



*Majorca:*  
 a mini-Spain,  
 a major holiday  
 destination  
 by Jonathan Broom



Left page: old fishing harbour. This page: Bondholder family watersports; Site manager Javier in Port d'Andratx; Port De Soller



One thing about Spain on which we can surely all agree is that it is big. The largest country in Southern Europe; the second-largest in the EU. It is a land of history, with a centuries-long period of Moorish occupation lending it an extra, exotic, dimension; mountainous topology, all peaks and high plateaus; beautiful coastlines to the north and south; a benign (and, in summer, hot) climate; and, in its cities, Catholic tradition interwoven with modern sophistication.

Worth a visit? Assuredly so: and with homes along the southern coast at Javea and El Pueblito de Alfaix, the Holiday Property Bond has more than a toehold in the country. But it is a huge place. To really experience the wonder of Spain would take time and a serious commitment to clocking up the miles.

Spanish territory is not confined to the mainland, however. The country has a 'presence' in North Africa; and the Canary and Balearic Islands are Spanish-owned. HPB has followed the Spanish lead and acquired its own territorial stake in those same islands, with homes at Santa Rosa, in Lanzarote, and El Balcón de Santa Ana, La Gomera. But the Bond's longest-standing Spanish island home is located on an island that could be described as a 'mini-Spain', with many of the features and attractions of the Iberian Peninsula packed into a much smaller and more exploreable land mass. La Reserva de Biniorella, in Majorca.

Comprised of 98 holiday units plus onsite bar and restaurant and other leisure and sporting facilities, La Reserva de Biniorella (or 'Bini') rests on a beautiful wooded hilltop overlooking a small bay: the 'cala' of Camp de Mar in the fashionable south-west corner of the island, near to the chic and picturesque Port Andratx with its stylish cafes and restaurants overlooking the beautiful harbour.

The largest of the Balearic Islands, Majorca is Spain in capsule form. There are mountains to conquer, by foot or by bike – the Serra de Tramuntana range is just inland from Majorca's northern coast. There are glorious beaches to play on – such as the one very close by at Camp de Mar – all

lapped by a limpid, warm Mediterranean Sea. And there are islands to explore – including Sa Dragonera: home to Lilfords' wall lizards, carob trees, cormorants and falcons, to which Bondholders Mark and Lavinia Edwards paid a visit a couple of years ago. You can read the Edwards' account in Issue 67 of the BOND Magazine, May 2016.

From beautiful Sóller, to the north-east of Bini, catch the steam train and journey back in time to the quiet, old-world town of Bunyola – or beyond, to Palma, the island's historic and achingly hip capital city.

Many of Majorca's attractions can be enjoyed year-round, but the summer is (mostly) about family holidays. This summer, British rowing hero and new(ish) Bondholder Sir Matthew Pinsent CBE took wife Demetra, 12-year-old twin sons Jonah and Lucas, and daughter Eve, 10, for a much-needed family break at Bini.

"It's been a busy year," says Matthew, these days a sports journalist and commentator for the BBC. "What with the Winter Olympics and Paralympics, the Commonwealth Games and the European Sports Championships. And the Boat Race, of course! But as I've quickly realised there's no such thing as a quiet year, sports-wise. Demetra has been hard at it, too; and the children's schooling is starting to get more serious. We needed a holiday; and having already 'dipped our toes in the water' at Le Manoir du Hilguy, HPB's Breton château, we knew HPB would be a safe – and very enjoyable! – bet." →

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Unsurprisingly, the Pinsents are an active bunch. Lazing by the pool is not for them – despite a choice of two at Bini. “We prefer to get out and do stuff,” says Matthew. “And there is a lot of stuff to do!”

Like all HPB site managers, Bini’s ebullient Javier Ceballos is committed to ensuring that all his guests enjoy the best possible holidays. “For some folk, staying on site is enough,” he says. “There’s plenty to do here: swimming, obviously; tennis; golf – we have a driving range; the outdoor gym; or you can just sit in the sunshine with a glass of wine and a good book. But most of our visitors want to see at least some of this beautiful island, and if they can try something new in the process, so much the better.”

Over the years, Javier has built up solid working relationships with reputable, reliable local suppliers of everything from food and drink for the onsite restaurant, to laundry and cleaning services, to activities and excursions. Central to this last category is Keida Excursions, based at St Elm, 12kms north of the site. Juan Ramón Alemany’s company offers a wide range of activities: road-cycling, mountain-biking, guided walks, kayaking, snorkelling, windsurfing, paddle-boarding, and more. “The Keida guys are totally trustworthy,” says Javier. “They’re affordable and as committed to our guests’ enjoyment as we are.”

Matthew, Demetra and the children found the Keida experience much to their liking. “The kids enjoyed pony rides, organised by Javier himself,” says Matthew, “but the kayaking and biking were our family favourites. Both were great fun and allowed us to see just a little more of this magical place. Plus, while a slap-up al fresco lunch is always a pleasure, it’s so much nicer when you’ve worked up an appetite and feel you’ve earned it!”

Keida Excursions’ activities can all be booked at Bini’s reception desk. Prices vary according to activity, but as a ‘for-instance’, guided walks (which tend to take place in the winter) are between €12 and €14 per person, depending on the walk; while kayaking (a summer activity) is €40 per person for a guided 2½-hour session.

All in all, a thoroughly relaxing and enjoyable holiday, then. But Matthew has not entirely lost his competitive edge and a challenge to play a round of golf with Javier at nearby Golf de Andratx proved irresistible. Who won, I don’t know; but Javier is not known for shyness and self-effacement. To beat an Olympic and world champion (albeit in a different sport) would surely confer serious bragging rights – but Snr Ceballos has been curiously coy, when asked. Perhaps we can draw our own conclusions. **B**



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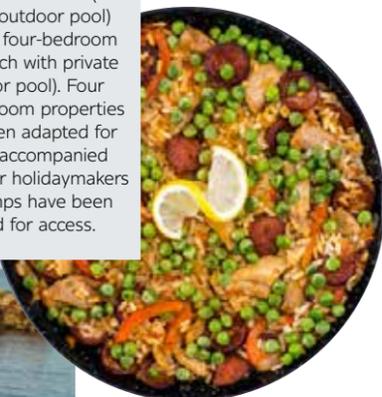
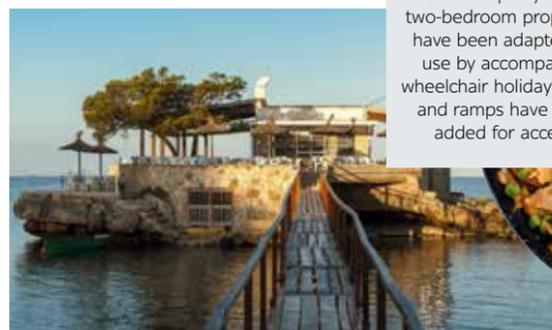
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Make sure to visit the Illeta Restaurant: built on a small rock just off the coast on Camp de Mar beach, this restaurant offers breath-taking sea views. They serve delicious seafood and fish, as well as other local and Mediterranean specialities like paella, grilled meat and refreshing sangria. Open every day from 10:00 to 00:00.

### PROPERTY FACTS Biniorella

The site has 98 properties consisting of 34 one-bedroom apartments, 14 one-bedroom bungalows, 42 two-bedroom apartments, six three-bedroom villas (with shared outdoor pool) and two four-bedroom villas (each with private outdoor pool). Four two-bedroom properties have been adapted for use by accompanied wheelchair holidaymakers and ramps have been added for access.



## The pleasures of Palma – absolutely capital!

Majorca’s temperate climate truly makes it an island for all seasons, and at quieter times of the year a magnet for more mature visitors, keen to escape the worst of the British winter and, perhaps, to enjoy more of a ‘grown-up’ holiday.

In which case, a visit to Palma is a must. For many the island’s capital is the precious stone in Majorca’s crown, and it’s just 35kms from Biniorella. Home to some 400,000 people, Palma is absolutely stunning – a city bejewelled with beauty, and masses of things to see and do. Here are just five of the city’s many attractions:

### Antoni Gaudí

While Barcelona boasts the mighty Sagrada Família, Casa Batlló, Park Güell et al, the Catalan capital isn’t the only place where the visionary early 20th-Century architect plied his trade. Gaudí’s buildings in Palma tend to be a little more understated than those in Barcelona – less gaudy Gaudí, if you will – but well worth seeing. In particular, check out the Edifici Casayas on the Plaça del Mercat.

### The Cathedral

If you ever wanted a physical definition of muscular Christianity, the Catholic cathedral of Santa Maria de Palma is surely it. More commonly referred to as ‘La Seu’, the cathedral dominates the entire city; a masterpiece of Gothic High Catholicism. Gaudí had a part to play here too, during the cathedral’s restoration, but there’s much more to see, both inside and outside. It’s well worth the €7 entrance fee. For further information, visit [catedraldemallorca.org/en](http://catedraldemallorca.org/en).



### People-watching

With its wide streets and tree-lined boulevards, Palma in places feels more Parisian than Spanish. Certainly it’s a place where the beautiful people of Majorca go to see and be seen (and to shop!). Given the island’s lovely climate, there’s rarely a time of year when you can’t comfortably sit outside a chic pavement cafe, coffee ‘con leche’ or chilled fino sherry to hand, and watch the world go by.

### The Marina

Palma overlooks a beautiful natural harbour, and as you’d expect there’s marine traffic in and out. But the Marina is something else; its pretty sailing boats and pleasure craft are dwarfed in size and number by the behemoth super-yachts that call this place home. It is a place to go and gawp at; but lest the experience leave you green-eyed with jealousy, the Marina is surrounded by numerous lovely bars and not-too-expensive restaurants to ease the pangs of envy.

### The Mercat de l’Olivar

Leave this till last – you don’t want to wander around fully laden. Palma boasts a number of markets, but this indoor emporium (next to the eponymous Plaza) is one of the best. A wealth of fresh produce is on display, from the very best in fish and seafood, to the choicest cuts of meat and the finest cheeses, to vegetables and fruit seemingly harvested fresh that morning. Plus tapas bars and cafes to rest in if all that shopping gets too much. The locals shop here – there can be no higher recommendation.