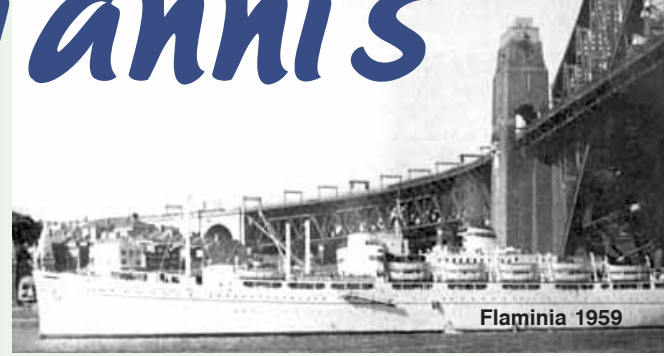


Meet the Karayiannis family



The end of World War II and the Civil War had left Greece without industrial infrastructure, primitive agriculture and thousands of displaced people. Thousands of Greeks left the country in the 50s and 60s and the major destinations this time were the countries of Europe (mainly Germany) and Australia. For a large number of Greeks the migration to Germany was only temporary and they have now returned to Greece. On the other hand the Greek migrants in Australia have remained in that country permanently and the Greek communities in Australia have become "a small Greece" down under.

Interview: Anna Arsenis

A couple of days ago I met Mrs Katerina and Mr Marco Karayiannis. Mrs Katerina was born in Egypt in 1938. She came to Australia at the age of 20. Her father Nikolaos was from the greek island Kastellorizo and her mother Sevasti from Kalymnos. The conditions of life at that time in Greece were very hard and this was why the family migrated to Egypt. The couple had seven children: Katerina, Michael, Mary, Sevasti, Vaso, Vasili and Costas.

Life was pretty easy for Mrs Katerina. Her dad had restaurants in Egypt. In one night he lost four restaurants because of a new law that was imposed. Things started to become difficult so the family immigrated to Australia.

They travelled with the Flaminia in 1959. They stayed in Greece for 3 months and then went to Port Said and from there to Sydney.

Mrs Katerina knew her husband, Marcos from Egypt. He was her brother's best friend.

Things for Mr Marcos were not easy when he came to Australia... There were times when he won-

dered whether it was worth coming! When he managed to bring the rest of his family he forgot all his troubles and the hardship. He was playing with the band "Nea Asteria" and mixed in with a lot of people. He was very well educated. For that he acknowledges the Kaniskeris orphanage where he spend 6 years of his life. "It was the best years of my life", he recalls. I was educated, I learned a profession, I was taught music.

When the couple married, Marcos was working 3 jobs to be able to make a better living. Around 1970-1971 the couple opened their own florist shop in Mascot and things started easing up a bit.

Mr Marcos has only one regret in his life. He didn't have the chance to enjoy his children while they were growing up.

The couple has three sons: Lukas, Niko and Vasili.

Mr Marcos and Mrs Katerina are now retired... Now it is time to enjoy their children and grandchildren and spend more time with family and friends. Mr Marcos grows orchids and takes part in lots of exhi-

They were tough years but really they were good years. I know they made me more determined.

Lukas, Niko and Vasili.

