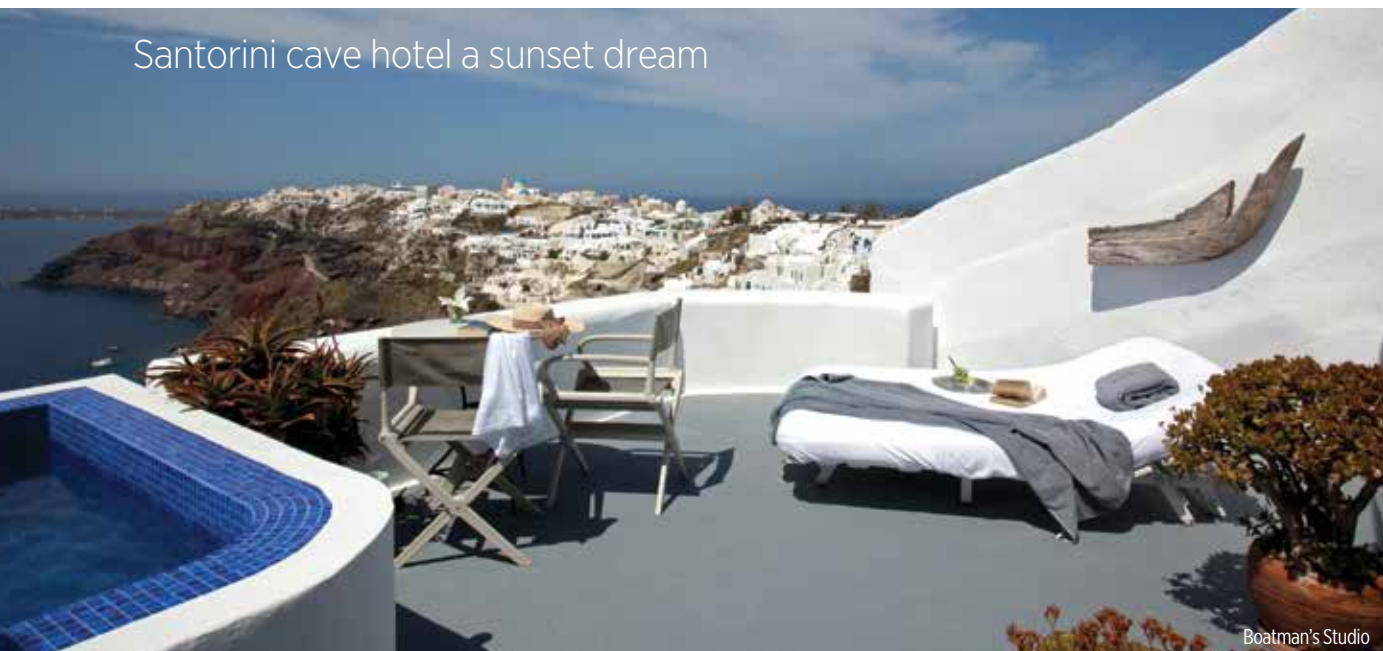


### Santorini cave hotel a sunset dream



### IKIES TRADITIONAL HOUSES

DON'T THINK Santorini's cave hotels are hobby holes. Take, for example, Ikies Traditional Houses. Yes, its 11 rooms and suites are carved out of pumice in the cliffs of the caldera but the front façades are covered by classic white-washed vaulted roofs. Though modeled after the Greek island's traditional cave dwellings – cheap accommodation for early fishermen – these boutique digs boast A/C, free WiFi, flat screen satellite TVs, kitchenettes, luxurious coco-mat mattresses (made from sea grass and coconut) and spacious terraces with private outdoor Jacuzzis commanding heavenly views of the cerulean Aegean Sea. There's also a small hotel pool for cooling off during the summer heat.

Splurge on the most popular honeymoon suite, the Winemaker's House. Along with a king-size bed and steam room, it has an antique distillery vat in the center of the living room and grape vines growing over an outside trellis. Perhaps you might prefer the adorable Boatman's Studio (one of the most requested rooms), with its pale blue décor and probably the most private terrace in all of Santorini. Also delightful is the two-bedroom Antiquarian Suite – we loved its beautiful Minoan wall frescoes and blue shuttered windows.



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Days start with a bountiful breakfast served on your terrace – thick Greek yogurt, croissant, spinach cheese pie, juicy strawberries and cappuccino. Then perhaps an easy five-minute stroll into Oia – a fairytale town of white sugar-cube shops, cafés and houses, interlaced with cobblestone paths, and a hot spot for photographers who gather in droves to watch the legendary sunsets. Maybe you'll choose a longer hike along Santorini's northern spine, past Cycladic churches and poppy fields, to the tourist hub of Fira. Just be sure to save time for the pure pleasure of lounging on your cushioned double day bed on your terrace, sipping your welcome Ikies bottle of fine Santorini wine and soaking in those eye-popping views. — JANICE AND GEORGE MUCALOV

