



# Formula 1 blog

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# TIMESONLINE



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Caitlin Moran

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From Times Online

July 4, 2007

## Azia Club and Spa, Paphos, Cyprus

### A five-star retreat with expert therapists, kids' treatments and its own fruit juice



Rachael Scott

**USP** The five-star Azia Club and Spa is a retreat from hectic home life and a refuge from the Vicky Pollard crowd a few kilometres from Paphos town centre.

**AMBIENCE** When the Azia was redesigned 18 months ago the Economides family were keen to incorporate nature as much as possible. The bright and airy lobby is built around a palm tree that started life as a baby, then shot up so high that within five years a hole in the glass ceiling had to be made to accommodate it. It's a fantastic centrepiece surrounded by a central atrium bursting with flowers, plants and hanging vines. My bungalow suite had a large balcony with two sun loungers and a hot tub. Yes, a hot tub, unfortunately made redundant by the unexpected heat wave gripping Paphos. All I could hear were birds chirping, cicadas buzzing and waves crashing against the coastline while I looked out onto extensive grounds littered with palms, mango trees and bougainvillea, but most importantly, acres of space to get lost in. Bliss. The spa is equipped with a whirlpool, Jacuzzi, steam and sauna room, gym and beauty and hair salon.

**EXPERIENCE** The Asphodel Spa was built at the beginning of 2006 when the Azia had a facelift. In Greek mythology the Asphodel is an immortal flower and the food of the dead, which is probably how many of its stressed out visitors feel when they arrive. That wouldn't last for long if my therapist Irina had anything to do with it. She moved to Cyprus from Poland because she was unable to give her clients relaxing massages when she lived in a stressful place herself. In Cyprus the weather and pace of life are anything but demanding. Irina's background was in sports massage so she knew the best way to treat my tense lower back and be mindful of the mild arthritis in my knee joints. She gave me tips on how to improve my circulation, strengthen my weakened leg muscles and avoid the varicose veins that run in my family. Using Elemis de-stress oil, Irina gave me one of the best full body massages I've ever had, which included lymphatic drainage – always good for expelling toxin build up from sedentary city dwellers like myself. She seemed to know which areas of my body could withstand hard pressure and which couldn't and even relaxed the muscles between my ribs.

If the weather had been a little cooler I would have had my treatment under a small gazebo in the grounds. Later though I had a pedicure in a glass conservatory overlooking the indoor and outdoor swimming pools. Full blown pampering sessions are also on offer such as the Exotic Frangipani Body Nourish Wrap, a bath in jasmine picked from the Azia's gardens and a Turkish Hamman, highly recommended by Irina for detoxification and

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smooth feeling skin. Children aren't excluded from pampering rituals either. The Little Girl's Morning includes a shoulder massage, manicure with flowers, a milkshake, pedicure for mum and a coffee iced frappe.

**IN CROWD** Predominantly British families and couples with a strong local clientele using the day spa. Have a chat with Niove who runs the souvenir shop, a delightful lady who will tell you everything you need to know about Paphos and Cyprus in general.

**FOOD** All fruits used at the hotel are grown on the Azia's Morokambos plantation and a jug of freshly squeezed orange juice awaited me when I arrived. The plantation includes 15,000 Mediterranean and tropical plants and the hotel will organise fruit picking excursions. The Cava Cocktail Bar, a dark, sultry lounge with Arabic interiors is a perfect seduction venue before you head into the à la carte Akamis restaurant. On the night I was there a traditional Cypriot buffet was served outside on the terrace.

**WALLET WATCH** Bungalow Suites from CYP 50.50 (£57) to CYP 130.00 (£150) including bed and breakfast. A 60-minute Elemis Deep Tissue Muscle Massage, CYP 45.00. Exotic Frangipani Body Nourish Wrap, CYP 60.00. Exotic Jasmine Flower Bath CYP 25.00. Full Hamman Ritual CYP 80.00. Little Girl's Morning CYP 55.00. Cyprus Airways fly to Paphos from London Heathrow, Stansted and Gatwick.

**NEED TO KNOW** Azia Resort & Spa, P.O. Box 62108, 8061 Paphos, Cyprus (+357) 26 845100; [www.aziaresort.com](http://www.aziaresort.com); E-mail: UK office: [londonoffice@aziaresort.com](mailto:londonoffice@aziaresort.com)

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