


Informationen zur Umwelt und für Naturreisende auf Kreta:
 Information about the Environment and for travellers in Crete:

Monastery Agios Georgios Karydi:

a bijou in the lovely countryside of Apokoronas

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For many years I lived on the North coast of Crete and when ever local people asked me where I live, they got bright eyes at my response and said: Yes, the Apokoronas is one of the attractive and most beautiful landscapes which Crete has to offer. It's certainly true until today with "certain restrictions". Even in summer it is there unusually green for the island.

Between **Vrisses** and **Vamos**, on the narrow and curves rich street is a place of interest, unspecified in most tourist guides: the Monastery *Agios Georgios Karydi*. (see fig. 1). It is easy to find if driving along the Old Road from **Rethymno** towards **Chania** through the village **Vrisses**. About 500 metres after the workshop of the Chair maker Vassilis (therefore see our leaflet No. 250-08/E at:

[\[http://www.kreta-umweltforum.de/Merkblaetter_en/250-08E.pdf\]](http://www.kreta-umweltforum.de/Merkblaetter_en/250-08E.pdf)) points a sign to right towards **Karydi**. You drive through under the new national road, then straight and after 1.5miles you reach your goal.

The monastery opens its doors Sunday and Wednesday from 04:00 p.m. -07:30 p.m. and on the remaining days in addition from 08:00 a.m. -01:00 a.m. (see fig. 2). Its simple, neat Church is consecrated to Agios Georgios (see fig. 3). Next to other images, the church is decorated by three icons dating from about 1880 which show the son of God, the Blessed Mother, and Saint George.



The small settlement of Karydi is first mentioned in writing in the year 1600. References to the church of Agios Georgios can be found in church documents starting from 1636. The monastery was abandoned in 1905, after the year 1923 also the village become orphan. The Bishop of district Apokoronas and Kydonias, *Irinäus* advanced a new foundation of the monastery since 1996. With support of the Prefecture Chania, the city Vamos and surrounding communities and institutions from the Apokoronas, repairs were made possible under the supervision of the archaeologist *Michael Andreataki*.

The site, where an old walnut tree stands in the idyllic courtyard, is again inhabited since several years. Apart from ancient column remains (see fig. 4) there are also lots of old paving stones remain within the Atrium (see fig. 5).



Very interesting is the old oil-mill from the year 1860. 12 imposing arches span the impressive building. Together with the surrounding buildings, a very special architectural structure arose which reflects, typical for the local architecture, also Venetian influences (see fig. 6 and 7).



Outside the main entrance of the monastery you can go left onto the terrain. There you will find more ruins with columns and arches which show that the side was used far more extensive.



If you are interested in historical buildings, then follow the road towards **Vamos**. After about 400 metres branches left a field road off. Please be careful: Without an off-road vehicle you should park your car here, and you better walk the approximately 1200 meters. The bumpy road, shaded by gnarled cypresses and venerable olive trees, leads to the ruins of the former Nunnery. The adjoining chapel, consecrated to the “deceased Mother of God”, is against it in remarkably good condition (see fig. 8).

Continuing towards **Vamos**, the large area of a former landfill site is to see on the right on the slopes. The area has been raised with earth already several years ago, even so unscrupulous people continue to bring their waste there. The more you approach the coast, the more becomes the destruction of the once stunning beauty landscape clear by excessive and unfortunately many cheesy newly constructed building. This is a part of "certain restrictions", I initially mentioned.