

# THE LAST SHOUT

## Josh Rafter checks out Ibiza's final few weeks

VENTURING back to the White Island for my eleventh year was never going to be easy. I missed out on the hedonistic pleasures of Ibiza in 2002, opting for a more leisurely holiday of a beach and book. What were my rewards for this holiday of health? I was drowned in texts and calls of stories of madness, exploitations and danced crazed adventures and "wish you were here!" cries. I promised I would never miss another year in Ibiza. Feeling left out has never come to mind so much as then!

We had one of those hideous journeys to Stanstead, by taxi, because trains do not operate to the outer wilderness at these antisocial times of day. The flight was a dream, literally, as we all crashed out fast asleep. Two hours later, we flew in over the south end of the Ibiza; a trickle of excitement ran through me as we touched down. A piece of advice to all those who have never

been to Ibiza before; make sure you hire a car and arrange it in advance of your holiday. The best bargains can be found the major car hire companies, but even better deals can be found online. In August there were absolutely no vehicles available at any of the hire desks. That left seven of us, laden with luggage, and one car! Loaded up, while the others followed in a taxi, we headed off to our hotel in Figueretas.

Rumours had filtered through to London early on in the Ibiza season as to what was hot and what was not. It's always a fairly good idea to have a rough plan of what and where you want to go, as far as the nightlife is planned. I say 'rough' because the island lends itself to deviations of even the best laid plans. Have an idea of the nights where you want to boogie, but be prepared to change your mind at the beat of a drum! Ibiza can be horrendously expensive and some may insist it has finally priced itself out of the hands many. Club entry prices can range anything from 35 to 60euros and that is before you find yourself gasping at the bar, handing over the equivalent of £7 for a bottle of warm water. When you visiting three clubs in 24 hours this is where planning can really help. Free passes and reduced entry tickets are handed out by club promoters just before the event. Tickets are more abundant due to falling numbers on the island, but you still need to be in the right place at the right time, and with the high cost of entry it can be well worth making that effort. A good place to start is up by the infa-

mous **Dome** in Ibiza Town where the dressed up people go to watch and be watched. Here you also have the gay bar **Oriental**, always a hotbed of cute guys and bustling with a lot of the people who work on the island.

It was here on our first Wednesday night that we found ourselves at a very heaving **Oriental**. Big holiday groups are not good for locating the numerous free passes, but the added advantage of being in Ibiza for so many years is that we already had them waiting for us. Ten passes later we headed off to **La Troja** at **Amnesia**. Two years ago this club was rocking the island and had proved most definitely the best night out. Oh, how things change. We were warned that the music policy had changed and by gum was it glum! Undeterred though, and after grabbing more passes for the after party from a midget on the dance floor, we headed bright eyed and bushy tailed to **Space**.

Now **Space** is a firm favourite of mine and on one non-salubrious year on **Disco Island** I was there every single day. Once again, it did not fail to entertain. The London boys were out here in force, and it was not long before they had twisted my rubber arm and I was in the back of a car heading for a marvellous chill out. Now these private pool parties are anything but a chill out. Imagine one hundred writhing torsos in swimwear, a beautiful location in the middle of nowhere, great pumping music and an infinity pool. It was so magical

that my friend Joe gushed "it's fabulous to be gay." This party went on until the sun went down and then the boys really did get down. As the bodies writhed in totally different directions we made an exit and headed off a little bit worse for wear to locate some much sort after food.

The beach the next day made us once again glow with vitality and only the thought of a drink in Ibiza Town lured us out. The weekend came round and it all kicked off with Barcelona's Matinee group holding their marvellous morning party at **Space**. One not to miss as the boys turn out in the masses and the party literally steams with sex appeal. Grab the passes at the gay beach the day before. With so many gorgeous boys in one place there just has to be another private pool party and this gathering blasts the socks off everything else. Swimwear is the key and gyrating to top DJ sounds proves that life here really is truly wonderful. The pool fills to the edges with naked men and the house shudders under the deluge of flesh.

Saturday passes and there is no rest for the wicked on Sunday as **Space** packs them in once again. Sunday night passes by and I found myself dressed head to foot in white for the **White Party** at **Privilege** where Gonzalo's amazing set kept the event alive. Back to **Space** with people's white attire now somewhat tatty and hideous in the light of day, the party masses continue unabated. We saved our energy for the best clubbing experi-

ence - **DC10** on the Monday afternoon. Think **Space** eight years ago and the vibe of Ibiza relives itself here. This kicked.

Monday's are big here in Ibiza and the new club on the block **Pin Up** is where we found ourselves. **Smokin Jo** laid down some fierce tracks as did **Little Louis Vega** a couple of days later. Great crowd, fierce venue and the new kid on the block really rocks. The only place left to venture was **Bora Bora** and the very next day we were there. Big in the past and in my opinion even better now. Mainly straight but a very up for it crowd. Loads of whooping, cheering, whistling and dancing on any available space, think chairs, tables and sun loungers! As tired as we were, we could not help but get carried away by the energy. And it's all by the beach. Not to be missed.

For the newcomer, beyond the partying, you must try and discover the island. There are some incredible beaches, my favourite being **Sa Trincha** at Salinas, where the DJ spins out blissful sounds to a really cool international crowd. **Beneras** in the north is also cool and at sunset you can grab a smoke as some of the dwindling original hippie inhabitants beat their drums. There is even, supposedly, a secret beach where you have to be invited as directions are only ever passed by word of mouth. Keep searching because I have yet to find it!

As the season draws to an end, the party diehards plan to go back to Ibiza for the closing parties. These are an institution. Find me on the dance floor, beer in hand and a huge smile on my face, the Ibiza magic still works its wonders on me!



Alternative tour operator Manaround  
tel: 020 8902 7177 or go to  
[www.manaround.com](http://www.manaround.com)