It is my pleasure to welcome you to Wyndham Grand Athens, Wyndham Loutraki Poseidon Resort and Ramada Loutraki Poseidon Resort, three luxurious properties developed and managed by Zeus International, the strategic partner of Wyndham Hotel Group in the Balkans.

Following the successful opening of Wyndham Grand Athens in 2016, Wyndham Hotel Group has decided to extend its collaboration with Zeus International and entrust us with the management of their two new properties in Loutraki, as well as the future management of 20 more properties in Greece, Cyprus, Bulgaria and Romania over the next 10 years. Their trust fills us with pride and pushes us to become better. At the same time, we are certain that our collaboration with the American hotel giant will have a significant financial impact on both Greek tourism in general and on the areas affected by these investments in particular.

While there is so much for you to discover in both our locations, if you should decide to relax indoors instead, we are here to provide you with the best this country has to offer, from our renowned Greek hospitality to our even more famous Greek cuisine. Our Athenian hotel is ideal for business or leisure travelers who wish to stay right at the heart of the city, while our two new hotels in the spa town of Loutraki offer an idyllic escape from city life, an escape that comes with the signature high-end services of the Wyndham and Ramada Worldwide brands. The upscale Wyndham Loutraki Poseidon Resort offers 107 suites, some equipped with private pools, while the midscale Ramada Loutraki Poseidon Resort features 196 suites and bungalows.

I am happy to announce that 2018 will see the opening of two more seaside properties: Wyndham Garden Attica Riviera with 130 rooms in the holiday resort of Mati (29k from Athens), and Ramada Plaza Attica Riviera with 352 rooms in Vravrona (44k from Athens), famous for its sanctuary of Artemis.

In closing, I would like to extend my gratitude to all our customers who have chosen Wyndham Grand Athens for their accommodation in the capital in the past year, as well as to Wyndham Rewards members who keep returning to our Athens hotel. Finally, a big thank you to our dedicated staff who give their best on a daily basis, maintaining the high standards of our services.

On behalf of everyone here at Zeus International, we wish you a pleasant stay and hope that you have an unforgettable experience.

Haris Siganos
Executive Director
Zeus International
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GRAND THE HOTEL MAGAZINE

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Cover photo: Street art detail, Metaxourgeio area, Athens © Clairy Moustafellou
WHAT’S ON
The city’s events, from modern art to classical opera
BY XENIA GEORGIADOU

BARYSHNIKOV PLAYS NIJINSKY
10-13/07/2017
“We came from the same place, trained at the same school, both danced with the Mariinsky ballet and both left, never to look back. Yet these are the only things I have in common with the great Nijinsky. In other regards, we moved in completely different directions, with completely different motives,” says Mikhail Baryshnikov. The celebrated Russian dancer has admitted to turning down 15 proposals to play the greatest male ballet dancer of all times until he accepted an invitation by Robert Wilson in 2014 for “Letter to a Man,” a performance based on Nijinsky’s diaries. The play follows his gradual descent into madness and reenacts scenes from his troubled relationship with dancer and Ballets Russes founder Sergei Diaghilev, to whom the show’s title refers.

SAVVOPOULOS AT THE STADIUM
12/07/2017
Popular and enduring Greek singer-songwriter Dionysis Savvopoulos is the headline act at a big concert in support of Skai TV’s Oloi Mazi Bormou (Together We Can) campaign, titled “Long Live Greek Song.” He will be joined by established and up-and-coming singers and musicians for a show that will contain highlights from his own career, but also popular songs by the likes of Michalis Sougioul, Vassilis Tsitsanis and Giorgos Zambetas.

HISTORY OF A THEATER COMPANY
To 27/07/2017
The exhibition “75 Years of the Karolos Koun Theater: 75 Objects” showcases costumes, props, photographs, models, performance programs, reviews and newspaper clippings about landmark moments in the history of one of Greece’s foremost theater companies, in an effort to draw attention to its significant archive.

HIDDEN TREASURES
To 30/07/2017
Archaeologist Heinrich Schliemann recounted how his wife, Sophia Engas- tromenou-Schliemann, an avid fan of Homer who had practically memorized The Iliad, would sit by and watch him at work from morning to night at some excavation site or another. When Schliemann discovered a hoard of impressive jewelry, utensils and tools made of gold, silver, amber and bronze hidden under the floors of 3rd-century BC buildings in Troy, Sophia kept a part of the findings. Following her husband’s death, she donated these finds to Greece’s National Archaeological Museum in 1892. Today these vessels, adornments and marble idols – among other artifacts – have been taken out of storage and put on display in the Hall of the Altar as part of the institution’s “Unseen Museum” initiative.

DIFFERENT FACES OF LOVE
To 23/07/2017
The group show “Eros, Iros,” curated by Iris Kritikou, brings together work by acclaimed and up-and-coming artists on the theme of love and desire. The works explore different manifestations of love: heroic, desperate, dark, platonic, forbidden and Dionysian, with references to literature and art history – as the title borrowed from the short story by early 20th-century Greek writer Alexandros Papadimitriou suggests.

Panathenaic Stadium (Kallimarmaro): Vassilios Konstantinou, www.oikomiaboroume.gr (Metro station: Acropolis, Syntagma)

IL TROVATORE
21, 23, 25 & 27/07/2017
The Greek National Opera is participating in the country’s biggest summer festival with Giuseppe Verdi’s ever-popular “Il trovatore.” This four-act melodrama is presented in an impressive production, with top-flight performers in the main roles, such as Walter Fraccaro, Cecilia Costea, Elena Manistina, Dimitris Plataniotis and Dimitris Tiliakos. It is directed by Stefanos Poda, who has also done the sets, costumes and lighting, and conducted by GNO artistic director Miltos Logiadis.

Panathenaic Stadium (Kallimarmaro): Vassilios Konstantinou, www.greekfestival.gr (Metro station: Acropolis, Syntagma)

ONASSIS CULTURAL CENTER: 107 Syngrou, www.greekfestival.gr (Metro station: Syngrou Fix)

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Panathenaic Stadium (Kallimarmaro): Vassilios Konstantinou, www.oikomiaboroume.gr (Metro station: Acropolis, Syntagma)
**PHOTOGRAPHIC TRENDS**

To 31/07/2017

The Athens Photo Festival, hailed as the biggest photography event in southeastern Europe, is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year with a big show. The main part of the program consists of an exhibition of works by 85 artists from different parts of the world that comments on key social issues today. The festival also includes educational activities, film screenings, performances and lectures.


**MARITIME TALES**

To 27/08/2017

The exhibition “Voyage: Greek Seafaring and Shipbuilding” presents 40 handmade wooden models of Greek ships that tell country’s naval history as it unfolded in the Aegean and the Mediterranean from prehistoric times to the early 20th century, highlighting great conquests and technological achievements. The ship miniatures – ranging from a prehistoric single-log vessel to the classical trireme – are complemented by displays of navigation instruments, maps, video projections, details of how the ships were built and specialized publications.


**CY TWOMBLY AND GREECE**

To 03/09/2017

Cy Twombly visited Greece for the first time in the summer of 1960, but his acquaintance with its ancient culture predated that, as is attested by the role that Greek mythology played in his work from the mid-1950s. The exhibition “Divine Dialogues: Cy Twombly & Greek Antiquity” presents 27 works by the great American artist – such as Aphrodite, Apollo, Orpheus, Pan and Nike – beside 12 ancient art-works, instigating a dialogue between ancient and contemporary art.


**SPACE AGE**

Until 10/09

Seventy years since the Soviet-built Sputnik became the first manmade satellite to enter into orbit and the term “space age” became an everyday phrase, Romantso cultural center is hosting the exhibition “Electric and Electronic Art in Greece, 1957-1989”. The exhibition will explore the utopian application of future technologies in the fields of music (Xenakis, Logothetis, Christou, Mamangakis, Adamis), the visual arts, (Takis, Pantelis Xagoraris, George Zongolopoulos, Kostis Tsantafyllou, Minos Argyrakis), cinema, architecture and urban planning. The exhibits include artworks, posters, vintage tin toys and video projections.

- Romantso: 3-5 Anaxagora, Athens, www.romantso.gr (Metro Station: Kerameikos)
**AGENDA**

**A RARE FRIENDSHIP**
Until 10/09
The exhibition “Ghika, Craxton, Leigh Fermor: Charmed Lives in Greece” explores the bonds of friendship between three leading lights of the 20th-century art and literary world, and the wonderful locations (Hydra, Kardamyli, Crete, Corfu) that helped inspire them. Through the paintings of Ghika and Craxton and the writings of Leigh Fermor, together with letters, manuscripts, publications, photographs and personal dedications, the exhibition reveals their love for Greece and their influence on each other.

- Benaki Museum (Main Building), 1 Koubari & Vasilissis Sophias, www.benaki.gr (Metro Station: Evangelismos, Syntagma)

**GREEK NAIVE PAINTERS**
Until 24/09
Fifty works by Greek and Cypriot artists from the collection of Christos and Polly Kollalis featured in the exhibition “Naive Art in Greece.” The exhibition focuses on Greek traditions and daily life in the city and countryside. The focal point of the exhibition are scenes from 19th- and 20th-century Athens set against the backdrop of the neighborhoods around the Acropolis.

- Center of Folk Art and Tradition, 6 Angelikis Hatzimichali, Plaka. http://www.cityofathens.gr/en/centre-folk-art-and-tradition-0 (Metro Station: Acropolis, Syntagma)

**THE LIFE OF A DIVA**
Until 29/10
Medea’s wig, the score from “La traviata,” a gold cross, autographs, costumes, dresses, furnishings, performance programs, handwritten letters and photographs all shed light on various aspects of the life and career of Maria Callas. Forty years on from the premature death of the great Greek opera singer, the B & M Theocharakis Foundation presents the exhibition “Maria Callas: The Legend Lives,” featuring over 200 of her personal items.

- B & M Theocharakis Foundation, 9 Vas. Sofias & 1 Merlin 1, www.thf.gr (Metro Station: Syntagma)

**WOMEN’S STRUGGLE**
Until 17/12
Photographs, newspaper front pages, handwritten manuscripts, posters, books, magazines and audiovisual materials depict the battles waged by the Greek feminist movement from the fall of the military dictatorship in 1974 to the end of the 20th century. The exhibition “Feminism and Transition to Democracy, 1974-1990: Ideas, Collectives, Claims,” hosted by the Hellenic Parliament Foundation, explores the efforts of feminists to improve the position of women in the social arena, labor market and family.

- The Exhibition Hall of the Hellenic Parliament, 11 Vas. Sofias (Sekeri entrance), http://foundation.parliament.gr/ (Metro Station: Syntagma)
An aerial panorama of Athens just before nightfall, with the majestic Acropolis dominating the frame. The once-forested northern slopes of this now universally recognized outcrop, which the Greeks refer to as the Sacred Rock, were home to the region’s earliest Neolithic inhabitants.
The Temple of Poseidon atop Cape Sounion – around 70k southwest of Athens – was once a sailor’s landmark, a haunt for pirates and a target of pilgrimage for early modern travelers and Philhellenes – including Lord Byron, who left his name etched on a column. Watching the sunset from here is a total must.
96 Degrees in the Shade?
FOLLOW THESE PATHS TO THE CITY’S COOL GREEN SPOTS
BY MARIA KORACHAI

The latest statistics from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development don’t really come as a shock: when all the green spaces of the city are added up and then divided per capita, every Athenian gets just 0.96m² of grass, whereas the World Health Organization suggests that every city should have a minimum of 9m² of parkland per resident. The “cool” spots of Athens are few; that’s what makes them special. Each one of those listed here deserve a visit, whether it’s for their history, or the rare natural life they host, or the view over the Attica basin they offer, or the illusion they create that time is standing still.

FAVORITE SPOTS

A stroll through the 15.8 hectare National Garden, the city’s oldest and most magnificent public park, allows its visitors a chance to view hundreds of different types of plants and animals from dawn till sunset. In this urban piece of heaven with its blossom-ing pergolas, its tiny zoo, its little lakes and dusty pathways, young and old alike gather to feed the ducks, or just sit back and enjoy the shade on one of the many benches. The landmark building just south of the garden is the Zappeio Megaron, which lends its name to the area surrounding it. Next door, at Aegli Zappeiou, you can enjoy a drink or a meal, or catch a movie at the open-air cinema.

Behind the Panathenaic Stadium (Kallimarmaro), entering from Vassileos Konstantinou Avenue, you can slip into the leafy park of Andrittos Hill. This casual meeting spot for runners from the surrounding neighborhoods offers a wonderful view of the Acropolis, Lycabettus and the columns of the temple of Olympian Zeus. The highest hill of Athens is Lycabettus (270m). Pines, cypresses, almond trees and shrubs greet you on the long and winding steps that bring you to the top where the church of Saint George is located. On the way up, you’ll probably meet dog walkers, while others with and without dogs take the back road and drive up at sunset for a clear view over the city, with chilled beers from the canteen at hand. There’s also a cable car that runs to the top.

Around Philopappos Hill, southwest of the Acropolis, you can walk to the Pnyx, where the ancient Athenians once assembled, or gaze at the stars at the National Observatory, or even take part in some fitness activities. The beautiful cobblestone pathways (designed by architect Dimitris Pikionis) lead you up the hill to the best spots from which to view the Acropolis, and the wooden tables under the pine trees are ideal for a picnic. The hill also hosts the Dora Stratou Dance Theater, operating for more than half a century with a resident company performing traditional Greek dances on most nights. It is worth making a stop at the beautiful Byzantine church of Saint Dimitrios Loumbardiaris and at Socrates’ Prison before reaching the peak of the hill, where you can admire the monument that gives the whole park its name. Built in the early 2nd c. AD, it was erected to commemorate Gaius Julius Antiochus Epiphanes Philopappos, a prince of the Kingdom of Commagene living in Athens, who was a great benefactor of the city.
Mattonella, open since 2008, is located only a few feet from the Monastiraki metro station. Customers here can choose from more than 20 different flavors every day, including exquisite new selections such as ice cream with berries or mint. If you are looking for something more traditional, such as a walnut pie or Turkish delights, why not add a scoop of ice cream and enjoy the whole thing while strolling around the historic centre?

82 Ermou, Monastiraki
Tel. (+30) 697.167.7064

Close to the area of Neapoli, the patisserie Asimakopoulos Bros. is famed for its classic desserts and delicious ice cream. Open since 1915, they may not offer a wide selection, but the flavors have remained unchanged - and we can vouch for their high quality. A top choice is the parfait with dried nuts and glazed fruit. The thick, rich chocolate with pistachio is also a favorite. Delicious new menu entries include frozen yoghurt, ice cream with prunes (made with dried fruit), and, for the more adventurous palates, fig with tsipouro.

82 Harilaou Trikoupi, Exarchia
Tel. (+30) 210.361.0092

Walking down Mitropoleos Street in the heart of Athens, you will come across Le Greche. In this high temple of Italian gelato, a seemingly endless selection of flavors will leave you spoiled for choice: tiramisu; pavlova; chocolate with rum, prunes, almonds and hazelnuts; exquisite pistachio ice cream made with Sicilian cream; about four different types of custards; and sour cream with vanilla - plain or with chocolate flakes. If fruit sorbet is more to your liking, then you’ll have a field day, because in the summertime there’s a vast variety of seasonal fruit to choose from. They also make frozen yoghurt, baklava ice cream (with pastry and syrup), cream cheese with figs, and many more treats inspired by Greek products.

16 Mitropoleos, Syntagma
Tel. (+30) 216.700.6458
Coffee on the Rocks

SOME CONSIDER IT SACRILEGE TO ENJOY GOOD QUALITY COFFEE COLD. OH WELL...

Unlike the stereotypical colonial Englishmen of bygone days, the Greeks have never found hot tea a refreshing drink in the scorching summer heat, and so they welcomed the invention of cold “frappe” in 1957. Made with instant coffee and cold water mixed in a shaker and served with copious quantities of ice, this innovative, albeit gastronomically unimpressive, concoction quickly replaced traditional Greek coffee during the calendar’s hottest months.

Over the past few years, however, as Athenians have started embracing gourmet coffee, a new type of cold coffee known as “freddo” has taken hold. Made with proper espresso that is then cooled in ice, freddo is served, just like a frappe, in a tall glass with a straw. If you walk through the center of Athens during the summer, you will see a host of locals slowly sipping their “freddos” under the shade of trees or beneath those new contraptions that create a mist over their customers’ heads, supposedly cooling the immediate area. But this isn’t the only way to combine cold with quality.

For those who believe that adding ice cubes to an espresso is sacrilege, there are a number of shops that serve cold-brewed coffee – ground beans left in cold water for many hours – made from premium beans.

RECOMMENDED

- The Acropolis Museum Cafe: Top-quality Greek snacks, absolutely amazing location. 15 Dionysiou Areopagitou
- Kaya: Value-for-money take-away joint. 7 Voulis, Bolani Arcade
- Odori: Nice spot to feel the city vibe. 2 Skouleniou (off Evripidou)
- Two Sips and Two Bites: No frills, excellent quality and breakfast available as well. 8 Dragatsanliou (off Evripidou)
- Underdog: Award-winning baristas, good location. 8 Heraklidon, Thiseio
- Zonars: Timeless luxury in a true Athenian institution. 9 Voukourestiou & Panepistimiou

VASSILIS MAZSELOS

NENA DIMITRIOU
A park for art

BY TASSOULA EPTAKILI

In 2014, the planting of a single olive tree was the symbolic first step towards the creation of Athens’ newest park. Today, the Stavros Niarchos Park boasts 1,450 trees and 280,000 bushes, making it a vital green space that cannot fail to impress visitors. But don’t let the park monopolize your interest; because the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center, designed by the renowned architect Renzo Piano, has many more marvels up its sleeve. There’s the Greek National Opera’s innovative new home, a 28,000 sq.m. building that heralds a new era in the institution’s history. The National Library is here, too, in a 23,000 sq. m. space which can house up to one million books, and there’s a saltwater canal that provides an additional metaphoric link between the complex and the nearby sea.

364 Syngrou, Kallithea, Tel. (+30) 216.809.1000. Most days there are tours available in Greek and English. Free transfer via shuttle bus from Syntagma and the Syngrou-Fix Metro station. www.snfcc.org/events
The neighborhood of Anafiotika that adjoins the bustling Plaka district was built in the 19th century by skilled builders from the Cycladic island of Anafi who moved to the Greek capital to work on King Otto’s palace. Nostalgic for their hometown, they built their new houses in the image of the ones they left behind, creating a unique island atmosphere that still enchants locals and visitors alike. The exact location of Anafiotika escapes many Athenians who may know of the neighborhood but don’t know exactly how to access it. Nonetheless, getting there is quite simple if you have just come out of the Acropolis metro station; find pedestrianized Areopagitou Street and turn off it to go uphill on perpendicular Thrasyllou Street. Once you reach the Church of Aghios Georgios of the Rock, you know you’ve made it. Meander through the tranquil narrow streets, and you will certainly forget you are in Athens, unless you look up; the Acropolis is right there towering above you.
A Day at Flisvos

BY ALEXANDRA MANDRAKOU

The Palio Faliro coast that runs from the Trocadero Tram Stop to Edem has retained some of its former glamor as a cosmopolitan resort: hidden among the tall apartment buildings, you can still spot a few surviving architectural gems such as the neo-gothic Kouloura Mansion, on the corner of Tritonos and Poseidonos Ave. This is one of the few stretches along the Athens Riviera that you can comfortably explore on foot or by bicycle, thanks to the pedestrianized strips by the sea. Start your day with a visit to the passenger vessel Neraida (neraida.org) which has been turned into a floating museum. Have a coffee, a nice lunch or maybe just an ice cream to go at the Flisvos Marina as you check out the luxury yachts. If you’re with the kids, take them to the huge playground in Flisvos Park, which comes equipped with picnic kiosks, a petanque court and a place where you can rent pedal go-karts. The scent of oregano and pennyroyal wafts in from the educational herb garden, stocked with native Greek flora; it’s certainly worth exploring. Or, if all this sounds like hard work, just spread out a towel under the shade of a palm tree and relax between dips in the sea. The best way to end this perfect day is to catch a movie at the open-air Cine Flisvos (Tel. +30 210.982.1526; tickets: €8, €6 on Tuesday), quenching your thirst with an ice-cold beer.
Tiny oases tucked in among towering buildings, the summer cinemas of Athens do not aim to captivate their audiences with their films alone. Resisting the trend of multiplexes and ear-splitting sound, these open-air movie theaters have retained their retro atmosphere. They are places where you can sip a cold beer and munch on a hot dog in a courtyard or terrace smelling of jasmine while gazing into the cat-like eyes of Audrey Hepburn or perhaps over her shoulder at the actual Acropolis, lit up at night... both equally charming. Non smokers beware, though: summer cinemas still offer cigarette-loving Greeks the option to light one up. Whether you’re a movie fan or not, a visit to an open-air cinema is worthwhile: they have greenery, usually a view, a long history and die-hard fans from all over the world.

**Cinema Paradiso**

And the Oscar goes to... the city’s open-air cinemas

The Observatory is located on the Hill of the Nymphs in Thiseio
• Tel. (+30) 210.349.0000
• www.noa.gr
• Tours: Wed-Sat 21:00-22:30
• Admission: €5

Both astronomy and architecture enthusiasts should visit the National Observatory of Athens, designed by Danish architect Theophil Hansen and built in 1842-46 on the Hill of the Nymphs, one of the seven sacred hills of ancient Athens. Highlights include the room where Greek time was measured between 1846 and 1902 using the Starke meridian telescope; the only known copy of Schmidt’s lunar map, the most accurate 19th c. mapping of the Moon’s surface, drafted by the Observatory’s third director, German astronomer Julius Schmidt; and a working copy (to a scale of 3:1) of the Antikythera Mechanism, considered to be the oldest computer in the world (2nd c. BC), on display here at the Museum of Geoastronomy. It is worth taking the night-time tour to observe the sky through an historic 1902 telescope, which weighs more than eight tons and was made in Paris by Paul Gautier, a famed instrument maker of the period.
The Enchanted Lake

BY ALEXANDRA MANDRAKOU

Urban legend has endowed this lake with a touch of the supernatural, possibly because divers have disappeared in the past while trying to explore its hidden depths, swept up in the strong current that flows at the entrance to its labyrinthine underwater cave system. Another mystery that Lake Vouliagmeni offers is that of its own depth; no one has been able to determine just how far down it goes. Other than the sheer beauty of the spot and the balmy temperature (a steady 22-29°C) of the lake’s brackish water – constantly fed both by the sea and by under ground springs – the main attraction here are the Garra rufa. These tiny black fish will rush towards your feet as soon as you step into the water and, if you’re not squeamish, will start giving you the perfect natural exfoliating treatment by nibbling at your dead skin cells. The facilities at the lake include the all-day bar-restaurant, with coffee served from 9 am, lunch from noon, and cocktails well into the night, with patrons enjoying a dazzling view of the spectacular cliff that rises from the lake. There are also changing rooms, showers and full wheelchair access.
ROOTS of MODERNITY

A leading Athens institution offers visitors insights into civilizations that thrived in the Aegean and the Eastern Mediterranean for millennia.

BY AMANDA MICHALOPOULOU
very tourist anxious to rush through Athens and head to the Greek islands this summer should spend at least a few hours at the Museum of Cycladic Art. The visit will add depth, meaning, and historical dimension to the usual routine of the holiday experience (sea – sun – horiatiki salad). On the four floors of that museum, we can all learn a lot, not only about the Cyclades and ancient art, but about ourselves.

Let me explain: In my teens, I liked to doodle, drawing meanders, rhombuses and concentric triangles on any scrap of paper lying around. This aniconic art helped me pass the time as I chatted to my friends on the phone or was bored with life in general; it was, in short, an activity that literally saved me during that period of dissatisfaction and ennui, and I rediscovered it on the second floor of the Museum of Cycladic Art, right there in the middle of the 10th century BC Attic wine jugs. The lines I had drawn for years, my idle doodles, were there, decorating ancient vessels. Like my adolescence, the 10th century BC was predominantly a dark period, as commercial trade fell off markedly, art became largely decorative and the dead were buried with nothing more than bronze clasps holding their garments and modest burial gifts at their sides.

As is the custom in life and in the passage of civilizations, after darkness comes light, and in the 9th century BC, society breathed once more: commerce picked up, ties were forged with the Phoenicians and the written word was reintroduced to the Aegean after a four-century hiatus. At the Museum of Cycladic Art, we witness these strides in history. The transitions are, if nothing else, comforting. All that ends, starts again, an incredibly encouraging thought during our current strange and dark period in Europe.

The Museum of Cycladic Art was founded 31 years ago, in 1986, by Dolly and Nikos Goulandris. It was a highly political initiative, a calculated response to the theft of antiquities that plagued the Cycladic islands in the 1950s and 60s.

During the 50s and 60s, the characteristic Cycladic figurines (also known as "idols") – with their sculpted nose, right arm crossed under the left, the slightly bent knee and elevated heels – were sources of inspiration for Western European avant-garde painters and sculptors. Constantin Brancusi, Pablo Picasso, Henry Moore and Amedeo
Modigliani viewed the Cycladic figure as the paradigm of modernism and minimalism. Naturally, this led to an ever-increasing interest in Early Cycladic art and, of course, a booming market. Peddlers who had previously referred to these idols as “dolls” and who had given them to children as toys were suddenly being offered staggering amounts for their wares; a thousand drachmas per inch of statue!

The illegal excavations that followed resulted in the coordinated destruction of the Cyclades: a total of around 1,600 figurines were unearthed. If we consider that, on average, only one in 10 graves contained such items, we understand how many thousands of graves were pillaged during that time. Almost half the burial gifts were discovered in Kavos, on the uninhabited islet of Keros. Most were broken, and probably had been since ancient times. However, not all the idols were unearthed broken. Often, to hide them during transport, the smugglers themselves would break the figures into pieces and stash them in fruit crates! According to archaeologists, the spot on Keros may have been some kind of sanctuary, and it’s possible the statuary featured in some still unknown ritual.

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In the Archaic period, city-states once more found themselves in a position to move forward and form the foundations of new institutions. They developed new laws, a system of writing, the concept of currency and armies of hoplites. At this point in history, we see the emergence of utilitarian art in war, such as the Corinthian helmet, worked from a single sheet of bronze. But war did not just mean new jobs in the ranks of the hoplites; it also meant violence and destruction. The casualties mounted, first from the Persian Wars and later from the wars between Athens and Sparta. Scenes of ceremonies in which the living ushered the dead into the afterlife feature in funerary reliefs of this period.

In the 1st c. BC, glass became a star in its own right, thanks to technological advances that led to its mass production. It is also then, during the Hellenistic and Roman periods, that a centralized authority model gave an air of globalism to both social structures and art. Currency unions were established and Graeco-Roman traditions
found themselves entangled with Oriental art. As a result, the earliest statues of Buddha clothe him in Greek robes!

The museum’s third floor, completed five years ago, was given over to the Cypriot collector Thanos N. Zintilis so that he might display the most comprehensive collection of Cypriot art in the Hellenic world. The collection is a marvelous showcase highlighting the Hellenization of Cyprus by Greek settlers, who introduced both the Arcadian dialect and the paradigms of Aegean art to their new island home. Here, among other objects, we see the cross-shaped figures currently depicted on the €1 and €2 coins minted in Cyprus today. We also see a clay jug used to transport opium, the only pain killer available in ancient times. Here, too, is the splendid necklace from the tomb of Arsinoe – an exhibit item coveted by museums around the world – decorated with sapphires, emeralds and pearls, and showing clear Assyrian influences.

It’s not all ancient on the third floor – modern technology has been put to good use here, as there are two interactive stations where you can learn a great deal about the history and art of the Mediterranean.

The same is the case on the fourth floor, where 142 objects of ancient Greek art are used as educational material to create everyday scenes from daily life in ancient times: among the subjects are personal grooming habits, the marriage ritual, a regular day in the Agora, war and death.

To help visitors identify easily with the people of ancient Greece, the museum takes us through the life of Leon, a fictional character born in 458 BC. We follow him from his childhood home to the palaestra, the wrestling school, all the way to his grave. This is an excellent way to familiarize children with the cycle of life as well as with Greek history. However, this is also an opportunity for the entire family to explore its new-found knowledge.

**TIPS**

Don’t miss the collection of children’s toys, such as the turtle rattle or the articulated dolls that heralded the modern marionette. Take a moment, too, to examine the black-glazed vessels and the impressive bronze basin with handles, probably used at symposiums for diners to wash their hands. Look for the Corinthian plate with the caricature of a naked man, something exceptionally rare in the Classical period, as well as the small amphora with the cartoon-like drawings of swans, lion, geese and wild boar. Last but not least, check out the Minoan bird’s-nest cup made of marble and the stirrup jar or “false-neck amphora” with the spout.

**INFO**

**MAIN BUILDING**

4 Neophytou Douka

• Tel. (+30) 210.722.8321-3

• www.cycladic.gr

• Open: Mon, Wed, Fri, Sat 10:00-17:00, Thu 10:00-20:00, Sun: 11:00-17:00

• Admission: €7 (Mondays €3.5)

**SHOP & ENJOY**

The MCA shop, offering a wide selection of design objects and stylish accessories inspired by Cycladic art, is located on the ground floor of the Main Building, at 4 Neophytou Douka St. It is open not only to museum visitors but to anyone interested in purchasing a gift or book. Make sure to conclude your visit with a stop at the Museum’s cool Cycladic Café, where juices, snacks, wine and light dishes are served.
For 62 years, the Greek Festival has served as the country’s premiere cultural event, attracting some of the greatest names on the international theater and music scene.

BY MATOULA KOUSTENI

© STEFANOS
The Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater (1986).

Sylvie Guillem with the Tokyo Ballet (1996).

Herbert von Karajan rehearsing with the Berlin Philharmonic (1963).


Maria Callas as Norma (1960).

Ian McKellen in Peter Hall’s Coriolanus (1985).

© PHOTOS BY ANNIVERSARY EDITION “50 YEARS ATHENS FESTIVAL”
Summer 1955: Elvis Presley was recording with Sun Records in the USA, while in France, Simone de Beauvoir, who had won the Prix Goncourt for her novel The Mandarins just half a year earlier, was preparing to visit China with Jean-Paul Sartre. In Greece, it was a time of both cultural and political change, and George Rallis, then Minister for the Presidency of the Government, decided to organize an arts festival in Athens. To give it a more international profile, the renowned theater director of the Metropolitan Opera of New York, Dinos Giannopoulos, was invited to organize the debut.

On 24 August 1955, a little before 8 pm, the Athens State Orchestra opened the festival with Handel’s Largo. Some 40 days later, the greatest Greek conductor of all time, Dimitris Mitropoulos, conducted the New York Philharmonic Orchestra at the Orpheus Theater (rain had ruled out the Odeon of Herodes Atticus as a venue). “No one has received such warm and prolonged applause as Mitropoulos,” the press wrote at the time. From this auspicious beginning, the Athens Festival would go on to become a cultural institution of decisive importance for the country. Thirsty for artistic creativity, the public immediately embraced the festival that would forever change the Greek summer. Not only did it become the flagship for artistic events, but it was also the institution that gave successive generations of attendees their cultural baptism. The festival introduced Greek audience to the international cultural scene, while simultaneously strengthening its relationship with native-born artists.

Over the past six decades, the festival has hosted some of the leading lights of theater, music and dance, including Maria Callas (who returned to Greece in 1957 after a 12-year absence); Margot Fonteyn (who appeared for the first time in 1961 and returned the following two years with Rudolf Nureyev); Leonard Bernstein (with whom the New York Philharmonic returned in 1959); Herbert von Karajan (who twice conducted the Berlin Philharmonic, in 1962 and 1965); and Martha Graham, one of the greatest artists of the 20th century. Others who have graced the festival include Matislav Rostropovich, Luciano Pavarotti, Yehudi Menuhin, Sylvie Guillem, Pina Bausch and George Balanchine, to name just a few more, along with such Greek luminaries as Mikis Theodorakis, Manos Hadjidakis and Leonidas Kavakos.

There were, of course, some teething problems in the early years; having adopted tried and tested formats from abroad, the festival at first seemed to be addressing itself more to older audiences, playing it safe with major ensembles, famous soloists and classical ballet. Boldness was not encouraged; Modern Greek theater pioneer Karolos Koun’s production of Aristophanes’ The Birds, for instance, was withdrawn in 1959 because it was considered blasphemous. However, this conservatism eventually disappeared as younger generations of artists claimed their place in the program, with the American Ballet Theater (1970), the Nederlands Dans Theater (1972) and the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater (1979) bringing the first wave of modernism. From the early 80s onwards, the festival became known for a decidedly more innovative approach. In 1984, Japan’s Toho Theatre Company, directed by multi-awarded Yukio Ninagawa, staged one of the greatest ever performances of Medea, featuring a male actor in the title role. One year later, as the city of Athens celebrated its designation as the European Capital of Culture, the Royal National Theater presented a truly memorable production of Coriolanus, directed by Peter Hall and starring Ian McKellen.
PERFORMING UNDER THE ACROPOLIS

Thanks to the festival, cultural life during the Athens summer now revolves around the magnificent Odeon of Herodes Atticus, the Roman theater financed by Herodes Atticus in the 2nd century AD and built on the southwest slope of the Acropolis. The route up to the theater, particularly from the Temple of Olympian Zeus, is like a walk through the city’s ancient past, the evening air heavy with the scent of children playing in the streets, a sense of escape and expectation.

The Odeon was the first venue to be identified with the festival. Organizers shrewdly “sold” to foreign artists the opportunity to perform under the “halo” of the Acropolis. They, in turn, infused their efforts with inspiration from ancient Greece, and helped the festival quickly develop an international reputation.

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Just as the presence of Dimitris Mitropoulos had been integral to the success at the Odeon, actor-director Dimitris Rondiris became a key figure for the Great Theater of Epidaurus. It was Rondiris who established a new way of “interpreting” the ancient tragedies; his 1954 production of Euripides’ Hippolytos served as a dress rehearsal for the inaugural Epidaurus Festival the following year. For its official inauguration, an invitation was sent to actor and director Alexis Minotis, who had already distinguished himself in the theatres of England and who had appeared in Alfred Hitchcock’s Notorious alongside Cary Grant and Ingrid Bergman.

Minotis chose to direct Euripides’ Hecuba by the National Theater, with Katina Paxinou in the title role. From this bright beginning, the Epidaurus Festival grew, soon becoming a great competitive arena for the world of theater.

One of the greatest artists to grace the Epidaurus Festival was undoubtedly Maria Callas. On 24 August, 1960, she performed Bellini’s Norma with the National Opera of Greece and with Tullio Serafin conducting. As she sang the Casta Diva aria, two white doves were released, prompting a storm of applause. At the end of the performance that night, the enthu-

siasm of the audience was so great that Callas reappeared for 10 encores. La Divina returned to Epidaurus the following year, again performing with the National Opera, this time in Luigi Cherubini’s Medea. Directed by Alexis Minotis before an audience of around 17,000, it was another triumph, with Callas receiving a standing ovation.

Because of the festival, life in and around Epidaurus takes on a different quality every Friday and Saturday in August. At Lygourio, the village that welcomes thousands of audience members after the performances, the locals are said to measure their age relative to the festival. In the early years, when there were no hotels, these same villagers would accommodate the festival performers in their own homes.

Since the festival began, other venues – in addition to the Odeon and Epidaurus – have sought to host events, including the Lycabettus Theater and the Stoa of Attalos. The man who envisioned a festival that would embrace the entire city of Athens was its former artistic director Giorgos Loukou. It was Loukou who, in 2006, launched an ambitious program of expansion. As a first step, an old furniture factory at 280 Pireos Street was renovated and transformed into a hub of avant-garde artistic expression. Many other new venues soon followed.

Today, the Festival is deeply ingrained in our DNA. Most of us have fond memories of events we have seen at the Odeon or at Epidaurus, and we still look forward to the next performances. As the years go by, I’m sure we’ll still worry that we’ve forgotten to switch off our cell phones, and we’ll still hide bottles in our bags for those particularly warm evenings. We’ll still be vexed by those stiletto heels that we couldn’t forego wearing, despite repeated warnings from archaeologists about the serious damage they cause to the monuments. We’ll continue to be outraged at the kilos of chewing gum removed from the marble by the special clean-up teams.

At the Odeon, political figures will squeeze into the front rows, while the upper tier will be full of young people. The seats will always be uncomfortable for long performances. Row 19 at the end of the lower tier will remain expensive, in great demand by those in the know, since this is the only row where the seats come with back support. And tourists will continue to use up the memory capacity of their cameras on their first visit, and leave the theater waxing lyrical about an incredible life experience...
Visitors to Athens can revel in a variety of must-see sites and museums in the heart of the ancient city

BY JOHN LEONARD
ILLUSTRATION: ASIMINA MITROTHANASI
ACROPOLIS AREA
The Sacred Rock...The place for history-rockin’ visitors! Athens’ Panathenaic tops the bill, backed up by the Erechtheion, the Propylaia and the stunning little Temple of Athena Nike. Around the slopes, make sure to see the Theater of Dionysus, the Sanctuary of Asclepius, the Odeion (music hall) of Herodes Atticus and the cave shrines to the ancient gods. On the adjacent Areopagus, Saint Paul gave one of his most powerful anti-pagan speeches.

The Acropolis
• Tel. (+30) 210.321.4172
• Open daily 08:00-20:00
• Admission: €20

THE SOUTHWEST HILLS
Southwest of the Acropolis lies the Pnyx Hill, with the open-air assembly area for the People’s Assembly (Ekklisia). On this spot, ancient Athenian politicians played to the crowds, delivering fiery speeches from the rock-cut rostrum overlooking the Sacred Rock and the Athenian Agora. On the adjoining Hill of the Muses stands the Philopappos Monument, a prominent tomb for an exiled foreign ruler.

The Athenian Agora
This was the heart of ancient Athens, the city’s central square, market place and governmental hub, where everyone, high or low, passed through, shopped, reported for jury duty, watched street performers and offered sacrifices, rubbing shoulders with the likes of Themistocles, Pericles and Socrates. The pristine Temple of Hephaistos and Athena marks the old metaworkers’ district, while the reconstructed Stoa of Attalos today houses the Museum of the Ancient Agora.

The Museum of the Ancient Agora
The daily activities of ordinary citizens and artisans in the Athenian Agora are the focus of this informative exhibition within the reconstructed 2nd c. BC Stoa of Attalos. Don’t miss the warrior’s tomb with the “killed” sword, the eyelet and hobnails from Simon the Shoemaker’s House (which Socrates frequented), the jury-selection machine; and the pot-shard ballots nominating Themistocles and other famous figures for ostracism.

Agora & Museum
• Tel. (+30) 210.321.0185
• Open daily 08:00-20:00
• Admission: €8

The Roman Agora
The Romans turned Athens’ city center with a new market place, funded by Julius Caesar and Octavian (Augustus). Once a hangout for merchants, shoppers and semi-literate prostitutes who left messages scratched on the square’s columns, the area is visit-worthy today for the Tower of the Winds, an ornate Ottoman era seminary gateway and the newly restored Pathyris Mosque (17th c.), now open to visitors.

Pepolida, Plaka
• Tel. (+30) 210.324.5220
• Open daily 08:00-17:00
• Admission: €6

The City of Hadrian (HadrianoPolis)
A new area of the city, added by the Hellenophile Roman emperor Hadrian. One entered this suburb through the Arch of Hadrian, beyond which towered the mammoth Temple of Olympian Zeus. The Ilissos River area, with all its shrines and lush vegetation, made this district a pleasant place to stroll.

Olympieion
• Entrance: Vassilis Olga St. & Tel. (+30) 210.346.3552
• Open daily 08:00-20:00
• Admission: €8

PLAKA
Hadrian also contributed a new forum (agora) equipped with a library. The courtyard of the Library of Hadrian went on to host two early Christian churches. On the Acropolis’ eastern slope one finds the Lysikrates Monument, commemorating a theatrical victory at the nearby Theater of Dionysus. Lord Byron once used the base of this hollow throne-styled pedestal as a private study.

The Library of Hadrian
• Tel. (+30) 210.324.9350
• Open daily 08:00-15:00
• Admission: €4

The National Archaeological Museum
A top destination in the city, where you’ll find extraordinary bronze and marble sculptures; golden artifacts from the Mycenaean palaces; an exhibition on Santorini’s prehistoric, ash-entombed town of Akrotiri; and an extensive collection of black- and red-figure vases with painted scenes of gods, heroes, famous myths and fascinating glimpses into ancient daily life.

Kerameikos
The northwestern corner of the ancient walled city. From here, through the Dipylon and Sacred Gates, Athenians could reach the State Burial Ground or join the annual procession to Eleusis. The wooded Academy of Plato also lay outside the walls. Potters, prostitutes, mourners and soldiers all frequented this once-busy area.

44 Patisson
• Tel. (+30) 210.314.4800
• Open: Mon 13:00-20:00, Tue-Sun: 08:00-20:00
• Admission: €8

Panathenaic Stadium
The stadium for Athens and for the Panathenaic Games was built in the 4th c. BC by Lykourgos, but given a complete marble makeover by Hadades Atticus some 500 years later. In 1896, the first modern Olympics were hosted here. Truly a place of historic and athletic glory!

Kavala Konstantinou Avenue opposite the statue of the Discobolus of Myron
• Tel. (+30) 210.752.2894-6
• Open daily 08:00-19:00
• Admission: €5

The National Museum of Athens
On the home of Heinrich Schliemann, the father of Greek archaeology, this impressive mansion now hosts the Numismatic Museum. With its richly painted walls, decorative marble floors and stunning displays of gold, silver and bronze coins, this is the place to appreciate the wealth of both ancient and modern Athens.

12 Panepistimiou
• Tel. (+30) 210.363.1057
• Open: Tue-Sun 08:30-15:30
• Admission: €6

The Byzantine Museum
Located in the Villa Illissia, another 19th-century Athenian architectural treasure that served as the winter palace of the Duchesses of Plaisance, a French-American Hellenophile, the BCM showcases the splendor and far-reaching influence of Byzantine culture and of Greece’s post-Byzantine Christian artists.

22 Vasileos Sofias
• Tel. (+30) 210.213.9500
• Open: Mon: 08:00-20:00
• Admission: €8

The Numismatic Museum of Athens
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12 Panepistimiou
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• Admission: €6

The Museum of Cycladic Art
Two great Athenian museums, located not far apart, one focused on the ancient culture of the Aegean and the other boasting an evocative collection of ancient, medieval and Greek Revolution-era and early modern art objects and artifacts, giving the visitor an overview of the full spectrum of Greece’s history and civilization. (The Benaki Museum also has an entrance to the Islamic art and contemporary art at two other locations.)

The Museum of Cycladic Art
• 4 Neophytou Douka, Kolonaki
• Tel. (+30) 210.722.8321-3
• Open: Mon, Wed, Fri, Sat: 10:00-17:00, Thu: 10:00-20:00, Sun: 11:00-17:00
• Admission: €7 (Mondays €5.50)

The Benaki Museum
• 2 Benaki Museum, Kolonaki
• Tel. (+30) 210.367.1000
• Open: Thu, Sat: 09:00-00:00, Wed, Fri: 09:00-17:00, Sun: 09:00-15:00
• Admission: €9

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• Admission: €9
Water is gently brushed onto a sculptural prototype during the mold-making process, in preparation for an application of protective zinc foil.

IN THE CRAFTSMEN’S LAIR

An inside look into the state-of-the-art labs where highly skilled conservators and artists study and reproduce ancient sculptural artifacts for the museum shop.

BY JOHN LEONARD PHOTOS NIKOS PILOS
The “face” of the Acropolis Museum usually seen by its visitors is that of a uniquely impressive sculptural collection and innovative archaeological display, viewed through an upward experiential ascent from the exposed sub-floor excavations and canted Slopes Gallery to the masterpieces of the Parthenon Hall. Recently, however, “Greece Is” had the opportunity to take a behind-the-scenes look at the inner workings of the Acropolis Museum - a face normally veiled from public view, but which on close inspection clearly bespeaks the fresh, highly principled, progressive approach of the Acropolis Museum to the ancient materials in its care and to its mission as a leading museological and cultural institution. As Museum Director Dimitrios Pandermalis led us through serpentine back corridors, he explained that what we were about to see represents something unusual in a museum: a specialized, state-of-the-art laboratory for the meticulous study and extremely accurate reproduction of ancient sculptural fragments and entire artifacts.

In approaching its sculptures and other antiquities, the Acropolis Museum strives to achieve a full understanding of the ancient materials used, how the ancient artists rendered these materials and how the objects have been affected or altered by the passage of time. Under the museum’s scientific and technological scrutiny, Pandermalis notes, the ancient artifacts themselves reveal the extraordinary passion with which ancient Greek artists once worked in order to “capture” the desired details. “This sense of passion, so remarkable today, is what the Acropolis Museum hopes to transfer to its visitors: it is about recognizing the details in the items exhibited and thus appreciating their quality.”

To explore, record and reproduce the Acropolis Museum’s treasured objects and the ways of ancient artists, Pandermalis has assembled a dedicated team of specialists, trained in disciplines ranging from archaeology, archaeological conservation and materials science to fine arts. They rely not only on previously established methods and cutting-edge approaches similarly adopted by the world’s other major museums, but also on newly developed techniques and procedures created right here in the Acropolis Museum’s own laboratory. The absolute principle guiding their efforts is the need to achieve the highest degree of accuracy possible, a goal in which the museum is also assisted and advised through collaboration with the Polytechnic School of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

“This sense of passion... is what we hope to transfer to our visitors: it is about recognizing the details in the items exhibited and thus appreciating their quality.”
The methods employed at the Acropolis Museum, according to members of Pandermalis’ team, are constantly being evaluated, refined and improved through in-house experimentation and research.

The actual procedures behind reproducing an ancient fragment or artifact are a far cry from the ancient process of the Greeks and Romans, who employed a mechanical pointing device to transfer the surface topography of an object to a newly created work. This age-old technique involved a certain degree of artistic freedom which today is incompatible with the Acropolis Museum’s highly exacting standards.

To begin with, an exact working prototype must first be created, which will be used as a guide in the subsequent steps of mold-making, casting and painting. Prototypes of existing objects are rendered either by working with the ancient object directly or by scanning it using 3D computer graphics technology. In the former technique, a membrane-thin sheet of zinc foil is first tamped onto the surface of the ancient artifact using water and a fine brush. This protects the original object when it is placed into a container of silicone rubber to form a mold. Once the mold is ready, gypsum plaster is poured in to create a cast. For larger, heavier fragments or artifacts, a two-part mold is used, into which casting material is injected and centrifugally spun to allow a hollow, thin-walled final product.

For plaster, acrylic resin or bronze reproductions of small artifacts, initial prototypes are created through 3D printing of the scanned original objects. These “printed” prototypes are then used as previously described for the mold-making and casting procedures. (To make their copies more like the originals, the museum hopes to be able in the future to begin using marble similar to an object’s original material, rather than plaster.) The last major production step is painting – both of an artifact’s base color and of all its intricate visible surface details. Even existing signs of weathering, wear, tool marks and holes for original bronze attachments are reproduced to create an exact replica of the ancient artifact in its current state of preservation. Perhaps most intriguing are the minute details of decoration and especially texture, which the ancient artists included so as to depict more realistically the actual cloth type and fabrication details of a figure’s peplos (robe) or other attire. To reproduce texture, cloth thickness, stitching and polychromatic border decorations, the Acropolis Museum’s painters must employ “micro-sculpting” techniques and a program of experimentation with a range of colors and paint types until the exact ancient hues are discovered. The science, precision and disciplined artistic skills required for all of these procedures pay appropriate tribute to the inspiring original artistry of the ancient Greeks.

The Acropolis Museum

Plaster casts are “brought to life” by conservators Stelios Panagiotopoulos and Christos Angelopoulos.

Info
Open: Mon 08:00-16:00, Tue-Thu 08:00-20:00, Fri 08:00-22:00, Sat-Sun 08:00-20:00 • Admission: €5
• 15 Dionysiou Areopagitou • Tel. (+30) 210.900.0900 • www.theacropolismuseum.gr
Treasure Hunting

Cast yourself in the role of a 19th century explorer looking through the city’s antique shops for curios and souvenirs to take home.

By Dimitris Xanthoulis
Photos: Nikos Kokkas

Monastiraki, the erstwhile heart of the city center, used to be the main gateway into Athens for people coming from the countryside looking for a better life. A hodge-podge of small inns, hotels, mosques, churches, homes, workshops and stores made way for a Balkan-style medina, a place bustling with carriages coming and going between Athens and the rest of the country.

Only a few traces from those bygone days remain, yet nothing has really changed. Indeed, some of the small streets have retained their old Ottoman-Balkan character, and in the main square, three notable monuments (built over the bed of the ancient Iridanos River – discovered a few years ago during excavations for the Athens metro) remind us of the different phases of the city’s history.

From Byzantine times, we have the Dormition of the Virgin, the main church of a small 10th century Byzantine monastery after which the area of Monasteraki is named. We also have the 18th century Tzistarakis Mosque, now a museum. Named after the Ottoman governor, or voevoda, of Athens, Mustapha Agha Tzistarakis, known as Cizderiye in Turkish, the mosque marks the passage of the Ottomans. Last but not least, there’s the ISAP electric railway, one of the first major infrastructure projects designed during the founding of the modern Greek state and inaugurated in the late 19th century.

Together with its modern apartment blocks, multiethnic population, street peddlers selling fruit from small stalls and the smell of roasting meat from the souvlaki joints, the heart of the old city remains vibrant and colorful.

Monastiraki Square is the best place to set off on a treasure-hunting expedition that will double as a tour of the city’s history. Start by heading down the main street, Iphestou, to Avasinias Square, exploring the side streets and arcades. Around since the early 20th century, Avasinias is the oldest and perhaps only organized emporium of second-hand clothes, shoes, furniture, books, objets d’art and sundry other goods, and to this day, it is the place where antique buyers come to root out interesting finds. Sunday is the busiest day, with sellers coming out in force and setting up all around the square and into the surrounding streets (down Astigos, onto a part of Ermou and to the start of Leokoriou), attracting hordes of people: the curious, the collectors, the professionals, folks looking to make some extra cash and others who are just there to while away their time.

Depending on the day, you can find all sorts of weird and wonderful things at the market: a lot of stuff from the Balkans (whose countries basically shared the same culture as interconnected parts of the Ottoman Empire up until the late 19th century), traditional Greek embroidery and kilim rugs/throws, Ottoman glassware, pottery from the Aegean, silverware, books, metalwork and “European” objects that you can often find at much cheaper prices in Greece.
**ARTIN**

The owner is a wise Armenian who specializes in ceramics from the broader Greek world and particularly from the start of the industrial era in Greece. His welcoming store has a 19th century feel about it and should not be missed.

5 Kynetou, Avyssinias Square • Tel. (+30) 694.460.3593

**TA PALIA KAI PARAKSENA (THE OLD AND ODD)**

The treasures here can be described as Greek bric-a-brac with style: plastic evzone dolls, old soda pop bottles, antique toys, ceramic bird cages, collectibles, stone mortars, wood carvings and more. Basically, it’s all the stuff found at the Sunday market, filtered by the antiques expert and owner Yiannis Skiadopoulos.

7 Navarchou Apostoli • Tel. (+30) 210.322.7901

**MARTINOS**

This four-story Aladdin’s cave exemplifies Ottoman style, with furniture, silverware, jewelry, embroidery, porcelain and paintings from that period, as well as a good collection of what can be described as “Philhellenic” art. It also carries African art, antique mirrors and modern objets d’art. A visit here is like going to a museum that offers a crash course in local history. Martinos has been around in the area for more than 100 years and at its current location since 1926. Unfortunately, it’s closed on Sundays.

50 Pandrossou • Tel: (+30) 210.321.2414 • www.martinosart.gr
Don’t be discouraged by the shop’s rather dusty appearance, because a good search through its merchandise is bound to be rewarding. Apostolos Argyriadis has a true collector’s zeal for sniffing out great finds and if you tell him what you’re looking for, he will most probably have it. His shop is like a showcase of bourgeois tastes and aesthetics, with art objects artlessly exhibited in a fascinating jumble, where silverware from Smyrna is set beside works by important Greek artists, Chinese porcelain and rare glassware purchased from Greek homes.

Apostolos Argyriadis
42 Patriarchou Ioakeim, Kolonaki • Tel. (+30) 210.725.1727

Angelos Vlastaris
standing next to a wooden winch from an early 20th-century boatyard in Chios.

Angelos Vlastaris
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standing next to a wooden winch from an early 20th-century boatyard in Chios.

Angelos Vlastaris
Esthete Angelos Vlastaris selects one-of-a-kind objects and furniture from the broader Greek world and has created a shop that is like a cabinet of curiosities in the buzzing up-and-coming neighborhood behind the Acropolis Museum. His greatest love, however, is clay jars from the island of Chios, his second home and the subject of many years of research. He is currently writing a much-anticipated book on the pottery of Chios, which is slated for release in 2017.

Angelos Vlastaris
5 Mitseon, Makryianni • Tel. (+30) 694.523.8001

Giorgos Goutis
Giorgos Goutis is the last surviving professional tailor of traditional Greek costumes and is regarded as an important proponent in the preservation of the country’s folk history. He first opened his shop in Monastiraki in 1934 and later moved to his current address. The store specializes in local traditional costumes – he has supplied almost every museum in Greece showcasing such collections – as well as embroideries, Greek jewelry and memorabilia from the Ottoman era.

Giorgos Goutis
10 Dimokritou, Kolonaki • Tel. (+30) 210.361.3557

In the 1980s, antique dealers began moving from Monastiraki to other parts of Athens.

In the 1980s, antique dealers began moving from Monastiraki to other parts of Athens.
THE ANTIQUE MARKET

The advent in Greece of Scandinavian design in furniture (sold for a small fortune in foreign markets and auction houses today) coincided with the construction boom of the 1950s and 60s, and also with the arrival of Anne-Marie, Princess of Denmark and later Queen of Greece. The new style – defined by simplicity, minimalism and functionality, but also by the fact that it was affordable and suited all manner of tastes – was soon embraced by the masses and renamed the “Anne-Marie look,” an all-encompassing term also used to describe Italian and French furniture from that period. The Anne-Marie look prevailed in the interior design of apartments and homes throughout Greece well into the 70s, and today we can find authentic pieces of interesting replicas at Averissinias Square – usually at very affordable prices – and in a few stores.

MOFU, VINTAGE & CONTEMPORARY DESIGN

This is a temple to Scandinavian design, with an excellent selection of carefully chosen items ranging from furniture to lighting fixtures, lamps and objets d’art.

28 Sari, Psyrrí
• Tel. (+30) 210.331.19.22
• www.mofu.gr

MARTINOS

The second Martinos store, in the upscale Kolonaki district, is more eclectic in style than the first and showcases a very interesting collection of furniture and objects from the 1950s and 60s, pieces by contemporary Greek and foreign designers, and contemporary art. It also has one of the biggest collections in Greece of pieces by local ceramic artist Eleni Vernadaki.

24 Pindarou, Kolonaki • Tel. (+30) 210.360.9449

Statuette of Muhammad Ali; teapot and vase by Thomai Kontou; and a piece by Nicholas Moore.

SEE ALSO

BENAKI MUSEUM

Before you start exploring the city’s antique shops, a visit to the Benaki Museum’s permanent collection serves as a good introduction to Greece’s history. Bringing together more than 40,000 exhibits, it constitutes a fascinating historical panorama that ranges from ancient and Roman times through the medieval Byzantine period from the fall of Constantinople (1453) and the centuries of Frankish and Ottoman occupation to the start of the Greek War of Independence in 1821, the formation of the modern state of Greece (1830) and the 1922 expulsion of Greeks from Asia Minor.

• www.benaki.gr

MUSEUM OF GREEK FOLK ART

The museum is currently closed for renovations, but its very interesting gift shop is still open and contains excellent replicas of the museum’s collections, as well as selected contemporary pieces inspired by traditional themes and figures, including pottery, wood carvings, silverware, jewelry, embroidery, shadow puppets and fashion accessories.

• 43-45 Adrianou, Monastiraki
• www.melt.gr

VERGOS AUCTIONS

...specializes in old manuscripts and engravings with a Greek focus, as well as in paintings and sculptures done mainly by Greek artists or foreigners who either visited the country or were inspired by its history.

• www.vergosauctions.com

Going Modern

A HEYDAY FOR SLEEK SCANDINAVIAN DESIGN

The advent in Greece of Scandinavian design in furniture (sold for a small fortune in foreign markets and auction houses today) coincided with the construction boom of the 1950s and 60s, and also with the arrival of Anne-Marie, Princess of Denmark and later Queen of Greece. The new style – defined by simplicity, minimalism and functionality, but also by the fact that it was affordable and suited all manner of tastes – was soon embraced by the masses and renamed the “Anne-Marie look,” an all-encompassing term also used to describe Italian and French furniture from that period. The Anne-Marie look prevailed in the interior design of apartments and homes throughout Greece well into the 70s, and today we can find authentic pieces of interesting replicas at Averissinias Square – usually at very affordable prices – and in a few stores.
GREEK HOSPITALITY AT ITS BEST
Zeus International is a leading Greek firm specializing in hotel management, development and consulting. It offers hotel planning, execution and technical services, as well as construction and design consulting, to owners, developers and investors. With an experienced and highly competent team of executives and technical advisers, it has participated in property improvement through the planning, renovation and conversion construction of six hotels in Bulgaria, Romania and Cyprus, while last year it expanded into Greece with the complete renovation and management of Wyndham Grand Athens, the first Wyndham Hotel Group property on Greek soil. Continuing its successful collaboration with the American company, this year sees the addition of two more hotels to its management portfolio; the Wyndham Loutraki Poseidon Resort and the Ramada Loutraki Poseidon Resort, both in the historic spa town of Loutraki, an hour’s drive from Athens. www.zeusintl.com

Wyndham Hotel Group

Wyndham Hotel Group is the world’s largest hotel company based on number of hotels and is one of three hospitality business units of Wyndham Worldwide (NYSE: WYN). The company’s global portfolio consists of nearly 8,000 hotels in 79 countries under the following brands: Dolce Hotels and Resorts®, Wyndham Grand®, Wyndham Hotels and Resorts®, Wyndham Garden® Hotels, TRYP by Wyndham®, Wingate by Wyndham®, Hawthorn Suites by Wyndham®, Microtel Inn & Suites by Wyndham®, Ramada®, Ramada Encore®, Baymont Inn & Suites®, Days Inn®, Super 8®, Howard Johnson®, Travelodge®, Knights Inn®, Dazzler® and Esplendor®. www.wyndhamhotels.com

Wyndham Grand: Check in to the Outstanding

Travel is the best excuse to enjoy the grand things in life, and Wyndham Grand Hotels and Resorts offer truly unforgettable travel experiences. The ensemble consists of more than 40 distinguished hotels located in some of the world’s most sought-after destinations, including Shanghai, Istanbul, Orlando and now Athens. Wyndham Grand is decidedly not pretentious, but approachable by design, featuring pristine rooms, relaxing spas, one-of-a-kind dining experiences, and more.

www.wyndhamgrand.com

Wyndham: A Distinct Experience

The namesake of the world’s largest hotel company, Wyndham Hotels & Resorts connects with guests by delivering comfort that exceeds expectations and by making travel extraordinary with tailored services and amenities in major urban and resort destinations around the world, such as the spa town of Loutraki in Greece. From smartly detailed rooms and beautifully appointed lounge areas, to distinct dining options and well-designed meeting spaces, Wyndham hotels offer all the features expected of a world-class hotel and are a top choice among Wyndham Rewards® members, representing five out of the top 10 most redeemed hotels in the Wyndham Hotel Group portfolio.

www.wyndham.com

Ramada Worldwide: Sample the World

With more than 850 mid- and upper-midscale full-service hotels spanning 64 countries, Ramada Worldwide is one of the most recognized hotel brands in the world, showcasing the uniqueness of each of its properties through regionally-inspired designs and décor and local flavors, as is the case with the brand new Ramada Loutraki Poseidon Resort in Greece. These passion-filled, personalized touches are what make staying at a Ramada hotel so memorable, and what guests most look forward to when joining Ramada Worldwide’s global community.

www.ramada.com

Wyndham Rewards is Wyndham Hotel Group’s simple-to-use, revolutionary loyalty program offering a flat, free night redemption rate – the first of its kind for a major rewards program. Members earn a guaranteed minimum 1,000 points for every qualified hotel stay, and just 15,000 points can be redeemed for a free night at one of 25,000 hotels, condos and holiday homes across the Wyndham Worldwide portfolio globally. Wyndham Rewards was ranked the Best Hotel Rewards Program for 2016-2017 by U.S. News & World Report.

www.wyndhamrewards.com

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GRAND THE HOTEL MAGAZINE 69
Wyndham Grand’s first property in Athens is housed in an imposing 1970s building right next to the Metaxourgeio Metro Station, in Karaiskaki Square (2 Megalou Alexandrou). After a full renovation based on designs by Eleni Spartsi of Schema 4 architects, it constitutes a stylish addition to this up-and-coming neighborhood, bringing with it the signature “affordable and unpretentious luxury” of the Wyndham Grand brand, further augmented by Greece’s legendary hospitality. Just a short walk or metro hop from all major sites and cultural points of interest, the hotel is a very convenient starting point for discovering the city, and an easily accessible home away from home where visitors can relax in comfort after their daily explorations.

WYNDHAM GRAND ATHENS
With 276 spacious rooms and suites on eight floors enjoying views of the hotel’s atrium, the city, or the Acropolis, Wyndham Grand Athens gives all of its guests, including those with disabilities, the opportunity to appreciate its unique location and its elegant presence in the neighborhood.

**ROOMS WITH A VIEW**

Delicate furniture design, tapestries in unique patterns, a soft color palette, subdued lighting, and mirrors that visually double the space create a cozy and inviting environment that allows for relaxation and repose. In the bathrooms, fitted with a shower or bathtub, imitation marble tiles offer a further touch of chic, while tinted mirrors add a discreet playfulness.
luxury and comfort come standard with every room, as do amenities such as free, super-fast Wi-Fi with LAN optical fiber at 100 Mbps, LED LCD TV sets, independent air-conditioning and heating, mini bars, Espresso machines, plus luxurious bathroom amenities for adults and special ones for kids. All rooms feature king-sized beds with pillow top mattresses, Egyptian cotton linens and micro-fiber duvets promising a comfortable sleep.

If you are a solo traveler, a Standard Double, with atrium or city view, or an Executive Double, with city or Acropolis view, are ideal choices. If traveling with friends, however, you can opt for a Standard Twin, with atrium or city view, or Executive Twin, with city or Acropolis view, which can accommodate two couples simultaneously. If space is important, the Executive & Junior Suites, all overlooking either the city or the Acropolis and Lycabettus Hill, come with adjoining living rooms featuring cozy armchairs with ottomans, sofa beds and an additional LED LCD TV. For extra luxury, the Executive Suites also feature a Jacuzzi. The 90 m² Presidential Suite, on the 7th floor, delivers commanding views of the city and the Acropolis and comes with a spacious living room with sofa-bed, meeting table, armchair with ottoman, and a LED LCD TV. The master bedroom features a LED LCD TV, an armchair and a private work desk, while the suite is also equipped with two bathrooms, one of which features a bathtub and a luxurious Jacuzzi.

IN-ROOM DINING
Celebrating a special anniversary? Planning on popping the question? Longing for a special night of intimacy and romance in the privacy of your room? Whatever the occasion, the 24-hour room service at Wyndham Grand Athens is always just a phone call away, ready to serve you the finest gourmet dishes or arrange a custom menu depending on your dietary needs.
At the all-day Mediterranean restaurant Fos (meaning “light” in Greek), you can start your day with a hearty breakfast, enjoy a tasty lunch, or indulge in an inspired à la carte gourmet dinner served alongside a rich selection of wines. The restaurant is located at the heart of the hotel, the atrium, where natural light pours in from the glass roof during the day and a gigantic chandelier illuminates the area in the evening. Soft music and the discreet service of the friendly staff complement the dining experience. In the adjoining, elegantly furnished all-day lounge bar Silk, with a name that pays tribute to the neighborhood, you can enjoy a cup of coffee, surf the internet with free super-fast Wi-Fi, conduct business and intimate meetings – the elegant wooden partitions help impart privacy – or simply sit back and relax on the comfortable sofas while taking in the lively rhythm of Karaiskaki Square outside the windows. Alternatively, you can also snack on some Mediterranean delights, or slowly sip your favorite evening drink. If, however, high-angle views are more your style, take a short elevator ride to the rooftop. Here is what awaits you.

The rooftop bar-restaurant Above is the ideal venue for mouthfuls of delicious food and an eyeful of stunning views. Enjoying unobstructed vistas from Lycabettus Hill on the left, past the Acropolis and all the way down to the Saronic Gulf on the right, the rooftop bar-restaurant Above is the perfect place for socializing. In the summer, you can take a refreshing plunge in the stylish, elevated pool, which allows you to look out on the city while floating or showering under its impressive waterfall. After your swim, lay back comfortably on a sun lounger and let the Greek sun envelop you while the city below maintains its busy pace.

As you watch the sunset from the rooftop bar-restaurant Above, world music fills the air and the kitchen begins to serve the ethnic street-food bites from the Savor the World menu. Its globe-trotting delights come from 10 different countries around the world and are paired with signature cocktails made with premium liquors by the bar’s resident mixologist. If you cannot decide which ethnic food to choose, you can try a combo menu with food bites from two, three or four different destinations. For example, you might try arepas with pulled chicken, pickles and guacamole sauce from Colombia; scallops with wakame seaweed salad from Japan; and island grouper fried with wasabi and chili mayonnaise from Madagascar. Each dish is a meeting of different cultures, expressed in harmonious or pleasantly startling flavor combinations. If, however, high-angle views are more your style, take a short elevator ride to the rooftop. Here is what awaits you.

The all-day Mediterranean restaurant Fos

Above's rooftop pool
Everyone needs some time to rejuvenate, refresh, recharge and start anew. The spa at Wyndham Grand Athens offers a wide range of holistic international beauty treatments and massages that blend ancient knowledge and modern science. For extra relaxation, step into the sauna and feel your stress and worries melt away. If, on the other hand, you are looking to accelerate those heartbeats and keep on track with your workout schedule, a fully equipped gym is also available for all guests to use.

Whether you’re looking for a small space to conduct a routine business meeting, or a larger venue to host a conference or even a wedding party, Wyndham Grand Athens has what you need. There are 14 multi-functional meeting spaces to choose from and a total area of 2,500 m2 capable of accommodating up to 2,000 guests. State-of-the-art equipment and free super-fast Wi-Fi internet, combined with the assistance of the hotel’s specially trained staff, guarantee the success of even the most demanding event. The hotel offers you and your guests 140 parking spaces, while its superb catering service will see to all your needs and provide food and beverages for any event, from simple coffee breaks to luxurious gala dinners. If you are seeking a more intimate venue, the Presidential Suite can also be transformed into a banqueting space, while the rooftop bar-restaurant Above can be booked for corporate events and parties.

For more information regarding catering options, special group rates, technical requirements or suggestions about things to see and do in Athens, please contact the Meetings Team on Tel. (+30) 216.800.9900.
WELCOME TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD

A short introduction to one of Athens’ oldest quarters, now hosting the new Wyndham Grand Athens.

By Maria Coveou

Northwest of the historical center of Athens lies a neighborhood once known primarily for its silk factory, a fact reflected in its name, Metaxourgeo, meaning “silk mill.” For centuries, it was just a rural stretch of land – as was most of what we now know as Athens. When, however, the city became the nation’s capital in 1834, many wealthy expatriates and foreigners rushed to purchase large plots on which to build their mansions, believing that the palace of King Otto, the first King of Greece, would soon grace neighboring Kerameikos and that the whole area would consequently become the city center. One of those foreigners, Russian Prince Georgios Kantakouzinos, bought a large plot and commissioned the Danish architect Christian Hansen to build a complex that would house his residence as well as a number of shops. A change in city planning, however, meant the palace was erected elsewhere – on what is today Syntagma Square – and the Kantakouzinos edifice was eventually demolished, to be replaced by a silk factory (in operation from 1855 to 1875), a building that now houses the Municipal Gallery of Athens.

In the late 19th century, Metaxourgeo became a thriving working-class neighborhood, whose residents were employed in the district’s factories and craft industries. Its population continued to grow during the course of the early 20th century, maintaining its working-class profile until the area went into decline in the 1970s. In 2000, however, following the opening of the Athens Metro Red Line, a new era began for Metaxourgeo as many Athenians from the suburbs began to move in, attracted by both the neighborhood’s proximity to the center and its low rents. In the period leading up to the 2004 Olympic Games, renovation projects and infrastructure rebuilding throughout Athens extended to Metaxourgeo as well, bringing even more residents, particularly artists, to the area.

Over the past few years, Metaxourgeo has become something of an artists’ hub, with many art galleries and independent theaters. The heart of the neighborhood is Avdi Square, next to the old silk factory, which draws residents and visitors to its open space and greenery to enjoy festivals, open-air movie screenings, and an abundance of restaurants and cafés. Make sure to take a stroll around the neighborhood; you might even stray further to Kerameikos, if only to admire the neoclassical beauty of some fine examples of early 20th-century architecture. Crumbling or salvaged, covered in graffiti or not, they are nostalgic reminders of the neighborhood’s past.

Over the past few years, Metaxourgeo has become something of an artists’ hub, with many art galleries and independent theaters.
POUNTS OF INTEREST NEARBY...

1. THE MUNICIPAL GALLERY OF ATHENS
The gallery, housed in a neoclassical building that once operated as a silk mill, stands some 350m from Wyndham Grand Athens and hosts permanent and temporary exhibitions of paintings, engravings and sculptures by leading 19th- and 20th-century Greek artists.

• 9 Leonidou
• Tel. (+30) 210.520.2420-1
• Open: Tue 10:00-21:00, Wed-Sat 10:00-19:00, Sun 10:00-16:00
• Free Admission

2. REBECCA CAMHI GALLERY
Founded in 1995, and located in the area (180m from Wyndham Grand Athens) since 2008, this gallery focuses on contemporary art and handles works in all media, including painting, sculpture, photography, film, video, drawing and engraving.

• 9 Leonidou & Myllerou
• Tel. (+30) 210.523.3049 & (+30) 694.732.5711
• www.rebeccacamhi.com
• Open: Tue-Fri 12:00-20:00, Sat 12:00-18:00

3. STREET ART
If you are a fan of street art, you won’t be disappointed by the abundance of diverse graffiti that appears and disappears overnight on the walls of many abandoned – and not so abandoned – buildings in the areas of both Metaxourgeio and Kerameikos. Some of the streets to explore, about 700m from Wyndham Grand Athens, are Iasonos, Salaminos, Stafylias and Paramythias, all of them pedestrianized and full of unexpected delights for neoclassical architecture aficionados.

4. THE BREEDER
Inaugurated in 2002, this gallery exhibits the work of emerging and established artists, both Greek and foreign. In 2008, it moved to the neighborhood, just 140m from Wyndham Grand Athens, to a new home in a renovated ice cream factory dating from the 1970s.

• 45 Iasonos
• Tel. (+30) 210.331.7527
• thebreedersystem.com/gallery/
• Open: Tue-Fri 12:00-20:00, Sat 12:00-18:00

5. THE NATIONAL THEATER OF GREECE
Founded in 1880 by King George I, the then Royal Theater brought stage entertainment to the people of Athens. The building itself (500m from Wyndham Grand Athens) was designed by the famous German architect Ernst Ziller and was completed in the late 1890s. It operates in tandem with the National Theater of Greece Drama School (founded in 1930) and stages both classical and experimental theatrical productions. In July, you can catch one of their two performances at the Epidaurus Theater, as part of the Athens & Epidaurus Festival 2017.

• 22-24 Agiou Konstantinou
• Tel. (+30) 210.528.8170-1
• www.n-t.gr/en/
• Box office: 39 Panepistimiou (inside the Pesmazoglou Arcade)
• Greekfestival.gr/en
• Open: Mon-Fri 09:00-17:00, Sat 09:00-15:00

6. FARMERS’ MARKET
Have you grown weary of museums and archaeological sites? Then you may want to spend a morning strolling around the Kerameikos laiki or farmers’ market. Farmers here sell locally produced fresh fruit and vegetables, but you can also find fresh fish, eggs, olives, honey, herbs and flowers.

• Tuesdays on Kerameikou (south of the corner with Thermopylon, 550m from Wyndham Grand Athens)

7. AN ANCIENT CEMETERY
Prominent Athenian statesmen Solon and Pericles, as well as Cleisthenes – referred to by historians as “the father of Athenian democracy” – were all buried at the Demosion Sema, the most important cemetery in ancient Athens (5th century BC). Its funerary monuments, unearthed during the excavation of 35 Salaminos Street in the district of Kerameikos (600m from Wyndham Grand Athens), revealed that many of the fallen of the wars waged by the Athenians had also been buried here. This somber place came back to life after residents and community associations created a gathering space right next to it with wooden benches, a swing and a seesaw, where people of all ages are welcome to hang out.

8. THE LITTLE PARIS OF ATHENS
If you find yourselves in Athens in October, don’t miss the annual Little Paris of Athens Festival, which takes place in streets named for famous...
Frenchmen (hence the name Little Paris) in the areas of Omonia Square, Vathy Square, Karaiskaki Square (right next to Wyndham Grand Athens) and the Larisis Railway Station. For 10 days, starting October 5, local squares, parks, schools, art galleries and historical buildings in these areas will come alive with musical performances, dance, theater, and photography.

• athensartnetwork.blogspot.gr
• All events are open to the public.

9. UNDERGROUND ART
The art you see on display in the Metaxourgeio metro station comes courtesy of one of the most famous Greek artists who happens to be a Metaxourgeio native as well. Painter, engraver and set designer Alekos Fasianos created his colorful work in 2001 especially for the station and you can enjoy it from both the platform and ticket levels. Bearing the title “Stories from my Neighborhood,” it depicts scenes from Metaxourgeio in the 1950s, like the grocery seller weighing his goods on a scales, people queueing outside an open-air cinema, a popular singer, and a man riding his bicycle.

10. MY CITY, MY SOUNDS
Keen to discover the areas of Metaxourgeio and Kerameikos but you wish you had a guide? All you have to do is install the free app MCMS Player on your mobile, download the SL Rhizome II English Version walk from the app’s Artist Gallery, and go out to meet the city. Via GPS, the app will locate your position and once you are within the area covered by the walk, you will be able to listen to audio tracks selected for you by Medea Electronique, the team behind the app. The sound clips include interviews with residents, poems, and the voice of a fruit hawker selling his goods. You could also download the Greek versions of SL Rhizome II for Kerameikos and Metaxourgeio, which include some audio in English and do not require you to interact with the app; you just walk around the two neighborhoods and enjoy a unique, immersive soundscape that no guided tour could beat.

• medeaelectronique.com

Distances from Wyndham Grand Athens on foot, according to Google Maps
Loutraki’s iconic Poseidon Resort Hotel, in operation since 1966, has been renovated and separated into two luxury resorts, the upscale Wyndham Loutraki Poseidon Resort and the midscale Ramada Loutraki Poseidon Resort, both of which are ready to deliver guests the unmatched hospitality of the Wyndham Hotel Group brands.
Boasting an exceptional location by the waterfront, just an hour’s drive from Athens and a seven-minute drive from the famous spa town of Loutraki, Wyndham Loutraki Poseidon Resort offers the ultimate backdrop for unforgettable holidays, special events, conferences or business meetings. The resort can also be used as a base for daily explorations to world-renowned historical sites like Epidaurus, Mycenae, Nafplio and Ancient Corinth, as well as to significant landmarks in the region, such as the monasteries on nearby Mt Geraneia, the Loutraki Thermal Spa center, the Heraion seaside archaeological site and Lake Vouliagmeni. Whatever your reason for choosing Wyndham Loutraki Poseidon Resort, rest assured that its amazing facilities, hospitable staff and refined elegance will make you want to come back for more.

**WYNDHAM LOU TRAKI POSEIDON RESORT**

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<th>LUXURY BY THE SEA</th>
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<td>Deluxe Junior Suite with private pool</td>
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The Executive Suites come with a plethora of modern amenities and their simple elegance and luxury are augmented by special extravagant touches, such as spacious marble bathrooms with Jacuzzis.

Executive Suites

The Executive Suites, with garden or sea view, can accommodate up to four individuals, making them ideal for families. They come with a plethora of modern amenities and their simple elegance and luxury are augmented by special extravagant touches, such as spacious marble bathrooms with Jacuzzis. They are located in the main building, on the ground floor or the first floor; some are situated right on the seafront.

For an amazing experience, you should definitely consider the Deluxe Junior Suites, which have views to the garden or the sea. Spacious and modern, they offer a comfortable setting of 36 square meters and can host up to three guests. There is also a 56 square-meter option that can host up to four people. These suites feature a large bedroom, living room area and a spacious bathroom with private Jacuzzi and shower. Some even come with their own private swimming pool.
restaurants & bars

Open from mid-June to the beginning of September (weather permitting), the restaurant Wyndham Poseidon is superbly located next to the beach and can accommodate up to 150 people. Guests come here to enjoy an American buffet breakfast, a sumptuous lunch with Mediterranean and international dishes or meat specialties, and fresh fish for dinner. The restaurant adjoins the trendy beach bar Anemos, located right on the waterfront, which serves delicious coffee and beverages throughout the day as well as colorful cocktails to be enjoyed as you surrender to the infinite blue of the Corinthian Gulf.

Neptune is a cozy restaurant operating during winter months. It is located in the main building and offers guests the opportunity to indulge in gourmet dining accompanied by fine, chilled champagne or a glass of local wine in an elegant environment with stunning views of the sea. Wyndham Loutraki Poseidon Resort can cater for any special dietary requests, such as gluten-free or vegan meals, and can even prepare special candlelight dinners under the stars on request.

Guests are also welcome to explore the restaurants and bars of the neighboring Ramada Loutraki Poseidon Resort.

contact us

Wyndham Loutraki Poseidon Resort
• Loutraki, Corinthia, GR 20300, Greece
• Tel. (+30) 2744.067.938
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Ramada Loutraki Poseidon Resort

Its privileged position on a serene, sheltered beachfront, surrounded by trees and overlooking the crystal-clear waters of the Corinthian Gulf, make the family-oriented Ramada Loutraki Poseidon Resort a truly magical retreat. The combination of the surrounding beauty with the brand’s signature upper-class accommodation and top-notch services is guaranteed to offer you a memorable experience, no matter your purpose for travel. World-renowned historical sites like Epidaurus, Mycenae, Nafplio and Ancient Corinth are only a short drive away, as is Athens with all its rich cultural life and entertainment possibilities. So get ready for endless adventures, and when you have satisfied your desire for excitement, allow yourself to be pampered by the resort’s staff at one of its many relaxing venues.
Elegant décor and stylish furnishings blend with the amenities on offer across the 196 luxurious Bungalows and Suites of Ramada Loutraki Poseidon Resort. Amenities include independent air conditioning and heating, luxurious bathroom items and free Wi-Fi.

The Superior Bungalows, with either a garden or sea view, offer comfortable furnishings and abundant sunlight and can accommodate up to two or three guests. The Suites – Superior and Premium – with garden or sea views are bigger than the bungalows and can accommodate two, three or four people, depending on the suite. They all feature bedrooms and living room areas, large bathrooms (some with bathtubs) and spacious verandas for laid-back reveries. Families can opt for the Premium Two-Bedroom Suite for more privacy, while lovers of everything vintage can choose between the Premium Romantic Junior Suite and the Premium Retro Junior Suite, both of which come with nostalgic, retro furnishings. As for those who feel presidential, the Villa Presidential Suite comes with two private pools (indoor and outdoor) and represents the epitome of luxury and comfort. It spreads over two floors and accommodates up to two persons. The ground floor hosts the living room and dining area plus a WC and the second floor hosts the bedroom and en suite bathroom featuring a Jacuzzi, shower and steam bath.

Restaurants & Bars

Open from mid-June to the beginning of September (weather permitting), Triaina Ouzeri Restaurant is located a few steps from the sea and specializes in creative Greek cuisine using the finest local ingredients and produce. Right next to it is the laid-back Ocean View Triaina Beach Bar, which serves a selection of healthy snacks and finger food, as well as an assortment of beverages, alcoholic drinks, fruit juices, refreshments and ice-cream. Amphitron Restaurant, open throughout the year and capable of catering to all dietary preferences, welcomes guests with a sumptuous breakfast, lunch and dinner buffet.

Nafsika Restaurant & Bar, which is open from mid-June to the beginning of September (weather permitting), serves Greek-Mediterranean street food and offers the best sea and sunset views in the entire resort. It is, therefore, an ideal spot for unwinding with a chilled glass of champagne as the setting sun turns everything orange and the resident DJ serenades you with lounge sounds. Apollo Lobby Bar, located in the main building, offers guests a modern spot where they can relax and enjoy a fresh, delicious cocktail. The Pool Bar, an all-day haven for colorful cocktails, freshly squeezed fruit juices, and healthy and hearty snacks in between refreshing plunges in the pool.

LOVERS OF EVERYTHING VINTAGE CAN CHOOSE BETWEEN THE PREMIUM ROMANTIC JUNIOR SUITE AND THE PREMIUM RETRO JUNIOR SUITE, BOTH OF WHICH COME WITH NOSTALGIC, RETRO FURNISHINGS.
**FACILITIES & ACTIVITIES**

Shared by the two resorts, the facilities include three Blue Flag beaches, two outdoor pools, one special children’s pool, one indoor pool, Aegeo Spa, a fitness center, three tennis courts, a basketball court, mini golf, sports and water activities for all ages, the Mini Club with supervised children's entertainment, a mini market, a private chapel, a conference center and event planning services.

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**AEGEO SPA**

Indulge in some of the spa’s restorative therapies, soothing massage sessions, rejuvenating face and body treatments and holistic packages. The team of experienced professionals will suggest the therapies best suited for you and will use the finest and purest natural ingredients for healing and detoxification. Aromatic herbs, natural essential oils, extracts and chocolate will leave your skin deeply nourished and hydrated. Many of the therapies can be enjoyed outside, in private gazebos by the sea, while in-room treatments for personal pampering are also available on request.

**MINI CLUB**

Let your kids have fun without having to worry about a thing, thanks to the supervision of certified, experienced professionals. Through a range of activities like painting, board games, tennis, aqua aerobics, mini golf and refreshing excursions to the beach, young guests will have the opportunity to learn new things, burn off some of their excess energy and make new friends.

**CONFERENCE CENTER**

The luxurious, state-of-the-art conference center constitutes the perfect destination for successful business meetings and corporate events. It features eight halls (which can accommodate from 10 to 450 people) as well as areas for coffee breaks and cocktails. In addition, the outdoor amphitheater, which faces the sea, is a remarkable venue, ideal for opening ceremonies, award speeches or team-building entertainment for up to 900 people.

**WEDDINGS & EVENTS**

Fairytale wedding receptions, social gatherings, afternoon teas or even wild parties are all possible, thanks to the premium services delivered by the planning professionals at both resorts who will go above and beyond to bring your most extravagant dreams to life.

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INDULGE IN SOME OF THE SPA’S RESTORATIVE THERAPIES, SOOTHING MASSAGE SESSIONS, REJUVENATING FACE AND BODY TREATMENTS AND HOLISTIC PACKAGES.
LOUTRAKI: MORE THAN BATHS

When visiting the Corinthian spa town, plan some mini-escapes to take in the local historical monuments, picturesque hikes and a swim next to ancient ruins.

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY MARO KOURI.
According to the ancient Greek historian Xenophon, Spartan warriors used to come to the ancient town of Thermiae, believed to be the modern Loutraki near Corinth, for rest and recreation after their battles, as the waters here are known for their healing properties. The first organized spa here was launched in 1855, and in the early 20th century, Loutraki became Greece’s first spa destination. The seaside town, still synonymous with mineral baths, welcomes visitors year-round for saunas, hamams (Turkish steam baths) and relaxation in the magnificent pool and hydro massage facilities of Loutraki Thermal Spa (24 Georgiou Lekka, Tel. (+30) 2744.028.757), now in its 70th year. This is a cinematic experience flavored with the salt breeze of the Corinthian Gulf stirring the leaves of the eucalyptus trees and set against the backdrop of the illuminated spa itself (films are screened in their original language with Greek subtitles). The evening need not end here. Continue onwards to the beachfront bars, stopping for a Parisian-caliber crepe, before the Corinth Canal was constructed. With the aid of pulleys, slaves moved three-masts from the Gulf of Corinth to the Saronic Gulf and vice versa. The high tolls that were paid for the right to use the diolkos were one of the most important sources of income for ancient Corinth – if not the most important. From Poseidonia, you can return to Loutraki by walking along the seafront, and continue your stroll through the town. To get closer to nature, drive out of Loutraki towards the village of Perachora and continue to the village of Sterna. From here, you can continue on foot along the signposted coastal path – through pine trees, cedars and wild olive trees hugged by ivy – which leads to Melagavi Lighthouse, also known as the Heraion Lighthouse, after the classical temple of Hera located nearby. Along the way, stop for a swim in Lake Vouliagmeni, which is renowned for its peaceful beauty. Its turquoise waters reflect the Geraneia Mountains, which are ideal for climbing, walking and mountain biking. Arriving at the archaeological site of the Heraion, take a dip in the sea below the ancient temple of Hera located nearby. Along the way, stop for a swim in Lake Vouliagmeni, which is renowned for its peaceful beauty. Its turquoise waters reflect the Geraneia Mountains, which are ideal for climbing, walking and mountain biking. Arriving at the archaeological site of the Heraion, take a dip in the sea Below the ancient temple of Hera located nearby. Along the way, stop for a swim in Lake Vouliagmeni, which is renowned for its peaceful beauty. Its turquoise waters reflect the Geraneia Mountains, which are ideal for climbing, walking and mountain biking. Arriving at the archaeological site of the Heraion, take a dip in the sea.
The arrival of the Wyndham Grand brand to Athens was celebrated on March 27, 2017, with a particularly glamorous grand opening party hosted by Haris Siganos, Executive Director of Zeus International; Geoff Ballotti, Chairman and CEO of Wyndham Hotel Group; Giorgos Margaritis, General Manager of Wyndham Grand Athens; and Dan Ruff, President and Managing Director EMEA for Wyndham Hotel Group. Among the distinguished guests who honored the event with their presence were Eleni Kountoura, Greek Minister for Tourism; Geoffrey Pyatt, the United States Ambassador to Greece; and Dimitris Tryfonopoulos, former General Secretary of the Greek National Tourism Organization. They all got the opportunity to become acquainted with the hotel and its facilities and to try the delicious treats of talented chef Kostas Namos.

Following the opening of Wyndham Grand Athens in 2016, Wyndham Hotel Group and Zeus International are continuing their successful collaboration with the opening of two additional hotels in Greece, in the renowned seaside town of Loutraki; the upscale Wyndham Loutraki Poseidon Resort and the midscale Ramada Loutraki Poseidon Resort. These two openings follow the companies’ recent announcement of an extended partnership, which will see them develop 20 hotels in Greece, Cyprus, Bulgaria and Romania over the next 10 years. “Wyndham Hotel Group has ambitious growth plans for Greece, and in Zeus International we have found a like-minded partner who continues to help us grow our footprint across the country,” said Dan Ruff, President and Managing Director EMEA for Wyndham Hotel Group.

Wyndham Grand Athens - Grand Opening Party

The international beauty pageant Miss Tourism Planet 2017, organized by George Koutouliazi’s Models Academy with the support of the Greek National Tourism Organization (GNTO), took place on June 30 at the shared swimming pool venue of Wyndham Hotel Group’s two new luxurious hotels in Loutraki. On June 19, the pageant participants, representing 20 different countries, competed in the Miss Bikini event, which took place at the rooftop bar-restaurant Above of Wyndham Grand Athens. The event was open to restaurant guests, who were given the opportunity to meet the participants and to help decide on the winner of the title Miss Bikini 2017, which went to Miss UK. (N.B. The overall winner of the pageant was not yet known at the time of writing.)

An extended partnership

Miss Tourism Planet 2017

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Zeus International, which runs Royal Blue Hotel & Spa in Pafos, Cyprus, is actively supporting the organization European Capital of Culture Pafos 2017 as Gold Hospitality Sponsor, providing free accommodation throughout the year at its hotel, according to the organization’s needs. The aim of the sponsorship is to help the organization implement its program and achieve its goals, which are to reinforce Pafos’ place on the European cultural map and spread its motto “Linking Continents-Bridging Cultures” worldwide.

Social Media Champion Award

During the Wyndham Hotel Group EMEA Summit in Brussels early in 2017, Wyndham Grand Athens won the Social Media Champion award in recognition of the highly competent management of its social media presence and the high level of engagement of its visitors on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest and Google Plus. (The online marketing consultancy Panadvert has been responsible for the online promotion of the hotel since it opened in 2016.) Giorgos Margaritis, General Manager of Wyndham Grand Athens, was presented the award by event host Geoff Balloitti, Wyndham Chairman and CEO; Dan Ruff, President and Managing Director EMEA for Wyndham Hotel Group; and Edwin Broers, Wyndham Hotel Group’s Regional Vice President for East and Central Europe.

Gold Hospitality Sponsor

Wellness and Rejuvenation sessions

Starting this summer and until mid-October, Wyndham Loutraki Poseidon Resort and Ramada Loutraki Poseidon Resort, in collaboration with the Greek subscription channel Body in Balance, will be offering their guests unique two-day wellness and rejuvenation sessions run by esteemed wellness trainers. On July 13-14, health expert Caroline Sandry will offer a special Pilates program for stress release and correct body workout. On September 3-4, Hatha Yoga and nutrition specialist Sybille Gebhardt will help participants improve the function of their respiratory system, achieve serene sleep and get rid of body pains. On October 14-15, the famous London-based fitness trainer Esmée Gummer will show attendees how to improve the functions of their cardiovascular and respiratory systems, reduce body fat and achieve a general sense of health well-being. On the above dates, the two hotels will be offering special accommodation packages which will include free participation in the sessions and a 20 percent discount on all massage therapies at Aegeo Spa.

Gold distinctions

On March 21, 2017, Zeus International and Wyndham Grand Athens received two gold distinctions at the 4th Tourism Awards in Athens. Organized by Boussias Communications under the auspices of the Greek National Tourism Organization, the awards aim to celebrate excellence and innovation in the travel and hospitality industry. Zeus International was awarded for its strategic collaboration with Wyndham Hotel Group in the Strategy and Innovation category while Wyndham Grand Athens was awarded best city hotel in the Hotels and Resorts category.
Welcome to Wyndham Grand Athens, Wyndham Loutraki Poseidon Resort and Ramada Loutraki Poseidon Resort, part of Wyndham Hotel Group — the world’s largest hotel company, with nearly 8,000 hotels in 79 countries.

Wyndham Grand is an ensemble of more than 40 distinguished hotels located in some of the world’s most sought after destinations, including Shanghai, Istanbul, Orlando and now Athens. Wyndham Grand is a luxury brand that is approachable by design, offering one-of-a-kind experiences with refined accommodation, attentive service and relaxed surroundings.

At Wyndham we recognize that the demographic of the modern traveler is changing, yet many hotels still only appeal to the frequent or elite traveler. Our 18 iconic hotel brands offer travelers the right place to stay, however they choose to travel and wherever their journey takes them.

Our industry-leading rewards program, Wyndham Rewards, provides a generous points-earning structure and a flat 15,000-point free night redemption rate at any hotel, with no blackout dates – making sure our more than 50 million members are able to redeem what they have earned. And together with our sister companies of Wyndham Worldwide, we offer a collective inventory of more than 120,000 places to stay across 100 countries on six continents – including everything from timeshares to condos and vacation homes, through great brands such as RCI, Novasol and Hoseasons.

Wyndham Hotel Group has ambitious growth plans for Greece, so we are very pleased to be expanding our partnership with Zeus International to introduce more of our iconic brands in additional destinations within the country. We want to ensure that wherever adventure leads them, whether in Greece or around the globe, people can always find our hotel brands nearby.

We hope you enjoy your stay at Wyndham Grand Athens, Wyndham Loutraki Poseidon Resort and Ramada Loutraki Poseidon Resort, and we look forward to welcoming you at many more of our hotels in the future.

Dan Ruff
President and Managing Director EMEA
Wyndham Hotel Group

WE ARE VERY PLEASED TO BE EXPANDING OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH ZEUS INTERNATIONAL TO INTRODUCE MORE OF OUR ICONIC BRANDS IN ADDITIONAL DESTINATIONS WITHIN GREECE.