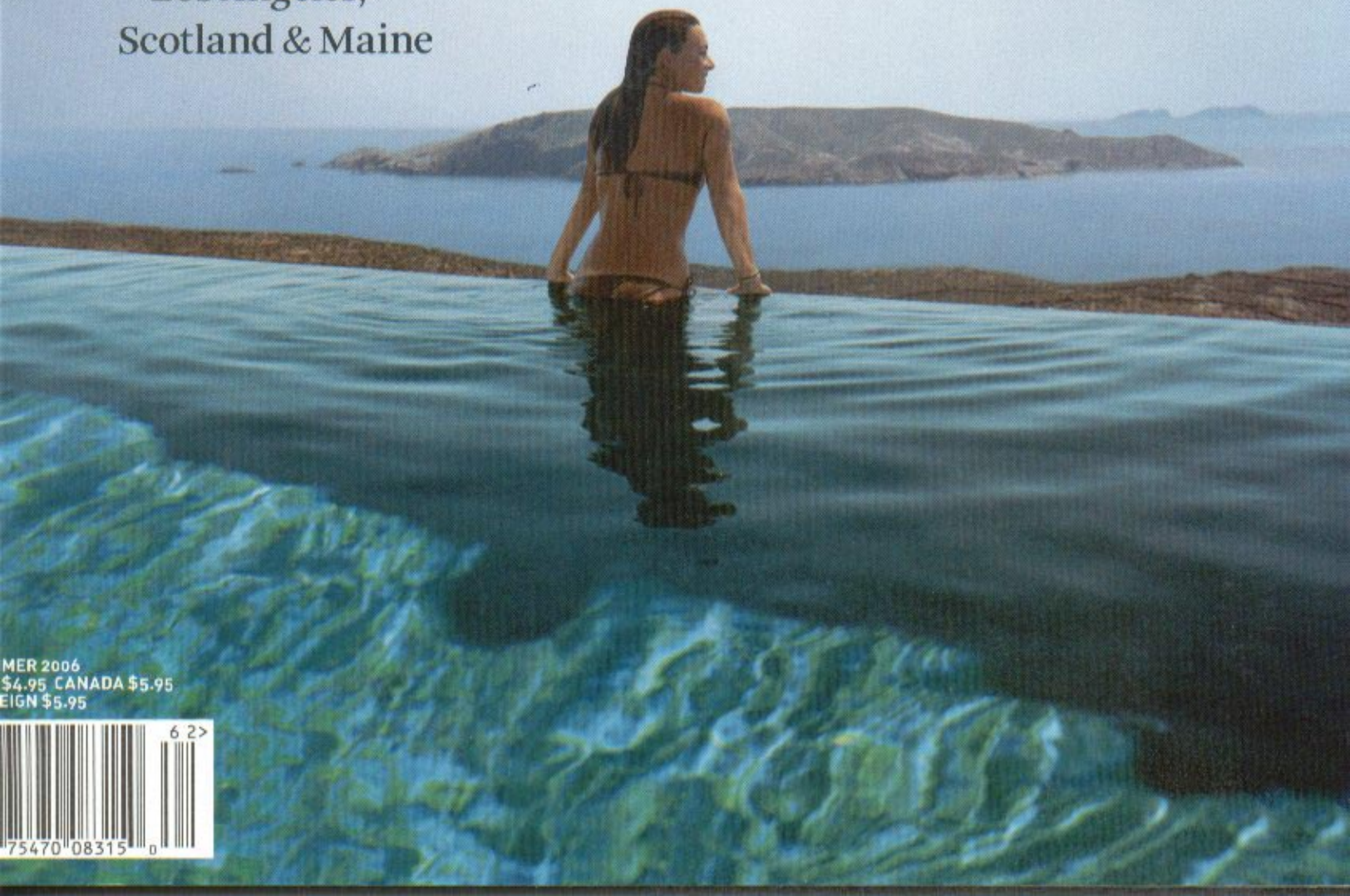


Town & Country TRAVEL

SUMMER 2006

SUMMER ESCAPES

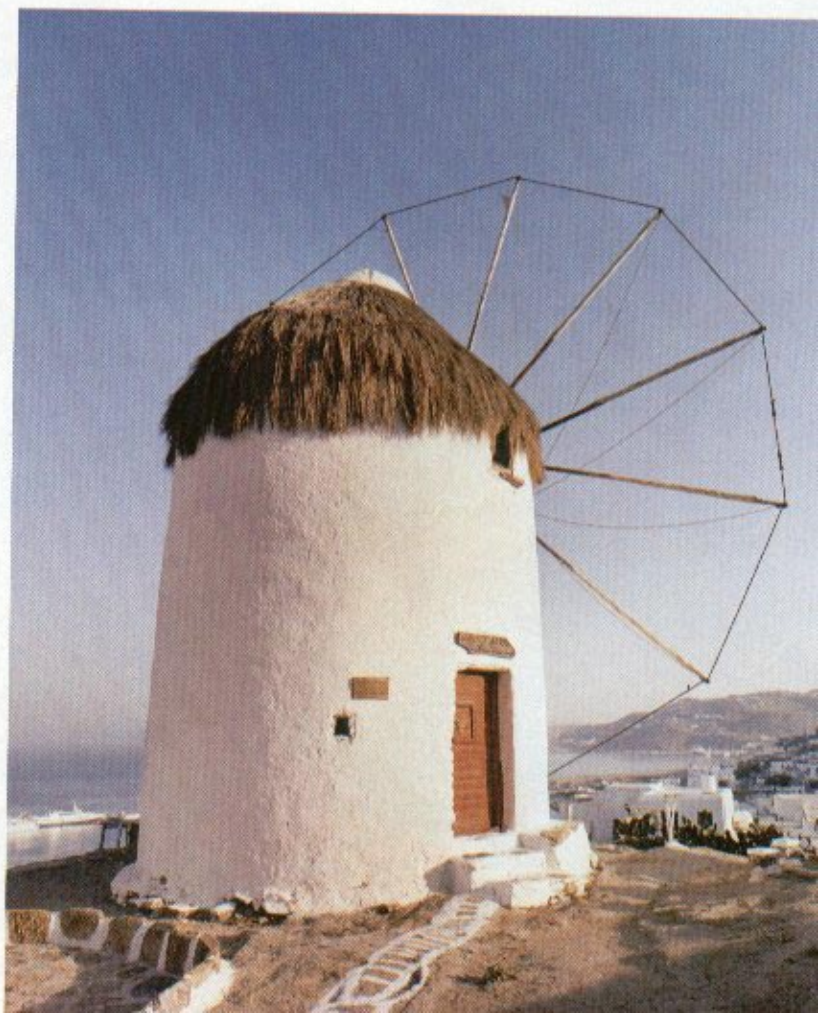
Greece, France,
Italy, Chicago,
British Columbia,
Los Angeles,
Scotland & Maine



SUMMER 2006
\$4.95 CANADA \$5.95
FOREIGN \$5.95



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:
Ornos beach; fresh black
cod at Matsuhisa Mykonos; a
windmill;



ISLAND INTELLIGENCE

GETTING THERE

No flights go direct from the United States to Mykonos. From Athens's Eleftherios Venizelos airport, you can take a forty-minute flight to the island on Olympic Airlines or Aegean Airlines. Or travel about two hours from the port of Rafina (near Athens) on the Blue Star Ferries speedboat (bluestarferries.com).

GETTING AROUND

Although Mykonos is relatively small (less than thirty-five miles square), renting a car is a must. Taxis can be unreliable and the narrow streets, while intended for foot traffic, are hazardous because of all the scooters zipping down them. Book a car in advance through your villa or hotel contact to make sure it's at the airport when you arrive. Note: There are very few automatic vehicles on the island, so you may want to work on your stick-shift technique before visiting.

WHEN TO GO

Mykonos is very much a seasonal destination; most restaurants and hotels open around Easter and shut down in mid- to late October. It's best to avoid the onslaught of visitors in July and August, but if you decide to travel then, plan several months in advance. Mykonos is considerably more relaxed and pleasant in May, June and September, when the weather is equally sublime as at the height of summer.

WHO GOES

Mykonos, dubbed the St.-Tropes of Greece, serves as the summer weekend retreat for many wealthy and famous Athenians. It's also a stop on most Greek yacht tours. The island has long attracted models, such as Claudia Schiffer; the Moroccan royal family; and a glamorous fashion crowd, including Jean Paul Gaultier, Thierry Mugler and Valentino, who comes on his yacht. Recently, Mykonos has begun to draw American celebrities, like Sharon Stone, Harrison Ford and Calista Flockhart.

THE LOOK

Anything goes on Mykonos, but in general the dress code embraces two extremes: white and peacock bright. You'll see white dresses and separates, vivid embroidered or sequined caftans, Pucci headscarves and dresses, and vibrant designer bikinis. For men, white shirts with shorts or light-colored trousers are the uniform of choice.

STAYING IN STYLE

Belvedere This all-white oasis with forty-seven rooms seems to float above the port. It attracts a trendy thirty-to-forty-something crowd, many of whom like its proximity to town. The chic poolside scene is complete with flowering trees, daybeds and Nobu Matsuhisa's only open-air restaurant.

Originally an enormous private garden and estate that the famous Mykonos scene maker Pierrot once rented, the Belvedere became a hotel in 1995 and is now owned and managed by brothers Tasos and Nikolas Ioannidis. The handsome duo run the property as if it were a never-ending fashion shoot, greeting friends and regulars by the pool during the day and at Matsuhisa Mykonos at night. The Nobu outpost was added during a 2003 renovation; there was another refurbishment in the winter of 2005. Rooms are on the small side but comfortable; the best are those with a terrace overlooking the pool. *In high season, July and August, double rooms \$737, suites \$832. School of Fine Arts district, Chora; 228-902-5122; fax: 228-902-5126; www.belvederehotel.com.*

Mykonos Blu For a balance of tranquillity and excitement, many choose this five-star establishment, part of luxury Greek chain Grecotel. The 100 rooms and suites are in whitewashed bungalows on a hill above popular Psarou beach. Guests need not worry about snagging the otherwise hard-to-come-by chaise longues, as a valuable section of beach is reserved for hotel clients. There's also a turquoise seawater infinity pool on the property.

The efficient and friendly service makes up for what the Blu lacks in a cohesive style. With private terraces and plunge pools, the four junior suites are worth the splurge.



Chora has narrow streets and alleys. **OPPOSITE:** The cafés of Little Venice.

Even better, this summer the hotel is adding a VIP villa complex that will include a grand three-bedroom presidential villa and several two-room suites with their own area by the pool. The two restaurants feature international and local dishes; the more formal one, Aegean Poets, has a Greek-inspired menu created by Alain Ducasse. *In high season, double rooms \$553, bungalows \$796, junior suites \$1,663. Psarou; 228-902-7900; fax: 228-902-7783; www.grecotel.gr.*

Santa Marina Resort & Villas The ambiance here is that of an exclusive country club: at breakfast in the nautical-themed Pool Restaurant, for instance, attractive older couples in designer sunglasses chat across the tables. Built in 1986 and managed by Starwood since 1999, the Santa Marina feels intimate although it's quite expansive: ninety-six rooms

and villas are spread across twenty acres. The property, situated above Ornos Bay, has two pools, a seaside tennis court, one of the only private beaches in Greece and a helicopter pad. (Because a helicopter, a small jet, two speedboats and a yacht are on call, this is where the stars stay. Harrison Ford and Calista Flockhart were guests recently, and Mel Gibson used the hotel as his headquarters after he docked his yacht offshore.) This year the Papageorgiou family, who manage the Santa Marina, opened eight two-to-four-bedroom villas at the top of the complex. *In high season, double rooms \$535, two-bedroom villas \$1,663. Ornos Bay; 228-902-3220; fax: 228-902-3412; santa-marina.gr.*

Ostraco Suites Ostraco is best for twenty-something couples or a group of young friends, thanks to its proximity to Chora (a walk of less than ten minutes) and its mod-meets-Mykonos decor. The late renowned Greek interior designer Angelos Angelopoulos was