

# AROUND GREECE

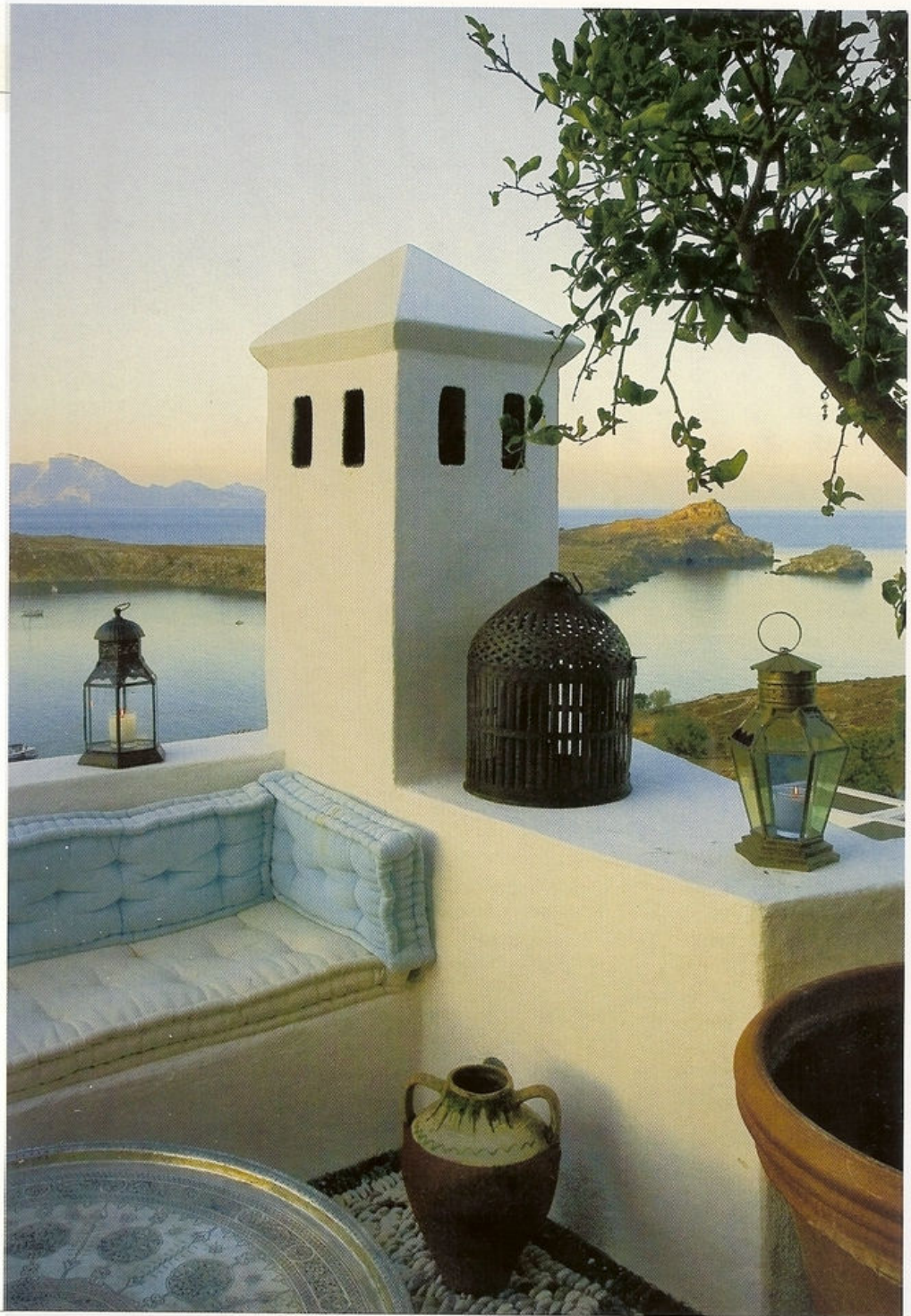
in *80* stays

Hotels and guesthouses of character



Jacoline Vinke

photography by André Bakker



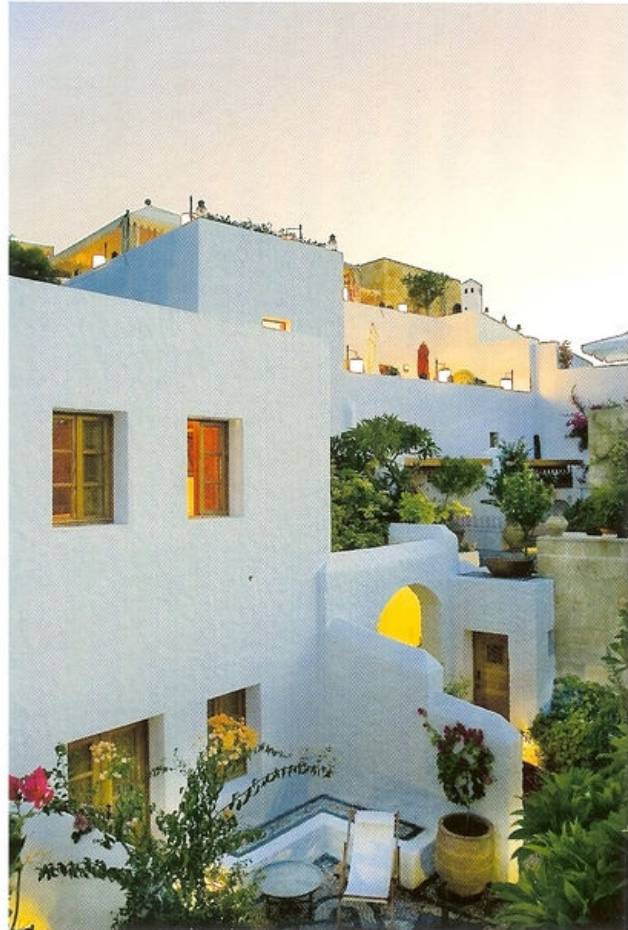
# MELENOS LINDOS

80 map 15

Rhodes

How long does it take to build and equip a not-so-big hotel? Barring unforeseen disasters, if you have a plot of land that is easily accessible, if you don't expect too much in terms of architecture and design, and if you are willing to cut a few corners, you could possibly get it done within a year. But what if you plan to build near the top of a protected village, right below one of Greece's most important archaeological sites, accessed only through steep, narrow alleyways? What if you intend to strictly follow the local, historical architecture and what if in terms of design, only the finest will do? Moreover, what if you are a perfectionist and cutting corners is not your style? Then, it might take a little longer indeed.

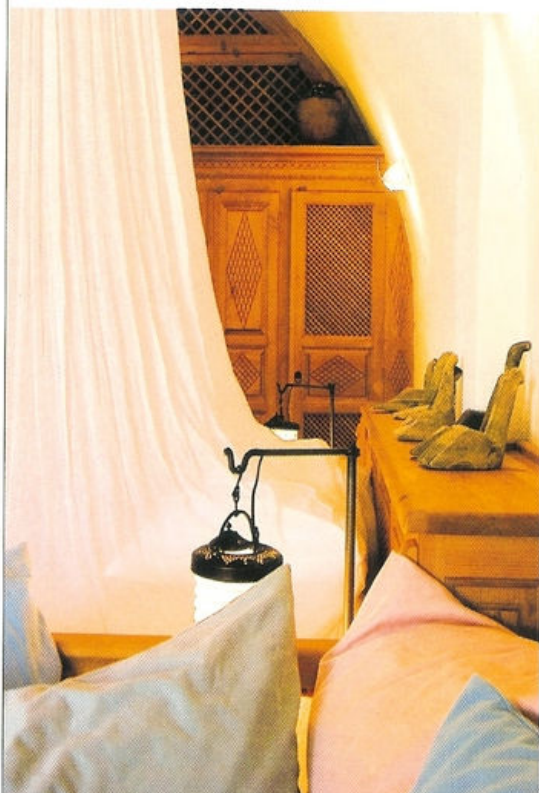
Michalis Melenos can tell you *how* much longer a *little* longer can get. Owning a piece of land in his native Lindos, he toyed with the idea of building a small hotel for years. It started as a dream that materialised slowly yet steadily, and was gradually transformed into a vision for a hotel that would not be just an addition to the village, but rather, an integral part of it. He called in the services of Anastasia Papaioannou, a Rhodian architect specialised in the restoration of local, historical houses, to design the Melenos Lindos. The small buildings she created are in absolute harmony with the style of the village, a *mélange* of Byzantine and Ottoman influences. Especially the limestone main building at the top of the property is undistinguishable from the original constructions of that era. Its impeccable state is a give-away, but you could easily be fooled into believing it is historical.





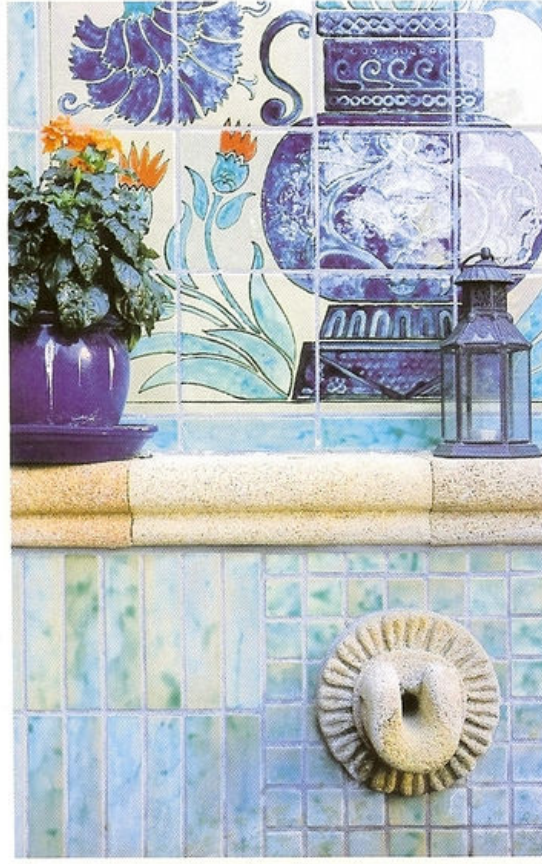
## MELENOS LINDOS

Lindos  
85107 Rhodes  
Tel. 22440-32222



Forget one year – *this* project took more than 12 years to bring to completion! (And that doesn't include the time spent for the architectural design, nor the delays due to bureaucratic procedures involving all the necessary permissions; let alone the time spent 'dreaming' about it, which was an equally important part of the process.) Maybe it could all have been just a hint faster; had Michalis been a bit more willing to make even the smallest compromise in order to gain time. The truth of the matter is that only the end result mattered to him and he spared no effort, expense or time in order to make his dream come true. He was helped a lot by a close friend, the Australian artist Donald H. Green, who spent five years in Lindos designing the gardens and the interiors.

Just to give you an idea of what this project involved, imagine the effort that went into the pebble mosaic terraces alone. They are made of white, grey and pinkish pebble stones (so-called *hohlakia*) that were collected



from local beaches. Workers had to carry up more than 3000 large bags filled with pebbles, which were then sorted out by size, shape and colour, and laid out with mind-boggling precision in elegant patterns. When you take in the sheer dimension of the surfaces covered, you won't be surprised to know that this was a full-time job for ten people, and lasted nearly three years!

It was not only landscaping that was handled with such diligence and artistry. Every aspect on the inside, from the wooden lattice work and the fine motives in the hand-painted ceilings, to the colourful embroideries and antique objects adorning the rooms, reflects that same eye for





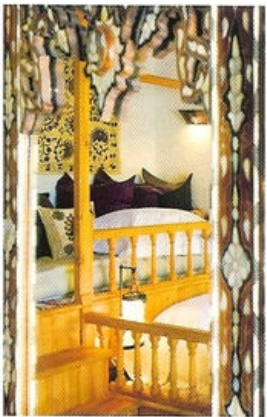
## MELENOS LINDOS

perfection. Numerous trips were made to antique and flea markets in Turkey and Greece in order to collect antiques and old household items. Countless ceramic wall tiles were painted by Donald and Michalis in colourful Iznik-style motives. Cedarwood furniture was tailor-made by local craftsmen. Everything was thought through up to the tiniest detail, and executed with the greatest care.

Staying in a place that offers such a sequence of visual treats (including the amazing views) is a very special experience. Moreover, the impeccable aesthetics are matched by flawless service (friendly, attentive but not overbearing) and great comfort. The Melenos Lindos is one of those rare hotels where you can experience luxury of the highest standards in a pleasantly laid-back atmosphere – a combination that is not easy to find.

**Where you'll sleep** The 12 generously sized rooms offer a remarkable blend of local tradition and luxury. The style may first strike you as heavy but the overall feeling is nevertheless one of freshness. There are no beds, but superbly comfortable mattresses are placed on elevated sleeping platforms, and made with the finest bed linen. Mod-cons (television, CD player, mini-bar, safe) are fitted into elaborately carved closets (still leaving lots of space for your clothes) – only the air conditioners are visible. Excellent bathrooms are stocked with a great range of bath treats, a hairdryer, slippers, robes and enormous towels. The rooms are doubles, but most can sleep one or two children as well. There is one suite with two separate rooms, for four people. All rooms open up directly to the terrace, and each has its own sitting corner outside.

**When you feel hungry** Breakfast is served from 8.30 to 10.30 and you can have it wherever you like. You will be asked what you are in the mood for; and a little bit of self-indulgence will not be frowned upon. For lunch and dinner you can try some fine Mediterranean cuisine on the terrace at the top of the property while also having some of the best views you can imagine: from one side you will look over the sea, and from the other at the Acropolis of Lindos.



**Bring the children?** The calm and romantic mood of the Melenos Lindos makes it more of an environment for adults, but well-behaved kids of all ages are welcome. (Cots are available.) Teenagers will enjoy the fun atmosphere at the beach of Lindos, in particular on Sundays when swinging beach parties are organised, but if you come with young children the problem is that there is nowhere really for them to play in the hotel.

**To see and do** Rhodes is a multi-faceted island that appeals to beach bums and lovers of art and culture alike, to party animals as well as to anyone looking for peace and quiet. The same applies to Lindos itself, with its lively, sandy beach (and many quieter ones a short drive away), the Acropolis that crowns the village, the little shops, bars and restaurants scattered throughout and, in the midst of all that the Melenos Lindos, offering an oasis of tranquillity.

**Good to know** The Melenos Lindos is open from the beginning of April until the end of October. Prices for a double room start at around €300, and they include breakfast. Credit cards: Amex, MasterCard and Visa.

**Getting there** Rhodes can be reached by ferryboat from Piraeus (overnight ferries take about 12 hours), from other islands (Crete, Kos, Santorini, Paros and others) and also from Marmaras in Turkey (one hour away), while Rhodes airport is served by an array of domestic and international airlines. Lindos is about 50 km from the airport and 45 km from the harbour, and can be reached either by bus (cheap, but time consuming) or taxi. In Lindos, you will be met by the staff at the square at the bottom of the village, so you don't have to haul your luggage up to the hotel. Upon request, the hotel can also arrange a private car transfer from the airport.

