

Thessaloniki, GREECE

January's "Castaway" story was shot just south of this chic and understated city. By *Julia Hobbs*

THE HOTEL

Set in a 1,000-acre ecological reserve overlooking the Aegean, the four five-star hotels of the Sani Resort hide out in the fragrant pine-clad hillsides of the Kassandra Peninsula. At just under an hour by car from Thessaloniki, the reserve and its gleaming private marina offer island seclusion without having to quit the mainland. Get your bearings via a boat tour

of the coastline, or learn the ethics of relaxation by immersion while deciding where along the four-mile Bousoulas Beach to throw your towel. Indoors, serene interiors match well-travelled taste. The resort's meandering pace of life is, however, entirely Greek – there are three world-class spas to tiptoe between, with cabinets stocked by Parisian beautifier Anne Sémonin. Sun-lovers can take treatments alfresco – enjoy a post-swim Deep Marine facial without moving from your lounge. *Sani-resort.com*

WHAT TO SEE

The State Museum of Contemporary Art (*right*), in a renovated monastery, showcases the best of Greece's not-so-ancient works (*Greekstatemuseum.com*), while its sibling, the Contemporary Art Centre of Thessaloniki (*Cact.gr*), in a former warehouse, is an unmissable platform for emerging artists.



WHAT TO DO

BUY...

Delicious olive oil and sweet pastries at the Modiano Market on Komnino Street.



OBSERVE...

The stylish shoppers, independent galleries and furniture boutiques along the exclusive Proxenou Koromila in the city centre.

LOSE TRACK OF TIME...

Local life revolves around cafés that rarely close. Stop by Fragile Bar (29 Valaoritou) late afternoon to sip coffee amid installations by city designers.



SAVE THE DATE

THE ANNUAL SANI GOURMET FESTIVAL HERALDS THE ARRIVAL OF SUMMER: SAMPLE CREATIONS BY THE WORLD'S TOP CHEFS, WHO FLY IN ESPECIALLY FOR THIS WEEK-LONG SHOWCASE OF THE FINEST FOOD GREECE HAS TO OFFER. MAY 10-19. *SANIGOURMET.GR*



MARY KATRANTZOU'S tips for Thessaloniki

FOOD AND LOCAL PRODUCE

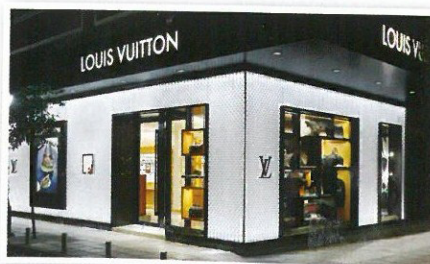
Ergon (*below*) is a globally recognised local company producing traditional Greek products. Visit the deli, or the meze-style restaurant in the city. *Ergonproducts.gr*

DRINKS

Valaoritou, the old business and textiles district, has been transformed recently into tens of small boutique cocktail bars. Standouts include Cocktail Bar, La Doze, Charro Negro, Elvis and Coq Au Zen.



SHOPPING Stylefax, on Thessaloniki's equivalent to Bond Street, has the best choice of designer brands in town. It's owned by one of the city's most famous stylists. 19 Proxenou Koromila



DRINK AND DINNER

Le Zazou, next to the city's yacht club. It's situated on the seafront with amazing views of the entire city. On a warm evening, you feel as if you are on an island.

