

MERCHANT MARINE

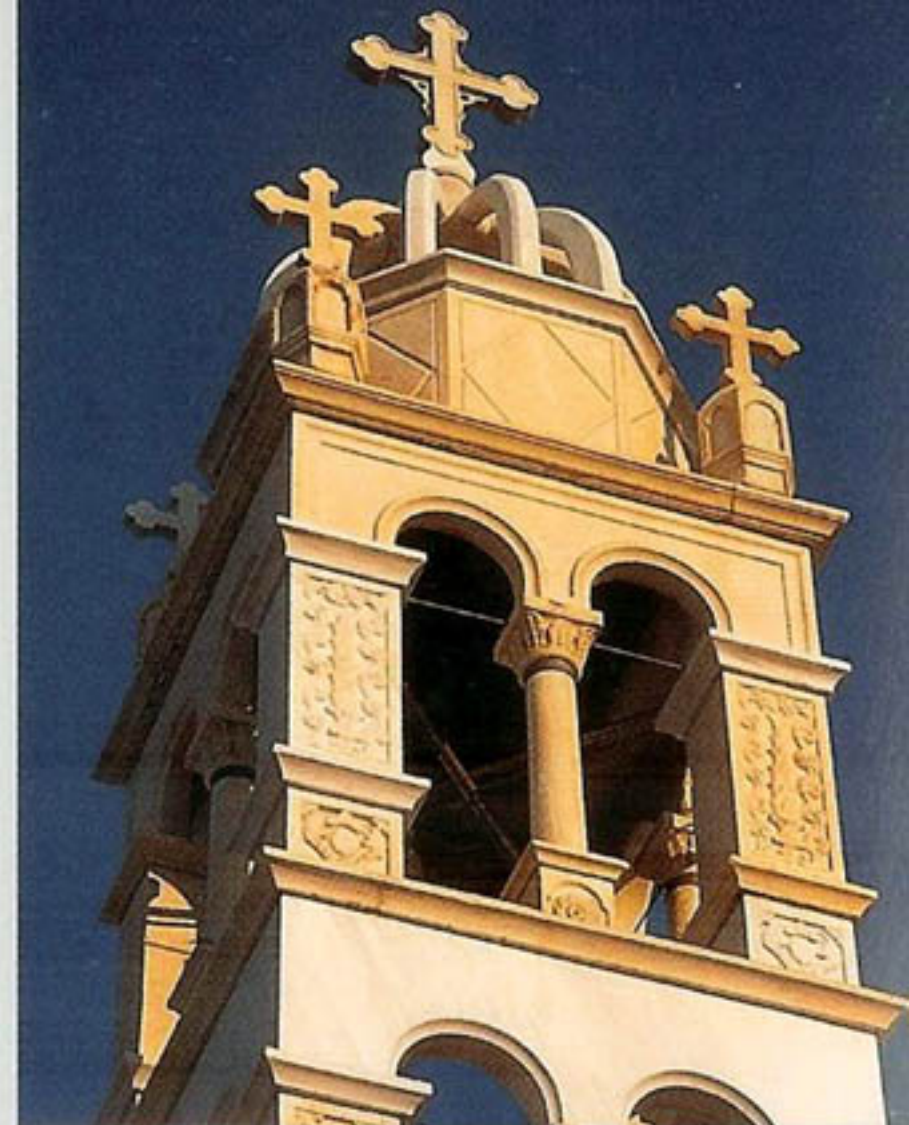
Spetses: Wartime History

- Orloff Resort
- Hatdziyiannis Mexis Museum
- Bouboulina Museum
- Nafpigoxilourgio Shop (Mr Kobogiorga)
- Tarsanas
- Liotrivi Restaurant
- Dentreliano
- Klimis Pastry Shop
- Throubi Bar

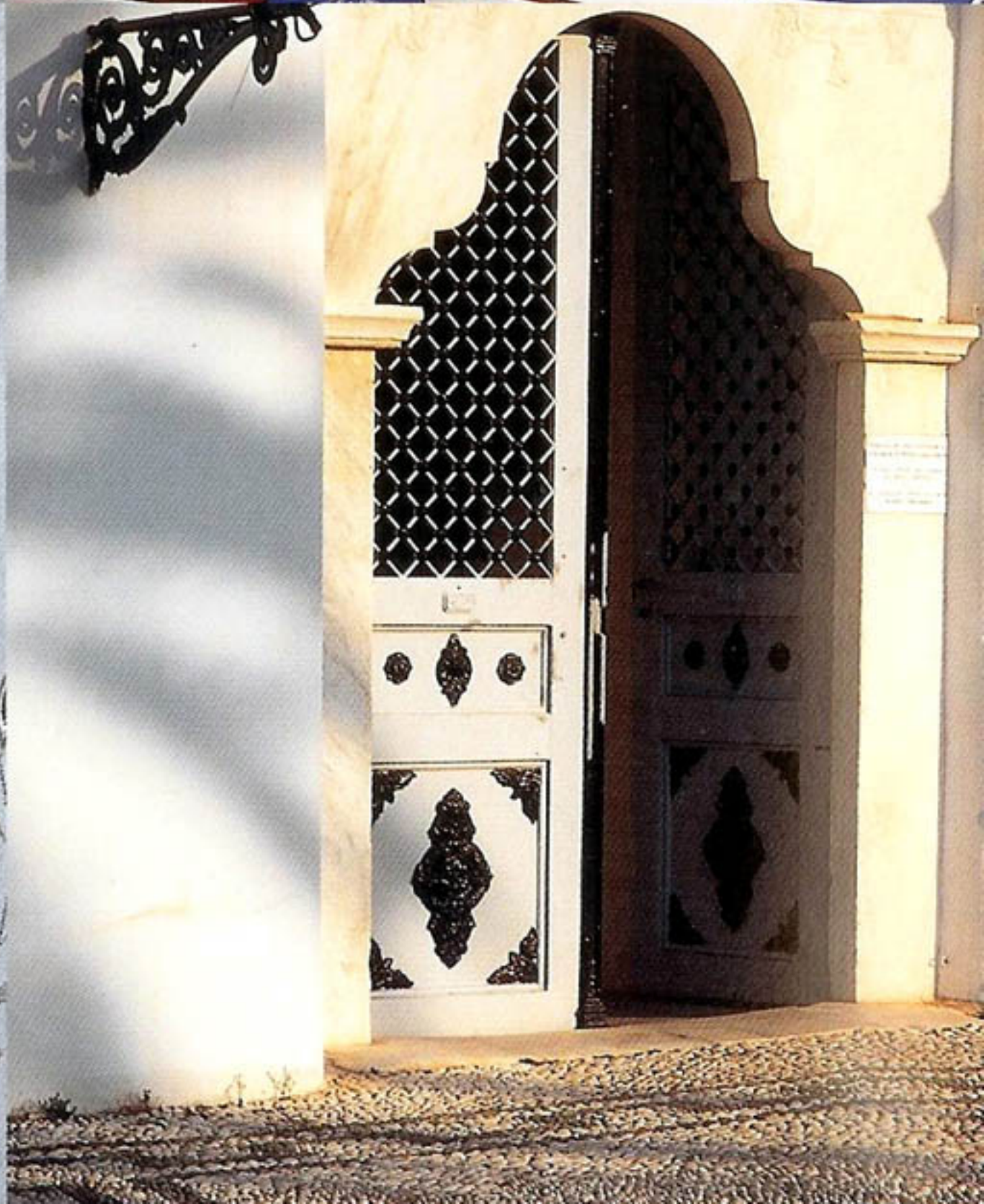
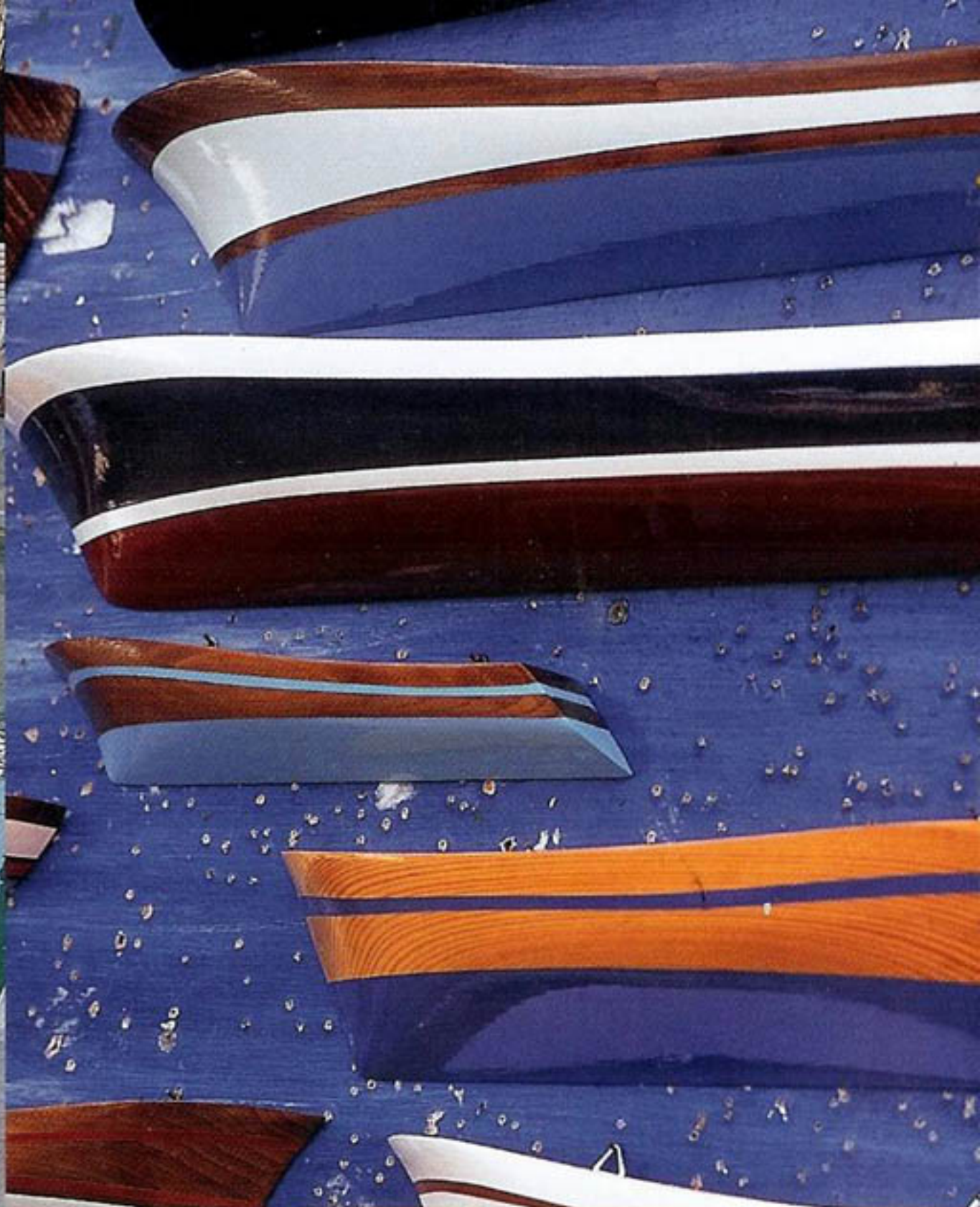
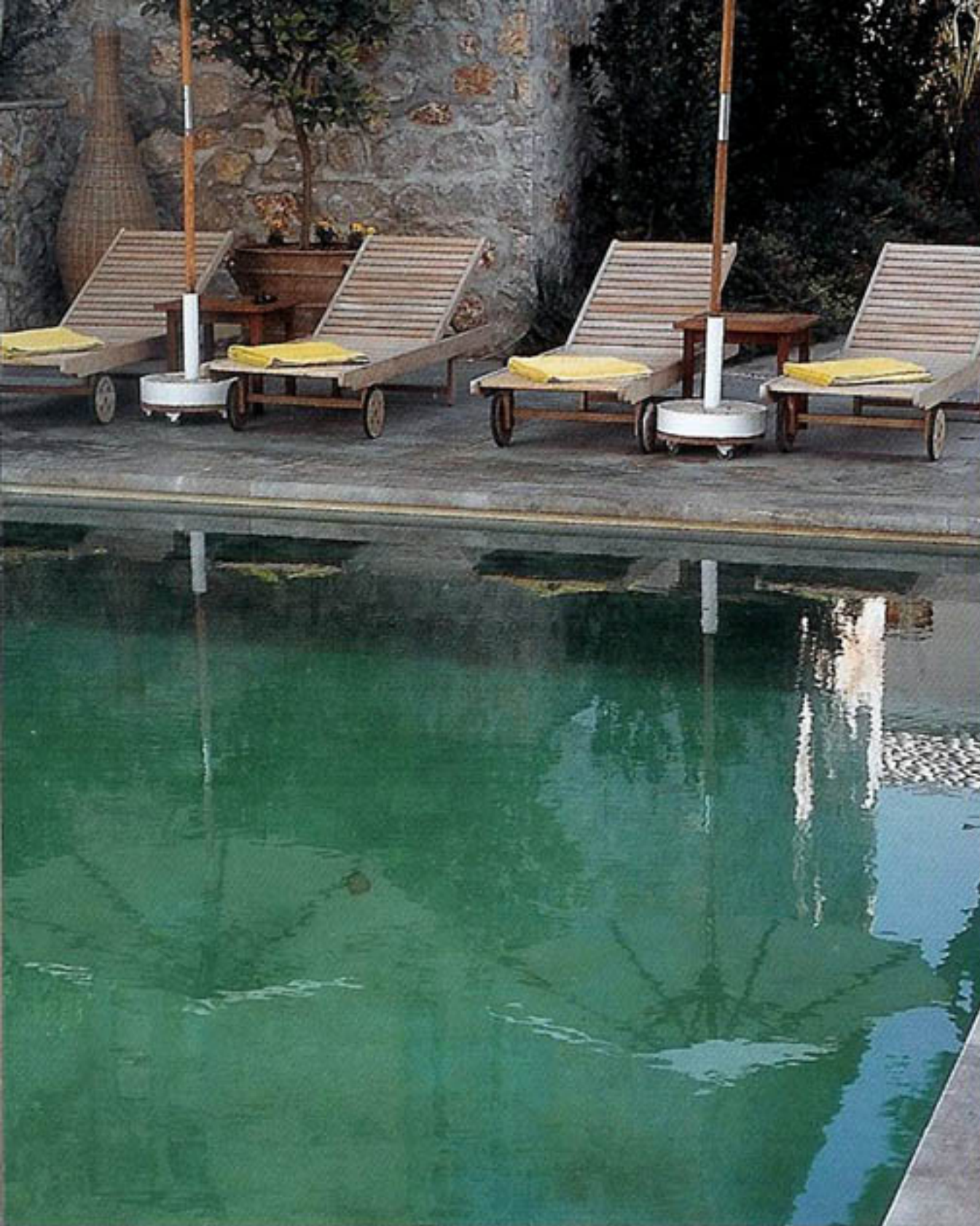
Spetses shares with Hydra a prosperous history of merchant shipping. It, too, played a significant role in the War of Independence, a proud heritage preserved in the island's suitably ringing motto, 'freedom or death'. In ancient times, Spetses was known as *Pityoussa* (or 'pine-clad'), a reference to the dense pine forests that still feature prominently in the landscape.

Your first encounter upon arrival will be the *Dapia*, or 'fortified place', the commercial centre of the island and former rallying point during the revolution. Past the cannons and cafés you will tread upon charming maritime-themed mosaics and, as there is a ban on automobiles, you can either keep on walking or rent a moped or bicycle to get around. Alternatively, you can choose a romantic horse-drawn carriage to reach your destination. Pause to admire the magnificent Posidonio hotel, built on the waterfront in 1914, before continuing on to the new Orloff Resort, a 19th-century mansion that has been converted into stylish suites with balconies overlooking terracotta rooftops and the sea beyond. Spend some time exploring the shore by taking a water taxi to Agii Anargyri, with its fine stretch of sand and excellent snorkelling inside Bekiris Cave, or visit the pine-shaded, emerald-green Zogeria cove.

To the west of the island is the Anargyrios and Korgialenios School, built in 1919 and modelled on the public schools of England. John Fowles was inspired to write *The Magus* during his years teaching here in the 1950s. Another site worth visiting is the home of Hatdziyiannis Mexis, Spetses's first governor, where the ground floor now houses an archaeology exhibit of items recovered from ancient shipwrecks. Other floors are dedicated to antiquities and artefacts from the War of Independence (1821–32), including the mortal remains of Lascarina Bouboulina, one of the revolution's most illustrious figures. Her late-17th-century mansion, with its carved Florentine ceiling, is also a museum displaying









such personal items as her ornate golden pistol and the safe from her ship, the *Agammemnon*, which she built herself and commanded during the war. Such is her legendary status – she is the only woman ever to be granted the title of Admiral – that Lawrence Durrell wrote that even her portrait smelled of gunpowder.

More humble boats are still being built in the traditional way on the island, near the old harbour. You can pick up a hand-made miniature from Mr Kobogiorga, an occasionally grumpy craftsman who also makes models to order. In the harbour restaurants and tavernas, including Tarsanas, serve fresh fish, and Liotrivi, named after its olive press, offers Mediterranean fare in a seaside location. The quaint little Dentreolivano has an eclectic menu and is open year round, with tables in the square in summer and a cozy fireplace in winter. For desert go to Klimis, famous for its *amigdalota*, pear-shaped sweets made of almond paste. Nightlife on Spetses is lively and diverse; one place you won't visit for 'just one' is Throubi, whose ethnic, jazzy atmosphere will keep you there till late into the night.