



An olive grove heading out to sea



Mansion Ses Oliveras

Spain's sunshine state

If you're yearning for sun after the gales this week, the Balearic Island of Majorca could be just the ticket, as **WEEKEND** discovered

WHEN it comes to holiday snobbery, I'm a self-confessed Hyacinth Bucket.

In spite of friends repeatedly telling me to visit Majorca, I've always resisted – after all, it's a popular package holiday destination and bound to be overrun with loud British tourists wearing string vests over sunburned, tattooed bodies, right? Wrong.

My friends were spot on. Majorca, or Mallorca as they call it in Spain, may have its busy tourist resorts but the majority of the island is breathtakingly beautiful.

From rugged hills and olive groves to glittering marinas and secluded beaches, it's one of those destinations where the hackneyed expression 'something for everyone' really does apply, whether you're a cyclist, a golfing fanatic or a sun-worshipper. The secret to the perfect Mallorcan

holiday is to stay in one of the many farmhouses and villas that have been built or refurbished.

We chose Mansion Ses Oliveras, a luxury six-bedroom, six-bathroom contemporary villa set amidst acres of almond trees near Cala D'Or to the south east of the island.

Newly-built in the style of a grand Mallorcan manor house, it's a dream of a holiday home. Traditional whitewashed walls, tiled floors and high ceilings have been given a contemporary twist with chic slate bathrooms, a designer kitchen and divine bedrooms (each as fabulous as the next, so no arguments over who has which), while outside, elegant sun loungers perch around a swimming pool with sweeping views towards the sea.

If you can tear yourself away from such luxury, there's plenty to do in the area.

In just a few days we took an idyllic yacht trip and a tour of a local vineyard, as well as a visit to Mallorca's beautiful capital, Palma.

I fell head-over-heels in love with the city, which feels like a miniature Paris. It's incredibly lush, with trees everywhere, and unbelievably clean. Everything gleams, from the beautiful Gothic Cathedral to the immaculate warren of side streets, which all seem to lead to pretty squares filled with people sitting outside cafés, sipping

coffee and ice-cold beer.

If you're after museums and art galleries you won't have to look far, but if you're more interested in shopping and eating, then spend an hour rifling through the city's fabulous clothes shops before heading to C'an Juan de S'Aigo, an ancient icecream parlour which oozes old-fashioned splendour.

Mallorcan icecream is truly divine, more like sorbet than our heavy, buttery goo, and here you can have any flavour imaginable, from almond to apricot, all for a paltry Euro each.

We were blessed with some fantastic restaurants near our villa, particularly Bona Taula in Calonge, a friendly, bustling place where we nibbled garlicky prawns under the lemon trees in a vine-clad courtyard, and Rapa Nui, a beautiful, contemporary restaurant in the pretty village of Cos Concos.

And feeling lazy and extravagant one night, we opted for the island's cook service, where charming local chefs came to the villa and prepared us a fabulous Mallorcan feast, complete with fish, lamb, peppers, aubergines and other Mediterranean delicacies, all washed down with smooth local wine.

All in all, our trip to Mallorca was the kind of holiday that Hyacinth Bucket would be bending the vicar's ear about for years to come. And with everything the island has to offer, I wouldn't blame her one bit.



One of the bedrooms

Getting there: British Airways franchise partner GB Airways operates up to 14 flights a week to Palma from London Gatwick, with one-way fares starting from £45 including taxes. Call 0870 8509850 or visit www.gbairways.com

Accommodation: Prices for Mansion Ses Oliveras start at £1,095 for a week including maid service, car hire and a deluxe hamper.

Cook service and daytime activities: Visit www.balearicdiscovery.com

Visit our website [this is gloucestershire.co.uk](http://thisisgloucestershire.co.uk)