

## ELENI NAKOU & KOUTSOUNARI TRADITIONAL COTTAGES



Eleni Nakou was born in Athens in 1931, she received her education at the Hill High School in Plaka, Athens, at St.Georges, Switzerland and later at Queen Mary College, University of London.

Her life-work was in quality tourism and her enthusiastic spirit left a lasting imprint in Crete, where she was the cofounder and partner first of Minos Beach Hotel in Agios Nicolaos in 1961, then of Elounda Beach Hotel in 1970 and Elounda Bay Hotel in 1972.

In 1974-76 she restored the traditional cottages at Koutsounari, a depopulated village near Ierapetra.

Her plans for further innovative developments were disrupted when she suddenly died in London in 1986.

Monsieur Serge Vaissière Résident du Comité de l'Excellence Européenne vous prie de lui faire l'honneur d'assister à la Réception au cours de laquelle le Grand Prix "Criomphe, 1978 de l'Excellence Européenne sera officiellement décerné à l'hôtel « Elounda Beach » en hommage à son exceptionnelle contribution et son entrée dans la CHAINE 'OR des Meilleurs Hôtels du mondo



Eleni Nakou receiving the Grand prix "Triomphe" 1978 de l'excellence Europeene for Elounda beach hotel



ELENI'S NAKOU NEW PROJECT : THE REVIVAL OF A DEPOPULATED VILLAGE, KOUTSOUNARI, OVERLOOKING THE SEA, AT THE SOUTH-EAST COAST OF CRETE. (1974)

## KOUTSOUNARI TRADITIONAL COTTAGES



THE BIRTH OF KOUTSOUNARI TRADITIONAL COTTAGES

ONE POWERFUL WOMAN, ATHENIAN BY BIRTH, CRETAN BY ADOPTION AND A PIONEER BY NATURE, IS DETERMINED TO DO ALL SHE CAN TO CHANGE THE TOURISM SCENE.

ELENI NAKOU, FOUNDER OF TWO OF THE FINEST BUNGALOW HOTELS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN (MINOS BEACH AND ELOUNDA BEACH) DECIDED THAT THE TIME HAD COME TO STOP CREATING THE KIND OF TOURIST COMPOUNDS THAT INVOLVED POURING MORE CONCRETE ON TO UNTOUCHED LAND.

INSTEAD, SHE DETERMINED TO USE TOURISM TO KEEP THE THREATENED LANDSCAPE ALIVE, AT THE SAME ENABLING THE TOURISTS ACTIVELY TO PARTICIPATE IN LOCAL LIFE.



NEW LIFE FOR RURAL CRETE. THE SUNDAY TIMES, JUNE 13, 1976

ELENI FOUND A RANDOM SCATTERING OF SOME 120 THRESHERS COTTAGES MINOAN IN STYLE, CLUSTERED INTO LITTLE HAMLETS ON A FINE SWEEP OF LAND BETWEEN SEA AND MOUNTAIN WALL AT KOUTSOUNARI, EAST OF IERAPETRA.

THEY WERE USED SEASONALLY (AND SOME STILL ARE) BY THE FARMERS FROM THE EAGLES NEST VILLAGE OF AGHIOS IOANNIS, WHEN THEY WERE COMING DOWN THE MOUNTAIN TO SOW, REAP AND THRESH.



ELENI, BOUGHT 20 OF THESE AND WITH THE HELP OF TWO IMAGINATIVE ARCHITECTS, TASOS AND VOULA ZERVAS, FAITHFULLY AND PAINSTAKINGLY RESTORED THEM.

CRETAN INTERIORS ARE FURNISHED WITH TRADITIONAL MATERIALS, BUT ALSO HAVE ALL THE CREATURE COMFORTS EXPECTED BY THOSE WHO WANT THE SIMPLE LIFE BUT WITHOUT ANY LOSS OF LUXURY.

EACH COTTAGE HAS ITS OWN PATIO WITH A VIEW OF THE SEA, A CHARCOAL BARBECUE AND TRADITIONAL OUTDOOR WOOD BURNING OVEN FOR BREAD, ROASTS BAKED MEAT DISHES.



SINCE THE WHOLE OBJECT OF THE SCHEME IS THE REVITALIZATION OF RURAL CRETE, THE TOURIST ASPECT OF KOUTSOUNARI WILL NEVER BE ALLOWED TO SWAMP THE FARMING SIDE AS LONG AS ELENI HAS BREATH.

AN IMPORTANT LURE TO THE FARMERS TO COME, OR STAY PUT, IS THE WATER, ELECTRICITY AND TELEPHONE THAT ELENI HAS BROUGHT FROM IERAPETRA, 7KMS AWAY.



ANOTHER IS THE TAVERNA OPENING THIS MONTH, SERVING SIMPLE CRETAN FOOD, RAKI, OUZO AND LOCAL WINE.

DRINK AND COFFEE PRICES WILL NOT BE BEYOND THE PURSES OF THE LOCALS AND IT IS BOUND TO ATTRACT THE CITIZENS OF IERAPETRA.

ALSO OPENING SHORTLY A KAFENEION, A CROSS BETWEEN VILLAGE SHOP AND COFFEE HOUSE. THIS WILL SERVE RESIDENT AND VISITOR WITH COFFEE, GROCERIES, MILK AND VEGETABLES. IT WILL ALSO HAVE A TELEPHONE.



ELENI WILL BUY AND RESTORE MORE COTTAGES WHEN SHE CAN, BUT TOURISTS WILL ALWAYS BE IN THE MINORITY. HER IDEAL RATIO OF TOURISTS TO LOCALS 20/80. A HAPPY THOUGHT BUT POSSIBLY THE TRIUMPH OF IDEALISM (SOME OF HER BEST FRIENDS CALL IT MADNESS) OVER BRUTAL FACT.



KOUTSOUNARI IS STILL A TENDER PLANT. IT NEEDS TO APPEAL TO THE FARMING INHABITANTS OF AGHIOS IOANNIS UP THE MOUNTAIN, BUT-EQUALLY IMPORTANT-IT NEEDS THE UNDERSTANDING AND CONCERN OF THE MINISTER OF TOURISM IN ATHENS.







WHO WOULD OPT FOR THE NEUTRALITY OF A HOTEL ROOM WHEN THEY COULD SPEND THEIR HOLIDAY IN A CRETAN HOUSE ON A GOLDEN HILLSIDE OVERLOOKING THE LIBYAN SEA?



## CAN ELENI'S TOURIST EXPERIMENT REVITALIZE CRETE'S DESERTED VILLAGES?

Jean Robertson, Travel Editor The Sunday Times, June 13, 1976



THE ELENI NAKOU FOUNDATION

THE ELENI NAKOU FOUNDATION IS A CHARITABLE COMPANY LIMITED GUARANTEE ESTABLISHED UNDER THE COMPANIES ACT 1985 AND REGISTERED IN ENGLAND AND WALES.

IT CAN RAISE FUNDS AND INVITE AND RECEIVE CONTRIBUTIONS FROM PERSONS AND INSTITUTIONS BY WAY OF SUBSCRIPTION, DONATION AND OTHERWISE.

THE FOUNDATION WAS SET UP UNDER THE TERMS OF THE WILL OF THE LATE ELENI NAKOU IN 1990 AND ITS MAJOR ACTIVITIES WILL BEGAN IN 1992.

THE AIMS OF ELENI NAKOU FOUNDATION ARE TO ESTABLISH A FORUM FOR WIDER APPRECIATION OF THE DIMENSIONS AND DEPTHS OF EUROPEAN CULTURE AND TO ENHANCE KNOWLEDGE OF THE VARIOUS ASPECTS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF EUROPEAN HISTORY, ARTS, SCIENCE, MUSIC, LITERATURE, LANGUAGE, RELIGION, INSTITUTIONS, TRADITIONS AND LIFESTYLES.



The Foundation was set up under the terms of the will of the late Eleni Nakou in 1990

Reflecting Eleni Nakous love for the Hellenic heritage and her wide European outlook, the Foundation aims in particular to support cultural exchange between the countries of North-Western Europe and those of the Mediterranean area and to promote mutual understanding between the peoples by examining and discussing their similarities and differences.

To further its aims the Foundation can arrange conferences and meetings, foster research, support production and distribution of books, plays, films and other works of art, offer scholarships, and make donations to individuals and institutions.

Among the Foundations activities will be the organization of a series of symposia with illuminate important aspects of European culture. A number of participants, writers, scholars, artists, politicians, young talents and established figures representing a wide spectrum of disciplines, will be invited to join in discussions and deliberations inspired by papers or lectures which highlight Northern and Mediterranean approaches to a particular theme.

A publication based on the proceedings of each symposium will subsequently be used. The Founders of the charitable company are Erik Holm, former Principal Advisor to the European Commission, L.St.J.T. Jackson Solicitor, Baroness Llewelyn Davis of Hastoe, Hans S. Moller, former Ambassador of Denmark to Greece, and Professor Yiannis A. Sakellarakis, Deputy Director of the National Archeological Museum, Athens. The Eleni Nakou Foundation38 Montagu MansionsGB-London W1H 1LDTel: (44) 71-935-0729





Κατάλογος σκοτιών στην Καστελλανία Μεραμπέλου κατά την τελευταία φάση της Βενετοκρατίας (1633)

Το χρανικό της έλευσης του Τουρισμού στην Ελούντα και στον Άγιο Νικόλαο

Τοπονώμια Ελούντας

Οι πρωτοπόροι της Τουριστικής ανάπτυξης του τόπου.



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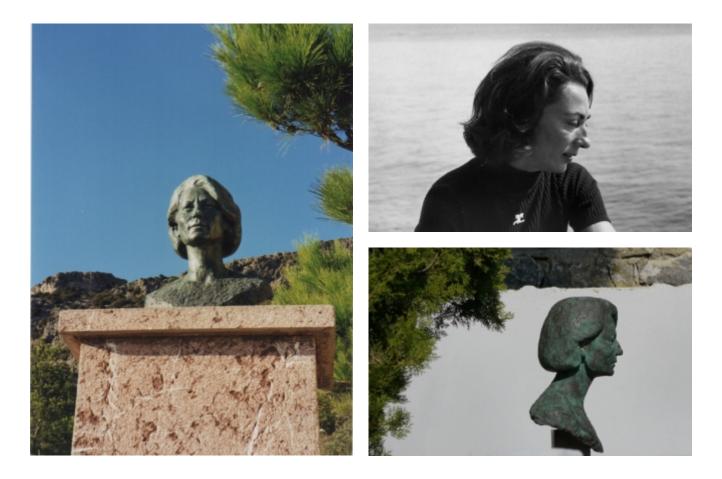
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Elounta magazine featuring an article on the pioneers of tourism in Lassithi, Crete.



THE PORTRAIT OF ELENI NAKOU WAS COMMISSIONED TO RENOWNED BRITISH SCULPTOR NIGEL BOOHNAM BY THE ELENI NAKOU FOUNDATION. ERIK HOLM, THE PRESIDENT OF THE FOUNDATION HAS OFFERED ONE TO FAMILY MANTALA. THE SCULPTURE CAN BE SEEN AT NAKOU VILLAGE HOTEL, NAMED AFTER ELENI NAKOU, IN ORDER TO HONOR HER AND THANK HER, FOR THE OPPORTUNITY GIVEN.



Sculpure by Nigel Boonham, located at Nakou Village



Each cottage has attention to detail





Dora and Emmanouel Mantalas had the pleasure of working with Eleni Nakou, since 1978, at the Elounda Beach Hotel (1978-1980). This was the reason they came to Crete.

## ELENI NAKOU IS INTRODUCING EMMANOUEL AND DORA MANTALAS TO HER FRIENDS (1980)

Dear friends,

I am happy to announce to you, that Koutsounari Traditional Cottages are now being managed by Mr. and Mrs. Mantalas.

Emmanouel Mantalas has been the very able Rooms Division Manager of Elounda Beach, for the last two years, and speaks English, French and German.

Dora Mantalas has also worked at the reception of Elounda Beach hotel and speaks several languages. She will supervise the housekeeping and, being an excellent cook, she will produce some of her Cretan specialties at the Taverna.

The enthusiastic presence of the Mantalas couple will, I am sure, add considerably to the friendly ambiance of the complex, and the fact that they are fluent in three languages other than their native Greek will enable our future guests in making their wishes known.

Taking this opportunity I would like to point out that Koutsounari is open all year round for our friends who could and would like to take advantage of the mild Cretan winter and early spring.

To those of you who have already stayed at Koutsounari I would like to say that we will be delighted to see you again, to those who have not visited it yet, I can promise a warm welcome, a relaxed stay and a most enjoyable holiday in the Cretan style.

I am enclosing herewith a few details about Koutsounari, with the tariffs and particulars.

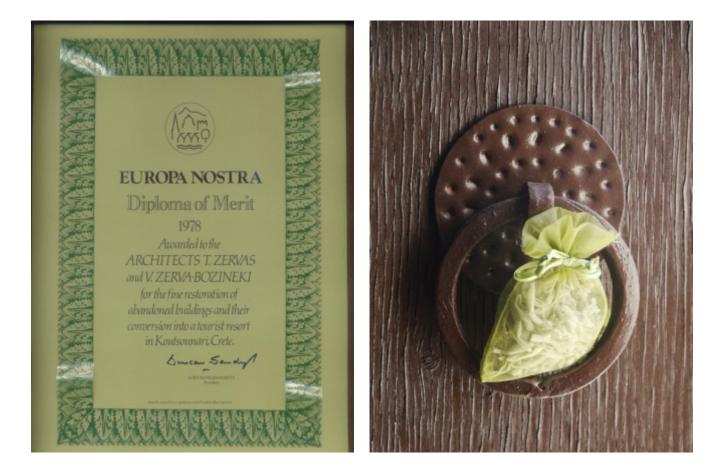
Best Regards

Eleni Nakou



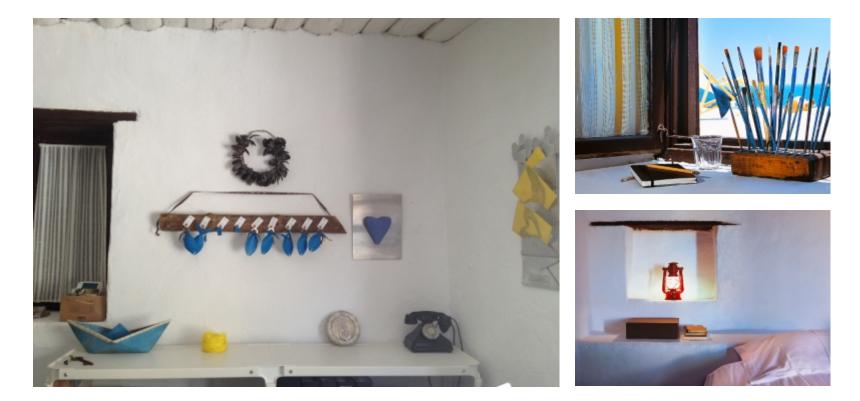
Drawings by friends and guests



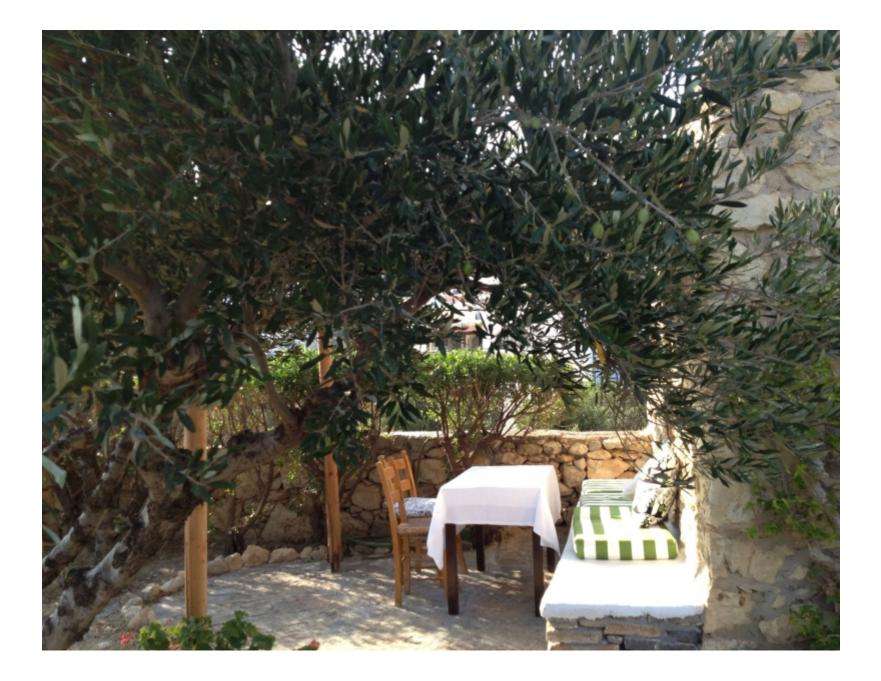


Diploma of Merit, 1978 by Europa Nostra, for the fine restoration of abandonned building and their conversion into a tourist resort in Koutsounari, Crete. The Diploma of Merit was awarded to T. Zervas and V. Zerva-Bozineki, architects of Koutsounari Traditional Cottages.





Handpicked items and art pieces are decorating Koutsounari Traditional Cottage. Our key-rings, in the shape of fish, are designed by Christina Skouloudes.





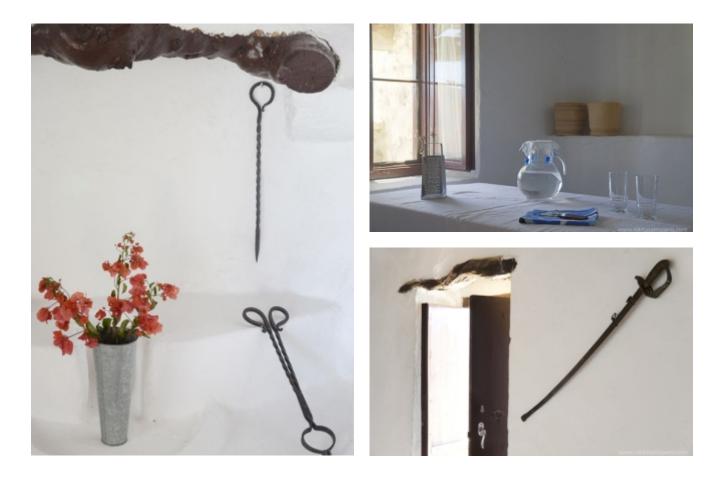












Koutsounari Traditional Cotatges, as seen by a friend.





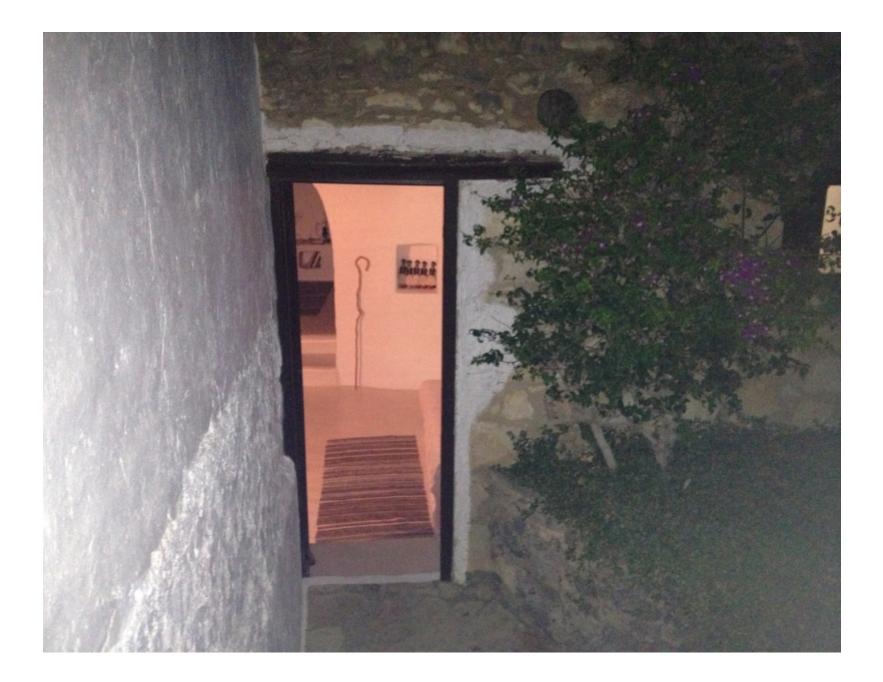


Attention to detail



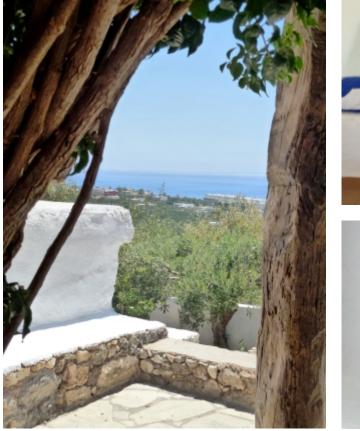


















## MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Koutsounari Traditional Cottages has a story and we are delighted to share it with you. Eleni Nakou was an extraordinary lady and a pioneer in the quality development of the Lassithi region.

Since 1980 the Mantala's family runs Koutsounari Traditional Cottages according to Eleni's will and vision.

In 1996, I graduated Ecole Hoteliere de Lausanne, that I attented thanks to a scholarship from the Eleni Nakou Foundation and since 2004 I am in charge of the management and daily running of Koutsounari Traditional Cottages.

We continue Eleni's steps unconditionally, with no compromises, carefully, with respect to tradition and authenticity.

We hope that you have enjoyed this journey through time.

Ioanna Mantala

Special thanks to Erik Holm, for the material he gathered and handed me.

Photo Credits:

Elina Dessyla, Fotis Serfas, Nikitas Almbanis, Claude Huguenin and Lisette Neuteboom

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