

HOLIDAYS

Hotels for adults only

The pool's inflatable-free and nobody sings the theme from Frozen. With the school hols at their height, Susan d'Arcy has the top grown-up breaks

Susan d'Arcy

August 7 2016, 12:01am,
The Sunday Times

Not a bucket or spade in sight: raise a glass on your child-free beach

Share

Save



We get it. It's not that you don't like children. You were one once. It's just that sometimes — say, when you're on a lovely holiday that you've paid good money for — you'd rather they were neither seen nor heard. Smart hoteliers know this, so they've created serene, stylish resorts with a “No Kids Allowed” sign slapped firmly on the gates, all summer long. Below are our favourite adults-only hotels of the moment. And even if you do have kids, isn't it time Granny and Grandpa spent a bit more quality time with them, anyway?

Blue Jasmine, Cephalonia

A recent facelift ensures the sand-and-sea palette of these 12 suites feels boutiquey without compromising on Greek charm. There's a cool pool, flower-filled gardens and fabulous sea views. A small sandy cove is just a short walk away and Skala's bars and traditional tavernas are five minutes in the car.

From £844pp, including car hire, booked through Simpson Travel (020 8003 6557, simpsontravel.com)



The high-spec decks at Dome Noruz Chania, on Crete

Domes Noruz Chania, Crete

The actress Helen Hunt described Domes of Elounda as the most serene place she'd ever been. Its new sister property, Domes Noruz Chania, which opened on July 20, repeats the five-star formula: high-spec urban design, enviable beachfront location, sybaritic spa. This time around, however, they've subtracted the crèche and the kids' club. The 83 rooms come with either a plunge pool or a hot tub. We're less sure about the MP3 players loaded with mood music. Chania's old town is a pleasant stroll away.

From £1,441pp, booked through Sovereign (01293 762400, sovereign.com); domesnoruz.com

Casa Cook, Rhodes

The high-street tour operator Thomas Cook opened its first "bohemian lifestyle" resort this summer, which basically works out as white walls, vintage furniture, ethnic cushions and rattan. It's not quite as cool as it thinks it is, but the pool, restaurant and bar merge into one another nicely and all of the 90 rooms back onto swim-up pools. You're a safe eight miles from Faliraki's drunken debauchery.

From £1,175pp, booked through Casa Cook (0844 412 5970, casacook.com)

Casa Angelina, Amalfi Coast

This minimalist beauty, cut into the cliffs between Positano and Amalfi, has 39 bedrooms with sugar-white decor and dramatic Murano sculptures that would bring any parent out in a cold sweat. The hotel owns a section of Gavitella Beach (reached by a lift, or 200 steps if you need to work off some spaghetti) and there's a spa, a pool and a terrace with sea views. Extra brownie points on offer if you hire the hotel's boat for a trip to Capri.

From £2,199pp, booked through Black Tomato (020 7426 9888, blacktomato.com); casangelina.com

Bohemia Suites, Gran Canaria

These 67 honey-toned rooms have the indoor/outdoor design concept down to a fine art, with balconies that feel like a continuation of the slick bedrooms. The rooftop restaurant is the perfect perch from which to weigh up the two miles of Playa del Ingles below. There's an indulgent spa, too.

From £939pp, half-board, booked through Jet2 Holidays (0800 408 5594, jet2holidays.com); bohemia-grancanaria.com



Time for a leisurely breakfast at Blue Jasmine, on Cephalonia

Hotel Marigna, Ibiza

There's mood rather than disco lighting in the 44 Mediterranean-inspired rooms of this retreat in the heart of Ibiza Town. It has a coffee shop rather than an all-night bar, and a rooftop terrace for sunsets, sangria and stories of celebrated raves of yesteryear.

Doubles from £95 a night, B&B; hotelmарignaibiza.com. Fly to Ibiza with easyJet

Hacienda de Abajo, La Palma

Turn sharp right at Tenerife and discover La Palma, a Canary island of black-sand beaches, pine forests and starry, starry nights (the island was the world's first designated Starlight Reserve). Base yourself at Tazacorte, on the west coast, home to the island's best hotel. Built on a sugar-baron's 17th-century estate, the 32 rooms are delightful mini-museums of antiques and ancestral oils. One modern addition is the minibar, stocked with free soft drinks.

From £999pp, booked through Prestige Holidays (prestige.holidays.co.uk); hotelhacienda.deabajo.com

Casa la Siesta, Andalusia

You can't open a hotel called House of Sleep in Andalusia's snooziest corner and then let kids in. This haven on the Costa de la Luz, 10 minutes from the romantic white village of Vejer de la Frontera, has just eight rooms. The owner is one half of the interior-design firm Bert & May, so expect stucco walls, pitched ceilings with exposed beams and recycled rough-cut wooden furniture, but no artwork — it'd be tricky for paintings to compete with the olive groves and lavender fields outside.

Doubles from £220 a night, B&B; casala.siesta.com. Fly to Jerez with Ryanair



Plenty of room on the beach at The House, Barbados

The House, Barbados

There's no danger of the theme from Frozen wafting in from the room next door at the House, a glitzy retreat in a prime position on the Platinum Coast, between the buzzy capital, Bridgetown, and the bars of Holetown. Grown-up treats include a jet-lag massage on the beach, champagne on tap at breakfast every morning, and Hobie Cats to sail, all free of charge. Right next door, Daphne's restaurant, the Bajan outpost of London's Le Caprice, serves superior Italian comfort food.

From £1,649pp, booked through Blue Bay Travel (0844 499 7645, caribbeanwarehouse.co.uk); thehousebarbados.com



Hurawalhi, in the Maldives, has a supersized underwater restaurant

Hurawalhi, Maldives

The Maldives has more than 1,200 resorts to choose from — Hurawalhi, when it opens in November, will be one of only a handful of adults-only properties. Apart from the standard bone-white beaches and Tiffany-blue waters, this place has 90 cutting-edge rooms (the pick are the 15 ocean sunset pool villas) and the world's largest underwater restaurant, sunk almost 20ft down. Two minutes from your balcony is a breeding site for manta rays — some babies you won't mind bumping into.

From £2,499pp, booked through The Holiday Place (020 7644 1770, holidayplace.co.uk); hurawalhi.com



Relax and watch the palm trees sway at Kahanda Kanda, in Sri Lanka

Kahanda Kanda, Sri Lanka

OK, this hotel does let in children — but they have to be older than 12 and extremely well behaved. We just couldn't leave Kahanda Kanda out. It's one of the island's most beautiful boutique hotels, set amid Lake Koggala's tea plantations, an easy tuk-tuk ride from Galle. Lush gardens and lily ponds form buffer zones between the 10 villas, each filled with exquisite local antiques and a four-poster. The views over the jungle and lake will lower your blood pressure instantly. The food is delicious: learn the secrets of that sensational seafood curry during a cookery class.

From £1,690pp, booked through Ampersand Travel (020 7819 9770, ampersandtravel.com); kahandakanda.com

Packages are for a week in August or September and include breakfast and flights, unless stated



No fear of being dive-bombed
in the pool at Casa Cook, in
Rhodes

Emma Barnett, The Sunday Times's new advice columnist, on why parents need to leave the kids at home

A child-free holiday is the ultimate reset button. Remember what you used to think about the conversations parents had, before you joined the breeding brigade yourself? If your brains are too befuddled from tiredness and box-set bingeing, allow me to remind you. You thought parent chat stank.

And now you and your other half, despite your best efforts, have fallen into the boring-parent-speak trap. The bedsheets are probably as stale as the words you limply allow to fall out of your mouth at your food-stained kitchen table every evening.

This is why you desperately need a holiday without sprogs. You need to de-familiarise yourselves from the daily routine, and from each other, in order to be new and individual again.

Individuality in relationships all too often rapidly dissolves into the family unit, until it just becomes one sloppy, gooey mess in which everyone ceases to make an effort. Yes, the bonds of family are strong and built out of deep love, but complacency affects even the strongest groups.

While you're away, try and get ready for evening meals separately and meet at the bar, as though on a date. And do a few things separately, too - so there is something new to chew over at dinner. Otherness is underrated as a tool to make sure each partner still has something fresh to bring to the table.

Use this holiday to impress each other again — with sparkling chat and, of course, gallons of sparkling foreign fizz.