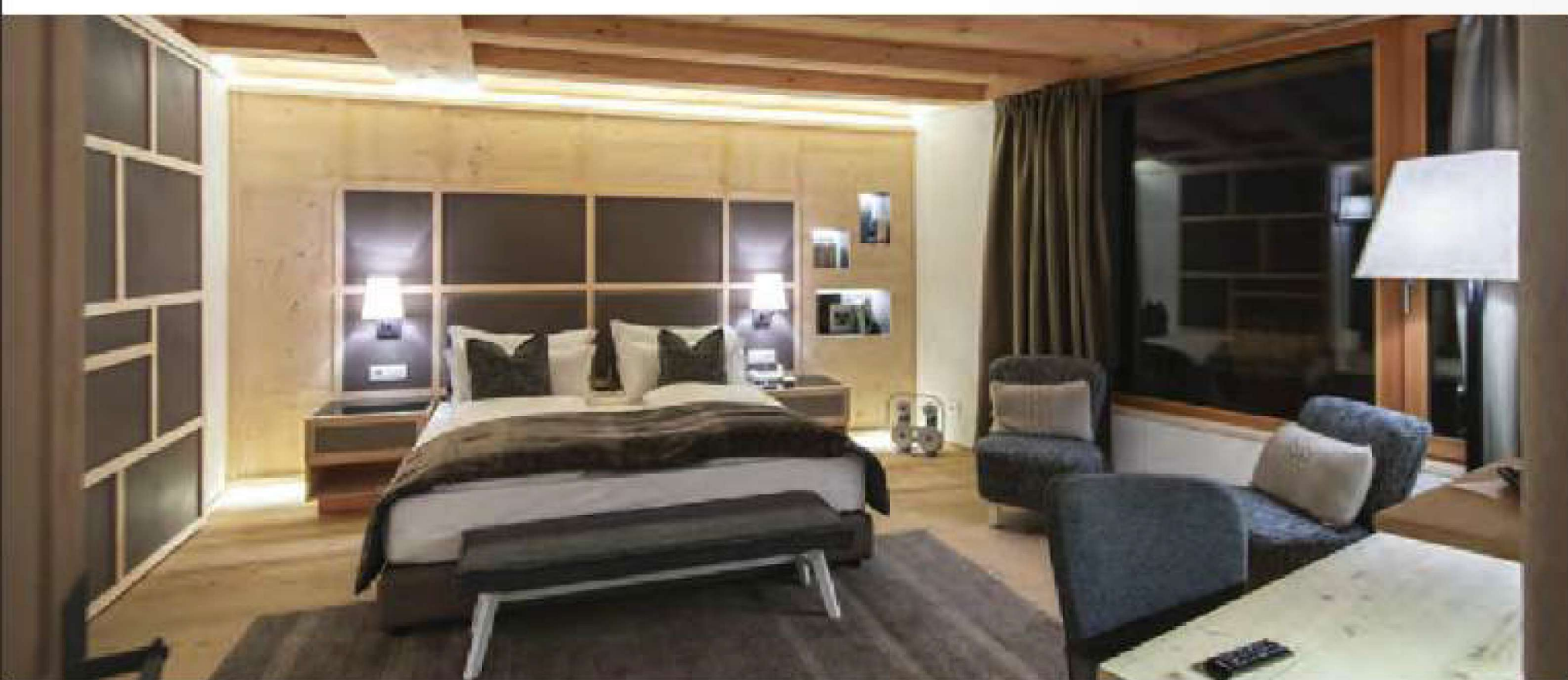


LUXURY

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ITALY

Rome can feel delightfully empty during the colder months. Meanwhile in the Dolomites, high season is booming and reservations are a must among the region's wealth of Michelin-starred restaurants.

FLY IN: Rome—3 Nights

When in Rome, do as Romans do: Enjoy the city in winter when it is void of tourists. Small boutiques and artisan studios can offer shoppers more personal attention than in busy summer months, and steaming street foods like pizza *al taglio* and deep-fried *suppli* pair well with cold temperatures. Buildings are decorated with Christmas cheer, and all roads lead to the 262-foot tree and life-size nativity scene in St. Peter's Square (don't miss the scene during midnight mass—a sight to behold regardless of religious beliefs). Founded in Rome, Context Travel (contexttravel.com) organizes small walking seminars led by local scholars in major cities all over the world. Their Food Culture of Rome

itinerary, led by Italian food writer and chef Maureen B. Fant, visits local markets for ingredients that the group takes to Fant's home near the Coliseum to prepare as a Roman winter meal (from \$678). Of the Coliseum and Imperial Rome, Context offers group (from \$96) and private (from \$424) tours. The Afterhours Vatican Museums Visit is also available to both groups (from \$458) and private tours (from \$3,732).

STAY: The fashionable 30-room **J.K. Place Roma** (from \$789, jkroma.com) opened two years ago in a 19th-century building once home to the University of Rome's architecture school (the renovation was led by famed Florence-based architect Michele Bonan). The 122-room **Hotel de Russie** (from \$577, roccofortehotels.com) will unveil its Christmas tree in December (last year 350 Fendi handbags hung from a 16-foot pine).



ESCAPE TO: South Tyrol, Dolomites—4 Nights

Italy's northernmost province is a culinary hotspot boasting 20 Michelin-starred restaurants. From Rome, take a 40-minute flight to South Tyrol's capital city, Bolzano, where the South Tyrol Museum of Archaeology (iceman.it) famously houses a well-preserved prehistoric mummy named Ötzi the Iceman. After the museum, drive 90 minutes southeast to San Cassiano, the new heart of the foodie mecca thanks to chef Norbert Niederkofler's two-Michelin-starred Restaurant St. Hubertus at **Rosa Alpina Hotel** (from \$430, rosaalpina.it). Walking distance to the hotel, San Cassiano's Alta Badia ski resort (alta.com) is known for its ski school and linking to the larger Dolomiti Superski area (dolomitisuperski.com) that connects 1,200 runs and 450 lifts. Foodies can ski to Michelin-starred restaurants like chef Chris Oberhammer's Tilia (tilia.bz), Trenkerstube at **Hotel Castel** (hotel-castel.com), and others in villages across South Tyrol. Nonskiers can check into South Tyrol's 56-room wellness center Alpina Dolomites **Garden Health Lodge & Spa** (from \$200; alpinadolomites.it) for relaxing treatments among panoramic mountain views by day and fine dining in local restaurants by night. ▸



Clockwise from top left: The Dolomites; J.K. Place Roma; fine dining; Alta Badia ski resort; Rome; the Rosa Alpina Hotel.