The "Memory Dinner" for the 50 years of Rodos Palace

June 15 2024

With a monumental dinner, she celebrated **Mary Kambouraki**, in the presence of 10 gastronomy journalists on 14-6-2024, the 50th anniversary of the operation of the hotel **Rhodes Palace.**

We often talk about Greek tourism, as the first Greek industry (which is obviously not an industry, but a set of services of a different nature) and the problems caused by hypertourism, but we forget that it contributes directly to 20% of the Greek GDP and indirectly to 30 %, and that it is an economic activity that spreads throughout Greece, in many professional branches and fields, as we neglect the fact that Greece, despite its size, plays a leading role in tourism and has one of the most important brand names.. In this feat for more than 6 decades, the pioneering and visionary businessmen-hoteliers who made great investments and gave the impetus for the country's tourism takeoff played a decisive role,

And if in the 1960s the **Konstantinos Karamanlis** laid the first foundations of tourism with the **little Xenia** in the most beautiful places in Greece, creating the first infrastructures (roads, airports, development of visibility through the EOT), in Rhodes the **Vassilis Kambourakis** he was one of the first to start exploiting the island's unique potential after the war.

Since the 1920s, even before the Italians left, the fate of the island was decided and predetermined. The Italians had dreamed of making Rhodes a holiday symbol of the Mediterranean and a destination for the world's elite. The airport and the port are built, administrative (the current Prefectural building, the current City Hall) and tourist infrastructures (with the most characteristic hotel "**Grande Albergo delle Rose**", today's Casino of Rhodes built in 1927), dozens of archaeological investigations and interventions are being carried out in the Medieval city of Rhodes, with the most typical example being the reconstruction of the palace, which was destroyed in 1856 **Grand Master** which would now serve as the residence of the governor De Vecchi.

Immediately after the Second World War and with the unification of the Dodecanese with Greece (1947), Rhodes, with the enthusiasm and hard work of the Rhodians and with state support, created the tourist miracle of Rhodes. Hotels are financed, created in 1957 **Higher School of Tourism Education** (the first in Greece) which actually functions as a pure hotel school according to the standards of the corresponding hotel school in Lausanne. Since the 60s, Rhodes has entered the map of high-end tourism.

O **Vassilis Kambourakis** -son of Antonis Kambourakis who had business activities in Abyssinia-, a self-made active merchant acquires in **Djibouti the Hotel d' Europe,** and in 1964 he built his first hotel **Meditererranen** in Rhodes and in 1974 he completes the **Rhodes Palace**, a unique hotel for the era. Armies of civil engineers are working on techniques, unprecedented worldwide patents, the 17-story central tower rises imposingly and unique in the country, the huge dome is built with innovative NASA aeronautical materials, and thus one of the largest conference centers in the Mediterranean is created.

In December 1988, the **Rhodes Palace,** surpasses his hotel resume and becomes part of Greek and world history, as he is chosen to host, following the proposal of the Minister of Foreign Affairs **Theodoros Pagalos**, The **European Union Summit.** Twelve European leaders among them the **Margaret Thatcher,** o **Francois Mitterrand,** o **Helmut Kohl,** o **Andreas Papandreou** and **Konstantinos Karamanlis,** they are accommodated in two-story presidential suites that were built for this purpose! The Summit is crowned with success and the Rodos Palace Convention Center becomes a trademark, bringing Rhodes to the world stage.

Nowadays, 50 years later, with the new generation at the helm, the **Mary and Antonis Kambourakis,** the Rodos Palace with its 785 rooms and suites, 7 swimming pools, 7 restaurants, 5 bars, a spa, a shopping and commercial center and a wonderful beach at its feet, evolves, and always remains ahead of its time, keeping true to the motto of the patriarch of the Roditiki Hotel, Vassilis Kambourakis, ***"every job brings you closer to the dream, as long as you dream."***

Her menu **Rotisserie** of the glorified restaurant, which woke up from the old past and opened only for this particular evening, undertook to prepare together with the current chefs of Rodos Palace, **Michalis Stala** The estate provides stunning sea views and offers a unique blend of luxury living and development potential **Lefteri Kambouraki**, the chef **Kostas Kampouris**, who, since the late 80s, was behind the hotel's major events.

Famous and loved all over the island, chef Kostas Kambouris, for the deliciousness of his dishes, still inspires the new generation, prosperous and active, a lover of the old and beloved international cuisine, who knew how to combine Thermidor lobster with a bag of shrimps with ouzo and according to his confession from that time when the whole world was dominated by French cuisine, he at every opportunity tried to put his Greek touches in his dishes.

Dozens of menus and wine lists from this 50-year period were laid out on a counter, and perusing them you could see the dishes and winemakers of each period. A material indeed very important to see the trends of the hotel kitchen in recent years.

Of interest were the wine lists showing wines and wineries that no longer exist, such as Roppa Theotoci, Carras Blanc de Blanc, Robolla Calligas, Cava Cambas, while there were also great French wines such as Sauternes AC Grand Cru, Chablis Premier Cru, Pouilly Fume (Loire), RieslingTrimbach (Alsace)

The menu presented on Christofle tableware and cutlery of the time was in small bites, a sample of the most characteristic dishes created in the period of fifty years. The event was curated by **Eleni Psychouli,** while the music played was also a sample of the same era.

"The Memory Dinner"

Soup de homard (lobster soup)

Mousseline with scallops, sauce nantoise,

Seafood pouch

Kadaifi with shrimps, fennel and goat cheese in anise sauce

Escargots bourguignonne

Prawns with ouzo sauce

Macadamia grouper

Chateaubriand with three sauces

Crêpes Suzette

Crepes Jamaica

Apple pudding with caramel sauce

The wines

Chablis 1er cru Vaillons, J. Moreau & Fils

Moutaris – Grande Reserve

Soup de homard (lobster soup)

Escargots bourguignonne

Seafood pouch

Kadaifi with shrimps, fennel and goat cheese in anise sauce

The evening ended with reminiscences of the beautiful past years and eagerness for the next evening's meal which will include the modern creations of the chefs who, utilizing the **Rhodesian culinary tradition** they will offer modern versions of it!

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