

# Forbes

## The Ranch Malibu Expands Its Famed Hiking Retreat To The Dolomite's In Italy And Beyond



**Jim Dobson**, CONTRIBUTOR

Traveling the world in search of amazing People, Places and Things [FULL BIO](#) ✓

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Randy Jay Brown / Ross Alpines  
Hiking the Dolomites with The Ranch Malibu

The Ranch Malibu, the famed celebrity and executive weekly health retreat, is expanding its popular 7-day hiking retreats to the stunning Dolomites in Northern Italy. Modeled after The Ranch Malibu's results-oriented weeklong stay, which combines an intense hiking and fitness regimen with a highly structured, plant-based nutritional diet, [The Ranch Dolomites](#) will be providing not only amazing alpine trails with professional guides but also vegetarian cuisine with an Italian twist.

The Ranch Malibu will actually bring a group of their well trained and highly popular staff from The Ranch 4.0 program in Westlake Village to Italy. From the experienced hiking guides to even the massage therapists and chef, fans of the program will find the same principals and successful results duplicated in the Dolomites.



*Rosa Alpina*  
Rosa Alpina Resort in the Dolomites

Incorporating experienced local guides with their own staff, mornings will be spent hiking the spectacular mountains of the UNESCO Natural World Heritage site. Located in San Cassiano and near Cortina, there are hundreds of trails all with views of the countryside and the enormous Dolomites peaks. Guests will spend their afternoons filled with fitness programs including strength training classes, yoga, and meditation, along with the customary daily sports massages.

Home to all of this activity will be the boutique [Rosa Alpina Hotel](#), a Leading Hotels of the World property in San Cassiano. Duplicating the experience from the Ranch 4.0 luxury lodging at the Four Seasons Hotel in Westlake Village, California, guests will enjoy luxury rooms with necessary soaking tubs after long days of hiking.



*Jim Dobson*  
The Ranch 4.0 Chef Meredith Haaz



I had previously experienced The Ranch 4.0 and can tell you first hand, this may not be for everyone. (This is also not for every budget, the Dolomites package alone is \$8,500 per person not including transportation.) Your daily routine includes waking up at 5:30 am and hiking for 3-4 hours through the beautiful Santa Monica Mountains. This is the perfect boot camp experience for executives and CEO's who want to kickstart their lives. While supermodels and celebrities also frequent the retreat for red carpet preparations, it is really the successful business owners from around the world that are returning year after year.



Randy Jay Brown / Miss Alps  
Hiking the Alps

I am not a fan of hiking and would rather spend my day poolside with massages but traveling the world has taken a toll on my body. My exercise is usually limited to walking through airline terminals. I wanted to detox, exercise and leave my computer but I was terrified at the thought of a group of 18 strangers mixed together for pain and suffering, not to mention no alcohol, sugar or caffeine. The Ranch tells you to prepare for several weeks in advance of the retreat, and of course, I did nothing, also drinking one last precious glass of wine and cup of coffee the day before as a sweet farewell treat to myself.

After the retreat, I found myself in love with creative vegetarian food thanks to the miraculous Chef Meredith, no more hamburgers or chicken for me. I still, however, incorporate fish into my diet. I also found myself five pounds lighter albeit a pound of blisters on my feet. With private expert consultation included from the California Health and Longevity Clinic on body fat and overall health, it shocks your system to be told you have a heart that is 10 years older than you actually are. It is a kick in the gut to really transform your life and do something above and beyond just a fad diet.

Most of the 17 strangers I met were in good shape, although many had knee and joint problems like all of us as we age. We all became new friends and exchanged numbers and made travel plans as we departed. I was impressed by their individual stories of living successful lives while still wanting to create a change in their health. There were a lot of solo travelers which helped alleviate the clique mentality of health retreats. Everyone felt comfortable contributing to the conversation, and the long hikes gave you plenty of time to get to know each other. From a philanthropist to a record executive, from a restaurant owner to a housewife, from a real estate developer to a fashion designer, there was a wide mix of some of the most interesting people in the world.





The Ranch Malibu  
The Ranch Malibu owners Sue and Alex Glasscock

The gregarious owners of The Ranch Malibu are Sue and Alex Glasscock and they are part of the reason for the enormous success of the retreat. I spoke with Alex about the continued popularity of the retreat as well as his plans for the future. The couple lives on The Ranch Malibu property which was built by silent film star William Boyd who played *Hopalong Cassidy*.

**What made you decide on the Dolomites for the upcoming retreats?**

"My wife and I went to the Dolomites on vacation and fell in love with it. While we were there, we pretended we were using the Ranch week, we hired hiking guides, yoga instructors, massage therapists, and we loved the culture and the competency of the staff at the Rosa Alpina. The thing that makes the Dolomites so special is that it is mountainous and is a lower elevation where you are sleeping at 5,000 feet and hiking at 8,000 feet. This takes the trouble of climatizing out."

**How has the response been from your customers on the new venture?**

"The response from our alumni has been really positive, and I feel really good about taking a core team from The Ranch 4.0. We are hiring Italian locals to blend into our staff, but for the authentic Ranch experience, we wanted to make sure we had our team. Our chef Meredith will also be cooking alongside the hotels acclaimed Chef."



The Ranch Malibu  
Yoga classes at The Ranch Malibu in the Dolomites



### **What other locations are you planning to create your successful retreat?**

"I want to create a Ranch retreat in Bhutan in the future. The leaders of Bhutan really care about the quality of life and health, and I think we can become a nice partner for their message. We are also looking into Latin American countries and also are in the works for The Ranch Sonoma project that is slated to open in the Fall of 2019. We bought a 2,700-acre ranch up there and we will be offering the week-long retreat there to become a permanent addition to our retreats. It is a very special property in the Mayacamas Mountains, and we can do all of our hiking on the property. It has such an abundance of wildlife which we are continuing to protect, and it really provides for a safari-like experience."

### **What kind of transformation do you see in your guests?**

"One thing I have observed in the over 8,000 guests that we have had is that there is an inner confidence that most people don't even know they have. We bring it out of them through the program because at the end of the day you have to be willing to be out of your comfort zone not only physically but socially. That is part of the magic of keeping people slightly out of their comfort zone but nurturing them, gaining their trust and then showing them what they are capable of. We have created this very welcoming and non-judgmental space so that introverts could let go and feel safe."



The Ranch Media  
The Green House for all dining at The Ranch 4.0 located at the Four Seasons Hotel in Westlake Village, California.

### **Who is the perfect candidate for the retreat?**

"This is the perfect reset for business owners, I was in commercial mortgage financing and wearing a suit every day and going to endless meetings and that kind of desensitizes you. To actually go to an adult luxury boot camp for a week where it doesn't matter what your net worth is or what your job description is, you are basically just an equal at The Ranch."

"Men in their 40's and 50's really need to look at and be truthful about their health condition and should be doing things to prevent weight creep every year. Using a program like ours with an intense annual reset, in one short week, you can improve your cholesterol levels by 16% so that may help you off medications and have someone educate you about proper nutrition by helping you moderate so that you are no longer in a state to get sick. We have had Fortune 500 CEO's at the Ranch, and afterward, they end up doing a corporate takeover of the entire retreat. It's the best way to bond with your C Suite in the most healthy and comprehensive way."

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