

Eternal life

Mykonos has had a reputation for glamour since the 1960s. Now, some of its hotels have found creative ways to renew for the next generation, finds **Andrew McQuarrie**

fuelled by roasted-peach cocktails, I jerk my body this way and that with little regard for how unpleasant the sight must be for the Gen Z revellers at Scorpios Mykonos, one of the island's most celebrated beach clubs.

But I'm no longer fully responsible for my actions – this ungainly display is being orchestrated by Valeron, a resident DJ who plays only the most irresistible of house beats. And I'm far from alone in being a slave to the rhythm. Amid the throngs of younger travellers, there's no shortage of more mature guests stomping in the sand and being pulled into another realm in unison.

Rest assured: glamorous Mykonos continues to deliver on its good-time reputation. But man cannot live on dance alone. Nor on mezcal-based cocktails, no matter how hard he tries.

SPRAWLING OUT

"People come here for one night and they end up staying for a week," says Nikos

Kolomvos, general manager of Mykonos Theoxenia.

The property, one of the first Greek bases to join Louis Hotels' new The Exclusive Collection range, was built in 1960. It has gone through numerous renovations over the years while maintaining the characteristic elements of its postmodern original design, which is protected by the Greek Ministry of Culture and Sports.

Almost as a throwaway bonus, it benefits from a location just yards from the island's famous windmills and a short walk from the town centre.

But on the first afternoon of my stay, as I sprawl out on the balcony, my mind is far from the bustle of the shopping district. With Jimmy Reed's 1959 blues album *Rockin' With Reed* as my soundtrack, I'm gazing down at the palm trees below – and the vivid greens, pinks and reds of the surrounding shrubbery – and feeling a kinship with one of the hotel's three cats as he rests in the heat, both of us enjoying the occasional breeze coming off the Aegean Sea. ➤



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: Mykonos Theoxenia; Once in Mykonos; Scorpions beach club PICTURE: Ana Santl

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Our visit to Mykonos Theoxenia comes slightly too early for the new haute cuisine vegan menu, which is being introduced to the hotel’s Apanemi restaurant this season. But we are treated to an incredible sequence of meat and fish dishes combining the best of French and Greek traditions.

My fondness for Greek food is further indulged at Once in Mykonos, an adult-only property from The Exclusive Collection by Louis Hotels, which opened in 2022 in a spot overlooking Ornos Beach. This has the distinction of being one of the few five-star hotels where you might find the general manager popping into the kitchen to contribute to an extravagant feast. Myrto Kasiakou rustles us up a batch of delicious meatballs cooked to her own family recipe, emblematic of the hotel’s commitment to hospitality.

A similar dedication can be found at Kuzina on Ornos Beach, where I can strongly recommend the black cod misoyaki, as well as in Kiki’s Tavern in the north of the island.



MYKONOS THEOXENIA

Serenity and relaxation reign supreme in this hotel, designed to blend with the Cycladic landscape, with low-lying stone buildings sitting amid expansive gardens. Its 49 rooms include suites with private pools and verandas.

My Superior Room Sea View featured textured linen walls and elegant use of marble and wood, plus a balcony with views of the gardens and Aegean Sea. For those wishing to lean further into a state of Zen, the spa offers a range of treatments, therapies and massages designed to “soothe the body and soul”. I opted for a 30-minute version of the Alchemist’s Aromatherapy featuring essential oils ranging from lavender to frankincense, as well as a playlist of calming music. louishotels.com

MYKONOS WAVES

“It’s safe, so don’t worry,” says Ilias, the captain of our speedboat, who utters these words just moments after explaining it’s too windy to visit the nearby island of Delos, the mythological birthplace of Apollo.

With the Beaufort scale clocking a seven (a ‘near gale’), we instead bounce along the Mykonos coastline at speeds of up to 32 knots until Ilias can point out day-to-night party hubs including Tropicana Beach Bar, Cavo Paradiso Club and JackieO’ Beach

Club. All of this whets the appetite for Scorpions, which numerous locals tell us is the place to be.

Fast-forward eight hours and we’re finally inside the fabled venue, cocktails in hand and marvelling at Valeron’s opening set – a performance combining house music and a seven-piece band that specialises in recreating the ethereal sounds of ancient Greece, including the lyre.

The crowd is transfixed, me included – it seems Mykonos’s appeal really is eternal, after all. **TW**



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Agents should highlight September and October to customers looking to escape the noise and bustle of the busy summer months.

The Ornos area is a gem, thanks to its beautiful beaches and Greek tavernas. It’s an ideal destination for those holidaying on a budget.

Clients seeking a cultural experience should head to Delos, the nearest island to Mykonos, which is scattered with myth-filled ancient ruins.

BOOK IT

EasyJet holidays offers seven nights’ B&B at Mykonos Theoxenia for £900 per person, based on an October 6 departure. Seven nights at the Once in Mykonos resort starts from £738 per person on a B&B basis, for an October 13 departure. Both packages include transfers, 23kg luggage allowance and flights from Gatwick. easyjet.com/holidays