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Malta's vibrant past is being brought to life with a brand new Pre-History Trail. Tick off the abundance of historical gems on the Mediterranean archipelago with a new map featuring temples, churches, statues and catacombs with remains dating back to 4,000BC. Download the map at [maltauk.com](http://maltauk.com)

## Lego Garda splashdown

The first Legoland Water Park in Europe will be built at Italy's top theme park, Gardaland Resort.

Set to open in 2020, the new wet and wild brick-themed splash zone will be included in the admission price for the Lake Garda-based attraction.

Gardaland, which also includes a SEA LIFE Aquarium and Peppa Pig Land, offers three accommodation options - Gardaland Hotel, Adventure Hotel and the brand new Magic Hotel. [Gardaland.it](http://Gardaland.it)

## Hotel checkout

BY JANE MEMMLER

Guests at The Atlantic Hotel in Jersey can enjoy a spa experience with a difference this summer.



In a quiet corner of the hotel's six acre grounds sits a bohemian therapy tent. With nothing but the sea and sky to distract you, those booking spa treatments can really be at one with nature.

Overlooking St Ouen's Bay, the tent offers seaweed-based pampering such as 30-minute tapas treatments (from £45) built into longer sessions. Rooms from £250 per night (based on two sharing). [theatlantichotel.com](http://theatlantichotel.com)

■ The Isle of Wight has just welcomed a lovely new collection of 12 lodges close to Priory Bay. St Helens Resort offers two and three-bedroom cottages as well as 27 stylish caravans.



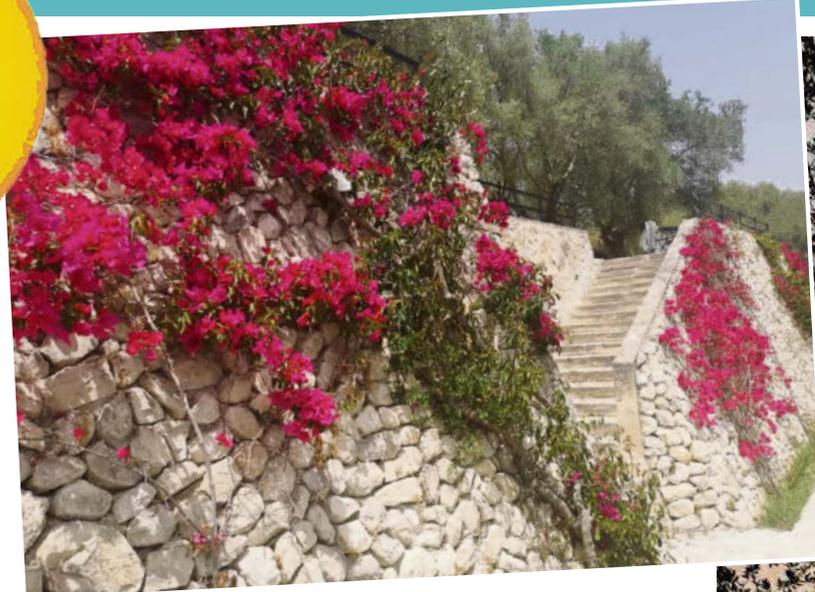
Most have hot tubs, decking areas and modern interiors. On-site you'll find adventure activities such as paddle-boarding, windsurfing and sand yachting. If that isn't enough, adjacent is a pretty beach surrounded by pristine forest. Four nights at St Helens from £269 (sleeps eight). 03333 700 555/[ariaresorts.co.uk](http://ariaresorts.co.uk)

■ Rome's Sofitel Villa Borghese has just reopened after a massive overhaul. This former 19th century palazzo is close to the Trevi Fountain and Spanish Steps. Baroque-inspired ceilings feature 'blue skies', marble bathrooms and monogrammed pillowcases. Rooms from £300. [accorhotels.com](http://accorhotels.com)



Think high ceilings, exposed timber rafters, invitingly soft king-size bed with crisp, white sheets. I don't always sleep well when I'm away but, I slept like a new-born and awoke refreshed and ready for the delights of another day at La Finca Serena.

# TRAVEL



**IDYLIC** La Finca Serena is set on 40 acres of the most stunning countryside in Spain



## Paul McDaid kicks back and spends a weekend in La Finca Serena set deep in the countryside of Majorca

**RARELY** has a hotel been more aptly named than La Finca Serena.

Set on rolling hills, overlooking the lush, verdant plains of central Majorca, the only thing likely to disturb you is the sweet sound of bird song or the sound of palm leaves swaying in a cool breeze.

Many boutique hotels can make lofty claims, but this really is a haven of tranquillity, peace, harmony and serenity.

Welcoming its first guests in April this year, Finca Serena has all the gleam of a shiny new pin and each of the 25 rooms which are set as one or two self-contained chalets throughout the estate are impeccably appointed.

Think high ceilings, exposed timber rafters, invitingly soft king-size bed with crisp, white sheets.

I don't always sleep well when I'm away but, I slept like a new-born and awoke refreshed and ready for the delights of another day at La Finca Serena.

The bathrooms are a joy too,

double basin and huge walk-in rain shower. But the whole ambience of this five-star, adults-only hotel speaks of a simpler, more fulfilled time when we seemed to have more time for each other.

Take a long, lingering alfresco lunch of shared tapas, shaded by the dappled shadows of rugged olive trees.

Take a deep breath and feast your eyes on those views.

Chat about the stuff that matters, laugh, enjoy each other's company, it might even seem like time has slowed down a bit.

Don't fight that feeling - surrender to the serenity. Order a jug of sangria and lose yourself in your thoughts for while.

Get lost gazing at shimmering horizons, golden fields of ancient farmhouses and distant monasteries all under shimmering Balearic sunshine.

The quaint cobbled terrace outside the main hotel building, a 17th century building dripping with character, has the feeling of a village



edited by

PAUL McDAID



SET AND DONE  
Sun slips away  
from La Finca  
Serena

# I Finca found my heaven on earth

square and oozes a warm and welcoming atmosphere.

While the Wifi coverage is second to none, this place is stripped of all the other trappings of modernity. No TV, no hideous piped-in music, no radio and no ads.

Just the sound of people in commune at a fundamental human level, eating, drinking, talking and laughing. Bliss.

It's a particularly appealing setting for pre-dinner drink at dusk.

And like everything else here, dinner at La Finca Serena is more than just a meal.

Majorcan cuisine is celebrated for its locally-sourced ingredients and at the Jacaranda restaurant, chef Celia Martin-Nieto places the accent on dishes that have their roots in the soil of and pasture of this Balearic paradise.

We had a truly memorable dinner which started with salmon tartare, followed by a cod loin with baby

potatoes. To finish the baked cheese-cake with a slightly smoky note elevated this classic dessert to an entirely new level. From the cellar we had a bottle of Menorcan white called Green Dog - named after a peculiar Spanish saying to describe something odd.

But in truth the only weird thing was this feast fit for a king in such a stunning location came in at just under €140.

Breakfast is served from 8am-11am in the Jacaranda or out on the terrace.

You'll find an array of treats such as avocado, sun-dried tomatoes and lamb's tongue on toast or buckwheat pancakes to make sure you start the day right.

For my money any breakfast worth its salt and pepper must involve eggs so ask the waiter to bring you a tortilla and pimp your fluffy, eggy dish with the extensive selection of cold cuts, smoked fish

and salads. While the emphasis of the weekend was on rest and relaxation, you might want to work some of those calories off and as the hotel is set on 40 acres there are ample opportunities to stretch your legs.

With acres of vines, bountiful orchards and fields of produce the chances are you'll walk by something that could end up on your plate or in your glass.

It's the hotel's long-term goal to become increasingly self-sufficient.

You can stroll around at your leisure or arrange a guided tour while organised wine and oil tastings can also be arranged.

For the more active guest, you can hire a bicycle to see the estate on two wheels or even on four hooves with a horse riding session.

La Finca Serena also boasts a full spa and sauna with an indoor pool with beautiful views over the

plains below. It's the perfect spot to watch the sun slip away on another chilled day in Majorca.

Away from the cooling sea breezes it can get hot on the island so as the temperatures rise, find a shady spot by the pool and spend an afternoon indulging in the gentle art of doing nothing.

Surrounded by sun loungers and parasols, it's the perfect place to get lost in a good book, top up your tan, sip a cocktail and maybe think about the weightier issues of the day like what's on the menu for dinner.

Whatever it is you choose to do, you won't be rushed, you'll do it in your own time. Your own time well spent in a little piece of heaven as it is on earth.

■ To stay at La Finca Serena visit [www.fincaserenamallorca.com](http://www.fincaserenamallorca.com) or call 00 34 97118 1758.

■ easyJet flies to Palma Majorca from Belfast International. Visit [www.easyjet.com](http://www.easyjet.com).



*Don't fight that feeling. Surrender to the serenity.*



## Win a cruise just by casting a vote

BY NIGEL THOMPSON



Vote in the 2019 UK holiday 'Oscars' and you could be soaking up the scenery on a free River Rhine cruise.

The public vote for this year's British Travel Awards - the most important in the country and the industry benchmark - is open to September 30 and the Daily Mirror is an official media partner.

Categories include cruise lines, hotels, staycation destinations and attractions, airlines, airports, family holiday firms and those essential add-ons such as travel insurance, airport parking and currency exchange.

It's your votes that will decide who gets the coveted awards at the glittering gala night in London on November 27.

To thank you for joining in, everyone who votes is entered into a draw for a bonanza of superb travel prizes worth tens of thousands of pounds - with more added regularly.

Among those is a superb eight-day trip for two on the Rhine between Amsterdam and Basel with Viking River Cruises.

It's worth around £5,000 and comes with flights from London, six guided sightseeing tours, all meals, wine, beer and soft drinks with lunch and dinner on board, plus free tea, coffee and wi-fi.

The itinerary includes Cologne, Koblenz, Strasbourg and the Black Forest.

For more information, see [vikingrivercruises.co.uk](http://vikingrivercruises.co.uk).

### HOW TO JOIN IN

Voting is online at [britishtravelawards.com](http://britishtravelawards.com), where you'll need to register. While there are 83 award categories, you don't have to vote in them all, simply choose as many or as few as you wish.

If, for example, you only want to vote for your top UK cottage holiday firm and nothing else, you can.

The voting form allows you to return to it as often as you like to amend your votes or add new ones.

There will also be a no-obligation invitation to take part in research that looks at the nation's holiday plans for 2020.

As with the awards voting, you can do much or as little as you wish - but to say thank you for taking part in the survey, you get an extra entry in the grand prize draw.

■ Full prize T&Cs at [britishtravelawards.com](http://britishtravelawards.com) and on Twitter look for @BritTravAwrds @TravelEdNigel @MirrorTravel and #VoteBTA19

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Seychelles, Vendee, Shropshire,  
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