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THE SUNDAY TIMES

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Travel

TRAVEL SECTION OF THE YEAR

9-PAGESPECIAL



Secret Greece

- The best summer breaks
- Bettany Hughes sets sail
- Art attack in Athens

Scott Dunn
ANYTHING ELSE IS JUST A HOLIDAY



Been there, Dunn that.

Travel Greece special

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Evia. It's a culturally rich spot, second only to Crete in terms of its archaeological treasures, but you probably won't be seeing them, because you'll either be in the hotel's natural hot springs or receiving one of the 18 treatments scheduled for your stay. These include body peels, ayurvedic massages, hydromassages and reflexology. The course begins and ends with a medical examination, and prices start at £1,418pp, half-board (spabreaks.com).

SAIL LIKE AN OLIGARCH

In 2015, Fleewinter launched affordable superyacht sailing in the Ionian Sea. The yachts – Jeannous, Argentous, Aurous and, new for 2018, Lunous – come with a skipper, a cook and all the essential toys, from paddleboards and windsurfers to a speedboat for fun and for posing. The 65ft Lunous has four double cabins and a bunk annexe that's suitable for a couple of kids, and it'll be based at Piraeus for sorties into the Saronics this summer. A week starts at £1,090pp, half-board, including watersports, fuel and marina fees (fleewinter.com). Fly to Athens with easyJet.

WILD SWIMMING IN EPIRUS

If you've ever gazed on the mainland from the east coast of Corfu, you've been looking at Epirus, a rarely visited, little-known and ridiculously beautiful region of mainland Greece with an embarrassment of cultural and natural riches. Yes, there are secret beaches and Instagrammable tavernas, but the best stuff is inland: the magnificent Vikos Gorge, technically the deepest on earth; the jade-green wild swimming on the

Acheron River; mysterious Dodona, the oldest oracle in Greece; and, just over the county line in Thessaly, the cliff-top cloisters of Meteora, Patrick Leigh Fermor's giddy "monasteries of the air". See them all on a one-week tailor-made trip with Original Travel; from £1,800pp, B&B (originaltravel.co.uk).

ADULTS-ONLY CORFU

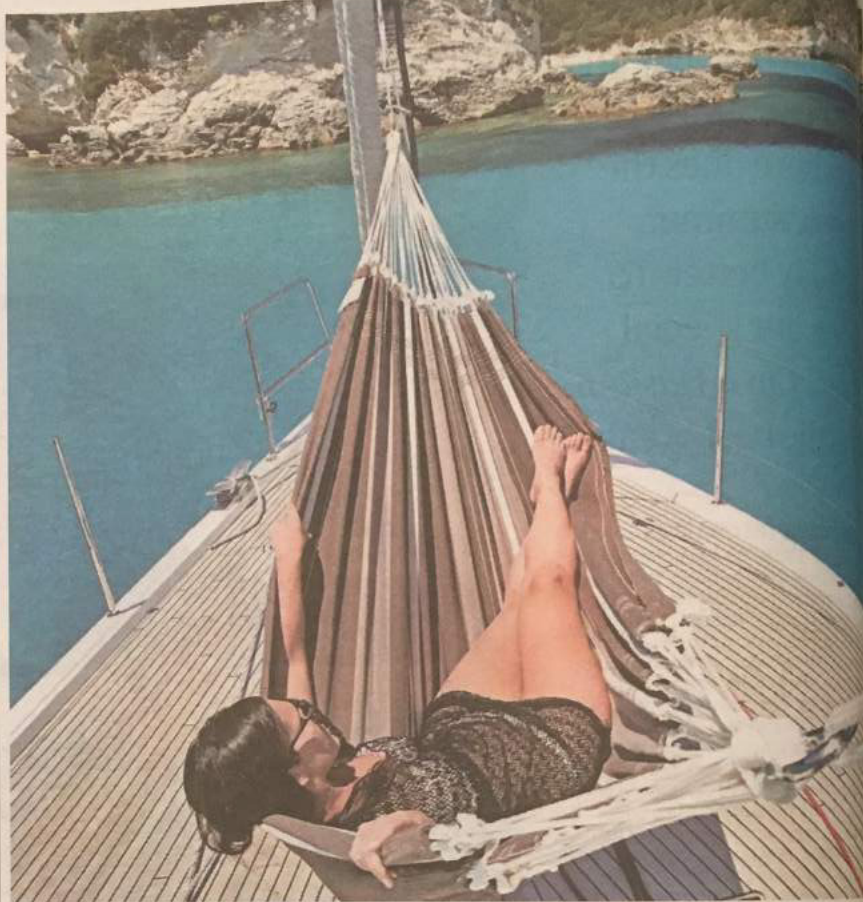
The elegant MarBella Nido opens on May 5. It's in Agios Ioannis Peristeron, next door to its big sister, the MarBella Corfu, and just down the coast from Corfu Town. Built to resemble a Venetian loggia, the 70-suite, adults-only hotel is a flower-filled maze of alleyways and courtyards, with public spaces that feel like the interior of an 18th-century merchant's house. Every suite has a sea view and there's a pebbly beach down the hill and across the road, though you're more likely to loaf poolside, gazing over the Corfiot Straits. A week starts at £994pp, B&B (sovereign.com).

PARTY TIME ON MYKONOS

The Party People's Republic of Mykonos is bright, white and stays up all night. This season's opening parties take place from late May to mid-June, and after that it's full tilt until autumn. The village of Agios Ioannis is three miles south of Mykonos Town, and here you'll find Villa Tramonto d'Oro, a six-bedroom party pad with a huge pool and sunset views across to Delos. It has air-con, wi-fi, fat outdoor sofas and maid service, but, unless you're minted, you're going to need 11 friends or relatives to make this work: a week in June starts at £13,362, or £1,114pp (cvvillas.com). Fly to Mykonos with easyJet.

PELOPONNESE SPA RETREAT

Euphoria is not a state of ecstasy, but a deep and contented feeling of wellbeing. The new Euphoria Retreat, in the woods above Mistras, on the Peloponnese, aims to achieve exactly that through the application of a wellness concept inspired, it says, by a combination of ancient Greek and Taoist philosophies and Hippocratic and Chinese medicine. It all takes place in a 45-room complex, which, when it opens this May, will feature a spa spread over four floors – the biggest to open in Europe for years. Five nights of Euphoria start at £1,250pp, full-board (thehealthyholidaycompany.co.uk).



SUSPENDED ANIMATION
Sail the Ionian on a luxury yacht; above right, Villa Tramonto d'Oro, Mykonos; and the cliffs of Meteora

Unless stated, prices include flights from London

LEARN ANCIENT GREEK

ACE Cultural Tours is the commercial wing of the ACE Foundation, a significant sponsor of archaeological research. It follows, then, that its 11-day tour of Athens, Delphi and the Peloponnese is pretty rigorous. It's led by Carolyn Perry, a former lecturer in ancient history and mythology at Queen Mary College and education officer at the British Museum. Days are spent visiting sites including the Acropolis, the Temple of Apollo in Corinth, the Lion Gate at Mycenae and ancient Olympia, and nights listening to talks about the Panhellenic Games, the

heroes of the Greeks and exactly why Athens never got on with Sparta. Prices start at £2,450pp, half-board, departing on May 14 (aceculturaltours.co.uk).

IONIAN WATER PARK WITH ROOMS

When I was a child, the dream holiday was a hotel with a pool. Then everyone wanted a waterslide. Now it's getting out of hand, and the proof is at the Grecotel Olympia Riviera, in the Peloponnese town of Loutra Killinis, home to the biggest hotel water park in Europe. Five acres of aqua attractions include a Looping Rocket, a Space Hole, multi-lane Water



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