



LAST RESORT

By Judy Alexandra DiEdwardo

INDULGE IN ONE OF TUSCANY'S PREMIERE PAMPERING ADVENTURES AT THE FAMILY OWNED ADLER THERMAE SPA HOTEL

Tucked in the heart of Tuscany's undulating countryside and centuries-old olive groves and vineyards, where native volcanic thermal springs once soothed the souls of 16th century Romans, is one of the world's top destinations for health-conscious travelers looking for a truly authentic spa experience.

In other words, it's one of the dreamiest places on the planet to relax, reboot and rejuvenate in ways you never dreamed possible.

The 90-room luxury hotel and thermal spring spa retreat was

built in 1999 by the veteran Sanoner family of hoteliers, marrying state-of-the-art wellness and pampering in a sophisticated blend of old and new — from its enchanting home in the Orcia Valley's ancient village of Bagno Vignoni, to the host of high-tech technology rooted throughout its modern design.

Designed in harmony with the pastoral landscape, the terra cotta exterior of the Adler campus emulates a true Tuscan villa with its expansive layout and lush surroundings. Each of the hotel's upper level rooms and suites offer exquisite views of the countryside while its maze of ground level outdoor pools, underground thermal grottos and fitness, yoga and spa facilities blend seamlessly with the resort's overall design. Guest rooms are designed with the senses in mind: mini spa sanctuaries splashed with Tuscan gold and tangerine hues, sumptuous duvets and plush linens, and an oversized soaking tub with unobstructed views onto

the private courtyard patio garden.

The central upper deck restaurant is a pinnacle of design and function, complete with the ambiance of an outdoor piazza. Only this piazza has a state-of-the-art cantilevered glass roof that can be opened according to the weather. The effect is enchanting, while its versatility in creating mood and atmosphere is utterly brilliant. Bathed in luscious sunlight from above, the air filled with sounds of birds singing in the gardens, patrons are served a sumptuous breakfast while relaxing in snowy white bathrobes or exercise apparel in preparation for the day ahead. (Lest you think spa cuisine means diet, the menu changes daily and always offers gourmet versions of low calorie and vegetarian options for every meal.)

By evening, the dining room is transformed into a romantic, candlelit ristorante where guests dine beneath the stars, choosing from a host of decadent Mediterranean cuisine and regional wines and desserts that will send even the most disciplined gourmand back for seconds.

TUSCAN RETREAT **A Spa Like No Other**

The spa is all about options, which is why the standard four-day stay is hardly enough time to experience everything. Little wonder why an impressive percentage of Adler's clientele are repeat guests.

Wander into the Etruscan steam room with its fabulously designed travertine cave, or the Finnish sauna and Herbal steam room, or the water bed salon and meditation area overlooking the lake. Getting lost is not always a bad thing. And that's just the lower level.

The full menu of spa treatments will not disappoint nor will Adler's custom-created product line that is manufactured using locally sourced ingredients: The Tuscan body exfoliation with crushed olive pits; a nourishing

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bath or revitalizing massage with Tuscan extra virgin olive oil or olive cream; and soothing, antioxidant-rich San Giovese red grape body wraps and facial treatments.

Among the spa's newest signature treatments is the 100-minute "Bacchus Ritual" anti-aging wine bath using the antioxidant powers of grapes and grape seeds. The treatment begins with an invigorating grape seed body scrub, followed by a hydro jet bath with warm water and a small amount of *Vino Nobile* wine from Montepulciano, followed by a soothing grape seed oil body massage. For couples, the "Brunello Ritual" grape seed bath and massage treatment is also ideal.

The spa also offers a wide range of wellness programs and services with nearly 30 different Ayurvedic and Oriental treatments to choose from. Services range from standard massages and facials to more specialized treatments for improved circulation, anti-stress, purification and well being—including a full complement of anti aging and moisturizing treatments and cosmetics using all-natural products and ingredients that round out the Adler spa product line.

The Adler wellness program also offers traditional medical diagnostic services to unearth and address ailments that can be treated with mind/body therapies and dietary counseling, including herbal cures, baths and packs, massages and physiotherapy — all supervised by the staff medical doctor.

In addition to specialized treatments, Adler's crown jewel is its healing waters and thermal baths. For pre- or post-spa treatment relaxation, guests enjoy an intelligently designed maze of swim in/out outdoor thermal pools that are heated to a soothing 95 degrees and feature an inventive collection of strategically positioned waterfalls, whirlpools, and full body Hydro-Massage beds that outclass even the most potent jacuzzi. Imagine watching the clouds dance across the Tuscan sky overhead while floating in a "hydro docking station" where an arsenal of powerful jets pummel your body head to toe. It's the ultimate spa fantasy!

The Adler program gives equal time to physical exercise and supervised workouts with a host of indoor and outdoor fitness options. Featuring a large panoramic window overlooking the Tuscan hills, the main fitness center offers a complete assortment of programs and equipment, from Pilates and yoga. It is also the starting point for outdoor mountain biking, walking tours, and cardio training programs and itineraries.

GETTING THERE Travel to the Adler Thermae Spa & Hotel from Rome is easy from Rome's Fiumicino Airport (Leonardo di Vinci) with regular train service to the city's central station. From there, connect for the scenic three-hour train to the Chiusi-Chianciano Terme where hotel car service is available for the short 23-mile drive scenic drive to the village of Bagno Vignoni.

Transiting through Rome offers the advantage of a post-spa side trip. What better way to experience the Eternal City's highlights after a soothing spa retreat? For guests with limited time for exploration, American-born Rob Allyn created a host of itineraries especially for the time-crunched traveler looking for the maximum experience. He should know. Fascinated by the city's layers of history while living in Rome, but weary of the traditional tour experience offered to visitors, Allyn teamed up with local musician and painter, Rosario Gorgone, to create a tour guide company led by experts who possess more than exceptional knowledge of the city's history, art and archeology. He wanted guides with great passion and story telling capabilities that bring the world of ancient Rome to life in a fresh, exciting way. His vision realized, Through Eternity Tours offers some of the most inventive itineraries led by a league of talented and energetic historians and archeologists whose passion for all things Roman is truly dynamic. In addition to tours of the city's top sights, that include in-depth, behind-the-scenes tours of places like the Coliseum, Vatican City and other popular landmarks, itineraries include: "Underground Rome," exploring centuries of history that are buried in the city's subterranean layers; and the popular "Angels and Demons" inspired tour, which takes inspiration from the Dan Brown book as well as themes from *The Da Vinci Code*. Whether you choose a private or group tour, Allyn and company do not disappoint. www.througheternity.com

WHERE TO STAY For convenient accommodations, the Bettoja Hotel group of hotels are located one block from the Roma Termini train station that links directly to the airport. Italy's largest private hotel group dating back to 1875, its flagship Hotel Mediterraneo is an easy five minute walk from the station and major points of interest. Privately owned for five generations, some of the hotel staff are second and third generation, which is a testament to the Bettoja family values and their devotion to and reputation for service. In-house dining options include the Ristorante Massimo D'Azeglio and Mediterraneo's Restaurant "21." Two fitness centers are also available to hotel guests. Rates from \$230; www.bettojahotels.it



Walk the unpaved road lined with tall cypress trees to the church where you may hear Gregorian chanting by the resident monks who pray there. The monastery sits in a large valley with views of rolling hills covered with olive groves, vineyards and wild forests. Monks live in buildings nearby and chant prayers at scheduled times during the day. Be sure to also visit Montepulciano, the highest of southern Tuscany's hill towns near the Umbrian border with its medieval alleyways and Renaissance palaces and churches. Inside the walls the streets are crammed with Renaissance-style piazzas and churches. A long, winding street (not for the faint of heart!) climbs up into the main square, which crowns the summit of the hill.

All-inclusive, four-day packages including accommodations, meals and fitness/spa facilities from \$930 per-person; www.adler-thermae.com 

A companion Kid's Club, for children ages four and over, offers a full exercise and activity program as well that include sports, art, indoor and outdoor games.

FAR AND AWAY **Exploring Tuscan Treasures**

After soaking up the thermal waters and indulging in total spa beauty and pampering, don't forget the world outside.

A short walk into the town of Bagno Vignoni should not be missed. Follow the cobblestone pathway from the rear of the resort, which leads to the heart of this ancient village and original spa that dates back to the 16th century. The town's landmark rectangular tank in the center of the plaza contains the original source of water that comes from the underground volcanic aquifer. For centuries, the Etruscans, Romans and Italian nobility traveled to this region to enjoy these restorative waters and breathtaking countryside.

Enjoy hiking across the surrounding slopes or biking to neighboring villages to savor local wines, cheeses and olive oil. Daily, complimentary excursions by motor coach to nearby villages are also available to explore the Tuscan hills and visit neighboring villages with their quaint local shops, restaurants and fresh regional cuisine.

Must-see area landmarks include the beautiful medieval village of Montalcino with spectacular views of the entire Val d'Orcia. And the Abbey of Sant'Antimo, a beautiful 12th century Romanesque church just south of Montalcino.

