

CITIZEN FEMME

The Stylish Guide for the Female Traveller



Beach

Escape The Crowds In Santorini's Imerovigli



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We've all seen (or taken) the photo: Oia, Santorini. Stunning views with its heaving caldera cliffside defined by white stone, blue-topped villas and turquoise pools.

It's a pretty scene, but there's more to this island than the perfect picture. Dig deeper and you'll find rugged landscapes, hot springs, and possibly an unexplained energy.

WHAT TO PACK



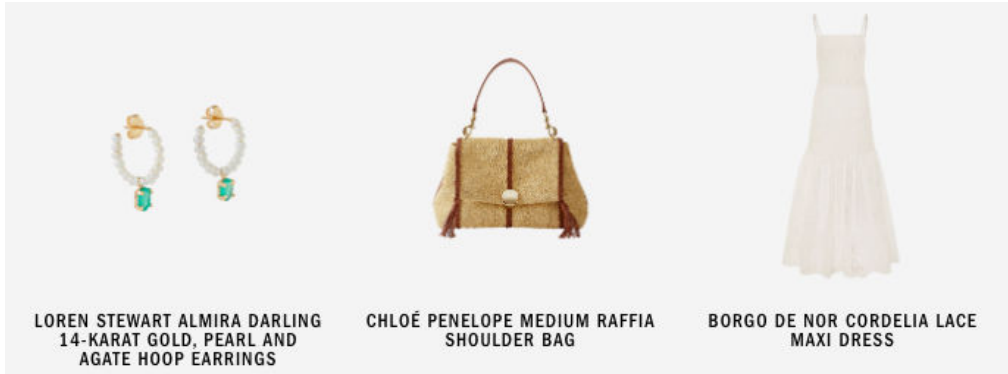
HUNZA G JEAN SEERSUCKER
BANDEAU BIKINI BROWN



VERONICA BEARD SARONG



ANCIENT GREEK SANDALS TRELI
CRYSTAL-EMBELLISHED METALLIC
LEATHER SANDALS



Just a 20-minute taxi ride from the more-famous caldera sits Imerovigli, home to **Andronis Concept Wellness Resort**. It's a spot that couldn't feel further from the bustle of the town's tourist-laden streets: dirt track roads wind up the mountainside, stony and unkempt in the best possible way. There's a smattering of sunrise hikers, and the odd farmer selling freshly-picked fruit from the boot of a rusty Fiat Punto. There are no shops or boutiques, no restaurants. This is the place to be for some quiet contemplation.

Among Imerovigli's stillness, in a space devoid of a DJ's bassline or the chatter of crowds, the natural energy is penetrable. Palia Kameni, Santorini's active volcanic island, can be reached by boat or catamaran from Andronis Concept. The volcano is still active – the last recorded eruption was in 1950 – and is surrounded by hot springs, small pockets of naturally warm water that act like the Aegean sea's own, unpretentious spa. They're safe to swim in and worth escaping the mainland for.



This volcanic energy, scientifically known as geothermal energy, is created deep in the earth's core and, for some, the vibrations it emanates across the surrounding area, taps into something spiritual: many have reported to have felt a wave of emotion or energy that they can't explain. This energy is also what inspired spa director Carla Sage when creating **Kallos Spa** at Andronis Concept Wellness Resort; she brought volcanic elements into both the spa interiors and its treatment menu. "Each treatment room is made to look as though guests are inside a volcano," Sage tells us, "that's what makes this island so special, and that's what we want to celebrate." Outside the spa is a freshwater cave-pool with its own mini waterfall. It feels reminiscent of Mexican cenotes, and a day spent people-watching on the sun loungers quickly shows there are few who can resist a dip in its cool, dark waters.



Back inside, the treatment menu follows a building-block format allowing guests to create a personalised plan. “We encourage guests to tune in to what’s going on in their minds and bodies, in order to build the right combination for what they really need,” says Sage. Another surprising – and welcome – twist: not a single option on the spa menu is beautifying. Unlike in most spas, this one is void of manicures, facials, and enhancers. Why? “This is a chance to focus on inner beauty and connect with the self,” Sage tells us.

Anyone new to this idea is made to feel at ease and the holistic approach doesn’t feel overpowering. If a good old-fashioned back and shoulder massage is what you seek, the option is there. If, however, you’re willing to dig a little deeper, Kallos Spa is set up to help you create a personalised mini-retreat.

Andronis Concept offers a juxtaposition to its sister hotels, which line the more saturated streets in Oia. There’s no white and blue to be found here, instead the curvaceous architecture is built from sandy-coloured stone befitting of its rural location. It’s beautiful in a way that feels different for Santorini, but what’s most striking about Concept is the ease at which the mind seems to switch into rest-mode. The hotel’s position and aesthetic promote an immediate sense of comfort and stillness.



The experience is heightened with mindful movement sessions, yoga, and guided morning hikes. One walking route follows the outer circle of the caldera, spanning views across the entire island. Here, the altitude, combined with the volcano's vibrational affect on the earth means many have reported feeling a wave of emotion or energy they can't explain, though it's not to be guaranteed; myths around spiritual energy believe that it reacts to a person and their current physical or emotional state. Unusual energetic experience, or not, a morning spent in the Kallos Spa or absorbing the natural beauty of the Aegean Sea from Andronis Concept offers more than ample opportunity to retune your mind, body, and soul; to spend some time rediscovering 'self'. There's far more to Santorini than meets the eye, all you need to do is be willing to explore it.

Andronis Concept is open from April until the end of October. Rooms start from £535 per night.

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