

# MEDITERRANEAN

SIGGY AND HEATHER | TRIP AROUND THE MEDITERRANEAN | WEDNESDAY, 15 MAY 2013

## Mystras

We camped on the coast for the night because we were looking forward to traveling on a small rack and pinion train that climbs up the mountain range behind Diakotto and then ambles slowly back down again. Unfortunately we got the times all wrong and missed it by 15 minutes. Rather than wait 2 hours for the next one we decided to move to within striking distance of our next intended destination - a fortress town on the southern coast. Because of time restrictions we have had to rationalize what we intend to do. This fortress town looked too good to miss.

Over the next hour or so we followed the coast and drove slowly through a number of villages with narrow main streets. Eventually we had had enough of this meandering so we gave Emily her head and coaxed Wilhelm on to the faster toll road.

Zoom - the pace quickened so much Emily calculated that we would get to our designated beach camping place at Mavrovouni by early afternoon.

Since we were passing through Sparta (or Sparti as the Greeks call it) we decided that a visit to Mystra could be fitted in. It was recommended in the guide books as a place not to miss - aren't they all!



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**TERRACOTTA** Not only is terra cotta used as a roof tile and in red bricks but in Mystras it was used in walls as reinforcement and beautiful decoration.

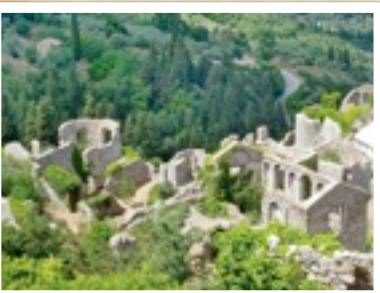


**BALCONY WATCH** The biggest issue on narrow lanes is not always just the badly parked vehicles - we also have to look up and watch out for balconies that jut out and make sure our 3.1m high van fits under them.



**DAINTY FLOWERS** It never ceases to amaze us that delicate flowering plants find a place to grow in the hardest of rock faces. They certainly look lovely.

## SNAPS



# We only had limited time to fully appreciate Mystras's magnificence

Besides, there was some climbing to do and we needed exercise. So, after some more crazy narrow lane detouring, courtesy of Emily, we rounded a bend and caught sight of amazing Mystra.

The ruins of this ancient town and citadel climbed high up the mountainside before us. We were immediately keen to explore. Unfortunately because the Greeks are still on their "winter schedule" the place closed at 3pm.

This meant we only had about an hour to explore the area. We parked our van at the bottom car park and hurried up the steep slope. Wow.

Mystras was an ancient fortress town. The fort itself was built in 1249. It is clearly visible high up on the top of the mountain. I was able to climb right up to the very top to admire the unbelievable view. Heather nearly reached it but decided to spend her time going down slowly in order to enjoy the atmosphere. There are a couple of monasteries/churches, a palace and upper and lower parts of the ancient town with their numerous public buildings. Some of the buildings

are being reconstructed but they look great. One of the monasteries is still occupied by nuns.

Evidently, in its heyday, Mystras became the centre of philosophy and enlightened ideas including the revival of the teachings of Plato and Pythagoras. No doubt the location had

**LOOKING DOWN AT THE LANDSCAPE FROM SUCH A HIGH LOCATION FORCES YOU TO CONTEMPLATE YOUR PLACE IN THE WORLD**

something to do with this.

Despite our limited time we were glad to have been able to visit this fascinating place. We had thought that we would not have time to go there.

It is our 42nd wedding anniversary today. Four years ago we were in Germany. Two years ago we were in Scotland. Last year we were in the Northern Territory.

Where to next?





# PHOTOS



Reconstruction in progress



View down from the citadel

