

SOUK UP THE atmosphere!

Head to Marrakech for an exotic adventure – it has sunshine, comfort, delicious food and style in spades

BY CHARLOTTE JOLLY

Enchanting exoticism

was what we were looking for in June's fashion story, so *Easy Living's* glam squad made its way (in under four hours) to bright and beautiful Morocco to shoot this season's trends and capture some Moorish magic.

We stayed in a palatial private residence called Ezzahra, in the exclusive Palmeraie, just 15 minutes from Marrakech's medina and souks. Ezzahra can sleep up to 14 guests and would be the perfect setting for a celebratory reunion or a luxury retreat en masse, but our hearts were stolen by a more introverted, cosy villa set in the shadows of this sprawling estate: the two-bedroomed Alkhozama, nestled in blossoming gardens and shaded by olive groves.

SLEEP Alkhozama descends from the ground to a lower level, where you will find two charming, cloistered bedrooms. One is bright and airy, with a contemporary monochrome style. It opens up onto a high-walled courtyard, where you can lie on a day bed and bask in the reflection of the shimmering sapphire swimming pool. The other guest room, which accesses a private, open-air plunge bath, has a rustic theatricality and exudes authenticity; the walls are resplendent in red ochre, there's mosaic tile flooring and the



From top: June's stunning fashion story, *Let It Flow*; the day bed at Alkhozama is the perfect spot to relax in front of the swimming pool; the villa's cosy living room

furniture is carved from fragrant cedar wood. Both bedrooms are en suite and have air-conditioning and underfloor heating.

CHILL Alkhozama has a maid service and its own full-time cook to prepare eclectic Moroccan and European dishes using locally sourced, seasonal ingredients. Meals can be served in the atmospheric dining room under the domed roof and ornate ceiling lamp (sourced from Marrakech's Thursday souk). Beauty therapists can be booked for massages, manicures and pedicures on-site. There are plenty of shaded enclaves and canopied lounge

areas dotted around the gardens, but you can withdraw to the spacious sitting room when you need to escape the blazing North African sun: the lofty ceiling height, wooden shutters, exposed bricks and cool steel accents make this a soothing, tranquil setting – perfect for reading or for an impromptu siesta. At night this room comes alive when you light the open fire and shadows dance on the towering chimney breast.

EXPLORE Leave the peace and calm of Alkhozama behind to venture into Marrakech; a mélange of Arabic and Berber cultures, with a sprinkling of medieval exuberance and a definite French stamp. When dusk gathers over Djemaa el Fna square, acrobats, storytellers and snake charmers will set you on an

exhilarating sensory journey. Scour the souk, recuperate in the coffee bars and make strategic forays into the labyrinthine, pink-walled Medina to take in the ruins of El Badi Palace, the impressive tombs of the Saadian sultans and emerge with a rug, an assortment of glazed ceramics and a metallic leather cushion in tow.

BOOK IT Seven nights from £1,375 per person, based on four sharing. The price includes all facilities offered at the house, all meals, non-alcoholic drinks, laundry and a return airport transfer. For reservations call (00 212) 524 328 688, or email ezahra@menara.ma. For more information, visit ezahra-morocco.com. ■

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