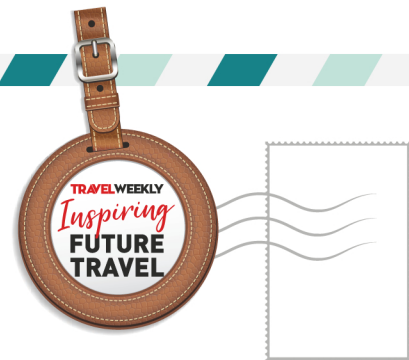


DESTINATIONS

GREECE & CYPRUS | SAILING

POSTCARD

Greece



Learn to set your own course across the sea with a sailing lesson off the west coast of Greece, writes **Janine Kelso**

"Ready about!" I holler, as I swing the boat around, ducking to avoid being smacked by the boom.

Freshly armed with nautical lingo, I'm taking a sailing lesson for beginners at Mark Warner's Paleros Beach Resort, which reopened last year and is set on the coast of mainland Greece near the pretty town of Paleros.

Learning to sail is one of the many all-inclusive watersports to take advantage of at the beachfront property, along with kayaking, stand-up paddleboarding and windsurfing. Framed by rugged mountains, the sheltered bay's calm waters, steady breeze and guaranteed sunshine provide perfect conditions for sailing novices like me.

More landlubber than salty seadog, I approach my first sailing class with a sense of trepidation. But our affable instructor, who has been sailing since the age of seven, soon puts me at ease, explaining that the family-friendly resort teaches sailors of all ages and abilities.

"As long as their parents are happy to let them go, we'll teach kids of any age," he tells me, although the RYA youth courses on offer at Mark Warner are suitable for children aged from six to 13.

We begin the class by learning the ropes (ahem) in a small boat positioned on the sand. While practising turns, we gen up on sailing terminology: 'Ready about!' – which you must shout to the crew when you're about to change direction; boom – the metal pole attached to the bottom of the mast that you want to avoid being hit by when the boat turns; and tacking – turning the boat.

After lots of practice on land, we're let loose in a sailboat in pairs, where we're set the task of navigating around two buoys in a figure of eight, taking turns at the helm.

Being master of the boat is nerve-racking at first, and my first few turns are jerky and wide of the mark, but soon the movements feel effortless and I start to enjoy being in control of our ride over the shimmering blue waters.

Towards the end of the class, the boat comes to a sudden halt. Crestfallen, I call over the instructor.

"How can I make it go faster? Am I doing something wrong?" I ask.

"No, you're doing great. There's just no wind!" he chuckles, before towing us back to shore in a speedboat.

With my newly acquired sea legs, this is not quite the end-on-a-high that I'd envisaged, but I'm feeling considerably more shipshape than when I began. **TW**



BOOK IT

Paleros Beach Resort reopens on July 19. Prices for a seven-night half-board stay, including flights from Gatwick and transfers, start at £1,599 per person for a couple, or £6,148 in total for a family of four in a Family room, with childcare for ages two to 17 years, windsurfing, tennis and more, based on an August 2 departure. markwarner.co.uk



TOP: Janine learns how to sail
ABOVE: Mark Warner's Paleros Beach Resort

PICTURE: Tales of Annie Bean