

HYDRA MUNICIPALITY TO NAME A STREET AFTER LEONARD COHEN

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The Municipality of Hydra will name a street after Leonard Cohen, the famous Canadian singer, who used to have a house on the Greek islands in the Saronic Gulf.

Organizing a two-day event to commemorate the poet who loved the island, the municipality will also reveal a stone bench that has been donated by the International Forum of the Friends of Leonard Cohen.

The street where Cohen had his house will receive his name.

A music concert by a local group dedicated to the works is scheduled for Saturday, June 10th 2017, at the port of the island.

On the same weekend, June 8/9-11 2017, there is Meetup scheduled on Hydra with Cohenites from all over the world.

Leonard Cohen bought the 19th century village house in summer 1960 for 1,500 US Dollar using some money inherited by his grand mother. He said once, "this was the smartest decision of my life."

Back then the house had no electricity or running water.

The official website of the great songwriter writes about **Leonard's house** on Hydra:

Buying the house was a complicated act, needing the assistance of his friend Demetri Gassoumis as translator, adviser, and witness to the deed. Cohen later said that it was the smartest decision he ever made. The tree-story, ancient whitewashed building, with its five rooms on several levels, was run down and had no electricity, plumbing or running water. Yet it was a private space where he could work, either on the large riled terrace or in his music room on the third floor.



In the kitchen of his Hydra house in 1981. More pictures in leonardcohenfiles.com

Cohen described his home to his mother:

It has a huge terrace with a view of dramatic mountain and shining white houses. The rooms are large and cool with deep windows set in thick walls. I suppose it's about 200 years old and many generations of sea-men must have lived here. I will do a little work on it every year and in a few years it will be a mansion... I live on a hill and life has been going on here exactly the same for hundreds of years. All through the day you hear the calls of the street vendors and they are really rather musical... I get up around 7 generally and work till about noon. Early morning is coolest and therefore best, but I love the heat anyhow, especially when the Aegean Sea is 10 minutes from my door.

He knew he had been accepted by the community when he began receiving regular visits from the garbage man and his donkey. *It is like receiving the Legion of Honour.* Cohen's house gave him a foundation. To a friend he explained that *Having this house makes cities less frightening. I can always come back and get by. But I don't want to lose contact with the metropolitan experience.* Buying the house also gave him confidence: *The years are flying past and we all waste so much time wondering if we dare to do this or that. The thing is to leap, to try, to take a chance.*



It was a place of solitude, of plodding donkeys (even today no cars are allowed on the island; nor would they get very far if they were), cold water and kerosene lamps. In such primitive surroundings, amid the stunning beauties of the island and the glories of the Aegean, where fishermen still wrested a living from the sea and ferries scabbled one from the land, Leonard found his peace, his *sitting-down time*, as he called it, where he could -as all poets must – recollect in tranquillity. Here he could live in virtually complete seclusion, at a fraction of the cost it would take in Northern Europe or Canada, where the people were unconcerned as to who you were or what you did; And where breathtaking vistas opened up for the seeing – both external and internal.

He spent several years with his love Marianne and wrote some of his famous works.

Legendary bard, poet, songwriter and singer Leonard Cohen passed away on November 11th 2016 at the age of 82.



Locals left flowers and candles at the doorway upon hearing of his death.

More on his life in Greece see in: **So long, Leonard! Cohen's muse and the island of Hydra.**



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