



little gem
Parilio

EMMA LOVE IS IMPRESSED BY THIS ALL-SUITE HOTEL ON PAROS, WHICH COMBINES MODERN SIMPLICITY WITH NODS TO TRADITIONAL CYCLADIC ARCHITECTURE



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT Parilio's pool area. The terrace of Mr E restaurant. The bedrooms are decorated in earthy muted shades

Parilio is the kind of next-level design hotel that can really put a Greek island on the map. Despite being only an hour's ferry ride from Mykonos, which is famed for its party scene, and Naxos, with its endless sandy beaches, Paros is a low-key Cyclades spot that has somehow escaped much scrutiny. Which is precisely what attracted husband-and-wife hoteliers Kalia and Antonis Eliopoulos.

In 2018, the couple (who already owned three hotels on Santorini) snapped up a plot of land on Paros' north-east coast, a 10-minute taxi ride from the whitewashed town of Naoussa and within easy walking distance of the quiet coves of Kolymbithres beach. There was a larger hotel on the site already, but they tasked the Athens-based studio Interior Design Laboratorium with making structural changes, as well as designing the overall look.

In the main low-slung building, crisp geometric lines combine with symmetrical arches inspired by Paros' churches and monasteries (of which the most historic is the Byzantine Panagia Ekatontapiliani, known as the Church of 100 Doors, in the capital Parikia) and terracotta floors. Peer straight through the lobby and the rest of the hotel - a series of white cube-like structures that are incredibly modern yet at the same time nod to traditional Cycladic architecture - stretches out along a path towards distant rocky hills.

In keeping with the hotel's name (its website explains *parilio* is a translation of *parhelion*, a bright optical illusion caused by sunlight passing through ice crystals in the upper atmosphere), the 33 spacious suites are all labelled along a solar theme. They vary little in decoration: each has porcelain floor tiles and a subdued earthy palette, a bespoke embroidered wall-hanging by Marrakech brand LRNCE above the bed, and a terrace or balcony (the Uranus Suites also have a Jacuzzi, while two Sun Suites have their own pool).

Equally successful are the two public spaces, both of which have that hard-to-define feeling that makes guests want to linger. The first is the wow-factor pool, where huge terracotta urns, cacti in concrete pots, towering fir trees

and cream umbrellas are the only distraction from water that appears invitingly turquoise in the sun. Staff will deliver lunch to loungers on wicker trays (perhaps a tortilla wrap or superfood salad), and there is a bar at the back for ice-cold Aperol spritz sundowners. The second is the Mr E restaurant, just off the lobby, which is partly inside, partly open-air, and framed with arched windows. Breakfast is an excellent buffet; the dinner menu features local dishes with a twist, served on Studio Piet Boon and Serax plates.

It is all too easy to while away the days here, swimming off Kolymbithres beach and pottering round Naoussa, with its pretty harbour lined with fish restaurants and warren of streets full of boutiques, bars and cafés. Yet it is worth exploring further afield - especially Lefkes, the most mountainous village on the island. Many come to sip coffee in the shady main square of the old town but, for walkers, it is also the start of the Byzantine road, a downhill trail that winds through the countryside to Prodomos near the sea. Afterwards, back at the hotel, a refreshing dip in the pool feels like a just reward □

Ways and Means

Emma Love stayed as a guest of Parilio (pariliohotelparos.com). Rooms cost from £207 through Design Hotels (designhotels.com).



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