



● Thrills and spills at Aqualand water park are only a short bus ride away

for much of the day (the hotel has 255 rooms), it does get crowded.

With our poolside berth secured, I would have been happy to lie back with a book. Our safari was surely enough action for the week.

But my son had other ideas. "Dad, I'm bored," he said, as we finished yet another game of pool, which was about as much exercise as I felt like taking.

Thrills and spills, noise and action were his idea of a good time. So we found ourselves boarding a bus for Aqualand water park.

The place is huge, with an array of twisting, plunging slides towering over the pools.

A burger and chips later, I was eyeing the quiet VIP area. That idea was quickly sunk by my son with the oldest challenge in the book: "You're not scared, are you?"

Soon, I was speeding down a tunnel in complete darkness, or being shaken and stirred in a giant rubber ring before being dumped over what felt like a precipice. Every time there was a sense of relief when I plunged into the water. But eventually, even I started to enjoy it.

Back at the hotel, Tom was finally ready to unwind, taking over the Jacuzzi that came with our eighth-floor penthouse suite. It boasted stunning sea views, two balconies and a huge satellite TV.

Tom also liked being able to graze for most of the day – from 7.30am until 9pm there's always somewhere serving hot food or cold snacks. Meals in the main restaurant are buffet-style, with local beer, and red and white wine offered on tap.

Like an increasing number of holidays, this is on an all-inclusive basis so all the basics are already paid for and there's no need to carry cash.

I insisted we try the tapas at the El Sultan restaurant, but Tom didn't share my taste for the delicious sizzling chorizo cooked in Asturian cider or the prawns in garlic and chilli. No, it was pasta from the buffet for him.

But we did agree that we preferred the pools to the beach where the sand was a disappointing grey colour, although the sea was pleasant.

At my prompting, we tried a more cultural excursion to the island's capital Las Palmas.

But the Santa Ana cathedral and the bronze statues of the now-extinct dogs that once inhabited the Canary Islands and gave them their name from the Latin, canis, left him unimpressed.

And the mansion where Christopher Columbus is said to have stayed in 1492, which includes maps and charts of his voyages, also drew a blank.

It was time to admit defeat and with the prospect of a cooling swim ahead, I didn't mind a bit.

the facts

● Nigel Williams was a guest of Thomson Holidays, which offers seven-night all-inclusive holidays to Gran Canaria staying at the Hotel Orquidea in Bahia Feliz from £680 per adult, £214 for first child and £254 for second child this summer. Prices include return flights ex-Gatwick in early May, in-resort transfers, taxes and charges.

● Reservations: 0871 2314691 or visit www.thomson.co.uk

The Argus Travel Offers

Book online: www.newmarket.travel/bar



Early Booking Discount
£100
off per couple*
Book by 30th June

4★ Edinburgh Christmas Markets

With its ice-rink, lights and Christmas markets full of seasonal merchandise, Edinburgh sparkles with yuletide cheer.

Includes • Return flights to Edinburgh • Two nights' bed and Scottish breakfast at the four star Holiday Inn, Edinburgh • Orientation tour of Edinburgh • Airport to hotel coach transfers • One suitcase allowance per person • The services of a tour manager

3 days from
£219pp

Flying direct from London Gatwick
Departs 3 & 9 December 2012



2 days from
£109.00

Departs 20 June 2012

Ladies' Day at Royal Ascot

High fashion and high stakes at the most stylish date of the racing calendar. See the Royal Procession and witness the best of flat racing as they battle it out.

Includes • Return coach travel • One night's bed and continental breakfast at the St.Giles Hotel, Heathrow (or similar) • Ladies' Day at Royal Ascot with admission to the Silver Ring Enclosure (General Admission upgrade available at a supplement) • Visit to Central London • The services of a Tour Manager



2 days from
£79.00

departs April to December 2012

Friday Night Supersaver 4★ London Theatre

These unbelievable value theatre-inclusive breaks with a top price ticket give you the opportunity of seeing a top West End show, plus the luxury of a night in a four-star hotel in London!

Includes • 1 night's B&B in the 4★ Ramada Ealing, London (a range of upgrade 4★ hotels in Central London are available for a supplement) • A top price ticket to an evening performance from a superb choice of top shows • Time in Central London for shopping and sightseeing • The services of a hotel-based representative

For a brochure please send coupon to: **Newmarket Promotions Ltd, FREEPOST KT2720, Worcester Park, KT4 8BR (NO STAMP REQUIRED)**

Please send a brochure for: Ascot Ladies Day – HBR Edinburgh Xmas Markets – EEP London Theatre Supersaver – BBJ

Name..... **BAR**

Address.....

Postcode..... Telephone.....

Email.....

*Book by 30 June 2012 for a £50pp discount off brochure prices. Offer subject to availability, may be withdrawn at any time & cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer.

To request a brochure or to make a booking call:

0844 391 2167 quoting code **BAR**



Newmarket Promotions/Air Holidays Ltd. ABTA V787X/V781Z. ATOL protected 2325. Calls charged at 4p per min. Single supplements apply.



or request a brochure at: www.newmarketbrochures.co.uk/bar