



Join the really cool kids' club

The home-counties smart set go back year after year to Peligoni, the most exclusive family hang-out on the Med. **Rose Astor** packs her designer cossie

I am eavesdropping on two sun-kissed teenagers in colour-coordinated Triangl bikinis. "Sholto and Jack are organising the Topper race this afternoon," squeals one. "OMG hot!" replies the other. Listening to the pair evaluating the ready supply of tanned older "boat boys", apparently put on these Ionian shores solely for their pleasure, is like watching a live episode of Made in Chelsea.

My stakeout is the shorefront sundeck at the Peligoni Club, on Zakynthos, Greece. Never heard of it? It's the coolest resort in the Med, like the love child of Soho House and Mark Warner. It's thrilling, it's fun, it's family-friendly — and it's exclusive.

That's because the Peligoni is a members' club. To access it, and its pool, spa, gourmet cuisine and seemingly endless watersports, you need to book one of the 55 villas or two B&Bs that are affiliated to the club, none more than a 10-minute drive away, then pay a members' fee: between £70pp and £210pp for the week, depending on age and season. There's no vetting process and it's free for under-3s.

The club has the atmosphere of popping round to a friend's villa, albeit a seriously well-equipped one. We arrive sporting the hot-and-bothered-Brits-abroad look, to be greeted at the whitewashed reception shack by Anouska (Noush). At 23, she's the youngest of the Shearer clan, who own the Peligoni. She and her brothers, Ben, 29, and Rory, 27, grew up using, and loving, the club. Their father bought it in 2008 and they all now have key roles.

The Peligoni effect is pretty much instant. Within minutes, our kids are barefoot and off, having caught a whiff

of adventure, while we take a tour of the club with a cooling drink in hand.

Next to reception is the By Rory boutique, run by Noush's big brother, which is all kaftans, pompoms and wicker baskets. A quick scan of our fellow members reveals a boho Boden vibe. In fact, Johnnie Boden was spotted holidaying here last summer, as were the founder of Soho House, Nick Jones, and the Olympic gold medallist Sir Chris Hoy.

Beyond the pool, which is baby- and toddler-friendly, is the Goat Shed spa, from where we hear the thwack of tennis balls as the resident pro coaches a father and son. A stroll down a white gravel path leads to the breezy dining terrace, offering, we later discover, the best

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wood-fired pizzas this side of Naples.

I locate my children at the watersports hub. Here, the aforementioned Sholto is shoehorning our two boys (six and four) into life jackets, while our eight-year-old daughter signs up for the afternoon's rubber-ring race with a pretty girl called Scarlett. Scarlett tells me that her family have holidayed at the Peligoni for years; she is now on her gap year, working the summer season and having "the most epic time". Indeed, 20% of the 90-odd staff — all young and cheery — are sourced from returning families.

Out on the water, fleets of canoes, paddleboards, sailing boats and speedboats bob enticingly. Once the children have their wristbands on (a watersports package for the week starts at £85), they're away.

As the week unfolds, we find that days at the club whizz by. Once we've



Boy racers Main picture, hold on tight in the rubber-ring race. Above left, many of the young guests go on to work at Peligoni. Above right, Figari, one of the 55 villas you can book through the club

managed to wrestle the children away from their milkshakes and toasts at the bar — a 4pm staple — there's barely time for a swim back at the pool of our villa before the sun goes down.

If you're a big group and want the Ibizan modernist vibe, there's the Asimi villa, which sleeps 12, has a pool and Bond-location views, and costs up to £9,000. At the other end of the scale, a double room at Mimi's B&B can be yours for as little as £350 a week. Our secluded, split-level villa, Maistrali, sits somewhere in between.

One afternoon, I'm discussing the demise of Vilebrequins in favour of



Orlebar Brown trunks (the Peli is wall-to-wall OB) with a fellow kaftan-clad mum. She tells me that holidaying here is a "done deal".

"The kids have made friends who return year on year," she says. Sacha Forbes, an editor at Vogue, says she was happy to let her son Jack, now on his second season as staff, roam freely at Peligoni during his teenage years, "because I knew who he was spending time with, and if they weren't friends' children, they were friends of friends' children".

The Peli is big on party nights, with huge communal feasts and dancing — not as cringey as you'd think, and a great icebreaker for teenagers. By the end of a week here, most children will have several new Snapchat friends, not to mention the coveted Peli hoodie.

Age-relevant fun aside, my favourite moments are *en famille*: hiring a boat for the day to snorkel among hidden coves, and joining up with another family to charter the Odyssey, one of the club's two classic wooden yachts, for a sunset jaunt.

Will we go back? Does Dolly Parton sunbathe on her back?

● Peligoni Club is open from May to September (peligoni.com). Maistrali, which sleeps eight, starts at £1,950 a week. Fly to Zakynthos with Thomson or easyJet

Fun with Sharky & George

This season sees a shake-up for 4- to 14-year-olds at Peligoni, with the launch of the Sharky & George Kids' Club. These are the entertainers ruling the kids' party scene in the home counties — think Famous Five meets Robinson Crusoe, and the iPad tug-of-war replaced by

the real thing. Co-founder George Whitefield, a self-identified Peter Pan, says they're planning "as much mischief as we can". Expect pirate battles, treasure hunts and beach Olympics under the watchful eye of the tireless Sharky & George crew. sharkyandgeorge.com