

A GLOBETROTTER'S
GUIDE TO THE
LATEST IN TRAVEL

EDITED BY
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DISCOVERIES



FROM LEFT

*Dinner at Borgo Tre
Lake Garda, a hotel
on Italy's largest lake;
looking out at the
town of Borgo Tre.*





GEORG ROSKE/COURTESY OF BORGO TRE

THE LAKE EFFECT

As Como contends with more visitors, another Italian destination enters the spotlight.

By Erin Vivid Riley

WHAT GIVES LAKE COMO its drama is also what makes it vulnerable to crowds: a narrow road encircles the lake, which is hugged tightly by grand villas, pretty villages, and mountains that top out at 8,000 feet. In summer, its popularity frequently results in gridlock. The destination is now considering a day-tripper's fee, similar to one instituted in Venice.

Lately, in-the-know travelers have discovered that Lake Garda—Italy's largest lake, 100 miles to the east—has the same old-world charm and soothing views, but with far fewer people clamoring for the same Instagram shots. And, in recent years, new retreats and restaurants have opened, with a focus on wellness and hyperlocal cuisine.

Boutique hotel **Borgo Tre Lake Garda** (*doubles from \$995*) opened last June in a 200-year-old farmhouse. A stay in one of its six rooms feels like having a villa to yourself: each two-floor suite has a living area, an outdoor stone bathtub, and a kitchen where meals can be prepared with provisions from the hotel's shop.

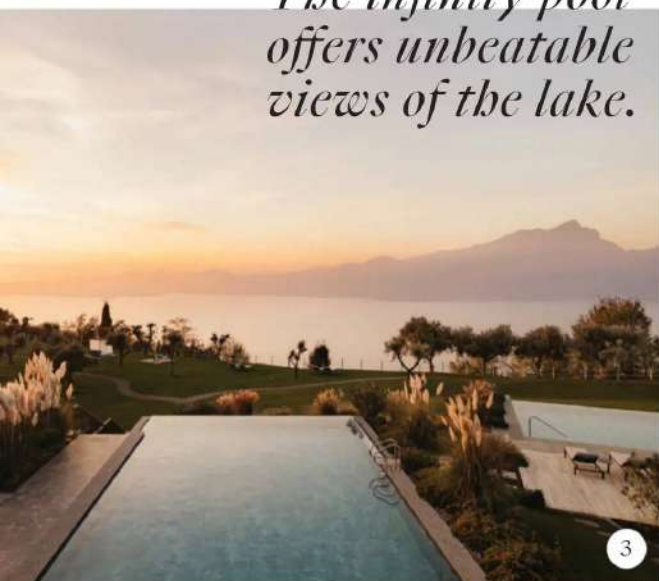
In nearby Torri del Benaco, a village on the lake's eastern shore, a family from South Tyrol has established the 55-suite **Cape of Senses** (*doubles from \$785*), a wellness retreat built into a hillside. The infinity pool offers an unbeatable view of the lake, and guests can take yoga classes or ride an e-bike or Vespa along the coast, stopping for a picnic lunch.

Another retreat, **Monastero Arx Vivendi** (*doubles from \$314*), is set in a former 17th-century monastery in the town of Arco. It has 40 rooms and suites (the largest of which has a private garden and sauna) and a cloistered design.



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The infinity pool offers unbeatable views of the lake.



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1.

Borgo Tre Lake Garda was converted from an 18th-century farmhouse.

2.

The vaulted ceiling of Monastero Arx Vivendi, a hotel in a former monastery in the town of Arco.

3.

The pool at Cape of Senses, a resort in the town of Torri del Benaco.

4.

A caprese salad at Monastero Arx Vivendi.



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2

The stone columns, arches, and vaulted ceilings are original; a new glass-and-steel wing houses a spa, which includes a sauna, steam room, and hammam.

Just up the street is the supper-club-style **Locanda 53** (tasting menus from \$98). Chef Evelyn Dalglish, formerly of Michelin-starred Borgo San Jacopo, in Florence, turns out her own versions of regional classics, like tortellini with herb-cured beef and licorice sauce. On the northern shore of the lake, **La Còrt Cucina & Vino** (entrées \$22–\$26) might have the area's most upscale trattoria experience. Staples like braised beef cheeks are done well, but it's the wine options that stand out, with more than 150 bottles on the menu. Around the corner, in the Lido Palace hotel, is **Zefiro** (tasting menus from \$92), a restaurant that's big on homestyle dishes including the region's signature creamed cod with polenta.

On the western shore of the lake is Valtènesi, a wine region that yields two unique grapes, Groppello and Marzemino. The best place to sample these varieties is **Conti Thun Wine Resort** (doubles from \$220), which recently added 24 farmhouse-style rooms. It also has an osteria that uses produce from the resort's farm and other local purveyors in dishes like squash blossom stuffed with trout and ricotta. A short drive up the road is the classic **Grand Hotel Fasano** (doubles from \$238), which was built in 1888 as a hunting lodge for the Austrian royal family. This spring, it reopened after a renovation with four new suites, a refreshed spa, and updated menus for the Michelin-starred restaurant, Il Fagiano.

In addition to the food and wine, Lake Garda also draws active travelers for its scenic hiking and cycling trails. On the lake's northern end, paths lead toward the Alps, while the south feels more like the Mediterranean, with rolling hills covered in olive groves and cypress trees.