

Get fit with Fleur

Take a break from the buffet with a fitness-focused break to Antigua inspired by *The X Factor's* Fleur East, writes Yolanda Zappaterra



If they're anything like me, most people on a resort holiday will check out the gym, do the odd aqua aerobics session, revisit childhood ping-pong memories... but to kick-start a fitness regime from scratch? That's a much bigger challenge.

It's a compelling one though, especially in these health-conscious times, so when I was invited to the Caribbean to check out an initiative being offered by Elite Island Resorts and W8 Gym – an innovative 'gym-in-a-box' created by singer Fleur East and her cousins Nick Meaney and Clive Payne – my dash to the airport would have given Mo Farah a run for his money.

The starry line-up – Fleur will be familiar to many from *The X Factor* and *I'm a Celebrity, Get Me Out of Here*, while keen-eyed film and TV fans may remember Nick for performances in such blockbusters as *Titanic*, *The X Files* and *Charmed* – developed the

compact W8 Gym as a portable keep-fit station. It has obvious appeal not just to hotels and resorts, but also to offices and even gym-hating or time-strapped home users. However, to experience it on holiday, with a breeze cooling me down as I tried Russian twists, box jumps, squats and leg raises, is surely the way to be introduced to it, I reasoned. And I wasn't wrong.

A GYM WITH A VIEW

On a sun deck at Elite Island Resorts' St James's Club in Antigua, overlooking the placid waters of Mamora Bay, some 30 of us were put through our paces by Fleur (qualified fitness instructor being just one of her hidden talents), sharing laughter, encouraging comments and howls of "I can't do that" while, during rest breaks, gazing at our beautiful surroundings.

It was fun and invigorating and carried through to the in-room video sessions that form part of Elite ➤

TALKING TRAVEL WITH **Fleur East**

Top three destinations?

Ghana, because I learnt so much about my culture, and the beaches are amazing. India, because it's just spectacular. And Japan, because it's unreal, plus I got engaged there!

Travel essentials?

My W8 Gym! I take the dumbbells out and travel with just the box and resistance bands, so I can do workouts anywhere. Plus my phone, music and headphones.

Holiday nightmare?

Delhi belly! I love food, so wherever I go I try the local cuisine and don't limit myself, but I've paid for it sometimes!

Bucket list destination?

Brazil. I really want to go to Carnival for sunshine, music, dancing and good vibes.

3 WAYS TO GET ACTIVE IN ANTIGUA

🌿 **Take a hike:** Puff your way up to hilltop fortifications; the Historical and Archaeological Society (antiguumuseums.net) arranges group hikes.

🚲 **Jump on a bike:** A guided bike tour is a great way to see some of the island's 365 beaches; Cycling Tours Antigua (cyclingtoursantigua.com) also offers bikes for hire.

🚣 **Take to the water:** Board a kayak with Antigua Paddles (antiguapaddles.com) to explore mangroves, lagoons and even an uninhabited island on Antigua's east coast.



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: St James's Club; Fleur East; beachfront room; Mamora Bay
PICTURE: Alexis Andrews



Island Resorts' new W8 Gym package, which includes in-room equipment, a daily beach class, and – as part of a limited launch offer lasting until December – a W8 Gym waiting for holidaymakers on their return home (full details at eliteislandholidays.com/w8gym).

The desire to be active had taken hold, and despite jet lag, a late night and one too many rum punches for a few of us, when we met for breakfast next day most of us had been out running, in the gym, doing in-room workouts or planning which resort activities we'd try out. And there are plenty, from morning power walks to aqua aerobics, stability ball classes to beach volleyball and sunset stretching to yoga.

The feeling of wellbeing encouraged me to take part in some of these as the days progressed, knowing I'd be able to do things at my own pace while also making the most of everything an all-inclusive resort has to offer.

FIT FOR LIFE

At home, the ethos of the trip continued in a way an all-inclusive holiday never normally would. Instead of day-to-day routine replacing holiday memories and activities, I wanted to continue the W8 Gym routine and my fitness plan. And that's not accidental. As Paula Whitehead, European MD of Elite Island Resorts, says: "It's important that our wellbeing options fit well with relaxation on holiday but are also habits or new things learnt that can be carried on afterwards. For us, W8 Gym takes anywhere, any-level, anytime fitness to the next stage, either by continuing an established exercise routine

while on holiday and adding moves from Fleur's in-room workout videos, or starting a new fitness commitment and using the same kit back at home."

Four months on, my W8 Gym and I are still going strong, and while other holiday souvenirs moulder away and gather dust in the back of wardrobes, kitchen cupboards and drinks cabinets, the W8 Gym has pride of place in my sitting room. **TW**



ST JAMES'S CLUB ANTIGUA

The resort has six pools, five restaurants, a spa and salon, 24/7 coffee shop, tennis courts, fitness centre and activities. Rooms are modern, with potable tap water.

Book it: JTA Travel offers a seven-night stay from £1,420 per person based on two adults sharing a Club Room, departing on May 5, 2020, with Virgin Atlantic economy flights from Gatwick. All guests can obtain a W8 Gym kit from the resort gym, subject to availability, or Royal Suites (from £1,732 per person) come with a W8 Gym. jtatravel.co.uk

