

# Vacations Of A Lifetime

## Wishing For A Winter Wonderland? Try Sunny Cyprus!

by Anthony Grant

(NAPSA)—A leisurely walk along the gorgeous beach where the goddess Aphrodite rose from a gentle wave, followed by a visit to a Crusader fortress and a tour of a boutique winery—it's all part of an ordinary day in Cyprus.

During the cooler months, daytime temperatures are seasonably fresh, days of sunshine are rarely marred by rain and hotel and tour prices become even more attractive.

Although Cyprus is the third largest island in the Mediterranean and geographically diverse, it's very easy to explore. Within an hour's drive from the capital city of Nicosia, famous for its wholly intact Venetian walls, are the Troodos Mountains, home of Cyprus's very own Mount Olympus, which gets enough snow in the winter for skiing. The pine-clad peaks are also home to miles of well-marked hiking trails and wondrously painted Byzantine churches on Unesco's World Heritage List.

An hour's drive south of the capital brings you to hillsides studded with lemon and orange groves; villages such as Omodos and Laneia that hum to the rhythms of authentic tavernas and mosaic workshops and plains with olive and cypress trees that slope gently toward a coast first settled by the ancient Greeks and Cypriot's some 10,000 years ago.

On a broad cliff facing the south coast is Kourion (Curium), an archeological showstopper that includes an ancient Greek amphitheater, extensive Roman mosaics and the evocative remains of an early Christian basilica. Nearby are the ruins of the Temple of Apollo Hylates, protector of the woodlands.

When it comes to deities, Cyprus really belongs to Aphrodite, who rolled ashore in the foam of a wave at Petra tou Romiou, a white pebble beach west of the port city of Limassol. According to myth, the goddess of love liked to frolic in the green countryside around Pafos, a seaside town in the far western part of the island. With its Roman mosaics, subterranean Tombs of



**Tombs of the Kings from the 4th century B.C., in Pafos.**

Kings and important Christian sites, the whole town of Pafos is on Unesco's World Heritage List.

While Cyprus is easy to explore for independent travelers, joining an escorted tour can offer significant savings. One great value this year is the Limassol Winter special from Amelia Tours, an air and land package that includes transportation via Luthansa, R/T airport transfers, six nights' first-class hotel accommodation and Cypriot-style buffet breakfast daily starting at \$925 per person, double occupancy with midweek departure. For more information call Amelia International at 1-800-742-4591, or visit [www.ameliainternational.com](http://www.ameliainternational.com).

Kinisis Tours offers attractively priced packages as well, 7 days/6 nights for the months of November 2004 and January 2005 that include roundtrip airfare from NYC, 6 nights hotel accommodation at a 3-star hotel in Limassol, breakfast and lunch or dinner daily, tour of the beautiful Troodos mountains, tour of Pafos, tour of Lefkara and the capital of Cyprus, Lefkosia. R/T transfers to and from the airport to the hotel. Price \$1,135.00 per person based on double occupancy. Airline taxes not included. For reservations please call (877) 567-6880.

For general information on visiting Cyprus contact the Cyprus Tourism Organization at (212) 683-5280, on the Web at [www.visitcyprus.org.cy](http://www.visitcyprus.org.cy), or e-mail [gocyprus@aol.com](mailto:gocyprus@aol.com).