



HOTEL REVIEW



Mandarin Oriental

BODRUM

Antonio Citterio redefines Mediterranean luxury
with Mandarin Oriental's Turkish debut.

Words: Eileen Keribar | Photography: © George Apostolidis





Above & Opposite: The recreation boasts custom, oversized woven light fixtures while a suspended stair leads guests to an array of indoor and outdoor public areas adorned with custom-designed furnishings and carefully selected pieces from Roda, Flexform, B&B Italia, Poliform, Kettal, Gloster, Arper and Vitra

For decades, the Mediterranean has played host to the archetypal European summer holiday with its wide range of laid-back cultures and countless resorts suiting every taste. Nightlife aficionados flock to Ibiza, romantics retreat to Santorini, gourmets delight in Corsica, and the crème-de-la-crème revel in the glamorous scene of the Côte d'Azur.

A relative neophyte to the Mediterranean holiday hit list, Turkey's Riviera, and in particular Bodrum, has rapidly gained a reputation as a distinguished destination – and its most ambitious newcomer sets out to both redefine Mediterranean luxury and evolve its predominately urban brand.

The southwestern Turkish coast lures travellers with its sun-soaked beaches, historic ruins, and striking limestone peninsulas extending into the brilliant cerulean waters of the Aegean. With its rocky coastline creating countless dramatic bays, the 44km-long Bodrum Peninsula itself is both ruggedly beautiful and increasingly chic. Between its celebrity fans, superyachts, and growing number of high-end hotels, it has been dubbed the Saint-Tropez of Turkey.

Paving the way for the next generation of luxury in the Mediterranean, Mandarin Oriental Bodrum eschews the image of boutique hotels and grande dame resorts from the turn of the century

that have, to-date, defined high-end resorts in this region. Catering to discerning guests trained in the likes of Indian Ocean luxury – with its exclusivity, indulgent pampering, and intimate contact with nature – this new addition fuses these elements into the ultimate European retreat.

“Our vision for the design was to develop a new luxury resort design language, sophisticated and contemporary and yet intimately connected to its natural Mediterranean setting,” explains Javier Hortal, Mandarin Oriental's Regional Director of Technical Services.

Marking the group's debut in Turkey, Mandarin Oriental Bodrum is located on a 60-hectare waterfront site offering panoramic views over one of its most exclusive bays, Cennet Koyu (Paradise Bay). Built on landscaped tiers tumbling towards the sea, immersed in ancient olive groves and surrounded by a pine forest, the property's one million plants and 10,000 olive trees truly allow the resort to indulge in its surrounding nature.

“Our goal was to support Bodrum, accelerating its mission to reach its well-deserved position as one of the world's leading luxury resort destinations in the world 12-months-a-year,” expresses Vedat Asçi, founder of owner and developer Astas Holding.

“When I first saw the land, I knew it had all the potential to





Above: Clean furniture lines combine with wooden wall panelling and floors, cream-coloured rugs and woven leather headboards, creating a serene sense of luxury while taking full advantage of the resort's outstanding vistas

be home to a fabulous luxury landmark in the Mediterranean, as it carried all the attributes of what Bodrum is famous for: eternal blue, lush green, beautiful weather and air quality. It is our loyalty to the site's nature and energy that make it the success our guests experience today."

With a masterplan by WATG and architecture developed by GAD Architecture in collaboration with Antonio Citterio Patricia Viel & Partners, the design was developed to create a sequence of flexible spaces that seamlessly transition from indoor to outdoor, one where the natural elements of daylight, water and landscape play a fundamental part in the guest experience.

UK-based practice Scape Design Associates was responsible for the landscaping of the resort, creating spa gardens, sweeping terraces and private escapes for the apartments and villas. The main lobby building sits astride a hillside spur surrounded by terraces of olive trees, while stone paths lead through the stepped landscape to the amenities and beach.

Each built facility has its own individually crafted setting. The main pool deck, for example, benefits from tiered infinity-edged pools and the tranquil spa garden offers a tea lounge surrounded by water.

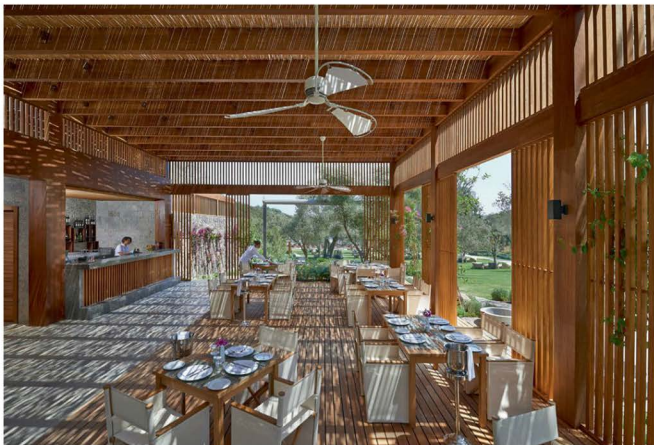
According to Scape, the planting palette – comprising large pine

and olive trees combined with a ground layer of seasonal colour and fragrance – was specifically selected to help blend the building forms into the landscape.

The resort's low-rise architecture combines simple and contemporary Asian lines with crafted feature elements. The reception boasts custom, oversized woven light fixtures and a monumental suspended stair leads guests to an array of indoor and outdoor public areas, adorned with exquisite local art pieces and a combination of custom-designed furnishings and carefully selected pieces from the likes of Flexform, B&B Italia, Kettal, Gloster, Arper and Vitra.

Design elements blend Mandarin Oriental's Far Eastern heritage with the local architectural vernacular. Natural materials such as wood, local stone and ceramics are employed extensively throughout the property, with unique applications representative of the group's exacting attention to detail.

Famed designer Antonio Citterio, with the support of Istanbul-based Metex Design, has crafted the resort's 109 guestrooms and suites – the largest on offer in Bodrum – with restrained elegance. Clean furniture lines combine with wooden wall panelling and floors, cream-coloured rugs and woven leather headboards, creating a serene sense of luxury while taking full advantage of the resort's outstanding



Above: Natural materials such as wood, local stone and ceramics are employed extensively throughout the property, including the beachside Olive Garden

vistas. Stylish linear bathrooms are adjacent to a generous walk-in dressing area and offer heated marble floors and freestanding custom Agape tubs. Apaise's Lunar Stone Bathtubs feature in the Oriental and Mandarin Villas and all rooms have either outside terraces or balconies, the majority with plunge pools and outdoor showers.

Not to be left in the shadow of Bodrum's increasingly vibrant dining and nightlife scene, the team called on celebrity chefs and nightlife connoisseurs to create a range of international epicurean and entertainment experiences. With a staggering selection of ten restaurants and bars, F&B destinations include sophisticated Japanese at Kurochan, elevated yet authentic Italian at Assagio, casual Turkish at the beachside Olive Garden, and the spectacularly jet-set, over-water Juju Bar @M2, operated in collaboration with Istanbul's famed Babylon nightclub.

Built into the hillside, the resort's sprawling 2,700m² spa offers unparalleled seclusion overlooking the cascading landscape. With

heat and water therapies including hammams with private scrub rooms, indoor and outdoor swimming pools and vitality pools, and a seductive relaxation area, the spa is primed for year-round repose. Of the 12 treatment rooms, particular standouts are two outdoor treatment cabanas, a couple's spa suite and the expansive VIP spa suite 'Orkide' that would render any seasoned spa-goer speechless.

Unique to Bodrum, the property boasts two private sandy beaches with cabanas nestled into the landscape along meandering pathways for ultimate privacy. Leisure facilities are rounded out with an array of pools set into the verdant hills, a vast fitness area, water sports centre, basketball and tennis courts and 8km jogging path.

Notwithstanding the many amenities, the property is so greatly over-scaled to the number of guests it hosts that it remains an exclusive, private experience that feels more as if you're sharing it with the humming cicadas than with other vacationers – a true luxury.

EXPRESS CHECKOUT: 109 guestrooms | 8 restaurants | 2 bars | 2,700m² spa | 622m² events space | www.mandarinoriental.com
 Owner / Developer: Astas Holding | Operator: Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group | Masterplan: WATG | Architecture: GAD | Interior Design: Antonio Citterio
 Patricia Viel & Partners (lead designer), Metex Design (local designer) | Fit-out Contractors: MOB (public areas), AHK (guestrooms), Europim (spa)