

TRAVEL

IN THE GARDEN OF TRANQUILITY

KAYLEE LASSETER VISITS A HOTEL THAT'S A WORLD AWAY FROM THE HUSTLE AND BUSTLE OF MOROCCO'S CITIES

TRAVEL REPORT ESSAOUIRA



JUST about all I knew about Essaouira prior to my visit was its reputation as the windy city by the ocean.

It's a port city on Morocco's coast, and it's windy weather, whilst not ideal for sunbathing on the beach, makes for great watersports.

We arrived on a beautiful sunny day at Essaouira airport, and were

met by our transfer driver who would be taking us to Le Jardin des Douars. This service can be booked directly through the hotel making it stress free.

Initially, the landscape of Essaouira reminded me of Lanzarote - large open areas without a single person or house in sight. But the tan and green



landscape soon gave way an abundance of colour - there were beautiful flowers everywhere and before we knew it we had arrived at this romantic rural retreat.

I quickly realised why the hotel was named Le Jardin des Douars as I felt like I was walking through a huge garden.

The hotel is a sanctuary. Everything about Le Jardin des Douars is so peaceful and most of the time the only thing you can hear around you is nature. We were told that many of the guests that visit Le Jardin des Douars feel that it is their second home and I can really see why. You don't have that usual holiday feeling, you are so calm and carefree that this place feels like it is your home.

Our room was spacious and filled with Moroccan charm. We had a very large bathroom with lots of counter space and a balcony with sun loungers.

After dropping off our luggage in our room, we headed for the bar. Whenever we ordered a drink our server would bring us some olives and bread to enjoy with it. Every day offered a different spread to go with your bread, I particularly enjoyed the homemade houmous and

kidney bean spread.

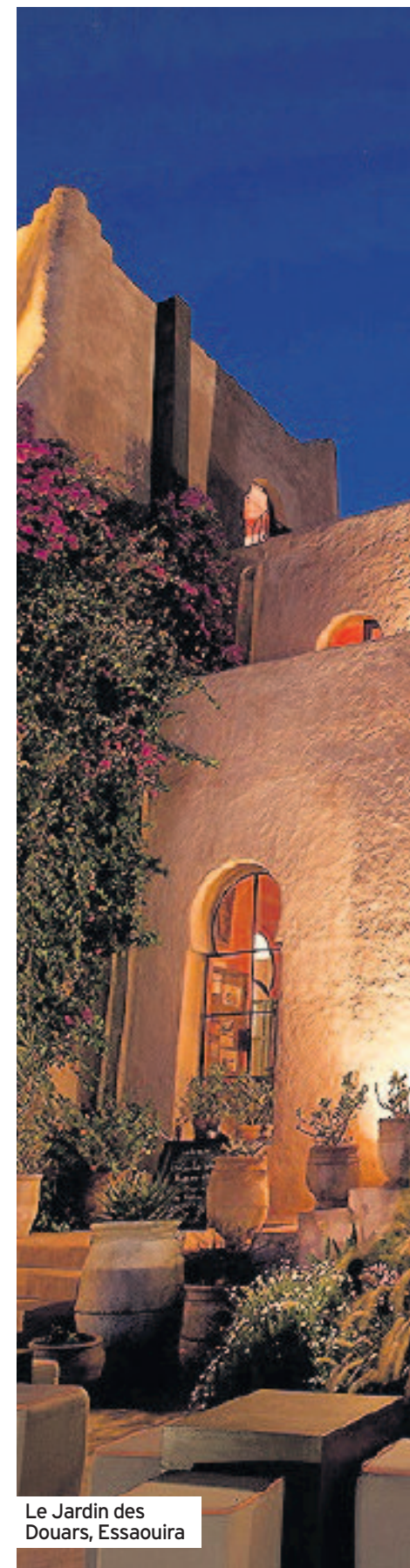
There are two outdoor pools, one for families and one for adults only. There is also a spa where you can enjoy a number of treatments at very reasonable prices (I recommend the black soap hammam, a must when in Morocco).

You are given quite a bit of freedom over where you can eat at Le Jardin des Douars, there are a number of dining areas to choose from and a cozy, romantic indoor one really caught our eye. It actually became our favourite place to eat during our trip.

The menu focuses on a small number of dishes but they are done exceptionally well. The restaurant also offers a special menu each day which offers some variety from the regular menu should you be looking for something a little different.

I had to try the courgette linguine with almonds, my partner went with a lamb dish.

I have never had courgette linguine before but it's now a favourite. My partner thoroughly enjoyed his lamb. I really wanted to try the dessert but simply had no room for one so I had to leave it for another day.



Le Jardin des Douars, Essaouira

Sunday is a wonderful day at Le Jardin des Douars as the chefs hold a barbecue in the outdoor seating area.

There is no shortage of meat options at the barbecue, and there were also some lovely quiches and salad options, too.

The kind of holiday this more relaxed and laid back area of Morocco offers is a completely different experience to visiting a city like Marrakesh.

More people should discover the paradise that is Le Jardin des Douars and enjoy the same relaxing experience I had.



HOW TO BOOK

B&B priced from around £140 per room, per night or £450 per villa, per night. www.jardindesdouars.com
 Travel Information: easyJet fly between London Luton and Essaouira twice per week on Saturdays and Tuesdays. Essaouira airport is located 15 minutes from Le Jardin des Douars and a shuttle service is available. easyJet fly between Manchester and Marrakech and then it is a three hour coach journey to Essaouira.



News / Daily flights to Muscat begin



Let to right are: Captain Ali Sulaiman; Lord Mayor of Manchester Carl Austin-Behan; CEO, Oman Air, Paul Gregorowitsch; Lord Mayor's Consort Simon Austin-Behan; SVP International Sales, Oman Air Ihab Sorial

AN airline is celebrating the launch of its first daily flight from Manchester to Muscat.

Oman Air welcomed its inaugural flight into Manchester Airport at 7.05pm last Monday, making the airport only the second in the country outside of London to have a direct flight to Oman.

Chief executive officer Paul Gregorowitsch was on board the first flight, together with a host of high ranking dignitaries and the Oman Air senior management team and media.

All passengers were warmly greeted by officials from Manchester Airport and the Lord Mayor of Manchester. The new seven and a half hour service leaves Manchester daily at 8.45pm and arrives in Muscat at 7.20am the next day.

The return service departs

Muscat International Airport each day at 2pm and arrives in Manchester at 7.05pm, local time.

The new daily service is operated by an A330-200 and is in addition to the double daily flight from London Heathrow. The service will cater to the 22 million people in the Manchester catchment area.

Mr Gregorowitsch said: "The addition of this flight to and from Manchester is a pivotal development and demonstrates our commitment to the UK market. Oman Air is the only carrier operating direct flights to the Sultanate outside of London, offering British and Omani travellers the convenience of flying direct between the north of England and Muscat.

"There is of course also the opportunity to connect with Oman Air's global network, more than 27

destinations have connectivity inside of three hours in both directions and our extremely keen pricing means that Oman Air offers a really attractive option for travellers from Manchester or those visiting from Oman."

Collette Roche, deputy CEO of Manchester Airport, said: "It is pleasing to see Oman Air commence daily direct flights to Muscat from Manchester. As well as connecting these two cities, the route opens up access to the airline's incredible onward connectivity across Asia and beyond. The fact this route in the UK can only be found at Manchester outside of London clearly showcases the role we play as a gateway for the North. We look forward to working with Oman Air as they grow from Manchester."

Prices start from £350 return.

News / New flight to Mykonos takes off

THOMAS Cook Airlines has launched its inaugural flight from Manchester Airport to Mykonos.

The Lord Mayor of Manchester, Councillor Carl Austin-Behan, and his consort Simon Austin-Behan joined the passenger celebrations with customary cake cutting and entertainment.

The pair then joined the flight for a weekend in Mykonos.

Carl said: "It is a pleasure to

be here today at Manchester Airport to launch Thomas Cook Airlines' new service to Mykonos.

"Mykonos is a great destination for sun-seekers looking for a well-deserved break and it's great to see so many passengers here today jetting off to the Greek island.

"Engagements like this are always heart-warming and fun to do, especially seeing so many happy and smiley people going off on their holidays."

