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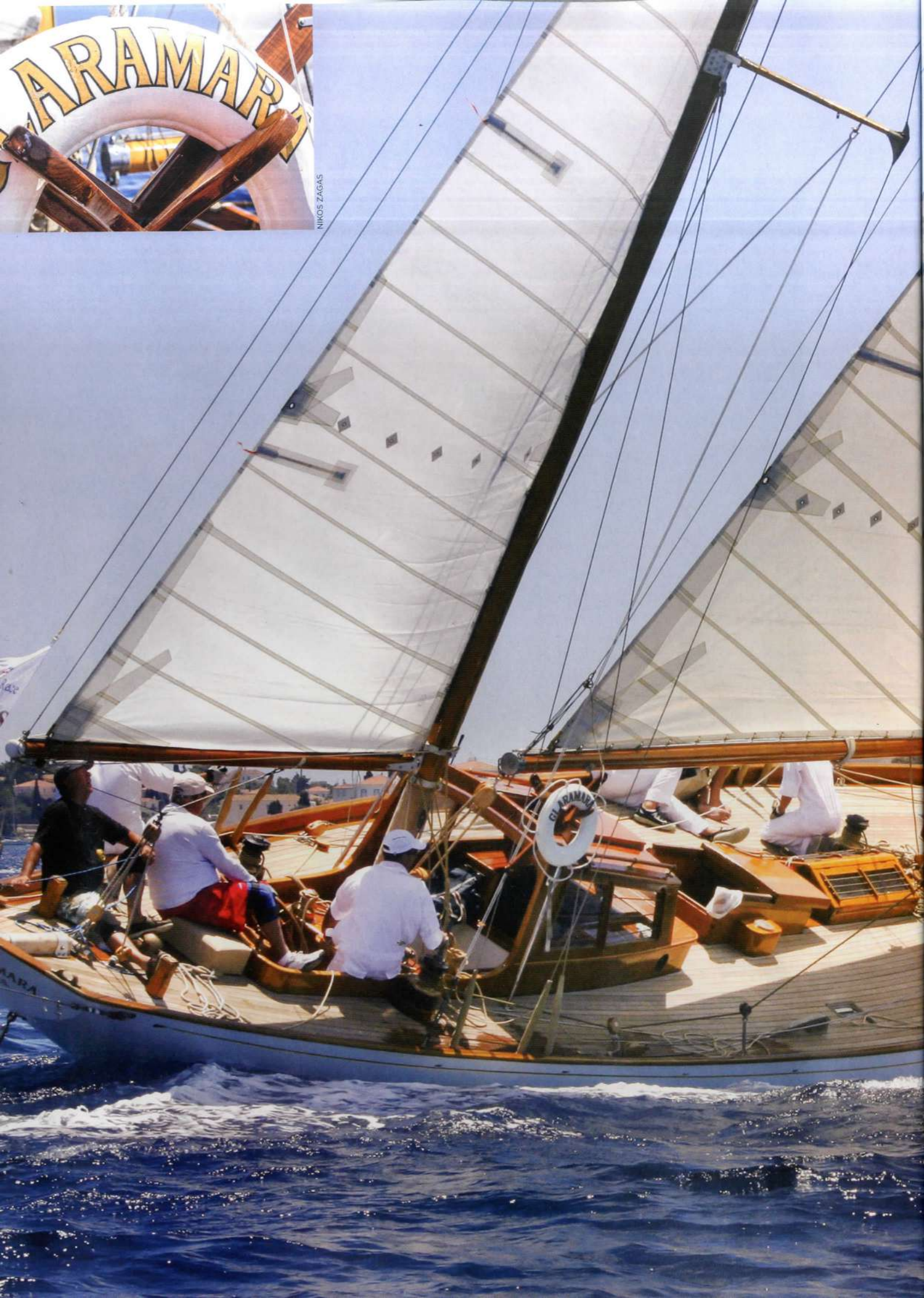
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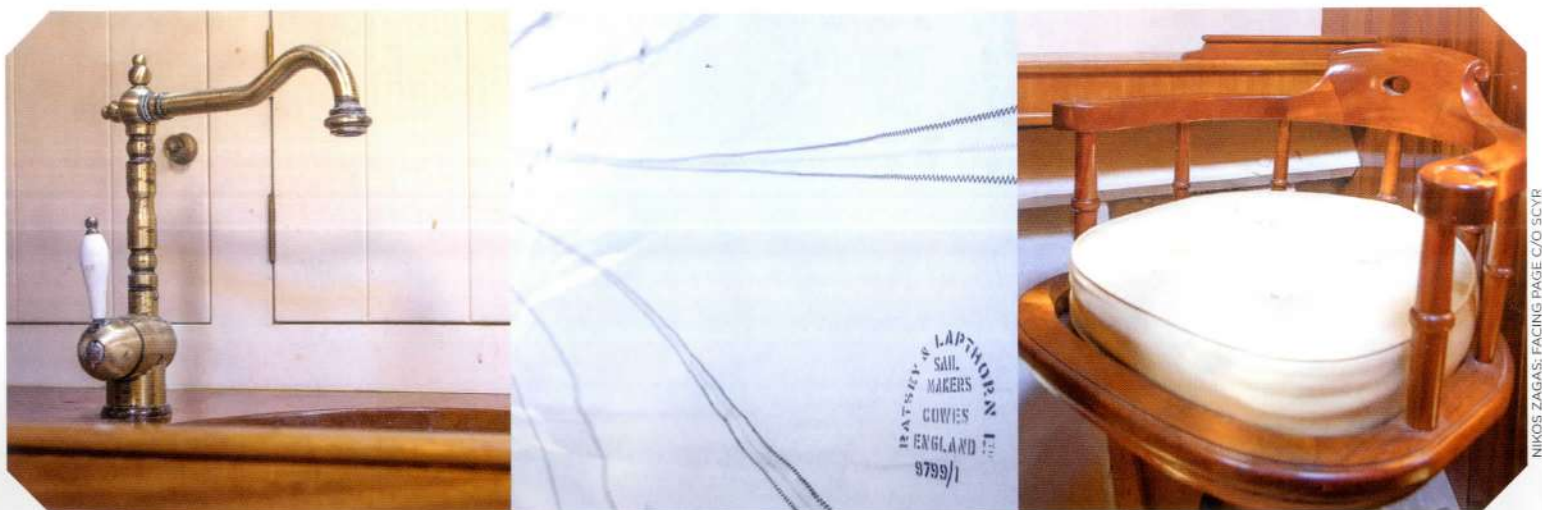
A large sailboat with white sails is racing on the water. A person in white is visible on the deck. In the background, a coastal town with yellow buildings and a blue sky is visible.

# GREEK CHARM

We join a Fred Shepherd ketch for  
glorious racing off the island of  
Spetses in a growing classic regatta

WORDS KATHY MANSFIELD





Above: the boat was sold, then reacquired by the family and restored to largely original condition on deck and below

Two titans battled it out near the regatta finish: the 1930 John Alden schooner *Puritan*, 135ft with a new and partly novice crew being expertly bossed about by Malcolm Banks, former mate on Herreshoff schooner *Elena*; and 1947 *Glaramara*, a 50ft (15.25m) Frederick Shepherd design, owned and raced by Stratis Andreadis, once ranked 29th in world match racing. Stratis had noticed that the finish line was skewed to the direction of the light winds and was pushing down *Puritan*. *Glaramara* was ahead, then almost abeam, then ahead again, and as the line was crossed a cheer went up from *Glaramara* while the *Puritan* crew clapped in admiration, appreciating the drama even if losing the placing.

Refreshingly, this was not the usual haunt of classic regattas, we were not in Atlantic waters, or Baltic, or the French, Spanish or Italian Med – this was the Aegean, famous for sailing since the time of Odysseus. We were enjoying the Spetses Classic Yacht Regatta just south of the Peloponnese in Greece: the sky was blue, the sea sparkling clear aquamarine, the sea breeze cooling the summer heat, Hydra and other islands adding interesting wind shifts, what was not to like? It was late June 2016, a blessed escape from dull, wet Britain writhing in the aftermath of the referendum, and Greece, despite its own recent travails, was endowed to overbrimming excess with sea and islands, sunshine and wonderful boats.

That lively finish captured the atmosphere of the Spetses Classic Yacht Regatta in its sixth year. It is competition in a friendly spirit and appeals to a wide variety of sailors from the highly successful and experienced, to the complete novice, which brings a sense of fun and the joy of discovery to the regatta. There is a wide variety of boats from the impeccably classic to the local lateen traditional boats and Aegean schooners, many built on Spetses, an historic seafaring island and one of the last centres of traditional boatbuilding in Greece. There are a growing number of spectators, who can watch from land but are often on lovely boats themselves, enjoying the setting among the islands and mountains of the Saronic Gulf. The Yacht

Club of Greece, formed 83 years ago near Athens, moves over to Spetses to organise the races each year with a 70-strong group of volunteers, plus RIBs, committee boats and technical equipment. It's a huge boost to the regatta and to the Spetses Yacht Club which also does everything possible to support it. "In 2016 there were 68 boats, so there's a dynamic behind this race," says a committee member of the Yacht Club of Greece. "Our goal is to have this race become part of the international calendar of classic yacht racing. I think it won't be long."

After all, this year's event pulled in participants including the former King of Greece (an Olympic sailing gold medal-winner), several Greek Olympic sailors, including winners at the Rio Games, and winners of big offshore races. I would recommend it to any classic boat that can sail or trail its way to this beautiful, historic island.

The regatta brings together various values, organiser Stratis told me – team spirit, chivalry, competition in a beautiful setting. "We have good sponsors and we work very hard to make sure that the race is not all work and no play, we have great receptions, great social events, we have a beautiful island with a great naval tradition.

"Spetses played an integral part in the Greek revolution of 1821 with the fearless captain Lascarina Bouboulina, the first woman in the world given the title of admiral until very recently. We encourage skippers to participate in this history by holding the skippers' meeting in her original house, which is a traditional Spetsiot building. Our battle flags are flying behind her statue in the main square in front of the Poseidonion Hotel. The other magical component is that hotel, built in the style of 19th century hotels, the Carlton in Cannes and the Negresco in Nice, a 1914 Belle Epoque building now considered as a monument by the Greek government. It was a favourite spot for high society and royalty in its day, and again in the 1960s."

The classic boats gathered together were of noteworthy heritage: Tara Getty's 1937 S&S bermudan yawl *Skylark* was a newcomer this year and won not only most of her races but the overall prize. *Puritan's* owners, the Classic Sailing Experience, have been



## GLARAMARA

DESIGNER  
**FRED  
SHEPHERD**

LOA  
**50ft (15.25m)**

LOW  
**38ft (11.56m)**

DRAUGHT  
**7ft 2in (2.2m)**

SAIL AREA  
**983sq ft (91m<sup>2</sup>)**







Main picture: the 2015 SCYR, won overall by Savannah (centre), the Pedrick Yacht Designs modern classic launched in 1997





Above: boom end; skipper Stratis Andreadis; the island offers variable conditions and picturesque sailing waters

restoring her near Rome. There was a 1927 Fife 6-Metre, *Sunshine* and a 1925 Fife 8-Metre, *Carina*; another Finnish Eight, several S&S yawls, the 1953 *Baccarat*, the 1968 *Baccara*, the 1965 *Alexandra*; the 1994 Ed Dubois *Bolero* designed in conjunction with her Greek owner; two Buchanan designs, *Escapade* and *Sagittarius*, a Howard Chapelle designed East Coast America fishing schooner designed in 1926, *Iliopotissa*; a Fred Parker design from 1965, *Larne*, her brightwork gleaming; a 1907 Isle of Wight Seaview Mermaid, *Navisa* – the list goes on.

It was hard to choose among this feast of boats, but *Glaramara* with her Fred Shepherd lines had captured my eye early on: her grace, her bermudan ketch rig and the fluid movements of her crew, no novices here. She was built in Britain in 1947 at Moody's in Bursledon for Sir Philip Bowyer-Smyth, a Royal Navy Commodore and aide-de-camp of King George VI who had fought in both world wars. He chose the same design as the 1939 *Amokura* but with different woods, mahogany on oak with African teak inside. Shepherd came out of retirement to oversee her build. *Glaramara* is essentially the same now, though her Ailsa Craig 20hp engine, followed by two General Motors engines, is now a Perkins.

Bowyer-Smyth sailed the coastlines of Tangiers, the Balearic Islands, the Côte d'Azur, Gibraltar and Malta before succumbing to the sudden onset of rheumatoid arthritis which brought his sailing days to an end. Stratis' grandfather found the boat in Cannes in 1951 and brought her to Greece where he cruised the Greek archipelago and also raced the boat, supporting the international Aegean Rally from its start in 1964. Indeed, *Glaramara* was one of the main yachts to beat each year and helped bring about a renaissance in offshore racing. Stratis' father, George, who sailed in the Mexico Olympics in 1968, is passionate about sailing which he sees as a valued part of human civilisation, a multifaceted sport encompassing a wide age and skills range. He has worked hard to promote the sport.

*Glaramara* has meant a great deal to the Andreadis family. "She has been the first major post-war yacht in my family that meant relaxation," explained Stratis, "and the first serious respite after the travails of World

War II and the Greek civil war." The chance to set sail to explore the islands has inspired two, now three, generations of the family. His grandfather sold the boat in 1987 but in 2000, his father George managed to buy her back again, returning her to her pre-1967 looks. In the meantime, Stratis grew up in Spetses above a boatbuilding workshop, which now builds Aegean schooners. His father and grandfather were both commodores of the Yacht Club of Greece – Stratis says he is not as keen a sailor as they were, but as a proficient world match racer and Spetses regatta organiser, sitting on the World Sailing youth development committees, he certainly carries on and has added to its vision.

I spoke to Stelios Sotiriou, who has sailed with Stratis for 18 years, and he compared *Glaramara* with the modern boats like 49ers, Farr 40s and Moths he usually sails. "It reminds you how hard it was to sail to the limit," he reflects. "A heavy displacement, long-keeled boat needs a different type of trimming... of thinking. It took us a long time to learn just the right angle for the rudder when tacking. We have a cutter rig upwind and five sails downwind – the asymmetric spinnaker, balloon staysail, main, mizzen staysail and mizzen – we had six legs, each two nautical miles. It's a wonderful experience, learning the old skills, and she's such a beautiful boat."

## A SPECIAL REGATTA

Spetses is a great place to have a classics regatta. For a start, the island is about as close to the Hellenic ideal that you can imagine: whitewashed neoclassical houses, motorbikes or horses and carts the accepted mode of travel, the smell of the sea and lavender and thyme on the pine-covered hillsides, the hidden coves and ancient churches, the locals drinking espresso and playing backgammon. Yet stylish cafes and the elegant Poseidonion Hotel line the port and the nearby mainland hides one of the finest resort destinations in Europe, the Amanzoe Hotel and villas, plus the lively Nikki Beach Hotel (see panel overleaf).

The island is not ostentatious, nor are the post-financial crisis travails of Greece immediately apparent. Its history is fascinating: named Spice Island by the Venetians in the 15th century as it was on an important trade route, it had been settled in Mesolithic and

**"It's a wonderful experience, learning the old skills, and she's such a beautiful boat"**



Mycenean times, and by the 18th century had a powerful merchant fleet trading between the Med and the Black Sea, working both sides during the Napoleonic Wars, and using its consequent wealth to help the Greek War of Independence from the Ottomans in 1821, when Spetses was the first island to raise the new flag. Bouboulina was at the forefront of that.

Spetses has been lucky to have proactive people who have done their best for the island. The elegant Poseidonion Hotel is a case in point: too far gone to be an easy project, it was restored by Emmanuel Vordonis and his son Antonis – who also managed to restore the 1936 Philip Rhodes *Tincano* which had been sunk for years in the Old Port of Spetses. The Spetses cargo and fishing boats of old are getting a new lease of life from the regatta, with masts and sails replaced and old skills relearned. Boatbuilders receive part of the proceeds from the registrations of participants, and get work repairing and refurbishing those boats when needed.

By creating this interest, lawsuits which threatened the old yards are lapsing and the yards are continuing their craft. Other events on Spetses reflect this harmonising and updating of the island's environment and history, as Emmanuel told me, injecting old ideals back into modern society. If anyone doubts the Greek determination to work hard, look to the future and rise above their economic travails, they should visit Spetses, and their growing regatta.

The regatta will be held this year between 21-25 June. See [spetsesclassicregatta.gr](http://spetsesclassicregatta.gr) or [facebook.com/spetsesclassicregatta](https://facebook.com/spetsesclassicregatta). Email: [sailing@ycg.gr](mailto:sailing@ycg.gr)



Above: the Poseidonion Hotel is regatta HQ; the regatta has invigorated local boatbuilders and fishermen



## A ROOM WITH A VIEW

The Spetses Classic Yacht Regatta is sponsored by the Amanzoe Hotel. Situated on the mainland across the narrow strait from Spetses with 360° views of sea, islands and valleys, this is regarded as one of Europe's finest hotels. American architect Ed Tuttle designed not only the buildings but the serene interior decor, which aims to fit carefully into the Peloponnese surrounding and history, using soaring Grecian columns, local woods and stone, and contemporary, large spaces. Every villa in the hotel, with its translucent marble doors and high ceilings, has its own large terraces overlooking olive groves and cypresses, herb and lavender scented gardens and a contemporary pool lined with a green marble exactly the colour of the Aegean sea. There is a gourmet chef plus a host for each villa to plan your excursions to Spetses, to Mycenae, the amphitheatre at Epidaurus, or the chic Nikki Beach Resort and Spa, a ten minute car ride away at Porto Heli. The resort is a 20-minute helicopter ride from Athens, a two-hour ferry ride, or about two-and-a-quarter hours by car from Athens Airport. [amanvillasph.com](http://amanvillasph.com)

The hotel is part of the Porto Heli Collection, comprising villas at Amanzoe, Amanzoe Hotel, Nikki Beach Hotel and Nikki Beach residences. Greek-based property developers, Dolphin Capital, have invested significantly to create an exclusive enclave on the shores of the Peloponnese. The aim is to create an upmarket destination offering the best in hospitality, villas, golf and leisure activities (hence the sponsorship of the regatta). Villas at Amanzoe are available to buy from €3 million – this would buy a two-bedroom property of approximately 300m<sup>2</sup> in size. [aman.com/resorts/amanzoe/villas-to-own](http://aman.com/resorts/amanzoe/villas-to-own)

To date, a total of 14 Aman Villas have been sold, seven of which are currently operational, including the nine-bedroom Villa 20.

Room rates at Amanzoe start at €850 per night (in low season). Villa rates at Amanzoe start at €4,800 per night (for a four-bedroom Villa in low season) [aman.com/resorts/amanzoe](http://aman.com/resorts/amanzoe)

Room rates at Nikki Beach, Porto Heli start at €195 per night (in low season). Residences within Nikki Beach are available from €300,000 [nikkibeachhotels.com/en/porto-heli/nbphresidences.com](http://nikkibeachhotels.com/en/porto-heli/nbphresidences.com)