

Dear Friends,

Last week we took part in the annual Pelion Regatta race. As we are always grouped with the big yacht class and have no hope of even a sniff of victory, we decided to just have fun, load the boat up with anyone who wanted the adventure and do our best out on the water. We were delighted that Scarlet my niece and Andrew all from our party of guests in the Randi Cottage decided to join us. Race training this year was a quick half hour before the start and a crew of 4 was overdoing it for the generally light winds expected.

Then just as we were going out on the water we were told that following pressure from the owners of three other small yachts, that there was to be a last minute addition of a new class of yachts that would put our 4 boats in our own race. Would you believe it, suddenly the race was on! This being a fun race, the organisers (mainly a group of German yachty dudes) were not willing to accede to a class for yachts under 7 meters for example. Oh no, far too serious. What they came up with following the small boat owners representations was a means of differentiating us from the big yachts, 'yah yah, dis ist goot idea, we av ze yacht wiz out toilet class, zis is ver good und ver funny! ' (apologies to our German friends for the last bit!)

So it was decreed we were competing in the 'yachts without toilet class' (a bucket is allowed). Out on the water a few practice tacks and gybes around Valtoudi Bay sorted out our race strategy and we were off to a good start, in fact we were up with the big boys (with toilets)... So we won't bore you with the next 2 hours and 35 minutes of tactical racing stuff, just let you know that Kaliope is the fastest 'Yacht without a Toilet' around here and that official.

The prize giving ceremony was moved into the sea this year so all the winners and runners up got a good soaking. It was excellent fun.

For a long time we have had a little book, 'The Discovery of Evia' the island that faces our balcony 7 miles by sea from Platania. So often we gaze at it's pine clad mountains and sparking lights in the night. We wonder about it's beaches and hill villages. The book is so descriptive and alluring, to see Orei the 'jewel in the crown' of the North Evian Coast has tempted us, the bay at Agios Nikolaios with its little church on a tiny off shore island, the 'endless beach of Agia Anna, that resembles Brazil' We just had to go. So with 3 spare days between visitors we set off with Harvey the camper van to explore. It was an interesting trip and with very beautiful pine clad forests but sadly generally completely naff seaside villages. This could be why Evia has never been a popular foreign tourist destination.



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We couldn't put our fingers on why the place felt so run down, but it was August, the main Greek holiday has finished, but the roadside rubbish, untended public gardens in Orei and the real lack of building control has spoilt what was a very pretty natural island. Eventually the big difference between Evia and Pelion is that old stone buildings here get restored and there just don't exist. Plastic replacement windows are allowed there but not here. Very efficient



windows do not equate with old world charm.. The highlights of our North Evia tour was stopping overnight in spectacular places right by the sea, stopping for a picnic lunch near Pefki directly facing the Randi valley and spotting our house far away through binoculars (simple things!!)..

The village of Limni was lovely and well cared for and the famous spar town of Edipsios was beautiful and grand with a long promenade, big classic hotels and shady tree lined walks. We even found where the warm sulphurous water flows into the sea, it was full of rejuvenating happy Greek couples and families.



We parked on the boulevard outside one of the grand hotels and took an evening stroll. Thinking it would be too cheeky to camp there overnight we bought some take away pizza and decided to head for a deserted beach where we could 'wild camp' over night. Returning to the van we found the road closed. No access permitted between 7pm and midnight. The world and its poodle were promenading along a 1km stretch of water front with the van parked slap bang in the middle, the rush hour concourse at Victoria Station would not have been busier! . There was only one solution; pretend we are an ambulance and get out.... So we did, very slowly, with lots of funny looks but no one actually challenges you when you just shrug your shoulders and look stupid!



So in summary a visit to Evia is worthwhile, don't believe the guide books if they are as lyrical as ours, but when you return to Pelion and of course Randi in particular you will find yourself in a truly magical place!

Happy end of August to you all

Best wishes

Chris and Kathryn