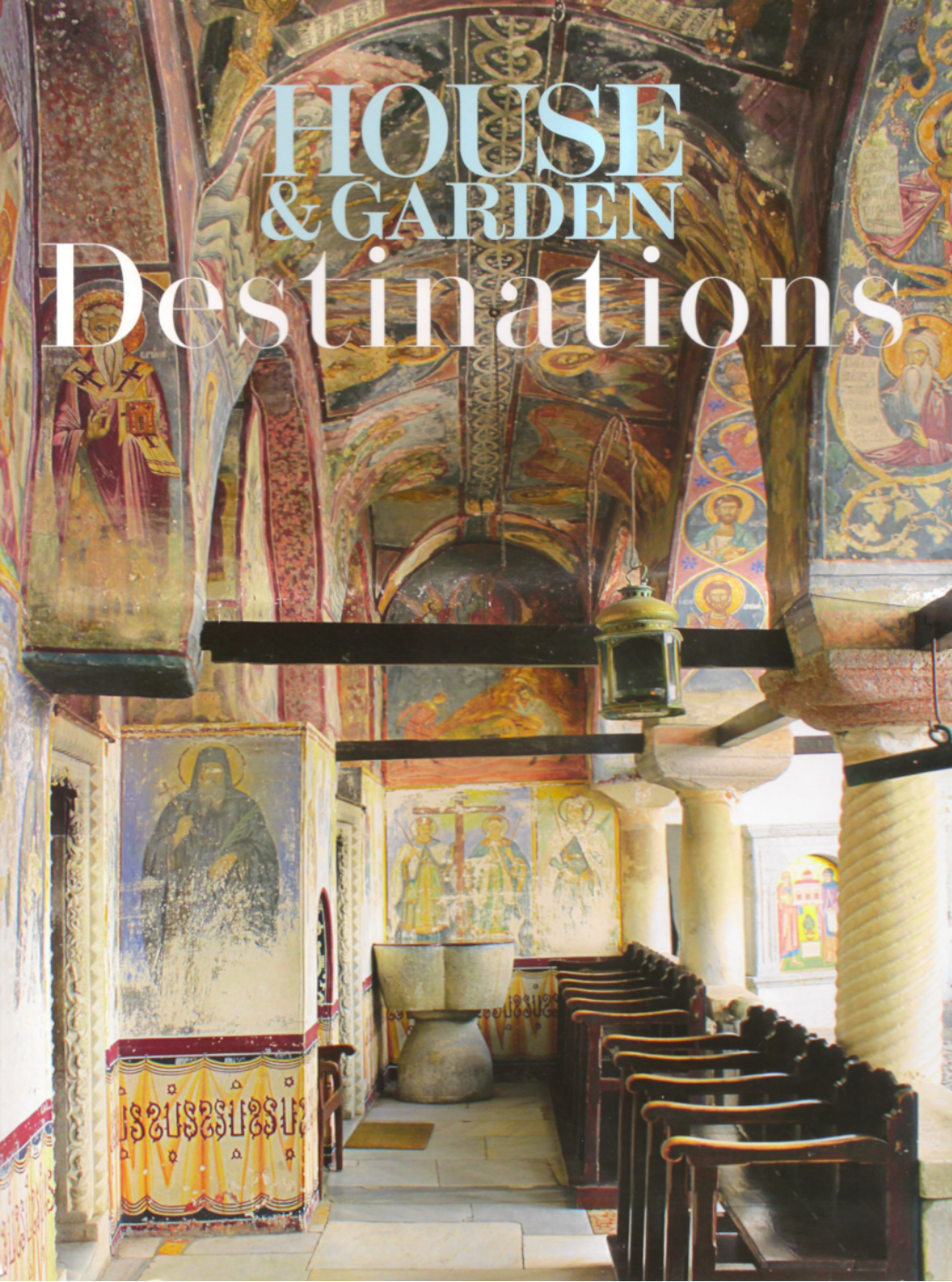


HOUSE & GARDEN Destinations



Andros is a lush island with an embarrassment of cultural riches bequeathed by local shipping magnates

CULTURE CRAVING

Mykonos is better known for its lively beach bars than its cultural heritage. But it's also the staging post for Delos, once the centre of Cycladic civilisation; the entire island is an archaeological site. Wander through stone-paved alleys, mosaic-lined temples and shopping arcades where pilgrims and hustlers, slaves and ship owners, courtesans and craftsmen once thronged. To relive the rituals of Byzantium, head to Patmos, a magnet for Greek Orthodox pilgrims and international jet-setters alike. The medieval monastery of Saint John casts a spell over Chora, the best-preserved Byzantine settlement in the Aegean. In the bleach-bright alleys, carved doorways lead to some of the most striking mansions anywhere in Greece. (Five Star Greece has the keys to some of them.) For contemporary culture, check out the summer exhibitions at the Goulandris Museum of Contemporary Art on Andros, a lush island with an embarrassment of cultural riches bequeathed by local shipping magnates. You'll also find museums devoted to archaeology and the sea, and an open-air theatre where Pantelis Voulgaris, one of Greece's most respected directors, stages a summer-long arts festival. For digs steeped in history, stay at Ktima Lemonies, a country estate outside the aristocratic village of Lamyra.

FAMILY FRIENDLY

The question I get asked most about the Greek islands is: where can I find a seaside hotel that's great for kids? The answer is always Ammos on Crete. Although it's been around for decades, every season owner Nikos Tsepelis adds more designer dash to his colourful hideout. Guests

return year after year for the incredible breakfasts, free childcare and whole-hearted welcome. The shallow beach is hardly Crete's finest, but it's perfect for toddlers. If you've got teens in tow, pine-fringed, car-free Spetses – where everything is a stroll, horse-and-carriage or bike ride away – is just the ticket. Rent a motorboat to whizz to secluded bays or learn to waterski and wakeboard at lively Kaiki beach. Understated Sifnos is just the right size to explore in a week. With a glittering pool, yoga pavilion and table tennis, Verina Suites is across the road from the sandy sweep of Platis Gialos, which has something for all ages: traditional tavernas (try Nero & Alati), sensational seafood (don't miss Omega 3) and mellow beach bars (head to Palmyra for mocktails and mojitos).

ROMANTIC ESCAPES

Painterly sunsets, clifftop infinity pools, tiny chapels suspended in a sea of blue... the Greek islands score high for romance. Skip the cooing couples taking selfies on Santorini, and head for starkly beautiful Amorgos. While the island lacks resorts, spas or fancy restaurants, it's the isolation and drama of the rugged terrain that makes it so sensual. For something more sophisticated, head to Symi, whose ravishing harbour is lined with peachy nineteenth-century mansions. One of them is now the Aliki Hotel. All family heirlooms and creaky floors, it brims with retro charm – and you get knock-out views if you book a sea-facing room. Languid little Paxos feels light years away from the madding crowds of Corfu, though it's only a speedboat ride away. Rental firm Scott Williams has collared the most stylish villas hidden among the olive groves, with paths leading to luminous coves ideal for skinny dipping. For those in the throes of passion, you can't beat Hydra, muse to Leonard Cohen and Henry Miller, who waxed lyrical about 'simple pleasures on an aesthetically perfect island'. Both unspoiled and fashionable, this cosmopolitan island of artists has still got it.



Greece on the mind

THANKS TO OVER 220 INHABITED GREEK ISLANDS, ALL TRAVELLERS, FROM YOUNG FAMILIES TO CULTURE SEEKERS, CAN FIND FULFILMENT. RACHEL HOWARD REVEALS WHERE TO GO

OPPOSITE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT Monastery of Saint John in Patmos. A horse-drawn carriage on Spetses, which is popular with high-society Athenians. The harbour of Symi. THIS PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP The cliff-hugging Panagia Hoziovotissa monastery on Amorgos. A secluded beach on Paxos. Mykonos is known as a hedonists' paradise