



BUDDHA BEACH

THE BOUTIQUE BEACH CLUB

REPORT GILES BROWN PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF BUDDHA BEACH

It's launch party had more glitz and glamour than your average West End film preview, with Premiership footballers, Rugby World Cup winners and the crème de la crème of Marbella's glittering social scene in attendance. But, since its opening in June, Buddha Beach has quickly gained a reputation as a relaxed setting for both residents and visitors alike, keen to experience Marbella's first boutique beach club.

Located in the quiet residential development of Villa Marina, just across from the Hotel Andalucía Plaza, Buddha Beach is the creation of Clare Strutton and her partner Ian Radford (the man behind Marbella Football Club and The Village). Clare is a huge fan of Thailand and has spent months at a time there, and when Ian visited he too was hooked on the relaxed and peaceful style of life. When the opportunity to buy the old Moosh Moosh Beach arrived, Clare decided to recreate a little of the peace and serenity of Thailand in Marbella.

The setting itself is stunning: there's a pool area with raised sundecks, two tropical bars perfect for sundowners, a separate beach with waiter service, spa, boutique and VIP area with its own 12-seater rock pool Jacuzzi. As the name suggests, Buddhas and other Far Eastern items are very much in evidence in the décor. The focal point for my visit, however, was the restaurant. Top Guernsey chef Seamus Duggan, along with Roddy White and the rest of their talented staff, has created a superb menu.

The first thing that I must mention about Buddha Beach is the staff. They are, to a man (and more importantly in my case, to a woman) aesthetically pleasing to the eye. In fact, a couple of them were described by my dining companion as being "really buff". Model looks aside, however, they are all extremely pleasant (a rare trait in models, let me assure you) and we were soon seated in the busy restaurant where I spotted a couple of well known locals, all obviously enjoying their al fresco lunch, accompanied by the subtle tunes of the live DJ.

For starters I plumped for the gazpacho, perfect for a hot day on the beach, while my companion went for the salt and pepper squid with chilli and garlic mayonnaise which she said was wonderful. My main course was the Thai Green curry with prawns, beautifully presented in wooden bowls and, I noticed, a popular dish with other diners. My guest had a Caesar's salad, and pronounced it among the best she's tasted since New York (She lives in Martha's Vineyard and I hadn't seen her in 20 years).

We washed this down with a jug of sangria (it was, as I said, a hot day on the beach and we hadn't seen each other in 20 years) though there is an extensive wine list.

Another table was really pushing the boat out and had plumped for the Marbella Platter, which consists of – and take a deep breath here – a



whole lobster and whole crab, four king prawns, baby prawns, four oysters and dipping sauces. On yet another table, a couple were tucking into the Chateaubriand, served with Béarnaise, onion rings, mushrooms and tomatoes. Both were spectacularly presented.

Of course, if you're thinking of hitting the pool after your meal and don't want to sink like a stone, the sushi platter or moules frites may be a better option, and there's a 'Snack and Wrap Menu' that you can enjoy on your sunbed without interrupting the serious business of sunbathing.

Buddha Beach has a selection of regular events, such as the Sunday Sunset Sessions which offers a barbecue from 5pm for a very reasonable €20, and the venue should prove popular for private parties and special events. Well-behaved children are also welcome, and the main cocktail bar features two discreet

TVs so that you can enjoy sporting events. "We've created the type of place that we wanted to come to," explained Clare as we left. I disagreed. Buddha Beach is the type of place everyone wants to come to.

CONTACT

Open every day from 11am for lunch.
Urb. Villa Marina, Nueva Andalucía. Tel. 952 81 38 82.
www.buddhabeachbanus.com Average price for a three course meal for two with wine, €90

