Cherries, cheese, speck & co: The ADLER quality-seal identifies the best products from the region.

Young talent at the ADLER: The seventh generation of the Sanoner Family enters the company.

HEY HONEY! The buzz of bees: a beekeeper produces exquisite honey at the ADLER Lodge RITTEN.

EXCELLENT
Cherries, cheese, speck & co: The ADLER quality-seal identifies the best products from the region.

Let your soul fly.
Dear friends of the ADLER Spa Resorts & Lodges,

We’re delighted to welcome you back – to the ADLER magazine and to our resorts and lodges. We leave a challenging year behind us. Over the past months, priorities have shifted for many of us. It has been an occasion for many to define what really matters. What is it that still counts, when nothing can be taken for granted? Health, first and foremost. And then closeness with nature, with our friends and family. And the opportunity to be active, take care of our wellness, and be in harmony with the environment.

These themes have always been central to the ADLER experience – from the holistic approach of our medical wellness concept to the sustainable architecture of our facilities and the use of organic products in our menus and spa cosmetics. Now more than ever, it is good to see that we are on the right path.

Although we missed our guests during lockdown, we decided to make the most of the extra time and used it to make our offer even better. For example, we have modernised ADLER Spa DOLOMITI. With a renovated reception area, spa and treatment rooms and a new yoga pavilion, it now offers even more space and privacy. → p. 22.

Over decades, we have built up strong partnerships with the local farmers and food producers that supply our resorts in the Dolomites and Tuscany, like the herbal brand Kräuterrebellen from the Stelvio Pass, the mills in the Val d’Orcia, and the South Tyrolean farmer who grows forgotten vegetable varieties such as primitive carrots, rat-tail radishes and lucky clover turnips. All these suppliers share our values of long-term thinking and environmental sustainability. In time, our community has expanded, and around 100 producers have now been awarded the ADLER REGIONAL PARTNER quality seal. → p. 8. Experiences you can taste as well as live: sample the fine bottles of Tenuta Sanoner with a wine tasting or have a chat with beekeeper Michael Hafner. He will tell you all about the fine honey from his beehives on the grounds of ADLER Lodge RITTEN, as well as fascinating stories about bees. → p. 46.

“There is nothing permanent except change,” said the Greek philosopher Heraclitus. Our first inn was built over 200 years ago. Now, the seventh generation is joining our family business, bringing new ideas and the assurance that our traditions and beliefs will not only be preserved, but also further developed in the years to come. In their interview, Franziska, Moritz, Maximilian and Lukas Sanoner talk of change and continuity, and tell us about their challenges, growth and visions. → p. 16.

We are looking forward to your visit and hope you enjoy your reading!
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No one remembers exactly how it started. “Working closely with local growers and agricultural businesses has always been pretty much the norm with us. We can’t remember any more who the first was,” says Franziska Sano- ner, talking about the ADLER family business. In time, however, their numbers grew.

The chefs at the ADLER Spa Resorts & Lodges prefer to work with locally sourced delicacies. A foray into the culinary richness of South Tyrol and Tuscany

RADICALLY LOCAL

The chefs at the ADLER Spa Resorts & Lodges prefer to work with locally sourced delicacies. A foray into the culinary richness of South Tyrol and Tuscany

Kräuterrebellen from Passo dello Stelvio supplied the herbal teas, the Val Venosta fruit consortium the apricots, cherries and raspberries. The salami made with ancient Cinta Senese pigs came from Bottega delle Carni in Siena, while the grain for our home-baked bread and the legendary croissants at THERMAE were sourced from the Mulino Val d’Orcia stone mill. This is just to name a few. With many growers, suppliers and farmers, our partnership was built over the years.

At the same time, guests expressed growing interest in the food they were served. “Today, they want to know all about it,” says Hannes Dignatner, chef cook at Lodge RITTEN. “Who made this jam and that delicious yoghurt? Where does the trout come from, and what about the animals that provided the meat I’m being served? Guests who spend their holidays with us enjoy our local specialities and wish to know more about the origin of the products.”

This is how the idea to create an ADLER REGIONAL PARTNER quality seal took shape in 2018. The seal is used at the Resorts and Lodges to label all the products coming from ADLER’s trusted local suppliers. “Artichokes, chard, cabbage – during the summer season it amounts to around 100 different products,” explains Klaus Kier, who is part of upper management at ADLER and acts as the point of contact between chefs and suppliers.

Harald Gasser is one of those suppliers. Up in the mountains above the Isarco valley, he grows almost-forgotten vegetable varieties that are over 500 years old. His brand Aspinger Raritäten offers heritage cultivars of carrots, radishes, winter onions, mountain leeks, ratten radish and lucky clover. He is a passionate farmer who attracts mixed reactions. To some, he is far too radical: he is so eco-
Whether in the Dolomites or Tuscany – the best products come from the area. Denny Mair from Lodge ALPE (left) and Gaetano Vaccaro from THERMAE agree on that.

Manual work: The Swiss chard is still in the field. In the ADLER cuisines, soon they will be transformed into the finest dishes.

friendly that you can see him walk barefoot across his field, some say. And he lets weeds grow between his seedbeds. Even within the ADLER kitchen brigade some were less than enthusiastic.

“With every five kilos of carrots comes one kilo of dirt – to exaggerate a little,” says Klaus Kier, laughing. “Those who are used to clean-washed vegetables from supermarkets are obviously not amused at first.” But the best chefs in South Tyrol have long been serving Gasser’s vegetables. He grows 17 varieties of spinach, and 22 different types of tomatoes. Hannes Pignater marinates Gasser’s seasonal production and serves it as a side to his Rittner organic beef tartare.

“We recently took our classics off the menu. Instead, as an alternative to our gourmet dinner we offer our From Farm to Table special menu – a six-course meal where every dish is prepared with locally sourced ingredients.”

The origin of the ingredients is listed under each dish: the organic beef for the tartare comes from the Weberhof farm, the smoked cheese from the 3 Cime di Lavaredo cheese dairy in the Alta Pusteria valley, the savoy cabbage from the Oberroth farm, and the emmer grain for the obvious home-made – tagliolini with thyme and juniper jus from Uwe Gesswein’s farm.

There is such great focus on local produce and gentle, environmentally friendly farming that Lodge RITTEN also offers regular tasting events. Guests can sample the single-variety apple juices by Kohl from Auna di Sotto, and the alpine rose honey and mead by beekeeper Michael Hafner (see also page 46). Cheese tastings are offered directly at the farm, and those who wish to know where the best South Tyrolean speck is matured can join Franco Cemin in Trodena for one of his “Marende” snacks.

In Tuscany, museums and Romanesque churches are not the only attractions. ADLER guests can also take a bike trip to visit the “Caseificio” and “Macellaio” – the dairy farm and the butchery. Gaetano Vaccaro, chef at ADLER THERMAE, says, “Going for local produce is an easy choice for us. Tuscany is a land of plenty, with all kinds of goodness within easy reach a couple of kilometres away.”

Unsurprisingly, wine tastings are a regular item on the agenda at Tenuta Sanoner, the ADLER winery. The house offers its own olive oil, brandy, grappa and fine vinegar – a real delicacy. Great favourites like picci feature prominently on the menu, of course. “Everyone loves our traditional hand-rolled pasta, especially with bolognese sauce. And of course our Fiorentina steak – there’s no better place to eat it than here in Tuscany,” says Gaetano. “You can just taste the difference: the meat comes from pigs, chickens and cattle that spend their whole life outdoors – the meat has an entirely different aroma.”

The bread is baked by Gaetano’s team using cereals from the Molino della Val d’Orcia, a mill situated less than a kilometre away. Jams are home-made from organic fruit. The fresh croissants baked daily have become something of a cult among ADLER guests – and one of the things they really look forward to when they return after their first visit.

Alongside these permanent temptations come the “diva” – delicacies that rarely feature on the menu. “I’m especially partial to things that have a strong character and are only available for a limited time, like saffron or truffle, which we only get for a couple of weeks a year from San Giovanni d’Assio – that’s one of autumn’s most delightful gifts. Truffle dishes and naturally also the fresh olive oil from our Tenuta Sanoner.”

Gaetano Vaccaro: “Going for local produce is an easy choice for us – Tuscany is a land of plenty, with all kinds of goodness within easy reach a couple of kilometres away.”
Farmers regularly pay a visit to the Lodges’ chefs to present their products. “For example, we had a talk with the local consortium about potatoes,” says Klaus Kier. “Then the farmers experimented with different varieties to see which ones flourished the most, and our chefs tried them to determine which ones tasted best and were best suited to the creative ADLER cuisine,” he explains. They narrowed it down to two varieties, which are now grown in sufficient quantities.

“This is a partnership based on trust, and everyone benefits from it. The farmer can rely on us to buy a fixed quantity of produce with each harvest. Our chefs can always rely on having enough premium-quality fruit, milk, cheese, meat and vegetables to work with, and our guests enjoy the excellent results while also discovering their holiday region from a culinary point of view. Even the environment benefits from this: we have short, eco-friendly supply chains, and promote gentle, natural farming methods as well as species-appropriate animal husbandry.”

According to Denny Mair, the chef at Lodge ALPE, it is “the farmers’ love for their produce” that makes this partnership framework so special. “It is always great to see how passionately they strive to work in harmony with nature to get the best out of their products,” he says.

Dairy products are a good example. Since last year, the cheese has been procured from the Hof zu Fall farm in S. Valentino. “This is a small farmer from whom we buy a few wheels of classic mountain cheese. Soon we will also be able to offer our guests a mountain cheese that we have developed in collaboration with the dairy farm – the ADLER Mountain Cheese.” Made from the milk of the South Tyrolean grey cows that graze the lush meadows at the foot of Mt. Sciliar and according to ADLER’s own recipe, this mountain cheese has a natural, aromatic flavour.

Denny too has his favourite seasonal products, which are swiftly processed into favourite dishes for the Lodge guests. “I especially enjoy the apples for our apple strudel. Or the chestnuts from Barbiano, which make for great desserts: the variation of chestnut with star anise, khaki and milk chocolate is really something. I also appreciate the lamb meat from Wipp Land butcher’s shop in Vipiteno, which is the main ingredient for our autumn highlight – a duet of lamb (belly and loin) with sea buckthorn, green pepper and parsnip.”

ADLER REGIONAL PARTNER is a typical Sanoner family project. “This comes naturally for us as a family business. After all, we pass on our values from one generation to the next. Basically, we have the same mindset when dealing with our local partners: we think long-term, we inspire each other and work together to develop our shared vision,” says Franziska Sanoner. The next projects? On Renon we will set up vegetable gardens in front of the chalets, while in Tuscany we may soon be growing our own grain for our homemade pasta.
One short premise first. Annemarie Sanoner is not a woodland fairy, skipping through the forest and hugging trees. However, she has an extraordinary ability to open up the forest to people, offering them a full immersion into the emotional and spiritual dimension of nature, in perfect harmony with the environment.

Annemarie regularly accompanies ADLER guests on outdoor yoga sessions and walks on the theme of “Experiencing the forest,” inviting them to observe different forms of leaves, capture shapes and faces in the bark of trees, identify animal traces and listen to the sounds of nature.

“The forest stirs something in us,” says Annemarie. And as an expert in Alpine forest immersion, she is familiar with its effects, which have also been recognised by scientific studies. Spending just a few minutes in the forest is enough to achieve relaxation; your blood pressure drops, your mood improves. Especially for those who come from an urban environment and are constantly exposed to traffic noise, flashing neon signs and nitrogen dioxide.

“The forest has a completely different atmosphere. Its sounds activate the parasympathetic nervous system, and suddenly the air you breathe is special; it carries the scent of essential oils, released by the leaves,” she says.

It is a sunny autumn day. Annemarie is wearing a green jacket and her blue eyes reflect the Dolomites’ sky. She is not far from her favourite spot, a larch grove above San Giacomo. She has always loved nature and used to be a passionate climber. Then she got the urge to discover the forest. “It is a different experience every time,” she says. “Smell this,” she adds, grabbing the bark of a larch tree. What an amazing smell! A strong scent of resin, reminiscent of incense. Once, sitting under a tree in a sunny clearing, as she listened to the sounds of the forest, all her senses went on high alert and soon after, right behind her, a deer appeared. They looked at each other, surprised; both were a little scared. Then the deer bounded away.

The woods of the Dolomites are teeming with creatures. It is quite common to spot an eagle-owl with light-brown plumage and feathered ears, perched on the top of a tree and staring at you with its large eyes. It is very tempting to hoot at it! With a bit of luck, you may encounter fawns, but more often you will see squirrels jumping from branch to branch and darting over tree trunks, chasing each other. Then you return your attention to Annemarie, who is telling stories of the forest through famous works; from Horace Vernet’s painting “Hunting in the Pontine Marshes”, in which you have the vivid feeling that the artist was struck by the great trees, to the writings of Hermann Hesse.

“Trees,” writes Hesse, “are sanctuaries. Whoever knows how to speak to them, whoever knows how to listen to them, can learn the truth. They do not preach learning and precepts; they preach, undeceived by particulars, the ancient law of life.” In his book “Trees”, Hesse describes these plants as fascinating beings, and this is not disputed by modern silviculture. Trees have memories and can feel pain. They are connected by a network of fungal threads, which wind their way through the roots underground. Environmentalists call it the wood wide web, through which the exchange of resources such as sugar can heal sick trees, thus safeguarding the life cycle of the species.

On this autumn day, the leaves of the larches glow a deep golden yellow. Some of them already have red foliage. As Annemarie knows well, larch trees have always played a special role in Alpine fairy tales and myths. “The forest was often perceived as dangerous, but as soon as you spotted a larch tree, you felt safe. Larch trees are trees of light and are said to make people happy.” And here come the woodland fairies after all. In Alpine mythology, they are called Saligen. Blue-eyed and white-robed, they are helpful, generous, and cheerful. But if an animal is mistreated or killed, they become fierce. Anyone who talks to Annemarie will notice the same flame in defence of nature. Doesn’t she look a bit like the Saligen? Is it possible that she embodies this myth in our time?
They left ADLER as children and came back as managers – meet Franziska, Lukas, Maximilian and Moritz Sanoner. A conversation about daily challenges, wild experiences and future scenarios

How does it feel to leave the hotel as a child and come back as a manager?

Maximilian: We were a bit concerned at first, that we might step on each other’s toes. But our concern turned out to be unfounded. There is so much to do here at the hotel, and new projects are coming up, too. We’re always happy for any of us to take the initiative and tackle any particular issue – we have each other’s back.

Lukas: To me, it was very exciting. Up to that point, we had only known and valued each other as family members. Working together took things to a new level. It worked out great, with no real friction to speak of. We found a constructive way to collaborate pretty quickly.

And then came the pandemic. In what ways has this changed things at work?

Franziska: Like most companies, we were caught off guard. The coronavirus caused some turmoil at first. But we soon learnt how to deal with the new situation and adapt constantly to the ever-changing circumstances that came with the evolution of the pandemic. Indeed, this new challenge showed us that our management model is solid, and that we have many loyal guests. Covid has reinforced our conviction that we are on the right track.

Moritz: Yes, I think we were in sync with the pulse of the times even before Covid came about. Our hotels have a nature-based design and offer guests plenty of space. They are situated in privileged locations that are secluded yet easily accessible. Each of our resorts has its own distinctive character, and the experience our guests can live either in the Dolomites or in Tuscany is simply unique. We also focus on premium cuisine and the involvement of local suppliers. The themes informing our offer are the themes of the future.

Your parents have worked hard to shape and develop ADLER, and they are still involved in the business. On a scale of 1 to 10, how ready are they to hand it over to you?

Moritz: Their willingness to hand over responsibility and a significant part of the family business is of course very important. However, it’s also important that we keep growing and evolving as a team and as individuals.
Means being considerate of this.

Different people, each with their own disposition. I think we bring into this family have an optimistic and diplomatic personality. We're happy that we can count on the continued support, competence and experience.

It sounds like a very harmonious affair... But isn't this harmony a bit like suppressing emotions?

Franziska: The people in our family have an optimistic and diplomatic disposition. I think we bring into this job something important - empathy. In our daily life we interact with many different people, each with their own unique story and needs. Harmony also means considering of this.

What path would you have followed if you hadn't chosen the hotel industry and the family business?

Moritz: I think I would have chosen medicine. But I have always been very clear that I wanted to run a business. Our parents did not push us into this.

Lukas: Without ADLER as an option, I would have ended up doing something creative, probably architecture. What I really like about our job is that we can branch out in so many different ways here. Architecture is an area of great interest to us and we have lots of ideas and visions of our own, which Maximilian and I will be working on together.

Maximilian: Lukas contributes with his finesse and good taste.

Travelling is a source of inspiration. I hear the idea to create ADLER Lodges came from a family trip to Africa. Any horror experiences from when you stayed at other hotels?

Maximilian: Oh yes! Le Havre 2011. We were students, so we had booked the cheapest hotel in town. When we arrived, someone threw stones at the entrance and smashed the glass door. And we had to flush the toilet using a rubbish bin filled with water, as the flush wasn't working.

Lukas: I remember once we went to Canada with our parents. We were staying at a lodge, and there were hordes of bats fluttering around at night. Moritz and I were still very young, and it was quite a scare. Sleeping there was out of the question. We wanted to spend the night in our car, but there were bears outside, so we had to stay in the lodge - more specifically in the bathroom, which was surprisingly bat-free. Apparently, bats don't enjoy bathing. When we told the landlady the next morning, she replied bluntly: “You only had to turn the light on and open the door; they would have flown away.”

Some of your staff still remember you from when you were children. How do you grow into the role of a manager?

Franziska: By not playing the big boss and carefully familiarising yourself with the dynamics. You need to look and take in the situation beforehand and avoid acting rashly. We have great staff, and the hotel directors themselves are also young. We are all growing together one challenge at a time.

Is it true that you can only tell a person’s real character when they become a boss?

Moritz: It’s definitely not just that, but it is often the case that more freedom and responsibility can shine a light onto someone’s true colours. Going to extremes, you sometimes see this with politicians and people in roles with unlimited power.

Does success dampen the ability to listen?

Moritz: There is a danger. In my experience, at a certain age very successful people tend to like the sound of their own voice and take little interest in listening to younger people.

Maximilian: Our parents always taught us the importance of listening and meeting the world with an open mind. This approach, paired with respect and kindness, is what enables us to work with a flat hierarchy and point our business towards innovation and success.

What are your plans for the development of ADLER over the next five years?

Lukas: With over 200 hundred years of history, our family business is all about continuity. We focus on sustainable growth and all that it entails: environmental aspects, a culture of trust with our staff and much more. This philosophy guides all our new projects.

Can you give us a sneak peek of these new projects?

Moritz: We already have concrete projects. The most forthcoming one is our new ADLER Resort in Sicily, which at the moment engages us a lot with our fathers. A new market and a new location, which poses an exciting challenge. Soon we’ll be adding a new jewel to the ADLER collection.

How important is growth for ADLER Spa Resorts & Lodges? Are there any limits?

Franziska: That’s the question we asked ourselves when we first joined the business. There are no economic reasons compelling us to grow. So, we decide on a case-by-case basis, depending on the location. Doing business sustainably means that it’s not about numbers, but rather about a slow, cautious form of growth. We want to be able to identify personally with each project and remain detail-oriented.

Many people are torn between the desire for recognition and imposter syndrome. Which one prevails in you?

Lukas: I'd rather say the imposter syndrome. Moritz: If I have to choose, it's certainly the latter. When did you last embark on a journey into self-knowledge?

Maximilian: Not that long ago, in Central America. I was taking a multi-day hike through the jungle in Costa Rica. Being in unspoilt surroundings made me realise once again just how important it is to preserve and protect the last natural treasures we still have on Earth.

Franziska: Actually, I experience this on a daily basis. There’s always so much going on in both our private and professional lives that I constantly get exciting new insights.

Lukas: It has only been a few hours. It doesn’t hurt to do some soul searching and question your own thoughts and actions every now and then.

Everyone on board at the ADLER: Franziska, Moritz, Maximilian and Lukas Sanoner

Where everything began: the ADLER in Ortisei, Val Gardena in 1880

18 19
Franziska Sanoner (29)

She is determined, optimistic and rarely allows herself to be upset. Franziska knows that problems are there to be solved. Her cousins describe her as “a ray of sunshine”. Now 29 years old, she studied at the Bocconi University of Economics in Milan and completed her masters at the Copenhagen Business School and in Kuala Lumpur. After graduating in International Marketing and Management, she first worked at Brand Trust in Nuremberg. At ADLER, she is in charge of HR and responsible for managing the existing Resorts and Lodges together with her parents, aunt and uncle. The topic of sustainability is particularly close to her heart. If she could make one wish, it would be “for ADLER to go on developing in a healthy way, and for us all to continue finding joy in our work”. The question she asks herself more often is: “Where did I leave my key again?” Her parents are Klaus and Karin Sanoner.

Maximilian Sanoner (27)

Moritz Sanoner (30)

Without his stamina and unwavering will to see things through, he probably wouldn’t have made it to the finish line at the Iron Man in Copenhagen. At 30, Moritz is considered a diplomat with a social streak. In the family business, he is responsible for the development and implementation of new hotel projects. He studied at the Bocconi University of Economics in Milan where he also earned his master and at the San Diego State University in California. In his own words: “My experience abroad was, first and foremost, one of personal enrichment.” Before returning to Ortisei, he worked in hotel consulting at Treugast and Ernst & Young in Munich and Hamburg, among others. Moritz is the son of Andreas and Verena Sanoner.

THE PERFECTIONIST.

He hardly leaves anything to chance. He even uses a checklist to pack his suitcase before a trip. His passions include travelling and developing new hotel projects. When he’s busy with a construction plan, he soon loses track of time. Maximilian graduated from the Bocconi University of Economics in Milan and completed his Master’s degree at the University of Economics in St. Gallen. Before joining the family business, he spent some time in Los Angeles and Paris and worked for the Oliver Wyman management consulting firm. His parents are Klaus and Karin Sanoner.

THE DIPLOMAT.

Lukas Sanoner (28)

He is the creative charmer at ADLER. With his penchant for beautiful things and design, he has a special eye for architecture when developing and implementing new hotel projects. Lukas studied business administration at the EU Business School in Barcelona and completed his Master’s degree in International Hotel Management at the Hotelschool The Hague in Amsterdam. Before joining ADLER, he worked for the Soho House hotel group in Berlin, among others. You can hear him say things like: “Today, luxury is no longer about material things. It is about experiences. And honest relationships.” Lukas is the son of Andreas and Verena Sanoner.

THE OPTIMIST.

She is determined, optimistic and rarely allows herself to be upset. Franziska knows that problems are there to be solved. Her cousins describe her as “a ray of sunshine”. Now 29 years old, she studied at the Bocconi University of Economics in Milan and completed her masters at the Copenhagen Business School and in Kuala Lumpur. After graduating in International Marketing and Management, she first worked at Brand Trust in Nuremberg. At ADLER, she is in charge of HR and responsible for managing the existing Resorts and Lodges together with her parents, aunt and uncle. The topic of sustainability is particularly close to her heart. If she could make one wish, it would be “for ADLER to go on developing in a healthy way, and for us all to continue finding joy in our work”. The question she asks herself more often is: “Where did I leave my key again?” Her parents are Klaus and Karin Sanoner.

THE CREATIVE MIND.
Ortisei is a little town set in the idyllic corner of our planet known as Val Gardena – a valley that stretches at the foot of Mt. Sassolungo, in South Tyrol. The lucky traveler who has visited it knows that Ortisei has a green heart, one where crystal-clear pools and spa landscapes are framed by the breathtaking peaks of the Dolomites. This is an exclusive retreat where ADLER guests find rejuvenation and renewed well-being in the enveloping embrace of fine scents and vapours. But more than that, it’s a wellness universe in its own right, an ever-growing, world-leading reality that keeps its eyes firmly on the future, inspired by the ADLER mantra: “Beyond health, true well-being”.

This is a long journey that began in 1990. “It was my mother who used to welcome guests at the first ADLER spa,” says Lukas Sanoner, son of Verena and Andreas. Together with his brother Moritz and cousins Franziska and Maximilian, this young man represents the seventh generation at the steering wheel of the family’s business. The philosophy and unique atmosphere that sets ADLER apart run in his veins.

“It feels strange now to call it a spa: the offer was limited. Guests could only choose between an anti-cellulite programme and an anti-stress programme.” A few years later, it was Annemarie Sanoner – Lukas’ aunt – that brought about the first leap forward. After her long trip to India, where she spent time studying and practising Ayurveda, Annemarie introduced the wellness concept inspired by this ancient Indian philosophy into the ADLER spa experience. Ayurvedic treatments were added to the range of traditional Alpine treatments, already so prized by the guests, and ADLER came to be the first centre in South Tyrol to specialise in wellness holidays. It was a real revolution, because back then – nearly 30 years ago – spa holidays were not yet a concept.

In the mid-nineties, the establishment of Aguana marked a new milestone. This vast “Water world” was an absolute innovation – a three-storey facility featuring saunas and Turkish baths, a Kneipp course, hay baths, a ladies’ sauna and much more. All of this is set in a beautifully designed indoor context that mirrors the spectacular outdoors, including an “Alpine” lake at its centre. To this day, Aguana (a name inspired by the water nymphs from the legends of the Dolomites) is a leading example of the way contemporary spa and wellness facilities evolved worldwide.

The new millennium began with a complete renovation of the spa facilities, which included the setting up of a large fitness centre and gym. “Our wellness programmes took on an increasingly holistic approach, aiming not only at complete physical restoration and aesthetic improvement, but also at restoring inner harmony and balance. The offer of speciality treatments was rounded off by targeted fitness, meditation and relaxation activities,” says Lukas.

This all paved the way to the medical centre ADLER MED - in 2008, with the inauguration of the ADLER Spa Resort BALANCE, the focus on health and well-being finally concretised. Besides a team of 30 highly specialised practitioners including beauticians, masseurs, physiotherapists and osteopaths, there is now a medical staff specialising in a variety of disciplines, from prevention and detoxification to anti-ageing medicine and stress management. The offer of tailored health programmes caters to the needs of health-conscious guests who wish to spend their holidays not only skiing and hiking, but also recharging and taking care of their well-being.

A new Dimension

The new ADLER Spa at the ADLER DOLOMITI in Ortisei opens in spring 2021. The new wellness dimension is spacious, elegant, bright, and modern. And that is just the beginning - the wellness world has many other projects ahead ...
"We Sanoners love to blaze new trails," adds Lukas. With a degree in economics, a specialisation in hospitality management and plenty of experience as a project manager in the field of hotel design under his belt, he devotes himself full time to the expansion and modernisation of the wellness centre, together with the rest of the family and the ADLER spa experts. "Wellness and spa have been a feather in our cap for decades and perfectly reflect our mission – to always be in the vanguard!

"In collaboration with local architect Igor Comploi, we have conceived the new spa landscape according to the ADLER style: using natural materials, locally sourced wood and large glazing to let the light in and create a bridge connecting the indoor areas to the outdoor gardens and fantastic views of the Dolomites," explains Lukas. A harmonious interplay, to be built in two steps, that is set to add a touch of additional exclusivity to the experience thanks to four different highlights.

"The first highlight will be the new spa – set to be inaugurated in spring 2021. There will be an expansive, welcoming reception area, flooded with natural light and provided with private areas where guests can receive personalised advice for their treatments from expert staff. We have designed this with a mind to quality experience as well as architectural style. The buffet area will be refurbished, and the waiting hall will be an exclusive, comfortable open space looking out over a sun terrace where guests can relax before and after their treatments." There will also be a new, stylish spa shop where guests can purchase their favourite ADLER Cosmetics.

An atmospheric corridor will lead to the new spa cabins, set in a bright area featuring furnishings from local wood and overlooking two romantic inner gardens. Another highlight is the yoga and meditation pavilion. This space, designed for private lessons and small group classes, will be an extraordinary place for rebalancing and finding one’s inner self. "Its architectural design will be rather original: a blend of ancestral elements and local flavour," adds Lukas.

The final highlights are planned for spring 2022, with the inauguration of a new relaxation area and lakeside saunas in the Resort’s large parkland.

These new saunas, which will add to the existing ones, will be located outdoors, on a wide dock at the centre of a small lake connected to the land by a boardwalk. Facilities will include a biosauna, a Finnish sauna, a Turkish bath, a hot whirlpool overlooking the lake, a cold plunge pool and a relaxation area – it will be a new kind of experience. "We envisioned a real island sitting on waters, an island of tranquillity, privacy and exclusivity."

Guests wishing to read, relax and enjoy absolute silence will have at their disposal a wide relaxation area affording a magnificent view of Mt. Sassolungo through impressive panoramic glazing. "We are confident our guests will take delight in it, especially in winter, when the cold temperatures make you want to snuggle up by a crackling fireplace and savour the intimate atmosphere. There will be no better place than this to contemplate the view of the mountains bathed in the sunset light... pure magic!"
"Your reputation precedes you, doctor," I tell her as I take a seat in her surgery. From behind her desk, Dr Stefania Mazzieri welcomes me with warm, politely inquisitive eyes. Years of study, lots of experience and several specialisations in medicine and surgery, acupuncture, homeopathy, phytotherapy and ozone therapy shine through those eyes. But what transpires above all is her different approach – one that conceives medicine as an all-round tool to understand, prevent and cure illness.

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The world is sound. The soft, lasting tone of copper pipes, the light singing of crystal, the short and deep rap of stone. All the tones of the different metal gongs: soft and loud, high and dark. My stomach resonates, my diaphragm vibrates. I am no longer listening with just my ears, but with my whole being. The world is made of sounds that fill every cell in my body.

But let’s go back for a moment. The gong workshop at ADLER Lodge ALPE lasts six days. Just the idea of spending a week up there in the peace and quiet of the Alpe di Siusi is marvellous. Elegant rooms furnished with native wood and fine fabrics emphasise the ancient traditions of the place. A place to find time and leisure, and to learn to listen – to the sounds of your own footsteps in the snow or on the soft forest floor. And the sounds of the instruments chosen by Christof Bernhard for a healing retreat in the mountains.

He has brought a large number of musical instruments, but not the classical ones, such as tuba or trumpet, flute or guitar. His instruments are pipes, trapezoids, and discs made of different materials that participants will get to know over the next few days. “Allow your brain to catch its breath,” he says. “Those who let themselves be completely absorbed by the sound find peace and unplug their thoughts – it’s liberating.” It starts on Monday morning. Christof strikes various copper pipes, and warm sounds drift through the room, hovering in the air. Participants listen with closed eyes, begin to dream and slip gently into a parallel world. “Copper is a great place to start; its soft, slow and suspended sounds are very engaging.”

Christof is a musician and gong master. He studied at music school for ten years, played flute and guitar, and trained as a percussionist in Africa under the guidance of the great master Don Conreaux. Since 2012, Christof has been...
“Allow your brain to catch its breath. Those who let themselves be completely absorbed by the sound find peace and unplug their thoughts – it’s liberating.”

Running various workshops and the largest gong school in Europe with the support of his wife, Viviana Molinari.

In the afternoon, participants lie on mats and listen to the sounds – many with their eyes closed. They abandon themselves to the experience, slowly losing track of time.

On Wednesday, we get to know the most personal of all musical instruments: our own voice. “There are always inhibitions at this point; people often have mental blockades.” Many were told too many times as children that they couldn’t sing – it is deep-seated. That’s why some participants shook their heads when Christof announced on Monday that there would be a concert at the end in which everyone would sing and play. “Of course, each person is free to decide whether they really want to dive into the water or just get their feet wet,” says Christof. He knows this from experience: some people just want to have fun trying something new, while others are looking for a deep spiritual experience. “It’s also fine if someone just wants to listen.”

But after a few days of experiencing the different instruments, it’s even better if you can overcome yourself and take part. You can feel the liberating effect that singing has on physical and psychological blockades.

“To stimulate the mind, I have prepared something scientific,” says Christof on Wednesday, smiling. Cymatics is the study of the visualisation of sounds. A metal plate is sprinkled with coloured powder. “With the singing, a graphic pattern begins to form – this way the sound becomes visual.” For participants, this is a particularly exciting phenomenon in their journey through the world of sound.

On Thursday, we finally approach the star instrument of our workshop – the gong. The gong vibrates by itself; it responds to everything as if it were a mirror on the world. It is not necessary to hit it: just get close and the gong perceives the vibrations of the body and begins to move. Christof and Viviana have at least two gongs per participant. At the beginning, everyone listens and starts to discern the different sounds. Each gong has its own tone, according to the size and thickness of the material. The gongs come from the tranquil town of Rendsburg in northern Germany, which is world-famous for its gong production.

On Friday, we get to know the sound of stones. These are chloride slate stones from the depths of the earth in the shape of trapezoids and rectangles. In the past, these stones were exposed to extreme pressure, which made them very hard. When struck with a clapper and rubbed with wet fingers, they emit a short but intense sound. The smaller the stone, the higher the sound. Large stones make a deep, warm sound. On Saturday, we get to know different percussion techniques and ways of creating transitions; we learn to listen to each other and make music together.

Then comes Sunday, and the concert that no one anticipated. “Of course, each person is free to decide whether they really want to dive into the water or just get their feet wet,” says Christof. He knows this from experience: some people just want to have fun trying something new, while others are looking for a deep spiritual experience. “It’s also fine if someone just wants to listen.”

The next week of workshops will take place from 21st to 28th November 2021 at ADLER Lodge ALPE.
**ADLER FRIENDS CLUB**

**COLLECT POINTS AND RELAX**

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You need 200 ADLER Friends points per child to take advantage of this offer

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The Top Deal for ADLER Friends Club members!

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Book this offer with only 150 ADLER Friends points per person
Diplomacy and a smile

... Angelo Tucci e Raffaele Porceddu. The two Maîtres ensure that everything runs smoothly in the THERMAE restaurant, from breakfast to dinner – and that every guest is happy.
Before managing the ADLER THERMAE restaurant, Raffaele Porceddu had a long career both in Italy and abroad, with brilliant achievements as sommelier to match. “I come from a family of winemakers, and went through all career stages from waiter to maître in my native Sardinia and now here, a region that I regard as the very backbone of Italian oenology.” Driven by his passion, he became manager of the Southern Siena Section of the Italian Sommelier Foundation. Now, he leads the wine tastings offered in the wine cellar of ADLER THERMAE. “We are one of the few establishments that can boast as many as 18 sommeliers in our restaurant,” he says proudly, and goes on to extol the professionalism and excellent service the brigade has been guaranteeing ever since inauguration, back in 2004: “Their quality of service and professionalism are so high that they hardly ever need us maîtres?” Quick witted and always impeccable, Raffaele is the busy bee buzzing from table to table, welcoming guests, dispensing smiles and advice on the best wine accommodation – all without ever losing sight of the situation. “We maîtres need to be ready to help out when things get more challenging, for example at dinner, when the 75 tables all need to be served almost simultaneously,” explains Raffaele.

This requires impeccable communication among staff, perfect synchronisation with the kitchen brigade and the ability to always respect the guests’ preferences, even in terms of table assignment. “Many guests wish to be served in the piazzetta, by the big olive tree, while others prefer a more secluded setting. It is our job to consider every nuance, and meet every requirement.” For Angelo and Raffaele, who coordinate operations like a well-oiled machine and with nearly fanatical precision, impeccable service is an exercise in diplomacy – from the mise en place to the ordering system, designed to afford time for the guest to visit the buffet between courses. “The recent pandemic has required extra efforts for us to be able to implement the new safety standards while maintaining the high level of service our guests are used to,” says Angelo. “We have tested different possible solutions,” adds Raffaele, “and we are very satisfied with the idea of using single portions. It has been a success.” It takes a lot of time and care to prepare home-made foods, package them and arrange them on the buffet, but it’s worth the effort: “the guests love it.”

In the early morning, well before breakfast, the maître inspects the restaurant and buffet arrangement together with chefs Gaetano Vaccaro and Onofrio Fusillo, who leave the kitchen to personally check food presentation one last time before the guests are welcomed in.

After breakfast and a short break, the restaurant is prepared for lunch. Everything is cleaned and sanitised thoroughly: from tables and chairs to furnishings and even oil and vinegar bottles. The menu and buffet change, too: lunch is a light, informal business, a tasty interlude between moments of relaxation that guests can savour in their bathtub.

There is more to the Italian concept of dining than just good food. Eating is an occasion for socialising, for sharing an experience that goes beyond culinary indulgence. But there is something in the piazzetta at ADLER THERMAE that turns this blend of fine dining and conviviality into a truly unforgettable experience. An extra touch called hospitality – ADLER’s distinctive way of letting each guest go the extra mile. We offer extra pampering, but always in a natural way: “Compared to high-level standards of service, we go the extra mile. We offer extra pampering, but always maintain a discreet, unintrusive and cordial presence. And above all, we treat all guests equally.” The secret to their success? Preparation, care, savoir-faire and a huge passion.

Tables are impeccable: everything is set out harmoniously, from the low lights that project onto the dishes with the utmost care to the perfect napkin folding. All cutlery, crockery and glasses are placed with pinpoint precision. The Villenoy & Boch dishes have been chosen personally by the chef to better match the seasonal courses. For all the restaurant staff, dinner is the most important part of the day. Angelo and Raffaele know this, and leave nothing to chance. Commitment, effort and sense of responsibility are masterfully concealed behind a warm, welcoming smile. “Compared to high-level standards of service, we go the extra mile. We offer extra pampering, but always maintain a discreet, unintrusive and cordial presence. And above all, we treat all guests equally.” The secret to their success? Preparation, care, savoir-faire and a huge passion.

“"We set great store in calling every guest by their name: they are people, not numbers."
We heard from the staff that the digitalisation process at the ADLER estates was something of a little revolution in its own right. What has changed?

KK: Let’s just say that we switched the hotels’ five local databases in favour of a cloud system. Before that, each hotel had its own separate database and ocean of data with no network to integrate them.

Sounds complicated... Did this have an impact on guest experience, too?

KK: It did, unfortunately. For example, before the switch each system could not recognise regular guests from other ADLER databases. If a regular guest of ADLER THERMAE checked in at ADLER DOLOMITI for the first time, they would have been processed as a new client. This meant that the guest’s requirements and preferences (such as allergies or the request for extra blankets) were not displayed in the database and had to be collected once again. In the digital era, this is no longer acceptable, and some guests were rightly bothered by it.

What about now?

KK: Now, all important information is stored in an integrated system, which members of staff can access at all ADLER facilities. This enables them to display any changes, e.g. in bookings, cancellations and spa offers. This new system has also improved communication: e-mails have been replaced by apps that can reach every member of staff concerned in a much more direct and efficient way.

This must have made things much easier?

KK: Yes, it streamlined our processes. Documents are now clearly organised and easy to find for all the staff. We’ve improved data security, too.

Still, each member of staff must have been pretty used to their own way of working. Has adapting to the new system been a bit of a challenge?

KK: Of course it was challenging. Sifting through, sorting and putting together the huge number of files alone was nothing short of a Herculean task. We can all tell from our personal experiences how easily the same file can get saved twice or more, under different names – all this had to be sifted through, untangled and turned into an easily understandable, user-friendly system.

Why hadn’t the system been changed earlier?

KK: We couldn’t find any digital standard or process that fitted our specific requirements. Hotels are very individual entities, each with its unique way of working and economic and social setups. Each hotel is a world apart. What we needed specifically was just not on the market. So, we had to tailor ADLER’s bespoke digital suit on our own.

And why did you choose this job?

KK: I have always been fascinated by the way everyday processes can be made comprehensible and manageable. That’s why my life has been highly digitised for a long time. I have my shopping lists on my smartphone, and let Alexa fill them in; my smartphone knows what my wife wants to eat for dinner and what ingredients I have to buy for it. So, it only made sense for me to put this mindset to good use in my professional environment, too.

What was the team expecting from digitalisation?

KK: The main thing they expected was for internal communication to become simpler and more transparent. Previously, one single process could require an exchange of 30-40 e-mails – a time-consuming burden. Now, reception has all the information, everyone can access it, and we can finally cater better to our guests’ needs.

Is there any other way this has changed everyday work?

KK: One way is that we have set up the ADLER Academy for training our Spa and Wellness staff. New members can watch the treatments on the iPAD and practise accordingly. We have also introduced detailed checklists for all processes, from ski hire to breakfast buffet composition. Any member of staff who needs to learn correct procedures can find all the information here.

And have your guests noticed any difference?

KK: Not as far as the backstage work is concerned. In the past, it could happen that a message received at reception for a guest was not forwarded when the shift changed, whereas now every piece of information is accessible to every staff member at all times. Things ranging from “When is the room available for a guest who has just checked in?” or even “Which room needs a light bulb replaced, and can we do it now or does the guest prefer not to be disturbed right now?” This way, work gets easier and our staff can respond faster and more efficiently. That’s something the guests benefit from.

What objectives will you pursue next?

KK: We plan on getting our guests more involved in the interaction. Everybody has a smartphone these days, and some of our guests are extremely tech-savvy; they know how to book their pedicure via app while they are sunbathe- hing by the pool, just by clicking on the appointment of their choice – all autonomously, without having to call or go through reception. This process opens up endless possibilities. Naturally, many guests will still want to tap into our staff’s expertise, for example to receive competent advice about the massage that best suits their needs, or the best guided hike to match their fitness level. Digitalisation is a powerful ally, but it should not be overestimated. While it is certainly a useful tool that helps us to improve our daily work, it can never replace personal contact with the guests – this remains ADLER’s priority.
A new body experience with Qi Gong, a detoxifying liver wrap, a magical slimming machine and a chocolatey experience for your children - try four unique treatments in our ADLER spas.
"A good doctor has no sick patients," says a Chinese proverb. Because if a doctor takes good care of their health, they don't get ill in the first place, that is. Ever since I read this years ago, I've been curious to find out about Qi Gong, a discipline based on movements and meditation that is regarded as a source of harmony, health and happiness. It is part of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and forms the basis of several martial arts such as Tai Chi. So I signed up for a taster course with Bruno Rabaner. Harmony is a pivotal concept in Qi Gong, and the first thing I need to harmonise is my breathing. "Slow down," says Bruno. "Feel how deeply into your belly you can breathe. And gradually lengthen the pauses between breathing in and out, so your rhythm quiets down." Qi means life force, Gong means work. So it is about learning to harmonise my energy flows. To do so, it is important to bring into balance the five elements of Qi Gong – wood, fire, earth, water and metal. Bruno guides me through a series of exercises. I raise my arms, try to find a firm foothold, bring into balance the five elements of Qi Gong – wood, fire, earth, water and metal. Bruno guides me through a series of exercises. I raise my arms, try to find a firm foothold. Time and again, I draw attention back to my breathing. Even though I only incorporate from my mind, my thoughts take a hike and I lose track of time. When Ilaria returns, I'm almost startled. She meets me at reception and leads me into a beautiful room. Soft light, soft music and a soothing atmosphere. Ilaria warms up the detox gel and starts by massaging it gently onto my back. It's a paste of ground arnica infused with honey, coriander, grapefruit and black pepper. "This stimulates blood flow to the liver and gall bladder," Ilaria explains. "It helps remove toxic metabolic products and cleanse the body. Furthermore, this potent natural detoxifying remedy accelerates the metabolism, improves digestion and improves hormonal balance of the thyroid. Ilaria fastens the wrap using a cushion and a large towel, and I find myself warmly rolled up on the soft waterbed. Ilaria puts warm detox pillows on my feet to stimulate my reflex zones. I lie wrapped up in this cosy setup for 25 minutes, during which my everyday life evaporates from my mind, my thoughts take a hike and I lose track of time. When Ilaria returns, I'm almost startled. Using warm compresses, she removes the detox gel, then proceeds to rub my body with the fragrant ADLER arnica oil. Slowly, I return to reality. How do I feel? Relaxed, warm and sleepy, with a sense of pleasant heaviness. "You should take a little rest now: don't go out and run a marathon straight away," Ilaria says, chuckling softly as she massages it gently onto my back. It's a paste of ground arnica infused with honey, coriander, grapefruit and black pepper. "This stimulates blood flow to the liver and gall bladder," Ilaria explains. "It helps remove toxic metabolic products and cleanse the body. Furthermore, this potent natural detoxifying remedy accelerates the metabolism, improves digestion and improves hormonal balance of the thyroid. Ilaria fastens the wrap using a cushion and a large towel, and I find myself warmly rolled up on the soft waterbed. Ilaria puts warm detox pillows on my feet to stimulate my reflex zones. I lie wrapped up in this cosy setup for 25 minutes, during which my everyday life evaporates from my mind, my thoughts take a hike and I lose track of time. When Ilaria returns, I'm almost startled. Using warm compresses, she removes the detox gel, then proceeds to rub my body with the fragrant ADLER arnica oil. Slowly, I return to reality. How do I feel? Relaxed, warm and sleepy, with a sense of pleasant heaviness. "You should take a little rest now: don't go out and run a marathon straight away," Ilaria says, chuckling softly as I lie my bathrobe belt at an unusually slow speed. Ilaria meets me at reception and leads me into a beautiful room. Soft light, soft music and a soothing atmosphere welcome me. After her detailed consultation, I choose the detoxifying liver wrap. Apparently, this treatment is the perfect counterpart for those who, like me, enjoy the pleasures of life, including good food and fine wine. Ilaria warms up the detox gel and starts by massaging it gently onto my back. It’s a paste of ground arnica infused with honey, coriander, grapefruit and black pepper. "This stimulates blood flow to the liver and gall bladder," Ilaria explains. "It helps remove toxic metabolic products and cleanse the body. Furthermore, this potent natural detoxifying remedy accelerates the metabolism, improves digestion and improves hormonal balance of the thyroid. Ilaria fastens the wrap using a cushion and a large towel, and I find myself warmly rolled up on the soft waterbed. Ilaria puts warm detox pillows on my feet to stimulate my reflex zones. I lie wrapped up in this cosy setup for 25 minutes, during which my everyday life evaporates from my mind, my thoughts take a hike and I lose track of time. When Ilaria returns, I'm almost startled. Using warm compresses, she removes the detox gel, then proceeds to rub my body with the fragrant ADLER arnica oil. Slowly, I return to reality. How do I feel? Relaxed, warm and sleepy, with a sense of pleasant heaviness. "You should take a little rest now: don't go out and run a marathon straight away," Ilaria says, chuckling softly as I tie my bathrobe belt at an unusually slow speed.

CM Slim here I come! As soon as I heard they had it, I booked my stay at ADLER Spa Resort THERMAE to try this groundbreaking treatment, which is only available at a handful of health centres across Europe. At first glance, the white device reminds me of an air conditioner. But Dr Banchini reassures me: this noninvasive device of machine actually contains the most advanced technology in the world for building muscle and reducing fat deposits. This device is extremely effective: it generates electromagnetic waves that are delivered to the target body areas through two hand pieces resembling the palms of large hands. The supramaximal muscle contractions not only burn fat, but also build, repair and define the muscle. After a preliminary consultation, the doctor determines the wave frequency that is best for my body. Over the following 30 minutes, my muscles are stimulated into contracting about 20,000 times, without me experiencing the slightest effort. I won’t go into details regarding my wishes and expectations, but the doctor informs me that by increasing muscle tone, CM Slim also helps to improve posture and relieve tension and pain. Besides boosting physical performance and aesthetics (e.g. by sculpting abs and lifting the buttocks), this treatment can also support posttraumatic rehabilitation or make it easier to resume exercising after a prolonged period of inactivity. After the treatment, I get up, don my bathrobe and book my next session in two days. I will be reaping the benefits of thousands of sit-ups and squats while relaxing comfortably on the doctor’s bed - that’s a dream come true!

Mmm, it smells delicious! The name alone sets your mouth watering: “Milk & Chocolate Dream” is a 75-minute treatment for a parent and child, a beautiful experience to share with your son or daughter or for two children. It can be administered from the age of three or four. “The only important thing is that the child really wants the treatment,” says spa employee Linda. But with this tantalising scent, it usually doesn’t require persuasion. The dream begins with a 10-minute warm-up session in the bio-sauna: at 56-60°C, you breathe in gentle herbal vourps, your muscles soften and your body relaxes. This is followed by a milk and honey butter massage for adults, while the younger guests are pampered by a chocolate massage, using a mixture of Nutella and almond oil, and it’s hard to resist the temptation to taste it. “It’s perfectly okay for them to indulge a bit, as everything we use here is edible,” says Linda. Then it’s off to the milk bath in two beautiful, antique ceramic tubs situated in the private spa. Small rubber ducks or plastic fish are already waiting for the children in one of them. Parents and children can have a chat during the whole treatment, while soft music plays in the background. The 75 minutes fly. At the end of the treatment, the little guests are dried off with large bath towels and rubbed with ADLER chocolate oil. This way, the delicious scent remains with them for quite a while. Linda advises resting for another half hour afterwards “and then you’re ready for your next adventures.”

ADLER Spa Resort DOLOMITI

ADLER Spa Resort THERMAE

ADLER Lodge ALPE

ADLER Spa Resort DOLOMITI
Like a LOCAL

Slopes that only locals know exciting mountain stories, culinary breaks: with the ADLER ski guide in the snow

What do a snowy expanse and a glass of wine have in common? Nothing actually, except perhaps that snow and wine are Alexander’s two greatest passions. He has been a ski instructor for 12 years now, five of them as part of the ADLER team.

Alexander spent his childhood playing in his mother’s vineyards. Now a fan of mountains and fine food, he is an endless source of information about the traditional local cuisine and the perfect wine accompaniment for every dish. The best place to listen to his stories is one of the typical mountain huts where, together with the little group of skiers he is guiding, he usually stops for a tasty lunch and sometimes a guided tasting after an enjoyable descent on skis. His anecdotes about South Tyrolean Lagrein, and the rare white grapes that defy the altitude and the ADLER team.

Alexander unfolds a map of the area. His finger runs along the Alpine ridges that “crown” the town of Ortisei as he names the peaks and valleys that he has known all his life, and among which he will guide ADLER guests on exciting ski tours. His itineraries change every week, and none is the same as last year’s. “That’s because after their first tour, many guests make friends and come back to us wishing to live another adventure with the same group of people.”

Alexander’s tours are not for absolute beginners. To follow him into the heart of the majestic Dolomites, you need to have advanced or at least intermediate ski touring skills. His itineraries are designed for those who wish to ski with people at a similar level of preparation, but above all wish to do so under the guidance of someone who knows these places like the back of his hand.

This affords the unique advantage of skiing in untrampled places, off the beaten track, and even the privilege – under exceptional circumstances and exclusively if accompanied by an instructor – of reaching deserted slopes long before the lift facilities open. A rare and extraordinary opportunity.

The programme covers Monday to Saturday, with different tours every day – unusual itineraries, arranged in increasing difficulty. It starts with Alpe di Siusi and Mt. Secco: these are the closest, easiest-to-reach pistes. They are designed to help those who have just arrived to get an energising start to their week. In the following days, the routes get longer and stretch beyond Seina di Val Gardena towards the glorious Dolomites. “Mt. Marmolada is the most coveted destination,” says Alexander, “but there are real gems hidden among these mountains, and I’d like to let my group discover them, and be surprised by unexpected views.” To one side, the Gardena pass with the spectacular ‘Pillar of Dreams’, to the other, the Sella pass, the meeting point of the two provinces of Bolzano and Trento, looking out to Mt. Marmolada. This is a big favourite among skiers at an intermediate level – an itinerary that combines the pleasure of skiing with a jaw-dropping panorama.

For the more experienced, there is the Great War grand tour, an exceptional circuit. This is the longest itinerary, one that leads to places of historic significance from World War I, all of which are set among the most impressive scenery the Dolomites have to offer. Expect approximately 80 kilometres of skiing, lift facilities and minivan rides, all amounting to an unforgettable day out in the unspoilt beauty surrounding Mt. Col di Lana.

The cherry on top? It’s not a cherry, it’s a helicopter flight. The experienced skiers have the chance to see the Dolomites from a different perspective with a helicopter flight. Offered at a premium to small groups of ADLER guests, this helicopter flight is an exceptional addition to the pleasure of offpiste skiing on virgin snow, in the company of an expert guide. In the early morning, after a short taxi ride, guests take off for a sensational 20-minute flight of breathtaking vistas, where the majestic mountains really appear to be just a fingertip away. After landing at the foot of Mt. Marmolada, while the lifts are still deserted, they climb up to an altitude of 3,300 metres to a panoramic terrace and enjoy – in blissful and silent solitude – an unparalleled view that, on a clear, cloudless day, stretches as far as the Venice lagoon. What lies ahead is a unique experience, a whole day of skiing on stunning slopes surrounded by amazing panoramas, until the itinerary leads back to the hotel in the afternoon.

“The best treat of all is the sunset excursion,” says Alexander. “After a whole day of skiing, we fly from Plan de Corones to Mt. Secco. The helicopter takes off right when the mountain peaks are bathed in the golden light of the setting sun. On arrival, we ski our way down the last stretch to the ADLER, just as the lights from the houses start to shine their goodbye to a glorious day of skiing.”

Text Carla Diamanti
Honey bees are domestic animals. These six-legged creatures are responsible for pollinating the majority of our plants. And they are more similar to humans than any other insect. Let’s meet Michael Hafner, the bee whisperer at ADLER Lodge RITTEN
Michael Hafner rules over a multi-ethnic state. His role, however, has nothing to do with waging economic wars, wearing suits or tweeting controversial dog-whistle messages. Michael is wearing shorts, a t-shirt and trainers. His good spirits shine through his friendly, almost mischievous laughter. Yet his job carries great responsibility. Because as he saves and takes good care of his people, his people save him in return. And many more. For his people are in charge of pollinating plants and crops – and they are among what scientists call “bioindicators”.

“When something changes in the air, they can sense it straight away,” says Michael, who is a beekeeper with a colony totalling about two million bees during the summer season. They are distributed over 40 hives, each with a population of 50,000, all situated in the Bolzano area. Around 250,000 of his bees are buzzing on the meadows of ADLER Lodge RITTEN, where Michael has set up five hives just behind the underground car park. In the morning, while guests are spreading honey on their bread roll at breakfast, the bees are busy supplying more just less than 100 metres away.

It is a balmy late-summer evening, and Michael is carefully opening one of the beehives. A “breach of domestic peace”, as he calls it. His cautious movements form a curious contrast with the rapid flow of exciting facts that gush out of him. Like the fact that a queen bee lives three to five years on average, and that she mates in flight with 15 to 20 males before she has enough material to lay her fertilised eggs in the nest, where she then stays and – as behaves royalty
Michael’s interest in bees started in his childhood. His grandfather gifted him his first hive when he was just 11 years old. Since then, his passion has never left him, and it kept him busy during his forestry studies at the University of Vienna. “In the world of bees there’s always something new to learn,” says the 36-year-old beekeeper.

He can sense when something is not right in the colony, for example when the queen loses respect and needs to be replaced. “Aren’t the bees bothered that they are constantly getting robbed of their honey?” No, he says. In summer, he provides them with a daily supplement of one kilogram of food – sugar beet syrup, for example. In winter, they need food up to ten kilos a day. There is no such thing as holidays, especially in summer when the bees produce honey, he says. “These animals need a lot of care, which is why I’m not a fan of amateur beekeeping.”

Apiculture has become a bit of a trend, especially since several celebrities have swapped their evening gowns for waxing suits, most notably Prince Charles, David Beckham and Brad Pitt. But for the ADLER Spa Resorts & Lodges, the collaboration with Michael is far from a fad – its a choice consistent with the ongoing commitment towards sustainability. The ADLER REGIONAL PARTNER concept is based on the involvement of local growers and farmers with the aim of offering guests the best of South Tyrolean produce (see article on page 8).

Michael is also constantly putting his head together with other suppliers and ADLER cooks to create new honey-based products. A honey with South Tyrolean bacon cubes is coming soon, and his chilli and rosemary honey is already available. The established catalogue features honeys produced from lime and chestnut trees, apple blossoms and forest trees. Michael’s alpine rose honey is a real speciality, with a mild, pleasantly flowery aroma. His products are sold under the brand Apis Aurum in his own small shop, situated in a fan- cy residential quarter of Meran, along with his award-winning mead and honey vinegar.

“Up here, the world is still as it should be, though.”

It takes a good deal of passion to put up with the stings. As he carefully pulls a honeycomb out of the hive, Michael reveals, “I get stung 500 to 600 times a season.” Then he asks me whether I’m allergic to bee venom. I have hardly any time to answer “No” before he hands me the honeycomb, saying, “Hold this for a moment, please.” The honeycomb is terribly heavy, considering that you can only hold it with the tip of your fingers by two small wooden hooks. And you cannot drop it, under any circumstances, not even if two bees are making their way towards your fingers. Michael says, “Tell the little bees to turn back!” For a brief moment I remember my grandmother, for whom a bee sting caused considerable swelling and some breathing difficulties. For an hour or two, she didn’t look good at all. But suddenly the two sweet little creatures actually turn around and go back to their honeycomb with their 15,000 other companions. Well done!

As an expert beekeeper, Michael has become an important advisor for many years. He was only 15 when he was first called by the fire brigade to remove a bee’s nest from a window shutter. He drove up there on his moped, and found that the house in Meran he had been called to had security guards. Someone took him to a room on the first floor, and stood guard in the doorway while he got down to work. As he was leaving the house, a breezily clad woman emerged from the basement. Only then did he realise that he had rescued the bees from a brother.

Michael has big plans for the future. He is going to build a house. It will have a couple of rooms for guests, and a room for aromatherapeutic treatments performed with apicultural products. He is always busy and there’s a lot of work to do. His father lends a hand, filling up and labelling the honey jars, while his girlfriend takes care of all the marketing. “And soon,” says Michael with a twinkle in his eye and a merry laugh, “soon my girlfriend will give birth to a little beekeeper.”
When dusk falls over the Dolomites, the mountains are bathed in a glowing light. The legend of the alpenglow – Enrosadira – is an entrenched part of South Tyrolean folklore.

It’s a well-known phenomenon: when dusk falls over the Dolomites, the mountains are bathed in a glowing light. It starts as a pale pink blush, then it gets redder and redder until the rock faces don a purple veil. The alpenglow, or Enrosadira, the Ladin call it – is more than just an impressive spectacle of nature. It is the mother of a legend that is an entrenched part of South Tyrolean folklore.

According to the legend, a long time ago a dwarf king lived in an underground crystal palace beneath the Rosengarten massif. His kingdom was vast, and his immeasurable wealth came from his league of dwarves below the Rosengarten mountain. But the days passed, and the dwarf king feared he would be forgotten. He decided to search for his bride, the princess Similde. However, Similde was to marry off her beautiful daughter, Similde. So, he asked the brave knight Hartwig to join him in the quest for Similde. The knight agreed, and so began the final duel between Hartwig and Wittich. The noble warriors battled for hours until sunset. The king, Laurin, who had been watching the jousting unseen, was so enchanted by the fair and lovely beauty of princess Similde that he made a bold decision. With the help of his invisibility cloak, he snatched her and took her away on his horse. Before the king could declare a winner, excitement rose from the crowd: “Similde has disappeared! Did Dietrich not see the roses, he would never have found me. Let those roses be turned to stone; none shall behold them ever again, neither by day nor by night!”

But Laurin forgot to mention the twilight, which is why to this day the mountains still glow at dusk, reminding us of the unfortunate dwarf king.

That is roughly the story as it has been told for almost a hundred years. Only recently has it been incorporated into a literary work: Pale Mountains: Folk Tales from the Dolomites and Their Legends by Karl Felix Wolff (1879-1966). Wolff’s legends tell of witches and dwarves, magic and dwarves, of magic and love affairs, of the mythical Fauns kingdom and of mysterious female creatures linked to water. They are written in prose form, but they are nevertheless imbued with the poetry that resides in beautiful landscapes and familiar natural atmospheres.

The English translations of Wolff’s legends have been published and reprinted several times in two separate volumes bearing the following titles: ‘The Pale Mountains: Folk Tales from the Dolomites’ and ‘The Dolomites and Their Legends’.
ADLER Lodge ALPE – this is what it must be like in heaven!

If you had to choose a slogan for the ADLER Resorts, what would it be?

ADLER Lodge ALPE – this is what it must be like in heaven!

Who would you like to meet in the lobby for a chat, and what would you chat about?

We are regular guests at the Lodge, where we have always enjoyed fascinating conversations in the past. The staff are real characters with very interesting things to say about their field. Through their insights we have learnt a lot about the natural and cultural landscape of the Dolomites. Denny Mait, the chef, offers delightful insights into the Ladin cuisine – not only through his delectable dishes, but also through interesting facts and stories. And Arko is a passionate photographer as well as providing great service. He knows the landscape like the back of his hand and offers great insider tips. What I mean is that everyone here is passionate about the Resort and the local area.

Let’s say you’re an hour away from the hotel, and it’s starting to rain. What do you do?

a) I’ve always had good experiences hitch-hiking.

b) I take off my shoes and dance barefoot in the rain.

c) I have someone pick me up at once.

... I just keep going. The Alpe di Siusi is beautiful even on a rainy day, and as I make my way back, I’m already anticipating a nice massage and an aperitif or a glass of fine wine by the fireside.

You probably get asked this a lot… what makes you keep coming back to ADLER?

It’s just … this place! And then there are these incredibly friendly people who make me feel pampered. It always feels like coming home, and yet it’s a different experience every time. Different and full of special moments. For example, I’ll never forget how the sky suddenly turned dark one day last June, as if the world was about to end. It started to hail, and in a matter of minutes the landscape turned white. And three hours later, we were basking in the sun by the pool again, as if nothing had happened – it was crazy. Nature offers the most incredible spectacles.

You probably get asked this a lot… what makes you keep coming back to ADLER?

What would you never travel without?

I always pack outdoor clothing, because at ADLER Lodge ALPE we enjoy the luxury of being provided with all the equipment for our outdoor pursuits, from skis and cross-country skis in winter to e-bikes in summer. That’s a great service. If you had to choose which glow spectacularly in the evening sunlight.

Another thing I always take with me is a yoga mat – at ADLER Lodge ALPE I get to practise yoga with me is a yoga mat – at ADLER Lodge ALPE I get to practise yoga with the landscape like the back of his hand and offers great insider tips. What I mean is that everyone here is passionate about the Resort and the local area.

Cindy Staiger

Cindy Staiger is in charge of Human Resources in her own family business, a medium-sized company based in Baden-Württemberg, Germany. She and her husband are regular guests at ADLER Lodge ALPE, and sometimes they visit with their friends, who have also become regulars. Cindy has been our guest since the very beginning, when ADLER Lodge ALPE opened in 2011.