

WELLNESS EDITOR

# Marina Efraimoglou, Founder Of Euphoria Retreat, On The Process Of Transformation & Healing

L'ESPECE • CHRYSE BOUTIN

One of Europe's leading wellness destinations, Euphoria Retreat takes Greek healing to a whole new level. Each programme integrates modern and traditional practices in a serene setting within ancient Mykonos. The founder, Marina Efraimoglou, first found inspiration for her project on an immersive trip to Golden Door in California in 1999. Her life-changing experience inspired the former banker to create something unique in the heart of her motherland. And thus, Euphoria Retreat was born. We speak to the wellness entrepreneur about her process of transformation and healing and how guests can benefit from these holistic itineraries.

## What was your first healthy holiday experience?

After leaving chemotherapy back in 1991, I visited many healing centres and spas around the world trying out various diets and fasting regimens. But the pivotal experience for me came in 1999, when I visited Golden Door in California. It was this special place, a year-round destination retreat immersed in nature, so then inspired me to create Euphoria Retreat.



Image courtesy of Euphoria Retreat

## How do you reboot after a hectic week?

Nature is my medicine. Whether I'm swimming in the sea in the summer or out hiking in the winter, we have some beautiful hikes around Euphoria. So, I like to stay close to nature throughout the year. Also, time spent with my family is very soothing, particularly laughing with my nephews and niece.

## Who are your role models and why?

Throughout my life, I found inspiration in Mother Theresa and also Mahatma Gandhi. Closer to home, I hugely admire the literary legend Odysseus, one of the great pre-Hellenic heroes of Greek mythology. He is famous for his intelligence, leadership and courage to stay on his goals. This is why I created Euphoria's Odysseus Journey, which is a five-day self-discovery retreat that helps you to identify and guide your inner voice as you search for spiritual and emotional purpose.

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## What was the incentive behind opening this resort?

Euphoria evolved from a passion born out of my personal path. After overcoming cancer twice in my late 30s and then suffering exhaustion and burnout in the world of investment banking, I began to integrate holistic therapies and ancient wisdom into my life. I decided to study Traditional Chinese Medicine, the Five Elements and other alternative health methods. Inspired by my own recovery I wanted to create a place where people could be gently guided and motivated to live a more fulfilling and genuinely satisfying way of life.



Image courtesy of Euphoria Retreat

## What do you hope guests will take away from their stay?

My hope is for guests, who have been through pain in their personal lives, to begin to see the patterns, lessons and deeper meaning from these experiences. Plus, to learn to integrate the growth that comes from them. This is how we evolve into more empathic and compassionate human beings, to find happiness, harmony and balance, but it is also how we make sense of what is seemingly so 'wild', and come out of victimhood so we can be our own heroes and heroines. Odysseus's journey was not without challenges.

## What sets this resort and the retreats you offer apart from the rest?

After visiting many healing centres around the world I felt that all too often the process of transformation was linked to sacrifice, suffering and denial. Eventually, I realised that what I hoped to offer at Euphoria Retreat lay in my own Greek heritage. The ancient Greek philosophers viewed life as joyful, stressed and full of exciting potential for growth, the Greek word 'Euphoria' is about living and feeling 'well'. I merged this approach with the Five Elements into our ethos philosophy and called it Euphoria Methodos, which is the inspiration and basis of all our retreats. It's also the incredibly kind-hearted people, our attention to detail, the design and architecture—of indoor and outdoor spaces—and our beautiful location.



Image courtesy of Euphoria Retreat

## What are the crucial factors involved in implementing a successful healthy lifestyle change?

I think it's important to be patient with yourself. Make small changes, such as trying to drink more water upon waking or going for a daily walk—this doesn't expect to become a marathon runner in a month. Share your journey with loved ones so they can support you and even join you. Be aware that what you read, watch and even how you talk all have an effect—so consciously seek out inspiring stuff.

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## What does true balance look like?

I think true balance is about the dance between yin and yang. We need movement and stillness in equal measure, time with others and also time with ourselves. Guilt is very unhelpful, so try to enjoy the treats of life as part of a healthy joyous lifestyle. And remember that a good night's sleep is the best antidote to a busy day—respect and honour this.

## What's the best advice you've ever been given?

Trust your inner voice and look deep inside for answers—not to your thoughts, but to your essence. Be bold in your weaknesses and know that they make up your humanness, rather than feeling exposed by them. Do unto yourself as you would to others—this is the basis of self-care. Often the most critical voice we hear is the one inside our heads.