

Condé Nast Traveller

Double
Summer
Issue

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THE HOT LIST 2016

OUR ROUND-UP OF THE BEST NEW HOTELS, BARS & RESTAURANTS IN THE WORLD

THE SUNSHINE ISLAND

SIZZLING IBIZA

FRESH VILLAS, HEALTH KICKS & SHOPS

THE CITY FIX

LA'S COOLEST HOODS

FROM DOWNTOWN TO VENICE BEACH

THE CARIBBEAN CRUSH

ST BARTH'S NEW OPENINGS

THE GREEK ISLAND HIT

A MYKONOS ADDRESS BOOK
HIP COCKTAILS & SECRET BEACH CLUBS

THE HOME-GROWN HEROES

GREAT UK COUNTRY RETREATS

THE URBAN INSIDERS

AMSTERDAM, RIO, MELBOURNE
NEW YORK & HONG KONG

THE HOLIDAY INTERVIEWS

WINONA RYDER
RODARTE
ROSIE HUNTINGTON-WHITELEY
PETE TONG

THE DESTINATIONS, FLAVOURS & TRAVEL TRENDS EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT

THE ISLAND: MYKONOS



As the season begins, big-hitting restaurants will be swooping down from Athens, new hotels moving in and contemporary-art shows launching. Jeweller Diane Kordas reveals her favourite places

Why Mykonos?

'I chose to build a house here for its raw physical beauty, crystal-clear waters, amazing climate, cosmopolitan atmosphere and incredible light. I also adore the mix of interesting people, and the cubist architecture set in a barren landscape against a vibrant sea. My husband calls it our natural habitat. I spend most of the summer here, but also come during off-peak times; as much fun as Mykonos is when it's full-on, the atmosphere is absolutely wonderful outside the very busy summer season – beautiful, calm and perfect for soothing the soul.'

Where is your favourite beach?

'Lia Beach, which is a stone's throw from our house, and Fragia Beach. For the more adventurous – and if you have access to a boat – head to Skinos lagoon bay on the neighbouring island of Rineia, which is a nature reserve. It's magnificent.'

And restaurant?

'Alemagou in Ftelia is a super-cool and relaxed beach hangout with a hippy vibe, great music and superb food. The Alemagou salad, a twist on a traditional Greek salad, has the most delicious local cheese. The lobster pasta and grilled fish are also hard to beat. Spilia, a cave-like small restaurant by the edge of the water in Agia Anna bay, is a real treat – try the sea-urchin pasta. For dinner I suggest an old classic, Katrin. It's a true Mykonos institution that opened on Nikiou Street more than 40 years ago, and is tucked away between amazing bougainvillea and old churches. Everything is great, but especially the starters and the rack of lamb. If you can speak a few Greek words you'll get extra-special treatment too.'

The best place for sundowners?

hammocks and oversized daybeds. The music is perfectly matched to watching the sun go down: a mix of deep house, ambient melodies and Berlin sounds.'

Where do you go shopping?

'The in-house boutique at the Belvedere hotel is fantastic: it stocks fun bikinis, colourful beach bags, sunglasses and edgy jewellery. Enny Monaco is another well-curated store. Must-buy pieces include beautifully made and comfortable sandals, which are sold all over the island. I'm yet to take a friend who can resist getting a few pairs – they are a summer staple.'

Insider tip?

'The Fournos Veneti bakery just outside Ano Mera on the way to the southern beaches is a local go-to. One of my favourite places to visit is the Monastery of Panagia Tourliani, also in Ano Mera, which dates back to the 16th century. For underwater jaunts, check out Kalafati Diving Centre. It's run by the delightful and experienced Waldemar, and with incredible visibility at 40 metres, expect to see ancient amphorae and shoals of barracuda.'

How does the island influence your jewellery designs?

'Le Corbusier, the father of modernism, said "Unless you have seen the houses of Mykonos, you cannot pretend to be an architect." The island is unique for having preserved its cubist architecture, and it has definitely influenced my jewellery. This simplicity, symmetry and the clean lines are all referenced in my designs, particularly in my Bar, Geometric and Star collections. The neighbouring island of Delos, which used to be the centre of the ancient Athenian Empire and is now a World Heritage Site, also influenced my Armour collection.'

In what way was your Amulette collection inspired by Mykonos?

'The amazing scent on the island: the earth, wild herbs and muskiness of the summer heat create an intoxicating mix. Smell is such a powerful communicator and it's linked to our emotions, so I wanted to capture this in a piece of jewellery. And I was trying to find a practical solution to carrying perfume around all day long.'

What jewellery do you take on holiday?

'I always take my body chains, beaded necklaces and hoop earrings. They are the first things I pack, along with various shell pendants my daughters have made for me – they are priceless.



diamond and black onyx, £2,710; Star Amulette in gold and diamond, £2,750; Amulette in gold and diamond, £2,680, all Diane Kordas (net-a-porter.com)

THE KEEPSAKE: AMULETS

How useful is jewellery? Aesthetically, it may make you look and feel more beautiful, but for warmth, covering your modesty and protecting you from the elements it's hopeless. Recently, the clever techy brigade have tried to give it a dual purpose, with 'smart' jewels that count calories and monitor your every move – but they're clunky and not lovely, and best left in the pile marked 'needs more work'. Jeweller Diane Kordas has turned innovation on its head by looking back in time for inspiration. Her dagger-shaped gold pendants with diamonds and black onyx would be lovely enough even without the fact that they also hold a small amount of fragrance for discreet dabbing and wafting. This idea is as old as the hills (Elizabethan ladies loved nothing more than disguising the stench of everyday life with solid perfumes set as jewellery), but the point here is that, today, necessity is minimal and design is everything. Kordas also knows all too well that scent is a powerful trigger, evoking memories and emotions that knit so well with our innate connection to jewellery, travel and a sense of place. Add an Amulette to your holiday wardrobe filled with your favourite holiday fragrance,