

Top notch flights with added frills ensure holidays on party island can still be enjoyed on a budget – and the White Isle offers the chance to get down with the stars.

MICKEY McMONAGLE

Ibiza is rocking

Travel info

■ British Airways operate up to 18 flights a week to Ibiza from London City airport. Connections are available from Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen.

■ British Airways are the only airline to offer year-round services to the White Isle from the UK with up to five flights a week in winter from London City.

■ Flights can be booked via ba.com.

■ For closing party offers or 2014 deals, go to www.hotelesvive.com

■ See www.atzaro.com for info and rules

■ Check out www.ibizarocks.com/house



HOST Film star Idris Elba rocks Pikes



PARTY Ibiza Rocks House is a top venue



VENUE Es Vive has its own club

FINCA ON THE PULSE
The stunning Atzaro hotel and spa

All too often, the only down side of a trip to Ibiza is the budget flight.

Packed with noisy, drunken idiots and with charges for everything imaginable, it's a torrid few hours of hell bookending a week in paradise.

But it doesn't have to be that way.

I must admit, it hadn't even crossed my mind that, for a similar price to the eventual total of a so-called budget airline flight, we could fly British Airways via their regular all-year round London City route.

No hidden extras, 23kg baggage allowance each, two pieces of hand luggage each and free drinks and snacks.

And, most important of all, no neds chanting and no cheers on landing.

We went from Edinburgh, checked our bags right through and found the whole journey relaxing and incredibly fast. With just over an hour in London City airport – plenty of time for connections as it's tiny – there was just time for a drink and then, before we knew it, we were landing in Ibiza.

We'd been treated by our pal Charlie to a night at the stunning Atzaro hotel and spa, a remote former finca, which has grown into one of the island's most beautiful retreats.

Tucked away in the centre of the island, well away from all the tourist destinations, it offers the kind of tranquility people refuse to believe even exists on Ibiza.

Set in its own orange grove, it's the kind of place you'll never want to leave.

Wandering around the sprawling, beautifully styled grounds, sipping cocktails as we found hidden corners, it was like exploring another world.

The restaurant is regarded as one of the island's best and prices are surprisingly reasonable.

And the Balinese spa is utterly otherworldly – my wife Deborah is already planning a return there for a spa day with her pals on our next Ibiza trip.

Rooms are very Ibizan, updated with the style of the old finca in mind to create a relaxed welcoming feel with all modern amenities. Look out for regular events

too – fashion shows, chill out DJs, all sorts – but ultimately this is one Balearic spot you want to go and enjoy for itself.

As we did, just soak up your surroundings and the complete relaxation on offer, with friendly staff there to cater for your every whim.

After an amazing breakfast, we were raring to get stuck in to the other side of Ibiza – the mayhem of Devil's Island.

So we decamped to our regular haunt, Hotel Es Vive in Figueretas, for the rest of our stay.

With its own (totally soundproofed) club on the ground floor, the legendary Experience Bar, the biggest danger is that you'll end up not going to any of Ibiza's superclubs because, frankly, you don't need to.

And funnily enough, that's exactly what we ended up doing.

All sorts of star names, from DJs to promoters to musicians, can be found either on the dancefloor, lurking in one of the comfy dark corners or taking over the decks.

There's no such thing as nipping in for a drink – once you enter, you're there for the duration, whatever you say. Trust me.

We did venture away from the hotel at night occasionally – in fact we twice crossed the island for parties at Ibiza Rocks House at Pikes, another legendary Ibiza hotel with a heritage to rival any in the world.

Established by showbiz icon Tony Pike and now owned by Ibiza Rocks, it's been a home from home to the planet's superstars since the start.

Our first visit this trip was for the final Idris Elba party of the summer, the Luther star hosting a series featuring a galaxy of star DJs.

You'll find yourself wandering around the maze-like warren of rooms, outdoor areas and bizarre little hallways, all packed with beautiful people having fun.

It was an ace night but, for me, it was topped by the legendary annual Freddie Mercury birthday party in honour of the Pikes regular after whom the main party room is named.

The super-exclusive bash had fancy dress Freddie's roaming around

and a mandatory moustache policy for everyone.

If you showed up without one, the girls at the gate drew one on for you.

With 2ManyDJs just about blowing the roof off, it was one of those truly Balearic nights with an utterly eclectic music policy and bizarre mix of people.

If you want to find the most effortlessly stylish, star-packed parties on the planet – think classic rock and roll stuff – Pikes is your place.

Look out for after-parties on Wednesdays post-Ibiza Rocks (the acts stay at Pikes and party there) throughout next summer.

This season there's the Rocky Horror Picture Show closing party on Sunday, October 13, and the island's most famous Halloween party on October 31.

While you're in the San Antonio area, Plastik is a must – the bar which began the now-thriving revolution in the once-derided resort.

Great DJs and music, a glam crowd and bar prices rather than club rates for drinks – you'd happily spend your whole night there.

Mambo is still the pick of the sunset bars while Ocean Beach Club is well worth a look.

Closer to base, we loved Sands, just along from Es Vive on Playa D'En Bossa beach.

This beach club has had an incredible year with new chef Tim Payne transforming it into one of the island's most popular restaurants.

Throw in a stunning location on the island's hottest beach, day beds, guest appearances from Carl Cox and friends and amazing cocktails and you've got a winner.

We'd hoped to have more of a relaxing week than usual and sort of managed it, despite mayhem at Es Vive and Pikes – but then, that's an essential part of the fun really.

With plenty staying open throughout the winter these days, those year-round British Airways flights may well come in handy again before summer 2014 kicks off...

