



Il Sereno Lake Como

Living

Il Sereno, Lake Como: Modern lakeside luxury in an architectural gem

The North Italian lake might be synonymous with old school glamour, but this modern hotel is redefining Lake Como's luxury appeal. Lucy Pavia checks in.

by Lucy Pavia • London • 1 day ago

Lake Como needs no introduction. Singing its praises as a holiday destination is like calling Mykonos an undiscovered gem or recommending the Caribbean as a fresh idea for winter sun.

ES. *Insider*

Como's appeal stretches back thousands of years; the Romans would escape there for lakeside R'n'R and over the centuries its deep blue waters and painterly mountain scenery have made it a magnet for artists, composers, poets, royalty and that handsome guy from E.R.

But with such a history, it takes minerals to show up and build something totally new. Il Sereno in Torno is the first new hotel to be built on the lake in decades; local authorities had to be carefully convinced that its ultra-modern design by renowned Spanish architect Patricia Urquiola would not jar with the traditional Como tableau of shuttered ice cream coloured villas.



ES. *Insider*

But the finished result does the opposite. Viewed from the water, its locally sourced walnut and Ceppo di Gré stone facade - combined with a four-storey living wall by French plantsman Patrick Blanc - makes the hotel blend into the hillside; an architectural gem that treads lightly in its location.

The lowdown



(Il Sereno Lake Como)

There is far more to this hotel than its sleek casing. Much like its sister, Le Sereno St Barts, the luxurious indoor/outdoor feel of Il Sereno is a major part of its appeal. Guests enter over a fragrant garden bridge planted with herbs, grasses and flowers to check in next to a glass lightwell filled with tropical plants.

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(Patricia Parinejad)

A 'floating' walnut and bronze staircase, like a beautiful but functional sculpture, links the dining, bar and lounge areas, but otherwise the decor is quietly luxurious and minimalist, never upstaging the lake and mountain views you can glimpse from every angle thanks to floor-to-ceiling glass.



(Patricia Parinejad)

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The same goes for Il Sereno's freshwater infinity pool, lined with stone to blend into the lake water behind it, and its spa, built close to the lapping water under the stone arches of the old boat dock.

The rooms



(Patricia Parinejad)

Apparently, there's an old saying in Lake Como that you should always be able to fish from your window. Nudging out over the water, the thirty lake-facing suites at Sereno meet this criteria - even if we don't have a rod to test it.

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Il Sereno Lake Como (Patricia Parinejad)

Each has a private, sheltered balcony with a lounging area designed for lazy mornings with a cup of espresso, while the decor inside continues the theme of understated Italian luxury; no stuccoed ceilings or gold to be found here, but clean lines, butter soft leather seating and polished stone floors.

ES. *Insider*

Every creature comfort is ticked off in style, including the supersized beds, made up with high thread count sheets by D. Porthault, Paris.

Eating and drinking

This is Italy - so anyone other than Molly-Mae Hague is spoiled for choice. The hotel's own restaurant, Berton Al Lago, scored itself a Michelin star within a year of opening and serves up a refined menu by chef Raffaele Lenzi in its waterside location. If you want the full experience, try the tasting menu where seasonal dishes include eggplants millefeuille, crisp anchovy with sweet and sour sauce and veal Milanese. Otherwise, Torno's pretty walled harbour is a five-minute walk away and boasts a number of restaurants where you can eat al fresco with a bowl of pasta or pizza.

Things to do



Villa Pliniana on Lake Como

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You'll probably want to spend most of your stay lounging on one of the poolside cabanas, glass of aperol spritz in hand, but if you're feeling active you can push off on a paddleboard from the hotel's mini pebble beach. Bobbing next to Sereno's private jetty are some particularly beautiful locally-made Riva boats, available to hire for exploring the lake in movie star style - though at over a hundred euros an hour to rent, they're not cheap. We opted for a more affordable rental service at a neighbouring town which will collect and drop you off.

Once you've got your transport covered, you can go villa snooping. A ten minute motor across the lake in Laglio is Villa Oleandra, the white and green shuttered mansion where George Clooney spends every summer, hosting VIPs including Jennifer Aniston and the Obamas in the next door guest house. Though do keep your distance - the mayor of Laglio has threatened any loitering Clooney fans with a fine.



Also worth a visit is Villa Pliniana. This glorious, yellow 18-bedroom palazzo dates back to the 16th century and occupies a quiet corner of the lake, a great place to jump off the boat for a swim. Managed by the Sereno group, it's also available to hire for around 100k euros a week - gulp - but for that, you'll live like an Italian Count and enjoy five star hotel comfort with your own spa and pool, lavish entertaining spaces, helipad and private boat dock.

Rates at Il Sereno start at €800 per night. For more information or to book a stay at Il Sereno Lago di Como, please visit www.ilsereno.com, email info@serenohotels.com or call +39 031 5477800.