



LONG WEEKEND

THE SENSE EXPERIENCE RESORT TUSCANY

BY STEVE DINNEEN

When you conjure an image of Tuscany in your mind's eye, it probably involves rolling vineyards, dusty olive groves and charmingly ramshackle wine estates. This is, after all, the land of Super Tuscans and ancient medieval towns and a tower that can't stand up straight.

What you probably don't imagine is a modern eco-chic resort where you can stroll from your room directly onto a pristine private beach. But this is what you get at The Sense Experience, a resort situated in the rural South of Tuscany in the province of Grosseto, close to Follonica. It overlooks the Tyrrhenian Sea and, beyond, the famous island of Elba, where Napoleon served his first, unsuccessful exile (the next time they learned their lesson and stuck him on St Helena, one of the most remote islands on the planet).

The Sense Experience lies amid lush forest and fragrant gardens, with the scent of lavender and thyme and pine following you around the resort, which is crowned by impressive local 'umbrella pines'.

WHAT'S IT LIKE?

The resort, which opened in 2020 and still has that "fresh from the box" feel, is focused around a grassy garden dotted with tables beneath canopies, which spills directly onto the beach. Here the Red Rabbit shakes cocktails from Bloody Mary o'clock (10.30am) until late at night and live musicians provide a relaxed soundscape. To the South are raised plinths where you can enjoy an outdoor massage or eat a romantic meal. The rooms – located in blocks called things like "passion" and "freedom" – are smart, light and functional, the majority coming with balconies overlooking the sea.

WHAT ABOUT THE FOOD?

Dimorà, the restaurant in the main building, is where you'll come for the impressive buffet breakfast and is the go-to stop for

TOP TIP



While you're in Massa Marittima, visit the Santa Cecilia organ museum. Housed in a centuries-old church, it's home to a priceless collection of playable organs and piano fortes, which owner Dr. Lorenzo Ronzoni will happily play for you

everything from hand-rolled pasta – the seafood linguina is outstanding – to rustic Tuscan-style pizza.

For something special, however, book a table at the beachfront fine dining restaurant Eaté, where you'll find a truly exceptional kitchen serving up dishes that are surely destined to land them a Michelin star sooner or later. As the sun set over the Tyrrhenian Sea, turning Elba into an ominous, craggy shadow on the horizon, I enjoyed creations including lightly poached oyster in a corn emulsion and lobster peppered with puffed corn. Executive chef Giuseppe Parisi – who London-based foodies may recognise from Al Mare at The Carlton Tower Jumeirah – has a "zero-kilometre" philosophy, taking many ingredients from within the confines of the resort and its immediate surrounds.

WHAT ELSE?

According to the coffee table book in each room, there are at least 2,000 activities in and around Sense Experience. Narrowing down that frankly dizzying number of options, a bike ride along the coast is a great way to explore the local area. The hotel will arrange e-bikes, which will allow you to traverse the coastal trails with ease.

Next you should take a trip to Massa Marittima, the kind of enchanting Tuscan town that lives in your imagination, full of ancient alleyways, stone courtyards and a stunning Romanesque Gothic cathedral.

After tiring yourself out schlepping up and down the town's vertiginous stairways, take a drive to nearby MorisFarms vineyard for a traditional Tuscan lunch on the beautiful curved terrace, where you can enjoy a wine-tasting hosted by the Moris family while soaking in panoramic views of the famous landscape. There's a reason this part of the world is so revered: Sense Experience is a great way to discover a new side of it.

● To book The Sense Experience Resort go to thesenserestort.com or call +39 0566 280035