

GUIDA ALPINA



*Sentier*<sup>®</sup>



*“abbandonammo la strada  
per un sentiero mai percorso”*





*Le cose più belle succedono tra le pagine di un libro...*

*E sono successe anche quando abbiamo pensato di pubblicare la nostra guida alpina con la collaborazione di Meredith Erickson*

*Questa è la seconda edizione: Inverno*

*Posti, itinerari, ricette, racconti, è tutto concentrato qui quello che ci piace, in questo minuscolo libricino che ricorda un vecchio passaporto e che sta in un taschino.*

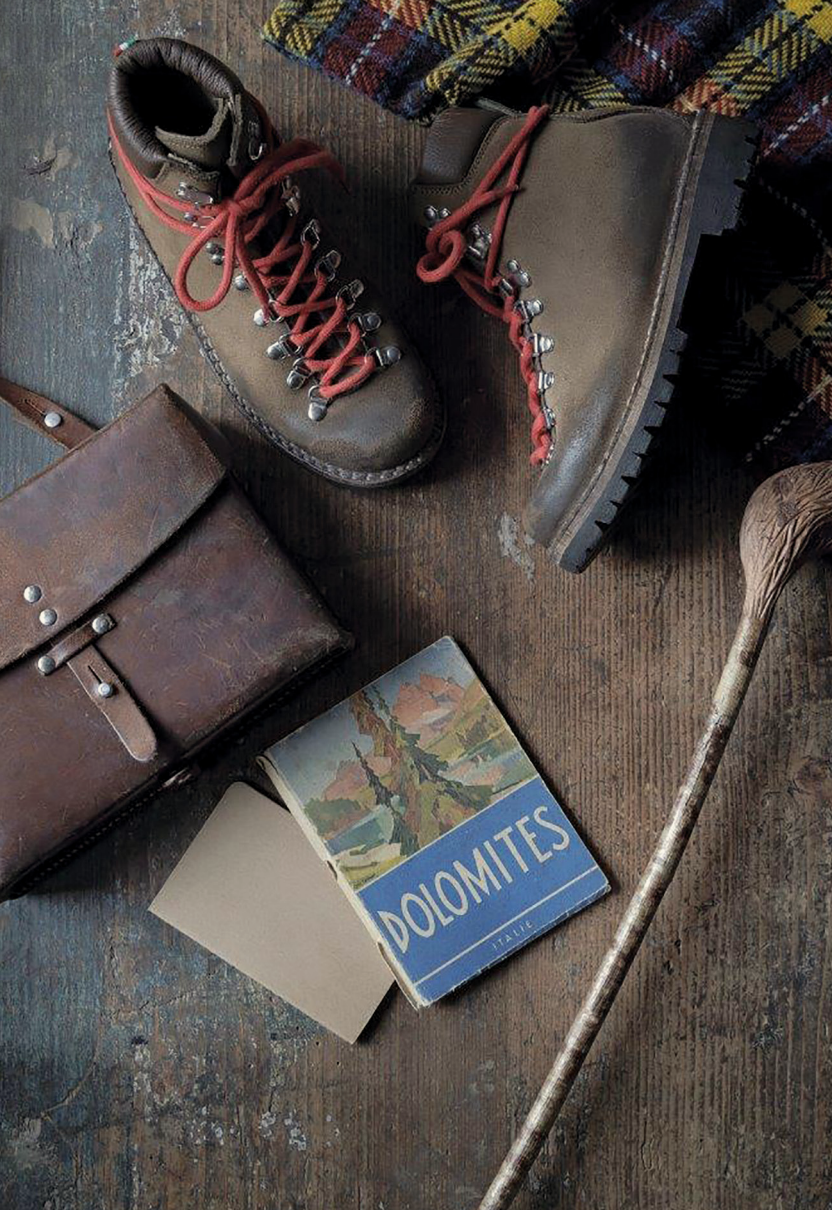


*For our first issue of the Sentier Alpine Guide we chose San Cassiano and Corvara as our featured alpine locales. For our second iteration we're selecting two high, high altitude towns that really shine with vivacity and deserve their iconic status in the winter sun.*

*Here is my Journal for Cortina and Cervinia.*

*by Meredith Erickson*

*The reputation of Cortina D'Ampezzo has always been that of a glamorous ski town, a sort of second-home getaway for the well-heeled Milanese and Romans. Known as "the jewel of the Dolomites" I've always thought of Cortina in feminine terms, a sort of alluring rich Venetian seductress relative to her down-to-earth mountaineering villages in neighbouring Alto Adige. It might be because the diamonds are not just found in the shape of the summits here, but also on the brooches of the local Ampezzana. Which brings up an important distinction: if you're from the area then you are Ampezzana, if you simply live in Cortina, you're Cortinese. There are rules here that one learns quickly (Always invite your ski instructor to lunch! Never wear jeans to dinner! The more fur, the better!)*



DOLOMITES  
ITALIA

*I've had the luck to visit Cortina over many seasons. But during my most recent stay, public works were in full swing. Already an Olympic village--the 1956 winter Olympics were held here—in February 2021 Cortina will host the World Ski Championship followed by the Milano/Cortina Olympics in 2026. There are approximately 6000 residents in Cortina, but in high season, that can balloon to 50,000. And the season was indeed high during my visit which is why Davide Peterlin (my ski guide from Snowdreamers) and I drove 20-minutes from Cortina to Cinque Torri (Five Towers), for untracked powder and higher elevation solitude.*

*Note: This is a must for any ski lover. Beginning at Cinque Torri, we skied the super 8 tour named after the figure 8 that winds around various peaks including Cinque Torri and Lagazuoi.*



FUNIVIA LAGA ZUOI SEILBAHN

ALT. 2152 MÖHE



*I highly suggest Rifugio Averau at 2413m for lunch. Basking on the terrace under what I'm now calling "Cortina-Blue" skies, I devour my Cappelli d'alpino, a sort of handmade knotted ravioli stuffed with spinach, 3 local cheeses, hazelnuts, topped with fresh tomato sauce. On the menu there are bottles from reputable alpine women winemakers like Elena Walch and Elisabetta Foradori, both from Trentino. There are a few places to indulge in the wine list in Cortina. This is one of them.*

*Later that night, feeling more après-ski than usual I head to Hotel Cortina for negroni time.*

*The bar is completely packed with mostly Italian guests, and with talk of (much needed) snow overnight, spirits are high. I'm notoriously not a fan of the bar scenes or big dinners in the Alps—I tend to think everything good happens early here—but I want to have a bite in one of my favourite haunts, Hotel de la Poste's bar room. Our waiter, uniformed in a white tuxedo, is named Dario Buosi and is from Treviso. He tells me I must have the Treviso Radicchio salad, and feeling you just don't say no to Dario, I oblige. It comes dressed with thinly sliced speck, 36-month aged Parmesan and Balsamic vinegar from Modena. For dessert we share a soufflé for two, perfectly cooked with chocolate and vanilla sauce as accompaniments.*

*The old school-ness of it all is worth the price of admission alone. The nostalgia of La DolceVita era: I'm now remembering why I love Cortina.*

Hotel  
de la  
Poste



*Before leaving for Cervinia, I want to see Ludovica Rubbini and her husband the chef Riccardo Gaspari, who have opened a second restaurant called **San Brite**. One of my favourite alpine couples, the bread soup with chicory and egg recipe from my book is theirs, and one I make the most at home. A 5-minute drive from the town center, San Brite is in a weathered wooden shack with a similar in feel to their first restaurant **El Brite de Larieto**, about 3 kilometers up the road. It is a tranquil sunny agricucina restaurant, the service is familiar with an undertone of seriousness. There are old milk churns stacked in the corner, restored lamps from '56 Olympics and a whole lot of reclaimed wood. The door is covered in dried bouquets from the nearby pastures. Inside there is a dairy counter open to non-restaurants guests and many are locals whom fill their wicker picnic baskets with buca neve (a kind of alpine brie), fienosa (cow or goat, aged in hey), breads, salami, fresh yogurt and Kohl apple juice, one of the first single varietal orchards from Ritten in nearby Alto Adige.*





*We try to catch up but the room fills quickly and there are orders of nido (spaghetti cooked in juniper and chicken broth, infused with mugo pine) to be prepared. It feels to me like it's only a matter of time before a Michelin star (or two or three) are in San Brite's future and food world descends. Is this Cortina 2.0? Bring on the Games!*

*I think most alpine towns exist within a feast and famine duality. Their geography provides a high perch upon which the world ascends, and yet, these are humble mountain towns. Even with the opportunity tourism brings, life here is not easy. It is isolated, it is demanding and no high altitude cosmos that I've ever visited exists in a lush micro-climate of fruit and vegetable. Sure, there are summer's green alpine pastures, but mostly it's snow and rock.*

*Cervinia, located in the very agricultural region of Aosta, epitomizes this duality.*

*As I live in Milan, I can be at the base of the mountain in Cervinia in 1.5 hours. And to visit Cervinia, regardless of season, is to have a skiable/hikeable buffet of options (both on and off piste), including access to the town of Zermatt, which is a whole other Swiss buffet right across the Swiss-Italian border. And no, you do not need to bring your passport. From Cervinia or Zermatt, the views of that great pyramid of the Alps, the Matterhorn, still thrill me with every glimpse.*



*On the Cervinia side, my favourite rifugio on the mountain is Chalet Etoile. And that's good news for skiers and non-skiers alike, as one can walk there on a snowy path uphill about 1.5 km from Plan Maison, the first cable car station. It is a family affair here, owned by a Swedish chef and her Italian husband and run (efficiently and excellently) by their two children. I love the venison stew with berries and the tiramisu. Others seem to love the lobster spaghetti.*

*The wine list is full of recognizable Italian producers that one would see on the list of a canteen in Piemonte or Toscana. And so I cannot complain about this unexpected treat at 2750m.*





*Below, the town of Cervinia feels like a throwback to the late 70s and for that, I love it.*

*It's kitsch, fun, sporty and I can't remember ever seeing a franchise here. If I'm sleeping in town for the night, I have a routine of grabbing a beer at **Hotel Sporting**, a 3-star hotel that hasn't changed, well probably since inception. And if I could sleep anywhere, it would probably be at the **Hotel Hermitage**, a cozy luxurious bolthole just up the curving road lined with pines.*

*In terms of eating or sleeping, well, the name Les Neiges d'Antan (Snowfalls of Yesteryear) gives away the spirit of this restaurant before you set foot inside. It is actually ten minutes down the road, closer to the charming village of Valtournenche. Being farther from the reach of the Zermatt/Cervinia connection, the town is more low-key. The current custodian of Les Neiges d'Antan, Ludo Bich, is a generous host, and if you find yourself within 15 miles or so of here, I really suggest you drive over for the food and the company. The walls are lined with Alpine paintings by Ludo's grandfather, Maurizio Bich, a famed mountain guide and climber. Ludo's father built the hotel, and Ludo has kept many of the recipes his grandparents would cook for him when his father was away.*





*One mainstay is the charcuterie board, made from meats caught by local hunters; a second is this Aosta trolley, really a complete larder on wheels. It's the equivalent of an American all-you-can-eat salad bar, except . . . it's actually good. Almost everything is made in-house, all of the products are from Aosta, and everything on the trolley is shelf-stable.*

*The wine list here runs deep with French and Italian greats. And though it's tempting to wander from the Alps over to the wines of Burgundy or Loire, I suggest that you stay in Aosta with a Prié Blanc from local producer Ermes Pavese.*

Duck liver pâté wrapped in lardo;  
Pickled Alpine trout;  
Smoked herring with carrots, onions, and bay leaves;  
Fried zucchini with red onions, vinegar, and sage;  
Anchovies, garlic, chiles, and oil;  
Beef tongue in salsa verde;  
Cannellini beans with onions and oil;  
Salignoùn ricotta with fennel, cumin, parsley, and chile peppers;  
Aosta fresh peppers with red vinegar and sugar in bagna cauda;  
Tomini cheese in vinegar with red chile and garlic.

*On your first or perhaps last day in the area, may I make a suggestion? An excursion to punctuate your visit?*

*On the Zermatt/Cervinia/Valtourneche piste map, red piste #1 begins at Cime Bianche (White Summit) and ends 1,500 meters later in Valtourneche. Where it actually ends is directly on the terrace of a little restaurant, as famous and old as the area, called *Foyer des Guides*.*

*The parents and grandparents of the current owners were Italian mountain guides back to the era of Jean-Antoine Carrel, the Italian guide who competed for the ascent of the Matterhorn/Mt. Cervinia against Edward Whymper. After skiing this run you'll be tired and hungry. But this restaurant isn't about the food, it's about the reward of making it down and taking in the history of mountain guiding presented on its walls.*



## MY SUGGESTIONS

*Stay*

*Cortina*

*Hotel de la Poste*

*Hotel Faloria*

*Franceschi Park Hotel*

*Cervinia*

*Les Neiges D'Antan*

*Hotel Hermitage*

*Eat*

*Cortina*

*San Brite*

*Rifugio Averau*

*Hotel Cortina*

*Cervinia*

*Chalet Etoile*

*Les Neiges D'Antan*

*Foyer des Guides*

*Recipes*

*Bread Soup with Chicory and Egg*

*Beet and Poppy-seed Casunziei (Casunziei “all'ampezzana”)*







# BREAD SOUP WITH CHICORY AND EGG

*(Panada con Cicoria e Uova)*

SERVES 4

## YOU WILL NEED

Straight-sided oval baking dish

Food processor or high-speed blender

5 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for serving

1 yellow onion, diced

7 ounces (200g) pancetta, diced

1 1/2 quarts (1.4L) low-sodium vegetable broth

1 bun Puccia Bread (recipe follows), cut into 2-inch (5cm) pieces, plus

1 cup (50g) Puccia Bread croutons

Fine sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 bunch wild chicory, chopped into ribbons

4 eggs

1 tablespoon minced chives

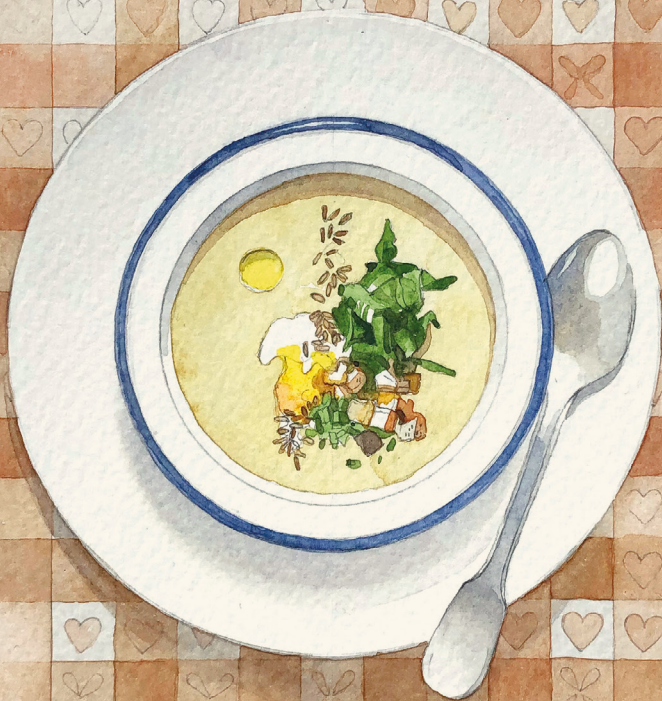
1 teaspoon fennel seeds, toasted

*In a Dutch oven over medium heat, warm 3 tablespoons of the olive oil. Add the onion and pancetta and sauté until starting to brown lightly, 5 to 7 minutes. Add the vegetable broth and bring to a boil. Add the bread, lower the heat, and simmer for 45 minutes.*

*Ladle the soup into a blender or food processor and process on high speed until smooth and creamy. Adjust the seasoning with salt and pepper. Return to the Dutch oven and keep warm over very low heat.*

*While the soup simmers, bring a large pot of salted water to a boil and fill a bowl with ice water. Add the chicory to the boiling water and blanch until wilted, 1 to 2 minutes. Lift out of the boiling water, plunge into the ice water to stop the cooking, and drain.*

*Place a wide saucepan filled with water over high heat.*



*While the water is heating, line a plate with a layer of paper towels. In a medium frying pan over medium heat, warm the remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil. Add the chicory and sauté until starting to brown. Season with salt and pepper.*

*When the water has started boiling, turn the heat to a simmer. Crack one egg into a small bowl, then gently pour it into the hot water, swirling the water around it with a spatula or wooden spoon to encourage the egg to take a nice shape. Repeat with the remaining three eggs. When the water returns to a simmer, set a timer and poach the eggs for 2 minutes, until the whites have just set. Carefully transfer to the prepared plate. Ladle the soup into bowls. Gently place one egg in the center of each bowl, then lay some wilted chicory next to it, add some croutons, then sprinkle each bowl with the minced chives and fennel seeds. Add a splash of olive oil to each soup and serve.*

## Puccia Bread

*Makes 2 buns*

*Puccia is a kind of sandwich bread you will find all over Italy, it's similar to pizza dough in its consistency.*

1 1/2 teaspoons active dry yeast  
1 1/3 cups (315ml) warm (105° to 110°F/40° to 45°C) water  
2 cups (240g) whole-wheat flour  
2 cups (240g) rye flour  
1 1/2 teaspoons fine sea salt  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
2 tablespoons fennel seeds  
Coarse semolina for sprinkling

*In a small bowl, stir the yeast into the warm water and let sit for 5 minutes until bubbles form.*

*In a stand mixer fitted with the dough hook, combine both flours, the salt, and olive oil. Pour in the water-yeast mixture. Mix at low speed for 2 minutes, then increase the speed to medium-high and continue to mix for 5 to 8 minutes, until the dough is smooth. Set the bowl with the dough in a warm place and cover with plastic wrap. Allow to proof for 2 hours. Lightly flour a work surface. Cut the proofed dough into two halves. Sprinkle 1 tablespoon fennel seeds onto each piece of dough, and knead each of the dough pieces to incorporate, until smooth. Place on the prepared surface, cover with a towel, and let the two balls of dough proof, until doubled in size, 45 to 60 minutes.*

*Preheat the oven to as high as it will go: 475°F (245°C) or up to 500°F (260°C). Sprinkle a baking sheet with semolina.*

*Flatten each piece of dough gently into a disk shape, then sprinkle on both sides with semolina.*

*Place each loaf onto the prepared baking sheet. Bake until the puccia have puffed up and turned golden brown, with some darkening around the edges, about 20 minutes. These will keep, tightly wrapped in plastic for up to 2 days. Reheat gently before serving.*

#### VARIATION

*Croutons: Let the buns cool completely, then cut into small cubes and let sit at room temperature for about 2 hours to dry out.*

## BEET AND POPPY SEED CASUNZIEI

*Casunziei means “filled fresh pasta” in the Ladin dialect, which is mainly spoken in the Dolomites. Not to be confused with the town of Canazei, a ski town in the Dolomites, these beet and potato half-moons are Bellunese in origin, in the Italian region of Veneto, just over an hour southeast of Cortina. This is close to the Carnic Alps, which along with the Julian Alps, are smaller than the central Alps of this book’s focus. These mountains begin in Veneto and Friuli and spread east to Slovenia. They hold fascinating food and wine worlds in their grasp, but that’s the story of another book! I’ve had this dish in two restaurants and both times it was delicious. The first taste was at El Brite, and the second was at Laite, an incredible family-run restaurant in the hamlet of Sappada, on the border of Veneto and Friuli. For those who want to eat incredibly well just off-piste in our Italian Alps map, I guarantee you will fall in love with this restaurant (and family).*

*The poppy seeds in this dish represent a very Austrian/Friulian ingredient. To underline the influence of flavor, think of the merchants of Venice trading spices from the East—nutmeg, pepper, cinnamon, and poppy seed—this is the Adriatic direction of this dish.*

*Now, on the plate, this may look like the mezzaluna presented in the previous recipe, but it is a potato filling, not a ricotta one, and the resulting dumpling has more in common flavor-wise with pierogi than ravioli. The filling is what makes this dish interesting, as the use of Alpine roots such as turnips, beets, and/or celeriac combined with poppy seeds and potato isn’t what we normally consider Italian flavor. But it is! Welcome to the mountains.*

# Beet and Poppy Seed Casunziei

*(Casunziei all'Ampezzana)*

SERVES 4 to 6

EASY

## YOU WILL NEED

Potato ricer or vegetable mill

2-inch (6cm) ring mold or cookie cutter

Pasta machine or stand-mixer with pasta attachment

### Filling:

1 pound (450g) beets, unpeeled

12 ounces (340g) russet potatoes, unpeeled

1/4 cup (55g) unsalted butter

1/2 cup (50g) grated Parmigiano-Reggiano or smoked ricotta cheese

Fine sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Freshly grated fresh nutmeg

1/4 cup (25g) dried bread crumbs

### Semolina flour for dusting:

1 recipe mezzaluna dough (see below), rolled out

1/2 cup (110g) unsalted butter

16 to 24 sage leaves

1 tablespoon poppy seeds

1/2 cup (50g) grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese

### Mezzaluna dough:

2 cups (240g) all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting

2 cups (240g) durum wheat semolina flour or rye flour, plus more for dusting

5 eggs

2 tablespoons olive oil

*To make the mezzaluna dough: Spoon both flours onto a clean surface or into a large shallow bowl and make a wide well in the center. Crack the eggs and pour the olive oil into the well. Using a fork, swirl the eggs and oil, slowly incorporating the flour into the center of the well. When the flour is completely incorporated, gather and knead the mixture together to form one large ball. Knead for 5 to 10 minutes on the counter. Wrap the ball in plastic and place in the refrigerator for 45 to 60 minutes to rest.*

*Heavily dust a baking sheet with semolina flour. Divide the rested dough into fourths. Keep the dough covered while working with one piece at a time.*

*Roll the dough through the widest roller setting of your pasta machine (or attachment, if you're using a stand mixer), dusting with all-purpose flour along the way to ensure the dough doesn't stick, but not too much as you don't want the dough to become dry. Fold the sheet of dough in half onto itself, and roll it through this initial setting ten to fifteen times, folding it again after each pass.*

*Change the machine setting to the next, narrower setting and roll the sheet through once. You'll notice your sheet will become longer and longer as you work it through each successive setting. Keep rolling until Setting 7 (on most pasta machines); you want the sheet to be thin enough to just see your hand through it. Lay the pasta sheet out on the prepared baking sheet. Repeat the rolling procedure with the remaining three pieces of dough.*

*To prepare the filling: Set a steamer basket over a large pot of boiling water. Add the beets and potatoes and steam until tender (a knife can easily be inserted with no resistance), about 30 minutes. Peel while still hot (using some paper towel to protect your hands) and pass both through a potato ricer.*

*In a large sauté pan or Dutch oven over medium heat, melt the butter. Stir in the riced beets and potatoes and cook gently until well combined, 3 to 4 minutes. Stir in the cheese and season with salt, pepper, and nutmeg. Add the bread crumbs and stir until the filling is smooth and well combined. Set aside to cool.*

*After the filling as cooled, dust a work surface with semolina flour and spread the sheets of rolled dough out on it. To form the typical crescent shape, use 2-inch (6cm) ring mold to cut out circles of dough. Place 1 teaspoon of filling in the center of each circle, then gently close each casunziei by folding the dough over the filling and pressing on the edges of the half-circles to seal.*

*Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Gently add the pasta to the pot and simmer until al dente, about 5 minutes.*

*In the meantime, in a large sauté pan over medium heat, melt the butter. Add the sage leaves and, using a slotted spoon, transfer the stuffed pasta to the pan. Stir gently to coat.*

*Divide the pasta into shallow bowls, then sprinkle with the poppy seeds and Parmigiano-Reggiano and spoon the sage leaves and melted butter over top of each. Serve immediately.*



## MEREDITH'S ALPINE READING RECOMMENDATIONS

*Below are some of my favorite Alpine books  
(excluding guidebooks) across genres.*

*The Alps: A Cultural History* by Andrew Beattie

*The Auberge of the Flowering Hearth* by Roy Andries de Groot

*Cuisine Alpine* by Andreas Döllner

*The Dolomites and their legends* by Karl Felix Wolff

*Heidi* by Johanna Spyri

*A Farewell to Arms* by Ernest Hemingway

*Premier de Cordée, La Grande Crevasse, and Retour à la Montagne,*  
*a trilogy* by Roger Frison Roche

*Scramble Among the Alps* by Edward Whymper

*Killing Dragons: The Conquest of the Alps*

*Swiss Cheese: Origins, Traditional Cheese Varieties and New  
Creations* by Dominik Flammer and Fabian Scheffold

*Slow Train to Switzerland* by Diccon Bewes

*Voyage au Coeur des Alpes* by Jean Blanchard and Léo Garin

*Manfred: A Dramatic Poem* by Lord Byron

*Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley





# *Sentier*

STORES



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## ITALY

Marinotti – Cortina d'Ampezzo  
Boutique Monika – Corvara Alta Badia  
Pesaventomountainstore – Asiago  
Simple – Livigno  
JStore – Jesolo  
Maison Taormina – Taormina  
Spaziogiroto – Postioma (Tv)  
San Luis Retreat Hotel & Lodges – Avelengo  
Stile Alpino – Madonna di Campiglio  
Massimo Alba – Courmayeur  
Spazio 11b – Trieste  
La Boutique Fantasque – Ravenna  
Metallia – Bormio  
Life – Novi Ligure  
SelikAstori – Bergamo  
Diana – Crema  
Lilly – Ciriè (TO)  
Magic Mountain Collective – San Sicario  
Punto.Atipico – San Candido  
La Bottega del Fiocco – Limone Piemonte  
Bazzani – Casale Monferrato

## REST OF THE WORLD

Gorsuch – Vail  
Gorsuch – Aspen  
Gorsuch – Avon  
Gorsuch – Park City  
Farmers Market – Reykjavik



*Meredith & Sentier*

*Christina Holmes - Photos  
Giorgio Oppici - Photos  
Pier Paola Canè - Illustrations  
Minedivine - graphic*



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