

# TRAVEL SPECIAL

MAY 7, 2017

**INSIDE**  
32 pages  
of fantastic  
holidays

## STRICTLY VIETNAM

Kieran Prendiville discovers a land of serenity, chaos, charm, beauty... and ballroom dancing

Wake up to...

# APHRODITE'S ISLE



By Naomi Leach

It's not often that I welcome a broken night's sleep, but a slither of light lures me from my cocoon of white sheets on to the balcony. A charcoal smudge of poplar trees frames the soft, silver waves of Chrysochou Bay, which are puckering along the shoreline below.

Spellbound, I savour this first blush of dawn, realising that no one else at the Anassa is awake. It's a moment worth waking for.

That's the magic of Aphrodite's island and this rugged hinterland on the north-west coast of the Mediterranean near the island of Cyprus – it conjures unforgettable moments. Forget the booze-soaked clubs of Ayia Napa and the thronging Larnaca beaches, the coastal wilds of Akamas are a world away from the better-known tourist hotspots.

This environmentally protected peninsula is blessed with turquoise lagoons and mountain villages. Latsi, the blink-and-you'll-drive-past-it location of Anassa, is 45 minutes by car from Paphos airport.

Restless guests can explore the island's vibrant history on a culture-infused day trip to Paphos castle, the House of Dionysos and the Baths of Aphrodite, all on the hotel's doorstep. But it's unlikely you'll stray from the award-winning beach retreat, home to one of the best spas in Europe.

Anassa is designed to resemble a serene, whitewashed Greek village with 166 garden and sea-view rooms as well as suites sprawling amid the fragrant bougainvillea. We are in the Panoramic Suite, which lives up to its name, boasting dreamy, blue-hued views of the coastline. Inside, there's a lofty white living room, a colossal bed and a sumptuous bathroom.

Following a three-year refurbishment, the resort is a peaceful sanctuary – a series of cool, pearly corridors where you hear the whisper



**TRANQUIL:** The harbour at Paphos. Above left: Naomi at the Anassa

of other guests but never see more than their shadows. From the hotel's secluded beach to the infinity pool with its swim-up bar, to the kids' club, there are enough hideaways to indulge in the luxury of privacy. In the Thalassa spa, I sample the Anastasia Achilleos Method. For 90 minutes, lying on a warm, water-filled mat, I feel as if I'm floating as a therapist massages my back and neck before painting masks on to my face to extract all the toxins.

By twilight the hotel has taken on a romantic hue. Guests have eight restaurant options to choose from, including the sea views at the Amorosa terrace, the Med tavern Pelagos or the courtyard of Asian restaurant Basiliko. Here, a mouth-watering sushi menu awaits as well as revelations such as grilled wagyu beef cannelloni. And in the resort's village square is a Byzantine chapel where local musicians and dancers conjure a rustic atmosphere for alfresco diners.

But we are drawn to the beach where flaming torches illuminate an intimate barbecue as an acoustic singer and guitarist lift classic pop songs over the crashing waves. Attentive service and hushed voices preserve the mellow enchantment of the night as we enjoy mezze followed by seafood and a meaty main. As a chocolate pancake and profiterole dessert arrives, I admit defeat, sitting back instead to soak in Akamas's star-spinkled ambience.

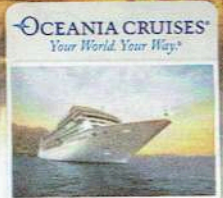
A blissful night's sleep awaits but I won't utter a word of complaint if it's interrupted.

## GETTING THERE

Room rates at **Anassa** ([anassa.com](http://anassa.com)) start from €420 (£356) per night and suites start from €900 (£762) including breakfast. The Anastasia Achilleos Method costs €195 (£165) for a 90-minute session. **Monarch** ([monarch.co.uk](http://monarch.co.uk)) offers flights and holidays to Paphos from Birmingham and Gatwick with fares from £130pp return.

## Luxury Med Collection

FROM  
**£1549**  
PER PERSON  
8-11 NIGHTS



Choose one of our amazing new Luxury Med Cruises with Oceania and get FREE Unlimited internet plus a choice of FREE drinks, up to 6 FREE shore excursions or up to \$600 onboard credit\*. Cruising from either Barcelona or Rome, you will explore amazing ports of call whilst relaxing in the luxurious surroundings of Oceania's beautiful Nautica. Throw caution to the wind whilst visiting the world famous casinos of Monte Carlo. Perhaps visit the Coliseum in Rome and ponder whether you would have given the thumbs up (or down) during the famous games of the arena. Or simply reflect in the beauty of the UNESCO protected Sagrada Familia cathedral in Barcelona.

**What's included:**

- Return flights from London
- All transfer
- One night's 4-star B&B hotel stay in Barcelona or Rome
- Seven-ten nights' full-board cruise onboard **Nautica**
- FREE Unlimited internet\*
- FREE drinks, up to 6 FREE shore excursions or up to \$600 onboard credit\*

### Cruise itinerary A (7-10 nights):

Barcelona – Palma de Mallorca – Marseille (Provence) – Monte Carlo – Ajaccio (Corsica) – La Spezia (Cinque Terre) – Livorno (Florence/Pisa/Tuscany) – Civitavecchia (Rome) (itinerary varies)

### Cruise itinerary B (10 nights):

Civitavecchia (Rome) – Livorno (Florence/Pisa/Tuscany) – Portofino – Monte Carlo – Toulon – Barcelona – Valencia – Mahon (Minorca) – Naples (Pompeii) – Civitavecchia (Rome) (itinerary varies)

Date	Itin	Nts	From
5 Oct 2017	A	11	£2299*
9 Oct 2018	A	8	£1549**
16 Oct 2018	B	11	£1849
26 Oct 2018	B	11	£1899

\*Terms, conditions and limitations apply.  
\*\*Based on Oceania view stateroom.  
\*Based on Balcony stateroom.

**RUGGED CHARM:** The Akamas coast in north-west Cyprus



JetlineCruise  
[www.jetlinecruise.com](http://www.jetlinecruise.com)

0800 082 2154

Open 7 days a week 9am – 9pm



Weekly departures on a Saturday. Prices are from and are based on flights from London Heathrow or London Gatwick  
\*All transfers included except for Vancouver hotel to Vancouver port where an independent transfer is required \*\*based on 22 April 2017 departure