

Kaliope, what's in a name?

'Room to Roam' is the title of an album by The Waterboys. I first heard this album on a sailing trip around the Brittany Coast, up to Guernsey, then overnight across the channel back to Chichester. The music was played a lot when out at sea and by the end of a fabulous and memorable week many of the excellent tunes and lyrics were on my mind. I became quite a 'Waterboys' fan after this.

One particular tune, 'Kaliope House' has no lyrics but the track ends up in a sort of Irish jig and was one of my favourites.

When, much later on, we ordered our 'Capecutter' I thought I'd look for some inspiration on the 'Room to Roam' album and the name Kaliope jumped out at me. It became the favourite suggestion for a boat name. Then I 'Googled' it and discovered that Kaliope was one of the muses in Greek mythology.

One of the daughters of Zeus who represented 'beautiful words or poetry'. Zeus, in mythology, would come down from his Mt Olympus home in the summer and travel to the nearby Mount Pelion. Here was his summer home, with the riches of Pelion's cool mountain, forests and coastline to enjoy. All of this seemed to be the perfect justification of the rather lovely sounding name of Kaliope.



Kaliope remains a contemporary Greek girls name but a fairly rare one. One day in Athens airport I searched in a record store for any modern 'Kaliope' links. I bought, purely based on her name, a CD by Kalliopi Vetta. A most beautiful and atmospheric album called 'Horizon'. Inside the album cover a text which reads,

'And so the Poet praised the Mediterranean Sea. The Sea of Muses, Wise Men and ancient Civilisation.

Where the East meets the West and Eros penetrates the hearts of boys and girls with his arrows.

There, in the Land of chants and into the Light that shimmers through the Olive leaves is a kaleidoscope.

There, at the Mediterranean Horizon, in Greece, rises the enchanted voice of Kalliopi reflecting a different colour.

A voice, vibrating on a strong, authentic Mediterranean sentiment.

Someone who moves us in a completely new manner.

Enjoy and love her, for she spreads her wings for a wider Horizon.'

Yiannis K Ioannou

Athens

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This text relates to a music album but also perfectly fits the sentiment of Kaliope the little sailing boat.

When Kaliope finally arrived and we launched her in Platanias, our friend Jimmy the boatman asked me why this name? The explanation was easy as you have seen. 'Hmm,' said Jimmy, 'why not Calypso, this would be better' 'But that was Jacques Cousteau's exploration ship and Kaliope's a much better name.....' Jimmy did not expand on his objection to Kaliope, but eventually I found out.

In Greek 'Kali' means good, as in 'kalimera', 'good morning.' In ancient Greek 'ope' means hole. So despite Kaliope being a beautiful Greek girls name, if your mind is particularly lateral, you can come up with 'Kali - ope' meaning good hole. I'm still ok with this personally, as the Cape cutter has a very kali - ope. You put the outboard engine in it, and any water that might ship inboard on a rough passage immediately drains out of the cockpit well, a very Kali-Ope indeed.

The sting in the tail to this story, is that the Greek Army still has conscription. Almost every Greek male does national service. During that time apart from learning the skills necessary to defend their homeland, they also learn other practical life forming skills and tasks. So every Greek conscript will be told, quite regularly, during their training to 'clean the kaliope'.... the good hole, or to put it another way the toilet!

Kaliope is much admired as a little yacht and as a name. I have managed to put the Greek Army misuse of this beautiful name to one side. If I detect a snigger from a Greek friend I can soon take the wind out of his sails by letting them know, that I know all about the Greek Army and frankly I don't care. There will also be a fair chance that a Greek man will be called Yanni. 'So what is the English equivalent of Yanni I ask?' 'John' they reply.... 'And in America they say they are going to the John, do you know what this means?' 'No?, good then let me explain!'

So in her 5th season Kaliope has enjoyed the company of many of our visitors and friends, these may be seen in the attached photo album.