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Greece Will Start Welcoming Travelers in May: 10 Luxe Resorts to Stay in When You Get There




The Mediterranean country will open May 14 to vaccinated travelers or those with proof of a negative Covid-19 test.

By SANDRA RAMANI 



Grace Hotel Santorini

As vaccination efforts increase across the country and new CDC guidelines clear fully vaccinated travelers for take-off (with some caveats), it feels like everyone is starting to plan getaways for summer and beyond. According to luxury travel experts, the place we are all dreaming about going is the Mediterranean—specifically, Greece, which announced that it will open May 14 to travelers who have been vaccinated or who show proof of a negative Covid-19 test taken within three days of their departure. With other traditional summer destinations such as France, Italy and Spain looking likely to remain closed to Americans for at least the next few months, 2021 is poised to be Greece’s moment in the sun—and hotels, travel operators, private jet companies and even cruise lines are responding accordingly.

“Because most clients are or expect to be vaccinated by summer, they are literally begging for our help to ‘restore their sanity’—as one client put it—with an annual pilgrimage to the Mediterranean,” says Jack Ezon of Embark Beyond, adding that  percent of client inquiries this month have been for travel to the Mediterranean

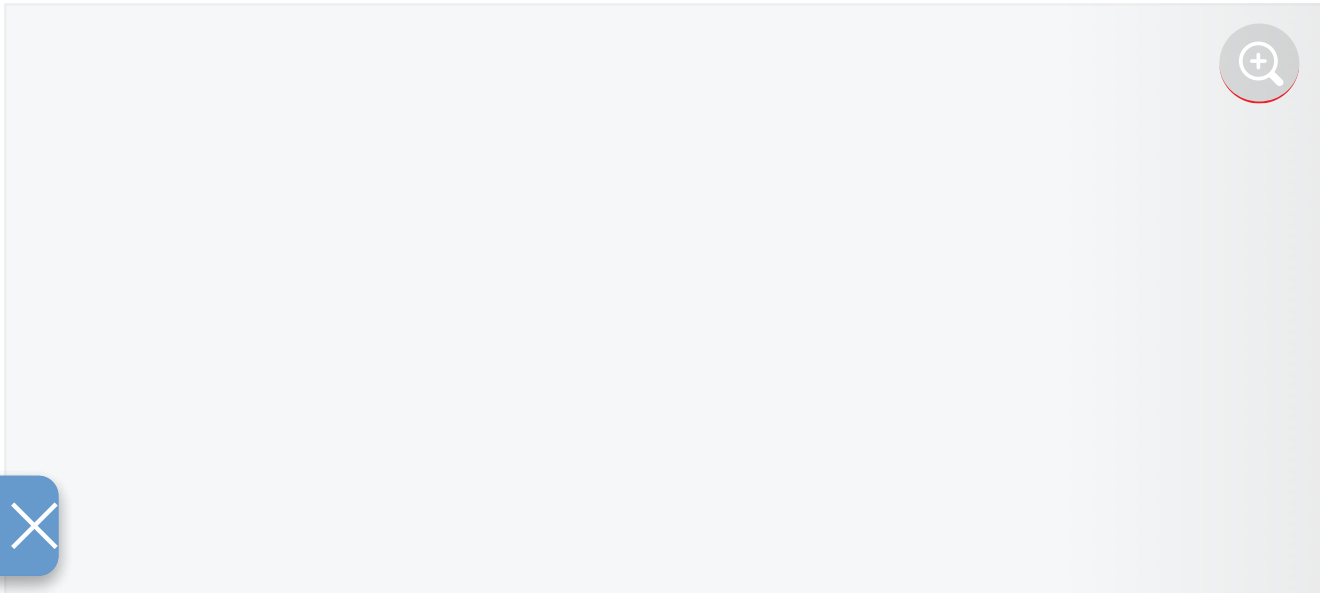
from June to September. In response, the company has launched the Greek and Ottoman Summer program, which offers guaranteed upgrades and other perks for bookings made before April 22. Travel planner Butterfield & Robinson, meanwhile, is offering “slow travel” itineraries in Greece that highlight lesser-known destinations like the island of Sikinos.

Known for its private jet experiences, TCS World Travel has introduced the Undiscovered Greek Isles Itinerary. Starting at \$14,925 per person, the program whisks you to four islands—Paros, Naxos, Folegandros and Milos—for helicopter rides, yacht sailings, cave adventures and more. Finally, if you’ve missed being on the water, Celebrity Cruises is introducing its long-awaited Celebrity Apex—the second ship in the brand’s award-winning luxury Edge series—in Greece this summer, with seven-night sailings starting June 19. (The ship will sail with a vaccinated crew and will be available to vaccinated adult guests and children with negative Covid-19 tests.)

Naturally, all this activity has also led to lots of excitement on the hotel front, with properties across the mainland and islands gearing up to welcome international

guests. Here's a look at the latest news from 10 luxury options, spanning from Santorini and Mykonos to the Kassandra peninsula.

Kalesma





Designed by the same architects as the new Mykonos airport, which is also opening this year, the new Kalesma—launching on May 20—sits on five acres on a hilltop above Ornos Bay, about two miles from town. All 25 accommodations are either suites or villas; the former have private patios and pools, the latter two or four bedrooms, living and dining areas, gyms, pools and full kitchens with wine refrigerators and pre-stocked pantries. Wherever you stay, you'll wake up to the smell of yeast-baked bread wafting from the resort's brick oven, then can spend the day at

the infinity pool, enjoying Cycladic specialties and sea views at the Pere Ubu restaurant, or on hotel-arranged yacht charters or private shopping trips. Design-conscious guests will also love the overall contemporary-chic vibe, which has been crafted using regional wood, marble and stone; don't miss the Rick Owens furniture in the lobby, as this is the only hotel in the world to feature pieces by the noted designer.

Photo : Kalesma

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Grace Hotel Santorini





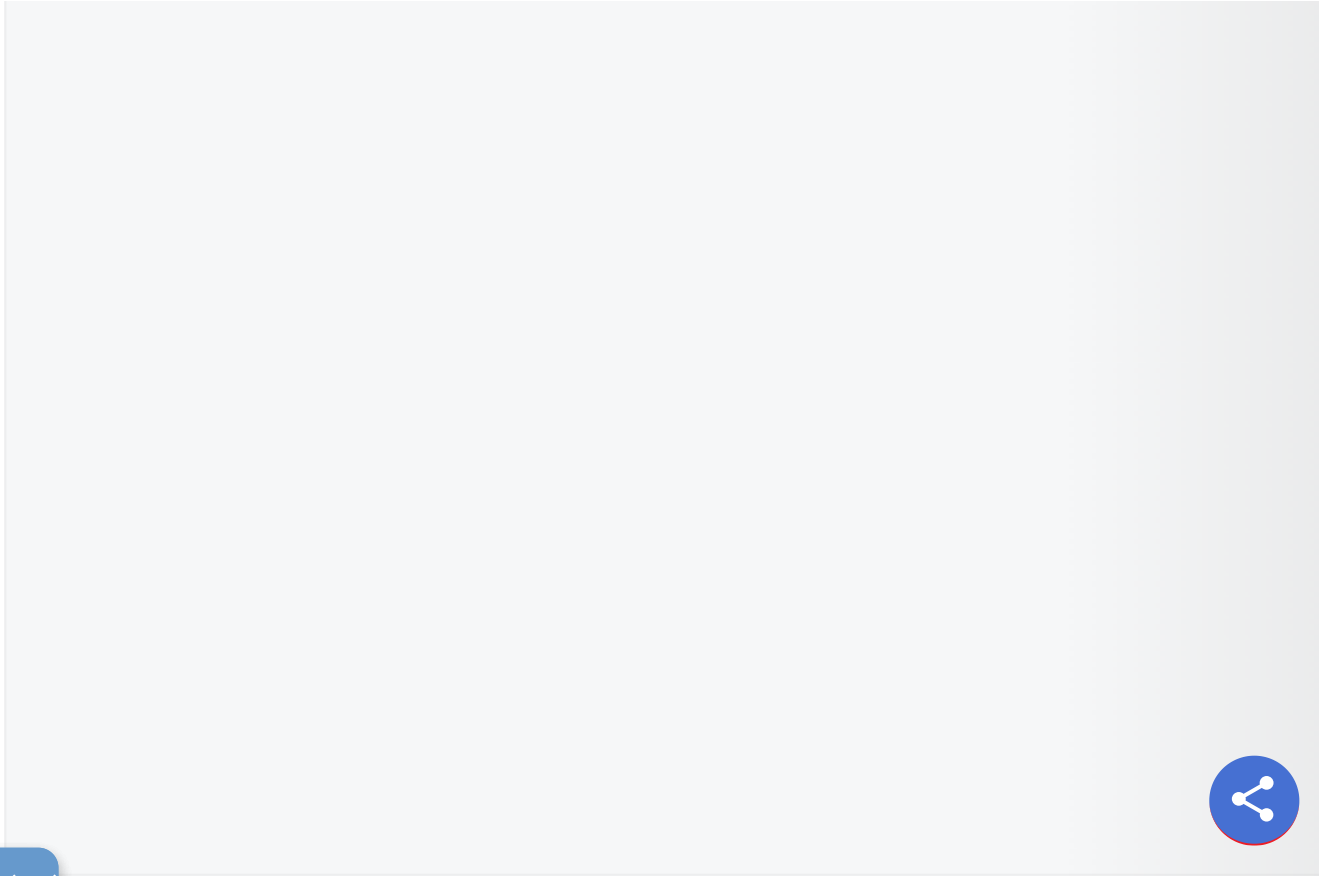
Auberge Resorts Collection's sole European hotel sits on the cliffs of Santorini, in the village of Imerovigli. In addition to being one of the only clifftop hotels to welcome children, the boutique spot is beloved for its spectacular sunset views and shimmering pool (which, at 72-feet-long, is among the largest on the island).

New for 2021 is the refreshed Grace Villa, a two-bedroom accommodation with full kitchen, dining area, swimming pool, wine and cigar bar, outdoor fireplace and steam room; access to an on-call private chef and a dedicated villa manager/butler is also included. The hotel is also rolling out a new program of experiences that showcase the island and its culture, from honey tastings, visits with local artisans and bespoke sandal-making sessions to cave explorations, “hidden” hikes and clifftop yoga. Cap it off with cocktails at the renowned 363 Champagne Lounge, named for its perch 363 meters (1,191 feet) above sea level.

Photo : Grace Hotel Santorini

The Rooster





...iving June 1 on the small, laid-back island of Antiparos (best known as the

location of Tom Hanks’s Greek vacation home), the Rooster is a lifestyle resort that embraces the philosophy of “slow living”—so expect sustainable practices, organic cuisine and wellness-focused activities. The 17 individual “houses” are crafted in a rustic-chic décor and feature furnished terraces and sundecks, outdoor showers, freshwater pools and views of either the gardens or the Aegean. Feast on meals made from farm-fresh fruits and vegetables, seafood caught daily by local fishermen, and cheeses and other goodies made on the island; cooking classes and farm tours are also available. The House of Healing (aka spa) is where to go for bespoke treatments using organic products, while a secluded pavilion is the spot for complimentary yoga and meditation. Owner Athanasia Comninos is passionate about both Antiparos and safeguarding it from overtourism, so has worked to create a haven that is respectful to the destination.

Photo : By Yannis Rizomarkos



Kanava Hotels & Resorts





Greek-owned Kanava Hotels & Resorts operate a number of standout luxury hotels across the islands, so it's hard to pick a favorite—but you can't go wrong with the three Santorini options, which celebrate authentic local connections and sustainable tourism. The iconic Vedema, a Luxury Collection Resort—the brand's first on the island—underwent a redesign in 2020 of all suites and villas, the restaurant and the public spaces; the new pool overlooks the surrounding vineyards, and the hotel's new Ionian suites have views of the medieval village of Galohori. Don't miss a sustainably sourced meal in the Alati Restaurant, which

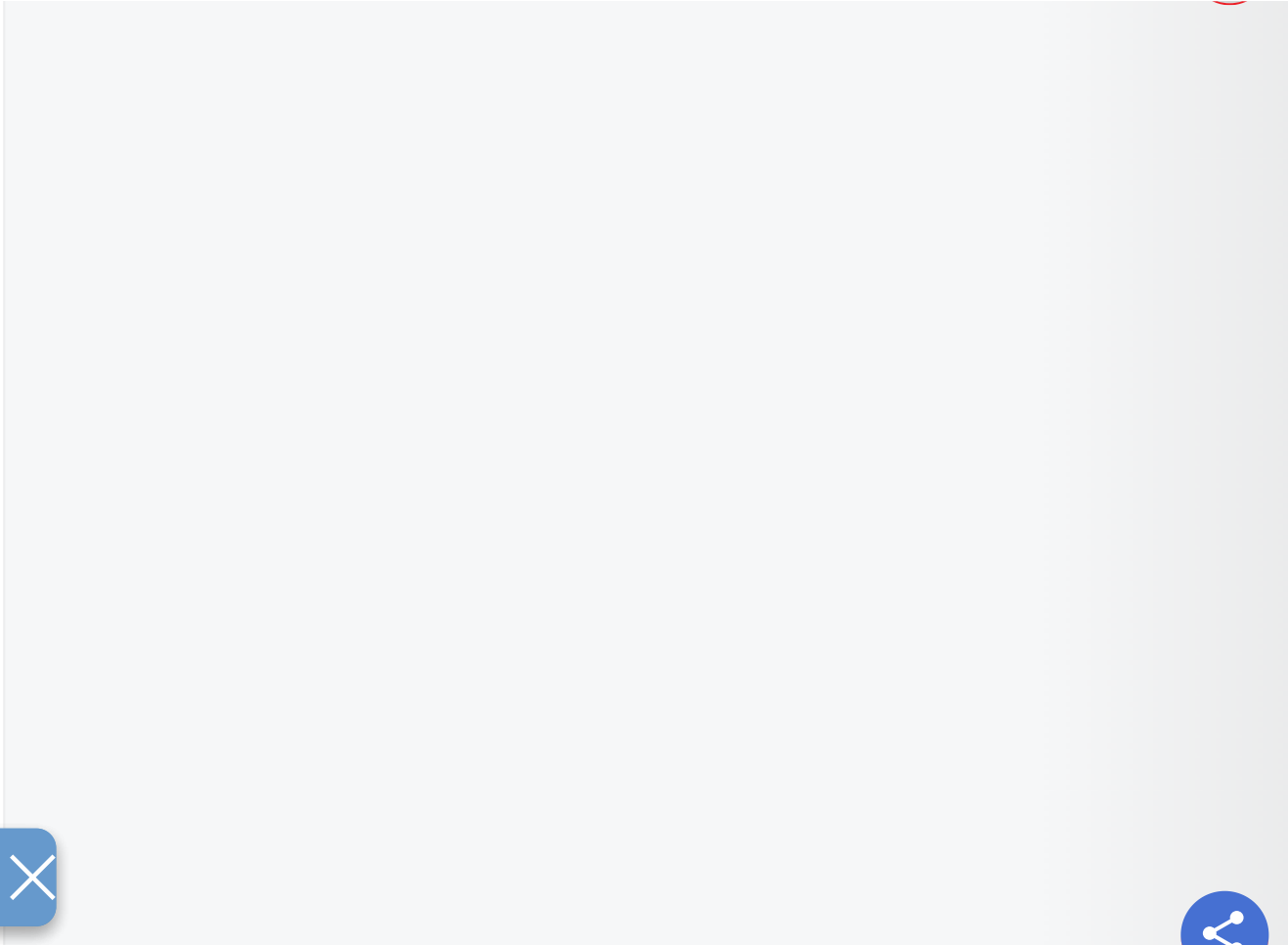
is housed inside a 400-year-old wine cellar.

Also a Luxury Collection member, Mystique sits on the edge of Santorini's famous caldera, in the town of Oja. This year sees the launch of a new gastronomy program helmed by executive chef Olivier Campanha, who comes from stints at Michelin-starred restaurants like Paris's La Tour d'Argent, as well as the arrival of the poolside Anthologist boutique, stocked with vintage fashion, artisan home décor items and statement jewelry. Finally, Design Hotels member Istoria Hotel is a contemporary gem on Perivolos's black-sand beach. This year a renovated private beach club joins existing favorite spots like the much-Instagrammed green tile swimming pool with sunken bar.

Photo : Istoria Hotel

Amanzoe







Reopening on April 21, the hilltop Amanzoe in Port Heli is the ideal place to find some post-lockdown well-being. New for 2021 is a selection of Wellness Retreats—each four nights or longer—that address a range of topics and issues. The Restore & Rebalance Retreat, for example, works to increase clarity and focus with mindfulness practices, sound therapy and more, while Sleep Enhancement uses yoga, meditation and bodywork to balance the nervous system. Fitness in Nature, meanwhile, gets you out into the area with hiking, cross-training, ocean kayaking and more. This year the hotel will also be partnering with the LUX Tennis Academy to offer private tennis lessons and clinics—suitable for all ages—run by high-profile coaches. Starting in May, you can refuel from all the activity with a Garden to Table Experience, a private, chef-led culinary session and meal featuring products from the resort’s organic gardens.


Photo : Amanzoe



Kenshō Psarou





One of the newer hotels on Mykonos, Kenshō Psarou is set on a sandy beach southeast of the main town. Each of the 31 rooms has been individually decorated with pieces by such noted designers as Patricia Urquiola and Paola Navone, and comes with its own hot tub or plunge pool, while the four-bedroom villa has ansive outdoor space, a pool, a private garden and sea views. The fine dining restaurant has drawn raves for chef Ippokratis Anagnostelis's signature take on

modern Mediterranean cuisine, which he infuses with Greek, Japanese and Peruvian flavors. Head to the beachside spa for treatments that use French line Codage, or have the concierge set up a helicopter or yacht trip to explore the area.

Photo : Kenshō Psarou

Domes Zeen, a Luxury Collection Resort





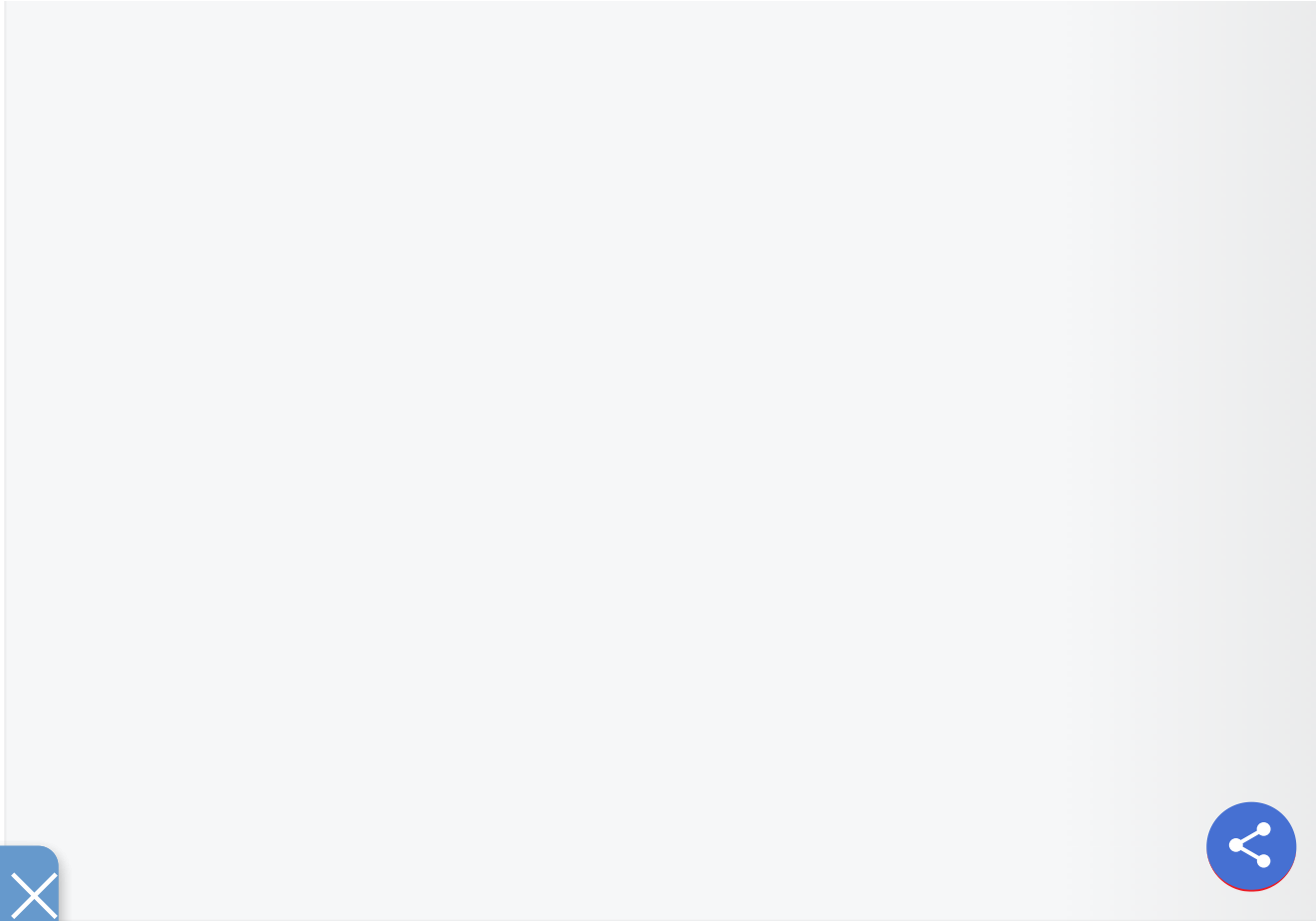
Located on the north coast of Crete, Domes Zeen opened in July 2020 with 101 sophisticated rooms that range from expansive villas to family bungalows, many with private terraces or pools. Soak up the seaside location at the fine dining Estia restaurant or the more casual Beach House, both serving Greek fare with Cretan influences. Head to the Jungle Spa for al fresco treatments, explore the island with activities like mountain biking, horseback riding, golfing and sailing, or wander

through the charming old town of Chania, with its open-air markets, elegant homes and 16th-century lighthouse.

Photo : Domes Zeen

Andronis Arcadia





Opened in 2019 as the newest member of the Andronis group of hotels, Andronis Arcadia is one of Santorini's few family-focused five-star options. There's plenty of space to spread out in one of the sugar cube-like villas, which range from one to four bedrooms and feature their own pools, spacious living areas and sustainably made furnishings. A 10-minute walk from the center of Oia, the hotel offers lots of family-friendly activities, from cooking lessons and photo safaris to kids' spa treatments. With the brand's Andronis Loyalty Club program launching this summer, there is more incentive to check out Arcadia's sister hotels on Santorini, too: Andronis Luxury Suites is famous for its award-winning Lycabettus restaurant and its 29 cliff-set suites, while Andronis Concept Wellness Resort is the place to unwind with hikes, yoga, nutrition sessions and CBD-infused spa treatments.

Photo : Andronis Arcadia





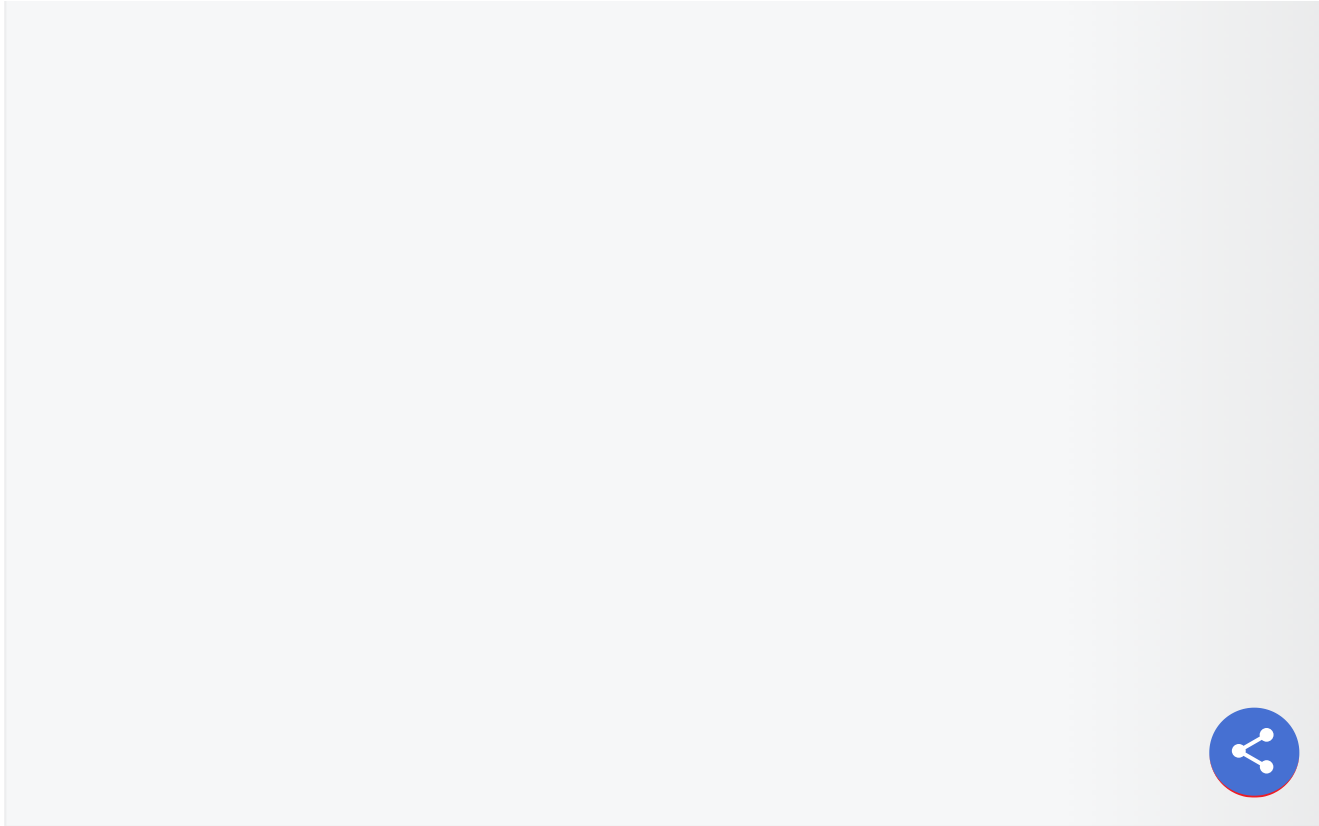


Ringed by sandy beaches and blue-green waters, the Kassandra peninsula is one of three peninsulas of the Halkidiki region of northeastern Greece, just south of Thessaloniki. It's there, on a thousand-acre eco-reserve, that you'll find Sani Resort, a popular resort complex that's home to five distinct hotels, 22 restaurants (from casual Greek to Michelin-starred) and notable facilities like a Rafa Nadal Tennis Center, a private marina, designer shopping and five spas. (Somewhat surprisingly, given its size, Sani is also the first carbon-neutral resort in Greece and has won awards for its sustainability.) New this season is the \$35 million renovation of the family-friendly Porto Sani hotel and its 98 suites, the arrival of a Spanish restaurant from Michelin-starred chef David Ibarboure and the launch of the Bear Grylls Survival Academy, through which families and teens can learn outdoor skills and have adventures in the surrounding wetlands and pine forests. Whichever hotel you choose in the complex, book one of the specially designated Xi Suites to enjoy perks like a dedicated concierge, VIP beach services, priority reservations, a private chauffeured tour and more.

Photo : Sani Resort

Katikies Garden





ated on the grounds of a former monastery in the old Venetian neighborhood
of Fira on Santorini, Leading Hotels of the World member Katikies Garden is

home to 40 suites that feature private pools, gardens or verandas. Hotel facilities include a seaview pool, a bar and a spa, but the hotel is best known for its food and beverage program, which includes cooking classes, wine tastings led by the in-house master of wine and trips to area wineries and cellars. Katikies is also home to the renowned Selene restaurant—a local legend—which is helmed by chef Ettore Botrini, a Greek native who has worked in Michelin-starred restaurants around Europe.

Photo : Katikies Garden

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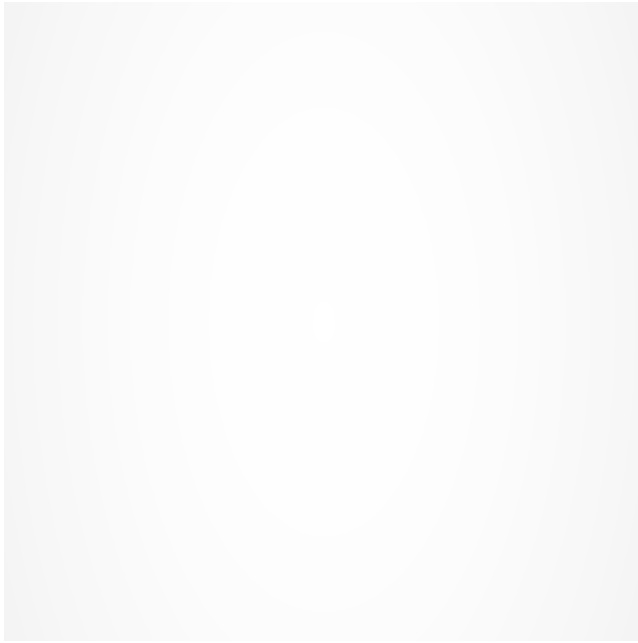
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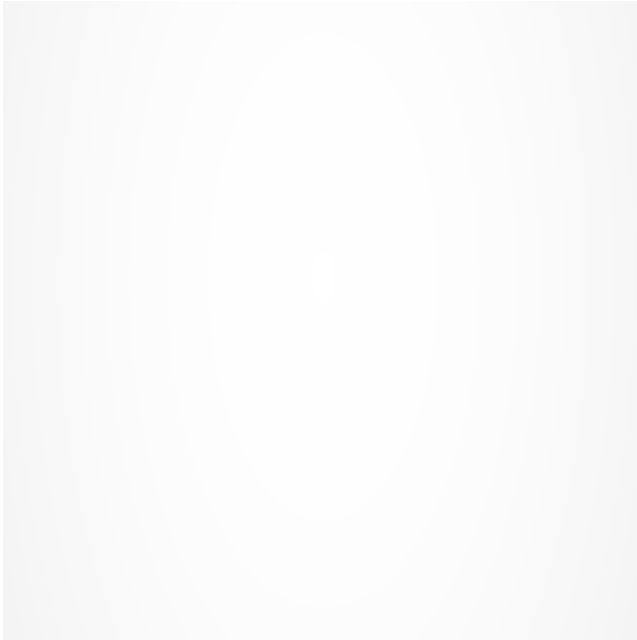


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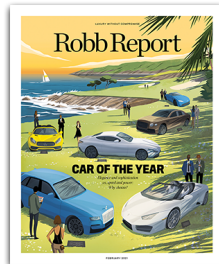


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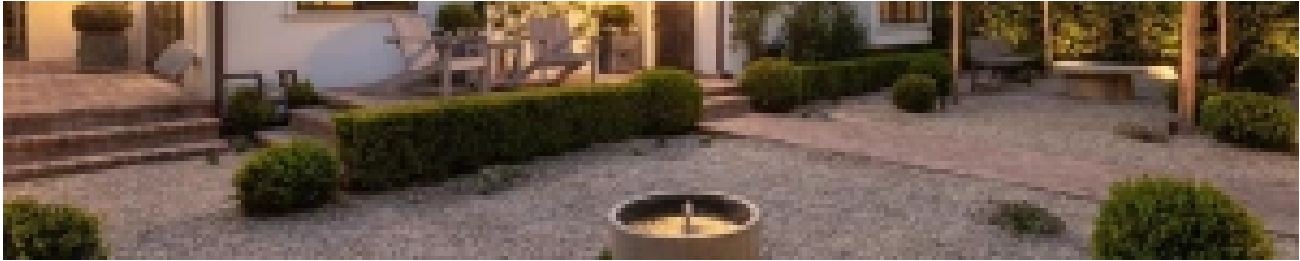




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