

News

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Paradise in Paphos: a review of luxury Cyprus spa Almyra Hotel

By Hannah Hastings
 Reporter



Sunset view from the Kyma Suite at Hotel Almyra

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In September 2019, our reporter Hannah Hastings was invited to review five-star spa hotel, Hotel Almyra in Paphos, Cyprus.

From wine-tasting, sightseeing by boat and a Mediterranean food-making class, here is her account of her long-weekend trip in the Cypriot sun:

Sometimes a spontaneous decision can be the best of your trip and my three-night stay at the Almyra Hotel in Paphos could not have come at a better time.

Touching down at the south-western side of Cyprus back in mid-September, the Mediterranean temperature served as the perfect welcoming warm hug to recharge for the long weekend.

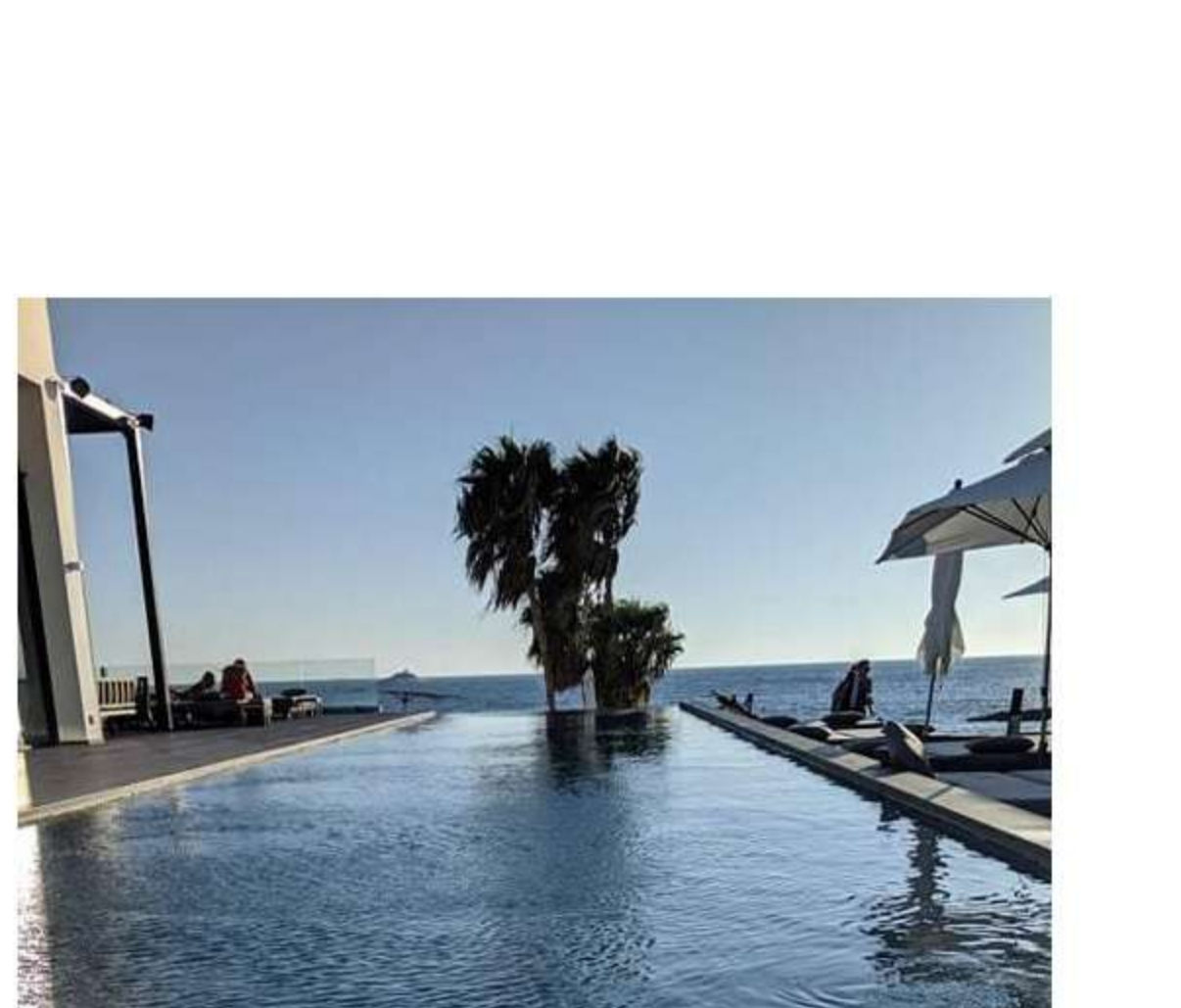
After a 20-minute drive from Paphos International Airport, I arrived at the five-star chic Almyra, nestled along the crystal-blue coast of Aykles beach.

Lunch at the hotel's Japanese-Mediterranean fusion restaurant, Notois, served as the perfect first impression after a four-and-a-half-hour flight.

My love for deep fried calamari with sweet chilli sauce, was happily met before my taste buds were challenged to a sesame seabass, with lemongrass jasmine rice and green chilli sauce.

Sticking to my rule of trying more fish-based dishes over the course of my stay, my seafood palette gained a new ally.

Soon after finishing off a refreshing passion fruit panna cotta for dessert, I was taken to the signature Kyma Suite where things suddenly got much sweeter.



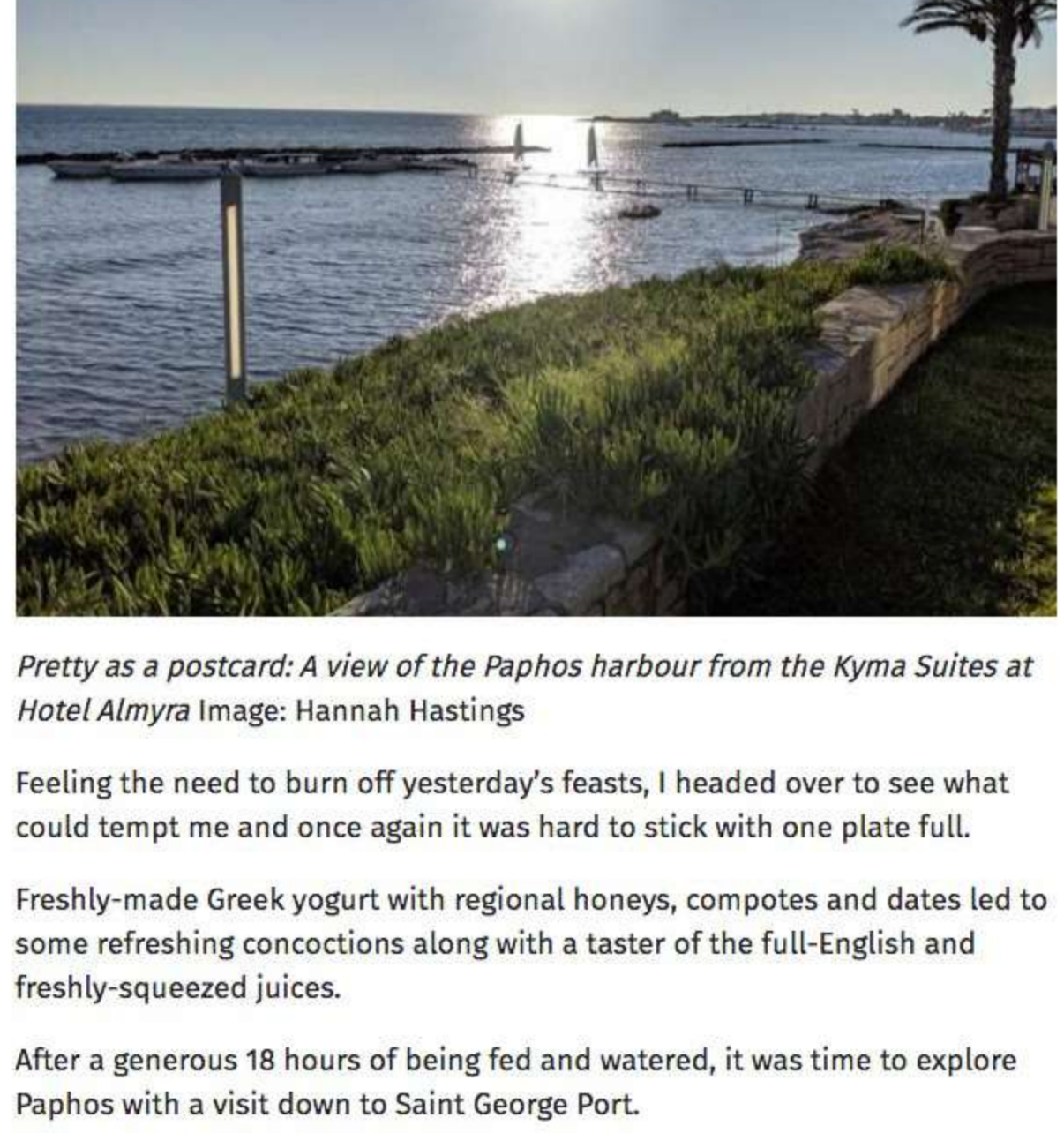
The mouth-watering passionfruit panna cotta served at Notois Image by Hannah Hastings

Named after the Cypriot word for 'wave', the Kyma Suites are perfectly situated along the seafront for those panoramic views of the harbour curving round to the tip of Paphos castle.

The sleek, white-washed walls, marble flooring and plush furnishings mirrored the rest of Almyra's contemporary design within the resort.

Speaking of which, the AlmyraSpa was based opposite my bedside overlooking the 33m infinity pool and snack bar Eauzone.

Cocktails are a must when unwinding at this more secluded area of the hotel, especially when paired with watching the priceless sunset take place.



End of the earth: A rare moment of the infinity pool empty image: Hannah Hastings

A body and face massage was eagerly booked for the next day, but until then, The White Company shower products in the bathroom soaked up my anticipation.

Dinner for the first night was arranged at Ouzeri, that would live make Aphrodite blush.

Diners are seduced by the guitarist while enjoying an array of traditional food from lamb cutlets to the addictive baked feta cooked in filo pastry with tomato jam.

Fast-forward to breakfast and Almyra provides two options on how to start your day, tuck in buffet style at the main restaurant, Mosaics, or order a selection of freshly cooked pastries to your room.



Pretty as a postcard: A view of the Paphos harbour from the Kyma Suites at Hotel Almyra Image: Hannah Hastings

Feeling the need to burn off yesterday's feasts, I headed over to see what could tempt me and once again it was hard to stick with one plate full.

Freshly-made Greek yogurt with regional honeys, compotes and dates led to some refreshing concoctions along with a taster of the full-English and freshly-squeezed juices.

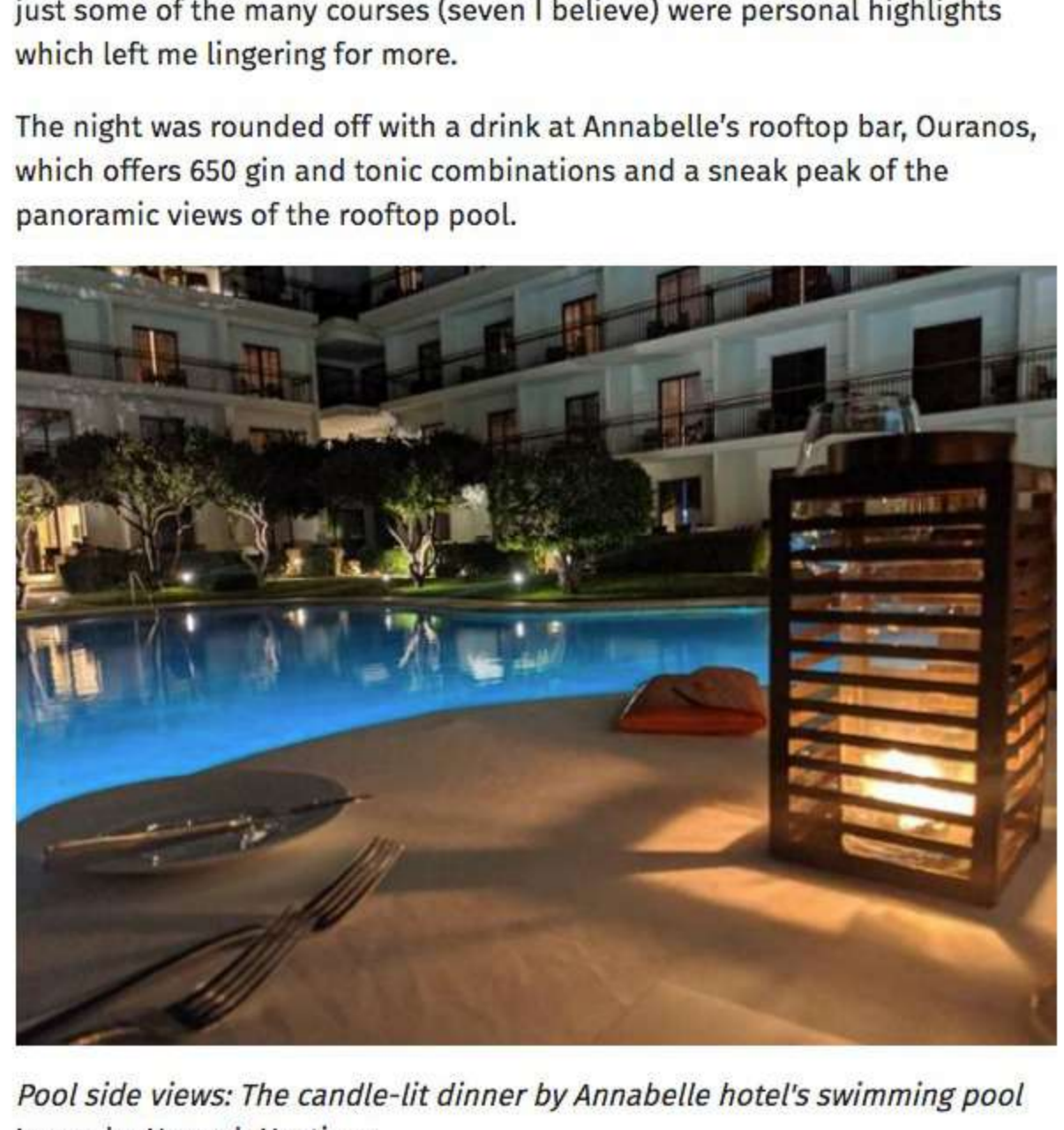
After a generous 18 hours of being fed and watered, it was time to explore Paphos with a visit down to Saint George Port.

Fishing is big business for Cypriots, up to 100 kilos are caught twice a day, which are then immediately sold at the daily markets.

Those who have a lucky catch can sell up to one tonne of fish a week all locally sourced – a brilliant way of discovering and understanding Almyra's food source.

Our tour continued by sailing along the north-west side of the island's deep blue sea, for a up close view of the shipwrecked Edro III abandoned back in 2011.

Close by is the Sea Caves of Paphos, a popular landmark with cliff jumpers snorkelers who regularly explore these unique rock formations.



Shipwrecked: Edro III is a popular unofficial landmark in Paphos Image by Hannah Hastings

Returning from the mini excursion to the hotel, paper chef hats awaited us to participate in a Cypriot-themed cooking class.

On the menu was koupepia, which roughly translates to wine leaves stuffed with minced meat, rice, tomato and lemon juice.

The main course was pastisio, a real comfort dish great for the swimming and excellent Greek alternative to its more famous Italian cousin, lasagne.



Meal time, Mediterranean style: the finished koupepia (bottom right) and the ingredients prepped for pastisio (top left) Image: Hannah Hastings

By the time the late afternoon rolled round, it was time to grab the dressing gown and slippers and head to AlmyraSpa.

Walking into the adult-only part of the hotel felt like I had accidentally discovered a hidden retreat.

Staff greeted me in hushed voices and a cup of peppermint tea while I awaited in the wooden panelled Oriental-styled haven.

Almost immediately my massage therapist relieved the overflowing tensions within my back thanks to bespoke scented oils, some containing ingredients home-grown within the spa.

Had I been given an extra day within my stay I certainly would have considered booking another treatment and checking out the gym, sauna and steam rooms.



Spa-mazing: The products used during the full body and head massage Image by Hannah Hastings

Dinner for the second evening was hosted by Almyra's neighbour and five-star sister hotel, Annabelle, at the signature restaurant, Amorosa.

Once again, another superb candle-lit gourmet dinner by the swimming pool was presented within the sub-tropical terraced-styled grounds.

Cured Wagyu beef, pork belly, seared scallops and beef cheek ravioli was just some of the many courses (seven I believe) were personal highlights which left me lingering for more.

The night was rounded off with a drink at Annabelle's rooftop bar, Ouranos, which offers 650 gin and tonic combinations and a sneak peak of the panoramic views of the rooftop pool.

Pool side views: The candle-lit dinner by Annabelle hotel's swimming pool Image by Hannah Hastings

My final day on my culinary-filled trip was a visit further inland into the mountainous landscape to uncover more Mediterranean delights.

First stop was a family-run Katsouras factory, which produces soutzoukos, a traditional Cypriot treat where almonds and walnuts are coated in grape juice.

Hung on strings to set for approximately two weeks, these sweets snacks can be easily mistaken for bite-sized sausages, a definite try for candy lovers.

As a side note, I would recommend saving them for an after dinner nibble than as a fancy substitute to toad in the hole.

Sweet life of Cyprus: Dozens of soutzoukos, the popular traditional Cypriot treat image by Hannah Hastings

Upstairs the factory is dedicated to all things dairy, the farm's goats milk helps produce 26,000 tonnes of halloumi, where three quarters of this beloved cheese produced is exported.

The emphasis of family continued onto Vouni Panayia Winery, currently being run by the seventh generation of the Yannis family.

Since opening in 1957, the dream of promoting Cyprus-based wine has come a long way, currently selling five white and three red flavours to dozens of hotels and restaurants.

The entrance to Vouni Panayia Winery which has been opened since 1957 Image by Hannah Hastings

My personal favourite resulted in a souvenir purchase, a medium-bodied dry white named Spouritiko with fresh tastes of apple and peach.

Finishing up from the wine-tasting session and tour of the factory our hosts kindly laid out a home-cooked lunch overlooking 25 hectares vineyard.

On top of the world: The panoramic views from Vouni Panayia Winery Image by Hannah Hastings

Cyprus' coastal city provides the right balance of romantic postcard views and charming Mediterranean culture, no wonder it's considered the birthplace of Aphrodite.

Should the chance for another spontaneous unwinding, food-tasting adventure weekend in a five-star resort appear, I'll be ready to fall under Paphos' spell all over again.

Hotel Almyra has just completed a €4million renovation and was reopened on Sunday, March 7.

Rates at Almyra start from €216 (currently approx £192) based on two sharing an Inland View Room on a B&B basis.

To book your stay at the Almyra Hotel, visit <https://www.almyra.com/en-gb/home>

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