

# COUNTRY & TOWN HOUSE

Looking  
for rest and  
renewal? Dip  
into the best  
in intelligent  
wellness  
and emerge  
refreshed

**THE  
REGENERATION GUIDE**

*Edited by Daisy Finer*



# ACTION STATIONS

*Harriet Compston feels the fear and does it anyway at The Ranch*

**A**cqua, acqua, acqua' crackled through my walkie-talkie as I trudged my way uphill through a breezy ancient forest, the fearsome Italian sun peeping through branches. I was on Day Two of The Ranch, Hollywood's hardest-hitting fitness retreat. Known for transforming the bodies of A-listers, this boot camp has spread its wings and opened an outpost in Fuggi – a medieval town known for its healing water, just an hour from Rome.

Set in the towering Palazzo Fuggi with its calming rooms and bells-and-whistles medi-clinic, the focus is on losing weight while learning to be more mindful of your health. But it doesn't start as you go through the grand gates and into the verdant parkland. Instead, the hard work begins 30 days beforehand with their pre-arrival programme: 16,000 steps four times a week, four sets of ten crunches and 10 push ups twice a week and ten breaths before each meal. And that's just for starters.

There were 23 of us 'Ranchers'. Nearly all high-flying workaholics



searching for life change. Some were there for weight loss, others to jump-start their fitness regime, another just for an all-out body reset. My goal was to lose the pounds I had put on over lockdown. All confirmed as I was weighed and measured on my first day, before being whisked away for an ECG and blood tests.

The programme is centred around the early morning hikes – deep in The Apennines with its sweeping valleys, lush meadows and glorious views. And,

PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES, PALAZZO FUGGI



despite the 6am hour-long stretch, it was a challenge: super steep rocky inclines (and declines) – up to 12 miles a day. Camaraderie was encouraged rather than competitiveness so I could go at my own pace, sometimes trekking alone, other times chatting with fellow walkers. A few days in, I began to feel more energised, able to tackle the unstable terrain and the never-ending uphill slowly felt manageable. Even my mind became clearer.

Food was always the big talking point. The Ranch is legendary for its exquisite plant-based cuisine using seasonal ingredients from local farms. Whipped up by three Michelin-starred chef Heinz Beck, meals are eaten communally with, perhaps, a zucchini banana muffin with homemade jam for breakfast. Lunch? A (tiny) quinoa and kale caesar salad and, for supper, delicious aubergine parmigiana stacks with macadamia ricotta.

The afternoon was filled with brilliant HIIT classes alongside calming yoga. Or take time out and lounge beside the glistening pool or in the spa with its three thalassotherapy pools, using Fiuggi's healing water. Then there was Dr Di Salvio who combed through my test results – most came back as normal except I needed to eat more protein. But the main event was the daily massage where the therapists (ask for Tamara) go deep into your sore limbs. And it worked – my legs never ached in the morning. It's all about being looked after '360' here. This means the enthusiastic staff do everything, right down to 'foot care' (they take an industrial approach to blisters).

As the days went by, my legs were looking more toned. The food was actually filling me up plus the hikes and workouts got easier. On my last morning, I stood on the scales. Over the week I had lost five pounds – and 12 inches across my body in total. But, perhaps most importantly, I returned home with a new mindset, determined to eat healthier and stay fit and slim. Despite the gelato I thoroughly enjoyed at the airport before flying home. I really felt I deserved it.

**BOOK IT:** From £7,226pp (\$9,100 USD) based on double occupancy.  
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