

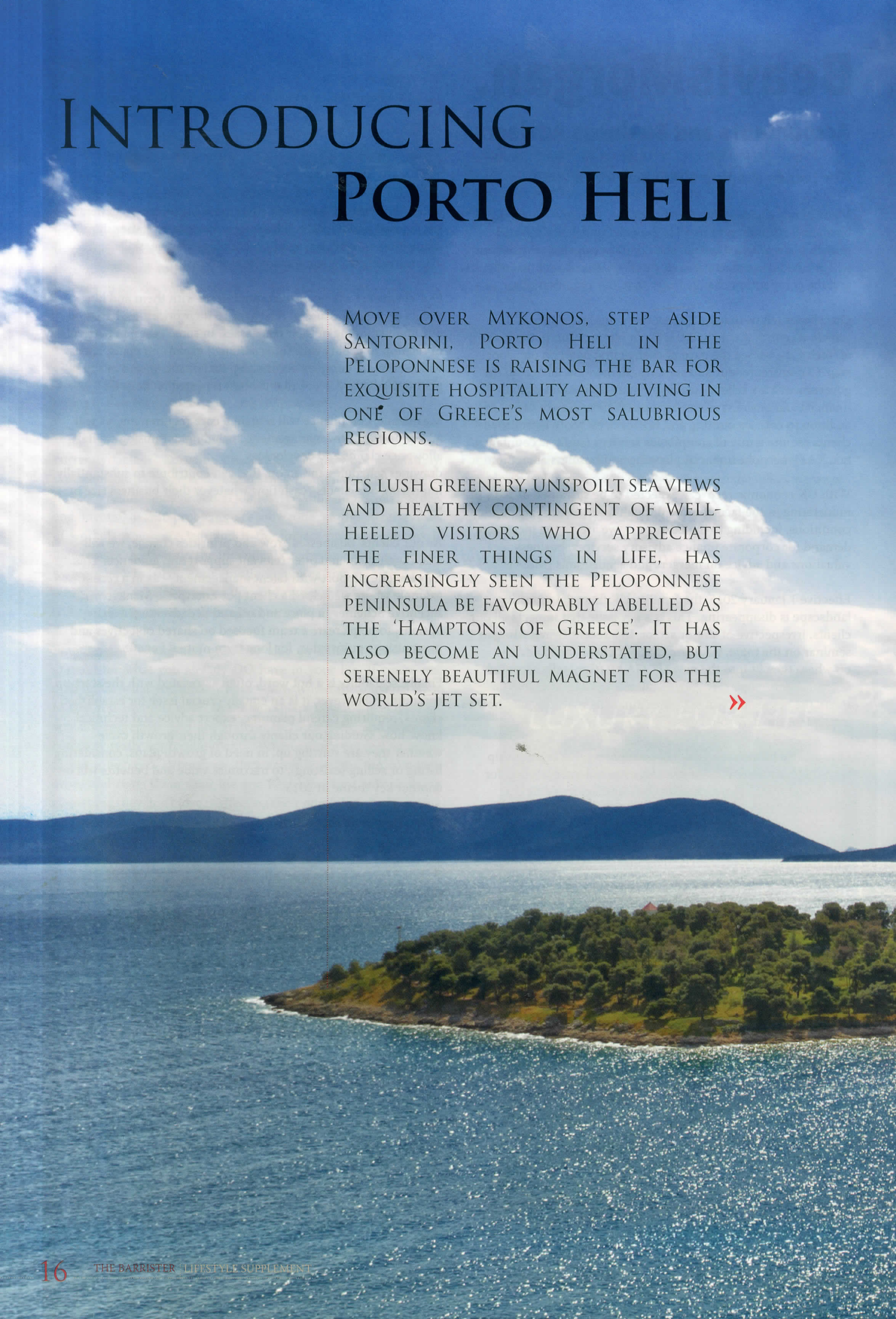
LIFESTYLE

SUPPLEMENT 2015

INTRODUCING PORTO HELI

MOVE OVER MYKONOS, STEP ASIDE SANTORINI, PORTO HELI IN THE PELOPONNESE IS RAISING THE BAR FOR EXQUISITE HOSPITALITY AND LIVING IN ONE OF GREECE'S MOST SALUBRIOUS REGIONS.

ITS LUSH GREENERY, UNSPOILT SEA VIEWS AND HEALTHY CONTINGENT OF WELL-HEELED VISITORS WHO APPRECIATE THE FINER THINGS IN LIFE, HAS INCREASINGLY SEEN THE PELOPONNESE PENINSULA BE FAVOURABLY LABELLED AS THE 'HAMPTONS OF GREECE'. IT HAS ALSO BECOME AN UNDERSTATED, BUT SERENELY BEAUTIFUL MAGNET FOR THE WORLD'S JET SET.





A 21ST CENTURY GREEK RIVIERA

BY PENNY BUTLER

THE BARRISTER LIFESTYLE SUPPLEMENT

Often referred to as sacred ground, the Southern Greek peninsula is widely respected for its romantic landscape, intricate history and for playing host to the gods and heroes that make up Greece's kaleidoscopic past. Riddled with ancient myths and legends, pedigree such as this is far from modern, instead, a history which has evolved over centuries. As a result, the peninsula enjoys a reputation and heritage dating back to the middle of the Palaeolithic era (circa 100,000 years BC). Situated just two hours from Athens, one needs to cross the Corinth canal, better known for having overcome Nero, to arrive. Once past the canal – which impressively comes at 6.4km long and 21.4 metres deep, you are welcomed by awe-inspiring panorama and the unforgettable scent of orange and cypresses, perfectly warmed by the sun.

Archaeological sites and monuments from every period of the Peloponnesian history can be found dotted around the unique landscape. Home to six UNESCO World Heritage sites, including the temples and sports grounds of the original Olympic games, the 4th Century BC amphitheatre, Epidauros, Mycenae and several Byzantine churches, which all come replete with immaculately-preserved frescoes, there's something for every classics enthusiast.

With the almost-paradisiacal melange of cyan blue waters, awesome mountains, thick forests, immaculate beaches and undulating, weather-eroded coastlines, it is the story-telling landscape of the Peloponnese which makes this part of the world its best proponent. Put simply, it would be foolish not to think of it as an idyllic setting for a holiday.

Today, the Peloponnese has evolved into a haven of sophisticated enclaves combining the best elements from the past and present. One town at the epicentre of this progressive movement is Porto Heli, a traditional seafront settlement to the east of peninsula. Gaining momentum since the 60's, this small fishing harbour has grown into an exclusive, effortlessly chic summer hangout for the influential contingent of discerning travellers.

This stylish and laid-back harbour offers a host of activities. For those eager to feel the wind in their hair and the warm waters of the Aegean on their skin, sailing and water sports, including water-skiing, stand up paddle boarding and kayaking, are key elements to life. For divers, the sunken underwater city of Halieis will surely impress: the relics of its once much-used harbour, houses and streets are there for all to explore below sea level.

Unsurprisingly, life in Porto Heli is largely spent either on, or next, to the water. A tradition not to be missed, which epitomises this, is the annual Spetses Classic Yacht Race. Either enjoyed by the sea, or at the century-old Greek hospitality bastion, The Poseidonion Grand Hotel, this is a Peloponnese event at which attendance is largely judged on the 'see and be seen' tradition. The Spetses Classic Yacht Race has grown to become one of the most important classic yacht races in the Mediterranean.

Greek-owned Dolphin Capital, property developers, have made their interest in this charming waterfront, replete with its authentic tavernas, a vibrant year-round atmosphere, splendour and privacy, quite clear.

They have recently opened Nikki Beach Resort & Spa, Porto Heli, solidifying the region's reputation amongst the world's ultra luxury resort communities. Spanning 8,000 square metres, the new 66-key Nikki Beach Resort & Spa Porto Heli, includes two restaurants, the brand's world-renowned Beach Club, a small, but equipped Nikki Spa with ESPA products and fitness centre.

Originally built in the late 60s, the hotel had a reputation for attracting celebrities and wealthy Athenians enticed by the property's unique seafront location and glamour factor. In 2007 Dolphin Capital founder, Miltos Kampourides bought the property and determinedly brought it back to life. Now completely transformed, and sensitively restored by Gasterelia Design and Arch Group, the new resort is anchored in the Nikki Beach philosophy of energy, partying and luxury. Each room features a unique lighting system, which will adapt in line with mood and other Nikki Beach in-room standard items. These include MyBar (a unique version of the minibar), free on-demand films able to be streamed to guests' devices, and GrooveShark, an exclusive service that enables one to stream music on phones or tablets.

Whether it is yoga, the tranquil waters or an invigorating pre-breakfast boat trip to kick-start the day, modern life and luxury collide beautifully at Nikki Beach.

And the same can be said for the evenings. Indulgence at this point of the day takes the form of cocktails, champagne and an all-encompassing menu of luscious dishes featuring signature international flavours, representative of all the countries in which Nikki Beach is found.

As part of a wider investment plan by Dolphin Capital, the opening of Nikki Beach Porto Heli, is the second biggest milestone for the region and development group. It neighbours the Amanzoe hotel, which opened in 2012 and was heralded as the first stage in the reinvention of this region. The hilltop resort features 38, Ed Tuttle designed guest pavilions set strategically back to bask in seas views, each with private pool. Further amenities include an Aman Spa and exclusive beach club.

The recent addition of Nikki Beach, to Dolphin Capital's portfolio has further positioned this part of Greece as a luxurious, yet modern Riviera ripe for exploration.

Nikki Beach, Porto Heli will open for the 2015 season from April 29th. Prices start from €295 per room. Reservation information: Bookings can be made online at

www.nikkibeachhotels.com

by phone +30 27540 98 500

or by email reservations.portoheli@nikkibeachhotels.com



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