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Celebrating 30 Years of Constantinou Bros Hotels in Paphos, Cyprus

NEWS
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NEIL STEEDMAN has been a trade journalist, copywriter, editor and proofreader for 52 years, and News & Features Editor for 'Irish Travel Trade News' for the past 42 years.



Four Irish travel agents and their partners joined UK agents in Paphos, Cyprus, to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of Constantinou Bros Hotels. Declan Hughes of FlyCruiseStay reports for Irish Travel Trade News.

Having left sunny Ireland we arrived on the island of Cyprus at the tail-end of what had been their wettest winter in over 120 years – but the warm hospitality of our gracious hosts more than made up for the unusually wet weather.

The venue for Constantinou Bros Hotels' 30th Anniversary educational was the 5-star Asimina Suites Hotel, which is just a short 15-minute transfer from Paphos Airport.



We enjoyed a fantastic celebratory atmosphere with a great group of people that included travel agents from Ireland and the UK. The friendly Irish delegation were a group of eight, four agents plus partners. Joining my wife Janice and I from www.FlyCruiseStay.com were Karen Tull from O'Leary Travel, Enniscorthy, Co Wexford, accompanied by husband Paddy; Frank Mackin from Mackin Travel, Main Street, Wexford, along with wife Una; and Evelyn McClafferty from Atlantic Travel, Letterkenny, Co Donegal, with partner Jimmy. It was with great pleasure that Asimina Suite Hotel was awarded the FlyCruiseStay Certificate of Excellence for exceeding expectations in relation to facilities, amenities and service.



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... recommend that they go all-inclusive as the local draft beer is €8 a pint, which can add up over time.

We were very well taken care of by the great team of staff at the Asimina Suites Hotel. Impeccable service levels in the restaurant would rival Michelin star establishments, while the maintenance standards were to the highest order along with cleanliness levels.



Ellis Burns, Mark Richardson, and Jo Gillam, the Constantinou Bros Hotels UK & Ireland team

The dynamic Constantinou Bros Hotels UK & Ireland team are Mark Richardson, Sales & Marketing Manager; Jo Gillam, Operations Manager; and Ellis Burns, Sales & Marketing Executive, who look after their four hotels for the UK & Irish market, namely the 5-star luxury adult-focussed **Asimina Suites** and the 4-star superior **Athena Royal Beach**, **Pioneer Beach** and **Athena Beach**, which are all within a short walking distance of one other. For golf lovers, there are also four golf courses on the south of the island that are within 20 minutes of the hotels. Cyprus is also very popular with cyclists, with many groups present.



4-star Athena Royal Beach Hotel

Buffet Breakfasts and Gala Dinners

Bathrobe and slippers in all room types meant we were refreshed and ready for not one, but three gala dinners that were held throughout our flying visit – welcome, anniversary and farewell – including cocktail receptions where the Moët was free-flowing along with pre-dinner canapes, the finest wine dinner pairings followed by after-dinner dancing and drinks each night to 1.00am. Should you wish to keep the party going, some bars in Cyprus stay open until 7.00am during the summer months.

The delicious and comprehensive buffet breakfast (there were eight types of sausage alone, including a local delicacy of a Cypriot sausage containing horsemeat, red wine and herbs) was served each morning up to 11.00am. The buffet contains a great selection of Cypriot specialties, including the traditional halloumi cheese and anari, the homemade halloumi pie and olive pie, and fresh local fruits that are linked to the authenticity of Cyprus. You can taste the island's unique and traditional delicacies and aromas of the products derived from rural family farms, such as fresh goat's milk, green olives, souzouko (a traditional sweet made from grape must, nuts and flour), carob syrup dumplings, fresh herbs, smoked meats of Cyprus, and spoon sweets (preserved fruit in syrup) – all naturally produced from local communities.

Sun-Kissed Cyprus, Passionate Paphos

As it is a very easy process to get married in Cyprus, you can see why the island is such a popular destination for couples, weddings and honeymoons. Why, the name alone Paphos translates to Passion in English. Therefore, Paphos is a city of love and passion. Aphrodite is not only the Goddess of beauty and love, but fertility also stems from the island of Cyprus.

With a population of 965,000, Cyprus is the third largest and third most populous island in the Mediterranean, located south of Turkey, west of Syria and Lebanon, northwest of Israel, north of Egypt, and southeast of Greece – Sicily being the first and Sardinia second largest islands in the Med – and offers visitors 3,572 square miles of unspoilt beauty. Paphos alone attracted over four million tourists in 2017 and has a population of just 70,000.

Cyprus is famous for its potatoes – 90% of which are exported – the island producing year-round fresh vegetables due to an ideal climate. Limes, lemons, oranges are also produced in abundance, with average rainfall at 200mm. Carob trees are also grown here producing carob syrup, which is good for diabetics and those who suffer from constipation.

Cyprus is full of fascinating Greek mythology, Gods, fables and legends. From Zeus to Athena Goddess of Wisdom, right down to infamous Helen of Troy. It is said of the iconic rock of Aphrodite (within easy reach of Paphos) that should you take a swim at midnight three times around it naked during a full moon you will become young and beautiful again.

We also visited the very impressive Onenou Yi winery where we had a terrific lunch in its amazing visitor centre. It is only one year in operation and offers panoramic views of the surrounding area – just perfect for wedding parties and corporate events.

It is not just all sun, sea and sand in Cyprus because Mount Olympus stands at 1,915 metres high and is therefore currently covered in snow, offering skiers the choice of four ski slopes:

- Aphrodite or Sun Valley I, Length: 150m, Level: Beginner
- Hermes or Sun Valley II, Length: 150m, Level: Intermediate
- Dias/Zeus or North Face I, Length: 500m, Level: Advanced
- Hera or North Face II, Length: 350m, Level: Beginner

Paphos Airport has mostly charter flights, while Larnaca caters for mostly scheduled flights. Flying into Paphos, I found the island was surprisingly very green and lush, so much so it had one shade less than Ireland's 40 shades of green. The white of the Cypriot flag symbolises peace, the wreathes signify independence from the United Kingdom in 1960, and the orange island symbol highlights copper, which was discovered way back and, as a result, Cyprus became a very rich island nation at that time. Cyprus is culturally Greek but is not part of Greece. The entire island and the Republic of Cyprus is part of the European Union, though this does not quite apply to the northern portion of the island under Turkish control.

In Ovid's narrative, Pygmalion was a Cypriot sculptor who carved a woman out of ivory. One day he carved a statue so beautiful and realistic, he fell in love with it. In time, Aphrodite's festival day came, and Pygmalion made offerings at the altar of Aphrodite. There, too scared to admit his desire, he quietly wished for a bride who would be "the living likeness of my ivory girl". When he returned home, he kissed his ivory statue, and found that its lips felt warm. He kissed it again, and found that the ivory had lost its hardness. Aphrodite had granted Pygmalion's wish.

Just like the story, once you visit sun-kissed Cyprus, you will develop such a likeness for the island that you will want to revisit time and again.

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