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WINTER HAVEN SERIES: THE HIP EXPERIENCE – HIPAWAY VILLAS, GREECE



HIPAWAY HEAVEN

“ A selection of hip spaces around Greece for a bohemian chic way of living. ”

There are those magical moments in life when one stumbles onto something truly special. It does not

happen often however and, when so one, feels that one has suddenly been let in on a great secret that they long to then keep to themselves. Such is the case when I discovered Hipaway Villas.

I wavered for quiet some time between keeping silent and being more generous with others by sharing. As usual, my conscious won out; in particular, as I know that there are many travelers out there looking for the same golden experience as I myself.

HIPAWAY CONCEPT

“ For the independent traveller. ”

The concept was what intrigued me most. Long had I searched for a place where I could simultaneously feel at home, yet disconnect; a retreat as well as an unparalleled experience in a location I had never before explored. Most importantly, it had to be personal. In other words, the antithesis of mass-tourism, which is a caveat the Hip Away experience fulfills very well.

What makes [Hipaway Villas](http://www.hipawayvillas.com/) so special? Founder, Joanna Papadopoulou, and her husband Fivos Coutsicos, make each house a home. To them, each villa is comprised of more than its four mere walls, but of its history. There has to be something about it that is particular and hitherto undiscovered, be that its location, architecture or owner.

The couple's love of all things Greek and intimate knowledge of each island guides their visitor recommendations and aesthetic identity of each villa. As a former graphic artist, Joanna has a well-honed eye for beauty and is very exacting about what she wants. Together they present a different Greece that by many has not yet been experienced or seen, authentically representing the soul of the country.

Every villa is carefully handpicked from the flotilla of those available on the market for its unique appeal to them as well as their clients.

“ Each house, each island in Greece is unique and that is what I want my clients to discover. My purpose is to bring places and people together. To help them discover the true beauty of Greece. ”

To discover more of the country, I join Joanna and her husband Fivos, on my first night in Athens to discuss in detail the Hipaway concept before setting off on my journey to two of their special locations, and what becomes apparent at once is their passion for their work. Fivos is tall, tanned, handsome and lean whilst Joanna beautiful, tawny-haired, sylphlike and petite. In other words, each is individually arresting. However together, they make a dynamic duo almost impossible to beat: a striking couple who exemplify the perfect combination of urbanity and laid back chic. One that reflects the concept of the firm, as well as their dazzling collection of villas. Beneath their charismatic allure are razor sharp minds that enabled them to establish an extremely successful company and, therewith, fulfil a most extraordinary dream.

Cutting straight to the chase, the adventurous 'nomads', filled with an avid curiosity about the world like myself, share what has become a passion, curating vacations that welcome flip flops, sun and unpretentious wonders.

"I remember, I went with this bag full of pieces: flip-flops, shirts, shorts and stuff. The first night I went out to Bangkok, I was wearing my flip-flops, my shorts and my t-shirt. The second night it was the

same and the third. So, I put my bag away, went travelling for a month with the same flip-flops, swimming trunks and t-shirt," says Fivos as he reminisces about his first trip to Thailand.

That sense of freedom continues to influence how they travel today and what they seek to offer. Joanna and Fivos set out to offer, from the time they started the company years ago, the exact same type of vacation for which they themselves (and I) had so longed.

"I know what I want. We have been contacted about many houses over the years, but not every one fits our purpose or our needs. There has to be a connection between Fivos, the owners and I. There has to be a connection to the island and to the house as well. Otherwise, it just doesn't work. We usually pick houses that have a story to tell and promote it accordingly. That is what differentiates Hip from the clutter. We give them life," says Joanna.

Joanna goes on to explain how they visit each house and, if possible, stay in order to have a first-hand experience of it themselves.

“ The market is over-flooded with offers for vacation rentals. The problem is that most of them are bland. So, if you want something different and don't know where to look, it is very difficult to find. That is what was missing in today's tourism and the niche we set out to fill. ”

“ I once had a client who did not know where to go, on which to stay, so asked if I could propose something for her. And, after her vacation, she contacted me to thank me for choosing so well. She said that I had picked the perfect place and seemed to know what she wanted and needed better than she had herself. ”

It is this type of natural intuitiveness, as well as personal dynamism and formidable business sense, which has made them so very successful.

“ It is a team effort, not just but by Fivos and I, but the rest of the Hipfamily as well. We work together to find the best houses at the best locations to provide the best experiences we can offer. And, like with the owners, we have a one-to-one relationship with our clients that is built on personalized service as well as honesty, reliability, and trust. ”

Fivos smiles engagingly as he nods in agreement.

“
When Joanna and I started the company, we wanted to create something truly unique. We wanted to offer the public something they had never had before and were as exigent in our demands for them as we would have been for ourselves. I lived in London for a while and I remember how every May, I would become depressed because of the weather.

It was the same when I was boy and had to leave Hydra at the end of the summer to return to Athens. At once, I had headaches and felt stressed. I missed

the warmth, the simplicity of the islands. I missed the good food and clean air. I missed running around barefoot, in the same t-shirt and pair of shorts or jeans. ”

says Fivos. It is something all of us have most likely felt at some moment in our lives. Not because it was the end of vacation however, but the end of a dream. That dream being our desire to return to a simpler life. One in which we did not need to stay 'connected' and could at last let go. Fortunately, at Hipaway Villas, you can do so, whilst discovering a new place, new adventures and a new you at one and the same time.

HIPAWAY VILLAS

“ Each house is carefully selected not just for it’s general aesthetic appeal but also for it’s architectural design, original inspired interior, natural setting and distinctive character. ”

Whether seeking a solo adventure, a romantic tête-a-tête or family holiday, Hipaway Villas has something to offer everyone.

The company offers a wide choice of villas scattered around the Greek isles such as Aetolia-Acarmania, Chania, Fthiotida, Hydra, Mani, Nisyros, Patmos, Sifnos, Kythira, South Evia and Tinos that lie off the beaten-track, in addition to those on more well-known islands such as Santorini, Mykonos and Paros, to suit the taste of each travellers.

Their selection of properties thus ranges from the trad-mod (meaning traditional modern) to the sui-generis (unique), from Bohemian chic to farmhouse glamour. Yet, all come with stunning views over land or sea nevertheless, and many with pools from which to take them in.

If in need for quiet time and reflection, then there is a wide choice of houses tucked away in the valleys or hills or high up on the cliffs.

Those desirous of more urban accommodation have the choice of a home away from home located near or in the town centre. For a beach holiday, Hipaway Villas also offers properties directly on the beach. Looking for a spiritual retreat? Try Tinos! Or something more artistic? Then, book a few weeks in Hydra. However, if a love of architecture, archeology or mythology is what makes you tick, then Kea and Kythira fits the bill perfectly.

Continuously expanding, Hipaway Villas currently has a portfolio of around seventy houses, and their latest, new concept is just as exciting.

“ Our aim is to make everyone’s holiday authentic and unique. ”

So, what is in store for the future? They desire to continue embellishing the Hip experience, while maintaining the quality and uniqueness of its service.

HIPAWAY DESTINATIONS*

“ *The ideal place where an independent-minded traveller can discover and experience unique villa rentals in privileged locations around Greece* ”

Cyclades Islands, small white homes and blue domed churches, aglow with dazzling light, set like gems in a landscape of stark natural beauty, surrounded by the sparkling waters of the Aegean. Cradle of one of the world's first great civilizations, the Cyclades offer a captivating mix of the ancient and the modern, where tranquility and traditional values blend seamlessly with a vibrant cosmopolitan lifestyle in a very unique way.

Dodecanese Islands, strategically located in the eastern Aegean, the islands share the varied history of a region coveted by Romans, Crusaders, Venetians and Ottomans, resulting in a remarkable cultural and architectural legacy.

Ionian Islands, scattered along the west coast of Greece, the culture, architecture and even the cuisine reflect the diverse influences they have absorbed from ancient times to the present. Evidence of this chequered past can be seen not only in ancient Greek temples and Venetian fortifications, but also in classic Italian dishes and French flavours; a mosaic against a magical backdrop of verdant hillsides and the turquoise waters of secluded bays that attract yachts from all over the world.

Peloponnese Peninsula offers a compelling alternative to the Greek islands. Here you will discover some of the country's most famous classical sites, including Ancient Olympia and Mycenae, the Byzantine wonders of Monemvasia and Mystra, as well as the mystery of rugged Mani. Mountains steeped in mythology, unspoiled bucolic landscapes and some of the finest beaches in the country, coupled with a rich cultural heritage that remains very much alive today.

A region of sharp contrasts, with some of the country's highest mountains, largest lakes and longest rivers, Central Greece is a harmonious mosaic of dramatic landscapes, picturesque villages and spectacular reminders of a glorious yet often turbulent past. Spanning this historic land from the Ionian Sea to the Aegean, it is a region where colourful traditions remain strong and customs are deeply embedded, forming part of a unique cultural heritage that visitors can discover and experience at first hand.

*Descriptions & quotes provided by Hipaway Villas

[Hipaway Villas](http://www.hipawayvillas.com)(<http://www.hipawayvillas.com>)

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