

## GREEK MARKET

**1. Island property prices soar.** The asking prices for residential property on Greek islands have soared in the last year, with hikes reaching up to 26%, in the case of the Cycladic destination of Serifos, where the average rate comes to 2,650 euros per square meter, according to the Spitogatos Property Index. The latest SPI data also showed major hikes on the islands of Samothraki (23.1%) and Poros (20%). In the case of the former, properties on the island off Alexandroupoli have an average asking price of €1,066/sq.m., while those on the Saronic island average at almost €2,000/sq.m.

**2. Greeks get more price sensitive.** In 2020, as supermarkets took on more of the cost burden, promotions were limited, and this may persist. There have already been price hikes for basic consumer goods, and more are bound to follow as raw material and transport costs remain high. Data also showed only 53% of consumers can cover their basic food and housing costs, while 74% are seriously concerned about their living costs and have changed their spending habits.

**3. Blackstone expands Greek hotel portfolio with Elounda Blu.** US investment firm Blackstone is further expanding its holdings in the Greek tourism industry, as its Spanish subsidiary Hotel Investment Partners has acquired a sixth hotel in Greece, the Elounda Blu in northeastern Crete. About 20 months after buying out five units from the Louis Group, Blackstone made its new purchase last week in a deal with owner Ledra Hotels & Villas for an unknown price. An investment of 6 million euros is thought to be required to upgrade the unit, expected to take Blackstone's total investment portfolio in the local hotel sector to more than €250 million.

**4. Santorini event to promote wine tourism across the country.** A two-day event dedicated to Greek wine tourism was launched on Santorini by the Ministry of Tourism. This action includes a visit to three local wineries and a conference, which will be attended by ministry and GNTA officials, led by Minister Haris Theocharis and his Deputy Sofia Zacharaki. Institutional representatives of wine tourism at the international and national level, foreign ambassadors and Greek producers will speak of the options wine tourism offers across Greece.

**5. NN Hellas takes over MetLife's local portfolio.** The sale of MetLife to Dutch insurer NN is creating the biggest life insurance company in Greece with a life and health market share of 31% and an overall insurance market share of 18%. The takeover of MetLife's activity in Greece forms part of a broader agreement of the US group on its departures from the Greek and Polish markets, where its divisions are being sold to the NN Group for a total of 584 million euros.

**6. Shipowner George Prokopiou named highest bidder for Skaramangas shipyard.** A double tender for the sale of Hellenic Shipyards SA, the country's biggest shipyard, in the western Attica port town of Skaramangas, concluded on Wednesday with shipowner George Prokopiou named the highest bidder. According to well-informed sources, Prokopiou entered a bid of 37.3 million euros to acquire the plot being sold Hellenic Public Properties Company (ETAD), outbidding Pyletech, which is owned by Theofilos Priovolos. Prokopiou also bid 25.2 million euros for the second part of the 700,000-square meter shipyard that is controlled by the company's special administrator, above Pyletech's offer of 22.1 million euros.

**7. Elliniko hotel operators to be named in September.** The hotel groups that will undertake the operation of the two complexes that will be developed by the TEMES-Lamda consortium at the Elliniko seafront will be announced in September. This is one of the central investment projects at the plot as it will play a decisive role in highlighting Elliniko as an international attraction for visitors, along with the integrated tourism and recreation complex "Inspire Athens," or its alternative. The TEMES-Lamda Development investment is expected to come up to 300 million euros and include branded residences, i.e. holiday homes named after the chains managing the hotels.

**8. Skiathos among world's most beautiful film locations.** Following the success of "Mamma Mia!", the western Aegean island of Skiathos has just been voted the world's third most beautiful film location by Big 7 Travel. It ranks only behind Angkor Thom in Cambodia, where "Lara Croft: Tomb Raider" was shot, and Salzburg in Austria, the setting of "The Sound of Music."

## GLOBAL MARKETS

**1. Global tourism losses 'could top \$4 trillion'.** A worldwide travel halt since the beginning of the pandemic resulted in a \$2.4 trillion loss in tourism and related sectors last year. A similar hole may occur this year depending on distribution of vaccines, the report warned. Reduced travel resulted in an average 5.5% rise in unemployment of unskilled labor. Tourism sector workers in countries without welfare schemes are expected to suffer more income losses. Developing countries suffered the largest reduction in tourist arrivals in 2020, ranging from 60 to 80%. The most-affected regions are northeast Asia, Southeast Asia, Oceania, North Africa and south Asia, while the least-affected areas are North America, western Europe and the Caribbean.

**2. French in a fizz over Russian champagne law.** French winemakers are frothing after Russia introduced a new law that bans them from using the term champagne. Russian President Vladimir Putin signed the law that forces non-Russian products to describe themselves as "sparkling wine." Under the law, only locally made *Shampanskoye* is worthy of the prestigious and previously exclusive name. French champagne, is not recognized under the appellation. The move has angered producers in France's Champagne region who have jealously guarded the name and reputation of their famous drink. "The people of Champagne are calling on French and European diplomacy to try to have this unacceptable law modified," the Champagne Committee's co-presidents Maxime Toubart and Jean-Marie Barillere said in a statement.

**3. Turkish company applies to explore for oil in east Med.** Turkey's state-owned energy company TPAO has applied for a licence to explore for crude oil in the eastern Mediterranean. According to a Turkish map database, the three areas where TPAO plans to carry out the exploration are in Turkish territorial waters off the coast of Silifke in Mersin province. President Tayyip Erdogan said last week Turkey would carry on exploring for oil and gas in the eastern Mediterranean in comments that may revive tensions with the European Union and Greece amid attempts to repair their frayed ties.

**4. Tokyo 2020: Olympic medals made from old smartphones, laptops.** Used electronic devices have been recycled in a nationwide effort to produce the

Olympic medals for the Tokyo 2020 Games. The project plans to set a precedent for future Olympic Games. As the athletes take the podium and, with a slight bow, have their medals placed around their necks, they will be happy to have landed in the top three. For the people behind the Tokyo Medal Project, they'll be happy that those Olympic medals are there in the first place. The project recycled old electronic gadgets such as smartphones and laptops to produce the Olympic Medals that are being awarded at the Tokyo Games.



**5. France fines Google €500 million in news copyright row.** Google said that the fine "ignores our efforts to reach an agreement." The tech giant now has two months to come up with a proposal on how to compensate France's news publishers. France's antitrust authority fined Google €500 million (\$593 million) on Tuesday, saying the technology giant did not negotiate "in good faith" with news companies and other publishers over using their content. Specifically, the regulatory body said Google violated temporary orders to hold negotiations with publishers within three months. The dispute is part of larger efforts in the European Union to get big tech companies to pay publishers for using their content.

**6. Reshoring of production on the rise in France.** Mid-sized French company Auer decided to shift its production away from boilers using conventional fuels to energy-saving heat pumps a few years ago. For that transition, the family firm deemed necessary to bring parts of its production capacity back from countries such as Poland and Serbia to France. "The French market had practically collapsed because of COVID-19 and it was unclear when it would pick up again. That made us question our decision to relocate," Palandre explained. "But when we then received the offer of government support, we knew we had to go for it." The manufacturer obtained an €800,000 (\$946,000) government subsidy towards its latest €5 million investment in new production facilities at its headquarters in the northern French town of Feuquieres-en-Vimeu. This year, Auer will be adding 10 jobs there.