Shifting sands
Page 190
Palm Springs' mid-century masterpieces are attracting a new generation of visitors to the Californian desert.

Taking flight
Page 196
Sydney suburb Crows Nest is a haven of youthful independence. We take a tour around its best bits.

Test of time
Page 198
Hong Kong's hospitality scene is constantly changing but Luk Yu Tea House has real staying power. Its secret? Consistency.

On the move
Page 200
New openings abound as the travel industry gears up for summer. Where will the season take you?

June 2024

Inventory

A monthly round-up of all you need

HOSPITALITY: Tatoï Club

Polished service Athens

Welcome to the members' club that's courting favour with the Greek elite.

Writer
Natalie Theodosi

Photography
Marco Arguello

1

Athens is well known for its chaos and hedonism. Perhaps that's why the neatly tended Tatoï Club, nestled beyond the urban bustle in the suburb of Acharnes, feels so refreshing. The white, single-storey building, recently redesigned by Kois Architecture, doesn't give much away from the road but there's plenty to divert members inside. Spread over 100,000 sq m, the club offers 15 tennis courts, most of which are clay and meet the highest professional standards, as well as two for padel. There is a guesthouse and two swimming pools: one for families and another for adults only. Landscape practice H Pangalou & Associates has overseen the grounds, whose botanical gardens and lavender fields reflect the rugged terrain of the nearby Mount Parnitha in their choice of plants.

"What makes us special is our proximity to nature," says the club's CEO, Elli Vizantiou. "We have planted everything ourselves and are constantly replenishing the land."

Members' clubs remain a rarity in Greece so Vizantiou had the enviable task of visiting others around the world as part of her research. "We didn't follow anyone else's model," she says. "Instead, we created our own. We didn't find a place in Europe that matches our approach to sport, socialising, food and family."

Simple pleasures

Rules at members' clubs can be rather arcane but the Tatoï Club is refreshingly unfussy. Membership is currently only by referral but there are plans to expand this to international markets in the near future. Non-members are, however, welcome to stay in the club's guesthouse for €600 a night to enjoy its sport and wellness retreats – a perfect way to sample what's on offer.

3

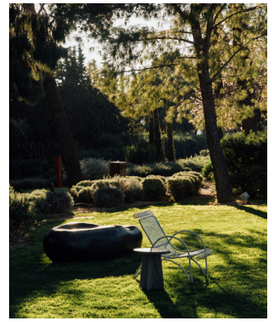
2

A simple premise underpins all that goes on at the Tatoï Club. "We wanted to create a sports-and-wellness space that would make both its members and its team proud," says Vizantiou. Accordingly, the club is open to ideas and strives to evolve according to members' needs. When it launched, the initial focus was on tennis; now, there are more activities and a greater family feel. You can book a personal trainer, join a fitness class (Vizantiou recommends the yoga sessions next to the lake), receive personalised nutrition plans, book in for cryotherapy or treat yourself to an Augustinus Bader facial.

You might even pick up a new hobby. "There are food classes in our cookhouse," says Vizantiou. "You can stargaze with us in the summer or join the running, book or theatre group. There are clubs within the club. Members can forge new friendships, which isn't always easy after a certain age."

The club's restaurant has a lot to offer too. The serene, sun-filled space features wooden furniture, neutral hues and the scent of freshly cut flowers, bringing elements of the natural world inside. "No matter where you are, you should be able to see daylight and feel in touch with nature," says Vizantiou. The menu's simple, hearty dishes range from freshly prepared vegetables to seafood risotto. These are made using organic ingredients, much of which are from the farm nextdoor. "We believe in growing our own fruits and vegetables without chemicals," says Vizantiou. "That's why we made a huge investment in our own farm. It might not make commercial sense but it aligns with our purpose. We grow a lot of seasonal produce – such as apples, tomatoes, strawberries and aubergines – and these cover most of our menu's needs."

4



5

6

7

8

Previous page

1. Clay courts at the Tatoï Club

This spread

1. Fresh fruit at the ready
2. Space to disconnect
3. Quiet corner on the terrace
4. State-of-the-art pilates equipment
5. Back to nature
6. Top of the shops
7. Menu highlight
8. Bringing the outside in

The Tatoï Club team also bakes its own bread (try a slice of the carob-flour loaf) and makes broths, gelatos and cakes in-house. Restaurant staff make a point of knowing every member by name and familiarising themselves with their personal nutrition plan (if they have one). "Our members want to keep educating themselves," says Vizantiou. "They understand the importance of investing in themselves, not just by playing sport but also by finding new hobbies and taking care of what they eat."

Personalised service and attention to detail are central to the Tatoï Club experience. A dedicated team is always on hand to reposition out-of-place pillows and replace anything that has broken. The club also caters to its members' children, with dedicated kitchen areas in which to prepare their meals, playgrounds for them to play in and various activities for them to get stuck into. Stroll around the club and you'll hear their laughter and see long tables at which family members from across several generations break bread together.

By catering to families and establishing personal relationships with members, Vizantiou and her team have struck a fine balance between luxury and providing a friendly, welcoming atmosphere. You immediately feel at home but have access to a standard of facilities and services that you might expect at a five-star hotel. That's why, over the years, its community has grown from 50 to 450 families (there's a long waiting list). And the club is continuing to evolve. A larger spa is in the works, while the guesthouse facilities are being renovated. "We are listening to our members, observing their needs and emotions, and changing accordingly," says Vizantiou. "That's the magic of this place." — Ⓜ

tatoiclub.com