

SATURDAY 23 MARCH



We will be visiting the Kaisariani Monastery, just 5km east of Athens. The monastery stands on a site that has been a place of worship since antiquity with sweeping views of the city. It is thought that a shrine to the goddess Aphrodite once stood here among the pine-clad slopes of Mount Hymettos, and the first Christian church to be built here in the fifth century was constructed over the remains of her temple. It remained an important Orthodox religious enclave even during Ottoman times. Kaisariani was a rich monastery and the library was legendary as a great repository of knowledge. The monks supported themselves through income generated from beekeeping, large olive groves, and wine making.

The original eleventh century church has beautiful frescos, which date from the late seventeenth century. There are rules for the position of painted subjects in the Orthodox church, and we will see Christ in the dome; the prophets are around the windows, while the mother of God is enthroned in the apse with the angels and apostles below her.

From the Byzantium era we will travel a short distance to the contemporary world to see one of the finest private contemporary art collections in Europe, at the residence of Dakis and Lietta Joannou. The Joannous are major international collectors of contemporary art and design.



Dakis Joannou is the founder of the DESTE Foundation for Contemporary Art, which was established in 1983. He currently serves on the International councils of MOMA and the Tate Modern in addition to several other major museums worldwide. He has continuously been on ArtReview's Power 100 list since its inception in 2004, when he was ranked its number one collector in the world. Joannou is a Greek Cypriot industrialist who entered the construction and civil engineering business in the late 1960s and over the last five decades diversified his holdings through numerous areas of international industrial commerce.

Nearby to the Joannou's we have been invited to lunch by Mrs Lila Lalaounis at her home, the widow of the founder, and the matriarch of the world renowned Lalaounis Jewellers.



Following lunch, we will return to the hotel to have free time and prepare for the excitement of the opening night of the new production of *Le nozze di Figaro*, conducted by Maestro Marios Papadopoulos. We will arrive at 6pm in time for a champagne reception with a buffet supper. Following the performance there will be a reception with the artists and our special guests from Athens.

SUNDAY 24 MARCH



Our final day will begin with a guided tour of one last 'must see' museum nearby to the hotel – the exceptional collection of the Nicholas and Dolly Goulandris Museum of Cycladic Art. The Museum of Cycladic Art houses one of the most complete collections of Cycladic art worldwide, with iconic sculptures and objects from all phases of the distinctive Cycladic Island culture that flourished in the central Aegean during the Bronze Age, third millennium BC.

Following this final museum visit we will enjoy a celebratory goodbye lunch in the rooftop Tudor Hall Restaurant of the King George Hotel, a sister hotel of the Hotel Grand Bretagne. We will be joined for lunch by our new friends from the evening before at the Greek National Opera. The King George Hotel, which opened in 1936, was a former royal residence and will provide one long, last view to the Acropolis, the sea and the National Gardens. After lunch guests will depart for Athens Airport.



The cost of the trip is £3,000 per person, which includes accommodation for four nights in a Classic Room at the Hotel Grande Bretagne and a donation of £650 to the Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra. There is a single occupancy supplement of £500. Airfare is not included.

Please contact Stella to book your place:
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Marios Papadopoulos
and
Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra

invite you to join us for a

PATRONS' TRIP TO ATHENS
20 - 24 MARCH 2019

For the premiere of Mozart's
The Marriage of Figaro
at the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Centre



Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Centre by Renzo Piano

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Committee in Formation

Join us in Athens for the opening night of the Greek State Opera's exciting new production of Mozart's classic opera buffa in four acts, *Le nozze di Figaro*, conducted by Maestro Marios Papadopoulos in the new Stavros Niarchos Foundation Opera House and Cultural Centre designed by the renowned Italian architect Renzo Piano. We have planned four magical nights in Athens in iconic settings with a full schedule of day activities to experience Athens as you have never before. Our expert tour guide, Kelly Bourni, has been a tour guide for 20 years to visiting dignitaries and heads of state and comes highly recommended by members of the American Friends of the Oxford Philharmonic. She has a Master of Arts in Archaeology from the Sorbonne University.

WEDNESDAY 20 MARCH

Upon arrival and after settling into the Hotel Grand Bretagne guests will depart the hotel in the early evening for their first glimpse of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Opera House for a behind the scenes, backstage tour.

This will be followed by a welcome reception and dinner at the Yacht Club of Greece. The Club is located on the peninsula of Piraeus surrounded by beautiful groomed gardens at the ancient Athenian military port of Mounihia. This port is one of the three historic naval stations of the democracy of ancient Athens. The view from the building is breathtaking, stretching from the Faliron and the Soronik Gulf to the islands of Salamina, Aigina and Poros and back to Athens and the surrounding mountains.



THURSDAY 21 MARCH



After breakfast, we will depart the hotel for a special guided walking tour of the Acropolis and Parthenon, followed by a lovely lunch at Restaurant Dionysos with its unique view of the Parthenon. After lunch we will walk a short distance to the Lalaounis Museum for a guided tour given by Mrs Ioanna Lalaounis, Museum Director, one of the four daughters of the founder.



We will return to the hotel to have free time and prepare for the black-tie gala evening activities. A luxury coach will take us to the newly-built, stunning Acropolis Museum for a champagne reception and guided tour of the collection. We will be shown to the roof top restaurant with its spectacular view for a recital by the principal cellist of the Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra, Mats Lidström, followed by a seated dinner with the finest Greek cuisine and wines.



FRIDAY 22 MARCH



After breakfast at the hotel we will experience a guided Panoramic City Tour, surveying Athens of the ancient world as well as the nineteenth century. We will end the tour at the National Archaeological Museum, considered one of the greatest museums in the world with its masterpieces from the Golden Age of Greece.

After a stimulating morning, we will then travel to the British Embassy Residence for lunch with HM Ambassador to the Hellenic Republic, Mrs Kate Smith, CMG. Considered one of the most attractive neoclassical houses in Athens, the British residence was formerly the home of Greek statesman, Eleftherios Venizelos and has housed the activities of the British Embassy in Athens since 1936. One of the most important works of art in the British Residence, is a portrait of the notable philhellene, Lord Byron, painted by Thomas Phillips of the Royal Academy in 1813. Visitors who have stayed in the residence have included members of the British royal family, Winston Churchill and Margaret Thatcher. Ambassador Smith has very kindly agreed to provide a short briefing over lunch on some of the issues facing Greece.



After lunch we will return to the hotel and have free time before departing for our evening activities at the nearby magnificent Benaki Museum of Greek Culture. Antonis Benakis, a politician's son born in Alexandria, Egypt, in the late nineteenth century, endowed one of the finest museums in Greece. Its three floors showcase impeccable treasures from the Cycladic Period up to WWII. Especially notable are the Byzantine icons and the extensive collection of Greek regional

costumes and jewellery. After a champagne reception and tour of the collection we will be seated in the galleries for a recital with principal members of the Oxford Philharmonic, Natalia Lomeiko, Concertmaster, and Mats Lidström, Solo Cellist. Following the recital, we will go to the rooftop terrace restaurant for a special private dinner overlooking Athens.