



Press Release

A Simply Golden Day

The Shimmer of September and October:
After the Heat, Into the Harvest, Before the Last Warm Swim

THE DANAI
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The Danai, Halkidiki, Greece: Together, the olives, the grapes, the honey, and the sea tell the same seasonal story from different corners of the estate: a slower, warmer, more golden version of Sithonia, where after the summer, the simplicity of country charm returns. September and October call for long lunches on the terrace, walks through the olive groves and vineyards as harvest begins, and sunsets over a glass of the estate's own wine.

Early in the morning, the hotel's owners are out among the olive groves. This year marks 50 years since Danai and Otto Riefenstahl acquired the estate's first parcel of land. In those days this was simply olive country, and the groves nearest the sea fetched the lowest prices, since the trees close to the waterline bear the least fruit. Further inland on the estate, many of the original trees from the time of purchase are still standing today, bearing fruit. The olives are picked by hand and carried to the press in the village of Nikiti, one of the richest olive-growing regions in Greece and part of a Macedonian olive-growing tradition that stretches back generations. Elsewhere across Sithonia, other farmers are equally out in muddy boots among the groves, and many of The Danai's staff keep a few trees themselves, small family plots tended for their own table. Owners and staff alike, gathered at the oil press, compare notes on this shared harvest. Here the olives are washed and cold-pressed within hours of picking, the air thick with

the same sharp, green scent that has hung over Nikiti's press houses each autumn for generations, as Danai Olive Oil drips slowly into the vats.

By midday, an audible hum rises from the nectar blooms. Just off the main grounds stand The Danai's four hives. Bees have been kept on Sithonia for centuries, and in nearby Nikiti alone, honey has been a local trade for some five hundred years, with more than 75,000 hives scattered across the wider peninsula today. At The Danai, the bees forage a very different landscape, one of lavender, citrus, and grapevines. As the season turns, the colonies busy themselves building the reserves that will see them through winter and will supply the hotel's guests with honey once again come the new season.

By afternoon, the September sun over the vineyard deepens to its richest gold. The grapes, unlike the olives, slip easily from the vine. This year's harvest brings the estate's own wine, Noble Story, into its second vintage, a red drawn from heat-resistant varieties including Grenache, Mourvèdre, and a Syrah variant. The wine, from the estate's vineyard overlooking the sea, is the work of Head Sommelier Apostolos Plahouras, who serves as curator and winemaker. His work has repeatedly been honored with the awards Best Wine Program in Greece and Best Sommelier in Greece. Noble Story now takes its place in the cellar of Noble House, Greece's largest private wine collection, home to 1,700 labels and more than 18,000 bottles. Guests may taste the new vintage at the estate's open-air tasting restaurant, or lend a hand in the grape harvest itself.

Swimming at sundown, when the sea shimmers the same amber as the cliffs, the water stays well above 20 degrees until the season's end. Life beneath the surface shifts with the season too: squid and cuttlefish return to the shallows, and schools of young fish dart across the seafloor. Near Kelifos island, just off The Danai's coast, young octopuses shelter in the rock crevices, born earlier in the summer and not yet larger than a walnut.

*Further information online at thedanai.com. The Danai is a member of **The Leading Hotels of the World**.*

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About The Danai

Set above the crystalline waters of the Aegean on Sithonia, one of Halkidiki's three peninsulas, The Danai is a luxury retreat surrounded by lush Mediterranean gardens and a private sandy beach. The family-owned hotel features 56 individually designed suites and villas with sea or vineyard views, created by owner Mrs Danai.

Dining spans three distinct restaurants, including a refined gourmet restaurant set beneath the pine trees, Greek cuisine served by the water, and The Danai Bakery House, where freshly baked breads and pastries are prepared daily. The Noble House & Vineyard is home to Greece's largest wine collection, comprising 1,700 labels, curated and served with expert care. Additional facilities include a private beach with cabanas and attentive service, a Kids Club and Baby Crèche, as well as a sunlit Spa & Fitness area with treatment rooms, indoor pool and modern training equipment. The Danai celebrates 50 years of hospitality and is family owned and run by the Riefenstahl family. For more Information visit: www.thedanai.com

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