

Suite dreams

With new suites and supercharged all-inclusive packages, this Majorcan hotel is a breath of fresh air, writes **Alice Barnes-Brown**

Each morning, as I amble towards breakfast past the split-level pool, I savour two things: the near-symmetrical cliffs that frame the Camp de Mar bay, and the smell of blooming jasmine from the climbing plant clinging to the wall. The best

things in life are free, but all-inclusive stays done well might be the next best thing.

My hotel, the 304-suite Zafiro Palace Andratx, is situated in a quiet corner of Majorca – an island that has recently seen protests against overtourism. However, the ➤

DESTINATIONS

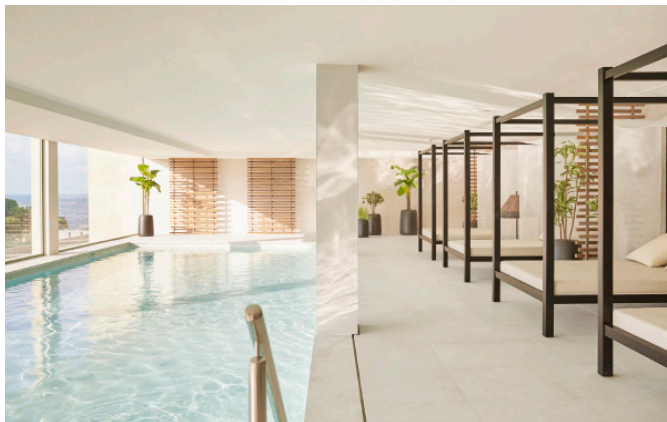
ALL-INCLUSIVE HOLIDAYS | MAJORCA

ASK THE expert



Tony Hopkins
trading and development
director, easyJet holidays

“Majorca is proving to be one of our most popular holiday destinations for agent bookings. With our extensive portfolio of three to five-star hotels, all-inclusive holidays are widely available and holidaymakers are spoilt for choice when in the largest of the Balearic Islands, home to more than 200 golden beaches. With a mix of more vibrant spots and quieter areas for couples, small groups of friends and families to holiday in the sun, Majorca has it all.”



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Zafiro Palace Andratx spa; Tastes & Sushi's gold decor; Japanese-inspired dining; Port d'Andratx town
PICTURE: Shutterstock/vulcano



village-like Camp de Mar feels a world away, with quiet seafood restaurants instead of beach bars and only the faintest of chatter from Andratx's championship golf course.

Zafiro's Andratx property, which opened in 2021, is the first of the brand's 14 hotels to offer the 'All-Inclusive Redefined' package, which launched last year. As clients have grown to expect, fitness classes and à la carte dining comes as standard, but thoughtful touches – such as day passes to other hotels, childcare during dinner and priority access to the Andratx golf course – make this all-inclusive offering stand out. I also discover that the seemingly bottomless minibar is restocked every day.

SUITE TREATS

New this year are the 33 Zafiro Club suites, which were added last month and take all-inclusive up a notch on the regular suites. They are situated in their own block and have an exclusive-access pool and signature bar menu with cocktails by local legend Rafa Martín, a mixologist who owns the NYC-inspired Brassclub in capital Palma.

Plus, guests in the Zafiro Club suites get an extra-special treat – the 'starlit supper' tasting menu. During their stay, couples will have an alfresco table just for them on one of the hotel's private greens, with a vista of the Unesco-listed Serra de Tramuntana mountains to keep them company.

After check-in – and a glass of welcome cava – I am whisked up to my room, where a blooming bunch of roses, daisies and peonies, a bottle of rioja and fruit platter await. More inviting, though, is my whirlpool tub with views across the fairways and rocky hills. Sinking into the bubbling water with a glass of minibar-supplied tonic, I look across to the twinkling lights and black ocean, anticipating the 50-minute Exotic Mediterranean spa treatment that's also included in the Zafiro Club package.

DINE AROUND

Mealtimes are a feast for the senses. Besides The Market buffet, which changes its array of international dishes daily but always features local specialities such as croquettes with Majorcan cheese and *sobrassada* (sausage), four à la carte

restaurants cater to all food moods. My first meal is in the Tastes & Sushi bar, a Peruvian-Japanese fusion restaurant featuring booths with gold chains for curtains. Umami flavours reign supreme, with a menu that ranges from delicate sashimi to flambéed salmon nigiri.

I opt for the vegan sushi platter – my dietary requirements making my choices a little less adventurous – but the tower of tofu prepared especially for me was a showstopper: I've not been able to stop thinking about the spiced Japanese mayo dip.

Two of the other restaurants, Mare Nostrum (Majorcan and Mediterranean cuisine) and Caliu Steakhouse, sit next door to Tastes & Sushi and are designed by the same local artist, Marga Rotger – but with such distinct decor and atmosphere they could be miles apart rather than neighbours in the same resort.

GUEST LIST

To make their stay on Majorca as easy as possible, all-inclusive and Zafiro Club guests can make use of a personalised concierge service. ➤

DESTINATIONS

ALL-INCLUSIVE HOLIDAYS | MAJORCA

TRIED
&
TESTED

BODEGA RIBAS

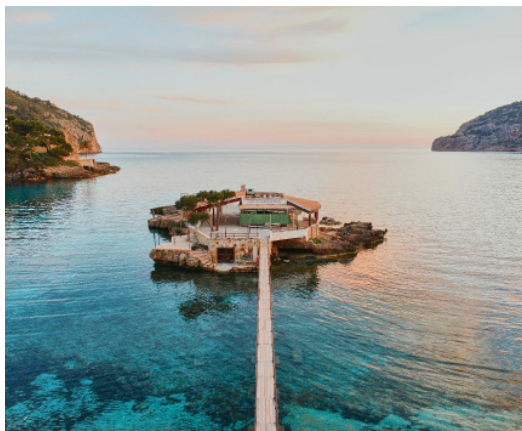


The Zafiro Palace Andratx concierge can arrange a host of island experiences. My group visits the 300-year-old Bodega Ribas winery, run by the 10th generation of the Ribas family. We're welcomed by sommelier Juanma, who takes us on a tour of the *bodega* (wine cellar), and his enthusiasm shines through as he explains its interesting story. Bodega Ribas produces 200,000 bottles of wine a year – 85% of which stays in Majorca – and 50% of them are organic.

"We are between two bays, so there is a microclimate. It's a big challenge, because only native grapes can really survive," he explains.

After a deep-dive into the fermentation cellars and bottling rooms, Juanma takes us into the family manor, a grand yet homely pile: warm and lightly fragranced by the smell of stew, with copper *greixonera* (Balearic cake pans) hanging from the walls.

The dining room is laid out with an array of Catalan cheeses, Iberico ham, plus Majorcan-style leek empanadas and *cocas* – pizza-like pastries. I dig in eagerly, my multiple wine glasses constantly refilled with Ribas' citrusy prensal blanc white, fine manto negro rosé and tannin-packed trademark *sío red*. I can't pick a favourite, but back at the hotel's Caliu Steakhouse, I get another go at choosing. The wine-tasting experience starts at €45.



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Viewpoint near Cap Andritxol tower; Zafiro Palace Andratx suite with private pool; scooters; Camp de Mar PICTURES: Shutterstock/rdonar, Jonaton Hornos Perez



My concierge, Martí Soldevilla, explains the typical guest profile: "We're trying to attract more British guests and the hotel is more adult focused. We have a lot of returning guests now and the feedback is very positive."

I ask him how the hotel maintains a peaceful and exclusive feel, even when it's operating at near-capacity. "We're not a typical hotel where you have to wake up at 5am to put towels down to reserve a sunbed – even in July and August," he says.

LOCAL LANDMARKS

While sunbathing by one of the many rooftop pools, I spot a 16th-century watchtower poking up through a nearby pine-coated headland. Soldevilla tells me it's a 90-minute round-trip hike, with the trail leading almost directly out of the hotel. I could do that, but instead I walk five minutes downhill to the Illeta Restaurant. Located just outside the resort on an islet in the middle of Camp de Mar bay, the shack-like paella paradise sits directly atop some of the most turquoise waters I've ever seen.

The last all-inclusive perk I test is Zafiro's fleet of scooters – duck egg-hued, Vespa-like vehicles outside the lobby. The charge lasts for about an hour, which is ample time for a zip to

Port d'Andratx, stopping at some secluded *calas* (coves) en route. Although I've never been on a scooter before, the feeling of the wind rippling through my hair and the sight of dappled evening sunlight on the tarmac is remarkably freeing.

To complement the scooter offering, the Zafiro Palace Andratx added outings on an electric *llaüt* (a type of Majorcan dinghy) earlier this month – at an extra fee of €400, which covers up to six guests for a four-hour rental.

We park our trusty electric two-wheelers on Port d'Andratx quayside and watch a group of tourists laughing as they try to wrest control of their vessel in time to open a bottle of wine to toast the coming sunset. From jasmine-scented peace at dawn to convivial wine on the water at dusk, it's the little moments that mean a lot. **TW**

BOOK IT

EasyJet holidays offers seven nights in a Junior Suite on an All-Inclusive Redefined basis, from £2,352 per person, including 23kg luggage, private transfers and flights from Southend on September 4. An All-Inclusive Redefined package in a Zafiro Club Junior Suite with Private Pool, departing the same date, starts at £3,038. [easyjet.com/holidays](https://www.easyjet.com/holidays)