

Groomed & Glossy

The Expert Beauty, Spa & Lifestyle Guide





Review: Jennifer Bonfield

Av. Severo Ochoa, 8, 29603 Marbella, Málaga, Spain

THE HOTEL

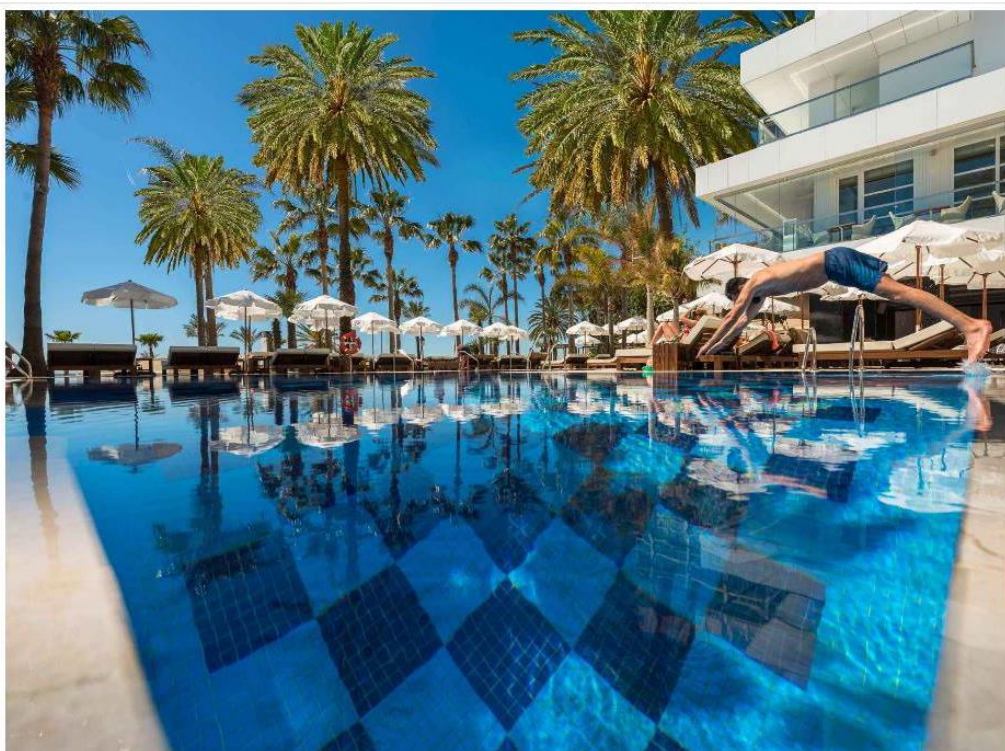
The very epitome of glamorous Marbella chic, this adults-only hotel is located right on its' own private beach and just a ten-minute walk from beautiful Marbella Old Town. The interiors are sleek and contemporary, a nautical palette of crisp white and blue hues, and floor to ceiling windows at every angle really does bring the outside in. The roof top bar is *the* place to sip on cocktails while enjoying uninterrupted sea and sunset views and the beach restaurant is the perfect place to sample fresh seafood and tapas dishes for lunch.

THE FACILITIES

3 RESTAURANTS | 2 BARS | SPA | SWIMMING POOL | PRIVATE BEACH

If ever there was a more inviting pool than here, I'd like to see it. There were plenty of white cushioned sun loungers available, and if the poolside is getting busy, hotel staff are on hand to assist, bringing towels (readily available poolside) and escorting you to find the perfect sunbathing spot. The poolside atmosphere was relaxed and tranquil with mostly couples, pairs of friends and a few small groups. The pool area leads directly on to the private beach area, again with plenty of sunbeds and just a short hop to the sea.

There really is no need to lift a finger here as waiters are on hand pool and beach side to offer snacks, lunch and drinks with just a touch of your own call button on the table next to your sunbed.



THE ACCOMMODATION

Rooms are categorised with idyllic titles such as 'Dolce Vita' and 'Oh La La'. There are six room categories, all of which are nothing less than chic, and most with large glass balconies. We stayed in one of the 'Oh La La - The One' rooms; these really are the best rooms in the hotel, located on the second to top floor (the top floor being home to the rooftop bar), so essentially these are the penthouse level for accommodation. The room was super spacious with beds dressed in Nordic duvets, accompanied by a pillow menu (should you have a preference with your pillows), a relaxation area with crisp white corner sofa and a coffee table stacked with glossy magazines. Entertainment-wise there is a wall mounted 42" LED TV, Bose sound system and portable Bluetooth speakers. A well-stocked mini bar and bottles of complementary mineral water will guarantee you don't go thirsty. The climate control ensures the perfect room temperature all year round and the free Wi-Fi connection is pretty strong. The bathroom is divided from the bedroom only with a glass wall and features a huge rainfall shower, large sinks and a separate toilet (with a proper door!). Toiletries (Germaine de Cappuccini or Molton Brown) are in abundance and re-stocked daily (twice a day if needed). Fluffy robes and slippers are also provided.

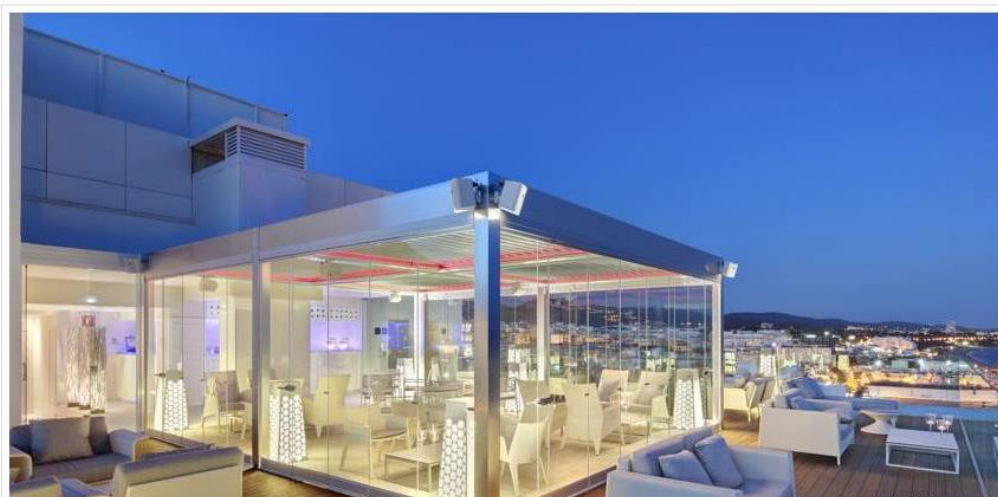
Now, this really is a room with a view as the large glass doors open onto a spectacular glass fronted balcony with uninterrupted views over the azure Mediterranean sea – a great spot to sit out and watch the sun go down with a glass of fizz.

Guest staying in the 'Oh La La The One' rooms have access to exclusive services within the hotel which includes daily access to the spa's hydrotherapy water circuit and exclusive access (only with a personal key card) to a private lounge which provides (on a self-service basis) an amazing selection snacks of cold meats, cheeses, mini salads, cous-cous bowls and mini desserts. Fridges are stocked with premium brand drinks and include water, wine, soft drinks, juices, champagne and beer, all available 11 am to 11 pm.



THE SPA

The SPA by Germaine de Cappuccino has relaxation areas and a hydrotherapy circuit. The spa treatment menu includes massage and facial rituals and Premier rituals which include specialist treatments featuring combinations of facial, massage, peels and wraps. I tried the Shi Zen Massage; inspired by the Oriental technique of Shiatsu and designed to enhance relaxation, well-being and harmony of mind and spirit. A glorious treatment which was the perfect post pool wind-down. There is also a salon offering hair and beauty services. If you don't want to wander too far from the beach, massage cabanas are dotted around on the beach.





THE DRINKING AND DINING

The multi award winning **Messina Restaurant** won its' first Michelin star in 2016 and has won top place in "Restaurant of the Year" prize, by the Marbella Academy of Gastronomy. This foodie destination is recognised as one of the best culinary experiences in the Costa Del Sol with chef Mauricio winning many accolades of his own alongside the restaurant.

Mare Nostrum Restaurant offers a buffet style dinner in the evenings and an outstanding breakfast buffet each morning including full English breakfast, huge pastry station, smoked salmon station, cereals and cold meats and cheeses. This extensive selection really does set you up for the day. There are options to sit on the sea-view balcony or to retreat inside in the shade.

For lunch visit the **Amàre Beach Restaurant**, this open-air location serves an extensive menu including tapas style dishes, fresh seafood, burgers and pizzas. Take a table on the wooden deck and enjoy a chilled glass of Chablis with the fabulous Iberian ham, fresh prawns and protein packed salads.

There is a bar lounge on the pool level, but the real drinks destination here has to be the **Belvue** rooftop bar. Wrapped in a glass balcony, this small but sleek bar is one of the best in Marbella and people flock from all around to enjoy the unrivaled sea views with a cool cocktail. Even the house Rioja is fantastic.



THE HIGHLIGHTS

At-sunbed service, means relaxation is uninterrupted.

The Belvue rooftop bar is a must-visit.

A glamorous pool with plenty of loungers.

Walking distance to Marbella Old Town.

www.amarehotels.com

THE RATES

Nightly rates start from £200 in an 'I Was Here' room on a bed and breakfast basis including complimentary daily sunbeds, use of the Technogym and WiFi.

THE TRAVEL

Monarch, the scheduled leisure airline, operates flights to Malaga from Birmingham, London Gatwick, London Luton, Leeds Bradford and Manchester airports with fares, including taxes, starting from £42 one way (£75 return)

For further information or to book Monarch flights, Monarch Holidays or Monarch Hotels, please visit www.monarch.co.uk