

ABMSAC HOTEL MEET 2017 - SELVA GARDENA

Friday 30th June to Friday 7th July

Next summer's meet will be based in Selva Gardena, situated at a height of 1566m in the Val Gardena, in the Dolomites of South Tyrol. This is a very different area to the Brenta Dolomites of Madonna di Campiglio further west, as the valley is wide and the terrain much less stony. It is a stunningly beautiful area, the surrounding mountains of rose-tinted rock rising over green valleys, with the towering spires of the Sasso Lungo to the south, the peaks of the Puez Odle Nature Park to the north, and the Sella massif to the east. To the south-west, above Ortisei (St Ulrich) is the lovely plateau of Alpe di Siusi (Seiser Alm), with glorious walks.

The South Tyrol (Südtirol) was once part of Austria but was ceded to Italy in 1919 after the First World War. It retains a distinct Austrian influence and German is widely spoken - you will find many place names in German, the Val Gardena also being known as Gröden, and Selva as Wolkenstein. Many in the valley also speak Ladin, a Latin based language similar to Romansch, and the local culture is still strongly influenced by Ladin traditions.

Selva is an attractive small town, with hotels and houses in typical chalet style. It has a helpful Tourist Office (www.valgardena.it) and the usual amenities, including a Guides Office, sports shops, banks, supermarkets and evening concerts. It is an excellent centre for walking, climbing and mountain biking, with two lifts starting from Selva itself, and others, going up to 2518m, from the villages of Santa Cristina and Ortisei further down the valley. The three villages are linked by free buses, which are more frequent than those in Cogne. Thus a variety of walks of all abilities are easily accessible, as well as mountain bike trails and via ferrata routes. It is a haven for wildlife, and a particularly good area for alpine flowers, with over 1500 species of flowering plants. A list of suggested walks will be sent nearer the time.

The Val Gardena Card gives unlimited use of all lifts in the valley, and is available at a cost 79 euros for 6 days, or 60 euros for 3 days. The hotel can arrange to purchase this for us, in advance.

The hotel has again agreed to Friday dates, thus avoiding travel on a Saturday. Access by car is from the north via Innsbruck and the Brenner Pass, or from the south via Milan or Verona and Bolzano/Bozen. The closest airports are Innsbruck (120km), Verona (190km), and Bergamo (270km). There is a direct bus to Selva from these three airports, and also from Milan, (www.transfertovalgardena.com - click on airplane, or www.altoadigebus.com). Otherwise, get a train to Ponte Gardena/Waldbbruck at the entrance to the Val Gardena and then a bus to Selva.

Accommodation has been reserved in the 3* Hotel Astor (www.hotelastor-valgardena.it) which is in a central yet quiet location close to the shops, bus stop and lifts. It is run by Doris, the daughter of the family, who speaks fluent English and is very friendly and helpful, with lots of ideas for walks. The hotel has a comfortable lounge and bar area, plenty of outside parking space, and a new wellness area. All rooms are en-suite, with recently refurbished bathrooms, and are large and spacious, with balconies, sitting area, desk, plenty of storage space, safe, TV, phone, hairdryer and free Wi-Fi. There will be a hot and cold breakfast buffet and a 5-course dinner with salad buffet bar and a choice of pasta, main course (with meat and vegetarian options) and dessert. Once again, Apérol spritzes are popular in the valley!

The cost per person for dinner, bed and breakfast in a double/twin comfort room (26-30m²) is 427 euros for the week, and 497 euros for a suite, which is very large (35-45m²), in two parts. Only 4 single rooms are available: 2 comfort for 567 euros and 2 standard for 497 euros (ground floor

without balcony).

The price given is based on a group of 20-25. In addition, there is tourist tax of 1.60 euros per person per night.

The hotel has agreed that if anyone wishes to spend extra nights there at the end of the meet, this will be possible. If you wish to do so, please let me know, either now or nearer the time, so that I can advise the hotel.

The hotel would like me to confirm by the end of September that we will be a group of this size. To reserve a place please contact Pamela Harris-Andrews before the end of the month. A deposit of 100 euros per person will be required by the hotel at the end of April.

Please note that appropriate insurance cover is essential, to cover travel and hotel cancellation, as well as accident, illness, rescue and repatriation.

September 2016