

## CASA FANTINI, LAKE ORTA

I've often wondered what it would be like to have a whole hotel to myself. It's a dream I never thought I'd realise – until a visit to Casa Fantini. Just an hour's drive from Milan airport, on the shores of Lake Orta, my friend and I arrive at the chic, five-star boutique hotel, which is part of the Casas Latinas portfolio and offers exclusive buyout experiences. As soon as we step out of the hotel's car, it feels like we're home.

In the quiet streets of Pella, Casa Fantini offers a snapshot of Italian life – the idyllic little piazza where locals gather for a sunset aperitif and the breathtaking view of Isola San Giulio in the lake beyond. The concept of the hotel, referred to as 'lake time', encourages some much-needed moments to relax, and I'm in awe of the peaceful tranquillity it affords.

We stay in the Prestige Room – one of the hotel's 11 suites – which overlooks a garden complete with a pool, dining area and stylish deckchairs. Designed by Italian architect and designer Piero Lissoni, the room is adorned with a mixture of luxury and handcrafted decor. From the rustic slats behind the twin beds – made from the windows of old lake houses – to the bespoke Italian sofa and high-tech bathroom boasting

a range of Comfort Zone Tranquillity bath products. But most important is the terrace; billowing curtains frame a balcony with a view of the pool, the lake and neighbouring buildings with gorgeous pastel shutters.

While Casa Fantini's luxury is considered and understated, it definitely doesn't go unnoticed; we're offered crisp sparkling wine at every meal, and when we're served a glorious seven-course tasting menu (including duck, risotto, ravioli, spaghetti and veal, with five wine pairings), the hotel's private chef, Diego, comes to our table to carefully explain his choices. 'Nothing is too much trouble,' Thiago the hotel manager assures us. And he's right: the hotel's own newspaper gets delivered every morning and handwritten notes are left to bid us goodnight; the waiter comes to know exactly how we take our tea and everything on the menu is made to order – all we have to do is ask.

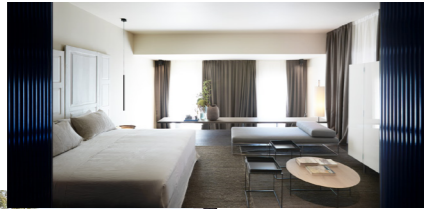
When we finally prise ourselves away from the Casa (after a refreshing dip in the pool, of course), we spend the next few days enjoying the local spots. After an off-the-beaten-track walk to Ronco, the idyllic village next to Pella, we take a guided e-bike tour east of the lake to the town of Orta San Giulio. Offering gelato, local trinket shops and intimate cafes and restaurants, the beautiful town is a quiet hub enjoyed by locals and tourists alike.

We end our stay by spending an evening on the island Isola San Giulio, easily accessible by boat. Our guide, Cosette, takes us through its winding fortress's rich medieval and religious history, pausing to point out multiple signs dotted throughout the streets that encourage contemplation and self-reflection – something I often forget to do in the hustle and bustle of life back in London.

Reluctantly, I sink back into the cool leather seats of the car to the airport, but as we wave goodbye to Thiago, I'm grateful to have acclimated to Casa Fantini's peaceful and reflective micro-time zone. It's something I remain determined to bring back with me, even if it's just for a few moments at a time...

ABBY ALLEN

ROOMS FROM AROUND £427 A NIGHT. EXCLUSIVE PRIVATE RENTAL IS FROM £94K TO £120K A WEEK DEPENDING ON SEASON. CASA FANTINI IS PART OF THE CASAS LATINAS PORTFOLIO. [CASAS-LATINAS.COM/CASAFANTINI](https://casas-latinas.com/casafantini)



Casa Fantini has 11 rooms, some with private terraces (above), which all overlook the lake



The lounge is at the heart of the house and is the perfect spot to relax and unwind

