

Γιάννης Αντετοκούμπο: “Η οικογένειά μου είναι ευτυχισμένη εδώ, στην Costa Navarino”

«Ήρθα στην Costa Navarino για έναν λόγο: γιατί ξέρω ότι μπορώ να φέρω εδώ την οικογένειά μου. Σίγουρα υπάρχουν όμορφα μέρη παντού... αλλά αυτό το μέρος μπορεί να μου θυμίσει το πώς ένιωθα όταν ήμουν παιδί». Με αυτά τα λόγια ο πρωταθλητής του NBA Γιάννης Αντετοκούμπο εξηγεί τους λόγους για τους οποίους επέλεξε να αγοράσει σπίτι στην Costa Navarino.

Ο μεγάλος Γιάννης Αντετοκούμπο στην αποκλειστική συνέντευξη που παραχώρησε στο blog του προορισμού, “Costa Navarino Stories” και τον Γιώργο Τσίρο λέει-μεταξύ άλλων-για την επιλογή του να αποκτήσει σπίτι στη Μεσσηνία και δηλώνει τα εξής:

“Όταν πρωτοήρθα εδώ το 2018, μου άρεσε που μπορούσαμε να είμαστε όλοι μαζί. Περπατούσαμε στην παραλία, πηγαίναμε στην Αγορά, τα εστιατόρια και κάναμε θαλάσσια σπορ. Υπάρχουν τόσα πολλά να κάνουμε εδώ, και είναι ένα ασφαλές περιβάλλον. Όταν φτάσετε εδώ, ξέρετε ότι θα υπάρχουν άνθρωποι τριγύρω, αλλά είναι καλό που τα παιδιά μου μπορούν να μεγαλώσουν σε ένα ασφαλές περιβάλλον, να πάνε στην παραλία, να οδηγήσουν τα ποδήλατά τους ή να παίξουν στις νεροτσουλήθρες, όλα αυτά χωρίς να ανησυχώ πολύ. Σκέφτομαι επίσης 10 με 15 χρόνια στο μέλλον, όταν θα μεγαλώσουν...”

– **“Είναι η αγορά ενός σπιτιού εδώ μέρος ενός ευρύτερου σχεδίου;”**

– **“Είναι επένδυση στην ευτυχία και τα καλοκαίρια που έρχονται; ο Γιάννης Αντετοκούμπο απαντά: «Ναι. Ξέρεις, στην**

πραγματικότητα δεν έχω σπίτι στην Αθήνα. Αντίθετα, θα έχω ένα σπίτι εδώ. Μου αρέσει να είμαι εδώ – περνάω καλά και η οικογένειά μου είναι χαρούμενη εδώ. Μου αρέσει να βλέπω τους πιο κοντινούς μου ανθρώπους χαρούμενους: τη μητέρα μου να περπατάει στην παραλία, να βγάζει φωτογραφίες...”

Ακολουθεί παρακάτω ολόκληρη συνέντευξη στα Αγγλικά για όποιον ενδιαφέρεται να τη διαβάσει :

Giannis Antetokounmpo: My family is happy here, in Costa Navarino

Giannis visited Costa Navarino to enjoy a brief holiday in a place that he loves, and to arrange the final details of an investment he is making with his brother, Thanasi, to guarantee happy family moments for the future: becoming the owner of two Costa Navarino Residences, at a beautiful seaside location.

I can't say I'm not nervous about interviewing Giannis Antetokounmpo. He's a national hero, the MVP of the NBA, a man with a rags-to-riches story you find in the movies. Nonetheless, I also know that he's a modest person. I know that, from the stories I've seen and read, and because he has chosen to own a home here at Costa Navarino, where luxury meets nature and simplicity in the most perfect way possible, and doing so to be with his family. What's more, he has graciously accepted to meet with me even though he's on a family vacation.

I arrange to meet the Greek professional basketball player at dreamy Royal Villa Methoni. Like the residences acquired by Giannis and his brother, it boasts uninterrupted views towards the sea – a calming presence.

CN: You've just arranged the final details for the purchase of two Navarino Residences you're making with your brother Thanasi. What do you like so much about being here?

G: When I first came here in 2018, I liked that we could all be together. We'd walk on the beach, go to the Agora, the restaurants and play water sports. There's so much to do here, and it's a safe environment. When you get here, you know there will be people around, but it's good that my kids can grow up in a safe environment, go to the beach, ride their bicycles or play on the waterslides, all without me worrying too much. I'm also thinking 10 to 15 years into the future, when they'll be older...

CN: **Is buying a house here part of a greater plan? Is it an investment in happiness and in the summers to come?**

G: Yes. You know, I actually don't own a house in Athens. Instead, I'll have a home here. I like being here – I have a good time, and my family is happy here. I like seeing the people closest to me happy: my mother walking on the beach, taking pictures...

CN: **At the age of 27, your life seems to have already had three chapters – one involving the struggle for survival, one of hard work and a great opportunity in the NBA, and the third one now, the life of a champion and family man. Is this new phase difficult for you?**

G: *Life is difficult. We try to make it easy. We shouldn't make our lives complicated. You need to understand who you are and find a way to be okay with it. It can be difficult to accept this for many, because they think they can be more, or they always want something more. Ultimately, they're not happy. My family and I, when we had nothing, we learned to survive on the streets. Then we adapted when we went to the NBA, and now we are adapting to where we are right now. We adjust, yet our principles remain the same. Sure, there are some all-time high moments, as well as some low moments. When I was young and we went from city to city selling things, that for me was an all-time high because I was with my brothers, in a car, playing, laughing, having*

fun. We didn't feel it at the time, but now that one of my brothers is in France, the other in Athens, I get it.

This has affected everything – regarding who I am, how I raise my kids, how I want to be as a player, as a businessman, everything. I came here to Costa Navarino for one reason – because I know I can bring my family. There are beautiful places everywhere, famous hotels, but none of that interests me. This is a place I have been to before, my father and mother have been here, and so have my brothers; I came a few years back and had a great time. This is a place that can offer me what I felt as a child. We may not have had any money, but we were together. And we're together now: Kostas, Thanasis, Alex, Francis, my mother, our children. Everyone together – I like that. I've never been alone in my life. I've always had my brothers, my family, and I want that to continue.

CN: You know that the man behind Costa Navarino, Captain Vassilis, was a visionary who wanted to support his area by creating work for local people while respecting nature. Today, his three sons are all here together, continuing this vision. Does this story resonate with you?

G: *Well, when I spoke to Mr. Achilles (Constantakopoulos), I told him that they are like a role model family for us. For Christos, Kostis, and Achilles, all of this began with their father. They're also very successful at what they do, and very good people. They will sit with you, talk with you, tell you a story, help you with their experience in life and in business. For Thanasis, Kostas, Alex and me, that's who we are trying to be – for our father. We all have this motto: "I am my father's legacy." I will say it again: my father did not have anything. He started, not from zero, but from minus zero. And we, who have achieved what we have achieved, cannot be idiots [and waste that achievement]. Much like Captain Vassilis who left something behind, and his sons continue to build on that, I hope that we can do*

the same, for the next generation, for our grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

CN: I'm so grateful that you're meeting me today, on your family vacation. I can imagine everyone wants something from an NBA champion and you can't do everything. Now that everyone wants a little "piece" of you, are you still able to remain intact?

G: Indeed, many people who want something from you will show up, but you must remain true to yourself. They often say that fame and money changes people, but this isn't necessarily true. The difference is that, a few years back when nobody knew you, you were calm, and now millions of people expect something, asking for things. And if you say "No," because you cannot always say "Yes," they take it badly. What I've come to understand is that you must continue being the same person. If you begin to change, that's when you can lose it.

CN: In a post-game interview during the NBA finals, you said that looking at yesterday is egoism, tomorrow is pride, and humility can be found only in the now. Of course, you were referring to the game, but is life off the court any different? Should we not look forward?

G: You should. That is the objective, the goal. This, right here is the goal. I want my children to grow up with Thanasi's children, but there's a process in order to achieve this goal, and for this process to work, you need to be in the present. It's easy to say, but difficult to do. When you master the technique, it has a real impact on your quality of life. You do not need money, or anything else, to be okay. I told you earlier about potential, being the best version of yourself. This is very important to me. Forget basketball, I don't care about basketball. As long as you're having fun, you play; when you stop having fun, you leave. It's that simple. As a human being, in order to be the best

version of yourself, you have to be humble.

CN: Last question. Looking at the view from this Mediterranean villa, I have to ask you, are you a sea person?

G: *I don't know how to swim, but I am a sea person. I like going in, but only when I can touch the bottom..*