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Alavya is Turkish perfection in Alaçatı | Sep 01, 2015

A Mojito sweats gently next to me, my feet float in the delicious cool water, the heady smell of perfumed flowers float on the breeze as I watch Tall Dark and Handsome snorkeling up and down the striped pool of Alavya.



If you are searching for boutique hotel perfection you've found it at Alavya. It's by far the coolest place to stay in this once sleepy fishing village on the Çeşme peninsula. Situated slightly inland Alaçatı is a short hop to the coastline which is awash with glorious beaches, slick bars and ocean sports options.

Slightly sleepy and unspoilt, Alaçatı sits at the foot of low mountains, that cradle the beautiful town. With narrow cobbled streets, white-washed ancient Greek houses with brightly painted woodwork in a rainbow of sugary colours, this lovely place has an unpretentious feel. Pink and purple flowers caress everything they can. The Aegean town on the Western coast of Turkey is largely unknown to those outside the country, but it's where the Istanbulites and those in the know go to avoid the more touristy and showy holiday scenes of Bodrum. Alaçatı sits about 3km away from the coast and is a 45-minute drive (about 40 miles) from Izmir airport and about a four to five-hour drive from Istanbul.

Situated right in the quaint heart of the town, Alavya is created from what was once an open-air cinema. The old buildings have been restored, and one newly built, although you'd struggle to spot it. The hotel was designed around the existing gardens and the very private grounds are full of bougainvillea, mulberry and mastic trees and beautiful herbs. You feel like you've stumbled upon a secret little oasis. At the very centre is the striped and mesmerizing lap pool. It feels like a remote haven and it's a shock to step from the hotel straight out into the bustling town. Alaçatı attracts the weekend holiday set from Istanbul and money flows. The restaurants are buzzing and there are art shops a plenty.



Alavya itself has managed to avoid any pretentious vibe...easily found at other hip Turkish hot spots. The buildings house 25 rooms ranging in size from loft suites to premium rooms with poolside fronts. All rooms are styled by Turkish designer Hakan Ezer, who has created interiors for the likes of British restaurateur Tom Aikens. We stayed in an absolutely beautifully designed room that was relaxing and well thought out. The mix of neutral textiles, raw stone walls, wooden decorations are mixed with Turkish kilim rugs and modern art taken from the family's private collection.



We had a secluded patio adjacent to the pool. The room itself felt very big partly because the white Carrara marble bathroom was huge. The bed was blissfully comfortable and the textiles and extras were perfect. It even allowed TDH a lie in which is rather rare. There were lovely books in the room, a kaleidoscope, and at one of our turndowns we were left with a rather lovable teddy bear, we have called Bear Bear. The room felt more like a small cottage and had all the lovely extras we have now come to expect like an iPod dock, flat screen TV, Segafredo coffee machine, slippers and cheerful yellow Aqua di Parma yummys in the bathroom. Incidentally, the shower had a viewing window out onto the bed.

Yoga, pilates, a spa and a small gym are on site but we managed to avoid them all! We could have caught a boat to the Greek island of Chios, had a windsurfing lesson, and the hotel runs cycling trips around the area. Total relaxation and food were the key elements to our trip. The hotel has a restaurant, Mitu, on site and the building looks out on to the pool and then the other side lets out onto the cobbled streets of Alaçatı. The Turkish breakfast was delicious with plenty of local produce – organic eggs, Turkish cheeses including the white and salty 'Angel Hair', tomatoes, cucumber, breads, local farm honey, olives, fruit, yoghurt and house made jams. It's a relaxed self-service meze-style meal. Chilled fruit juices are produced on arrival and it's a truly civilized affair!



I'd head back to Alavya in a flash, pure relaxation and understated luxury. Glorious!

Alavya
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Alaçatı 35937 Çeşme İzmir TURKEY

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By Lara Lockwood on September 1, 2015.

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As a young child, Lara (@Lara_Lockwood) drew animals wearing clothes and, as an adult, she still does. Working as an illustrator she lives in exotic Istanbul. Trained in food styling at Leith's School of Food and Wine, and having gained an MA in Byzantine Art & Architecture from The Courtauld Institute of Art.