



The pool at Vilalara Longevity Thalassa and Medical Spa on the Algarve

# ESCAPE AND NO EXCUSES

*Do you tell yourself that in the right environment you'd find the willpower to eat healthily and shape up? When offered the chance of a break at a well-being resort, Louise Allen-Taylor had no excuses*

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IT seemed like I'd arrived in paradise: warm sun, cool breezes, swaying palm trees, tranquil villa accommodation set in lush gardens...

The moment I checked in at the Vilalara Longevity Thalassa and Medical Spa, on the Algarve, everything was wonderful. The accommodation was chic, the food was fabulous - even all the healthy options prescribed for me - and the service was impeccable.

On my first full day, it was rise and shine and straight into a healthy breakfast on the restaurant terrace overlooking the sparkling blue sea lapping Vilalara's private beach. Next stop, into the Medical Spa for a full bio-physical evaluation with fitness consultant Ellier. After considering a detailed health questionnaire I'd filled in he

calculated my metabolic age - which was a flattering 12 years younger than my actual age - and gave me an hour-long introduction to Pilates. His clearly expert tuition impressed me and I'm now a devotee. It's not easy, but if I persevere I'm told I'll reap benefits.

I then enjoyed a couple of hours sunbathing by the pool before returning indoors to meet nutritional consultant Philippa. After more searching questions, being weighed and measured, she too declared I was in good shape, but was slightly alarmed by my idea of healthy eating. (I can eat like a disciplined vegan for two days and then like a fast food fanatic for two days. Not good, apparently.)

'You need to eat four small healthy meals



a day,' she advised. 'They should include lean protein and you shouldn't eat carbohydrates after dinner and try to ensure a lot of your carbohydrates are gluten-free.' Apparently, white wine is a 'no no' because it has no beneficial properties but Philippa says modest amounts of red wine are good for the heart. Plus, I should give up trying to lose the half stone I've gathered in the past couple of years. 'Once you hit 50, even the most active slim woman will add a few pounds she can't shift.' I liked Philippa.

So food for thought there, as I made my way over to the next stop - body peeling and algae treatment in the Spa. Ah, bliss. Gentle massaging from kind hands and soothing oils and creams. I must have done something good, as Julie Andrews once said.

After that, it was time for a late lunch. The chef - on Philippa's orders - presented me with three lean pieces of grilled lamb coated in mild mustard and mint and two potatoes. Melon and fresh peaches followed. Mmm. I had no complaints about this kind of diet food. All my meals followed a similar pattern: everything served was low calorie, low fat but delicious. It was tempting to order some vino in the restaurant as many guests at this high-end elegant resort are enjoying the wine list, as well as 'full fat' cuisine,

but I managed to avoid giving in to temptation, apart from a large glass of red on my last night. Well, nobody's perfect.

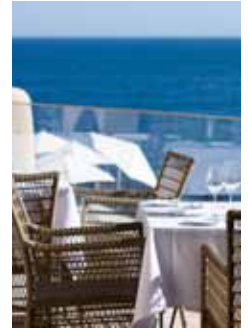
The following day I had an hour's consultation with Riccardo, their amazing osteopath. He didn't lay hands on me until the last 20 minutes, after quizzing me about my lifestyle, how I sit at my desk, how often I run and the angle of my car seat to the steering wheel. Just before I left, he had a feel of my stiff neck (almost permanently stiff) made a quick tugging movement...et voila, I could turn my head freely from one side to the other. I was very impressed.

I'm glad I stuck to the promises I'd made myself. Back home, hopping onto the scales, I'd lost four pounds, and it really had been painless. When I logged on, Philippa had emailed a detailed seven-day healthy eating plan which I'm still abiding by, on the whole.

If you want to treat yourself to a break at a beautiful location and return home feeling healthier than you have done for a long time, I recommend Vilalara Longevity Thalassa and Medical Spa. My package included time with health experts and pampering and beauty treatments. You can see more of the medics if you wish, or more of the beauticians, it's up to you. But whatever you choose, it will do you good. ♦



Expert medical and nutritional guidance



The restaurant's wonderful view of the private beach



Food and drinks are healthy but very tasty



Tranquil, lush gardens

## DETAILS

The Vilalara Longevity Thalassa & Medical Spa, Algarve.

Longevity Quick Detox (5 nights) - price from 2.559 Euros for 1 person in a Junior Suite Garden View (single occupancy)/ price from 4.551 Euros for 2 people sharing one Junior Suite Garden View (double occupancy).

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