

# Capt. Daley's Sea Stories

## Santorini, Greece (2)

11 April 2008



Santorini is the site of a massive caldera with an island at its center. Volcanologists have determined this ill-fated island was engulfed by the terrible eruption and collapse of the Strogilí volcano there, which affected the entire eastern Mediterranean, possibly the most powerful eruption in recorded history, ejecting approximately 7 cu miles of magma, up to 23 miles high. Volcanic events of this magnitude are known to generate tsunamis. The eruption also is theorized by some to explain most of the seemingly miraculous Biblical events of Exodus (a controversial idea made popular by 2006 History Channel documentary, "The Exodus Decoded").

The island has a small, but flourishing, wine industry, based on the indigenous grape variety, Assyrtiko. Vines of the Assyrtiko variety are extremely old and prove resistant to phylloxera, attributed by local wine makers to the well drained volcanic soil and its chemistry, and the soil needed no replacement during the great phylloxera epidemic of the early 20th century. In their adaption to their habitat, such vines are planted far apart, as their principal source of moisture is dew, and they often are trained in the shape of low spiraling baskets, with the grapes hanging inside to protect them from the winds. Also unique to the island is the red, sweet, and extremely strong Vinsanto; white wines from the island are extremely dry with a strong, citrus scent, and the ashy volcanic soil gives the white wines a slightly sulphurous flavor much like Vinsanto.



Alexandrous invited us to join them for a Good Friday service in Pargos. The church is actually the Monastirii high atop a hill over Pargos. It is a long walk and long climb up to the church, but well worth it. It is a pilgrimage church for many Greeks and the service is considered every special. On the way up to the church we passed this lamb for sale.



It was quite crowded with pilgrims from all over Greece.



One thing about Greek churches, they are always built atop a hill, never in a valley!



I wish I knew more about the history of this church or monastery. I'm sure the church has a very interesting past.



The inside of the church was beautiful. We were literally the last four people to participate in the ceremony.



The piece represents the coffin of Jesus. On Good Friday the priests carry it around the outside of the church symbolizing his death and burial. Prior to this, the participants come in and kiss the "resting place" of Jesus as an act of respect.



Here is Diane and the Alexandrous'. They really made our Easter season in Greece a very special event.



As we left the church we noticed that lights were turned on and burning pots were set on the rooftops.



There were so many burning pots. I don't know how they were all lit at the same time.



There were literally thousands of pots on every rooftop, lighting up the village.



Santorini is a magical place. You really don't want to leave. I would return for another visit given the opportunity.



This is the tram that the passengers on the cruise line used to return to the ship. We jumped ship in Santorini and did not make the voyage back to Athens with them. We stayed in Santorini for three wonderful days.



This is one of my favorite shots. This Greek dog looks so all knowing and relaxed about his wonderful kingdom.



We returned to the room to find a special Easter gift from the hotel awaiting us, including two Easter candles.



The package contained traditional Greek red Easter eggs and Easter breads.



It was a bit chilly in the shade, but it is hard not to smile in Santorini.



The manager of the hotel was very helpful; in finding us the perfect room in spite of the crowds that were there for the Easter pilgrimage to Pirgos.



Our waitress was happy and friendly.



The restaurant manager was happy and friendly.



And consequently the guests were happy as well.



They served Easter eggs for breakfast on Sunday morning.



Sunday was a rainy, dreary day. We decided to stay in. I went to the restaurant to find some breakfast leftovers to snack on. They said they would fix me up. Five minutes later this was delivered to the room. They didn't charge us for our snacks! The Majestic Hotel and the island of Santorini are definitely magical.