

# Romance with altitude



Visitors to Astoria Seefeld's spa are treated to serious alpine views when they take a dip in the heated outdoor pool



Against a picture-perfect alpine backdrop, **Hugh Perry** enjoys skiing, spas and that loving feeling

As the plane descended through cotton wool clouds towards Innsbruck, I took in the view. Jagged snow-capped peaks. Pine trees so close it felt like we were skimming their crowns. Ski trails snaking down to the valleys below. We had travelled into the very heart of winter.

And over the next few days, the Austrian alps put on such a memorable display of natural beauty, creating memories that I suspect I'll be turning over in my mind for months to come back in grey Britain. Without question, this is a place where you could fall in love, or fall deeper in love, with your special someone.

A mere two-hour hop from Gatwick, Innsbruck is a well-known winter destination for the great, the good and the discerning. Close by is Seefeld, a resort town so charming that romantic honeymoon memories are guaranteed.

Nestled above the town is the five-star spa hotel Astoria Seefeld. Imagine a cosy hunting lodge, with high-quality, expertly chosen fittings. Wood panels, antlers, soft lighting, fireplaces and chairs to sink into after a long day on the slopes. It was very much the sort of place where you imagine stumbling across Cary Grant and Audrey Hepburn clinking glasses.

Our first day at the Astoria was suitably relaxed, as we acclimatised to luxury alpine living. After drinking in the remarkable vistas from the balcony of our suite, we sampled some excellent Austrian wine in the hotel restaurant over a dinner of salmon confit, hake, blueberry cheesecake – and naturally a cheeseboard too, including local favourite, Tiroler Adler.

We rolled into the bar for a nightcap, fully signed up to the notion that wellness is as much as state of mind as body, ordering the negronis barman Chris is justly proud of.

The hotel's spa is beautifully laid out, with a long list of treatments on offer. It's a beacon of calm, whether dipping in one of the pools, including a heated outside pool with extraordinary views of the mountains, or relaxing poolside with a podcast.

Our pick for those seeking a romantic treat is to book a half day in the couples' room at the spa, where we received treatments on adjoining tables, with yet more of those views framed by the window. I chose a sports massage tailored for those returning from a day on the cross-country ski trails (more of which later). This was a precision pummelling, which melted the tension in my muscles like a spring thaw.

After the massages we felt ready to tackle the Insta-worthy view above Seefeld

(at 1,200m, around double the altitude of Innsbruck), which takes in the old church of St Oswald and some of the loveliest nature in the region, easily worth the 20-minute walk up the hill.

Seefeld is the haunt of many an elite sports person, but rank novices can reap some of the benefits too. We'd strapped on cross-country skis before, but unsupervised, so it was a different story when Chris at the Skischule Cross Country Academy took us through our paces.

Under his patient tutelage, it was less than an hour before we were making our inelegant way along a trail, huge grins plastered on our faces. It hardly mattered that our group was regularly outpaced by pine trunk-thighed athletes, skimming over the snow at breakneck pace.

Then, of course, back to the Astoria for more us-time: sipping cocktails, log fire crackling and the resident pianist playing.

The promise of a winter honeymoon here is hard to beat. Fall in love again as you indulge all your senses at the hotel, breathing in the fresh air, taking in the magnificent mountain views and feeling a sense of perfect calm. [W](#)

**Winter prices start from approx £150 per person, per night, based on two adults sharing. Visit [astoria-seefeld.com](http://astoria-seefeld.com)**