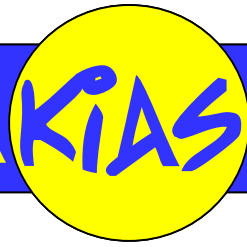


NEWSLETTER

Youth
Hostel

PLAKIAS



Mirthios 74060, Crete, Greece

Web site: www.yhplakias.com

Please note new mail address below.
The info@ was getting too much spam.

E-mail: hostel@yhplakias.com

Tel. +30 28320 32118

From 31st March, before that:
+30 6948 811 359

Just into 2012

Hi Folks,

To new readers, welcome. To the others, here it is at last! As you can see I'm trying a new format this year – putting the newsletter on to our web site. This will save a lot of space in your in-box and give me a bit more scope for photos and videos. Please let me have your thoughts; a good idea or no.

I'll still be sending out a short e-mail letting you know the latest newsletter has gone to press, about 850 of them! I will also put up a link on Facebook for the many that I do not have an e-mail address.

It was another fun season; thanks all. As usual about half the people staying were returning to holiday at the hostel, some of them for their normal 2 or 3 visits in the season. But it was a strange season in a way. April was very quiet, but then it can be depending on the date of Easter. May through to September were super, better than last year. And then October, what a disaster, the worst October in my 15 years here. All the world headlines about the Greek economy, strikes and riots really put people off coming; and who can blame them. One young couple told me that their parents tried to warn them off coming to Greece but they had had no problems. It is true, Plakias doesn't go on strike, the buses still run, businesses are being even more cautious with their prices despite taxes going up. Having said that, it is difficult to predict the 2012 season

I can't go further without thanking the wonderful staff we had this past year. Radka cleaning for the third year; Sky the 'Eggs Princesses'; Brian, Uli, Richard & Chris keeping the gardens in order.

The charity box made 460 Euro which is being split between the local cats and dogs rescue and the Sea Turtle Protection Society. Thanks also go those who donated to the music collection; to Barrie for the replacement hammock (Eleni – the one you donated last year is still OK but needs some minor repairs); to the Bremen geologists for the barbeque and to Sjak for creating herb gardens around the hostel, they are growing well and so you will be able to pick fresh thyme, basil, oregano, mint, dill and rosemary this coming season.

Births & Marriages

I have to correct an error in last years newsletter; Eddie & Sindi did indeed meet in the hostel so that now makes 10 marriages of couples who met here.

Congratulations go to:

Stijn & Emilie on the birth of Solea; to Carel & Helen on the birth of Ronan and to Klodian & Melissa with baby Luljeta (you may recall that Klodian worked at Sifis Taverna for a few years).

Here are a few quotes from messages sent to us:

"Such a great and social environment. Chris is a kooky old bugger but he will happily show you the best hikes and make sure you have a great time in Plakias." - Gemma

"This hostel is the friendliest place I've ever been!" - Yuli

Asked by Hostelbookers "What did you dislike about the property? Daniela replied "Nothing"

"I have stayed in hostels across the world and only a few truly stand out to the point of recommendation. This hostel is probably the most social hostel I have ever been to." -
"What did you dislike about the property?" "Having to decide whether to walk to the beach or to take a nap. That was about as stressful as it got." - Sean

"I loved the showers - probably the best hostel showers I've experienced in 6 years of traveling." - Michelle

"It's clear how special Plakias is..I honestly feel like a happier person after only 6 days there." - Jackie

And can anyone work this one out? From Wikipedia.de (Machine translated to English!).
"With young travelers the place is not also by its youth hostel lain beautifully is admitting and likes, in Greece usual mechanism (see Web on the left of)."

Here are a couple of blogs that may amuse you:
I don't know who wrote it but you may enjoy this one:

[First Timers Guide to Enjoying a Nude Beach](#)

Thanks Sean for - [Reasonable Daily Activity is Optional at the Youth Hostel Plakias](#)

Here is a new feature for your entertainment – videos by hostel folk:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xu2YTGx1T-8>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YC4vGTsOLxI>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mMPcHbUY3ww>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wbHs2-kT3Zk>

When you are in Youtube you may also spot some older videos that you may have missed.

Some of the highlights and lowlights of the 2011 season:

An item that I missed from last years newsletter. Many of you will have met Dr. Tom Strasser who has been coming to the hostel and village for the past 10 years or so. He and colleagues have made some amazing discoveries near Plakias – stone tools that could have been used for boat building 130,000 years ago! Read about it here:

[The New York Times](#) and here: [The National Geographic](#)

Tom returned in 2011 to arrange for carbon dating at the various sites to confirm his finds – looking forward to reading about it.

You know how we try to keep our river walk a secret. Well, this year the news about it got out – both in a book of walks by two Cretan guys (I don't think it will sell many copies) and on CNN! Aaaagh! [How to pick the right Greek island for you](#)

For the 9 weeks (yes NINE weeks) before I opened for the season we were without internet here. A real Greek farce. Time after time telephone engineers arrive, do some testing and leave telling me that I should again telephone the faults line! It was finally sorted on 1st April – no joke – the day I opened for the season. But it is working well now – much faster than last season.

In May, at long last the local council start some tentative recycling of refuse. I go out and get 2 extra bins; one for paper and plastics and the other for non-returnable bottles. All goes well but then after 2 months our little recycling centre disappears – what! I must find out what happened and whether it will reappear this year.

In late July, on a sweltering afternoon, there was a bit too much party at the hostel. Our neighbours, who have been wonderful and very tolerant, could not siesta – not good news. Frederikos was not amused. We finished up with an alcohol prohibition for 10 days – fortunately it was all taken in good spirits (awful pun, Chris) but a lesson was learned – siesta is sacrosanct!

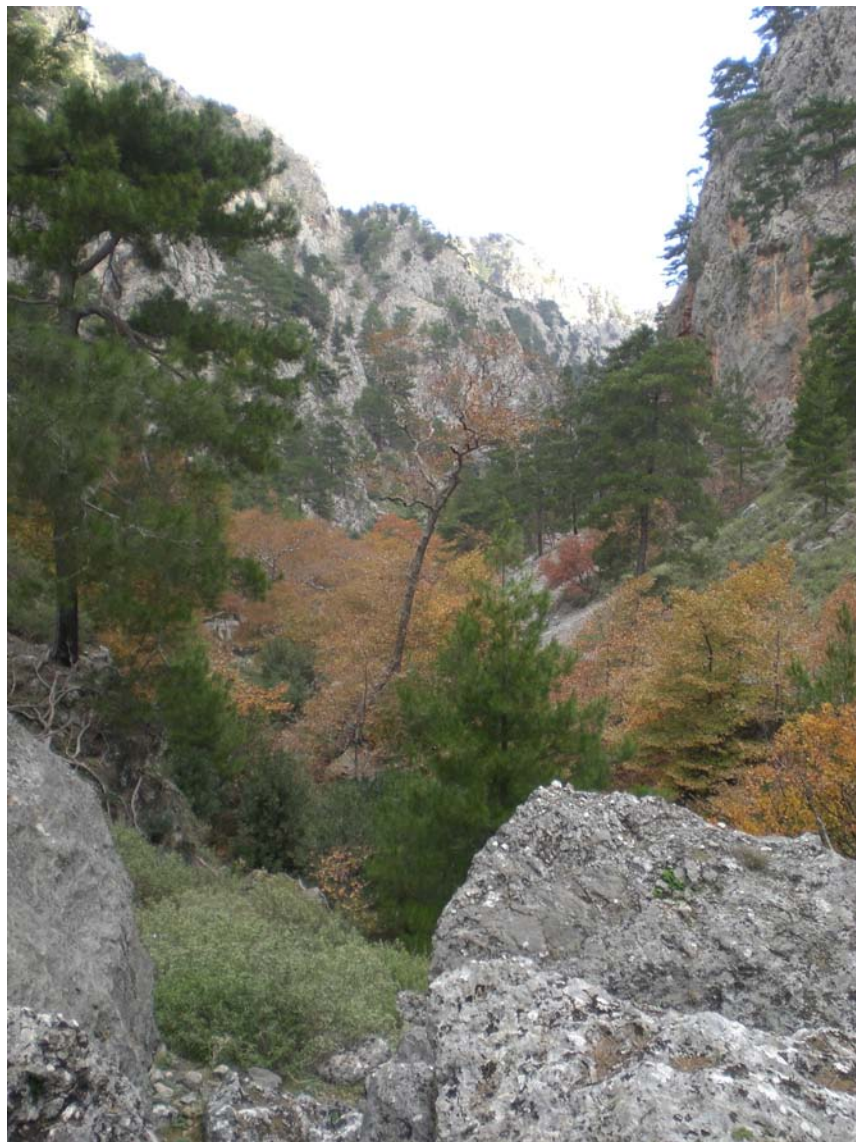
Late November I took off for 10 days of gorge walking in the Paleochora and Soughia areas. Great weather and I didn't see another tourist the who time. For those of you not on Facebook here is a little peek:



Snow on the high mountains near Soughia.



Goats on the beach at Lisos.



The very beautiful Agia Irini gorge above Soughia – well worth a visit.

For the past 6 months I have been doing a lot of soul searching and have come to the conclusions:

- a. I'm too bloody old for this job. It is too tiring and stressful for someone of my advanced years.
- b. The hostel would be a better place with someone younger at the helm.

At the end of May this year I "retire". But sorry to those who may be cheering – I'm not really going anywhere! OK, I have to find another apartment but I will probably still be in the hostel on a near daily basis teaching the new guy the ropes and doing the gardening (I still have to earn a living!).

Frederikos (the boss) and I have talked hours about this and he totally understands my decision. In regard to my replacement we both agree that it should not be someone well known in the hostel and it should be someone with fairly extensive hostel management experience. Without having to advertise I have found what I consider to be an ideal candidate. I would like you all to welcome the new manager from 1st June, Chris! Don't be silly, it's not me! I just thought it may be easier for you all to remember if we had the same name!

A note for your address books and you can make the change now if you wish:
For hostel business, bookings, etc. Please continue to use either chris@yhplakias.com or the new address hostel@yhplakias.com To contact me privately please use my new mail address of cb@yhplakias.com

When I "retire" at the end of May it will have been a sentence of 16 years all but for 3 weeks. Others have done less for murder! But I can say without a shred of hesitation that they have been the happiest 16 years of my life. I thank you all.

Just so that you won't be greeted by a total stranger here is an intro to my successor; Chris Horden from Melbourne but with a UK passport.



In his own words: I have a Graduate Certificate in International Hotel and Resort Management (now there's a mouthful!) and degrees in Economics and International Relations (which I obviously put to VERY good use these days :P).

I've had every job you can think of in a hostel, some are big 300+ bed hostels, some 30-40 beds:

Aboriginal Hostel, Budapest
Nomads Hostels - Melbourne, Sydney, Byron Bay
Soi1 Guesthouse Hostel, Bangkok
The Caledonian Backpackers, Edinburgh
Hostelling International, Banff, Canada
Globetrotter Inn, Edinburgh
Astor Hostels, London

And finally here is a view of the hostel taken on 1st January. I thought you may be interested to see what it looks like in the winter.



Looking forward to seeing many of you again this season. Opening again on Saturday 31st March. And yes, the hostel will be improved again this winter; do come and see what I will have done.

Love Quin