

## Mourtzanakis Residence



BY JACOLINE VINKE \*

**If you are looking** for tranquillity and seclusion, without however being too far away from everything, especially the sea, if you don't want to blow the budget but you appreciate space and comfort, and if you like the kind of hosts who will treat you like friends but who also provide good service and respect your privacy, then head to the Mourtzanakis Residence, some 20 kilometers west of the city of Iraklio on Crete.

Markos and Smaro (short for Smaragda) are Greek but have more of an international background: He grew up in Beirut and she lived for many years in Paris; their 11-year-old son speaks three languages fluently and is currently learning his fourth. A few years ago, they returned to their native soil to run a small, eco-friendly hotel consisting of four individual guesthouses. Everything is designed with a view to "easy living." The houses are of modern design and furnished and decorated in a fresh and unpretentious style, with some traditional touches. The layout is open-plan with the master bedroom in a loft, while children can sleep on built-in convertible sofas in the living room. Kitchens are fully equipped so you can prepare your own meals, though I wouldn't really bother, as healthy home-cooked dinners are served on the terrace or at a large table in the communal sitting room. If you're feeling lazy, you can just stay put by the (smallish) pool. The views over olive groves, the mountains and the sea are mesmerizing; the sunsets are to die for. Otherwise, stroll to the 16th-century village of Achlada, drive to the sea (there are four beaches only about 10 minutes away by car) or ask Markos to help you organize excursions and activities including horseback riding, scuba diving, mountain climbing and kayaking. Perhaps the Mourtzanakis Residence is not a place that will awe you the moment you arrive. But you will fall under the spell of the super-friendly atmosphere and happy feeling, and the peaceful, beautiful surroundings. Perfect for longer holidays.

Prices for two persons start at 70 euros per night (breakfast not included).



Mourtzanakis Residence, Achlada, Aghia Pelagia, Crete,  
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\* JACOLINE VINKE IS AUTHOR OF THE BOOKS "GREAT SMALL HOTELS IN GREECE" AND "AROUND GREECE IN 80 STAYS." HER WEBSITE, [WWW.SMALLHOTELSINGREECE.COM](http://WWW.SMALLHOTELSINGREECE.COM), PRESENTS SMALL AND CHARMING HOTELS ALL AROUND THE COUNTRY.