

# Pleasure island

A new hotel in Ibiza lets clients tune in to the chilled side of the White Isle, writes **Alice Barnes-Brown**



View of Illa de Santa Eulalia from Fergus Style Punta Arabi

**I**t's 8am on a Wednesday morning in Ibiza. I had thought the only people active at this hour would be local commuters, with most tourists sleeping off a big night out at the clubs. But the four-star Fergus Style Punta Arabi, which opened last year, is a hive of activity. Almost 500 stalls are setting up for the weekly hippy market, while thousands of Ibizans and visitors alike gather to see what's on sale.

Ibiza's largest and oldest hippy market has been happening on this spot since 1973. When the market sets up each Wednesday between April and October, the boho-chic 329-room resort is buzzing with musicians, street-food trucks, fortune tellers, jewellery makers, homeware artisans and more – but the rest of the week, clients will find the resort refreshingly peaceful. It resembles a Balearic village, with rooms set in low-rise, whitewashed Mediterranean buildings shaded by pine and hibiscus trees.

#### A QUIET PLACE

Driving past billboards for big-name DJs and superclubs en route to the resort, I wonder whether my suspicions about Ibiza being exclusively for partygoers are correct. But as we near the island's rural northeastern corner, gaudy roadside advertising gives way to rustic windmills, leafy vineyards and dry-stone walls.

Punta Arabi is a rocky cape, with the Fergus property its only occupant. At the tip of the cliff, sea on both sides, is the resort's Thai massage and yoga area, where instructor Marta helps settle us in with a vinyasa class. "They say Ibiza is a spiritual place," she comments as turbulent waves crash against the coast, "but for some people, it's just partying." Perhaps, like yin and yang, there's room for both.

A few steps from the yoga deck is the large, emerald-green pool, where I take up residence on a Bali bed facing the Med. Resort guests seeking to escape the ➤

# DESTINATIONS

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CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Poolside at Fergus Style Punta Arabi; amphorae used to age wine; hippy market stall; rooms at Fergus Style Punta Arabi

PICTURES: Maxi Bellucci; Ibiza Tourism Board/Joan Costa; Alice Barnes-Brown



hubbub of the hippy market can use their wristband to access the pool, where the atmosphere is relaxed and peaceful. Those looking for more vibes can head to the Hippy Bar in the heart of the market, or get their caffeine fix at Bar Sa Trobada, offering coffee-loving clients the only on-resort Starbucks in Ibiza.

Speaking of food, there are three restaurants and three bars at the Fergus Style Punta Arabi, ranging from Caramull, an Argentine-inspired joint, where dishes include grilled pork steak seasoned with Ibizan salt crystals, to Lola Pool Bar, where cooling, cucumber-infused cocktails can be sipped with a side of crispy chicken bao buns.

### COUNTRY LIFE

Though the Fergus Style Punta Arabi offers plenty of tasty dining options, the resort's half-board basis gives clients a chance to explore the local food and drink scene. A 30-minute drive away is Bodega Can Rich, where director Alvaro Perez Navazo gives us a vineyard tour, wine tasting and generous spread of Catalan appetisers (€60 per person).

“Ibiza surprises people – they call it the green island of the Balearics

“We age some wines in amphorae. This is what our ancestors, the Phoenicians, used,” he explains, gesturing to a row of thousand-litre terracotta vases in the cellar. “We thought it was interesting to finish the wines in amphorae, because we’re trying to bring out the traditional Ibiza method.”

The wines all pair brilliantly with local dishes, from *coco ibicenca* (a crunchy flatbread with roasted tomatoes and peppers) to *flaó* tart. Navazo finishes by tipping a favourite island liqueur, *hierbas ibicencas*, into brandy glasses, then quickly darts into the herb garden to show us the sage and verbena used in the bodega's own blend. As we take in its sweet and heady scent, he says: “Ibiza surprises people when they come inland – they call it the green island of the Balearics.”

### REVITALISED RESORTS

Even on the ever-popular coast, Ibiza is full of surprises. Near Bodega Can Rich is Sant Antoni, a resort once popular for lively bars and clubs, but now investing in its art and culinary offering. We dine at Villa Mercedes, a glamorous 125-year-old casa with a beautifully lit garden, free-to-play piano and sizzling plates of savoury *arroz* (Ibiza's answer to risotto).

A stone's throw from the Fergus Style Punta Arabi is Santa Eulalia, one of Ibiza's first tourist resorts and centred around a glitzy yacht marina. Lo-fi beats drift from the rooftop of the port authority building where a yoga class is taking place, but the sea is the biggest draw, and there are many ways your clients can get out on it.

At the hippy market, tell them to look out for the Jet Ski Club

### BOOK IT

Jet2holidays sells a seven-night stay at Fergus Style Punta Arabi from £779 per person, half-board, based on two sharing. The price includes 22kg luggage, transfers and flights from Bournemouth on June 4. [jet2holidays.com](http://jet2holidays.com)

### INSIDER insight

“The quieter side of Ibiza offers an exceptional opportunity for agents, enhancing the island's appeal throughout the year. Areas such as the north and the inland regions allow visitors to discover the true essence of Ibiza: markets, scenic hiking trails, hidden coves and traditions that remain alive today. This type of experience is particularly appealing to British visitors who are already familiar with the island, or are seeking a more exclusive and relaxed stay.”

Juan Miguel Costa, director, Ibiza Tourism



Ibiza stand for a half-hour jetski tour of the coves south of Santa Eulalia (from €119 per person). Alternatively, suggest a yacht charter with La Mar to Illa de Santa Eulalia – an island occupied only by birds – where we laid anchor to swim as the sun went down.

Sailing around Punta Arabi on our return, with the sun setting on my shoulders, salt on my skin and a new necklace from the market around my neck, I felt a smile form. If Ibiza is a spiritual place, this is an island that enchants visitors both day and night. **TW**