

Spiros' Scooter in Paros: Jan McCoy

Ro and I were on Paros Island in Greece and today we were hiring motor scooters.

'Me ... Spiros. Good day. Why scooter?'

'We want to ride around the island.'

'Not scooter! Car! I have car. You hire.'

'He's seen our grey hairs.'

We convinced him we weren't changing our minds, chose scooters and helmets, and were soon cruising slowly up the road, following the sign 'Noussa Bay.'

After ten minutes, I turned off onto a dirt road, up a small incline, to see the view.

'I'll video you riding,' said Ro. She pulled her scooter, still purring, onto its stand, took out her camera, and walked down to film me approaching. 'Ready, go ... stop. Great.'

She returned to her scooter and gently rolled it forward off its stand ... and then it happened. Placing her hands on the handlebars and lifting her left foot onto the platform ... WHOOOOSH!!!! She was off. Well, the bike was. It hurtled forward and then left the road, landing on its side in the shrubbery. For a split second, Ro resembled Superwoman, hands outstretched and feet flying out the back with the momentum of her fast take-off. She was now lying spread-eagled, face in the dirt, the scooter's engine still running, wheels spinning.

I quickly alighted and ran to her. 'Are you okay?' I saw her back bouncing in rhythmic movements. Thank goodness. She was laughing.

I watched her check each limb. 'All good.'

Lifting herself up onto all fours, she turned over into a sitting position.

My turn to laugh ... face covered in dirt, forearms scratched, elbows bloodied from lost skin, grazed knees showing through holed pants.

'Nothing broken. Where's the scooter?'

'In the scrub. What happened?'

'I was on the wrong side and my hand was tight on the throttle. I must have turned it back ... she took off ... a few scratches, I'll be fine. Let's pick it up.'

'Should've hired a car.'

'The front lights are out of their sockets.'

'The back ones are hanging from their wires like Christmas lights.'

With handlebars almost parallel to the wheel, Ro led us back to Spiros who threw his hands in the air shouting, 'Oh, no, my scooter, my scooter.'

Perhaps we should have hired a car ... we hadn't ridden for years. Were we foolhardy?