

Maria's – fabulous food, fun and very family-friendly

If you are going to the Faro area in the holidays then here are a number of restaurants which may tempt you.

Nigel Duncan is just back from the area and here are some of the restaurants he visited with Maria's top of the list for food, fun and being family-friendly.

Maria's: This superb, family-friendly and sometimes whacky restaurant is situated on the beach at Praia do Garrao Poente, 8135-170 Almancil around 20 minutes from Quinta do Lago.

It was packed – including families – for Sunday afternoon food from an extensive menu which would suit most.

Fish stew (shared) was wonderful and so were the steak, burgers, pasta and salads. The atmosphere was the icing on the cake.

Entertainment included a two-piece band (keyboard and guitar) playing 80s music and obviously well-heeled, blue-rinse Brits were among those up dancing and enjoying the run.

A highlight was when a well-proportioned lady chef appeared and proceeded to dance on a table with most – apart from a little lad on his play station – applauding and then joining in. Memorable.

www.mariasbeachalgarve.com

Florian Restaurante: The reviews are exceptional. Words like fantastic experience, superb quality, lovely staff, fabulous food and even “best restaurant in the Algarve” are commonplace.

It is quality, with everything done so you enjoy the experience. Dishes are innovative – I had eel, a tribute to

the Northern European owner's heritage – which was fantastic – and all introduce a subtle twist. Our party of six enjoyed various dishes and all were beautifully-presented.

It was Valentine's Day and it was busy but nothing was too much for the professional, cool staff who helped make this such an enjoyable night.

Facebook at Florian Restaurante

Parrilla Natural: Good location, minutes from the centre of the Quinta do Lago complex, and eye-catching on arrival.

However, this restaurant – whose tag line is quality with a South American touch – needs to improve on elements, including service.

The Uruguayan-inspired steakhouse prides itself on using the very best ingredients, including a signature beef range which is 100 per cent grass fed, high in Omega 3 and vitamin E and low in saturated fats.

They also cook in an authentic Parrilla, the traditional Uruguayan way, which is said to naturally intensify flavour. Steaks were tasty but not exceptional, particularly for a restaurant which boasts this dish as one of their leading lines, and the sides were OK.

Disappointing and a wee tip, on a cool night, yes, they do get them in Portugal, book a table in the main restaurant as near the kitchen can be cold.

www.parrillanatural.com

Dano's: At the centre of the busy Campus complex is Dano's, a family-friendly sports bar and restaurant, showing all live sports from around the world.

It also boasts a range of wines and spirits and craft beers – including local offerings – plus good food, served in a relaxed setting.

Our party of six were well-satisfied with the offering which included nachos, wraps, burgers, fish and sweets with Eton Mess among the most appreciated.

www.quintadolago.com/en/restaurants/danos

Casa do Lago: Chilling is part of the Quinta do Lago experience and Casa do Lago serves fresh seafood bought from the local markets.

It is well-known for its cuisine and the restaurant features an outdoor terrace, pool and fire pit is beside an extensive lake and nature reserve,

We had just enjoyed a morning walk in the early-Spring sunshine and instead settled back on the sun-kissed terrace with a coffee as the Scottish Triathlon team swam against the clock in the lagoon and then jumped on a bike for a gruelling road session. I appreciated their effort but indulged in laziness and enjoyed the coffee.

www.quintadolago.com

The Quinta do Lago Clubhouse: Relaxed atmosphere, dining on the terrace overlooking the South Course, or inside in luxury but pleasantly informal surroundings, this establishment offers a menu to suit all tastes in the 19th Hole. The food was quality and the price is extremely competitive.

www.quintadolago.com