



■ Son Antem

factfile



◆ Average temperature ranges from 15C in January to 31C in August.

Useful websites...

- ◆ newsmallorca.com
- ◆ marriott.com
- ◆ pulagolf.com
- ◆ simplymallorcagolf

Island up to scratch

Andy Goodall finds superb golf courses on Mallorca

If you're going to any of the Balearic Islands for golf, it has to be Mallorca. There are 23 courses to choose from – compared with just one and two respectively on the smaller islands of Menorca and Ibiza – which makes Mallorca a match for the other Spanish golfing resorts and Portugal's all-year destination in the Algarve.

It's awash with superb courses and is a popular destination for everyone from holidaymaking hackers to European Tour professionals. We were based at Cala d'Or on the east coast, a little way south of Pula, whose golf club, opened in 1995, is just outside the rural settlement of Son Servera that overlooks the bay of Cala Millor. The club, one of four in the north-east of the island, hosted the European Tour's Mallorca Classic from 2003 to 2007, an event won by three of Spain's favourite sons – Jose Maria Olazabal, Sergio Garcia and Miguel Angel Jimenez.

You need to be on top of your game to master the 6,246-metre course (white tees) which has some demanding tee shots and



■ Pula

several large strategically placed lakes. Although the terrain is hilly there are no climbs too steep to negotiate and the variation of "thinker's holes" make this a challenge to relish. We also found the course almost deserted when we visited in early September, and were soon able to relax on the patio with a cold beer after a brisk three-and-half-hour round. The venue boasts a delightful clubhouse-cum-hotel renovated from an ancient farmhouse, dating back to 1581. For our next day's golf we travelled west, towards the airport at Palma, to play at the popular self-contained

Marriott-owned Son Antem resort. In stark contrast to Pula, there was a lot of hustle and bustle from the start, with pre-booking a must for both the east and west courses. To speed play up we were paired with another couple to make up a four-ball, which proved a blessing as we kept a steady pace and weren't waiting on the tees. We played the east course, which proved an ample test of golf, despite being billed as the easier of the two options. The course is built on an old hunting estate and has an abundance of tree-lined fairways that demand accuracy from tee to green.

With five lakes coming into play, it's by no means a pushover and at 6,246 metres is only slightly shorter than the championship west course. The plush clubhouse boasts top-class facilities and a huge terrace to enjoy a bite to eat after a relaxing day's golf. Fifteen of the 23 golf clubs in Mallorca, including Son Antem, are clustered around Palma on the south coast, with the others spread more sparsely to the east and north. But with a distance of just 70km from west to east, and 100km from south to north, you are never very far from a quality course set in beautiful Spanish surroundings.