



TOP NOTCH STAY AT BUDGET PRICE

Travelodge London Southwark

WHAT'S IT LIKE? A good budget hotel in a multi-story building near to Southwark tube and rail station. The reception is small but check in was very quick. It is within walking distance to the River Thames and lots of the main attractions including Tower Bridge, London Tower, the Tate Modern, Big Ben and the Houses of Parliament.

ROOMS ANY GOOD? There is a choice of twins, double and family rooms as well as their new SuperRooms, which I was lucky enough to try. The room was actually good in size — more than enough space to swing the proverbial cat — and offered a choice of firm or soft hypoallergenic pillows, blackout curtains (bliss), flat-screen TV and a Lavazza A Modo Mio fresh capsule coffee machine, as well as traditional tea and coffee choice for your morning cuppa. And if that doesn't wake you, the Hansgrohe Raindance 3jet adjustable power shower in the well-designed bathroom sure will.

SO YOU'D GO BACK? Absolutely. This place was so convenient and the staff so friendly and, of course, the price so good.

WHAT'S THE DAMAGE? Rooms start at £29 per night. SuperRooms from £49 per night. Breakfast is from £5.95pp. Call them on 08719 848484 or see travelodge.co.uk.

Check-in check-out

hot spot IT'S 32°C IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC — a week at the 5★ Casa Dom Campo resort is from £1,249pp with Xclusivity. The price is based on all-inclusive with flights from Manchester on August 31. Book by August 15 at xclusivity.co.uk

hot spot IT'S 27°C IN PORTUGAL — seven nights at the 5★ TUI Sensimar Lagos resort in the Algarve is from £997pp with TUI. The price is based on half-board with flights from Glasgow on August 9. For more information go to tui.co.uk

TIME TO TRIP THE LIGHT FANTASTIC

JET2.COM will have special flights to Iceland from Glasgow Airport next February offering the chance for three-night midweek breaks or four-night long weekends.

Flight-only deals starting from £179pp return and package options with Jet2City-Breaks start from £579pp. Package breaks with Jet2City-Breaks include a guided tour of the Northern Lights, above, transfers and a choice of 3 and 4-star hotels in central Reykjavik which provide the perfect base to explore the island. Excursions to the Golden Circle and Blue Lagoon are also available to purchase. See Jet2.com

air news Europe' for the sixth straight year. The Skytrax 2018 World Airline Awards also saw Air Europa named Europe's Best Regional Airline for the eighth consecutive year. Air Transat, Canada's leading holiday airline, was named the World's Best Leisure Airline and Qatar Airways won four awards. It was once again named 'World's Best Business Class' at the ceremony held in London this week — the sixth time and third consecutive year the airline has won the award. In addition it was also named 'Best Airline in the Middle East', for the fifth straight year, 'Best First Class Airline Lounge' for the second consecutive year and 'Best Business Class Seat'.

LIVE THE GREEK HIGH LIFE AT 5★ ABATON ISLAND RESORT

ANYONE who knows me, knows I simply ADORE Greece.

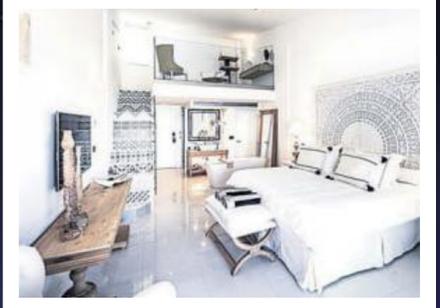
It is my favourite holiday destination and I hope to retire there one day. And if I could spend my retirement in a hotel (oh the dream!) it would have to be Abaton Island Resort and Spa. My room here was good enough to live out my old age in — especially since it came with its own private pool! A beautiful bedroom, a place to swim and cool down in private, a secluded space to sunbathe, what else could I possibly want? I mean who needs a kitchen when you have four top-class restaurants to choose from? Not me. I want to retire remember — not spend my new life in the sun cooking. I adored this brand new top-end hotel when I got to enjoy all its luxury and delights just weeks after it opened its doors near the holiday hotspot of Hersonissos with my friend Kathleen.

We left the men at home and headed to Edinburgh airport and started our girls' trip in style, breezing through fast track security thanks to booking into the lovely Nol Lounge who give you it as a wee added extra. The lounge offers a comfy place to wait for your flight, with plenty of food and drink on offer, all included in the price of your entry. Depending on the time of day you can grab breakfast, including bacon rolls or soup and salad for lunch and hot dishes to order. We devoured the fish finger wrap — delicious — as we enjoyed a lovely glass or two of wine.

Before we knew it we were taking off on our easyJet flight direct to Crete. We'd booked extra leg room seats — well why not — and bagged ourselves the front row for the three-hour journey which passed in no time thanks to some nice nibbles and a few more vinos from the friendly crew. We arrived late at night but luckily we had also treated ourselves to a private transfer to the hotel through the brilliant and very good value Hoppa.com website. Our driver was ready and waiting to whisk us to our luxury abode.

And what a place it was. Abaton Island Resort and Spa is all low rise, flat-roofed white-washed buildings tumbling down a gentle slope to the sea. Very Greek but also very sleek. The reception is a cavernous space dotted with high quality art and sculptures and the reception staff well they were like something out of Vogue magazine with their amazing uniforms and jewellery.

There are too many different room categories on offer to mention — from anything but standard doubles with sea view to magnificent family villas



LUXURIOUS... modern hotel with stunning views across the Bay of Hersonissos, posh bedroom, Heather and pal Kathleen enjoying a meal and the Taverna Harakas, below, got the thumbs up

What costs what?
Meal out in a typical Greek Taverna, including wine, is around £50
Do make sure to visit the spa — it is pure bliss
Don't miss out on a trip to the old town



Crete dreams

GO: GREECE

GETTING THERE: easyjet have flights from Edinburgh to Heraklion in Crete with fares from £28.72pp (one way including taxes based on two on same booking). See easyjet.com
STAYING THERE: Rooms at Abaton Island Resort and Spa start from £170 a night in October. See abaton.reserve-online.net or abaton.gr
MORE INFO: Airport transfers with Hoppa cost from £19pp from Heraklion to Abaton. Book at hoppa.com
Book a visit to the No 1 Lounge at Edinburgh airport from £26pp online in advance for a three hour stay including fast track airport security, food and drink. See nollounges.com and also visitgreece.gr

with huge living rooms and sunlounger on your balcony fabulously heated private pools and gardens with outdoor dining area. There are also rooms with private jacuzzis on the balcony and others with sharing pool where you step from your

front restaurant. Inside it featured the biggest bed I have ever seen — which was lucky considering we'd be sharing it — but we needn't have worried, four could have slept in it without touching! There was also a mezzanine area with couch and work table which would be perfect for a family with youngsters sleeping upstairs. A Nespresso machine, mini bar and fabulous Hermes toiletries added to the luxury and for romantic stays there's a bath in the bedroom — maybe another time with him indoors! But the piece de resistance had to be the outdoor area. Sliding patio doors lead to a shaded terrace with comfy couch to lounge on, sumptuous sun loungers where we spent most of our time lapping up

the rays and our pool for a cooling respite from the 30°C plus temperatures. We also enjoyed some pampering at the lovely hotel spa. I was in heaven when I found out all the treatments are backed by Elemis. While I was massaged into a near coma by the expert hands of one of the lovely therapists, Kathleen had a fabulous hour-long facial and came out skin glowing. That night we celebrated our new looks and headed to the hotel's WOW Steak and Sushi restaurant for an amazing meal. It started on a high with a seafood amuse bouche and just got better and better, course after delicious course. Miso soup, prawns, tuna and the salmon sushi, rib eye steak for Kathleen and grilled sea bass for

me. Just when we thought it couldn't get better the lovely waitress brought us what can only be described as pieces of art for dessert. A chocolate sphere melted under the weight of liquid chocolate poured over it and a deconstructed lemon tart which Picasso would have been proud of was washed down with a bottle of rose. The sea-front Elemes Greek restaurant was equally as brilliant. The setting may seem the main attraction — until the food arrives. Rustic potato salad and chicken soup wetted the appetite. My cod and garlic smash and Kathleen's seabass on bean puree were magnificent. There's also a fish restaurant and a main buffet restaurant which I can honestly say had the most amazing variety of breakfast items I have ever seen and

lovely staff to boot. One night we ventured out to the absolutely gorgeous old Hersonissos town. A quick cab ride and we were in the lovely Greek square surrounded by tavernas and cute souvenir shops. We nabbed a table at the busy Harakas and enjoyed a fabulous Greek feast cooked and served in this lovely family-owned taverna. It has all your traditional fare and favourites, a lovely selection of wines and the cheeriest staff around. On our last day we had our last lunch at C'est La Vie restaurant next to the main pool where I devoured the delicious veg and feta wraps while sipping some ouzo, watching the sun glint off the sea and dreaming up ways of making Abaton island Resort and Spa my home. **HEATHER LOWRIE**

C'MON, HIT THE SUMMER SAILS

FLY from the UK to Malta and board P&O's Oceana for seven nights exploring the Messina Strait; Naples, Ajaccio in Sardinia and Rome.

Costs from £749pp two sharing an inside cabin departing October 4, including flights for various airports (supplement may apply). See cruise1st.co.uk or call 0800 953 4963.

● A 12-night New Zealand cruise onboard Royal Caribbean's Ovation of the Seas sailing roundtrip from Sydney, Australia, costs from £2,164pp leaving Gatwick on November 2. Itinerary includes: Doubtful Sound, Dusky Sound, Milford Sound, Dunedin, Wellington, Tauranga, Auckland, Bay of Islands and then back to Sydney. See royalcaribbean.co.uk or call them on 0844 493 4005.

● FRED. Olsen Cruise Lines has a 'Free Flights & Transfers' promotion on six of its exotic fly-cruises to the Indian Ocean, Caribbean and India on Boudicca and Braemar on all new bookings made by August 8.

● Try Boudicca's 14-night 'Authentic India' fly-cruise, leaving Abu Dhabi, UAE on October 4 and calling at Dubai, Porbandar in Gujarat, Mumbai, Mormugao in Goa, Kochi in Kerala, Vizhinjam in Kerala and Colombo in Sri Lanka. Costs from £1,699pp. Or Boudicca's 14-night 'Islands of the Indian Ocean' fly-cruise (adult-only), departing from Colombo, Sri Lanka on October 18 calling at Uligamu and Malé, in the Maldives, Mahé and Praslin Islands in the Seychelles, Réunion Island and Mauritius. Costs from £1,799pp. See fredolscruises.com or call them on 0800 0355 242.

● EMERALD Waterways has savings of up to £1,250 per couple on its eight-day Jewels of the Rhine itinerary if booked by August 31 with prices now from £1,670pp. Sail from Basel in Switzerland and call at Stannheim, Heidelberg, Koblenz, then sail through the Rhine Gorge, before finishing in Amsterdam. Includes regional flights, tips and excursions. More details at emeraldwaterways.co.uk or call 0800 115 6269.

● SAMPLE South America with a trip combining Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires and the Iguazu Falls. Includes two-night B&B hotel stay at the Windsor Leme in Rio de Janeiro, a fully escorted tour of Christ the Redeemer, above, a two-night B&B hotel stay at the Panoramic Grand in Iguazu Falls and a 14-night full-board cruise on board Star Princess. Transfers and return flights from London on February 24. Costs from £3,299pp if booked by July 26 at imaginecruising.co.uk or call 0800 840 5800.



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