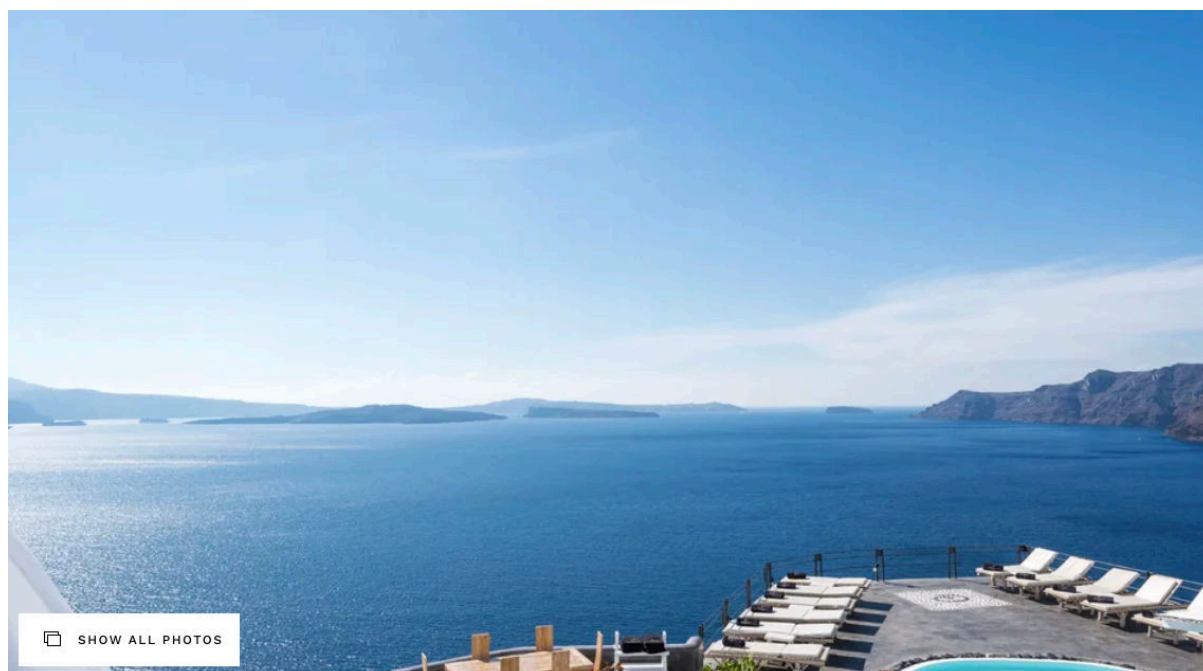


REVIEW:

## Andronis Boutique Hotel, Santorini review

*A chilled-out retreat hanging on the cliffside of the Aegean Sea*



Pools at Andronis Boutique Hotel, Santorini Tryfon Georgopoulos

Reviewed by **CORDELIA ASPINALL**

### Why book?

Take the winding stone steps down to Andronis Boutique Hotel to get off **Santorini's** vibrant but well-beaten track. From soaking up the sun in the private pool to Michelin-star suppers and bespoke spa pampering – this is a blissful arrival on Santorini's stellar hotel scene.

### Set the scene

Andronis is located right in the heart of Oía on the northwestern tip of Santorini, among traditional white-washed houses and blue-domed roofs lining the landscape. Oía's streets are pedestrianised with no transport (except donkeys) allowed. Wander down the cascading black stone pathways and steps overlooking the Aegean Sea, a nod to the island's volcanoes that stand out against the bright whites. This is the place to escape for the ultimate Grecian break as a couple – for **honeymooners**, babymooners, or simply those a little loved up – packed with first-class service, out-of-this-world food and divine wine.

### **The backstory**

The Andronis hotel group has several locations spread across Santorini and **Athens**. There are Andronis Luxury Suites just down the road with 33 suites and villas and home to the Mare Sanus Spa; Alta Mare by Andronis focuses on its bespoke services; Andronis Arcadia is named after the mythical home of the god Pan and Andronis Concept Wellness Resort located in Imerovigli. Each site aims to fit into the Mediterranean landscape.

### **The rooms**

Hidden around the bends and curves of the traditional cave style architecture lies 24 unique suites, each with quirky character and a private veranda pool. There's the Petite Suite, built across two storeys and complete with a bubbling hot tub; the Signature Suite featuring a large bedroom, living area with an alcove sofa, hot tub and plunge **pool**; and the Water Retreat Suite which has an infinity pool and outdoor hot tub – all showing off panoramic sea views from the cliff's edge.

### **Food and drink**

Lauda was the first restaurant built in Oía back in 1971, gathering locals and visitors to convene over traditional food sourced from the local area. That ethos continues today – using regional ingredients to create fresh dishes and bringing in top chefs to rustle up knock-out menus. Start the mornings with a buffet breakfast of cooked meats, eggs every way, natural Greek yoghurt and honey, homemade bread, pastries and even deliciously sticky, syrupy baklavas. In the evenings, the restaurant's sophisticated setting is shown at its best, looking out to the deep blue sea and mesmerising by the beautiful sunset. Choose between the a la carte menu or settle in for the night with an exclusive six-course tasting menu led by three **Michelin-starred** chef Emmanuel Renaut. The tasting menu will take you on a journey of his top creations, with small plates such as delicate yellowtail marinated with fennel in the shape of a flower petal, a whole smoked onion flavoured with immortelle and creamy feta cheese oozing in the middle, and very orange lobster gnocchi (the showstopper for me). Those opting in to the wine pairing will sample the different grapes grown in Santorini and beyond, from crisp citrusy whites to smokey, wooden hints, hand-picked from the vast cabinet displayed in the back of the restaurant.

### **The spa**

The small and intimate Mare Sanus Spa at Andronis Luxury Suites, just a couple of strides away on the caldera, welcomes guests from Andronis Boutique Hotel. Carla Sage, director of spa and wellness at Andronis, has carefully curated plant-based oils with powerful scents to use throughout the treatments. ‘The Thoughtful Three’ includes ‘Be Distressed’ using eucalyptus to help ease aching muscles, clear the mind and energise the spirit, while the lavender based ‘Be Rested’ aims to relax and calm the body and mind, and ‘Be Balanced’ with bergamot focuses on renewing the spirit and reigniting a zest for life. Pick the scent that feels right for you or create your own combination.

### **The area**

Oía, pronounced ‘ia’ (‘as in E-I-E-I-O,’ as our taxi driver put it) was built on the caldera of Santorini following the island’s major volcanic eruption. Look down one side to the rugged landscape of vineyards and arid green land or peer down the other for views of the Aegean. Made up of cafés and restaurants, churches, boutiques and hotel are flecked across a maze of streets and paths. Head down the busiest thoroughfare, N. Nomikos Street, where Andronis Boutique Hotel is situated, and walk right down to the bottom of the cliff to Ammoudi Bay – hop on a boat here to explore the surrounding islands and volcano, go for a seafood supper at Ammoudi Fish Tavern or dive into the water for a cool down. Walk the other way on N. Nomikos Street and join the 10km hiking trail to Santorini’s capital city Fira. The ancient ruins of Akrotiri and the Red Beach are also worth a visit on the other side of the island, and the airport is about a 25 to 30-minute drive, without traffic (be warned, in peak season this can double). Sunset is an occasion in Oía – join in with the crowds and line the bustling streets as the sky turns golden pinks and oranges, or enjoy the romantic skyline from the hotel’s terrace.

### **The service**

The staff here strike the perfect balance between attentiveness and respecting your space, and can be found pottering around the hotel in their all-whites linen. They are super welcoming; happy to chat about the island’s ancient history, will make sure you are constantly hydrated (whether that be by water or wine).

### **For families**

Guests must be over the age of 13 to stay at Andronis Boutique Hotel and the vibe is definitely much more a couple’s hideaway than a family affair.

**Eco effort**

Cars provided by the hotel for airport transfers are Tesla electric cars. The restaurant champions local produce in its menu, keeping imports low, and there is a significant presence of plant-based ingredients in the dishes. In the suites, bathroom products are by Apivita, a Greek natural beauty brand founded in Athens, which uses plant extracts and bee products to provide rejuvenating skin and haircare.

**Accessibility for those with mobility impairments**

Oía in general is a tricky destination for those with mobility impairments with its cobbled streets and countless winding steps lining the town. Guests should expect to climb and descend the steps throughout the hotel and no extra instalments have been made for those with disability requirements.