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Q Insider > Jet Set > Costa Navarino | Luxury Destination Greece



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Everyone loves a rags-to-riches story, but when that successful someone uses their newfound wealth to do something remarkable it's all the more special. As was the case with Vassilis C. Constantakopoulos. Originating from a poor family in Greece's southwest Peloponnese, Vassilis took his first job on a ship in 1953 when he was still a teenager; 20 years later he was the billionaire owner of the largest independent private cargo shipping company in the world.

Not content to sit back and count his money however, Captain Vassilis (as he is fondly remembered) had a vision in the mid-1980s to put his native province of Messinia on the global tourist map. This ambition was driven by a desire to share the ancient beauty of the region with the world, but also to generate thousands of jobs for local people. Thus, [Costa Navarino](#) was born.

Today, sprawling across 320 acres that flow down to the Ionian Sea, this epic eco-destination encompasses two five-star resorts, two manicured golf courses, a 4000 square meter spa, a kilometre of private sandy beach and just about every other luxury amenity you could imagine.

Q Insider was lucky enough to experience this Greek gem first-hand...

## Where to Stay



### *The Romanos, a Luxury Collections Resort*

Even more luxurious than its neighbouring destination The Westin Resort Costa Navarino (voted "Best Family Destination" in the Mediterranean amongst Europe's Starwood Hotels), The Romanos will impress from the moment you arrive. Past rolling olive groves, guests will emerge in front of the palatial open-air lobby which affords postcard views of the sea below. After being welcomed with a complimentary flute of homemade pomegranate juice, attentive staff will ferry you onto golf buggies and then zoom off to one of the 321 rooms, suites and villas.

In our case it was to an Infinity Room which comes complete with its own terrace and individual infinity pool. Spacious and luxurious this bright airy option, decorated in pale neutrals, includes a King Bed and expansive marble bathroom. Guests can even watch the plasma TV from the bathtub if they're feeling particularly indulgent.

When you venture out of your room, The Romanos and The Westin (collectively known as Navarino Dunes) have a litany of options to keep the whole family entertained. Sip on a cocktail at the swim-up bar or amble down to the beachside restaurant; get the kids active with indoor rock climbing or go-karting; head to The Agora Square for a spot of clothes shopping. A lot of resorts claim to have everything under one roof – at Costa Navarino it's almost true!

## Where to Eat



With twelve restaurants across Navarino Dunes serving a range of ethnic, continental, Greek fusion and local fare you may be a little overwhelmed by the choice. Here's two you definitely shouldn't miss...

### *Barbouni*

This chic beachside restaurant is the place for delicious freshly caught fish, salads and mezzes. Named after the Greek word for 'red mullet' it would be criminal not to come here for a lazy lunch under the rippling fabric canopy. Menu highlights include the eponymous red mullet which comes deep fried with fresh lemon and sea salt, linguine with fresh local lobster and mesclun salad with prosciutto, cherry tomatoes and watermelon vinaigrette. Cocktails such as the Passion Sparkling Caipirinha are also highly recommended.

### *Flame*

As the name suggests Flame is all about classic and signature cuts. With rustic brickwork and a vast open kitchen this is a great place to while away a few hours feasting with excellent cuisine and matching wines. Take our word for it and sit out on the terrace which affords sweeping views across The Dunes golf course and beyond. On our dinner visit we enjoyed the likes of grilled talagani (a delicious variant of halloumi) with grilled vegetables from the garden and beautifully cooked tenderloin fillet.



## Must-Dos



### Anazoe Spa

Connecting The Romanos and The Westin, Anazoe Spa is arguably the most alluring destination at Navarino Dunes. Make sure you get a chaperone on arrival because, at 4000m<sup>2</sup>, it's easy to get lost amidst the labyrinthine corridors – especially if you're in a post-treatment haze. Meaning 'rejuvenation' in ancient Greek, Anazoe is all about revitalizing your mind and body and it makes excellent use of Messinian olive oil and honey to accomplish this. Start out by taking a dip in the high density salt-water and thalassotherapy pools which will soothe aching muscles and nourish skin.

Following this head to the 'Heat Experience Area' which boasts an extensive selection of revitalizing rituals such as Ice-Grotto room, Scottish shower, Rasul and Golden Rain Shower. The amazing facilities here warrant a trip alone but to leave feeling truly rejuvenated you have to book yourself in for the signature treatments. On our visit it was the Melisseus, The Spirit of Honey massage that proved irresistible. Available in 50 or 80-minute sessions this blissful experience includes the application of warm honey to promote circulation, relax muscles and therefore loosen knots. Expect to leave afloat with tranquillity.



### *The Dunes Course*

With two championship courses to choose from, Navarino Dunes is a quite simply a golfer's paradise. We sampled The Dunes Course which, designed by golfing legend Bernhard Langer, is the first 18-hole signature designed golf course in Greece. Snaking through lush fruit groves and along the rugged coastline, this 6000-meter, 71 par, beauty of a course is the perfect tapestry on which to hone your skills. Just try not to feel guilty when treading on the immaculate greens.

Thanks to a variety of tees, The Dunes Course is perfect for casual and professional golfers alike. Should you be with us in the former camp, the Navarino Golf Academy is on-hand to provide tuition using the extensive practice facilities and the latest technology.

**Costa Navarino:** Rates at the two hotels at Navarino Dunes, start from: *The Westin Resort Costa Navarino*: from €220, and *The Romanos*, a *Luxury Collection Resort* from €390. For further information visit [www.costanavarino.com](http://www.costanavarino.com)

**Aegean Airlines:** Aegean Airlines offers daily flights from London Heathrow and London Gatwick to Athens. For more information please visit [www.aegeanair.com](http://www.aegeanair.com)

**Anazoe Spa:** For further information on Anazoe Spa and the signature treatments available please visit [www.anazoespa.com](http://www.anazoespa.com)

For bookings please contact your Lifestyle Manager. Interested in becoming a Member? [Request more information](#)






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