

THE ADORIAN WAY

If you are reading these pages, you have probably just arrived.

Perhaps your suitcase is still half unpacked. Perhaps you are sitting on the terrace with your first coffee, listening to sounds that are still unfamiliar. Or perhaps you are simply enjoying the rare feeling that, for a few days at least, nothing is demanding your attention.

Before your holiday truly begins, I would like to tell you a story.

Not the story of these villas.

Not even the story of Adorian.

It is the story of a piece of land that quietly shaped my family long before it welcomed its first guests.

Most people believe that places are created when construction begins. It is an understandable thought. Drawings become buildings, buildings become homes, and one day a door opens to welcome someone for the very first time.

For many years, I believed the same.

I thought Adorian was born in 2024, when the first machines arrived and the foundations were laid.

Looking back, I realise that only the buildings began then.

Everything else had already started decades earlier.

This land belonged to my grandfather.

Long before there were swimming pools, terraces or stone pathways, there were vineyards stretching across the hills around Episkopi. Every August, when the grapes reached their perfect sweetness, our family gathered for the harvest. As children, my brother and I believed we were helping the adults. We carried wooden crates that always seemed too heavy for our small hands, proud of every journey we managed to complete between the vines and the waiting truck.

At the time, it felt like work.

Only much later did I understand it had been an education.

Without ever sitting us down or offering advice, my grandfather was teaching us lessons that have remained with me throughout my life.

He taught us that nothing worthwhile can be hurried.

That every season has its own rhythm.

That the land gives generously to those who care for it patiently.

And perhaps most importantly, he taught us that we never truly own a place.

For a little while, we simply become part of its story.

As children, we rarely recognise the moments that shape us. Memory works quietly. It collects ordinary afternoons, familiar scents and small routines, storing them away without explaining why. Years later, those simple moments return carrying a meaning we never noticed before.

Whenever I stand here today, I still see the vineyard.

Not because it remains.

But because, in many ways, it never really disappeared.

The world around it changed, as worlds always do. Vineyards gradually gave way to olive groves. Families adapted. New generations followed different paths. The landscape evolved, but its character remained the same. It continued to reward patience, simplicity and respect.

Perhaps that is why, when life eventually brought me back to this land, I found myself asking a very different question from the one most people expected.

I did not ask, "What should I build here?"

Instead, I asked,

"What deserves to grow here next?"

The answer did not arrive immediately.

For a long time, I believed I was planning a small collection of villas.

Slowly, I realised I was trying to preserve something much less visible.

Not buildings.

A feeling.

Because every place leaves us with one.

Some leave us impressed.

Some entertained.

A very small number leave us changed.

I hoped Adorian might become one of those places.

Not because it offers luxury, although comfort certainly matters.

Not because it has beautiful views, although Crete has never lacked beauty.

But because it might gently remind people of a way of living that many of us have quietly forgotten.

Growing up in Episkopi, life followed a rhythm that nobody questioned.

Morning arrived with daylight rather than alarms.

People walked because that was simply how daily life unfolded.

Neighbours stopped to talk without first checking the time.

Meals were rarely hurried.

Evenings belonged to conversation rather than schedules.

No one called it wellness.

No one spoke about mindfulness.

It was simply life.

Only years later, while reading about health, longevity and happiness, did I discover that many of these ordinary habits were now being celebrated as the foundations of a healthy life.

I found that strangely comforting.

Not because science had discovered something new.

But because it had finally found words for something my grandparents had lived without ever needing to explain.

That realisation changed the way I thought about Adorian.

I no longer wanted to build somewhere people could simply stay.

I wanted to create somewhere people could slow down.

Not by telling them what to do.

But by creating a place where slowing down felt natural.

Where mornings invited you outside before your phone did.

Where walking became more appealing than driving.

Where conversations lasted longer than expected.

Where silence no longer felt empty.

And where, for a little while, time stopped feeling like something to chase.

There is something remarkable about holidays.

We often think we travel to discover new places, yet the journeys that remain with us usually reveal something much closer to home. They remind us of a version of ourselves that everyday life has quietly hidden beneath routines, responsibilities and constant urgency.

Perhaps that is why I never wanted Adorian to tell people how to relax.

There are already enough books that explain how we should live.

This place was never meant to become another lesson.

It was meant to become an invitation.

An invitation to notice.

To notice the first light as it reaches the terrace.

To notice the breeze moving through the olive trees.

To notice how different a meal tastes when nobody is watching the clock.

To notice that silence is not something to fill, but something to enjoy.

The greatest changes in our lives rarely arrive through dramatic moments.

More often, they begin with small discoveries.

The first morning you wake naturally.

The first afternoon you leave your phone inside because you simply forgot about it.

The first evening you realise you have spent hours talking without once thinking about tomorrow.

These moments seem insignificant while they are happening.

Later, they become the memories we carry home.

One of the things I loved most as a child was walking through the village with my grandfather.

He never seemed to be in a hurry.

Everyone knew him, and every short walk somehow became a series of conversations. Someone would ask about the harvest. Another would invite him for coffee. We would stop beneath the shade of a tree, exchange a few words, smile and continue.

Back then, I often wondered why such a simple journey took so long.

Today, I understand that he never considered those conversations interruptions.

They were the journey.

Perhaps we have forgotten that.

Modern life has become remarkably efficient.

We save time everywhere.

Yet we rarely ask ourselves what we are saving it for.

Somehow, despite all the time we gain, many of us feel we have less of it than ever before.

The village taught me a different lesson.

Time expands when we stop trying to control it.

That is why I hope you never feel the need to plan every hour of your stay.

Some of the finest moments cannot be planned.

They simply happen.

Perhaps you decide to follow a small road simply because you wonder where it leads.

Perhaps you stop beneath an olive tree because the shade looks inviting.

Perhaps you order another coffee although you have nowhere to be.

These are not delays.

They are often the moments we remember most.

The same is true of the table.

When I think back to family meals, I remember almost none of the food.

I could not tell you what we ate on any particular Sunday.

Yet I remember exactly how those afternoons felt.

Laughter moved easily from one end of the table to the other.

Stories became longer each time they were told.

Children listened without appearing to listen at all.

Nobody announced that something important was happening.

It simply was.

Looking back, I realise those meals were never about food.

They were about belonging.

Perhaps that is why sharing a meal remains one of the most generous traditions of this island.

Food satisfies hunger.

Conversation nourishes something deeper.

If there is one thing I hope you discover during your stay, it is not a particular restaurant or recipe.

It is the pleasure of eating without rushing.

Of allowing dinner to become an evening rather than simply part of one.

Crete has always understood that hospitality begins long before someone enters a room.

It begins the moment they feel welcome.

The sea, too, has always been part of that feeling.

People often imagine that growing up in Crete means growing up beside the water.

My own childhood belonged more to the vineyards than to the beach.

Perhaps that is why every visit to the coast still feels special.

Even today, I enjoy the journey almost as much as the destination.

The landscape slowly changes.

The hills open.

The air becomes lighter.

And then, almost without warning, the horizon appears.

The sea has a curious gift.

It rarely changes our problems.

It changes our perspective.

Standing before something so vast has a way of reminding us that many of the worries we carry are much smaller than they first appeared.

For that reason, I never wanted Adorian to stand directly beside the sea.

I wanted the sea to remain something you looked forward to.

Somewhere you choose to visit.

Somewhere you happily return from.

Because there is another kind of peace waiting here.

The peace of the hills.

The peace of olive trees moving gently in the evening breeze.

The peace of hearing birds in the morning instead of traffic.

The peace of a night so quiet that you suddenly remember what silence actually sounds like.

When people speak about luxury, they often think of things.

A larger room.

A finer meal.

A more expensive view.

The older I become, the less convinced I am.

Real luxury is becoming increasingly simple.

Time without interruption.

Silence without loneliness.

Nature without effort.

Conversation without hurry.

Sleep without anxiety.

These are the things that have become rare.

And perhaps rarity is what has always defined luxury after all.

When I was younger, I thought places became important because of what we saw there.

Today, I believe they become important because of how they make us feel.

Years from now, I doubt you will remember the exact colour of the stone or the dimensions of the pool. You may not even remember the name of the restaurant where you had dinner.

But you will remember how the morning light entered the villa.

You will remember the sound of the cicadas on a warm afternoon.

You will remember the scent of rosemary carried by the evening breeze.

And perhaps you will remember a feeling that is becoming increasingly rare.

The feeling of having nowhere else to be.

That, more than anything else, is what I hope this place offers.

Not an escape from life.

But a gentle return to it.

Because somewhere along the way, many of us began believing that a good life is a busy life.

We fill our calendars, answer messages before they arrive, measure our days by what we accomplish and convince ourselves that slowing down is something we will do later.

When the work is finished.

When life becomes easier.

When there is finally enough time.

Yet I have learned that life rarely becomes less busy on its own.

If we wait for the perfect moment to slow down, we may spend a lifetime waiting.

Places like this simply remind us that another rhythm is still possible.

Not forever.

Just long enough to remember it exists.

Perhaps that is why so many people leave Crete feeling unexpectedly lighter.

It is not because the island has solved their problems.

Their lives are waiting exactly where they left them.

What changes is something quieter.

For a few days, they remember what it feels like to live without constantly looking ahead.

They discover the pleasure of finishing breakfast without checking the time.

Of walking simply because the road looks inviting.

Of sitting in silence without feeling the need to fill it.

Those moments may seem small.

Yet they are often the moments that remain with us the longest.

The land has always understood this.

Nature never rushes.

The olive tree does not hurry towards summer.

The vineyard never asks autumn to arrive early.

Everything unfolds when its season comes.

Perhaps we ask too much of ourselves when we expect life to move differently.

One of the greatest lessons this place has taught me is that patience is not about waiting.

It is about trusting.

Trusting that not every answer must come today.

That not every hour must be productive.

That not every silence needs to become conversation.

When Adorian was still only an idea, I often wondered what people would take home with them.

Certainly not the furniture.

Not the architecture.

Not even the swimming pools.

Those things matter while we are here.

But they are not what remain.

What remains is always invisible.

A feeling.

A memory.

A different pace of breathing.

A quieter state of mind.

Perhaps months from now, you will wake one morning and open the window before looking at your phone.

Perhaps you will choose to walk instead of drive.

Perhaps you will invite friends to dinner and allow the evening to unfold without checking the time.

Perhaps you will notice the sunset instead of photographing it.

If even one of those things happens, then Adorian will have travelled home with you.

That thought has always meant more to me than knowing whether someone enjoyed their holiday.

A holiday eventually becomes a memory.

A meaningful place quietly becomes part of the way we live.

Perhaps that is the greatest gift any place can offer.

Not to change our lives completely.

But to remind us of the life we already knew was possible.

As I write these final pages, I find myself thinking once again of my grandfather.

I often wonder what he would think if he could stand here today.

The vineyard he cared for is gone.

In its place stand villas welcoming people from every corner of the world.

Everything has changed.

And yet, I like to believe he would recognise something important.

Not the buildings.

Not the gardens.

Not even the landscape.

He would recognise the intention.

The same land that once gathered families for the harvest now gathers families for rest.

Once it offered grapes.

Today it offers time.

The gift has changed.

The generosity has not.

Perhaps that is all any of us can hope to leave behind.

Not monuments.

Not possessions.

But places where people feel a little lighter than when they arrived.

Places where they remember what truly matters.

If Adorian succeeds in doing that, then everything this land taught my family will continue to live through everyone who spends even a few days here.

And that is why, when it is finally time for you to leave, I hope you do not think of this as saying goodbye.

The olive trees will still be here.

Morning will continue to arrive across these hills.

Another guest will one day sit where you are sitting now, listening to the same breeze and wondering why this place feels different.

Perhaps they will discover the answer.

Perhaps they will simply feel it.

I have come to believe that feelings are often more important than explanations.

They stay with us longer.

So rather than thanking you for visiting Adorian, let me thank you for becoming part of its story.

Because every person who spends time here leaves something behind.

Not something we can see.

But something we can feel.

And perhaps that is how places, like families, continue to grow.

Quietly.

One story at a time.

Before you close this book, allow me to leave you with one final thought.

When I first imagined Adorian, I believed I was creating a destination.

Today, I see it differently.

Destinations are places we visit.

Home is a feeling we carry with us.

My hope has never been that you remember the name of these villas, or the details of your stay. Time has a gentle way of softening those memories.

Instead, I hope you remember how you felt here.

Perhaps you found yourself waking a little earlier, simply to watch the light arrive.

Perhaps you lingered over breakfast because there was nowhere you needed to be.

Perhaps an evening conversation lasted longer than expected, and for a few hours the world beyond these hills quietly disappeared.

Those moments may seem ordinary.

Yet I have come to believe that ordinary moments, fully lived, become the extraordinary memories of our lives.

The land has taught my family this lesson for generations.

It has never hurried.

It has never demanded attention.

It has simply remained here, season after season, offering its gifts to anyone willing to notice them.

First it offered grapes.

Then olives.

Today it offers something even more precious.

The chance to pause.

The chance to breathe.

The chance to remember that happiness is rarely found in having more, but in needing less.

Everything around us encourages speed.

This place gently suggests another possibility.

Not a different life.

Simply a different rhythm.

A rhythm where mornings begin with daylight instead of urgency.

Where meals become conversations.

Where walking has no destination.

Where silence is no longer something to escape.

And where the passing of time is measured not by schedules, but by moments worth remembering.

One day, this place will continue without me.

I find comfort in that.

Long before Adorian existed, this land already had a story.

Long after all of us are gone, it will continue writing new ones.

I hope my sons understand that they are not inheriting buildings.

They are inheriting a responsibility.

To care for this land.

To welcome those who arrive as guests and hope they leave as friends.

To protect the quiet spirit of this place while allowing it to grow with each new generation.

That is all I have ever tried to do.

Not preserve the past.

But carry its best qualities into the future.

If, years from now, you happen to think of Adorian for no particular reason...

If the scent of olive trees reminds you of an evening spent here...

If a slow breakfast, a quiet walk or an unhurried conversation brings this place back to mind...

Then I will know that Adorian has done exactly what I hoped it would do.

Not remain in your photographs.

But remain, quietly, in your life.

Thank you for sharing a small part of your journey with us.

May you leave rested.

May you leave inspired.

And above all, may you leave carrying the quiet certainty that the richest moments in life are often the simplest ones.

That has always been the real meaning of Adorian.

Not a destination.

Not a luxury retreat.

But a gentle reminder that, wherever life takes us, we are always searching for the same thing:

A place where we can slow down.

A place where we can belong.

A place that, long after we have left, still feels a little like home.