

alpine spring



The Nth Degree heads to the Alps for a taste of Lighter Living at The Alpina Gstaad for the launch of their new spa and wellbeing programmes. *Words Jessica Gibson*

Intrinsically associated with the winter ski season, The Alps are often overlooked as a springtime travel destination. But there is one hotel within The Alps that are reinventing the wheel by offering guests year-round reasons to get active in the Alps without stepping foot into a ski boot. The hotel in question is the Alpina Gstaad, which last spring launched its new spa and wellbeing programmes. The resort has created packages including spa treatments, yoga, meditation and a clean-eating menu. Combined with the endless outdoor activities on offer during the Alpine spring such as walking, the Alpina Gstaad is now the perfect place for a spring time detox as well as a ski season getaway.

First Impressions

A drive down an unassuming tunnel brings you to an underground main entrance of the hotel, with a sweeping ramp for pick up and drop offs and a beautiful central fountain. The private entrance has a very exclusive feel and it becomes no surprise that the hotel frequently welcomes high profile clientele such as Madonna.

Inside, the interior design perfectly combines stylish luxury with alpine coziness. With beautiful wooden beams, furnishings of the highest quality and indulgent little extras, the Alpina Gstaad is the epitome of alpine chic. Despite visiting in summer, I could just imagine how The Alpina Gstaad would provide the perfect luxury retreat after a bracing day of skiing on the slopes.

A Cozy Haven

The junior suites at the Alpina boasted both quality and quantity. With a large lounge area, original wooding beams, a sumptuous bed, quirky artwork and Acqua di Parma toiletries, it truly was luxurious home-from-home. An expansive balcony stretches along the entire width of the suite which is entirely private and out of sight to all other guests. Overlooking green fields and mountainous landscapes, the only sound you can hear is the atmospheric rattle of the Alpine cowbells.

A central electronic control panel controls everything in the entire room, from lighting the fireplace to closing the black out blinds. Like many others, I always think the bed is a true hallmark of a hotel and a great way to measure the level of luxury. My king size bed was dressed in incredible Egyptian cotton sheets decorated with the Alpina Gstaad logo, an example of immaculate attention to detail that runs throughout the whole hotel.

MEGU and The Michelin Star

The three main restaurants at The Alpina Gstaad are Michelin Starred restaurant Sommet, trendy Japanese eatery MEGU and traditional Swiss alpine restaurant Swiss Stubli. Swiss Stubli is only open during the winter seasons, but I was lucky enough to experience the other two. The six-course tasting menu at Sommet featured fresh local produce and creative food pairing combinations such as pigeon breast with blueberry risotto. The risotto was weird and wonderful but tasted utterly divine.

My favourite, however, was MEGU. Our 5-course tasting feast included Carpaccio of Yellowtail with Kanzuri Sauce, Carpaccio of red tuna with spicy miso, crispy Kanzuri shrimps, a sushi selection and Kagero Wagyu beef. The sushi was delicious but my personal favourites were the curried shrimp tempura and the beautifully presented Wagyu Beef sizzling on a hot plate.

Alpina Life Cuisine

As part of its springtime incentive, the hotel offers an additional Alpina Life menu made up of deliciously fresh,



organic and healthy dishes. I ordered from this menu for both lunches at the hotel and enjoyed the organic salmon with fresh greens and a king prawn and quinoa salad with mandarin slices. Both dishes proved that healthy eating can be absolutely delicious as well as leave you feeling satisfied and pleasantly full. Having the Alpina Life menu on offer makes it easy for guests to make healthy choices if visiting for a detox or a health kick.

Breakfast is another food offering that cannot be overlooked at the Alpina Gstaad. The choice of healthy foods including seeds, nuts, muesli and yoghurts on the buffet was a refreshing change to most over-indulgent breakfast buffets. Fresh omelettes cooked to order were served in the blink of an eye and of course there was the option to go for the full cooked breakfast.

Six Senses Spa

Another huge attribute of The Alpina Gstaad is that it is home to its very own Six Senses Spa. I was treated to 2 treatments during my stay, The Divine Facial and the Signature Six Senses Massage. The signature massage was a full body experience like no other, incorporating blissful stretches and pressure points within the massage. The facial was the most sensual treatment I'd ever had, with my holistic therapist going much more than just skin-deep. You could tell the therapists loved what they did, which made the experiences all the more enjoyable. I was totally blown away by the facilities too, which include an indoor pool up-lit with soothing colours, two jacuzzis, a state-of-the-art gym, juice bar, salt room, steam room, relaxation water bed rooms, hot and cold plunge pools and more.

The Verdict

My stay at The Alpina Gstaad was absolutely flawless from start to finish. My treatments combined with the fresh mountain air, yoga, workout and deep sleeps meant I left feeling totally relaxed and rejuvenated. The service, hospitality, facilities, food and rooms bring you the ultimate in Alpine luxury and I would recommend The Alpina Gstaad to anyone looking for a unique luxury mountain retreat that is equally as beautiful in summer as it is in winter. I could have stayed for days.

EasyJet flies to Geneva from 14 UK airports with prices starting from £19.74 per person (one-way, including taxes and based on two people on the same booking).

www.easyjet.com

Rates at The Alpina Gstaad start from £395 per room per night based on two people sharing a Deluxe Room Schönreid. Prices include breakfast, access to Six Senses Spa facilities, parking, services charges, taxes and VAT.

www.thealpinagstaad.ch