

ALMYRA

by CLOVER STROUD



In brief

Buzzy white-washed charmer for young families

The lowdown

This heavenly gem on a cliff in north-western Cyprus is a haven for adults and a pleasure zone for hordes of children. In fact, we've never seen a hotel so happily crammed with parents bonding at breakfast (all of them obsessively discussing sleep) or kids forging new friendships in the heated, shaded paddling pool. It's the norm to arrive at mealtimes armed with wet wipes, knowingly greeting the waiter with a look that says, 'Bring the crayons, quick.'

Set in three hectares that sweep down to the beach, the cool-marble hotel is a lovely place to retreat after baking in the glorious sunshine (still doable in October). The spa harnesses the healing powers of sea water, with treatments that make full use of the skin's ability to absorb minerals from the ocean, including magnesium, sodium, iodine, calcium and potassium. British brand Ila's Beyond Organic products have recently been introduced, for example in the two-hour Neroli Immersion, which uses orange blossom, jasmine, poppy seeds and tuberose milk. It's sensuous enough to leave you near comatose. And try the Ila Chakra Wellbeing therapy, designed to sooth the seven energy centres with a combination of reflexology, a bracing body scrub, healing massage and a soft facial. Wives should tell husbands it lasts longer than it really does so they can soak up the peace rather than racing guiltily back to their brood. There's no need to worry about them.

There's also a tennis court, jet-skiing, scuba-diving and boat trips, but perhaps best of all is the space-saving Baby Go Lightly service, providing not just nappies and baby food but

pretty much every piece of kit a harassed parent could need, including buggies, baby walkers and bottle warmers.

The most family-friendly of the five restaurants is Mosaics, which has an early sitting for toddlers demanding freshly blended stuff at tea-time. And poolside Notios has a new menu focusing on seasonal ingredients; the sushi rolls and chargrilled Black Angus steak are both excellent. There's also a children's synergy menu, using the principles of food combining (no protein with carbs) to maximise nutrition. Who'd have thought your child would become a Greek-salad addict?