

# Poros Confidential

**Elena Pappas** attends a gallery opening on the island of Poros where she discovers, in addition to the art, an altogether different art of island living

PHOTOS BY C. PICADAS



“The sea was there but the shore too, the goats were clambering about. The lemon groves were in sight and the madness which is in their fragrance had already seized us and drawn us together in a frenzy of self surrender. I don’t know which affected me more deeply – the story of the lemon groves just opposite or the sight of Poros itself when suddenly I realized that we were sailing through the streets. If there is one dream which I like above all others it is that of sailing on land. Coming into Poros gives the illusion of the deep dream. Suddenly the land converges on all sides and the boat is squeezed into a narrow strait from which there seems to be no egress. The men and women of Poros are hanging out of the windows, just above your head. You pull in right under their friendly nostrils, as though for a shave and haircut en route. The loungers on the quay are walking with the same speed as the boat; they can walk faster than the boat if they choose to quicken their pace...”

*Excerpt from Henry Miller's travel notebook of Greece **The Colossus of Maroussi** when he visited Poros around 1938.*



- 1 Sweeping views of the city of Poros, the *oikismos*, from the restaurant of the Poros Image hotel
- 2 Previously the summer palace of King Otto, this majestic neoclassic building now is home to the Hellenic Naval Academy
- 3 The Love Bay, one of Poros' picturesque coves

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- 4 Citronne gallery aspires to include Poros in the itinerary of the cultural tourist
- 5 Lemons are omnipresent on the island and of course in Citronne gallery's patio
- 6 The gallery's owner, Boston-based art historian Tatiana Spinari-Pollalis
- 7 Inside the gallery during the Vassilis Theocharakis exhibition
- 8 Above the gallery, on the first floor, is the family's summer house. Here in the drawing room, the Pollalis antiques have been placed under new light with contemporary art by Dimitris Koukos
- 9 Harvard professor of architecture, Spiro Pollalis personally oversaw the 18th century building's renovation
- 10 Spiro and Tatiana Pollalis with children Christina and Nikolas (CK NAMES)
- 11 Room with a view. Spiro and Tatina's favorite spot for coffee overlooking the marina
- 12 The architect's touch. A cozy corner in the central patio
- 13 The dining room is always busy with friends and artists
- 14 Traditional elements revisited in elegance and style in the guest room

Poros, a great island destination for many reasons, not only for its proximity to Athens, its sandy beaches, forested hills, 6th century BC temple, charming port town and cuisine, but for art! Yes, the first art gallery, CITRONNE, opened this summer on this Argo-Saronic island. It's definitely the icing on the cake. Residents and visitors are in for a special treat, July through September, as the works of Greek and international artists grace the island. This season's theme is the Greek landscape interpreted in three one-person painting exhibitions of artists Dimitris Koukos, Vassilis Theocharakis and Peter Seibt. Seibt's works will show through September 10, 2006.

Who is responsible for creating CITRONNE? Tatiana Spinari-Pollalis and Spiro Pollalis. This couple has art in their blood. Tatiana is an art historian and professor of 19th and 20th century modern art at Boston College, and her husband, Spiro, is an architect and professor of design technology and management at Harvard University. Both have distinguished careers, engaging personalities and refined taste. The Pollalis and their two children live in Boston and spend their summers in Greece, on Poros, as they have family ties to the island.

The idea to open the gallery came after they bought an elegant two-storey building right along Poros town's quay. Not wanting to change its original use, they kept the lower level as a



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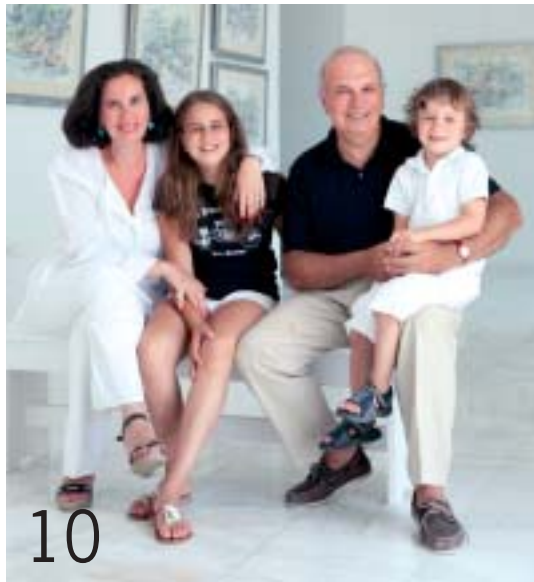
commercial space and made their residence on the upper level. Dr. Spinari-Pollalis was very inspired by the spaces and as she'd held exhibitions in the U.S., she envisioned the lower level ideal for such use. Thus the art gallery was born. Her husband undertook a detailed renovation of the 18th century building and the results are truly striking. She describes it as an austere example of island architecture, minimal and monolithic.

A lemon-yellow banner bearing the name CITRONNE runs vertically alongside the building. Lemons decorate the window displays giving a touch of freshness. The fruit is not foreign to these parts and the gallery takes its name from the area's well-known *lemonodassos* (lemon grove) and from the novel with the same title, published in 1928 by Greek author Kosmas Politis.

The island is also associated with George Theotokas and Nobel laureate

George Seferis, two of Greece's important literary figures of the 1930s, who spent a great deal of time on the island to compose their works. In this spirit, Dr. Spinari-Pollalis would like to "revitalize the artistic scene on the island and create an intellectual discourse during the three months of each summer, stimulated by the sensitivities of Greek and international artists exhibited at CITRONNE." She hopes the gallery will be the vehicle to achieve this.







### Poros fast facts and addresses

Poros, which means 'passage' in Greek, sits just 450 meters away from the mainland. A 5-minute boat ride takes you to the mainland port of Galatas. The sea passage between the two land masses sees vessels making their way to and from the islands of Hydra and Spetses. Ferry boats and catamarans depart daily from Pireaus to Poros.

**CITRONNE gallery**, Plateia Virvili, Poros. Tel: 22980.22401. info@citronne.com. www.citronne.com.

### Where to Stay

(15,16,17) **Poros Image Hotel**, Neorio. Tel: 22980.22216-8. Fax: 22980.25725.

Email: info@porosimage.gr. www.porosimage.gr

**Sirene Hotel**, Monastiri. Tel: 22980.22741-3.

Fax: 22980.22744. www.gtp.gr/Sirene-Poros

**Hotel Saron**, Poros town. Tel: 22980. 22279. Fax: 22980.23670.

contact@hotelsaronporos.com

### Where to eat

(18) **Aspros Gatos**, Neorio.

Tel: 22980.25650, www.whitecat.gr. Enjoy beachside dining and delicious Greek and Mediterranean cuisine. Try the *astakomakaronada* (lobster pasta) and many other seafood dishes. In photo: Aspros Gatos owner, Andreas Kaikas.

(19) **O Karavolos "The Snail"**, Poros town (behind gallery). Tel: 22980.26158. A not-to-miss family-run taverna serving wonderful Greek specialties including snail. **Prima Sera**, Punta. Tel: 22980.23080.

Located on the quay overlooking the

canal. The chef recommends one of his seafood pasta dishes followed by walnut cake topped with ice cream.

### Don't leave without

- enjoying the sunset from the clock tower (in town)
- visiting the 18th century monastery of Zoodohou Pigis (3 km from town by bus or taxi)
- viewing the wall paintings by Greek painter Constantine Parthenis at Saint George cathedral
- heading to "Punta", the fishermen side of town, all the way to Timios Stavros church, to watch boats passing through the canal on route to Hydra
- seeing the ruins of the Russian Dockyard with views of "Daskalio," the small island with the church