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OLIVE OIL BUSINESS IN LONDON

"The Greeks are warmer than the British"

Friedbert Meurer

[Listening post](#)



"Liquid Gold Cave": A piece of Greek culture in London (Germany Radio / Friedbert Meurer)

The neurologist STAVIA Blunt has Greek roots and sells olive oil in London. She blames the misery in her homeland not on the Germans - but the banks.

Her shop is in a vault with round arch next to the Thames. On the river, excursion boats sail from Richmond, West London to Hampton Court, the palace of Henry VIII. Only 20 meters away is the traditional pub "The White Cross" which dates from the 18th century. But here in the store you hear music from Crete. "Liquid Gold Cave" – is the retail outlet of STAVIA Blunt's Greek products business. On the noble wooden shelves are expensive olive oils from Crete, the liquid gold, as well as handmade terracotta pots in all shapes and sizes.

You must select Olive oil in the same way as you would select wine

"There are big differences in quality of olive oil. You have to select it as if it were a bottle of wine. Good olive oil not only tastes good but is also good for health, among other things, because it is a natural fruit juice, cold pressed."

STAVIA Blunt, a slender woman with long brown hair, with a doctorate, worked as a neurologist at Hammersmith Hospital in London. A top job at an early stage of her

career, but perhaps she did not fit into the sterile academic world - perhaps because of her Greek roots, which became more and more apparent as we talked.

"My mother was Greek, and I was brought up in an emotionally Greek way. My father was British, my husband also. Since university I have been living in UK having moved here from Kenya. The main difference between the Greeks and the British, of course, is that Greeks are more openly warm. They also say tend to say what they think. The family values are still held high, while that has waned somewhat in England. "



STAVIA Blunt works in London – in the "Liquid Gold Cave" – where she explains to her customers how extra fine olive oil is produced from Greece (Germany Radio / Friedbert Meurer)

Whilst we talk, customers wonder in to the vaulted cellar from the Thames to look at the honey jars and herbal essences. The outcome of the parliamentary election seems to be far away from here. But STAVIA Blunt insists the crisis in Greece is very close. The olive growers in Crete, where she buys her oil struggle to survive.

"I know a lot of small manufacturers. Some have had their olive groves confiscated by banks. This is disastrous for the farmers, whose survival depends on olives. I am lucky because I can buy olive oil from somewhere else – but for the individuals the financial situation is a big problem."

The money is not flowing into the pockets of small growers

STAVIA Blunt has never heard of swindles involving EU subsidies for olive oil – or if it has occurred, she says, it has not reached the pockets of small growers. When the euro came, were all full of hope. Of course not everyone was an innocent bystander, but there is no doubt that the banks have shamelessly exploited this naivety.

"I give Germany no guilt – this lies with the banks. The austerity measures might have made a difference much earlier, but at this stage it is completely useless. They are simply nailing the Greeks to the cross."

Stavia goes regularly to the Hellenic Center, the Greek Cultural Center near Regent's Park. She is aware that there may be Greek millionaires and billionaires investing in London real estate or expensive cars. However, most Greeks who now seek their fortune in London, have had a hard time. Most are seeking work. And they will do whatever they can. An accountant, recently arrived, working as a cook.

STAVIA Blunt is not optimistic. Through her Facebook page she calls for support of Greek producers. To buy their products and visit Greece on holiday.

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