

Clockwise from top: spend your days soaking up the Caribbean sunshine; Ashdown Park's sweeping grounds; one of the large suites; classic interiors; enjoy a sunset dinner at Sandals



Sandals Regency La Toc ST LUCIA

Glamorous and all-inclusive aren't two adjectives that usually go hand in hand but Sandals has made an art of combining them throughout the Caribbean. Its flagship St Lucia resort is a shining example of its service-led ethos. Set over 85ha, it's an undeniably elegant spread of pools with swim-up bars, tropical gardens and rolling fairways, flanked on one side by an arched golden beach and a lush hilly backdrop that is typical of the eastern Caribbean on the other.

When Sandals says all-inclusive, it means all-inclusive. So should you not want to laze by one of its three pools (there are lively and quiet options depending on your mood), you can join a yoga class, tee off on one of the nine golf holes or take to the jade green seas to windsurf, paddle board or scuba dive.

Minibars are restocked daily with quality spirits and mixers,

Appleton rum cocktails

pour freely from the eight bars and the nine eating options range from top-grade sushi and Italian fine dining to Kimonos, a theatrical teppanyaki restaurant. And if that's not choice enough, there are two other Sandals resorts on the island, with guests encouraged to 'stay at one, play at three', opening up the options to 27 restaurants. Sandals is aimed at couples, and there's a romantic flourish to all rooms, which range from handsome pool-side doubles to duplex sunset-view suites with outdoor tubs. The latter come with butler service, assisting you with everything from check-in to booking meals and reserving beachside cabanas complete with beer-packed cool boxes. *EM. From £2,599 per week. 0800 022 3030, sandals.co.uk*



Places

This month, we indulge in all-inclusive luxury relax in AA Milne territory, admire the Northern

Ashdown Park Hotel East Sussex

Neatly sidling up to the bucolic glory of Ashdown Forest, country house hotel Ashdown Park could not be more quintessentially British if it tried. This part of East Sussex inspired AA Milne to pen the *Winnie-the-Pooh* stories. Spend an afternoon here and you'll start to see why. A short yomp south from the sprawling grounds brings you to a tributary of the River Medway with any number of rickety bridges to chance your arm at Poohsticks, or find a spot to settle down with a picnic provided by the hotel (oversized jar of hunny, optional).

A neo-gothic mansion, the main building houses 51 of the 106 rooms and



are our pick of those available. If swinging cats is your thing, you could grab a tiger by his tail and be confident not to bang his head; huge is an understatement. King-size beds with high-quality linens come as standard in all rooms, with soft furnishings that, although a little tired, add to the character of the space. Bathrooms feature whirlpool tubs and under-floor heating, with stellar views of the estate.

The two-AA Rosette restaurant Anderida serves country classics in sizeable portions, with ox cheek pie with black truffle, parsley velouté and Savoy cabbage the standout dish. *MS. Doubles from £154. 01342 824988, ashdownpark.com*