

RITZ-CARLTON ABAMA

Tennis in Tenerife

Annabel Croft's Tenerife academy opens its doors

Words JO CARTER

Perfect tennis climate? Check. World-class tennis facilities? Check. Stunning views of the Atlantic Ocean? Check. Throw into the mix a five-star hotel, an award-winning spa and two Michelin-starred restaurants, and you might just have yourself the ultimate tennis break.

Tucked away on the west coast of Tenerife, the 400-acre Ritz-Carlton Abama offers the perfect blend of luxury, fine dining and outstanding leisure facilities.

But first to the weather. Situated 250km off the coast of north west Africa, the Canary Islands boast a balmy year-round climate, with temperatures averaging 24°C in summer and 20°C in winter and less than 40 days of rain per year.

With academies now established at Pine Cliffs in Portugal and Forte Village in Sardinia, Annabel Croft was looking for another five-star resort to offer a year-round tennis programme. Abama ticked all the boxes. Surrounded by tropical palm trees, the seven Plexipave courts and four padel courts enjoy a breathtaking vista. With the volcanic Mount Teide [snow-capped in winter] to the north east and the ocean to the west, it is a far cry from Thursday night training down your local club.

"It's an undiscovered gem at the moment," says Steve Cockell, Coaching Director at Annabel Croft Tennis Academy. "Throw in the winter sunshine and it's perfect for tennis. Whether you go as a family, individual or part of a tennis group it is a fantastic destination.

"Our vision is to have lots of people there, enjoying the fantastic facilities and perhaps coming off court and enjoying a drink with these fantastic views. The aim of Annabel Croft Tennis Academy is to put group coaching into resorts and give people, whether they are a beginner or an experienced tennis player, opportunities to drop in and play tennis, make friends, learn about the game and participate in a working programme."

With British tennis coaches offering a year-round coaching programme at Abama, the on-court philosophy of the coaches is "movement and repetition", the theory being that by getting your footwork right the timing, and consequently the technique, will come more easily.

"Our belief is that if we get the movement right we can get instant results, and I think that is important for a tennis holiday," explains Cockell. "I don't think it's right to start messing with your grip or trying to change your swing because the chances are you will go home worse than when you arrived. Why would you pay loads of money to go home all doom and gloom? I want players to go home buzzing and wanting to come back."

Down the hill from the courts is the luxurious hotel and its seven swimming pools and 10 restaurants. A train runs down to the secluded golden sandy beach. Be sure to check out the spa, with its wealth of steam rooms, hydrotherapy pool and menu of treatments from Balinese facial to Swedish massage.

There are 10 restaurants to choose from, whether you fancy grabbing a burger and a pint while watching the football in the sports bar, tucking into a steak at the Pampa Grill house or eating while watching the sun go down at the scenic Mirador restaurant.

If you're feeling really indulgent, the resort boasts three Michelin-stars. The unique fusion of Japanese and local cuisines makes Kabuki a popular destination for foodies, while Martin Berasategui's two-starred M.B restaurant is described in the Michelin guide as "innovative cuisine combining excellent ingredients, superb technical skill and meticulous presentation".

With such a wealth of dining and leisure options on site, it is the kind of place where you can wake up and decide whether you want to spend the day finessing your forehand or simply sipping Sangria. Whatever takes your fancy. 🍷

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FACILITIES

Ten restaurants, including M.B (Martin Berasategui) – 2 Michelin stars and Kabuki – 1 Michelin star // 7 swimming pools
18-hole championship golf course // 7 tennis courts // 4 padel tennis courts //

ACCOMMODATION

The 5* Ritz-Carlton Abama has 461 guest rooms and suites // Deluxe adult-only Tagor villas with ocean views
Tennis packages start from £550 per person for 3 nights including 10hr coaching package // Flights and transfers not included

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