

# Greek islands among top 50 favourite destinations

Everyone has a favourite place. After surveying industry experts on their favourite destinations, Travel + Leisure magazine invited Australians to vote on their dream lists of top spots throughout the world.

The Pyramids of Giza, Parisian temptations, African safaris and Greek Island adventures all scored top marks in our survey of the world's best travel experiences.

Travel + Leisure asked readers for their all-time top

50 destinations, categorised into most popular countries, cities, regions, journeys and icons, and the results revealed many clear favourites and a few surprises, too.

For everyone, there's no place like home for the number one country spot, but at the same time a thirst for European adventures and global icons is evident. There were also some exciting results among readers' nominations for something special, ranging from running the Midnight Sun Marathon in Tromso,

Norway, Moscow's Red Square and walking through the Old City of Jerusalem.

Readers were asked to vote for their top choice, based on a list voted by members of the travel industry published in our January/February edition. We also asked readers to nominate their choices for destinations not on the list, plus their recommendation for their tip for a special travel place.

Australia remains the number one destination among readers, but interestingly

home turf choices remain less popular in other categories such as regions and journeys. Europe was a strong player across most categories, with Paris hitting the top spot for favourite city, and the three nominated European regions taking the top three spaces.

## TOP TEN COUNTRIES

1. Australia
2. Italy
3. France
4. New Zealand
5. US
6. Thailand

7. Turkey
8. India
9. Greece
10. Japan

## TOP TEN REGIONS

1. The Greek Islands
2. Tuscany
3. French wine districts
4. The Canadian Rockies
5. The Antarctic
6. Tasmanian Wilderness
7. Kakakdu
8. The Kimberley
9. Byron Bay
10. The South Australian wine districts



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## Hendo's Pride in 'shocked' Angelica Poulos

GIVING BACK: Chief Minister Paul Henderson has nominated Angelica Poulos for a Pride of Australia award.

A TERRITORIAN who has devoted her life to the community has been nominated for a prestigious award by the NT's leader.

Angelica Poulos was nominated for the Community Service award of the Pride of Australia Medal by Chief Minister Paul Henderson. The dedicated community advocate of Woolner said she was a "bit shocked" to be nominated and felt humbled to be selected by the Chief Minister.

"I am not alone, everything I achieve in the community is with the community," she said.

"The greatest pleasure is that I can give something back."

Ms Poulos devotes much of her time to progressing the work she champions around teaching of the Greek language.

She was one of the leaders who convinced the Greek Government to fund three teachers in Darwin to fulfil their commitment to sharing their language and culture with the rest of the world.

She also belongs to the Hellenic Macedonian Association, is heavily involved in charity work and helps to organise parts of the annual Greek Glenti celebrations. Chief Minister Paul Henderson said Ms Poulos epitomised the Territory's multiculturalism.

Mr Henderson called on Territorians to nominate someone who makes them proud.

# A bronze chess set tells a family's tale

*THEY may appear a jumble of rooks, pawns and bishops, but this chess set tells the story of Phillip Wierzbowski's life.*

The 32 bronze, Roman-style figurines are among the few items salvaged from Mr Wierzbowski's Healesville house that burnt down in the Black Saturday bushfires.

A North Ringwood couple, Jeff and Desma Noble, heard about the tragedy from a mutual friend. Professional jewellers, they are cleaning and polishing the 29 pieces that are charred but intact, and having three badly damaged ones recast.

Apart from his father's gold wedding band, the chess set is the only physical memento of Mr Wierzbowski's late parents: everything else, including his father's architectural drawings and video footage of his mother, was lost in the blaze that tore, twice, through the eight-hectare property, 10 kilometres north of Healesville.

Akrivi Partheni was just 16, but claimed to be 18, when she came to Australia in 1955 for an arranged marriage to Polish immigrant Mark Wierzbowski.

Mr Wierzbowski earned money making house models while studying architecture at university. The couple settled in Greendale Road, East Doncaster, and had four children. It was 1971 before Akrivi saved enough to return to Greece for a tearful reunion with her mother at Piraeus.

Mrs Wierzbowski took along Phillip, then 11, and he witnessed her buying the bronze chess set in an Athens shop, a gift for her husband.

Mark Wierzbowski had been in the Resistance fighting the Germans in



A bronze chess set tells a family's tale. Phillip Wierzbowski, who lost his house in the fires, and jeweller Jeff Noble with the set Phillip's mother bought in Greece in 1971. Photo: PENNY STEPHENS

World War II, but for 17 years, on Saturday nights in the Wierzbowskis' lounge room, his chess partner was a German neighbour, Karl.

Over peanuts and the odd sherry as they played, Mark and Karl would talk politics, photography, "but never about the war", says Phillip, who learned to play chess by watching them. When Mark died of a heart attack at 61 in 1988, Phillip inherited the chess set. One year later, chess games helped break the romantic ice with a schoolmate, Leanne McKenzie, and they are still together.

On Black Saturday, the couple were holidaying in Bangkok after a three-week African safari and watched the fires on the internet with horror. The following night, a neighbour texted them a photo of the ruins of their rammed-earth house, which Mr Wierzbowski had designed and had built.

A week later, as the Wierzbowskis

and their friends the Mutton family of Warranwood combed the ruins, he held no hope that the chess set would have survived.

But over six hours that day, they picked up the pieces one by one. Mr Wierzbowski says there was "hysteria" at 6pm when Alyssa Mutton, 15, found the final piece. The publican at Healesville's Terminus Hotel shouted them drinks. Mr Wierzbowski had found a ray of light in the gloom.

Mark Mutton, a friend who had helped build the Healesville house and whose idea it was to drop the damaged chess pieces at his friend Jeff Noble's studio for repairs, is making Mr Wierzbowski a new chess board.

When the set is ready, Mr Wierzbowski has promised to teach Alyssa to play chess, and start a new chapter in the story of the board.