



Spring time on the Greek Isles March 28-April 9, 2009

Although Greece is synonymous with ancient history, and renowned for its landmarks and mythology, it is also a vibrant, contemporary nation. On this journey, we will divide our time between the bustling, modern city of Athens and the idyllic beauty of the Saronic Islands of Aegina, Poros, Hydra and the Cycladic islands. The juxtaposition of the two “home bases”—Athens with its galleries, theatres, monuments and buildings, and Tinos with its cobblestone streets, spectacular villages, numerous art studios, and ruggedly beautiful beaches – is designed to balance the journey, giving you a chance to thoroughly explore Greek art and culture.

Tinos is in the heart of the Cyclades, the most beautiful part of the Aegean. From there we will take day trips to the neighbouring islands of Mykonos, Syros and Andros, all within a 15 to 60 minute ferry ride. Our village visits will be leisurely, allowing us time to explore, take photos, make sketches al fresco, learn about the history and customs, and taste the cuisine. Participants should be in good physical condition for walking.

Day 0: March 28, 2009: Arrival at Athens airport, bus to our hotel in Plaka; walk about the Plaka district.

Day 1: Athens. We will visit the Parthenon; dinner in the Plaka district.

Day 2: Athens. We will visit the Cycladic and Benaki Museums; free evening.

Day 3: Athens and the Islands: A one day Saronic cruise where we will visit the nearby and spectacularly beautiful islands of Aegina, Poros and Hydra.

Day 4: Athens – travel to Tinos. We will spend the day in the wine country of the Attica Plain. We'll visit the Vorres Museum of contemporary art followed by lunch and wine tasting at the Fragou Estate, one of the oldest and best established wineries in Greece. Late in the afternoon we'll go to the port of Rafina to take the ferry to Tinos.

Day 5: Tinos. We'll start with some refreshing strolls around the harbour of Tinos, one of the oldest inhabited places on the Aegean. We'll visit its famous musea, and the Church of the *Megalohari*, the most holy of churches throughout Greece, credited for many miracles. Evening will take us to the old section of *Pallada* for a welcoming dinner.

Day 6: Tinos. We'll visit *Pyrgos*, the only village not visible from the sea and the only one that has never been captured by any invader. *Pyrgos* is a veritable artists' enclave—it has more studios per capita than anywhere else in Greece. We'll visit galleries, artists' studios, have coffee in the village square under the thousand year old plane tree, and then will walk down the hill to the Bay of Panormos for lunch, with a hike back to *Pyrgos* for our bus.

Day 7: Tinos. We take a ferry ride to the picturesque island of Mykonos, where we'll enjoy first hand its spectacular and world-renowned architecture. We'll photograph, sketch, or visit some of its galleries and boutiques—Mykonos, after all, is the home of the jetsetters.

Day 8: Tinos. We will spend all day on the island of Syros, in *Ermoupolis*, the leading port of Greece after the War of Independence from the Ottomans in 1821. Visit the upper city, a walk of 1,200 steps...that should take care of our workout for the day; then have dinner in one of its restaurants before we take the ferry back to Tinos.

Day 9: Tinos. We visit Andros, the island of the shipping magnates. It has the best French painting collection east of Paris at the *Goulandris* Modern Art Museum, lovely villas, and a beautiful port city. We'll spend the rest of the day visiting musea, walking through *Hora*, and having a bite or two where our fancy will lead us.

Day 10: Tinos. A day of relaxation, shopping in *Hora* (local handicrafts and foods) and a going away dinner in the Old *Palada*, at a restaurant famous for its *loutza* and excellent local *potamissio* (white) wine.

Days 11-12: Rafina. Departure by ferry to overnight in Rafina, then to the Athens International airport the following morning. We return home...to savour our memories.

Price: Double occupancy: \$2,524 per person. Single: \$3,404 per person. Deposit of \$500 required by January 15, 2009.

Includes: All accommodation and breakfasts; all ground transportation including airport transfers; ferry transportation between islands, four special dinners, wine tasting, museum entrances. Fully escorted. Airfare not included.

Contact: Caterina Pizanias, The Art Exchange

Tel: (403) 251-5297 E-mail: cpizanias@artexchange-greece.com

