‘The house still feels like a home’

From a shipping magnate’s mansion to a converted toy workshop, Rachel Howard selects the country’s hottest new hotels

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◄ Pool customer: Oku on Kos has a new name, owners and look
◄◄ The Moon and Stars in Athens
▲▲ Cubism? The Kalesma on Mykonos
▲ Lunch at the Modernist in Athens

ARISTIDE
Syros

Syros, the 19th-century shipping capital of Greece, has the architectural pedigree to prove it. Among the neoclassical mansions that grace the waterfront capital, Hermoupolis, is Aristide, a nine-suite hotel that is both respectful of the building’s magnificent bone structure and bang up to date. Family-run, the house still feels like a home: all richly painted walls and ceilings, designer furniture, and contemporary art. Champagne breakfasts, superb Cycladic tapas and classic cocktails are served in the secret garden or at the rooftop bar. Top marks for sustainability, too: rooms have biodegradable slippers, environmentally friendly cosmetics and no single-use plastics. Suites from €180 (£158). hotelaristide.com

KALESMA
Mykonos

Nothing comes cheap on Mykonos, but privacy is at a premium on an island swarming with celebrities and paparazzi. Above the fray of Ornos bay, Kalesma is a low-rise cluster of 25 suites and villas that all have sea-view terraces and private heated pools. The look: neutral, natural, understated and uncluttered, is low-key luxe; but prices are brazenly high-end (from €1,200 for a suite that is big enough for a family of four). Owners Aby Saltiel and Makis Kousathanas are Mykonos aficionados and successful restaurateurs, so expect a savvy concierge and excellent food (including a weekly dinner party for residents). kalesmamykonos.com

MOON AND STARS
Athens

It took three years to secure planning permission and another year to restore this enchanting 1920s building in the historic heart of Athens. Formerly the home and workshop of a toy maker, the five suites are a playful mix of old and new: parquet floors, patterned tiles, metal four-poster beds. Husband and wife team Theodore Vasileiadis and Vaso Adamou designed and now run the hotel with real flair. A rooftop breakfast bar, with glorious Acropolis views, is in the works. Another bonus: city tours in Theodore’s cherry red Fiat 500, with pit stops at coffee shops and picnic spots you would never find without a local’s help. Doubles from €90. moonandstarsathens.com

CRETAN MALIA PARK
Crete

Cool digs, sophisticated food and self-care are usually forgone on family holidays. Not at Cretan Malia Park, a beachfront resort conceived in the 1980s by Antonis Stylianides, an acolyte of Walter Gropius. Radically re-imagined, the verdant resort is peppered with pieces by House of Hackney, Gubi and LRNCE that will thrill those with a keen eye for design. Deliciously unpretentious food is sourced from the organic kitchen garden and local suppliers (including many staff members, who are trained in sustainable farming off season). While parents are doing pilates, kids can cause chaos in the two pools, performance space, playroom or test kitchen. There’s even a cat café, a sanctuary for strays, and a bar and cinema exclusively for teenagers. Doubles from €165. cretanmaliapark.gr

WHITE PEBBLE SUITES
Milos

Milos has been getting a lot of buzz lately. Beyond the August crowds lining up for a table at O Hamos taverna and the Instagrammers striking a pose on the bone-white cliffs of Sarakiniko, this picture-perfect Cycladic island is amazingly unspoilt. With some 70 beaches, there’s always space to escape. Now there is a sexy, adults-only hotel, too, with 12 curvy suites in a restful palette and a luscious spa. Poised on the waterfront of Pollonia, White Pebble Suites is just steps from a sandy beach and a row of lovely seaside restaurants. Suites from €230. whitepebblesuites.com

THE MODERNIST
Athens

In a quiet, upmarket area of Athens, this clean-cut newcomer has a knowing, edgy vibe. Monochromatic interiors in black, white and grey are warmed up by oak floors, leather headboards and plants. Even the smallest rooms feel considered rather than claustrophobic. The biggest has an outdoor hot tub, a selection of vinyl and a drinks trolley with premium spirits. The roof garden, with Acropolis views, doubles as an outdoor cinema and the ground-floor café hosts workshops by local artists, who have created and curated everything from the ceramics and artworks to the books and playlists. Doubles from €140. themodernisthotels.com

SKINOPI LODGE
Milos

The epitome of Cycladic simplicity. With a minimal footprint, the stone, glass and polished cement dwellings are reduced to the bare essentials: a great bed, an outdoor shower and kitchen, a walled patio, and front row seats for the sunset. Surrounded by lavender, sage, olive trees and the sea, nothing tries to outdo the beauty of the setting. The only traffic are sailboats and goats. With a fanatical word-of-mouth following, it’s always been hard to score a reservation; but four new villas open in summer, bringing the total to seven. Villas from €290. skinopi.com

OKU
Kos

Oku is the reincarnation of Casa Cook, the bohemian brand launched as an antidote to Thomas Cook’s all-inclusive resorts, just before the company went bust. With a new look, new owners and a new name (Japanese for “inner peace”), it still feels on trend. Seaside yoga shala? Farm-to-fork restaurant? Shaggy hammocks, wicker lampshades, weathered ceramics? Check, check, check. Throw in swim-up suites, an open-air cinema and sensational sunsets and you have the kid-free beach resort of millennial dreams. Doubles from €180. okuhotels.com

SANTORINI SKY
Santorini

A modern take on the *yposkafa*, the subterranean houses burrowed into Santorini’s volcanic terrain, Santorini Sky’s six villas are slotted into the hillside of Profitis Ilias. Two-thousand feet above sea level, it’s the highest point of the island so the views are out of this world and the privacy is absolute. The architecture is impressive, too: raw concrete walls, lashings of local marble and sliding glass doors that open on to expansive terraces with heated pools that seem to plunge over the cliff. It’s a five-minute drive to the pretty village of Pyrgos, where Santorini Sky has two more villas if you prefer a bit of buzz. Villas from €249-€599. santorinisky.com

COSME
Paros

Kanava hotels and architect Stamos Hondrodimos have history. On Santorini, they have carved a niche for contemporary resorts that respect their surroundings. Parilio, their first collaboration on the island of Paros, drew rave reviews when it opened in 2019. Now they’re upping the ante with Cosme, a chic revamp of a dated property just outside Naoussa, the island’s lifestyle and nightlife capital. Opening in July, Cosme will have 40 rooms with a crisp Cycladic aesthetic, a spa, fine dining restaurant and a private beach club. Rates and website not available yet.

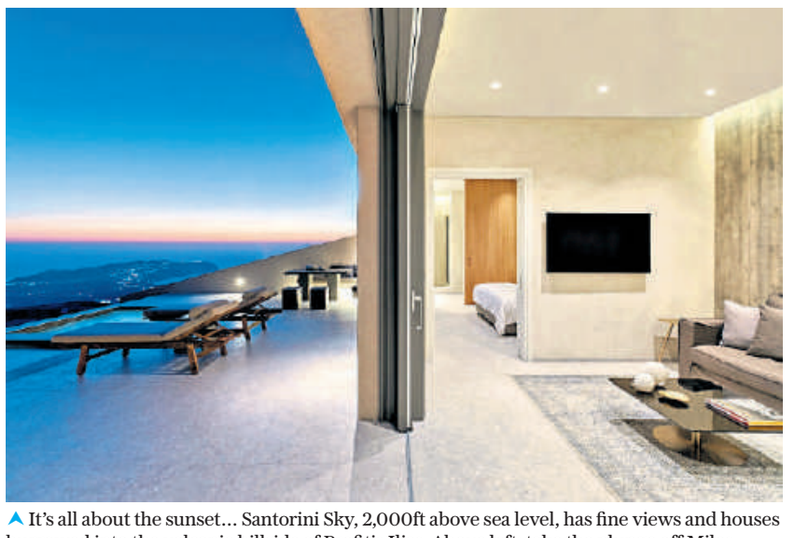
MARBELLA ELIX
Parga

A sweep of tawny sand wedged between two headlands, Karavostasi is one of the finest beaches along the relatively unscathed Ionian coast of mainland Greece. It’s a tree-lined stroll or funicular ride up to Marbella Elix, a snazzy makeover of an old resort. Balconies and infinity pools are eye level with the horizon, streamlined interiors are flooded with light. Activities focus on wellness (the region is ideal for cycling and the hotel can provide bikes, maps, and organic lunch boxes), and there’s a great outdoor adventure club for kids. Doubles from £121 half board. marbella.gr

NUMO
Crete

Koutsounari is one of the longest beaches on Crete. Tucked among the watersports centres and beach bars is Numo, a laid-back resort with a grown-up vibe. Soulful rooms are decked out in grey and green, reflecting the surrounding olive, tamarisk and palm trees. The upbeat beach club livens things up, while cute touches like a pop-up fisherman’s stall connect guests with Cretan culture. Being just outside the coastal city of Ierapetra is handy for diving, gorge hiking, or a day trip to tiny Chryssi (‘golden’) island, whose glowing sands are composed of thousands of shells. Doubles from €140. numoierapetra.com

Overseas holidays are currently subject to restrictions. See Page 3.



▲ It’s all about the sunset… Santorini Sky, 2,000ft above sea level, has fine views and houses burrowed into the volcanic hillside of Profitis Ilias. Above left: take the plunge off Milos

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