

Kastellorizo and its Architecture

by Nick Mandikos, Brisbane



For some time, my wife Evy and I wanted to buy a villa in Greece. In the late 1990's, my practice became involved in Architectural commissions in provincial Portugal, and I was required to travel extensively around Southern Europe. This presented the perfect opportunity to look around. Evy and I visited many regions, islands and villages and inspected many properties. Each had its own charm and appeal, but, to us, none had more appeal than the islands of Kastellorizo and Symi.

Being an Alexandrian-Symioti, I leaned towards property in Symi. This island had tourism activity, 2500+ permanent citizens, 5 villages, no cars, 32 donkeys and about 4,000+ steps. However, Evy's family connections with Kastellorizo were greater. To me, Kastellorizo had the same architectural appeal as Symi, and with its small 300+ population and huge Australian representation, I was quickly convinced.

Both of Evy's parents were born on Kastellorizo so it seemed appropriate to resurrect the old family home. With the help of several Diamandas and Efstathis relatives to identify the site and with our all-important "prikosymphono" (the official wedding dowry document – perhaps one of the earliest of prenuptial agreements) in hand, we had our block of land.

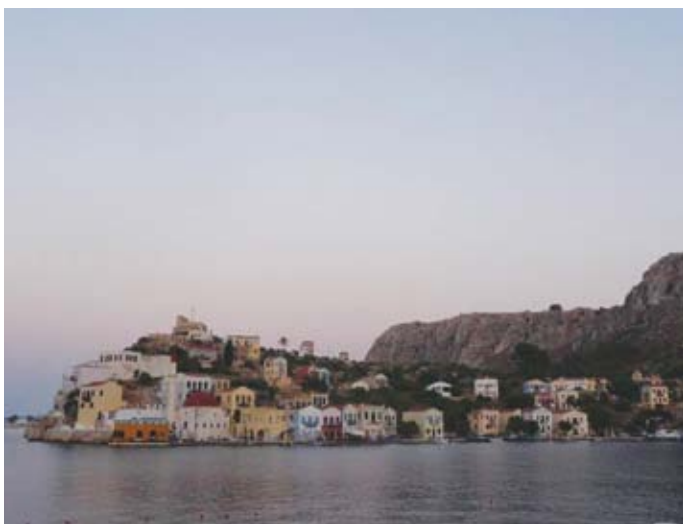
Sadly, there was no house or even a ruin on the land. The once popular residential and privileged area of Kavos, where the family home once stood, had been obliterated during World War 2. All that was left to indicate a home had ever been there was the "sterna" (cistern).

Our 4 year construction adventure was about to begin.

In conformity with the system, we engaged a local Architect/Engineer to "document" our house within the bounds of Kastellorizian design. It was interesting to see how many different elevational solutions he presented for the same floor plan. All were aesthetically pleasing. All were Neo Classical in style. I was impressed with his design approach and I wanted to understand how Neo Classicism evolved on Kastellorizo.

In Antiquity, the Architectural "Classic Greek" style, was developed as an aesthetic expression of serious importance. It was used in the design of temples and places of worship (e.g. Parthenon). The style was later extended to the design of public buildings. The Romans embraced this "Classicism" and used it extensively in the design of their public buildings. Examples of the Greek Classic style can be found in Italy, Greece, Turkey and North Africa.

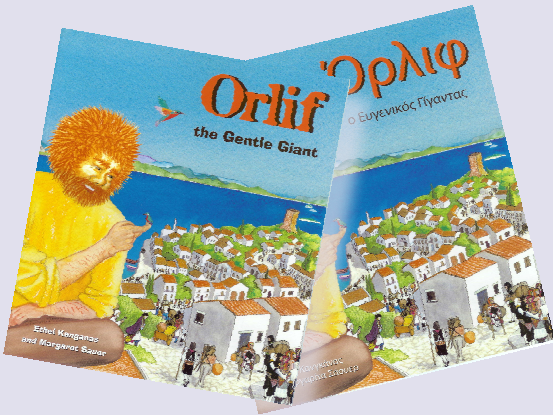
During the latter part of the last Millennium, the style became known as "Neo Classical". It was again employed in the design of important civic buildings worldwide.



Since the late 1700's and during the heady years of maritime prosperity, Kastellorizo's merchants emulated this style in the construction and establishment of their homes. Originally the

Kastellorizo

Christmas Gift for Children



This fable would make a great gift for your children or grandchildren and is a wonderful story set on Kastellorizo

\$20 each

If you would like to purchase a copy in English or Greek at \$20.00 each plus postage.

Please e-mail:

coordinator@australianfriendskastellorizo.org



Application for AFK Membership

Funding of AFK projects has been by way of \$90,000 of seed capital contributed by a number of individual members. To continue delivering our projects further funding is required. To date AFK has raised an additional \$5,900 through your generous Foundation Membership subscriptions.

At the February 2009 meeting of AFK, members expressed a desire to make a financial contribution to assist AFK achieve its objectives and deliver on its programs and projects. To this end it has been decided that any member can become a Foundation Member by paying a minimum of \$100. Of course payments in excess of \$100 would be most welcome and some members have already indicated they will be making larger contributions. Any contribution will be appreciated.

AFK Membership will of course still remain free to any person wanting to be a friend of Kastellorizo by simply completing the Membership Application form or online at <http://www.australianfriendskastellorizo.org/membership.htm>

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Residential Address : _____

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Are you over 18 years of age? : Yes ☐ No ☐

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If you wish to become a Foundation Member please make cheque payable to Australian Friends of Kastellorizo Ltd and post to:
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AFK wishes you a

Kastellorizo and its Architecture continued...

by Nick Mandikos, Brisbane

style was adopted by the declared "rich and famous" to reflect opulence and their status. The style soon spread and today forms the uniqueness of the fabric of Kastellorizian Architecture. So much so, that the design of any construction on the island today, is controlled by the Heritage Department of the Greek Government.

In general terms, this style celebrates aesthetic simplicity through organised symmetry. Any of the 3 Orders of Greek Architecture (Doric, Ionian and Corinthian) may be used in its design.

As a background to Neo Classical style, the main constituent elements are:

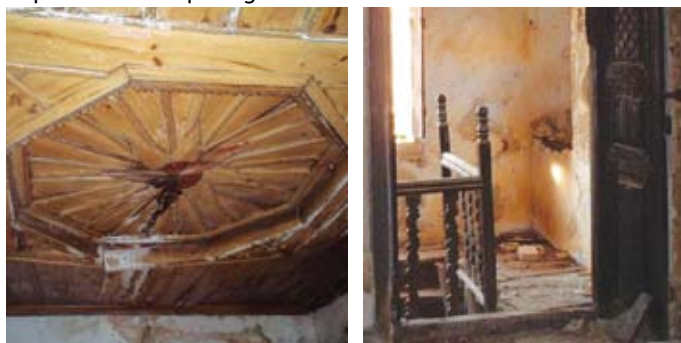
- Perfect symmetry of building elevations
- Verticality in proportions (tall narrow windows and doors)
- Gabled roofs forming a pediment- with wheel vents and/or other relief decoration - all supported on tall columns
- High ceilings with central rosette ornamentation, ornate cornices and skirtings
- Ornate metalwork to balconies, grilles and Balustrading



- Exquisitely detailed timber windows and doors
- Fluted columns on block bases – generally in bas relief.

Neo Classicism is not unique to Kastellorizo – It is the style adopted by a few other Greek 'seafaring' islands, including Symi and Corfu, and also the town of Gythion in Peloponissos.

However, Kastellorizo's Neo Classical Style is quite unique as it blends a host of Ottoman features, vibrant colours, and borrows other decorative elements from the East and the Dodecanese, such as pebble mosaic paving.



The island of Kastellorizo is small and barren, with one significant deep water harbour, around which the housing was established. Up to 10,000 Kastellorizians lived in this concentration of houses. Land was at a premium, and housing was allowed to rise two and three storeys, often with common adjoining walls. The lack of floor area encouraged the building-in to the common walls of cupboards,

wardrobes and racks of shelves.

From my observations, and my personal experience of restoring another Kastellorizian house, I noted the following.

Walls were originally of stone construction, half metre thick, rendered and painted. Lower floors were concrete, stone paved, with a raised section to house the 'sterna' and to provide space for the 'sopha' (a platform used for sleeping accommodation). Upper floors were framed in hand-hewn or adzed Katrani from Turkey with floorboards up to 30cm wide. Roofing was framed and lined with Katrani timber, and roofed with tiles imported from Marseilles. Katrani was also used for timber trims, doors, stairs etc which were all intricately detailed, crafted and often carved. Dividing walls were few. They were timber framed, lathed and plastered. Heavy ornate curtains were often favoured as room dividers.

Sun control, privacy and ventilation to windows and balconies was provided by shutters. Early shutters were simple swinging timber panels with no glazing. During the latter part of the 19th Century, glazed windows were introduced and external shutters became louvered. Heating was provided by way of fireplaces of unique Kastellorizian design whose flues were built into the thick stone walls and not easily delineated from the exterior. Fireplaces with a raised hearth and raised internal 'side burners' were used for cooking family meals.

To maximise natural light, windows opening onto the narrow laneways were made taller by employing low sills (30cm). There were no balconies from these windows, and to prevent inhabitants falling out, special timber balustrading was installed. On a sunny afternoon, women would sit on the wide window sills, crocheting or embroidering.



Kastellorizian homes have a very small footprint and require good contemporary planning knowledge to maximise the usage of the available/allowable building void.

Our house at Kavos was completed in 2003.

Although it was constructed with modern materials and methods, internally it provides many traditional Kastellorizian features such as winding stairs, Ottoman fireplaces, detailed joinery, stone paving and "forno" (outdoor oven). Externally, the presentation is Kastellorizian Neo Classical. This house can harmonise comfortably in any group of houses on the island.

Evy and I are very pleased to have made the decision to establish a house on Kastellorizo, and commend the Government for enforcing its Heritage Design ByLaws which will preserve the unique Architectural Neo Classical character of this delightful island for future generations.

merry Christmas

Student Exchange - *Our Personal Experiences of Kastellorizo*

With love I dedicate this article to my Pappou Brazil.

I had heard many stories of the island of Kastellorizo, as well as many traditions that had been carried out throughout our family. From the day my great, grandmother Maria Komninos left the island, there was a hole in her heart; a hope that this love of the island would be carried on throughout future generations. My Pappou Brazil, still had this love for the island and passed it through to me. Ever since I went to the Greek school of St Andrews Grammar in Western Australia and learnt Greek, it has been my dream to return to my family's homeland of Kastellorizo and immerse myself within the culture, language and the people.

It all began with the boat 'Proteas' after a long five hour journey by boat from Rhodes to Kastellorizo. As the boat pulled into Kastellorizo, all I saw was a lot of lights in the pitch black night. These lights reflected across the glass like water. As we stepped off the boat onto Kastellorizian soil, I knew I was home. We were sincerely greeted by the loveliest lady whose name was Marion Mitaros (pictured with me here). She took care of our every need and went out of her way many times to make sure that Yanni and I thoroughly enjoyed our trip. I remember our first night when we had dinner with the Principal of the school, Kyria Betty. She warmly welcomed us to the island.



It was now time for our first day at the School of 'Σαντραπεία Αστική Σχολή'. This was let's say, unfamiliar territory. I have been to a Greek school many times here in Australia, but never in Greece. I remember my first day entering into the classroom for history. I had mixed emotions. The entire lesson was conducted in Greek. It was very different to anything I had ever experienced before and this forced me to immerse myself into the language.

During our lunch break, the children of Kastellorizo took a particular interest in us and were fascinated to know every detail in relation to Australia. They were genuinely hospitable and warm people and within a couple of days it was like we had known each other for a lifetime. I was always invited to soccer matches after school, basketball matches and meeting at Effie's local cafe for a drink. We all grew to love each other, and thereby, developed an inseparable relationship with the kids.

Another fond memory was when we were taken by Captain George to the "Blue Grotto" with his boat. This was the most amazing thing I have ever seen. We all had to lie down in the boat as we entered the grotto. It was such a confined space. Once we were in the grotto it was unbelievable. I have never seen anything so incredible, so beautiful, and so large. As the sun reflected off the crystal blue waters outside the grotto, it created an absolutely unforgettable scene inside. Words cannot describe what I saw. It was just picturesque.

I remember as we got back I said "hello" to a beautiful elderly lady on the corner who was always willing to have a chat with me. Her name was Kyria Loula and whenever she made some kourambiedes she would always give me some. At that moment I realised it was not only the spectacular scenery that made the island, but the beautiful and generous people as well.

As I walked past one of the restaurants towards the end of my journey, I bumped into a lovely man by the name of Komninos and his wife, Lola. To my surprise they were my relations. From that moment, they treated me like very close family. Eventually it was time for me to leave the island. This was the absolute hardest thing I think I have ever come across in my entire life. As our boat 'Proteas' came to the "limani", I was surprised to see all of my friends from school come to see both Yanni and I off. This made me feel so privileged to have met such great people. Saying goodbye to everyone I had met on the island was the hardest thing to do. The whole island seemed to become like close family.

I sincerely thank the Australian Friends of Kastellorizo for this opportunity and I cannot wait for the next time I return to the island and meet everyone again. Many thanks to all those involved in this exchange program. It has been truly life-changing.

Anthony Komninos



I am back from an unforgettable trip to Kastellorizo. I spent twelve days on this beautiful island which has made me want to go back for another experience. We travelled from Rhodes to Kastellorizo by ferry and arrived there late on a warm Saturday afternoon. Mrs Marion Mitaros was there to greet us and that evening we went to dinner to meet with the Principal of the school, Ms Betty Mouzak.

Over the two weeks we got to know most of the students of the school and got along really well. We attended a few lessons during the day and in the afternoon we had time to ourselves to rest and explore the island. I saw places such as the Blue Grotto and I climbed to the top of the mountain to get a fantastic view of the whole island. We caught up with the older students and spent evenings with them at the cafe and sharing with them our lives in Australia.



Living on the island was like going to a family you didn't know you had. Everyone knew each other and no one was a stranger. You always had parea (company). For me the bakery was the best. It had beautiful pastries. The sea was literally ten steps away from the hotel.

We also had the opportunity to visit Kas (Kash) a small region of Turkey which lies 2km across from Kastellorizo. There we spent three days sightseeing, shopping and eating scrumptious food. We also got to see the market which is held every Fridays which sold food, clothing, DVDs and almost anything really.

We were honoured to meet the Mayor of Kastellorizo Pavlos Panigiris and he presented us with several books describing the history of Kastellorizo. Finally, I would like to thank Australian Friends of Kastellorizo for giving me the opportunity to travel to the island and especially to Mrs Marion Mitaros for her 'filoxenia' and for being my mum for twelve days and all she did for us.

Yanni Ragousis

2 a happy

What it means to be Kazzie growing up in the 1940's

by Dr Byron Kakulas , Perth

I was born in Perth with both parents being Kastellorizians. Like many of us, I spoke only Greek before going to school. From the day I could comprehend the spoken word what I heard most about was Kastellorizo. My mother Φιλία being nurtured in Rhodes 'and so very refined ' would not allow us to speak the Kazzie dialect and sent us to Greek school three times a week.

In those days our lifestyle was dominated by Greek Community activities: Church on Sunday, Name Day festivals, Easter with red eggs, and waving flags at the March 25th celebrations. At home we learnt good τρόπους – manners, the high regard for family and to be generous and hospitable.

We also loved our food and γλικά especially στραυα and supremely delectable κατουμαρία the quintessential Kazzie sweet: a heavily spiced buttered pancake.

Community events consisted of εσπερίδες (concerts, plays, comedies), weddings and baptisms with everyone in the community invited, and of course, the Greek dances with someone doing a solo ζεμπεκικό or τσεφτετελή, sometimes dancing with a chair when well lubricated and the women dancing the καλαματιανο or the Kazzie σουστα.

At the club my father would point out some new face and smiling proudly tell me that this person was a Kazzie. Another would be identified as a Tsirgoti or Cretan and then another from Makedonia. When a Kazzie married someone Greek, but from 'outside', they were said to be marrying a foreigner.

The politician and elder statesman President George Mavros, a Kazzie himself living in Athens, on landing in Perth in 1978 said that he thought he was visiting Australia, but found Kastellorizo instead!

Our fathers, although claiming to work very hard, spent a lot of time at the Hellenic Club, the λεσχή. As a child I listened to many erudite discussions about Kastellorizo. Who owned what sailing ships? Where they traded? How they were financed? Politics, history and philosophy, amidst a fair amount of gossip were also on the agenda. After all Greeks are genetically programmed philosophers.

A great memory of early World War 2 was my father cutting out from the newspaper into a scrap book, reports of the great Greek victories taking thousands of Italian prisoners. These incredible battles followed the famous Όχι (emphatically 'No') of General Metaxas vehemently rejecting Mussolini's demand to surrender. The defeat of the Italians was so great that Hitler had to divert his best divisions into the Balkans to provide aid. This fateful event stalled Hitler's invasion of England across the channel allowing the evacuation of Dunkirk and the RAF victory in the battle for Britain.

In later years, after the all absorbing study of Medicine, I began a casual reading of the Classics discovering that what our lay fathers had talked about, that is, the Greeks being great philosophers and mathematicians such as Euclid and Pythagoras was correct. There was no field in which they did not excel, even to the nuances of human psychology exemplified in the famous plays laying the foundations of modern psychiatry.

The elite in the Roman period spoke Greek. Julius Caesar's words were και εσει τέκνον "and you my son". A household gem in every Greek family has been the aphorism "moderation in all things" which comes from Aristotle. To this I added such truisms as "noble challenge rather than mere achievement" "οὐκ ἐν τῷ πολλῷ τὸ εὖ" "the largest is never the ideal" and most significantly the danger of hubris – arrogant pride.

The contribution of the Greeks cannot be better expressed than the quote of the Englishman "apart from the wild forces of nature there is nothing which has changed this earth more than those which are Greek in origin."

I was once in a plane sitting beside a German businessman. Hearing I was Greek, he made the astute observation that Western civilisation rests on three pedestals - Greek philosophy, Roman organisation and Jewish religion. How correct was he!

Reading this history, I realised that my own value system and especially my career was pure Greek, that is, a combination of the search for knowledge and humanitarian service as a doctor. After all Hippocrates was a Dodecanesian living on Kos.

All of this convinces me that we still maintain much of those Greek attributes including our energy and enterprise. There is no Kazzie family no matter how humble in origin (although all claim to come from a great ΣΟΙ –aristocratic pedigree) which has not had outstanding success in the Antipodes. We are good citizens and we contribute generously to the Australian community. Just look at how many have been recognised with national honours. These distinctions are undoubtedly connected with our ethics and our upbringing.

This is not to say we don't have weaknesses. An introverted Kazzie would be seen as manic in restrained Northern climates. We are 'know-alls' talking loudly and over one another. Just watch Greek TV. We argue and argue. This phenomenon I have come to think of as not such a bad thing. My thought is that the Ancient Greeks did the same. Their animated discussions, exploring all avenues of debate would eventually lead to a well founded conclusion to the question in hand.

As Greeks we have many fine attributes, although we do acknowledge that we originate from one of the conquering Hellenic tribes. Kastellorizo, Megisti as it was then known, was first colonised by the Dorians who were from the north of Greece and who swept over the islands of the Eastern Mediterranean colonising Megisti and Cyprus. They were known to be heavy, steadfast, and stubborn; characteristics you may think are still in evidence today. Thus, we have the foundations of what it means to be Kazzie.

new year!!

Project Updates on Kastellorizo



The Empire Patrol Project

Alexandros Zygoouris previously of Preveza, Northern Greece and now resident artist on Kastellorizo informs us that the sculpture commemorating the Empire Patrol disaster is progressing well as shown in the photo with the hand slipping away tragically into the water.



AFK Liaison Officer

Australian Friends of Kastellorizo would like to announce the appointment of Irini Karavelatzis (daughter of Dimitris Houlis) as the AFK Liaison Officer who resides on Kastellorizo. Irini's role is to liaise with the AFK Coordinator (Marilyn Tsolakis) to establish and maintain strong working partnerships with the Municipality of Megisti and members of the Kastellorizian community to implement AFK projects. Irini is married to Nektarios Karavelatzis and together they visited Australia for a belated honeymoon during Christmas and New Year 1997 for two months. They both have an affinity with Australia, especially with extended family living here.

Advertising

Some people have asked if they can advertise in Filia. The rate is \$250 per edition if you are interested. An opportunity exists to advertise on our website too.

Proverbs (Parimies) from Kastellorizo

By Dr Paul Boyatzis, Perth

Akoma then ton ithame ke yianni
ton evgalame .

(We haven't met the person as yet
but we already named him John).

Don't anticipate prematurely. ---Think
before you act... "Fools rush in where
angels fear to tread".

Ipe o gatharos ton petino kefala
(The donkey nicknamed the rooster
"bighead").

Don't be ridiculous in your comments
and actions. ---- Look at yourself
before criticising others.

People in glass houses shouldn't
throw stones

Kathe psilou pithima

(At every jump/movement the
mosquito makes).

At the slightest opportunity /
provocation--- At every occasion----
Often acting without thinking.

Pou yirizi mirizi, ke pou kathete
vroma

(Whoever travels smells sweetly,
whoever is idle smells badly).

Be energetic and enterprising. Look
for opportunities. Don't stagnate.

Since early childhood on Kastellorizo, I have been hearing proverbs from my grandfather which to this day, at the age of seventy three, continue to serve me well. Proverbs were not the prerogative of Apostolos Boyatzis (senior), but rather were and still are widely used by Kastellorizians. They form the ethos, the philosophy, the way of life and if you like the Filotimo of our ancestors and us. Greeks, on the whole, are notorious for their proverbs which are widely published.

I have selected a few well known Kastellorizian proverbs to include in Filia from my memory as a boy growing up. As you read them, there may be words that require explanation to help you understand the Kastellorizian dialect. To facilitate the reader who may have a limited knowledge of written Greek, I have used English phonetics and identified the syllable that needs emphasis by underlining it. The English translation is included for the proverb, but as is often the case, some of the meaning is lost in the process. I have commented on the way in which the proverb can be interpreted.

Min taxis to moron fagin ke ton
agion kerin

(Don't promise food to a child or light
a candle to a saint without fulfilling
your pledge).

Keep your promise / word at all
times.....Be honest and reliable.

o pseftis ke o kleftis ton proton
hronon herete.

(The liar and the thief are happy only
in the first year. His happiness is
short lived).

Be honest and trust worthy in your
dealings with others. The liar and
thief will eventually be found out.

o pondikos stin tripa then horouse
ke ithele na travixi ke kolokithi

(The mouse could not fit into the
hole and yet it wanted to drag a
pumpkin with it).

Don't be ridiculous..... Be realistic.....
realise your limitations.... Set yourself
achievable goals in life.

Tis nihtas ta kaomata ta vlepi i
mera ke yela

(Daytime observes nighttime's
activities and laughs).

Act in clear circumstances. You are
able to perform better with a clear
head and well rested.