

TRAVEL

Valcastello:

A WINTER'S TALE

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Just a 20km drive away from Cortina D'Ampezzo near the Three Peaks of Lavaredo, and Braies lake - both declared World Heritage Sites by UNESCO - lies a historical 19th century private five-hectare Italian chateau with the relaxed atmosphere of a hunting lodge. Valcastello was the backdrop of my teenage years in Europe and 30 years later, I have come full-circle and returned for a milestone birthday accompanied by family and friends for a party of a lifetime that I will never forget..





Out of a past era the decor and furnishings are colonial Africa with early 20th century Italy

Her name is Cinzia Chantal D'Acquarone...Countess D'Acquarone.

To me she is just Chanti, my best friend since meeting at a student launderette in Oxford, England when we were just 17.

Today this incredible human, sportswoman and entrepreneur is the mother of three outstanding children – the oldest of which is my first Godson Cesare

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She just also happens to own Valcastello: an opulent and aristocratic 19th Century Boutique Resort located in the South Tirol region of Northern Italy.

King Victor Emmanuel III of Italy stayed at Valcastello, in what is now known as the King's Suite...L'Avvocato Gianni Agnelli, head of Fiat stayed there...Prince Aga Khan and his wife Rita Hayworth stayed here in the days where Chantal's father, the late Count D'Aquarone and his wife Claire hosted their famous royal hunting parties in the 1950's.

Many Hollywood stars of the Golden Age of Hollywood came here too...from David Niven to Peter Sellers...to the 007's Roger Moore and Sean Connery.

The Italian Chateau has belonged to three generations of Countess Chantal D'Acquarone's family since 1910. The mansion still embodies an exclusive Polo Club with suites, the layback feel of a hunting lodge, the grandeur of a historic chateau and the pristine service and the ultimate alpine location of a ski chalet.









The chateau itself is of 19th-century vintage, and its interiors reflect that heritage: ornate woodwork, fine fabrics, and period artworks everywhere.



Play or watch polo tournaments on the Alps' only permanent private polo field at Valcastello.











The chateau has stunning living and dining areas, featuring floor-to-ceiling handwoven tapestries, original oil paintings, Gio' Ponti vintage furniture, Peter Beard photographs and various historical artefacts. Windows let plenty of natural light into the magnificent dining room and there is a delightful open bar where you can enjoy a drink or two. Guests can try their hand at 'Snow Polo' from December through to March and it is possible to organise tournaments varying from friendly chukkas to corporate competitions. The chateau also has a Finnish sauna, steam room, massage

Valcastello is the only permanent resort in the Italian Alps where polo-playing members and other guests can play snow polo throughout the winter.



Suite 1 on the first floor is the most prestigious suite, having formed the royal apartments of King Victor Emmanuel III and Queen Margherita in the 1930s.





THE POLO CLUB HAS AN ALL-SEASON POLO FIELD AND A STABLE OF TRAINED POLO PONIES FOR ALL LEVELS