

## **History Of Koca Ev Mehmet Ali Ağa Mansion Hotel;**

The story of the mansion begins well long after ancient Knidos disappeared into history. Captain Ali Ağa's successful service in the navy was rewarded with land that included Datça in 1100 AH (1694 AD). It is Ali Ağaki, the ancestor of the Tuhfezade family, who founded the old Elaki quarter (today's Reşadiye).

The building locally known as "Kocaev" (big house) was commissioned at the beginning of the 19th Century by Mehmet Halil Ağa, the father of Tuhfezade Mehmet Ali Ağa; it bears witness to the last two centuries of Datça's history. "Kocaev" enjoyed a splendid reputation during Mehmet Ali Ağa's lifetime; he was the Governor of Rhodes in the first half of the 1890s. His two sons Fehmi and Halil read Law and died childless; likewise, one of his daughters, Seza, died before she could marry. Münire, his second daughter, married Hidayet Şahingiray, of the Crimean royal family who had emigrated to Rhodes. Unfortunately, they did not have any children either. Upon the deaths of first Münire, closely followed by that of Hidayet at the beginning of the 'Fifties, the house was sold by the Tereke Court, along with the rest of the Tuhfezade estate. Kocaev then changed hands a number of times, serving as a tobacco depot, cinema, school and wedding hall.

Purchased by Mehmet Pir of Pir Tourism Management Co in 2002, the house was reborn from its ashes. We would like to thank Yerel Tarih Grubu for their valuable help in assisting us with their research of the history and culture of the region for the reconstruction period of Mehmet Ali Ağa Konağı. Architectural: Mehmet Ali Ağa Mansion is a significant example of Anatolian Turkish civil architecture. Set in a large piece of land, the Mansion was designed as a two-storey building of 1,000 sq. m. The ground floor is of stone and the first floor constructed of wood and filling, plastered on the exterior. The northern facade is circled by stone arches; this section turns into a sofa onto which its five main rooms open up. Documents and testimonies indicate that Greek masons worked on the construction.

The Mansion is one of the oldest examples of civil architecture still surviving; it is the first building in the area to have used glass windows. Mehmet Ali Ağa Mansion, with its similarities to the Giray palaces, reflects the Crimean building style that reached this region subsequent to the exile of the Crimean dynasty to Rhodes. Restoration: The Mansion was virtually derelict and very tired indeed when purchased by Mehmet Pir. The historic texture was preserved down to the last detail, in line with the "least interference is the best restoration" principle. Traces of the original guided each stage of the restoration work which was undertaken with the least amount of alteration.

In order to avoid further damage to the tired building, the Mansion was first protected with a steel cage and all deconstruction took place after extensive documentation. The wooden construction was partly repaired in its place and partly in a workshop. A carpenter's shop was set up in the garden specifically for this purpose. Cedar was the preferred choice as that appeared to be the longer-lasting wood. Partially decayed wooden columns were not discarded but rather repaired. No fabricated pieces went into the repairs; everything was fixed with beaten nails and studs.