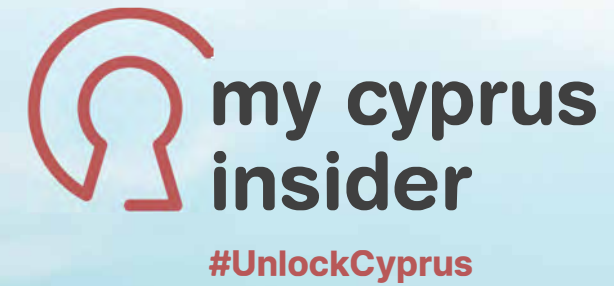




WE CONTRIBUTE TO A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR OUR PLANET

- ✓ We have improved our energy performance index for all our property types.
- ✓ We implement an **effective energy management system (ISO 50001 certification)**
- ✓ We have **discontinued single-use plastic bags**, saving 45 tons of plastic a year.
- ✓ As of 01.01.2020 we were the first to **permanently discontinue single-use plastic at our stores.**
- ✓ We have committed to **20% less plastic in own-brand product packaging** by 2025.
- ✓ We aim to **maximise recyclability of packaging** for 100% of own-brand-products by 2025.



MY CYPRUS INSIDER | 5 YEAR ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

Free with the July 12, 2020 SundayMail

A special publication by

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CyprusMail 75 YEARS

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CONTENTS



10 of the Best Beaches: Your Insider Hotlist

PAGE 10



Blissful Wellness Retreats to Rejuvenate You

PAGE 16



Dreamy Countryside Accommodation around Cyprus

PAGE 22



Local Produce you Will Love: The Insider Top 10

PAGE 30




Fascinating Village Museums Taking you Back in Time

PAGE 34



Your Insider Guide: What to See and Do in the Troodos National Park

PAGE 40



Great Places for the Whole Family to Spend the Day

PAGE 44



5 Beautiful Winegrowing Villages to Visit for Perfect Time Out

PAGE 48



Cyprus Insider Sites to Add to Your Holiday Bucket List

PAGE 56



Spectacular Spots to Enjoy the Sunset

PAGE 62

Published by:

NEO CYMED Publishing Limited

5 Limassol Avenue, Nicosia

Tel: 22 818585 | mail@cyprus-mail.com

Special Publications Editor: Katy Turner

Design Consultant: Artemis Psathas

Advertising: Agathe Venizelou, Julia Michael

Produced by:

Action PR and Publications Ltd,

part of Action Global Communications

6 Kondilaki Street, 1090 Nicosia, Cyprus

Tel: 22 818 884 | publishing@actionprgroup.com

actionprgroup.com

CEO: Chris Christodoulou

General Manager: Dimitris Ioannides

Chief Editor: Zoe Christodoulides

Senior Designer: Gabriela Constantinou

Coordination: Effie Roussou

Printed by: Proteas Press Ltd

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A WARM WELCOME FROM THE CYPRUS MAIL



Dear Readers

As part of the newspaper's ongoing mission and civic role to serve and support Cyprus as best as possible and promote the island to the local and international community, we joined editorial and creative production forces with Action Global Communications to work towards featuring Cyprus' sought-after destinations and lesser-known corners through a special *My Cyprus Insider* five-year anniversary publication.

Wonder drives us all to seek out the best hospitality establishments and destinations around the island. There is so much to enjoy and share in travelling locally. You'll find locally-made food products, as well as award-winning vintages from local wineries. And if you're looking for green items, the island offers more than its share of eco-friendly, locally sourced produce.

Supporting local helps pay local wages, support local public services, local agrotourism industries, puts food on local tables, pays local rents and mortgages. It also funnels through to many local NGOs through the donations of local businesses. Spend in Cyprus and your money stays in Cyprus.

This is especially important this year as the island was forced to close its doors to one of its most important revenue streams – tourism. As this magazine exemplifies, there is plenty on the island to discover even if you are not a new arrival. Whether you just want to loll on the beach or take the time to plunge into the island's past, there is something for you.

This year marks a special anniversary for the *Cyprus Mail* too, as we celebrate the newspaper's 75th anniversary. Through all those years we have remained true to our vision of being the island's main English language news source, promoting Cyprus with a strong voice to the international community.

Three quarters of a century after starting out, the *Cyprus Mail*, like all publications of its kind, has had to face the challenge of digital technology. The *Cyprus Mail* still produces a print edition six days a week but has met the digital challenge head on and our website boasts the top SEO for news and information on Cyprus, reflecting the high regard in which it is held by readers worldwide.

We hope the destinations featured in this special issue will inspire, delight and motivate you to explore Cyprus.

Katy Turner

Special Publications Editor, Cyprus Mail

CyprusMail 75
YEARS

CyprusMail⁷⁵

Founded 1945

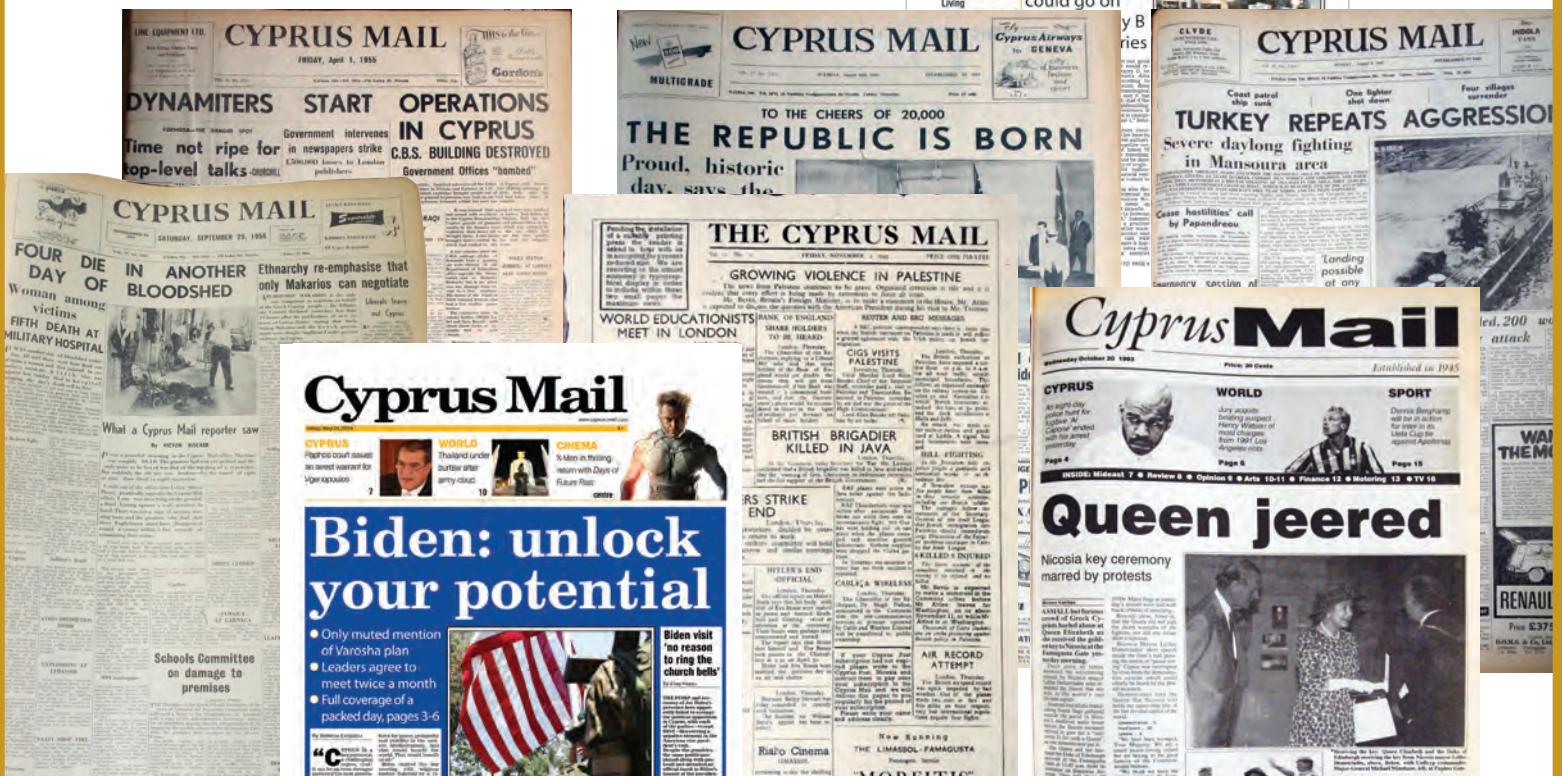
YEARS

The Cyprus Mail is celebrating its 75th year.

When the very first issue of the island's oldest newspaper was printed on November 2, 1945 the Second World War had just ended and a major concern was paper rationing.

Three quarters of a century later, the challenges remain: this time it's the all-conquering advance of digital technology. The Cyprus Mail still produces a high-quality print edition, available six days a week, but has also met the digital age challenge head-on. Its website boasts the top SEO for news and information on Cyprus, reflecting the high regard in which it is held by its readers worldwide.

With a proud history spanning three quarters of a century, the Cyprus Mail is a well-known news brand respected for its reliability and objectivity.



WELCOME TO

my cyprus insider MAGAZINE



Dear Readers

We are very proud to present you with this one-off special magazine in celebration of the *My Cyprus Insider* five-year anniversary. The supplement has been produced by our creative media and publishing team at Action Global Communications (Action) in Cyprus, in collaboration with the *Cyprus Mail* – the island's oldest English newspaper – celebrating its 75th anniversary.

Mycyprusinsider.com was first launched in 2015 as Action Cyprus' alternative CSR project, centred on the company's core ethos of making meaningful connections via integrated communications. The overarching aim was to promote the island in a favourable and alternative light, creating a positive impact on society at a time when the country was suffering from negative and detrimental publicity following tough economic times. It immediately gained popularity as the first English-language website of its kind to publish travel-related blog posts, specifically highlighting the appeal of the island to an international audience via an 'insider' viewpoint. It has since grown from strength to strength, attracting a growing worldwide following and receiving accolades which place it at the top of its league, including a Cyprus Tourism Award in 2019.

The website today is widely recognised for significantly boosting Cyprus' image abroad, generating global awareness of the country's alternative tourism offerings, while promoting local talents, SMEs, startups and more. The success of the endeavour has relied upon the diverse talent of the Action Cyprus media team – content writers, editors and designers – alongside experts from Action Digital, including web designers, developers, SEO and social media specialists. Communications and PR professionals across Action's global offices (spanning 40+ countries) boosted the collaborative effort, helping to spread the word and generate an international buzz about the initiative.

Now, Cyprus finds itself in another challenging position, with tourism hard hit by the coronavirus pandemic. Luckily, however, a successful lockdown in the spring and early summer period has meant that the spread of the virus was significantly curbed, with the country now celebrated in international media as one of the safest havens to holiday in Europe.

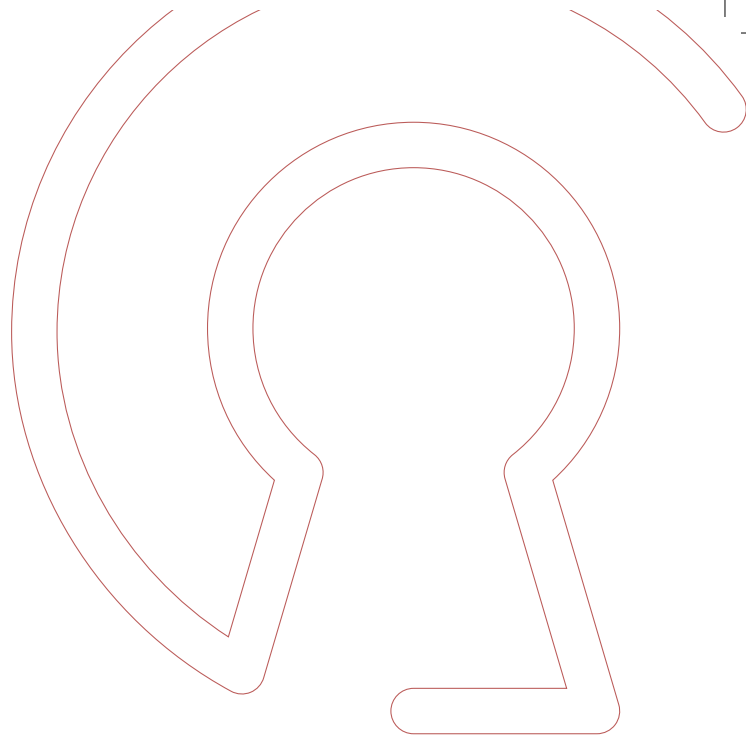
As the island slowly but surely stands back on its feet again, we felt that there was really no time like the present to give local tourism a boost, highlighting Cyprus' top splendours and attractions, as our website celebrates five years of success. As such, Action Global Communications is delighted to bring you this novel summer print publication, featuring some of the most popular articles published on *My Cyprus Insider* over the past five years, and brimming with ideas on great places to see and alternative things to enjoy locally this holiday season.

We hope you enjoy the publication!

Dimitris Ioannides

General Manager of Action Global Communications Cyprus, Greece & Action Digital

ACTION
GLOBAL COMMUNICATIONS



Dear Readers

Welcome to an inspiring complimentary *My Cyprus Insider* anniversary magazine supplement. I will never forget the first day that mycyprusinsider.com went live five years ago – I spent the best part of my day excitedly staring at my computer screen, blown away by the likes and shares that we began to receive on social media.

Five years on, we are delighted to have given thousands of readers across the globe a real insider glimpse of the island, inviting them to unlock the country's hidden splendours. Beyond seaside attractions and typical well-known coastal hotels, *My Cyprus Insider* has brought to light remote villages, hidden accommodation, quirky sites, unique cultural and historic wonders, unusual venues, and alternative events – complemented by stunning photography – to generate worldwide awareness about what Cyprus has to offer.

The island was going through a tough time back when the site was launched, slowly trying to get back on its feet following the 2013 banking crisis. In the years that followed, positive growth ensued and incoming tourism reached an all-time high. However, early this year, the coronavirus pandemic brought about the unimaginable as airports closed and hotels shut their doors. It has been a massive blow to our little island that depends so heavily on tourism, but we're lucky enough to have contained the virus to a large extent, making our Mediterranean haven stand out as one of the safest countries to enjoy a gorgeous summer break by glistening seas.

Whether you are a local planning your summer holidays, or have just arrived on the island for your idyllic and safe break, we are here to show you how to make the most of your time off with heaps of ideas packed into this novel publication featuring some of the most popular articles ever published on *My Cyprus Insider*. Now, more than ever, is the time that we should all be embracing the efforts of local producers and small to medium-sized businesses, as well as all those in the local hospitality and tourism industry who truly need our support. As such, this publication is a celebration of all things quintessentially Cypriot – our rich historic heritage, our fabulous local produce, our traditional villages and so much more.

As temperatures soar, you will no doubt be making a beeline for the island's golden coast for a dip in cerulean seas. We have highlighted our all-time favourite stretches (pages 10 – 14). Want to explore the island's rugged interior? We have located some gorgeous winegrowing villages (pages 48 – 52) and some dreamy accommodation to send you into seventh heaven. Then, head to the highest heights of the Troodos Mountains, blanketed in green, where endemic flora and fauna delight the nature-loving traveller (pages 40 – 43).

Happy exploring!

Zoe Christodoulides

My Cyprus Insider Editor and Head of Content, Action Global Communications Cyprus

#UnlockCyprus



Uncompromising values for Lidl Cyprus: quality and healthy food

Strict checks and standardised procedures are carried out at every stage of the process for Lidl, from the production of the food until the time it reaches the shelf.

Ensuring food quality and hygiene is of the utmost importance for Lidl Cyprus, which is unwavering in its strong commitment to provide worry-free enjoyment. Quality, freshness, safety, and hygiene are pillars on which the company's culture is founded and customers can rely on the highest standards across the supply chain.

The strict checks during production and the transport process, as well as at points of sale, ensure all health rules are met. Implementing standard procedures for flawless quality management, Lidl seeks to ensure that its products meet the expectations of its customers. Before being put on the market Lidl's own-brand products are thoroughly checked and tested as part of the company's commitment to its suppliers, employees, and associates.

Confidence in packaging

A comparative advantage for Lidl is the fact that its products are packaged without human intervention, a method that ensures quality while significantly reducing the possibility of mistakes or contamination. At Lidl all cheeses, cold cuts, fresh fish and meats are sold in vacuum sealed packaging. This development also shows the confidence that consumers now have in the quality assurance systems of the food industry.



High standards

At Lidl Cyprus high quality standards are set through long-term business partnership trust with suppliers.

“Every day we develop the network of our stores in such a way that is always aiming to highlight the freshness and quality of our products and we have succeeded with private label and branded products that smell fresh” general manager of Lidl Cyprus Spyros Kondilis said.

Before being put on the market, Lidl’s private label products are thoroughly checked and tested. In parallel with the internal quality controls, microbial, chemical, physical, and organoleptic tests of the products are performed by the independent and distinguished control institute AGROLAB Cyprus. In addition, the designation of products is checked. “We ensure that all ingredients are fully and correctly listed on the package. This helps people with special nutritional needs or allergies who can immediately find all the information about the ingredients and possible allergens” Kondilis said.

The commitment to quality and hygiene has been upheld on a daily basis for years because it is part of the DNA of the company, its stakeholders, employees and suppliers to produce Lidl’s quality products at the best prices.

For more information about Lidl visit:
<https://corporate.lidl.com.cy/en>



“

Lidl promise:

‘All products have the appropriate packaging, following the required rules of hygiene practice, so that they are never left exposed on a counter and keep their freshness.

Packaging will inform customers about the origin of the products, as well as the date of production and expiration.

Vacuum sealed packaging is used to ensure products stay in the same condition from the moment of their production until the moment the customer chooses to open them for enjoyment.

The products remain unchanged - inside their packaging they are not exposed to external factors, but are protected in a controlled environment, fresh and completely healthy’

”

THE COVID SHIELD CERTIFICATION

Lidl Cyprus is the first food retailer in Cyprus with the Covid Shield certification of the highest level, ‘Excellent’, attained from the TÜV AUSTRIA Hellas organisation.

With social responsibility and sensitivity, the company took all precautionary measures to achieve:

Reduction or minimisation of transmission and dispersion of Covid-19

A high level of support for the prevention of possible exposure (involuntarily or voluntarily) to Covid-19

Management of potential Covid-19 incidents in an organised, immediate and protected manner, based on the proposed published guidelines and instructions

10 OF THE BEST BEACHES IN CYPRUS:

Your Insider Hotlist

To really get to grips with what beachside magic on the island is all about, be sure to unleash the explorer in you to discover the quaint, the hidden and the remote. And for those a little more wild and adventurous at heart? We've added a few on our hotlist to get your pulse racing.



Aphrodite's Rock and Beach, Paphos

Aphrodite's Rock and Beach, Paphos

Legend has it that Aphrodite, Goddess of Love and Fertility, once rose from frothy waters that surround Aphrodite's rock. A truly spectacular sight just off the old road between Limassol and Paphos, crowds gather to ogle at the spot that has become the most famous and mythical on the island. Driving up to

the area is probably the best experience of all, with stunning scenery giving way to this fantastically rugged coastline. The water itself is sometimes choppy here, but you can always dip your feet in shallow territory or just take in the splendour of it all from the pebbled shore. Do take your own umbrella with you!



Lara Bay, Akamas Peninsula

As the Greek poet, Kavafis, once let on in his famous poem, Ithaca, life is not just about the destination, but the wonderful journey along the way. And when it comes to discovering the island's beaches, never have his words rung more true than when embarking on the path towards the discovery of Lara Bay. Set out to find it, and you'll want to take in every second of the unforgettable experience. Hidden within the breathtaking Akamas Peninsula nature reserve, it's best to hire a 4x4 to get here or head out on a safari tour.

Prepare for vibrant greenery and breathtaking wilderness which gives way to sweeping bays and panoramic views of the west coast of the island. Home to the green and loggerhead turtle that arrive to lay their eggs in the summer months, you'll no doubt be making friends with the little creatures on one of the island's most impressive sandy stretches. Just be sure to keep quiet so as not to disrupt their peace.



Lara Bay, Akamas Peninsula



Konnos Bay, Ayia Napa

Konnos Bay, Ayia Napa

Picture this. You're driving down a peaceful seaside road with turquoise waters as far as the eye can see. Turn off the main strip and follow a winding road downhill through dense greenery. The forested hill suddenly gives way to powdery white sands; a crescent shaped shoreline speckled with colourful umbrellas befriends iridescent aquamarine waters. Welcome to Konnos Bay.

There is good reason why this beach has become so popular with locals and foreigners alike: it's an absolute stunner. Whether you're staring out at the dazzling view, lazing down on the sand, or enjoying a cool drink at the hillside café that looks out to sea, you won't forget this picture perfect spot. But if you are looking to enjoy it sans the crowds once the summer sets in, be sure to only visit during the week.

TOP 10 BEACHES



Serena Bay, Protaras



Paramali Beach, Paramali Village, Limassol

Serena Bay, Protaras

First timers in Protaras will be forgiven for not knowing this place exists - Serena Bay is one of those spots that has largely earned its popularity with locals through word of mouth. It's off the main road, it's hidden, and it's a tiny stretch of beach compared to some. But once you get here, you may never want to leave. The little bay itself is somewhat more secluded than the rest of the Protaras hot spots and undeniably scenic. And Serena Bay beach bar is irresistibly charming too, with wooden tables strategically placed under the shade of leafy trees. Don't expect the place to be empty however, as trendy young things – particularly Nicosians – frequent the area on most midsummer weekends.

Paramali Beach, Paramali Village, Limassol

Some beachgoers like nothing more than lazing on a sandy shore with a good book. Others, however, care little for chilling out, adamant on hitting the waves and pushing those adrenaline levels to an all time high. If you fall into the latter category – and think of yourself as being wild at heart – then you've simply got to visit Paramali Beach. Hailed as being one of the very best kitesurfing beaches on the island, the golden sand stretches a distance of about two kilometres, and when the winds pick up and the waves get rough, the horizon is punctuated with multi-coloured kites, as avid sporty types do their thing.



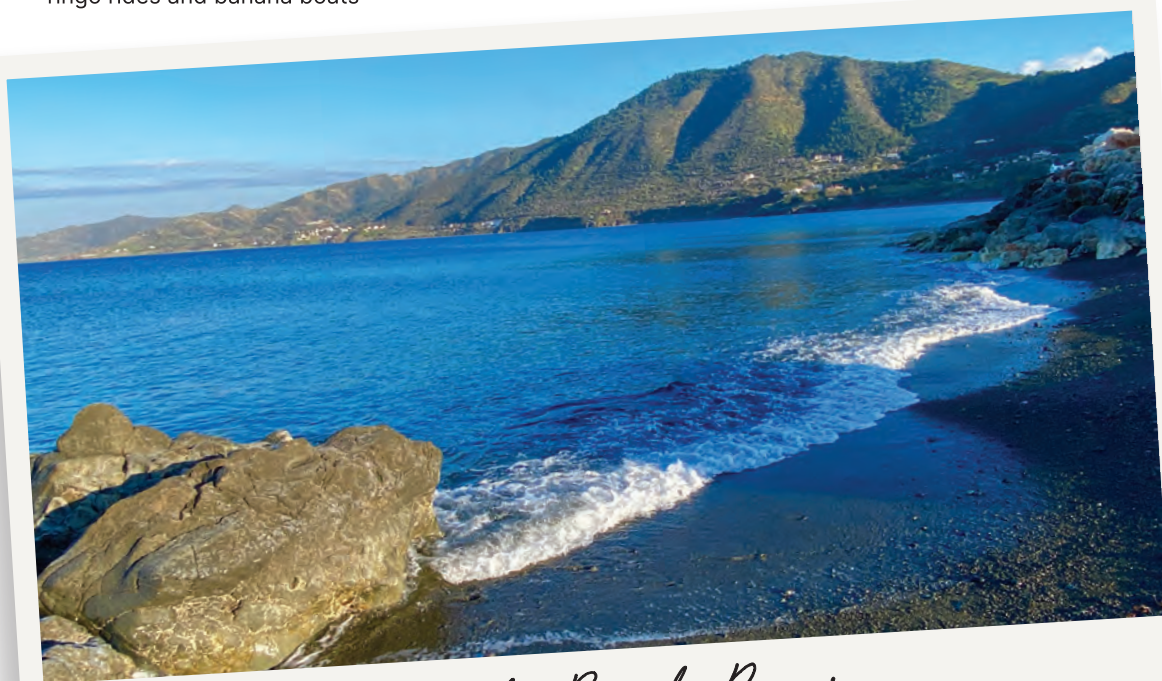
Nissi Beach, Ayia Napa

Nissi Beach, Ayia Napa

After east coast fun under the sun? If there's one beach that gets people talking in the tourist haven of Ayia Napa, it has to be Nissi Beach. The notorious stretch is absolutely breathtaking, with translucent turquoise waters lapping against soft white sand. But most people that head to Nissi Beach aren't just interested in the dreamy sea; they are looking for a good time. Come peak season, the area tends to get rather busy, popular with both locals and holidaymakers – intent on showing off their tan, working up a sweat with a game of beach rackets, and dancing to the beat at one of the beach bars. But this year, with social distancing measures enforced, you can enjoy a less packed and slightly more chilled out version of Nissi beach. That's not to forget the array of water activities to kick-start the adrenaline rush, from water-skiing and paragliding to ringo rides and banana boats

Kanali Beach, Pomos

The wild western coast of the island is often touted as the most spectacular, with a rugged coastline cradling deep blue seas. There's the wonderful fishing village of Latchi to visit, the picturesque town of Polis to explore, and all the splendours of the surrounding villages and countryside to take in. But if you want to really appreciate what it means to get out into some of the most unspoilt parts of the country, drive all the way to the western tip of Pomos. It's remote, it's untamed and it still retains the same charm it did years ago. And when you're desperate for a splash in the sea? Head to Kanali Beach - dotted with just a few colourful parasols, it's the perfect place to escape the crowds. What's more, the water is crystal clear, the scenery is unforgettable, and the feel of the place is simply magical.



Kanali Beach, Pomos

TOP 10 BEACHES



Mackenzie Beach, Larnaca

Mackenzie Beach, Larnaca

One moment you'll be gazing at bikini clad fashionistas sipping on mojitos and tapping their feet to house beats. The next, you may well find yourselves beside well-oiled buffed young men sipping on their frappes and enjoying endless games of beach rackets. This is Mackenzie Beach: Larnaca's true summer hot spot. As the rhythms of just about every type of music imaginable resonate through the area, just take your pick from the array of beach bars, take a seat on a high stool with your tipples of choice, and enjoy all the action (responsibly and at a safe distance)!



Coral Bay, Paphos



White Rocks, Governor's Beach, Limassol

White Rocks, Governor's Beach, Limassol

If you love to work on your tan and like nothing more than doing so in privacy, the coves of the rocky stretch that make up Governor's Beach should be top of your list. Hire a good car and veer off the main commercial hub, heading onto a dirt road that takes you right along a string of small black sand bays, offset by brilliant smooth white rocks. In the summer months, you won't be completely alone, but if you explore a little, there is always a private bay to set up base. And if the hunger pangs kick in? Head back onto the main strip, home to popular fish restaurants dishing up the fresh catch of the day.

Coral Bay, Paphos

The gorgeous Coral Bay is a great family-friendly choice. Kids love to play in the shallow and often wavy waters, adults can enjoy kicking back under the shade of the umbrella, while those with a passion for water sports can spend hours out at sea. One of the best sandy beaches in the Paphos area, the summer season sees just about anyone and everyone – from teenage trendsetters, families and young couples – carve out their space on the popular strip. Luckily, the stretch is long enough to also accommodate those looking for a little rest and relaxation.

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BLISSFUL WELLNESS RETREATS TO REJUVENATE YOU



Casale Panayiotis Traditional Village Hotel & Spa, Kalopanayiotis

One of our favourite countryside retreats, Casale Panayiotis is nestled in Troodos' green Marathassa Valley and is renowned for breathing new life into the lovely Kalopanayiotis – one of Cyprus' oldest spa villages blessed with natural sulphur springs. The hotel comprises luxurious rooms and suites located in various houses across Kalopanayiotis village, each lovingly restored to retain its original character and charm.

Luxurious on-site spa facilities give you the chance to indulge in hydrotherapy, thermal suites and a spa lounge, while body treatments soothe mind and soul. Try the 'King of Soli'

ancient sulphur spa ritual, which includes a sulphur bath, a signature massage and male executive facial or the 'Queen of Marathassa' which includes a chocolate sensation wrap with chromotherapy, a totally 'quenched and drenched' facial and a 'windows of the soul' eye treatment.

There are also numerous bath rituals to enjoy, including ancient sulphur relief, royal milk bath, the Myriathousa Heavenly Whirlpool and a whole range of massage treatments to leave you feeling rejuvenated from head to toe. Celebrating a special occasion with your other half? Enjoy a spa ritual for two!

Where: Kalopanayiotis village, Troodos
casalepanayiotis.com



Finding the perfect getaway is easy in Cyprus – a country where nature lovers can rejoice in the hidden splendours of the undulating countryside and hide away in forested lands beside peaceful villages where time seems to stand still. Add a handful of gorgeous retreats into the mix, designed with the selective traveller in mind, and you are guaranteed the ultimate time out in heavenly style.

Aelia Wellness Retreat, Tseri

Just outside Nicosia in the Tseri district, this gorgeous wellness haven was created with one intention: to transport your body, mind, and spirit into a state of pure bliss and serenity. Aelia Wellness Retreat is meticulously designed and boasts natural elegance with detailed woodwork throughout, accentuated with unique glamorous touches.

Stay here for the night and every suite is guaranteed to relax the senses, each with a different design and a variety of handpicked touches. In need of a pampering treatment? There

are a number of wellness-oriented treatments and rituals on offer at the Cocoon spa, aimed at soothing, restoring and revitalising body and mind, using the finest products to cater to your unique needs.

Want to learn more about healthy living? Aelia gives you the chance to take part in workshops and seminars on healthy nutrition, behavioural tips, stress management, decision-making, life coaching, personal improvement, anger management and much more.

Where: 150 Grigoriou Afxentiou, Tseri, Nicosia district
aeliawellness.com.cy



WONDROUS WELLNESS



Ayii Anargyri Natural Healing Spa Resort, Miliou village

A place of profound calm, the bucolic setting of this spa resort on the more remote western part of the island is famed for the health-giving mineral rich waters which flow in the area. The ideal rural location, offering guests the chance make the most of the true splendour of the natural world, Ayii Anargyri Natural Healing Spa Resort uses natural spring water, which is channelled into three treatment pools: kinesiotherapy, rheumatology and phlebology.

The medical spa treatments on offer are intended for conditions such as arthritis, rheumatism, gout and joint pain. The professional therapies are complemented by a wide range of wellness therapies, whether you wish to relax those muscles with a deep massage, fancy a sulphur mud bath therapy or want a good old facial to make you glow. As for the accommodation itself, there are garden suites, bungalows or classic rooms to choose from, with a lovely central swimming pool where you can simply kick back and relax.

Where: Miliou village, Paphos district
aasparesort.com



The Library Hotel and Wellness Resort, Kalavassos village

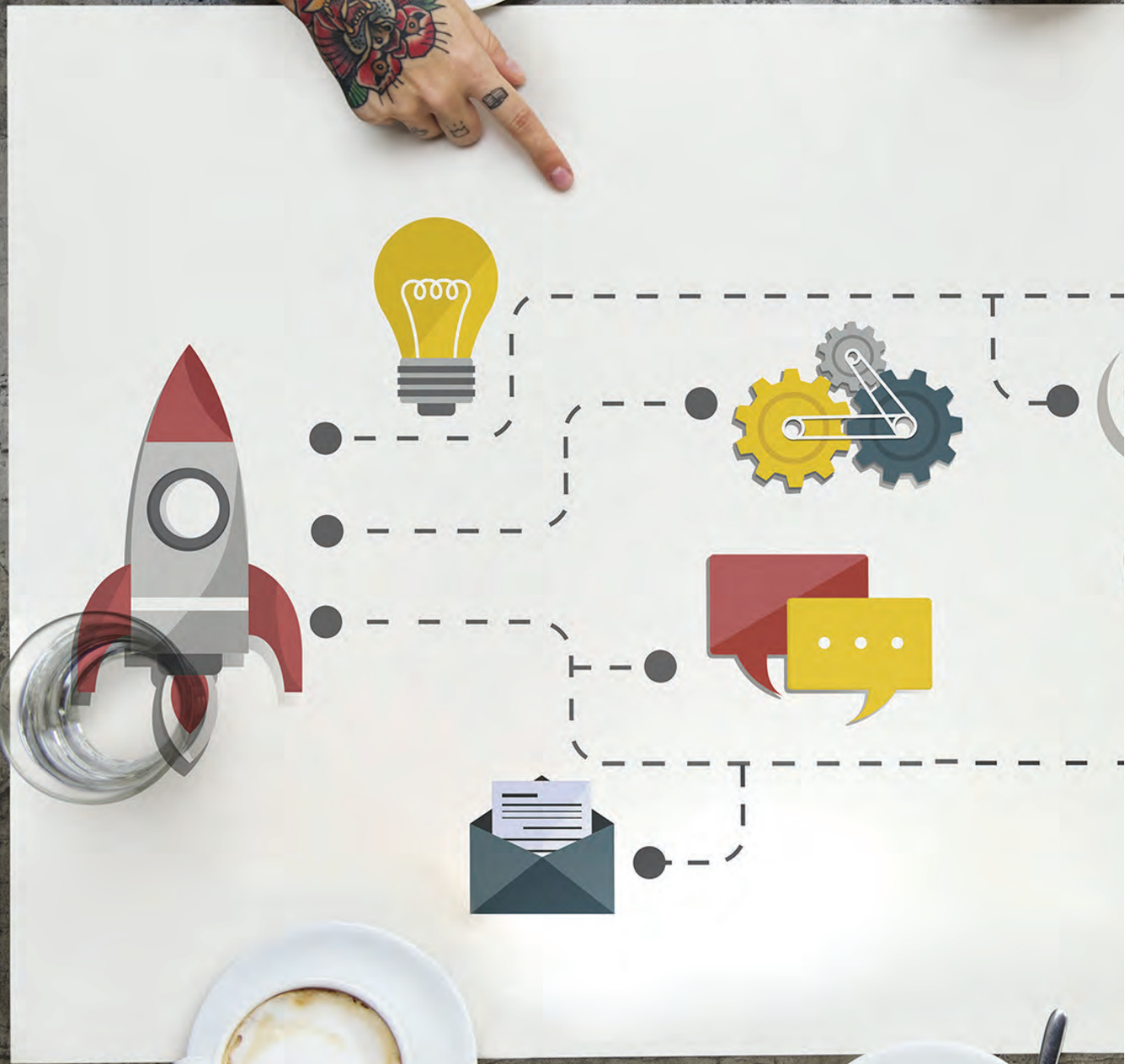
Located in the quaint village of Kalavassos in the Larnaca district, this hotel and wellness resort is housed in an old stone-built mansion, with its traditional features beautifully restored. Step inside, to enter what is promoted as a 'home of well-being, catharsis of mind and body'.

With 11 uniquely styled suites named after poets, thinkers and writers from all far flung corners of the world, The Library Hotel and Wellness Resort opens up to a courtyard with beautiful and picturesque views of the village and surrounding mountains. But the main attraction of the mansion is its library-lounge, featuring a collection of interesting books with an emphasis on history, philosophy, culture and civilisation.

But it is not just about mental stimulation here; you are also encouraged to elevate your spirit while experiencing full wellbeing of body and soul. Proud of its Potamonde Wellness Baths, just take your pick from the mud steam bath and herbal baths. The former involves steam filling the room with aromas from Cyprus spring blossom, while the latter sees fragrances of Cyprus' medicinal herbs give you a lift. There is also a whole range of other treatments available including massages, trigger point therapy, body wraps and plenty of facials.

Where: 3 Anexartisias Street, Kalavassos, Larnaca district
libraryhotelcyprus.com





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DREAMY COUNTRYSIDE ACCOMMODATION AROUND CYPRUS

Rise and shine to the dreamiest views, dine on fresh village produce and head out to explore the best that the rolling countryside has to offer. Here is a select pick of gorgeous accommodation around the island to ensure the sweetest dreams in impeccable style.



Modus Vivendi Traditional Houses



The sleepy hideaway:
Modus Vivendi Traditional Houses,
Psematismenos, Larnaca district

These little houses and studios in the sleepy Larnaca village of Psematismenos are so secluded that you would be forgiven for not knowing that they exist. Eclectic, rustic and beautiful, each one of the six listed traditional stone-built houses and studios – all decorated in various colour schemes and named accordingly – is packed with heirloom furniture and adorned with vibrant fabrics and rugs.

Design elements are everywhere at Modus Vivendi, from the specially crafted table lamps to paintings by local artists. For some, the lovely courtyard in the centre of the complex is the real star of the show, brimming with local aromatic herbs and plants reaching up for the skies around a central swimming pool, offset by glorious pink bougainvillea. If you do fancy venturing out into the great outdoors, the beach is just a short drive from the accommodation.



COUNTRYSIDE GETAWAYS

A west coast affair: *Ktima 1937 Kannides, Droushia, Paphos district*

If you love the idea of spending a few days surrounded by unspoilt nature on the western part of the island, time out in Droushia should go down a treat. A short drive from the seaside town of Polis, there is so very much to explore in the area, whether you want to rejoice in the splendour of the wild Akamas peninsula, take in the tranquillity of Pomos, indulge in a fish meze feast in Latchi, or enjoy leisurely drives and lazy strolls through country lanes to discover all the picturesque villages of the area.

Boasting a real rustic appeal, Ktima 1937 Kannides is a traditional family house that has been tastefully renovated and converted into a complex of five self-catering apartments. The accommodation also has a lovely swimming pool on the grounds if you fancy taking a dip or kicking back on a lounge to soak up the summer sun.





A nod to tradition:
*Oinoessa Traditional Boutique Houses,
Lofou, Limassol district*

Another gorgeous little place mixing elegance with tradition in the heart of the Limassol winegrowing district – this time in the sleepy village of Lofou – Oinoessa comprises a variety of stone-built houses separated into deluxe studio apartments, complete with their own kitchen area and homey living spaces.

The complex dates back to the middle of the 18th century, and all studios have been lovingly restored by local artisans

alongside the family owners of the establishment, keeping all original features intact with a great mix of local stone and wood. Large patio doors from the studio living rooms lead out into a tree-lined courtyard; ideal for moments of relaxation and respite. Head out for a walk in the village and put your best foot forward through the maze of cobbled streets that tell tales of yesteryear and an incredibly rich winemaking history.



COUNTRYSIDE GETAWAYS

Where old meets new: *Palatakia Village Houses,* *Kato Drys, Larnaca district*

This gorgeous sanctuary oozes chic charm to delight even the most discerning guest. A boutique agrotourism complex of restored traditional houses in the quaint and beautifully kept Larnaca district village of Kato Drys, the beach is just a 20-minute drive away, while rugged countryside cocoons the village houses in the most magnificent fashion.

The four Palatakia Village rural houses date back 300 years, transformed into rooms and studios by a creative duo fuelled

by a passion for traditional architecture and local history. And their attention to detail can hardly go unnoticed, with beautiful lighting around the complex, artwork by local artists adorning the walls of each room, and contemporary furniture adding a modern touch to a traditional affair. As old and new fuses in fabulous fashion, traditional stone exteriors combine with streamlined modern and chic interiors; sophisticated and simple and yet still warm and welcoming.





For the love of wine:
Oinou Strata Luxury Suites,
Vouni, Limassol district

Craving time out with a loved one in stunning surrounds? Oinou Strata will make your dreams come true; a gorgeous complex tucked away in the lovely Limassol winegrowing village of Vouni, comprising three luxury suites that could have easily stepped out of a fairy-tale. Each named after a different type of wine – Shiraz, Merlot and Champagne – just take your pick and indulge in true luxury, albeit with a homey feel.



From four-poster beds to vintage style rolltop bathtubs and just about every other glamorous amenity imaginable adding to the charm, you may never want to leave the comfort of your stylish room. But when you do fancy a drop to drink and a nibble outside the confines of your swish suite, head down to the cosy wine bar on the premises, serving local vino in fine ambiance.



Info Box

Modus Vivendi Traditional Houses: Psematismenos village, Limassol district
modusvivendiholidays.com.cy

Ktima 1937 Kannides: 37 Apodimon Drousioton Street, Droushia, Paphos district
kannides.com

Oinoessa Traditional Boutique Houses: Centre of Lofou village, Limassol district
oinoessa.com

Palatakia Village Houses: Kato Drys Village, Larnaca district
palatakia.com

Oinou Strata: 5 Ellados St, Vouni, Limassol district
oinoustrata.com

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LOCAL PRODUCE YOU WILL LOVE: *The Insider Top 10*

From melt-in-the-mouth halloumi to tantalising sweet honey, gastronomes are always in for a real treat in Cyprus! Here are ten local products we just cannot live without.

Olive oil

No lunch or dinner is complete in Cyprus without lashings of olive oil, poured generously over salads and pulses, and often used for cooking. Locally produced extra virgin olive oil is the best on offer, often made on traditional plantations in top climatic and soil conditions, resulting in a gorgeous golden colour and superb taste.



Commandaria

Cyprus has an incredibly long wine producing history dating almost 6000 years, and locals are exceptionally proud of the sweet Commandaria; one of the oldest wines in the world still in production! In fact, Richard the Lionheart once boldly proclaimed Commandaria to be the "Wine of Kings and King of Wines" while gulping away at the renowned Cyprus dessert wine.



Spoon sweets

Visit any village home in Cyprus and you will no doubt find a jar filled with the so-called 'spoon sweets.' One of the best-known sweet treats in the country, spoon sweets are essentially bite-sized nuts, fruits and vegetables preserved in thick syrup and later flavoured with various spices. Walnut spoon sweet is particularly popular, as are cherry and watermelon.

Halloumi

Every foodie's dream, this salty cheese – famous the world over – was first made in the Byzantine period with a mix of cow's and goat's milk. A real treat at every tavern and on every meze table, halloumi cheese is possibly one of Cyprus' most celebrated produce. Not just delicious, the semi-hard brined cheese has a very high melting point, usually served grilled, and sometimes fried.



Honey

If you have a sweet tooth, then Cyprus honey is the way to delight your taste buds in healthy style. Owing to the fact that the local countryside is home to almost 2000 varieties of flora, local honey boasts distinct flavours and comes in a variety of consistencies. Look out for local honey when you visit countryside villages, with each area boasting its own varieties and brands.



Zivania

Not for the faint-hearted, this local 'firewater' is a potent distillation of the leftover grape skins and residue (pomace) from winemaking. Mighty strong stuff, a few swigs of this tippie will leave you feeling on top of the world. For the brave and the brave at heart, this white spirit contains a whopping 45% alcohol and is usually enjoyed as an ice-cold shot.

Soujouko

During the winemaking season, grape juice is poured into a huge pot, where it is sweetened if necessary – usually with a little honey – thickened with starch and left to cook until it becomes almost glutinous. Long strings threaded with either almonds or walnuts are then repeatedly dipped into the mixture until they are well coated and just the right thickness, before being hung out to dry in the sunshine. Enjoy your knobbly Soujouko fix in true local style with a cup of strong Cyprus coffee.

Rosewater

Deep in the heart of the Pitsillia region of the island, is a village that has come to be loved by islanders and foreigners alike. Not just another pretty rural hot spot, there's something incredibly bright and beautiful that makes Agros famous: its glorious rambling Rosa Damascena. Locals pick the roses to create the well-known Agros Rosewater, stored in glass bottles and used in local treats and cosmetics.

Loukoumi Geroskipou

If you love all things tasty and sweet, then Geroskipou is the village for you, known for its dreamy 'loukoumia', otherwise known as 'Cyprus Delights'. And despite its worldwide popularity and production, the only Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) has been given to this very 'Loukoumi Geroskipou' found in the village. The delights are made with sugar, corn-starch, nuts and flavouring, and once they set, they are dusted with icing sugar.

Local herbs

The Cypriot countryside offers a plentiful bounty of natural gifts – from mint and oregano to thyme and parsley – many of which find their way into the kitchen. While you will often see Cypriots collecting wild herbs in the countryside, local markets are excellent sources of fresh herbs, as are supermarkets. More recently, specialist shops sell them fresh, as well as dried and beautifully packaged.



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CULTURESCOPE is a Cypriot lifestyle and entertainment web show, exclusive to Cyprus Mail's new interactive web portal, Good Living. Hosted by Paul Lambis, the show places great emphasis on a quality lifestyle that is in keeping with international trends in décor, travel, fashion, glamour, sport, film, theatre, music, art, talent, gastronomy, and a myriad of modern conveniences and luxuries.

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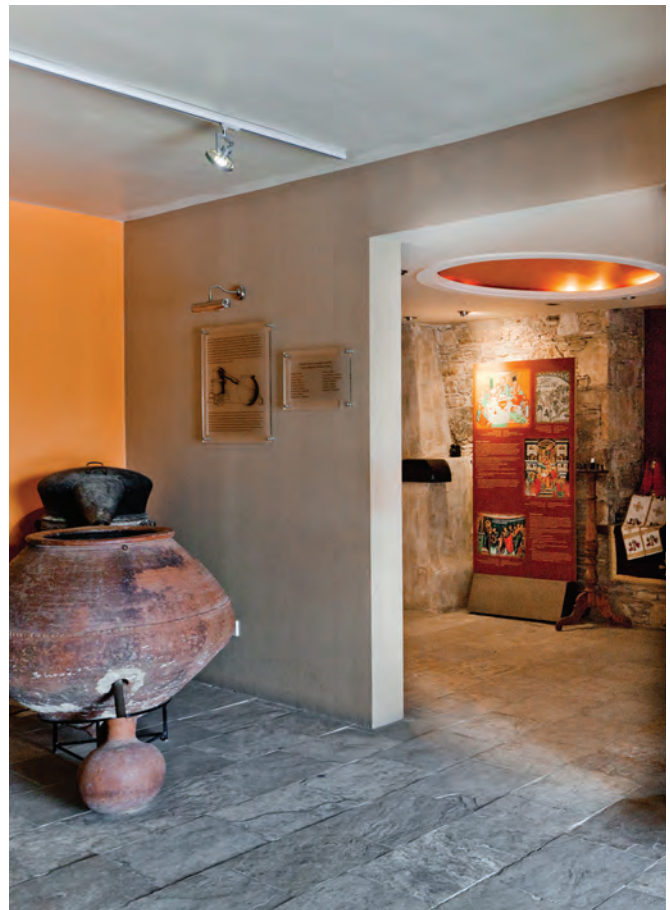
FASCINATING VILLAGE MUSEUMS TAKING YOU BACK IN TIME



The oenophile's delight: Cyprus Wine Museum

Most of us are aware that Cyprus boasts a really long winemaking history which can be traced back almost 6000 years, but few of us are really familiar with the real ins and outs of wine production on the island and all the history and tradition linked with it. This little wine museum in the sleepy village of Erimi in the winegrowing district of the island is just the place to educate yourselves on the subject matter, taking you back through the centuries, displaying ancient jars and vases, medieval drinking vessels, old documents, and a variety of instruments that provide insight into all aspects of wine production.

Where: Erimi village, Limassol district





Lazy summer days call for plenty of relaxation, but they also provide the perfect chance to get out and about to familiarise yourselves with unexplored territory. There really is no time like the present to discover hidden gems dotted around the island that tell tales about the island's history and culture. Let us guide you towards some truly wonderful treasure troves hidden in villages around the country.

A mythology lover's paradise: Kouklia Museum, Sanctuary of Aphrodite

If there is just one thing that makes this place truly magical, it has to be the setting, located in Palaipafos ('old Pafos' in Greek) and more specifically, on the fascinating Kouklia Archaeological Site; one of the most important city-kingdoms in Cyprus, and home to the Sanctuary of Aphrodite, the remains of which date back to the 12th century B.C.

The on-site museum is housed in the eastern wing of a Lusignian Medieval Manor House, and presents finds from the site itself and the area's two cemeteries, while portraying how the Cult of the Goddess of Fertility developed into the Cult of Aphrodite. You will be particularly impressed by the Roman mosaic on the floor of the first room, as well as a terracotta bath, stone tools, pottery, jewels and more, dating back to the 2nd millennium B.C. until Roman times.

Where: Kouklia village, Paphos district



INTO THE PAST

History unravelled: Arsos Folk Art Museum

Standing proud as one of the biggest wine producing villages of the island, clinging to the slopes of the Laona Mountain in between Limassol and Paphos, Arsos village attracts countless curious holidaymakers each year. Housed in a restored 18th century country house, Arsos Folk Art Museum aims to preserve the rich cultural heritage of the area and the wine villages dotted across the surrounding countryside.

Celebrated as one of the best museums of its kind on the island, it will whisk you away on a journey back in time from the very moment that you step foot inside the main hall, once used as a kitchen, a dining room and a living room. Take note of the traditional chairs, fireplace, cooking stove, copper domestic utensils, dresser, cupboard, and many more pieces of household equipment. Down in the cellar, you will spot a traditional wine press, clay jars and other traditional winery tools. Climb the staircase in the paved yard and you'll enter the two upstairs rooms where you can admire what a traditional bedroom once looked like, while another room houses a permanent exhibition of old photos taken during past events and village occasions.

Where: Arsos village, Limassol district



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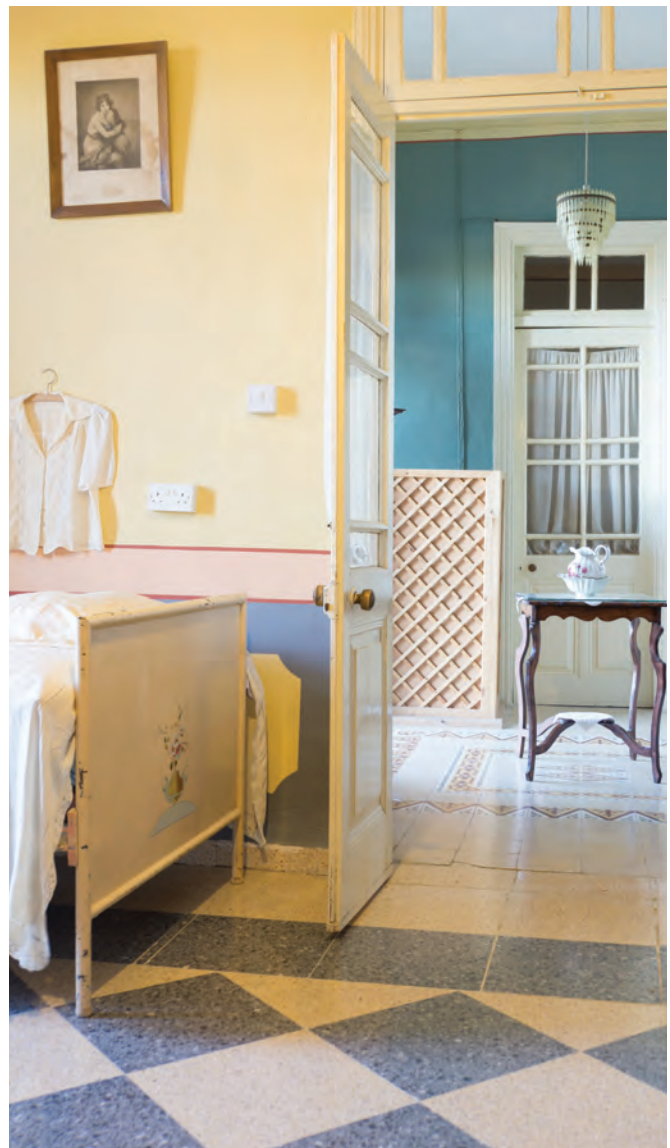


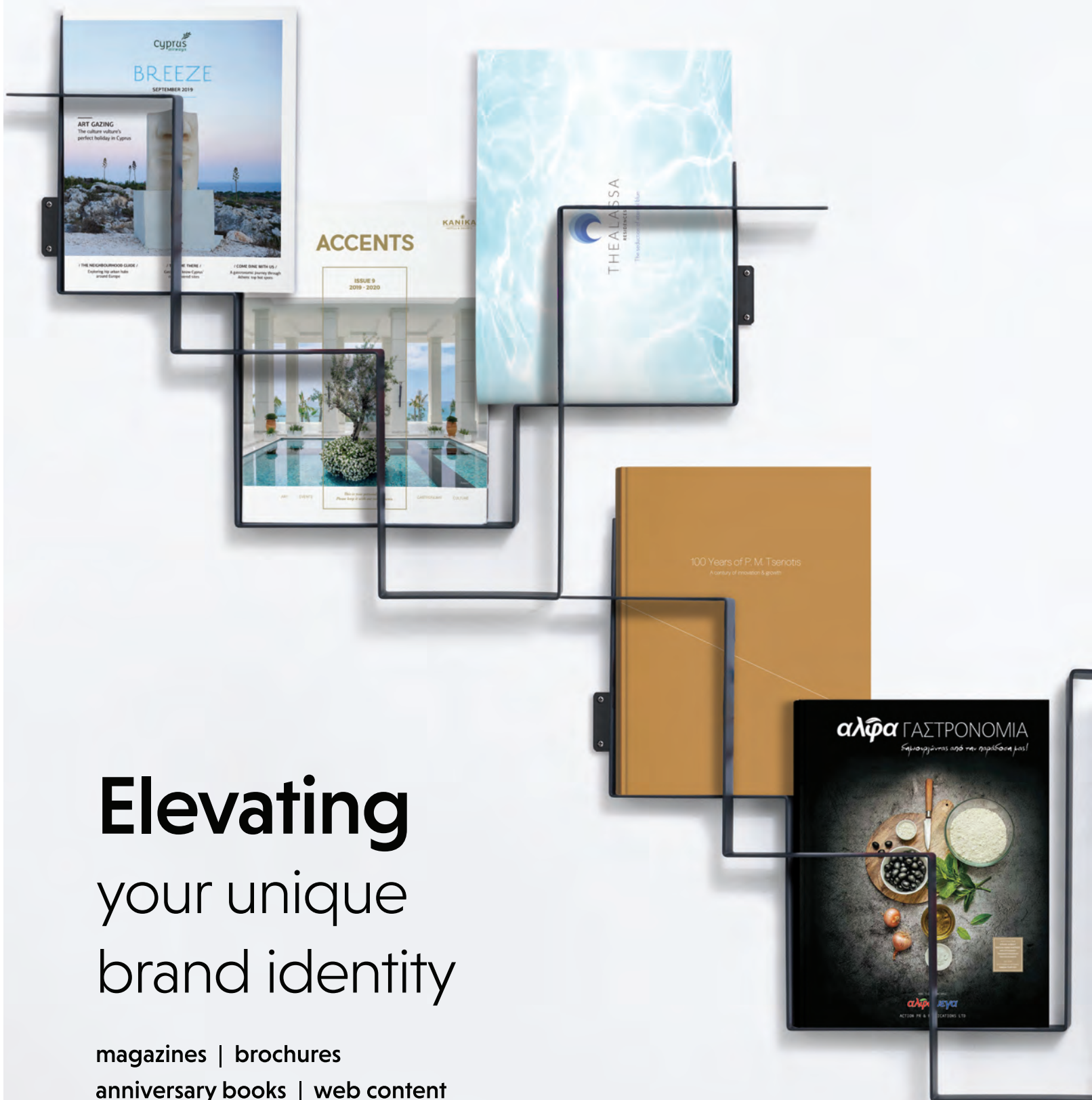
Sweet as honey: The Bee and Embroidery Museum

Hidden in the picturesque village of Kato Drys is a little place well off the tourist radar known as the The Bee and Embroidery Museum. The establishment guarantees a dazzling trip down memory lane in this centuries-old stone house that has been converted into a quirky little museum that brings a taste of village culture to life (and it's not just about the bees or local embroidery either!)

Top up your knowledge on some fascinating facts about bees and beekeeping on the island, and then watch how wine and Zivania is produced on local soil during harvest season. This little gem also sheds light on memories and images of Kato Drys and its people, brought to life with a collection of agricultural, livestock and apian tools, furniture and general household items. Take note of the beautiful collection of lace and embroidery dating back to the 1880s.

Where: Kato Drys village centre, Larnaca district





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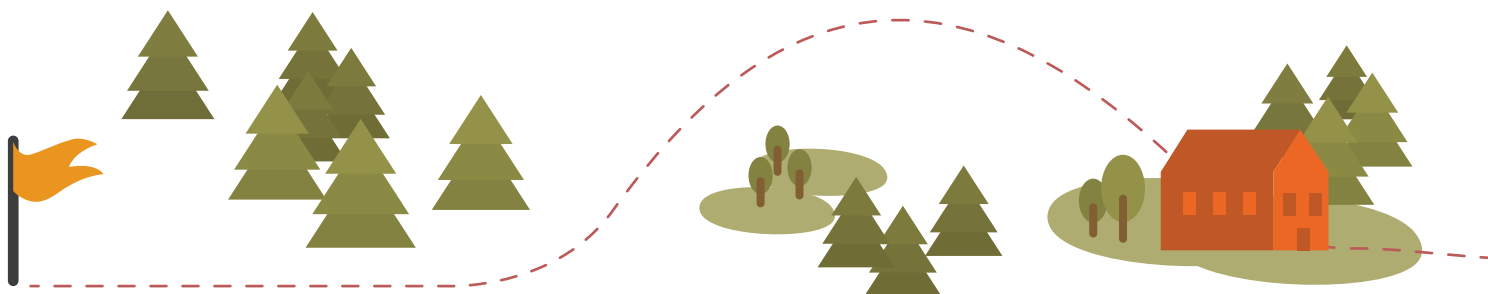
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YOUR INSIDER GUIDE

WHAT TO SEE AND DO IN THE TROODOS NATIONAL PARK



Find out why the area is so special at the Troodos Geopark Visitor Centre

If you really want to get to grips with facts about Troodos that you may never have known, then you absolutely must visit the Troodos Geopark Visitor Centre. At the entrance of the centre, you'll be greeted by a fantastic geological garden where you can spot all the different types of rock formations in the area, in stratigraphic order, representing the Troodos ophiolite sequence.

Once inside, the Visitor Centre provides insight into the geological uniqueness of the Troodos area, including the

geological processes currently occurring in the depths of the oceans, and the formation of new oceanic crust. Have a good look around the venue and you'll spot impressive rocks and minerals providing insight into the geology of the area, as well as info on sites of geological importance (from faults mines to geo trails). There are also exhibits of abandoned asbestos and chromite mines to look at, representations of an ancient pyro-metallurgical furnace for the production of copper, and a gallery of the last century for the exploitation of sulphate deposits.

Where: Just off Karvounas – Troodos Road
troodos-geo.org



When you need a break from the summer heat, nothing beats lifting your spirits on the Troodos Peaks as you cool off at almost 2000 metres above sea level! Formed 92 million years ago and considered one of the most complete and best studied ophiolites in the world, the Troodos area stands proud as a geological model for researchers the world over. With much to see and do in the vicinity, join us on an inspiring journey into the fantastic Troodos National Forest Park, an expanse of forest covering about 90km around Mount Olympus.

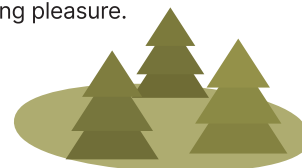


Rejoice in the splendours of nature at the A.G. Leventis Troodos Botanical Garden

The Troodos National Forest Park is home to approximately 750 plant species, with 72 of these endemic to the island. And if you want to get better acquainted with the many endemic plants and herbs of the area, be sure to head to the Troodos Botanical Garden. The garden aims to protect, conserve and promote Cypriot botanical heritage through exposure and education and it's a really great place to take the whole family.

Where: Troodos National Forest Park

Be sure to pop into the sweet little visitor centre and have a good look at the insightful information conveniently placed around the area. And do sit back on one of the benches to take in the panoramic views across the mountain valley, with a telescope on hand for your viewing pleasure.

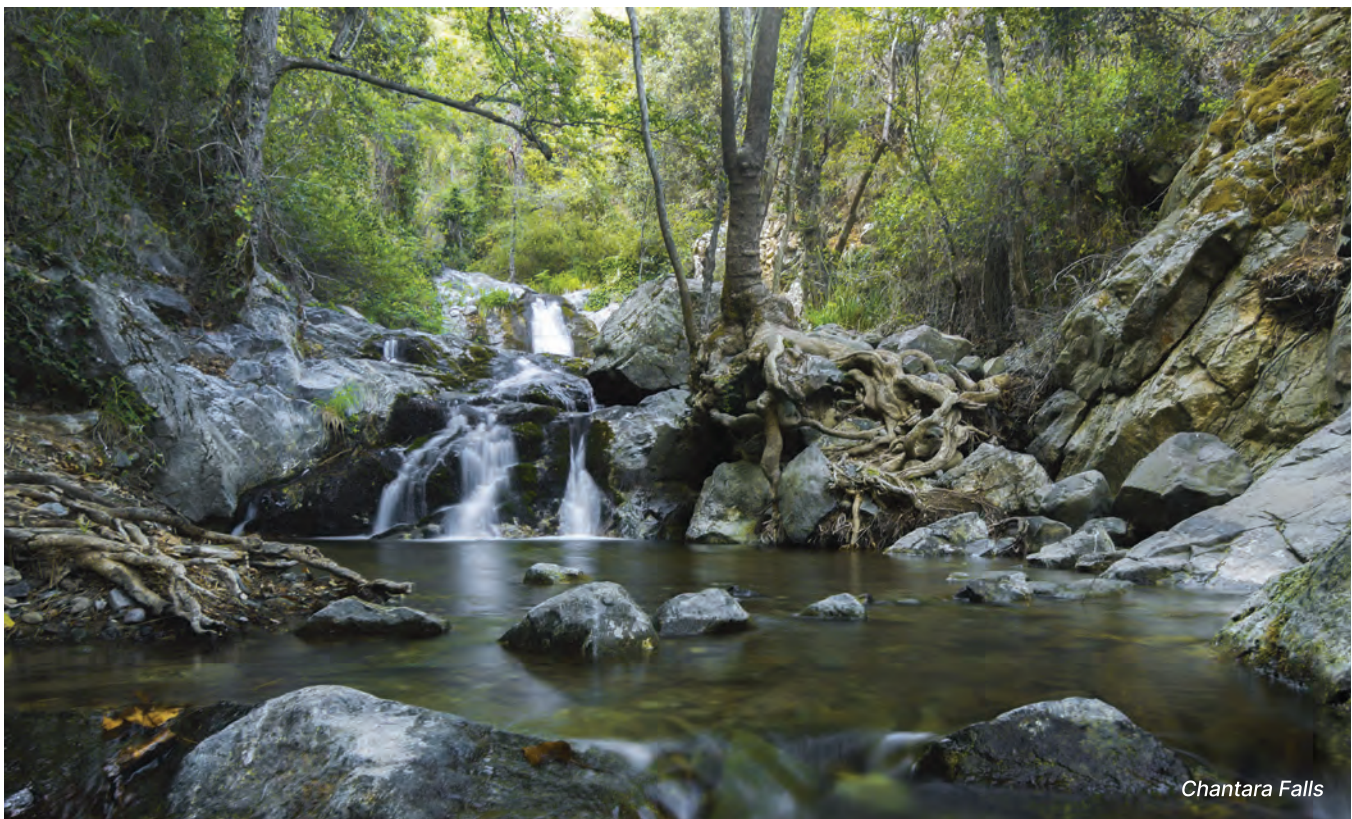


TROODOS MOUNTAINS

Refresh yourselves by gorgeous waterfalls

When you're exploring the national park in the summer, there is nothing like a relaxing moment spent by one of the area's gorgeous waterfalls. With the Caledonia Falls perhaps the most popular of all, you can head here from the 'Kryos Potamos' River near the Troodos Presidential Residence, or from the 'Psilon Dentron' point near the village of Platres. Once you get to the falls, you'll be inundated by the smell of sweet-scented pines as gushing water (falling from a height of 13 metres) carries you away somewhere truly magical.

Chantara Falls is also rather special, located on the Trooditissa river bed, north of the village of Fini. Head to the area to enjoy a great picnic and walk, before setting your sights on these lovely falls that drop from a height of 8 metres. But the highest falls of all are Myllomeri, with the water falling from a height of 20 metres. Situated in the Kryos Potamos river bed southeast of Pano Platres at an altitude of 980 metres – near Panayia Phaneromeni Church – you can reach the falls via a couple of routes, from either Pera Pedi Village (4,2 km distance) or from Pano Platres towards Moniatis (at a distance of 3,8 km).





Find out more about the area at the Troodos National Forest Park Visitor Centre

Just 200 metres west of Troodos Square, this little visitor centre sheds light on all sorts of interesting facts about the park. Enter the exhibition gallery to enjoy interesting exhibits about the environment, geology, flora, fauna, various habitats, recreation, history and civilisation of the island.

Where: 62 Archbishop Makarios III, Troodos

The centre is also packed with collections of butterflies, wood samples, fossils and a cross section of an age-old Black pine, while the film theatre screens a 10-minute informative film about the area. It's worth keeping in mind that a botanical and geological trail is also connected to the building, where you will spot various plants of the park and geological specimens.

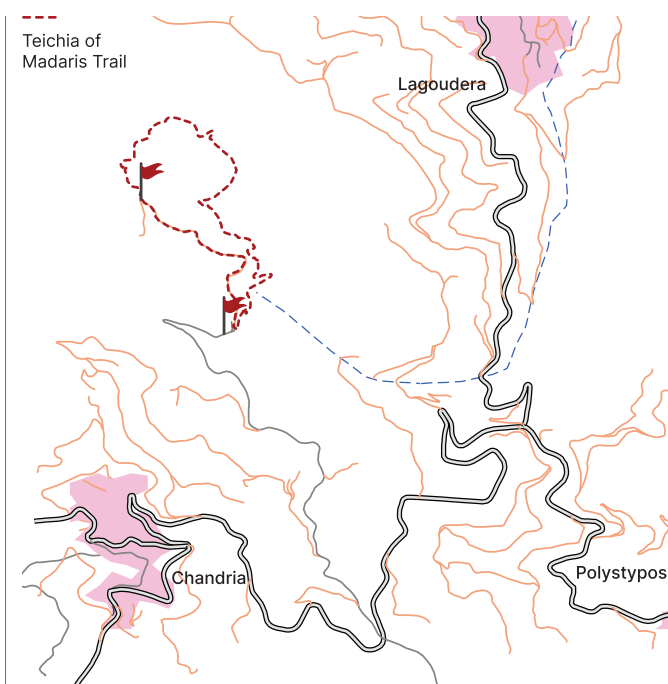
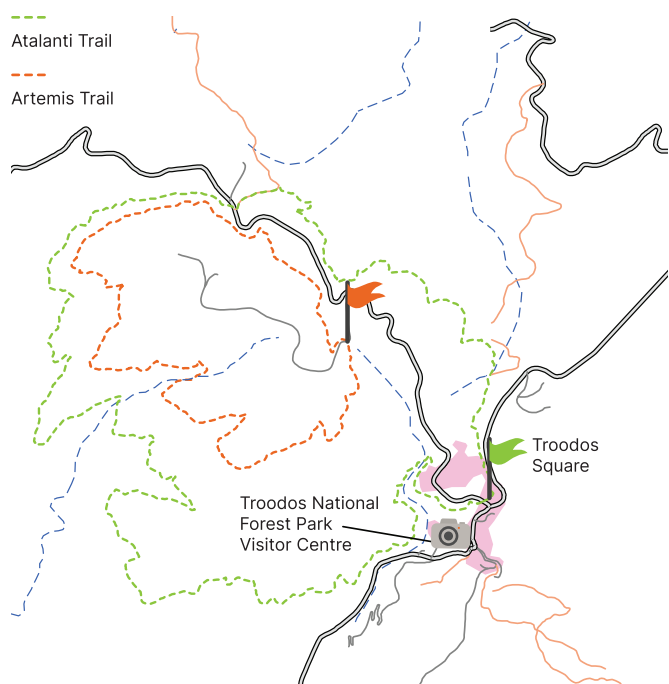


Take in some awe inspiring views as you walk through beautiful nature trails

Gorgeous walking trails dissect the Troodos area, and there is no time like the present to enjoy a glorious early morning or late afternoon walk at cooler altitudes. With 13 different signposted trails within the park, there's something for every level.

The Artemis Trail (a 7km circular trail) is bound to leave you wide eyed; walk this one to spot ruins of rough fortifications

built during the final year of the Venetian Occupation of the island (1571). The longer Atalanti Trail (a 14km circular trail) will take you through dense thickets of black pine, while the Teichia of Madaris Trail is ideal for those looking for a shorter walk (a 3km linear trail) and is famed for its impressive cliff-like vertical rocks.



GREAT PLACES FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY TO SPEND THE DAY

Whether you're raising the next generation of eco-warriors, athletes, equestrian prodigies, wildlife conservationists, thrill seekers or fun lovers, you are sure to find activities to suit you and your kids over the summer break. Here are some top spots that will keep the young ones engaged, entertained, and hopefully, sleeping in the car all the way home!

Riverland Dairy Bio Farm

Located just outside the rural village of Kampia, a mere 20 minutes outside Nicosia, Riverland Dairy Bio Farm is a magical haven where the animals are happy, well cared for and fed a fully-organic diet. School groups and individuals are welcomed up to the farm on weekends when the family who run the cosy little place will take you around, show you the ropes, and treat you to a delicious organic breakfast at the end of the morning. This activity is very popular, so call in advance to get on the waiting list.

Where: *Kampia village, Nicosia district*



Mazotos Camel Park

They might look like creatures left behind from the prehistoric era when dinosaurs roamed the earth, but the camels at Mazotos Camel Park near Larnaca are friendly, sociable and love being fed and petted. Go on a camel safari, play a round of crazy golf, relax while the kids enjoy the rides and activities in the kids area, or learn about the other animals at the park.

Where: *Mazotos, Larnaca district*





Pafos Zoo

Learning the importance of caring for and conserving wildlife is an integral lesson for us to teach the next generation of animal lovers and environment protectors. With its large family of exotic residents from all over the world, a trip to Paphos Zoo to see the giraffes, monkeys, crocodiles, kangaroos, mouflon, white lions, tigers and elephants is a day out the kids will never forget.

Where: St George, Peyia, Paphos district



Protaras Ocean Aquarium

Take the kids on an interactive adventure through the oceans, rivers and lakes of the world at the Oceanic Aquarium Protaras. With over 200 species of marine life floating peacefully around in over 50 tanks, the aquarium is also home to a wide variety of other land and water-dwelling creatures and makes for a very interesting day out for kids and adults alike.

Where: Paralimni, Famagusta district



FAMILY FUN



Adventure Mountain Park, Troodos

Head up with the whole family to the village of Kyperounta in the foothills of the Troodos Mountains where a great outdoor adventure awaits, as stunning surrounds and breath-taking nature trails make for the perfect setting for an adrenaline fuelled adventure. Adventure Mountain Park gives the young and the young at heart the chance to enjoy paintball, archery, laser tag, rock climbing, orienteering, ice-skating, tyrolean traverse and plenty of other adventure sports. There is a camp site on the grounds too, where the family can enjoy a night under a blanket of stars!

Where: Kyperounta village, Troodos district



Sparti Rope Park

If you are looking to take your family day out to soaring new heights, this spot really earns top marks! In the hub of Platres, deep in the towering Troodos Mountain range, great excitement awaits at Platres Rope Park. Reach the highest heights on ropes running between the glorious pine trees, with different challenges and courses requiring no previous climbing experience. And rest assured, the kids will love it!

Where: Pano Platres, Troodos district



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5 BEAUTIFUL WINEGROWING VILLAGES TO VISIT FOR PERFECT TIME OUT



Arsos

Hands down one of the biggest wine producing villages on the island, this village is in a prime location on the slopes of the Laona mountain, some 1092 metres above sea level. Stop to take it all in and enjoy views out to the Paphos sea. Famous since antiquity for its great wine – once considered to make the very best wine produced on the island – many villagers continue to busy themselves with wine production here. There are also plenty of locals who have earned a superb reputation for dishes made from wine, including palouzes, epsima, soujouko and other tasty delights.

As you explore the village, be sure to take in its religious heritage at the 13th century church of Apostole Filippou, as well as the chapel of Ayia Mariamni. The icon museum and folk-art museum are also worth a visit, while nature lovers will be in for a treat when traversing the area's nature trails. Love wine? Follow the designated wine routes of the area: wine route no. 3 (Diarizos Valley – Paphos Region) and no. 4 (wine villages – Limassol). And if you fancy a little adventure, the gorgeous medieval Tzelefos bridge is not too far away!



Head up into the foothills of the Troodos Mountains that rise above the seaside town of Limassol and a paradisaical setting awaits: slopes of shimmering green blanketed in rambling vineyards that bask in the sun's rays, cobbled streets and old stone buildings that tell tales of days gone by, dirt roads that lead to breath-taking nature trails weaving their way through the countryside, and quaint museums shedding light on the area's glorious winemaking history. Join us on a journey through some of the most beautiful winemaking villages that you absolutely have to visit.

Omodos

If you're looking for traditional grape produce, Omodos is a richly fruitful village that has it all; from Zivania and wine, to soujoukos and palouze – all made locally – and which can be found in the many charming little shops that line the narrow cobbled streets. The gorgeous handmade lace made by the women of the village also deserves a mention.

Located at the epicentre of the island's winegrowing district, Omodos' tourist appeal has ensured that the village and its medieval stone buildings, museums and churches are all very well looked after and maintained. The village is built around the rather majestic Monastery of the Holy Cross; the true pride and joy of Omodos and one of the oldest and most historic monasteries on the island.

Beside it, the large central square is dotted with cafes, restaurants and shops selling a whole manner of traditional goods. The real charm of the village springs to life when you meander through the narrow streets, with traditional houses featuring sturdy wooden balconies packed with flower pots attracting the gaze of visitors all year round, as elderly women busy themselves with intricate lacework.



WINE VILLAGES



Vouni

Another pretty village known for its cobblestone alleys and traditional houses; take time to ogle at the glorious wooden doors, intricate balconies and gorgeous courtyards here. Many of the locals are happy to have a chat and you may even get the chance to have a look around one of the lovely gardens, kept so beautifully by the area's inhabitants.

Be sure to pop into the byzantine and folk-art museum and do have a look at the old village olive mill. Also take note of the lovely old water fountains of the village where local folk used to congregate to take water back home with them. Like most of the area's villages, there are also some great nature trails where you can make the most of the natural world. The designated nearby wine route 4 will also give you plenty to take in.



Koilani

Close to the west bank of the river Kryos (Cold River), this picturesque little village is yet another rural gem with narrow alleyways, dotted with houses topped with terracotta tiled rooves, intricate balconies and gorgeous archways, so very quietly telling tales of the past.

Keep your eyes peeled for the traditional earthenware jars that decorate various gardens, while some old houses still keep equipment for distilling wine and zivania! Nature lovers will be happy to stumble across one of the biggest plane trees on the island, which provides shade for the village chapel of Ayia Mavri, known for its lovely murals. And do not forget the olive mill and the ecclesiastical museum – both add equal interest to any day trip.



WINE VILLAGES

Lofou

Few villages in Cyprus take you on a journey back in time like Lofou does. While the entire area is believed to have been inhabited since the Bronze Age, it endured a slow abandonment in the mid-20th century, as many locals moved in search of work in main towns (much like what has happened in most of the areas' winegrowing villages.)

The place is now home to no more than 40 inhabitants and makes for a brilliantly peaceful day out. With the old village school standing as a central focal point, the area around the school gives way to a web of narrow streets, punctuated by

restored traditional stone village houses adorned with sturdy wooden balconies. As you walk through the maze, be sure to stop by the nearby Folk Art Museum; a tiny little place which hosts a private collection of traditional treasures.

When you reach the village church of Panagia Chrysolofitissa, built in the 19th century and characterised by an imposing bell tower, take note of the small sculptures at the gate of the church where stone lions call out to greet visitors. Continue exploring, and enjoy the splendours of the natural environment with a trek along the Lofou walking trail towards Sylikou village.



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CYPRUS INSIDER SITES TO ADD TO YOUR HOLIDAY BUCKET LIST

From ancient Neolithic settlements and early Greek temples, to Crusader castles steeped in medieval intrigue, a plethora of awe-inspiring sites dotted around the island have contributed to the modern-day culture and traditions of an island saturated in history. But where to head to first? These ten sites top our bucket list.



Choirokitia

Head here to catch a magnificent glimpse of the remains of the earliest recorded settlement in Cyprus, distinctly marked out by cylindrical stone and mud dwellings that lay claim to the earliest permanent housing on the island. Scattered across a looming hillside just off the Nicosia-Limassol highway,

the Neolithic colony of dwellings was constructed in 5,800 BC and inhabited until about 5,200 BC, when the site was abandoned, possibly because of a sudden catastrophe, such as an earthquake.



Kolossi Castle

Drive out of Limassol towards Paphos and make a slight detour to visit the Crusader castle of Kolossi. It is here that the oldest wine in the world still in production – the sweet Commandaria – was first produced, while the rambling vines that blanket the nearby hillsides still supply the Limassol wineries with grapes

to continue the tradition. Once in the grounds, the remains of what was once a large sugar refinery can still be seen, while the castle itself is completely restored. The battlements soar to a height of around 23 metres and the views from the top are magnificent.



Curium Amphitheatre

Hit the road towards Paphos and you simply have to stop off at the breathtaking Curium, a Greco-Roman theatre sitting high on a cliff top and commanding tremendous views of the

sea. In the summer months, be sure to watch a performance here at night – the starry sky makes for the perfect backdrop to high drama on stage.



Sanctuary of Apollo Hylates

Just a few kilometres westwards, along the cliff that cradles the Curium are the remains of an ancient stadium and the Sanctuary of Apollo Hylates (Apollo of the woods), which was

built around 100 AD. In the days when the cult of the god still flourished, anyone who defiled the inner sanctum was promptly thrown off the nearby cliff- a fall of around 100 metres.



Famagusta Gate

If you are in the capital and want to soak up tales of the past, make a beeline for Famagusta Gate. A glorious sandstone gate which once led into the old city, it stands as the largest and most imposing of the three gates of the Venetian Walls

which surround the old city of Nicosia, built between 1567 and 1570 by the ruling Venetians, and designed by the famous engineer, Giulio Savorgano.



Hala Sultan Tekke

Just a stone's throw from Larnaca International Airport, this is one of the holiest shrines in the Islamic world. Its prime position is a sight to see in itself, proudly sitting at the edge of the Salt Lake surrounded by shady palms and cypress trees. In the winter, the lake is a haven for exotic birds like flamingos, while

in the summer, it is a shimmering expanse of white. The Tekke, which is the reputed burial place (in 649 AD) of Umm Haram – a maternal aunt of the Prophet Mohammed – consists of a mosque, mausoleum and some fine old ancillary buildings.



Ancient Amathus

A city immortalised by Homer's Iliad, the ancient city of Amathus just outside the centre of Limassol is one of the most significant ancient city kingdoms of Cyprus, dating back to 1100 B.C. Bearing a strong connection to the cult of Aphrodite, it is said that the worship of the goddess once flourished here.

Head down to the site and you can catch a glimpse of the ruins of the Temple of Aphrodite and tombs dating back to the early Iron Age. What's more, this is the very spot where the world's largest stone vase was discovered, now displayed at the Louvre Museum in Paris.



The Paphos Mosaics

A real 'living' museum, Paphos is hands down one of the most important areas of archaeological significance in the Mediterranean. Wherever you step foot, you can be fairly sure there is something of archaeological value beneath your feet, with the entire town included on the official UNESCO list of

cultural and world heritage. Be sure not to miss the Paphos Mosaics in the Paphos Archaeological Park, each with their own brilliantly intricately colourful tales to tell as mythological scenes jump to life.



Tombs of the Kings

The name of this place in itself is slightly deceiving as it's not really the burial place of kings, but that of the wealthy noblemen and their families that once lived in the Paphos area. Nonetheless, the impressive necropolis is still worth a


visit, with the imposing burial monuments dating back to the Hellenistic period. Squatters took over some of the tombs in the medieval period and made alterations to the original architecture.



Paphos Castle

Head to this much-photographed castle at sunset and you'll be in for a real treat. Originally built as a Byzantine fort, the castle is connected to the harbour via an arched bridge. Head

to the vicinity in the evening to enjoy the building beautifully lit, while surrounding harbour side cafes and restaurants provide plenty of spots to take in the view.

A two-story villa with a warm, terracotta-colored facade and dark wooden beams under the eaves. The villa features arched windows and doors on the ground floor, and balconies with black metal railings on the upper floor. In the foreground, a clear blue swimming pool reflects the sky. To the left of the pool, there is a lounge area with white sun loungers, a small table, and a large white patio umbrella. The sky is bright blue with a few wispy clouds.

Enjoying privacy and safety, without compromising on the fun!

Now that travel is starting to come back to life following the complete shutdown of all things travel and tourism, due to the unprecedented global pandemic, it's time for all those in need of a break to escape, refresh and recharge to look into the best and safest holiday options for them and their loved ones post-COVID-19.

Villa holidays have always had their strong selling points. Having your own private space to enjoy, a private pool without any opening hours or fighting for a sun lounger, the need to keep check on the dining times for breakfast, lunch or even dinner – but in the current times, this type of holiday seems all the more appealing.

So as world travel restrictions are gradually being lifted and holidays can resume, it seems likely travellers' habits will have shifted, with social distancing and private accommodation replacing crowded communal pool sides and evenings of shared buffet dining.

Guests will be seeking to get away with their family to spend quality time together after

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having been in lockdown for months, and the private villa holiday option looks set to be more popular than ever.

When booking a villa with enough bedrooms for everyone, every member of the family can relish the luxury of their own private space. So once the kids are finally in bed, parents can have the rest of the evening to themselves without having to worry about waking them with the noise of clinking glasses whilst enjoying the beautiful sunsets with the perfect bottle of Cyprus wine.

One of the biggest selling points of a villa right now is that guests can remain relatively self-contained, should they choose to, without needing to use shared facilities such as pools or restaurants. For those who want sheer isolation this holiday accommodation choice could be a major draw, which allows travellers to really spend quality time together under one roof, offering the "A Home away from Home" feeling, only with the added extras and benefits.

"Luckily at Aphrodite Hills Resort, we did not need to create a new product to meet what

may potentially be this season's tourism needs" - Telemachos Hassapis, General Manager of the Aphrodite Hills Property Management told us in a recent interview. "Private villas and the concept of self-catering holidays are something we developed many years ago. The only thing that will change this year is the thorough disinfecting of the properties in addition to the detailed cleaning, prior to each arrival."

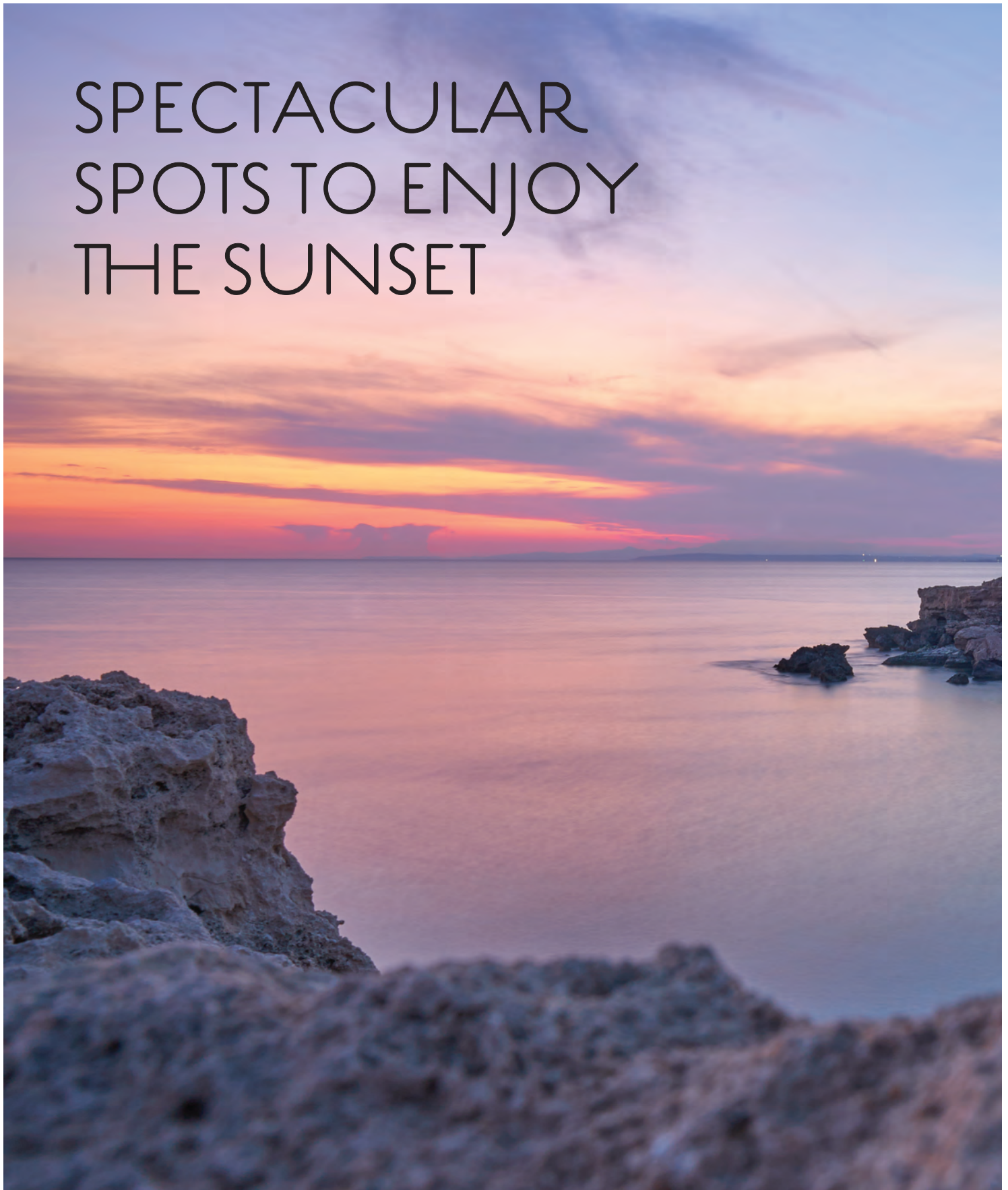
At this multi-award winning five-star resort, the Holiday Residences offers independent stunning villas with private pools and beautiful apartments with shared pools all located within this spectacular and secluded hillside paradise overlooking the Mediterranean, off the south western coastline of the island Cyprus, just a short drive from either Paphos or Limassol.

All guests choosing to stay in any of the many properties of the Holiday Residences can retire to the privacy and safety of their own villa or apartment but still enjoy the conveniences at hand within the resort and an array of sports and leisure activities on their doorstep should they wish to venture out.

Guests can practise golf on the renowned PGA National golf course, practise their back hand at the tennis academy which also features the newly added Padel tennis, improve their shots at the football academy, learn horse-riding, pamper themselves at The Retreat Spa by Atlantica, as well as have lots of child fun at the kids club for children ages 3 to 12 years. For meals, we could not leave out the picturesque Village square in the heart of the resort offering endless culinary experiences in a tranquil and ambient setting.

At Aphrodite Hills Resort, villas and apartments come in all shapes and sizes perfect for couples to large families, with budgets ranging from the most cost effective options up to the exclusive properties that allow guests to live a lavish experience, even if just for a week or two. This resort can be considered a beautiful destination full of life and plenty of things to do, but at the same time a place where you can withdraw at any time. No other resort on the island offers the combined experiences of sociability and isolation at very affordable prices.

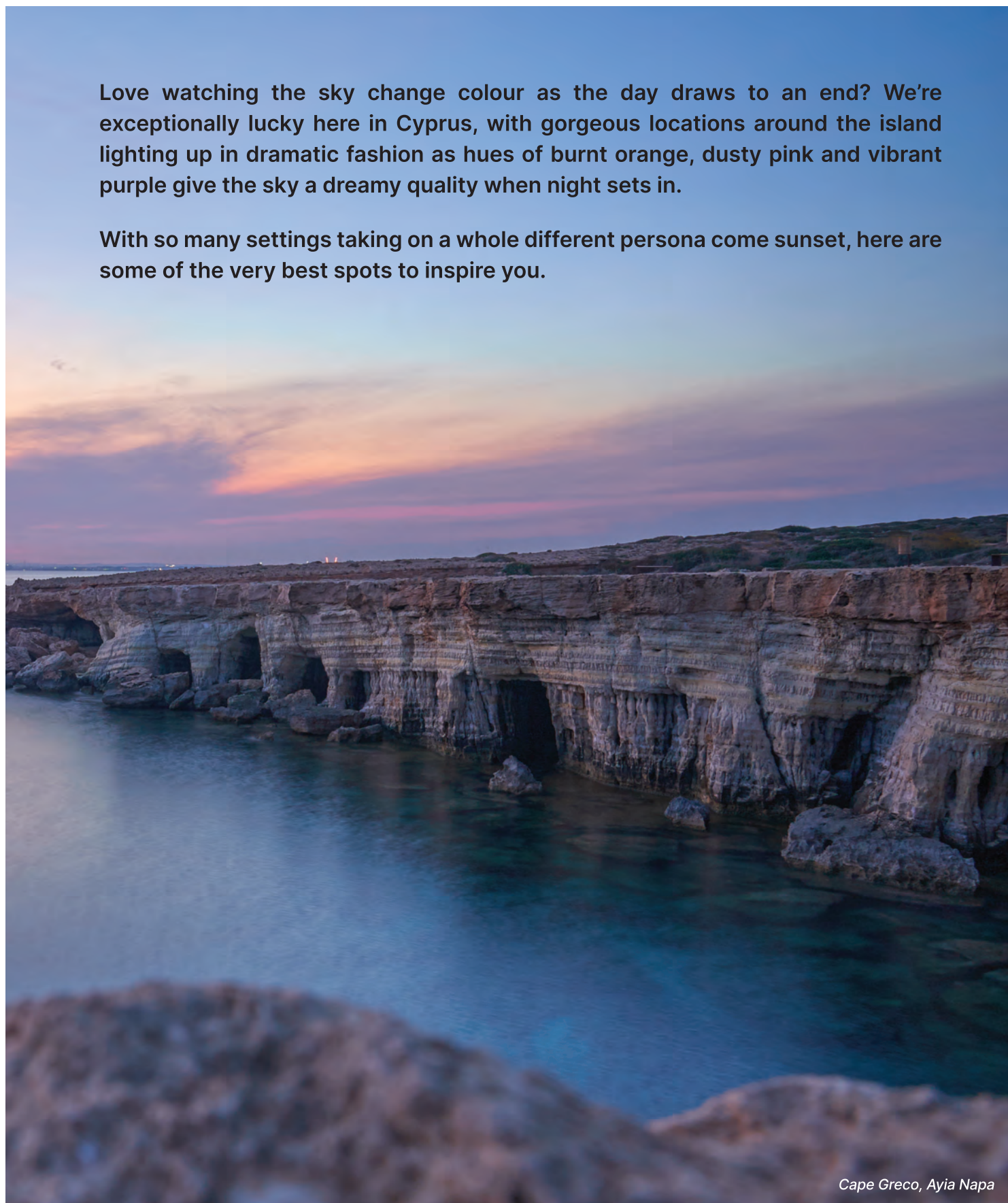
SPECTACULAR SPOTS TO ENJOY THE SUNSET





Love watching the sky change colour as the day draws to an end? We're exceptionally lucky here in Cyprus, with gorgeous locations around the island lighting up in dramatic fashion as hues of burnt orange, dusty pink and vibrant purple give the sky a dreamy quality when night sets in.

With so many settings taking on a whole different persona come sunset, here are some of the very best spots to inspire you.



Cape Greco, Ayia Napa

SUNSET HUES

Curium archaeological site, Limassol district

If you have visited the magnificent Greco-Roman Curium amphitheatre, then you will be well aware that the location and views out to sea are absolutely awe inspiring. But what many people don't know, is that the ancient site witnesses some of the most spectacular sunsets imaginable, as the age-old ruins transform into a fairytale setting, glistening under the setting sun.



Cape Greco, Ayia Napa

Some people flock to this rocky headland and designated national park to embark on a long walk through the nature trails that dissect the area. Others love to jump into the turquoise waters that beckon avid swimmers, and some even choose to have their wedding pictures taken here. But if you are after panoramic views, be sure to head to the area as the sun goes down, lighting up the rugged and wild rocks under brightly coloured skies.



Peyia sea caves, Paphos district

If you live in Paphos, chances are you have enjoyed the sunset here countless times. But for some, this dramatic spot, right by the gorgeous Oniro by the Sea beach establishment, still remains unknown. Located off the main sea caves road and past fields of banana plantations, Edro III has been stranded by the caves since December 2011, and come sunset, the spectacle is bound to take your breath away.



Larnaca Salt Lake

Head to the famous Salt Lake during the day and you'll witness a gorgeous glistening site, backed by the Hala Sultan Tekke and its rising minaret. While the area dries up during the summer months, it doesn't take a great amount of winter rain for it to become a stunning lake again (albeit a shallow one). Particularly impressive during the wetter winter months, flamingos descend on the area during migration. Head here as the sun goes down any time of the year and you may very well be lost for words, as the salt glistens in all its glory, perfectly tinged with red, orange and pink hues.



Aphrodite's Rock, Paphos district

Crowds from near and far flock to this famous spot to catch a glimpse of the place where legend has it that Aphrodite, Ancient Greek Goddess of Love and Beauty, once rose from the frothy seas. And hardly surprisingly, the destination has now become the most mythical and famous on the island. The mighty rock and endless blue backdrop is picture postcard perfect during the day, but once the sun dips below the horizon, fiery crimson and orange hues light up the sky, adding to the drama of the spectacle.



Akamas Peninsula

Akamas is truly spectacular at any time of day, with the dramatic rocky coastline dropping down to greet the deep blue of the Med. But once the hot Cyprus sun begins to disappear, the setting becomes one that can only be described as heavenly. After all, the west coast of the island is renowned for its magical sunsets. Stand back without any interruptions to really indulge in the splendour of it all, and if you happen to be a photographer, be sure to have your camera on hand.



Troodos Peaks

This might be an obvious one, but how often do you actually sit in peaceful isolation to take in the view of the sun going down over the highest heights of Cyprus? Blissfully quiet and absolutely magical, if you find just the right vantage point, Troodos is the perfect place to reconnect with your inner self and let all worries wash away. End the day here and you will witness the mountain tops glisten, with the setting sun often forming a gradual gradient of colours, lighting up the tips of the trees so gracefully blanketing the dramatic mountaintops.



Paphos Medieval Castle

Majestically commanding attention by the Paphos harbour, the Medieval Castle is widely recognised as one of the hallmarks of the Paphos region and an absolute must-see for any visitor. And once the sun begins to set over the coastline, the castle itself takes on magical proportions, set against a multi-coloured backdrop that brings the history and splendour of the ancient site to life in vibrant fashion.



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