



Eirini Sohos

# Growing up Greek

A young generation of Greeks is embracing their traditional culture more than ever, writes Alex Bernard

**E**irini Sohos had a small wedding by Greek standards – only about 300 guests – when the average is more like 500. Sohos, 26, lives in Carindale and although she was born in Brisbane she says she considers herself Greek. “It’s in my blood, it’s the way I think, which is in Greek by the way,” she says.

Her father Tass, a stonemason, came out from Athens in his late teens and her mother Daphne was born in Brisbane. As children Sohos and her older sister Tarsi not only went to the local primary school, they also attended Greek school two nights a week at the Greek Orthodox Church in West End where they learnt the language and other aspects of Greek culture alongside 150 other children of Greek families. “It’s more or less compulsory for Greek kids,” says Sohos, who adds that her mum went too.

Commitment to family is inherent in

Greek culture – it’s common for children to go into the family business and they often live at home until they marry.

“Like most Greek parents mine were very strict. We were never allowed to sleep over at friends’ places. There’s a very high expectation of young Greek women to be ‘good girls’ not out partying, getting drunk and falling over in the gutter, to respect your family, your church, your culture,” says Sohos. Her comments are echoed by Anna Holevas, 28, who also lives in Carindale and had a similarly strict upbringing which she wants to replicate for her own children when she starts a family.

“I want my kids to go to church, learn the language, go to Greek school, learn the dancing and, more than that, have the respect and embrace the traditions and culture,” Holevas says. “We speak Greek at home, well Grenchish really. I feel Australian but I embrace my Greek heritage, it’s a huge

part of my identity.”

Holevas works in the family business, the Zorbas and PC Hair Salons across Brisbane, where she is in charge of marketing.

“Everyone works here. My sister, my husband, my brother-in-law, my mother-in-law and my dad works at HQ. Whether it’s work or play, it’s always all about family for us Greeks,” says Holevas, who adds that the Greek work ethic is another quality she wants to share with her future children.

Eirini Sohos met her husband on the Greek island of Rhodes where she went to work after leaving high school, but it wasn’t until they both came home to Brisbane that they got together. “My parents weren’t happy I was running off to the other side of the world, a young single girl on my own, but they came around. I learnt to appreciate the culture, the traditions – it was an amazing time,” says Sohos.

Indeed, the trip back to Greece appears to

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