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NINE *SPEARBEARERS* FOR ONE DREAM HOLIDAY PAULA VOLGGER AND HER EIGHT CHILDREN RAISE THE BAR WITH THEIR 4-STAR SUPERIOR HOTEL

Truly unique in the world, this 4-star superior spa and holiday paradise is run by eight siblings and their mother. The Plunhof's unrivalled destination spa gives a nod to the local mining tradition, making it the only one of its kind in Europe. The hotel has won multiple awards, including being nominated Best of Italy in the Health & Spa Awards. Most recently, the Plunhof became Italy's only Global Winner at the World Luxury Spa Awards 2019, taking the title of Best Unique Experience Spa. A home of generations and a hospitable refuge: the hideaway makes the most of the Alpine air at 1,340m above sea level in the natural South Tyrolean paradise of Ridnaun.

Their surname derives from the Old High German name *Volcger*, which means *spearbearer*, and was also borne by the knight and minstrel from the famous Nibelungenlied poem. Unlike the poem, life at the Plunhof revolves around love, passion and family rather than power and revenge. Paula Volgger and her husband Leopold built the Plunhof 40 years ago – it was her childhood dream: 'I always wanted to be a hotelier' she says, perhaps because she and her late husband witnessed her father, a miner, slaving and digging to find silver in the nearby Shneeberg mine. Paula Volgger's beginnings as a miner's daughter inspired the Plunhof's haven of wellness, and she is now the proprietor of one of the most innovative spas in the world, a legacy for the next generation.

Family tradition fires the imagination

The family's history provided the starting point for one of the most astonishing spa concepts in Europe: the Spa & Acqua Minera. The multi award-winning destination spa with Europe's only 'wellness above and below the surface' concept mirrors the local mining tradition and is based on the power of rock and nature. Guests make the most of the feel-good atmosphere in the saltwater whirlpool, saunas, steam room and infrared cabin, the shower temple and the amazing relaxation areas where they can go to ground in a 'world of mining'. The story of the area's ancient mining traditions continues: the Volggers have extended their legendary mining hideaway to create a new 4,000sqm Acqua Minera poolscape into which Paula and the eight Volgger siblings have invested €6.5 million.

Power of stone signature treatment & more

Spa Minera offers beauty treatments with all the power of nature and the elements. The Power of Stone Signature Treatment, for instance, uses locally sourced mica schist, while the Silver Quartzite Stone Massage makes use of the first Alpine rock to have proven ideal for energetic massage therapies. It is silver quartzite's high silica content that provides the therapeutic properties. Guests can also experience a rock salt massage as part of the holistic Salt for Flowing Energy ritual. 'Nature plays a major role at the Plunhof, not just in our indoor and outdoor spa area, but also throughout the hotel's architecture, materials and furnishings, and even in our gourmet cuisine. Being in close touch with nature harmonises body, mind and spirit – and we wish to honour that,' says Paula Volgger. The Plunhof is one of the first EU Ecolabel certified hotels in South Tyrol and has also attained ClimateHotel pre-certification.

Climb to the peak of nature

A meeting of *dolce vita* and Alpine delights, the outdoor relaxation area offers guests a new natural pool as well as an ideal spot for enjoying a proper Italian Cappuccino while they admire the view of the stunning mountains and the miners' chapel of St Magdalen. A picture book idyll, except it's real. Waterfalls and streams meander towards the valley. Snow-covered peaks are reflected in beautiful mountain lakes. Guests take their pick of idyllic valley walks, sheltered forest paths, tranquil mountain pasture hikes and mountain trails with superb panoramic views. There is no shortage of high-Alpine tours and summit climbs. For Paula Volgger, the Seven Lakes Tour and the walk to the Plunhof Alm for a barbecue are unmissable. The Plunhof Alm walk is without doubt the top pick for nature lovers. The Seven Lakes hike into the Ridnaun Valley, however, guided by hiking enthusiast Günter Volgger himself, is reserved for sure-footed hikers in good physical condition and equipped with the appropriate gear. There is no need to carry drinking water because the route is lined with mountain springs. And snacks can be left in the hotel, because Günter knows the best places to stop for a bite to eat.

The Volgger family's walking tips

- **Seven Lakes Hike:** Start at 1,418m – Moarerbergalm mountain hut 2,113m – Mittlerer Moarer Egetsee lake 2,468m – Egetjoch pass 2,693m – Hinterer Senner Egetsee lake 2,647m – Vordere Senner Egetsee lake 2,510m – Trüber See lake 2,344m – bridge over the Fernbach 2,118m – Grohmann Hut 2,254m – Walking time 7 to 9 hours
- Plunhof > Stadlalm: Ascent 2 hours – Descent 2 hours – easy walk
- Plunhof > Aglsbodenalm: Ascent 3 hours – Descent 2 hours 30 minutes – easy walk
- Plunhof > Plunhofalm: Ascent 2 hours – Descent 2 hours – easy walk
- Plunhof > Joggelealm: Ascent 2 hours 30 minutes – Descent 2 hours – easy walk

Delicious cuisine served in the Plunhof's Stuben

The Eisack Valley has a long-standing reputation as one of the Alps' top five culinary destinations. This became official in 2015, mostly thanks to the outstanding level of culinary diversity combined with superb hiking opportunities. The extraordinary, and somewhat rare, mix of tradition, experiences, enjoyment, regionality and creativity is strong at the Plunhof. Chefs Peter and Egon Volgger serve mainly seasonal and regional South Tyrolean specialities as well as gourmet Mediterranean dishes, where possible using produce sourced from local organic farms. Whether homemade pasta and dumplings or Paula's doughnuts – there is no compromise when it comes to quality. For guests who fancy learning how to cook, the chefs de cuisine hold regular cookery classes. Dining areas are housed in four wood-panelled *Stuben*, and lovers of vino can look forward to a selection of 600, predominantly Italian and South Tyrolean, wines and tastings in the hotel's Bacchus wine cellar. Wine experts Günter and Erwin Volgger also love to whisk their guests off on a tour of the hotel's own Cuvée.

About the 4-star superior Hotel Plunhof

The Volgger family's environmental credentials and commitment to their region and traditions are reflected throughout the hotel, from the cuisine and the hotel's Bacchus wine cellar to the materials, furnishings and architecture. The 67 rooms and suites offer guests tangible insights into the world of mining, as well as being named after family members! All offer views over the impressive peaks of the Stubai Alps.

www.plunhof.it

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