

SPA time

SPA OF THE MONTH



**RESORT VALLE
DELL' ERICA
THALASSO & SPA,
SARDINIA, ITALY**

I needed help to lose a few extra pounds, so what better way than staying in a luxury resort while trying a high-protein, low-carb regime where I could eat as much as I liked? The Silhouette in Sardinia slimming programme is based on Dr Pierre Dukan's best-selling book, *The Dukan Diet* (Hodder, £8.99).

THE SETTING: I was blown away by the beauty of the surroundings. The resort borders the National Park of the Archipelago of La Maddalena and looks out over crystal clear waters, white sandy beaches and rocky coastline. Mediterranean herbs such as jasmine, lavender and juniper scent the air – and flavour local food produce.

THE HOTEL: The 140 recently refurbished rooms sit 100-200m from the sea, and all are on the ground floor – I loved taking in the views from my private hammock outside! With a choice of three restaurants, a plaza offering entertainment, an 18-hole golf course, numerous pools, and impressive nursery and kid's club, you'd be forgiven for thinking this 5-star resort could feel overcrowded. But it's so sprawling, you can't fail to relax.

THE PACKAGE: The weekly programme is designed to aid quick, easy and sustainable



weight loss (between 5 and 10lbs in seven days) by following the Dukan diet*, enjoying 18 detoxing, slimming and toning spa treatments, and doing some light exercise. With a chef on hand to prepare all meals and dedicated staff offering support (including cookery classes with award-winning chef Nando Rossi), the 'dieting' process was enjoyable and educational. After a medical assessment on arrival, my 'True Weight' was calculated (surprisingly realistic and achievable), and I was put on the 'Attack' phase for two days to kick-start my weight-loss (you eat from 68 protein-rich foods) before moving onto the 'Cruise' phase that includes vegetables.

THE SPA: The 1,600sqm Wellness Centre 'Le Thermae' boasts four external Thalasso Circuit sea-water swimming pools, hammam, sauna, cardio fitness and relaxation areas, plus 15 cabins for thalassotherapy, massage and beauty treatments. I enjoyed a body scrub, hydro bath massages, jet showers, anti-cellulite massages and detoxifying seaweed body wrap, plus daily aquagym sessions, all of which left me feeling energised, pampered and more toned by the end of the week.

THE FOOD: I never felt hungry, and often struggled to finish the huge plates of local produce (think lots of lovely seafood, fish, poultry and lean meat). You can eat as much of the foods on offer as you like. Admittedly, while I thrived on my high-protein diet, some

Dukaneers missed the crunch of veg after a few days and craved carbs. But if you can manage to get through the cravings, the results are worth it. I lost 7lbs during my stay and a further 9lbs in the months after I left.

PRICE: A seven-night, full-board stay in a Standard Room with sea view and 18 Thalasso & Spa treatments starts from £1,875; hotelvalledellerica.com.

THE COMFORTER

If you love massage and chocolate, you must try Lush's The Comforter. You're immersed in a warm duvet and your body is gently exfoliated with a warm chocolate scrub that feels as good as it smells. While it soothes your skin, rose-scented bubbles waft around the room and upbeat nostalgic music lifts your mood, then a hot body serum is massaged all over to nourish your skin. Enjoy a candyfloss cocktail to complete the Willy Wonka-esque experience. £65 for an hour; lush.co.uk/spa.

