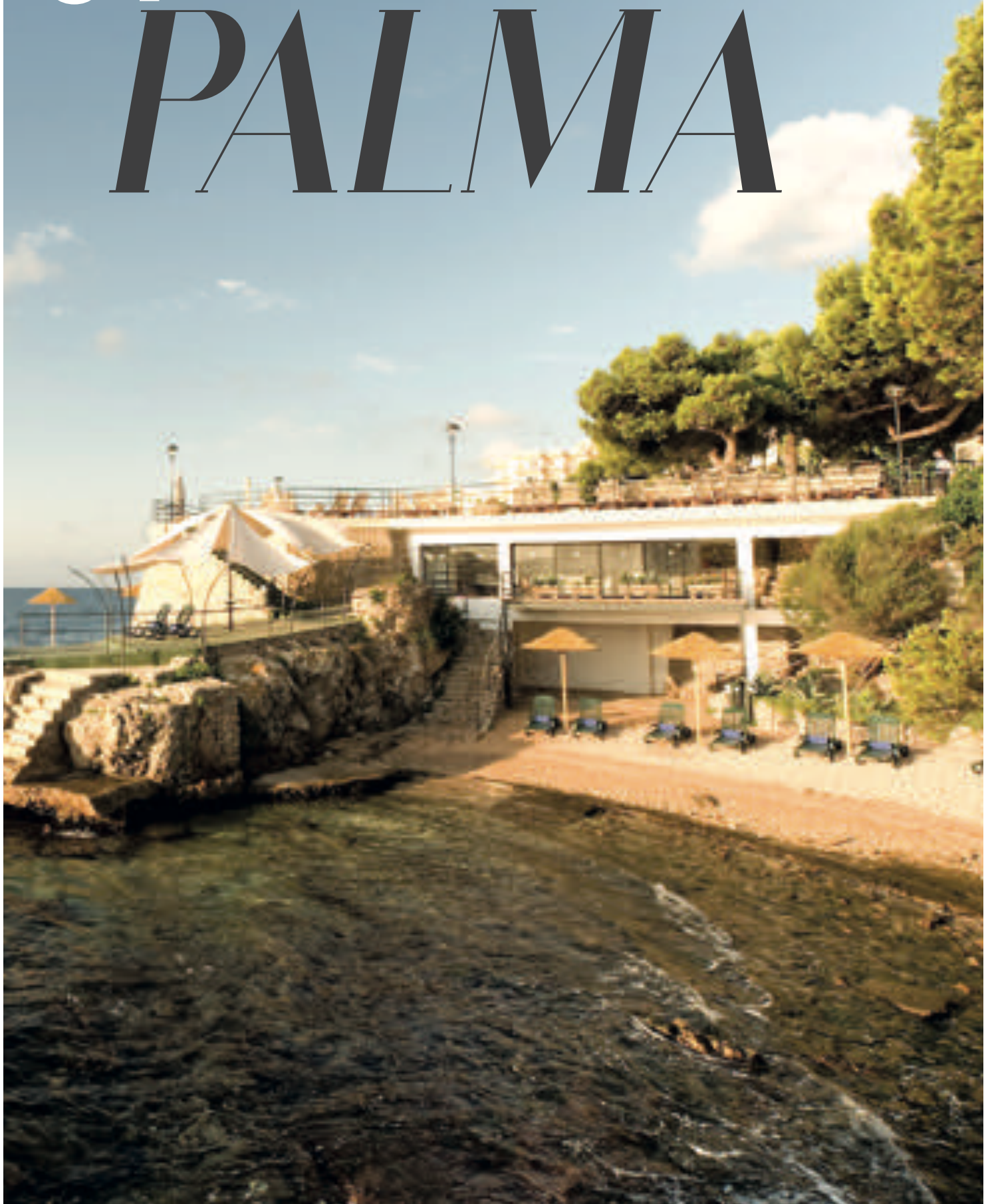


# THE PALATE



# OF *PALMA*







## I WORDS: VANESSA GAINFORD

From the moment #TeamCoco arrived at Barceló Illetas Albatros we were completely immersed in the Mediterranean; from the views to the lifestyle and the unique yet traditional cuisine. Waking up and rolling out of the comfiest bed, into hotel robe and onto our balcony, sipping some orange juice and taking in the panoramic views of the Balearic Sea was idyllic to say the least. We didn't think our morning could get any better until we took part in sunrise yoga overlooking the hotels beach and private cove.

After revitalising our mind and body, literally, we made our way to breakfast which was exquisitely prepared, healthy and locally sourced, oh and delicious. Our days at Barceló Illetas Albatros were spent in the pool, lounging on Balinese beds in the sun, in the spa and on the beach. However, if the tranquillity and pure relaxation gets to be too much for you, then there are a variety of activities from hiring kayaks and bikes to exploring local towns and beaches. This Mallorcan gem is just 15 minutes from the centre of Palma de Mallorca so far enough for peace and quiet (the hotel is adults only) but close enough to explore what Palma has to offer. When it comes to exploring, the staff at Barceló Illetas Albatros are more than helpful and will organise transport, give advice on where to go, where to eat and what to see, even helping you organise tours that are local or further afield; all whilst you sit back and relax in the modern hotel lobby.

In the evenings we retreated to our open plan, avant-garde room to run a bath, have a power nap and enjoy the sunset from our balcony. The sea views allow you to watch life go by as yachts come in and out of the harbour and really just get lost in the moment.

Dinner is gourmet local cuisine in the hotel's restaurant that boast gorgeous sea views, and the sky terrace allows you to enjoy cocktails under the stars. The food in Barceló Illetas Albatros is unique and local, between September



to November there is also the option of 'Sprunch' for two, which is a mix between lunch and afternoon tea, yes, it is as delicious as it is 'instagrammable'. Arriving in what looks like a large white briefcase, the box is placed upon the table and the case is removed to unveil an array of shelves with culinary delights; ranging from beef to cake.

It's safe to say that Mallorca's cuisine is like no other. With locally-sourced products, each dish is fresh, full of flavour and often with hidden tradition. With the help of the hotel staff we visited the food markets situated in Palma and discovered some of Mallorca's famous dishes. This was an afternoon of complete indulgence and it was near impossible to pick our favourite dish.

However, ensaimades de Mallorca won us all over. The dish is a pastry made with strong flour, water, sugar, eggs, mother dough and a kind of reduced pork lard named saïm. Frito de cordero which is essentially fried lamb and vegetables is a simple dish came high in the ranking, local paella made with noodles instead of rice was a sure contender, the array of fresh fish dishes, fresh pork and sobrasada was almost too much for us to handle, almost. Pan de Mallorca originates from ensaimades bread and is a sweet fluffy egg bread, which is perfect to have sliced and buttered with tea and coffee. Aubocassa is the locally-produced olive oil and you would think it would be hard to taste the difference between olive oils but this is a truly amazing discovery.

If you feel like eating out and exploring more of Palma, then heading to Puerto Portals is the place to go. Essentially the place to be with an array of restaurants, bars and clubs, and where there is the possibility to run into some famous faces, Puerto Portals is also home to designer boutiques and a marina with more than 600 berths where there are constantly yachts there, making it an amazing place to people-watch and take in the atmosphere of one of Mallorca's most glamorous spots!

Restaurant Flanigan is one of the marina's highlights; over thirty years old, Flanigan's has become a staple of Puerto Portals due to its convenience, exceptional service,



amazing atmosphere and of course the traditional Mallorcan dishes. We opted for the tumbet which is layers of sliced potatoes, aubergines and red bell peppers previously fried in olive oil, the dish can be vegetarian or with added meat or seafood and is truly a must-have. For dessert we had an apple tart which nearly put us into a food-coma but the combination of crisp filo pastry, caramelised apple and ice cream is the perfect way to end your meal.

Of course, if we're talking about how amazing Mallorcan food is we need to acknowledge the drink... wine in particular. The Son Puig winery in Puigpunyent is a family run company which produces top quality wines.

The staff at Barcelò Illetas Albatros will be more than happy to help you book a tour or wine tasting here or you can book directly yourself through their website. The winery was bought in 1926 by the current family's grandfather and the family now produce seven different wines per year, with an average of 45,000 bottles. Each wine is made from grapes exclusively from the estate's own vineyard and are handpicked by the same people

every season. A chardonnay takes around seven months and is made from the moll grape which is only from Mallorca, red wine takes around 24 months with the callet grape, again only from Mallorca and the composition of this changes each year. They are mineral wines because of the salt from the sea and the calcium in the soil so are not acidic wines giving each a flavour unique to Son Puig. The building and grounds itself are enough to win us over but learning the family history and the history of the house itself just enhances the charm of this beautiful place. By far one of the best wine tastings we have ever experienced. Outside in a haven-like garden, the sun beating down on us, picnic on the table, wine in hand; simply idyllic. What's more is that with the expertise, skill and pride gone in to creating the wines, the family don't want you to waste it, so you are encouraged to drink the contents of each glass, which of course no one needed coaxing into.

All in all, Mallorca is a mix of culture, languages, sunshine, wonderful people and there is a shared love of food and drink. So, no matter where you choose to stay, explore, eat or drink, you are sure to be in both Mediterranean and culinary paradise. ■

