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HEAVEN ON EARTH

LAKE COMO, ITALY

WHO

Former rugby union player
Lawrence Dallaglio

WHY

'My wife and I were married here, which makes it even more special'

My father is from Italy and I love the entire country, but if I have to choose one part that is special to me it has to be Lake Como.

I've visited a number of times and there's something about being by the water, and having snow-capped mountains all around you, that makes it such a great place to visit any time of the year. The whole setting is magical. My wife, Alice, and I also got married there which makes it extra special.

If you're going to Lake Como for the first time, I suggest that you hire a nice car at Milan Airport – I rented an Alfa Spider; given my size, and the car's size, I'm quite a sight in an Alfa Spider – and drive to Como. Once there, take a trip on a boat, visit some of the lovely little towns up and down the lake, relax... and of course enjoy the wonderful cuisine.

The area has some fantastic hotels. Everyone associates Lake Como with the Villa D'Este (0039 031 3481; www.villa.deste.it), which is beautiful but might not be in

Peaks of perfection:
the lake is surrounded
by snow-capped
mountains

everyone's budget. If you're looking for somewhere a bit more affordable, I'd suggest the Grand Hotel Tremezzo (344 4249; www.grandhotel.tremezzo.com). I stayed there the night before my wedding – it's right on the lake and is absolutely stunning.

Food-wise, you're spoilt for choice. **But you have to eat at the Island of Comacina** (344 55083/56755; www.comacina.it), a restaurant on the little island in the middle of the lake. It's a bit touristy but their four or five-course set menu is pretty good and it's such a great location.

In my experience, everything on the menu wherever you go is good. But my advice is to order something local or leave it to the waiters to decide. Let's face it, most Italians are black belts when it comes to food.

● **Lawrence Dallaglio and his father, Vincenzo, have joined forces with Sacla to create a range of pasta sauces, 'Dallaglio by Sacla'.**

