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MILLENNIAL SLOANES

Their habits, codes and mating practices

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WITH HIS ARISTO (YES, REALLY) BUDDIES

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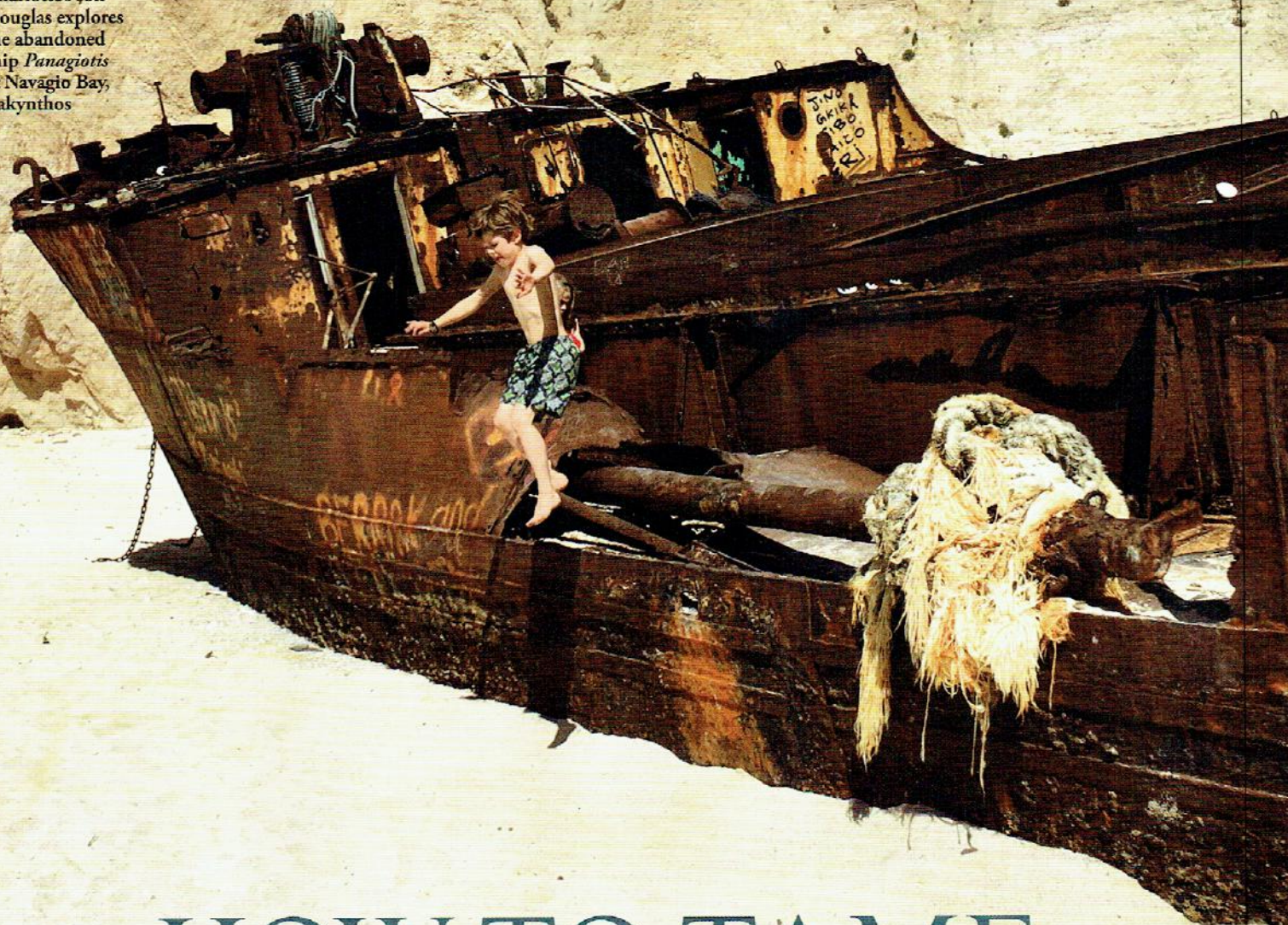
THE NEW POSH

RULES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

TATLER

Edited by FRANCISCA KELLETT

Charlotte's son
Douglas explores
the abandoned
ship *Panagiotis*
at Navagio Bay,
Zakynthos



HOW TO TAME YOUR PIRATE

Take him to the Peligoni Club in Zakynthos, where Sharky & George will devise treasure hunts for the kids while you drink cucumber martinis. By Charlotte Edwardes



ABOVE, 'THE SANCTUARY' AT THE PELIGONI. BELOW, A MORNING DIVE

Summer holiday rarely translates in the ears of parents with children aged between, say, six and 16 as anything to do with relaxation or reading or lying in. Certainly for me, the closest synonyms are 'noisy', 'naked' and 'anarchy'. I'm still haunted by the memory of one daughter standing on a restaurant banquette, pulling down her pants and threatening to pee because a Frenchman had told her she was 'naughty'. (She was three, but the shame burns on.)

True to form, the kids make sure our plane journey to the Greek island of Zakynthos is one long squabble – over the iPad, the cheese and onion Pringles, the travel Connect 4 – with a game of marbles as the only respite (although they use the aisle as a sort of sniper alley). My children Margot, Douglas and Audrey, aged 11, nine and seven, are as immune to the tuts and hisses and frowns of disapproval from other passengers as I am susceptible. (I'm particularly afraid for the neck of the man in front, which is whipped round so often I think it might snap.) Single-handedly, I imagine, they've driven up demand for on-board childfree zones, but it's nothing compared to the door-slammings, bath-foam-producing, bedspring-twanging carnage they unleash in hotels – the reason we no longer go anywhere a) vaguely smart or b) where there's any chance of recognition.

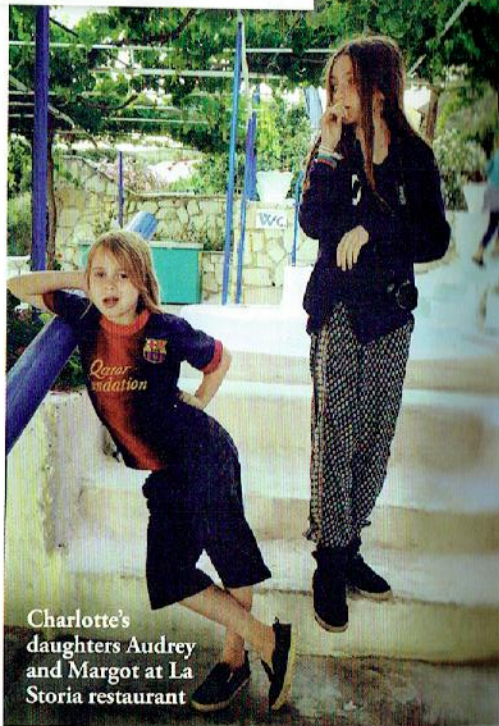
It's with this background that I arrive, damp and tired, at the Peligoni Club, which sits above the pretty, unspoiled port of Agios Nikolaos, overlooking a hip of Ionian coast on the north-east of the island. Here, the Shearer family have been running a sailing club for 12 years, taking over from another family who ran it for years before them. It has been steadily expanding from a small enclave for enthusiasts to a specialist watersports destination, taking in the full gamut of boats, dinghies, catamarans, windsurfing, wakeboarding, waterskiing, subwinging and 'ringoing' (being dragged at high speed on inflatable rings and blasted with



Euro techno – 'awesome', according to the kids) while maintaining a fun, house-party vibe. Jeremy Clarkson has been a fan for decades. More recently, guests have included Rose van Cutsem, Vassi Chamberlain, Camilla Johnson-Hill and Sir Charles Dunstone and his wife Celia, who moored their boat up the coast last year and regularly stopped at the ice-cream hut with their little ones.

The set-up is unusual: the club is the central focus, with its tree-fringed restaurant, café and three bars (the Yard is for teens and offers non-alcoholic drinks for the younger ones), pool, tennis courts, spa and yoga studio, and then there are some 60 affiliated villas dotted around the surrounding wild countryside, where guests stay. This gives me hope: I can control the exposure other people have to our family craziness.

Anouska Shearer ('Noosh') greets us when we arrive. She's sun-bleached and absurdly young (25) to be running all this with her brother Ben. But her school and university chums have rallied, not least Bish, her BFF, who is front



Charlotte's daughters Audrey and Margot at La Storia restaurant



A private boat trip to the Blue Caves



LEFT, THE DRIFTWOOD BAR. RIGHT, DRIVING IN ZAKYNTHOS



Peligoni staff at the beach club

of house with her. The rest of the 'Peli' team are polite, charming, mostly blonde, leggy and tanned. I notice the boys overwhelmingly have creamy hair and cowlicks. There's definitely a posh-bohemian atmosphere; it's a magnet for mooching, hair-flicking teens approaching their GCSEs and A-levels (they have two Eton-Oxford tutors on site so that time in the bar can be matched by time on revision to assuage parental guilt). And there's something for younger kids too: Sharky & George have a den, complete with a pirate-ship play area and cupboards of bubble-making kits, plus water balloons and paints and dressing-up clothes and who knows what else, which means parents can genuinely relax – as if on a real 'holiday'.

I should explain for the uninitiated that the lure of Sharky & George is overpowering for anyone under 10. Founded by Old Etonians Charlie ('Sharky') Astor and George Whitefield a decade ago, the company sends bouncing, enthusiastic, borderline risk-taking acolytes (often thumping yahs) to entertain at kids' parties. They've organised events for David Cameron's children and Sir Paul McCartney's

grandchildren and stack up around 50 parties per week (including camp-outs that are like a 'full-blown SAS mission'). The thought that they will be on call all day for six days of our holiday has caused a zombie-type brain melt with my two younger children. But our first day is Sunday: our own Sharky & George's day off.

Noosh's easygoing manner belies (as I will later discover) the insane amount of juggling she does. She sweeps us off to our villa, telling us she's been coming here since she was five years old: 'It was very small, something like 70 guests, and the food

was rubbish and the boats were

always broken, but the vibe was such fun.' Her parents fell in love with the place and built a house. When the old owners ran into financial trouble, the Shearers decided they couldn't live without the club, so bought it. 'And ever since university Ben and I have been running it,' Noosh says.

The roads bend between the farms' dry-stack rock walls and rows of olive trees; the air is warm and smells of chalk, dried wood and fig flesh; there's the sound of crickets and their cartoonish rasping. We draw up at the rather splendid Villa Livadi: tucked away in the hills, it was built by the Brennan family and is a peaceful white palace of glass, concrete and architectural lines – and so brand new I'm afraid of leaving scuff marks. We spend a >

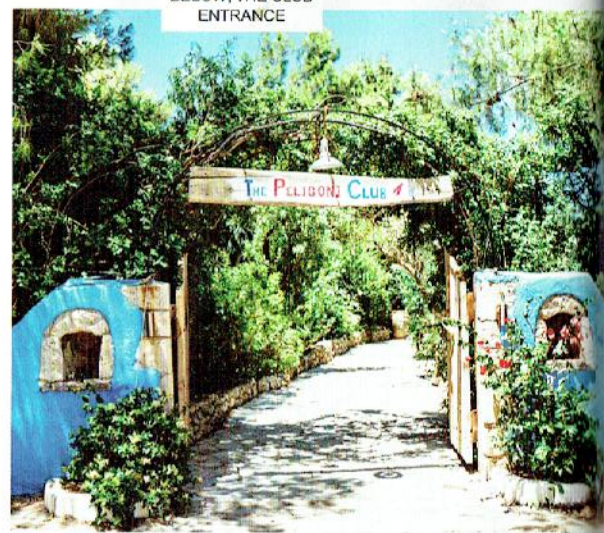
Mezze evening at the main restaurant. Right, Peligoni staff



Villa Livadi



ABOVE, NAVAGIO BAY & THE SHIPWRECK
BELOW, THE CLUB ENTRANCE



NAVE ORGANO/SHINE/RECORDERS



Open-mic night at the Peligoni

◁ while investigating before I start to unpack. There's a view, a surround-sound of bleating goats, a swimming pool, high ceilings, rain showers, DVDs, music and a teched-up kitchen, where, later in the week, our villa host Ellie Hiskett (a graduate of Cambridge and Rick Stein) will cook us the most insane supper.

Accommodation at Peligoni can cost anything from £360 per week for B&B – 'for people who don't want to spend mega-bucks,' says Noosh – to a stonking £18,500 for the incredibly chic Figari (old-style whitewash, blue shutters, Moroccan tiles). The idea is that you dip in and out of the club as much as you choose; membership fees are on top.

After about 45 minutes my girls flop on the bed, asking where their brother is. He'd been playing happily in the courtyard, I'd thought, with them. After a brief 'I thought he was with you' exchange, we are in a full frenzied search of the rooms, pool area and garden, calling his name in a spiralling panic. Then a horn honks outside and beside Noosh in her clapped-out Skoda is my son, his face tear-stained and dejected. He'd tried to cross two and a half miles of wild Zakynthian countryside to get to the Peligoni, he explains, because 'I wanted to see Sharky and George'. On this odyssey, he'd come across 'a huge goat with slit eyes and horns, and it was staring at me and then the grass dropped from its mouth and I thought it was going to eat me.' Hearing his air-ripping screams, a farmer ran to his aid and, finding he spoke no Greek, took him directly to Noosh – a sort

of English consul in these parts – with an uncomprehending shrug.

Noosh is unbelievably nice about the whole thing. 'I just wanted to see Sharky and George,' my son repeats. It's the only time in the week's holiday that I curse their names. Noosh suggests some watersports instead, 'or just a quiet game of backgammon, or cards at the Peli' (possibly with a stiff drink for me). We pile into our Skodas and follow her bobbing numberplate down a dusty, rocky track. After a week of driving like this, plus sandy car parks with the windows open, wet children, towels and deflating beach toys, my car will look every bit as battered as hers. I will even start to leave the key in the ignition every time I get out. This place is genuinely laidback. Peligoni slowly gives me back an old, long-forgotten definition of 'holiday'.

There's no beach as such at the club, but terraced decking with sunbeds looking out to sea. It's from here, with a cucumber martini, that I watch my kids aboard a platform they christen *The Peggy Sue*, which they never tire of scrabbling up and diving off. This will sound package-holidayish, although it doesn't feel like it: Noosh and her team organise a

Peligoni is genuinely laidback – it gives me back an old, long-forgotten definition of 'holiday'

programme of events, from an open-mic night to beach drinks to dinner at La Storia in the nearby town and an end-of-the-week regatta. This removes a chunk of planning from my shoulders. Again, a novel experience.

On a couple of mornings, the kids play board games or cards with the handsome tutors from Oppidan Education, Henry Faber and Walter Kerr, and even decide by themselves that they want to write a story. 'It's unconscious learning,' explains Faber. (Although as I watch a group of 16-year-olds give these two their undivided attention, I suspect it may be a little more than that.) Noosh adds that the boys are a bit like 'big brothers'. They offer advice on future schools for parents who want it, and feedback on any written work for the older children. For the most part, my younger two are trailing Pied Piper-like behind Sharky and George, as spies or pirates or archaeologists, playing water polo or going on treasure hunts. One morning, they even disappear on a boat trip and I'm not entirely sure what to do with my time (read? Have a massage? Both?).

We go off-script at times, electing to take ourselves to the nearby Mikro Nisi restaurant by boat to eat fresh fish, battered calamari and white taramasalata for lunch overlooking a small bay that must have been unchanged for centuries. Another time we hire a boat to visit Navagio Bay, where the freightliner Panagiotis lies shipwrecked on the white sand. The kids jump on the rusting brown carcass, trying out the old rope and stepladders and gingerly testing the floor for decay. The beach is near empty and the solitude exotic.

The Peligoni throbs at night. I can imagine how great this must be for the teens. My children make new friends and jump on deckchairs; they post Instagrams and have important 11-year-old 'DMCs' (deep, meaningful conversations). I suppose they are feral, but no one seems to care – everyone else's kids are feral too. The only night I fear they're too hyped, Noosh sweeps in to help gather them into the car. She copes with some mad demands from guests, including one who asked her to stop planes flying overhead, but mostly she meets their every need. I wasn't surprised to hear how she managed one unexpected crisis after we left – a private party some weeks later was hit by a massive storm. But the show went on regardless, she says: 'Simple Minds played and somehow we pulled it off – everyone was dancing in the rain and having the best time ever.' □

Seven nights at Livadi (sleeps 10), from £3,500. Club membership, from £140 (adults)/£70–£110 (children aged four to 12) per week (peligoni.com). British Airways flies from London to Zakynthos from May from £200 return (ba.com).