aspire

MYKONOS BLU,
GRECOTEL HOTELS & RESORTS

Famed for the blue donkeys that loiter around reception, this hotel on Psarou beach is literally *the* place to stay on an island that is *the* island to stay on. This is *Top Gun* territory: the best of the best. Go anywhere else for lunch, supper or a beverage and, when asked where you're staying, simply toss the keys on the table: they'll know you're a big deal. Or just reply with your voice if you prefer. Either way they'll tell you it's a nice hotel. And you'll tell them you know because you live there.

White is a very popular colour here and indeed in many places across the two islands. Box-fresh trainer white, a white that washing powders promise but can't possibly deliver. Coupled with the bright blue sea and the, perhaps even brighter, blue private plunge pool, you have a honeymoon-worthy setting and, if not for my polaried green classic G-15 Rayban lenses, a potentially damaging few days for the retina.

There is a huge range of rooms from €175 a night but we weren't in anything like entry-level accommodation. Our suite was big, breezy and beautiful, with just the right levels of pimp. The terrace with infinity pool is obviously where we spent the majority of our time. The view across the bay filled with a scattering of mega-yachts, the beach and the sea.

> *A woman in a skintight jumpsuit cat-walked over and asked if we had a reservation*

LEFT AND ABOVE: Mykonos Blu, famed for its views and blue donkeys

Up a couple of stairs was the terraced main pool – perfect for tanned super-cool folk to stand and loll around, but equally suitable for me to bomb into. Below, the private bit of Blu sand with deckchair service that takes the faff out of beach-going. Towels, cocktails, cold compresses all come to you. The only thing missing is a person to carry you from sun lounger to sea and back again to avoid sandy toes.

Deep in our honeydaze, we hadn't realised quite how momentous this beach is. Our short stroll in search of a battered old taverna for some tzatziki/souvlaki action saw us mosey into a restaurant, take a seat and wait for an old Greek man to pop over. He never came. Instead, a woman in a skintight black jumpsuit and a Madonna microphone cat-walked over and asked if we had a reservation. I think she knew we didn't but, after holding her earpiece a bit and whispering, she let us stay anyway. We had walked into Nammos, one of the most famous beach restaurants/clubs/party spots in Europe. We didn't order the →

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€150,000 champagne. After lunch the tunes start pumping (I believe that's what cool tunes do) and back safe on our Blu terrace we could enjoy the sounds while snoozing with legs dangling in our little private infinity pool.

Most of our eating took place in the hotel. Aegean Poets is big-time Mediterranean with clean and fresh flavours at the breakfast buffet, and à la carte Greek and seafood specialities for lunch and supper. L'Archipel is for lunch by the pool, and if you want to spend more time with the donkeys the Delos Lounge rooftop bar is exactly where you'd expect to find it.

Down the hill, a five-minute walk away, there's another great beach called Platis Gialos. You can spend all day here but we were too content at Blu to make it till the evening. Suggest your clients go to Avli tou Thoridi for delicious Greek food and extraordinarily friendly service.

You should book a car for clients on both islands – and make sure it's a diddy one. A lot of the best roads are tight and the occasional Range Rover invariably causes a traffic jam.

On our way north and west to Grace Mykonos, we took what looked like massive detours on the big map but actually it's a little island at 32 square miles. Alemagou on Tarsanas beach in Ftelia is officially the coolest place I've ever been. A sandy, bumpy track takes you to an unofficial car park above a slim bay with big loungers and a restaurant set back. A DJ does what DJs do, a bikini-clad hostess delivers you to a lounger that looks like it belongs on a Sunseeker, and F&B flows.

And at sunset we took another big detour south towards Paraga beach in search of Skorpios. The sensible part of my brain wants to tell you it's an upmarket beachy/restaurant/DJ/sunset/drinky place, but so astonishing was the welcome the sensible details are pointless. We walked in to find two DJs sitting cross-legged on a big rock in the centre of a mini seaside amphitheatre in turbans and togas with Macbook Airs in front of them, and a gong alongside. A man wearing a feather on his head in a non-ironic fashion seemed to be chief host. The website explains it best: "Genuflecting to the communal wisdom of our distant ancestors while exploring classical antiquity, we take it upon ourselves and invite our guests to reinvent the ancient sociocultural concept of Agora." I don't really know what I can add. Don't tell clients to avoid it, it's hilarious and beautiful. But prepare them for comedic levels of pretentiousness.