

LIVING  
IN-STYLE





# Going Greek at Iconic Santorini

*Tucked away in the quaint and whitewashed village of Imerovigli, in the stunningly beautiful volcanic island of Santorini, the boutique cave hotel of Iconic Santorini is reason enough for you to plan your next vacation to the ethereal Greek Isles, says **Rekha Shanmugham**.*







**L**iterally carved out from the Santorini volcanic caldera and blissfully surrounded by the infinite glistening blue waters of the Aegean Sea, the five-level luxury property of Iconic Santorini rightfully found its place in Tatler Travel Guide's '101 Best Hotels in the World' list. About a 10-kilometre transfer from the Santorini airport takes you to Immerovigli, the highest settlement along the Santorini caldera cliffs, where Iconic Santorini sits. The hotel, with its non-fuzzy, simple and cool interiors looks like an extension of the azure spectacle by name of the Aegean Sea that surrounds it. The immaculate, white washed walls and the clean and simple lines with specks of the calming blue thrown in are obvious touches of the Greek architectural style. To call it a personification of understated elegance would perhaps be an understatement by itself.

What with the once-active volcanic landscape and the soothing waters of the sea all around you, the views from the place can be quite bewitching. It is no wonder that they say a trip to the Iconic Santorini is worth it, simply for the

magnificent views. Another thing that is sure to stand out and make you come back is the traditional Hellenic hospitality. The smiles are genuine, staff multilingual, and utmost care that goes into ensuring that your stay is nothing lesser than perfect; definitely not a faultfinder's haven.

The hotel has 22 residences for you to choose from. Note that it is just 22, true to its mission of providing a highly personal atmosphere that does not overwhelm you with crowded spaces. These individualized, traditional cave accommodations are done up Greek-style and transport you to the historic Cycladic times. Apart from the Traditional and Deluxe rooms there are five different kinds of suites to choose from – Classic, Caldera, Grotto, Cliff and Iconic in ascending order of the luxe factor. Get to the Iconic suite fast, we can hear you saying, and here goes. Apart from the ample living area, separate bedroom that leads you to the private terrace, separate breakfast and lounge seating and several other first-class amenities, the suite features a private indoor heated and jetted grotto pool and a similar one on the



outside terrace as well. Yes, you heard it right, two pools, to cater to your whims and fancies. Think swimming the blues away with the calming blue views of the Aegean Sea and the magnificent caldera for company – The Iconic Suite is just about the best it can get.

Irrespective of the type of accommodation you choose, however, Iconic Santorini stays true to the philosophy that luxury is defined by the attention paid to the smallest of details. What thrills the visitors immensely is the bedding program, the Aesop luxury bathing facilities and the impeccable internet service. The Oversize All-Natural COCO-MAT 4 Layer bed especially deserves mention; it is so huge and inviting that you would want to laze forever. At Iconic Santorini, it is all about spoiling you silly. You can bask under the glory of the fine Aegean Sun in the beautiful blue and white terrace seating and lounge area and have your complimentary breakfast served at your own personal table just outside your accommodation. The Iconic Santorini Wellness & Fitness Centre, on the other hand, takes the pampering several notches higher. While here, it is definitely worthwhile to try out their Signature Holistic massage. The one hour treatment, in utter privacy with the just scented candles and soothing music for company and your partner too, if you choose, is sure to squeeze out every bit of stress lurking in your body. The staff is happy to do this within the comfort of your accommodation as well. Once that is done, there is of course, the indoor grotto pool to make the experience wholesome. Alternatively, you could spend a few hours in the crystal clear waters of the outdoor infinity pool and lounge in the jetted tub seating, indulging in some delicious complimentary Greek snacks and beverages. These delightful treats, gotten indoors as well, are accompanied by quotes by the ancient Greek fabulist Aesop, a fine Greek touch indeed.

Talking about food, you can sample typical Greek fare, complete with the authentic flavours and oils at the Pergola restaurant. Reserved exclusively for guests of the hotel, the place serves breakfast, lunch and dinner; and as with anything Iconic Santorini, the homely setting and breathtaking views take the experience to a whole new level. The place has private seating arrangements too, in case you have a romantic dinner in mind. If you have the time, do drop in to say hello to the chef as he whips up the day's menu, you could take home a thing or two about the great Santorini cuisine. If you are a wine enthusiast, you are lucky indeed, for the place, with its dry volcanic soil and over 40 home-grown grape varieties, is world-renowned for its fine wine. The Santorini winery Domaine Sigalas was presented by Wine Spectator's Grand Tour Event in San Francisco, in May 2013, while choosing their 2012 Assyrtico, a dry, aromatic white wine, as one of the world's 200 finest wines. It happens to be the most popular grape on the island, tempted much?

Your wine experience needn't just end with the tasting, there are several wineries and wine museums to be visited



## LIVING IN-STYLE



*Picture Courtesy: Iconic Santorini, Greece*



If you are a wine enthusiast, you are lucky indeed, for the place, with its dry volcanic soil and over 40 home-grown grape varieties, is world-renowned for its fine wine

in Santorini. The picturesque island, with a rich history that dates back to as early as 4th millennium B.C., has several archaeological sites, apart from villages, restaurants, pretty blue-domed churches and stunning black-sand beaches. From going on a hike or a sailing trip along the caldera to enjoying a sunset boat tour with a buffet onboard and being chauffeured around on a luxury private tour of the island, the activity options simply abound. We strongly recommend that you try out cave exploration and diving. The promontory of Trypiti in Therasia, and the shipwreck in Taxiarchis, Palia Kameni are particularly ideal to take the plunge. Not an adventure lover? Opt for a heady round of swimming followed by sunbathing along the caldera and stare in awe as the glorious Aegean sun vanishes amidst the kaleidoscopic expanse of a sky in the romantic village of Oia.

And that reminds us, Santorini with its abundant natural beauty has time and again been voted as the best amongst honeymoon destinations. Iconic Santorini takes the experience even further by tailor-making your romantic getaway, honeymoon or even wedding to perfection. Leave it to the round-the-clock concierge service to assist you with choosing your perfect luxury 'Iconic Santorini Romance Package' to explore the various romantic options around the island. From a leisurely hand-in-hand saunter down the village to a blissful sunset concoction at your private terrace, there is much to be experienced. And with the dreamy indoor grotto pools carved out of the caldera rim and oversized COCOMAT beds, need we say more?