

THE WEDDING EDITION

curated by experts

Spa Review: Andronis Hotels, Santorini

by ALESSANDRA FRAME / January 18, 2023 in Travel, Wellness & Beauty



Why Go?

Whether you're looking for a spa-focused **honeymoon** or are in need of a reboot before the big day, Andronis Hotels' wellness program offers cutting-edge mind, body and soul restoration in one of the most picturesque places on the planet. Oh, and you don't have to forfeit the finer things in life (no rabbit food here).

Set the scene:

Approximately 3,600 years ago a devastating volcanic eruption blew the **Greek island** of Santorini to smithereens, forever altering the landscape and the history of the region. The blast led to the formation of a vast caldera surrounded by dramatic cliff-faces and seawater with an extremely high salt content. Today on this geological marvel, the sun sets without fail into the very centre of the caldera and clusters of sugar-cube buildings stagger down the steep cliffs, all vying for a theatre seat for this heart-tugging natural phenomenon.

Carla Sage, Spa and Wellness Director at Andronis, explains how the island's volcanic arc is not only responsible for the variety of micro-climates, but it's also widely believed to release powerful energetic (and healing) vibrations. While this sort of comment may illicit the odd raised eyebrow, after a few days on the island, the scepticism begins to wobble.

While Santorini has no shortage of luxury hotels, Andronis is the first hospitality group to offer a wellness experience with serious clout. We reviewed two of their properties (the Andronis Concept and Andronis Arcadia), both delightfully distinct from one another, ensuring you experience two different sides to the island. So, if you're planning on visiting for more than a few days, we recommend dividing your stay between them.



Andronis Concept

If the image of gravity-defying whitewashed buildings teetering over the Aegean is what's evoked when you think of Santorini, Andronis Concept will surprise you. The spa hotel serves up a rather different aesthetic. Located on the island's western coast near the quaint village of Imerovigli, Andronis Concept's earthy minimalism blends in with the arid volcanic landscape and has an unusually lateral layout for an island where hotels sit cheek-by-jowl. Each of the 27 suites are vast, some of them laid out across two levels, all enjoying heated infinity pools in pole position for those fabled Santorini sunsets.

The Kallos Spa riffs on the island's cave like houses, just with Zen undertones. Lit by candlelight and aromatically scented with people talking in hushed tones, it is dark and serene, with a well-curated treatment menu. From non-invasive bio cell profiling to '*Couples Connect*' sensual rituals and even the yoga studio leveraging the stunning caldera views, the wellness offering is abundant and finely-tuned to the magical setting.



The team at Andronis promote a philosophy of balance and are big believers in the 80/20 rule. There are not restricted diets here, as is the case at many other health retreats. Instead, guests are entrusted to make choices that are right for them, promoting happiness and relaxation. For a fine dining experience drawing on Santorini's volcanic bounty, nab a table at Throubi, whose menu reflects the hotel's philosophy of balance. Just-caught fish and raw vegetable salads sit alongside more hedonistic plates such as the lobster with ravioli and Wagyu strip loin with sweet potato cream. Sampling the local Assyrtiko wine is duly encouraged, in the spirit of moderation.

Andronis Arcadia



The more zingy Andronis Arcadia has a very different feel. Both hotels strike a haute hideaway note, but where Andronis Concept is more zen, Andronis Arcadia caters to a younger, hipper crowd. With the largest pool on the island, slick sushi restaurant Pacman and a DJ playing sunset sessions, there is definitely a more Ibiza-style vibe to the place. It also seizes on the cubic white-washed design aesthetic more typically associated with Santorini. While the spirit of balance and moderation is also present here, there is perhaps more to do on the hedonistic side of the coin. Who says that you shouldn't be able to let your hair down at night if you've experienced transformative healing therapies during the day? It's the blend that speaks to the 20, 30, 40 somethings, who'd rather not fly home broken from a trip, but equally aren't overly keen on the notion of an austere medispa along the Swiss Lakes. The location is about as prime as it gets for a hotel of this size. Not only does it occupy a privileged perch along the edge of the island with Caldera views, it's a short stroll from postcard-perfect Oia – the most famous village on the island – so you can dip in and out of the action as you please. There's a palatial six bedroom villa along with 53 sumptuously simple suites, each with sea and sunset views and their own private infinity pools. The interiors are chic and neutral with plenty of light and once again, unusually for Santorini: space.



The cavernous hotel spa Evexia is architecturally jaw-dropping. A true oasis, it is set in a quiet, serene corner of the resort. Dappled light breaks through shade cloths and eyes are drawn to a lonely olive tree holding court in a beautiful square. Here, modern technology is fused with ancient traditions, with the goal of attaining deeper levels of emotional, mental and physical balance. There is a dry sauna, aromatic steam room, Kneipp pool and an open-air studio surrounded by Santorini scrub, where yoga, mediation, sound healing and kundalini dance classes take place.

After a hard day in the spa, serious gastronomes can treat themselves to a tasting menu at Lauda, Andronis' Michelin-star restaurant (a breezy early evening walk away). Settle in for a gastronomic journey at the hands of Emmanuel Rennaut in a secluded and impossibly romantic setting.

Wellness Philosophy

Carla Sage's wellness philosophy is one built on moderation and practicality. Carla herself is serene, a picture of vitality, with a twinkle in her eye that reads fun. She brings an openness to Andronis' wellness program that makes it feel accessible for those who are only at the beginning of their wellbeing journey, but her depth of knowledge and the experts she collaborates with highlights her credibility. It is this approach that encourages guests to experiment a little and walk away feeling some incredible results.



Visiting Practitioner Program

The jewel in the crown of Andronis' wellness offering is the Visiting Practitioner Program.

Introduced by Carla in her quest to create a world-class spa experience, it means guests have access to some of the most sought after healers in the business. Envisage a holiday with heaps of Greek sunshine, while simultaneously having access to London's most sought after acupuncturist. I am indeed talking about Ross J Barr, whose A-list clients includes the Duke and Duchess of Sussex. Once you've visited him, you'll understand why.

You can also pay a visit to Dr Zulia Frost, whose non-invasive treatment device called FlexBeam uses infrared light to stimulate the body's healing processes. A therapeutic session with Dr Frost also typically involves pulse stimulation treatment from her handheld InterX machine which uses to locate problem areas and help to reduce pain, inflammation and promote faster healing.

The Visiting Practitioner Program schedule is published on the Andronis website ever spring. So be sure to check it out and plan your stay accordingly.



Andronis Concept: Rates start from £250.00 – £5,000 per night *Andronis Arcadia:* Rates start from £575 GBP per night