

ENIGMA TRAVEL

By Travis Randall



I WISH I WERE IN...

# *The* ALMAZA BAY RESORT

Egypt's famed Marsa Matruh coastline finally has a resort to match its magical beauty. The first of its kind on this famous stretch of coastline, the six million squared Almaza Bay Resort features holiday homes, a stunning hotel - the JAZ Almaza Beach Resort - and fabulous commercial facilities. This is a wonderland that blends beauty, service and sophistication. Enigma's Travis Randall spent a weekend at the untouched utopia...

*I*t might as well be a desert island for its remote location on a long stretch of uninhabited coastline. Save for a few Bedouin abodes dotting the distant horizon, the The Almaza Bay Resort is a beacon of luxurious living in a very lonely landscape. The Matruh coastline, looking out onto the azure waters of the Mediterranean, has long been famous for its snow white beaches and year-round sunshine. However what it boasts in beauty it has always lacked in service. Yet with the arrival of the Almaza Bay Resort and development, things are about to change.

The JAZ Almaza Beach Resort is the corner stone around which the rest of the Almaza Bay development will be springing up over the next few years. The new development will be home to 3,500 residences including some of the finest villas, town houses, studios and apartments on the north coast as well as a golf course, water park, movie theatre and modern marina. JAZ hotels are the cream of Travco's crop of hotel chains, which include the Iberotel and Sol Y Mar. And the Jaz Almaza Beach Resort is the cherry on top. Having spent two days in paradise, the only thing I'd like more than coming back, is owning my own holiday home here.





Here the décor is elegant, perfectly understated and welcoming. A medley of earth tones and neutral shades blend into the stunning sandy surrounds while accents of dark wood mashrabeya can be found in the so named restaurant and around the premise.

## Amidst snow white sands and azure waters, you can live, work and play in this beacon of luxury

The earthy tones are also found in the relaxing rooms, which come with all the anticipated luxuries of a high-brow hotel. For the ultimate indulgence, stay in one of the hotels exclusive suits; featuring a private foyer, sitting room, Jacuzzi bath and a master bedroom where you can watch the sunset from the comfort of your king size bed. Step out onto your wrap-around terrace for unparalleled views of the coast and enjoy the rising moon over sparkling waters.



At this resort you're removed from life's unwanted and unhealthy disruptions. Instead they're replaced with a plethora of appreciated distractions. With eight sprawling swimming pools, tennis courts, a football and basketball court, beach football and volleyball courts and a gym with weight and cardio equipment, there is plenty to get your blood pumping (not to mention the less athletic activities like life size chess board, billiards and football).

The spa is also the perfect place to get pampered with a range of massage options from full body deep tissue to anti-cellulite treatments. Of course, you can always just relax in the steam room, sauna, Turkish style bath or take a dip in the Jacuzzi while enjoying the view of the sunset through three huge arched windows.





We found it difficult to drag ourselves from the sun and subtle breeze on our lounge chairs but there are a host of water sports to take part in. Among the more enticing excursions are dives to visit sunken World War II vessels from the great battles fought off the coast of El Alamein. The turquoise waters hold unexpected historical treasures that make for a one of a kind experience.

The resort looks as beautiful as it feels with its medley of inviting earth tones and neutral shades

If you're driving to this resort from Cairo, leave early in the morning and sleep in the car if you can. At just over 4 hours you'll arrive in time for lunch. It's 100 km closer than Sharm or Hurghada and only an hour past many of the more crowded North Coast destinations. And with every kilometer you travel the sand seems to get whiter and the sea bluer. If you prefer to travel by air, Egypt Air flies from Cairo to Marsa Matruh three times a week – and you'll touch down after just 45 minutes with a complimentary transfer waiting to take you to the hotel.

The all-inclusive holiday that seemed particularly popular with the Italian vacationers we shared the beach with, was a relatively new concept to me. And although the hotel is happy to accommodate all kinds of boarders, this seemed like the way to go. The sense of freedom of everything at your







finger tips, makes just about anyone feel right at home. And the bar men at each of the eight bars on the premise also serve a variety of specialty drinks tossed around like Tom Cruise in *Cocktail*. Meanwhile their mean espresso seemed to win the approval of even the pickiest Italian pallets.

The two buffet restaurants and à la carte beachfront venue also serve some outstanding cuisine. My travel companion was in the middle of a cleansing diet, which required a very specific diet and the hotel's head chef accommodated every requirement; whipping up a mouth-watering lunch of specially prepared lamb shanks on a moment's notice.

Come the chillier season, lush lounges, cozy corners and roaring fireplaces make this resort a magical winter getaway

Yet the real beauty of this resort is in its adaptability to the changing seasons. During the chillier season the resort is transformed into a magical winter getaway. Lush lounges with roaring fireplaces make for a perfect romantic weekend away, while countless conference rooms provide companies with a beautiful setting in which to get down to business (with a little pleasure mixed in).

So go ahead and lose yourself in this private, pristine and pampering beach resort. Five star elegance has finally arrived to one of the world's most untouched natural locations. Let the sun setting over the Mediterranean coast take your breath away, but don't let the sun set on your chance to experience or own a peice of this breezy beach paradise.

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