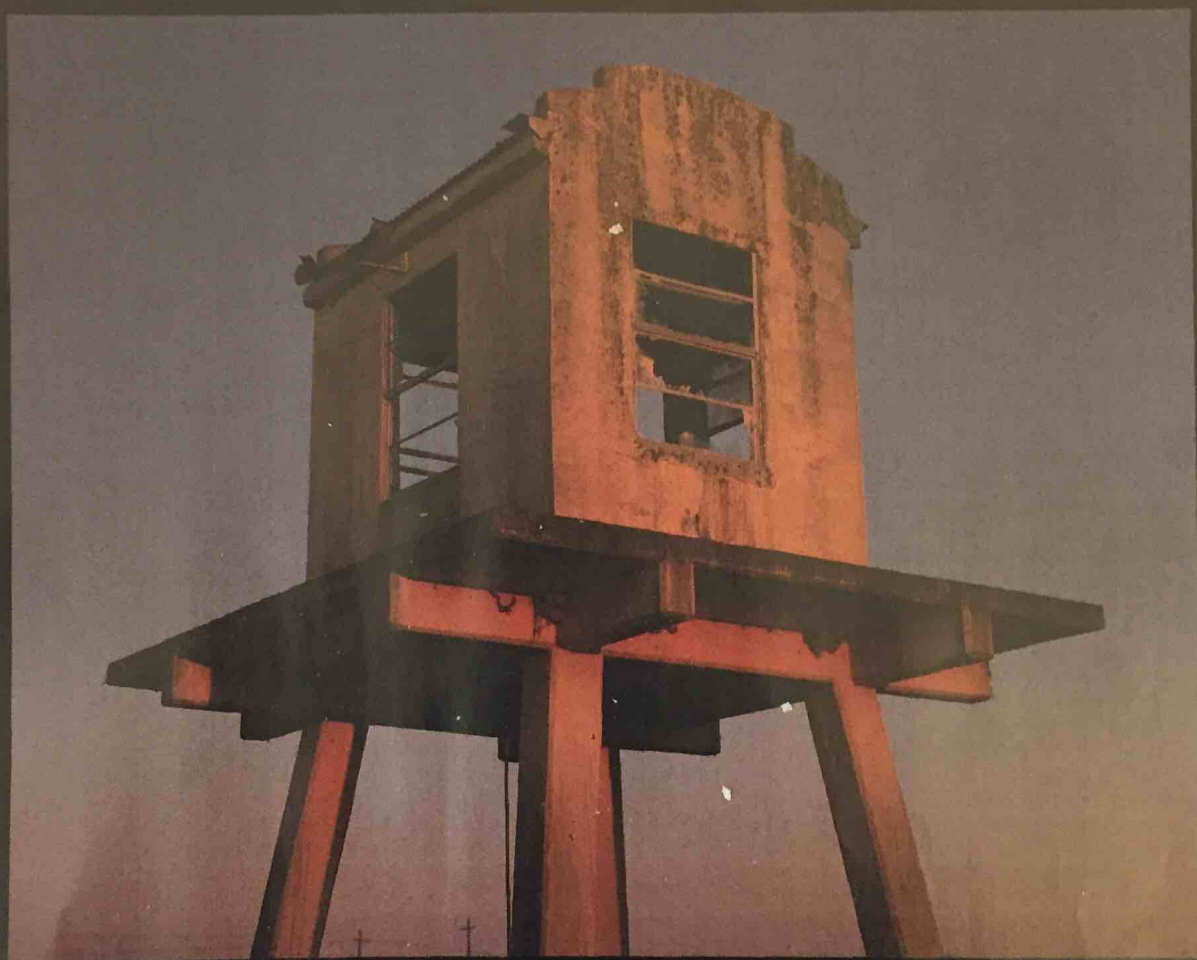


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FT Weekend Magazine

SUPPLEMENT OF THE YEAR

THE GREAT AMERICAN PRISON CRISIS*



*AND HOW TO FIX IT

Courtney Weaver reports from maximum security

MEDITERRANEAN HIDEAWAYS

TOP 50
PINK SAND

1— Serifos, Greece

While Mykonos and Santorini are the megastars of the Cyclades, Serifos remains gloriously in their shadow, overlooked and undisturbed by the holidaying masses. As one guidebook puts it, "Little has happened here since Perseus returned with Medusa's head." There is no airport, and ferry timetables can be capricious (the time from Athens varying from two to five hours), but the journey is worth it - as your ferry pulls into the harbour, you can't fail to be impressed by the steep, barren mountains rising straight from the shore. Improbably perched on one of these peaks is Chora, the island's capital, among the most picturesque towns in the Mediterranean.

When the Victorian English traveller Theodore Bent visited in 1883, he was shocked by the poverty and filthy living conditions, but in recent years the islanders' humble dwellings - shepherds' huts, sailors' cottages, even an abattoir - have been reimagined by Athenian designers and architects as stylish but discreet retreats. Several are available to rent, or you can stay at the Coco-Mat hotel, above the white-sand beach of Vagia. Formed from a row of former miners' huts, it has a bar and restaurant scooped out of the rock and open on one side to the elements, and exudes a sort of castaway chic. Rent a car and tour the island, stopping to walk down dusty tracks to little coves you won't have to share.

The Coco-Mat hotel has doubles from about €230 per night; coco-mat-hotels.com. For villas, try fivestargreece.com, whose properties include the one pictured, at Kalo Ambeli



2 — San Fruttuoso, Italy

To the west of the monied Ligurian resort of Portofino, wooded hills plunge steeply to the sea, making the small coves inaccessible except by boat. Most are uninhabited but in one sits a Benedictine abbey, so close to the sea that its medieval foundations rise straight from the pebbled beach. During summer days, the picturesque scene buzzes with day trippers from Portofino or Camogli, who play on the beach and eat in the couple of restaurants. At night, though, everything changes. There is just one place to stay – an 18th-century cottage jointly run by the Fondo Ambiente Italiano, the state-owned Italian heritage body, and the UK's Landmark Trust. With no TV or WiFi, peace is guaranteed. *Casa de Mar, sleeping up to four, costs from £539 for three nights; landmarktrust.org.uk*

3 — Lastovo, Croatia

Croatia has more than 600 islands and islets, and Lastovo is one of the more remote – stuck out in the Adriatic, accessible by ferries from Split that take between three and five hours. It's a place of craggy coastline and forests, and vineyards that produce the celebrated Marastina wine. There is a Renaissance church and some pretty ancient houses of white stone, but really this is somewhere to swim, walk and simply unwind. The island has just one hotel – the appropriately named Hotel Solitudo – but for real escapism, stay at the lighthouse that sits alone on the headland at Struga. It is one of a dozen scattered along the Croatian coast in which, post automation, the keeper's quarters are rented out to tourists. Most of them, including Struga, offer fairly spartan accommodation but the views and isolation are unrivalled. *The lighthouse at Struga has four apartments sleeping between two and five; an apartment for two costs from €60 per night; lighthouses-croatia.com*



GIORGIO MAJNO

4 — Favignana, Italy

Favignana, off the west coast of Sicily, offers turquoise waters and one of the Med's most unusual retreats: Zu Nillu, a house formed from the remains of a Roman quarry. It has a swimming pool surrounded by honey-coloured stone and numerous secluded, sun-drenched sitting areas. *Zu Nillu sleeps eight and costs from £4,379 per week; thethinkingtraveller.com*

5 — Cavallo, France

At the southern tip of Corsica, the clifftop town of Bonifacia heaves with tourists in August, but just offshore is Cavallo, a private island sometimes dubbed the "Mistique of the Med". It has only one hotel, the four-star Des Pêcheurs, one bar and one shop. *Hotel des Pêcheurs has doubles from €264; hoteldespecheurs.com*

6 — Mani, Greece

The southernmost tip of mainland Greece, the Mani peninsula gets wilder the further south you go. Its turbulent history led to the development of fortified stone tower houses, some of which are now tourist hideaways. Among them is Tainaron Blue, a three-room retreat at Vathia, and Citta dei Nicliani, a boutique hotel at Koita. *Doubles at Tainaron Blue cost from €120; tainaron-blue.com. Doubles at Citta dei Nicliani from €80; cittadeinicliani.com*

7 — Kornati archipelago, Croatia

Even Vis, the furthest Croatian island from the mainland, is seeing growing visitor numbers, but the 140 Kornati islands have no permanent settlement and remain utterly pristine. Sail from Zadar and explore them on a yacht. *Sail Dalmatia offers yachts for six, from about €2,000 per week; saildalmatia.com*

8 — Amorgos, Greece

It says much about Amorgos, the easternmost of the Cyclades, that the biggest tourist attraction is a monastic retreat. The island remains unscathed by mass tourism – not much has changed since Luc Besson shot *The Big Blue* here in the 1980s. *Vorina Ktismata guest house in Chora has doubles from €125; vorinaktismata.com. A villa for three with Elegant Holiday Homes costs from about £600 per week; amorgos-holidayhomes.com*

9 — Datca peninsula, Turkey

This mountainous peninsula is dotted with wild beaches, some accessible only by boat. Stay at the Mehmet Ali Ağa hotel in Reşadiye, a 19th-century mansion set in rose gardens. *Doubles at Mehmet Ali Ağa from about €160 per night; kocaev.com*

10 — Pantelleria, Italy

Though windy and volcanic, Pantelleria enjoys a quiet reputation among the Italian arts and fashion elite. Stay at Sikelia, a new hotel formed from an ancient complex of *dammusi*. *Doubles from about €450 per night; sikeliapantelleria.com*