



NEW

EUPHORIA RETREAT

WEIGHT
LOSS

PELOPONNESE, GREECE

IMPRESSIVE EUROPEAN EXPERIENCE TO RIVAL THE BEST IN THAILAND AND INDIA

When this heavy-hitting destination spa opened last summer, it quickly became a benchmark by which Europe's other holistic retreats were to be judged. And quite right, too. Here is somewhere that thoughtfully delivers emotional clarity, as well as weight loss. Everything about a stay at Euphoria feels imaginative, rooted and reassuringly authentic, right down to the location. Greece, after all, is the home of Hippocrates, the father of modern medicine. This particular corner of the Peloponnese has the bonus of being immersed in myths and legends. The property lies on a hillside in the shadow of Mount Taygetus, which was mentioned in Homer's *Odyssey*, and 13th-century Mystras, Greece's answer to Pompeii, clings spectacularly to its sheer slopes. The style of the set-up is bold, masterfully mixing modern and traditional with three new buildings echoing the original honey-stoned mansion. The 45 bedrooms are restrained havens, but every minute spent in them is one less in the incredible four-storey spa, as atmospheric as a cathedral, all archways, domes and dimly lit corners. An extraordinary spiral staircase leads barefoot guests to its therapeutic floors, the light shifting from galactic blue to sunburst yellow as they climb. The focal point is the vast indoor hydrotherapy pool. Diving into its dark four-metre depths is quite the mental and physical challenge, a sort of sensory rebirth. There's also a dreamy outdoor infinity pool, steam rooms, sauna and huge hammam for pensive sweating and cleansing. Plus, rooftop yoga studios look out at snowy peaks. Euphoria's charismatic owner Marina Efraimoglou was the first female chairman of a Greek bank when a cancer diagnosis forced a lifestyle rethink and led her to retrain in Traditional

DIVING INTO THE HYDROTHERAPY POOL'S FOUR-METRE DEPTHS IS QUITE THE PHYSICAL CHALLENGE, A SORT OF SENSORY REBIRTH

Chinese Medicine. The retreat reflects her dual nature, so there is a scientific approach to the nutrition alongside the more spiritually therapeutic treatments. From a unique pin-prick blood test, Euphoria's nutritionist and chefs devise personalised meal plans to achieve metabolic-balance guarding against cancer, heart attack, stroke and type 2 diabetes. Fortunately, in practice, this translates to a succession of delicious regional dishes that – rather improbably, given the generous portions – result in a shifting of pounds even for those not following slimming regimes. Fitness programmes

are constructed around excellent massages and interesting therapies such as sacred geometry energy work that connects meridians. Activities range from hikes up to mountain churches, and meditation under the tree canopy,

to sunset qigong in the courtyard and wild chakra dancing that leaves you elated. There are also fabulous transformational workshops run by Efraimoglou that explore personality types, as well as Ulysses Journeys, which focus on mental resilience. What Euphoria has brought to the table is a credible medically led clinic that commits to finding balance in each of the three levels of existence: emotional, physical and spiritual. And it's right here in Europe, for a meaningful short hop.

INSIDER TIP The Advanced Detox programmes are an interesting alternative to the Mayr method – less spelt-bread-chewing, more level-headed long-term focus on balancing antioxidant levels in the diet.

BOOK IT Healing Holidays (+44 20 7843 3592; healingholidays.co.uk/condenast) offers a five-night Inner and Outer Glow programme from £1,825 per person, full board, including flights and transfers.