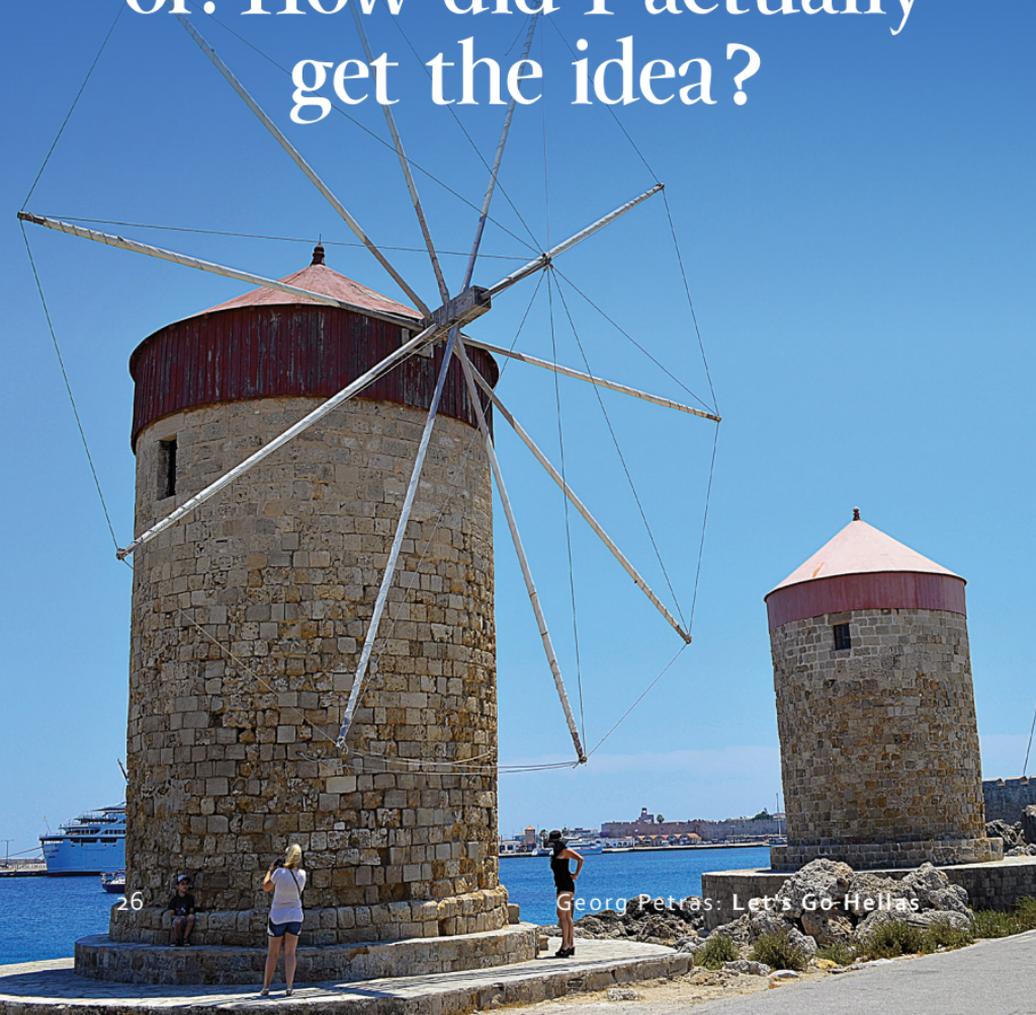


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## Chapter 3

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# *Evlogimeno* – the blessed island or: How did I actually get the idea?



Greece is very rich. It has hundreds of islands and over 300 days of sun per year on holiday islands such as Rhodes, Crete, Corfu and Mykonos as well as millions of tourists - in 2016 it was over 27 million. Despite this, Hellas has been struggling in recent years with one of the most severe economic crises that has befallen a European country since the Second World War. The following question I have heard regularly: How did I actually get the idea to open an estate agency on the island of Rhodes in the middle of this Greek debt crisis? To understand this, I shall jump into the middle of the story: We are writing on the 14th of March 2010. I opened my first broker's office on the island of Rhodes a few weeks ago:

A remote Greek acquaintance is driving his new car in front of my real estate office in the town of Rhodes. He gets out and storms into our agency: "So you want to sell our last possessions now? The best land on our holiday island? "My fellow compatriot wasn't expecting an answer, but added, "Did you get the job from Angela Merkel? You want to encourage this bargain sale, you German! "For this elderly gentleman, his dramatic performance was now over. Without saying good-bye he leaves my real estate agency, puffing and panting, gets into his shiny Mercedes and speeds off.



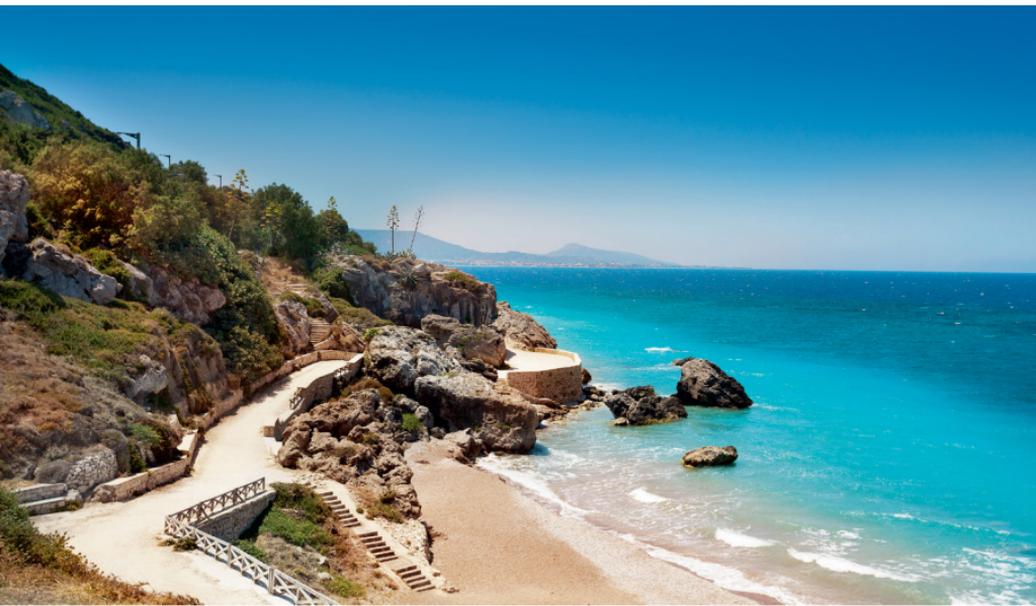
Rhodes does not skimp on lush green surroundings.

This anecdote shows the dichotomy of a generation of Europeans who benefit from open borders and a single European market, but who often find it difficult to deal with cultural differences or economic constraints. This story is that of an emigrant. Born and raised in Stuttgart and having successfully established his first company - an example of a true European life story created in the vortex of the Euro crisis. A successful logistics entrepreneur from Stuttgart with roots in Rhodes, who gives his all and founds a real estate company on a holiday island. Perhaps with a special talent and showing some courage?

When I opened my office, just a few days after the then government of Papandreou declared Greece to be insolvent,

even some of my friends thought I was crazy. "With Swabian virtues, I dream of a thriving real estate company licensed by Engel & Völkers. I employ around ten professionals in an agency which made its first profits in the heart of Greece, right in the midst of a crisis in a country battered by general strikes and capital controls. It was not about making quick money. Even though we made good real estate sales during the crisis years due to the fact that the media presence in Greece had actually attracted more buyers. It was for me personally about much more than that.

It does not have to be a conflict if somebody is "the Greek" in Germany and "the German" in Greece. This can even be considered as an advantage in sales negotiations. I



Kato Petres: attractive landscape and ideal climate ... like everywhere else in the area