



Under the Auspices of the Greek National Tourism Organization
Approved by the Hellenic Swimming Federation

PRESS RELEASE

4th Santorini Experience rising global interest

More than 6.000 visitors from 45 countries in Santorini

Athens, October 12, 2018. Santorini was the global benchmark by professional and amateur athletes, escorts and visitors who traveled to the enchanting island of the Cyclades on **October 5-7, 2018** for the needs of the 4th "Santorini Experience".

The top sports tourism event in Greece was completed with absolute success and a **record of participations** in the running and swimming races gathering **more than 6,000 visitors in Santorini**. In fact, **60%** of the visitors stayed in Santorini for **more than 5 nights**.

Participations from the 5 continents in Santorini!

For one more year, foreign participations surpassed every precedent, as Santorini "hosted" athletes from a total of **45 countries from the 5 continents, America, Asia, Africa, Europe, and Oceania**. Indicatively, participations in swimmers and runners were recorded from **Argentina, Australia, Canada, France, Germany, New Zealand, USA, Russia, Qatar, South Africa, United Kingdom, Japan and China**.

World class names as well as the elite of the Greek national open water swimming team were present!

The top Hungarian swimmer **Attila Manyoki**, who excels in open water swimming races with several successes and is a member of the **International Marathon Swimming Hall of Fame (IMSHOF)**, returned for another year at the event that is member of the **Global Swim Series (GSS)**. Along with him, the British **twice silver Olympic medalist**, at the Rio Olympics in 2016, **Jazz Carlin** swam for the first time, as well as the twin Greek expatriates racing with the colors of the national team of Netherlands, **George and Timos Skotadis**. The elite of the Greek national team along with top professional athletes had a dynamic presence in the swimming race. The national team consisted of **George Arniakos, Dimitris Negris, Stellina Aplanti, Dejan Giovanovic, Dimitris Manios, Irene Diakoumakou, Maria Filopoulou, Maria Lioffi, Anastasia Kyrili, Konstantinos Konstantineskou, Panagiotis Alogakos, Maria Kirykou, Triantafyllia Diakoumakou, Marianota Elmali and Melina Trochalaki**.

The federal coach and technical director of the **1.5 miles (2,4km) open water swimming by Vikos, Nikos Gemelos** applied **FINA's regulations** on Sunday, October 7th, and implemented the race with the **approval of the Hellenic Swimming Federation**, following all safety rules. At the same time, the event took care of the amateur athletes with the addition of the **safety buoy**, of high standards and quality. The swimmers started in two groups from the volcano ending their race at the old port of Fira, having the imposing view of the island in front of them. Men's winner was **Dimitris Negris**, **George Arniakos** finished 2nd and **Dejan Jovanovic** in the 3rd place. In women, Olympic medalist Jazz Carlin was 1st, **Irene Diakoumakou** finished 2nd and **Maria Filopoulou** came 3rd. You can see the detailed results on the official page of the event (in the event there was an **extra classification** for those wearing **wetsuits** - wetsuit category): <https://bit.ly/2zUQI6Z>

In the safety of the race contributed the **50 specialized escorts in the water** with the help of **Lifeguard Patrol**, which also had several lifeguard boats beyond its staff, the **people of Santorini** who assisted with their own boats, the **Voluntary Lifeguards of Santorini, Atlantis Dive Center, Mediterranean Dive Club, Santorini Nautical Club** and most of all the **Boatmen Union Santorini** that carried the athletes to the volcano and helped in the smooth implementation of the open water swimming race.

On **Saturday, October 6**, the **15km, 10km and 5km "Aristides Alafouzos"** running races were held. All routes started from the desalination plant in Oia, with parts of trail track and a background of the magnificent images from the volcano overlooking the **Caldera**, as well as the settlements of **Imerovigli, Firostefani, Oia** and with a finish in Oia. The running routes are designed by the former marathon runner, Greek classic route record holder, running trainer and director of All About Running, **Nikos Polias**. "Santorini Experience" has joined the **World's Marathons** global community. In the following link you can see the **running results**: <https://bit.ly/2zUQl6Z>

It should be highlighted that many athletes decided to run for the joy of sports with no timing.

In terms of the social events, **Municipal Sports Cultural Environmental Organization of Santorini (DAPPOS)** hosted an open concert with the Greek-German artist FIONA, in the surrounding area of the Indoor Hall DAPPOS, on **Saturday October 6**. A little bit earlier the International Dancing Group of Santorini "Stamatina Xiarchou" & Association of Pontians Eptamyloi Serres "Akrites" opened the concert.

On **Friday, October 5**, on the occasion of Santorini Experience, **Samsung** (as the official technology partner), in cooperation with the local **Kotsovolos** store, organized the event **"Kotsovolos and Samsung present the Hotel of the Future"** at the conference hall of DAPPOS informing the island's hoteliers of all the latest developments and the benefits of technology in their industry. Samsung enriched the experience of those participating and attending the event with the innovative Samsung Galaxy ecosystem services, such as the Samsung Galaxy S9 and S9+, coupled with the Gear 360, the Gear VR and unique 360 degrees content.

Easy access with the help of sponsors!

Participants traveled to "Santorini Experience", with the official airline partner of the event, **Ryanair**, which offered the connection of Athens with Santorini with direct flights from abroad. The Greek leading shipping company **Blue Star Ferries** as a sponsor of the event facilitated the ferry connection offering a **50% discount** on the ferry tickets and the participants' vehicles, assisting a total of Greek and foreign athletes while offering an additional discount on the **connection with the Cyclades and Dodecanese group of islands**, resulting in participations from the islands of Paros, Naxos, Amorgos, Rhodes and others.

Ford Motor Hellas promoted sports and "fair play" by participating for the 4th year in the support team of "Santorini Experience". Athletes and organizers moved with the safety and efficient Ford Motor Hellas cars, the **official sponsor** of the event.

For another year **Vikos SA** as an **official sponsor** spread the message of sporting energy with the **natural mineral water "Vikos"**, offering the necessary hydration and revitalization to all participants. The natural mineral water "Vikos" offers the necessary balance, well-being and energy that the athletes need during their exercise in order to be able to continue their efforts.

The organization innovated with its collaboration for the first time with **Luanvi**, the leading company in the sportswear industry in Spain. As the event's **official sports supplier**, Luanvi offered an extremely **innovative sports T-shirt to all participants**.

The event received a very substantial support and assistance from its **official sponsors Alafouzos Sport, Athina Luxury Suites and Santo Maris Oia Luxury Suites & Spa**.

Official supporters of the event were **Santorini Hoteliers Association, Meltemi Hotels & Resorts, Aqua Vista Hotels, Boatmen Union Santorini and Avance Rent A Car**.

DNA Travel, as the **official transport partner** of the event, facilitated the transportation of all participants and volunteers of "Santorini Experience".

National Geographic was the **official strategic partner** of the event.

The event was **assisted by Lifeguard Patrol, Assyrtico Wine Restaurant Café, Hellenic Recovery Recycling Corporation** and the **Department of Sports Organization & Management from University of Peloponnese**.

The event received the support of the following **hospitality sponsors: Santorini Hoteliers Association, Meltemi Hotels & Resorts, Athina Luxury Suites, Santo Maris Oia Luxury Suites & Spa, Aqua Vista Hotels, Canaves Oia, Santo Houses, West East Suites, Desiterra Luxury Suites & Villas, 270 Oia's View, Fanouris Condo, Monolithia, Casa Iphigenia, Sienna Resort, Esperas Santorini and Loizos Stylish Residencies**.

VitaNTravel, as the **official travel agent** of the event, **took care and assisted all athletes and escorts** with information about the **ferry routes, ferry tickets, car rentals and accommodation**

"Santorini Experience" is a co-organization of **Municipality of Santorini, Municipal Sports Cultural Environmental Organization of Santorini (DAPPOS) and Active Media Group**. The event was held **under the auspices of the Greek National Tourism Organization and approved by the Hellenic Swimming Federation**. More info at: www.santorini-experience.com

Official Technology Partner: Samsung

Official Airline Partner: Ryanair

Official Sports Supplier: Luanvi

Official Sponsors: Ford Motor Hellas, Natural Mineral Water "Vikos", Blue Star Ferries, Alafouzos Sport, Athina Luxury Suites, Santo Maris Oia Luxury Suites & Spa

Official Supporters: Santorini Hoteliers Association, Meltemi Hotels & Resorts, Aqua Vista Hotels, Boatmen Union Santorini, Avance Rent A Car

Official Transport Partner: DNA Travel

Strategic Partner: National Geographic

Assisted by: Lifeguard Patrol, Assyrtico Wine Restaurant Café, Hellenic Recovery Recycling Corporation, Voluntary Lifeguards of Santorini, Mediterranean Dive Club Atlantis Dive Center,, Santorini Nautical Club, Department of Sports Organization & Management from University of Peloponnese

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Official travel agent: VitaNTravel

Official Hashtag: #SantoriniExperience

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