

europaean Spa

THE NO.1 MAGAZINE FOR SPA AND WELLNESS



Issue 53 | August/September 2016 | www.europeanspamagazine.com



AUTHENTIC WELLNESS

Global Wellness Summit reveals industry predictions

APHRODITE'S ISLAND

Inside two of Thanos Hotels' sumptuous Cypriot spa resorts

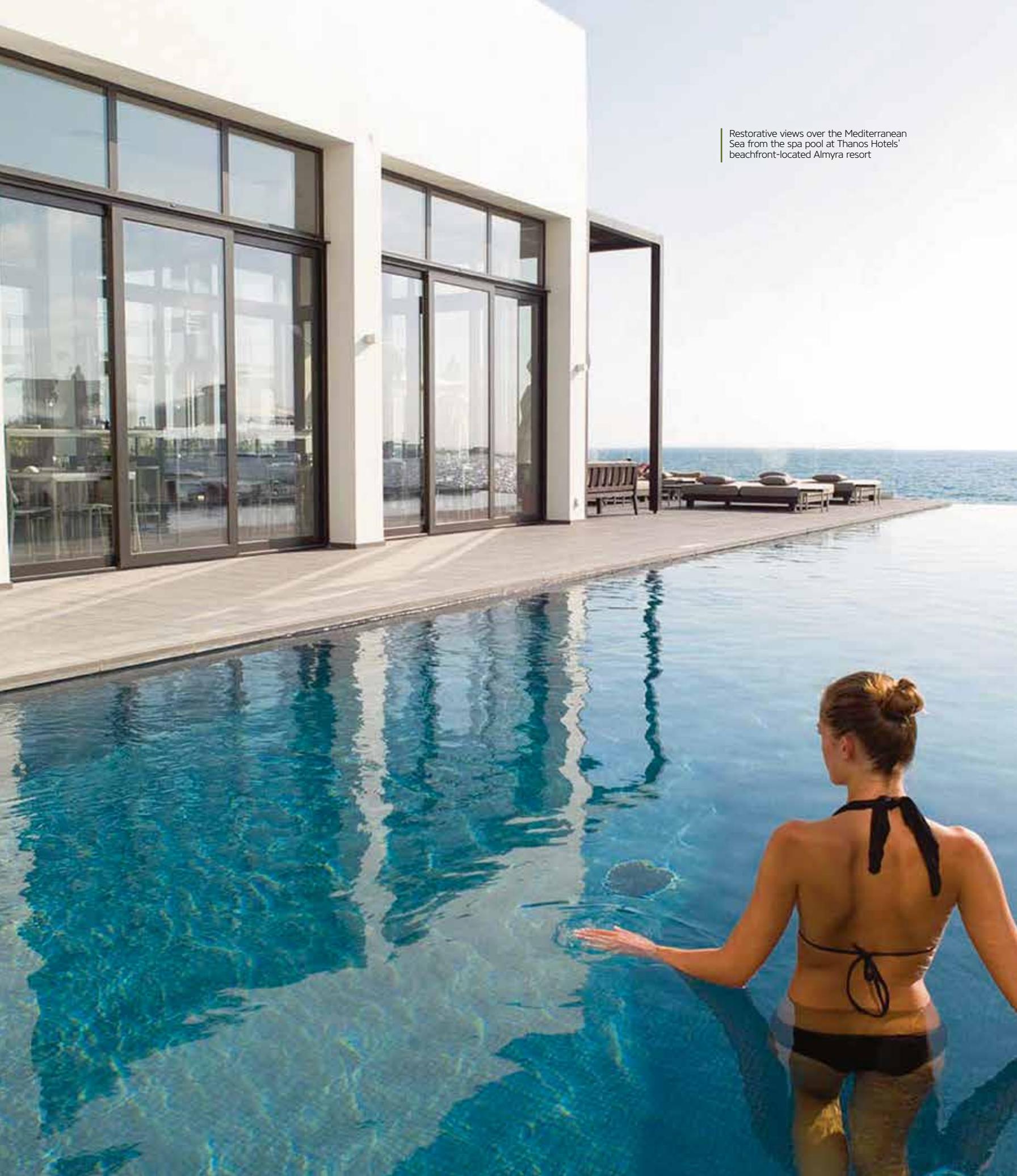
A MATERIAL WORLD

High-performance uniforms and textiles in our Expert Guide

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

Celebrating a first year of success for Spa at Ramside, UK

Restorative views over the Mediterranean Sea from the spa pool at Thanos Hotels' beachfront-located Almyra resort



The sanctuary of Aphrodite

Synonymous with the sea, love and beauty, Cyprus radiates an authentic, natural sense of wellbeing. We visit the island to witness a reawakening of wellness destinations driven by Thanos Hotels

REPORT BY HELLENA BARNES

Famed as the legendary birthplace of Aphrodite, the ancient island of Cyprus basks in 300 days of sunshine per year and is the third largest in the Mediterranean. Edged with golden sands and surrounded by crystal waters, here is a place where panoramic views provide a therapy of their own and whose people possess an innate gift for hospitality.

The island's embrace is tangible through its abundant natural assets, ancient historical culture and the authentic welcome that awaits a vast number of visitors each year. According to the Cyprus Tourism Organisation, a record-breaking 2.65m people enjoyed a stay on Cyprus in 2015, with 2016 set to build on this total.

"Even through the recent economic downturn, our spa and wellness hospitality market has flourished," says George Tavelis, president of the Cyprus Spa Association. "Occupancy figures have always remained high and while the average spend dropped by 20% for a short time, this was largely due to defensive price reductions by spa operators, however it is now back to €80 per hour."

Flying the flag for spa excellence, the family-owned and managed Thanos Hotels has three distinguished properties on Cyprus; Anassa, Almyra and Annabelle. The group, founded 40 years ago by the late Alecos Michaelides, continues its proud heritage with son Thanos Michaelides as managing director, and daughters Natasha and Anna as directors.

Having invested throughout the years to provide sumptuous five-star excellence, Thanos Hotels has also

thrived on its 'extended family philosophy', earning a host of awards and an impressive 40% guest-return rate. The group now plans to build on its spa status and wellbeing offering with expansion across the Mediterranean.

Iconic Anassa

This year saw a celebrated re-launch of Anassa following the completion of a three-year, multi-million euro renovation project for the property, which is hailed as 'Queen of the Mediterranean'. Designed in the style of a traditional Cypriot village, the resort offers 166 low-rise rooms, all with balconies; signature suites, with plunge pools or whirlpools; and private villas with large outdoor terraces for family and group gatherings. The site's 'village square' even has its own Byzantine-style chapel.

Perched majestically on the headland of the Akamas peninsula in west Cyprus and encircled by gardens abundant with fruit, flowers and olive groves overlooking a secluded beach, the luxurious resort has been re-imagined with the addition of new villas and an extensive rejuvenation of its award-winning Thalassa Spa.

"We have never allowed Anassa to grow tired," affirms Natasha Michaelidou, co-owner and marketing and communications director of Thanos Hotels. "This was a multi-million euro investment project and our three-year regeneration programme was very carefully paced so as not to interrupt visitor experiences. We absolutely wanted to avoid any disruptive alterations or clear changes from old to new;





“We have never allowed Anassa to grow tired. This was a multi-million euro investment and our three-year regeneration programme was a very carefully, sensitively-paced project.”

Natasha Michaelidou, co-owner, marketing and communications director, Thanos Hotels



it needed to be a smooth and sensitive transition that enabled us to uphold consistently high standards.”

Straight from the sea

Integral to Anassa’s renowned wellbeing services, the Roman-style Thalassa Spa aims to reflect the healing powers of Cyprus, providing thalassotherapy treatments that utilise seawater pumped directly from the Chrysochou Bay.

Its majestic, sky-lit, columned, freshwater indoor pool and seawater jet pool are complemented by 18 treatment suites, separate male and female steam rooms and saunas, an outdoor freshwater hot tub and relaxation spaces, as well as a fitness room, refreshments area, hair salon and nail bar.

“Our approach to the guest spa journey is healing and holistic,” states Ingrid Price, spa manager for all three Thanos properties. “We have wonderful teams, highly trained in our Thalasso programme, therapeutic concepts, lifestyle consulting and world-leading treatments. Natasha has been visionary in her selection of global product partners, combining marine, scientific and ‘beyond-organic’ skincare to meet every restorative and rejuvenating client need.”

Working with international brands Osea, QMS and ila, the spa menu runs from one-hour treatments to ten-day retreats. “Osea products work supremely well with our thalassotherapy offering and we have enjoyed a ten-year exclusive European partnership with the American brand,”



Clockwise from above left: Gentle relaxation in the Anassa health bar; Anassa's light-filled, Roman-style indoor pool; an aromatherapy massage in an Almyraspa treatment room; a refreshing cascade at Anassa's outdoor infinity pool; natural tones at the Almyraspa reception

explains Price. "Its naturally active marine-based therapies are vegan, biodegradable and created with USDA-certified organic seaweed, so it enhances our ocean spa experience.

"QMS MediCosmetics by German cosmetic surgeon Dr Erich Schulte is a non-invasive product range focused on skin regeneration and its results-driven formulas are very popular with our Russian guests," she adds. "Furthermore, the arrival of luxury organic range ila has opened a world of treatment opportunities for us this year and has led to the very exciting and exclusive partnership with star facialist Anastasia Achilleos" (see box right).

Almyra's energy

An hour along the spectacular coastal road from Anassa to Paphos is the hotel Almyra, which sits on the beachfront next to its more colonial looking, 80% residential-occupancy sister property Annabelle and provides an altogether more energetic vibe. The family's very first hotel operation, set up in 1975 under the name Paphos Beach hotel, the 189-room property was relaunched as Almyra in 2003 and is equally focused on five-star experiences, offering uninterrupted views across the bay of Paphos and beyond.

Maximising its markets, the multi-faceted Almyra has no less than 18 specified room categories and provides vast amounts

Higher consciousness: The Anastasia Achilleos Method



The founder of The Anastasia Achilleos Method has created a multi-platform transformational Cranial Sacral Facial Therapy exclusively for Thanos Hotels. "I was looking for the right spa partner and this came about organically," Anastasia Achilleos tells *European Spa*. "I've known Anassa excellence all my life, so it is a perfect partnership."

The Anastasia Achilleos Method delivers emotional stimulation through effective skincare massage therapies that tap into the body's craniosacral rhythms. It has connections with reiki and energy lines to engage the central nervous system, releasing connective tissue stress and muscle tension.

The 90-minute facial is undertaken on a warm water mat to foster a calm, floating sensation and enable the therapist to reach from the face beyond the neck to the shoulders, and even to the abdominal area, with flowing ease to leave clients with a glowing complexion and replenished energy.

One-to-one engagement with the spa teams developed the skills, technical methods and inner awareness of the Thanos therapists, who are the first in the world, other than Anastasia herself, to deliver this treatment.

"This was shared mentoring rather than training," says Achilleos. "Therapists must treat the emotional and physical body in harmony. It is a 360-degree approach. Not everyone can do it, and yes, there are tears, but these are of emotions of breakthrough, release and joy. Bringing consciousness into therapists' work, providing treatments that make a difference and sharing energy is not a hobby or a job – it is life for me."



SPA STATS

Anassa, Thalassa Spa, Cyprus
+ 357 (0) 26 888000
www.anassa.com

Owner: Thanos Hotels

Managing director: Thanos Michaelides

Marketing and communications director: Natasha Michaelidou

General manager: Sebastian Wurst

Spa manager: Ingrid Price

Interior design: Joelle Pléot

Treatment suites: 18

Spa product partners: Osea, QMS MediCosmetics, ila, L'Oreal, Essie, OPI, treatment beds by Touch America

Pools and wet facilities: separate male-female sauna and steam rooms, indoor 17.5m x 8m pool, indoor jet pool, outdoor hot tub, thalassotherapy pools and aqua yoga, Flipper Camp for water-based exercise and fitness activities

Exclusive offerings: The Anastasia Achilleos Method, and Baby Go Lightly concierge

Additional facilities: 300sqm Kult boutique with collections from Prada, Stella McCartney and Jimmy Choo, Anassa watersports, gym and fitness area, squash and tennis courts, hair salon and nail stations, relaxation room, yoga, children's activity clubs and teenage Crew club, private boat to Blue Lagoon



We have wonderful teams, highly trained in our Thalasso programme, therapeutic concepts, lifestyle consulting and world-leading treatments.”

Ingrid Price, spa manager,
Thanos Hotels

▷ of space within its eight-acre setting to offer activities including watersports and outdoor pursuits, together with two freshwater pools, one designed specifically for children. An easy 20-minute drive from Paphos airport, this accessible wellbeing destination successfully harmonises family fun with fitness and an impressive five-star destination spa, set within the resort's secluded adult-only area.

“For me, the spa at Almyra is like visiting a luxurious home,” smiles Natasha Michaelidou. “There is warmth in whatever we do and a personal touch that connects with our guests. We are not ticking boxes, we are thoughtfully creating individual experiences.”

Three levels of perfection

The three-storey Almyraspa, set within landscaped gardens, does indeed offer a warm welcome. Its ground floor houses a spa reception, hair salon and nail stations together with an indoor heated swimming pool that meets the open sea horizon with a floor-to-ceiling glass frontage. The first floor is dedicated to wet areas with sauna and steam rooms, showers and a Vichy suite, plus an outdoor yoga deck.

Almyra's seven treatment suites, located on the second floor, benefit from huge windows that let the light and views flood in, while the third floor provides two secluded couples' suites, a private sea-view terrace, and a Technogym fitness area overlooking the tennis courts and the ocean.



From top: A stunning view of the Akamas peninsula in west Cyprus from Anassa; the marble-tiled freshwater infinity pool at Almyra

Almyraspa's exterior is designed over two levels to encompass a stunning outdoor marble-tiled freshwater infinity pool, designed to allow guests to be 'at one' with the sea, together with private lounge areas.

In addition, the Eauzone spa restaurant serves synergetic cuisine on an open terrace looking over the Mediterranean. With a mantra of 'cook local, think global', its science-based, healthy Synergy spa menus follow the concept that the key to good health is in food combinations that are biochemically balanced to help the body absorb maximum nutrients.

Another enlightened idea at Almyra has been the introduction of a fully equipped bike station within the spa that enables cyclists to ride in, park up and head straight to the spa's showers, sauna and steam rooms, or massage therapy suites. This is a particularly popular offering during the





SPA STATS

Almyra, Almyraspa, Cyprus
+ 357 (0) 26 888720
www.almyra.com

Owner: Thanos Hotels

Managing director: Thanos Michaelides

Marketing and communications director: Natasha Michaelidou

Hotel manager: Ashley Goddard

Spa manager: Ingrid Price

Interior design: Joelle Pléot

Spa architect: J+A Philippou

Treatment rooms: Seven single and two couples' suites

Spa product partners: Osea, QMS MediCosmetics, ila, L'Oreal, Essie, OPI, treatment beds by Touch America

Pools and wet facilities: indoor spa swimming pool, outdoor infinity pool, sauna and steam rooms, and Vichy suite

Exclusive offerings: The Anastasia Achilleos Method, Baby Go Lightly concierge

Additional facilities: Outdoor yoga deck, singles and couples treatments suites, relaxation areas, Technogym fitness, Eauzone spa restaurant, activity camps and triathlon training



“Bringing consciousness into therapists’ work, providing treatments that make a difference and sharing energy is not a hobby or a job – it is life for me.”

Anastasia Achilleos, founder,
The Anastasia Achilleos Method



From top: The design of Anassa’s spa pool blends seamlessly into an ocean panorama; Almyraspa’s Technogym-equipped fitness area with wonderful sea views



winter months when the hotel’s wellness and activity market increases with spa services that combine with triathlon training, coastal cycling and seawater swimming clinics.

Cypriot success

Thanos Hotels’ inclusive sense of hospitality means it is open to all demographics, offering everything from exclusive spa and elite travel experiences to family leisure, corporate group breaks and fitness camps. This provides an extremely wide range of opportunity for marketing and Michaelidou says the brand conducts active public relations, consumer advertising and social media campaigns. “Our individual offerings can stand alone, but they invariably integrate, so we work closely with companies such as Design Hotels, Wellbeing Escapes and Leading Hotels of the World, to extend our reach and emphasise our message of modern hospitality for all segments.”

Creating a sense of engagement is the life’s work of the Thanos ‘family’, particularly when it comes to its commitment to people and the sharing of ideas and energy to drive the brand forward in a positive way. “The hospitality and spa business is personal, especially if a company is privately owned,” says Michaelidou. “Perhaps this is an extension of our own personality, however, our overall ethos is to remain authentic and true, this matters greatly to us.”

A sense of inclusion travels right through from the company’s employee relations to specific guest offerings “Much has changed over the years but a sense of family always remains important,” explains Michaelidou. “Especially these days, as parents want to travel more extensively with their children. We were one of the first to recognise this at

a luxury level. How many designer hotels do you find that embrace families? I don’t just mean providing amenities; we actually follow their needs. I created our Baby Go Lightly concept after travels with my own baby daughter, however even I didn’t realise how successful it would be.”

“Professional couples with young children find it quite rare to enjoy such a high level of spa, good eating options and relaxation opportunities – yet not feel bad by having children with them in a five-star establishment. Although there is a different price point from Anassa to Almyra, our philosophy of exceptional and individual care echoes throughout the company.”

Next year looks set to be a particularly hot one for Thanos Hotels as the UNESCO World Heritage site of Paphos has been awarded the title of European Capital of Culture for 2017. With the brand announced as an official Gold Sponsor for the festivities that accompany this honour, it will surely provide a perfect opportunity for the company to further showcase its deep connection to the island of Cyprus and its people. ●●●●●