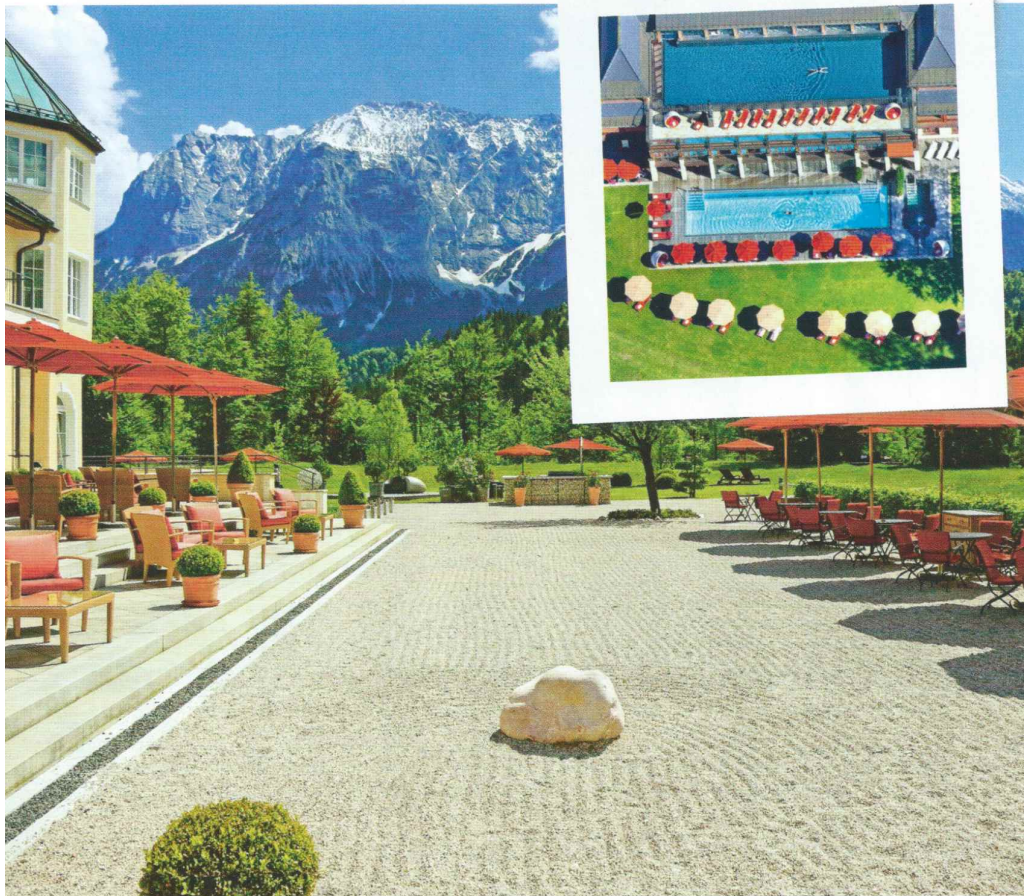


101 HOTELS FAMILY



SCHLOSS ELMAU

BAVARIA, GERMANY

You might think it's boring, going to the same hotel year after year. More fool you, because you're choosing the wrong place. Try Schloss Elmau. Yes, it's in Germany, but you won't mind once you see its setting, nudging up against the towering Wettersteinwand, surrounded by Grimm fairytale forests. You won't mind when you step into one of the four spas, with their top-of-the-class yoga, life-changing treatments and steaming outdoor pools. Or when you fancy a fondue in the wood-clad Kaminstube, or posh Thai in Fidelio, or the best buffet of your life in La Salle. You won't mind when your offspring disappear to hike up rivers or build forest camps with the kids' club. Nor when you're in the concert hall listening to world-class musicians, or biking through mountains or skiing in nearby Garmisch. And yet it all feels calm and intimate and effortlessly stylish. You won't get bored. Promise.

Healing Holidays (healingholidays.co.uk; 020 7529 8551) offers four nights, half board, from £1,100, including transfers.

AND ANOTHER THING OK, it's not nearby, but here's a shout-out to their brand-new sister hotel, the cultured and handsome Orania, in Berlin.

ZIGHY BAY

ZAGHI, OMAN

An epic bumpity-bump over sun-bleached mountains brings you in. From your first view, high up on a ridge, the resort is a miniature village dotted with date palms, fishermen zipping about in a dusty haze. Up close, the scale is something else. Villas are massive, hewn from wood and terracotta, frayed rope tying it all together. It's *The Flintstones* meets *Treasure Island* with a dash of *Oka* thrown in. Expect to get carried away: with the crazy scenery, the pulse-rate-slowing massages and the general lack of anything to do. Isn't isolation bliss? The kids' club whisks away small ones for treasure hunts, watersports and evening movie sessions, and new this year is *Dhabab*, the hotel's three-storey dhow (sleeping six). Cue snorkelling and fresh-caught tiger fish by day; shooting stars and rippling bioluminescence by night. Crank up the Sade – this is no ordinary cruise. *Carrier* (carrier.co.uk; 0161 492 1358) offers five nights from £1,965, including breakfast, flights and transfers.

AND ANOTHER THING Go paragliding. The hotel will take you up to the top of a nearby mountain and give you a gentle push.

