



PLACES TO STAY

The best hotels in Greece

Acropolis-like hotels on the wild mainland to palatial suites with private pools on magical islands, these are the best hotels in Greece right now

BY RACHEL HOWARD

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Just when you think you know **Greece**, you'll happen upon another slice of coast, sail to another island, or stumble across yet another one of the best hotels in Greece – and your perceptions are flipped all over again. Big-hitting **Santorini** (bright-white churches topped by blue domes that melt into the sky) and **Mykonos** (dinky beach bars arranged around a Venetian harbour) get a lot of attention. The scrubrier, craggier islands of **Crete** and **Corfu**, and the smaller, more bohemian flecks of land such as Antiparos and Syros are much-loved, too. On the mainland, Athens might be steeped in history but is always pushing boundaries with clever art, restaurants and bars. And across the whole country are some of **Europe's best hotels** – from sweeping retreats for switching off to stays built into caves and low-key hangouts that put wellness at the forefront of everything. Here, Athens-raised Rachel Howard picks her favourite hotels in Greece, from her favourite island spots to the mainland must-visits.

The Wild Hotel, Mykonos

The Wild has provenance: its creators were the restaurateurs behind Interni, a **Mykonos** institution with outposts in **Athens** and Belgrade. Family patriarch Nikos Varveris also created homewares

brand Moda Bagno (not bad composite skills for a hotel). When they were small, Varveris would bring his children to jump off cliffs encasing a scoop of sand on Mykonos' peaceful southwestern coast. Now, grown-up Philip and Alex have created The Wild here. This laidback idyll of 40 rooms and suites, some with plunge pools (and a two-bedroom pool villa) opened on the cusp of the pandemic. Sofia Apergi and Matina Karava's architecture made use of local stones and woods. Polished-concrete spaces are softened with handcrafted lampshades and kilims. The suites resemble a higgledy chora – organic and rustic yet sleek. They tumble down to a curvy cliff-top infinity pool, and a small spa, bar and restaurant area. A stone staircase winds down to the beach.

The Wild eschews the raucousness of Mykonos. Instead, the sons followed the template and memory of their family home: a convivial, aesthetic space filled with friends with a busy kitchen. A slow-food philosophy is embraced, with family recipes and local produce at Taverna, a simulacrum of a village cafe, with its Myconian cheeses, crisp pies, meats and catches of the day. Pine-framed multi-level Raw, overlooking the beach, lantern-lit by night, is for botanical cocktails, sakes and Greek vintners. Food here speaks to demanding palates, with a Greek-Japanese plant-and-paleo-tilted menu by Kazouaki Sitamori. Rib-eye steaks and aubergines; Cycladic urchins and salmon roe; spicy tuna with black sesame and a vegan futomaki.

The Wild is built for eating beautifully, spa moments, long, poolside coffees, and beach lounging. This year they offer a rekitted sailing boat for trips to secluded swim spots off-island. Kick back and relax. The party is elsewhere. *Lydia Bell*

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