Andreas, 71, Bakery, Frenaros

**1. Can you tell me a few things about yourself? For example, when and where you were born? Did you study for anything? Have you travelled or lived overseas?**

*My name is Andreas and I’m 71 years old; I own this bakery in Frenaros [a village south-east of the island in the district of Ammochostos]. I’ve had this bakery since 1996 and I manage it with my wife and son. I have three children, my son who works here and two daughters; one works in a hotel in Ayia Napa and the other is a speech therapist. I’ve also got two grandchildren aged four and six.*

**2. Have you ever owned another business in the past? How long have you been an owner of a business? How many businesses have you owned in the past?**

*Between 1980-1994 I owned a confectionery on the other side of the village, but I was renting and then the owner decided that he wanted to open up his own business in car sales, so I had to move out. I had the plot of land here which was my father-in-law’s and so I opened up the bakery here.*

**3. Can you tell me about the history behind your business?**

*Since I was forced to close the confectionery in 1994, I decided to open the same shop with the same name here on our private land but a bakery-confectionery, not just a confectionery. I’d been thinking about it before, that it would be better to have both a bakery and confectionery, and so since I had to move, it would be best to combine the two in the new shop. Things worked out better this way because I didn’t have to pay a monthly rent anymore and I had no one nagging me. When I had the confectionery I had quite a few problems with the owner because he always wanted to increase the rent.*

**4. What advantages did you see in continuing your business? Why don’t you retire?**

*The advantage is that by not paying rent, I’ve reduced my unnecessary expenses. I paid a lot of money back then to build the bakery here, but at least whatever I’ve done is permanent and it’s mine. I’m on the main road of the village and so it’s worked to my advantage. We make a good enough income, regardless of whether my son takes most of it.*

**5. How many employees do you have and how many hours do you work?**

*We’ve got three people working for us at the moment – two in the kitchen and one at the counter who works with my son. My wife works as much as she can in the kitchen too, as she looks after our grandchildren when their parents are at work. I handle our suppliers mostly and my son does the accounts since he studied accountancy and knows more about these things than I do. I’m out from five in the morning until late in the afternoon but I don’t work without a break. I might go for a coffee at the coffee shop further down for a while and then come back to work, and at lunch time I go home for a siesta for a couple of hours. What can I do? I’ve reached that age [he says with a smile].*

**6. Are you facing any obstacles or problems in keeping your business going?**

*We don’t have any problems here. We’re the only bakery in the village, so the 3.500 residents come here to shop. The income is good and it’s definitely an advantage. I get a pension but it’s not a lot. So you can understand that we get most of our income from here. To be honest, most of the income goes to my son because he needs it most. Let’s say that my son takes 70% and my wife and I, 30%. But even so we’re still happy. We’re with our children all the time, we see them every day and we lead a very good life.*

**7. Considering the experience that you have built up over the years but also the experience that you are going through now, would you say that you are still able to maintain the business and deal with the problems that affect it?**

*Surely people make mistakes in their lives especially when it comes to finances. We’re happy with this business because it keeps us and our son financially stable which is very important. My wife and I are blessed for managing to get as far as we have come. I really enjoy being here and I can’t say that there has ever been a day when I can’t be bothered or I don’t want to come to work. I’m here every morning ‘til late in the afternoon. You might say it’s a way of life.*