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# *THIS REGION TICKS ALL THE BOXES FOR A MORE AUTHENTIC GREEK HOLIDAY*

17 JUL 2025 BY REBECCA HALL

With a medieval rock town, barefoot grape stomping and a hidden cave, the often-overlooked Peloponnese is emerging as a destination for clients seeking depth, history and a quieter sense of luxury



Kinsteria is a historic mansion converted to a boutique hotel

I'm standing in a centuries-old wine vat, gently pressing grapes beneath my feet as part of Kinsteria Hotel and Spa's annual harvest. Other guests enthusiastically join in. Nearby, fig-laced bread is being prepared in the

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We're in Laconia, southeastern Peloponnese – a mainland region of Greece that has long appealed to curious travellers, yet remains blissfully under the radar. Unlike Mykonos or Santorini, this region offers a slower, richer pace rooted in landscape and legacy. Laconia appeals to couples after quiet romance, families enjoying nature-led activities, and solo travellers seeking stillness. It's about four hours' drive from Athens, or three from Kalamata Airport.

## STORY-TELLING LANDSCAPES

Set on a hillside just a 15-minute drive from the fortified rock town of Monemvasia, Kinsterna Hotel and Spa blends discreet luxury with deep-rooted tradition. Guests are invited to slow down – help with the olive harvest or bake bread in a wood-fired oven.

Hidden amongst olive groves and citrus trees, the estate was once a Byzantine mansion. Now it's an elegant complex of warm stone buildings, cobbled paths and cooling fountains. Even in peak season, it's hushed.



Kinsterna guests are invited to help bake bread in a wood-fired oven

“Kinsterna is more than just a destination – it’s an experience shaped by centuries of heritage, natural beauty and Greek hospitality,” says George Lambroukoulas, Kinsterna’s hotel manager. “Guests step into history while

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table cooking classes. Sustainability is also core to our philosophy, from organic farming to generating our own energy.”

For clients seeking more than luxury poolside relaxation, these seasonal experiences offer a deeper connection to the land. Rooms range from restored heritage suites to newer villas, all retaining a strong sense of place. My suite has arched ceilings, thick shutters and views stretching to sea.

“We consider Kinsterna to be an outstanding property in Greece,” says Dudley der Parthog, director at Sunvil Holidays. “It’s the antithesis of five-star ‘bling’ and offers intimacy with just 52 rooms and historic charm.”

“Due to its distance from the international airports of Kalamata and Athens,” he adds, “we typically sell Kinsterna as part of a Peloponnese fly-drive. Clients booking these touring holidays are often seeking culture, history and scenery.”



## LIVING HISTORY

Unesco-listed Monemvasia remains hidden from view until you’re nearly upon it. Once inside its gates, cobbled lanes wind between stone houses up to the 13th-century Agia Sofia church.

“Greece’s most impressive fortified medieval town,” says der Parthog. “It’s known as the ‘Gibraltar of Greece’, an essential for culturally curious travellers.”

While some buildings house boutiques and wine bars, Monemvasia retains a solemnity shaped by centuries of history.

Day trips from Kinsterna include the small island of Elafonissos. A short ferry from Pounta brings you to its Simos Beach, where curved bays frame white sands and shallow turquoise waters. With just one taverna and little development, it’s a serene alternative to Greece’s busier island beaches.

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Monemvasia was constructed to be invisible from the mainland to avoid enemy attacks © Rebecca Hall

Just off the mainland, I snorkel over Pavlopetri – the world’s oldest known submerged city. Dating back over 5,000 years, its stone foundations are visible just below the surface. Floating above this ancient grid is quietly moving. No touching allowed – this is a site of preservation.

Roughly 30 minutes inland from Neapoli – around a 50 minute drive from Kinsterna – lies Kastania Cave. Reached via winding roads through mountain villages, this natural marvel reveals chambers formed over millennia.

Guided tours thread through vivid stalactites and stalagmites. Unlike Europe’s bigger show caves, Kastania remains uncrowded – its silence adding to the magic.

On my final evening, I dine on Kinsterna’s terrace at Mouries Restaurant, watching dusk fall over the hills. I tuck into seabass with black-eyed peas and warm, house-baked bread and the homemade herb butter melts into the crust as I sip estate-grown wine. I don’t think I could find a more peaceful spot in Greece if I tried.

**Book it:** Sunvil offers seven nights at **Kinsterna Hotel and Spa**, based on

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with easyJet any Saturday in October. Includes flights, breakfast, car hire and 23kg luggage; [sunvil.co.uk](https://sunvil.co.uk); [visitgreece.gr](https://visitgreece.gr)

## SELLING TIPS FROM AUDLEY TRAVEL



Orthodox church on the small Greek island of Elafonisos © Rebecca Hall

Samantha Bosman, senior product executive for Greece at Audley Travel, says: “The Peloponnese appeals to clients drawn to history, archaeology, outdoor activities and traditional culture. It’s a year-round destination and a popular option for those without a set idea of where in Greece they want to go. Once they explore a little, they’re always enthusiastic – and many rebook before the first trip ends. It’s a region that resonates deeply.”

“Kinsterna consistently scores well in our client feedback thanks to its romantic, historic charm and exceptional service. For agents offering grounded, elegant and meaningful experiences, this corner of the Peloponnese is a compelling choice – and one that lingers long after the return home.”

**Book it:** Audley Travel offers an 11-day tailor-made trip to Athens and the Peloponnese from £4,700pp (based on two travelling). Includes two nights at Kinsterna Hotel plus time in Athens, Nafplio, Costa Navarino and Messinia. Flights, transfers, accommodation and excursions included; [audleytravel.com/greece](https://audleytravel.com/greece)

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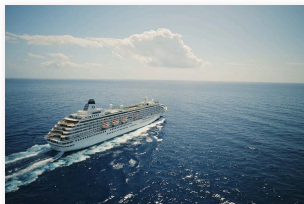
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