



holistic holiday in Crete

Yoga Plus is a long established and well known Ashtanga Yoga retreat, in fact Europe's first dedicated centre for this practice. Students return with incredible regularity to learn the seemingly vigorous application of Hatha Yoga asanas and to do their 'practice' under the guidance of the teachers and founders, Radha and Pierre.

Having spent 4-6 months during the winter in Mysore with their guru, Sri K Pattabhi Jois, they wanted to recreate a place where they could teach the series and where others could experience the benefits and wonderful feelings that they had experienced from Yoga. Their aim was to create an oasis where people could practise, not only on the mat but in their everyday lives in the form of: proper breathing, proper exercise, proper diet, proper relaxation and positive thought - kindness and caring in thought, action and speech.

The Ashtanga Vinyasa Yoga method requires getting on your mat the same time each day (early morning) and following a sequence of postures, a Yoga 'mala' or garland, strung together by the breath - moving in and out of each asana using inhalation, exhalation and a number of breaths whilst in each pose.

Heat is built up, 'tapas', which burns off impurities in the muscular system and stills the perpetual busy mind. There are 6 series altogether, with approximately 40 postures in each. Before each series there are standing postures and at the end there is a set finishing sequence.

At Yoga Plus many returning students are working on the Primary series, some the Intermediate and a few the Advanced series. These students attend the self-practice classes where Pierre and Radha adjust them having first formed a teacher/student relationship. Each year more and more Astanga students visit the retreat to practise with Radha and Pierre, enjoying a holiday at the same time. As one student summed it up, 'We can practise with experienced and caring teachers, eat good vegetarian meals in an atmosphere conducive to relaxation and well being'.

The Introductory class is also demanding and designed for those who have never tried Yoga or Ashtanga Yoga before. Students will learn the standing postures and a small part of the Primary Series which they can take home and practise safely on their own.

With all the classes, Radha and Pierre help students to build on their practices, encouraging them to carry on at home. Some stay at Yoga Plus for months and return twice the same year!

Yoga is practised daily, except on Saturday which is a day off and on New or Full Moon days. The 'staff' form a very special part of the wonderful



Top: The bay of Agios Pavlos with Yoga Plus nestling in the rocks at the back of the bay.
 Far left: Radha and Pierre adjusting students in the Mysore - style Self Practice class
 Above: Self Practice.
 Left: Tai Chi at sunset.

atmosphere at Yoga Plus, coming from different countries, as do the guests. They also take the opportunity to enjoy and develop their Yoga lifestyle and Astanga practice, staying for a period of 3 to 6 months working in exchange for Yoga classes, meals and accommodation.

A range of courses to complement the Yoga are offered at different times of the season including tai chi, art, meditation, pilates and salsa under the stars. Everyone enjoys the friendliness and informality at Yoga Plus. Friendships are made and lifestyles improved in this oasis created and inspired by Radha and Pierre.

For more information: www.yogaplus.co.uk