



VIGILIUS MOUNTAIN RESORT, ITALY

There's nothing like pure air to clear out the cobwebs and balance your yin with your yang, says **Josephine Stockman**. And make you sleep like a baby...

My inner batteries were on the blink, and my mother was snuffling with a winter cold. A hot, sunny spa break seemed like the solution. But after some careful research, an Alpine escape sounded much more promising – all that pure air and head-clearing scenery. Far more invigorating.

Days later we were en route to our mountain hideout. Two hours north of Verona, the Vigilius Mountain Resort lies a dizzying 1,500m up in Italy's spectacular South Tyrol region. There are no roads, so cable car is the only way to arrive (vertigo sufferers beware) – but up here there's no pollution and even the air tastes different: larch-scented and apple-crisp.

Designed to resemble a fallen tree, the pine-and-glass Vigilius melts into the landscape; cosy, uncluttered rooms have hypnotic views in place of TVs. We slipped on the robes laid out for us and headed off for an evening dip. The cathedral-like pool area is a knockout: walls of glass gazing over feathery pines, blood-red loungers and, best of all, an indoor-outdoor whirlpool tub where we bubbled beneath frosty pine cones. I clocked up nine hours of deep sleep, compared with my usual fitful six.

The next day we were up early for a free yoga class – the perfect warm-up for hiking the network of trails on the hotel's doorstep, which wind through dense larch forests and

pastures dotted with timber chalets, the snowy peaks of the Dolomites beyond.

Mud-splattered, we returned for some well-earned pampering. My mother had a Hay Bath, which involved being wrapped, sausage-roll-style, in heated hay. Sounds barmy, but worked a treat, she said. I tried a Trehs Whirling session, wallowing in a high-tech tub, filled with larch-infused water while jets massaged me and coloured lights supposedly enhanced my mood. Result? Early to bed and 10 hours' kip.

A happy pattern ensued over our long weekend: yoga in the morning, breakfast followed by a hearty hike, then back for spa treatments and snoozing by the pool. I began to wake raring to go, my grey complexion replaced with a rosy glow. 'Apparently,' mused my mother, 'the cable car sometimes closes during high winds.' We performed a rain dance to invoke the weather gods, but only managed a magical snow flutter as we headed home.

● *Trehs Whirling costs £36 for 20 mins; Hay Bath £89 for 80 mins. Doubles from £282, B&B (00 39 0473 556600, www.vigilius.it). For more info visit www.suedtirol.info.*

THE RESULTS

Energy levels: Up 80%

Sleep gain: Three hours extra a night

Stress reduction: 9/10

Coffee intake: I've switched to decaf >