

► **Poet's corner**

The 'ordinary' life of an American poet in Athens

4

► **Iron Lady**

How new Maggie film reduced one lefty to tears

25

NOVEMBER 27-DECEMBER 3

# living



Gliding through Nicosia

Segway tours now available around the capital's old streets

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**Segway Station**

Tours run seven days a week at 11am-1.30pm, 2.30pm-5pm and at 6pm-8.30pm. They cost €39 per person. [www.segwaystationcyprus.com](http://www.segwaystationcyprus.com), Tel: 22 763736

# Gliding through the city

**D**o believe your eyes, over the coming months, the next time you see a person fly through the capital on a Segway. By taking a tour on these personal transportation machines, tourists and locals alike will have the chance to visit the undiscovered areas of the old city and downtown Nicosia. Segway riders will also have an opportunity to live out their Back to the Future hover board fantasy, on these dynamic and futuristic machines.

"They call it the Segway smile," I'm told as an irrepressible grin spreads across my face. It remains fixed this way for the next two and a half hours, despite the heavy rain pummeling my helmet and cascading over my face. I'm on the first Segway tour in Cyprus exploring the old city's warren of beautiful, dilapidated streets and attractions, previously unknown to me, even as a local.

Riding the Segway, a two wheeled self-balancing platform with a handlebar, is intuitive. Lean forward to go forward, stand straight to stop and lean in the direction which you'd like to turn. Each manoeuvre is smooth and responsive on this electric motored vehicle. Despite any initial wobbles during the first few minutes of safety training, maintaining your balance on a Segway is easy even over cobbled streets, gutters and pot holes. By the end of the tour as your movements become more fluid and natural, you'll be itching to test the machine's 20km/hour speed limit.

The Segway, the leader in green transportation, was invented back in 2001 but is only just starting to appear on public roads and pedestrian areas across the world. Segway Station arrived in Cyprus earlier this month, brought to the island by Professor Loizos Heracleous. He had been searching for new ideas to transform the premises of his family's clothing business in the old city and was struck by the idea, two months ago. After experiencing a Segway for the first time himself, he was inspired to start the tours in Nicosia.

"I took evening tour in Munich by Segway. I could see the lights and feel the breeze and the only way to describe being on the Segway is feeling like you're on a magic carpet and gliding along. I rode a Segway and thought 'this is it'. I finished the tour and the same day thought 'why don't we do this in Cyprus?'" Loizos enthuses.

Segway tours can already be found in cities across the globe such as Paris, San Francisco, Milan, Atlanta, Budapest, Berlin, Thessaloniki and Vienna. At the Segway Station in Nicosia, customers are taken on a two and a half hour guided tour through the city which includes training and a halfway refreshment pit stop.

As a Nicosia native, Loizos is keen to share the delights and unique appeal of the old city with a wider au-

Discover Nicosia's hidden gems on Cyprus' first Segway tour. NAOMI LEACH gets to grips with the magical flying machine



After a few minutes of gentle training, the streets of Nicosia are yours. Left: Naomi Leach ready to go

well known but our tour guides are quite artistic so we have added some of these places. Old Nicosia has such wonderful parts that many do not know about, or might not have time to see. We offer a fun and efficient way to get orientated, then people can visit themselves at a leisurely pace," says Loizos.

Segway Station tours run seven days a week, three times a day and will continue throughout the winter and summer periods. During a winter shower riders are given protective anoraks and gloves to wear in addition to their safety helmet. For summer riders, the Segway could provide an effortless way to see the city and a tanning opportunity for sun worshipping tourists.

"The reason we thought it would be successful here is down to the weather in Cyprus. During the summer months when it's hot, walking around by foot gets too exhausting whereas this is cool because of the breeze. It takes two days to see everything we show you in two hours," adds Loizos.

Segway Station's Nicosia fleet

dience. "I grew up in the old city. This [Segway station's premises] was my parents' shop since I was five years old. I went to school down the road and would like this part of the city to be revitalised and to reach its potential as a pleasant and soulful place for people to spend their time. It's meant for locals as well as tourists who would like to get to know old Nicosia a little bit more," explains Loizos.

The tour takes in approximately 15 stops which include sites of historical value such as Famagusta Gate, Omerye Mosque, the Archbishop's Palace and Chrysaliniotissa Church. But in addition to these sites, the route taken also incorporates the hidden yet picturesque avenues packed with cultural treasures such as galleries, art and craft centres, the hamam and tavernas.

"Apart from the landmarks, we point out other modern places worth seeing such as nice cafes and tavernas people might want to visit at a more leisurely time. Some galleries aren't

**As a Nicosia native, Loizos is keen to share the delights and unique appeal of the old city with a wider audience**

currently has 10 machines able to take parties of up to six people plus a guide out on the tour. Each machine is an expensive piece of equipment to purchase. It lasts for eight continuous hours and then is re-charged at the station. The tour costs €39 per person for 2.5 hours which Loizos compares to other European city Segway tours such as Paris which is €85 for four hours and Munich which costs €69 for three hours.

"We tried to use Cyprus friendly pricing so it's €39 for a 2.5 hour tour. We tried to make it cheaper and more accessible and we also offer packages for Segway tours. If you do the tour and you love it, there is a package where you can use one on a 20 hour tab for €195. This works out at less than €10 an hour," Loizos explains.

There will also be a special introductory package aimed at groups of four people over the next few weeks.

"We would like to show Nicosia in a different light. Riding the Segway is a universally fun experience. When they come back everyone has a Segway smile," grins Loizos.

