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BY LOTTE BROUWER / TRAVEL / APRIL 25, 2017

PARADISE FOUND (AND IT'S ONLY TWO-AND-A-BIT HOURS AWAY)



What does heaven look like to you?

Perhaps it's a cold glass of pale pink C tes de Provence ros  whilst sitting on a beach with your toes in the sand, waiting for a waiter to bring you a platter of fresh grilled seafood? Or maybe it's waking up to the sound of waves, followed by a shower with an ocean view and then tucking into a strong cup of coffee and freshly squeezed orange juice on the terrace with a copy of the morning newspaper.



ABOUT

A lifestyle blog with a focus on recipes, home & interiors, travel and London life!





Or what about that way your skin feels on a warm evening when you're still all tingly and sunkissed from a sunny afternoon, and then cooling down with sundowners at sunset from a rooftop bar, a gentle breeze softly caressing your (slightly sunburnt) skin. Either way, I've got good news for you. All of this is possible – and it's just a short flight away with [Monarch](#).



Yup, that's right. You could leave work *right now* and be on a hot and sunny beach in a matter of *hours!* So where is this little slice of heaven, I hear you ask?

If you scroll down through my pictures you'd be forgiven for guessing LA, Miami or Palm Springs, with the bright blue sea, clear skies and countless palm trees creating a Slim Aarons style backdrop to this contemporary and stylish hotel. After all, it was March when I went – and to find real sunbathing weather this time of year you'd have to board a long-haul flight, right? Wrong.





Give up? I'm talking about Marbella; a picturesque old town with a manicured promenade dividing the town from the pristine beaches and beach restaurants. It's no wonder the area is called the 'Costa Del Sol' - which literally translates as the sunshine coast - because there wasn't a single cloud in the sky the entire time we were there. This is because Marbella has its own micro-climate (which it owes to the surrounding mountains apparently), which pretty much guarantees the perfect holiday, even in March!



I'd been to Marbella before as I had a friend with a family place near there, so already knew of its beauty, culture and climate, but I had never been to the [Amàre Marbella Beach Hotel](#) - which is really the icing on the Costa Del Sol cake.



After a quick Monarch flight from Gatwick to Malaga airport (two and a bit hours - just enough time to read two magazines and delete old photos and videos to clear up space on my phone for new pictures), we arrived at Malaga's floor-to-ceiling glass airport. After a 45 minute drive along the coast and through dramatic mountainous scenery we arrived at the stunning beachfront hotel right across the road from Marbella's old town - with Amàre bicycles parked outside to explore the town with.



That recognisable holiday feeling of instant relief mixed with childish excitement washed over me the moment we stepped inside the bright and airy lobby. I couldn't stop my mouth blurting Oh-My-God-Oh-My-God-Oh-My-God everywhere I looked: floor-to-ceiling glass windows, Philippe Starck ghost armchairs, glass curved desks and Milo Baughman inspired designer furniture, contrasted against rustic, stripped wooden beams to remind us we were seconds away from the beach.

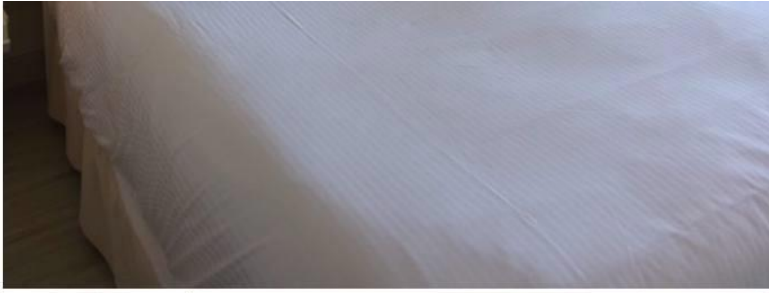




Opening the door to my room was another jaw-drop moment, and I don't think I was able to close my mouth until several minutes later. I may have actually physically drooled on the floor. As soon as you place your key card into the slot, Debussy's *Claire de Lune* starts playing softly in the background.



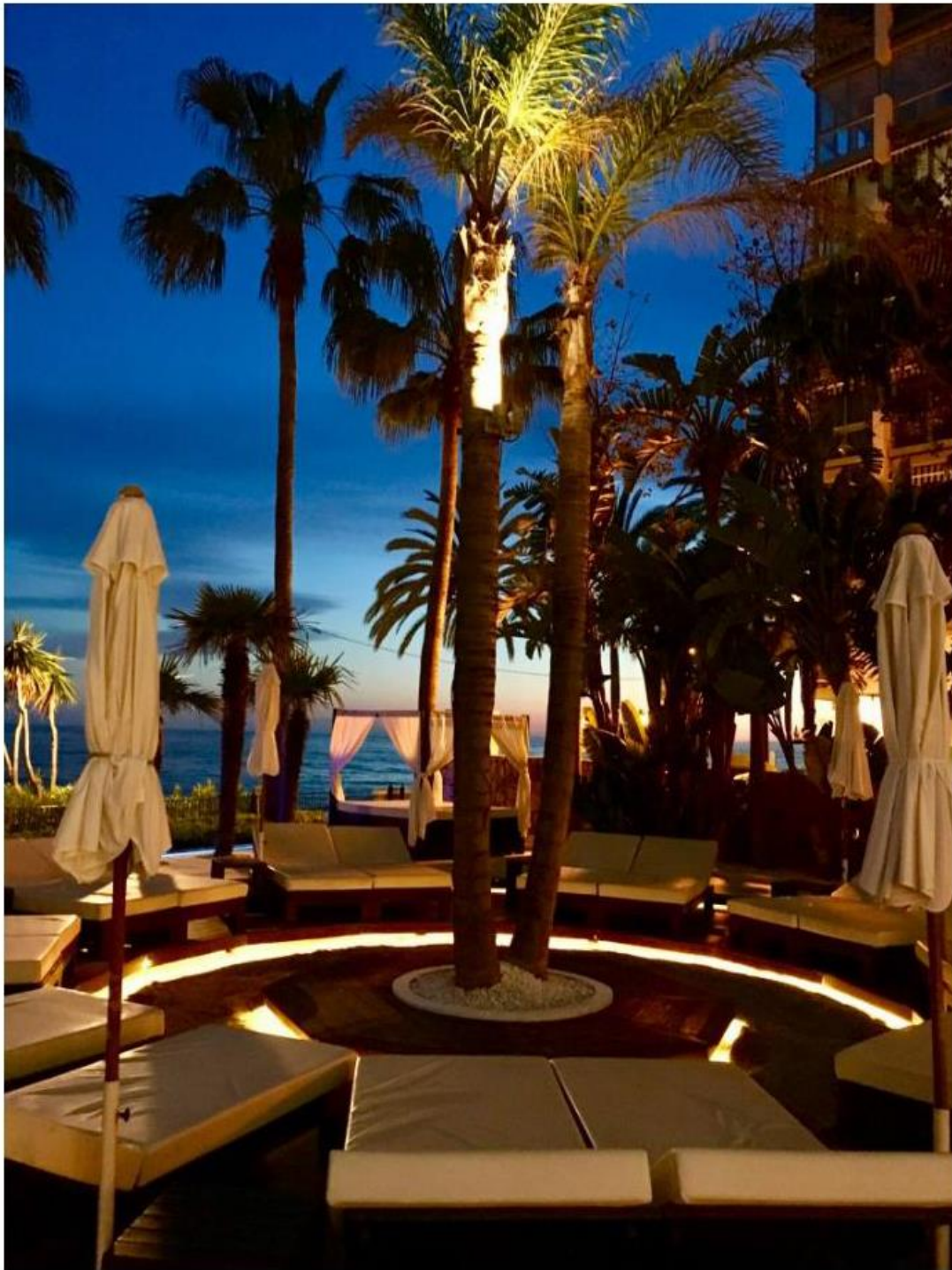
To my left there was a large open bathroom with a glass shower room that has views of the sea (yes, really), to my right was enough closet space to host a Kardashian's holiday wardrobe, and straight ahead was an enormous bed with white carved headboard, a small sitting area, a desk area, a mini-fridge, Nespresso machine and a bookcase stocking the holiday essentials you may find yourself needing – from crisps and popcorn to liquor miniatures and mixers, to vibrating cock rings and handcuffs. Because, you know.



And then there's your private balcony. The bedroom opens on to a small private balcony with a table and chairs, with views overlooking the hotel's swimming pool and beach, and the palm tree lined pedestrian promenade that leads to Puerto Banús.



Once I managed to compose myself, I joined the rest of our group downstairs in the Amàre Lounge for champagne, dinner, and the evening entertainment. The Lounge opens on to the pool area that overlooks the beach, and both the pool and the palm trees were lit up in warm pinks and purples, creating a romantic, sultry atmosphere.



The live music kicked off at 9pm, getting everyone's bums wiggling in their seats as they tucked into a creamy pistachio soup with local Iberico ham, Parmesan and seaweed salad.

After the red curry oxtail dim sum (incredible), grouper fish, and 'three texture brownies', it was time to hit the hay.

