



FOUR SEASONS

ASTIR PALACE HOTEL

ATHENS

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The 19 Hottest New Hotels Of 2019



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Four Seasons Astir Palace Hotel, Athens

You might have thought Four Seasons was all over glamorous European capitals, but the fact is, it hasn't been yet. This year will see several openings that change that, starting with [this major update of a historic hotel](#), expected to debut this winter or spring.



In-the-know Athenians have long flocked to the day- and nightclubs of the Athens Riviera, the coastline that stretches south of the city. Now Four Seasons is bringing that laid-back vibe to international visitors while positioning them just 30 minutes from the city center.

FORBES US– Value AEV \$59.577

17 Most Anticipated Hotel Openings of 2019



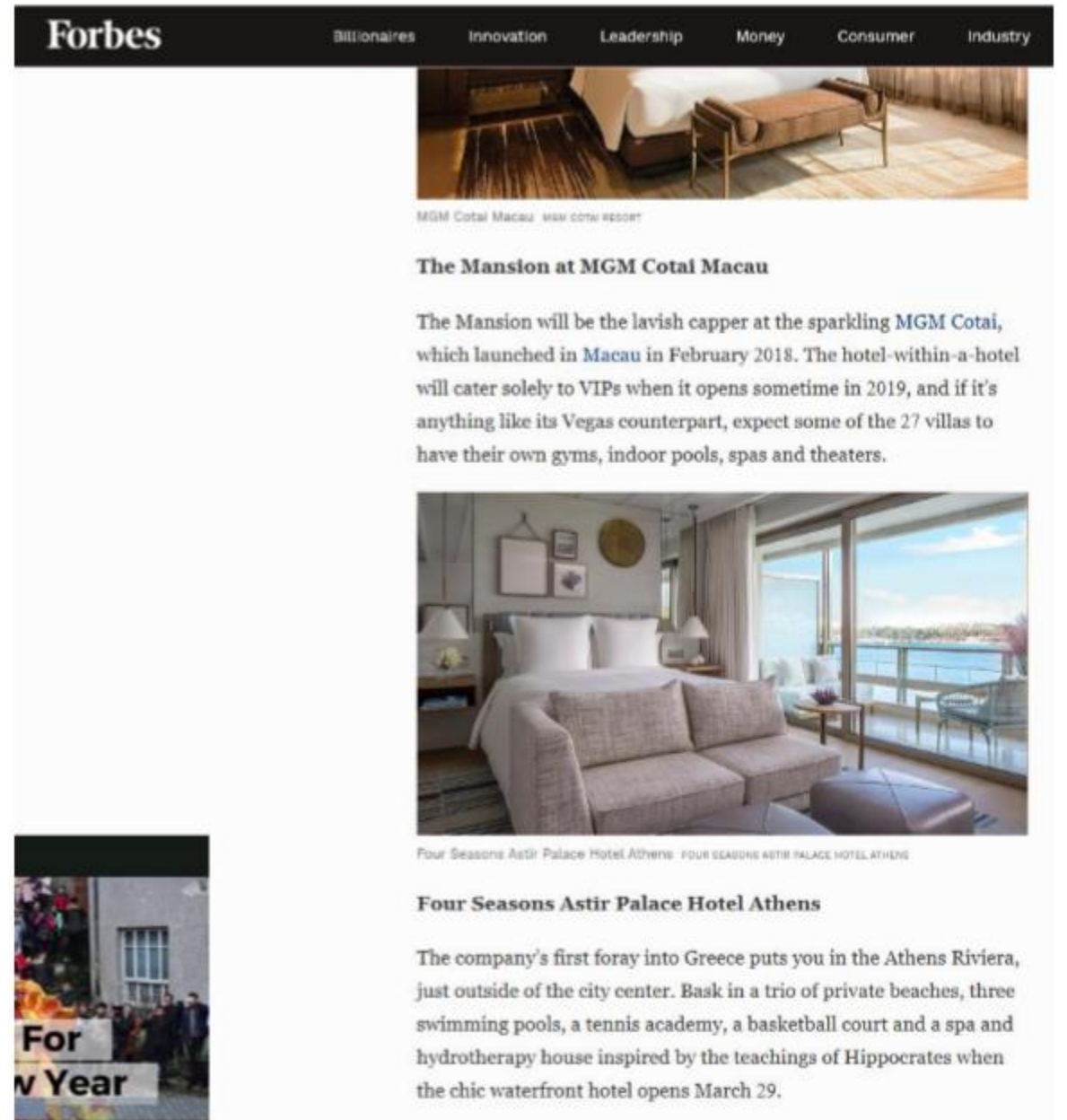
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17 Most Anticipated Hotel Openings Of 2019

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MGM Cotai Macau MGM Cotai resort

The Mansion at MGM Cotai Macau


The Mansion will be the lavish capper at the sparkling MGM Cotai, which launched in Macau in February 2018. The hotel-within-a-hotel will cater solely to VIPs when it opens sometime in 2019, and if it's anything like its Vegas counterpart, expect some of the 27 villas to have their own gyms, indoor pools, spas and theaters.



Four Seasons Astir Palace Hotel Athens FOUR SEASONS ASTIR PALACE HOTEL ATHENS

Four Seasons Astir Palace Hotel Athens

The company's first foray into Greece puts you in the Athens Riviera, just outside of the city center. Bask in a trio of private beaches, three swimming pools, a tennis academy, a basketball court and a spa and hydrotherapy house inspired by the teachings of Hippocrates when the chic waterfront hotel opens March 29.



For
v Year

MR PORTER - AEV £2.500

The Five Best Cities for a Weekend Break in Spring 2019



THE REPORT

THE FIVE BEST CITIES FOR A WEEKEND BREAK IN SPRING 2019

Look beyond the obvious for the other cool places to end (or start) your week

ATHENS



Four Seasons Hotel Pelina Hotel, Athens. Photo by Sir Richard Wicks, courtesy of Four Seasons

It seems mad to talk about a city with thousands of years of history as resurgent, but the Greek capital has emerged in the past decade as one of Europe's most vibrant cultural destinations, dusting itself off after its recent economic sagas. Tourism has recovered faster than the mercury rises in August, and the canniest among visitors come in spring or autumn, taking advantage of a thriving contemporary art scene as well as the city's more ancient attractions.

Independent.co.uk- AEV £7,350

The Hottest Hotel Openings for March

Four Seasons Astir Palace Hotel, Athens, Greece



Also making waves is the Athenian Riviera, where Four Seasons has chosen a glamorous seaside spot for its first opening in the country. The Astir Palace resort quickly became a magnet for the great and the good after opening in the 1950s, attracting everyone from Brigitte Bardot and Frank Sinatra to Lady Gaga and Barack Obama prior to its closure in 2016. Now it's set to reignite tourism along the pine-clad peninsula, offering around 300 sea view retro-chic rooms with earthy-toned furniture, lashings of woods and white marble.

UK TIMES AEV
£54,400.

Luxury travel

Old-fashioned glamour returns to the Athens Riviera

A new hotel and hip restaurants have revived the Astir Peninsula to its former glory, says **Amanda Dardanis**

Sweet and wine-sipping champagne cocktails on a private jet and penthouse on the Athens Riviera, surrounded by sea on three sides. Sounds forward about the empty beachfront along the rocky coastline for Greek ships during the battle of Salamis in 480BC. The sea breeze is always behind the former mansions of the Peninsula, across the vast expanse of them.

In a moment of perfect synchronicity, just before sunset, the waves seem to catch fire. Everything glows, from the 24-carat gold leaf on the drinks to the art-deco style mirrored tiles that fringe the double-height bar. Conversation pieces.

For the many locals such as us who have come to visit their own country's coast rapidly reworked beach opening, it's a living spectacle. The arrival of Four Seasons Astir Palace in the affluent suburb of Vostitsia signals Athens' ascent from the former, like the powerful pillars of Greek mythology. With some grandeur (€1.5 billion investment) a luxury penthouse with rooftop pool for €200,000 a night in summer, the upscale character is reviving the definition of luxury for Greek hospitality giant.

With capital controls and a new state credit default swap, several million visitors to Athens are making 20 million at last night. This ancient metropolitan area flourishes with a tangible creativity and entrepreneurial spirit, and is rapidly becoming the glass-ceiling capital of Europe. There's a strong bar scene to give London a run for its money, edgy urban neighbourhoods with hip new restaurants, and a genuine sense of change that would have been unthinkable a decade ago.

If the Greek capital is no longer dismissed as a merely jangly-off part of the island, it's also gaining a reputation with people living outside Greece as a coastline. And the coastline is one with mountains, sandy blue flag beaches, ancient temples to roam the Peloponnese, and quiet nights around a Cape Sounion in the land of many thousand churches that people generally find in the island. Not to mention the museum that stands for six months.

The Athens Riviera has a past too. In the 19th century, the southern shores of Cyclades and rolls out the Apollo Coast for 10 miles, and Cape Sounion on



the Athens peninsula, via a rim of laid-back seaside towns.

Anticratic Vostitsia, with its mansions, mansions and private mansions, has always been the queen bee, especially the Astir peninsula. Long before the first ever hotel appeared on this 75-acre park in 1962, city-wary Athenians would park up in private cars and head to a posh restaurant and private club where

Actually, Athenians have been coming to worship the heavenly beautiful spot since antiquity. At Astir beach, Athens high society and nobles met in the 16th-century BC ruins of the Temple of Apollo Zoster.

On the sea-washed hilltop opposite the Four Seasons re-modelled hotel, with its double white columns, stands like a modern-day counterpart.

If it's Tupper for Follies, Athens has always had Astir Palace, with a penthouse as star-spangled as its name (the name "star" in Greek). Famous visitors range from Frank Sinatra to the Beatles, Nelson Mandela to Lady Gaga. Bill Clinton to Barack Obama, who was the last VIP to check in before the old starwood resort checked out in 2012. It's where Aristotle Onassis courted Jackie Kennedy and his daughter Christina learnt to water-ski. During Astir's 1962-1976 heyday, Richard Gere's divorced wife, the late, long-haired Greek goddess, got gold watches in lieu of tips and Brigitte Bardot made the show in a shaggy bikini.

Remembering a legend is never easy. But global events and local legends aside, the Four Seasons reviving of this much-loved club is a lesson in sophistication. Essentially, they're taking Greek style and reinventing it for Athens' new age.

There's a renewed respect for the surroundings. It's best embodied by the showstopper main pool, where you can swim around divers and underwater water, and on the new five-story penthouse penthouse that connects to the Nafplio link of the hotel with a small concrete beach beach (aka the bungalow). Guests can stroll along it in the spirit of the age-old Greek who (famously well) stepped in a stylish flip-flop, an ice-cream waffle or to have their hair done and from coffee grates in the local folk tradition. (Infilling every body should be a sign of Greece to eat and drink by the sea is a smart sea-breeze with marble-topped tables (a nod to the old school Greek taverna, where you can

“From our balcony we can see mountains, the lush green belt of Cape Lemnos and the sandy shores of Astir beach”



A view of Astir Palace



Kratis by the beach



The Parthenon

also on grass-rod lawn on the spit inches from the water.

Backrooms for a one-stop view when you get from the flowers you can moon as you walk out of your room to the lounge, the pergola and will be order placed all over the grounds and used in the kitchen and Hippocrates' inspired spa.

The 600,000 Astir peninsula is billed as the country's largest tourism project. Aside from the flagship Nafplio, which has 100 rooms and 27 suites (some with pools), there are 52 bungalows that vary in price and a second, more intimate hotel, Aegon, with 16 rooms, 30 suites and a 400sqm high-ceiling pool with four bedrooms, a spa pool and spa facilities overlooking Aegon's main

My husband and I are staying in the boomerang-shaped Aegon, which has its own deck, infinity pool in a more-shaded, back-balcony hotel setting. The view from our room is so good that you can see the sea from the balcony in the afternoon sun. There are all the charming, stone-tiled beaches you'd expect from Four Seasons too. At the gym, you're offered a complimentary post-workout electrolyte brew of organic lemon juice and pink Himalayan salt. Clean out of the room's 1000 m² lounge – around the pool, across wood decks to the public bar (no it's not) and everywhere there is an expense of suit.

Use rooms down in a modern style of the beachy public outside sun-drenched deck, leather shoes and circular rug in set grey and blue, with terracotta sub

chairs to match the cliff opposite and seating white marble with a chocolate-wed. There's a large picture window in the balcony so you can watch the sunsets while you walk in the middle of the sea. The balcony is perfect for afternoon naps.

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Need to know

Amanda Dardanis was a guest at Four Seasons Astir Palace Athens. www.fourseasons.com, where an Astir Five View Room, including breakfast, costs from £620 a night. British Airways flies direct from Athens to London Heathrow



The Margi villa

works increasingly well known Greek art in (shoving the floor for Antony Gonsky sculpture guarding Nafplio's entrance).

In the evening we down (close to the restaurant and cafe) are open, but by sunset you'll have eight options, including a poshish cocktail restaurant, fine dining on Astir beach and, hanging over the water, Mithras, an already established location of the Nafplio town.

Our standout meal is at the signature Greek seafood restaurant Pelagos, where we took into blue-cream cake, a delicious one-hour carpaccio and pulled fillet of local sea bass served on that beautifully simple way that Greeks prefer: with just a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil, lemon juice and a heap of wild greens.

Make time to try the grassy outside the Four Seasons and its nearby gates, though. In recent years, in anticipation of its arrival, we took time watching in the Athens Riviera has spent its time around. Crisp Greek cuisine have been reworked into the Cycladic inspired art, from squares, local parks and ancient buildings have been masterfully.

The Margi, the established Vostitsia, where you can see the sea from the balcony, has turned rough and rocky beaches into Mythenia-worthy beaches. The hotel has also launched Margi Bars, an elegant farm-to-table experience where you can enjoy meals made with Mediterranean ingredients pulled from the earth among vineyards, olive groves and fire-roasting herbs on the 25-acre property.

Set out on foot from the Four Seasons to the nearby beach that we like most, weekends with friends on Mount Lycabettus. It's just above the main Vostitsia square club strip, opposite Vostitsia's Bar Soap away at seasonal panoramic of the sea and the coastline. Then afterwards roll in to the capital's Vostitsia, where you can see the sea from the balcony, has turned rough and rocky beaches into Mythenia-worthy beaches. The hotel has also launched Margi Bars, an elegant farm-to-table experience where you can enjoy meals made with Mediterranean ingredients pulled from the earth among vineyards, olive groves and fire-roasting herbs on the 25-acre property.

As a point, everyone checks down to epic Cape Sounion, where Lord Elphinstone's excavating graffiti on the 448BC. There's a museum. Back to the Four Seasons, the sea-side hotel just a little further round the coast from Vostitsia to the sun-drenched beachfront of the sea. The sea-side hotel just a little further round the coast from Vostitsia to the sun-drenched beachfront of the sea. The sea-side hotel just a little further round the coast from Vostitsia to the sun-drenched beachfront of the sea.

the whole experience. For a more casual affair, the next fish restaurant down, Sardinia sea. Then, for a view that's just as fine-tune (we are looking at the hotel's facade with its mosaic and glass) as the whole experience. For a more casual affair, the next fish restaurant down, Sardinia sea. Then, for a view that's just as fine-tune (we are looking at the hotel's facade with its mosaic and glass) as the whole experience. For a more casual affair, the next fish restaurant down, Sardinia sea. Then, for a view that's just as fine-tune (we are looking at the hotel's facade with its mosaic and glass) as the whole experience.

When we want to proceed we're in Mythenia we can head to nearby Kratis, the Margi's private and new beachfront, out that opened last summer. From a hotel Athens, we'll find right at home, it was designed by the same team. You can graze on the beach (there's such as mini rock-throwing burgers and up-chilled oysters of the Nafplio town).

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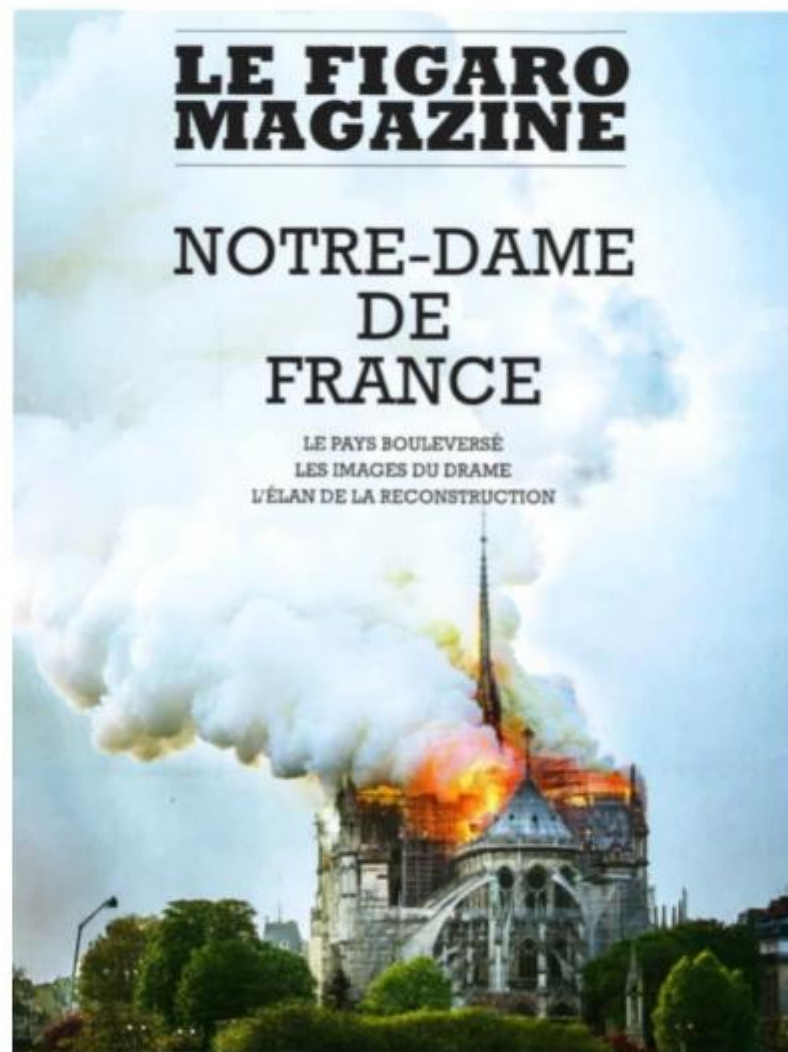
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LE FIGARO MAGAZINE FRANCE

AEV 37.500€



PHOTOGRAPHY BY ET VANDER B. 2016, 2017



VISITE EXCLUSIVE
L'ASTIR PALACE
RÉVEILLE LA RIVIERA ATHÉNIENNE

Four Seasons s'implante en Grèce dans le mythique Astir Palace. Glamour, nostalgie et rétro chic : entre mer et pinède, la merveilleuse péninsule de Vouliagmeni vibre de nouveau.

Un isthme effilé gardé par les ruines d'un temple dédié à Apollon. Une langue de terre couverte de pins qui se déploie dans la mer. Une succession de criques et de petites plages de sable irrésistibles... A une demi-heure de l'Acropole et de l'aéroport international d'Athènes, la péninsule de Vouliagmeni est considérée comme le joyau de la Riviera athénienne. Récemment privatisée pour 450 millions d'euros, elle abrite notamment une petite marina pour les yachts, le fameux restaurant du chef japonais Nobu Matsuhisa et surtout l'Astir Palace, hôtel mythique des années 1960 à 2000 dont le seul nom évoque Aristote Otassiss, Jackie Kennedy, Melina Mercouri... Fin mars, l'hôtel a rouvert sous les couleurs de Four Seasons, une manière magistrale pour le groupe hôtelier de luxe de s'implanter pour la première fois en Grèce. Deux ans de travaux ont été nécessaires pour revampier complètement ses trois ensembles de bâtiments (nommés Arion, Nafsika et The Bungalows) qui totalisent 300 chambres, ainsi que les 30 hectares de côte enchantée. Nous accueillant à l'entrée, l'Arion se dresse à la verticale de la baie, dans un style rétro chic à la fois sophistiqué et décontracté. Grands ouverts, ses espaces laissent entrer la lumière et la mer : le lobby et son bar, le restaurant de poisson raffiné Pelagos, le lounge à cigares et cognacs, l'im-mense spa, la piscine tout en longueur, les terrasses... nous attirent comme un aimant. Trois minutes à pied dans la pinède ou au bord de l'eau suffisent pour rejoindre le Nafsika. Avec ses lignes géométriques

à flanc de colline, l'édifice évoque l'esprit resort des seventies. Ses suites, toutes pourvues d'une grande terrasse, dégringolent en cascade sur la magnifique piscine et la mer. On se laisse éblouir par la palette de couleurs : bleu turquoise ou céruleen de l'eau, vert argent des oliviers implantés en îlots dans la piscine et roux du deck en teck. Ici, les papilles se ravissent de saveurs cosmopolites : italiennes (trattoria Mercato) ou latino-américaines, avec notamment un bar à cerviches à côté de la piscine. Plus intimes et proches de la nature, les Bungalows (3) déclinent une tout autre atmosphère, glamour et nostalgique. Nichés dans la forêt, les cubes en pierre blanche aux tentures rayées s'éirent en guirlande face à la mer. Certains disposent d'une piscine (4). Les sentiers pavés courent entre les pins et déservent de petites plages privées de sable ou amarrées sur les rochers. A moins de rejoindre la taverne grecque boho-chic lovée au creux de la crique, avec ses fauteuils en paille et ses pergolas. Une excursion en mer pour rendre hommage à Poséidon est un must. Le temple du dieu de la mer (1) ne se trouve qu'à une demi-heure de bateau. Une vedette vient vous chercher au quai de l'hôtel. Longeant la côte et ses îlots, elle fend l'écume jusqu'au cap Soution, la pointe méridionale de l'Attique. Entre les îles ou la vibrante capitale grecque - Fondation Niarchos, musée Benaki et ses satellites (2), Opéra national... -, plus besoin de choisir. *Maud Vidal-Nizet*

Four Seasons Astir Palace Athens (06.30.210.896.31.49) / fourseasons.com/athens/. A partir de 370 € la chambre.

CONDE NAST TRAVELLER US AEV 19.200\$



AFTER A DECADE OF CHAOS CAUSED BY THE DEBT CRISIS, ATHENS HAS REMADE ITSELF INTO EUROPE'S NEWEST (OLDEST) NEXUS FOR INNOVATIVE FOOD AND CULTURE.

By CHRISTOPHER W. BAGLEY
April 11, 2019



It was supposed to be a quiet lunch with art dealer Rebecca Camhi at a groovy taverna in Athens' Metaxourgelo neighborhood. But as soon as we took our seats on the sidewalk terrace at **Seychelles**, Camhi heard strange noises coming from the undercarriage of an illegally parked Volvo nearby. The plaintive meows seemed to be emanating from within the engine, and soon a crowd of passersby gathered to debate the best way to lure the stray cat hiding under the hood out to safety. After many failed attempts—our waitress set out some grilled shrimp as bait, an English tourist poked around with a broomstick—Camhi finally commandeered a garden hose from across the street and sprayed the engine until a tiny orange kitten dropped to the ground, soaked and terrified. It glanced around at the hectic scene—then climbed right back up to its hiding place.

“I’ve written” was written on signs around the city, but it was not the case of the city’s “creative class” but rather a reflection of the sense of urgency and the need for innovation—along with the occasional light and a certain strategic flexibility—that define the city right now. “The tension is what is driving the city to solve more problems creatively, and that means we really get creative,” Camhi told me.

Clearly, you might have been hearing this “Athens is back” talk about 10 years of volatility caused by the debt crisis and the resulting state of financial emergency, but it has turned, and it means the city is exhibiting its reputation as not only a center of contemporary culture but also a novel place to hang out. “Young artists are being encouraged to create in Athens by UNESCO, so we have more space here, and we are spending less on rent so we can afford the shops and studios before they find good tenants.”



The newly opened Helen Gallery in Piraeus
Christopher Bagley



The contemporary Gallery of Art in Athens
Christopher Bagley

My recent trip to the city was timed just as the tide is high. But Athens is also a place where the city’s creative class is still in the process of being defined. It has been there all along, even though institutions are only now being created. For travelers who have experienced city’s recent past, Athens is a kind of second-chance discovery zone, a place where extreme contradictions are taken for granted.

The real challenge is that a group of sophisticated, globally connected Greeks is eager to see the city’s creative class. This tension is what I have chosen to write about in this story, and it is the story of a city that is still in the process of being defined. “The city is still in the process of being defined,” says Camhi. “The city is still in the process of being defined.”

Art and Culture

Athens is once again a hotbed of cultural life. In 2017, when the city’s financial crisis was still in its infancy, the city’s creative class was still in the process of being defined. “The city is still in the process of being defined,” says Camhi. “The city is still in the process of being defined.”

While working around the globe, I’ve collected a lot of stories about it. It’s often easy to forget that you’re also outside the city. In Athens, when the economy was high, it was a matter of time before the city’s creative class would have moved to other parts of the world. But the city is still in the process of being defined. “The city is still in the process of being defined,” says Camhi. “The city is still in the process of being defined.”



The Contemporary Museum
Christopher Bagley

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Food and Drink

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them: downtown area now buzzes with little spots offering their own takes on market-based Mediterranean tastes. At Japanese-Greek **Nidan**, the entire menu changes daily, but with luck you’ll be able to sample the wheat with minced lamb, or the least boring side dish of steamed vegetables (available if the local herbs, arachis, and carrots are all crisp and soaked in a light beef broth). Nearby is **Cherchez La Femme**, where the Greek coffee is prepared using a traditional brass *douli* on a base of heated sand. The aforementioned eschews, where the young owners source their ingredients from tiny farms all over Greece, is the ideal spot for a 3 p.m. lunch that might last until dusk. For a more old-school meal, it’s worth the 30-minute drive to Itraoua for **Iperohamni**, with a solid seafood menu and faded photos of Greek royals on the walls.

The last few years have also seen a boom in cocktail spots: try the downtown mainstay **The Chameleon**, along with sprawling multi-use spaces that include performance and exhibition areas. Some of them, such as **Six Lages**, already feel like victims of their own hype, overrun by eager foreign Instagrammers. To sample a more soul scene, make a post-midnight crawl around the Kerameias neighborhood, adjacent to **Mitsakopoulou**. At the bar **Cabernet**, there’s some graffiti near the entrance that says “African tourists fuck off. Refugees welcome.” In the gravel-strewn courtyard there’s little evidence of either group: it’s mostly hip young Athenians, smoking under the plane trees. Down the road is **Lafina**, an ingeniously laid-back hybrid of cafe and skate park, hand built by architect Zachos Vardis and his friends. As the place fills up in the late hours and the skaters take room for DJs and partiers, the wooden skate bowl becomes a *de facto* dance floor.

Places to Stay

Though Athens’ seemingly limitless supply of inexpensive Airbnb rentals—many with cute terraces and views of the Parthenon—can be hard to resist for longer stays, an ongoing wave of hotel openings is adding plenty of good options. The sleek and well-run **Electra Metropole**, in a renovated mid-century building that once housed the Ministry of Education, has an ideal location not far from Syntagma Square—as does the **Newotel**, which is now in its eighth year but remains a favorite among the creative set. The old-world, neo-classical **Grand Bretagne** boasts the city’s best rooftop breakfast and a throwback hotel bar, complete with an 18th-century Finnish tapestry. The city’s first **Grand Hyatt** debuted last September on busy Syntagma Avenue, the site is fab and the location is convenient to the National Parliament and Pnyx, but it’s a long haul to the city center.

It’s fitting that Athens’ newest luxury hotel is also one of its classic properties. Greece’s first **Four Seasons** has just opened in the middle of the “Athenian Riviera”—a stretch of coastline a half-hour south of the city—on the site of the 1960s jet-set retreat **Azule Palace**. Treatments at the spa are said to be inspired by the teachings of Hippocrates.



Financial Times - How To Spend It

AEV £14,650

the ultra-sleek beach resort that Greece's capital has long wanted



travelista

Wander woman Maria Shollenbarger fast-tracks international intelligence on where to be and what to see



→ #traveldeeper: you'll have seen the hashtag, and possibly given it a bit of thought – but probably not as much as have the top operators and designers in the industry, who increasingly occupy themselves with creating itineraries and experiences that change perspectives and open minds. Among these is **Black Tomato** (blacktomato.com; itineraries from £4,150 per person), which has just launched an intriguing journey series that seeks to help its clients understand themselves better via points foreign and far-flung: from work-life balance with authors and experts in **COPENHAGEN** to improving family relationships by shadowing nomads in **MONGOLIA** – and with additional itineraries in Cuba, Morocco, Iceland and Peru.

→ The rose-stone baroque town of Noto, in southeastern **SICILY**, seems to have captured the imaginations of tastemakers, both authentic and aspiring/self-proclaimed. But this summer it will be to charmingly crooked Ragusa Ibla that those who are really in the know are bound, as the old town debuts **AD 1768** (1768iblahotel.it; from €300). Its 10 rooms and suites are clad in hand-crafted monochrome tiles, a subtle palette of creams and neutrals and a spare-chic design that complements the patrician dimensions of the 18th-century palazzo in which it's housed, facing the duomo square (with a prime view onto its nightly theatre). Colourful hits of pop-inspired art mingle with bespoke cabinetry and furniture, among which are showcased some elegant antiques. This is old Ragusa's first such hospitality – and a very welcome addition.

→ In **ATHENS**, it's the turn of **Four Seasons** (fourseasons.com; from about €690), where the site of its new Four Seasons Astir Palace is a 30-hectare plot on a lush forest-covered peninsula in Vouliagmeni, some 30 minutes' drive south of the city centre. The old building's mid-century bones have been preserved, with private bungalows augmenting the total offering to 303 sleek, light wood and white marble-clad spaces that range in size and outlook but are uniformly contemporary. Three private beaches, a full spa and eight bars and restaurants round out the picture – essentially, the ultra-sleek beach resort that Greece's capital has long wanted.



© 2015. A room at the elegant AD 1768 boutique hotel in Ragusa Ibla, Sicily, which is housed in an 18th-century palazzo



© 2015. Dining at Four Seasons Astir, a new resort in the Agios Sostis, near Myrabeck, is part of Black Tomato's Morocco itineraries. Below: the terrace of the Radisson Blu View Rooms at Athens' new Four Seasons

www.ft.com 21

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The Four Seasons Astir Palace

There aren't many views that beat the one from a sunbather at the pool of the new Four Seasons Astir Palace Hotel, at which LUXX photographed this eveningwear. The two lagoons look out over another great blue expanse: the Aegean Sea.

In fact, there are few places in the 303-room resort that don't offer a good look at deep-blue waves crashing against the orange cliffs opposite; the place is designed around that picture. This is, after all, the Athens Riviera. And the hotel certainly

has a Riviera feel, from its three private beaches and the white stone of its exterior, to the Greek architect Aetor, to the abundant white-cotton-clad staff, who have the cheerful demeanour of those who breathe fresh sea air all day.

The food options are just as plentiful. The hotel has seven spots in which to dine, offering a variety of menus. Pelagos, the Greek restaurant, puts on a fantastic breakfast, while Mercato has refined Italian options for lunch and dinner. Come summer, the Latin

American cocktail bar and restaurant by the pool will be a lively spot. For those who prefer lounging to liveliness, the spa has a sauna, hydrotherapy pool and a steam room. The bedrooms are light and airy, and the communal areas channel the aesthetic of a London members' club.

The Acropolis – a 30-minute drive away – may be the one thing worth leaving that lounge for. Doubles from £470 B&B. fourseasons.com/athens
Hannah Rogers

Conde Nast Traveler Middle East AVE £40.111



ASTIR PALACE HOTEL ATHENS

KATIE SILCOX trips down memory lane of Greece's latest hotel hotspot, discovering that it's all in the details.

Flying to Athens again, the contrast is striking to one side of the airplane is a large hotel and densely packed city, to the other are green and blue, serene and islands as far as the eye can see. The Greek capital is often overlooked as a source of relaxing beauty to the island, but that may be changing as the Four Seasons hotel group opens its first ever property in Greece, Five Seasons, the Palace Hotel Athens.

It's a highly anticipated opening, and not just because it's located on the green and blue side of town, romantically described as Athina's Riviera. A destination in its own right, the property spans multiple gardens. A distance walk to the renovated port, it's the view over the Greek playground for big names in the world of art, music, film and politics. Greece has its Aphrodite Frank Sinatra, Nicki Minaj and Charles Hazen – plus more recently, Lady Gaga and Barack Obama. In fact, Obama was the first American to stay here before the hotel shut in 2016. Their taste of renovation later, Astir Palace has reopened and looks set to once again become the place to be seen for both Athina society and global guests. It is the announcement of an icon.

Whether you're aware of the hotel's history or not, that history before facing perceptions is for now a great backdrop to careful renovation and design, which enhances the character of this gem. This is seen obvious in the 14 private lounges, which contain many of their original design features including artwork. Suites respect historic details. The breakfast, 80 of which have private pools, are the most exclusive part of the hotel and appearance

a private paradise with a private beach. This is what British Railways famously posed the question in two years before in 1967.

A modern hotel which respects the heritage on the site of the hotel, the 212 rooms, including 41 suites, are spread across two buildings, Astir and Palatia. Despite the hotel's large scale 175 acres in total, its reputation for classic elegance offers really great views across the hotel of a smaller scale, with the added bonus of access to all the facilities.

My New York Room was in Astir. And from here – with full delivery and store both stores over the Riviera – it was hard to comprehend that I was still in Athens, the sea was felt through the view and waves. You're just 20 minutes from the airport and 30 minutes from the Acropolis, access to highly exclusive services can only be seen from here. I decided to skip for a guided tour to the other historical museum, around these beautiful gardens and views. The hotel occupies prime real estate on a prime real estate, with Acropolis, Hadra and across the street of Mythenas street in a day. I walked 30 minutes to Cape Sounion, later taking the 15 minutes of Pausanias and enjoying myself with delicious Greek fare at local beach bars nearby.

Back at the hotel and with a skydiver's view, it took the day's most used to leave the property to enjoy the best that the city of Athens has to offer. Tennis, basketball, football and water sports are offered, as well as cooking lessons, guest parties and spa experiences. Swimming pools, saunas and beaches are scattered throughout the property, and exclusive tables just at the top

Check out the bathroom.
The Astir Palace Hotel has a bathroom with two round mirrors, a white vanity and a modern aesthetic.

CNT EXCLUSIVE

THE BUNGALOWS SPRAWL ACROSS A PRIVATE PENINSULA WITH A PRIVATE BEACH. THIS IS WHERE BRITTANY BARDOT FAMOUSLY POSED FOR CAMERAS IN HER PINK BIKINI IN 1958.

Check out the Parthenon.
The Parthenon is one of the most famous ancient Greek temples, dedicated to the goddess Athena.

of private areas, rooms and recreation needs. Spa treatments are based on the teachings of Hippocrates, and 100,000 is a blend of ancient and modern therapies.

Dining, too, has been carefully considered as cuisine that the hotel makes a distinction in its own right – something that seems to be changing given the number of well known chefs that have opened up to-day in one of the main restaurants. The restaurant from Greek to Taverna 17 and finally caught up at Palazzo in Italian cuisine at Marina and inspired Argentinean views, served elegantly on-site and later, at open-air beach bar and restaurant. It's the epitome of the classic Greek view. The restaurant of which was designed by Maria Koudouki of London's Five Fish and Antalis's fame.

Notable ingredients are a big deal at all the restaurants, fish, herbs and vegetables are sourced locally, where possible. Guests take their choice of naturally, as the property has been designed and created to work, available exclusively here. The attention to detail is evident everywhere – the pool is not only in the parking lot in the open air, main beach and other side.

Despite each view over the hotel, Astir Palace features, other big names have had input in the design, including K. Kostas and Marco Dini. But it's the small touches that matter most. Really on those that are beloved walls, before you stepped with the 14th-century and more than 2,000 pieces of carefully chosen artwork adorning the walls. 90 per cent of which are by young contemporary Greek artists.

Walk such on some sunny, peaceful options and a private location, the rooms are large, airy and well lit. But what really makes us see the most detailed touches that have gone into everything from the hotel to the design.

There is a lot to see, and a great location for those who want to see the best of Athens in your travel plans. ■

[Photo: Dan AED, TONY LUTZ, JEFFREY MAYER, JAMES HANCOCK](#)

The Telegraph Online
UK
AEV £25,000



Four Seasons Astir Palace Hotel Athens

Vouliagmeni, Athens, Greece



[View on a map](#)

9/10

Telegraph expert
rating

"Greece's first Four Seasons hotel is a triumphant revival of a modernist landmark, where guests can enjoy a beach holiday, destination spa and city break rolled into one glamorous, authentically Greek experience."

Telegraph Review



Monocle

AEV £21,500

Vouliagmeni is Athen's wealthiest neighbourhood, where old-school rules. And now it has a revived hotel that's set to pull in a jet-ski set.

BY **Jana Wynn**
PHOTOGRAPHER: **Francesca Jones**

Saturday morning in Vouliagmeni is an active affair. In the bay, children no older than 10 navigate sail boats, trailed by a megaphone-wielding coach zipping around in a dinghy. Beside them, swimmers paddle, surfers bob and legendary water-ski instructor Lotos Stamatis (just call him "Lotos") helps students into the turquoise water from a small concrete jetty colonnaded by a Greek flag.

Healthy-looking families with year-round tan

back in 2004 when I came of age, it was even more relaxed – as if it was left a bit back in time."

There's something to this. Vouliagmeni's residents – estimated to include 80 per cent of Greece's wealthiest people, their fortunes made in shipping and banking – have fought to keep their hometown somewhat frozen in time. Their great cause has been to prevent it from becoming overdeveloped like its coastal neighbours such as Glyfada, now a shopping district littered with high-rises.

That's not to say Vouliagmeni is a dead zone: it has been a ritzy tourist beacon since the 1960s, when the Astir Palace Hotel was built as part of Xenia, a postwar nationwide tourism push by the government. With its discreet bungalows, pristine beaches and boxy modernist architecture, the hotel became a high-flyers' hangout; Jackie Onassis and Maria Callas would clink cocktails with Brigitte Bardot and Frank Sinatra (who used the back entrance to avoid paparazzi). Yet, rather than commercialise the area, the hotel added to the image of Vouliagmeni as a beautiful, glossy preserve. It never embraced malls or chains, retaining this unspoilt charm has been its residents' challenge ever since.

That they have succeeded in this pursuit is thanks to Grigoris Kasidokostas, Vouliagmeni's beloved former mayor (he's also a water-ski champ and the husband of shipping scion Marianna Latis). In power from 1986 to 2012, Kasidokostas doggedly enforced building restrictions and put the kibosh on skyscrapers. "About 30 years ago, all these buildings were [being built and they were] destroying the Athens coastline in Vouliagmeni. Kasidokostas fought against this," says Spyros Pinas, who was deputy mayor under Kasidokostas before becoming mayor himself from 2012 to 2016. "We had the same vision for our area: to keep it as a small village without high buildings. It was very difficult – because of Vouliagmeni's beauty, everyone wants to develop it."

We're sitting in a low-slung villa that clings to a craggy cliff-face on the eastern edge of Vouliagmeni, with views over the Aegean and the mountainous bluff of Sounion. It's one of several private villas, restaurants and a beach club (called Island) that Spyros runs with his brother Chrysanthos. The flat-roofed villas melt into, rather than dominate, their surroundings; their desirability comes not from architectural muscle-flexing but from mid-century furnishings, gardens overflowing with Mediterranean plants and that priceless vista. Chrysanthos, who pairs designer scrubbie with white jeans, says, "We wanted to celebrate the nature; we didn't want to use cement."

The brothers grew up in Vouliagmeni and are still enamoured of its quality of life. "We spend all our summers going to the beach; it's like having a

TRAVEL | ATHENS



The guide

0101 The Margi: This boutique hotel with its classic, Mediterranean facade is run by the Agapostolis brothers, the first generation of their family to be born in the city. They also offer a private villa on the coast.

0102 The First Seasons Astir Palace Hotel: Greece's first Four Seasons. Its renowned grounds has a history of elite vacation and a public ferry. Up for a private hangout, pressions convenient.

0103 BlueFish: Chef George Tsamiridis serves traditional, high-end seafood dishes.

0104 Loxoskila: They eat seafood: skate paper roll-ups, moussaka and 12 other of their specialties. "Welcome here for an evening, here for an evening, here for an evening," they'll cheer you.

0105 Lotos: Come for drinks and dinner, stay for dancing. The Pinas brothers also operate a handful of beach private villas near the club.

0106 Agapi Studios Patisserie: Order a black coffee and a plate of galaktoboureko, a cream-filled Greek pastry. Elias Vasiliadis, who opened the restaurant in 2001, greets local customers with a kiss.

0107 Loulou: Vouliagmeni has 300+ restaurants, which leads us to try to staying overnight. Pick up micro-bike recommendations from Greek designers at the boutique inside The Margi hotel and, for gourmet products, visit Spinaio.

0108 Astir Marina: describes the upscale addresses as "Athens' version of Essex & DeLuca [the New York grocery store]." www.greece.gr

0109 Lotos Vouliagmeni: The sparkling water is at 22C year-round, making for a prime swimming spot, while the club is good for sipping in the sun.

0110 Astir Beach: A private club near the First Seasons, also where several events in the shadow of Olympic Athletes.

0111 Metasperta: To marvel, speak to local legend Lotos. For sailing, water-skiing or water polo, head to the Vouliagmeni Nautical Club.



ISCAPEST

TRAVEL ANNUAL 2019 SPRING / SUMMER 2019 ISSUE 1

MONOCLE

The Escapist – go further

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Top gun **Room at the top** **Top tan**

The Travel Top 50

The inns and airlines, chefs and chiefs, designers and dogs who can make everything from beach break to business dash a sunny success.

Top dogs **Top up?** **New format!** **Top table**

DESTINATIONS: The cheapest spot on the ADRIANIC RIVER. Why the city of Merida in Yucatán means the essential Puerto RICHMOND pushes for clean tourism. Why all the signs point to TESHU. This is a damn MIBOCAN road trip.

How To Spend It Financial Times UK Online AEV £21,250



TRAVEL / BEACH

A sleek Four Seasons beach resort for Athens

A long-overdue first for the Greek capital



The terrace of the Na'vika Skyview Beach in Athens' new Four Seasons. | Image: Richard Mann

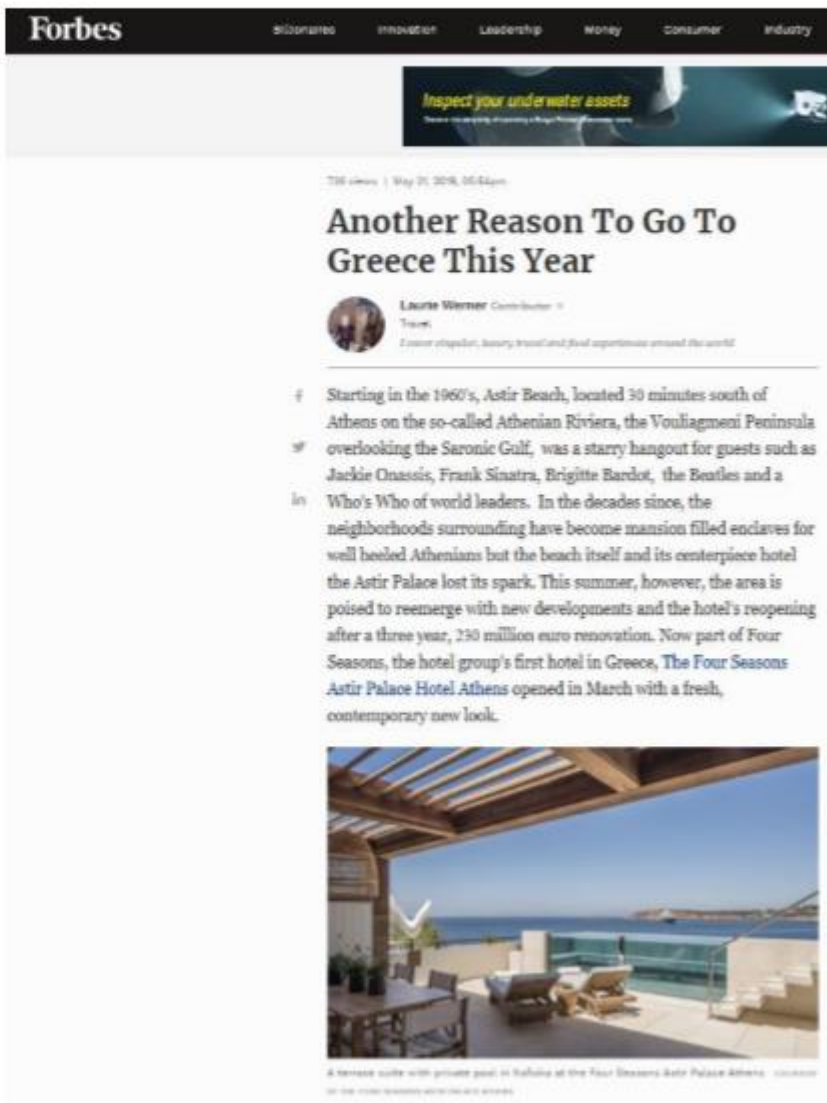
MAY 07 2019 / [NARIA SHULTSWARTZ](#)



Four Seasons ([fourseasons.com](#); from about €690) is arriving in Athens, where the site of the new Four Seasons Astir Palace is a 30-hectare plot on a lush forest-covered peninsula in Vostifakia, some 30 minutes' drive south of the city centre.

The old building's midcentury bones have been preserved, with private bungalows augmenting the total offering to 303 sleek, light wood and white marble-clad spaces that range in size and outlook but are uniformly contemporary. Three private beaches, a full spa and eight bars and restaurants round out the picture – essentially, the ultra-sleek beach resort that Greece's capital has long wanted.

FORBES US, \$19.112



The screenshot shows the Forbes website interface. At the top, the Forbes logo is on the left, and navigation links for 'Sponsored', 'Innovation', 'Leadership', 'Money', 'Consumer', and 'Industry' are on the right. Below the navigation is a banner with the text 'Inspect your underwater assets'. The main article is titled 'Another Reason To Go To Greece This Year' by Laurie Werner, a contributor on Travel. The article text describes the Astir Beach area in Athens, mentioning its history as a hangout for world leaders and its recent renovation. A large image of a terrace suite with a private pool is shown at the bottom of the article.

Forbes sponsored innovation leadership money consumer industry

Inspect your underwater assets

739 views | May 21, 2018, 10:44pm

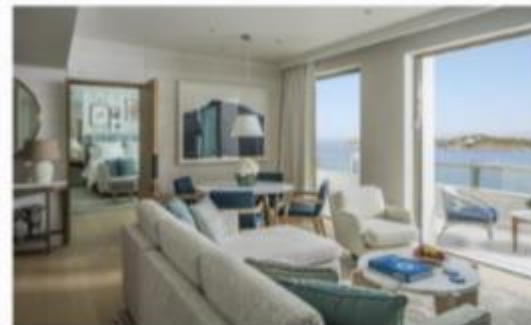
Another Reason To Go To Greece This Year

Laurie Werner Contributor | Travel
Laurie Werner, luxury travel and food experiences around the world

Starting in the 1960's, Astir Beach, located 30 minutes south of Athens on the so-called Athenian Riviera, the Vouliagmeni Peninsula overlooking the Saronic Gulf, was a starry hangout for guests such as Jackie Onassis, Frank Sinatra, Brigitte Bardot, the Beatles and a Who's Who of world leaders. In the decades since, the neighborhoods surrounding have become mansion filled enclaves for well heeled Athenians but the beach itself and its centerpiece hotel the Astir Palace lost its spark. This summer, however, the area is poised to reemerge with new developments and the hotel's reopening after a three year, 230 million euro renovation. Now part of Four Seasons, the hotel group's first hotel in Greece, **The Four Seasons Astir Palace Hotel Athens** opened in March with a fresh, contemporary new look.

A terrace suite with private pool in Nafsika at the Four Seasons Astir Palace Athens. COURTESY OF THE FOUR SEASONS ASTIR PALACE ATHENS

The 75 acre complex is composed of two main buildings, the more classically designed Nafsika built in 1979 and the modernist Arion built in 1967 plus 61 bungalows, the original part of the project. All of the Nafsika rooms have neutral color schemes with dark wood accents, wood slat headboards and balconies with views of the sea; some also have private pools. Arion has a younger, hipper feel and a color scheme of blues and grays.



A new bedroom suite in the Arion building. COURTESY OF THE FOUR SEASONS ASTIR PALACE ATHENS

The facilities and restaurants are split between the two. Nafsika has Mercato, the Italian restaurant, and Hellos, the Latin American poolside grill that's popular with locals for ceviche, guacamole and grilled meats. Arion has the signature Greek seafood restaurant Pelagos designed by international designer Martin Brudnizki to resemble an ocean liner and features catch of the day specialties including perfectly prepared octopus. A classic Greek taverna is located on the walkway between the two hotels and on the grounds close to Arion but independently run is a branch of Nobu's **Matsuhisa**.



The catch of the day at the seafood restaurant Pelagos. LAUREN SCHWAB

Over on that side of the property, guests who need more privacy can move into one of the bungalows which have also been renovated in a style closer to Arion's rooms. The last bungalow guest before the hotel closed for renovation was Barack Obama in his last visit to Greece as President.

The catch of the day at the seafood restaurant Pelagos. LAUREN SCHWAB

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A bungalow suite. COURTESY OF THE FOUR SEASONS ASTIR PALACE ATHENS

All guests have access to the three beaches, the waterfront pools, the non-motorized watersports—kayaking, stand up paddleboards—and the new spa built in the lower level of Arion which specializes in water-based treatments and is apparently inspired by the teachings of Hippocrates. (How, exactly, was an answer I never quite achieved.) The setting is soothing and the techniques proficient, however.)



The outdoor pool at the spa. COURTESY OF THE FOUR SEASONS ASTIR PALACE ATHENS

Outside of the Four Seasons, other developments on the peninsula include upgrades to the Astir Marina for yacht facilities and the launching point for hotel guests for cruises on the Aegean, high end retail openings, the new Astir Beach Bar and the second season of

Telegraph UK
AEV £29,500

The Daily Telegraph

ANNA HART Silence is golden - on a retreat with nothing to say [page 16](#) **HIDEA'S OJEMS** Why now is the fit [page 17](#)
RETURNS TO EDEN How to see British gardens at their best [page 18](#) **GEM HORNER** The Spice Girls open

TRAVEL SECTION OF THE YEAR

Make the world yo

Travel



HOTELSEEKER

Expert reviews of the world's great places to stay

FIRST LOOK

A Greek palace that is finally fit for royalty

This celebrity haunt has left its days of atrocious service behind, says

Teresa Levonian Cole

Churchill and Orassis, Bardot and Sinatra, Gorbachev, Mandela, and a host of succor-deposed potentates... From its opening in 1983, all the usual suspects in the hotel in the famed Astir Palace, in lounge on its beaches, slip onto and watch the yachts sail into the bay. In an idyllic pine-cloaked location on the Vouliagmeni peninsula - the so-called Athens Riviera, some 13 miles (20km) from central Athens - this summer playground of the boss mundi would kick start luxury tourism in Greece. But fortunes in decline, and in 2000, this much-loved Greek institution - renowned as much for its atrocious service as for its star quality - closed its doors.

Athens held its breath, and waited. Finally, in March this year - after long delays due, in part, to the discovery of ancient ruins on the grounds - the Astir Palace quietly reopened under new ownership and the promise of impeccable management typical of Four Seasons Resorts.

For those unfamiliar with the old Astir Palace, it was a complex consisting of three independent hotel units - the Arion, Nabika and Aphrodite buildings, along with the 60 old cabanas (the remains of bungalows) with which the Astir originally opened. For those familiar with the hotel, it will be a homecoming. Although the Aphrodite

building is no more (it will be replaced by luxury villas, unrelated to the hotel), the cabanas, Arion and Nabika remain on the same footprint, their status and location intact, terraces and beach areas much beautified with the addition of wood, stone and glass details. Four thousand pine trees have been planted, silver trees rise from the depths of Nabika's seawater swimming pool, and Greek herbs and plants perfume the air. The Astir Palace has been restored to the glamour of its former heyday.

The interiors, however, have been entirely remodelled and updated, with cool neutral tones and ladings of pale woods and marble in different varieties, mostly from Greece) along with subtle references to perennials in the slender vertical slats that line many corridors. The emphasis on natural materials extends to the promenade that links the buildings, and to the smallest detail - such as those little notices requesting a change of bed-linen, made here, from recycled sourced reconstituted iron-ore-shell. Natural, yes - and also



local. The Greek heritage of the hotel is celebrated in every thing from the artwork to the staff uniforms, the latter by Greek-born fashion designer Inesita Kokkosalaki, with touches on Hellenic culture scattered liberally throughout the hotel, and signature Greek scents wafting through the buildings - fig, for example, pervading Nabika. "We want to provide the unique and authentic spirit of Greece," says Sam Ioannidis, the general manager, with whom I sip Syrosina made - naturally - with Greek gin, specially produced for the hotel. Ioannidis, a passionate advocate of Greek culture, personally sources produce, from Cretan avocados to Anatolian cheeses.

On the subject of food, there is no shortage of choice. The Italian Mezzano, the all-day Arion (a different black truffle risotto), and the Latin-American poolside Helios, which serves ceviche, tacos and more, are based at Nabika.

This is, at first glance, the more striking of the two buildings, with its dramatic entrance perched high above the Mediterranean, a lobby that plunges into the bar below, and all-sea-facing rooms and suites. Nabika also has the larger of the two outdoor pools - which is generally synonymous noise with children, although tranquillity can be found by parking oneself in the kids' club, and visiting to one of the elegant wooden cabins dotted along the seawall.

For true seafarers, or a romantic break, you should opt for a stay in one of the bungalows that line the beach at Arion and meander into the pine forest. Or, better still, go for one of the five exquisite "specialty suites" - the size of Monaco and, at up to €25,000 (£23,140 a night, the price of its prime's common.

Cigar lovers will be delighted to find a humidor at Arion, which stocks, inter alia, the Kubanbas brand offered to Chou-fall and Orassis on their visit to La Palma in 1959, along with Mexican brands from the first barrel. Smaller and more sophisticated, Arion is embellished with ever-changing, hand-painted floral designs in its lobby, and houses the fabulous Piragos fish restaurant (which already now polishes and shimmers, vying for a title).

Designed by Martin Brundage, with riveted brass surfaces, fish-scale tiles, an undulating blue stone bar, wood and rope detailing, and marine-related artwork beneath a beautiful semi-arched ceiling, it resembles a cross between a brasserie and a ship.

Step on the freshest sea urchins, sea bass carpaccio with bottarga, and in subsequent courses, and conclude with squash rice, before selecting your



How it rates

ASTIR PALACE HOTEL VOULIAGMENI, GREECE

ONE NIGHT
£378

9/10

Aphrodite 40, Vouliagmeni 001 20 21 0000 1040; telegraph.co.uk; 14 fourseasons.com
Pine-view rooms from €425 (£378)



own clear-eyed creature of the deep from the fish counter.

The informal - and equally fabulous - choker is Taverna 37, also at Arion (although, of course, guests have the run of facilities throughout the 75-acre property). This waterside tavern offers traditional Greek dishes at their best, together with an extensive choice of omeu and seafood, and world-class Greek wines. It also offers innovative, locally inspired cocktails. Scudum, a vibrant delight featuring gin, mussels, cucumber, basil and lime, perfect in

A humidor at Arion still stocks the Kolumbus brand offered to Churchill in 1959

DEPARTURES.us AVE \$12.598



Courtesy Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts

Now Astir Palace—the heart and soul of the Riviera—has risen again, after being closed for three years after the hotel fell into hard financial times and, ultimately, disrepair. The storied property has been reincarnated into a [Four Seasons](#), an [American Express Fine Hotel & Resort](#) property, the first major international hotel brand to invest in Athens since the recession. There are also new designer shops, a revamped beach club, restaurants, gorgeous vistas, and that singular aquamarine Greek sea. Here's our guide to the new manifestation—and era—of the Athens Riviera. No ruins required.

— Travel —

How to Do the Greek Riviera Right



Courtesy Astir Beach Bar

SHARE:



Your guide to the best of what the Greek Riviera has to offer.

By Hannah Seligson on June 04, 2019

DEPARTURES

to a private chef and a driver to White Key Villas offers full care.

Where to Eat

Papaioannou

Some say it's the best fish restaurant in Greece. It's located so close to the water you feel like you could throw a line out and catch your dinner yourself. Thankfully, Papaioannou has its own dedicated team of fisherman who use spearfishing, as opposed to lines, to catch. The reason? Spear-caught fish tend to taste fresher. The prices are a bit steep, but worth it for the view, ambiance, the ability to select your own fish from the gleaming selection of the day, and, of course, the finished product. The only downside is this restaurant may ruin fish for you. It's hard to go back to "normal" seafood after this meal.



Matsuhisa Athens

While it might seem silly to come to Greece to eat at an international, albeit very good, high-end sushi chain, there are many reasons to try this hotspot. Located in the Astir Palace complex a 10-minute walk from the Four Seasons, the west-facing views make for an unforgettable (read: must Instagram) sunset. The people watching is top-notch—lots of decked-out glamorous Athenians. Also, everything tastes better in Greece.



Courtesy: Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts

Taverna 37

One of the seven dining concepts of the Four Seasons Astir Palace, Taverna 37 is the only beachfront restaurant. But don't be fooled by the laid back vibe of the restaurant. They take food seriously. As just one example, they tried 36 types of feta cheese from all over Greece before settling on the one they currently serve. The sommelier is extremely knowledgeable about Greek wines, an underappreciated treasure of the Greek dining experience. The traditional dishes—tzatziki, grape leaves, moussaka, and grilled fish—are served to showcase their fresh ingredients. Go for lunch.

known to hand out gold watches instead of tips. In the Four Seasons Astir Palace Hotel was the epicenter of all the glamour and opulence.



Courtesy: Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts



Now Astir Palace—the heart and soul of the Riviera—has risen again, after being closed for three years after the hotel fell into hard financial times and, ultimately, disrepair. The storied property has been reincarnated into a Four Seasons, the first major international hotel brand to invest in Athens since the recession. There are also new designer shops, a revamped beach club, restaurants, gorgeous vistas, and that singular aquamarine Greek sea. Here's our guide to the new manifestation—and era—of the Athens Riviera. No ruins required.



Courtesy: Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts

Town & Country.U.S

AVE \$ 11.890

WHAT DOES IT COST PER NIGHT?

Starts at €2,920 per night in low season



AVRA LOUNGE AT THE FOUR SEASONS ASTIR PALACE
COURTESY OF THE FOUR SEASONS ASTIR PALACE

ASTIR PALACE HAS A DEEP PLACE IN THE HEARTS OF MANY GREEKS. CAN YOU TELL US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT WHAT IT MEANS TO PEOPLE IN GREECE AND WHY IT REVITALIZATION IS SUCH A BIG DEAL?

If you ask any Athenian about Astir Palace, they will tell you of some connection or childhood memory they have of the place. Everyone has a story to tell about the property. It was—and still is—a landmark of international stature and symbol of Greek hospitality. Greeks felt proud of all the famous people hosted and were so excited about the re-opening of the property. Our aim is to be considered the living room of Athens. Four Seasons Astir Palace Hotel Athens was developed to showcase the beauty of Greece's people, customs and products, and we cannot think of anyone that would enjoy this more, other than Greeks themselves!



VIEW FROM THE FOUR SEASONS ASTIR PALACE
COURTESY OF THE FOUR SEASONS

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER THE "BEST ROOM" AT THE FOUR SEASONS ASTIR PALACE?

We have eight signature suites within the property, where any of our guest would definitely find the one based on their needs. However, I would say the sea-view Bungalow suite with a private infinity pool overlooking the Aegean, even if it is not the most expensive one, is definitely my favorite! A modern hideaway, nestled among centuries-old pine trees, with separate living area and bedroom. The first part of the Astir Palace estate was built in 1961, and the Bungalows retain the same glamorous allure today as they did then. These are the accommodations of choice for those who want to live the secluded seaside lifestyle of the golden age of the Athens Riviera, but brought into a new era.

The Best Room At... Four Seasons Astir Palace

A look inside the newest and hottest hotel in Athens

by HANNAH SELIGSON JUN 12, 2017



Our column "The Best Room At" offers a glimpse inside some of the most charming, luxurious, and iconic properties around the world.

The hottest place in Athens right now is about thirty minutes south of the center in an area known as the Athens Riviera. It's all because of the opening of the **Four Seasons Astir Palace**, the brand's first property in Greece. This elegant 75 acre hotel is on its way to another glory era. (Back in the 1960s and 1970s—forget Mykonos—Astir Palace was the place to see and be seen.) All the glamorous Greeks are descending to eat, relax, and play in the flawless modern revival of a classic Greek icon, not an easy feat to pull off. Sam Ioannidis, the hotel's general manager, talked to *Town & Country* about his vision for the property, his favorite room, and how to spend an ideal day at the reborn Astir Palace.

Town & Country

TOWN&COUNTRY STYLE ROYALS CULTURE TRAVEL SUMMER



AERIAL VIEW OF THE FOUR SEASONS ASTIR PALACE
COURTESY OF THE FOUR SEASONS ASTIR PALACE

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If you ask any Athenian about Astir Palace, they will tell you of some connection or childhood memory they have of the place. Everyone has a story to tell about the property. It was—and still is—a landmark of conventional status and symbol of Greek hospitality. Greeks felt proud of all the famous people hosted and were so excited about the re-opening of the property. Our aim is to be considered the living room of Athens. Four Seasons Astir Palace Hotel Athens was developed to showcase the beauty of Greece's people, customs and products, and we cannot think of anyone that would enjoy this more, other than Greeks themselves!



THE POOL AT RAFINA, THE HOTEL BEING ONE OF THE PROPERTY'S TWO MAIN BUILDINGS
COURTESY OF THE FOUR SEASONS ASTIR PALACE

Four Seasons Cairo Nile Plaza

Book Our Stay Longer Offer To Receive A Complimentary 4th Night In A Premier Room Or Suite Four Seasons Cairo NP

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE VIBE OF THE HOTEL?

The Nile Palace Hotel building, built in 1979, is a very active and dynamic property. It has secure sea views from every room and suite. With three restaurants – Italian trattoria Mercato, busy lounge and bar Area, and poolside grill Helios, Nile Palace is the energetic hub of the hotel. The Arnie building was built in 1967. This hotel has a more intimate feel than Nile Palace and combines modern elegance with relaxed resort style—this is where guests will find our Hippocratic-inspired spa with a soothing hydrotherapy zone.

TOWN&COUNTRY STYLE ROYALS CULTURE TRAVEL SUMMER

THE ASTIR AND NILE PALACE HOTEL COMPLEX, WHICH OFFERS UNMATCHABLE – Italian trattoria Mercato, busy lounge and bar Area, and poolside grill Helios, Nile Palace is the energetic hub of the hotel. The Arnie building was built in 1967. This hotel has a more intimate feel than Nile Palace and combines modern elegance with relaxed resort style—this is where guests will find our Hippocratic-inspired spa with a soothing hydrotherapy zone.



VIEW OF THE RAFINA BUILDING, PART OF THE FOUR SEASONS ASTIR PALACE, WHICH RECENTLY REOPENED AFTER A THREE YEAR RENOVATION
COURTESY OF THE FOUR SEASONS ASTIR PALACE

TELL US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT THE AREA WHERE YOU ARE LOCATED ALONG THE ATHENS RIVIERA.

The Athens Riviera is a pristine coastline, boasting hidden coves, golden beaches and breath-taking views. We are located on the Vasilissis pinel-clad peninsula, a location that is irrefutably one of the most prominent and special locations in Greece and the Mediterranean as well.



AERIAL VIEW OF THE FOUR SEASONS ASTIR PALACE, LOCATED ALONG THE ATHENS RIVIERA
COURTESY OF THE FOUR SEASONS ASTIR PALACE

WHAT MAKES THE FOUR SEASONS ASTIR PALACE UNIQUE AND DIFFERENT AMONG THE MANY TOP-NOTCH HOSPITALITY OFFERINGS IN GREECE?

The experience of Four Seasons Astir Palace is made up of the best aspects of a visit to Greece: fascinating nature, amazing beaches, unique hospitality and gastronomy, and access to high-end services. We are 30 minutes from the center of Athens, have three private beaches, two outdoor pools, 10 spa treatment rooms, a hydrotherapy zone, including an adults-only indoor lap pool, aroma steam grotto, hammam, vitality pool, chill showers and relaxation lounge with sea views, and a basketball and tennis academy. Not to mention eight restaurants—from Pelagos, a stylish Greek seafood restaurant, to Mercato, an Italian trattoria. This is a once-in-a-lifetime experiences of Greece that you will not find anywhere else.

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THE BAR AT PELAGOS, THE MODERN GREEN CUISINE RESTAURANT
COURTESY OF THE FOUR SEASONS ASTIR PALACE

HOW WOULD YOU SPEND A PERFECT DAY AT THE HOTEL?

A perfect day would start with an amazing Four Seasons breakfast, preferably in bed. Then, head off to the beach for a swim and soaking in some sun—there is nothing like the Aegean waters and the Greek sun. At lunchtime, head to Taverna 37 for a quintessentially Greek seaside lunch or to Helios for refreshing cocktails and Latin-American fare. Before going back to your room's private pool or the beach, take two hours to visit the Spa for a signature treatment and some pampering in the Hydrotherapy zone. Watch the sunset while sipping creative cocktails at Astron or Avra. Finish the day with dinner at Mercato or Pelagos.

Financial Times Online £12,500

The screenshot shows the Financial Times website interface. At the top, the logo "FINANCIAL TIMES" is centered. Below it is a navigation bar with links: HOME, WORLD, UK, COMPANIES, TECH, MARKETS, GRAPHICS, OPINION, WORK & CAREERS, LIFE & ARTS, and HOW TO SPEND IT. A search icon and a menu icon are on the left. A red banner below the navigation bar reads "Weekend long reads". The main content area features a large article with a dark background on the left and a photograph of a swimming pool on the right. The article title is "A new era for the Astir Palace – grande dame of the Athens Riviera". A sub-headline reads "Europe holidays" with a button "Add to myFT". The lead text states: "The former playground of Sinatra and Bardot has been relaunched — after a two-year, \$250m facelift". Below the article is a comment section by "Rebecca Rose 3 HOURS AGO" with a comment icon. The comment text reads: "So, what do you think?" asked the woman in the lift eagerly. "I used to come here with my family a lot, so coming back is quite an emotional experience." Dressed in a short, floaty dress and jewelled flip-flops, she explained that she grew up in Athens but now lives in London, and this was her first time back at the Astir Palace since it reopened recently after much anticipation — and a €250m, two-and-a-half-year overhaul. Having arrived on an Aegean Air flight at 3am the night before, I had only vaguely taken in the polished marble lobby and the comfort of our giant bed. I didn't feel I could give her much feedback. It was 11am and we were both on our way to the ground floor, to meet our families at the pool. Blinking my way into the bright late May morning, I immediately sensed it

Marie Claire Russia AEV \$24,000



mc LONG WEEKEND

Греция Дом под Афинами

НОВЫЙ КУРОРТ С ЛЕГЕНДАРНЫМ ПРОЦЕДУМ
НА ЖИВОПИСНОМ ПУБЛИЧНОМ ОСТРОВЕ, ОТКУДА
НЕ ЗАБОРИТСЯ УЛЕЖАТЬ



До конца года в Four Seasons Athina Hotel Athina состоится грандиозное Grand Opening Offer, которое включает скидку 20% на проживание и дополнительные услуги. При бронировании отеля онлайн подарком станет чашка кофе, которая выделена для каждого гостя.

Рассказывая, что Ермаков Баран, в свое время частая гостья Афины под Афинами, всегда была в восторге от прекрасных пейзажей и тепла в сочетании с древними. Тогда древние историки фотографы, сама Баран оказалась в стране для отдыха в своем доме. В 1960-е и 70-е годы Афины были еще не самым популярным местом в Греции и Москве для международных деловых, но зато, выстроенных в основном в то время неоклассическом стиле, курорт выстраивался в соответствии с традициями, что свидетельствует о том, что курорт выстраивался в соответствии с традициями, что свидетельствует о том, что курорт выстраивался в соответствии с традициями.



Благодаря уникальному дизайну и организации обслуживания в отеле Four Seasons Athina.

Vogue France

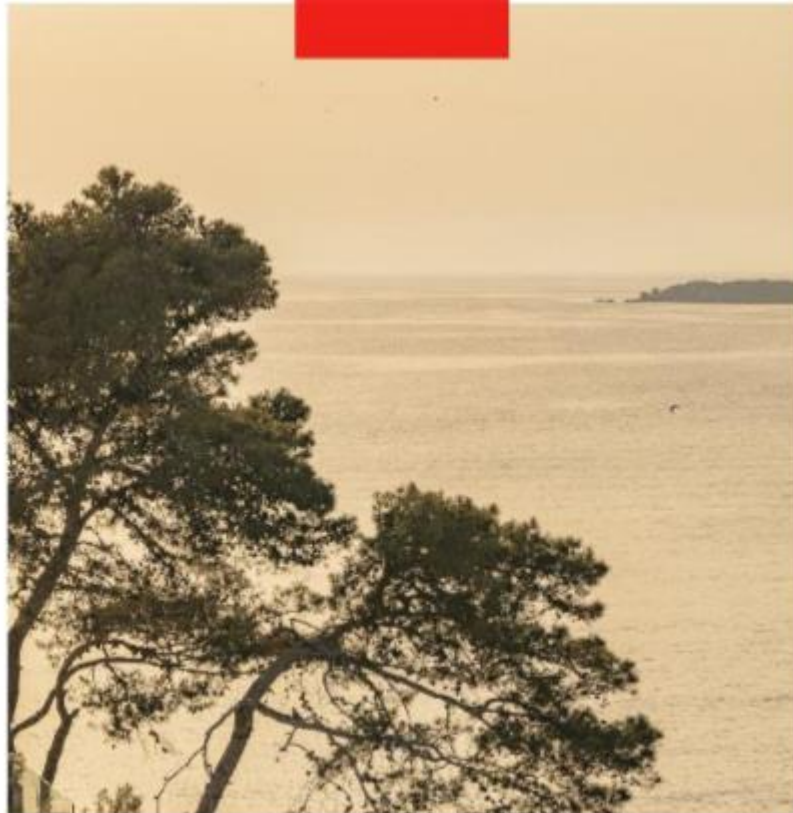
AEV: \$6,823

VOGUE

EDITION PARIS

MODE BEAUTÉ LIFESTYLE CULTURE DÉFILÉS VOGUE LOVERS

MAGAZINES & ABBONNEMENT



VOYAGES

6 nouveaux hôtels en Grèce à découvrir cet été 2019

PAR JADE SIMON
8 JUILLET 2019

De Santorin à Mykonos en passant par Athènes, plein phare sur six nouveaux hôtels qui viennent d'ouvrir leurs portes aux quatre coins de la Grèce.



1. Four Seasons Astir Palace Hotel à Athènes

Après avoir dévoilé, l'hiver dernier, un fabuleux hôtel au sommet des montagnes de Megève, le groupe **Four Seasons** met le cap sur la Grèce. Entre les murs de l'ancien Astir Palace, on y découvre un petit éden, piqué de luxe, installé sur la Riviera athénienne et entouré de 30 hectares de nature sauvage. Composé de 300 chambres au décor minimal, tournées vers la mer, le lieu comprend également trois plages privées, trois piscines, cinq courts de tennis, un embarcadere où s'adonner aux joies des sports nautiques (kayak, planche à voile...). Mais aussi 8 restaurants, pilotés par le chef **Bertrand Valegeas** (dont un restaurant italien, un restaurant grec, ou encore un restaurant japonais Matsuhisa de **Nobu**.) et un spa à la pointe, qui propose, entre autres, un soin anti-âge au caviar et des protocoles innovants étudiés spécialement pour les personnes épuisées physiquement ou émotionnellement. Le tout à 30 minutes de l'Acropole.

Apollonos 40, Vouliagmeni 166 71, Grèce, Tel. +30 21 0890 1000



New York Times AVE \$22.850



Four Seasons Astir Palace Hotel is perched on a peninsula directly on the Aegean Sea. Maria Mavropoulou for The New York Times

2. Four Seasons Astir Palace Hotel Athens

Recently revamped, the historic Astir Palace (frequent haunt of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, Charlton Heston, Frank Sinatra and Joan Collins), has upped the ante for seaside glitz here. Perched on a peninsula directly on the Aegean Sea, the 303-room hotel has seven restaurants and bars, private beaches equipped with snorkeling, wind surfing and Jet Skis, a variety of pools, boat outings to archaeological sites on nearby islands (Aegina, Hydra, Poros) and sunset sailing nightly.

Apollonos 40, Vouliagmeni 166 71

5 PLACES

Five Places to Visit on the Athens Riviera

Just 25 minutes from the Acropolis, an alluring stretch of beachfront beckons with island charm. No ferry required.



Forbes.US
AVE 12.897\$



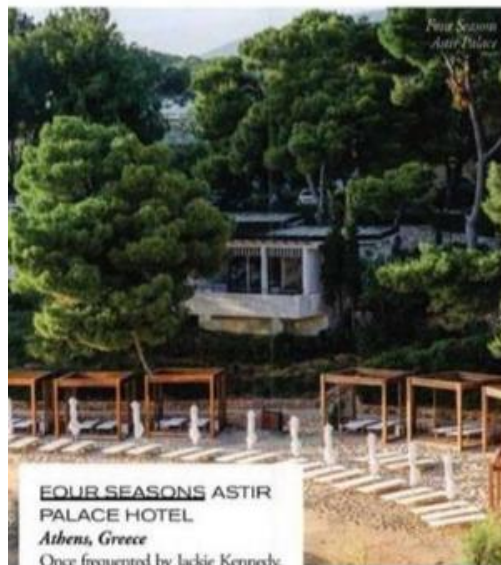
Behind-the-scenes first taste. © KENSEET

8 Spy a Kitchen's Heartbeat. At **Four Seasons Astir Palace Hotel Athens**, a chef-led "first taste" tour walks and talks you through the inner workings of a hotel restaurant, as culinary advice is shared behind-the-scenes—before the dining room opens to other patrons. Pelagos restaurant (*above*), deftly managed by executive chef Bertrand Valegeas, serves sophisticated Greek seafood, such as *lavraki* (sea bass) *carpaccio*, *chtapodi* (octopus) and whole grilled fish deboned tableside. Perched on the pine-dressed peninsula of the swanky Athens Riviera, dotted with glamorous yachts, Astir Palace is a half-hour drive to the city center. Celebrate Greece's ancient civilization at the Acropolis and environs. For more Athens travel info, go [here](#) and [here](#).

TATLER®

Travel Guide 2020

The 101 best hotels in the world



FOUR SEASONS ASTIR PALACE HOTEL

Athens, Greece

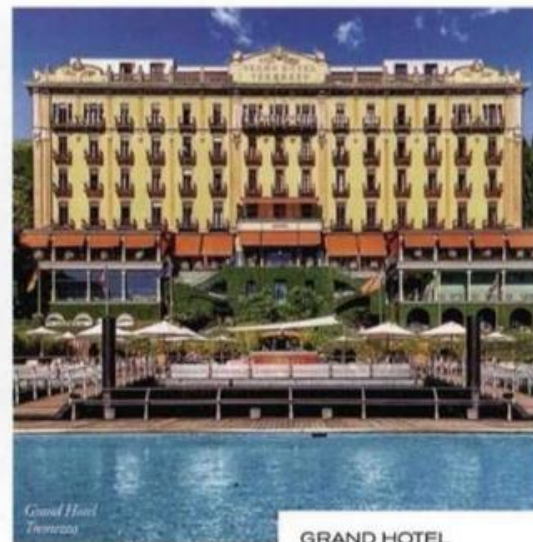
Once frequented by Jackie Kennedy, Aristotle Onassis and The Beatles, the Astir Palace, sprawling across a pine-scented peninsula on the Athens Riviera, has reopened as the Four Seasons' first property in Greece. It's actually two hotels (and 61 bungalows), the retro-chic Arion and boho resort-y Nafika, where Athenians come to see and be seen by the olive tree-lined, sea-facing pool. Thirty minutes from the city centre, it's easy to pop up to the Acropolis, but it's also a serene retreat from the city's bustle. There are three private beaches, muscle-melting massages in the marble and light-filled spa, and four restaurants (best of all, Pelagos, serving catch of the day with lemon and olive oil). Rooms are stylish and contemporary with traditional Greek touches like evil eyes and a tippie of mastika left at turn-down. Rooms at Nafika have jaw-dropping views over the Aegean and the yachts that slide in for a taste of the Astir Palace life. *Elegant Resorts (elegantresorts.co.uk) offers seven nights from £1,450, including flights and transfers.*



CHÂTEAU SAINT-MARTIN

Venice, France

Built on 12th-century castle ruins, the steeply perched Château Saint-Martin was transformed into a hotel and spa by its owners between the Thirties and Sixties. Views from the south-facing windows are gasp-out-loud stunning: the walled village of Venice in the foreground and the Cap d'Antibes and coast beyond. An intimate restaurant, spacious patio bar and all the guest rooms sit on this side, bathed in sunshine. Above the property looms the steep rock wall of Baou des Blancs, tempting guests



GRAND HOTEL TREMEZZO

Lake Como, Italy

Greta Garbo said the Tremezzo was one of her favourite hotels in the world, her 'sunny, happy place'. In her spirit, fling open the bedroom shutters of Suite Greta, look out over the ravishing setting of Lake Como and wholeheartedly embrace the indulgence. To sit on the terrace and sip a glass of chilled Franciacorta while drinking in those views is to be in hotel heaven. With its gilded, draped and upholstered grandeur, and hundreds of sparkling windows, this is one of Lake Como's old-school greats. The star swimming pool floats on the lake, but another glorious pool lies tucked away in the gardens, surrounded by towering palms and banana plants, a heavenly space ornamented with statuary and vines, where a great stone staircase cascades down to the water's edge. The spa housed in the 18th-century Villa Emilia has impressive treatments; equally restorative is time spent taking in the views from the relaxation area. Like Garbo, you will want to be left alone – to revel in the grandest comfort zone. *The Ultimate Travel Company (theultimatetravelcompany.co.uk) offers seven nights from £2,200, including flights and transfers.*

Like Garbo, you will want to be left alone – to revel in Tremezzo's comforts

Destinations Tatler's Travel Editor Is Dreaming Of: The Athenian Riviera

For a cultural and coastal escape, nowhere compares to Athens, especially holed up at Four Seasons Astir Palace, a temple of chic with an impressive holistic spa that will take near Herculean resolve to leave...



by DELILAH KHOMO
THURSDAY 9 APRIL 2020



So much history is packed into Athens's streets and along its shores. After all, this is the birthplace of western civilisation and democracy. It's the home of Zeus and Socrates, a city with winding cracked stone alleyways, walls overgrown with jasmine creepers and gardens abundant with bitter orange trees.

Little wonder that when Lord Byron (the ultimate Hellenophile) drew up to the shores in 1809, he was so seduced by the place - and by the daughter of the British Consul - that he wrote in the Maid of Athens he had seen nothing finer.

Today, the combination of its historic splendour and vibrant arts and cultural scene is irresistible. Take a stroll to the antiques market in the neighbourhood of Monastiraki, where 70s socialist buildings jostle against ancient vine draped squares, where the intoxicating smell of honeysuckle, leather and dust fills the air. Here, seek out the Tsantilis Gallery, an antique store that houses the most impressive collection of 18th century Orientalist art and Philhellenic treasures from fabulous urns to Napoleonic chandeliers. Step into Cycladic civilisation at the Cyclades Art Museum for an incredible collection of ancient sculptures and ceramics and figurines. Watch arthouse classics at Cine Paris, possibly the world's most impressive open-air cinema next door to the Acropolis. Or just revel on the rooftop of the incomparable Grand Bretagne and eat breakfast overlooking the Plaka, watching the changing of the guards. Come nightfall, imbibe the old school magic of this institution, with one of the Barman Sypros's signature martinis and soak up the views of the uplit Parthenon and Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.



READ NEXT



Introducing: The destinations Tatler's Travel Editor is dreaming of right now

by DELILAH KHOMO

But the city's best kept secret lies half an hour from the centre, on the cypress- and cactus-studded coast of Vouliagmeni, famed for its healing thermal waters. It is also home to the glamorous stretch of Astir Beach with its glorious black and white striped umbrellas and daybeds, not to mention its very own marina, yacht club and 6th-century BC ruins, the Temple of Apollo Zoster. The area is known affectionately as the Athenian Riviera and has been marinated in pure unadulterated jet set glamour since its Sixties prime. At the centre of it all is the Astir Palace hotel, the place where Christina Onassis learnt to water ski, Brigitte Bardot hired a doppelganger so she could hangout poolside uninterrupted and Rudolf Nureyev drifted along the boardwalk to his favorite bungalow...

Today, high-octane glamour is still a given. The name conjures up sun, Valentino and bare feet. Here there are no cute fishing boats or tanned seamen mending nets - just elegant yachts, sleekly bobbing in the marina before the party people descend on the new Four Seasons Astir Palace jetty.



And what waves the legendary Four Seasons hotel has created since it relaunched, following a £230 million facelift. Previously majority-owned by the National Bank of Greece, the hotel and beach club was sold in 2016 as part of the drive to reduce national debt. The new owner, Jermyn Street (an investment group backed by Abu Dhabi, Kuwait and the Turkish Dogus group) brought in the Four Seasons to manage the hotel - creating 650 jobs for the local Greek economy in the process - and it has truly regained its title as the ultimate beachside pleasure dome.

The Martin Brudnizki-designed seafood restaurant, Pelagos, is like the Scott's of Athens, and serves an impressive lobster spaghetti and the most refined grilled calamari with fava bean puree, all paired with delicious Greek wines. It's fabulously inviting here, with a sweeping terrace and plenty of polished marble, driftwood sculptures and exposed stone interiors employed by one of the project's starchitects, K-studio, which perfectly conjures up the simplicity and sophistication that is the essence of Greek style.

The high jinks and excess start at daybreak, where every manner of fun and games is on tap: a Greek Breakfast, of the iced coffee and cigarette variety is most welcome - including cigars, should you prefer. Then, of course, there is the bikini-friendly and gluten-free spread of dreams - cue endless varieties of yoghurt and artisan honeys, eggs cooked every which way. It's served at the various terraced restaurants overlooking the royal blue and navy Aegean lapping below.



There's also the famous watersports school to explore, with boatmen on hand and outboard motors at the ready. Messing about on the water is certainly one of the vivid pleasures of staying here, but this is also a place where you can easily escape the exuberant beach-club vibe to enjoy a more sedate existence in the glorious spa, where you can take part in rituals inspired by the teachings of Hippocrates, alongside more esoteric treatments of reiki and pelma reflexology.

And for those looking to drink in the area's antiquity of classical sites, there could be no dreamier spot than the Temple of Poseidon in nearby Cape Sounion. It's famed as having the best sunsets in all of Athens, and the golden light here will seduce you, especially on a boat trip on an elegant wooden schooner arranged by the Four Seasons. They also offer party-time and seafaring adventure with such verve, with their crew on hand to prepare sundowners served with platters of just freshly caught Dorade ceviche and sashimi that morph into starlit seafood barbecues.

As the sun descends over the southern tip of the Attica Peninsula with its stunning coves and deserted beaches, it bathes the temple and its Doric columns that punctuate this craggy promenade in an otherworldly stillness.

Lord Byron was so moved by the area's beauty that he carved his name into the base of one of the columns. He wrote, in his 1881 poem, *On The Isles of Greece*:

'Place me on Sunium's marbled steep,

Where nothing, save the waves and I,

May hear our mutual murmurs sweep...'



READ NEXT



Claridge's opens its doors to the NHS

by DELILAH KHOMO



TRAVEL

Sarah Harris On The European Hotspots To Run To Right Now

BY SARAH HARRIS
27 SEPTEMBER 2019

From Greece to Spain, Vogue's deputy editor and fashion features director Sarah Harris takes us on a trip around Europe with her edit of three hotels worth visiting.



Four Seasons Hotel Astir Palace, Athens, Greece

Regardless of the fact that this newly-opened Four Seasons is just 30-minutes away from the historic city centre, you'd be forgiven for passing on a tourist visit to the Acropolis in favour of another day spent in the comfort of this sprawling hotel, so sprawling (75 acres in fact) that golf buggies are on hand to swiftly transport guests from room to pool, or to one of its three pristine private beaches, or, perhaps, to one its eight restaurants (offering everything from relaxed beach bar bites to traditional Greek food and Mediterranean menus). Situated on a vast peninsula along Athens Riviera the views are as good looking as the interiors.



5 OF THE BEST PLACES TO TRAVEL TO *IN OCTOBER*



The Wallawwa, Sri Lanka

Whether it's heading off for a romantic retreat in the tropical hinterlands of Sri Lanka, going back to nature in a remote Romanian mountain lodge or staying in the lap of luxury on Greece's Athenian Riviera, these are the best places to visit in October. By CATHERINE FAIRWEATHER



The Four Seasons Astir Palace offers a splendid mix of classic luxury and archaeological history on the Athenian Riviera

5

FOUR SEASONS ASTIR PALACE *Athens Riviera, Greece*

The Four Seasons Astir Palace boldly strides 75 acres of the most expensive strip of Athenian real estate – the coastal land that stretches between the Parthenon in the historic center and the archaeological site of Sounion on the tip of the Attic peninsula. This year sees the much-lauded relaunch of the city's 1960s landmark. Once the cherished beach club and watering hole of Onassis, Bardot and Sinatra, its old-school allure was eventually eclipsed by the more bohemian charms of the Greek islands, when the jet set migrated elsewhere. But the Athenian Riviera's Astir Palace enjoyed a huge revival this summer, after the massive restoration project and the injection of Four Seasons style, polish and service, without losing a unique sense of heritage vibe and sleek Greek modernist aesthetic. In October, the crowds have dissipated and the sun hangs lower on the horizon, but no less golden through the long Mediterranean summer that bumps up to November. With six restaurants, three private coves, three pools (one with a floating olive grove), water sports, a massive spa, crèches and a kids' club, it will make a spontaneous European weekend in fall feel like a long vacation.



The Hot List 2020

WE LOVE HOTELS. AND EVERY TIME A NEW ONE OPENS ITS DOORS, WE'RE ROOTING FOR IT TO SOAR HIGH. THE PAST FEW MONTHS OF 2020 HAVE OFFERED – SHALL WE SAY – A LESS BOUNTIFUL PERIOD, BUT BEFORE THINGS TEMPORARILY SHUT DOWN, THERE WERE A NUMBER OF NEW DOORS BEING THROWN OPEN HERE IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND AROUND THE WORLD. THIS THEN IS A LIST OF NEWCOMERS THAT TOOK OFF WITH A BANG IN THE PAST 18 MONTHS

Conde Nast Traveler Hot List 2020



Athens

FOUR SEASONS HOTEL ASTIR PALACE

Before it was given new life by Four Seasons following a three-year renovation, this sprawling property set in what's described as Athens' Riviera – all shades of green and blue – was a favourite with the international jet set; guests have included Frank Sinatra, Nelson Mandela and, more recently, Lady Gaga and Barack Obama. That Sticks-holiday feel permeates in its new avatar with the refurb carefully enhancing the charms of days gone by. This is most obvious in the 61 private bungalows – half of which boast private pools – which maintain many of their original design features including striped pelmet blinds. A seafront boardwalk connects them to the rest of the hotel, where 303 rooms, including 43 suites, are spread across two buildings. Despite the large scale (75 acres in total), the separation into three distinct parts allows each area to retain the feel of a smaller resort, with the added bonus of access to all the facilities – take your pick from tennis, basketball, football, water sports, cooking lessons, grape pairings and spa experiences. Dining has been carefully considered to ensure that this hotel remains a destination in its own right – an apparent success given the number of well-heeled Athenians sipping at tables in one of the many restaurants. The range spans from Greek at Taverna 37 to freshly caught seafood at Palagos and Argentinian steak, served alongside ceviche and tacos, at open-air HELIOS. Grape bar Avra sports interiors designed by Martin Brudnizki of London's Sexy Fish and Annabel's fame. The celebrity might have changed but the fame remains the same. – Katie Siccar

FLASH POINT Spa treatments are based on the teachings of Hippocrates, such as a blissful 60-minute Proddia body ritual. fourseasons.com

SUNDAY. 04/10/20

Monocle Weekend Edition: Sunday

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
SWISS



Warm welcome

This Sunday we stop by a café in Tokyo, check out a stopover in Mexico City, track the trees of Switzerland in their full autumn glory and hear how a Harlem-based chef spends time outside the kitchen. First, here are the thoughts of our editor in chief.

THE FASTER LANE / TYLER BRÛLÉ

Walking on sunshine

If you're starting your Sunday working through your diary and wondering what to do next weekend, I already have it sorted for you – it goes like this. First, some good news: the weekend is going to start on a Thursday, at a boarding gate flashing “Last call for Athens”. From there you're going to board an Aegean, Lufthansa or Swiss flight and in less than three hours (I know, know, you may not live in the heart of Europe but just play along) you'll be walking off an Airbus, hopefully skipping the pop-up coronavirus testing bays and looking for a driver with a Four Seasons sign. Twenty-five minutes later a very tall Austrian named Hannes will be greeting you and showing you to a funky-up 1960s bungalow and you'll be at the start of the perfect, late-summer Med long weekender. I know all of this because, at long last, I'm taking what resembles a proper summer holiday – and all the better that it's at the start of Q4.

Things got off to the best possible start on my arrival in Athens as the second that I stepped off the plane a Monocle reader bound for Bavaria wished me a good morning and a good stay in Greece. As he'd read last week's column he enthusiastically passed on some culinary and cultural tips but what were the chances that he'd be at the very same Schengen gate for his departure and my arrival? No matter, it proved to be a tone-setter for what was to come.

At long last, I'm taking what resembles a proper summer holiday – and all the better that it's at the start of Q4.

Also, what were the chances that the former GM of the Park Hyatt Tokyo (the hotel where I've clocked the most nights) would now be running the show at the Four Seasons Athens property? As much as we credit good design, sound architecture and star chefs for creating and building buzz for a property, nothing beats a capable GM to ensure a good stay and maintain standards. Working with an already outstanding piece of real estate also helps.

Friends who stayed at the Astir Palace before the Greek government sold it and the Four Seasons took over the management speak of a faded, somewhat forgotten architectural gem. The good news is that the good bones remain intact, the F&B offering has had a serious upgrade and the designers didn't go too crazy trying to please Gulfies, Russians or others in search of added gloss and unnecessary sparkle. While I've only been here a few hours, I can already recommend it as it's perhaps the best resort-hotel on the Med that also boasts a capital city on its doorstep and an airport less than 30 minutes away. For the moment, Greece is trying its best to stay on top of infection rates and keep parts of its tourism industry open. Long may this continue. The mayor of Athens promised Monocle that summer is going to run for another full month, so you've got a couple of weekends left to juggle the diary, monitor your tan lines and plan for a weekend of long morning swims in the Med, late afternoons scented with warm cypress and Santorini whites to drink. More from this corner of the Med next Sunday.
