

# The Agiot

18th Edition

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## Village News

By Dr. Lionel Mann  
Contributing Editor

Easter is upon us; only one week later than in the West this year. Throughout "Great Week" and "Paska" the population of Corfu more than quadruples as visitors come from all over the world to witness the processions, solemn and joyful, the unique "pot-throwing", the celebrations culminating in "Christi anesti" and spectacular fireworks, as well as to sample the appropriate cuisine, including kokoretsi, soup and spit-roast lamb, and to test the strength of their hard-boiled, red-dyed egg against those of their neighbours.

Though the crowds include very many nationalities, there are surprisingly few Britons amongst them. One would have thought that the inhabitants of those rather damp and misty western islands would welcome the chance to escape for a week or two the rather gloomy conditions. Usually some weeks elapse before the British invasion commences. They do not know what they are missing! The

first Dutch visitors will arrive in time for Easter; some from Sweden are already on the island.

Simon and Linda are back in Ano Korakiana, Mark and Jenny in Afra. We are looking forward to welcoming our first summer visitors, Denis and Linda Oxlee, at the end of the month. Under Linda's nursing Denis has recovered well from his heart-attack; some sips of Kosta's "medicine" will doubtless prove very beneficial. Paul and Sally Grove will be spending a few days here, as will also Derek and Carole Pullen to inspect progress on their new villa at Panorama. Jackie Rawlinson, Richard and Karen Quilter are returning to their villas, Walter to his trim little "spiti". Ron will be flying in to prepare Villa Persephone for the new season.

Although most of our bright young things will be visiting for Easter, Constandinos is spending the holiday at Cluj Napoca in Romania with his friends there. We still wonder about that sweet little gypsy

girl - or is he vampire-hunting? Brother Peter is busy disseminating culture in Melbourne.

The taverna has reopened after having been thoroughly redecorated. Nikos has done most of the work. Anna has not been able to assist because she has strained a tendon in her right wrist through carrying four plates of food simultaneously, a juggling trick that has exacted its toll. A tray or trolley would seem to be called for in future!

Spring arrived rather late this year, but now everything seems to be hurrying to make up for lost time. The plane trees in the plateia have gained their leaves in very little more than a week. The meadows and hedgerows are a blaze of colour. The weather appears to have mended its ways too - fingers crossed!

Our Easter fireworks have been bought; we are hoping that our eyelashes will have regrown by the time that the preparation of the next newsletter is due.

# Athens in the Spring

By Paul McGovern  
Editor

Well, Athens certainly made a pleasant change from the strictures of Mount Athos.

I had pre-booked into the palatial 'Hotel Temporary' in the very heart of the city, with a stunning view of the Acropolis if you hung from your balcony by one leg and craned your neck to the right. Not as advertised in their propaganda!

The suite I occupied was remarkable for its amenities. After a thorough search I discovered one plug socket, but the fridge remained stubbornly evasive. A very cunningly concealed step leading into the shower room was very handy for tripping over on every occasion you entered that particular room. Having said that, the people at the reception were very nice and friendly and the chamber maid kept winking for some reason.

On the Saturday there was a mystical magical day of aimless trek walking through the Athens streets; a day of people being friendly, smiles on every face; a day of climbing towards the Acropolis and never actually reaching it; instead being re-directed by a 'Springer walking' lady amongst peaceful woods above the sprawl to a funicular railway which climbed up to the highest point in Athens where reposes the church of St. George. The vista of the white city spread below was unimaginably beautiful. The Acropolis looked like a toy building some way off and below this vantage point. The city spread, it seemed forever, below this magical point. The vista of this white city spread below will live forever in my memory. Back down into the

maze of streets, getting lost on several occasions but always asking and being re-directed roughly on the correct route back to the hotel. One shop had an army of nude mannequins in it; I've not seen one of those before. Into the electric meat market with its noise, its smell, its banter, its light and verve, a cheap bar with a cheaper toilet, 'mezes' fit for kings, a time to shut up and just listen. Sometime earlier in an Athens boulevard a superb 'Maldovan' quartet was playing. I don't think I'd ever heard any musicians play so smoothly and eloquently.



Another day was spent in Piraeus where a business meeting took place. It was easier to get here by metro, well at least in theory, although the machine didn't like my ticket and spat it out. Piraeus is also a shining massive city in its own right. My appointment was in the harbour sprawl, but this was just far too busy, so I took a taxi to the little port of Piraeus which was adorned with fish tavernas on both sides of its small main street. A walk up and down and it was quite easy to pick out the only desirable eatery; the one with the checked tablecloth. The others looked too space-age and plastic. A glimpse in the kitchen, a choice of bits and pieces, a main fish, salad, white wine, not too much; can't turn up

at the meeting squiffy. Janet had zoned me in for a 4:30 appointment in a large office block, second floor. It was a hot day and I nearly fell asleep in the park waiting for the appointed time to come round.

After the appointment I returned to Athens itself and a meal next to a terrific bazouki-player. He played incessantly for what seemed like hours and didn't tire at all. I'm sure my hands would have been red-raw and bleeding, assuming I could have played even one-tenth of the notes he seemed to manage with consummate ease. Back to the hotel, ah! no soap! Well never mind, I had brought my own. I had a slight accident here with a cup of coffee which I had balanced on the balcony. Being two floors up it made quite a smash on the concrete below when I accidentally knocked it off. Luckily, it didn't hit anybody, although several people gave me some stony stares for quite a long time as I stood nonchalantly looking over the balcony with complete innocence.

I'd flown into Athens but I decided, being clever, to take the train and ferry back. It's remarkably cheap. You can cross from Athens to Patras for six euros by train. The ferry from Patras to Igoumenitsa is only another twenty euros. Infinitely cheaper than air, but it turned out to be infinitely longer. I was supposed to change boats at Igoumenitsa, but managed to sail through to Bari. This was a bad oversight! I didn't feel too bad about it, though, because the ferry wasn't due into Igoumenitsa until about midnight so I would have had to have found a hotel.

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Athens in the Spring  
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As I'd struck up a terrific friendship with the very friendly steward he said, "Don't worry, you can come straight back". He very kindly directed me to a quiet part of the ship where I could stretch out on a couch and get a good night's sleep.

I awoke quite refreshed but dismayed when he told me that the boat was not returning to Igoumenitsa until six-thirty that evening. It's now about nine o'clock in the morning. Great, a day in Bari. I could have stayed on the boat, I suppose, but that seemed very unappetising. So here I am on the quayside with fifty euros, where do I go from here? The guard speaks English and sees the humour in my unintended landfall in Italy. Ah! A building at 'bleak' port, they sell tickets! There is one at 7 p.m.

tonight direct to Corfu. The ship is called the 'Polaris' - I hope it's not a submarine, but at least I won't have the mucking about and changing at Igoumenitsa. Trailing my voyager case, I head for town, the city of Bari is nowhere near as I had imagined. Don't judge a book by its cover. Tramping the lanes, here is a bank; I can have some more money. Re-tracing my steps from the main thoroughfare into 'nooky' lanes I find a café, two cappuccinos and toilet are fortifying me, a gaggle of old boys stands in the street opposite my alfresco table, joking with each other and passers-by. Easy banter. I don't understand a word, yet it matters not a jot. They are immensely likeable. More lanes and here is a pizzeria, ooh! I have a nice Neapolitan pizza. I do more exploring of the lanes and the churches and the quaint walkways,

taking my time, dawdling on purpose to let the day run. There are a lot of people in green football shirts. I discover that Ireland are playing Italy tonight in Bari. I'm sure people back in Corfu will think I've come here on purpose just to see the match, but it's not true. I'm hungry in the middle of the afternoon, so I go to a taverna and have a small spaghetti. It's very cosy in here and I am soon joined by a charming Irish family from Kilkenny; Jimmy the father, Eleanor the sparkly eyed wife and Ian the thirty-something year old son. Imagine my delight when I discover that Ian is an Arsenal supporter. I mustn't get too comfortable because I might miss the ferry and after all it is April Fools day. I don't think anybody would believe me missing on two ferry trips.

## Agiotfest 09 - 'East Of Memphis'

Richie Henderson, who has been a greatly-appreciated contributor to past Music Weeks, will be performing here again this year as part of Agiotfest. The following is biographical material that he has supplied for "The Agiot".

East Of Memphis is the latest incarnation of Richie Henderson and Sheila McWhirter, two popular Edinburgh singers whose history dates almost 25 years.



Starting from the local pubs graduating to bigger and better things.

Richie struck out with his band The Liberties, first Scottish country band to be signed to a major record label, Chrysalis with debut album "Distracted". Working alongside major acts such as Lyle Lovett, k.d.Lang, Richard Thompson, John Prine, The Proclaimers, James Taylor, Richie has now branched out yet again with his local act Bedford Falls, specialising in interpreting songs by class songwriters with an injection of his own material. Recently been opening for acts such as Smokey Robinson, Cliff Richard and renowned guitarist Albert Lee.

Meanwhile Sheila has worked with Phil Cunningham, Aly Bain, Avalon and many other popular Scottish folk artists. With a dy-

namic but sympathetic voice, she can capture a heart with immediate effect.



East Of Memphis offer a wide variety of some well-known and some lesser-known songs that could almost be their own. From Leonard Cohen to Lennon/McCartney, the whole package is there.

# Our House And Other Ruins

## Part 3

By Rich and Karen  
The Continentals!

The pictures we started to get via email, now showed the bulldozer hard at work cutting through the undergrowth to the next level to create the pool area. While we had drawn up the proposed plans some of it was almost a best-guesstimate as it had been so overgrown. We had to try to remember where the terraces had been when we had had the land cleared for the original topography! We wanted to try and work with the existing terraces if we could but, were relying heavily on Lula and Paul, working with the mechanics and builders to make the final decisions.



Having never even thought of designing a pool before, we needed to listen to advice carefully. We tried to plan an interesting but fairly small pool in order to keep the costs down. We were not planning to train for the Olympics but mainly, just needed some where to cool off. The view clearly pointed towards an infinity edge no matter what, but that creates so many other problems which we had never thought of before. Having travelled in Morocco, Spain and the Canaries some years previously, we wanted to achieve a sound of running water which is both cooling and soothing on a hot summer's

day. Our son, Luke, came up with many ideas along the way, we weeded out the ones we couldn't afford.....and then tried to draw the ones we liked so that everyone could see what we were after! That proved quite tricky as no one had tried our idea out before and there were many emails, sketches and photos flying back and forth.



We wanted a waterfall and somewhere to sit, preferably covered in order to have some shade. The seated area was going to be sunken next to the pool so as to be on a level with anyone in the pool. Sounds pretty cool? We thought so! Unfortunately, we hadn't bargained with a huge piece of living rock which was not going to be moved this side of Hell, well, unless we wanted the old stone shed next door to move a stage closer to collapse for a start! This resulted in a change of plans and a belvedere came into being, sitting right on the side of the pool but with another view point of "our valley".



Rather than doing a separate water feature, apologies to Charlie Dimmock, we decided to use one of the water inlets from the pool to top up a small pool on the top patio area which would then cascade down into the main pool on the lower level. Simple, you may say, yeah, right!!! I believe this one item had 50% more drawings done than anything else in the build!!!! We came over at the Easter 2008 and realised that the builders had started the pool further out than the plan showed which meant that the waterfall, now known as "The Cataract" was going to have to be bigger than we had designed and quite visible where as we had wanted it under the pathway where it could be seen and not heard. Oh, well! There was little we could do at this stage other than re-adjust the plans a little. It was going to work out in the end we were confident of that!!



Meanwhile inside the house the screed had gone down, tiles were going into bathrooms, kitchen, lounge and on the loggia and balcony too. We had found a really good deal on granite tiles so we were using white in the bathrooms and green on the balcony and loggia. The electrician was dealing with a seemingly, writhing mass of different coloured worms hanging out of a variety of crevices in most of the

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Our House and Other Ruins – Part 3  
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rooms. The carpenters were tackling the kitchen units and Lambros even sent us some pictures of the work in progress, so proud of their achievements was he!



We had a stonemason to complete the surrounds of the arch between the old barn/ kitchen into the dining area as we had preserved the stone wall there as well as one in the lounge. We were trying to keep the old stone feel as best we could. He also extended the wall down by the pool, trying to match

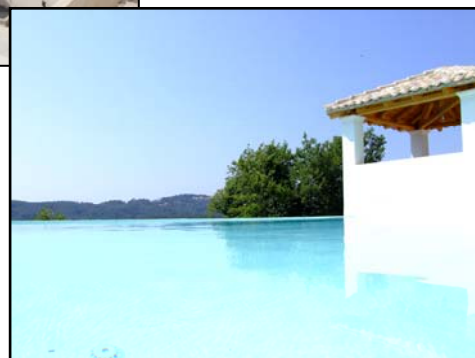
the old wall by the house.

The time was drawing close when we planned to move in for an extended stay, was it going to be ready in time? Lula and Paul must have been having kittens when we were adamant that we wanted to come across in mid-August no matter what. They had been trying to dove-tail all the final finishing off things together for months, how Lula kept her temper with the painter, who insisted he was the best, knew what we wanted and then painted a beam five times, five different colours because he felt he knew better than us. We were there for two of the attempts and explained the grey colour we wanted as well!! No luck, he didn't like our choice.

Well, after a rather stressful journey across Europe to Ancona (were we going to get there on time to catch the ferry? - type stress) we finally arrived in Corfu in August, not too sure what to expect as Lula

and Paul had stopped sending pictures near the end to keep it a surprise we thought or was it because they were so busy there hadn't been the time?! Having been delayed at the Taverna, to allow Lula time to sweep and clean, we finally pulled up outside our house. I must admit to a few tears having finally seen it all pretty much completed and looking as we had imagined. It clearly was all worth it. We feel like Gulliver, sitting looking out over "our" valley, watching miniature sheep meandering around with their shepherd and villagers working on their various plots and olive groves as they have been doing, without change for hundreds of years. We are glad we stuck to it; we have kept a piece of history and hopefully, will be adding some of ours to our ruin in Corfu.

Rich and Karen



# News From the North

By Uncle Bulgaria  
Contributing Editor

So here we are again, Easter ahoj, lovely weather last week bit of sunbathing, bit of gardening life cannot be bad.

Interesting all the economic doom and gloom, but people are here right now looking to buy property up here in the North. Had a few lookers at a house I am selling. No buyers mind you, still, looking hopeful.

The roads through Acharavi have been Tarmacked and repaired, but Roda looks a tip and Sidari, well, the less said the better. It is a muck hole; I cannot see it being ready for Easter let alone the summer season.

I have a little local bar in Agios Martinos where I like to hide away for a few swifty's, shorts only 2 euros wine 1 euro, lovely spot the walkers go that way. What a shame the local council can spend millions of EU money on drains for show, that will probably never be connected, and will not spend a couple

of hundred finishing a public toilet next to the cafe neon where I drink.

They started it years ago, put in steps, built the building, put in a toilet bowl and cistern. However they did not put in water and electricity or indeed a window frame in the window hole.

Needless to say, it is used by wandering Albanians, who crap every where, it cannot be flushed, and if it was not for the cafe neon owners cleaning it now and again the smell would be totally offensive.

Why don't the owners of the bar fix it I hear you shout, they have offered to do the work and been told by the council in Acharavi that if they do they will be prosecuted.

This is so sad when we need all the tourists leaving Corfu with glowing reports and coming back again. Come on Acharavi Demos, get your finger out and get this public loo working!!!!

Is it just me who hates change? At Roda crossroads was a bar in business for yonks. I have been boozing there for nigh on 20 years,

one of those places where you go in and Greeks and Brits alike know your name and say hallo. (The Brits then say clear off).

But the lease was up and new owners took over and made it into a yuppie bar. The old owners opened again in the heart of Roda village. But now the new bar is an empty shell no one goes there hardly, the atmosphere is not the same, but lovely people, I hope Tellis and his crew will do well with the tourists and earn some dosh this year.

The cookery book is coming on well, all the recipes are over 100 years old and I am translating the old handwritten book into modern idiom, cooking and photographing the recipes. This has kept me sane all winter as a hobby, driven my wife mad because I have taken over the kitchen. I only mention it to make the point that over here a hobby gives winter an interest, and there is nothing like a slurp while knocking up a fruit cake!!!

## *Aunty Lula's Love-bites*

### **Fruit Surprise Cake** (Alternative Fruit Cake)

#### **Ingredients**

2 Apples (peeled and grated)  
2 Mashed Ripe Bananas  
Juice and grated skin of 2 Oranges  
1 cup, selection of dried fruits -  
(Pineapple/Papaya etc.)  
½ cup Walnuts  
½ cup Olive Oil  
3 cups Flour  
2 cups Sugar  
3 Eggs (beaten)  
1 tsp Baking Soda  
½ tsp Salt

1 tsp Cinnamon  
½ tsp Ground Nutmeg  
2 tsp Vanilla

#### **Go:**

Grease and flour a 22cm fluted tube.

1) In a medium mixing bowl, stir together flour, sugar, soda, cinnamon, nutmeg, salt and grated skin of oranges. Set aside.

2) In a large mixing bowl, mix bananas, grated apples, orange juice,

eggs and vanilla. Beat until combined.

3) Add flour mixture and stir until combined. Fold in walnuts.

4) Spread evenly in the prepared heat resistant dish.

5) Bake in a 170°C oven for about 75 minutes, or until a wooden toothpick comes out clean when inserted in the centre.

***Bon appetite!***

# Open this Night

By Dr. Lionel Mann  
Contributing Editor



Rather disappointingly the renovated Kosta's Taverna was not ceremonially reopened by the cutting of a tape with a pair of gold-plated scissors or the smashing of a bottle of champagne against a door jamb. However the event was a very enjoy-

able evening with a packed taverna, late arrivals finding only standing room, sampling some very appetising "nibbles" and quaffing a seemingly limitless supply of Kosta's vintage.



Aegli had returned from Athens in time to help her parents and grandparents in serving the



throng. Friends from the village and from many kilometres around came to wish Kosta, Nitsa, Anna and Nikos success continuing into the taverna's second century. All were very complimentary regarding the new décor, ('Well, it doesn't make me sick', said a small boy to his parents).

## CORFU WEATHER STATISTICS



So far this month we have had rain on 2 days out of the 15 days. During those days a total of 53.4 mm of rain fell. This brings the total of rainfall this year so far to 526.2 mm. On the 13th 36.9 mm fell, and Lionel's cats asked for wellies! "Rain, rain and more rain"

Warmest April temperature so far is 28.6 °C and the Coldest April temperature, 9.1 °C.

Maximum wind-speed reached 37 kmh from 360°( N) on 11<sup>th</sup> April at 05.08.

### Records to date:

Rain in 1 hour: 19.7 mm at: 14:08 on: 14 Dec 2008 - *We inflated the dinghies.*

Daily rain: 71.5 mm at: 17:43 on: 14 Dec 2008 - *We set sail.*

High temperature: 37.1 °C at:

15:09 on: 15 Aug 2008 - *Record ice-cream sales too.*

Low temperature: -10.2 °C at: 20:23 on: 06 Apr 2008 - *shiver!*

High wind gust : 183.2 kmh from 270° at: 13:58 on: 21 Dec 2008 - *we tied down Alfie and Andy.*



# Nature's Gentry

By Dr. Lionel Mann  
Contributing Editor

In New Zealand the native Maoris are encountered mainly in the warmer North Island. They arrived by canoe in Aotearoa, "The Land of the Long White Cloud", in stages from about 800 to 1300 A.D. following centuries of island-hopping from south-east Asia. They were decimated by the arrival of British settlers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century importing the lethal "Three Ms", muskets, measles and missionaries, and accordingly they are usually to be found in widely scattered communities.

During the time of my teaching in New Zealand I worked for some years in Hawkes Bay, an area with a large Maori population. The solicitor father of one of my pupils regularly represented Maoris in their recurring disputes with law and order. In return the Maoris allowed him to build a "bach" (pronounced "batch"), a holiday cottage, in a delightful location, a grassy riverside meadow a hundred yards from a beach and lagoon, on one of their "reservations". I enjoy woodwork and helped him with the building on Saturdays when I had no more pressing engagements.

One hot day we were struggling with heavy wooden triangles, supports for the roof, when two hefty natives emerged from the surrounding bush, easily handed up the trusses and held them in position while we attached them. When the job was finished they refused payment, but just shared our meal. We always left all our tools on site, unprotected. Nothing ever went missing, but we found our edged tools newly sharpened when next we went to use them.

My friend's wife and two sons, nine and seven, always came with

us. The boys could play on the meadow and in the river, naked in the sunshine, while we worked and the wife prepared our meals. One day the two little ones let out a delighted squeal. Coming out of the bush was an incredibly old Maori lady clad in a large cloak of feathers escorted by two husky dusky gentlemen. The lady might have been aged, actually 92, but she was no weakling; when the pair ran to her she lifted one in either arm to hug them. She was the Maori Queen, and when she heard that I was a teacher she spent about two hours recounting the history of her people, especially her part in it. As a little child she had helped to bring the first sheep into Hawkes Bay, now largely given over to sheep-farming. In those days there was no overland access through the mountains and the animals were herded round the coast from Wellington, each carried round every headland; she had managed lambs. Her Majesty stayed to share our meal, her escorts, great-grandsons, hunkered down either side of her chair.

About a year later, when we were enjoying the results of our labours and visiting the cottage, she came to us again. Her memory was unimpaired by age as she immediately recognised me, enquired after the school and told more stories of the past. When removed from malign contact with "civilisation" the Maoris are nature's gentry. I wonder what effect a further forty years has had upon them.

On any school trip in pursuance of the Social Studies curriculum we always made sure that we passed by that site, Araparanoui, entailing a two-mile detour along a narrow track winding through native bush so that the boys might have a swim in the lagoon. There are sharks in the seas

around N.Z. and whenever the boys were in the sea I stood on the beach with a whistle in my hand, but I never needed to sound an alarm. At this site, however, the lagoon was made shark-proof by a low sand-bar and I could also go into the water. Moreover, as well as the river a mountain stream fell into the lagoon from the cliffs as a little waterfall; we could have a fresh-water "shower" before running around to dry after swimming. There were only fourteen boys aged from eight to thirteen in the school, so we used a hired minibus as transport.

Of course in such secluded surroundings nobody bothered with bathing-wear, but on one occasion, when fortunately I was not swimming, to our consternation a car pulled up on the beach and father, mother and two little girls got out. The boys at once stopped their cavorting and stood in the deepest reaches. I went over to explain and the highly-amused intruders drove further down the beach to the farther end of the lagoon, about a half-mile away. That was the only occasion when anyone else intruded on our privacy, though we also visited there for picnics during school holidays or on Saturdays whenever the boys felt that an outing was due!

There is nothing dangerous, such as reptiles or carnivores, in the New Zealand bush (locally known as "the wop-wops") except on the beaches of Hawkes Bay, where the katipo spider lurks in driftwood. The bite of this sweet little creature is fatal inside a half-hour unless the antidote serum is injected, so from the earliest age children living in or visiting Hawkes Bay are taught never to pick up any jetsam on or around beaches; the nearest hospital is almost always more than a half-hour distant. The training is good for I never heard of anybody being killed through carelessness.



## PROPERTY PAGES



### Land in Pelekas

Delightful land not far from the historic village of Pelekas with sea views and very secluded. Four thousand square metres of olive grove for sale, priced € 120,000 or alternatively, the site can be divided into two and each two-thousand square metres plot thereby would cost €65,000.

Guide Price: € 120,000



### Villa Felice

This magnificent 4 bedroomed villa is four hundred and fifty square metres and stands atop a hill on the outskirts of Almiros on the north coast of Corfu, within a mile or so of the lively small town of Acharavi. Featuring ensuite bathrooms and under floor heating, viewing is encouraged to see all the benefits of this property.

Guide Price € 2,000,000



### Land near Messaria

This plot of land measures approx. 970 square metres and is situated near the picturesque old village of Messaria in the north of the island of Corfu, on the route to Sidari. A building of about 124 square metres would be allowable on this piece of land. Utilities are within immediate reach and a topography is available.

Guide Price € 50,000



### Agios Douli

This is a detached village cottage, 85 square metres in size, set in 1000 square metres of garden. Situated in the traditional village of Agios Douli, North Corfu, on the way towards Roda. This cottage consists of 2 bedrooms, a bathroom, kitchen and a large lounge.

Guide Price € 120.000



### Agios Ioannis - Panorama

This superb two stremmas is situated in the heart of Agios Ioannis, and yet is secluded with unbroken views over the valley below. There is permission to build up to two dwelling houses on this site but one house only may be the solution. Utilities are close at hand, as are schools, shops and easy access to Corfu town.

Guide Price: € 70.000



### Hlomos

This is a two-bedroom village terrace cottage, with 75 square metres of living space. Newly modernised and renovated with some wonderful new features which include a featured working fireplace and a good quality spiral staircase leading to a top floor with amazing views.

Guide Price: € 120.000