

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

PINE CLIFFS, PORTUGAL

NEED TO KNOW...

WHERE

Pine Cliffs, Albufeira, Algarve, Portugal

TRAVEL

Pine Cliffs Resort is a 30-minute drive from Faro International Airport

ACCOMMODATION

The 215-room Sheraton Algarve is nestled at the heart of the 72-hectare resort in Albufeira

FACILITIES

- Annabel Croft Tennis Academy with five floodlit courts – two clay and three all-weather
- Golf Academy and Country Club featuring nine-hole golf course, driving range, putting green and chipping green
- Swimming pool
- Porto Pirata Kids Club
- RitualSPA Wellness & Beauty Centre



PORT OF CALL

Annabel Croft returned to her roots when she opened an academy at Pine Cliffs Resort in the south of Portugal

With breathtaking views over the Atlantic Ocean, first-class facilities and the best year-round climate in Europe, Pine Cliffs really has it all.

Following the success of the Annabel Croft Tennis Academy in Aphrodite Hills in Cyprus, the former British No.1 needed no convincing to expand her growing portfolio across the Mediterranean into Portugal.

“Everything seemed to be working at Aphrodite Hills so when this opportunity came along it seemed right,” Croft said. “Portugal is very close to my heart, I have holidayed there for over 20 years. We had our family holidays in the Algarve, very close to the academy when I was growing up – we used to play tennis in the morning and go to the beach in the afternoon.

“Portugal is like a second home to me. I always wanted to do something in Portugal and this opportunity just felt right.”

From the stunning sea views to the intimate setting, there are some obvious similarities between Pine Cliffs and Aphrodite Hills. But while Croft’s team took over the under-utilised Aphrodite Hills and breathed new life into the place, Pine Cliffs just needed coaches.

“We have installed some coaches and trained them up using the methods we use at our other academies,” says Croft.

“I have known the head pro, Paolo Machado, for many years and he is supported by assistant coach Hugo Ramalho. In addition to that, one of our coaches in Cyprus will be heading over for the kids’ camps in the summer.”



Having won over 30 awards, Pine Cliffs Resort offers the perfect family getaway, not just for a tennis holiday but for its wide range of leisure facilities, dining options and luxury accommodation.

For those in your party who prefer swinging a golf club to a tennis racket, the Pine Cliffs Golf Course features the signature 'Devil's Parlour' par-3 sixth hole, which requires a long challenging tee-shot over the cliff tops and offers unrivalled views of the coastline.

The Pine Cliffs Golf Academy offers players of all standards a chance to improve their game, while for those who prefer a more relaxing break the resort also boasts a water sports centre, spa and health club. Once you've hit enough forehands and backhands to work up an appetite, why not head up to the cliff-top Mirador Champagne Bar for an aperitif before dinner at a wide range of restaurants, from Japanese gourmet cuisine to the piri piri steakhouse.

"There is the most amazing champagne bar set among the pines overlooking the sea," says Croft. "It is one of the most beautiful locations I have ever been to, and it is worth going there just for a glass of champagne!"

Croft, who founded her UK academy, based at the National Tennis Centre in April 2009, draws on her experience from her playing days and applies it to the philosophy she instils in her coaches.

"IT'S DEFINITELY NOT AN ELITE ACADEMY – OUR HOLIDAYS AND CAMPS ARE FOR EVERYBODY OF ANY STANDARD... ANY AGE"

"The initial reason for setting up the academy in the UK was based on my own experiences when I was playing on the tour," Croft says. "I saw different academies from around the world and wanted to bring the best bits and put them into my own academy."

"For example, I did a coaching course at Sanchez Casal Academy in Barcelona, where Andy Murray trained. Their philosophy is very much about high-energy, movement-based drills and that is also key to the programme."

"But then when I was about 16 I went to an academy in Florida and the drills were so different from anything I had ever experienced in England. Each coach had a supermarket trolley filled with balls and

we hit millions and millions of balls from different positions on the court with targets to aim at.

"Tennis is based on repetition so if you are hitting loads and loads of balls from

different positions, there is no way you can't improve."

Croft may benefit from knowledge gained during her years on the tour, but she insists you do not have to be a budding Grand Slam champion to benefit from her expertise.

"It's definitely not an elite academy – people sometimes think that they aren't good enough and that the standard will be too high but that couldn't be further from the truth," she explains. "We are very much for people who want to learn to play tennis, even those who have never picked up a racket before."

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