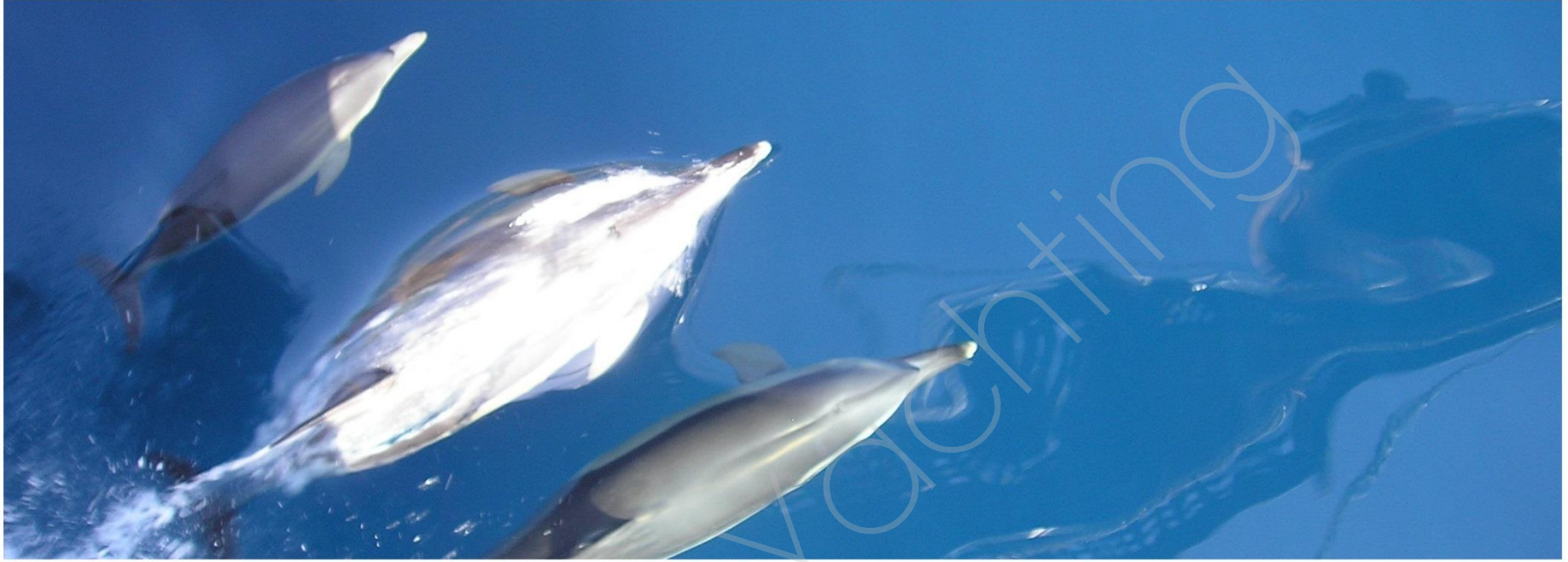




PARSIFAL
YACHTING

ALONISSOS

itinerary



Alonissos island

Alonissos rises from the sea in a mountain of greenery, with thick stands of aleppo pine and kermes oak, mastic and arbutus bushes, vineyards, olive and fruit trees, threaded with perfumy patches of wild oregano, sage and thyme. The west and north coasts are mostly steep and rocky, but the east coast is speckled with small bays and pebble-and-sand beaches.

As lovely as it is, Alonissos has had its share of bad luck. In 1952 a thriving cottage wine industry came to a halt when vines imported from California were infested with phylloxera insects. Robbed of their livelihood, many islanders moved away. Then, in 1965, an earthquake destroyed the hilltop capital of Alonissos Town (known as Old Alonissos or Hora). The inhabitants were subsequently rehoused in temporary dwellings at Patitiri, which has since evolved into a quaint island port.



Alonissos town

Old Alonissos (aka Palia Alonnisos and Hora) is an enchanting place with panoramic views and winding stepped alleys. From the main road just outside the village, an old donkey path leads down to pebbled Megalos Mourtiás Beach.



Patitiri

Patitiri ('wine press') sits between two sandstone cliffs at the southern end of the east coast. The quay is in the centre of the waterfront, from where two roads lead inland. There are no road signs: people refer to them as the left-hand road and right-hand, or main, road.



Islets Around Alonnisos

Alonnisos is surrounded by eight uninhabited islets, all rich in flora and fauna. Piperi, the furthest island northeast of Alonnisos, is a refuge for the monk seal and is strictly off limits. Gioura, also off limits, is home to an unusual species of wild goat known for the crucifix-shaped marking on its spine. Excursion boats visit an old monastery and olive press on Kyra Panagia. The most remote of the group, Psathoura, boasts the submerged remains of an ancient city and the brightest lighthouse in the Aegean.

Peristera, just off Alonnisos' east coast, has sandy beaches and the remains of a castle. Nearby Lehousa is known for its stalactite-filled sea caves. Skantzoura, to the southeast of Alonnisos, is the habitat of the Eleonora's falcon and the rare Audouin's seagull. The eighth island in the group, situated between Peristera and Skantzoura, is known as Dio Adelphi (Two Brothers). Each 'brother' is actually a small island.



National Marine Park

In a country not noted for its ecological foresight, the National Marine Park of Alonnisos is a welcome innovation. Started in 1992, its prime aim has been the protection of the endangered Mediterranean monk seal (*Monachus monachus*) and several rare seabirds.

In summer, licensed boats from Alonnisos and Skopelos conduct excursions through the pristine park. Though it's unlikely you'll find the shy monk seal, your chances of spotting dolphins (striped, bottlenose and common) are fairly good.



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