

The inside track on ever-changing Paris, where only the romance is a constant



Exploring the Med on board the luxurious new Emerald Princess

Edited by JANE MEMMLER

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Picture: FRANCISCO GUERRERO TANCO

## Cast away your cares in Tenerife



In search of a holiday with a relaxing pace, **JANIS BUCKLAND** discovers the joys of pampering in the sun at a spa resort on the island's south coast

**H**OLIDAYS with the girls used to mean spending all day on the beach getting over a hangover and all night in a bar working on the next one. But as we plotted to abandon our husbands to celebrate my friend Alison reaching the big Five O, we found ourselves thinking more about lazing around the pool, pre-dinner cocktails, nice meals with a decent bottle of wine – oh, and lots of pampering.

Which is how we came to be at the Hotel Jardin Tropical in Tenerife. Situated on the south Adeje coast, just 20 minutes from Tenerife airport, it's right on the seafront and a 10-minute walk from Playa de las Americas. The whitewashed walls and palm-lined entrance gave the hotel a Moorish feel while, inside, the 390 bedrooms had recently been refurbished with warm colours to reflect the year-round average 23C temperature. Our room had generous-sized beds and satellite TV, as well as such thoughtful welcoming touches as a delicious bottle of Freixenet.

But I knew my holiday had begun when I stepped on to the balcony. What a feast for the senses – the fragrance from the tropical gardens below, the amazing ocean view across to the island of La Gomera and the feel of the sun's warmth on my skin tempered by the cooling Atlantic breeze. Wow!

We headed to the first of the two swimming pools which looked like a tropical lagoon, surrounded by more than 1,700 plants and trees. We were impressed as a man appeared bearing sun loungers, a sunshade and towels. Apparently, we could either sit beside the pool or on terraces overlooking the ocean. Decisions, decisions.

Later, and according to plan, we started our evening with a cocktail at the hotel's Las Rocas Beach Club. Standing on the balcony, drink in hand, watching the sun set slowly over La Gomera is an incredible experience and not to be missed. Then we went on to Las Mimosas. The hotel has four restaurants but this was probably my

**PARADISE FOUND:** After chilling out in the amazing river pool at Hotel Jardin Tropical, you can take in the stunning views up Mount Teide (inset)

# Enjoy a sizzling mix of sun, sea and spa delights



**ROOM WITH A VIEW:** Take in the spectacular vista of neighbouring La Gomera from the terrace of your room at the Jardin Tropical

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favourite. Having chosen from its extensive hot and cold buffet, the main dish – from a selection of sea bass, swordfish steak, venison or ostrich – was cooked on the griddle in front of us. Perfect.

Next morning we went to check out the other pool which, strictly speaking, was more like a river. Filled from the sea, it snaked around the bottom tier of five rock-carved sun terraces. After a swim, it was time for some of that pampering. It was difficult to decide from the menu of treatments at the Wellness Centre, especially as some had such delicious names as Chocolate Therapy and Honey Scrub.

I chose a Hydro Massage (£20) and found myself lying in a bath of warm water, scented with rose and orange blossom. As underwater jets blasting small circles of water massaged their way slowly up from my feet to my shoulders and back down again, intermittent waves of spa bath-style bubbles stirred the water. Candlelight and the sounds of acoustic guitar and gently lapping waves completed the effect.

"This combination," explained Maria, who runs the newly-opened centre, "together with the heat of the water, soothes the muscles and helps mind and body to relax." Just to make sure, I followed it



**BLISS:** Choose from a menu of treatments in the hotel spa

with a Relaxing Full Massage (£40), using essential oils, which lasted a glorious 55 minutes.

We compared our experiences over lunch. I thought mine had to score top on the relaxation scale but Alison rated her Vichy Shower (£33) equally highly. It involved lying on a bed in a wet-room and having a massage beneath a gentle, continuous shower. She also tried a Shiatsu Facial Massage (£23). With the face

cleansed, then followed the Japanese acupressure technique of stroking, tapping and pressing points to improve energy flow. The amazing thing was, said Alison, that although she had only her face treated she felt completely "chilled" afterwards, physically and mentally.

**W**E FELT we couldn't return home without having met the other two criteria of a trip to Tenerife – going up Mount Teide, and seeing the dolphins.

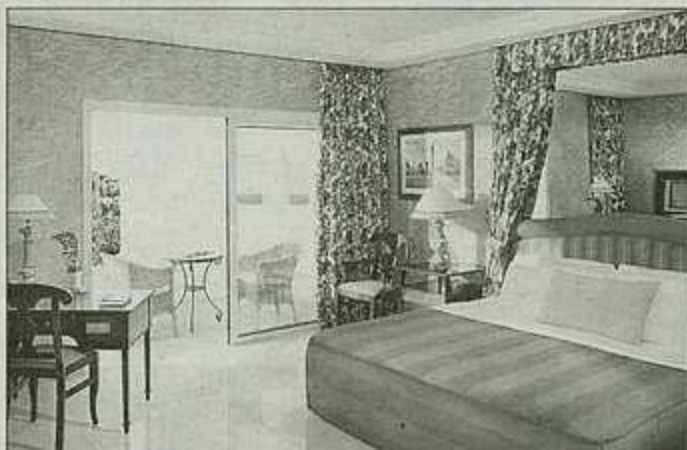
As you drive up Teide, the scenery is unique. The lower level is a lunar landscape created from lava flows. Then a short cable car ride and we were above the clouds where on a clear day, it's said, you can see four of the other Canary Islands. Sadly, we couldn't walk right to the summit of the 12,198ft dormant volcano (which last erupted in 1909) as we didn't have a permit. However, these can be obtained from the National Park Offices in Santa Cruz.

The following day, we set sail beneath the 2,000ft cliffs of Los Gigantes hoping for a glimpse of the pilot whales and dolphins that live in these warm waters all year round. We were rewarded by three whales, which nonchalantly allowed us to shadow them and, as we headed back to shore, a pod of dolphins, which played along in the wash of the boat.

Now we could go home happy. Well, maybe after just one more visit to the spa.

● **GETTING THERE:** Saga Holidays (0800 300 5000) [www.saga.co.uk/travelshop](http://www.saga.co.uk/travelshop) offers seven nights' half-board at the Hotel Jardin Tropical from £649pp (two sharing), including return flights from Gatwick. Spa treatments start from £25.

Holiday Autos (0870 400 4441) [www.holidayautos.co.uk](http://www.holidayautos.co.uk) offers car hire from £80 per week. Spanish National Tourist Office: 020 7486 8077 [www.tourspain.co.uk](http://www.tourspain.co.uk) or [www.canarias.org](http://www.canarias.org)



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