

Gone are the walking sticks, glowsticks and karaoke happy hours: the Med's most iconic islands have had a 2018 revamp. Here's where to book, stay, eat and party this year

GO RETRO

Swim in the sea or the hot tub – both'll work



MALTA

Think Malta, think greying expats and package tours? Fashion director **AMY BANNERMAN** says you need a serious rethink

THEN

Bargain-basement tours led by shouty guides holding up huge umbrellas and clipboards.

NOW

Making itself known as a chic mini-break destination, thanks to the capital Valletta's old town, which is so beautiful you feel as if you've been dropped into a Dolce & Gabbana advert (sadly the pants models were MIA). It's also a brilliant location for divers, thanks to the abundance of wrecks, reefs and caves around the island. We even managed to find totally remote coves, in case you're in need of some real P&Q.

OK, do I need a mahogany tan and fedora to get through airport security? Nope, we just had a light Nivea gradual tan and some scuffed Stan Smiths, to be honest. People are very casual here, but take something vaguely Dolce-esque (see left) for a night out. Evenings in Valletta can be glamorous, especially if you find yourself down at Caffè Cordina for an apéritif pre-dinner, or at Monaliza for a digestif (and dancing) afterwards.

But how likely am I to bump into a Saga tour? We covered a lot of ground – on Sunday try Il-Monti, the city's largest open-air market (Malta does excellent embroidered white cotton tops), St John's Co-



Cathedral (baroque, gold everywhere, unbelievable) and didn't get even the merest whiff of PG Tips pyramids in a tupperware box. And at Blue Lagoon (looks like it sounds), there were multiple Maltese David Gandys posturing in wooden boats.

OK... but where do the in-crowd go?

The InterContinental has just opened Skybeach – a super-slick club on the roof of the hotel – which is *the* place to be. Tinie Tempah was spotted there recently, as well as Valletta's beautiful people. Also Yard 32 and Da Pippo are where the great and the good can be found.

And you promise there's a cool place to stay that doesn't look like the inside of an '80s resort?

The presidential suite at the InterContinental Malta had us feeling like JLo in the P-Diddy era: dark walls, a hot tub that fits two and a private balcony which overlooks the city. Sexy. >

The InterContinental Malta, from £89 per night; Intercontinental.com. British Airways flies to Malta from £70 return; Britishairways.com/malta



Home for years to the Brits everyone wishes would just stay there. Now? *The* place to rent a villa with mates, says associate editor **AMY GRIER**

THEN Sixth-formers doing bad things in Magaluf bars and beach-side 'full English' restaurants.

NOW Embracing its more authentic Spanish spelling, 'Mallorca', with a focus on white beaches, villas hidden in vineyards and old towns bustling with local life, food and SO MANY GREAT ESPADRILLES. Oh, and the all-important location of *Love Island*...

My parents went in the '80s. This makes it uncool, non? OK, so Maj has been the go-to holiday destination for Brits (and French and Germans) wanting a quick, cheap no-frills break for quite some time. But it's undergone a bit of a reinvention of late, with literary types flocking to Deià's cobbled streets, and sun-worshippers making Cap de Formentor as Insta-famous as the #maldives. **But all the hotels either cost mega-bucks or look like outtakes from *Banged Up Abroad*.** The *only* way to holiday in Mallorca is *to villa* (new verb, just made it up). Away from the hype of capital city Palma and the hordes of Magaluf, lies Camp d'Avall, a palatial newly refurbished farmhouse just 10 minutes away from the old town of Pollença. Surrounded by nothing but mountains and vineyards (vineyards = local wine which also = many, *many* drunken photos of you and your mates on



inflatables), you and up to nine friends can recline by the pool, eat dinner under the stars, barbecue in the back garden or bed down with a film in the 'snug' should the weather fail. It is heaven on terracotta tiling.

And if you need to venture out? Forage for food etc? Just a 10-minute drive down the road (we strongly advise hiring a car if going down the villa route – there's no other way to get to the beach!) is Pollença, a cobbled old town that's a mecca for local artisanal crafts and gastronomes alike. Every Sunday, a huge food market takes over the centre, where you can barter for jamón ibérico and golf-ball-sized olives. Or, go back in the evening to stock up on locally made espadrilles (I'm obsessed, I know), woven wicker bags and the chicest kaftans. Save some euros for dinner at La Sastreria – Mallorcan tapas on rickety wooden tables that really do slope downhill (it's not all in your head, as the local wine will have you believe). **Where do all the beautiful people hang out?** In the *Love Island* villa, less than an hour down the road, now you ask. But, in general, Playa de Muro beach, a 6km stretch of golden sand, is also worth braving a 40-minute drive on the treacherously narrow roads for. To avoid the crowds, go at around 4pm, soak up the last few rays, have a paddle in the surf, then grab an ocean-front table at Ponderosa. Order a black paella and crisp bottle of rosé and people-watch until sunset.

Seven nights in Camp d'Avall, from £1,228 (sleeps 10); Vintagetravel.co.uk. Easyjet flies to Palma from £24.49; Easyjet.com. Zest Car rentals from £51; Zestcarrental.com



Farmhouse up front, vineyard pool party out back



Plenty of hot buoys to look at...



Beyond the mega clubs and sunset strip, deputy editor **SHOSHANA GOLDBERG** found Ibiza is also the new luxury haven of Europe

THEN Teenagers writhing around in Fairy Liquid, otherwise known as 'foam parties', while Carl Cox bangs out some TUNEZ... and you bang some guy from Telford.

NOW Nobu Hotels opened their first Ibiza outpost last year, and Six Senses has their first property planned for 2020. That's proof enough the White Isle is quickly becoming the Balearic's answer to Monaco – only with smaller yachts and less white tuxedos.

Don't I need to be a certified 'raver' to even board a plane to Ibiza? Yes, the clubs are still there, but so, too, are a raft of boutique hotels and retreats packed with the sort of clientele who look like they just stepped out of a J Crew catalogue. **OK... but what is there to do if you don't do Day-Glo?** We spent mornings at Cala d'Hort, a picture-book beach spot on the opposite side of the island to San Antonio. First, stop at its perfectly Instagrammable jetty El Carmen, then take lunch at their beachside restaurant – which just happens to serve up the best paella on the island. Fact. From there, head to Ibiza old town for the quaint villagey vibes, street music and boutiques of Dalt Vila. We stayed for dinner with the locals at Comidas Bar San Juan – cheap as chips and utterly delicious – before heading over the road to Teatro Pereyra for live music (usually jazz, soul or Latin but always good) and drinks with true Ibicencos of every age at the bar.

And if we're going to pick one spot to 'Gram? The beautiful people (check out their fancy wheels in the car park as you walk in) book tables at La Torre, set high up on a cliff, just in time to watch the sun set. The deep orange and scarlet skylines from this spot on the west of the island are the most mesmerising – and they serve great tapas, a perfect burger and glasses of Rioja as big as the moon (well, you get the idea). **And if we don't want to stay in a 'party' hotel?** For peace and quiet, book into Can Lluç, a chic family-run hotel surrounded by vineyards and pine forests. Open all year round (lots of places in Ibiza close in the winter months), this is where footballers and Spanish politicians come to when they want to chill out with no security guards in tow. After breakfast on the terrace, set up camp in the shade of a four-poster beach bed beside the naturally chlorinated pool. Treat yourself to a glass of Cava and keep the bottle on chill – for your pretend Premier-League boyfriend, of course. >

Can Lluç from £195 per night for a double room, including breakfast; Canlluc.com. Easyjet flies to Ibiza from £47 return*; Easyjet.com





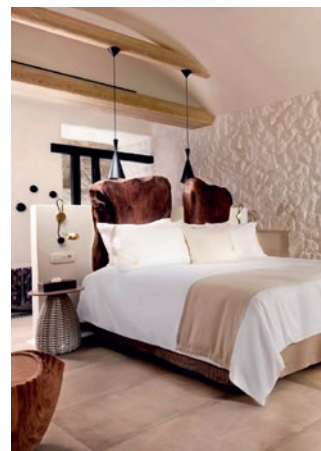
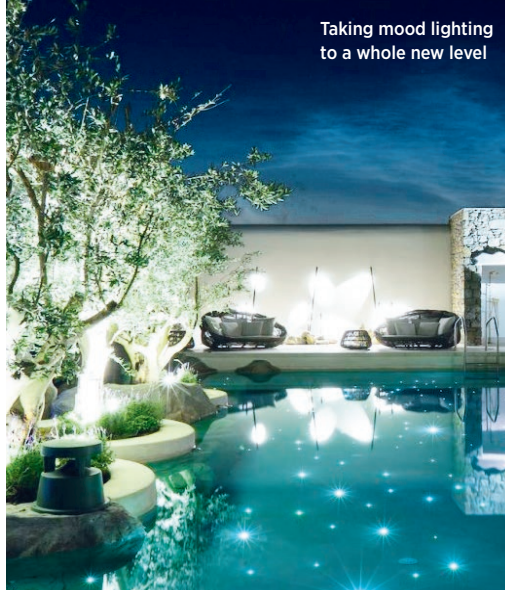
Editor-in-chief **FARRAH STORR** hadn't hit this Greek island in a decade. Would she still find the boho fashion crowd or the cast of *TOWIE*?

THEN

Mykonos was once 'the place' to be seen. Supermodels danced on table tops and half of Hollywood was holed up in the tavernas. But by 2005, flashy beach clubs reigned, the mega yachts had landed and hedge-fund high-rollers sprayed champagne around like orange squash.

NOW

Come in high summer and head to any beach club that sounds like a retired Turkish wrestler (Nammos, Scorpios...) and you will almost certainly find bankers in red pants paying thousands for a lunch of crudités and rosé. But come in June or September and explore the back streets of Mykonos Town and you will find that the rustic charm of the island is alive and well.



Be honest, how likely am I to bump into someone from *TOWIE*?

Not very, if you know where to go. Kiki's is a tiny tavern on Agios Sostis Beach where there are no reservations and the food is as effortless as the chic clientele. Or try Katrine's – a legendary taverna run by the septagenarian chef who keeps the food classic (lobster linguine, chicken and veg – which is unlike any chicken and veg you've eaten) and the atmosphere sparkly.

I'm hungry now – where else should we dine?

The in-crowd tend to stick to the restaurants in the labyrinthine back streets of Mykonos Town. Going out-out? Eat at Spilia, inside a cave – it serves the best lobster salad in town.

And to catch our beauty sleep?

If camping out in a place that looks like the entire White Company catalogue was shot there is your thing, you're in luck. Kensho is the boutique hotel of

pretty much everyone's dreams. Staff flutter around in billowy white linen dispensing Aperol spritzes and flirty smiles, while rooms have hot tubs and sun-baked terraces. Everything has been thought through – from the morning fitness classes (yoga or HIIT depending on your constitution) to the hamman and the candles that scent the entire hotel (which, thankfully, you can buy). To be honest, you could just shack up here for an entire week. After all, most people head to Kensho's bar for a pre-prandial snifter before heading out anyway. ♦



Kensho Boutique Hotel & Suites, from £260 per night, including breakfast**; Kenshomykonos.com. Easyjet flies to Mykonos from £52†; Easyjet.com

STILL RETRO

THE SLIDING SCALE OF RETRO

SO RETRO IT'S COOL



BUDGIE SMUGGLERS

'70s trunks so it'sy-bitsy you'd rather drown in the shallows than come eye level with *that*.



STRAW DONKEYS

The gift everyone brought home from the Med in the '80s. No, we have no idea why either.



HAWAIIAN TROPIC

Coconut-scented, greasy AF tanning oil with SPFO, what could possibly go wrong?



'EXOTIC' HOLIDAY SPIRITS

Raki and Ouzo were once the height of sophistication. Remember Pernod? No, us neither.



EMBROIDERED KAFTANS AS PARTYWEAR

Jade Jagger spent the entire '90s in one, and now it's coming back around. Yes, we're excited.



PINA COLADA

The fuel of baby boomers, this holiday-in-a-glass has returned. Now seen served from a slushy machine.



SANDALS WITH SOCKS

The style curse of the '80s dad has become the uniform of the hipster classes. See also: sliders.



SLIDERS

Formerly only seen at mid-range leisure centres. Now in faux fur and permanently wedged on Gen Y's trotters.