



GRAND RESORT BAD RAGAZ SWITZERLAND

IN BRIEF Recover from major surgery at this super all-rounder

THE LOWDOWN Along with pioneering Clinique La Prairie, Bad Ragaz is the main reason Switzerland has become known as the number one centre for medical spas. It is a forerunner, a ground-breaker, a spa for the future. And it's a place that offers solutions for everything – from dermatological issues and rheumatism to mobility problems, infertility and neuromuscular disorders. Many of the world's wealthiest people check in here when they are ill, in need of rehab or top-notch medical care. What makes it all the more special is that it's the beating heart of what has been one of the country's health hotspots since the 19th century, back when it was the place to take the thermal waters. Over the years it's developed into a super-smart, if rather hushed and sedate complex (the Michelin-starred restaurant tends to be unnervingly silent) with a casino, a classical concert programme, golf and 267 rooms spread across three hotels. The oldest are full of spindly antiques and the smell of beeswax polish, while the newest, the 12 spa suites unveiled a couple of years ago, are still setting standards. These are the ones to plump for. They are an absolute thrill: wander around taking in the view from the floor-to-ceiling windows (Lake Constance just a few hundred yards away; the Alps beyond), marvel at the steam room, sauna and all-action Toto loo in the bathroom, and make the electric blinds and mattress zoom up and down. (Warning: going to bed is complicated until you've mastered the remote.) A Presidential Suite has just been added, offering a wrap-around terrace and mountain vistas from the bed. There's also an absolutely immaculate spa, with big treatment rooms for expert massages, and one of the loveliest indoor pools

anywhere. The all-round brilliant Medical Health Centre has a sports training and rehab area, which explains the occasional presence of the unnaturally muscular young things in the gym; Swiss Olympic teams train and get check-ups here. It also has its own operating theatre and a newly opened wing for those recovering from major surgery, with 24-hour medical care; a second one for people with mental health issues will be opened soon. The depth and breadth of the medical expertise is incredible. What is so reassuring however is that the team (70 doctors and specialists), besides being highly qualified, are also well versed in, and enthusiastic about, alternative attitudes and complementary treatments. This means that the advice given out reflects the most cutting-edge-meets-holistic thinking. Weight loss and eating disorders seem to be particularly well-tackled, with a kind-hearted and personalised approach. If you are overweight and sick of it, this is the place to sort it out, once and for all. And you need not feel daunted. The doctors are down to earth, they're not pill-pushers, but believers in the therapeutic power of real food, exercise, sleep, and staying in touch with nature.

INSIDER TIP Remember to bring walking boots. A German guest at the spa said: 'Before I lived in this area, I was a lazy person. But here, I go up into the mountains and I meet people of 85, climbing. The fresh air is anti-ageing. It gives you a natural detox and natural Botox.' Very encouraging indeed.

BOOK IT Healing Holidays (+44 20 7843 3592; www.healingholidays.co.uk/condenast) offers a seven-night Anti-Ageing Nutrition and Training programme from £5,669 per person, including breakfast, British Airways flights and transfers.