



SOMETHING FOR THE WEEKEND



JON MURRAY kicks back and laps up the high-quality cuisine at a ski resort that is a perfect place to spend special occasions

Cold
comfort



Hotel Restaurant Spa Rosengarten, Kirchberg has 26 rooms and suites. Rooms cost from 190 to 300 euros (£160-£255) per night, including a gourmet breakfast; suites are from 380 to 620 euros (£320-£525) per night. The facilities include a reception, piano bar and smoking lounge, two restaurants – Restaurant Rosengarten and Bistro Rosengarten Light – spa, cookery school. The spa has a finnish sauna, marble steam room, relaxation area with waterbeds, private spa suite and a range of treatments
 Website: rosengarten-taxacher.com
 Contact: tel +43 5357 4201, email welcome@rosengarten-taxacher.com
 Getting there: British Airways has regular flights from London to Innsbruck from £98 return and to Salzburg from £118 return.

IMAGINE a holiday where every meal you have is up to Le Manoir Aux Quat'Saisons standards – or better. Imagine the accommodation, health facilities and hospitality are of a standard to match. That is what you can expect if you stay at Hotel Restaurant Spa Rosengarten in Austria. Located in the picturesque Tirolean village of Kirchberg, just seven kilometres from Kitzbühel, Rosengarten is a destination in itself, surrounded by beauty. It is one that will appeal both to skiers and summer visitors, and to anyone with a love of sublime food, because everything at Rosengarten revolves around cuisine. Chef-proprietor Simon

Taxacher's meteoric rise to culinary stellar stardom is making him as famous in Austria as Heston Blumenthal is here. Awarded two Michelin stars at the age of 33, the only restaurant in Tirol ever to achieve this distinction, Taxacher's fast lane to success has brought him national and international accolades. This year Restaurant Rosengarten earned three Gault Millau toques and when I was there late last year he was being feted by Relais & Châteaux, who were warmly welcoming his hotel into their exclusive family. Relais & Châteaux also presented him with a plaque marking him as one of their Grand Chefs, an honour bestowed on an elite few culinary

masters worldwide – among them are legendary names such as Michel Troisgras and Michel Rostang in France, Michel Roux jr (Le Gavroche), Heston Blumenthal (The Fat Duck) and Raymond Blanc (Le Manoir Aux Quat'Saisons) in the UK, and Annie Feolde in Italy. However, my own holiday travel began and ended badly, though through no-one's fault. Bad weather conditions meant the flight into Innsbruck diverted to Munich, while back in Britain on the return home, an accident caused the M4 to be closed for five hours. But the time in between, in Austria, was memorable. Dinner on the first night was taken in Rosengarten's Bistro Light restaurant and began with a

carpaccio of beef then a pumpkin soup that was sensational. Yet even these culinary masterpieces were overshadowed by the following night's dinner in the main Restaurant Rosengarten. Each of the seven courses was a homage to perfection and individuality, reflecting Taxacher's lightness of touch and his sense for fascinating combinations. Whether it was the marinated goose liver with gianduja dark chocolate, melt-in-the-mouth turbot with black garlic, or the saddle of venison accompanied by Jerusalem artichoke and olive dust, the flavours were delicious. It is a loving attention to detail, as seen throughout the hotel, that makes Rosengarten stand out. The contemporary rooms are stylish, the ambience in the bars

and restaurants relaxed. And in the kitchen, Taxacher pays great attention to exclusively sourced ingredients for innovative French-Mediterranean cuisine. The village itself has much to commend it. From here you can ski into Kitzbühel, and enjoy 180km of inter-connecting slopes. I've heard Kirchberg described as Kitzbühel's little brother. Rosengarten, its top hotel and restaurant, is a little gem. And while it's not cheap, it's not exclusively wealthy either (£160 for a basic room isn't that much more than you'd pay for a decent B&B in Dorset). Rather, somewhere to book for that special anniversary, that milestone birthday, or just to impress that new love in your life.