

ASK THE experts

With the Winter Olympics putting northern Italy in the spotlight, **Lina Molloholli** finds out how to sell a snowy stay



PICTURES: Shutterstock/Travelling Jack, Alberto Masnovo; Andy Huntley, Art Pitman

1 SHORT BREAK

As a former resident of Italy, Heather Green knows the country better than most. She has worked at Citalia for more than 25 years and became head of product in 2023.



Heather Green
head of product, Citalia

“The Winter Olympics will be an exciting spectacle and will showcase northern Italy, which has such a lot to offer. We hope it inspires people to talk to us about what’s possible in Italy because we know it like the back of our hand and can help agents find the right package for their customers. Interestingly, couples are our strongest-selling cohort for 2026, making up 84% of bookings.

More than ever, travellers are looking to slow down, join the dots and scratch beneath the surface. Winter – or what I call the ‘secret season’ – is when Italy’s cities come into their own, offering a quieter, more authentic atmosphere, better value and the chance to engage with key sights in a more meaningful way, without the long queues and intense heat that can dominate the summer months.

One classic short-break pairing is Venice and Verona – the cities have a different feel and offer a less touristy experience in winter, as clients can see how the locals live. Venice is magical in the colder months, especially if it snows, while Carnival [in February] is a great experience. Verona (*pictured*) is a compact and walkable city and has a view of snow-capped mountains from December to April.

Book it: Citalia’s five-night Venice & Verona itinerary starts at £949 per person, based on two sharing. The price includes breakfast, rail travel from Venice to Verona, private transfers and flights from Gatwick on January 11, 2027. citalia.com

2 CITY HOPPING

Raj Mistry has led Railbookers’ UK trade sales team since last April, having previously worked for Explora Journeys, Carrier, Collette and Travel Indochina.



Raj Mistry
UK head of trade sales and development, Railbookers

“Our Venice, Bologna and Milan itinerary truly shines in winter. With fewer visitors, Venice is at its most captivating – perfect for unhurried museum visits and wandering misty canals. Bologna brings warmth and depth, particularly in the colder months, when its rich cuisine and historic porticoes come into their own. Milan (*pictured*) completes the journey with world-class galleries and indoor shopping arcades that thrive whatever the season.

Italy’s trains are fast and reliable, while the centrally located hotels place clients right where they want to be. The itinerary is also flexible: clients can start from any UK station or tailor the journey to suit their needs – for example, combining one-way rail travel with a return flight or adjusting durations in each city.

This itinerary is ideal for culture lovers and repeat visitors to Italy looking for something a little different. A selling tip for agents would be to position this as Italy for those ‘in the know’, with flexible routeing, standout food and atmospheric cities at their best.

Book it: Railbookers’ eight-day Venice, Bologna and Milan trip costs from £1,639 per person, based on two sharing, departing February 23, including B&B accommodation, all train travel and a food tour in Bologna. railbookers.co.uk

3 WINTER SPORTS

Nicolas Bresch joined Club Med in 2014, becoming UK and Nordics managing director in 2022. The company’s winter 2026-27 programme goes on sale on February 3.



Nicolas Bresch
managing director for UK and Nordics, Club Med

“Northern Italy delivers a well-rounded experience that combines skiing, culture and comfort, making it an increasingly attractive choice for British travellers. The recently renovated Club Med Pragelato Sestriere (*pictured*) offers access to 250 miles of pistes, including the slopes of the Via Lattea and Sestriere [used in the 2006 Winter Olympics] for experienced skiers. For beginners, there are reliable snow conditions and wide slopes.

The resort is easily accessible, with a transfer time of about 90 minutes from Turin adding to its appeal for short or family ski breaks. Italian cuisine is one of the UK’s favourites, and there’s no better place to enjoy some typical fare than atop a snow-capped mountain. Suggest clients try a Piedmontese fondue made with fontina cheese.

I love how après-ski in the area is so different. Instead of loud bars, Pragelato takes a relaxed approach to *aperitivos* that feels uniquely Italian.

We encourage agents to focus on the ease, value and convenience that our packages provide. Our resorts offer ski-in, ski-out access, with lift passes, group ski lessons and equipment included as part of the all-inclusive price.

Book it: Seven nights’ all-inclusive at Club Med Pragelato Sestriere starts at £1,811 per person, based on two sharing a Junior Family Superior Room with Balcony. The price includes transfers and flights from Gatwick on March 22. clubmed.co.uk