

The G. & A. MAMIDAKIS Foundation: a dream that became reality

It all began...

... in 1988, when Gina Mamidakis, managing director of Bluegr Mamidakis Hotels in Greece, created the Minos Beach Art Symposia at Agios Nikolaos, Crete. Her aim was to tap the desire of artists to make their works available in Crete, so that increasing numbers of people would have the opportunity to enjoy a unique cultural experience, actively taking part in cultural events rather than merely observing them.

In 1993, the G. & A. Mamidakis Foundation became a reality. Named after the parents of its head, Gina Mamidakis, it hosts works by great artists from Greece and abroad, making modern art more accessible to Greeks and visitors from all over the world. The Foundation also organises social and environmental.

Significantly, the three main pillars of the Foundation – people, environment and culture – are a perfect fit with the development and the philosophy of bluegr hotels.

The bluegr hotels team and the Foundation make their local communities the focus of their initiatives and their employment policies.

Art Symposia

The **Art Symposia** concept arose from Gina Mamidakis's love of culture, and insures that the cultural heritage of different countries will travel all over the world through the eyes of visitors.

The **first** international **Art Symposium** was held in June **1988** at the Minos Beach Hotel in Agios Nikolaos, Crete. Artists from Greece, Europe and America created works in the environs of the hotel and the sculptures that adorned the hotel's gardens, whether standing, hanging, resting on surfaces or attached to other natural or man-made structures, became part of the hotel's natural environment.

The **second Art Symposium** took place in 1990, the European Year of Tourism, focusing on the topic of a new cultural identity for the Mediterranean. New works by 16 artists from Italy, Greece, Cyprus, Spain and Turkey were presented to great acclaim, while the theme of the Symposium was also discussed.

In the summer of 1993, "Art in politics" was the central topic of the **third Art Symposium**. It featured 22 artists and seven critics and scholars who lived and worked in Central and Eastern Europe (Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Bulgaria). Its aim was to present artists whose artistic expression and output had for a long time been restricted by totalitarian regimes.

The **fourth Art Symposium** was held under the aegis of the G. & A. Mamidakis Foundation in the summer of 1996. Eight experienced Cypriot artists created works of art during the Symposium and exhibited them in the hotel and its grounds. Made of various materials such as metal, copper, marble, canvas and wood, they were characterised by a conceptual approach and also included video art.

In July 1999, Chilean art made an appearance in Crete at the **fifth Art Symposium**. Eight artists created a diverse exhibition of sculpture, painting, photographs, theatre and song which went on display at the Minos Beach Art'Otel, establishing how close cultural, political and human relations can be, despite the geographical distance that separates countries.

Continuing success

In recent years, the following exhibitions have taken place:

- In June 2006, “Mechanics 1978 – 2006” by renowned sculptor Giannis Parmakelis opened and continued until September. Four of his works are in the Foundation's permanent collection.
- “People and Places in the 1960s”, an exhibition of black-and-white photographs taken in and around Agios Nikolaos and the Minos Beach Hotel became part of the hotel's permanent display in summer 2007.
- Photographs of Cretan landscapes and traditions, “Crete in black and white”, have been on permanent display at the Minos Palace Hotel since Easter 2011.

The exhibitions were accompanied by lavishly illustrated catalogues which were free to visitors, hotel guests and artists working locally and in exhibitions and workshops abroad. They also feature on the Internet and are regularly updated.

At the same time, two travel books, “The Unknown Crete” and “The Unknown Rhodes” have been published. Through a host of photographs and fascinating descriptions they introduce readers to less well-known monasteries, archaeological sites and other places in and around the two destinations where bluegr hotels are located, encouraging people to discover some of the secret treasures of these two beautiful islands.

In addition, bluegr. hotels help guests get to know Crete and Rhodes better by inviting them to take photographs of the places they visit. These are then displayed in the hotel lobbies and are entered in a competition in which the winners receive free holidays and see their pictures posted on the Internet.

Meanwhile, the bluegr Candia Park Village and Miramare Park suites&villas have mini clubs where children of all ages can paint island scenes and ancient gods and heroes on stones and paper. At the end, they receive certificates and prizes.

The environment

Since 2008, the hotels and the Foundation have extended their activities to raising awareness about the environment, using detailed information leaflets to focus the attention of guests and employees on saving water and energy.

The programme is constantly being expanded with new initiatives and policies and the hotels are in permanent contact with the Municipality of Agios Nikolaos for plans being effected up to October 2011 and in 2012.

The hotels follow the same programme as the Foundation, with which some initiatives are jointly implemented.

The G & A Mamidakis Foundation contributes to the implementation of the Environmental Programme at bluegr hotels. Following their inspection, bluegr hotels received certification in October 2011.

A range of environmental initiatives is planned for 2012. Children and their parents staying at bluegr hotels in Crete and Rhodes and from the local community will be invited to take part in tree-planting, recycling and smartening up central squares.

A unique journey through the world of art

With all these activities, bluegr hotels are working with the G & A Mamidakis Foundation to make visitors more aware of traditions and customs in Crete and Rhodes. They are building on past successes to bring more and more people into contact with the wonderful world of art.

A real commitment

The bluegr. group is committed to corporate social responsibility and has signed up to the principles of the Global Compact, a voluntary international initiative from the United Nations in which participating businesses must operate with the aim of sustainable growth and apply responsible behaviour and actions. It consists of 10 principles concerning human rights, working conditions, the environment and corruption.