

TRAVEL

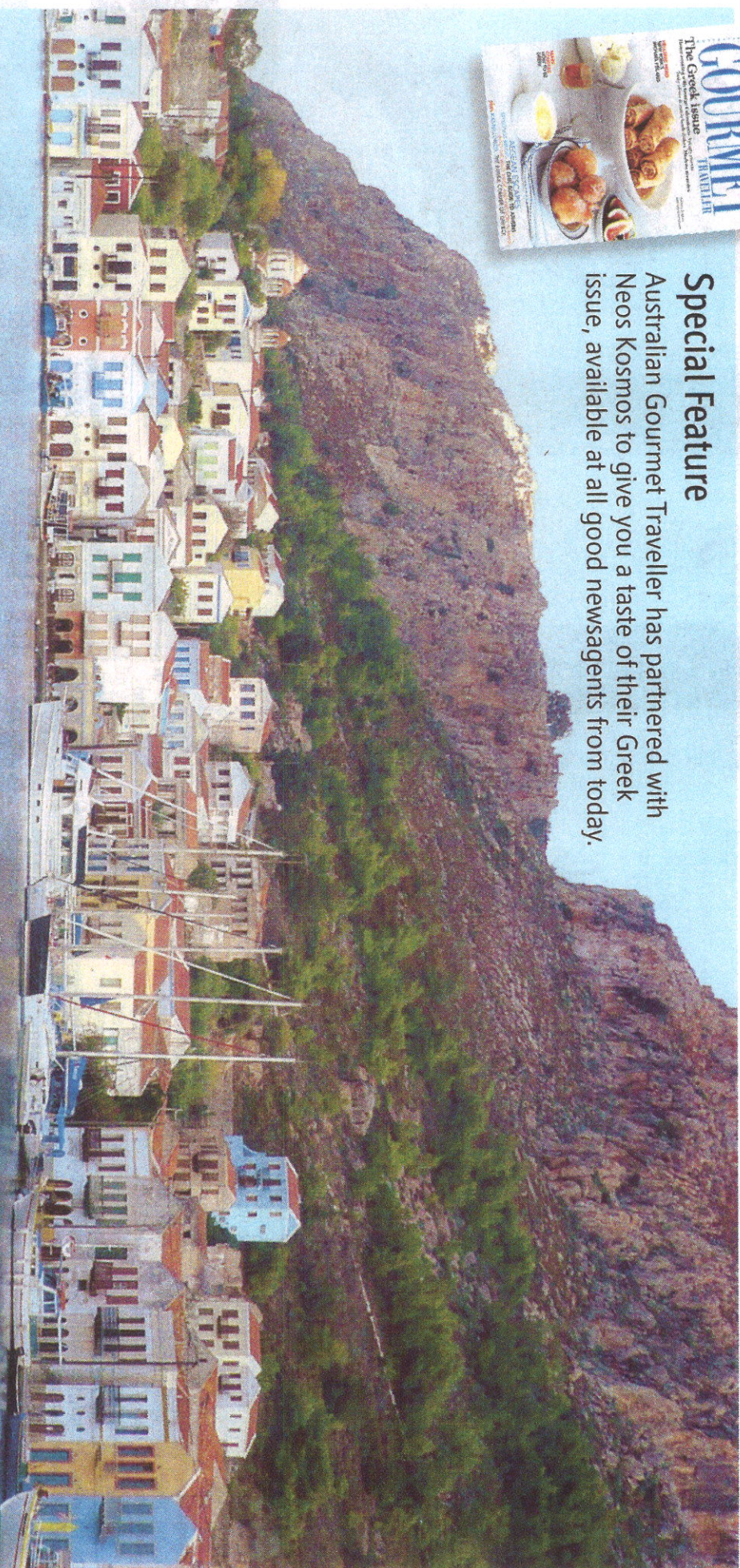


Special Feature

Australian Gourmet Traveller has partnered with Neos Kosmos to give you a taste of their Greek issue, available at all good newsagents from today.

Aussie rock

How did a tiny Greek island manage to become a virtual outpost of Australia? Nicholas Pappas traces the history of Kastellorizo.



THERE'S a corner of the Mediterranean, nestled close to Turkey, which has a very special relationship with Australia.

Kastellorizo, barely the size of Sydney's Centennial Park, has such a strong Aussie flavour that come summer you're more likely to hear rugby league or AFL scores shouted down the laneways than Greek soccer results.

Almost 80 percent of the island's diaspora resides in Australia, and in recent times, an increasing number of second- and third-generation "Kazlies" have been returning to what they affectionately refer

to as "the rock", resulting in this to as "the rock", resulting in this

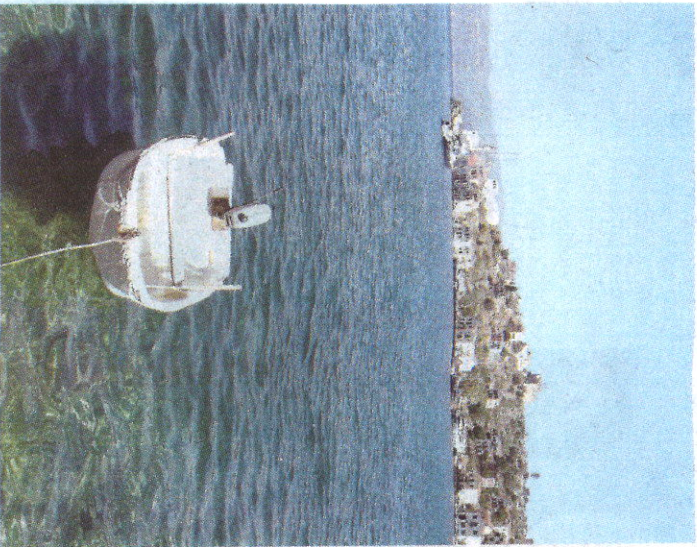
Australianisation of the island. Kastellorizo is a tiny (barely 10 square kilometres), claw-shaped limestone island just two kilometres from Turkey.

Barren and largely inaccessible except via an inviting port, it has seen conquerors come and go and, with them, its fortunes rise and fall.

At one point in the mid-19th century, it boasted the highest population density in the world as its inhabitants packed themselves around the town's bustling harbour and engaged in trade throughout the Near East.

Only a century later, the island was to be a picture of ruin and abandonment.

Curiously, Kastellorizo only became officially Greek in 1948, when the other islands of the Dodecanese group were united with the motherland, but it had retained a Hellenic character for at least two millennia. During that time, Byzantine traders, crusader knights, Ottoman Turks, Egyptian Mamelukes and Venetian commanders fought over it as they competed for the advantage its port provided. In the 20th century, it became a French colony during



Kissing coasts: the pristine harbour of Kastellorizo with a not-so-distant backdrop of Turkey's coastline.



An overhead shot of the town which clings precariously to the island coastline.



The caiques moored in the port of Kastellorizo.