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HIGH STYLE

The Italian region of South Tyrol is renowned for many things, including world-class wines, eco-friendly architecture and an endless lattice of flower-flanked hiking trails. And now, as Farhad Heydari reports, it also boasts a private lodge unlike any other.

Endowed with saw-toothed peaks and valleys striated in vines, the northernmost Italian province of South Tyrol has always been a fêted year-round playground, especially among Europe's clued-up and well-off outdoorsy set. But this uniquely bilingual region of the Dolomites, which even inveigled the French architect Le Corbusier, who rhapsodized about its collective magnificence, is now adding haute hostelryes to its lofty natural draws.



Witness San Lorenzo Mountain Lodge: a 16th-century maso (or South Tyrolean farmhouse) perched 1200 metres at the edge of a couloir in the Val Pusteria, above the town of Brunico. The brainchild of Giorgia and Stefano Barbini, the lodge, which sleeps six in three en-suite bedrooms and another four in a rusticated dwelling with a pair of bunks, marries centuries-old charm with mod cons, including an under floor heating system hidden by the larch and stone.

In addition to a troika of lounges and libraries, guests can retire for a post-hike soak in a state-of-the-art outdoor hydrotherapy pool with jet lane or make for the petite spa, complete with an indoor whirlpool, a steam room and a sauna fashioned from ancient spruce. But the hallmark of the property, which also features a wine cellar and a traditional stube, are its artisanal accessories, like the rabbit and cashmere throws, the loden pillow coverings and the one-off blankets, which are handmade from wolf and coyote skin.

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