



## Santorini's Studio in the Sun

Alongside its rich heritage and idyllic Aegean Sea setting, the Greek island of Santorini now boasts a five star residential recording complex. JIM EVANS reports.

### MEDIA MATTERS

State-run broadcasters enjoyed a near-monopoly until the late 1980s, when new commercial TV services quickly gained a lion's share of the audience. Public TV lost a large slice of its advertising revenue as a result. News, domestically-made variety programmes, comedies, and game shows dominate the peak-time TV schedules.

Broadcasting is relatively unregulated by European standards, and many of the country's approximately 1,700 private radio and TV stations are unlicensed. An attempt was made in 2001 to impose some order on the crowded FM dial in Athens, prompting a political row.

### VITAL STATISTICS

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| POPULATION                  | 11.2 million (UN, 2008)                   |
| CAPITAL                     | Athens                                    |
| MAJOR LANGUAGE              | Greek                                     |
| MONETARY UNIT               | 1 euro=100cents                           |
| MAIN EXPORTS                | Textiles and clothing, food, oil products |
| GNI PER CAPITA              | US\$29,630 (World Bank, 2006)             |
| INTERNET DOMAIN             | .gr                                       |
| INTERNATIONAL DIALLING CODE | +30                                       |

Recording studios located on exotic islands are not a new idea – witness Air Montserrat, Capri Digital, Ibiza Sound, Compass Point – but it's been a while since a new player joined the sector. Step forward Black Rock. Located on the South Western tip of the idyllic island of Santorini, the southernmost of the Cyclades, Black Rock represents the fulfillment of a dream of owner/Manager Kostas Kalimeris.

He states, "It's been a dream of mine to own and operate a studio of this calibre since I began engineering at 17. I wanted to have a space that would inspire musicians and artists to do what they do best. Create."

As the well-worn cliché goes, it would appear that little expense has been spared in developing Kostas' dream. The studio and all that surrounds it is in the five star category. And the studio is the latest to be represented by UK-based Miloco.

"Black Rock holds the key to a world you thought you'd only ever dream of working in. Its sumptuous accommodation, breathtaking surroundings, and exquisite studio together embody everything that recording artists desire: complete luxury and bliss combined with top-end studio facilities – the ultimate combination for any creative project," says Miloco. "Guests will have the sole pleasure of a stunning three-storey six-bedroom Cycladic villa, boasting many tranquil living areas, a luscious pool and Jacuzzi, several outdoor terraces, and of course a pristine SSL room with J-series console and Genelec monitoring.

"Sitting high on Santorini's incredible volcanic landscape and immersed by panoramic views of the sea, neigh-

bouring islands, beautiful historic settlements, and spectacular Aegean sunsets, Black Rock sets a supreme new standard for residential studios. A phenomenal recording destination, it provides clients with a creative experience like no other. Take a break from the real world and escape to its paradise..."

The main villa has been built on a cliff-top area of 6,700m<sup>2</sup>, close to the famous Lighthouse of Santorini, and is engulfed by some of the most breathtaking oceanic views in the world.

Spread across three large floors, the house comprises several living, dining, and reception areas providing a choice of secluded indoor hangouts, sheltered from the baking South Greek sun. Black Rock contains six bedrooms, five of which serve guests and one used by staff.

The outdoor areas at Black Rock are magnificent. Four decked terraces line different sides of the villa, where guests can relax, sunbathe, or dine. There is an outdoor pool currently being built plus a Jacuzzi and barbecue area.

The studio at Black Rock is located on the west side of the house on the ground floor. Designed by Roger D'Arcy of Recording Architecture, it features a variety of different areas making it suitable for both tracking and mixing projects.

The studio is accessed through its own external entrance, which leads onto a large 40m<sup>2</sup> day-lit control room looking out over the sea. At the centre of the room is an SSL 9080 J Series console with Ultimatum and Total Recall. The desk is joined by an awesome monitoring setup, comprising Genelec 1035B speakers, and a choice of KRK E8 and Yamaha NS10

nearfield monitors.

A Pro Tools HD2 rig runs on an Apple Mac Pro. There is a good selection of outboard including Neve 1081 Classic pre-amps, Manley, Focusrite and Avalon dynamics, and a variety of FX processors. Clients will have access to a great choice of microphones, including several Shure, Sennheiser, Neumann, and AKG models.

Situated next to the control room is the main recording area, which measures 25m<sup>2</sup>. This long and tall room features a 6m high arch-shaped ceiling. At one end of the room are some sea-facing windows letting plenty of natural light into the space.

On the other side of the live room are two good-sized recording booths. The first is a specially designed 15m<sup>2</sup> drum booth. At the back of the booth is another window facing the sea and the pool, and at the front is a large glass divide into a smaller booth, which serves as an isolation space for recording vocals or guitars. This small booth is adjoined to the villa's kitchen and dining area, providing an additional entrance and exit to the studio.

The design of the studio has allowed for extensive visibility between all of the separate areas, through a number of soundproof windows and thick glass doors. Each of the studio's rooms has the benefit of natural daylight. An additional feature, which the studio will provide, are special tie lines connecting to Black Rock's bedrooms and outdoor spaces, providing clients with further recording options. 

