

# Storylines

## The Summer Season: Sports, Festivals & Events

British travel-writers are gradually coming to realise that Trentino does not just mean winter ski resorts or summer on the shores of Lake Garda. This rugged alpine region is capturing a greater share of the summer market, providing a relaxing, “escape from it all” retreat close to secluded valleys or small lakes, as well as in the better-known resorts. Lake Garda may be the region’s calling card but the lakes of Caldonazzo, Lavarone, Ledro, Levico or Molveno hold great appeal for nature-lovers, walkers and families in search of peace and quiet, cosy inns, or energetic outdoor pursuits.

This is Italy’s most environmentally aware region, with myriad clean lakes, and motor boats banned from Trentino waters. As well as expanses of sheer wilderness, Trentino also has the largest national park in the country, part of almost 20 percent of territory protected. Yet dominating the skyscape are the transcendent Dolomites, representing mountains of space, energy and freedom. As for summer weather, the climate ranges from snowy glaciers to the balmy Mediterranean climate around Lake Garda; perfect conditions for summer skiing on the Presena glacier or windsurfing near Riva del Garda.

As a summer break, Trentino means family-style alpine hotels in lakeside locations, as well as water-sports, from sailing and windsurfing on the lakes to canoeing and rafting on fast-flowing rivers. The region also boasts some of the country’s best-kept mountain paths and cycling trails, with horse-riding also popular. More adventurous visitors will seek out extreme sports, from canyoning to mountaineering, hang-gliding to parachuting.

Major cultural events run from late June to early September, making it easier for travel-writers to place pieces over a period of time, and for tour operators to offer a consistent programme. Foremost amongst the festivals is the *Sounds of the Dolomites*, featuring free concerts in idyllic alpine pastures, followed by tasty treats in a mountain refuge. This great music festival is gaining international renown, with celebrated musicians and singers from around the world performing live in glorious mountain settings. Another regular fixture is the popular *Vinum Bonum* food and wine festival, which stages concerts, wine-tastings and banquets in atmospheric castles and historic wine cellars.

Given the wide range of accommodation, Trentino compares favourably with other regions. These are often alpine-style, family-run 3-star hotels, large enough for most groups, although small, highly individualistic rustic hotels abound in the valleys. Trentino also has its fair share of elegant or historic spa hotels (including around Lake Levico) and even boasts several villa-hotels in alpine settings (for instance, around Trento or Comano Terme). The enlightened regional policy is to refurbish traditional alpine hotels rather than give permission to build brand-new ones.

## **Summer Festivals & Events**

### **The Year of the Mountains: celebrating the Dolomites**

The international “Year of the Mountains” is upon us, a United Nations-inspired venture that seeks to combine celebration of the world’s natural wonders with promotion of specific mountain ranges, alpine sports and scientific research into sustainable development. In Italy, the “Year of the Mountains” will be a high-profile affair, with mountainous regions vying with one another in staging spectacular events. The Italian committee has already decided to floodlight five significant mountains in honour of the occasion. The event has also been heralded by the introduction of an Italian “mountains credit card”, with 50 per cent of all profits going to support struggling alpine communities. While far from struggling, Trentino is fully behind any initiatives that favour alpine culture, sustainable development and tourism. Moreover, as the self-declared home of the Dolomites, Trentino is well-placed to promote its greatest assets – so expect to see the peaks celebrated in words, music, wine and sporting events.

► *For more details of the events connected with this international jamboree, see [www.mountains2002.org](http://www.mountains2002.org). For details of how Trentino plans to celebrate the year, check with the London Trentino office – and keep your diary free for 16<sup>th</sup> May and 13<sup>th</sup> June!*

### **“The Sounds of the Dolomites”: music festival in the mountains**

Trentino is a musical region, offering everything from alpine oompah bands to classical concerts at the highest level. You can even walk the forests where Stradivarius, the legendary instrument-maker, came to select the choicest spruce for his deeply resonant violins. Given Trentino’s musical soul and alpine heritage, many of the best summer events embrace musical themes in mountain settings. The *Sounds of the Dolomites*, in particular, is a magnificent series of open-air concerts staged in the natural amphitheatre of the mountains. Prestigious musicians perform classical or contemporary pieces to an audience gathered on the grassy banks beside a spectacular lake, refuge or peak. The soaring music is chosen to symbolise the adventurous spirit of those who seek to conquer mountain peaks. In addition, keen walkers can do a free organised walk which takes place near each location before the concert starts. Since this hospitable region has a talent for combining wine, music and food in convivial settings, the concert will probably be followed by a feast in a neighbouring mountain refuge.

This year, the highlights include performances of classical music, folk music, jazz and contemporary sounds by Italian and international musicians and singers. The Turin Philharmonic Orchestra will be performing a tribute to the mountains and Mozart in a superb concert held at the dramatic pass of Passo San Pellegrino on 27<sup>th</sup> July, with the Gipsy Brass Band performing on 8<sup>th</sup> August in the lovely Val di Fassa (at Rifugio Fuchiade, see *Alpine Inns Storyline*). In addition, there will be concerts by: Danilo Rossi, who plays first viola for the orchestra at Milan’s La Scala; the Tiny Bell Trio with Dave Douglas, the American trombonist; Gianni Coscia, the harmonica player; and Andrea Benzoni, the renowned jazz guitarist. To celebrate both the festival and the Year of the

Mountains (*above*), the classical composer Ludovico Einaudi has created a new work which will be presented during the festival. The festival is nothing if not international: also playing will be the Romanian violinist, Alexander Balanescu, the Hungarian singer Marta Sebestyen, and Tambuco, a Mexican quartet of percussionists.

► *For full details of the forthcoming summer programme, check with the London office.*

#### **“*Vinum Bonum*”: wine, music & song in convivial company**

The competing summer event is *Vinum Bonum*, an engaging food and wine festival held in romantic vaulted cellars or in the rustic courtyards of sprawling wine estates. Staged between June and September, this festival encapsulates the best of Trentino: wine and music, conviviality and cosiness. Delicious tastings of Trentino’s finest wines are accompanied by intimate concerts amidst the barrels, an intoxicating experience, and a chance to meet wine connoisseurs. Trentino produces excellent wines, most of which never find their way into British shops because the locals appreciate them too much at home. Full-bodied red *Marzemino*, for instance, was Mozart’s chosen wine, but who knows what he made of *grappa* flavoured with herbs or fruits of the forest. This year, the performers are as diverse as ever, ranging from classical recitals to Gershwin, or from folk music from Mozambique to Neapolitan interpretations of *Beatles* numbers. The locations are as enticing as ever, with one concert staged in the in a wine estate beside Castel Toblino, arguably Trentino’s most romantic castle. Another event is held deep in the heart of the famous Ferrari wine estate, home to the producers of some of the finest sparkling wine in Italy. (If it weren’t for the French, we could call it Champagne).

► *Request the **Taste of Trentino** Storyline for background on food and wine in the region.*

#### **“Museum Nights”: museums at the heart of summer festivities:**

In summer, a selection of the most original museums will now be open to the public at night. The idea is to open up 24 of these treasure-troves to a broader public, and to make entertaining links between the museums, local culture and live entertainment. Every Wednesday and Saturday evening in July and August, some of the best museums will be challenging visitors to see the collections in a new light. In Trento, The Castello di Buonconsiglio will be staging a “Gothic in the Alps” multimedia exhibition, linking architecture and landscape. Also in Trento, there will be a recreation of Roman times staged in the newly-restored Roman site in the city. (► *See the **Trento Factfile** for further details*). In Rovereto, The Italian War Museum, set in a magnificent medieval castle, will be showing its relevance to current international debates on war and peace. In Ala, an historic centre noted for its tradition of silk-weaving, the Piano Museum will be reminding the world that the young Amadeus Mozart once performed in the area. In the Garda Dolomites, the local museum will be staging an event entitled “Come, Gentle Night,” a homage to Shakespeare and Goethe. ► *Request the forthcoming **Museum Nights** programme from the London office, and also ask for the Museums booklet.*

#### **Opening of the Trento and Rovereto Modern and Contemporary Art Museum:**

Set in Rovereto, Trentino’s second city, and an historic centre for the silk industry, this long-awaited museum will put Trentino on the map as a centre for modern art. Known as the MART, this museum will also play a major role in this year’s Museum Nights festival

(see above). Composers of the calibre of Philip Glass and Michael Nyman will be to the forefront, with their works used to showcase the new museum. Contemporary music will be followed by a succession of inter-related art events and exhibitions to be announced.

### **Dairying in the Dolomites:**

Known as “*Andar per Malghe*” in Italian, the festival is centred on the alpine dairies (*malghe*) that retain their rural charm. Set on high alpine pastures, these dairies are putting on a musical and gastronomic show between June and September. Here, milk, butter and distinctive cheeses can be tasted, accompanied by toasts to the good health of the local milk-maids. Sophisticated city-dwellers are warned: there’s no escaping the folkloric effects of an alpine chorus merging with the chimes of cow-bells.

► Request the forthcoming *Andar per Malghe* programme from the London office, and also ask for the *Refuges* booklet and the *Alpine Inns & Lodges (Refuges) Storyline*.

### ***In Aqua et in Montibus Vita*: celebrating spa culture**

This new cycle of events, introduced this season, aims to promote spa culture in its natural setting and to promote the life-giving powers of water – and the sense of well-being symbolised by the mountains. Some of the region’s best-known spa resorts will be hosting a cycle of concerts and events, which will be staged in Levico, Pejo (Peio), Garniga, Comano and Vetriolo, to name but a few spas. ► Request the *Storyline on Spas, Health & Fitness*, and ask for the *In Aqua et in Montibus Vita* programme.

### **Summer activities:**

**Castles:** As a border region, Trentino has impressive Venetian castles and Austro-Hungarian forts. Foremost amongst the treasures are the Gothic and Renaissance Castello di Buonconsiglio in Trento (see the *Trento Factfile*) or the fairytale Castel Toblino, set on the lake of the same name. Many castles are open to the public, whether converted into museums, wine estates, restaurants or hotels. This summer, many will be the setting for concerts and spectacular events, including historical re-enactments. ► Request the *Castles* booklet from the London office. For the forthcoming summer programme in castles and museums, check with the London office, or see the Trentino website: [www.trentino.to](http://www.trentino.to).

**Lake cruises, windsurfing & water-sports:** Given that Trentino includes the northernmost part of Lake Garda, the historic resort of Riva del Garda is the place to book cruises around this vast lake. The resort also has a number of excellent fish restaurants and hotels with swimming pools. Alternatively, neighbouring Torbole is lively, young the windsurfing capital on the lake, renowned for its reliable winds. To protect the environment, private motorboats are banned from Trentino waters, but sailing and water-sports are encouraged on Lake Garda, and on numerous other lakes and fast-flowing rivers in Trentino. With 297 lakes to choose from, water-lovers are spoilt for choice. ► Request the *Lakes* booklet and the *Summer Sport* booklet from the London office.

**Walking & hiking:** The region boasts some of the country’s best-kept mountain paths and cycling trails. Cycle paths range from gentle river-bank trails to altitude climbs and

endurance tests, with summer signalling the start of mountain bike races over rough terrain. Many of the walking trails are inspired by archaeological, geological, spiritual or military themes, which can satisfy mind, body and spirit alike. *\*Request the Storyline covering **Alpine Inns & Lodges (Refuges)** and the Storyline on **Walking and Hiking in the Dolomites**. Since each area of Trentino has its own particular trails, also contact the Trentino London office for more information.*

**Cycle paths & mountain-biking trails:** Trentino is arguably the best-equipped area in Italy for cycling and mountain-biking, with over 400 kilometres of trails covering most of the region. Recently, Paola Pezzo, the Olympic mountain-biking champion, took a party of foolhardy journalists (outdoor specialists who perhaps later wished they were indoors) to ride some of the most demanding routes in Trentino. Given the superb cycling and racing conditions in the region, it is hardly surprising that the *Giro d'Italia*, the Italian equivalent to the *Tour de France*, always features a *stage in Trentino, following a route that is considered extremely challenging. Virtually every area in Trentino produces its own maps and brochures on local cycle routes so contact the London office if you're interested in a particular area or route.* ► Also request the **Summer Sport** brochure.