

CALL OF DUTY

At training camp with the new Army recruits

PRINCESS SPARKLE

What jewels will Kate be wearing on Friday?

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TRAVEL

Four of the best hotels in Portugal, by Francesca Syz

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HOTEL MARTINHAL SAGRES The fishing port of Sagres, an hour's drive from Faro in the western Algarve, has long attracted nature lovers and scuba divers but never had decent high-end accommodation. Enter Hotel Martinhal, a chic, eco-friendly, five-star resort located just up the coast and fringed by a national park of protected forests and wetlands, which also opened last summer.

The hoteliers behind it are the founders of the British group Luxury Family Hotels, and it offers 'affordable barefoot luxury' in 38 hotel rooms and, with families firmly in mind, a series of low-rise village houses, some with private pools and spacious gardens. There are three restaurants, numerous bars, four communal swimming-pools, a beach club, a deli, a gym, the Finisterra Spa and, for the more energetic, Club 98, which offers tennis, windsurfing, kite surfing, mountain biking, horse riding, snorkelling and scuba diving. There are also, of course, creches and kids' clubs catering for all ages, and a 'baby concierge', who can sort out baby equipment from bottle sterilisers to cots and pushchairs. **The details** Terrace Rooms from £128 inc breakfast (00351 282 240 200; martinhal.com). Monarch flies from Gatwick and Luton to Faro from £68 (monarch.co.uk).



THE OITAVOS NEAR LISBON This ultra-modern hotel, which in September landed like a sleek glass spaceship in the Sintra-Cascais Natural Park, is one of a new breed moving away from the traditional style typical of Portuguese resorts. Twenty minutes outside Lisbon on the Atlantic coast, the Oitavos is set within the family-owned Quinta da Marinha estate. Its design embraces the setting, with floor-to-ceiling windows in every room. There are four restaurants serving different takes on healthy local cuisine, a nine-treatment-room holistic spa offering ocean-inspired organic treatments by Voya, a sauna, a steam room and in and outdoor seawater pools. While it caters for both leisure and business travellers (there are fancy conference facilities), the resort somehow manages not to feel too corporate. Elsewhere on the estate you'll find the beautiful and challenging Oitavos Dunes championship golf course, a natural links that weaves its way through the dunes and surrounding pine forest, an equestrian centre and a health and racquet club. This stretch of coast also offers some of the best surfing in Portugal. **The details** Doubles from £123 (00351 214 860 020; theoitavos.com); British Airways flies from Heathrow to Lisbon from £124 (ba.com).

VIDAGO PALACE NEAR PORTO After a four-year closure while it underwent refurbishment by the hotelier Grace Leo (the Cotton House, Mustique, the Clarence in Dublin and others), the 100-year-old Belle Epoque Hotel Vidago Palace re-opened last October as a super-chic, classic-contemporary country-house hotel. Located in a forest an hour from Porto within a 250-acre estate owned by the producers of Vidago spring water, the hotel has all the grandeur of its previous life, with high ceilings, parquet floors and sweeping staircases, with the addition of four new 'fauna-themed' colour schemes inspired by its natural setting. New additions include a spa extension with 20 treatment rooms, in and outdoor pools (including one just for kids) and a vitality pool. There are also five restaurants (dinner in the exquisite Salao Nobre dining-room is a must), four bars and an 18-hole golf course. For such a grand, glossy hotel, it also offers an impressive range of local activities alongside more conventional vineyard visits, from basket weaving to jam and preserve making. **The details** Doubles from £170 (00351 932 640 512; vidagopalace.com). EasyJet flies from Gatwick to Porto from £60 (easyjet.com).



QUINTA DA BOUÇA D'ARQUES VIANO DO CASTELO For something completely different, try Quinta da Bouça d'Arques in northern Portugal. Set within vineyards and ringed by ancient trees, it is a meticulously restored, 300-year-old manor that has been converted into a thoroughly original B&B by Ana and João Couto. Accommodation is mainly in seven chic self-contained cottages, each whitewashed and furnished with elegant antiques and fresh, bright local textiles. Fridges are stocked with fresh local fruit, cheeses, homemade breads and jams, and tea and coffee for when you arrive; fresh bread is delivered to your door each subsequent morning. There's also a large saltwater pool with sunloungers, bikes to borrow, a wood to walk in and the Doll's House, a little wooden house for children to play in. Should you want to explore further afield, the historic town of Viana do Castelo, which stretches along the north bank of the Lima estuary, is six miles away. **The details** Cottages sleeping two from £100 with a minimum two-night stay (00351 968 044 992; boucदारques.com). EasyJet flies from Gatwick to Porto from £60 (easyjet.com). **Next week: British hotels for house parties**