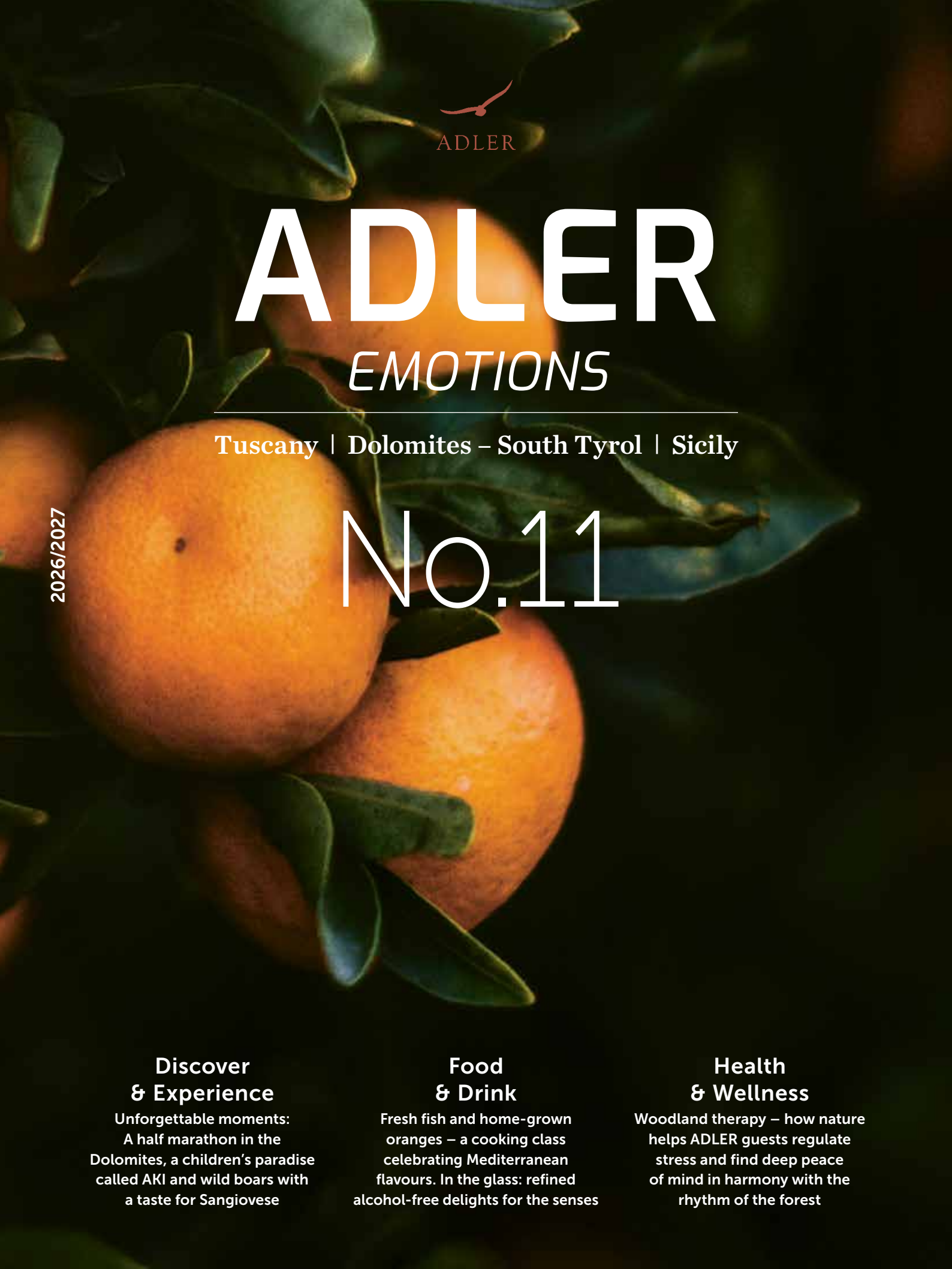

ADLER

# ADLER
## EMOTIONS

Tuscany | Dolomites – South Tyrol | Sicily

# No.11

2026/2027

### Discover & Experience
Unforgettable moments: A half marathon in the Dolomites, a children's paradise called AKI and wild boars with a taste for Sangiovese

### Food & Drink
Fresh fish and home-grown oranges – a cooking class celebrating Mediterranean flavours. In the glass: refined alcohol-free delights for the senses

### Health & Wellness
Woodland therapy – how nature helps ADLER guests regulate stress and find deep peace of mind in harmony with the rhythm of the forest

**Dear friends of ADLER Spa Resorts & Retreats,**

The well-known phrase “A healthy mind in a healthy body” was coined by Roman poet Juvenal almost 2,000 years ago. These ancient words of wisdom have since been substantiated by countless scientific studies and confirmed by our first-hand experience. Health is indeed a cornerstone of happiness.

However, caught as we are in everyday life, focusing on what really does us good can often be difficult. This is where our health experts come in. ADLER wellness and medical centres are designed to deliver more than just a relaxing timeout. The ultimate goal is longevity in its highest form. We aim to support you not only in adding years to your life, but also in enjoying those years to the fullest, promoting physical, mental and emotional fitness.

Our hope is to inspire a new awareness that will follow you home, helping you integrate health-promoting strategies into your daily routine – be it through targeted prevention or effective stress management.

Set in South Tyrol, Tuscany and Sicily, our resorts offer the perfect ambience in which to nourish your mindfulness and wellness in the long term. In this issue of ADLER Emotions, our practitioners share with you some insights into how we approach health and well-being.

While ADLER resorts, with their integrated health and wellness concept, are a good starting point, crafting a healthy lifestyle with lasting benefits requires going a step further. Namely a strategy that includes key factors such as nutrition and physical exercise. So, let yourself be inspired by the variety of authentic Mediterranean cuisine, where consciously selected, locally sourced ingredients form the foundation of a healthy, enjoyable lifestyle. Discover fine alcohol-free pairings and allow our sommeliers to surprise you with an array of indulgent experiences.

Outside our hotels, breathtaking natural landscapes are waiting to be explored. From bike tours in the Tuscan countryside to an invigorating run in the Dolomites, we have designed a host of experiences to encourage you to actively reconnect with nature and draw new energy from it.

Enjoy your journey of discovery!

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## ADLER Dolomiti

**As the Sanoner family's first property, ADLER Dolomiti traces its heritage back to Josef Anton Sanoner. After finding success in France as a master woodcarver, in 1810 he returned home to Ortisei, where he acquired a modest inn. Today, the historical ADLER Dolomiti hotel stands as one of South Tyrol's most prestigious retreats.**

# Timeless retreats for the soul

Every ADLER destination has its own soul, offering a distinct blend of nature and culture, action and relaxation, health and wellness. From Alpine elation to Mediterranean lightness, our resorts cater to couples, explorers and quiet seekers alike

› **Location**
In the heart of Ortisei, with the Dolomites as your backdrop
› **Wellness**
4,000m² spa with pools and pondside saunas
› **Nature**
9,000m² of private parkland with quiet oases and a yoga pavilion
› **Family**
AKI Kids' Club, open daily for children aged 4 and over
› **Spa highlight**
Our Circle of Cells spa concept, with treatments in sync with the seasons

ADLER Dolomiti
info@adler-dolomiti.com
+39 0471 775 001

## ADLER Balance

**Standing alongside and seamlessly connected to ADLER Dolomiti, ADLER Balance, with its medical centre, is a dedicated sanctuary for health and longevity. Its holistic philosophy and regeneration-oriented approach is supported by cutting-edge diagnostic and therapeutic methods.**

› **Location**
In the heart of Ortisei – a tranquil power place surrounded by the Dolomites
› **Philosophy**
A focus on health, longevity and regeneration
› **Med expertise**
A medical team specialising in detoxification and preventive, regenerative and aesthetic medicine
› **Spa & Med highlights**
DNA diagnostics, phytotherapy, acupuncture, anti-ageing treatments

ADLER Balance
info@adler-balance.com
+39 0471 775 002

## ADLER Sicilia

**Situated alongside the Torre Salsa Nature Reserve, ADLER Sicilia is a masterclass in Mediterranean escapism. Here, amongst orange groves and olive trees, guests can enjoy ADLER Med treatments while basking in the unspoilt beauty of Sicily.**

› **Location**
Contrada Salsa, on Sicily's wild southern coast, with sea views and 12 km of pristine beach
› **Spa highlights**
A 3,200m² wellness area with thalasso pool, infinity pool & panoramic sauna
› **Med expertise**
Holistic programmes focusing on prevention, TCM & acupuncture, detoxification
› **Cuisine**
Gourmet farm-&-sea-to-table restaurant and our own vegetable garden

ADLER Sicilia
info@adler-sicilia.com
+39 0922 178 8700

## ADLER Thermae

**Swathed in the gold and green of the Tuscan hills, ADLER Thermae is a place of relaxation and indulgence. Our guests have the best of Tuscany at their fingertips, from our own wine estate to the healing thermal waters of Bagno Vignoni, along with modern diagnostics to support their health.**

› **Location**
In the rolling hillscape of Val d'Orcia
› **Med expertise**
Advanced diagnostics, high-performance regenerative treatments
› **Spa highlights**
Thermal water pools, panoramic sauna
› **Cuisine**
Osteria in the garden, open-air restaurant serving organic Tuscan cuisine
› **Nature**
Our own herb garden and biodynamic wine estate

ADLER Thermae
info@adler-thermae.com
+39 0577 889 001

## ADLER Ritten

**ADLER Ritten is an intimate bolthole tucked away on the Renon high plateau. With a sweeping view of the Dolomites, a unique forest spa and a sustainable farm-to-table cuisine, it is the ultimate destination for a deep, quiet reset.**

› **Location**
On the idyllic Renon high plateau, above Bolzano
› **Style**
Boutique lodge with an atmosphere of quiet exclusivity
› **Spa highlights**
Panoramic infinity pool, forest spa with saunas and relaxation area
› **Cuisine**
Farm-to-table cuisine – locally sourced natural ingredients, skilfully refined
› **Activities**
Cycling, hiking, yoga

ADLER Ritten
info@adler-ritten.com
+39 0471 1551 700

## ADLER Alpe

**Set among Europe's most scenic plateau, ADLER Alpe is a place of power in its own right. Surrounded by the majestic beauty of the Dolomites, guests enjoy laid-back comfort, fine South Tyrolean cuisine and the rejuvenating power of the mountains through our Alpine spa. A timeless, replenishing experience.**

› **Location**
Alpe di Siusi – the most beautiful high plateau in the Alps
› **Spa highlights**
Infinity pool with restorative saltwater, steam bath and panoramic saunas
› **Cuisine**
Alpine-Mediterranean dishes and local specialities
› **Activities**
Hiking, cycling, cross-country skiing, ski-in/ski-out facilities

ADLER Alpe
info@adler-alpe.com
+39 0471 723 000



# Family bliss on Mt Plose

AKI Family Resort Plose redefines the family holiday as a seamless, stress-free experience – the bliss of sharing quality time without having to organise everything

## AKI Family Resort Plose

**Family time meets unspoilt nature – AKI Plose offers everything from outdoor adventures to serene wellness. Our childcare service for infants as young as 30 days allows parents a unique opportunity for relaxation and peace of mind. Unique bliss for the whole family.**

› **Location**
On Mt Plose above Bressanone – with a view of the South Tyrolean mountains
› **Style**
Family resort with a stylish design and atmosphere
› **Children's facilities**
Indoor play barn, creative atelier, petting zoo, adventure playground
› **Childcare**
Baby and childcare service offered daily from 9 am to 9 pm
› **Water fun**
Pools, paddling pool, water slides, family sauna
› **Spa highlights**
Adults-only spa with forest saunas, relaxation oases and yoga pavilion

AKI Family Resort Plose
info@aki-plose.com
+39 0472 317 000

# Heavenly heights

This article is by Patrick Gensing – an author with a passion for extreme runs and ultramarathons of up to 100 kilometres under his belt. His first mountain run on Alpe di Siusi turns out to be a transformative experience

Text Patrick Gensing
Photos Manuel Kottersteger, Arik Oberrauch, Alex Filz

It's just before seven on a mid-September morning on Alpe di Siusi. The sun is creeping over the jagged peaks of Mt Sassolungo. The air, crisp and clear, carries a hint of autumn. The first sunrays pierce the mist like a starter pistol, as though announcing what is about to take place. A half-marathon around Alpe di Siusi – child's play for a seasoned ultrarunner such as myself. Or is it? You see, there's a subtle yet crucial difference to be reckoned with: I'm a flat-terrain runner. And these are the Dolomites. An unprecedented run in my career – an exceptional experience set against a breathtaking backdrop. Even more breathtaking if you consider that people are now hiking and running here, where the Tethys Ocean ebbed and flowed 280 million years ago. The striking Dolomite peaks framing the horizon are, in fact, ancient coral and shell reefs. To run here is to traverse a fossilised seabed – the most awe-inspiring terrain ever. Last night, I enjoyed a perfect prelude to the experience at ADLER Alpe. The steaming outdoor pool – suspended like a tarn above the meadows – affords a glorious view of the summits blushing in the alpenglow. The spa takes pride of place at the Lodge, set as it is on the expansive roof of the main building >

## Tips for runners

**Time**
Allow at least 2.5 hours – preferably more, to enjoy the views and take breaks

**Equipment**
Running shoes with a good tread, sunscreen, cap, light clothing

**Refreshment**
Water stations and huts along the way; we recommend bringing a soft flask

**Best season**
Early summer or early autumn – for stable weather and good visibility

**Regeneration**
Massages and spa treatments at ADLER Alpe – wellness guaranteed

**Cuisine**
Light, local cuisine – real energy, not just calories

A touch closer to heaven: the trails lead right past the majestic peaks of Mt Sassolungo, Mt Sassopiatto and Mt Sciliar

On the right:
beautifully nestled in nature – ADLER Alpe with one of its highlights: the outdoor pool overlooking Alpe di Siusi, Europe's largest high Alpine pasture

Below:
the challenging run rewards participants with a spectacular view of the Sassolungo and Sassopiatto peaks – two of South Tyrol's iconic landmarks

rather than hidden away in the basement as one would expect. Up there, a touch closer to heaven, the scent of dried alpine grass blends with the rhythmic crackle of heat in the hay sauna. A place where tradition meets design and nature meets comfort, in a perfect balance that steadies the pulse before the race. Then, a good night's sleep in the chalet, cocooned by warm larch wood walls.

## ASCENDING TO 2,050 METRES

It's time. I'm at the start line, located at an elevation of 1,900 metres. Serving as the blueprint for today's run is the Alpe di Siusi Half Marathon, officially held in July. Think 900 participants tackling 21.1 kilometres and about 600 metres of elevation gain, peaking at 2,050 metres. Labelled as "difficult" in my running app, it pretty much redefines the meaning of the word. I start running across dew-studded meadows. The route winds past the Lodge towards the Sanon hut, with cobwebs sparkling like tiny artworks in the early morning light. I feel the crisp mountain air, around ten degrees, flood my lungs with energy.

Mt Sciliar, South Tyrol's ultimate landmark, stands 2,564 metres tall under the sun's spotlight. Looking almost staged, yet feeling uncannily real. As I pass bell-toting cows and the turnoff to the Rauch hut, nature seems to set the pace. At the quarter mark, a clear mountain stream offers a natural reprieve, murmuring gently through a small grove. An old mill along the path beckons me to rest. But no, now is not the time – here comes the climb. A glance at the map confirms that the ascent to the Almrosenhütte lies ahead. It's an exacting feat. Pulse racing, legs growing heavier. But as I discover, the view rewards every ounce of effort. A passing hiker's "Well done!" cuts through the morning silence – a small gesture that gives me wings.

Eight kilometres in, I have tackled 400 metres of elevation gain. On my usual turf, such a distance would have been no big deal, but up here it's a strain on every muscle.

## WITH ELEVATION COMES ELATION

I reach the highest – and most panoramic – point of the route below the Punta d'Oro mountain shelter. At this point, endorphins take over. Every glance unveils a new vista. The path winds its way between alpine roses and mountain pines, leading through the Ladinser Moos biotope, where dragonflies dance over small pools. This is a realm where stillness and diversity blend into an almost primordial balance. As you cast your gaze to the rocks, you might even catch a glimpse of what the locals call Kuhtritt – fossilised megalodon shells. The first mountain dwellers in the area mistook them for footprints of wild women and placed them in front of their huts as a protective charm. Today, they are a piece of Earth's history set in stone. Imagine: A UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site under your running shoes. As I hit kilometre 13, I meet Tong, from China. He is studying in Great Britain and enjoying his first Dolomites run, too. We talk briefly, connecting over training, mountains and our shared sense of awe. "Nature here feels alive," he says. Yes, it does. My watch shows an average of seven minutes per kilometre, an absurdly slow pace, but that's immaterial when you're running up here. The sun rises higher. And time passes... just like that.

## THE FINAL CLIMB

I make my way downhill towards Compatsch, the official finish line of the half marathon. Today's run, however, is still far from over. People, voices, bustle. Almost 20 kilometres in, the sun starts to bite – it's 20 degrees Celsius, no more shade to be found. Sweat is trickling down under my clinging shirt. I push past Compatsch towards the Ortisei gondola mountain station. Ahead, one last, steep climb. Hikers watch as I pant past them, and one woman laughingly exclaims, "Oh my goodness, he is running here!"

I can't suppress a grin. I press on, eyes firmly on the prize. Just a couple of metres and it's done. Three hours. I had planned two. But it's ok: what I'm after here is something above performance – it's a feeling called elation.

## ROOFTOP REJUVENATION

It's back at the hotel that the experience culminates in its last – and most crucial – part: regeneration. I reach the top floor of ADLER Alpe, where the spa is located. Under its sloping beams, treatments are inspired by the natural surroundings themselves. Ingredients such as edelweiss, arnica, Swiss stone pine and mountain salt are sourced just outside the Lodge. For 50 minutes, expert hands work over my muscles, hips and back – an intense but liberating treat. Arnica works wonders on sore legs, while the scent of Swiss stone pine soothes the mind. The difference professional treatments make is something you can feel immediately. I have only been here three and a half days, but it feels more like two weeks. That's how content, well-trained and deeply rested I feel. The magic of heavenly heights.

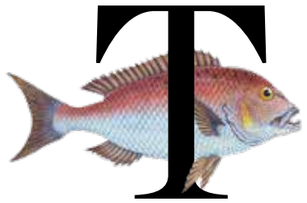
**Patrick Gensing** (52) lives, works and runs in Hamburg. A former journalist and author, he is now the head of communications for a well-known football club in the city

Text Jessica Wagener
Photos Carla Sutera Sardo

# Savouring Sicily

A cooking class with Giuseppe Schimmenti, executive chef at ADLER Sicilia, is more than a rare glimpse behind the scenes of a professional kitchen – it's a roadmap to falling in love with the island

Ensnaring all senses: discovering the scents and flavours of Sicily under the guidance of chef de cuisine Giuseppe Schimmenti



The sun is already high as I wander through the organic gardens at ADLER Sicilia. Amidst ancient vegetable varieties and herb beds framed by olive and citrus groves, Giuseppe Schimmenti is waiting. Black apron, calm poise and a smile that speaks volumes. At ADLER Sicilia, Giuseppe is the architect of the resort's culinary identity. Usually in charge of overseeing every menu and creation, today he will be overseeing me as I step into his inner sanctum and learn the ropes. I won't be just watching from the sidelines: I'll be giving him a hand.

The meals of the past few days were incredible, and he receives my praise with a gratified smile before giving me a tour of the herbs: basil, thyme, marjoram, Sicilian mint, anise and lemon thyme, alongside liquorice and chamomile. The goodness we are harvesting will soon enrich the plates. To many, farm-&-sea-to-table may be a buzzword. Here, it's a way of life. Much of the produce is grown literally a few steps away from the kitchen, and if not, it comes from small-scale local suppliers.

Next, we move to the kitchen – Giuseppe's spick-and-span professional atelier. It's an interesting twist, to be on this side of the restaurant, rather than at the table. During service, a staff of about 30 run the show behind the scenes, though it's calmer now between services. For us as guests, this masterclass is a backstage pass, an exclusive opportunity to peek into the inner workings of ADLER's kitchen. Groups are kept to a strict limit of eight people to ensure a personal atmosphere. Titled "The Scents of the Island", this class is a deep dive into the art of Sicilian seafood cooking. We are about to learn how to spot the freshest catch, fillet it with confidence and conjure up pure culinary magic from a simple fish.

Arranged on the steel counters are sea bass, gilt-head bream, and baskets of anchovies and prawns. All fished off the coast just hours ago. Like the vegetables, olive oil and oranges, every product at ADLER Sicilia is rigorously local. "Sicily is remarkably fertile," Giuseppe says. Etna, volcanic soil... no need to say more. Giuseppe uses these riches to craft dishes that capture the very essence of the island. To him, this is more than just cooking – it's a heritage shaped by centuries of influence from the Greeks, Arabs, Normans, French and Spanish. Protecting that heritage is his life's work, and part of his commitment to sustainability.

I'm handed a black apron and a crisp white toque. And gloves, of course. Giuseppe shows me how to dampen my hands first, so they snap on instantly – the first of the many trade secrets I'm about to learn. I wear this uniform with pride and a pinch of disquiet. My experience with fish is largely limited to eating sushi, and my knife skills certainly don't extend beyond frozen salmon fillets.

Knives at the ready, we start with the anchovies. A precise cut, a gentle pull, and the spine comes away cleanly. It's surprisingly simple – a perfect start for a novice. As I work through the pile, I ask Giuseppe about his roots. His great-grandfather was a fisherman; his grandfather ran the local fishmonger's. "I grew up around fish," he says, while effortlessly prepping a langoustine. It shows. My own family history involved much earthier fare, and maybe that's why my hands aren't nearly as nimble as his, I realise.

Step by step, Giuseppe shows the proper way to peel the tender shrimp meat

„Seeing guests enjoy my food makes me happy."

**Giuseppe Schimmenti**

From the sea and garden to the kitchen: taste-ripened local produce and the salt of the Mediterranean at ADLER Sicilia

I am soon demoted to dicing tomatoes while Giuseppe picks up my slack with practised speed. Then, we move on to the larger fish. The golden rule: lift the gills and check the colour. “If it’s bright red, the fish is fresh,” he explains. He descales the fish over the sink using two forks, the scales flying like silver confetti. With a sharp paring knife, he cuts from belly to tail in one effortless stroke. His every move a lesson in flawlessness. “Your turn,” he says. I don my chainmail glove – safety first: these knives are razor-sharp. Giuseppe checks my grip. I find the spot, pierce firmly – not too gently – and slice through to the head. Hey, it works!

Next comes the gutting, an incision just behind the head. This is the moment I’ve been dreading. Giuseppe makes it look like child’s play, but as a layman, I can only rely on touch. I’m not even sure what I’m feeling for, but his patient guidance gets me through it. All fingers unscathed, I sigh with relief. This is turning out to be an exciting class. No previous experience required; all you need is curiosity and a dash of courage. Sure, filleting is not for the faint-hearted, but the best things usually lie just outside our comfort zone. Giuseppe points to the bowl of trimmings: “Those are going into the stock.” Waste is out of the question; everything has its use – an admirable display of sustainable thinking.

We put the fillets in cold mineral water. “It must be ice-cold,” Giuseppe insists. By chilling the fish instantly, bacterial growth is staved off and the flesh is kept firm and bright. The chef quickly prepares a delicate sea bass carpaccio. My job here is not to fillet, but to segment a juicy Ribera orange from the grove just outside. It takes me three times as long as him. I’m here to learn, after all. We dice tomatoes, chop onions and julienne carrots and courgettes. I watch, mesmerised by his quiet work. Not a single movement wasted, not a word too many.

Time to move to the stove. “We’re making two sauces: one light, one tomato-based,” Giuseppe announces, wielding two large pans. One is for pasta with Mazara prawns, the other for sea bass. As we cook, he shares his story: “As a teenager, my father sent me to work in a local eatery.” That sparked the flame. A few years later, during military service, he delighted his comrades with his cooking. “That’s when I realised I was meant to be a chef.”

It is his calling. Giuseppe still loves his craft as much as on day one. “Seeing guests enjoy my food makes me happy.” A daily occurrence, judging by the blissed-out faces in the dining room. At home, however, he leaves the cooking to his wife. “I just make a mess in the kitchen,” he laughs. I see his point. Besides, however much you love your work, you don’t want to take it home.

There’s a quiet confidence in every move he makes.Years of experience show in the smallest gestures. Nothing is rushed, nothing left to chance. Even simple ingredients seem to gain importance. It’s less about perfection and more about feeling, about understanding the product and its story. And about passing that knowledge on with passion.

The kitchen fills with the scent of tomatoes, fresh herbs... and the sea. After nearly three hours, our job is done. Giuseppe himself carries our starters and mains down to the sea-view Osteria. First, sea bass carpaccio with Ribera oranges, anchovies with oil and lemon, and prawn spaghetti. Then, sea bass paccheri and, finally, red bream fillet with sautéed vegetables. “Now you know how it’s done,” he says warmly as we part ways.

I get to keep my ADLER apron and toque. I’m still feeling rather proud. Thanks to Giuseppe, I could probably make my own sushi now. Looking out over the stunning vista, I tuck into the fresh catch. At the risk of sounding clichéd, it truly tastes better when you’ve prepared it yourself. Savouring a perfect glass of Sicilian white (Canicattì Fileno Grillo DOC Sicilia), I sink back into my chair, content and serene. What I’m taking home is more than just a new skill – it’s a piece of authentic Sicily.

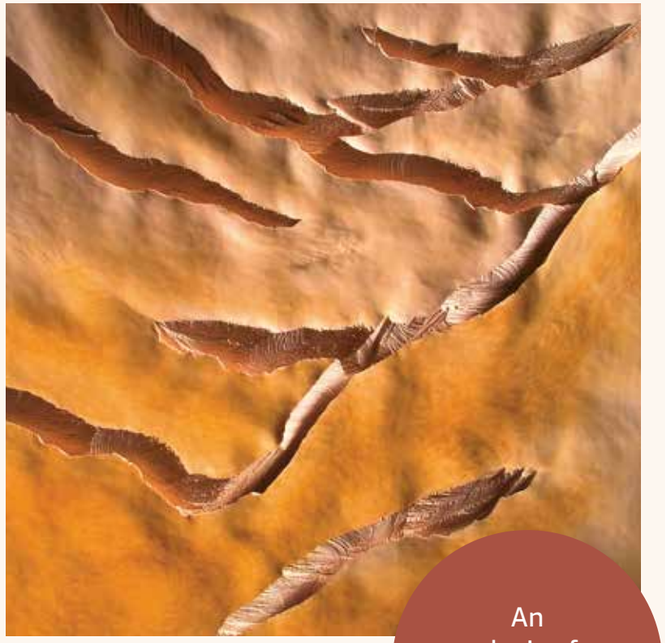
Would you like to try your hand, too? Scan here to book onto The Scents of the Island cooking class at ADLER Sicilia!

## From nature to table

ADLER Sicilia’s cuisine is built around a farm-&-sea-to-table concept: fish and seafood are sourced from local fishermen, while herbs and seasonal vegetables are grown in the resort’s organic garden, which yields produce year-round under the care of five gardeners. Any extras are sourced almost exclusively from the region. There are around 70 tree species growing on the resort’s grounds, from oranges and grapefruit to olives and pomegranates. The result is a zero-mile cuisine that champions origin and sustainability, serving the flavours of Sicily on a platter of authenticity.

# ADLER TRENDS

News and updates from our resorts



An exclusive for ADLER Dolomiti guests

Culture › ADLER Dolomiti

## Art in a natural setting

**A visit to the sculptor: Gregor Prugger** is among South Tyrol's most influential contemporary artists. His farm is perched high above Ortisei, with sweeping views of the Gardena valley. There, inside a historic hay barn, he carves wood and stone into masterpieces inspired by the surrounding landscape and deeply rooted in nature. ADLER guests are offered the exclusive opportunity to visit his atelier and meet him in person, **in an experience accompanied by Lidia Prugger's delectable refreshments**.

Fuelled by passion, Prugger reveals how raw materials give shape to his visions, in an atmosphere charged with the sparks of creativity and craftsmanship.

**The tour of Gregor Prugger's atelier can be booked at ADLER Dolomiti**

Natural skincare › AKI Family Resort Plose

The most delicate touch for the most delicate skin: **the new AKI BY ADLER gift set** is specifically formulated for the skin of babies and children. Featuring a gentle wash and a nourishing body lotion, the set taps into the healing power of nature. Precious extracts of calendula and yarrow calm sensitive skin, locking in moisture and preventing redness. True to the ADLER ethos, all the ingredients are organic and free from synthetic dyes and preservatives. We use gentle processing methods to create lightweight textures that absorb quickly, strengthening the natural skin barrier. The best protection for the skin you love.

**Find the AKI BY ADLER gift set in our online shop: adler-shop.com**

Cuisine › ADLER Ritten

## Indulgence unclouded

Zero alcohol, zero sacrifices. ADLER Resorts open the door to new horizons of indulgence, where alcohol-free means exploration, rather than compromise.

Once a trend among the health-conscious, alcohol-free pairings have now evolved into a statement.
Local raw ingredients, fine fermentation and the mastery of our sommeliers combine to create virgin alternatives that mirror the structure of fine wine, with acidity, sweetness and body that rival their traditional counterparts. Let yourself be tempted to an exciting encounter with **Bloody Roots** – a signature ADLER Ritten creation that blends the earthy spice of Feral No. 4 with wild berries and the fresh sharpness of ginger. Fresh thyme and crushed red pepper add a complex finish beneath a velvety foam crown. More than just a drink, it's (zero) proof that you don't need alcohol to enjoy a full, indulgent aromatic palette.

**Feeling enticed? Please ask about our alcohol-free pairings at dinner**

Green energy › ADLER for Planet

Since 2024, all ADLER establishments have been powered by 100% renewable every year. This saves around 2,700 tonnes of $CO_2$ each year. We are also investing in our own solar arrays at our ADLER Thermae, AKI Plose and ADLER Sicilia resorts – another step towards a greener future.

## Dates

› **30 September 2026 / ADLER Ritten:**
22 km half marathon across Corno del Renon and Alpe di Villandro

› **2 October 2026 / ADLER Dolomiti:**
42 km hiking marathon from Alpe di Siusi via Monte Pana to Selva

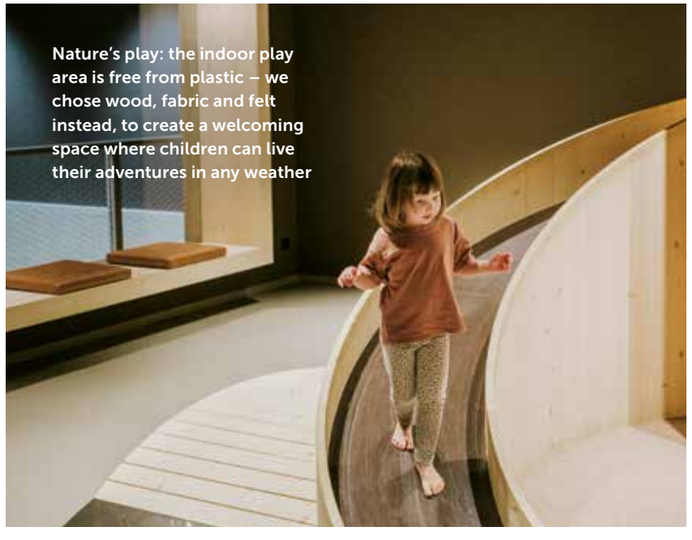
› **3 November 2026 / ADLER Thermae:**
23.5 km half marathon through the Val d'Orcia

› **2 December 2026 / ADLER Sicilia:**
22 km half marathon through the unspoilt coastal landscape and the Torre Salsa nature reserve

AKI Family Resort Plose

# Mila discovers her realm

Text & Photos Mario Heller



Nature's play: the indoor play area is free from plastic – we chose wood, fabric and felt instead, to create a welcoming space where children can live their adventures in any weather

Farm adventures: children love the nearby Frötscherhof farm for its animals, honey, ice cream and the main highlight: a huge outdoor trampoline

"This is Hugo the alpaca," says farmer Ignaz, pointing to a white fluffy animal. Mila looks fearfully at the creature, which is munching on fresh blades of grass. "Don't be scared: he's a very sweet boy," adds Ignaz.

Don't be scared – a phrase that will often recur over the next few days. Mila is almost four years old and a city kid. The only forests she has seen so far are the ones in picture books. She finds real ones rather curious, and a bit strange.

Ignaz assigns his alpacas to the families. "Is it nighttime now?" Mila asks as our group makes its way through the dark woodland. She has never seen a forest like this before – so real, thick, unspoiled. Her father, now panting up the steep slope pushing a hired buggy, probably didn't expect a real one either.

Mila goes for a bird's-eye view. She can certainly get a safer view from her dad's shoulders than by climbing on her own two feet. We are only a few hundred metres away from AKI Family Resort Plose, and yet it feels like a totally different world.

Located at the foothills of Mt Plose, above the town of Bressanone, the resort opened a year and a half ago, bringing to life the concept of a

Furry friends: Mila cuddles Hugo the alpaca. As he lives in an enclosure right next to the hotel, children can say hello from their room window

**Pony riding at Peniederhof farm: young guests can ride, groom and feed the ponies against a fabulous mountain backdrop – an unforgettable experience for any animal lover**

family-only hotel where everyone feels at home. In this case, "everyone" means me, my partner, our five-month-old son Loris and Mila, who will soon be turning four.

Loris has not yet reached his crawling stage, but he is already having fun at the resort – splashing around in the pool, trying new toys in the toddlers' group, and rocking in the soft baby swings.

Being older, Mila has a much stronger urge to explore, and for a child like her, AKI offers one thing above all else: an outdoor paradise. From alpaca trekking, playful nature explorations and animal tracking to culinary tasters in the resort's gardens, children can look forward to a variety of daily activities which you can easily sign up for via the hotel portal.

There is also plenty of space for your quiet breaks and family get-togethers, and that's what makes the experience at AKI so enjoyable.

This afternoon, we meet up with the rest of the group in the outdoor area. There is a large pond with a raft, a huge playground, a sandpit, bikes for hire and a verdant lawn currently enjoying the ministrations of a robot mower. We head to the terrace, soaking up the kiss of the early autumn sun on our faces. This is where we will be making butter using cream from a farm just around the corner.

Each of us is assigned to a butter churn with a hand crank. As the instructor pours some cream into each one, we get started. Mila gives it three turns, sighs heavily, and points right at me with her little index finger: "Now you!"

Brimming with motivation, I start churning. Among us is a father on his own, without his offspring:

"My son is sleeping right now, so he can start jumping on our bed again until ten tonight," he explains resignedly while turning the crank.

About fifteen minutes in, the cream starts to thicken. Following the instructions, I take out the lump of butter. I let Mila taste the buttermilk, and she returns an enthusiastic verdict of "Yummy!"

We all spread the butter on some bread and taste it right away. All except for the resigned dad, who is still churning.

When the days are so filled with activities, having a quiet nest to retreat to at night is even more important. The family suites at AKI Plose are simply perfect: spacious, entirely fitted with natural wood, and featuring a separate children's room. Where Mila sleeps like a queen, I'm glad to say.

The next morning, I sneak out at seven o'clock with Mila and

**Into nature: from roasting marshmallows over the campfire to meeting animals and carrying out experiments, there is so much children can learn and experience at AKI**

Loris in tow, leaving Vlada to her rest for a few more hours. The hotel lobby is filling with electric children and cheerful parents. The resigned father from yesterday and his wife look a tad tired. We exchange sympathetic glances and little anecdotes. "So, how was your night jumping session?" "Our baby practised crawling all night," someone interjects. "There was a bit of a tantrum..." Fortunately, the many playgrounds and play areas across the resort provide immediate distraction. And relief. At seven-thirty, the breakfast buffet to which we've all been looking forward is ready to delight us.

At some point, Mum joins us and Mila gets a second round of breakfast, while Dad treats himself to a spa break. In the afternoon, we will drive to the pony farm to show Mila what a pony is. "Riding a unicorn? I'm in!" she exclaims, holding her pink toy unicorn up to my face.

When we arrive at the pony farm, Mila finds herself face to face with Mara, a small white pony. And bursts into tears. "Don't you want to sit on it?" "No!"

But Sanna, the riding instructor, is patient. She leads Mara around on her own while Mila casts curious glances at them. The breakthrough comes after twenty minutes: Mila is now sitting on Mara. At the end of the experience, Sanna lets her feed Mara a carrot – something she will enthusiastically tell Mum about at dinner.

It has now been weeks since our holiday, and Mila is still going on about it: "I miss Hugo and Mara. I want to go back to AKI!" So do I...

I too can't wait to go back to the soothing atmosphere of the resort, and the stunning nature all around it.

Swiss photographer **Mario Heller** works internationally for publications such as Die Zeit, The Guardian, and Falstaff. Currently based in Berlin, he has escaped the city to spend a peaceful family holiday at AKI Plose.

# Balance

Text Jessica Wagener

## How to learn to manage stress

Stress is not an abstract feeling or a character flaw – it's a complex neurobiological reaction. A holiday provides the opportunity to break the stress cycle

Stress has become the physiological soundtrack of our time, leaving many to yearn for true relaxation while achieving only a state of mere functioning. Unfortunately, the human nervous system cannot be regulated at the touch of a button. This is where modern diagnostics and integrative medicine come in, showing us specifically how to turn off the brain's alarm switch and rebalance the autonomic nervous system.
"The continuous multitasking and digital communication in our daily life create constant pressure. This activates the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis, which is our inbuilt stress response system," explains Dr Letterio Taormina, resident physician at ADLER Sicilia. Emails and pressing deadlines trigger an ancestral response in the body, which releases adrenaline and cortisol to fuel the fight-or-flight response. However, since we cannot react to modern stressors by fighting or fleeing, the biochemical energy resulting from this hormonal surge remains stuck in the body.
"The chronic excess of stress hormones is the main issue we see in our daily practice," confirms Dr Stefania Mazzieri, resident physician at ADLER Thermae. "In the long run, the resulting systemic overload wears down both physiological functions and mental resilience."

**The physiology of cognitive overload**

The biggest stress factor is often the blurring of work-life boundaries. "We work under high cognitive pressure," says Dr Taormina, "which means that the brain is denied the rest periods it needs to process information." Our lifestyle also has a direct impact on our metabolism. Dr Mazzieri points out the relevance of chronobiology in this respect: mealtimes that disharmonise with our biological cycles, highly processed foods and insufficient sleep all contribute to a state of silent inflammation – an insidiously asymptomatic, persistent inflammatory process in the body that further reduces our stress tolerance.

**Recognising the warning signals**

When the sympathetic nervous system (our "accelerator") is constantly firing and the parasympathetic nervous system (the "brake") fails to counterbalance it, the situation becomes critical. In addition to sleep disorders and irritability, clinical warning signs include specific somatic symptoms such as reduced heart rate variability (the heart becomes less adaptable), chronically cold hands due to vasoconstriction, or sudden weight gain due to cortisol-induced fat storage in the abdominal area. Decreased libido or persistent palpitations may also be indicative of a dysregulated HPA axis.

**Dr. med. Letterio Taormina**
General Practitioner, Specialist in Traditional Chinese Acupuncture and Phytotherapy

**Dr. med. Stefania Mazzieri**
Specialist in Functional Medicine, Active Cell Nutrition and Epigenetics, Practitioner DietaCOM® HRV Trainer

**Evidence-based stress management**

Good news comes from epigenetics: research shows that we are not helplessly at the mercy of our genes and environment, and that targeted lifestyle changes can significantly reduce cortisol. Physical exercise remains the most efficient way to burn off stress hormones, but sleep is just as essential. In fact, it is only during deep sleep that we activate our glymphatic system, flushing metabolic waste products from the brain – a biological cornerstone of resilience.

**The key role of holistic medicine**

"The ultimate goal is not to live a stress-free life, which is biologically impossible," summarises Dr Taormina. "Rather, it's about restoring the nervous system's ability to regulate the stress response."

The ADLER Med team supports this process through a layered strategy that includes medical testing (e.g. heart rate variability), targeted exercise such as yoga or Qi gong, and regulating therapies ranging from acupuncture to Ayurveda. All this, combined with an anti-inflammatory diet, creates the conditions required for the body to restore its self-healing abilities.

### Three tools for measuring stress

**Heart Rate Variability test**
**The HRV test uses a sensor to track time intervals between two heartbeats – an important indicator of how flexibly the autonomic nervous system responds to stress.**

**Light test**
**A sensor placed on the finger or ear illuminates the skin and measures even the smallest blood volume changes. This shows how active the sympathetic (stress) and parasympathetic (relaxation) nervous systems are.**

**Stress hormones test**
**Blood or saliva samples are collected at specific times of the day to measure the concentration of key stress hormones such as cortisol and DHEA. Lab results show precisely how much strain is being placed on the HPA axis, revealing whether prolonged stress has already caused hormonal imbalance.**

# Recovering

## Why sleep is our most important ally

Sleep does much more than just enhance wellness. From a medical standpoint, it is a highly active neurobiological process and essential to maintain the body's balance

Sleep is a fascinating phenomenon. While the body is at rest, the brain is working at full speed. The REM (rapid eye movement) phases, for example, are when emotional processing occurs, while memory is consolidated during deep sleep phases: the brain filters information, separates the wheat from the chaff and stores learnt information as long-term memory. At the same time, the glymphatic system activates. It acts as a "waste disposal centre" for the central nervous system, flushing metabolic waste and toxic proteins out of tissues – a crucial process in preventing neurodegenerative diseases. The immune system also burns the midnight oil. During sleep, the body increases the release of cytokines, i.e. signalling proteins that act as messengers for immune regulation in the event of infections and inflammation. At the same time, cell division and tissue repair are in full swing during sleep.

**Why customisation wins over standardised criteria**

There is no one-size-fits-all: sleep requirements change with age. While children and teenagers need up to ten hours of sleep per night for their development, adults need between seven and eight hours. These, however, are only guidelines. "More important than the number of hours is the subjective quality of rest perceived in the morning," emphasises Dr Letterio Taormina, resident physician at ADLER Sicilia. "It is less about quantity and more about the physiological efficiency of sleep cycles." That said, around ten per cent of adults in Europe suffer from chronic sleep disorders. The modern-day "social jet lag" resulting from shift work, artificial lighting and digital overload throws our circadian rhythm out of sync. The consequences range from metabolic imbalance to mental exhaustion.

**Medical expertise at the service of good sleep**

Fortunately, sleep-wake cycles can be reset. The ADLER Med team specialise in holistic health support, which includes somnology-based sleep programmes at ADLER Sicilia, stress management concepts at ADLER Balance and regeneration rituals at ADLER Thermae. All these strategies combine medical expertise with highly effective treatments to restore the natural sleep architecture, which is the alternation between light, deep and REM sleep.

## Night as a source of energy

Seven science-backed strategies to help you stabilise sleep architecture

**1. Skip the nightcap**

It is a common misconception that alcohol aids sleep. While it is true that it dampens brain activity with temporary sedative effects, it severely disrupts sleep quality. When the alcohol is broken down in the second half of the night, a rebound effect sets in: the body releases stress hormones, sleep becomes fragmented and awakenings become more frequent. Additionally, alcohol suppresses the REM phases, which are essential for mental recovery.

**2. Create acoustic safety**

Our hearing centre never sleeps. From an evolutionary perspective, a brain that scans the environment for danger signals even at night is a significant advantage. In our day and age, however, it is rather inconvenient, as sudden noises trigger immediate alertness and micro-wakefulness. Silence is ideal. When it is not an option, white noise or special sound frequencies (e.g. 432 Hz) can help calm the brain, as they have been proven to activate the parasympathetic nervous system.

**3. Allow for metabolic rest**

Digestion is hard work: it consumes energy and increases core body temperature (thermogenesis). Deep sleep, on the contrary, requires a slight drop in body temperature. For this reason, it is advisable to avoid eating heavy, fatty or spicy foods within three hours before going to bed. The insulin surge caused by late carbohydrate consumption also inhibits night-time release of growth hormones, which are important for cell regeneration.

**4. Safeguard melatonin production**

Light is the strongest cue for our internal clock. Even minimal light signals daytime activity to the retina. This inhibits the release of melatonin – a hormone produced by the pineal gland that we need to enter deep sleep. Blackout curtains and high-quality sleep masks are highly recommended for undisturbed hormone regulation.

**5. Establish a conditioning ritual**

The human brain loves patterns. A fixed night-time routine can act as a neurobiological trigger signalling to the body that it is now time to rest. Whether it's a cup of herbal tea, a yoga practice or meditation, repetition is key. People practising their night-time rituals consistently have been found to have lower pulse and blood pressure even before they turn off the lights, which eases the transition from sympathetic to parasympathetic activity.

**6. Detox from digital devices**

Modern screens emit light with a high blue component. This light spectrum mimics daylight, inhibiting melatonin almost instantly. As a result, the body remains awake even when tired. This is why experts recommend switching off digital devices at least 90 minutes before bedtime. Reading a book is a far better alternative, as it is free from blue light and focuses the mind.

**7. Avoid the rumination pitfall**

Lying awake and staring at the clock at night builds up sleep pressure. The brain starts to associate bedtime with frustration and wakefulness – a classic cause of chronic sleep disorders. Medical experts recommend stimulus control: if you are not asleep after 20 minutes, get up and engage in some low-intensity activity until you feel sleepy again. "It helps relieve the psychological pressure," confirms Dr Taormina. This retrains the brain to associate bedtime with sleep once again.

# Phytotherapy

## How herbal medicine can support nervous system regulation

From monastery gardens to modern laboratories: medicinal plants are humanity's oldest pharmacy. Phytotherapy is now seeing a revival, especially in the field of stress relief

"There is a herb for every ailment." What Paracelsus realised around 500 years ago still applies today. So much so that phytotherapy is now making a real comeback. "The word phytotherapy literally means plant healing," explains Dr Colomba Aura Romeo, resident general and complementary medicine specialist at ADLER Balance. "Of course, we are not talking about simple herbal teas, in this case. Phytotherapy is a science-backed branch of medicine that relies on plant extracts that have been researched and proven for quality, safety and pharmacological efficacy." Dr Romeo draws a clear distinction between dietary supplements and approved phytotherapeutic drugs.

**Passion flower**
This herb has a relaxing and anxiolytic effect – especially helpful in cases of stress-related nervousness

The latter contain active ingredients in specific concentrations to deliver reproducible therapeutic effects.

**Precious keys to our cells**
Plants are highly complex chemical labs that produce secondary compounds – such as flavonoids or terpenes – designed to protect them from predators or UV radiation. It is precisely these substances that have such potent effects in the human body. Recent research shows that plant molecules dock onto human cell receptors according to a lock-and-key principle. They can, for example, inhibit inflammatory cascades or modulate the release of messenger substances in the brain. In the integrative medicine programmes offered at ADLER Resorts, phytotherapy is used synergistically alongside conventional medicine, rather than as a substitute. "It works best as part of a multi-layered concept," says Dr Romeo, "in combination with exercise, healthy nutrition and mental balance strategies."

**A natural antidote to stress**
It is especially in cases of chronic exhaustion and sleep disorders that phytotherapy really rises to the occasion. This is where adaptogens come to the rescue. These plants produce substances that help the body to manage stressful situations and increase resistance. "In cases of chronic stress, the autonomic nervous system keeps firing alarm signals, and cortisol levels remain permanently high," explains Dr Romeo. "Specific medicinal plants can have a regulating effect on this stress axis, soothing an overexcited nervous system rather than simply numbing it." Even in the case of sleep disorders, there is more at

"Medicinal plants help without numbing"

**Dr. med. Colomba Aura Romeo**
Medical doctor, surgeon, general medicine specialist, homeopath, expert in complementary medicine

play than mere tiredness. Certain extracts interact with the GABA receptors in the brain – the main "calming switches" in our central nervous system. "This allows us to shorten sleep latency and improve sleep architecture, leading to improved quality of deep sleep," says Dr Romeo. The advantage over synthetic hypnotics is that there is usually no hangover effect, and their addictive potential is minimal.

**Lavender flowers**
A real help against insomnia and inner restlessness, as well as digestive complaints

**Effectiveness comes with safety rules**
The proven pharmaceutical efficacy of phytotherapeutics makes it essential to use them under professional guidance. "Herbal does not necessarily mean harmless," warns Dr Romeo. "St. John's wort, for example, can hamper the effect of other medications by accelerating their breakdown in the liver."

Especially when treating people with pre-existing conditions, the elderly, or patients taking blood thinners or other medications, it is essential to consider their medical history to rule out undesirable interactions.

**Valerian root**
This calming herb helps to induce and maintain good sleep, relieves cramps and relaxes muscles

**Ensuring quality from the plant to the pill**
The efficacy of a remedy depends entirely on the quality of its raw ingredients. "Unlike synthetic substances, plant extracts are subject to natural fluctuations," explains Dr Romeo. This makes it all the more important to establish strict standards in

**Lemon balm**
This popular condiment also has medicinal properties – for example, it is a good remedy for stomach complaints

terms of cultivation methods, harvest time and standardised extraction processes. There are also ethical aspects coming into play. Modern phytotherapy should take responsibility for biodiversity protection and fair trade. "A sustainable approach not only safeguards ecosystems, but also ensures the long-term availability of these precious resources," says the specialist.

**Between tradition and scientific evidence**
Phytotherapy has long reached beyond the confines of alternative medicine, evolving into a branch of evidence-based pharmacology. As Dr Romeo aptly sums up, "We tap into the ancient wisdom of nature, but rely on the precision and safety of modern science to apply it." Especially these days, when our daily lives are under the pall of stress and insomnia, herbal medicine offers a gentle but powerful alternative to restore biological balance.

# Acupuncture

## Small needles, deep relaxation: a reset button for the nerves

Targeted neurobiological stimuli calm the autonomic nervous system, ensuring deep mental and physical relaxation

**Switching from fight mode to relaxation**
According to TCM teachings, stress symptoms arise when the flow of Qi – or life energy – is blocked. This often manifests as inner restlessness or sleep disorders. The Asian philosophy behind acupuncture now finds a modern counterpart in Western medicine, with a fascinating explanation of why fine needles can have such a calming effect. Stress puts the body in a permanent state of alert, in which the sympathetic nervous system is dominant. In this context, acupuncture acts as a physiological switch. Research shows that targeted needle stimulation activates the parasympathetic nervous system, which is responsible for regeneration, digestion and relaxation. When specific points are stimulated, signals are sent to the brain that inhibit the release of stress hormones such as cortisol while also boosting the release of mood-lifting neurotransmitters such as serotonin and endorphins.

**Proven efficacy – relief for the brain**
The relaxing effect of acupuncture is not only noticeable, but measurable. Imaging techniques such as functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) show that acupuncture can curb activity in the limbic system – especially in the amygdala, our fear and stress centre – while also stimulating the vagus nerve, the body's calm-inducing nerve. As a result, heart rate drops and breathing grows deeper and calmer. The body switches off the fight-or-flight response, prioritising repair and function once again.

**Putting the mind to rest**
An acupuncture session is a masterclass in deceleration. The needles are hair-thin and barely noticeable, except for De Qi – a warm, heavy sensation often felt at the needle site. Once the needles are in place, you are left to lie still for 20 to 30 minutes, with nothing to do – your smartphone is out of reach, and the outside world falls silent. The body can use this period of calmness to process the impulses and readjust the autonomic nervous system. Many guests report a trance-like state, halfway between waking and sleeping, that is more restorative than a simple afternoon nap.

**The way back to balance**
Acupuncture is an ideal catalyst for relaxation – especially on a holiday, when everyday life fades into the background. This is why it forms an integral part of the medical service at ADLER Balance and ADLER Sicilia. Our specialists use acupuncture not only to treat physical complaints, but also as a building block for tailored stress reduction programmes. Whether you suffer from stress-related neck tension, experience poor sleep or simply wish to clear your head, this ancient healing art performed in the soothing atmosphere of a contemporary retreat can help you let go of mental burdens. While not a substitute for conventional medical treatments, acupuncture is a powerful, science-backed tool for bringing the body and mind back into harmony.



## In balance with yourself – the ADLER anti-stress packages

**At ADLER Balance and ADLER Sicilia, medically designed programmes combine diagnostics, therapy and coaching within a holistic approach. Individual assessments form the basis for targeted treatments – with the aim of enhancing regulation, regeneration and long-term health.**

### ADLER Balance

**Burnout, work-related stress & smoking**
**When prolonged strain leads to exhaustion, this programme begins with a precise medical assessment, including blood values, biological age and heavy metal analysis. Acupuncture, detox infusions, NanoVi™ and treatments such as hay baths or Ayurveda relieve the body and support its self-regulation. Coaching helps maintain stability in everyday life.**

**Biorhythm Rebalancing**
**Sleep disturbances and low energy are addressed through an individual therapeutic and nutritional concept based on medical and energetic assessment. Acupuncture, Shiatsu and detox elements help harmonise the autonomic nervous system and support a stable biorhythm. The result is noticeably greater energy.**

### ADLER Sicilia

**ADLER Med TAO Balance**
**Based on the principles of TCM, the body's energetic state is analysed and treated in a targeted way. Acupuncture, Tuina, Moxa-TDP and Qi Gong regulate the flow of energy and support inner balance. Ideal for stress-related complaints and exhaustion, the programme restores stability and clarity.**

**ADLER Med Sleep Therapy**
**Restorative sleep is the result of a complex interplay of physiological and mental processes. Following an initial integrative medical consultation, targeted treatments such as acupuncture with Tuina, Abhyanga and an ADLER ritual are applied. Supported by yoga and meditation, the programme helps regulate the natural sleep–wake rhythm and promotes deep regeneration.**

The silence of an early morning.
Spectacular views. A sense of elation.
Buongiorno Val d'Orcia!

Tall peaks and good cheer!
1,800 metres of elevation gain to tackle.
Great teamwork. Grazie mille, Mauro, Giulio and Michele!

# A wild boar's breakfast favourite: Sangiovese

Between Siena and Monte Amiata, Val d'Orcia extends in a triumph of gold and green. When author and TV comedian Carsten van Ryssen left Berlin, all he wanted was a bike ride in the Italian countryside. Instead, he had a minor epiphany



Text
Carsten van Ryssen

Photos
Gabriele Forti,
Carsten van Ryssen

Dear readers, dear ADLER Thermae guests, I hope you'll forgive this interjection squeezed between the headline and my reportage. I don't expect you'll be familiar with my name, so I thought it best to let you know whose voice will be guiding you through the next few pages. I am an author, TV comedian and teacher living in bustling Berlin – my adopted town. When I first pitched my tent in this crazy metropolis forty years ago, my first act of settlement was to sell my car, an Opel Corsa inherited from my mother and replace it with a three-speed hub-geared men's bike. It saved me a lot of money and nerves, as well as keeping me fit. No regrets, believe you me. Pedalling my way across the Alps at least once in my life is still my dream – or my most beautiful nightmare, you could say. These days, I cross the Alps flying, courtesy of Lufthansa. A strictly rational choice. For my first forays into altitude cycling, I chose Tuscany. Val d'Orcia, more precisely. And it's been a great start...

## MOUNTAIN BIKING UP MOUNT AMIATA

"Guys, this flatlander from Berlin wants to climb Monte Amiata!" Mauro, our tour guide, nods in my direction and looks around amusedly. "Ha coraggio!" Everyone laughs. "Wait a sec," I rebut "doesn't fortune favour the brave?". Mauro's cheerful teammates Giulio, Massimo and Michele nod in agreement and go back to fiddling with their jerseys and equipment. Mt Amiata, an extinct volcano, stands tall on the horizon from ADLER Thermae. It's eight in the morning, and the sun has already halved the shadow in front of the entrance to the bike hire station. My weather app forecasts 29 degrees Celsius, no wind and no clouds. I clip my smartphone into the handlebar mount and adjust the automatic seat post to my leg length. These bikes are a feat of technological advancement. With a few quick moves, Mauro replaces the flat pedals on his Fully – a full-suspension electric mountain bike (e-MTB) – with clipless pedals. Then batteries, tyre pressure, sunscreen, freshly filled water bottles, protein bars and bananas to stave off hunger pangs. Expect the unexpected and cover all bases. After all, we have 1,800 metres of >

Challenging routes demanding focus and body control. The perfect blend of sport and sightseeing.

What's not to love? From asphalt tracks to gravel roads and forest paths, every route in Val d'Orcia holds its own delights in store.

Shortly before the climb. Taking a breather and charging up with a protein bar.

elevation gain to tackle. Untrained neophytes and amateur cyclists may find themselves overwhelmed here.

We start off smooth – touring mode. The quiet purring of the electric motors breaks the morning silence, as our four e-bikes set out to conquer Val d'Orcia under expert guidance. The seventy-kilometre feat is off to an inconspicuous, yet spectacular start. Dozing peacefully in the heart of the Siena area, Italy's spa hotspot, is the chocolate-box village of Bagno Vignoni.

At this morning hour, it is still deserted and all the more picturesque for it. There is only time for a quick "Buongiorno" before we speed down Via Cassia and, after a few kilometres, turn right onto pale gravel and stone paths into the wide open hillscape. We make our way past well-kept farmhouses and country manors towards Vivo d'Orcia – a bona fide Tuscan idyll. A film set. A photographic hotspot. Or, as Mauro proudly calls out to me from his bike: "Da sogno, magnifico!" I am lost for words. This region is blessed with such fortune that it rightfully achieved UNESCO World Heritage Site status in 2004. We stop on the edge of the Strada Comunale del Pozzo-Gallina road, where a simple natural wood cabinet equipped with an espresso machine, milk rolls and sweets offers refreshment. For a voluntary donation… payable via PayPal. Next to it, there's a fountain where we can refill our bottles with fresh water. Free of charge. Such a welcome, convenient facility, privately managed, for the benefit of not just cyclists. Things are about to get serious, Giulio warns us. The tough climb to Monte Amiata begins here. Michele quickly hands out insect repellent to everyone before we head up into the woods. We dutifully rub it on. With every kilometre, I feel the muscles in my

## THE MONTE AMIATA TOUR

**› A cyclist's paradise**
Tuscany is a dream for anyone on two wheels, whatever your level. From ADLER Thermae, you can tap into more than 1,000 kilometres of GPS-guided tours via the Val d'Orcia Outdoor app. Guided rides are organised five times a week.

**› Monte Amiata**
At 1,738 metres, Monte Amiata is the highest peak in southern Tuscany. This extinct volcano feeds the underground basin from which the region's thermal springs originate.

**› Snacking by the roadside**
For refreshment along the way, the wooden cabinet of the honesty bar is supplied with espresso and sweet treats.

**› A mushroom break**
The flavoursome porcino is the king of mushrooms. But chanterelles, champignons, butter mushrooms and meadow mushrooms also play an important role in the local cuisine.

**› For the perfect biking experience**
ADLER Thermae offers guests a complimentary e-bike hire service, with the option to upgrade to Bianchi gravel, e-gravel or road bikes – Italian engineering at its best, for a small fee.

thighs scream louder. Like children in the back seat: "Are we there yet? How much longer?". To save energy, I switch the drive to turbo.

The backdrop keeps changing. Damp forest floors followed by gravel and stone tracks, then short sections of tarmac. It takes focus, control, coordination. The perfect blend of sport, adventure and sightseeing. Our route covers around 30 kilometres with a constant incline, leading us through ancient beech, oak and chestnut woods that have been protected since the 14th century. And on, past rivers, streams and springs. Many sections of the route are in the shade, which gives us an invaluable bonus. After just under two and a half hours, we reach Vivo d'Orcia, at an altitude of almost 1,000 metres. The woods surrounding the idyllic village are rich in black and white truffles – highly prized delicacies. And more. Eight kilometres further on, we meet Claudio and his nephew. He lifts his wicker basket up to my nose. It contains porcino, "one of the finest, tastiest varieties of porcini mushrooms in Italy". I'm starting to get hungry. I've already consumed all my bananas and protein bars. "Forza Carsten. Forza!" Mauro cheers me on with a laugh. According to the display, my bike's battery is still at 50% capacity. I wonder what it would feel like to just stop now and sit for a while, exhausted but happy, possibly with a basket of porcini mushrooms on my lap. But no. First and foremost, I didn't want to let my lovely group down and secondly, well… I would have missed out on this panino con porchetta – a decadent sandwich filled with succulent, aromatic slices of roast pork. This delicacy is available at a bar called I'Pianese, in case you are wondering.

Around midday, we reach the rustic hut sitting below the iron summit cross of Monte Amiata. As one of the highest places to stop for refreshments in the whole region, it is especially popular with cyclists and hikers. On Giulio's advice, we round off our enjoyable break with an espresso and a slice of delicious Torta Ricciolina – it's hard to believe that such a dessert can be the product of an Italian nonna's thriftiness. Thus fortified, we resume our climb for the last stretch to the summit. And… WOW, we've made it! At 1,738 metres above sea level, we are now rewarded by a wonderful view over the centuries-old cultural landscape of the Val d'Orcia.

Back at the resort, as we handshake our friendly farewells, Mauro commends me on brilliantly mastering my first serious mountain stage as a flatland cyclist. Tomorrow, >

I made it! My aluminium e-MTB resting under Pope Leo's iron summit cross.

Summit dining. A panino con porchetta in good company – a succulent treat for the palate and a reset button for tired legs.

I'll treat myself to a restorative day, relaxing by the pool, getting a massage and definitely visiting ADLER's Tenuta Sanoner winery. "Ciao Carsten, a dopodomani. And give my best to Giuseppe Basta!"

In the evening, I tuck into a well-deserved dinner of tuna tartare, handmade pici and shi drum from the hotel's restaurant. It tastes like Tuscany. And feels like heaven.

## VAL D'ORCIA IN A GLASS

When the young winemaker Giuseppe Basta greets me at Tenuta Sanoner late that morning, I'm struck by his easy charm. Which is perhaps why I don't beat about the bush and ask him "Giuseppe, I'm a hops man. Does that mean I'm hopeless?" Laughing, he vows to do his best to win me over to the grape.

Giuseppe starts by offering me a tour of the estate. Soon, visitors will be able to explore it on their own, using a newly designed foldout map, with three routes to choose from, lasting between twenty and sixty minutes – each tailored to different interests and levels of fitness. Sections and distances are colour-coded and numbered, and every station along the way features a clear description.

Tenuta Sanoner is something of a pioneer in the Val d'Orcia's contemporary wine-growing scene. Roughly the size of fourteen football pitches, the estate operates according to strict biodynamic principles and has held Demeter certification since 2020. It relies on holistic practices designed to improve soil structure and water retention. "The Maria Thun calendar is our most important tool," Giuseppe explains. "Thun observed how plants develop based on moon phases and discovered that roots, leaves, flowers and fruits mature differently depending on when they're sown."

During our stroll along the vines, I notice the odd animal droppings here and there. Giuseppe points to a half-eaten grape. "See?" he grins. "Wild boar – they like their Sangiovese for breakfast." Near the main building, a small drove of Cinta Senese pigs has gathered at what Giuseppe calls the "bathing spot". These hardy, black and white creatures have been a fixture of the Siena landscape for over a thousand years. Their meat is highly prized, especially for hams, salami and other Tuscan classics. Giuseppe reaches for a hose and gives the playful creatures a cooling shower. I ask whether their wanderings affect the wine's flavour. "The pigs are a vital part of the estate's ecosystem," he explains. "In our biodynamic approach, we see the whole farm as a single, interconnected organism. Like an orchestra where all the >

Welcomed by the view.
The Tenuta Sanoner wine estate
is set above Bagno Vignoni.



An introduction to biodynamic farming – winemaker Giuseppe Basta gives beer sommelier Carsten van Ryssen a tour of the estate.

## A WALK THROUGH TENUTA SANONER

Visitors are welcome to explore the estate on their own with a map; the trail begins and ends right by the winery.

**› Getting there**
Tenuta Sanoner is 700 metres from ADLER Thermae – just a fifteen-minute walk away.

**› Tour options**
You can choose from three different walks, at different levels. All of them offer insights into biodynamic growing.
**› Tour 1 is the easiest:**
a 20-minute, 1.4km walk.
**› Tour 2** (intermediate) takes approximately 30 minutes, leading through the estate for 2.18km.
**› Tour 3**, the longest at 3.7km, leads through Vignoni Alto and takes an hour to complete.

**› What to expect**
There is more to the experience than just a view of rolling Tuscan hills swathed in vineyards and olive groves. It also provides direct insights into a modern approach to traditional, sustainable farming and how biodiversity actively supports the ecosystem: from bees to livestock and from pea and lupin-based green manure to horn manure and horn silica, many elements combine to give Tenuta Sanoner's products their wholeness and distinctive character. Every process follows a natural rhythm shaped by the seasons. Careful observation replaces intervention wherever possible. The result is authenticity you can truly taste and feel.

**› When to visit**
The estate is open Monday to Saturday from 10 am to 5 pm. Closed on Sundays and public holidays.

**› Guided tours**
To book a guided tour, please call +39 0577 169 87 07 or email info@tenuta-sanoner.it

Wine tasting. It's not what it looks like, I promise! Just an informative, unpretentious and frankly delectable experience!

Early birding: bike allocation at the hotel. Every mount fine tuned to its rider.

players – soil, plants and animals – must be kept in balance." In this orchestra, I realise, Giuseppe is the conductor.

Between the cool walls of the tasting room and showroom – all clean lines and modern minimalism – I'm introduced to the rest of Giuseppe's team: Giada, Giulia and Barbara. They've laid out a spread: local ham and cheese, crispy bread... I'm twice charmed. Alongside French classics like Merlot and Cabernet, Tenuta Sanoner grows mainly Sangiovese – the essential grape for authentic Val d'Orcia wines and their premium Aetos range in particular – think Aetos Sangiovese BIO, or Riserva DOC. By the end of my exploration, two wines have won me over: Aetos Orcia Rosé 2024 and Aetos Extra Brut Metodo Classico Biologico 2022. And what do you know, the weight has lifted from my legs. Remembering my promise, I pass on greetings from Mauro and Giulio. Giuseppe's face lights up. "They like beer too, those two!" he grins.

## TOURING BEAUTY SPOTS

After a solid night's sleep and a breakfast spread overlooking the valley's hazy awakening, I pull my cycling kit back on. On today's agenda: the Cypress Tour. At the bike shed, Giulio is already in his element, bouncing between bikes like a pinball, explaining, correcting, cajoling, spreading good cheer. He's a born entertainer. And his energy is contagious. Our group is a mixed bag of about ten today – I catch Italian, English, German. The stats: 30 kilometres, 500 metres of elevation gain. The tour is classified as "moderately challenging". We shall see.

After the first serious climb via Vignoni Alto, we roll into San Quirico d'Orcia. It's an immaculate location, steeped in history and equipped with a public defibrillator. We decide to park our e-MTBs right next to it. "You never know, in this heat," says half-jokingly one of our fellow riders, an Englishman. San Quirico sits on the old pilgrim route from Canterbury to Rome – a primary stop for medieval traders and travellers. And for us too, as it turns out. Taking off my helmet, I find myself looking at the church of Santa Maria Assunta. A fine example of eleventh-century Romanesque architecture, with its sleek, impressive travertine construction. The portal facing the Via Francigena is especially



## THE CYPRESS MOUNTAIN BIKE TOUR

The perfect mountain bike outing for the ambitious and discerning!

**› Time & distance**
The Cypress Tour is almost 30 kilometres long with 500 metres of elevation gain and takes around three hours to complete. Departure is at 8:30 am.

**› Difficulty**
Physically challenging, yet manageable.
Good basic fitness helps.

**› Equipment**
Comfortable, season-appropriate clothing is strongly recommended. Helmets are supplied by ADLER Thermae. You will also need a backpack, packable rain jacket, windproof layer, sunglasses and sunscreen.

**› Provisions**
Plenty of water

**› Highlights**
Cipressi di San Quirico d'Orcia – the iconic cypress grove rising from a gentle hill – is one of the most photographed scenes in Tuscany, and for good reason. Then the medieval town of San Quirico itself, strung along the Via Francigena: its stone-paved alleys, gardens and churches embody the very essence of this ancient landscape.

Up hill, down dale... one of the finest rides ever: the Cypress Tour!

striking. We have a full 45 minutes: time for an espresso and a spot of sightseeing, including a quick look at the Horti Leonini – a Renaissance garden of sculptures and cypress, perfect for a break in the shade.

Giulio herds us back together at some point, and we resume our tour. Two kilometres south, we reach a spot marked Scendi e gusta (dismount and enjoy). We are along the Anello dei Cipressi, San Quirico's famous cypress ring route, with sweeping views over endless fields and hills rolling away to the horizon. Just... wow! Moments like this more than compensate for the climb. I take a few shots borrowing the smartphone from Caro and Christian, a couple from Cologne. They're big on cycling. "We're hardly ever in the same photo on holiday," she admits. "I'd like one from here." She has already booked for next year. I tell them about the Monte Amiata stage, with Mauro and Giulio – expertise and good cheer, the perfect double act.

Back at ADLER Thermae, tyres caked in dust and eyes still filled with beauty, I resolve to take a leaf from Caro's book: I too will be back. The crossing of the Alps can wait. For now, ciao Val d'Orcia!

**Carsten van Ryssen** is a Berlin-based journalist, TV comedian, film director and lecturer. He became a household name in Germany after featuring for ten years on ZDF Heute – one of the most successful news comedy shows in the country. His greatest passion, however, is cycling.

# The healing power of the forest

Text Michael Witt
Photos Alex Filz



A few hours spent among trees are enough to boost physical and mental health. The Japanese have known this for decades – and the Western world is now catching up

Few places engage the senses quite like a forest. The soft give of moss beneath your feet. The scent of pine and fir. The birdsong, the light beaming through the tree canopy. And the greens... a hundred shades of green – from deep and earthy tones to the vibrant brightness of new growth.

Small wonder we long for the forest. Yet for decades, we lost sight of its gifts. Squeezed between concrete and glass, modern urban life has been pulling us away from our roots. It seems, however, that we might just be finding our way back to nature – with newfound awareness.

Even as you make your way to the Renon plateau, you can feel nature quietly working its magic. By the time you reach ADLER Ritten, you're surrounded by trees. You will be staying among and with them. The Lodge is cradled by woodland: larch, spruce, pine, the odd broadleaf breaking the evergreen. Around 25 different species in all. As if they were all brought together to create a place of restoration.

Study upon study shows that spending time among trees comes with a host of health benefits: it reduces stress, lifts mood and even boosts the immune system. In Japan, where this health practice has been officially recognised and promoted since 1982, it's called Shinrin-yoku – forest bathing.

"We want to offer a chance to reconnect," says Hannes Pignater, resort manager at ADLER Ritten. Our hyperconnected rat race leaves little room for stillness. Here, you can take a break from it and focus on what matters. Pignater himself finds spaces of rediscovery, here. "After the rain, you can smell scents you'd forgotten even existed."

In fact, those scents – there are over 2,000 of them – do more than reawaken memories. According to Peter Wohlleben, forester and author of "The Hidden Life of Trees", they actively boost the immune system. And it's not just the scents – the colours of the forest have their effect, too. "Green soothes the body and calms the mind," he says. "Simply looking at leaves has a healing effect." Even the forest floor plays its part: that warm, earthy brown beneath your feet instils a sense of safety and stability.

Wohlleben's claims are backed by science. A walk in the woods works on multiple levels: it balances blood sugar and blood pressure, improving heart function, circulation and metabolism while also relieving stress, raising the natural pain threshold and boosting immune function by stimulating natural killer cells. A walk in the woods also brings mental benefits, giving us more energy, sharper focus and improved cognitive performance and relieving low moods.

The experience at ADLER Ritten has been designed to offer guests an immersion

# Wellness in the wood – why not? The new, expanded spa at ADLER Ritten brings us and nature a step closer

in nature from the very beginning. So, the Wald Spa was designed to blend harmoniously into its surroundings. The tree sauna and hay sauna perch like stilt houses among the pines and spruce trees, surrounding you with Alpine scents of resin, dried herbs and wildflowers. Inside the relaxation room, stone pine wraps you in warmth. One step onto the balcony, and you're back among the trees.

But it goes deeper than that: at ADLER, you get into direct contact with nature. Yoga teacher Alex-Bhaskara Parmeggiani leads walking meditations – including on a barefoot trail through the wood, where the experience is not about speed, but rather about mindfulness. Feeling the ground beneath you promotes circulation and a sense of balance. "Barefoot is the healthiest walking you can do," says Hannes Pignater. "That's an experience we want people to feel again – really feel. The sylvan floor, the give of moss, the press of bark, the occasional sharp greeting of a pine cone…." And yes, he's walked on the cones himself. "Many times. I try everything out first!" he confesses, laughing.

Then there's forest bathing as a "journey into stillness". With therapist Paul Göller, guests embark on a three-hour exploration. The exercises are all about deceleration and reconnecting with the environment. Mindful breathing, for example, as stress makes breaths shallow. There's little talking – it's an experience to savour in silence. Another exercise is to find a "thinking stone" to sit upon for ten minutes, to be alone with one's 60,000 to 80,000 daily thoughts. Or simply examining a patch of forest floor with a scientist's curiosity, as if you'd never seen it before.

And things continue evolving. In early 2026, the Wald Spa has expanded to include two new cabins next to the relaxation room, and a yoga pavilion – a light-filled cube of wood and glass, its walls sliding open to let the forest in. This is where Alex leads his morning and evening classes, now. With space for around 15, it offers guests an even more pleasant setting for their yoga, Pilates and gentle exercise sessions, compared to the relaxation room next to the saunas. That worked well, but this… This is something else.

Of course, the simplest way to interact with the forest is simply to step outside. The greenery is there, waiting. More often than not, you will find yourself on your own, with a chance to fully take in the stillness of Renon's 1,200 metres of altitude. Hannes Pignater goes for walks here whenever he can. "You can feel the atmosphere shift," he says. "Early in the morning, when the deer move through. Or in the evening, with the sunset's warm light. Or on hot days, when you find sanctuary in the cool shadow of the trees. Everyone feels it differently. But everyone feels something."

# The keeper of the night

When the guests turn off their lights, another light goes on: Diego Santovito is the night porter at ADLER Dolomiti – and its guardian spirit

Text Jessica Wagener Photos Arik Oberrauch

The night is his domain. After dark, ADLER Dolomiti rests entirely in his hands – a responsibility that Diego Santovito carries surprisingly lightly. He carries himself with a quiet confidence that stands out as you meet him in the small hours. He's a friendly, attentive, no-fuss type.

Diego has been the night porter here since 2024. He rises at four in the afternoon, and by the time the last guest has turned off the light, he's just clocked in, ready to make sure everything runs smoothly.

**10.30 pm**
**Clocking in**

By half past ten, the buzz at reception has wound down. Don't let the apparent quiet fool you, though – there's plenty to do. Taking over from his day-shift colleagues, Diego tackles notes, news, outstanding requests. Early arrivals, late departures, anything that needs watching. He listens, nods, makes mental notes. Then his colleagues head off, and the night shift truly begins. Now, it's Diego at the wheel.

**11 pm**
**The first round**

Come eleven, he makes his first round: lobby, lounges, staff quarters, storage, laundry – all the backstage places guests never see. He checks doors, windows, lights. Anything amiss. It's routine, but it's never just going through the motions. Diego is a conscientious type. His first job after university was in accounting; later, in security. Both fields demand vigilance and an eye for detail. The same skills Diego brings to fruition in his nightly duties.

Back to reception. There are hardly any guests around at this time of night. A call, maybe – an extra pillow, a blanket. Sometimes a safe that won't open. Rare occurrences that always come with a friendly, personal exchange. "Wishing guests

Diego's rounds take him deep into the hotel's workings, from the lobby to the laundry

good night," Diego says, "gives me a sense of fulfilment. While they sleep, I keep them safe and secure. I like helping people." It's what he does. Occupation: guardian angel.

**1 am**
**Preparing for a new day**

By one, the resort is truly quiet. It's time for Diego to prepare what will be needed in the morning: reports, table cards for the restaurant, newspapers, personalised guest folders, small welcome gifts. Then, a second round. At weekends, he takes care of lost property, too. The most common items left behind by guests? "Socks and underpants", he replies laughing. And of course, he always takes a few minutes for Romina. She's the hotel's unofficial mascot, a cat who materialises on most nights for her dose of attention. She too is part of his routine at ADLER Dolomiti.

Diego's previous job was in Milan – big city life. Moving to the mountains and working nights was a deliberate choice for him. "It took me a couple of months to shed the city pace and change gear into mountain rhythms" he says. "But I love it here. The quiet, the peace. Sure, I have my checklists, but I also have time for myself."

Do nights ever feel long? "Never," he replies, convincingly. For all the tranquillity of his surroundings, he takes his job very seriously. "The whole place is in my care. I have to be ready and expect the unexpected."

**3 am**
**Bumps in the road**

And the unexpected really does happen. Sometimes, Diego has to step in, keeping things smooth with his calm presence. A group of teenagers started a late-night water

His shift starts and ends at the reception desk. "But my office is really the entire resort," says Diego

"It's not easy, adjusting your body clock", says Diego, "but the benefits make it worth it"

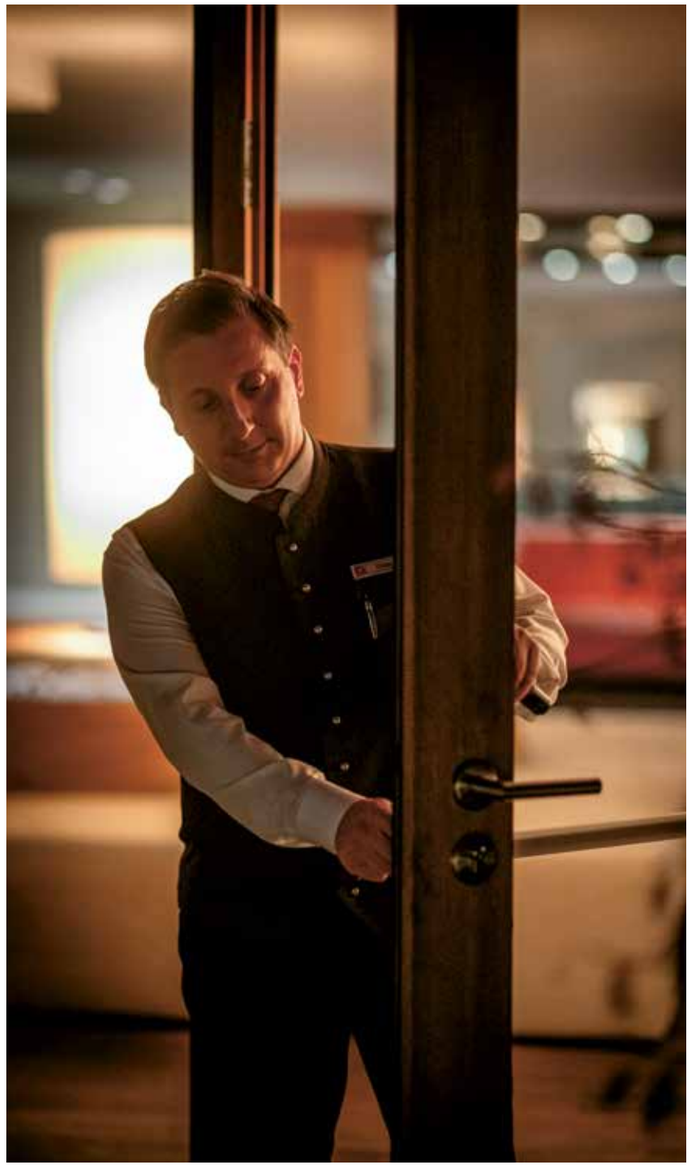
fight on the bar terrace, once. After a brief reprimand, he opted for an educational approach: "I handed them towels and supervised them as they dutifully mopped up. We all shared a good laugh in the end," he recalls. No drama. He has the ability to stay calm and cool even when things get heated. Besides, there are only two ways to go about it – be upset or be Diego.

**4 am**
**Peace and quiet**

Sometime between four and five, Diego takes a break. A cup of tea, some biscuits, a good book – all it takes to unwind. He's learnt to savour moments like these: "What I love most about the night is the silence, the darkness, the slow ticking of time." On clear nights, he steps outside for a short intermezzo of nocturnal nature. The clear starry sky, the snowy Sella peaks bathed in moonlight – all it takes to recentre.

**5 am**
**Morning approaches**

Time to prepare the ground for the morning shift: restocking supplies, opening the kitchen areas, setting the wheels in motion. Sometimes there's an early departure, or a packed breakfast to prepare. At around six, the bread coming in fresh from the baker heralds the break of a new day at ADLER Dolomiti.



Diego's night duties include checking that all doors and windows are closed, locked and in order

**6.45 am**
**Handing over**

First light from behind the peaks. Diego writes his report, logging any events, leaving notes for the front desk, the housekeeping, the kitchen. At seven, the day team trickle in. Voices, footsteps, doors opening and closing. Diego's night is over. He leaves his colleagues, goes outside and watches the daylight take over. No fuss, no ritual. Just the contented feeling of having seen another night to conclusion. And as the world slowly stirs awake, the keeper of the night goes peacefully to bed.



# ADLER FRIENDS

## The loyalty programme that makes every stay even more rewarding

## A loyalty that connects

The ADLER Friends Club was created in 2010 to mark ADLER's 200th anniversary - a gesture of appreciation for guests who return time and again. What began as a simple thank you has grown into something more: a way to deepen your connection with ADLER, where each stay and every shared moment unlocks exclusive privileges.

### Collect moments, earn rewards

Points are earned not only for your stay, but also for the moments that make it truly special: dining and bar experiences, spa treatments, products from the ADLER Shop, coaching sessions and ADLER Med services - all contributing to your points balance.

New members receive exclusive bonus points and enjoy access to selected ADLER Friends privileges - the perfect start to their journey with ADLER.

### Designed around you

In 2026, the programme will be further refined to offer even greater ease and flexibility.

Points can be collected and redeemed conveniently through a family account, while each member enjoys personal access to the entire ADLER experience - from the app to bookings and loyalty benefits - seamlessly connected and individually tailored. Looking ahead, one of the most attractive features: up to 50% of your points can be converted into a voucher, with an exceptional value of **1 point = €1**.

### More than a loyalty programme

ADLER Friends is an invitation to be part of a community and to make every stay even more meaningful. Available across all ADLER Spa Resorts & Retreats and at AKI Family Resort Plose. Because the most meaningful connections are built through shared moments - and at ADLER, they are truly valued.

Text Michael Witt
Photos Alex Filz, Arik Oberrauch

# Buckwheat ravioli with mushroom filling, spinach and Golden Gel® cheese

When it comes to gourmet creations, the mind often goes to landscapes of opulence. Which makes it all the more surprising when delight is found in simplicity. Head chef Martin Noflatscher and his brigade are on a mission: bringing the essential to the forefront. Using just a few select ingredients – locally sourced and certified organic – they serve flavours at their most authentic. Salt, sugar, butter and cream give way to herbs, citrus notes and natural seasoning; pulses provide a vegan source of protein. Alcohol is used sparingly – a few drops to enhance classic sauces. The result is a cuisine that strikes the perfect balance of health and indulgence. Buckwheat ravioli with mushroom filling, spinach and Golden Gel® cheese is an ADLER Balance signature dish that masterfully embodies this culinary approach. Here is the recipe to recreate it at home.

## INGREDIENTS

**For the buckwheat dough:**
250 g wheat flour, 120 g buckwheat flour, 3 eggs

**For the mushroom filling:**
300 g mixed mushrooms (e.g. chanterelles, button mushrooms, porcini), half an onion, 70 g mascarpone, Parmesan, fresh herbs (marjoram, thyme, finely chopped parsley), salt, pepper, olive oil, 100 g fresh spinach, Golden Gel® cheese (broken into pieces)

## METHOD

**Preparing the dough:** Mix the wheat and buckwheat flour in a bowl, add the eggs, and knead everything into an elastic dough. Wrap in cling film and leave to rest in the fridge for 30 minutes.

**Preparing the filling:** clean the mushrooms and blanch briefly in salted water (approx. 1 min). Drain, pat dry and fry in olive oil until lightly browned. Chop finely. Dice the onion and fry in olive oil until translucent. In a bowl, mix together the mushrooms, onion, mascarpone, grated Parmesan and chopped herbs. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

**Shaping the ravioli:** roll out the dough thinly on a floured surface. Using a piping bag or spoon, place small mounds of mushroom filling onto half of the dough (spaced approx. 4–5 cm apart) and fold the other half of the dough on top. Press down lightly between the fillings and cut out the ravioli. Seal the edges well.

**Preparing the spinach:** wash the spinach and blanch briefly in salted water until tender. Rinse under cold water and squeeze out any excess liquid. Blend with olive oil into a smooth purée.

**Cooking and serving:** boil the ravioli in salted water for 3–4 minutes until they rise to the surface. Remove and drain. Arrange on plates, decorate with the spinach purée and pieces of Golden Gel® cheese. Garnish with Parmesan or fresh herbs and serve immediately.

**Martin Noflatscher has been head chef at ADLER Balance since 2018. Originally from the nearby village of Laion, he joined the resort's kitchen in Ortisei after working on Lake Garda, in Salzburg and under three-Michelin-starred chef Norbert Niederkofler. He and his brigade focus on preserving the ingredients' original, unadulterated flavours while also giving free rein to creativity.**

# Crystal-clear luxury

ADLER
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## ADLER's new strategies to protect and preserve our most precious resource

Text Jessica Wagener
Photo Arik Oberrauch

How much water for well-being? Water is a constant companion – it's in that morning shower, in the fresh tickling of the meadow's grass, in the restoring steam of the spa. For ADLER guests, water is simply an integral part of the experience, and possibly the most precious one. And precisely because it's so ubiquitous, water is one of the most intensively used resources in hospitality. Pools, saunas, laundries, kitchens, gardens – water consumption quickly rises to jaw-dropping levels compared to domestic use. For us at ADLER, this represents both a challenge and a responsibility.

### Using instead of consuming

In common speech, we tend to talk about "water consumption". Water, however, isn't consumed – it's used. It doesn't disappear like gas does. It evaporates, gets cleaned, seeps back into the earth and re-enters the cycle. It's what environmental scientists call the hydrological cycle – a system that depends on the balance between use and renewal. Therefore, the crux of the matter lies not in how much water we use, but rather how consciously and efficiently we do it. This attention to cycles informs every operation at all ADLER establishments, from indoor technologies to outdoor facilities. Some of our resorts, including ADLER Thermae and ADLER Sicilia, are equipped with systems that treat and recycle greywater from showers and sinks to irrigate meadows, trees and plants. This way, precious drinking water is saved for actually drinking.

### Technology for water quality

Every drop is accounted for: ADLER's technicians monitor water use in real time – spas, laundries, gardens – analysing data to promptly spot and address any inefficiencies. In the pools, water is cleaned and recirculated continuously through modern filtration systems. In many areas, water is slightly saline, disinfected by means of electrolytic conversion instead of conventional chlorine. With fewer chemicals, it's kinder on the environment and on the skin, and feels as good as it looks.

When it comes to preserving water, no less important is what doesn't go down the drain.

Since 2024, only certified ecological cleaning products are used across all ADLER resorts, all the way from housekeeping to laundry to grounds maintenance. Products are chosen based on rigorous testing for efficacy, skin-friendliness and environmental footprint. This way, no persistent residues end up in the soil or water. Microorganisms thrive, safeguarding water quality and soil fertility.

## Rethinking water

Sometimes the biggest gains come not from grand investment but from applying new perspectives to old routines. Close observation and practical thinking can lead to effective solutions to everyday problems. "We don't want to waste water that's still clean," explains Salvatore, a building technician at ADLER Sicilia. He and his team came up with a way to capture condensation from the air conditioning and reroute it to garden sprinklers. A simple idea that saves water every day. Rain, too, is harvested – at ADLER Alpe it's used for washing bikes, at ADLER Dolomiti for watering meadows. So, the cycle closes, on a small scale as well as on a larger one.

## Spring water, bottled on site

Every ADLER guest has unlimited access to free drinking water – still or sparkling, always of the highest quality, and never from a disposable bottle. Since 2024, water – be it from the spring or the tap – has been tested and filled in reusable glass bottles directly on site. No more trucks, no more long-haul emissions. The results speak for themselves: in a single year, glass and transport volumes fell by more than 90 percent.

ADLER's thinking extends beyond preserving drinking water. Since 2025, ADLER Sicilia has been drawing on its own well. Reaching 90 metres down, it is used for irrigation only, leaving public reserves untouched. Quality and yield are being assessed to see if it can cover the whole resort's needs. It's a long-term project, but one that leads towards self-sufficiency as well as saving water.

## Nature as a partner

How we treat water shapes the resilience of our ecosystem. ADLER outdoor facilities are carefully designed to hold and store water, not drain it quickly or waste it unnecessarily. Native plants, rich soils and minimal intervention contribute to reducing the need for watering, preserving groundwater over time. Rather than manicured into submission, the gardens are allowed to thrive from balance and natural interaction. A garden left to self-regulate is more resilient and needs less help. No less important, it also becomes a home for insects, birds and other wildlife, strengthening biodiversity. It's designed around ecological stability from the very start, with long-term impact in mind.

Water is movement, change, life itself. And it reflects the level of awareness with which we approach the world around us every day. For ADLER, water preservation isn't a standalone initiative. It's the expression of a core principle: using resources in a way that preserves natural systems and respects their limits. It's not about going without. It's about striking the right balance, hitting the golden spot where technology, processes and human choice converge, thoughtfully shaping the daily experience of guests, staff and everyone involved.



ADLER
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# The numbers, one year on

Comparing 2023 to 2024/25 shows how effective our measures have been

### Water saved

The volume of bottled water transported fell by nearly 200,000 litres – from 218,147 to 20,183 litres. A saving of almost 90%, enough to fill 1,300 baths.

−197,964 =
1,300 bathtubs

### Bottles saved

Across all resorts, single-use bottles dropped from 315,517 to 30,937 – that's 285,000 fewer bottles a year. Guests now drink spring water from refillable glass bottles, filled on site and provided for free.

−284,580 =
90% fewer glass, bottles & transports

### Transport saved

Eliminating external supply of water bottles cuts glass and transport by over 90%. Carbon emissions dropped by 41 to 43 tonnes a year, with approximately 293,000 kilometres saved – the equivalent of going over seven times around the globe.

−145.7 41–43 tonnes $Co_2$ = 293,000 kilometres driven

Success secrets, visions and anecdotes –
in the words of a Sanoner

# 7 QUESTIONS TO KARIN SANONER

**1 How did you go from the front desk to designing hotels?**
After graduating from secondary school, I trained as a technical designer in an architecture firm. Then I got married, and came to ADLER – back then, it was still just Hotel ADLER. I worked mainly at reception at first, but as the company expanded from the early 2000s, my role evolved and I was able to put my earlier training to use. These days, alongside administrative tasks, I'm mainly involved in the architectural design of new projects and renovations, as well as in the interior design of our resorts.

**2 What are the biggest changes the ADLER group has seen in recent years?**
As the company grew, our leadership structure had to adapt – a lot. In the early days, we were directly involved in every aspect. Now we can count on a wonderful team of motivated people who support us with day-to-day operations and management. That kind of constant shift in roles and structures has been challenging and has forced us to adapt. But it's also been enriching. It never gets boring.

**3 Is there any specific project that challenged you the most?**
ADLER Thermae was by far the biggest challenge. It was our first new opening as well as our first project outside Val Gardena, so we were breaking new ground at every stage, from planning permission to the construction. We had to let go of the tried and tested.

Karin Sanoner, married to Klaus Sanoner, represents the sixth generation managing the ADLER hotels

I learned that you simply can't be everywhere, and you have to trust others and delegate. It was an important but demanding learning process that pushed me to my limits, more than once.

**4 Do you have a favourite spot at any of the properties?**
At any ADLER, anywhere with a view – whether it's the South Tyrolean Dolomites, the Tuscan hillscape or the Sicilian coastline. Those landscapes are part of our identity. There is one spot that has a special place in my heart, though: during construction works at ADLER Thermae, there was a small, unassuming room that I'd retreat to when things got stressful. It was like a reset button. It's still there, practically unchanged.

**5 What's the secret to ADLER's atmosphere?**
Design helps, as do quality materials, of course. What makes all the difference, however, are our guests and staff. The atmosphere comes from people – guests who love our locations and the surrounding nature, and staff who care that everyone feels at home from the very first moment. That's how ADLER came to feel like a big family. That's where that leggerezza – that special lightness – comes from, that permeates every corner and creates a sense of ease and belonging.

**6 What makes design timeless?**
Good design goes beyond trends – it's built on clean lines and function. Unlike short-lived trends, these two principles last and continue to inspire over time. Colours and details may change, but if the underlying concept is sound, it can stay current for decades. In designing our hotels, we aim for something timeless and flexible enough to look and feel fresh with just minor tweaks.

**7 What's your approach to renovations?**
We plan long-term, with an eye not just for aesthetics but for the technical lifespan of things, too. Quality comes first, as good materials last longer. The budget isn't as much a constraint as it is a framework, guiding us to smart solutions that balance creativity and responsibility. That's how we strive to create spaces that are aesthetically, environmentally and economically sound.



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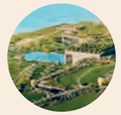

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