



JOIN THE CLUB!

The first private members club for the local business community is the brainchild of Valentina Kislava, CEO of Phoenix Leaders, who wants it to become a place where businessmen and women can do business, network, relax and be intellectually stimulated through events and discussions

By Pan Charalambous | Photos by Amy Murrell and Slava Potalakh

On a warm summer morning in mid-July, I met Valentina Kislava, the CEO of Phoenix Leaders and founder of The Club, at a cosy cafeteria in the heart of Nicosia. Arriving at our breakfast meeting slightly early, I started going through the interview questions I had prepared, while trying to imagine what Valentina looked like, as I hadn't seen her before. The title of CEO usually brings to mind a picture of someone strict, serious and formal but I realized that I had the wrong idea the moment Valentina arrived with a big smile, friendly attitude and exciting, bubbly character. After getting to know each other a little bit, we talked about why Phoenix Leaders was founded and what The Club has to offer to businesses in Cyprus. It is much more than one might think. Valentina is an insightful coach and leadership advisor with a dynamic style and an eye for detail. She has worked with leaders globally to help them inspire multi-generational and multi-cultural teams in a world of changing business models and non-traditional ways of working,

and she is passionate about promoting an authentic, sustainable and impactful leadership style. Phoenix Leaders works with both existing and emerging leaders to develop the skills and mental resilience they need to thrive in today's ever-changing, fast-paced world of technology-driven social and economic disruption. Leaders face an unprecedented need to be able to adapt and flex their thinking to future risks and opportunities, to be transparent, authentic and emotionally aware. The Club is a new, exciting, agile workspace where members can do business in a dynamic and fluid way. It provides prominent and aspiring professionals with excellent networking opportunities, while supporting the interactive and intellectual side of leadership through regular events. "Cyprus has been a wonderful home to my family over the past 5 years and one to which the three of us feel a very close bond. We are incredibly grateful for the heartfelt welcome that we received when we arrived in the country and for the continued warmth and kindness which is shown to our family," Valentina said, before explaining more about The Club. "The idea behind it was to combine a

great location where the Cypriot business community can come together and discuss ideas, with a more structured portfolio of training programmes, providing members with insights and perspectives, which will really add value to them and their businesses." The Club is housed in a historic building which was actually due for demolition but, instead, has been transformed into a convivial, atmospheric and welcoming clubhouse, a place where historical heritage and modern luxury converge. "We were looking for the perfect spot for The Club" Valentina said. "It had to be a place that was convenient to get to, so that members would really make the most of the building – be that for meetings, events or even just a cup of coffee on their way past." She then elaborated further on the importance of being in a building that reflects and speaks to the philosophy of constant renewal and rebirth. "I loved the idea of giving a building a new lease of life, whilst retaining its original features and anyone who visits The Club will see that much of the traditional style of the building – such as the metalwork or the staircase – is still there."



The Club is still something of an emerging concept for the Cypriot business community but Valentina Kislava believes that it can add a huge amount of benefit. “I am immensely proud to play a role in it,” she said, adding with a bright smile that, “In many ways, Cyprus is a very traditional market and I am excited that this initiative has been wel-



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comed so warmly. I get such a thrill when I see the reactions of visitors to The Club and how their eyes light up when they see how we have incorporated old and new.” Although The Club is a relatively new venue, there are a number of projects scheduled in the coming months. Both local and international experts from a range of sectors and industries will be talking to members on issues that are relevant and pertinent to their businesses.

“I am personally excited to be welcoming

Cyprus’ very own Professor Costas Markides, who is one of the world’s foremost experts on strategy and innovation, an author and internationally acclaimed teacher and speaker, to speak at The Club on September 28,” she told me. “This will be a unique opportunity for Members to get to know Professor Markides in an intimate setting and probe him on the topics and issues that they are encountering on a daily basis in their own businesses.”

In November, The Club will be welcoming Matt Wright, former Global CEO of Russell Reynolds, the global executive search firm. Wright is an expert in helping companies around the world find leadership talent across multiple geographies. “For me, the goal is to create a place that the Cypriot business community can call home,” Valentina explained. “By that, I mean that I want The Club to be a place where members come not just for intellectual stimulation and discussion but also for relaxation and a much needed time-out from their busy working day, be that 5 minutes with the paper on the terrace or simply a chat with one of our team. I want to create an environment which not only allows Cypriots to embrace their cultural legacy and heritage, but also encourages a respectful approach to cultural collaboration, allowing the various communities within Cy-

prus to work together to realise the country’s potential.” Joining The Club is quite simple. A member of staff is available to answer all inquiries via e-mail and will arrange a meeting for coffee and a tour of the premises. Phoenix Leaders will then provide potential members with all of the relevant information and forms, depending on whether you are looking for corporate or private membership. If you’re interested, contact ask@phoenixleaders.co.uk 