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locked in discussion at the
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As world says
farewell to the
people's Pope
...a miracle in
the Vatican?

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EXCLUSIVE: After the PM's years of dithering over the true definition of a woman, a new book reveals...

KEIR STARMER'S EX GIRLFRIEND IS PRO-TRANS JUDGE

By Glen Owen and Mark Hookham

SIR KEIR Starmer had a long-term romance with a judge who has been accused of being influenced by trans activists, The Mail on Sunday can reveal.

A new biography of the Prime Minister reveals that before meeting his wife, Victoria, Sir Keir spent 'years' in a relationship with Maya Sikand KC, a high-flying barrister who now works as a part-time Crown Court judge.

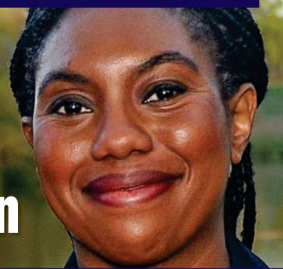
Six years ago, Ms Sikand, 55, was at the centre of a legal row at the chambers where she worked, with a colleague claiming in court papers that she was part of a group that 'explicitly endorsed the trans rights agenda'. Last week, Sir Keir U-turned on his previously stated

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EXCLUSIVE: TORY LEADER OPENS UP TO SARAH VINE



Kemi: I've
had my own
run-ins with
predatory men



INTERVIEW, PAGES 14-16

Pristine beaches, vineyards, a rich heritage
– no wonder the chic north-west coast is now...

By **Mark Palmer**

SUCH has been the country's long and turbulent history that one exasperated high-ranking official declared some years ago: 'The only true Cypriots are the donkeys.'

Of course, Greek Cypriots in the south and Turkish Cypriots in the north would contest that view vehemently, which explains why this sunny Mediterranean island remains divided along the so-called Green Line – and no one pretends that reunification is close to being on the agenda.

Invaders have long eyed up Cyprus – from Mycenaean Greeks and Persians to crusaders and Ottoman pashas.

The British ruled from 1878 to 1960 – and one legacy from this period is that cars drive on the left.

It's fair to say that Cyprus's reputation has suffered in the past decade or so as Russians flew in and flopped at blingy all-inclusives along the south coast. But Putin's intentions on Ukraine have changed that to a large extent.

Which must be bad news for business in some tourist hotspots – but perhaps good for the rest of us. Mind you, the north-west tip of the country on either side of the Akamas Peninsula has long been regarded as a million miles away from the fleshpots of Limassol and Ayia Napa.

It's here – less than an hour's drive from Paphos Airport – that Cyprus's former foreign minister Alekos Michaelides, who died in 2008, brought his family to swim in the clear water to the west of Latsi and liked it so much that he built what's now the 160 room Anassa Hotel. It opened in 1998.

Big resort hotels are not everyone's cuppa, but this particular brew works brilliantly. It sits above a long, sandy beach with easy access to the water whatever your age – and the hotel truly caters to all, with kids' clubs galore and even a creche for babies.

The lush and extensive gardens are a joyous palette of colour, with some areas given over to immaculately cut lawns. There's a consecrated chapel, five classy restaurants, a beautifully designed Thalassa Spa (adults only, go for the wild juniper salt body scrub) with an indoor pool and gym – and by far the best hotel shop



Cyprus's Cote d'Azur!

I've ever come across, run by an ex-New York writer who has taken local artists under his wing and given them the exposure they deserve.

'This place is on a par with anything you'll find in the South of France – but at two-thirds the price,' says a German regular, as we converse over the pastries section at the breakfast buffet.

And what a buffet it is. You may have read that these feasts are on the way out – but not if what's happening here is taken into consideration. Each morning I resolve to have just fresh fruit and yogurt, but end up with a little bit of this, a large slice of that until my plate becomes a mountain of disparate goodies.

ALL rooms have balconies, most with sea views. Ours, with two blue-and-white striped chaise longues and full length shutters, looks east over the vast Chrysochou Bay from where the sun rises, at first golden and then, an hour later, a piercing white light that picks out the tall cypress trees standing to sergeant major attention.

A few miles along the coast is where you'll find the Baths of Aphrodite, where supposedly the goddess of love splashed about with Adonis. It's instructive but not life-changing.

A better idea is to head up to the little village of Neo Chorio, where life centres around the perfectly formed Greek Orthodox Church of Agiou Mina, outside of which are three large tombs in remembrance of villagers who died fighting for independence on the same day in 1956.

Across the road, in a cafe, I ask for a Greek coffee with sugar and am charged the mighty sum of one euro. A Greek

coffee, with granules remaining at the bottom of the cup, is an acquired taste – but at 11am in this unspoilt hill-top hamlet where men with faces lined like a London Underground map smoke small cigars and where children play hide and seek in the street, it seems just right.

We're here in mid-April and the temperature is already in the high 20s, whereas in the Cote d'Azur it can still be what forecasters

INVITING: The Anassa overlooks the Med. Far left: Agiou Mina church in Neo Chorio

call 'unsettled'. What's more, the season here stretches well into late October.

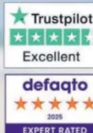
True, it's a longer flight, but once you're here and have picked your spot with care, your holiday budget will stretch further and those murky preconceptions about Cyprus will be vanquished.

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TRAVEL FACTS

Garden view rooms at Anassa start from £470 B&B (anassa.com). British Airways flies from London Heathrow to Paphos from £250 (ba.com).

LUXURY: Some rooms come with pools