

# THE WEEK

THE BIG TRIP

## Andronis Arcadia and its Santorini sisters

Four Andronis hotels offer contrasting views of picturesque Oia, the northern star of Santorini

HOLDEN FRITH  
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Rooms at Andronis Arcadia are stylish, spacious and modern. Andronis hotels

Think of a Greek island and there's a good chance you conjure up a hillside clad in white-walled houses and blue-domed churches. What you're picturing is Oia, the picturesque town on the northern tip of Santorini.

Seven best Greek islands

A luxury foodie road trip through the Greek islands

Known locally as Thira, the crescent-shaped island was a full circle until the 17th century BC. Then a volcanic eruption blasted the centre out of it, leaving a vast caldera that was flooded by the Aegean sea. New islands sprang up within it after subsequent smaller eruptions.

The unusual geography of the island has shaped its unique villages, which cling to terraces cut into the steeply sloping rock. Eye-searingly white paint reflects the sun, while high vaulted ceilings help to keep the heat off the occupants below.

Such practical benefits may be obsolete in the age of air conditioning, particularly in five-star hotels - but the aesthetic appeal remains. To visitors from more northerly climes, those white walls convey the simple pleasures of long summer evenings with a bottle of local wine and a plate of something ripened in the sun.

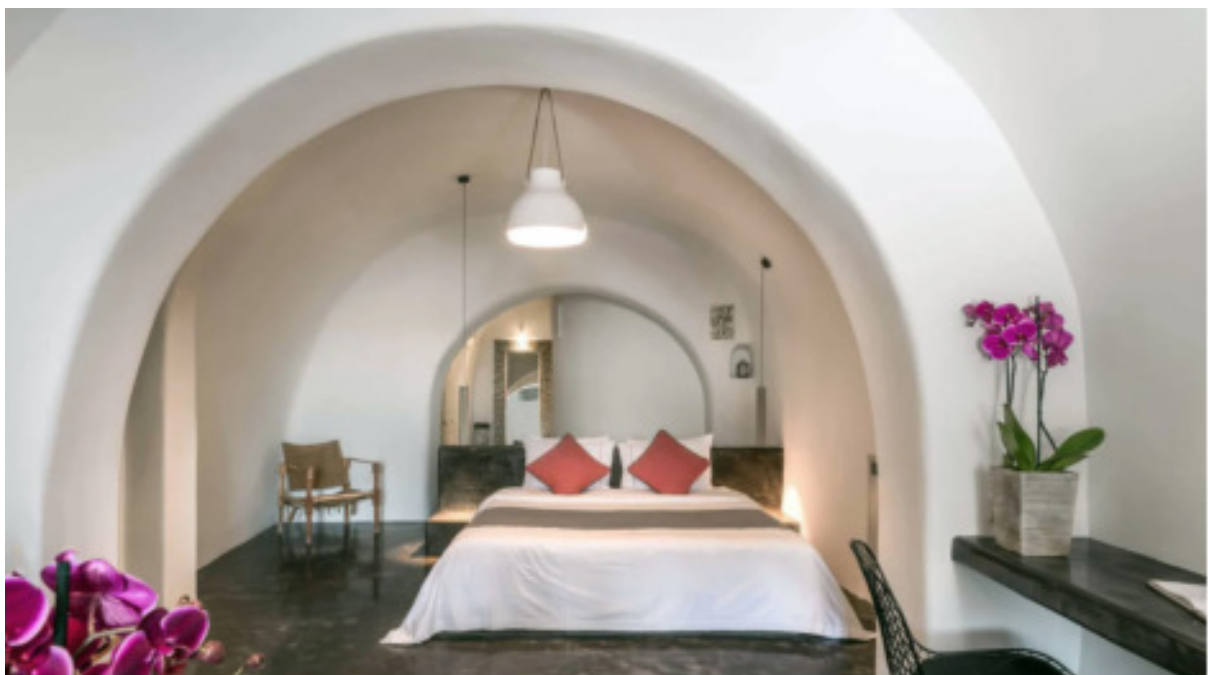


The domed churches and steep terraces of Oia, Santorini Holden Frith

## The Andronis hotels: why stay here?

The [Andronis](#) group has four hotels in Oia, each offering a different perspective on this unique island. Andronis Luxury Suites, Andronis Boutique Hotel and Alta Mare sit on the town's southern slope, overlooking the deep blue water of the caldera. Andronis Arcadia, a short walk to the west, trades caldera views for a little more space and privacy - and spectacular sunsets.

Arcadia's architecture is modern but sympathetic to Greek island style, its crisp white lines softened by the grass-like shrubs planted in its gravel roofs. Bougainvillea clammers up the walls and drapes them with colour. Inside, the suites are sleek, modern and spacious, with large bathrooms and super-king sized beds. Each comes with its own balcony and private pool, many of which face the setting sun.



A room at Andronis Luxury Suites Andronis hotels

The caldera-side hotels are smaller and more traditional in character. Andronis Boutique Hotel, for example, has just a handful of suites and villas carved into the cliffside, their interiors sculpted to resemble caves. The restaurant and swimming pools make the most of the enviable perches, jutting out into thin air to maximise their panoramic views.

## What to do

Oia is small, but its dense warren of footpaths and alleyways will while away an afternoon or two, even if you aren't distracted by the luxury boutiques and cafes secluded in every nook and terrace. The streets are at their busiest around dusk, when visitors flock towards westerly vantage points.



Oia's spectacular sunsets draw everyone into the streets and alleyways Holden Frith

A more relaxing way to see the sunset is from the water: cruises leave the harbour each evening, many offering drinks and canapes to complement the natural splendour. Photographic tours can also be arranged, either on land or sea. If you want to beat the Instagram crowd at their own game, you can even star in your own fashion photoshoot, complete with changes of wardrobe.

The hotel group has its own yacht, the [Andronis Feretti](#), which can be chartered for half-day tours. Itineraries are flexible, but can incorporate beach visits, snorkeling, swimming and visits to other islands - as well as wine tastings and meals.

Or you can sit back and enjoy your hotel's facilities. Each Andronis hotel has its own spa - offering massages, beauty treatments and other relaxing rituals - as well as pools and sun loungers.



The poolside bar at Andronis Arcadia, which faces the sunset Tryfon Georgopoulos

## What to eat

Andronis Luxury Suites has one of the island's best restaurants, [Lycabettus](#), whose location (below) is as breathtaking as the food it serves. Occupying a spur of rock jutting out over the water, its candlelit tables offer 360-degree views across the caldera on one side and Oia's shimmering lights on the other.

The tasting menu brings a fine-dining sensibility to the island's fresh produce, from which it crafts a series of elegant dishes. A crab sabayon with caviar and lime is a case in point: delicate, fragrant and beautifully presented.

Over at Andronis Arcadio, the [Opson](#) restaurant offers a different taste of Santorini. Eschewing all ingredients originating from beyond the Mediterranean - the new world's tomatoes, for example, or pasta, derived from Chinese noodles - it delivers a taste of Ancient Greece. Breads baked with heritage grains are followed by fish from local waters, both fresh and preserved using classical techniques, as well as game from the island and its neighbours. All are flavoured with the herbs, nuts and fruits that would have been familiar to the Greeks of past millennia.



The Lycabettus restaurant at Andronis Luxury Suites Andronis hotels

## When to go

Sitting well south of the Greek mainland, Santorini enjoys a warm, dry climate, its summer heat moderated by the Aegean Sea. Temperatures peak at 29C in July and are only a few degrees cooler in September. Most Santorini hotels close for the winter season: Andronis Arcadia opens from late April to the end of October, while the other three Andronis hotels open from late March to mid-November.

## How to get there

British Airways, easyJet and Ryanair fly to Santorini (Thira) International Airport, a 30-minute drive from Oia. [BA](#) offers four nights at Andronis Boutique Hotel from 27 October for £1,344 per person, based on two adults sharing, including breakfast and flights from Heathrow. Or book [directly with the hotels](#), from about £250 per night at Alta Mare.



The dramatic location of the swimming pool at Andronis Boutique Hotel Andronis hotels