



The 60-kilometre Selvaggio Blu hiking route can involve tough scrambles. Reward yourself with a stay at the artist-owned Su Gologone hotel.

PHOTOS BY SUZANNE MORPHET/THE GLOBE AND MAIL

Some look warm and gooey but they are cold and hard in the chill air. Two shallow lakes reflect the chalky white walls and – if we were to bend down and look closely – our own wonder.

On what's supposed to be our final day of hiking, we're shut out by the weather once more. In 11 years of guiding here, Mik says he hasn't seen anything like it. Instead, we drive 25 kilometres inland and arrive early at what should have been our reward for four tough days of hiking – a night at the renowned Su Gologone hotel in the Barbagian countryside. We haven't earned it, but we'll take it anyway.

Founded and owned by a local Sardinian family, Su Gologone feels more like a home than a hotel. Art and crafts adorn the walls, from framed scenes of traditional Sardinian life, to fine art by some of the island's major artists, and from hand-painted cushions to embroidered shawls to wrought-iron sculptures, all crafted by island weavers and artisans. (Giovanna Palimodde, the daughter of the founders, is an artist in her own right and her love of colour and design is evident throughout the sprawling property.)

After checking in to my "Shepherd's Room" with its juniper wood beams and white plaster walls, I immerse myself in my outdoor hot tub, watch the rain fall and reflect on the past few days. I could bemoan the weather and curse climate change, but what's the point?

Plus, I've had a chance to see a side of Sardinia that I would otherwise have missed, a side that tells me more about the people and history than hiking its cliffs ever could have. Truth versus beauty, perhaps.

Special to The Globe and Mail

The writer was a guest of Dolomite Mountains. The company did not review or approve the story.

These goods were made for walking

The latest hiking gear combines pops of colour with practical features, **Domini Clark** writes

FJALLRAVEN ABISKO LITE TREKKING TROUSERS

Behold, hiking pants that aren't beige and boring. These trousers – available in men's and women's versions – come in the Swedish's company signature G-1000 Lite cotton/polyester fabric, giving them breathability and stretch and making them ideal for warmer weather pursuits. On really hot days undo the thigh zippers to get the air flowing; on rainy ones use the boot hooks to keep water out. \$220; fjcanada.ca



BOLLÉ HOLMAN FLOATABLE SUNGLASSES

No, sunglasses that float are not a hiking necessity – but should you choose to cool off in a waterfall or river, you'll have one less thing to worry about. Regardless, the anti-reflective treatment and polarized lenses will serve you well on dry land as well. The nylon frames are light and easy to clean, and the bright colours – they are also available in aqua and orange – make them easy to spot in your tent or backpack. \$160; bolle.com



ARC'TERYX AERIOS FL GTX

Not every day on the trails calls for a heavy-duty boot, particularly in sunny summer months. If you haven't already, discover the joy of the lightweight hiking shoe. The Vibram Megagrip sole will have you moving faster without compromising stability, and Gore-Tex will aid in keeping your feet dry. The fun and sleek design is a bonus. Starting at \$200; arcteryx.com



TILLEY HIKER'S HAT

With a name like that, it's no surprise this topper boasts some features walkers will love. The best is the HyperKewl insert, which (after being soaked in water) is tucked into a special pocket to boost the body's natural evaporation process and help you feel a few degrees cooler. The water-repellent hat – made in Canada with 98 per cent organic cotton – also features a wind cord and a large brim to keep the sun off your face. \$115; tilley.com



BORA AR 49 BACKPACK

Hitting the sweet spot of about 50 litres – not so big that you'll long for a sherpa, not so small that you'll regret having to leave items behind – this pack is great for multiday adventures on and off the trail. Numerous adjustment options ensure a snug fit and the (patent pending) RotoGlide hip belt moves with you to reduce friction. Zippered pockets at the top and down the front make it easy to stash and grab frequently used goods. \$700; arcteryx.com



MEC WANDERWALL SHORTS

On days when comfort is key, you can't do much better than this. Designed for hiking and watersports such as canoeing, these quick-drying shorts – made of ripstop nylon (61 per cent recycled) and spandex – feature mesh interior pockets, a drawcord elastic waist and a gusseted crotch for a greater range of motion. (For a men's style with similar features, try the MEC Mica 2 short.) \$55; mec.ca

YOUR TURN

Dolomite Mountains offers custom guided tours of Selvaggio Blu in spring and fall. A seven-day tour starts at approximately \$4,000 a person (based on eight people). Trips can be shortened or lengthened and customized to client requests, including providing luxury accommodation in most places; dolomite-mountains.com.

Su Gologone Experience Hotel is near the village of Oliena and offers a wide variety of rooms and suites, some with private terrace and hot tub. Guests can register for classes in sewing, embroidery, origami, mosaic, drawing and painting. From approximately \$300 a night; su-gologone.it.



* All prices are in CAD dollars, per person based on double occupancy, and for Canadian residents only. Space is subject to availability. Additional restrictions may apply. Includes one shore excursion in every port, Free WiFi, alternative dining at no extra charge, room service, beer, wine and soft drinks with onboard lunch and dinner, specialty coffee, tea and bottled water. Port taxes and fees, Viking Air Program gateways: Calgary, Edmonton, Halifax, Montreal, Ottawa, Quebec City, Regina, Saskatoon, Toronto, Vancouver, Victoria, Winnipeg, others may be available, please call.

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