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TRAVEL



Understated, elegant, chic – three words that sum up St Moritz and this mountain retreat.

Driving down a winding, snow-dusted road, guests arrive at a small enclave of Alpine chalets that looks like something out of a Swiss fairytale. We're on the outskirts of St Moritz, in Champfèr, where among the chocolate-box chalets lies a five-star mountain resort: Hotel Giardino Mountain. Made up of seven Engadine houses, the hotel blends seamlessly with its neighbours, and unless you know where you're going, it would be easy to miss it. If you're searching for a St Moritz hideaway, this is it.

Once an 18th-century retreat, today the hotel is a stylish sanctuary for those in the know. Inside, different centuries come together amid the historic walls and contemporary interior. Think untreated wood, exposed beams, colourful fabrics and charming touches – room numbers are marked by numbered cow bells – steeped in tradition but with the elegance, luxury and service one expects from a five-star hotel.

The views are sensational (we are in Switzerland, after all) and snow-capped mountains can be seen from every room. With 55 rooms, 22 suites and the unique addition of its own private ice rink, the property feels like an exclusive club, and offers something very different from the usual St Moritz stay.

Like its serene surroundings, the hotel boasts a fabulous spa with a Finnish sauna, sanarium, steam room, indoor pool, Jacuzzi and a treatment menu that offers everything from

massages to yoga to meditation sessions. Are your tresses looking a little worse for wear après-ski? Not a problem, because you can even get your hair done here, as there's an Aveda salon right by the spa. If facials and hot stone massages aren't your thing, you can easily while away the hours sipping coffee on the terrace, soaking up the winter sun and scenic mountains.

Food here is taken very seriously and you'll struggle to find better anywhere else. With a bar and three restaurants, there's something to appeal to even the pickiest of eaters. The standout of the trio? Ecco, which is known as one of the best restaurants in St Moritz. People navigate the winding roads up to this quiet mountain valley just to get a taste. Housed in what used to be a chapel, the two-Michelin-starred restaurant is a mecca for connoisseurs of fine taste. Dishes are playful and surprising – think poached oysters, shards of beetroot-flavoured meringue and coconut ice-cream topped with caviar.

If you fancy doing some shopping or filling up on Hanselmann baked goods, St Moritz town centre is less than a five-minute drive from the hotel. Those more concerned with skiing will be happy to know that all the best slopes are only a few minutes' drive away too, and the hotel runs a free ski shuttle that goes directly to the ski lift Chasellas or the Corvatsch cable car.

Whether you're coming to St Moritz to hit the slopes or for an Alpine weekend reset, Giardino Mountain is made for those seeking peace and quiet. It's for the laid-back and seasoned travellers who are looking for a home away from home.

PEAK CHIC

A stay at Hotel Giardino Mountain,
St Moritz's best-kept secret

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