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PEDAL IN PARADISE

A LUXURY CYCLING ESCAPE AT CYPRUS' AGORA HOTEL

Written by Richard Howard

Nestled in the serene mountains of Lefkara, Agora Hotel offers cycling enthusiasts a rare blend of Mediterranean beauty, Michelin-recognized hospitality, and tailor-made adventures. From secluded roads and premium bikes to sunset hikes and saltwater pools, discover why this boutique retreat is redefining the art of active luxury.



In September I was back on a plane to Lefkara in Cyprus to visit a truly stunning hotel that specialises in offering bicycle enthusiasts a very luxurious base camp to explore Cyprus' unspoiled mountains and what can only be described as truly magnificent views.

When I say unspoiled I mean that when I went out on a bike ride with one of the co-owners (a lovely guy called Kasper) on the Sunday of my visit we barely passed a car, another person or other cyclist in the 3hrs that we were on our ride and this was on the weekend which you'd expect to be one of the busiest days for a ride.

That was of course great from a safety point of view but it also made the riding all that much enjoyable just to get away from it all.

Comparing this to my recent experience in Serre Chevalier in the French alps which had quite a bit of traffic from other cyclists and cars it certainly was a refreshing change.

Especially if you made a wrong move on your bicycle due to an impatient driver over there as if the knee high crash barrier failed to stop you then you're going straight off the edge of a cliff!

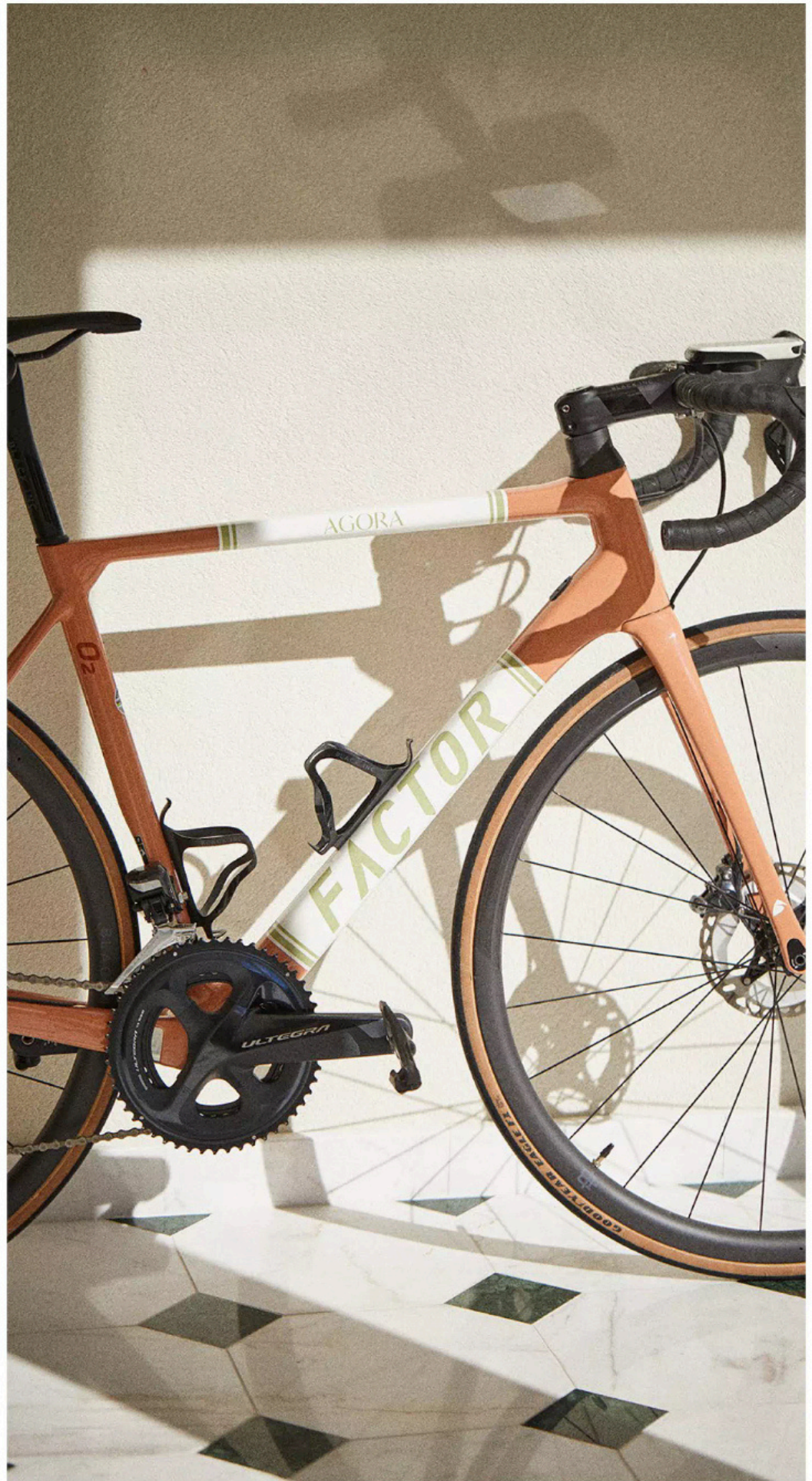
In Cyprus I felt very safe riding even though we were somewhat isolated, the roads were well maintained and I had consistent phone signal throughout the ride.

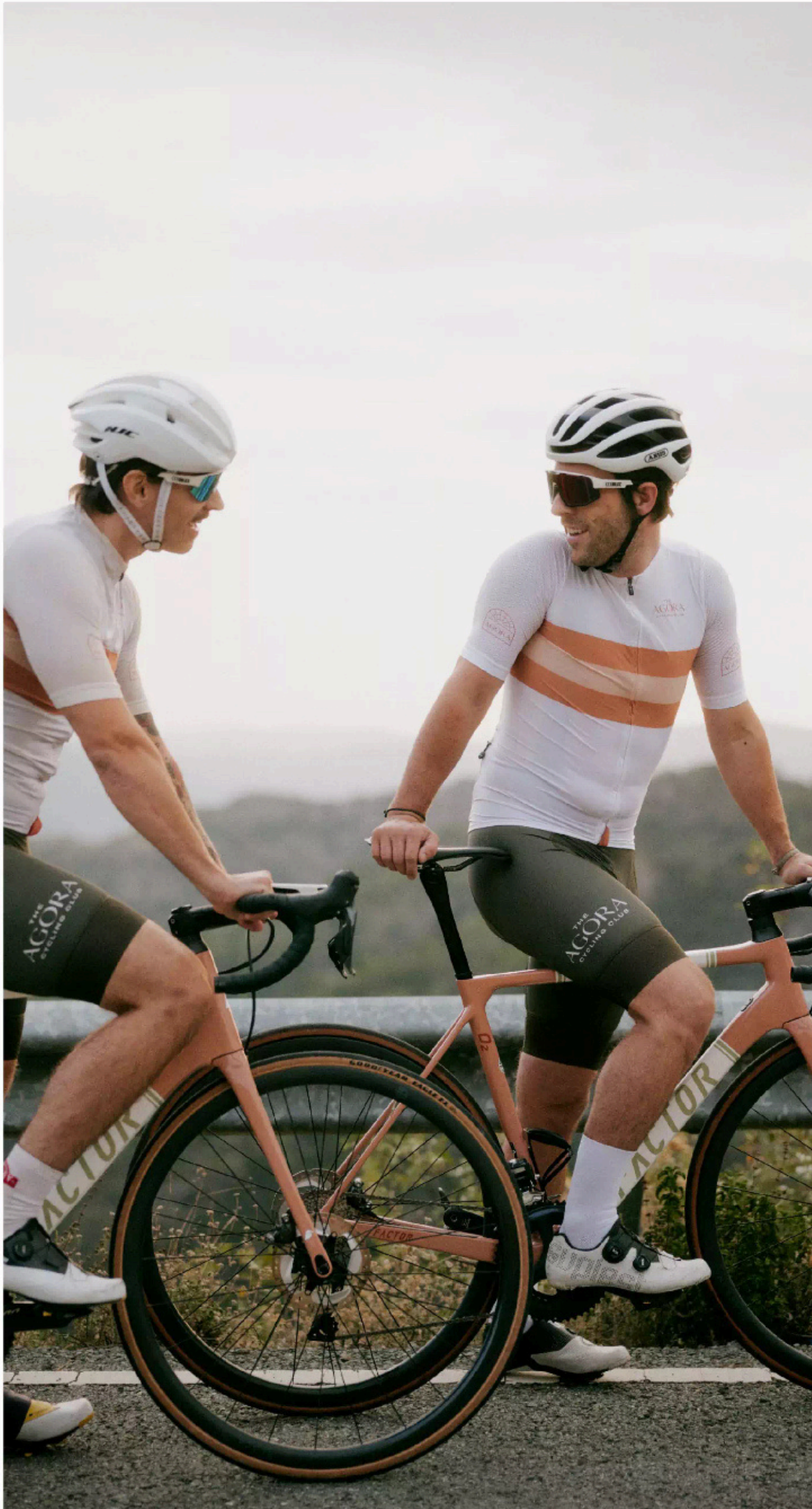
As you can imagine due to Cyprus mediterranean climate it means that riding during the peak Summer months is not something that is recommended. Even though during my September trip we left at 9am or so and by 11am it was a good mid 30's temperature wise I managed to cope just fine thanks to the odd break and taking lots of water.

As you may recall from my previous article visiting Club Med's hotel in the French alps in June, I am not an advanced cyclist by anyone's standards. I have a good level of fitness and stamina for someone in their late 30's and so I wouldn't let the heat put you off.

Although if planning a trip: April, May, October and November would be the most comfortable albeit busiest times to cycle.

In regards to whether this hotel is a good fit for you I'd say it depends. As it's a luxury hotel aimed at those who have the budget and enjoy the finer things in life, it's also aimed at those who have a reasonable





amount of cycling experience. You certainly don't need to be a pro but having climbed a few mountains and having a good level of fitness will certainly make it more enjoyable for you.

You can of course bring your own helmet and bicycle or you can rent one of the ones they have on site which is something I did to avoid the airlines crazy baggage charges.

I rode one of their custom made Factor O2 Disc Carbon Road Bikes equipped with premium Shimano Ultegra Di2 components made by a British company no less. It was certainly one of the best I'd ridden and worth over 5000 Euros a pop you'd expect nothing less.

Whilst you're welcome to take your bike and explore at your hearts content as the hotel is a cosy 20 or so bedroom establishment they're able to provide each guest with a personal experience that you wouldn't get from a huge hotel or chain.

So much so that both owners Aleks and Kasper work on site seven days a week and I would imagine meet and interact with each and every guest. And so if you'd prefer to ride with an experienced guide on some of the days then they can arrange this for you. They're of course both cycling enthusiasts and so can also provide some expert recommendations as well.

It was very refreshing to see amongst the staff a very "can do" attitude and commitment to tailor each guest's experience to their needs.

On the night that I arrived there was a private birthday party being held and I later learnt that this family had hosted 4 family birthdays in the last 3yrs at the hotel which clearly demonstrates that they feel very well taken care of.

Primary hotel owner Aleks also told me about one of the planned rides they offer is around 150 kilometres from the coast to the hotel and a shorter one of 100k closer to the hotel for those who'd prefer one not so intense. I am currently not at that level yet but the taster ride I did during my two and half day trip certainly left me hungry for more riding through their secluded roads with great views of nature that's for sure!

For those looking to take a day or two off from riding then you can certainly explore the mountains on foot too.

Aleks took me on a hike at sunset just a short drive from the hotel to Dyo Mouttes, located in the Machairas forest that had some truly beautiful views. The incline to the top was certainly not intense and so a hike open to virtually all fitness levels.

Once again just like on the bicycle ride the previous day there were almost no cars on the road and we didn't come across another hiker at all and so truly a perfect place to unplug from the rest of the world.

As many of us know, Ben Nevis, the tallest mountain in the UK, is 1,345 metres above sea level. Whereas





If you intend to move around a lot during your trip then I would suggest hiring a car as the 30-40 minute taxi ride I took from the airport to the hotel was a good 70 euros. As Cyprus closed their last railway line in the 1950's travelling by road is the only means to get around.

Another thing of note is that the hotel is adults only, they do not permit children to stay there or visit their restaurant and if like me you need to do a little work whilst visiting I'm happy to say that the WiFi was reliable and fast.

And so to summarise the hotel is well worth a visit if you value exploring mountains on your bicycle with incredible views, enjoy the solitude of biking just in your group and have the budget and desire for a premium experience.

If you're tempted to visit Cyprus then do visit the Agora Hotels' website for more details and photographs and consider booking directly with them vs going through Booking.com and Expedia as not only will it save them on their crazy commissions but as the Agora website says they offer a discount on guests who book directly with them.

As I'm sure you can tell I had a great time and am very much looking forward to telling you all about my island hopping tour in Croatia in next month's edition of BIKE Magazine!

www.theagorahotel.com

