



*The Grand Hotel Gardone*

*Graham & Sylvia Barrett invite you to join them for*

## **Dancing At The Grand Hotel Gardone**

An historic and elegantly appointed grand hotel on the banks of beautiful Lake Garda

**22<sup>nd</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> April 2017**

- 6 evenings modern sequence dancing • Historic lakeside hotel (opened 1884)
- Elegant private ballroom with a panoramic lake view terrace • An outdoor heated pool with lake views
- Lake view restaurant & lake view cocktail terrace • Table d'hôte half board • Optional excursion programme

Many unusual attributes align to generate the entirely unique experience that is a stay of any length at the Grand Hotel Gardone. A stay that for any traveller would represent an entirely memorable holiday experience but which for a dancer might well represent a truly exceptional one. The physical beauty of the Italian Lakes region has been attested to by artists, writers, and travellers over the course of many generations, and the Grand Hotel Gardone stands in a particularly privileged position on Lake Garda's lakefront overlooking Garda Island. Not only is the hotel privileged because of its outlook, but also because of the microclimate of the section of lakefront of which it is the centerpiece. Quite simply, Gardone enjoys the best average temperatures on the lake and also enjoys shelter from the many winds that render watersports so popular in the more northerly areas of the lake.

Because of this, the Gardone Riviera and nearby historic lakeside town of Saló had already become destinations of choice both for travellers and those in search of elegant lakeside residences as early as the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Bordering the southern fringes of the Austro-Hungarian Empire many members of its elite would travel south to the benign climates of Lake Garda, and Gardone in particular, for rest cures, and to gather socially for a season of parties and dancing that would extend from September to May. These then were the core clients of the hotel until the world changing events of the First World War, a largely German speaking elite, featuring such notable personalities such as the King Of Saxony and his entourage. Both money and clients were plentiful at that time, and a huge recreational park, that later had to be sold in order to finance the redevelopment of the hotel, was constructed to its rear.



*Delightful lakeside Saló*



*The hotel's lakefront promenade*

The First World War brought this world to an end unfortunately, but fortuitously for the hotel, brought one of the most charismatic figures of the early twentieth century to Gardone, the poet, novelist, politician, and military adventurer Gabriele D'Annunzio, a personality somewhat akin to Salvador Dali in a number of ways but with an added militaristic edge. A major cultural figure in early 20<sup>th</sup>-century Italy, his daring nationalistic military exploits also brought him to the attention of the wider Italian population to the extent that Mussolini paid him generous stipends to stay clear of politics and indulge his artistic interests in the creation of a monument to Italian achievements (and himself) on the Gardone Riviera (the 'Il Vittoriale Degli Italiani' villa complex and gardens). The property chosen by Gabriele D'Annunzio to convert into his monument was the former home of the owner of the Grand Hotel Gardone, and a further tight association between the two properties was forged in that the majority of D'Annunzio's celebrity guests would stay at the hotel, giving its revenues a major lift.

Mussolini, who was funding much of this hospitality, also favoured the Gardone and Saló resort areas. In 1943, with the tide of the Second World War turning against him, he based the government of his ill-fated Italian Social Republic in Saló, attracting another influx of wealthy influential people to the area. During the war the Grand Hotel Gardone served as a major military hospital, at which Mussolini's own son was treated, and it was the despoilment of that era, allied to a massive drop in tourism following the war, that led to the necessity of the sale of the hotel's park.

The newly refurbished hotel however soon reclaimed an appreciative celebrity guest list with the resumption of its many high quality services, and Winston Churchill and his wife were amongst the first of its post-war guests. The hotel today remains as manicured as it ever was, with much reduced, but nonetheless beautifully maintained grounds featuring a delightful lakefront promenade. Its restaurant operates to a particularly high standard and its public areas exude a sense of classic understated elegance. Other outstanding facilities include 'Winnie's Bar', offering beautiful lake views and a tantalizing array of highly creative cocktails, a main restaurant that allows for dining and breakfasting 'al fresco' adjacent to the lake, and a heated outdoor pool and sun lounging area once again overlooking the lake. Of particular interest to dancers is the hotel's magnificent first floor parquet floored ballroom. An exceptional room in itself, featuring many large windows offering lake views, it also opens up onto a vast elevated terrace offering breathtaking views over the expansive southern area of the lake.

The hotel is also well served by public transport links, with boats and hydrofoils both embarking immediately outside the hotel grounds and a public bus service to Saló stopping close to the hotel's front door. On the hillsides above the hotel in Upper Gardone stands the imposing and fascinating Il Vittoriale Degli Italiani (Gabriele D'Annunzio's property) whilst the major botanical gardens in the area, the Heller Gardens, lie but a short stroll from the hotel's front door.

On the lakeshore adjacent to the hotel sits the charming little resort of Lower Gardone.

**Summary Of The Hotel Facilities:** 167 rooms (including 26 junior suites), main lakeside restaurant serving 'table d'hôte' dinners and buffet breakfasts, à la carte candlelit lakeside restaurant, Winnie's lakeside bar and terrace (with live music in the evening), spacious lounge and reading room, heated lakeside pool & whirlpool, large lake view sun lounging area, private lakeside promenade, small wellness & beauty centre, spacious parquet floored ballroom with lake views.



*The Grand Hotel Ballroom*

## Nearby Places Of Interest

**Il Vittoriale Degli Italiani** – References to Il Vittoriale range from ‘monumental citadel’ to ‘fascist lunapark’, its owner and designer Gabriele D’Annunzio described by one writer as ‘a dare-devil poet-soldier, philanderer and proto-fascist’. Whatever one’s reaction to this vast monument to an unbridled ego and the heroes of Italian history, it is sure to fascinate.

**Heller Botanical Gardens** – Owner artist André Heller purchased this botanical garden, created by the private dentist to the last Zsar of Russia, remodeled it and filled it with statues and specially conceived original artworks that explore spiritual and natural world themes.

**Saló** – Saló has been a significant lakeside town since Roman times and exudes an old-world gentility that is both pungent and highly appealing. In addition to the lake’s longest and most attractive lakeside promenade it offers a striking cathedral interior, an interesting Museum (MUSA), fascinating narrow historic streets to explore, and an interesting array of shops, bars, and restaurants.

**Sirmione** – An impossibly pretty peninsula that reaches out into the southern end of the lake offers a picture book castle, an extremely well-preserved ancient Roman site, wonderful views of the lake and pre-Alps (from the northernmost tip of the peninsula), and a highly atmospheric old town.

## Pricing Per Person

7 nights sharing a twin room: **£895** if booked & deposited by 15.09.16, **£945** if booked & deposited later (complimentary lake facing room upgrades for all twin share bookings made by 15.09.16)

Lake facing twin share supplement **£75**, Single supplement **£95**, Junior suite **£175**

**Price includes:** Return flights from Gatwick or Manchester, airport transfers, 7 nights half board accommodation, a welcome drink, 6 evenings dancing in a private ballroom, the assistance of a Personal Touch Holidays representative throughout your stay.



*Sirmione’s wonderfully preserved castle*

## How To Book



The deposit required for this holiday is £250.00 per person, plus the Insurance Premium if applicable. For further details or a booking form for this holiday please visit [www.personaltouchholidays.com](http://www.personaltouchholidays.com) or contact us at Personal Touch Holidays, Anvil House, West Street, Billingshurst, West Sussex RH14 9HW. Tel. 01403 786200.

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