. The trails are dotted with mountainside restaurants, great for a spot of lunch. I stopped off at Chalet Fogajard, an alpine lodge straight out of Heidi. This picturesque, rustic retreat offers magnificent views of the Dolomites and serves fresh, local dishes. The walk down the mountain presented a totally different perspective of the landscape with the autumn sunshine hitting the waterfalls and river making them sparkle in the light.

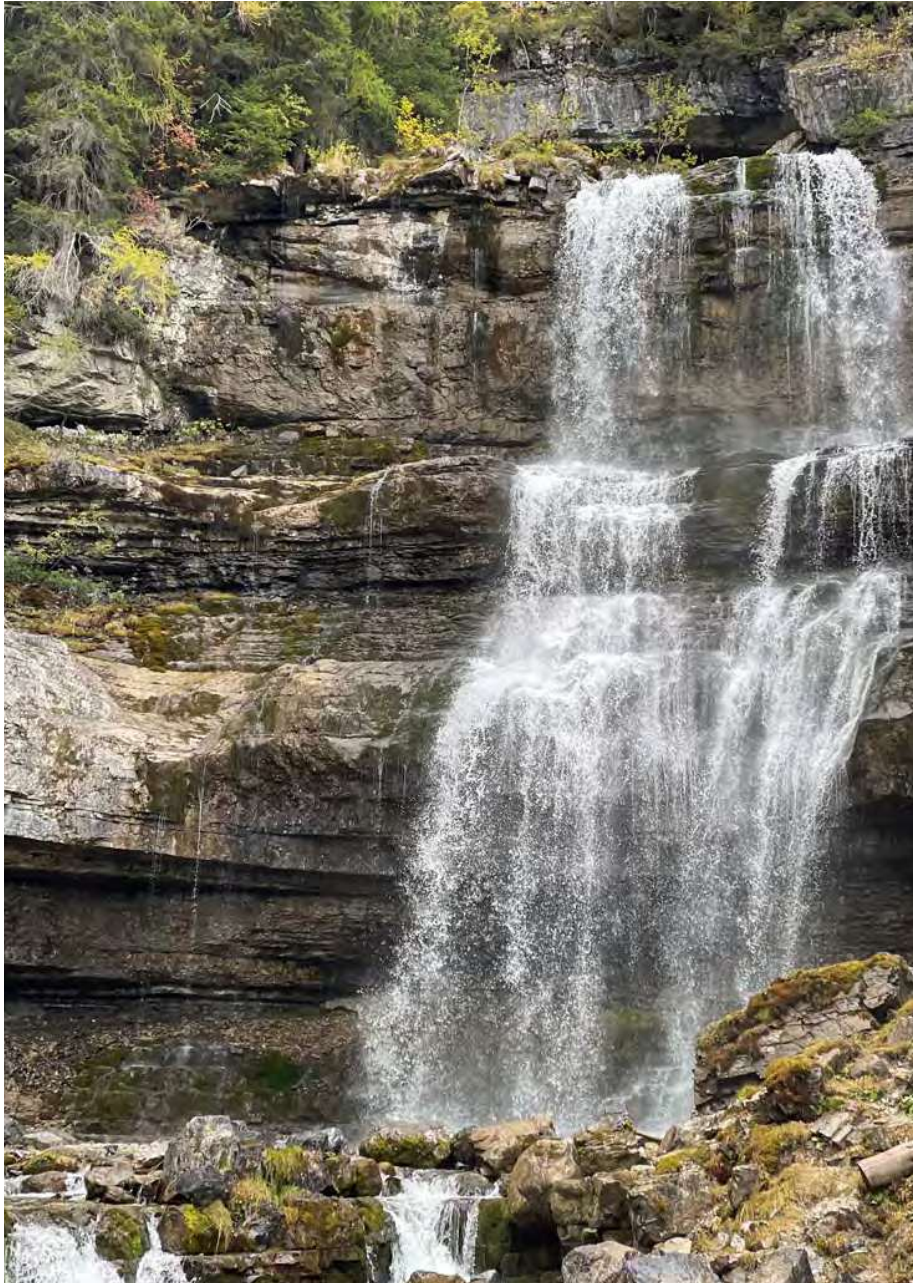
The hotel can organise wellness activities from horse riding and mountain biking to golf. As well as this you can book onto wellness trails in the Nature Park Adamello Brenta. The itineraries vary but expect bare foot walks, Kneipping in the Sarca River, meditation and tree hugging.

Lefay Spa is the perfect place to reset your energy and rebalance. It's a haven of calm where East and West blend together among nature and innovation. The extensive spa is one of the largest in the Alps, spread across four areas featuring an indoor/outdoor pool with epic views of the mountains. It offers 22 treatment rooms, a 24-hour fitness centre, saunas, an indoor pool made of tonalite rock to reflect the landscape and at the heart of the spa is the Energy Therapeutic World. Here you will find a unique wellness space, based on the concept of energy (Qi) and using the principles of classical Chinese medicine. It is dominated by five zones: The Green Dragon, The Red Phoenix, The White Tiger, The Black Tortoise and the Centre. Each zone targets specific acupuncture points and is distinguished by the temperature and humidity and phytotherapy teas, which are created by the doctors based at Lefay Garda, using local herbs. Depending on your needs, a specific path will be recommended and combined with holistic treatments.

My five-day spa programme started at the Salt Grotto and Saltwater lake. The floating salt pool targets stress so was definitely a good place for me to start. Sensory lighting and a crystal curtain make this zone super relaxing







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and for the first time in a few months I felt like the world had slowed down. Throughout the week I dipped in and out of each zone, spending time pre and post treatments unwinding. Nature is at the centre of all the treatments at Lefay and I had an amazing massage and facial as well as a body scrub using chestnut flower, Alpine salt and traditional Alpine butter. This exfoliating massage has anti-inflammatory properties and leaves the skin hydrated and glowing. I literally floated out of each treatment, feeling more peaceful, my mind less busy with 'stuff', and I experienced four nights of unbroken sleep.

Lefay Spa offers a meditation studio and a timetable of holistic activities

such as Perception Walking and Sauna Stretch. I tried a Qigong class, a mind-body-spirit practice that originates from China. Using stretching and breathing techniques it improves your mental and physical health and restores the flow of energy in the body. I'm used to high impact exercise so found it hard to adapt to the slow pace but after 30 minutes I was in flow and left the studio feeling energised.

My stay was fuelled by some fantastic, delicious food. Lefay's menu is fresh and local, catering for guests looking for healthy light bites through to a more glamorous dining experience. The hotel's fine dining restaurant, Grual, offers a unique, culinary experience that's a real tribute to the Dolomites. Executive chef, Matteo Maenza, has designed an eight-course 'altimetric' tasting menu that reflects the territory and a specific altitude. The menu highlights the natural characteristics of the three mountain ranges, starting from the valley floor with ingredients such as red turnips and white fish, then moving up to alpine pastures with wild herbs, apple and brown trout then finally reaching the high mountains with char, deer, and roe deer. The menu is 100% seasonal and Maenza often takes mountain walks with his sous chef for inspiration. Every course was paired with an excellent wine and beautifully presented. I adored the Spaghetti Monograno Felicetti with smoked mountain butter, cornelian, and deer. The Arctic char, Trentino bread purée with wild broccoli was to die for but the pièce de resistance was dessert which consisted of Caramel Tarte Tatin, puff pastry ice cream and almond chips as well as a final course of walnut emulsion, chocolate mousse, blackberry compote and mountain pepper ice cream. I finished the evening with a bespoke locally foraged herbal tea - while each course was modest in size by the time I finished my eighth I was truly spent.

This oasis of luxury and wellness was just the tonic I needed after a tough couple of months. A blend of relaxation, connecting with nature and spending some time filling my cup meant I left feeling rejuvenated and balanced.

■ A stay at Lefay Resort & Spa Dolomiti costs from 350 Euros per room, per night including breakfast and taxes -

■ [dolomiti.lefayresorts.com](https://dolomiti.lefayresorts.com)