
Greek Charm on the Corinthian Gulf

Contributed by Dina Tekka-Efstathiou

A Mediterranean style home has the charm and grace to allure you. Indeed, the Papantoniou family has created a pure, classic elegance in the picturesque village of Monastiraki, on the Corinthian Bay.

A typical home architecture, of the area, consists of a rather simple exterior enhanced by narrow wrought iron balconies and colorful flowers. The exterior walls often are in stucco painted with earthy tones or built with natural stones. The roof is covered with dark, red brick tiles. The terrace is created by asymmetrical patterns of grey stone or monochromatic tile interspersed with focal points of fruit trees and urns. The neutral and rich foliage palette radiates a sense of tranquility and comfort from outdoors to indoors.

Walking through the living room the old world style atmosphere provides a distinctive first impression. The carved stone fireplace is enhanced by numerous 19th century handmade tapestries and family treasures that include many applications of needle art. Such needle works are crochet, cutwork, and embroidery.

The unique legacy and testimony of Greek needle arts spans over 5,000 years and Papadoniou's have preserved their family dowry linens which were used for domestic and practical applications. Around the walls, tapestries are displayed with Greek Heroes of the Greek War of Independence 1821, as well as clothing representing rites of passage and rituals, ecclesiastical icons and personal items of worship. "This home was built with love and respect for our family history. We enjoy each others' company with our children and grandchildren; a sense of bonding with our ancestors and roots. We have endless conversations about past family stories that make the youngest members more curious and eager to travel back in time with their grandparents", said Mrs. Xenia Papantoniou.

Exiting the home, I felt it had the quality, simplicity and an understated strength of materials to inspire plenty and memorable family gatherings.