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PICTURE- PERFECT Paphos

Digital editor Steph Telfer falls in love with the Cypriot island on a wine and food-filled getaway

Ever since the Greek goddess of love, Aphrodite, rose from the waves surrounding Paphos, Cyprus has been dubbed the island of love, enticing honeymooners to flock here for a romantic getaway. As I slide open my patio doors on my first morning in Paphos to be greeted by a pink sorbet sunrise across the beach, it's clear that the island lives up to that reputation.

LOVER'S RETREAT

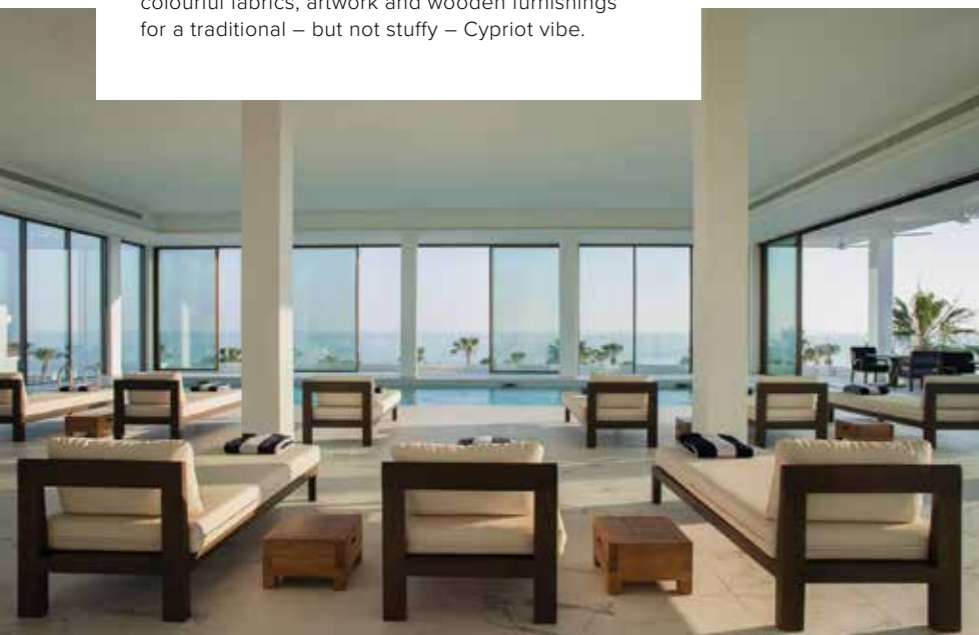
I'm staying in Trip Advisor's number four-rated hotel in Paphos, five-star Annabelle (as a TA addict, I'm all about that top five). It's been welcoming guests for 30 years and recently had a €11million upgrade, which saw the addition of a rooftop pool, bar and restaurant, wellness centre and suites offering unrivalled views of the Mediterranean.

The location of my room, a luxurious garden studio suite, is what affords me such beautiful sunrise views. On the lowest level of the hotel, it has a small terrace with a whirlpool jacuzzi, classical Greek décor and a working fireplace for those chillier months. I could quite happily base myself here for a couple of weeks, or longer.

The hotel itself is a beautiful oasis; every corner turned reveals a snaking pool, cascading waterfall, or a shady hideaway sheltered by lofty palm trees. Cool, smooth white walls are broken up by colourful fabrics, artwork and wooden furnishings for a traditional – but not stuffy – Cypriot vibe.

Another great hotel choice is five-star Aphrodite Hills Resort, a favourite with celebs like Rio Ferdinand and the Rooneys. You'll never want to leave this luxury resort!

Find out more by visiting aphroditehills.com



HONEYMOON

SEE THE SIGHTS

If you can tear yourself from the blue and white stripes of your sun lounger, it's worthwhile venturing out to explore.

It's only right that honeymooners take a trip to the birthplace of Aphrodite; giant rock formations which, according to mythology, have magical powers. Swim around the rock three times and you'll be granted eternal youth and beauty. As a non-swimmer, I stand on the shore, wishing I'd brought my armbands.

At the Archaeological Park of Kato Pafos, a UNESCO World Heritage site, you'll find uncovered mosaics depicting scenes from Greek mythology. These once graced the houses of the four Roman noblemen, Dionysos, Theseus, Aion and Orpheus.

If sightseeing and historic sites aren't quite what you're after, then a trip to Vasilikon Winery might be more your glass of vino. Cypriot wines are beautiful, and my favourite that I tried on the trip, a dry white, was produced at that very winery (and bears the same name).

At the end of a long day of exploration, you'll be desperate for some chill time. Why not treat yourself to some R&R back at Annabelle? The stylish Ouranos Wellbeing Spa offers lots of treatments bespoke to the resort, like the Cypriot Citrus Body Ritual, combining massage with exfoliation – perfect to maintain that tan.

CHEF'S TABLE

Food will be a big part of your honeymoon in Cyprus, as it should be. The Cypriots take their food very seriously, with the cuisine closest to Greek gastronomy.

It's worth taking a trip by bus or taxi to Koutourou Ouzeri, a beautifully unique restaurant in the old upper town of Paphos, next to the renovated town square. The restaurant is filled with a mish-mash of interesting memorabilia – old typewriters and vintage punch bowls, classic Coca-Cola bottles and miscellaneous antiques – but the food is a little less fussy: village salad with feta and tomatoes; freshly baked bread buns; baked carrots with yoghurt and coriander; pork loin with mustard; and the rather revelatory halloumi baked with honey. Pair delicious mezze with beautiful local wines and you'll find yourself whiling away hours just talking, eating and drinking.

For those days when you'd rather just stay put, you'll find yourself spoilt for choice at Annabelle. The resort has an abundance of restaurants and bars, both inside and out, my favourite of which was the beachfront tavern Mediterraneo. Homemade dishes with locally sourced produce take pride of place on the menu, and the extensive cocktail menu means that you'll simply have to sample a few.

I sipped a mojito and enjoyed a delicious Karvuna salad (grill-seared veggies with leaves, croutons, olives, lashings of olive oil and spiced halloumi – the salad of dreams, actually) one afternoon, listening to the waves lapping the shore

Cyprus really does have it all: delicious food, amazing wine, stunning hotels, beautiful beaches and cultural points of interest. It's the ideal place to leave the stress of wedding planning behind and reminisce about your amazing day, cocktail in hand. ♦



'That's Aphrodite's rock in the background!'



'Amazing street art on the buildings in the old town of Paphos'



NEED TO KNOW

Flights to Paphos are available from Glasgow International and Edinburgh airport from TUI, Jet2.com, Ryanair and Easyjet from £116pp return, based on seven days.

Rates at Annabelle start from €131 per night, B&B based on two adults sharing (annabelle.com.cy/).

For more information, visit the Deputy Ministry of Tourism for Cyprus: visitcyprus.com