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### Majorca: Sunset to love

### Nadal's home turf is ace for tennis breaks

By James Weatherup, 27/06/2010

EVER dreamed about smashing a tennis ball around the court like Rafael Nadal?

The Spanish ace has been showcasing his talents at Wimbledon which goes into its second week tomorrow.

serve at 140 miles per hour to enjoy a good game of singles or doubles. I've played regularly since I was

a teenager but I've never had any lessons - that's my excuse anyway!

The one thing I've always wanted to do though is try a holiday abroad with some proper instruction.



And what better place to pick than No 2 seed Nadal's home turf on the beautiful island of Majorca.

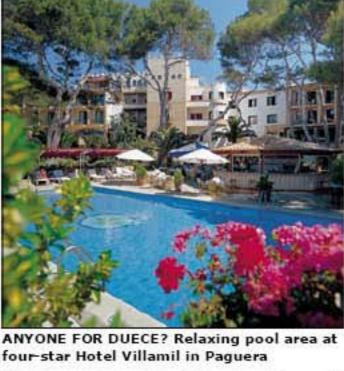
ACE: Learn to play like Rafael Nadal

He grew up playing tournaments here so I hoped maybe a little bit of his magic might rub off on me.

I picked a Jonathan Markson Tennis holiday and stayed in the four-star

Hotel Villamil in the pretty Mediterranean town of Paguera. The other option was the cheaper Hotel Reina Paguera which has a huge pool and offers half board.

The location was perfect for both hotels - just 20 minutes drive or taxi from Palma Airport and a few minutes' stroll to the tennis centre. The good thing was that it doesn't matter what standard you are as the coaches sort out the right hitting partners for you. It's not for the faint-hearted



though. Prepare for three solid hours of instruction, games and drills every morning for five days! Our friendly group of 10 was

made up of students, teenagers and mums and dads all wanting to hone their skills and play that bit better. Fun

devised by former Davis Cup player and top coach Ali Yenilmez who has had 30 years of coaching adults and children at all levels. And each day the coaching team - we had ex-British county players

The programme has been

Anthony McNairney and Suzanne McNaughton-Brown - focus on a different shot. It was tough but fun and very rewarding, and I admit I had a few aches and

pains after the third day but I felt much fitter and lost a few pounds in the

The popular club has 15 courts and a cosy rooftop bar and restaurant - a nice place to relax and make friends after a gruelling morning session on the courts.

If you want to arrange a game or extra tuition privately afterwards you can also book a court or an individual lesson with one of the pros. Expect to pay around 13 per hour (about £11) for the court or 39 an hour (£32) for a

lesson. The courts are in good shape and former Wimbledon champions like Nadal, Boris Becker and Steffi Graff have all played and practised there over the

And if you really are fit and sporty and you've got some energy left, Majorca is also a wonderful place to play golf.

10-minute drive from the hotel is Golf de Poniente near Cala Figuera. I played it twice - expect to pay

One of the nicest courses - just a

past few years.

process by the end of the week.

at least 80 (£65) - and enjoyed the challenging par 72 course.

The fairways and greens are superb and the scenery amazing - as long as you don't hook the

ball into the trees. If this all sounds too exhausting don't panic because the hotel will help you unwind.

There's a spa with sauna and steam room, indoor pool and hot tubs to soothe those aching muscles.

the whole bay to enjoy after a game.

Beauty therapy and massage

treatments can also be booked.



Almost all the rooms in the Hotel Villamil have stunning sea views and are elegantly furnished with a private bathroom, terrace, mini bar, air conditioning and satellite TV.

There are two restaurants serving superb international and local cuisine

and outside sun loungers and towels are provided. If you prefer, you can walk directly out of the hotel on to the beach where there are plenty of restaurants for lunch or dinner. Paguera town itself is crammed with superb eateries which have a choice of

Some of the bars put on free entertainment like flamenco dancing and there are also two nightclubs a few minutes' stroll from the hotel, which also hosts live entertainment in the main bar every evening.

menus - from tasty pizzas, paellas to five-course gourmet feasts.

If you walk along the seafront you can pick up a fantastic glass- bottomed boat trip which costs around 13 (£11) for two hours and the kids will love it.

Delights If you have a hire car, you can reach beautiful Port Andratx in the south

# west of the island in 20 minutes and enjoy a coffee or a lovely meal in the

Off course, Palma and all its delights such as the cathedral and shopping is not far away if you fancy a super day out, and there's a bus stop just a few metres from the hotel if you are on a budget.

they receive a £200 discount off the booking price in the brochure. And prices for tennis players vary depending on where you go for your

It's also worth pointing out that non-tennis players don't miss out either -

Now, about that backhand...

GETTING THERE

SEVEN nights at the 3-star Hotel Reina Paguera based on two sharing and including dinner and a 15-hour tennis programme in September costs from

£660 per person.

harbour.

coaching.

# Seven nights B&B at the 4-star Hotel Villamil with the tennis programme

2422. Flights not included but easyjet.com flies from UK airports and ba.com now

costs £1,130 per person. Visit www.marksontennis.com or call 020 7603

has flights from London City Airport to Palma. Other centres that give good

service

JONATHAN Markson have 15 venues at home and abroad. They include centres in: OXFORD - Specialist tennis camp was set up in 1981 by

team and a Scottish international. Players stay in college digs and receive intensive lessons from a team of 30 coaches, £890 a week full board, accommodation and tennis. YORKSHIRE - Summer camp for

Jonathan Markson, ex-captain of

the Oxford University tennis

kids aged 10 to 18 at Giggleswick School in the Dales, Suits all playing levels with one or two-week stays from July 11 to 25 and tennis up to 30 hours

a week, Residential from £720 a

week, non-residential £350.



Meadowridge Tennis Club in stunning Constantia outside Cape Town. Stay in the historic Alphen Country House Hotel or stylish guest-house accommodation. TUNISIA - Five-star Le Hammamet is the luxury base on the beach at

Yasmine. All players catered for in a 15-hour weekly programme on hard courts with breakfast and dinner included. There are two golf courses about 20 minutes away.

CYPRUS - Luxury five-star Paphos Amathus Beach Hotel near Paphos with coaching led by Brit John Potter, Related Links

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