

Dragon's Cave one of the most popular destinations in Kastoria

The Dragon's Cave in Kastoria, northwestern Greece, a site of exceptional natural beauty and boasting one of the most sophisticated air recycling and climate maintenance systems, has quickly become one of the most popular destinations for visitors to the region since it opened to the public in late December after a two-year project to make the site accessible to visitors.

The opening to the cave, which is situated close to Lake Kastoria and was discovered in 1940 by three local residents, has the shape of a dragon's mouth, thus the name.

According to local legends, a dragon guarded the cave and spurted flames from its mouth when anyone dared to approach it.

Tourist corridors have been constructed, while stalactite- and stalagmite-friendly lighting has been installed, and measures have also been



taken to protect the cave's rare flora.

The Cave's interior contains impressive stalactites and seven underground lakes, 10 caverns and five tunnel-corridors.

It is the only Cave in Greece with fresh-water lakes, given the proximity of Lake Kastoria.

Bones of cave bears have been discovered in the cave, dating back 10,000

years.

The exit route from the cave is through a man-made tunnel that also serves as a museum containing photographic material depicting the history and legend of the cave.

According to one legend, many centuries ago the Cave was a gold mine that was guarded by a dragon that spewed fire and poisonous fumes.

There are an estimated 10,000 recorded caves throughout Greece, and the Dragon's Cave is now among the country's 12 caves open to visitors.

The Greek caves that are currently open to visitors are Petralona Cave in Halkidiki, Perama Cave in Ioannina, Alistrati Cave in Serres, Dyros Cave, Mara Cave in Drama, Dikteou Androu Cave in Crete, Mellisanthi Cave in Cephalonia, Pramaton Cave in Ioannina, Aghios Georgios Cave in Kilkis, Sykia Cave in Chios, Katsias Cave in Tripolis, and Vathi Cave.



Changing houses: Interior designer Chontelle Samios.

Home, sweet home

CHONTELLE Samios made such an impression last year in Channel Nine's house makeover show homeMADE as one of its youngest interior designers that it led to another job. Samios, 25, of Monterey, is the newest team member on Domestic Blitz, whose team descends on suburban families to give their homes a new life.

"Before joining the team, along with my mum and younger sisters, I would enjoy watching the stories unfold," Samios said.

"The show's generosity coupled with the inspiring attitude of all those involved captivated my imagination.

"I feel privileged to now not only have a role in the show, but also to be able to contribute to the stories to help bring a little happiness back into the lives of the families."

A career in interiors was always on the cards for the girl who, from a young age, could be found fluffing pillows, changing colours and moving furniture around her family's home in The Blue Mountains.

At the age of 23, Samios had already completed two diplomas in interior design and styling, renovated her property from top to bottom, started her own design firm, Elles InDesign, and managed to win an impressive mix of residential and commercial clients. When not helping to redesign house in Domestic Blitz, Samios enjoys hosting dinner parties and barbecues, joining friends for brunch, riding her bike and all water sports.

Domestic Blitz is on 6.30pm,

Sunday, on Channel Nine.

Article from The Leader

Mother, daughter suicide linked to 2006 quintuple murder of hunters

The mother and teenage sister of a young hunter killed in a quintuple murder in late 2006 in the village of Kalyvia, near Agrinio, in western Aetoloakarnania prefecture, were found dead in their home late Sunday night, police announced on Monday.

According to initial findings, the mother and 17-year-old teen are believed to have died from pesticide consumption. The bodies of

the two women were found by the slain main's brother, when he returned home late Sunday night.

An autopsy will be conducted on the two bodies to determine the precise cause and time of death.

Five hunters, two brothers, two cousins and a friend of theirs, were found dead on the night of Nov. 26 near the community of Platania at Kalyvia, outside Agrinio. They all had fatal injuries caused by a shotgun.

The hunters had left their village in the morning to go hunting, but after failing to return home their relatives began to search for them. The father of the two brothers finally found them dead near a lake on Saturday night and immediately notified police.

Two days later, police announced the arrest of a 37-year-old local man in the slayings that shocked Greece.

Dionysis Foukas eventually admitted to the homi-

cides, adding that the incident occurred during a confrontation with the hunters on his father's fields.

His 73-year-old father, a local shepherd, was charged and convicted as an accomplice.

The two men were handed down five life sentences each for the killings by a first instance court in March 2008, the son on five counts of homicide and the father for moral instigation of the killings.

Union of many cultures

LEAVING home and family for a retirement home would be stressful enough without the problems of language. At Sir Thomas Mitchell Aged Care Centre at Illawong, staff are aware of the difficulties faced by people who do not speak English. In fact, about 23percent of the centre's 125 residents come from non-English speaking backgrounds, and some speak no English.

They come from Netherlands, Italy, Sri Lanka, Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Greece, Egypt, Germany and Spain. Fortunately, many of the 170 staff come from the same countries and can help out with interpreting.

Director of nursing, Rachael Ellender, said that between the help of family and staff, they had little need for formal interpreters. There was always someone on hand to help out.

"The fact that several of the staff speak Greek has resulted in us getting more Greek residents," Mrs Ellender said.

Staff had a multicultural day for the residents recently, dressing in costumes from various regions and countries including Africa, England, Scotland, Philippines and Australia.

"Every one, including laundry staff, physiotherapists, nurses administration and maintenance staff added to the experience by bringing in a meal from their homeland to share," Mrs Ellender said.

"The residents loved the performances given to them by our staff. One resident said 'Can you dress up like this every day, you look so fabulous'." Details: Sir Thomas Mitchell Aged Care Centre: 95437333.



We are one, we are many: Multicultural day at Sir Thomas Mitchell Aged Care Centre.

Article from The Leader