



GRAND DESIGNS

I recently had the opportunity to visit the Grand Hotel Savoia in the picturesque resort of Cortina in Italy. The hotel has just celebrated a century of history and iconic holidays, having first opened its doors a hundred years ago to some of the most glamorous international clientele. It may be a century old, but the hotel's appeal remains as timeless today as the day it opened all those years ago.

The mountain resort of Cortina has long since been associated with fashion, glitz, and glamour, with the Italian Dolomites as its backdrop and it's no small wonder that discerning travellers choose the Grand Hotel Savoia as their base to enjoy their winter sports but also to come and relax during the warmer summer months.

The resort of Cortina is without doubt one of

the best winter sports destinations in Italy and there is a long tradition in ski tourism, so it's not surprising the Winter Olympics will take place there in 2026. There are over 120km of ski slopes with breath-taking views as well as guaranteed snow cover. If you are thinking of strapping on ski boots for the very first time, then the Snowpark in Cortina is ideal for families as well as skiers of all ages and abilities.



Grand Hotel Savoia has 132 rooms and suites, which are delightfully detailed using wood and local materials to reflect the majestic exterior and surroundings. The rooms are superbly appointed with all the amenities you would expect from a luxury hotel. There are marble bathrooms, incredible faux fires in some of the rooms, well stocked mini bars and of course some gorgeous toiletries.

I was up early on my first morning for an amazing breakfast served in the Ristorante Savoy, which is also the hotel's main restaurant serving regional cuisine and some of the best Dolomite recipes. But my morning wasn't for skiing, instead I was there to witness the Cortina WinteRace start where 50 classic and historic cars assemble with their respective drivers and navigators. This is now an annual



event at the hotel. To compete, cars have to be built prior to 1976, with iconic marques, some from limited productions, with owners and crews from all over the world. Countries as far away as Argentina, Mexico, Germany, Austria, England, and Switzerland all take part in this annual race, covering two stages between Italy and Austria. Overall, the circuit spans a total of 400 kilometres, crossing five passes, making it one of the most elegant and eagerly anticipated road rallies in Italy. The sight was spectacular with all the cars parked outside in front of the hotel with drivers and crews enjoying the hotel's hospitality in the warmth of the morning sun. The cars would return for a gourmet dinner and presentation in a couple of days, so I

decided to hit the slopes and check out the pistes and the apres ski of course. Having had a full afternoon skiing and enjoying the snow on the nearby mountains, only a ten minute stroll to the nearest ski lift, I returned to the hotel for a well-earned glass of bubbly in the relaxing 1224 Terrazza, which is the terraced area outside the hotel adjacent to the 1224 Bar & Lounge. Here you will get some gobsmacking views of the mountains and cosy up in comfortable sumptuous chairs covered in warm blankets and cushions enjoying your favourite cocktail watching the sun go down, simply sublime! As my legs were tired from skiing, I made an appointment at the Savoia Spa. An in house spa only a short wander from my room.

Robed and slippers, I made my way to the spa which has a lovely warm swimming pool, a large sauna and steam room and a large spa pool. The Savoia Spa really is a sanctuary of calm and warmth in which to unwind after a day on the slopes. Luckily for me, the Spa team have created a range of massages, treatments and beauty procedures that have been specifically designed to rejuvenate and reinvigorate tired limbs. You can book a single treatment, or they can arrange a day, a weekend or even a week-long spa programme with personalised menu packages. For dinner that evening I returned to the Ristorante Savoia, designed in the theme of a mountain Stube, a traditional mountain style

wood lined room where family and friends meet to eat and drink. I was expecting a very traditional Italian style menu, however, the food in this region is much more than simply 'Italian'. It's a flavoursome mixture of traditional Austro-Hungarian and Italian influences, along with regional specialities such as homemade speck and buttered dumplings. You will find butter, cheese, pork and dumplings are found on most menus in this region, along with polenta, slow-cooked meats and casunziei, the half-moon ravioli stuffed with red turnip, spinach and pumpkin. However, no mountain dessert menu should be without home-made Strudel, It's the sort of pudding designed for climbing and skiing down mountains, although at Grand

Hotel Savoia they do offer a slightly more contemporary, lighter take on this classic alpine dish, but well worth ordering trust me! The Ristorante Savoy has a great wine list that will take you on a journey around this part of Italy. If you aren't sure of a choice, then the sommelier will guide you on your journey, or just try something different and be surprised. For lighter and more informal meals the Pizza Palace has slices of pizza straight from the wood-fired oven, or if you just fancy some lighter options then there's the 1224 Bar and Lounge which has tasty nibbles with a menu of locally inspired salads, sandwiches, and burgers. Cortina is an evolving destination with a thriving culture as well as a lively social diary

that includes classic car races, festivals and fashion shows to name but a few. It's a year-round destination that will leave you wanting to return over and over again. So, whether its Ski boots and sunglasses or cashmere and cable cars, if you want to experience the exceptional, the exclusive and the elegant, look no further than Grand Hotel Savoia in the amazing resort of Cortina d'Ampezzo.

Grand Hotel Savoia
Via Roma, 62 - 32043
Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy
Nearest Airport: Venice

grandhotelsavoia.cortina.it

Room Rates and Discounts mention The Player