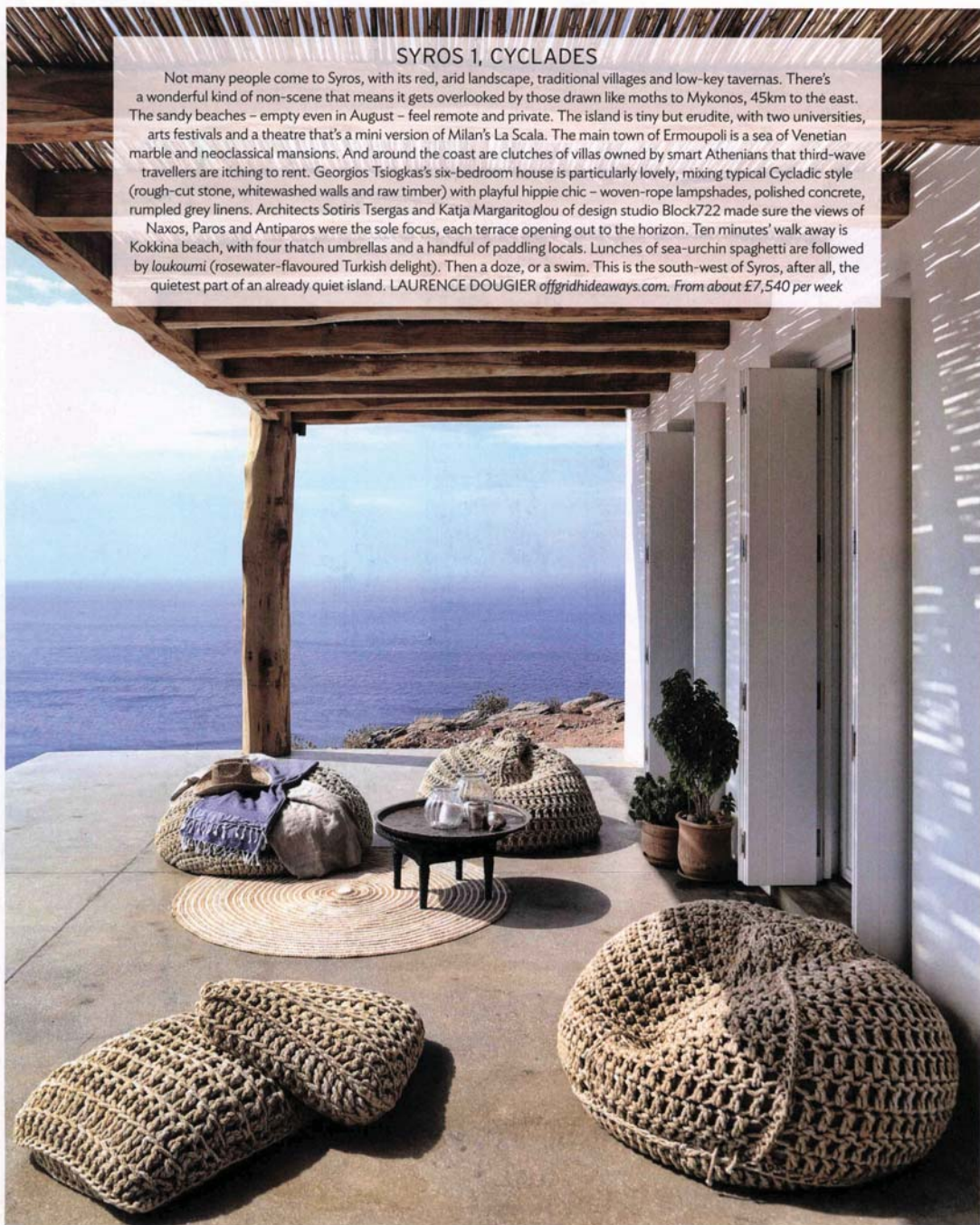


THE VIEW FROM HERE

MYKONOS'S BASHFUL NEIGHBOUR OFFERS THE MOST SPLENDID KIND OF ISOLATION

SYROS 1, CYCLADES

Not many people come to Syros, with its red, arid landscape, traditional villages and low-key tavernas. There's a wonderful kind of non-scene that means it gets overlooked by those drawn like moths to Mykonos, 45km to the east. The sandy beaches – empty even in August – feel remote and private. The island is tiny but erudite, with two universities, arts festivals and a theatre that's a mini version of Milan's La Scala. The main town of Ermoupoli is a sea of Venetian marble and neoclassical mansions. And around the coast are clutches of villas owned by smart Athenians that third-wave travellers are itching to rent. Georgios Tsiogkas's six-bedroom house is particularly lovely, mixing typical Cycladic style (rough-cut stone, whitewashed walls and raw timber) with playful hippie chic – woven-rope lampshades, polished concrete, rumpled grey linens. Architects Sotiris Tsergas and Katja Margaritoglou of design studio Block722 made sure the views of Naxos, Paros and Antiparos were the sole focus, each terrace opening out to the horizon. Ten minutes' walk away is Kokkina beach, with four thatch umbrellas and a handful of paddling locals. Lunches of sea-urchin spaghetti are followed by *loukoumi* (rosewater-flavoured Turkish delight). Then a doze, or a swim. This is the south-west of Syros, after all, the quietest part of an already quiet island. LAURENCE DOUGIER offgridhideaways.com. From about £7,540 per week



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