



XK Gazette

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Greece – The Apollon Tour October 2020



On our autumn 'Apollon Tour' in the forest of Arcadia, writes **Alex Holis**, many Jaguars, from a teenager F-type roadster to an elegant lady 1951 XK 120 roadster, stopped to admire the phenomenon of 17 trees growing on the roof of St Theodora church in Vasta, a statically unexplained miracle also recorded in *The Guinness Book of Records*. Just in front of this incredible church, there is a beautifully kept taverna named 'O Kipos tis Agias' – 'The Garden of the Saint' – because it is in bloom all year round with a great variety of multicolored flowers. After visiting the incredible church, we 'tied' our Jaguars to the oak trees. Thanks to the warm temperature for the season and our cheerful company, we enjoyed tasty local recipes at a safe distance by the river.

In the afternoon, the winding roads crossing the forest brought us to Abeliona – a village that experienced an incredible aesthetical renaissance due to a generous patron who was born there. Not for business gains but just out of love, Mr Nikos Anghelopoulos – owner of a large hotel chain and brother of the Oscar-winning film director Theodoros Anghelopoulos – decided to spend his money to give a second birth to the village of their parents. Now the 'Abeliona Retreat' has become a famous international centre for yoga, reiki, meditation and trekking, where visitors can find peace and balance through the power of nature.

We found also very warm hospitality, cosy country-chic rooms where fireplaces were lit in the evening, and a lush greenery just like a 'green hug', instead of a normal parking, where our Jaguars slept one next to the other under the full moon. A private dinner with traditional dishes, cooked with love as only a grandmother can, concluded the beautiful day.

The usual camaraderie we share in our club was put to work when two of our members experienced an electrical and a mechanical problem. With humour and the help of all of us, a failure that could have turned into an unpleasant event became an opportunity for a mini technical seminar and both issues were fixed successfully and with joy.

The next day, relaxed and invigorated by the summer weather, we continued our tour to the Temple of Epicurean Apollo, the second masterpiece of the





architect Iktinos after the Parthenon. Our Jaguars climbed to an altitude of 1,130m and there our 'coloured metal knights' were parked and stood proudly to be immortalised in the tourists' selfies. This world-famous monument of humanity, protected by UNESCO, is the oldest monument where all three ancient Greek architectural styles meet – Doric, Ionian and Corinthian. This beautiful temple was erected in the second half of the 5th century BC (420-410BC) at the zenith of Greek culture. It was dedicated to Apollo Epicurus by the Phigaleians, who believed that the God of the Sun and Healing had protected them from the plague and the invaders (probably with COVID we have the same problem again).

On 4 October, it was World Animal Day. As Jaguars are an endangered species in nature, by maintaining them we contribute to the preservation and protection of 'this kind of car'. Driving classic Jaguars in today's conditions proves their incredible strength and reliability. Their beauty is reflected in the eyes of young children who, when they see them, instinctively feel and understand the beauty of their feminine curves. Crossing the forest, our roaring Jaguars threatened the lazy goats sleeping right on the road. Luckily, our polite Jaguars ignored them and proceeded driving through the villages of Andritsaina and Karytaina to reach Agroktima Papakia Farm.

This huge green paradise for families, hosting deer, geese, ostriches, ponies, wild boars, pheasants, partridges, turkeys, guinea fowls, quails, ducks and sea turtles would never have thought that one day they would welcome jaguars! We had a shady area for our 'big cats' to rest and a separate private area outside their tavern where we enjoyed their special dishes.

Another successful event was about to end but everyone was already looking forward to saving the date for the next one in Nemea – the most important wine region of the Peloponnese – for our exclusive event 'Master of Winery'.

