



The Hot List 2011

GREECE Kinsterna Hotel & Spa, Peloponnese

The medieval citadel of Monemvasia, linked to the mainland by a causeway, is where loved-up Greeks escape for the weekend. The village, which is clustered around the castle, is awash with twee guesthouses that have seen better days. Those in the know head seven kilometres south to Kinsterna, a 13th-century manor house hidden among olive and citrus groves. The hotel is named after the ancient cistern at its centre. Guests are refreshed with ice-cold water straight from the source after the four-hour drive from Athens (the hotel can arrange chauffeur-driven transfers). The water cascades through the dark and steamy spa and into a jagged swimming pool with spectacular views to the sea. Interiors (by award-winning architects Divercity) draw on the building's Byzantine, Ottoman and Venetian heritage. Vaulted ceilings, exposed-stone walls, and sandstone floors covered with kilims maintain a sense of authenticity, but there are plenty of cleverly concealed hi-tech features, too. The 27 rooms and suites are decorated in shades of grey and olive, a natural palette that reflects the rural location. The Champagne breakfast is a feast of local treats, such as custard pie and orange-scented rice pudding. A five-course dinner is accompanied with the owners' own Malvasia wine, a local grape celebrated since Byzantium. The remote, romantic setting is inevitably a hit with honeymooners. And there's no chance of the hoi polloi spoiling the peace - the owners have bought the surrounding hillsides to protect guests from prying eyes.

When to go Around Easter, when the countryside is in spring full bloom.

Room to book A top-floor Deluxe Suite, with sweeping views to Monemvasia.

Kinsterna Hotel & Spa: 00 30 27320 66300; www.kinsternahotel.gr. Doubles from €180

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