

## Leonidio Kynourias

The city of Leonidio is one of the municipalities that form the new municipality of South Kynouria, the other are Tyros and the community of Kosmas.

Leonidio is a tranquil town located at the southeast coast of Peloponnesian peninsula, under the Parnonas shadow. Nature abundantly graced this place with all its splendors. The town is located at the mouth of the valley of Dafnonas the ancient *Selinountas* and it's built at the feet of the towering vertical Red Rocks. The stream runs through the town, continuous along the plain and into the sea. Leonidio has been proclaimed a historical place. Here was the ancient Prasiatiki country, old pre Dorian city, which was under Laconian command from the late 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C.

Nowadays, it is a traditional town, with important manor houses, some of them listed, such as The Tsikaliotis' Tower, the highlight in Leonidio. The tower is proclaimed as a **historical** and ever to be preserved **monument**. Here is the home of poets as Ouranis and Sarantaris, painters as Tsouhlos and Varveris.

Leonidio with its own traditional architecture, the old mansions and picturesque narrow streets offers an idyllic atmosphere to its visitors. Apart from this the area in general is considered very important for its flora and fauna. The surrounding mountains offer their hospitability to important bird species and rare herbs and constitute a unique zone for trekking and mountaineering. There is also a mountaineering shelter with accommodation. The areas' visitors can also visit significant ancient settlements, castles and monasteries.

Leonidio and its surroundings, have got crystal clear sea which runs so much its rough and wild coasts as much its accessible beaches.

A great link between the old Prasiai and Leonidio is the language which was preserved in the Tsakonian area through the centuries. Tsakonian dialekt is the survival OF ANCIENT Doric even just a corruption of Neolakoniki dialect. It is considered one of the most ancient spoken dialects in Europe.

Productive activities of the population are mainly in agriculture. Leonidio's citizens are distinguished for their hard work and their appeal TO CROPS. Leonidio's plain, "Dionyso's garden" in the ancient years, is a very fertile plateau naturally protected and it's proclaimed of high productive rate. The most characteristic product of the place is the **Tsakonian eggplant**. Tsakonian eggplant of Leonidio is among the 317 European products PROTECTED DESIGNATION OF ORIGIN, including nine Greek. Since 1996 has been established the festival of Tsakonian eggplant of Leonidio, which attracts thousands of visitors.

Leonidio's area is protected by Natura 2000 programme because of its unique natural beauties.