

THE TIMES Saturday August 31 2019

27

# Travel

Page

32

**'It was untouched by tourism — no one was trying to sell us anything or ask for anything'**

Anna Murphy heads along the Ganges in India

GETTY IMAGES

Pucisca, near Villa Giardino, Brac **2**

## 20 great late summer escapes

The crowds have gone, hotel prices have plummeted, but it's still hot. **Richard Mellor** picks the top spots a short flight away

### **1 The Melegran, Rovinj Croatia**

Even though Rovinj is in Croatia, this underappreciated Istrian port is closer to Venice than to Zagreb or Dubrovnik — and it shows via clustered, pastel-shade houses and piazzas. A boutique hotel in the old town's web of cobbled lanes, the Melegran makes an ideal base, in walking distance of harbour-front fish restaurants and Mulini's pleasant, pebbly shore. Book the chic duplex suite for its sea-view terrace and consider signing up for guided truffle hunts, wine tours or island-hopping on speedboat trips.

**Details** B&B doubles cost from £81 a night (00 385 5230 5099, melegran.com)

### **2 Villa Giardino, Brac Croatia**

Villa Giardino describes itself as a "heritage boutique" for good reason. Emperor Franz Joseph I stayed in this house in 1875. Perhaps he was lured by the chevron-shaped Zlatni Rat pebble beach in nearby Bol, a rather ritzy resort today, or by the hikeable forested interior. With September temperatures likely to push 25C, modern-day visitors can glug homemade lemonade on sea-facing balconies, or enjoy palm-tree shade in the large back garden. The rooms' crisp, blanché walls and rattan rugs provide calm



Villa Giardino

alongside picture-crammed walls and chequerboard floors in the public areas. Brac's biggest town, Pucisca, is a half-hour drive away.

**Details** B&B doubles cost from £130 a night (00 385 21 635 900, villagiardinobol.com)

### **3 Purohotel Palma, Mallorca Spain**

In the old, shoptastic La Lonja quarter of Palma, Mallorca's capital, Purohotel affords sumptuous city views from its rooftop pool terrace. Below that is a large spa, its treatments encompassing hydrotherapy showers, and then palm-fringed patios, where the new ▶

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## 28 Travel

17 Macakizi, Turkbuku



restaurant Beatnik serves all-you-can-eat brunches, lobster tacos and barbecue beef short ribs. Bold hexagonal wallpaper lines the diner's interior, but bedrooms are calmer, with white walls and wooden floors. A shuttle service connects to Puro's nearby beach club, which has another pool. There is no beach, but don't fret: sandy Playa Ca'n Pastilla is round the corner. Expect the mercury to edge above 25C well into October. **Details** B&B doubles cost from €190 a night (00 34 971 425 450, purohotel.com)

#### 4 Melia Salinas, Lanzarote Spain

A handsome, colonial-style resort open since June, the adults-only Melia Salinas is well placed for exploring Lanzarote's untouristy north, which bathes in sun and daily high temperatures of 25C until late October. Rent a car and drive towards Haria, a town enlivened by an artisan market every Saturday morning. Back at base, loll in tropical gardens and pools designed by César Manrique, the Lanzarote sculptor, or set up camp in the beach bar. There are Canarian and Mediterranean restaurants on site, or try Da Bubi in the town. **Details** B&B doubles cost from £137 a night (0808 2341953, melia.com)

#### 5 Marbella Club, Andalusia Spain

Like your bedrooms bright, off-white and spacious? Then head to Marbella Club on Andalusia's Golden Mile. Once

a haunt for Brigitte Bardot, it's now just as luxurious, but more on-trend — hence the nostalgic photographs, the pared-back poster beds, the hammocks and the strong wellness focus, spanning HIIT classes and thalassotherapy. Bougainvillea-trailed walkways connect thatched patios to The Grill restaurant, while the La Concha mountain looming in the background ensures an especially mild microclimate and typical September temperatures of 22C. If you don't fancy the golf course, drive inland to find pretty hill villages. **Details** B&B doubles cost from €668 a night (00 34 952 822 211, marbellaclub.com)

#### 6 Corral del Rey, Seville Spain

Here's how to do Seville in late summer, when days can still reach 32C: take in the Giralda, the scenic bell tower of the cathedral, before everyone else, then return to your hotel for the heat of the day. Ideally that hotel will be the Corral del Rey, a converted palacio where the rooftop garden and sun-soaked plunge pool face the Giralda. Take a siesta in your bedroom, off the central courtyard. Refreshed? Then head out to the Museo del Baile Flamenco for a dance performance and tapas on a lantern-lit plaza. And repeat. **Details** Three nights' B&B in September costs from £1,065pp, including flights, UK airport lounge access and transfers (020 3582 4990, originaltravel.co.uk)

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Unless otherwise stated, prices are the lowest rates in September or October

#### 7 Hôtel Les Roches Rouges, St Raphael France

Sandwiched between St Tropez and Cannes, the quieter Côte d'Azur resort of St Raphael could average 26C during September and stay hot into October, when starting prices are half those of August. Ample reason to make for its most chic hotel. Along with bedrooms affording white-walled serenity, the five-star Hôtel Les Roches Rouges has a seawater pool cut into the rocks and an open-air evening cinema. Once a week cocktail hour coincides, perhaps unwisely, with free pétanque lessons in the gardens, where you'll also find yoga classes and a ping-pong table. Wellbeing treatments and a Michelin-starred restaurant complete the offering. **Details** B&B doubles cost from €247 a night (00 33 4 89 81 4060, hotellesrochesrouges.com)

#### 8 Casa Iris, Tuscany Italy

Just opened in Tuscany's southern Maremma area, where long beaches give way to rosemary-scented scrub and thermometers hit 25C during September, the three-bedroom Casa Iris occupies part of a palazzo in Orbetello, a town memorably positioned on the isthmus across a lagoon. Sourced from fairs and markets, its fittings are a mix of art deco, mid-20th century modern and 1970s wackiness, and accompany stripped-out stone walls and 18th-

century frescoes restored by a Sistine Chapel specialist. Wine tastings can be arranged, and the 5km Feniglia beach is a ten-minute bike ride away. **Details** B&B doubles cost from £225 a night (00 39 392 529 8010, casairisorbetello.com)

#### 9 Masseria San Giovanni, Puglia Italy

Although Italy's southeastern region of Puglia stays hot long after August (with temperatures in the high 20Cs), its crowds clear when the country's school summer holiday ends. A 19th-century farmhouse turned luxury hotel between Bari and Brindisi, the Masseria San Giovanni has walled grounds with olive trees, orangeries and herb gardens. Its air-conditioned rooms are a marriage of contemporary and classic. Food is strictly local, and best enjoyed after you've roved around the Itria Valley or journeyed to Torre Canne's beach on borrowed bicycles. **Details** B&B doubles cost from £140 a night (00 39 80 222 8 222, masseriasaniovanni.it)

#### 10 Relais Torre Marabino, Sicily Italy

Amid gently rolling countryside scattered with carob trees, the seven-room Torre Marabino occupies an organic farming estate and vineyard. It's ideally placed for trips to southeastern Sicily's powdery beaches. Expect sea temperatures of 25C, while out of the water it's a degree or so higher. Pretty



THE TIMES Saturday August 31 2019

## Travel 29



cool-toned touches, with each of the 60 luxury rooms and pool villas lent a rustic, beach-hut feel with sun-bleached woods. There's also an infinity pool, and Comporta's 10km or so stretch of white sand and shack-style cafés are within sauntering distance. An on-site restaurant serves organic produce. **Details** B&B doubles cost from £264 a night (0800 0482314, slh.com)

### 13 The Alex, Piraeus Greece

Newly arrived on the Athens Riviera, where the mercury nudges 23C even in October, the Alex represents a first urban hotel from the Santikos Collection, hitherto a Greek island specialist. It's a 34-room hilltop affair, in the port of Piraeus, 15 minutes' taxi ride from the city centre, with fine views of Athens and the Saronic Gulf; none is better than the ones from the rooftop restaurant Nest. A ground-floor brasserie is also in situ; between the two, bedrooms have local paintings and sand and slate hues. Hydrofoils enable day trips to the islands of Spetses and Hydra. **Details** B&B doubles cost from £99 a night (00 30 210 412 8451, santikoscollection.com)

### 14 Katikies Garden, Santorini Greece

When it opened this summer, Katikies' latest ultra-luxury retreat became the first five-star property in the centre of Fira, Santorini's pretty capital. It utilises a former monastery complex blessed with blossom-filled alleys, fountains and gardens. There are seven categories of suite, including private-pool duplexes and ones with jet-equipped hot tubs. The large, main pool provides bathers with views of Santorini's famed caldera, and there's also a spa, wine bar and restaurant. Prices are half those of other Katikies hotels during this introductory period. **Details** B&B doubles with a hot tub cost from €334 a night (00 30 228 644 0900, katikiesgarden.com)

### 15 The Chedi Lustica Bay, Radovici Montenegro

Part of a multimillion-pound mega-marina newly cut out along Montenegro's riviera, the Chedi's townhouse-like outpost is pure indulgence. A flick through the facility list confirms as much: there are two pools (one infinity-edged), a spa doing Voya treatments, a cocktail bar etched from the cliffs, an Asian waterside restaurant, a Balkan-style brasserie and a private pebble beach hosting yoga classes. Throw in rooms with floor-to-ceiling windows and a curated wine collection, and there's little cause to leave — although nearby waterfalls and boat trips to Dubrovnik provide reason to do so. Temperatures in September and early October should be about 20C. **Details** B&B doubles cost from £172 a night (0333 3636186, mrandrsmith.com)

### 16 Cugo Gran Macina Grand Harbour, Senglea Malta

Senglea is one of three small cities in Malta's fortified Grand Harbour area, across the water from Valletta, the capital. Within its fortress walls is the recently renovated Sheer Bastion, a 16th-century rampart, and inside that is this new, all-suite hotel. A rooftop pool and

solarium face across the harbour, and the ground-floor fine-dining restaurant champions modern Mediterranean fare. **Details** B&B doubles cost from €265 a night (0800 37468357, designhotels.com)

### And a little farther afield ...

### 17 Macakizi, Turkbuku Turkey

This trendy hotel descends via four levels, punctuated by stone gardens of magnolia and oleander, to the Aegean, where decks host sunloungers and a bar. Charming pronounced "magicizy", you'll find it in Turkbuku, a St Tropez-style jet-set resort of restaurants and beach clubs north of Bodrum. Sunbathe as October temperatures hit 25C, snooze in cream-coloured rooms, and hit the large Nuxe spa or gorge on the "new Turkish" cuisine, epitomised by thin pizzas of tomato and spiced lamb. **Details** Half-board doubles cost from £468 a night (0333 3636186, mrandrsmith.com)

### 18 Olive Farm Guesthouse, Resadiye Turkey

According to the ancient Greeks, Zeus created the 80km, wisp-thin Datca peninsula, hence its beauty: pine-tree hills, thyme-scented gorges, olive groves, blue waters and empty coves. Helping things further is a lack of development compared with other parts of southwest Turkey's coast. Typically peaceful is Olive Farm Guesthouse, part of a 160-hectare estate. The traditional main house contains eight rooms and suites with stone walls and lots of space, while outside are flower-filled gardens and a pool perfumed by orange trees. **Details** B&B doubles cost from £67 a night (00 90 252 712 451, guesthouse.olivefarm.com.tr)

### 19 Es Saadi, Marrakesh Morocco

Marrakesh stays hot well into autumn, so the hurly-burly of its narrow souks can become exhausting. Recover in the upscale Hivernage district at Es Saadi, only 20 minutes away on foot from the medina, but much quieter. It's an eight-hectare resort containing the ultra-opulent Le Palace (designed by the Moulin Rouge owner Jean Bauchet), the merely luxurious L'Hotel, some villas, ksars (mini castles) and, in between, banana trees, bougainvillea, lagoon pools, play areas, boutiques, bars, eight restaurants, a huge spa and a casino. **Details** B&B doubles in L'Hotel cost from £117 a night (00 212 5 2433 7400, essaadi.com)

### 20 Berber Lodge, Douar Oumnas Morocco

Base yourself a half-hour's drive south of Marrakesh and you'll be in the quieter (and cooler) Atlas Mountains foothills. Designed in Berber-meets-boutique style by the Swiss architect Romain Michel-Ménier, the nine-room lodge consists of mud-brick adobe cubes, each made from plaster and wood. There's a pool shaded by olive trees, and gardens candlelit at night for Mediterranean-meets-Moroccan dinners. As well as day trips to Marrakesh, guests can kayak on Lake Lalla Takerkoust. **Details** Two nights' B&B costs from £366 (0117 946 7072, f-escape.com)



Marbella Club, Andalusia 5



Memmo Baleeira, Algarve 11



Corral del Rey, Seville 6



The Chedi Lustica Bay, Radovici 15

baroque towns also tempt, but then so do the hotel's free-form pool, its terrace and a stellar Sicilian restaurant. **Details** Four nights' B&B costs from £800pp, including flights and car hire (020 7359 3938, realholidays.co.uk)

### 11 Memmo Baleeira, Algarve Portugal

The Algarve's main beach resorts still swarm with sunseekers into autumn thanks to average daytime temperatures of 23C in September and October, but less so the empty shores either side of the surf town of Sagres. Just outside it, above a neighbouring fishing port, is the refurbished design hotel Memmo Baleeira, with Atlantic views. Elsewhere are a first-floor restaurant grilling ocean-fresh fish and a heated pool plus sundowner deck. The hotel also has its own surf school and offers bike rentals, dolphin-spotting boat trips and guided walks around the cliffs of the Costa Vicentina Natural Park. **Details** B&B doubles costs from £115 a night (00 351 282 624 212, memmohotels.com)

### 12 Quinta da Comporta, Comporta Portugal

In Comporta's lovely and ever-posher Carvalhal village, this low-key wellness retreat has been designed by the exalted Portuguese architect Miguel Cancio Martins. Amid a 17-hectare estate of umbrella pines, cork trees, sand dunes and rice fields — which inspires the spa treatments — Martins has opted for