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# Travel

## Just deserts

*From the Atacama to Wadi Rum, the world's deserts offer truly uplifting travel experiences. Oh, and plenty of heat. Nigel Richardson reveals his favourites*

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Lead-in price of £549pp refers to Phokaia Beach Resort, 12th May 2018. See website for full terms and conditions.



## ROSIE GREEN

### SPA STRUCK

*In need of a sunny wellness break where you, your Mamil and the kids will all be happy? Try the multipurpose Almyra hotel in Cyprus*

**M**amil (or middle aged men in Lycra for the uninitiated) are everywhere. You might be one. Or be married to one. In which case you'll want a hotel that can serve up a side order of sport with your sun and sea.

Enter Cyprus. And the Almyra. You might be thinking Cyprus is not the most obvious of wellness/fitness destinations. That it's more chips and two eggs than wetsuits and power shakes. But you'd be wrong.

At the Almyra they've realised the country's climate – endless sunshine and sea that's swimmable in year round – makes it the perfect place to host endurance sport holidays. And that the terrain is perfect, too. The open water swimming is a joy in Paphos harbour and the Troodos mountains provide an embarrassment of challenging hills and scenic views for keen cyclists.

For Mamils (or possibly Mawils), the Almyra provides a bespoke programme for triathletes. They design them for individuals or groups and recruit in experienced athletes/triathlon experts to coach. They provide the equipment, offer advice and encouragement, and use technical gadgetry like video analysis to improve swimming style and running gait. Word of warning: you'll need to organise all of this ahead of your visit.

And for those of us for whom climbing on to a treatment bed is exercise enough, the Almyra has a really good spa offering. Positioned at the end of the property, right away from the bustle of the family pools, it's all clean lines and sleek design.

It's a no-kids zone (except in January to March when younger guests can use the pool in set

times) and it feels like an oasis of calm. It has Vichy rooms where you can be scrubbed and hosed down and they have recruited the skills of celebrated London therapist (Cypriot-born) Anastasia Achilleos to ensure facials are top notch. Ila treatments offer utter relaxation (I had the Ila Chakra Wellbeing; €180/£159 for two hours) while QMS treatments deliver anti-ageing results.

You can eat delicious healthy food in the spa's Eauzone

It's perfect for sport holidays: open water swimming is a joy in Paphos harbour

restaurant (special mention goes to the breakfast).

Kids are also brilliantly catered for at the Scott Dunn-run club with a shady playground, zip wires and trampolines aplenty. Our two children had a session with a brilliant tennis coach, too.

Food? The Mosaics restaurant buffet was good, plentiful and generally tasty (though there is an unavoidable school canteen feel to any "plate of plenty" buffet right?). What was standout, though, was lunch at the hotel's seafront restaurant, Ouzeri. It's local food – think Greek salads brimming with the most luscious vegetables, and fresh fish – all to be consumed within yards of the sea.

The rooms are cool and pared back with marble flooring, whitewashed walls and floaty curtains. We stayed in Kyma Suite 13, and the sea view was one of the best I've ever had. If you were going to be picky you might say the hotel needs a bit of a refresh, and that there's not much of a beach.

But whether your idea of heaven is being massaged with oils, climbing a steep incline on

two wheels or spending all day splashing in a pool – the Almyra's got it covered. Enjoy.

Scott Dunn (020 8682 5040; [scottdunn.com](http://scottdunn.com)) offers seven nights at the Almyra, Cyprus, from £1,560 per person, based on a family of four (two adults and two children) staying on a B&B basis. Includes two places in the Scott Dunn Explorers kids' club, British Airways flights from the UK and private transfers.



Pool with a view: the Almyra

#### A-LIST RETREATS WITHIN REACH.

The Ranch Malibu and Kamalaya are hailed as the ultimate life-changing retreats by the rich and famous, who go to overhaul body and mind.

But if you don't fancy clocking up the 5,000-plus miles plus to get to them, both are doing "pop-ups" closer to home. Kamalaya's founders are decamping from Koh Samui to Limewood in the New Forest in May, where they're offering two-day retreats.

Meanwhile, The Ranch Malibu's team is heading to Hotel Rosa in the Dolomites in August to September.

[limewoodhotel.co.uk](http://limewoodhotel.co.uk)  
[rosalpina.it](http://rosalpina.it)