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Issue #14

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A FREE PRESS MAGAZINE • PUBLISHING AND DISTRIBUTION, PKATSATOU & Co Grand Cru, 6 Vas. Georgiou II st., 15452 Psychico • T: (+30) 215 555 4430 • E: info@grapemag.gr
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BODY OF SUMMER

"O body of summer, naked, burnt
 Eaten away by oil and salt
 Body of rock and shudder of the heart
 Great ruffling wind in the osier hair
 Breath of basil above the curly pubic mound
 Full of stars and pine needles
 Body, deep vessel of the day!

— Odysseus Elytis

With the brine of the sea already on our faces, we can't wait to splash into Greek summer. It's as if this country was born for the summer. The sun, the sea, the scent of jasmine and the smiling, hospitable people opening up their gardens and whitewashing their pavements so as to welcome the greatest season of the year, the one that brings with it millions of tourists, are just some of the images that come to mind. Greek cuisine, Greek wine and warm hospitality take center stage and welcome everyone who wishes to indulge in the unique experiences that a Greek summer has to offer.

We traveled around Greece and met with professionals from the wine and food industry, and our new experiences only reinforced what we already knew. The unique beauty of this country is not enough to take it into a new era of high expectations. If we wish to build up our country's brand, we need to eradicate dishonest behavior and all forms of insincerity. We owe it to ourselves to build a brand in a professional manner while maintaining the authentic, outgoing nature of Greek hospitality that everyone loves.

In this issue, we've focused on the unique experiences hidden away in a glass of Greek wine. As Konstantinos Lazarakis, MW, explains: "The sheer plethora of indigenous varieties is both proof of and testament to the long history of winemaking in this part of the world. For thousands of years, Greeks had wine as a vital part of their life, important enough to merit a god, Dionysus."

Santorini, Naoussa and Nemea are the three most famous wine regions in the country, producing wines that are already being met with great enthusiasm by wine lovers around the world. Things are happening in those regions, proving that when there's a will, there's a way. In Santorini, home of the famed Assyrtiko, we found new arrivals, including well-known winemakers from mainland Greece, who have decided to test their mettle against this island's unique terroir.

In Naoussa, we caught up with the region's latest celebrity, Apostolos Thymiopoulos, and talked about his internationally recognized label Earth & Sky while getting a taste of northern hospitality, complete with delicious local cuisine and BBQ meat accompanied by excellent wines.

Our next stop was Nemea, with its renowned Agiorgitiko. A new generation of winemakers has taken on the job of raising the status of the wines from a region with exceptional archaeological interest, just an hour away from Athens. This is "Generation Next," one that has studied abroad, that speaks a different language from their parents, that grew up with the internet, and that finds social media second nature and an important part of their work.

Our Cellar Rat, Giannis Kaymenakis, dug around downstairs and emerged with an analysis of what "great" wine really means, while Gregory Michailos, Dip. WSET, tasted different vintages of Goumenisa from Domaine Tatsis, third-generation winemakers working in the Goumenisa region, a small but important appellation of northern Greece. Gregory Kontos, Dip. WSET shared pages from his Wine Journal, where he records all of his wine pairings and tastings; Nick Loukakis, Senior Lecturer at WSET paired fish, seafood and Greek wine; and Marmita, a wonderful restaurant in Skiathos, shared with us its summer culinary suggestions.

On the other side of the pond, Grape stopped off in New York and met with Kamal Kouiri, wine director of the Big Apple's famous restaurant Molyvos and a great ambassador for Greek wine in the United States. While in the city, we also had the opportunity to meet a true legend of the wine world. Peter Sichel talked to us about the birth of the iconic brand, Blue Nun and shared his thoughts on Greek wine.

Using "Grape Escape" as our motto, we'd like to welcome you to the world of Greek wine and Greek gastronomy.

Have a Grape... sorry, great summer!

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Last May, the Vinexpo Bordeaux wine exhibition took place in, well, Bordeaux, and it was far and away the most poorly attended Vinexpo of all time. However, almost no one goes to Vinexpo for the exhibition anyway – they're there for the parties. During the four-day event, all the famous châteaux organize amazing dinners and open incredible bottles. The whole point, of course, is to get invited to the best parties.

The most talked-about dinner of the 2019 Vinexpo, and presumably the trickiest invitation to get, was the evening event held at Château D' Yquem, underlined in importance by the presence of its owner, Bernard Arnault, himself. Arnault is the richest man in Europe and the fourth richest in the world, at least among those whose wealth is publicly traceable. On that evening, everyone expected that the host would be invisible at the start, appear for a quick toast and then get into his helicopter and disappear. Instead, Bernard Arnault welcomed everyone with a handshake and a big smile, grabbed the microphone, talked for half an hour entirely in French, and stayed on until the last guest left. And then he jumped into his helicopter.

Arnault is a most peculiar case in the world of billionaires. He is the head and founder of LVMH, the luxury giant of our times, with an annual turnover of \$40 billion, out of which more than \$6 billion goes to the LVMH shareholders. The list of brand names under the LVMH umbrella is dazzling and ranges from drinks (Dom Perignon, Moët, Hennessy, Cheval Blanc, Cloudy Bay, Belvedere, Krug and more), to fashion (including Louis Vuitton, Celine, Dior, Marc Jacobs and Berluti), to perfumes (such as Acqua di Parma and Guerlain), to jewelry and watches (Tag Heuer, Bvlgari and Chaumet, among others) and many other sectors.

While most of the other magnates of our times push us towards easier living, like Gates keeping our desk tidy and Bezos helping us spending less time shopping in malls or boutiques, Arnault is opening up the gates to the good life for us. One of his latest additions to the LVMH portfolio was a surprise to many people – the acquisition of the Orient Express train service. Others, in hindsight, said that the purchase of a majority stake in Rimowa, the luxury luggage brand, was already pointing in the same direction. It seems that the good life is not about having things anymore. It is all about experiences.

This dovetails very nicely with what knowledge is for modern people, according to writer and historian Yuval Noah Harari. Harari has a formula: knowledge = experience x sensitivity. We gain knowledge from filling up our lives with a range of experiences, but we must have the initial sensitivity to appreciate these experiences and then we must allow ourselves to change as a consequence. Harari stresses the importance of that multiplication sign standing between experience and sensitivity. If you have the highest sensitivity in the world but zero experiences, this results, after multiplication, in zero knowledge. The same goes for the other way round, for someone going through myriad experiences but having no sensitivity to appreciate these, let alone move onto a greater level of understanding of how rich the world can be.

Imagine, for instance, the ability to taste and the food we eat. Someone could have the most sensitive palate in the world, but, for some bizarre reason, eat the same food, like fish and chips, all her life. It would be a miserable, and probably malnourished, existence. And that's not all: a sudden exposure to another food, say sushi, would be such a shock that understanding the qualities of the new taste sensations would be impossible. The other extreme is, sadly, far more common. A person loves fish and chips but, thanks to some fortunate circumstance or another, gets exposed to all kinds of different cuisines. Still, everything is dismissed as inferior. Fish and chips remain, for them, the best food that someone can have. Zero sensitivity, zero appreciation, zero change. Zero knowledge.

Why drinking Greek wine might be the ultimate luxury

Let's move on to wine. Wine is an amazing product that offers a huge gamut of styles. You can cover a long table with glasses of different wines, taste them all and find the fact that all these beverages started off from the same fruit clearly unbelievable. And yet some people do spend their entire lives drinking only one wine. These are usually winemakers, mainly amateurs but also, sadly, some professionals as well. Many, many wine drinkers, however, drink a very limited range of styles and resist everything else. "It's always Champagne, white Burgundy or red Bordeaux for me, my dear." No matter what these people taste, their vinous yardstick remains pretty much the same.

This is made even sadder by the fact that wine is so much more than that which is in the glass. Beyond the aromas and flavors, the acidity or the body, someone can connect with the place of production, the grape variety, or even the personality of the producer. When tasting wine, you're allowing yourself to be exposed to myriad factors, and this is priceless. All of these thoughts come to mind every summer, when I encounter people who, having picked Greece as their travel destination, resist drinking Greek wine. Provence rosé is great, but you can have it back home. Frankly, you can have it everywhere! There's lots of it! Would you spend your time in Greece eating only burgers and pizza?

Greek wine is very rarely the product of a clever marketing plan. Believe me, there are many wines out there that are just conveying marketing concepts. Greek wine is, first and foremost, very artisanal in scale. On an annual basis, the Bordeaux region alone produces more than double the wine that the whole of Greece puts out. There are only a dozen vineyard estates in Greece that are bigger than the average vineyard in France.

Here, most wineries are family-owned businesses of the smallest kind, meaning that the owner is the head winemaker, the head viticulturist, the receptionist, the accountant, the coffee-boy and the emerging markets analyst. These wineries deal with one of the richest oenological ecospheres in the world, because Greece has an enormous number of native grape varieties which are endemic, meaning that they cannot be found anywhere else.

The sheer plethora of indigenous varieties is both proof of and testament to the long history of winemaking in this part of the world. For thousands of years, Greeks had wine as a vital part of their life, important enough to merit a god, Dionysus. At the same time, they honed the wine they produced into the most appropriate beverage for their mode of consumption – to go with their food, to be enjoyed in warm weather, and to have moderate levels of alcohol, since drunkenness was not tolerated. The grapes and the grape-growing places that could best serve these needs were celebrated. The others were left behind.

Today, when you have a glass of Greek wine, you're getting millennia of both natural and unnatural selection based on culture, on worship and on everyday habits in your glass. There are very few experiences that can match this. So drink more Greek wine. It won't taste like a Napa Cabernet or an Australian Chardonnay, but it can really, honestly, make you a better person.

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Text by Thalia Kartali and Penelope Katsatou
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Naoussa

Only an hour's drive from Thessaloniki, Naoussa is an area that shouldn't be missed by any wine lover who wants to explore Greek wines. This is the land of Xinomavro, which means acidic ("xino") and black ("mavro") a rare, indigenous red variety which has been compared to Nebbiolo, thanks to its firm structure and its unique aromatic character. Its high acidity and tannic character produces wines which can age for decades and are suited for more experienced palates. A number of committed winemakers in this area are producing high-quality wines, combining tradition with modern wine-making techniques. Having visited the area back in 2016, when we discovered a new generation of winemakers full of energy and fresh ideas, we decided to come back, this time focusing on some of the boutique wineries as well as on the Kir-Yianni Estate, the dominant winery of the appellation. The winemakers' passion for the great potential of Xinomavro and their dedication in promoting this unique and versatile grape variety was what impressed us most on this trip to the region. Most of the people we talked to are second-generation and third-generation winemakers, young and energetic, with great faith in what they are doing and dedicated to producing high-quality wines with the least possible intervention.



Stomping the grapes.

Kir-Yianni Estate

If you're visiting Naoussa, a stop at the Kir-Yianni Estate is mandatory. In contrast to the rest of the wineries of the area, Kir-Yianni is a large estate, boasting 500 acres. It doesn't concentrate solely on the production of Xinomavro, although the varietal wines produced from this variety are the estate's premium labels. It was founded in 1997 by Yiannis Boutaris who, breaking away from the family business his grandfather had established in 1879, went on to create his own estate, concentrating on the production of quality wines that express the character of Naoussa's terroir. Ramnista and Diaporos are two outstanding wines which do just that, helping them to find their way to the international markets.

Today, the estate is managed by Yiannis' sons Stellios and Michalis Boutaris, fifth-generation winemakers. With an annual output of 500,000 bottles, Kir-Yianni is the largest winery in the area and, thanks to Stellios' vision, it offers one of the best wine tourism experiences in the country. In addition to enjoying the magnificent views of the vineyards nestled on the rolling slopes of Mt Vermion, visitors can take tours around the winery, enjoy an upmarket picnic in the vineyards with dishes based on local recipes, or opt for a BBQ on the winery's veranda. Naturally, the meals are accompanied by wines produced on the estate. All the options offered to the visitor, along with their seamless delivery, are the result of perfect organization by the winery's courteous and knowledgeable staff. Although great emphasis is placed on indigenous varieties, Kir-Yianni Estate produces some excellent labels from international varieties. Drumo, a Sauvignon Blanc from a single vineyard in Amynteo, a neighboring appellation where Kir-Yianni also has vineyards, is a treat not to be missed.



Touring the vineyard at Kir-Yianni Estate.



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Kostis Dalamaras in Paliokalias vineyard.



The stars of the winery.



Markos Markovitis tending the vines.

Domaine Dalamara

When he took over from his father in 2011, Kostas Dalamaras was the youngest winemaker in Naoussa. Following time in Burgundy, where he had studied oenology and viticulture, in Catalunya, Spain, and in Alsace, France, Kostas came back to take over the small winery which had been founded in 1991 by his father Yiannis. He did not hesitate to push through important changes in the winemaking techniques, applying knowledge he had accumulated abroad, but more importantly, he decided to switch the emphasis to the vineyard. About 20% of the family-owned vineyards were replanted, getting rid of varieties that Kostas thought were not serving his purpose, in order to concentrate on the indigenous varieties of the area and on Xinomavro in particular. His production is small, about 40,000 bottles a year, but his aim is to produce a high-quality wine which is the best expression of Xinomavro. As is the case with other winemakers in the area, Dalamaras seems determined to focus on this unique and versatile red variety, which is capable of producing very complex wines which age well.

A quiet young man who adores spending time with his fiancé Maria – who also works in the winery – up on the mountain, Dalamaras believes that all the important work is done in the vineyard. He spends most of his day attending to the vineyards himself, getting a little help from his cousin Yiannis, a viticulturist, and his father who, after many decades of hard work, is now considering retirement. The small winery is surrounded by vineyards, but perhaps the most valuable plot of land is a few kilometers away in an area called Paliokalias. This particular vineyard produces the winery's most expensive wine, Paliokalias, which is produced in an extremely limited quantity (a maximum of 8000 bottles) and does not come out every year. The climate of this area features warm dry summers and mild winters. For most of the day, the vines are exposed to the full benefit of the sun. All of the vines are grown organically, and Dalamaras tries to follow the biodynamic calendar, a philosophy he embraces. Despite the fact that he studied in Burgundy, he seems to prefer wines coming from Roussillon, France. "I think my experience in that particular wine region has influenced me more than Burgundy," he says. The winery is located on the outskirts of Naoussa and is open to visitors.

Markovitis Winery

Markos Markovitis is arguably Naoussa's most avant-garde wine producer. A third-generation winemaker, he took over in 2012 after his father passed away and changed everything. He only had one thing in mind, to focus on the area's star variety. He began by replanting the whole 140-acre vineyard, replacing other varieties with Xinomavro. He then eliminated all the other wines (about 6) that his father and uncle had been producing, and focused on the production of just one, a red wine made

from 100% Xinomavro. At the same time, he changed the label from Chateau Pegasus to Markovitis Winery. "You need to focus on one variety, which in my case is Xinomavro," he says. His philosophy is very clear. "I don't need to experiment with different varieties; all I want to focus on is this particular variety, which is indigenous, unique and offers immense possibilities."

His is a completely one-man show. He takes care of the vineyard and vinifies the wine himself, having studied oenology and viticulture in Germany. "It is my German discipline that has helped me," he jokes. Markovitis is convinced that anybody who is interested in promoting Greek wine must have a very clear sense of geography. "Naoussa produces Xinomavro, Nemea produces Agiorgitiko, Santorini produces Assyrtiko," he says. "This should be our focus." Markovitis' winemaking approach is based on a philosophy of non-intervention in the winery, and that's why, he explains, "Our wines cannot be consistent. You'll have good years and you'll have bad years, like, for example, 2014. That year, we didn't produce any wine. We had to sell our grapes to other producers." In September, he will be releasing Markovitis 2016, a great vintage, according to the winemaker, a great wine with all the typical red fruit aromas of Xinomavro, very good acidity and well-rounded tannins. Trying a bottle of Chateau Pegasus 1999, we realized the amazing ageing potential of Xinomavro. The winery produces 80,000 bottles a year, 80% of which are exported to Germany, the UK, the US and Sweden. It isn't open to visitors.

Argatia Winery

Christoforos Georgiadis is the newest winemaker at this small winery in the area of Naoussa. Son of well-known viticulturist Haroula Spinthiropoulou, Georgiadis decided to give his mother's name to his first blend. Following a different philosophy from the previous two producers, Georgiadis believes that the best way to introduce someone to Xinomavro is through a blend. Thus he created Haroula, a blend of Xinomavro with two other indigenous Greek red varieties: Negoska, which grows mainly in Goumenisa, a different PDO area in northern Greece, and Mavrodafni, Cephalonia's main red variety. "It's an easy-drinking, entry-level wine with no barrel ageing that's doing really well in the markets abroad, especially in the United States," he explains.

As far as the PDO wines are concerned, Argatia Winery produces one Naoussa label, which it releases onto the market after five years' maturation in the bottle. "The strong, tannic character of Xinomavro doesn't make it very appealing to the consumers," he says, "so our philosophy is to keep our wines for as long as we can before releasing them onto the market. Being a small winery, our space is limited; otherwise, we'd keep our bottles for even longer, seven or eight years, because this is how long a Xinomavro needs to mature." The production is small, just 14,000 bottles. The winery is open to visitors.

OTHER WINERIES IN THE AREA

Domaine Karydas

The estate produces two labels, Ktima Karyda, a typical Naoussa Xinomavro, and Ktima Karydas Collectible, an exuberant blend of Xinomavro, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot.

Domaine Chrisochou

Its best-selling wine is Chrisochou Xinomavro. A blanc de noir is also produced from Xinomavro.

Domaine Diamantakos

Two wines are produced here, a red from Xinomavro and a white from Preknadi, another indigenous variety.

Domaine Foundis

The most traditional winery of the area, this estate produces a more rustic version of Xinomavro.

INFO

kiryianni.gr
dalamara.gr
markovitiswinery.gr
argatia.gr
domainekarydas.gr
chrisochou.com
diamantakos.gr



Apostolos Thymiopoulos

Text by Penelope Katsatou
Photography by Yiorgos Kaplanidis

The philosophy of winemaker Apostolos Thymiopoulos is simple; it's Xinomavro, Xinomavro, and a bit more Xinomavro. On this point, he tells me, he is unwavering. "Why should I do something different with our land? Have we already drowned the world in Xinomavro that we need to change to something else?" he asks, leaving little room for debate. Undoubtedly talented – his actions have proven this – the oenologist from Naoussa is a multifaceted man.

A believer in biodynamics, with a strong business approach to his work, Thymiopoulos is clearly passionate about what he does, which explains his popularity abroad. It also explains his wines; complex, abundantly fragrant, with finesse and plenty of what people are calling "the Naoussa new school" element, which means you no longer need to wait decades before enjoying a wine. If, however, you did choose to wait, you would surely be rewarded. Going straight from his studies in oenology ("I only applied to a single university, that's how determined I was to go there") to his successful release of "Earth and Sky," Thymiopoulos' journey is reminiscent of George Skouras and his first wine, "Mega Oenos." When I tell him this, Thymiopoulos smiles, flattered by such a comparison. He is a fan of Skouras, though slightly more obsessed with the vineyards.

A colorful stone wall welcomes visitors to Thymiopoulos Vineyards in Naoussa, showcasing the variety of rocks in the surrounding terroir, with the rocks' colors ranging from dark grey to almost red and brown, bringing clay to mind. "Apart from the vineyards that were already owned by the family, I also bought some land. Trilofos and Fyteia, our highest-elevation vineyards (at 550 meters above sea level), came later. Today, we have 29 different vineyards; 340 acres in total, all of them organically certified. Some of our partners are also certified, so as to cover needs for the for-

eign market. In fact, some of our partners are even greater fans of organic certification than we are. My father also cultivated organically, though he was never certified. Because I still employ this method, with even greater dedication, the result is purely the progeny of earth and sky; after all, that's the name of my label, one that I came up with when I was a student. We use whatever the land gives us; we don't play around with machinery, or yeasts, or anything. I am resolute when it comes to that."

Thymiopoulos' Xinomavro wine is dissimilar to other Xinomavro wines from the region. His goal, he says, is to capture and bottle the fragrant memories of the land where he grew up. Being an oenologist, he knows how to boost aromas and to combine anthocyanins with tannins to create the bright color that has become his wine's trademark. The winery produces 500,000 bottles, of which 400,000 are Naoussa PDO. And although the facilities and the vineyards are not yet open to the public, if oenophiles happen to be in the area, they'll be welcome, upon appointment.

What is Xinomavro to you?

Xinomavro is a great challenge. It's sour, acrid, watery, difficult to produce. It's a difficult variety, which is what compels us to want to succeed in its production. It is the Greek variety that challenges all other varieties worldwide. My attitude is that you have to forget what you know. Forget protocols and

vinification – each year takes you in a different direction, and you have to go with the flow. I never work by the book. Books tell you when it's time to add sulfur, but if it's sunny out, why bother with that? Biodynamic cultivation is a twofold process. On the one hand, marketing drives sales; on the other hand, your heart drives production. Then there's homeodynamics, to make plants strong against weathering, similar to how homeopathy works for humans. After all, it's easier to work biodynamically in Greece because of the climate. Biodynamic products are our weapon, and should be our forte. Instead, they make up a very small percentage of the market, something like five to seven percent, at best. Did the Northern Italians plant different varieties than Barolo because Barolo is tough and tannic? No. So why should I plant something different? That would be an act of defeat, in my opinion.

What do you say to those who claim your low prices are not on a par with the high quality of your wine?

I try to make wine attractive to the world. I want people to get to know my wine; why should I increase the prices? To buy a helicopter? We have more expensive wines in the making, from different vineyards. The quality analyses of our vinifications are very encouraging; however, for now, we're happy with our prices. In any case, if we were to increase prices, we'd have the taxman on our back.



Apostolos Thymiopoulos tasting his wine.



Earth and Sky 2016.

How did the addition of Santorini vineyards come about?

I was there in 2008-2009, helping out my friend Haridimos Hatzidakis with his harvest, and then ended up going back there regularly ever since. I miss Haridimos, as do others; he was a visionary. He wasn't in it for the money. He never spoke about money. He wasn't an investor like so many are in this business; he was an oenologist. A family friend had given us space in his winery to create Akrotéra. Unfortunately, after Haridimos' death, things changed.

We've just bought land in Santorini and are preparing to build. We have many partners there. For me, Santorini is a big challenge.

Will you be creating a new label?

That depends. The harvest is what dictates how work will proceed. There's no set recipe for success. This place and the products it yields are so unique that it does a lot of the work for you. As long as you pay attention to its needs, the land will give you its best. The land is so powerful that it would be hard not to produce a good wine.

Which wines from other vineyards caught your attention?

I try to keep up with everything, especially my international competition, because I think of Greek winemakers not as competitors but as colleagues. I greatly admire flawless natural wines, such as those wines from Jura that manage to elude oenological laws and retain that intense oxidation without losing their flavor. ●

Before my visit to the vineyard in Naoussa, I enjoyed a very interesting vertical wine-tasting event, hosted by Apostolos Thymiopoulos and Gregory Michailos, at Mr. Vertigo in Athens.

Earth and Sky 2017

Released just before Easter 2019, this wine comes from an excellent year. Compared to the 2015 vintage, fans will notice a difference in flavor, thanks to the addition of stalks. There are intense notes of strawberry, pomegranate and sun-dried tomato, as well as a hint of lavender. Its extractability was increased for better ageing. The color is strong, and it has quite intense tannins which, despite the wine's youth, do not deter the drinker. It's worth buying a bottle and forgetting about it in the cellar for a while.

2016

This is a deep red, full of red fruits such as raspberry, strawberry, tomato and spices, and hinting at the presence of vegetable notes. Its strength, and what sets this apart from other wines we tried, is its balance. It's an impressive Xinomavro with very good tannins and acidity, high alcohol rate, and very full-bodied. It will easily survive the ageing period, but if you don't want to wait that long, it won't, as its creator so colorfully puts it, "make your jaw drop with tannins."

2008

Despite its age, it retains its vibrant color. This is a traditional Xinomavro, but with unmistakable references to Nebbiolo. Its robust aromas, far from diminished, are of strawberry jam, tomato, and forest fruits, spices and vanilla. It delivers a very intense taste to the mouth, with excellently rounded tannins and the ideal acidity. It still has at least another decade of ageing ahead. To some, the leftover trace of the barrel might taste rustic, whereas to others, it provides a perfectly harmonized flavour.

2006

This was a particularly wet year, which is evident in the wine, says Thymiopoulos. It has an exceptional clarity of aromas, and has slightly less of the "barrel" about it compared to the 2008 vintage. It's still intensely fruity, smelling of raspberry, wild strawberry, sun-dried tomato, cedar and spices, and has, despite its age, strong tannins. It's beautifully rounded, with the appropriate acidity and a very long aftertaste.

ATHENS

ALL AROUND



NEW
HOTEL



Generation Z takes over Nemea

Text by Thalia Kartali and Penelope Katsatou
Photography by Yiorgos Kaplanidis

They're part of the demographic that, among other things, grew up taking the internet for granted. They talk and write using a language all their own, causing us older folk to regard them with admiration and a touch of wonder.

Info

This particular group of young people, however, have one other thing in common; they have common roots, share the same home region, and have all grown up in and around wineries and vineyards. Wine has always been a part of their life, and they all decided to take on what their parents had built so painstakingly, and to keep pushing forward with it. Oenologists, communications officers, HR executives and marketing directors, many with a background of studies abroad – they are living proof that winemaking isn't a simple undertaking. It's a complex, collective profession that combines the knowledge of people from a range of specialties.

These young professionals all agree that such collaborative knowledge is a necessary ingredient for success; they also agree that, in order to compete in the international market, Nemea is a brand that will need the combined efforts of a number of people dedicated to realizing their vision. This particular group became close when they participated in the Great Days of Nemea event and realized they all had the same goal in mind: to introduce their wines to the world.

In the course of our interview, we were pleased to discover a new generation lucky and gifted enough to build upon the experiences of their elders, imbuing the wine world with fresh aromas and, above all, to speak in wine terms, with substance.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE AND MUSEUM OF NEMEA

Visit the archaeological site of Ancient Nemea, including the Temple of Zeus, the ancient stadium and the site's wonderful museum.

ANCIENT MYCENAE (25 km*)

Tour the ruins of the greatest city of the Mycenaean civilization, which played a vital role in the development of classical Greek culture.

ANCIENT CORINTH /ACROCORINTH (31 km*)

Corinth was an important city in ancient Greece, and it also played a major role in the missionary work of the Apostle Paul; he lived and preached here for 18 months.

EPIDAUROS THEATER (68 km*)

This is one of the most extensive sacred sanctuaries in ancient Greece. The temples, athletics facilities, theatre, baths, and other structures were built in an elevated valley surrounded by mountains.

STYMPHALIA (28 km*)

Visit Lake Stymphalia and the Environmental Museum of Stymphalia.

NAFLIO (40 km*)

Discover Palamidi Castle, the Fortress of Bourzi and the National Gallery of Nafplion.

CORINTH CANAL (42 km*)

Admire this great achievement of human technology and engineering and take in some amazing views.

Wine and Food

BEST LOCAL FOOD / INGREDIENTS:

- Extra virgin olive oil
- Kalamata olives
- Lemons and oranges
- Raisins, currants and vinegar
- Eggplants (especially Tsakoniki), tomatoes
- Roosters and rabbits
- Orange-flavored sausages
- Kagianas omelet (with tomatoes and cured pork)
- Artichokes

A SELECTION OF NEMEA WINES TO TRY:

- Aivalis, Nemea
- Gaia Estate, Nemea
- Skouras Grand Cuvee Nemea
- Mitavelas Estate Agiorgitiko, Nemea
- Tselepos 'Driopi' Classic, Nemea
- Palivou Estate Terra Leone Ammos Reserve, Nemea
- Semeli Reserve, Nemea
- Cavino Nemea Reserve, Nemea
- Nemeion Estate 'Hgemon' Sovereign Grande Reserve, Nemea
- Lantides Nemea
- Papaioannou Terroir, Nemea
- Lafkiotis Agionymo, Nemea



Dimitris Skouras

Dimitris Skouras' family history could have been a daunting burden. After all, when your father is George Skouras, one of Greece's most successful winemakers and an extremely active member of the winemaking community, your life is unlikely to be simple. However, Dimitris seems to have a clear view of where he's heading, and has only the nicest things to say about his father and their working relationship.

"It really is a good partnership," Dimitris explains, "mainly because we both like to talk things through. We'll discuss everything, what we like, what we don't, and often we'll find a happy medium. Sometimes his experience is invaluable, other times a more youthful perspective is needed. I have only ever bottled one wine on my own, an Assyrtiko made

exclusively for exportation to America, but I did lend a hand in producing all of last year's wines. There's nothing I want to change, and if there were, it would only be minor details."

The family's winery is open to visitors, and produces about 800,000 bottles a year. Once Dimitris' sister finishes her marketing studies, she will take up a position in the family business as well. Dimitris already has an impressive resume considering his age, and gained experience by working at large wineries. "Until my junior year in high school, I didn't know what I wanted to do. I continued my French studies and went to France to study oenology. I studied viticulture and oenology at BTS, a school that focuses on practical learning, which helped me immensely. I did my Master's in Montpellier, while taking every opportunity to gain hands-on experience. I worked the vintages and vineyards of some of the big-

gest wineries, among them La Fleur Petrus. I acquired practical experience by working at Sigalas in Santorini, at Gentilini in Cephalonia and in the Napa Valley in California."

He delayed his return to Greece, he says, as much as possible because he wanted to collect as many experiences as he could. His ultimate goal is to be involved in every aspect of winemaking, from production and wine tastings to traveling abroad to promote his family labels. "I don't believe Nemea is the Tuscany of Greece," Dimitris says, "but I do think Greece will finally gain recognition, and within the next few years. There are so many people abroad who are passionate about Greece. The visiting tourist won't remember the local wine or the fried squid; they'll remember that they enjoyed that meal at a taverna by the water's edge under the sun and the blue sky; that is the Greek experience we should be selling."



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Athena Lafazani



Andriani Tselepou

Athena Lafazani

The Lafazanis family has been in the wine business in Greece for 73 years, since 1946, when Vasilis Lafazanis came over from Asia Minor and settled in Piraeus. Both his sons started working with wine from a young age. Initially, the winery was established in Magoula – this property now belongs to Athena’s uncle – but in 1993, Athena’s father transferred his operations to Nemea. He did this because of his great love for the Agiorgitiko variety, a feeling he’d had since his university days studying chemistry. In moving to Nemea, he became one of the first non-locals to involve himself in the area’s winemaking. Over the following years, the vineyard grew to 200 acres, and production shifted towards the distillation of spirits, which now makes up a large part of the company’s output.

“My brother and I,” says Athena, “are the third generation of winemakers. My father used to do everything on his own, so he’s been through all the stages of production. My parents have done a lot and I appreciate it, but it’s my generation’s responsibility to take the next step, which primarily involves increasing our prominence abroad. I got into the business five years ago when I graduated from the Athens University of Economics and Business, and I’ve taken on the responsibility for the company’s administration and marketing.”

Athena deals with sales and distribution, but her main focus is on their brand image abroad. Nestor Wines was a recent addition to the company, increasing production to 1.2

million bottles a year, and the company currently exports to Europe, the United States and Australia. Despite these exports however, there is a feeling that Greek wine is not properly marketed abroad.

“I don’t know if it’s the wine itself or the Greek mentality, because I see this in the food industry as well,” argues Athena. “I believe it has to do with our inability to properly grasp the idea that we do something well enough to export it. Isn’t that the same problem we have with our tourism industry? I also believe we lack unity. We need to be promoting Greece, and not Greek wine. That’s the only way we’ll succeed. There’s little point going abroad to separately promote the Lafazanis Winery or the Skouras Estate – we need to promote Greek wine and Greek varieties. It’s good that we’re showcasing Assyrtiko, but if that’s the only variety we take abroad, it won’t be enough; the market will get saturated. We need to market Agiorgitiko as well, particularly since Nemea is Greece’s largest wine production region,” she says.

Andriani Tselepou

Andriani, who studied in Greece and London, is involved in the communications and marketing activities for her family’s winemaking business. But since it’s always a good idea in such roles to be informed about as many areas as possible, she works in production, too.

Her calm demeanor not quite concealing her enthusiastic nature, Andriani’s eyes light up when she says that her brother is in New

Zealand at the moment and that she’s jealous, before going on to speak of her decision to join the family business.

“My father’s very lively personality made me hesitate a bit before my decision to enter the winemaking business,” Andriana says. “But since I started working with him this past year, my impression of him has changed. I realize that my father gave us and continues to give us plenty of room for self-expression. Nonetheless, it’s a fact that this business is the result of my father’s vision, and it’s very important for me to have him close by and be able to ask for his advice. The difference I see between my generation and the previous one is that mine has become more extroverted, particularly because we use new media technologies as work tools. Both my brother and I aim to promote the wine tourism industry. We have great faith in it, and believe that it can contribute to the survival of a business.”

In recent years, Tselepos Winery has seen further development, teaming up with Amphora, a Chinese investment company, to build a bioclimatic winery facility that will be open to the public. “What’s really important,” Andriani says, “is that all of us from Nemea go abroad united, because Nemea is a very strong brand. I truly believe that, and we have platforms to get that message out. Social media plays a huge part in branding and marketing; customers can get a clear idea of the products they’re buying, and we have a great tool that allows us to stay in contact with them, especially if they are abroad. In this way, we can communicate directly with them. Although our father still has no idea how social media works.”

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Vasiliki Palivou



Sotiris Aivalis

Vasiliki Palivou

Vasiliki Palivou has definitely inherited her father's energy and enthusiasm. It's because they're so much alike, she says, that they disagree with each other so often and push each other's buttons, but it's also the reason why they love each other so much. However, it's their common vision that makes them such excellent business partners.

"Pretty much all the families in Nemea," Vasiliki says, "are involved with wine, one way or another. Our parents got into the business in 1995, bottling wine. My father was a vine grower; he believes wine is created in the vineyard. Gradually, our business grew and we opened our winery to the public. In 1999, my father had told my mother that one day people would pay to visit our winery, and she'd all but laughed in his face. Two years later, we were getting twenty thousand visitors annually. We believe wholeheartedly in wine tourism."

Wine is in Palivou's blood. "Basically, my sister and I grew up in the winery. Since we lived there, we were always helping out with the work – the only difference is that now we're following a schedule."

Vasiliki began studying business administration but soon switched her educational focus. She went to Athens to study interior design and then returned to Nemea to take on several responsibilities at the winery. She handles office administration, communication, and accounting, and is also responsible for the winery's wine tourism, which is her favourite

thing about the job. In her opinion, Nemea could become the #1 wine tourism destination in Greece because of its proximity to Athens, but work needs to be done.

"In addition to an archaeological museum and an ancient stadium, the Nemea region boasts 13 villages, each one interesting in its own way. Having, on top of that, a number of wineries open to the public makes it an ideal region for wine tourism. However, it lacks much of the necessary infrastructure, such as hotels and restaurants, needed to develop and maintain such an industry. We need to convince the locals that Agiorgitiko is a brand that could radically improve and benefit the entire region. We have, for instance, 400 coffee-houses which, if turned into rooms to let, could accommodate tourists. I think my generation is well aware of the infrastructure problem and I believe that, with the experience and the guidance of our elders, we can turn things around."

Sotiris Aivalis

Sotiris' father Christos started producing wine in 1996 from within the local cooperative but, and Sotiris points out that this is characteristic of his father, he was so obsessed with the work that he wanted to do everything himself. Christos would clean vats, go to the chemistry lab, and spend time out in the vineyards. The first Aivalis vinifications were done at home. No one ever thought that soon they'd be doing this professionally; the first years were tough. But

Sotiris' father, in addition to being passionate about the vineyard, is also very knowledgeable about it, and before long the Aivalis winery became a reality.

Until 2012, Christos did everything at the winery by himself, but things are different today. Sotiris studied oenology in Burgundy, and then went on to participate in seminars in Dijon. In 2013, Sotiris took on the family business, leaving his father to focus on the communications side of the business, for which he has a natural gift.

Sotiris will never forget the first wine he bottled. "We went out to the vineyard really early one morning, picked off a single grape and squeezed it. The juice was so dense that it dyed the rocks on the ground. That's how the 2014 vintage was born, with the Deux Dieux 2016 following shortly after. It might seem that things have changed since my studies in Burgundy, what with all the new pathways it's opened up for me. But it's not all change: I'm in absolute agreement with my father's philosophy that, to make a big red wine, you must really work the vine, and that's what I am trying to do."

Every year the Aivalis winery produces about 50,000 bottles and it is Sotiris' goal to use his wines to showcase the various terroirs. "Let's not forget that we have 13 generations of French winemakers to contend with," he says, adding that he thinks it will be a long time before Greece is finally able to erase the "Greek Moussaka" image from people's minds and make them take the nation's cuisine and its wines seriously. ●

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Greek Grape Varieties

GRAPE VARIETY	MAJOR REGION	WINE STYLE	MAIN FEATURES	AGEING	FOOD PAIRING	SUGGESTED PRODUCERS	DETAILS
ASSYRTIKO A-seer'-tee-ko Originating from Santorini	Throughout Greece	DRY WINES: austere, mineral SWEET WINES: sun-dried, luscious	High acidity, citrus fruit, minerals, saltiness, structure, high alcohol content, full body	2–10 years	DRY WINES: Shellfish, sea-urchin, clams, sushi, risotto, white meat SWEET WINES: Crème brûlée, lemon pie, walnut pie, chocolate fudge	Domaine Sigalas, Hatzidakis Winery, Estate Argyros, Gaia Wines, Boutari Winery, Vassaltis Vineyards	Assyrtiko is a rare world-class white variety from Santorini. It mainly yields dry white wines, some of which mature in barrels, as well as sweet sun-dried wines. It is a variety focusing more on structure and full flavor and less on aromatic character. Assyrtiko is the dominant variety in the PDO Santorini wines, producing highly condensed subtle dry wines with a mineral character. Sweet Assyrtiko wines (Vinsanto) are rich, complex and intense dessert wines. It is grown throughout mainland Greece, too.
MOSCHOFILERO Mos-ko-fee'-le-ro Mantinia, Central Peloponnese	Central Peloponnese	Floral and elegant dry white wines	High acidity, light body, low alcohol content, aromatic, rose petals, lemon flowers	1–3 years	Green salads, cold appetizers, spicy cuisine, finger food	Semeli Wines, Bosinakis Winery, Domaine Tselepos, Domaine Skouras, Troupis Winery	Although Moschofilero grapes have a reddish or greyish skin, the variety is almost exclusively used to make dry white wines. Moschofilero generously provides fine and exotic aromas with notes of lychee, rose petals and lemon blossom. It has a light body, low to medium alcohol, pleasant acidity and a spicy finish. What's more, Moschofilero does not lose these features during maceration in the case of rosé wines, not even when oak-aged.
ROBOLA Row-bo-lah Cephalonia	Cephalonia	Dry white wines of medium to light weight	Citrus fruit, mineral aromas, elegance and structure	2–4 years	Oven-baked or grilled fish and other seafood, cheese pies, cold appetizers, cheese plates	Gentilini Wines, Sclavos Wines, Robola Cooperative of Cephalonia	A very straightforward white wine with a lemony character, ideal with fish and other seafood. Its mineral character and refreshing acidity is obtained by cultivation on the high-elevation slopes of Ainos Mountain on Cephalonia. It has a similar taste mission with Assyrtiko, but it is lighter in both alcohol and body. Different winemaking techniques (wild yeast, oak-fermentation) can give a wider variety of styles to match different foods and different cuisines.
XINOMAVRO Ksee-no'-mav-ro Naoussa	Naoussa, Amynteo and most of northern Greece	NAOUSSA: Dry red wines with ethereal aromatic profile AMYNTEO: Dry red wines, white and rosé sparkling wines	High acidity, dry tannins, medium body, red currant, tomato sauce, smoke	3–20 years	Grilled lamb, grilled steak, mushroom risotto	Thymiopoulos Vineyards, Domaine Dalamara, Markovitis Winery, Domaine Diamantakos, Kiima Kir–Yianni, Boutari, Domaine Karanika	Xinomavro is a truly European, “Old-World” variety for experienced wine drinkers and connoisseurs. Tasty and demanding, Xinomavro requires an appropriate terroir, extra care, low yields and suitable weather conditions in order to reach its potential. Xinomavro's color is ruby to garnet and its aroma profile includes violets, olive pate, tomato paste, smoke and forest fruits. Moderate alcohol, high acidity and high tannins complete the picture and explain why some refer to it as the “Greek Nebbiolo”.
AGIORGITIKO Ah-your-yee-ti-ko Nemea	Nemea, rest of the Peloponnese, parts of northern Greece	VERSATILE: From elegant young red wines and youthful rosé wines to robust long-ageing wines	Medium to high acidity, mild tannins, sour cherry, cinnamon, clove	2–8 years	Beef, including burgers, spaghetti Bolognese and cannelloni; goat dishes	Domaine Karanika Aivalis Vineyards, Domaine Skouras, Domaine Tselepos, Gaia Wines, Mitravelas Estate	Agiorgitiko is a captivating variety characterized by freshness, intense red fruit and sweet spice aromas. It is a complex variety which can produce a wide range of wine styles, from refreshing rosé to reserve reds and luscious sweet wines. However, the most widely known wine styles are two: young, un-oaked dry red wines and red wines aged in barrels. The latter are rich, with top-quality, silky tannins. Young wines from Agiorgitiko have a moderately deep red color, intense aromas of fresh red fruit, moderate acidity and soft tannins.



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Kamal Kouiri

Text by Thalia Kartali

It was a glass of Assyrtiko from Santorini that first caught Kamal Kouiri's attention, making him realize that Greece wasn't only about sun, sea and fun on the beach. Almost 20 years later, in his current position as wine director at Molyvos, an upscale Greek restaurant in midtown New York, Kouiri has become a true ambassador of Greek wine.

Although Kamal Kouiri can't remember the name of that first wine, the freshness, acidity and minerality so characteristic of Santorini Assyrtiko made such an impression that he decided to start digging deeper in the complex world of indigenous Greek varieties. For the past 20 years, he has kept a close eye on the revolution taking place in the Greek wine world, so that today he can offer more than 750 selections to diners who come to the restaurant eager to try all his latest discoveries. "Everybody associates Greece with wonderful weather and beautiful beaches," Kouiri says. "Of course it has those, but when I started traveling inland, I discovered a whole new world. Going through regions such as the Peloponnese, Epirus, and Thessaly, and visiting areas like Naoussa, I discovered a mosaic of vineyards and of different terroirs, and I saw a passion in those people. For me, the only thing lacking back then was stability in the wines, but Greek winemakers have come a long way, investing in the vineyard and in technology. The philosophy was there, and the materials have been there for thousands of years."

Are people beginning to ask for Greek wine?

Two years ago, I conducted an interesting experiment with the wine list, putting on 70% Greek wines and the remaining 30% from famous wine regions of the world. Still, 93% of our sales were Greek wines. People saw their value. If you want to buy a bottle of Sancerre, for example, you know it's going to cost you but, if you can get something similar, a good terroir-driven wine with good acidity for 30% less, why not go for it? I want to showcase as many wines as I can so people will understand that Greece can do a lot more than one or two wines. In our restaurant, we offer 60 choices by the glass, presenting all appellations. Our list has now gone to 100% Greek wines.

Do non-Greek restaurants in NY ever include Greek wines in their lists?

Of course they do, with Santorini Assyrtiko being the most popular. You can also find a little bit of Xinomavro (a red variety from northern Greece) and Robola (Cephalonia's white variety). It makes sense to have those wines on the list; they relate to the terroir. Having said that, Santorini Assyrtiko is still leading the game and will continue to do so.

Which variety should we be keeping an eye out for?

The grape I'm excited about is Vidiano. It will be the grape we'll be talking about in the future. It's the grape of Crete, and has a great Cinderella story. I really enjoy Vidiano; it gives you different dimensions at different stages of the wine. I've tried different styles and I love it.

Do you think there's a trend towards natural wines in Greece right now?

There are some amazing natural wines in Greece. What I always say is that it's possible they were making natural wines in Greece before anybody else did, without even knowing that they were making them. This is actually my objective this year, to understand the "natural wine" state of mind in Greece. There are some amazing producers, including Tatsis in Goumenissa, Sklavos in Cephalonia and Karatzas in Drama.

If you had one piece of advice to Greek wine-makers, what would that be?

Be yourselves in your terroir, don't try to be somebody else. You need to be yourselves, don't be copycats, be true to your tradition, to your terroir and to your heritage, and then we will have a greater diversity of wines. You need to protect your identity.

What do you think are the weaknesses of Greece as a wine-producing country?

Marketing has always been the Achilles' heel for Greece. Good marketing is what has always been missing. Another problem is the production of low-quality, cheap bulk wine. Once, I had a guest who had just come back from Greece, where he had only been served large carafes of bad-quality bulk wine. I offered him a bottle of Greek wine and he couldn't believe it was Greek. I said to him "It's your fault; you should have asked for a bottle of wine." It does happen in Greece that you lose track; you're having a good time on the beach, and you don't think about asking for good wine. But that's a pity. There are so many beautiful tavernas serving excellent food in magical spots, but they need to sell good-quality wine, too. People should start asking for it.

Where do you see Greek wine ten years from now?

I think it will continue to get bigger. I believe there are two main reasons for this: first, Greek wines are good value for money. These are unique wines, from varieties that can't be found anywhere else in the world. Production is still small, so I think a good marketing strategy, targeting the right people, will help Greek wine grow. Second, the Mediterranean diet is becoming more and more popular. This will help Greek products in general and Greek wines in particular. There's a trend for Mediterranean restaurants because people are looking for seafood and fresh vegetables, and this is what Greece is all about. And Greek wines pair perfectly with this cuisine. You can put 10 dishes on the table and one wine that pairs with all of them; this is the wonder of Greek cuisine! ●

Dimitris and Evripidis Katsaros

Text by Penelope Katsatou
Photos by Yiorgos Kaplanidis

Did Dimitris Katsaros get things backwards, or was he just ahead of his time? Back in the 1980s, people in Greece usually gave up their vineyards to pursue a better life in the city, whereas he, an accomplished medical practitioner, felt the urge to throw himself instead into a struggle against the soil. His determination, love and hard work validated the opinion expressed by a journalist during a wine tasting: "Although not an ophthalmologist, the doctor has opened many winemakers' eyes to the true essence of winemaking."



Today, his son Evripidis follows in his admirable footsteps; having completed his studies in France, Evripidis is now in charge of Katsaros Estate, whose bottles still bear their trademark wildflower on the label. As for Dimitris, the winery's founder speaks with pride of his son and says: "I'm merely a helper now."

Katsaros Estate is located in the village of Krania on the slopes of Mt Olympus, at an elevation of 800 meters, with magnificent views upward towards the mountain of the gods and down towards the sea. There, on the lower flanks of Olympus, stand the stone houses of Krania, looking almost as if they had climbed up this far and were resting. There are numerous accounts of this location dating from ancient and Byzantine Greece through to the modern era that praise the local vines, seeming to suggest that the vineyards of Krania have always been there. In 1978, ENT surgeon Dimitris Katsaros was hiking in the area on a brief escape from the fast pace of city life, and came across this beautiful place.

"I was visiting the area with a friend," Katsaros explains. "The view was breath-taking: we could see all the way to Mt Athos. Within the space of a week, I had purchased the property and a year later we moved into the house, which didn't even have proper shutters. We used it as a holiday cottage. In the morning, I'd work in the city of Larissa and in the afternoon I would come back here. One thing led to another and I ended up becoming involved with wine. I realized that the small amount we were producing was costing us way too much and so I decided, on a whim really, to produce slightly more. I started with Cabernet in the beginning, since we didn't really know how to experiment back then."

In an attempt to revive the area's rich wine tradition, and with the invaluable help of his wife Stella, Katsaros decided to experiment with different grape varieties. Their first wine was produced in 1987; in 1989, the full production run of 300 bottles was released. These facts are being told to me at the winery, which I've reached after a four-and-a-half-hour journey. Here, I find a warm and welcoming lunchtime table awaiting me and am greeted by Stella Katsaros' delicious pies and the four wines produced in the Estate. I join the family at the table and together we share food, wine and stories. This is when Dimitris Katsaros starts reminiscing about his early days in winemaking.

"As an ENT doctor, as you can imagine, I already felt a connection to wine, since the organs involved in wine-tasting – the mouth, the nose and the ear – are the same as the ones involved in my medical practice." My baffled look elicits a clarification "The ear is connected to that clinking sound you hear when someone's making a toast," he says with a laugh.

He recounts how he came to meet the Greek winemaker Vangelis Gerovassiliou, the person who, he says, helped him more than anyone: "I called him up and said: 'I'm a doctor from Larissa, I make my own wine, and I'd like to show it to you.' Instead of hanging up, he suggested we met at Thessaloniki. So I packed my samples and headed north. Years later, he confessed to me that he'd thought: 'A doctor who makes wine in the valley? What sort of wine could that be?'"

"The odds were against me, but he must have been intrigued by me, since not only did he meet me, he also ended up supporting me more than anyone else. He wasted no time in coming over to the vineyard, bringing along his oenologists, and that was the beginning of a relationship that's always been based on mutual appreciation. He never feared Katsaros might make a name for himself, he was always by my side and he never accepted any sort of material remuneration."

When Katsaros started working at the winery, he continued his medical practice but stopped performing surgery, knowing it would be impossible for him to give his full attention and focus to both his chosen professions. He says that, in those early years, he remembers rushing to the fields of Krania at one o'clock in the night to water the vines, after someone had called him to say that the temperature had reached 28 degrees Celsius. He grabbed the sprinklers and took care of the vineyards himself. After a while, the locals at the village kafeneio (coffee-house) began staring at him and saying things like: 'What is the doctor trying to prove?'

At that time, the villagers of Krania were, for the most part, busy selling their vineyards which, due to their small size, could not easily be made profitable; the doctor, through considerable effort, managed to acquire 25 acres of land in total.

"In all those years, working at his practice in the morning and in the vineyards in the afternoon, not once did he complain to me about being tired," his wife Stella says.

"Despite the fact that we were missing out on many exciting conferences and trips, he never even mentioned them to me; he always dedicated his free time to the estate and to his work." She pauses for a moment, then adds, with a smile, "Not to mention that he has never properly thanked me in public."

Dimitris' comment on this is laconic and rather cryptic, but he, too, is smiling as he says: "All that glitters is not gold."

Their son Evripidis has been in charge of the family business since 2007. Having grown up in the vineyards, and after concluding his studies in General Biology at the University of Bordeaux and in Oenology at the University of Burgundy, he now continues the family tradition, equipped not only with the passion he has inherited from his father, but also with the knowledge he has acquired at these universities. It's certainly no coincidence that a vivid presence of France is also a characteristic of his wines.

As he shows me around, he speaks passionately of his work: "We're now at the winery's vertical unit, at the foothills of southeastern Olympus. Our vineyard is 100% privately owned – we don't purchase anything – and it has received organic certification since 1998. Most of the vine plots have a southeastern orientation, while the high elevation helps us achieve a particularly fine quality. The sea breeze and the winds are highly beneficial to the grapes, especially during the rainy season, as they help reduce humidity. Harvesting usually takes place in late August and in September; however, over the past years, things have changed due to global warming."

The walls of the winery are decorated with murals depicting scenes from the grape harvest and from the biblical "Wedding at Cana." Each year, a new wildflower native to Mt Olympus is displayed on the wines' label; this has, over time, become a classic characteristic of the winery.

Chardonnay wines remain in the barrel for five months. One-third of the barrels are new, one-third were used the year before and the remaining third come from earlier vintages. As for the red wines, half of the barrels are new and the other half are last year's barrels. This is a winery with a solid reputation, open to visitors, where only 50,000 bottles per year are produced out of 25 acres. Out of this, about 40% is exported, with much of it going to the US and to Quebec, Canada.



Dimitris and Evripidis Katsaros

ter than I am and that, thanks to him, things will improve dramatically – that he will help our work a great deal. But Evripidis as well respected my own contribution and my own take on the work that we do. Another thing is that we never went after any prizes; we always did what we liked.

Dreaming big is a good thing, don't get me wrong, but there's always the danger that it might throw you off track.

Early on in your career, you decided to produce wine in accordance with organic standards. Did this choice have to do with the fact that, as a doctor, you were aware of the health hazards associated with crop dusting?

D. K.: Actually, this is something that happened without me realizing it. I used sulfur exclusively in any case, so someone said: 'Since you only use sulfur, why not get your cultivation officially certified?' I didn't want to use any artificial substances. But I was also lucky to have started with Cabernet, because nature protected me from the rainy season, which at the time used to begin later on, after I'd harvested my grapes. In fact, this is the very reason why I then came to choose Chardonnay – for its resilience in comparison to Greek grape varieties.

Is there a winemaker or a wine label that you particularly like?

D. K.: My favourite among our own "children" is Estate Katsaros Red. It's different from the rest; its density fills your mouth, its aftertaste lasts and lasts... The longer the wine sits in the glass, the better it becomes: its aromas change and seduce you. This is the wine that really makes us stand out. As far as other wine producers are concerned, many good ones have entered the market recently, but I keep forgetting their names. Apart from Gerovassiliou, I have long admired Tselepos, Paraskevopoulos, and Katogi Averoff as well.

E. K.: I'm fond of Kokkinomylos and Avlotopi by Tselepos, Gaia Estate, and of the white wines by Antonopoulos, including Adoli Gis. I also like Sigalas from Santorini, with his plain label. The Xinomavro by Karydas and Dalamaras are good, and, as far as Cretan wine goes, my favourite ones are Dafnios by Douloufakis and Sitia by Economou. I also really like Zakynthino and Mavrodaphne by Sklavos. Paparoussis makes a top quality rosé wine called Petite Fleur.

Our conversation on wines came to an end the instant Stella Katsaros' milk pie appeared on the table. ●

Do you intend to increase your production?

E. K.: Not by means of acquiring more land. However, what we would like to do is to focus on smaller pieces of land that would ultimately provide us with an even higher-quality and more recognizable product – something which is, of course, not easy to do. We'd also like to extend our facilities, but I'm not talking about huge buildings or anything like that.

Why would a foreign customer opt for a Greek Chardonnay?

E. K.: The truth is that, at first, people are rather sceptical, but once they've tasted our wine, things change. Given their price range, our wines are competitive on a global level. In Burgundy, Chardonnays of this quality would come in at a totally different price. You visited Conterno yourself recently and you must have noticed that their Chardonnays, too, cost four times more. Have a look at the glass you're holding right now, and judge for yourselves: is their quality actually four times better than the wine you're having? On the other hand, it's extremely unlikely that someone in a restaurant abroad would go ahead and order a Greek Chardonnay, without the sommelier having first introduced it accordingly.

The new generation, equipped with studies and experience acquired in France, comes back home to apply all this expertise to the very vineyard that the previous generation built with such love, hard work and devotion. Did this cause any friction?

D. K.: There's never been any rivalry between us whatsoever, because I quickly came to terms with the fact that my son is way bet-

THE WINES OF THE ESTATE

Estate Katsaros Red

80% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Merlot, average age of vines: 16 years

Long extraction in stainless steel tanks and maturation in small (228-liter) French oak barrels for 12 to 18 months. Bottled unfiltered. Deep red color. Abundant and intense nose of gooseberry, sour cherry and black cherry, with notes of ink and butter. Thick and velvety mouth with excellent structure and tannins. Long aftertaste and long length.

Estate Katsaros Chardonnay

100% Chardonnay, average age of vines: 15 years

Fermentation in small French oak barrels and maturation on the lees for a period of five to six months. Light fining and filtering before bottling. Once bottled, it ages for three months before being released. Yellow-blond bright color with light green shades. Intense and complex aromas of yellow fruit, citrus fruit and wax, with notes of smoke and vanilla. Cool mouth with good acidity and volume. Long aftertaste and long length.

Estate Katsaros Xinomavro

100% Xinomavro

Fermentation in stainless steel tanks and maturation in small (225-liter) French oak barrels for 10 months. Once bottled, it ages for at least one year before being released. Red, medium-intensity color and vivid aromas of red fruit and sun-dried tomato, with hints of herbs and olive. Acidity and tannins balance the fruit. Fruity aftertaste.

Estate Katsaros Merlot

100% Merlot

Fermentation and long extraction in stainless steel tanks of controlled temperature. Maturation in small (228-liter) French oak barrels for 10 to 16 months. Once bottled, it ages for at least a year and a half before being released. Red-black color and vivid aromas of red fruit, marmalade and cedar. Notes of spices and milky hints. Rich mouth with density and excellent structure. Velvety tannins and ageability. Long aftertaste.



The  Revolution
Embrace the Challenge



Santorini

Text by Thalia Kartali and Penelope Katsatou
Photography by Yiorgos Kaplanidis

The breathtaking views from the caldera and the legendary sunsets as seen from the island have made Santorini one of the most famous destinations in the world. The island, however, is also one of the most important wine regions in Greece, claiming a unique oenological ecosphere which dates back to ancient times. The island's leading variety, Assyrtiko, has gained worldwide recognition, producing wines with a strong mineral character attributable to Santorini's own unique volcanic soil.

Santorini's winemaking history stretches back 3000 years, making it one of the oldest wine-producing areas in the world. What's more, thanks to that same special volcanic soil, the vineyards here have never been affected by phylloxera. Top-notch wineries produce a number of excellent wines which have found their way onto the lists of leading sommeliers around the world, making Santorini Assyrtiko a recognizable brand in the international wine market.

The story of the island's success begins with the arrival of the Boutaris family in the 1980s, which changed the commercial landscape and made Santorini wines known to domestic and foreign markets, followed by the pioneering oenological efforts of Paris Sigalas. Since then, the island's reputation has attracted a number of winemakers from mainland Greece who wish to take up the challenge of producing wine in the country's most famous wine region. The combination of its reputation as a leading tourist destination and its unique wines has led to a boom in wine tourism on the island. Most of the island wineries offer high-end wine-tasting experiences, an inviting alternative to spending yet another day on the beach.

ESTATE ARGYROS

Here on the other side of the island, there are no dramatic views, only vineyards, symbols of the triumph of life over the widespread death once caused by the volcano. Surrounded by the privately owned vineyard, the estate's winery is a modern building designed to remind the visitor of the traditional "canava" structures of Santorini. The estate, established by George Argyros in 1903, was passed down through the generations. Today, it is run by Matthew Argyros, the fourth generation of winemakers in his family. The Estate produces a series of wines – all from indigenous varieties – which they create by combining traditional and modern winemaking techniques.

Episkopi Gonia, Thira, 847 00
+30 2286 031 489
winetasting@estateargyros.com
estateargyros.com

Open daily 10:00–20:00
Accommodates groups, up to 25 people

AVANTIS WINES CELLAR DOORS

The most recent addition to the list of Santorini wineries open to visitors is Avantis Wines Cellar Doors. Apostolos Moudrichas, a well-known producer from mainland Greece, landed on the island in 2012. He began by collaborating with George Gavalas, one of Santorini's most noted winemakers, and soon acquired a traditional cellar, a "canava" where he stored the big wooden barrels used for his winemaking.

This year, he opened the doors of his new winery, an old open-air cinema which was transformed to include those elements common to traditional wine cellars of the island. Here the visitor can enjoy wine tastings accompanied by food from a small menu based on Santorini's traditional products. The winery produces five labels: two whites, Dolphins and Afoures, based on Assyritiko; two reds, Red Wave and Saint Nicholas, based on Mandilari and Mavrotragano; and one rosé, Grace, made from Mandilari. The winery does not own its own vineyard; instead, all the grapes are sourced from different growers across the island.

Fira, 847 00
+30 22860 23140
info@avantissantorini.com
avantissantorini.com

Open daily 11:00–21:00
Accommodates groups
Private tours available



Boutari Winery.



Gavalas Winery.



Hatzidakis Winery.

Boutari Winery

A pioneer in many ways, Boutaris landed on the island of Santorini in the 1980s, when the now-famous Assyrtiko variety was practically unknown. His state-of-the-art winery, distinguished by Designcrave Magazine as one of the top 10 architectural wonders of the wine world, was the first to open its doors to visitors in 1989. Upon his arrival, Boutaris changed the practice of late harvesting and began vinifying less ripe grapes, causing an uproar among the traditional winemakers. Since then, the Boutari Winery has been consistently producing high-quality Santorini wines, including Assyrtiko, Nychteri and the traditional Vinsanto, a dessert wine, aged for 12 years in the barrel.

Megalochori, 847 00 • +30 22860 81011
 santorini.winery@boutari.gr • boutariwinerysantorini.gr
 Open daily 10:00–19:00 • Accommodates groups
 Lots of information online

Gaia Wines

Housed in an industrial stone building which dates from the beginning of the 20th century and was once a tomato-canning factory, Gaia Winery is nonetheless equipped with all the current technological equipment necessary for modern winemaking. A charming area in front of this impressive structure serves as the tasting area, so that wine lovers can sample different selections outdoors by the water. This is a truly marvelous setting for tasting Thalassitis, the winery's best-selling label.

Exo Gonia, 847 00 • +30 22860 34186
 info@gaiawines.gr • gaiawines.gr
 Open daily 10:00–18:00 • Lots of information online

Gavalas Winery

This is a small family-owned winery, one of the oldest on the island. Vagelis Gavalas represents the fifth generation of a family of wine-makers and, together with his father George, continues the Gavalas tradition of winemaking, using the age-old method of stomping the grapes for the production of their signature wine, Vinsanto. This wine ferments and ages for six years in 100-year-old barrels made from oak imported from Russia back when the wine export trade to that country was flourishing. The charming courtyard where the wine tastings are held is next to the cellar and the old "patiiri," where the stomping used to take place. Here, visitors can also take a look at an antique press and the wicker baskets used for carrying the grapes so as to get a better idea of the traditional winemaking processes of the island.

Megalochori, 847 00 • +30 22860 82552
 info@gavalaswines.gr • gavalaswines.gr
 Open daily 10:00–20:00, last call at 19:00
 Accommodates small groups, up to 10 people
 Tours only by appointment

Hatzidakis Winery

This winery boasts a 12-meter-long wine storage cellar (or "canava" as it is called in the local dialect), carved into the volcanic rock that forms the island's soil, where all the winery's barrels are kept. The rest of the winery was built in 2004 as an addition to this old canava, which wasn't large enough for the 130,000 bottles that are currently produced annually. Of this output, 50% is exported to markets around the world. The winery's founder, Haridimos Hatzidakis, who passed away two years ago, was considered one of the most charismatic winemakers in Greece. Today the business is run by his family.

Pyrgos Callistis, 847 00 • +30 69700 13556
 hatzidakishospitality@gmail.com • hatzidakiswines.gr
 Open daily except Sunday 10:30–16:00 • Accommodates
 small groups, up to 15 people • Bigger groups need to book
 a tour before 10:00 or after 17:30

SANTORINI



The view from Santo Wines.



Gaia Winery.



Estate Argyros.

Santo Wines

Situated right on the rim of the breathtaking caldera, Santo Wines offers its visitors a unique experience. An impressive modern building welcomes those who are interested not only in tasting the wines but also in trying the island's local delicacies, served along with the wines or available for purchase in the winery's deli shop. The winery was built in 1992 to house the Union of Santorini Cooperatives, whose products are marketed under the name Santo. The building itself resembles the island's traditional stone benches. Surrounded by breathtaking views of the deep blue sea and the volcano, the visitor can enjoy a selection of the cooperative's wines.

Pyrgos, 847 01 • +30 22860 28058
promo@santowines.gr • santowines.gr
Open daily 10:00–19:00 • Accommodates groups
Private tours available

Domaine Sigalas

The name of Paris Sigalas has become synonymous with Santorini winemaking. Sigalas has dedicated his life to protecting the historical vineyards of Santorini and to saving indigenous varieties from extinction. He has been instrumental in transforming Santorini Assyrtiko into a worldwide brand and has never stopped experimenting and exploring the tremendous possibilities that both Assyrtiko and Mavrotragano, the island's precious red variety offer. The Sigalas winery, hidden away on the plain of Oia, offers its visitors a unique wine-tasting experience that includes a degustation menu prepared on the spot, based in part on fresh vegetables produced on the domain, in the winery's award-winning restaurant, where the visitor can enjoy magical views of the sunset. Sigalas Santorini Assyrtiko is the winery's most popular label.

Baxes, 847 02 • +30 2286 071 644
sigalaswinetasting@gmail.com • sigalas-wine.com

Canava Chryssou

Yiannis Tselepos, a renowned wine producer from the region of Nemea, began his activities in Santorini in 2013 in collaboration with the Chryssos family, local producers who owned vineyards and a canava in the area of Pyrgos. In contrast to the trend for turning abandoned traditional canavas into hotels, Tselepos invested in creating a small winery with the goal of producing high-quality wines.

Pyrgos & Emporio • +30 22710 544 440
tselepos.gr • Does not offer wine tours

Mikra Thira

The challenge of winemaking in Santorini's unique terroir could not have left one of Greece's leading producers unmoved. Vagelis Gerovasiliou, a well-known winemaker from northern Greece, decided on a bold strategy, acquiring land not on Santorini itself but on the small island across from Oia called Thirasia. This year, a small amount of Assyrtiko (1000 bottles) was produced from the two vineyards he has here and was bottled under the label Terassea. Another wine, called Santorini and made from indigenous grapes, was also released to the market this year. Looking ahead, Gerovasiliou has plans to build a winery on Thirasia.

+30 22860 717 44 • facebook.com/mikrathira/

Vassaltis Vineyards

Text by Thalia Kartali
Photos by Yiorgos Kaplanidis



The ingredients were all there: a family vineyard, a unique terroir, two talented oenologists who became his partners and, most importantly, the desire to leave his own footprint on an island already famous for its unique white wines. When you add to that a background in economics and a strong will to succeed, it's easy to understand how the young entrepreneur Yiannis Valambous came to add his name to the list of renowned wine producers on the island of Santorini. At only 35, he's also the youngest among them. He belongs to that new generation of Greek wine producers who believe that Greece, and Santorini in particular, can produce world-class wines.

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The most important thing is to recognize your mistakes and learn from them. Having said that, I believe that what really helped us was good timing; I think Santorini was ready for something new.

Arriving on the island almost 10 years ago to take up the vineyards his late father had left him, Valambous managed to build his own winery, a state-of-the-art facility which today produces 10 labels, but he didn't do it alone. Valambous is working in consultation with Ilias Rousakis, an oenologist who has worked with one of the most well-known Santorini producers, Paris Sigalas, and with Yiannis Papaeconomou, a traveling oenologist with winemaking experience gained in famous wine regions around the world. "It hasn't been easy," Valambous says, "having to overcome the obstacles of Greek bureaucracy, especially during the height of the economic crisis."

As for details regarding his output, Valambous is forthcoming: "About 30% of the production comes from the privately owned vineyard, the biggest part of which has been replanted in the last seven years." The rest of the grapes, he explains, come from rented vineyards managed by his team along with fruit sourced from different growers. The varieties planted in Valambous' vineyard are the traditional varieties of Santorini, mainly Assyrtiko, Aidani and Athiri.

It all started in 2012. Having arrived fresh from London where he had completed his master's degree and had worked briefly in finance before deciding to make a complete U-turn in his career, Valambous proceeded to sell the grapes produced in the family vineyard to other producers, following his father's business model. "That year we sold all of our production but, instead of being happy, I felt an extreme sense of emptiness inside me. It was at that moment that I turned to my partner, Ilias Roussakis, an oenologist with vast experience of the Santorini terroir, and asked him if he'd be willing to start producing our own wine instead of selling our grapes to others. There was no hesitation in his answer, and this is what set it all off."

The building of the new winery began in 2014, and was completed a year and a half later. It was baptized Vassaltis ("Basalt") Vineyards, taking its name from the volcanic rock formed by the cooling of lava. Great emphasis was given to the architectural design of the building, which now sits on the coastal road to Oia, in the area of Vourvoulos. "We tried to combine modern elements with the traditional architecture of Santorini, making the winery an efficient production unit while still creating an inviting space for our visitors." The winery officially opened its doors in 2016, and today organizes wine tastings based on four differ-

ent flights, where the visitor has the opportunity to experience a deeper understanding of the potential of Santorini's unique terroir.

Vassaltis produces between 55,000 and 60,000 bottles annually, far from its production potential of 100,000. The rising cost of grapes on the island is one of the biggest problems Valambous has to face, a concern shared by the majority of the island's wine producers. Santorini's overall vineyard holdings have shrunk considerably during the last few decades, due to the boom in tourism and, some say, a series of decisions by the Greek state which were meant to protect the wine industry, but which, according to many producers, have led to its further decline.

The arrival on the island of a number of well-known winemakers from mainland Greece seems to have created a further strain on the limited grape production, pushing prices upwards and increasing the competition amongst the wineries. "When I started out, the price was one euro a kilo. Now it's four, and it's rising," says Valambous, stressing that a continued rise in prices will end up having a negative effect on Santorini wines sales, "especially in Greece where consumers are not accustomed to paying higher prices for a bottle of wine."

On the other hand, he argues that Santorini is a unique terroir, producing singular wines, and it must be recognized as such: "Being such a unique terroir, of course it's inevitable that it will attract more and more producers who wish to experiment with the Santorini Assyrtiko. Competition is good for all, as long as everything is done in the right way."

Valambous certainly seems to have found the right way for himself. What is the secret to this young man's success? "Well, for me," he says, "the most important thing is to recognize your mistakes and learn from them. Having said that, I believe that what really helped us was good timing; I think Santorini was ready for something new." Valambous seems to have it all very clear in his mind. He recognizes that coming from a totally different background, he will never become a winemaker himself, lacking the knowledge and the knowhow. So, instead he leaves the winemaking to the rest of the team, Ilias Rousakis and Yiannis Papaeconomou, while he takes care of the finances, the sales and the marketing of the wines. "You need to know where you stand. Let an oenologist take care of the finances and an economist make the wine, and you have the recipe for disaster," he says, laughing.

VASSALTIS WINES

The wines produced by Vassaltis do not try to follow any kind of new trends. On the contrary, they are produced with immense respect for the history of the island's wine culture, and all of them reflect the island's unique volcanic terroir.

Nasitis

A pleasant and easy-drinking blend of Santorini's three white varieties which combines the aromatic character of Aidani and Athiri with the minerality and acidity of Assyrtiko.

Santorini

The winery's best seller. This is an Assyrtiko with a strong mineral character, full body, high acidity and a very long aftertaste.

Santorini Barrel

An aromatic and complex wine which ages for 5 months in oak barrel and for another 6 months in stainless steel tanks. It spends another 7 months in the bottle before it is released to the market.

Gramina

This label comes from the winery's best vineyard which is vinified separately and has been carefully picked in order to produce a wine which emphasizes the typicity and the best expression of Assyrtiko. It ages for 12 months in stainless steel tank.

Plethora

A very special wine which aims to revive Santorini's tradition of producing wine from overly mature grapes, fermenting and ageing it in old barrels and then keeping it in the bottle for another two years before releasing it on the market. This wine has a very limited production run.



Summer's
rosé.



DOMAINE
COSTA LAZARIDI

www.domaine-lazaridi.gr

Lately, I've been hearing a lot of discussion and some disagreement about when and who will release the highly anticipated next "great" Greek wine. Because of this, I've taken this opportunity to discuss what these great wines are all about, and whether we have nurtured the right conditions to produce wines of such caliber in our wineries.



To begin with, it makes sense to clarify the meaning of the word "great." Great wines do not simply establish themselves because of arbitrarily exorbitant prices or their creator's great expectations. On the contrary, they require long-term involvement, a substantial historical record in the field of viticulture, and a producer's commitment to a vision. I understand that this may sound vague, or complex, or even a little mythic, but believe me when I tell you it's really much simpler than that. I remember how I was at the start of my career, visiting all the hallowed wine behemoths of Europe, expecting to witness dazzling productions, castles and cellars, mysterious and sophisticated oenological practices, and an abundance of stardust. I assure you that the people I met were very much down to earth and did only what was absolutely necessary. As Auguste Clape told me on the steep slopes of Cornas, "Nature does most of the work."

Now, to cut to the chase: from a gustatory point of view, things are even simpler. Great wines need no introductions or intricate descriptions and, more importantly for us mortals, a bottomless pit of knowledge is not a requisite to enjoy them! In some sincere way, great wines demand that we enjoy them and, as Michael Broadbent once wrote, they defy any sort of analysis. Furthermore, I've noticed how, when a great wine is served, the whole table goes silent and an enormous smile of relief plays upon all the diners' faces. In other words, you will enjoy a 1990 Chateaux Margaux much more in the company of good friends than with a bunch of erudite wine lovers looking to overanalyze it.

Coming back to our own case at hand, I believe that, over the last few decades, Greece has produced some very lovely and well-made wines. But that alone does not grant us the right to prematurely call ourselves "great." Still, it's only a matter of time before wines worthy of a cellar's top shelf pedigree emerge. Now, as to which region will stand out when that moment comes, I dare say, with little to no impartiality, that it will be the Naoussa region, with its unique Xinomavro. ●

Wine.
Great



VOLCANIC BUBBLES

THE FIRST EVER SPARKLING ASSYRTIKO FROM A PRODUCER FROM SANTORINI

Domaine Tatsis is run by Pericles and Stergios Tatsis, third-generation vine-growers and wine producers working in the Goumenissa region and carrying on a long-lasting tradition in this small, yet significant, appellation where the varieties Xinomavro and Negoska excel.

In 1996, Pericles and Stergios took over the family business, continuing to display the same dedication and passion their father had shown for highlighting the unique terroir of Goumenissa. The winery, which has been certified as an organic producer since 1998, focuses on native varieties; most of their 14ha of vineyards are planted with Xinomavro, Negoska, Roditis and Malagousia grapes, although a smaller proportion of their land is dedicated to international varieties, including Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon. In 2002, they implemented a program of biodynamic viticulture, following these tenets and the biodynamic calendar devised by Maria Thun in both the vineyard and the cellar; they are not, however, certified as biodynamic producers.

In the winery, the brothers exercise very little intervention regarding the wine, trying instead to leave Goumenissa's magnificent terroir to shine through. Fermentations start spontaneously (they haven't used any commercial yeast since they moved to their new facilities in 2007) and they don't employ any additives, just a small dose of sulfur dioxide, prior to bottling, if necessary. Their wines receive a long period of *élevage* prior to bottling.

Undoubtedly, along with Sclavos, Georgas and Teramythos, the Tatsis brothers are among the pioneers of the "natural" wine movement in Greece. If, however, you ask Pericles Tatsis, he'd rather avoid labeling his wines as such. "Since there's no single definition of 'natural' wines, we see marketers more and more often branding conventional wines as 'natural' simply because the producers haven't added any sulfites during the vinification method. This is very different from our philosophy," he explains. "We would love to be seen as producers of 'real, authentic, wines' made with love, following in the footsteps and honoring the traditions of our ancestors. This is our only truth."

From the beginning, the brothers have focused on using traditional grapes from Goumenissa: the treasured red Xinomavro and Negoska varieties found on the picturesque slopes of Mt Paiko. Their Goumenissa red blend of Xinomavro and Negoska was initially produced in 1997, and this wine can be seen as an example of a traditional approach to winemaking, to be released after a significant ageing period in order to highlight the way that the wine can be enjoyed. Tatsis Goumenissa is a wine destined to age, offering its extraordinarily impressive beauty (associated with an earthy mineral dimension and reminiscent of mushrooms and truffles) over the long term.

2012

Bright, red-berried fruit, along with intense savory notes, peppery hints and dried flowers. Bone-dry palate, with powerful dry tannins and extraordinary levels of freshness. Tight and austere, at present it requires either more ageing or the accompaniment of a fatty prime cut of beef to be fully appreciated.

2008

The 2008 boasts a garnet color and aromatics (such as dried fruits and earthy notes reminiscent of forest floor and

mushrooms) showing elements of development. Barolo-like intensity on the palate with relatively dry tannins and some vegetal hints. It is quite impressive, with a layered complexity and, once again, it's very powerful.

2007

Umami-like aromas such as bacon and tomato paste conquer the nose. A second swirl will also reveal sweet dried fruit notes, including raisins and sweet spices. The palate is balanced, with fantastic oak integration adding complexity, along with melted juicy tannins. A long, complex finish. Beautiful evolution and great Xinomavro typicity.

2004

Light brick color. Fully developed nose with aromas of dried fruits and herbs, smoked meat and kernels such as walnut and chestnut. Still fresh and vibrant on the palate, with fine-grained tannins and great concentration. You can drink it now or forget it for another five years in your cellar.

2003

A masterpiece on the nose, it bears the typicity of a gracefully aged Xinomavro. The wine was released on the market just two years ago after spending a long period in the winery's cellar, and it offers aromas of dried tomato, black olives, mushrooms and noble leather. Harmonious and balanced with a high level of sophistication. A perfect contrast between freshness and development.

2001

It's difficult to put its aromas into words. A bit rustic, yet beautifully evolved, with hints of deliberate oxidation, nuttiness and dried black and red fruits. However, the palate is nervy and fresh, while the tannins are a bit stripped of fruit and quite aggressive. It will probably not get any softer with extra ageing.

2000

Over the top. Fully developed nose with some fading eucalyptus aromas, dried herbs and quite oaky notes. The palate is dry and a bit astringent, not showing the great drinkability of the 2003 or 2004, and there is no potential for further ageing in the bottle. Drink now.

1999

Fully oxidative style, earthy aromas of truffles and mushrooms, and overripe tomato notes. It smells like a rainy walk in the forest. The palate lacks a bit of freshness, but it's all about the level of ageing that you expect to see in your glass. This 20-year-old Goumenissa can easily be called memorable. ●

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Κάθε μέρα αξίζει!





Marmita Skiathos

Photography by Yiorgos Kaplanidis

Marmita opened in 2013 on the island of Skiathos, serving real Greek food in an idyllic setting. They specialize in contemporary Greek cuisine and rely on the use of fresh local ingredients combined with innovative takes on traditional recipes to create a delicious menu full of flavor. Their aim is to take you on a journey through the authentic flavors of Greek cuisine.

The unique setting provides the atmosphere as the food takes center stage and other factors, including the music, the lighting, and the flow-ers, combine to create comfort, intimacy and even romance. Real au-thentic cooking is what makes the difference. The restaurant provides good, honest food. Fresh ingredients, in season and grown locally or in the region, and healthy recipes are crucial to the way they understand cooking and run their kitchen. Everything they do is created and pre-sented in an elegant way.

The menu has a unique and appealing identity. It allows the dishes to speak for themselves: they are simple, tasty, light and healthy. Marmita's wine list is based mainly on Greek producers and indigenous varieties. With more than 70 wines from all over Greece, they try to offer some of the best Greek wines from different regions, appellations, terroirs and winemaking traditions. The wine list also includes organic and vegan options. The recipes below are for two dishes that the restaurant makes with local seasonal ingredients.

Magiatiko (Amberjack) fillet with celery root pure

Ingredients (per person):

Fillet of amberjack 220 g
Olive oil 5 ml
Butter 5 g

CELERY ROOT PURÉE

Celery root 200 g
Olive oil 10 ml
Butter 10 g
Lemon juice 5 ml
Coconut milk 120 ml
Fresh thyme 2-3 sprigs
Salt and pepper to taste

Beets 1
Pearl onions 2

Preparation

PURÉE OF CELERY ROOT

In a deep pan over low heat, add the oil and the butter and then the diced celery root and the fresh thyme. Wait until the roots start to change color and get softer. Add the coconut milk, bring to a boil and, when the roots are soft, remove from the heat, place in a mixer and blend until smooth. Add lemon, and mix again.

BEETS

Put the beets in the oven for 50 minutes in 180°C. Peel and slice, sauté in a pan with some olive oil at high heat, add white vinegar and wine, and cook off.

PEARL ONIONS

Put them in the oven for 15 minutes at 80°C after marinating them in white wine for at least 3 hours in the refrigerator in a covered bowl.

AMBERJACK FILLET

Put olive oil and butter in a pan at high heat, add the fish and cook for 10 minutes on each side. Remove from stove top and finish cook-ing in the oven for 6 minutes at 180°C.

SERVING

Add olive oil and salt flakes.

Wine pairing

GAIA SANTORINI ASSYRTIKO WILD
FERMENT 2017, GAIA WINES

Citrus notes combined with the floral aromas of the acacia wood and the vanilla of the oak result in a wine with a highly complex aromatic profile. Minerality and well-balanced acidity give depth and longevity.

Panos Stamoulis (right)
and his team.



Kritama (Rock Samphire) salad

Ingredients:

Rock samphire 150 g
Marinated onion s 20 g
Tomato cherries 30 g
Aged Anthotyro cheese 30 g
Olive oil 25 ml
Vinegar 5 ml
Pinch of salt and pepper
Pinch of oregano

Preparation

To marinate the onions, slice them and put in a bowl with red wine vinegar. Place the bowl in the refrigerator for 24 hours. Blanch the kritama, or samphire, for two minutes in boiling water. After straining off the water, put the samphire in a bowl with some ice to preserve its intense green color. Cut the tomato cherries in half and slice the cheese thinly. Mix in all the ingredients, including the marinated onions, and serve in a salad bowl.

Wine pairing

GOLD 2017, PETRAKOPOULOS WINES
Bright golden color with a clear aspect that mesmerizes. Full of flowers, ripe peaches and apricots, with notes of wet leaves, this wine revitalizes you with its acidity, which balances perfectly with the full body, and it ends in a lemon-flavored aftertaste.



Moscato ARTISTI

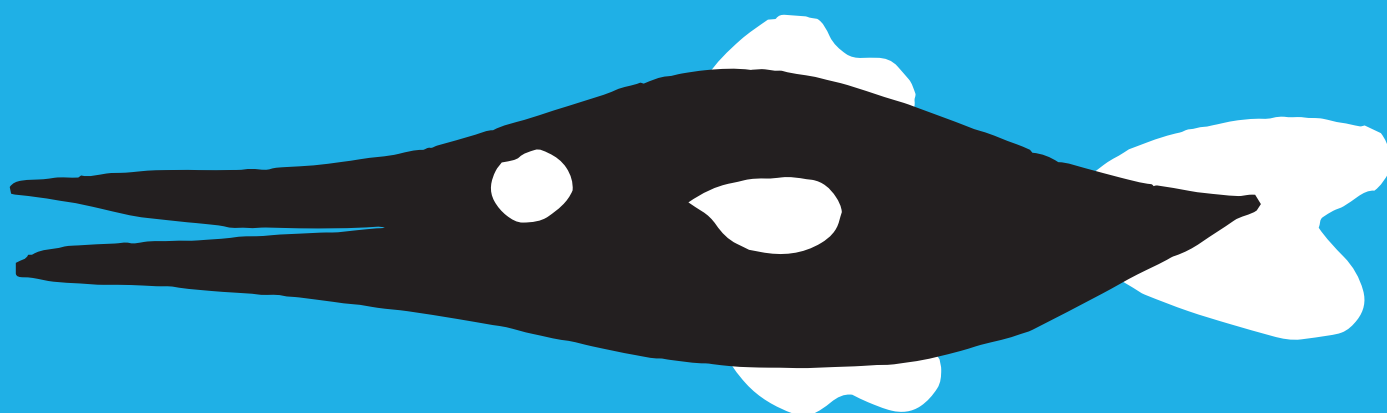
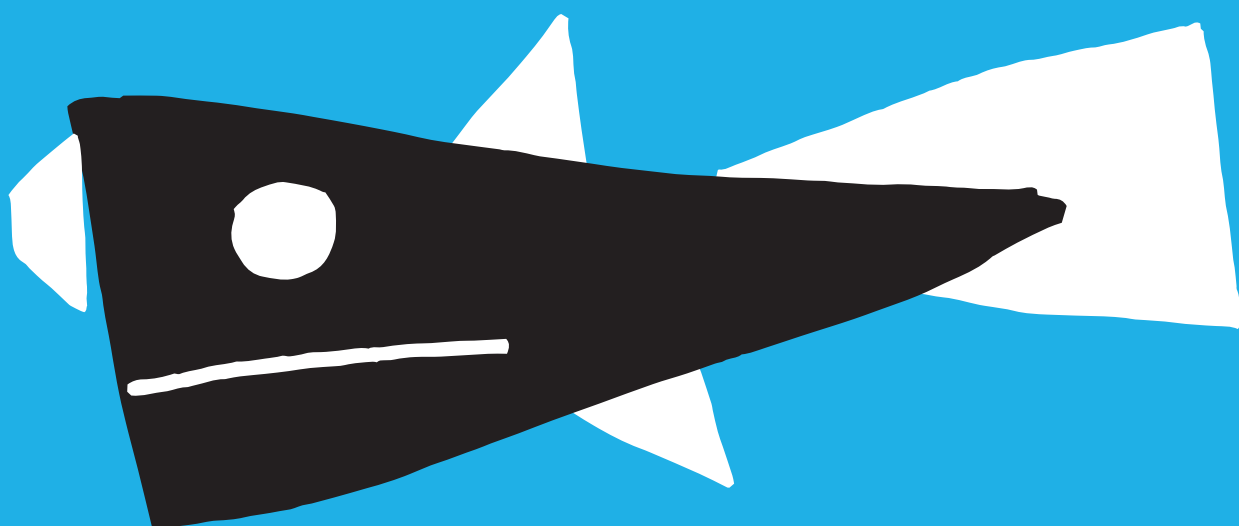
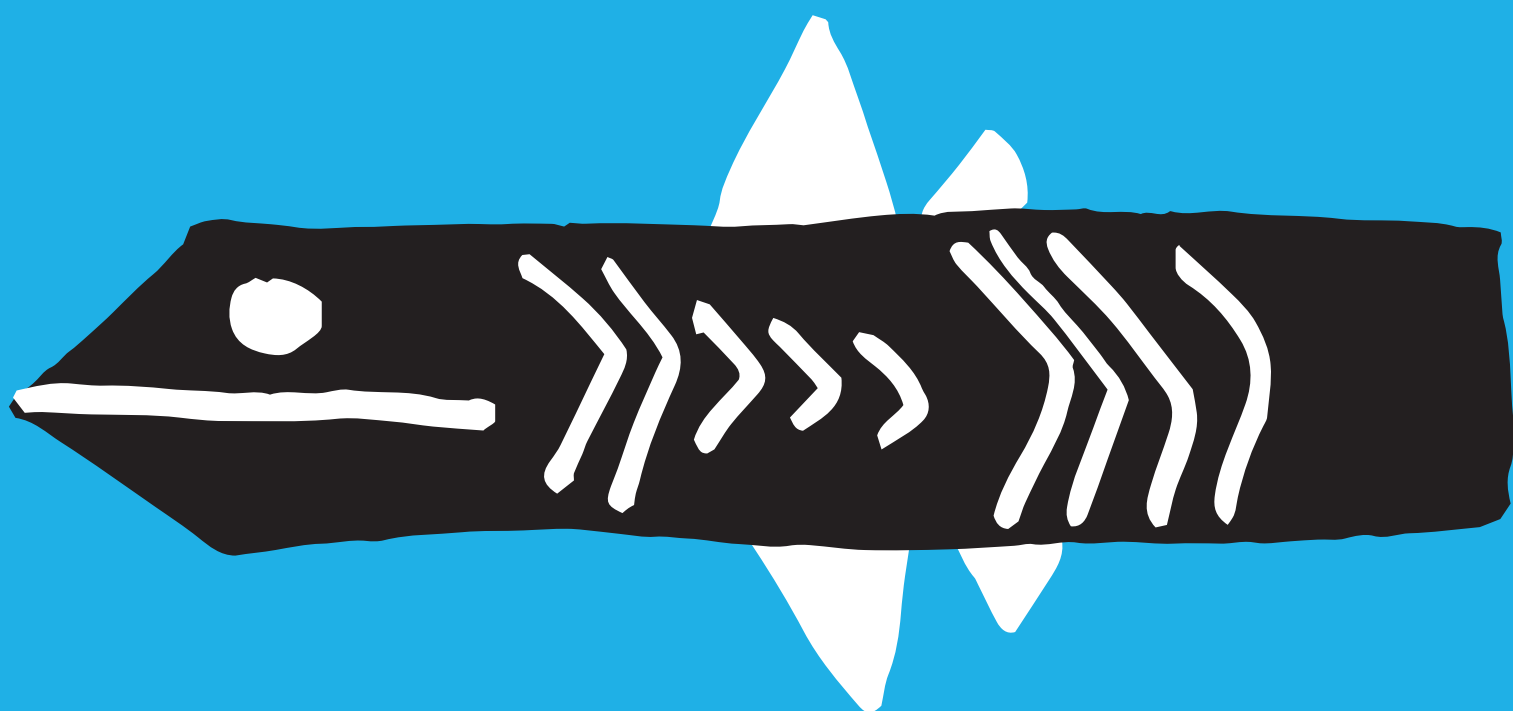
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Greek Wine and Seafood

Text by Nikos Loukakis, Senior Lecturer WSPC
Illustration by Menelaos Kouroudis

Greek culinary culture is flourishing, thanks to very talented chefs who have combined modern techniques of cooking with traditional recipes and ingredients.

There are outstanding artists at work in kitchens all around Greece, but the delight that Greek cuisine brings isn't based on the skill of the chefs as much as it is on the pure soulful enjoyment of the food itself. Enjoying food is part of the festive approach that Greeks have towards life. Food is part of our social life, our daily entertainment, and our culinary culture goes far beyond the food itself.

The atmosphere that surrounds the dining table is festive as well, and the aim of all such informal gastronomic events is to help everybody to connect with each other ("Phones down please!"). A perfect example of this is the weekly Sunday lunch, at which family and friends gather together to share food, wine, stories, songs and sometimes even a few dance moves. In most culinary cultures, this is called a "sharing" approach to food; in Greece, we simply call it "family-style" dining. This difference in itself is an important distinction with deep connections to culture and tradition.

The stars of the Greek table are always the fresh items, and there's nothing that says "fresh" like seafood does. Greece is surrounded by the sea and boasts a plethora of islands and endless kilometers of shoreline providing nearly limitless access to these maritime treasures. Meat, too, is crucial to Greek cuisine, but its relative scarcity is an important part of its appeal, and the sense of sacrifice that accompanies the provision of fresh meat makes dishes such as Easter lamb or goat even more special.

The climate plays a crucial role in the creation of Greece's gastronomic culture. For eight months of the year, we eat outside, under a hot sun or a warm star-lit sky. The bounty of the sea is perfect for such weather; it's low in fat, easier to digest and pairs perfectly with a refreshing glass of chilled white wine.

The sea provides a wide variety of foodstuffs with different textures, flavors and intensities that can be prepared using many different cooking methods. Greek white varieties offer a great diversity of styles to match the broad range of seafood options. Here, you'll find some of our suggestions.

SAVATIANO is a variety that is grown mostly in the region of Attica, although it is cultivated in other areas around Greece as well. It is a dry wine, light to medium-bodied, with medium acidity and fruity aromas. Small pan-fried red mullet is a good pairing with this variety, as both they have a delicate fragrance.

RETSINA is traditionally made from Savatiano, but today it's made using other varieties as well. The new style of retsina allows the wine to express a fruitier flavor and often has raisin notes that give it more length. Grilled sardines sprinkled with sea-salt flakes are fantastic with this wine.

RODITIS from the mountainous region of Egialia at North-West coast of Peloponnese produces a dry medium-bodied wine, with crisp acidity, and a Sauvignon Blanc-like character; it's herbaceous, lemony and fruity. Small fish from the picarel family, including atherina (smelts), marida (whitebait) and gavros (anchovies) fried simply in olive oil, can make Japanese seafood tempura and Portuguese peixe frito blush.

ROBOLA from Cephalonia island produces a dry wine, with sharp acidity, minerality and citrus flavors, which pairs with raw clams, oysters and other shellfish. The citrus character complements salty tastes and the flavor of the sea itself.

VILANA from the island of Crete produces a wine which is dry, soft, medium-bodied and with delicate flavors that pairs perfectly with grilled or fried shrimp. The soft textures and delicate flavors of both elements creates a good match.

MOSCHOFILERO from Mantinia delivers a more fragrant white wine, with crisp acidity, citrus and flowery flavors with a medium body. The next time you have some nice crispy fried calamari, instead of squeezing lemon over it, try a sip of this refreshing wine. You'll remember us forever.

MALAGOUSIA can be found across Greece. It's a very fashionable variety that offers a diversity of wine styles. In general, however, it produces a dry wine, with medium acidity and expressive fruity and flowery flavors and a medium body. Delicate medium-sized fish such as sea bass (preferably sautéed) marries well with the body and flavor of this variety.

VIDIANO, mainly from Crete, offers us a more concentrated wine, closer to a Viognier. It often comes with a touch of oak that adds more creaminess to the texture. A complex wine with medium acidity, it goes very well with the richer flavors of crayfish or lobster.

ASSYRTIKO from Santorini is probably one of most structured wines, without needing the use of oak, in the world. The very definition of a dry wine, it has a high acidity that is hard to find in such a hot climate. The unique mineral character of Assyrtiko is balanced by the lack of primary fruit to the nose. Large grilled large fish, such as sea bream, offer the richness that pairs best with this unique variety. ●

Peter Sichel, the spy who loved wine

Text by Thalia Kartali

Peter Sichel is a true legend in the wine world. Born in Mainz, Germany, in 1922 into a family with a wine business that had been established in 1857, Sichel found the path he was meant to walk interrupted by world events. Growing up Jewish in Nazi Germany, Sichel was sent by his family to school in England before the family resettled in France.



Peter Sichel at his office in New York.

After being interned as an enemy alien at the outbreak of World War II, Sichel escaped France and made his way to the US. As for the world of wine, he didn't get into the business until he was 37 years old, after a career in the OSS (US Office of Strategic Services) and then the CIA, for which he served as the first station chief in Berlin after the war. Once he left the CIA, he decided to finally follow the career he had been originally destined to undertake, entering the family wine business. His name became associated with one of the most successful brands in the history of wine. Blue Nun was his creation, a wine born out of his conviction that a single, simple, off-dry wine that went with practically everything, eliminating the sometimes difficult question of food and wine pairing, was the way to conquer the American market. By the beginning of the 1980s, Blue Nun had sold 45 million bottles, becoming the first wine produced and marketed specifically to target a mass market. Peter Sichel has a truly fascinating story which has been chronicled in his memoir, "The Secrets of My Life: Vintner, Prisoner, Soldier, Spy." Grape had the opportunity to meet him in New York, where he lives with his Greek-born wife Stella. He shared with us his thoughts on Greek wine and what Greek winemakers might do to raise their profile in a changing world.

To what, as a brand, does Blue Nun owe its huge success?

First of all, let me give you a bit of the history. To begin with, the creation of the Blue Nun label was actually an accident. When my father and his cousins came back from WWII and returned to the business the family had been running since 1857, they decided they didn't like the labels. Having been around the world, and having seen different things, they thought the labels they were using were too old-fashioned, so they asked the printer to design some new ones. He designed a blue label with brown nuns on it, a reference to the Church's contribution in preserving the vineyards in Europe. When they started shipping the wine under the new label, their customers wrote back: "Send us more cases of the Blue Nun." So it was the customers who gave the product its name. When I took over the business in the 1960s, we were selling 10,000 cases of Blue Nun in the United States. But this "Blue Nun" was, in fact, different wines from different areas at different prices. I eliminated all except one. You see, if people ask for a brand, they want the same product; they're looking for the same taste each time. This is what we did and, at the time, people didn't drink much wine, so they weren't that knowledgeable about wine. What they were looking for was a wine that was consistent and would go with everything. This is what we gave them, and that's why Blue Nun was such a huge success. We became a big hit in the 1980s, selling 45 million bottles.

So the creation of one strong brand is the way to conquer a new market in the wine business?

There is an evolution that takes place when people start drinking wine. You don't start out

with knowledge and you don't start out being able to distinguish between wines; you start out by drinking. Only after you develop a market for people who aren't drinking just to drink but are drinking to have an experience can you take the next step. I knew Blue Nun's huge success wasn't going to last forever. As wine became more popular and people became more selective, I decided I wanted to offer varietal wines with my name on it. But my partners back then didn't want that.

What's your opinion of Greek wine?

I've spent many summers on the island of Paros, where we had a summer house. While there, I used to drink only Greek wine. Greek wines are really good, but the problem is that they're produced in small quantities. I've tried different types and some were really good indeed. Santorini wines have become very popular in the United States because their producers did the right thing. For years, I helped the Greek wine promotion people in America, telling them that they have to specialize in very few things that nobody else can make. I mean, this preoccupation – not unlike other people in the world – of growing Merlot and Cabernet... nobody is interested in that. You have varieties that only exist in Greece that produce really interesting wines.

What is your advice for Greek winemakers?

What you need is to have one wine that has an original taste, a name that's easy to pronounce, and some good packaging. The one wine that everybody knows, the Assyrtiko wine of Santorini, is doing exactly that. Red wines are a bit more complicated, because there's more competition.

Do you think Greek wines are expensive?

No, they aren't expensive. There is nothing wrong with the price, nothing wrong with the quality, nothing wrong with the packaging. The thing is to have enough on the market for people to notice you, especially if you can't afford to advertise.

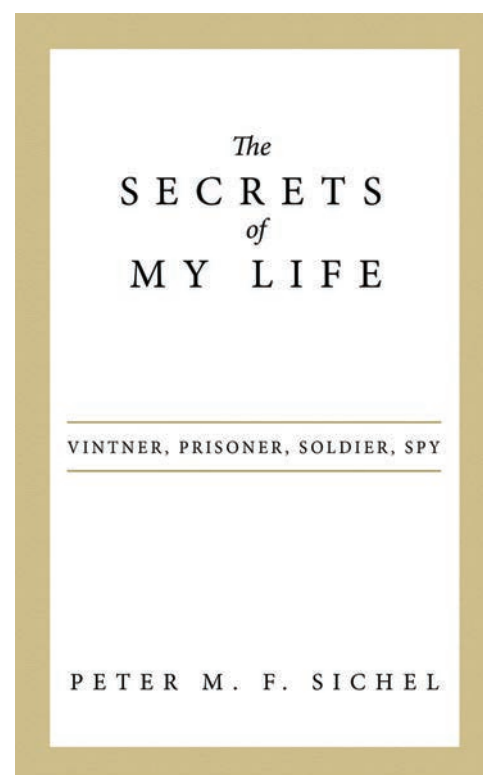
What's your favorite wine?

I don't have favorite wines. I think it's silly to have a favorite wine. I have favorite regions, and Bordeaux is definitely one of them. But I can't say I don't like Burgundy; I used to go there once a year to buy wine. I was a wine merchant, you know. Well, in fact, I still am!

While we were talking, Mr Sichel, a lover of details, as his wife told us with a smile, insisted on searching online to find out the exact price that Santorini wines are currently commanding in the United States. At the age of 97, he is fully aware of all the new wine apps in use around the world. "The Wine Searcher is a very useful app; I use it all the time when I'm looking for one particular wine. The wine world might have expanded tremendously in the last few years, but it's still a friendly community of people willing to talk to each other and to give each other advice, especially when that means ensuring that all of them are making money!" ●



Peter Sichel (in the middle) and his brother David (left) lighting the Hanukkah menorah.



Peter Sichel's autobiography.



The famous "Blue Nun" label.



Unsung Heroes

Text by Thalia Kartali and Penelope Katsatou
Photography by Yiorgos Kaplanidis

A new profession has emerged over the past years in the wine world: “celebrity” oenologists who, with the help of their teams, are responsible for several wineries at once. What about Greece, though? Who are the people behind the label and why are we usually familiar just with the winemakers? How well known and well paid are Greek oenologists after all? To find out, and to learn a little more about how they might see things, we met with some young, passionate and highly successful people from all over Greece and asked them some questions.

LEFTERIS ANAGNOSTOU
Artemis Karamolegos Winery

Lefteris Anagnostou is a graduate of the Agricultural University of Athens who also holds master’s degrees in both Viticulture and Oenology from the Montpellier SupAgro and Bordeaux Sciences Agro Universities. He has also been awarded the French National Diploma of Oenology (Diplôme National d’Œnologie, DNO). After gaining valuable experience working in various regions of France, such as Corbières in the south of France and Margaux (Château Kirwan) in Bordeaux, he participated in winemaking in different regions of the world, such as New Zealand (Isabel Vineyard) and Crete (Manoussakis Winery).

He’s always seen Santorini as a challenging but attractive wine destination, and the Cyclades in general have always held a certain significance for him. So, after a brief collaboration with Estate Argyros, he was appointed production manager at Artemis Karamolegos Winery in early 2016. More recently, he’s been collaborating with different wineries as a freelance consultant.

Vineyard or Winery?

The answer, even though it might sound banal, is that the two of them are intricately connected, making it impossible to say whose role is more important. I’m a firm believer in this, and that’s the reason why obtaining two master’s degrees seemed like the only option for me. There’s no doubt that great wines begin in the vineyard; on the other hand, you run the risk of wasting excellent raw material if the right work isn’t done at the winery.

Still, oenologists aren’t magicians. They can’t create remarkable wines out of mediocre raw materials, and one thing’s for certain: great wine is always closely linked to an exceptional vineyard.

From where do you draw the inspiration for your work?

From the region itself. Expressing the uniqueness of each region through a bottle of wine is the cornerstone of my philosophy and my overall approach to wine. As purely theoretical as this may sound, you’ll often sense that the vineyard’s characteristics, the history of the region and the grape variety itself are pointing you in the right direction. Another source of inspiration is each person’s personal points of reference, his travels and the winemaking experiences he’s acquired in different regions of the world, as well as the constant experimenting he’s done.

Does it bother you that, in a way, you’re the “unsung hero” behind well-known labels?

I consider it to be unfair when somebody’s work and effort aren’t recognized in a suitable manner. Personally, I haven’t experienced such a thing, as I’m lucky enough to be collaborating with a winery where self-promotion isn’t regarded as an end in itself and where the roles are clearly delineated. The trust and appreciation Artemis Karamolegos has shown me is something I value greatly.

What are the difficulties and joys of your profession?

This certainly isn’t an easy profession. To those who think that we just wander around

aimlessly all day holding a glass of wine, I’d like to explain that we work under difficult and challenging conditions! We have many responsibilities and we’re often under great pressure; we face situations where a single decision may affect a whole year. What’s more, we have to depend on weather conditions, we’re away from our homes during harvest, and it’s often not easy to communicate with wine producers.

On the other hand, the sheer joy of sharing something that you’ve created is truly one of a kind. An acknowledgment of your efforts, a positive review, a prize, a smile of contentment or a compliment, and above all your own personal satisfaction are invaluable, and they’re very hard to measure against the difficulties mentioned above.

What would your dream wine (the ideal wine that you’d like to create) be like?

That’s a difficult question... I’ll answer based on my current working conditions, so I’d like it to be a PDO Santorini. Above all, I’d like it to be a wine that’s able to stir the emotions, say an Assyrtiko that would still seem fresh after seven to eight years have gone by, and that would, at first, appear austere and ill-tempered. I would like it to convey a sea breeze and a flinty aroma and be able to transport you to some distant rock outcropping in the Aegean Sea. Its mouth should be structured, oily, with a sharp acidity, length and vivid saltiness, as if you’ve just tasted a limpet! It should make you want to taste it again right away, even while you wait for it patiently while it sits in the carafe, wondering, as you wait, whether you’ve opened it too soon.



Dimitris Mansolas

A truly great wine is “born” in the field and it is largely determined by the vintage (millésime). In that sense, the better job a winegrower does, the less the oenologist needs to intervene. Even though, as I said, it's the vintage and its interplay with the vineyard that determines the “DNA” of a truly great and unique wine.

Which wine from one of your “competitors” have you been jealous of, in a good way?

I've tasted certain Santorini wines that have been able to stir my emotions, but I haven't felt jealous of them, not even in a good way. I'm always glad when I taste excellent Santorini wines, because I feel as if the expectations I have of this region, as well as its enormous potential, are being confirmed. I have been touched and “transported” by a freshly bottled 2015 Cuvée No 15 by Haridimos Hatzidakis, and I was stunned by the evolution of the 2012 Thalassitis, when I tasted it five years later. I also take my hat off to the exceptional formality of 2014 Kavalieros by Sigalas.



DIMITRIS MANSOLAS
Rhous Winery Tamiolakis

Dimitris Mansolas has studied Oenology in France, graduating from Bordeaux-Victor Segalen University. He also holds a degree from the Faculty of Agriculture, School of Geotechnical Sciences of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. For nearly eight years now, he's been involved with the Rhous Winery of the Tamiolakis family. Nonetheless, he considers the

period between 2002 and 2010 as having been equally important to his career. During those years, he collaborated with the Kir-Yianni Estate for a period of five years and with the Wine Art Estate for a period of three years. “They were,” he says, “both beautiful collaborations, mainly because of the quality traits of the people involved, namely Stelios Boutaris and Yannis Papadopoulos respectively.”

Vineyard or Winery?

They both need each other. It's a team effort. The contribution each makes ends up intertwined with the work of the other, and the result depends upon whether or not everything has been done correctly. However, a truly great wine is “born” in the field and it is largely determined by the vintage (millésime). In that sense, the better job a vine grower does, the less the oenologist needs to intervene. Even though, as I said, it's the vintage and its interplay with the vineyard that determines the “DNA” of a truly great and unique wine.

From where do you draw the inspiration for your work?

I regard my job first and foremost as precisely that: a job, in the sense that I need to spend many hours in the vineyard, by the grapes, while at the same time also making

good use of the available scientific knowledge and of my own experience. I think that, throughout this process, various challenges can emerge which will serve as a source of inspiration for the next wine to be created or for the next viticultural or oenological detail to be addressed. So, I think that I draw inspiration from my work itself: from a new grape variety, a new plot to be planted, or from a rain that falls just a couple of days before the scheduled harvest.

Does it bother you that, in a way, you're the “unsung hero” behind well-known labels?

Not at all. My goal is to produce wines that people enjoy and choose to buy. In other words, for me, it's enough to see the sales numbers go up.

What are the difficulties and joys of your profession?

Many of them... both difficulties and joys. Challenges include the lack of interest among younger workers in learning how the work in the vineyard is done (pruning, for example), the legislation covering the planting of new vines and PDO/PGI/Varietal wines, and the logistics of the harvest season. The list of joys, on the other hand, is probably longer, so I'll simply mention the most important one, at

UNSUNG HEROES

of Languedoc-Roussillon. I'm also jealous of the acidity and minerality of a Rhine or a Mosel Riesling and of the extroverted nature and voluptuousness of Australian wines. Here in Greece, there are many fellow oenologists and winemakers who are doing an excellent job and, from time to time, I have been "jealous" of a number of their wines. These include the Nemea Reserve and the Mavrodaphne of Patras by the Parparoussis family and the Roussanne by the Manoussakis-Nostos winery, right here on the island. The most well-rounded wines I have ever tasted so far are the 2000 Château Haut-Brion Blanc, the 1996 Château Margaux and the lovely 1994 Kir-Yianni Ramnista.



EVAGGELIA MORAITI Sclavos Wines

Evaggelia Moraiti studied Oenology and Beverage Technology at the Technological Educational Institute (TEI) of Athens, and continued her studies at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (Viticulture-Oenology and Wine Retail). She also graduated as a sommelier from the Le Monde Institute of Hotel & Tourism Studies (2012). "I can still remember, when I was very little, climbing onto a wooden trailer and pressing Mouchtaro grapes at my grandmother's village in Thebes. I was utterly... 'possessed' by the spirit of Dionysus and that was it for me; there was nothing else I wanted to do with my life."

Vineyard or Winery?

That's a difficult question... Many people say that good wine is made in the vineyard, and I agree with the logic behind this. However, I'm convinced that it's about teamwork, too; each bunch of grapes is being handled by many pairs of hands – the energy transmitted to the grapes is tremendous and the power you can bestow on the final product yourself is no less magical. If wine can hear us and feel our presence, why shouldn't the same thing apply to the vineyard? So, once more, it all comes down to the fact that everything is intertwined and interrelated.

What are the difficulties and joys of your profession?

There's no such thing as an easy job, and mine is no exception, since a whole year's work basically depends upon two months of harvest, during which you have to fight against a number of things, above all the weather conditions. But when the brief and yet tremendous moment arrives, when you're about to open the wine you fought so hard to bottle, and you see the faces of the people around you aglow with excitement, for me this is possibly the only thing that keeps me going for another year full of pressure and difficulties.

From where do you draw the inspiration for your work?

What inspires someone is different from person to person. I haven't figured it out yet,

but I think it must be something very spontaneous; the more spontaneous it is, the better the result. When I open a bottle of wine that holds a little part of myself in it, only then do I understand why I have sacrificed all those summers. And the answer is invariably the same: in order to create. Wine itself is my sole inspiration.

Does it bother you that, in a way, you're the "unsung hero" behind well-known labels?

When I first started doing what I really love, I certainly wasn't thinking about becoming well known. It seems to me that we aren't recognized by the public at large for a very simple reason: we oenologists are a somewhat strange "species". Some of us strive for – and achieve – recognition, while others have a harder time promoting themselves. Take me, for example: I don't even have a Facebook account. I think I belong to the second category. Evriviadis Sclavos himself has a naturally shy disposition, yet he always makes us feel that wine isn't made by one person. So behind a bottle of wine there are many "unsung heroes," and I'm sure people are aware of that.

What would your dream wine (the ideal wine that you'd like to create) be like?

A dream wine in my opinion is a wine that would give prominence to a Greek grape variety. It should be a wine that, when opened by a group of people, a couple or whoever just wants to have a glass of wine, wouldn't perplex them, but instead would offer them beautiful moments and relax them. In other words, my dream wine would be as discreet as possible.

Which wine from one of your "competitors" have you been jealous of, in a good way?

To be perfectly honest, most wines that I like have made me feel jealous, but in a good way, of course. However, the one wine that has particularly caught my attention over the last couple of years is Robola Natural by Melissinos Winery, and this is because it gives me the impression that this is what a Robola wine must have actually tasted like back in the old days. Also, a dynamic Roditis by Tetramythos Winery makes me feel proud of this largely misunderstood wine.



LOUIZA DOUGOU Dougos Winery

Louiza Dougou studied Chemistry at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and, later on, Viticulture and Oenology at Trento and Udine, Italy. She has participated in two harvests in Italy: one in Sicily, at the Feudo Arancio Winery and one in Friuli, at the Borgo del Tiglio Winery. Since 2006, she has been working at the family winery alongside her brother Thanos, an agriculturist.

Vineyard or Winery?

The work can't be done by either an agriculturist or an oenologist on their own. The role of the agriculturist is essential, because basically

least for me: creating such a "living" product. Besides, this is the very need I was trying to satisfy for myself when I chose this profession: the need to create.

What would your dream wine (the ideal wine that you'd like to create) be like?

My dream wine would definitely come from indigenous red grape varieties. With each sip, you'd be able to recognize the region where the vines are rooted and the variety's "DNA". It would have a clean and, at the same time, complex nose of fruit, herbs and metal. Its mouth would be round, condensed and structured upon a sharp acidity, which wouldn't, however, be pretentiously overshadowed by a high alcohol percentage. It would be a wine that would be over the top and still be characterized by a simple harmony. Intellectually, you would approve of its solid technicality while, emotionally, you'd be moved and filled with impressions. Perhaps a Mandilaria wine, a Liatiko, a Mavrodaphne, a Xinomavro, a Limniona... Who knows?

Which wine from one of your "competitors" have you been jealous of, in a good way?

I'm jealous of the fruitiness of New Zealand wines, of the "air" and durability of Burgundy wines, of the Mediterranean warmth

the wine is “made” in the vineyard. You can’t create anything good out of poor-quality raw material! Having said that, it is then, of course, the oenologist’s turn to do things properly in the winery. His craft is most needed, and his mistakes are noticeable in a bad vintage!

From where do you draw the inspiration for your work?

I came to love wine at a very early age, because my father Dimitris was involved with vine nurseries, which gradually led him to become inextricably linked to wine. Later on, when I became actively involved with the family winery alongside my brother Thanos, I understood very well what it means to take something – a bunch of grapes – from scratch and to take all the way to the end – a bottle of wine! It’s a great feeling, to be having dinner at a restaurant and to notice that people at the next table are drinking a wine that you made, or to receive an e-mail from the other side of the world in which someone congratulates you for one of your wines he tasted the day before. I think that very few professions can offer you this kind of job satisfaction!

Does it bother you that, in a way, you’re the “unsung hero” behind well-known labels?

Not in the slightest, because I believe that an oenologist should express himself through his wines. It is through them that he comes into being. The important thing is that people like our work, and this is what we strive for.

What are the difficulties and joys of your profession?

The difficulties are many, since you never know what lies ahead... We depend upon one great imponderable, the weather, that always has plans of its own. You can never be sure of the toll it will take on the raw material you’ll have to work with! But this is ultimately what makes our profession so magical and so alluring. Each year is new and unique! The joys are always connected with accomplishing your principal goal: to produce a lovely outcome. If you manage to do this, the feeling is indescribable, and the satisfaction is immense.

What would your dream wine (the ideal wine that you’d like to create) be like?

I don’t think there’s such a thing as an ideal wine, but it’s true that our goal is to achieve an ever-higher quality each year and, as time goes by, you keep learning new things and you experiment. You yourself know that our profession is one that’s constantly evolving. Having said that, there’s no doubt that I have a soft spot for red wine. I’m a firm believer in the Greek varieties we are producing, Xinomavro, Mavrotragano and Limniona, and I would like for us as a winery to keep doing even better things in this direction.

Which wine, made by one of your “competitors,” have you been jealous of, in a good way?

There are many winemakers in Greece who are doing an excellent job. My soft spot, of course, as far as grape varieties are concerned, has always been Xinomavro,

so I would most likely be jealous of a great Xinomavro wine. I’m also very pleased when I see winemakers working to revive grape varieties that have been lost over time, because I believe that the future of Greek wine lies in its unique indigenous varieties.



PANAGIOTIS PANAGIOTOPOULOS Tetramythos Winery

To date, Panagiotis has participated in twenty-four harvests. He’s been in charge of setting up no less than eleven wineries, which means his experience is vast. For the past twenty years, he’s been collaborating with Tetramythos Winery. What’s more, he comes from a family with a long tradition in wine-making. He was born in Australia, and when his parents returned to Greece, they became involved with land cultivation. He studied oenology in Athens and the wineries where he’s worked include Ftelia, Katogi and Stofylia.

Vineyard or Winery?

These are the two strongest links of the six-part, cosmically intertwined chain, in which everyone contributes to creation.

Where do you draw inspiration from in your work?

My main source of inspiration is the memory of those moments when you finally get the gifts the vines have given you, after the fruit has gone through a production process (whether more or less challenging) during which you have been attentive to the slightest differentiations, having heard the call to prolong the existence of these fruits by providing them with



Evaggelia Moraiti, Lefteris Anagnostou, Louiza Dougou and Panagiotis Panagiotopoulos

a form of immortality. Beyond this, since I am blessed and lucky enough to be working in one of the most beautiful and historic vineyards of Greece, even the smallest observations of everyday life and those permutations that occur can serve as sources of inspiration.

What are the difficulties and joys of your profession?

The main difficulty is coping with the ever-increasing amount of paper work, which leaves very little time for creative work. Our often absolute devotion to our work can also cause various interpersonal tensions and create distance. In other words, most people have a hard time accepting the intensive working conditions required during harvest-time or the frequent need to work late nights and on weekends. The joys are many; above all, being involved with such a multidimensional product and enjoying the fruits of your creation (especially when we set aside tasting for a moment to actually start drinking).

What would your dream wine (the ideal wine that you’d like to create) be like?

I’m happy to say that I’ve already created it.

Which wine from one of your “competitors” have you been jealous of, in a good way?

The three wines (made by friends and companions) that have provided food for thought over the last decade by overturning our usual perception of wine and by carving new paths are Efranor, made by Evriviadis Sclavos and the lovely Evaggelia Moraiti; Metagitnion, created by the same people, that I actually finished drinking six months after I first opened it; and Assyrtiko de Mylos 2010, by Haridimos Hatzidakis. ●

GEOMETRIA

FROM GREEK INDIGENOUS VARIETIES
MALAGOUZIA - AGIORGITIKO - MOSCHOFILERO



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Fifty Shades of Pink

Text by Grigoris Kontos, Dip WSET

The rosé wines of Greece

The French use the term “vin d'effort” to describe an acceptable wine manufactured in the winery, often from lesser-quality grapes. In contrast, a “vin de terroir” is a wine made from excellent grapes and with minimal manipulation in the winery; the winemaker lets his vineyard express itself.

Most wine experts say rosé wine is a “vin d'effort,” seeing it largely as a by-product of the production of red wine, but is that, in fact, true? Well, yes and no. While many people see the production of rosé as a simple matter of crafting a wine by using the juice produced by the method known as “bleeding”, there is a fast-growing number of Greek winemakers who take rosé wine much more seriously. By experimenting

with maceration time and by using indigenous grapes and yeasts, alternative fermentation vessels, and vineyards planted exclusively for rosé wine, these producers have created wines that inspire and intrigue.

The effort is worth it. After all, Greek rosé is the ultimate summer wine and is the best match for the “ladera” (i.e., cooked in olive oil) family of dishes. Rosé wine always pairs perfectly with oven-baked ladera, including green beans in tomato sauce; tomatoes stuffed with rice; stuffed eggplants “imam”; and “briam” (oven-roasted vegetables). It's also excellent with a rich seafood pasta full of shrimp, mussels and other shellfish.

Let's see what determines the character of Greek rosé wine.

GRAPES USED

Dark-skinned grapes often give darker, fuller-bodied rosé wines, while light red or pink grapes result in a much lighter color. Greek rosé wine is made from both dark grapes (Agiorgitiko, Xinomavro, Limniona, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Grenache) and pink grapes (Moschofilero and Roditis). White grapes also play a blending role, offering their features to the wine.

Try → DARK GRAPES: 14-18h Gaia Wines (Agiorgitiko)
GREY/PINK GRAPES: Petite Fleur, Parparoussis (Sideritis)

MACERATION PERIOD

Works similar to tea maceration: long maceration produces a darker color, while a short maceration results in a lighter color. Of course, the color pigments of the variety itself play a vital role. Dark-skinned Syrah may only need four hours to give a much darker rosé wine than 36 hours of maceration for pink Moschofilero.

Try → SHORT MACERATION: Saumon, Domaine Harlaftis
LONGER MACERATION: Tomi Rosé, Troupis Wines

GRAPES EXCLUSIVELY CULTIVATED FOR ROSÉ

The best examples of rosé wine are made from grapes exclusively intended for rosé wine production. You can, of course, always take some juice from a warm-climate red (using the “bleeding” or “saignée” method) and add tartaric acid, but it just isn't the same, and it shows in the taste! The former wines are much finer and more subtle.

Try → Gris de Nuit, Ktima Tselepos (exclusively grown for rosé)

WEATHER CONDITIONS

The cooler the vineyard is, the lighter the wine will be (in alcohol content, body and more), and vice-versa.

Try → COOL CLIMATE ROSÉ: Akakies Rosé, Ktima Kir-Yianni
WARM CLIMATE ROSÉ: Lampadias, Ktima Merkouri

YIELDS

This is a factor that affects concentration. In general, lower yields (fewer grapes) give wines a more concentrated fruitiness with a longer aftertaste. Few producers keep their yields very low when it comes to rosé wine, but when they do, it certainly makes a difference!

Try → Biblinos Oenos Rosé, Ktima Biblia Chora

FERMENTATION VESSELS

Stainless steel tanks are the most common fermentation vessels used for making rosé. It is a particularly well-suited vessel, as it adds zero flavor of its own to the wine. However, some blending experts now use barrels and amphorae to add complexity to their cuvées.

Try → Peplo Rosé, Domaine Skouras
(Each variety in this blend is fermented in a different environment: the Agiorgitiko in acacia barrels, the Syrah in stainless steel tanks, the Moschofilero in egg-shaped amphorae.)

CO₂

In addition to regular (light) rosé, there are sparkling and semi-sparkling versions. Sparkling rosés will help your tartare or your ceviche show its full potential; it's worth checking them out.

Try → SPARKLING: Karanika Brut Rosé, Ktima Karanika
SEMI-SPARKLING: Rosato by Elena, Ktima Rapti

DRY VS SEMI-DRY/ SEMI-SWEET

If you're out for a drink and you like sugar, a semi-dry or semi-sweet rosé wine is fine. But otherwise, and especially when dining out, you'll find dry rosé a much better match for your food, unless, of course, you're eating Thai food!

Try → SEMI-DRY: Variete Rosé, Lalikos Vineyards
SEMI-SWEET: Deus Rosato, Cavino

AROMATIC VS LESS AROMATIC

The previous generation of Greek rosé wines were aroma-focused; the more they smelled of everything (including chewing gum, candy and red fruits), the better it was! For the past five years, however, Greek winemakers have taken a more sophisticated direction, producing serious esoteric textural rosés much more suited to food pairings than parties. Of course, that doesn't mean you can't party with a modern Greek rosé!

Try → AROMATIC ROSÉ: Amethystos Rosé, Costa Lazaridi
Textural Rosé: Idylle d'Achinos, La Tour Melas

After all, Greek rosé is the ultimate summer wine and is the best match for the “ladera” (i.e., cooked in olive oil) family of dishes.

WINE JOURNAL

Text by Grigoris Kontos, Dip WSET

"People don't remember days; they remember moments!"
Wines, restaurants, aromas, moments and ideas, all duly noted.



Last week, I visited the Zea Marina in Piraeus and, although it was only a half an hour's drive from home, it made me feel as if I were on vacation. I chose to have lunch at the very popular "Hams and Clams," a brightly lit cosmopolitan oyster bar with minimalist decor overlooking the yachts and luxury cruisers in the Marina. The large windows allow in ample sunlight and you only need a few oysters, some seabream tartare, a lovely plate of seafood pasta and a glass (or two) of Apla Rosé 2018 by Oenops Wines to feel that you're in paradise! For me, the Apla did the job: a lovely, pale, all-around rosé wine with aromas of red fruits, tomato paste and herbs, made from Xinomavro and Cabernet Sauvignon.

So you find mixing cocktails difficult. I understand. But here's an idea for your summer drinks: Otto Athens Vermouth! Besides the fact that Vermouth is very cool and back in fashion on a global scale, this refreshing and charming urban drink is ridiculously easy to prepare! The other day I just grabbed a highball glass and stirred Otto Athens Vermouth with tonic over ice and that was it; my drink had rose petals, citrus fruit, orange peel, a modest sweetness and an overall summery character. For the record, vermouth is an aromatized fortified wine infused with herbs and spices, and sweetened. Try it!

Malagousia - Assyrtiko is a popular Greek white wine blend, from two quite different but complementary varieties. The "Sirius" 2018 white from the Georgios Lafazanis winery is a perfect example. We opened a bottle for our eldest son's birthday and it charmed everyone; it was refreshing, food-friendly and vivid. Malagousia offers a tropical and herbaceous aromatic profile, while Assyrtiko offers texture, acidity and a mouthwatering lemony character.

The best Greek wine ever made. Is there such thing? I don't know. What I know is that Vinsanto 2002 by Estate Argyros – which Robert Parker scored 98/100 – is one of the most memorable and moving wine experiences someone can have. Seventeen years of ageing – twelve of them in old oak barrels – give the wine an alluring complexity: toffee, caramel, roasted almonds, coffee, crème patisserie, sky-high acidity and a never-ending finish! Pick your dessert very seriously before pairing it with this gem from the volcanic island of Santorini! Either chocolate or caramel-based sweets will offer serious amounts of pure pleasure.

Celebrating Greek Orthodox Easter is a big deal in Greece, both spiritually and gastronomically! We spent a few days on the beautiful island of Lefkada and paired our Easter lamb with a lovely Xinomavro: Naoussa Argatia 2014 is a modern version of the grape replete with forest fruits, raspberries, tomato paste and earthy notes, and with a very refreshing acidity that dries and refreshes the palate between fatty, meaty bites! The earthy aromas of the lamb suits the wine perfectly.

There's nothing more adventurous – and rewarding – than ageing white wines with potential. I had a bottle of Ovilos 2012 by Ktima Biblia Chora with a simple mushroom risotto and aged Graviera shavings from Naxos, and the result was stunning! After six years, this iconic Greek wine has reached its peak and offers a generous bouquet of aromas: honeycomb, quince, meat broth, truffles and minerality. ●

GIVING
emphasis
on what
matters most.

Emphasis. Assyrtiko



KTIMA PAVLIDIS

DRAMA GREECE



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Domaine Economou

Text by Grigoris Kontos, Dip WSET
Photography by Yiorgos Kaplanidis

Do you know what "unicorn wines" are? First of all, they have to be beautiful. You hear about them, but they're so rare you almost never experience them. Getting your hands on a unicorn wine is not so much about paying ridiculous amounts of money for a bottle, but more more about embarking on an adventure, an actual quest to find and taste the unexpected.



Are there any unicorn wines in Greece? Well, let me introduce you to Yiannis Economou.

Born in Crete, Yiannis Economou first studied agriculture in Milan and then specialized in oenology at Alba University in Piedmont. He has a solid winemaking background; he has worked for Ceretto Wines in Piedmont; in Baden, Germany; and for first-growth legend Châteaux Margaux in Bordeaux.

When, in 1994, he returned to Crete from Château Margaux, he planted vines with

American rootstock but, over the last few decades, he has completely abandoned those vineyards. Now he mainly sources grapes from phylloxera-free vineyards, many owned by his family. These vineyards are scattered over just seven hectares around Ziros, a village at an elevation of 650 m located in the municipality of Sitia in the easternmost part of Crete. The altitude keeps the temperature down; even though Ziros is a good deal south of Santorini, the grapes here are harvested at least 45 days later than those in Santorini vineyards. Speaking of Santorini, Assyrtiko is the only fully non-Cretan grape Economou uses. All other varieties are almost exclusively of Cretan origin: dark-skinned Liatiko and Mandilari, and white-skinned Vilana and Thrapsathiri.

It is interesting to note that, while Yiannis Economou has mastered all aspects of modern winemaking, he prefers to work similarly to his ancestors: he uses no commercial yeasts, and there isn't much technology involved in his production, either. His approach to winemaking is gentle and discreet, allowing his vineyards to express themselves in producing a distinct array of character-driven wines. Of course, the grapes he uses help make his life easier – he works with a large quantity of old vines (roughly 60-80 years old) yielding very small quantities of concentrated fruit. The sea fossils in the vineyard soil offer a nice mineral touch, while the high elevation provides the

wines with a nice acidity that gives a strong backbone to the wines.

And then there is... time. Yiannis Economou can wait. He is unbelievably patient. At the moment, he has the following vintages on the market: Sitia White 2013, Assyrtiko 2013, Rosé 2014, and Sitia Red 2006. His white wines are usually released three to five years after harvest – sometimes even longer – while the reds are released 8-12 years after harvest. There is no predetermined rule for the sequence of releases. The decision is made once the wine has been tasted; a more recent vintage could be released earlier than an older one, if the former feels ready. For the reds, the majority of the vessels used are 350-liter to 500-liter barrels, which are used a total of three times. After ageing, the wine is then racked back to the steel tanks for assemblage and blending.

If you want a dense, golden white wine with aromas of ripe stone fruits, dry nuts, honeycomb, earth and chestnut, a very textural palate and a long aftertaste, you should try Sitia White (a blend of Vilana and Thrapsathiri). I always go for wines with unique personalities, not ones that copy other wines, and if you feel the same way, you should give this one a try. The Sitia Red, on the other hand (made from the indigenous Cretan grape variety Liatiko, a local Sitia clone), is the flagship wine that gave Economou cult status. It's light in color, with a lovely earthy bouquet of herbs, a mixture of dried petals and spices (potpourri), leather and earthy notes. The wine is ethereal and powerful at the same time. The oak influence adds a very subtle touch, contributing mainly to the wine's texture. The long finish hints at the old vines from which the grapes were sourced.

As for production size, let me give you an idea of the numbers. Sitia White, Assyrtiko, Rosé and Sitia Sweet (the last two coming from Liatiko) yield about 170 cases each (12 bottles/9 liters). Sitia Red production falls somewhere between 840 and 1700 cases. So the overall production is under 30,000 bottles. That's few enough bottles for these to be considered unicorn wines, but still enough to supply his clients. Yiannis Economou is selling his wines mainly in the US and UK markets, to high-end accounts that cater to some of the world's most prestigious restaurants.

If Yiannis Economou was not crafting these wines, nobody would understand the unlimited potential of the terroir of Sitia in eastern Crete, where the weather's never too hot or too cold and where the use of sulfur powder is enough to protect the vineyards, so that no other chemicals need be employed. What's more, Sitia produces healthy grapes that allow for minimal human intervention in the process of winemaking. But perhaps the most important element of this terroir is Yiannis Economou himself. It's great to know there's someone doing everything their own way, everything differently, against the grain, especially since the results of his efforts are wines with personality, excellence and authenticity, displaying the winemaker's own sincere passion for the land it comes from... Crete! ●



*Smile,
it's strofilia*

STROFILIA ESTATE, SAVVATIANO

A Savvatio wine that brings out the Attica vineyard's potential and carries Saronic Gulf's breeze. Stamatia Antypa, Tassos Lakes, and Stelios Antonatos had their picture taken on Tuesday, February 19th, at Strofilia Winery in Anavyssos, by Dimitris Poupalos.



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White Wines

LANTIDES ESTATE
ERGO WHITE 2018
Varieties: Sauvignon Blanc
Region: Peloponnese

Lemon-green color and intense aromas of summer and exotic fruits such as pear, pineapple and lemon blossoms with notes of freshly cut grass. Freshness on the palate with moderate intensity, crisp acidity and lemony aftertaste.

€ 9.50



KARIPIDIS ESTATE
MAGDA 2017
Varieties: Assyrtiko
Region: Larissa

Bright, green-yellow color. On the nose discreet aromas of white flowers, citrus and lemon peel combined with a sense of minerality. It is a full-bodied wine with an extremely high and refreshing acidity and notes of citrus, stone and chalk dominating in its long aftertaste.

€ 26.00



PAVLIDIS ESTATE
EMPHASIS CHARDONNAY 2017
Varieties: Chardonnay
Region: Drama

Bright, golden color. Beautifully evolved nose with aromas of pineapple and mango on a palate of honey and delicate vanilla-like hints of the oak. Its mouth is round and generous, giving a feeling of sweetness, and it is balanced in acidity with a long freshness to the finish.

€ 16.70



ALPHA ESTATE
SAUVIGNON FUME 2017
Varieties: Sauvignon Blanc
Region: Amynteo

Attractive lemon color, delicate but complex nose, where scents of green apple, pineapple and white-fleshed peaches, basil and lukumi gradually unfold, as well as hints of tobacco and vanilla. Mouth with elegance, balance and good structure, topped with a juicy and fragrant aftertaste.

€ 16.80



ALPHA ESTATE
ROSÉ 2018
Varieties: Xinomavro
Region: Amynteo

A pale rosé, particularly fragrant on the nose, nearly sugary with lukumi and bubblegum starring up front, followed by discreetly fruity notes. Gently sweet mouthfeel, thick and relatively aromatic on the nose. Spicy and slightly bitter aftertaste.

€ 15.10



KIR-YIANNI ESTATE
L' ESPRIT DU LAC ROSÉ 2018
Varieties: Xinomavro
Region: Amynteo

L' Esprit du Lac or "the Spirit of the Lake" is the new rosé wine from Kir-Yianni. It captures the dynamic spirit of Xinomavro in an elegant, refreshing rosé. This seasonal wine has a light body, fresh acidity and peach and strawberry aromas.

€ 14.40



KIDONIS ESTATE
ANGELS WINGS ROSÉ 2018
Varieties: Malagousia, Syrah
Region: Peloponnese

"Angel's Wings", a pleasant cool wine, with a pale pink-salmon color from the blend of Syrah and Malagousia varieties. Aromatic notes of rose, wild strawberry, tropical fruits and spices, while in the mouth, a rich body (due to the Syrah) with unrivaled refreshing acidity, all in a an angelic rosé wine.

€ 11.30



MITRAVELAS ESTATE
NEMEA OLD VINEYARDS 2015
Varieties: Agiorgitiko
Region: Nemea, Peloponnese

The characteristics of the Agiorgitiko variety at its best. Deep, dark color with intense fruity nose of cherries, forest fruits and baked raisins in balance with the characters of vanilla, dried fruits and chocolate coming from the long ageing process in oak barrels. Very soft tannins provide a soft mouthfeel.

€ 34.20



PAVLIDIS ESTATE
EMPHASIS SYRAH 2015
Varieties: Syrah
Region: Drama

Deep purple in color, with violet sheens. The nose is dominated by an intense bouquet of fruity aromas (cherry and blackberry) and spicy (thyme, basil) and oaky (vanilla, coffee) characters. Full-bodied on the palate, with velvety tannins. A concentrated, lively, complex wine worth ageing.

€ 20.70



BOUTARI ESTATE
1879 BOUTARI LEGACY 2007
Varieties: Xinomavro
Region: Naoussa

Deep red color. Aromas of red berries, dried fig and tomato juice. Secondary aromas from intense ageing consist of vanilla, plum, roasted nuts and a hint of cigar box. Full bodied, with pleasant acidity. Very soft tannins provide a soft mouthfeel, rich in density with a long, warm finish with an aftertaste of cocoa and red fruit.

€ 26.10



GEROVASILEIOU ESTATE
MALAGOUSIA 2018
Varieties: Malagousia
Region: Epanomi, Thessaloniki

Malagousia is now the personification of the way Greek producers are rediscovering their roots. Evangelos Gerovasilliou is credited with its renaissance and the estate's Malagousia is a benchmark version, round, soft and supple, with ethereal floral and fruity aromas, coupled with oaky undertones.

€ 14.20



KARAMOLEGOS ESTATE
34 KARAMOLEGOS 2017
Varieties: Assyrtiko
Region: Santorini

Characteristic stony minerality in the nose followed by fruity (peach, pear) and herbal (tea, chamomile) hints. Rich mouthfeel and elegant at the same time. Its creamy texture makes an excellent balance with the bone-dry crispiness and the high acidity of the Assyrtiko. Full-bodied, concentrated wine with long salty aftertaste.

€ 23.40



T OINOS ESTATE
CLOS STEGASTA ASSYRTIKO 2017
Varieties: Assyrtiko
Region: Tinos Island, Cyclades

Harvest takes place only very early in the morning. Hand-picked grapes, pressed in a pneumatic press. Alcoholic fermentation with indigenous yeasts. Part of the grape must is fermented in stainless steel tanks. Intense floral nose along with subtle citrus notes. Balanced mouthfeel, while the palate is mineral and salty, with a savory, long aftertaste.

€ 47.70



OINOGENESIS ESTATE
FEGGITES 2018
Varieties: Sauvignon Blanc, Assyrtiko
Region: Drama

Bright golden yellow color, elegant and distinctive aromas of citrus, mango, pear and thyme. Fresh and refreshing acidity thanks to both varieties. Round mouthfeel with nice structure and aftertaste of moderate duration.

€ 10.40



Rosé Wines

LAZARIDIS ESTATE
ROSÉ 2018
Varieties: Merlot
Region: Drama

Delicious, pale salmon color in the style of Cotes de Provence wines. Nose full of floral aromas, with notes of citrus and freshly cut summer fruit. Full mouthfeel with quite good acidity that stimulates, rounded subtle sweetness and long, delicate aftertaste with spicy details.

€ 14.20



Red Wines

T OINOS ESTATE
CLOS STEGASTA MAVROTRAGANO
2016
Varieties: Mavrotragano
Region: Tinos Island, Kyklades

Whole bunch grapes are gently put in 3.5 ton open wooden vats. The wine is matured for 16 to 18 months in French oak barrels, 30% of which were new. Deep red color. Pepper, spice and dark cherries nose with oaky aromas. The mouthfeel is rich, complex and generous, with a long finish. Great ageing potential.

€ 85.00



T OINOS ESTATE
MAVRO 2012
Varieties: Mavrotragano, Avgoustiatis
Region: Tinos Island, Cyclades

Separate and successive picking of the grapes, partly destemmed and gently put in 3.5 ton open wooden vats. Fermentation with wild yeasts. The wine is matured for almost two years in French oak barrels. Violet, reglisse and pepper. Melting tannins on the mouth, well balanced with a long salty finish. Great ageing potential.

€ 39.60



MEGA SPILEO ESTATE
GRAND CAVE 2012
Varieties: Mavrodafni, Mavro Kalavritino
Region: Peloponnese

Deep red color with lively purple hues. Complex aroma of ripe fruits, white pepper, mature red fruits and leather with elegant wooden background. Dense yet balanced in the mouth, with smooth tannins and an acidity that allows further ageing. Long and pleasant finish.

€ 16.70



KARIPIDIS ESTATE
HYDRIA 2014
Varieties: Merlot
Region: Larissa

Deep red color with violet highlights and dense aromatic bouquet with hints of plum jam, currant, violet, chocolate and vanilla. Mouthfeel of high-density flavors, greasiness, rich structure, robust body and a great finish.

€ 13.00



THYMIPOULOS ESTATE
EARTH & SKY 2017
Varieties: Xinomavro
Region: Naoussa

It has a dark red color, with orange highlights. The classic aromas of the variety are present, with the tomato and forest fruits starring and wood, spices and vanilla in the background. It has an explosive mouth with strong but rounded tannins and the ideal acidity in a really long aftertaste.

€ 19.80



A

Agiorgitiko

Agiorgitiko is the most widely planted red wine grape in Greece. It originates from the PDO Nemea zone, which enjoys a typical, warm Mediterranean climate. The variety produces supple and versatile red and rosé wines with sweet fruit/sweet spice aromas, a round palate and velvety tannins. Agiorgitiko is now widely cultivated in other places, notably in Kavala and Drama in northern Greece.

Assyrtiko

Santorini's signature white grape variety, Assyrtiko is rapidly gaining worldwide recognition. It produces wines of medium aromatic intensity but with strong minerality that is characteristic of the island's wines, and it has great ageing potential.

C

Canava

The name of the traditional winery or wine cellar in the local dialect of Santorini. A canava is usually a rock-hewn, underground space or a structure protected by nearby buildings.

D

Dionysus

Dionysus was the god of wine, celebration and fertility in ancient Greece. He taught his followers to be free from fears brought on by self-consciousness and to celebrate life with wine, music and dance. Symbols related to Dionysus include the grapevine, the drinking cup and, on occasion, ivy. A son of Zeus and Semele, Dionysus lived on Mt Olympus with the other gods. His Roman name was Bacchus.

K

Kouloura

This term describes the traditional way of training Santorini's vines into a basket-like shape in order to protect them from the strong winds and the high summer temperatures.

M

Mavrotragano

A very rare red variety from Santorini that was, until recently, at risk of extinction. This variety combines dense red fruit with roasted coffee and smoke, robust tannins and a rich and mineral mouth.

N

Nychteri

Santorini's traditional wine, made from a blend of Assyrtiko, Athiri and Aidani. Grapes destined for Nychteri were pressed during the night after the harvest, to protect the juice from the heat of the day. Its name is derived from the Greek word "nychta," which means "night."

R

Rapsani

Important PDO region on the foothills of Mount Olympus, the home of the gods in Greek mythology. The wine produced here is a red blend of Xinomavro, Krasato and –less importantly– Stavroto that is dense, earthy and nicely structured, at an altitude of 250-750m above sea level. Usually this is a more round and approachable version of Xinomavro, compared to Naoussa and Amyntaio.

V

Vinsanto

Santorini's sweet wine, made predominantly of Assyrtiko, with Aidani and Athiri also participating in the blend. It's made from late-harvest grapes which are left to dry in the sun for 12-14 days. It ferments and then ages for at least 24 months in oak barrels.

CAVA ANTHIDIS 76 Kifissias Ave., Marousi / 45 Pat. Ioakeim St., Kolonaki / 77 Gr. Lambraki Ave., Glyfada • CAVA CELLIER 1D Kriezotou St., Athens / 369 Kifissias Ave., Kifissia / 320 Syngrou Ave, Kallithea • CAVA DROSIA 3 Stamatas-Drosias Ave., Drosia • CAVA EIGHTEENSCREEN Tzavella 88, Piraeus • CAVA FAIDON 28 Agiou Ioannou St., Voula / 4 Skippi St., Kallithea • CAVA HOUSE OF WINE 40 Ethnikis Antistaseos St., Chalandri • CAVA KRASOPOULIO 11 Dimokratias Ave., Melissia • CAVA KYLIX 20 Karneadou St., Kolonaki • CAVA MR. VERTIGO 15 Filikis Eterias Sq., Kolonaki • CAVA OAK 282 Kifissias Ave., Chalandri • CAVA STAFILINA 18 Aigaiou St., N. Smyrni • CAVA VEGERA 61 Vas. Pavlou & Poseidonos St., Voula • CAVA VINIFERA 317B Kifissias Ave., Kifissia • ACROPOLIS HILL HOTEL 7 Mousson St., Athens • ARION HOTEL 18 Ag. Dimitriou St., Psiri • ATHENS WAS HOTEL 5 Dionysiou Areopagitou St., Athens • HOTEL GRANDE BRETAGNE 1 Vas. Georgiou I, Syntagma • ATHENS HILTON 46 Vas. Sophias Ave., Athens • MELIA HOTEL 14 Halkokondili St., Athens • NEW HOTEL 16 Filellinon, Athens • 48 URBAN GARDEN RESTAURANT 48 Armatolon & Klefton St., Ambelokipi • 8 LE BISTRO WINE BAR 8 Frinis St., Ilioupoli • ANCIENT GREEK SANDALS STORE 1 Kolokotroni St., Athens • BOTILIA 235 C2 Lykourgou St., Kallithea • BY THE GLASS WINE BAR 3 Souris St. & Philellinon, Syntagma • CANAL CAFE Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center, 6 Evripidou St., Kallithea • CHEFI RESTAURANT 31 Perikleous St., Chalandri • CODICE BLU RESTAURANT Hari-

tos & Loukianou, Kolonaki • COOKOOVAYA RESTAURANT 2 Hatz. Mexi, Athens • CULPA DELI 1 Solomou St., N. Psychiko • DRY BISTRO 5 Koumbari St., Kolonaki • FABRICA DE VINO Wine Bar 3 Em. Benaki, Exarchia • GASPAR BAR RESTAURANT Dim. Vasileiou Ave. & Lukourgou, Pharos Psychiko • GREECE AND GRAPES 20 Lykourgou St., Kallithea • HETEROCLITO WINE BAR 30 Petraki St., Syntagma • IT RESTAURANT 29 Skoufa St., Kolonaki • JONA'S WINE BAR 31 C. Vournazou St., Athens • K2DESIGN 34 Veranzerou St., Athens • KEDROS BOOKSTORE 3 G. Genadiou St., Athens • KOKOTOS ESTATE WINERY Stamata Attiki • KIKI DE GRÈCE WINE BAR 38 Voulis & 1 Ipitou, Syntagma • L'AUDRION WINE BAR Filomoussou Sq., & 3 Farmaki St., Plaka • LAFAZANIS WINERY 89 Afon Kypraiou, Eleysina • CHATEAU LAZARIDIS Kapandriti Attiki • LITHOINON PRIVATE 16 122 Saronidas Av. Saronida • MONK GRAPES AND SPIRITS WINE BAR 4 Karori St., Athens • OINOSCENT WINE BAR 45 Voulis St., Syntagma • PALEO RESTAURANT 39 Polidefkous St., Piraeus • LOLLO'S ATENE PIZZA 3A Ethn. Antistaseos Av., Chalandri • MARMITA RESTAURANT 30 Eth. Antistaseos St., Skiathos • MATERIA PRIMA WINE BAR 68 Falirou St., Koukaki • MATSUHISA ATHENS SUSHI 40 Apollonos, Astir Palace, Vouliagmeni • MONO WINE RESTAURANT 4 Benizelou Palaiologou St., Athens • MUSEUM OF CYCLADIC ART 4 N. Douka St., Kolonaki • BENAKI MUSEUM 1 Koubari St., Kolonaki / 138 Piraeus Ave., Gazi • NOEL WINE BAR 59B Kolokotroni St., Stoa Kourtaki • NO-

RA'S DELI 11 Anagnostopoulou St., Kolonaki • PANDASIA DELI 41 Ag. Ioannou St., Ag. Paraskevi • DOMAINE PAPAGI-ANNAKOS WINERY Pousi-Kalogeri, Markopoulo • POEMS N' CRIMES WINE BAR 17 Ag. Eirinis St., Athens • SCALA VINOTECA 50 Sina Str. Kolonaki • SCENARIO WINE BAR 1 Maronias St., Komotini • SPONDI RESTAURANT 5 Pirronos, Pagrati • STALATI RESTAURANT 363 Syngrou Ave., Faliro • THA SE KANO VASILISSA RESTAURANT 13 Veroias St., Athens • CAFE TAZZA D' ORO WINE BAR 9 Pentelis Ave., Syntagma • VAROULKO SEASIDE 52 Akti Koumoundourou, Piraeus • VASSILAINAS RESTAURANT 13 Vrasida St., Athens • VILLA GRIZIO 46 Ag. Alexandrou Palaio Faliro • VINS OENOTOURISM 20 Ithakis, Pallini • VINTAGE WINE BAR 66 Mitropoleos St., Syntagma • WAREHOUSE WINE BAR Mavromichali & Valtetsiou St., Exarchia • WINE UP WINE BAR 86 El. Venizelou St., Petroupoli • WINEPOINT WINE BAR 2 Porinou & Ath. Diakou St., Acropoli • WSPC ACADEMY 11 Glaukou St., Palaio Faliro • YOLENII'S CAFE 9 Solonos St., Athens • ZOUMBOULAKIS GALLERIES 20 Kolonaki Sq., Athens

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