

THE E-type

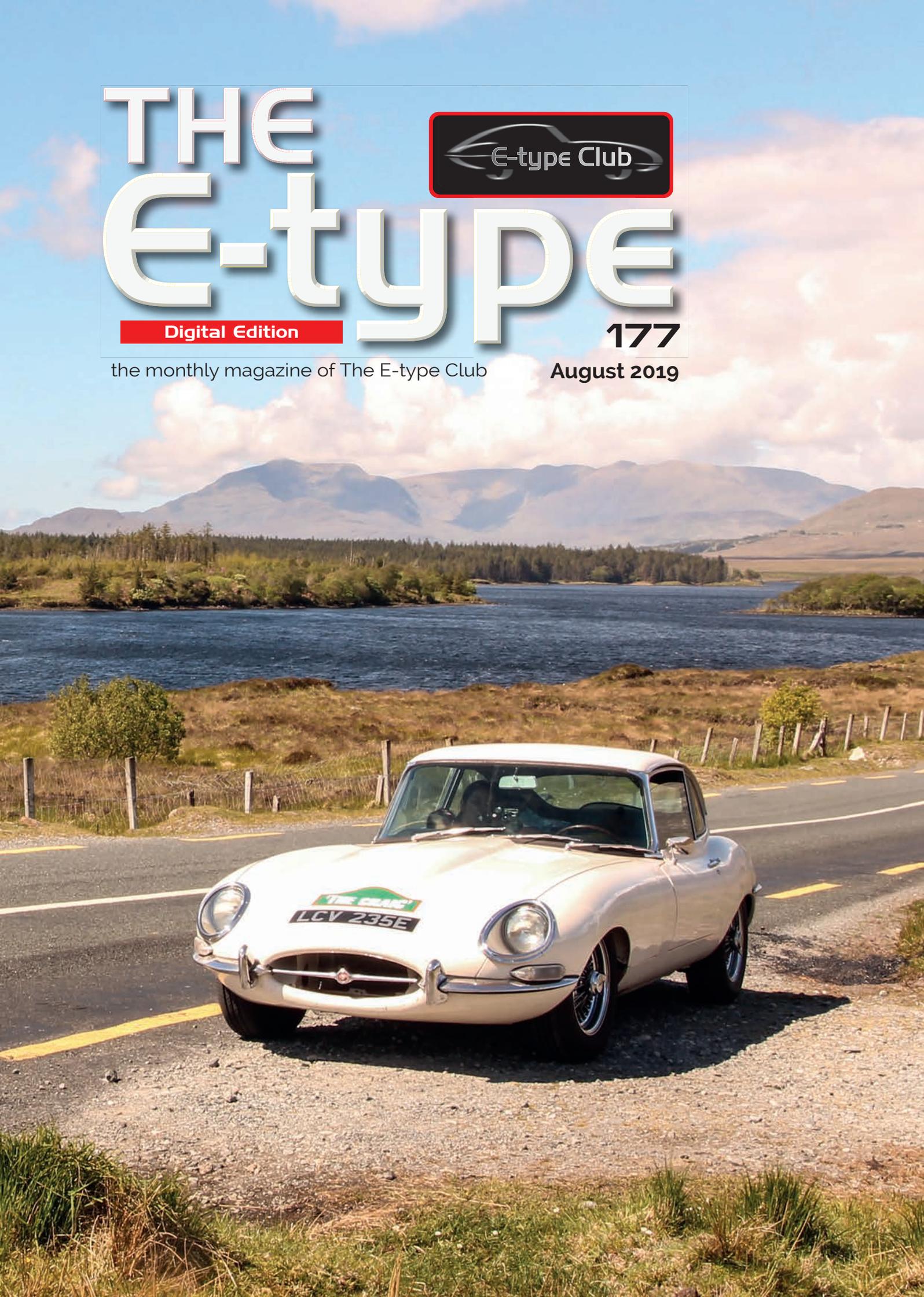


Digital Edition

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Island **discovery**

Club Representative **Alex Holis** reports from another amazing Greek tour. The destination this time was Evia...

Evia, or Eubea, is a 280km-long island east of Attica, connected to the mainland by two bridges in Chalkida, only 80km from Athens. We started our discovery tour on a sweet note visiting Stayia farm, a small family bio farm that produces healthy bio-organic food based on honey and royal jelly. Their products, named Vasilissa, can be found on the shelves of many prestigious delicatessen stores worldwide.

The brand name Vasilissa has an intriguing mythological origin. The nymphs Amalthea and Melissa (the Greek name for bee) were the daughters of King Melisseos of Crete, and fed Zeus (Jupiter) with goat milk and honey. Melissa raised Zeus with special care, feeding him with honey in order to grow faster and become the main divinity on Mount Olympus. Zeus loved honey, and one of his nicknames was 'Melittite' in honour of the bee's superfood.

When Cronos (Saturn) realised the role of honey in the development of his son Zeus's strength, he was outraged and transformed nymph Melissa into a worm. Zeus, forever grateful to Melissa, broke the spell and transformed her again into a Queen bee (Vasilissa in Greek means Queen).

Stayia farm's Vasilissa honey comes in different flavours such as truffle, lavender, fir tree, thyme, honeycomb, royal jelly and pollen, wild herbs,



mastic of Chios, saffron, cinnamon, hot chilli pepper, goji berry and a special variety containing flakes of 24k edible gold! The two young children of the owners inspired the creation of a cocoa honey, a natural superfood that baby Zeus would have appreciated for sure.

After having tasted the God's favourite food, we happily continued our discovery visiting the Karababa Fortress and the panoramic café

- Top: XK 150 pictured on the picturesque descent to Porto Boufalo
- Above: enjoying the local produce at the Stayia bio farm



overlooking the town of Chalkida. The Venetian Gerolimo Galopo built the Karababa fortress in 1684 during the Ottoman occupation and that is why the architecture looks European rather than Oriental. The old 40m-long moving bridge was built in 410BC on the narrowest point between the island and the mainland. To the present day, depending on the needs, it allows pedestrians and cars to pass over or boats to sail through the passage between the two seas.

The Jaguar Club of Greece is the only classic car club that allows owners of modern Jaguar cars to become members and participate in its events. All members can also invite other Jaguar friends. Our purpose is to encourage people to enjoy the sight of our classic Jaguars, informing them about what it means driving and maintaining an XK or E-type so that they might decide to acquire one and become the 'treasurer' of another classic Jaguar. Konstantinos, one of our members, owns a new F-type roadster and we were proud to admire both the curvy pin-up lines of an XK and the aggressive lines of the F-type. Both are stunning!

Refreshed by our drinks under the pine trees, we pointed our bonnets in the direction of Eretria



• From top: some of the participants lined up outside Stayia farm; XK 150 parked alongside its spiritual descendant – the F-type that belongs to a member of the Jaguar Club of Greece; the Red Arrows use this part of the world for their pre-season practice each year (Image courtesy of the Negroponte Beach Resort)



to reach the five-star Negroponte Resort, the annual 'base' of the famous RAF Red Arrows when they're training here. Every May, the Red Arrows' jets depart from the United Kingdom to reach the Hellenic Air Force base in Tanagra and begin an intensive phase of preparations for the summer campaign. The annual training, known as Exercise Springhawk, takes full advantage of the fine weather in Greece to perfect and polish the team's displays, which millions of people see every year all over the world. We always enjoy their acrobatic flights during the Formula One Grand Prix at Silverstone or over the Goodwood Festival of Speed.

We landed – sorry, parked – our aerodynamic Jaguars in the crowded parking of the fully booked Negroponte Resort, eager to take our first dive into the clear blue waters. We all had such a wonderful time at Negroponte, whether in pareo tasting excellent food and wines at the restaurant, or in evening dress dancing to live music around the pool at night.

On Sunday morning, after our swimming and jogging, we turned on the engines to continue our South Evia Discovery Tour. The weekend average

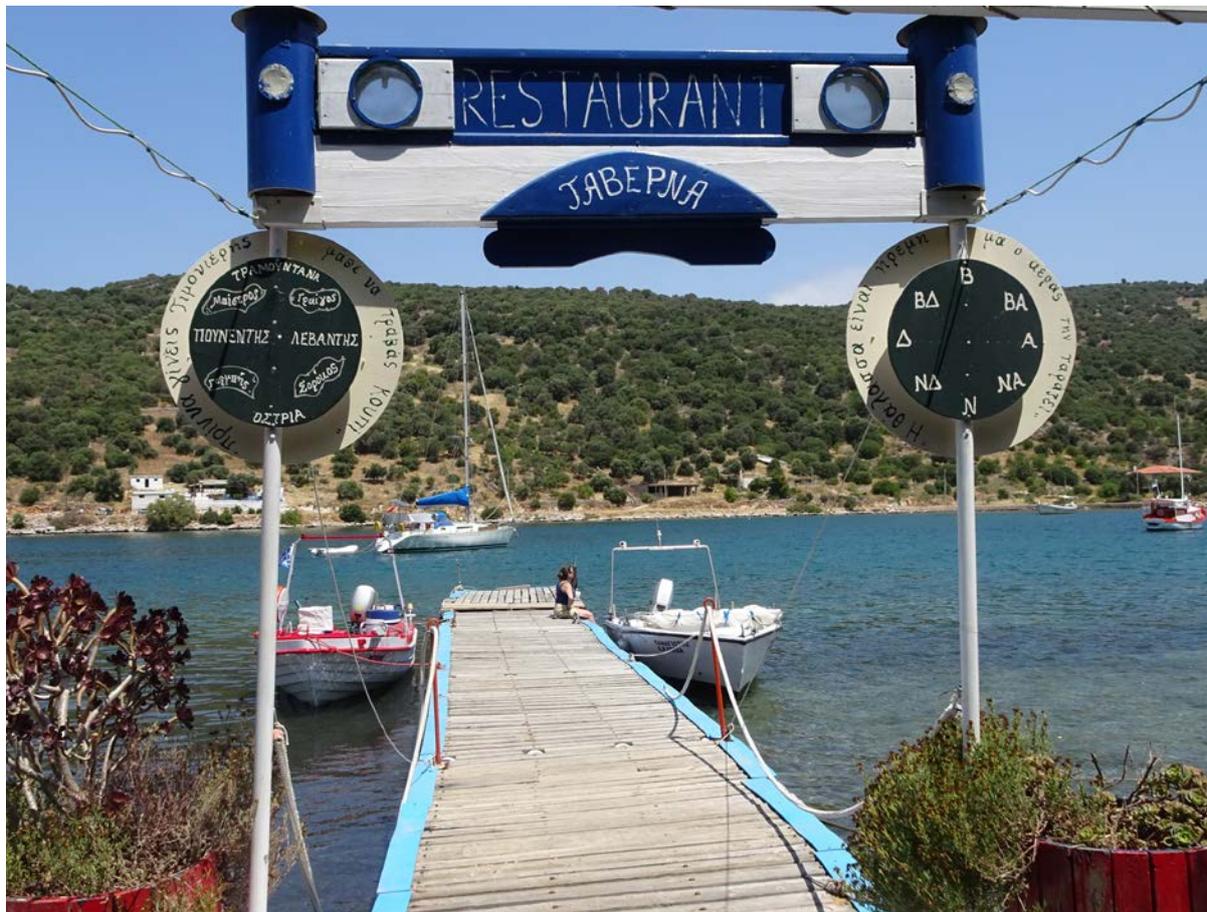


- From top: Jaguars squeeze into the small car park at the Negroponte Beach Resort; looking across the bay at Porto Boufalo; Jaguars old and new line up at the Montofoli Estate



- Top: how's this for a room with a view? Looking out from Alex's balcony at the Negroponte Beach Resort
- Above left: Series 3 E-type leads XJ and XK around the mountain roads
- Left: Jaguars trying to find a welcome area of shade in the fierce heat – this is on arrival at Porto Boufalo

- Right: the main entrance of one of the fish tavernas for customers arriving by boat. The sign on the left reads: 'If you want to become a helmsman, learn first to row!' and the second one 'The sea is quiet but the winds shake it!'
- Below right: on the road again, this time heading for Figia Beach
- Bottom right: F-type to the fore as the cars seek out more shade



temperature was 34 degrees Celsius (93 Fahrenheit) so, while driving around the mountain hairpins, sometimes we had to switch on our electric fans.

Finally, our leaping cats saw the amazing sight of Porto Boufalo and ran wild to find a shady place to sleep. Porto Boufalo, with only 105 inhabitants, is a small fishing village renowned for the fresh fish visitors enjoy at the three local tavernas. The pristine waters of this bay are paradise for swimmers and a wonderful secluded anchorage for sailboats. In this gulf there is also a yoga retreat offering tranquility and relaxation to people who need to detox their body and soul.

In Greek mythology, this area was known for the story of Io, the beautiful daughter of Inachos. She was a priestess in the temple of Hera in Argos, but also the secret lover of Zeus. When Hera discovered the betrayal of her husband, she transformed Io into a female buffalo and gave her for safekeeping to a shepherd named Panoptis Argos, who tied her to an olive tree on the promontory, which is the current Porto Boufalo. Zeus ordered Hermes (Mercury) to retrieve his beloved Io from the shepherd Argos. Hermes managed to get the shepherd to sleep with the sound of his flute and later killed him, thus giving Io her freedom again!

Our cars went to sleep without the need for flute melodies, while we 'killed our thirst' with chilled ouzo and Greek appetisers. Leaving this quiet paradise lost and the sea breeze, we again climbed the mountain to reach another amazing beach. Along the road, the colourful bushes of yellow, white and pink flowers delighted our eyes.

Our lunch destination was at the romantic Figia Beach near the Port of Marmari. We left our Jaguars





in the shade of the trees and sat under a plane tree at Taverna o Platanos. Our programme was not finished yet because we kept the best surprise for the end: in the afternoon we drove to the hill above the town of Karystos to visit the historical Montofoli Estate.

Since the Frankish domination, it has been owned by the ruler of the Castello Rosso – the castle of the area – which, like the estate, is built on the ‘Montofoli’ (the mount with foliage: ‘monte’ and ‘foglie’). Omer Pascha, the final Ottoman ruler of Karystos, was its last owner. The estate was then referred to as The Paschas’ Gardens. Following the departure of the Ottomans from Karystos, it was conveyed by the Sultan to Ioannis Paparigopoulos, the Russian sub-consul to Karystos and Lord Chamberlain to King George I of Greece.

In 1986, under the ownership of the Pavlos Karakostas family, the Domaine Montofoli was

reborn. Aiming to bring the estate to prime condition, he started restoring the existing buildings and continued cultivating and producing agricultural products. All the archaeological finds from the estate were transferred to the Archaeological Museum of Karystos.

Pavlos Karakostas decided to produce a sweet wine, the Domaine Montofoli, in the way the sweet wines of the Aegean islands have been made since ancient times. Four native varieties are grown and they always make sweet wine. Asyrtiko and Aidani from Santorini, Athiri from Rhodes and Liatiko from Crete. In 1991, for the first time, the Domaine Monofoli, a sweet-salted dessert wine, was placed on the market and it immediately gained recognition in the Vin de Liguers ranking.

Following our wine tasting with the typical almond biscuits ‘cantucci’, Mrs Marianna Karakosta kindly showed us how to prepare this Tuscan speciality to relish it, dipping it into the sweet Montofoli wine.

We really enjoyed their warm hospitality and chilled wines and we took some bottles of this precious nectar for our cellars. And then it was time to leave that magical swallow’s nest to reach our ferry boat and return to the mainland. Another great weekend was over but we promised to meet again at the next one to visit the 19th-century Castle of Queen Amalia, the wife of Otto – the first King of Greece. 📷

● Above: enjoying lunch at Taverna o Platanos and (right) relaxing at the Montofoli Estate

