

LONG WEEKEND

**LA RESERVE
EDEN AU LAC
ZURICH**
BY ANNA MOLONEY

Can you name a Zurich landmark? I didn't think so. The Swiss capital is not on many of our travel radars, but finding myself in the city for work, I thought I may as well stay for the weekend. This pretty-as-a-picture city is a perfect, short-stop getaway which can happily be squeezed into a weekend.

THE HOTEL

Standing proud and picturesque above Lake Zurich since 1909, La Reserve Eden au Lac is a bit of an institution, but one that has grown stylish rather than stale, thanks not least to a complete redesign by the eclectic Philippe Starck in 2020. Neutral tones, dark woods and spacey fireplaces, the freshly vamped, modern interiors provide a welcome balance to the hotel's outward white stone majesty. Starck calls the look "imaginary yacht club", which means nothing to me, but the blue and white pinstripes are very pretty.

That's all by the by anyway. La Reserve, really, is all about one thing: the view. Crystal blue waters, little white sails and mountains in the distance, maybe this is what yacht club life is like. Three quarters of the rooms have the lakeside view, and I'm not sure you should waste your time booking one of the others. I stayed in one of the balcony rooms and even the refreshing late February weather couldn't keep me off it (I'll happily pair a dressing gown with ear muffs to feel like an eccentric movie star for my morning coffee). The balcony is set higher than the room itself, with stairs leading up to it, making the whole room feel sunken, which not only feels uniquely cosy but also gives extra privacy. That's important, as you'd be doing yourself a disservice not to take a bath with the blinds wide open so you can gaze at the Alps in the distance.

TOP TIP



If it's sunny – or if you're just brave – why not take a dip in the lake.

A pontoon offering lake access and sauna facilities is just two minutes from La Reserve.

THE FOOD

I was lucky enough to enjoy dinner at the hotel's Michelin star Eden Kitchen, which offers very expensive Italian food. If you sit by the open kitchen, you can hear the chefs barking at each other in Italian, so you can at least trust that it's authentic. The blue lobster paccheri was unquestionably the star of the show but the beetroot carpaccio with almond, truffle and blue cheese was a noble runner up.

Gauche as I am, I naturally had to try the most expensive dish on the menu, the chateaubriand of turbot (96 Swiss francs pp), and honestly I wouldn't bother – just order more of that lobster. Wash it all down with the hotel's own-grown champagne (I shan't be bothering with hotels that don't own their own vineyards in the future) and you'll be suitably giddy.

The food is a little let down by the ambience. Situated on the ground floor, you risk feeling a little like you're still in the lobby if sat too near the entrance. The maximalist interiors of La Muna upstairs, the hotel's Japanese-Peruvian offering (basically obligatory for luxury hotels), are far more interesting, with layered rugs, room-splitting wooden beams and twinkling lanterns creating something modern yet fairytalelike. It also comes with a plushly decked out rooftop terrace attached, making it an easy choice on a sunny day.

THE AREA

La Reserve is perfectly placed for a stroll through the winding cobbled lanes of Zurich. Then head to Central Square and take the Polybahn, a cherry red funicular which looks straight out of toy town, to get to ETH Zurich, which not only boasts rather impressive alumni (Albert Einstein) but also a rather lovely viewpoint.

