MYSON

Joseph passes to the unusually tall winger out wide on the right, who then splits the defence with a perfectly weighted ball. Joseph runs onto it and then his teammate's deep Bulgarian voice booms out around the pitch: 'FEENISH!'

Joseph ducks under the ball past the keeper to secure his hat-trick, then sprint to deliver a euphoric, jumping 'high ten' to the architect of the brilliant assist. Dimitar Berbatov chuckles warmly at such unbridled exhilaration.

Well, he knows it's not every day a ten-year-old lad gets to play alongside a former Manchester United and Tottenham superstar. But, then, this is Football Escapes.

The prospect of a week's break with a football focus over summer half-term was a dream for two mad Chelsea fans like Joseph and me, but it was hardly the easiest sell to my wife, Emma.

Last season was particularly long and bruising in our house, with football being the flashpoint for many a red card dispute — not least knocking down to homework.

In the space of a year, Joseph had grown from having a vague interest in The Beautiful Game to an all-consuming obsession. These days, if he's not playing, watching, or talking about football, he's reading poorly written biographies, or analysing his unfathomably huge and expensive Match Attax card collection. In quieter moments he will simply chill out by singing Blue Is The Colour.

To exacerbate matters, his mum is an artist who would rather watch her paint dry than sit through a game, but I had managed to sell our Football Escapes holiday as a bit of footy for Mum, a glamorous break for the boys, a glamorous break for Mum.

So we head to the brand new Parklane Hotel in Cyprus, the latest destination for Football Escapes, which is also in Dubai, Portugal, Mauritius and the Maldives.

The Russian owner of Parklane has just spent €2 million securing its place in the Cyprus top flight and the money shows.

As often only a child can, Joseph sums it up with one look at the cavernous white marble-lined lobby, with a 65ft glass waterfall cascading from the ceiling: 'Wow! This is so Ronaldo!'

Across 25 acres of beachfront gardens, Parklane has three epic grounds, a state-of-the-art spa (with a 100m pool), a state-of-the-art gym, five superb restaurants, a kids' club with its own swimming pool, a state-of-the-art spa (with a 100m pool), a state-of-the-art gym, five superb restaurants, a kids' club with its own swimming pool, a state-of-the-art spa.

In one morning, we take the bus to the ancient ruins of Malamais, a city dating from 1106BC. The grown-ups find it fascinating, but Joseph would be more captivated by a concrete football stadium built in 1990AD. We then walk around the Old Town of Limassol and Lemesos Castle with its medieval museum. The collection of artefacts is modest, but nonetheless interesting. My pick is the skeleton of a soldier from 1570 with his head, feet and hands missing.

A controversial 2013 government scheme to jumpstart the economy has brought foreign money gushing into the property market. Most of it is Russian.

The scheme is known as the 'golden passports' land grab because anyone who puts €2 million into a development gets a Cypriot passport and, therefore, EU citizenship. Which, in footy speak, seems a little offside.

But all seems fine at the Russian-financed Parklane. After each training session, Berbatov fields a Q&A session, and in one answer he reveals the mantra that helped him succeed. 'Talent is not enough. You must work hard.'

Not exactly ground-breaking advice — but it’s a winning strategy for a spellbound Joseph.

What a result: Parklane resort and (inset, left) Joseph training

The goal is for children to play football and mum to relax by the pool — and this Cypriot resort hits the back of the net

seven nights at Parklane Limassol, Cyprus, from £6,845 per family (with one child under 12), including flights and transfers. Five days’ training with Football Escapes (footballescapes.com) for children aged five to 15 costs £550.