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# The Chef Cooks for You

## The Agrino at the Apokryfo, Lofou

By Patrick Skinner & Mary Jean Covell

*Promoted as a rural hideaway, Apokryfo Traditional Houses are easy enough to find once you get to Lofou, because the undulating, twisting single-track concrete roadway to it is sign-posted at every turn. Suddenly you are upon it, and the first impression is confirmed by all the others you have during your visit, or, preferably, your stay. It is one of clean, uncluttered modern-traditional, Cyprus style. Inside and out, wherever you look, or feel, there are textures. Textures in wood, stone, metal. Textures that please the eye with their satin or lime or natural finishes in muted complementary shades.*

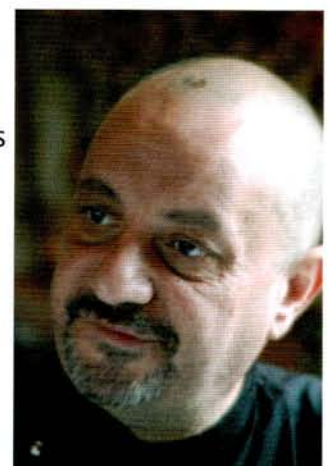
The senses are pleased in other ways, too. A warm room and a log fire on a winter's day. A divinely comfortable bed in your room, studio, suite or house, which offers every comfort and pampered luxury, but which still manages to feel homely. For the over-nighter, weekender or longer vacation-taker literally everything is here. In one of the larger accommodations, for example, there is a kitchen any cook would be happy in. Ultra-modern in respect of equipment but with the beautifully rural touch of an old gate, restored and painted hanging horizontally from the ceiling and used to hang state-of-the-art copper and other cooking wares and the tools of Epicureanism.

Yes, everything is done in exceptionally good taste at the Apokryfo, which brings us to the Agrino restaurant. Here, Chef Anthonis presides over 40 covers with his modern-Cyprus cuisine. His style is perfectly complementary to that of the buildings, décor and accoutrements. Developers-owners, the noted architect Vakis Hadjikyriacou and his interior-designer wife, Diana,

gave him a simple brief: "Be yourself, be original, be Cypriot". One of his interpretations of this direction is to source everything he can for his kitchen locally – as close as his own herb garden and smallholdings around the village.

We knew Anthonis from an earlier incarnation, when he ran the kitchen at the Golf Clubhouse at Aphrodite Hills and remarked then on the quality of his cooking – though it was governed by what one might term "international popular menu" constraints. Now he has a free hand to produce an à la Carte menu at lunch time and a Table d'Hôte evening meal which is his personal take on Cyprus Meze. We can recommend you to both.

At weekends the Agrino is full – so must book. At other times it is less crowded and the chances of discussing your food with the chef are greater. At lunch Anthonis will greet and show you the blackboard where the day's fare is chalked up.







The options allow you to have a simple, but ample, one-plate dish, like a cheese or cold meats platter (€10.00) or tuna, cheese or chicken in a Farm Salad which also provides black-eye beans, olives, tomatoes, onion and greens, herbs and very good dressing. There are grills to choose from, too like chicken fillet or pork chop at €12.00 and there is a daily dessert (€4.50).

At nights, Anthonis offer his Meze for €35.00 a person. He varies the components weekly. For example, recently you could open with some of his hot home-made bread and local green olives; then choose from one of three soups, such as: Vegetable, Onion or Chestnut. After which: modern versions of Cyprus salads with dips (the one made of puréed beetroot with yogurt, herbs and capers is outstanding). The main round might include baked aubergine, octopus slow-cooked en casserole, mashed broad-beans with wild asparagus and artichokes, aromatic rice with pistachio and raisins, stuffed pork loin and roast kid. Traditional – yes. Modern – certainly. Individual – absolutely.

On a visit a few weeks back we enjoyed all the Meze, but standouts were Anthonis's cream of Trachanas soup, chicken livers cooked in a Commandaria sauce, and a delicious light and fluffy and oozingly seductive dessert, Halvas.

This makes a splendid three course meal and Anthonis has obligingly provided the recipes, which may be found on page 45.

The wine list offers mostly local wines (a useful selection) and a few imports at prices from €14.00 to €52.00 or €85.00 for Champagne Ruinart.

It is essential to reserve your table at any time, especially if you would like to discuss your menu with Anthonis. Lovely place for two. Excellent for a group of family or friends. Fine for functions like christenings, meetings and get togethers.

**The Agrino Restaurant at Apokryfo Traditional Houses, Lofou Village, Limassol. Tel: 2581 3776 Email [info@apokryfo.com](mailto:info@apokryfo.com) [www.apokryfo.com](http://www.apokryfo.com) Lunch for two with wine from: €60.00 Dinner for two with wine, from €85.00 Recommended.**

*For a fuller profile and details of accommodations, check our website [www.cyprus-gourmet.com](http://www.cyprus-gourmet.com)*

