



HELLENIC BLISS

Erosantorini, a one-of-a-kind private estate on the Greek island of Santorini, embodies the spirit of traditional Greek hospitality with the refinement of a five-star hotel

WHILE PAVLOS KONTOMICHALOS was taking a flight over his native Greece during the country's financial crisis, he looked down at the perfect islands nestled in the sparkling embrace of a bright blue sea and felt a surge of pride and the urge to celebrate his homeland. The Athens-born businessman had spent most of the previous 30 years living and working in the US and Asia, but still adored those special Greek qualities – the climate, history, gastronomy, culture and natural beauty. "I wanted to build a business around these unique treasures of my country," he says. So Hellas Group was born. A jewel of the group is Erosantorini, an 8,500 square metre private paradise with a million-dollar view on the idyllic volcanic island of Santorini, where guests are treated like gods and go home with unforgettable experiences.

It starts with the location, a coveted perch on a clifftop, two kilometres south of Fira, the capital. "I was fortunate to find one of the most sought-after locations in the world," says Pavlos. "We combine our beautiful view with complete privacy to attract those people who are used to the best of the best. We are fully staffed, and our chefs and hosts have perfected the ability to offer attention with discretion. They are like artists. I wanted to combine the best of five-star hotels and luxury villas with, even more importantly, the warmth of a friend's home. We are told by our guests – billionaires, royals, international celebrities – that they have never had an experience like this. They say that it leaves an intangible feeling."

Opened in 2016, the stunning estate, which can house ten adults and four children in five private suites, is a Cubist-inspired collaboration between brilliant Athens-based x2 Architecture and acclaimed Italian designer Paola Navone, who shares a passion for Greece. Spread over



two acres, the suites are designed to create the perfect flow between indoor and outdoor space, providing glorious views inside or out. Among the highlights are the largest infinity pool on the island, a quaint chapel, an underground wine cellar, a blissful cave, a spa and an outdoor cinema. "Light, joyful, serene – this is how we want our guests to feel here," says Paola, who has a summer home in Greece. "Our design is inspired by the setting: timeless and pure."

Should they choose to leave this slice of personal heaven to explore the island, guests can select excursions or events to suit their tastes. This can include visiting the island's historic archaeological sites, touring acclaimed vineyards or diving from a private yacht. They can explore the beautiful landscape by foot, boat or plane, while divers, snorkelers and underwater photographers can explore reefs, wrecks and myriad varieties of ocean life, before enjoying a seafood dinner on board. Gastronomy is a particular highlight. Guests can take culinary classes with the estate's chefs or sample the finest Greek cuisine, from Cycladic fagioli fish and tender lamb to fresh bread and fabulous cheese, with ingredients showcasing the produce of different islands.

"Everything is customised depending on what each guest requires, even down to the suntan lotion we provide," says Pavlos. "That is why we get so many repeat visitors. It is very simple, very Greek, but very sophisticated. This isn't opulent luxury, it's for people who are beyond opulence. For me, luxury means to be with the people you love in an unbelievable environment. We are for those who appreciate that. Erosantorini offers a profound bonding experience that our guests remember forever."

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