



The Summer of My Greek Taverna: A Memoir

Tom Stone

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Tom Stone went to Greece one summer to write a novel -- and stayed twenty-two years. On Patmos, the tiny island where St. John received the apocalyptic visions recorded in the Book of Revelations, he fell in love with Danielle, a beautiful French painter. His novel completed and sold, he decided to stay a little longer.

Seven idyllic years later, after the birth of their second child, they left Patmos for Crete, where Stone taught English to civil servants and Danielle painted icons for tourists. But Stone's heart was still on Patmos, and when a Patmian friend, Theológos, called and offered him a summer partnership in his beach taverna, The Beautiful Helen, Stone jumped at the chance -- much to the dismay of his wife, who cautioned him not to forget the old adage about Greeks bearing gifts.

Back on Patmos, Stone quickly discovered that he was no longer a friend or a patron but a competitor. He learned hard lessons about the Greeks' skill at bargaining, and about how truly effective the curse of the Evil Eye can be. There was no longer time to leisurely sip Greek coffee in the morning or linger over oregano-scented lunches with friends. The taverna closed for the tourists at 3 A.M. and opened for the fishermen at 7; work sometimes seemed little more than a battle to stay awake. Spurring him on were the enormous profits that Theológos had assured him would materialize in August. And there were still the many joys of being back in Patmos: the beauty of the island, the friendships he had made over the years, and the adrenaline rush of success as news began to spread about Stone's cooking; yachts sailed over from Mykonos for dinner. But then came August, and the realization that Theológos had been cheating him out of thousands of dollars. His illusions shattered, Stone turned to his wife and children, who had been there all the time, offering their support. And their love.

Featuring Stone's recipes, including his variation on the traditional Greek tzatziki, his own Chicken Retsina, and the ultimate moussaka, *The Summer of My Greek Taverna* is as much a love story as it is the grand, humorous, and sometimes bittersweet adventure of an American pursuing his dreams in a foreign land, a modern-day innocent abroad.

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