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# TRAVEL + LEISURE

WORLD'S

BEST

AWARDS  
2023







▲ The Turkish Bath spa suite at Palazzo Fiuggi faces the property's namesake town.

## LA DOLCE VITA

What do you get when a palatial Italian hotel partners with a beloved California wellness retreat?

**Rachael McKeon** checks in and discovers the healthy side of a country known more for pasta than Pilates.

DESPITE A REPUTATION for decadence, Italy has a centuries-old wellness culture, thanks to the hiking traditions of the Dolomites and the profusion of hot springs in Tuscany. Cleanses, intermittent fasting, and kale? Not so much. But new offerings from some of the country's best hotels have encouraged even diehard pasta-and-red-wine fanatics to get with the program.

The poster child for this shift is Palazzo Fiuggi, an hour south of Rome. The property's namesake town is locally renowned for its thermal baths and mineral-rich drinking water; since the Middle Ages, it has been a magnet for health seekers—including, according to legend, Michelangelo. The palazzo itself is a more recent development, originally built in 1910. It opened in its current iteration in 2021 after a renovation added all the trappings of a wellness wonderland: the 64,500-square-foot spa has both thalassotherapy and Turkish baths, as well as whirlpools, saunas, three swimming pools (both indoor and outdoor), and yoga and Pilates studios.

Palazzo Fiuggi has an array of spa programs, but what caught my eye was a seven-day intensive in partnership with the Ranch, the famed Malibu, California, health center known for its hard-core approach. Though most guests arrive for some Tuscan R&R, my week included four-hour hikes—not to mention calorie restrictions—that pushed me to my physical limits, in a good way. And the work was tempered by spectacular views of the Apennine Mountains, as well as delightful curiosities like crossing an ancient Roman bridge and running into a truffle hunter on the job.

While meals were light, they nevertheless included Ranch-ified versions of Italian classics, including vegan parmigiana and *brodo* (bone broth). We had regular restorative massages and yoga classes, as well as consultations with the on-site medical team to monitor progress. For any decadence, we had to rely on the guest rooms—think restored frescoed ceilings, Murano glass chandeliers, and marble bathrooms.

But my favorite way to unwind was to lounge in a fluffy robe by the spa's Roman-style thermal baths, swigging cups of Fiuggi's famous salty-sweet mineral water. It was a reminder that even during a rigorously active schedule, the pleasures of Italy were never far away. [palazzofiuggi.com](http://palazzofiuggi.com); seven-night Ranch programs from \$9,300 per person, all-inclusive.

### + 3 MORE ITALIAN WELLNESS ESCAPES

The legendary Positano hotel **Le Sirenuse** ([sirenuse.it](http://sirenuse.it); doubles from \$2,880) has autumn and spring "Dolce Vitality" stays that include cliffside treks, meditation sessions, and healthy meal plans. The minimalist 60-room **Forestis Dolomites** ([forestis.it](http://forestis.it); doubles from \$538) has treatments inspired by the surrounding woods, including body scrubs that incorporate ingredients from local pine trees. Less than an hour from Florence, **COMO Castello del Nero** ([comohotels.com](http://comohotels.com); doubles from \$838) also has a wide range of wellness programs, such as expert-led yoga retreats.



▲ A yoga session at Le Sirenuse comes with views of Positano.