

little gems ATZARÓ

ELIZABETH METCALFE RELISHES THE IBICENCO FEEL OF THIS STYLE-SETTING AGROTURISMO HOTEL AND SPA

At the centre of a working orange farm, Atzaró set a precedent for a new wave of agroturismos when it opened in the quiet north-east of Ibiza in 2004. Close to the village of San Lorenzo, it sent whispers across the Balearics thanks to its farm-to-fork ethos, impressive spa and rambling gardens. While agroturismos were once a way for farmers to boost their income by renting out hastily converted outbuildings, this new breed is much more style conscious. Other than the occasional gardener at Atzaró, there is not much sense of this being a working farm, but it still somehow feels rooted in the valley. This is largely due to a recent overhaul, which replaced the 2004 Balinese theme with traditional Ibicenco elements.

It is here that I find myself sunbathing in the vegetable garden to a soundtrack of cockerels and wood pigeons – not what most people would expect from Ibiza. There is no shortage of places to relax – daybeds and seating areas nestle in every corner of the 25-acre grounds and stretch out in rows around the two main pools – but this is a particularly peaceful spot for a lounger, right next to a little sauna pod that I can nip in and out of. The vegetable garden has also recently been extended by three hectares.

The 300-year-old finca, which houses the reception and seating areas, sets the tone for the rooms with polished terracotta floors, plaster walls and olive-wood ceilings. Of the 24 suites and rooms, the nicest

are clustered around the finca and reached via a series of bougainvillea-adorned walkways. They are elegantly decorated with teak four-poster beds, crisp white sheets and carved wooden doors. Most have private outdoor seating areas and some a daybed. The suites, many of which have their own plunge pools, occupy modern finca-style buildings on the opposite side of the road. While more private, these do not have quite the same charm as those around the main house.

Breakfast at La Veranda restaurant takes the form of an appealing buffet, and you can order eggs and hot dishes from the menu. Lunch and dinner are also served here, featuring fresh and flavoursome fare. The sliced Iberico ham is a delicious way to start and the burrata, on a bed of tomatoes, gloriously creamy. Finish with a tipple of Orangecello liqueur, which is made from the estate's oranges.

If you want to explore further afield, there are plenty of quiet beaches to discover (Aguas Blancas is beautiful and less than half an hour away) and Atzaró's charming sister restaurant, Aubergine, is only a 15-minute drive. But the joy of Atzaró is that you could spend lazy days drifting from one spot to another. The 40-metre lap pool is one way to work up an appetite, as are vinyasa-flow yoga or Pilates classes. The open-plan

spa offers a range of treatments – I can recommend the reviving full-body Integration massage – and is very pretty. Once you have passed through the mother-of-pearl inlaid doors, there is nothing left to do other than relax, look up at the carved wooden ceilings and listen to the distant sound of cockerels crowing □

WAYS AND MEANS

Elizabeth Metcalfe stayed as a guest of Atzaró (00-34-971 33 88 38; atzaro.com). Doubles cost from £155.

