

#22 • Summer 2021 • Free Press • A Magazine About Wine

grape



Wine Stories

MERLOT - CHARDONNAY - CABERNET SAUVIGNON

PYLÓS

The Art of Terroir



NESTOR

www.nestorwines.gr



CONTENTS

A FREE PRESS MAGAZINE

PUBLISHING AND DISTRIBUTION,
PKATSATOU & Co Grand Cru
6 Vas. Georgiou II Street
15452 Psychiko
T: (+30) 215 555 4430
E: info@grapemag.gr

PUBLISHER
Penelope Katsatou

EDITOR IN CHIEF
Thalia Kartali

PUBLISHING CONSULTANT
WSPC

COMMUNICATIONS
Regina Maselou
Aris Gertsos

COVER DESIGN
Yiannis Kouroudis
(k2design)

GRAPHIC DESIGN
Yiannis Kondilis
(k2design)

PHOTOGRAPHER
Yiorgos Kaplanidis
(This is Not Another Agency)

ASSISTANT PHOTOGRAPHER
Katerina Goritsa

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Konstantinos Lazarakis, MW
Grigoris Kontos, Dip WSET
Grigoris Michailos, Dip WSET
Yiannis Kaimenakis, Sommelier
Yiannis Pappas, General Manager Mr Vertigo
George Velissario, Co-owner grapeescape.gr

TRANSLATIONS
Danae Athanasopoulou
Phaedra Gavouneli

COPY EDITOR
Don Domonkos

PRINTING AND BINDING
Niki Ekdotiki S.A.

📍 Grape wine stories
@grape_wine_stories

© All rights reserved

grapemag.gr

6 TABOO

Konstantinos Lazarakis, MW, asks and answers some interesting questions: “Can Greek wine ever be fine wine? Are we sure that Greek wine isn't already fine wine? What is fine wine, anyway? And is it something that we should care about, or even like?”

8 CRETE

Traveling across the Crete on a winery-hopping trip can be quite an experience. This large island holds many surprises for anyone who sets out to discover its wines.

20 INTERVIEW

“I love white dry wines that are not fruity, My favorite Greek dish would be spanakorizo” reveals Victoria Hislop in an interview under an olive tree overlooking the vines at Fantaxometochos Estate.

24 KEFALONIA

Giannis Pappas and his friends set out on a road trip across Kefalonia, discovering its lovely wines and its wonderful people.

28 NAOUSSA

Wandering through vineyards in the land of Xinomavro with Grigoris Michailos Dip WSET.

32 PRODUCER'S VIEW

Stellios Boutaris, one of the most well known wine producers of northern Greece, shares his views on the future of Greek wine making.

34 WINE TRAVELER

George Velissarios, co-owner of Grape Escape.gr, talks about what he knows best, Greek wine tourism and its future.

36 GRAPE STORY

An introduction to Greece's main wine producers and Greek varieties.

42 INTERVIEW

Robert McCabe, the noted American photographer who, traveling through Greece in the '50s, captured landscapes and people, talks about a way of life that is slowly vanishing.

46 SANTORINI

Yiannis Kaimenakis, wine sommelier, writes about Santorini's extraordinary terroir.

48 INTERVIEW

Matthew Argyros, one of Santorini's most ambitious winemakers, reveals the secrets behind his award-winning wines and talks about the future of winemaking on the famous island.

54 NEMEA

Gregory Kontos, DipWSET, takes us through Nemea, one of Greece's most famous wine-producing areas.

56 ACHAIA AND ILIA

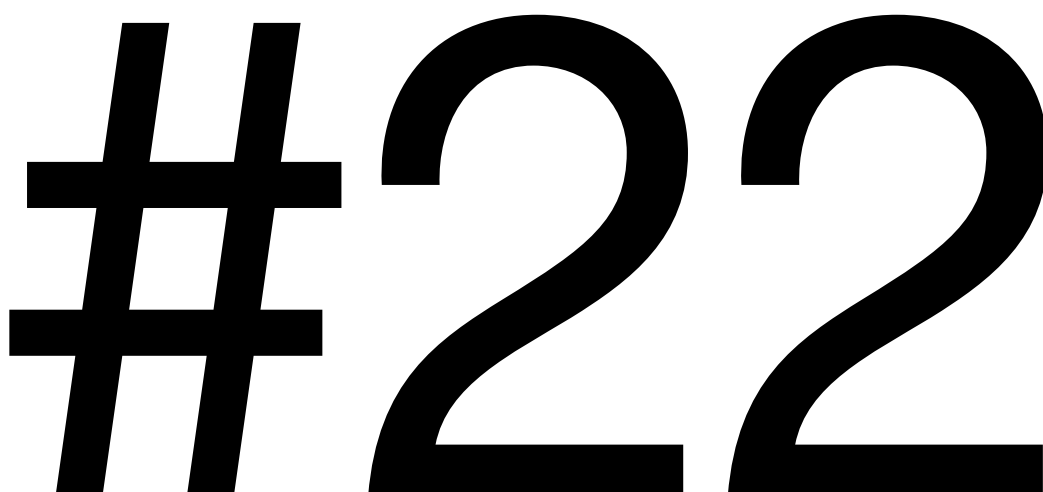
An introduction to a region where good wine has a millennia-long history.

60 INTERVIEW

Austrian winemakers Barbara Gruber and Jörg Salchenegger, owners of Lacules Estate, came to Greece on vacation and ended up with an estate in Messinia in the Peloponnese.

62 INTERVIEW

Chef Lefteris Lazarou of Michelin-starred Varoulko shares with us his love for his work and for Piraeus.



EDITORIAL

As we boarded the plane (fully vaccinated), it was as if the gloom of this past year had disappeared all of a sudden and, in its place, a huge smile in anticipation of what was to come formed on our faces.

Endless zoom hours, phone calls, and masks during the few meetings with our co-workers are finally becoming a thing of the past, and it's time to meet people face to face again, shake their hands, sit with them around a table and share their stories.

As soon as we set foot on Crete, we took back that part of our lives that had been violently stolen from us by the isolation of recent months. But, above all, we took back that part of our work that we love most: our contact with the protagonists of the stories that we write about in Grape.

Choosing Crete as the starting point of our trip around Greece was not accidental, and our choice compensated us in the best way. It was wild, beautiful, proud, and with amazing variety, but above all it was hospitable. The issue you're holding in your hands is a roadmap of the important wine-producing regions of our country. We have tried to pick out the best Greek wines, to enlighten those who will visit Greece this summer and to remind us locals of the treasures that we hide.

Crete, Santorini, Nemea, Achaia, Ilia, Kefalonia and Naoussa are all here, as seen through the eyes of the contributors of the magazine. In the following pages, we introduce to you different wine production zones, climate, varieties, people and, above all, their stories.

Victoria Hislop, the famous British writer who has fallen in love with Greece and spends much of her time in this country, writes about her day in Fantaxometochi Estate, while sharing with us her experiences of living in Greece and the reasons why she's been inspired to write so many books about this country. A few years before Victoria Hislop first visited Greece, American photographer Robert McCabe was setting foot in Athens back in the '50s for the first time, beginning what was to become a lifetime love affair with the landscapes of the Aegean islands and mainland Greece. Both have become honorary citizens of this country, in recognition of their contribution in promoting Greek culture, and both adore enjoying a glass of Assyrtiko.

Konstantinos Lazarakis, MW, in his popular column Taboo, answers the questions: "Can Greek wine ever be fine wine? Are we sure that Greek wine isn't already fine wine? What is fine wine, anyway? And is it something that we should care about, or even like?"

An award-winning and experienced Greek wine producer, Matthew Argyros, and a Michelin-starred chef Lefteris Lazarou share with us their love for their work and for Greece.

So do other distinguished contributors. "There is no product that encompasses the Greek way of life better than Greek wine does! Greek wine is the one and only product that transcends time, linking the Greece of antiquity to that of today, somehow representing everything that modern Greek society is, as well as what it once was", says Stelios Boutaris, one of the best known wine producers of the country. George Velissarios, co-owner of Grape Escape.gr, talks about what he knows best, Greek wine tourism and its future, and Nick Loukakis Senior Lecturer WSPC unlocks the secrets of the ideal combinations between Greek sweet wines and desserts.

Gregory Kontos Dip WSET, decodes the most important Greek varieties, which he describes in detail, making it easier to understand and appreciate them, while all the wine-producing areas and main wineries of Greece can be found on the brilliant map that our illustrator Filipos Avramidis designed for this issue.

All you have to do – in case you don't have room for the whole magazine in your bag, what with all your summer essentials – is to cut and keep the middle pages, for your vacation reading in the country that is famous for having the most beautiful summer in the world.

Stin Igia mas! Cheers!





BUSINESS
SOLUTIONS

PIRAEUS
TOURISM 360°



PIRAEUS TOURISM 360°

Your business success is our case too.

With **PIRAEUS TOURISM 360°** we contribute to the success of your business, by offering you a complete proposal of products and services. Benefit from the preferential terms of the package on contemporary solutions for:

- your liquidity and transactions daily management
- financial tools
- reward through the yellow business Rewards Program

Visit a Piraeus Bank branch to consult our specialized partner.

www.piraeusbank.gr

PIRAEUS BANK



EMBRACING TOMORROW

CAN GREEK WINE EVER BE FINE WINE?

TEXT

Konstantinos Lazarakis MW

Are we sure that Greek wine isn't already fine wine? What is fine wine, anyway? And is it something that we should care about, or even like?

The very concept of "fine wine" might be an oxymoron in the minds of many. Wine is, after all, an agricultural product and a staple of nutrition in quite a few countries. So, a natural assumption might be to think of wine as just a commodity. However, wine hits world markets in a vast number of guises, with wildly different qualities and at widely varying prices. Although there are other products "born of the land" that can command crazy prices, such as truffles, speciality coffees, rare teas or, indeed, beef, fine wine has a gravitas and an abundance of cultural implications that make it unique.

Any attempt to define fineness in wine will, sooner or later, stumble onto the thorny question of "How much?" Areni, one of the most important think tanks in the world of wine, defines fine wine initially by price. In a recent study, they used a three-tier system. The first tier of fine wines is for wines that retail between roughly €55 and €330; the second tier goes from €330 to €1000; and the final segment is for wines that retail above €1000. If this is all that's needed to spot a fine wine, then Greek wine is largely out of contention: less than fifty labels from our country belong to the first tier and possibly none to the tiers above. But the idea that the selling price alone is enough to make a wine fine is a dangerous concept, one that pushes winemakers to price their products higher just to jump on the "fine wine" bandwagon.

There is a serious distinction here that we must address – "fineness" and "pricy-ness" are two dissimilar, only slightly overlapping, concepts. High quality, because this is the real issue here, is all you need in my book to call a wine "fine." High price, on the other hand, is the result of a very complex equation with a myriad of variables, from history to rarity and from market trends to producers' illusions of grandeur. I'm not going to say that "Cheap wine can taste as good as that €100 bottle," or "Expensive wine exists only because insecurity does as well." There are usually many reasons behind the success of a wine, and high quality must play a role. But, flip that around and you'll see that a lot of fine wines haven't, in fact, cashed in on their superior quality.

Over the last two decades, the concept of fine wine has become embellished with other, more nuanced notions. The aromas, the complexity, the balance and the persistence remain in the picture, but there is so much more in a wine. Things like character, individuality or suitability to match with food are increasingly viewed as equally significant. Other qualities are lessening in importance, like ageing ability – after all, who has the cellar space, the money and the patience to enjoy a 30-year-old wine, and why should we even bother?

Additional aspects, totally unrelated to taste, are slowly becoming parts of the fine wine canvas, too. Sustainability, environmentally responsible methods of vine growing or winemaking, the importance of wine production in the local community, and many other factors and ethical considerations are taking center stage. If wine is a vital part of the social fabric, then any endeavour to understand or define its quality must be holistic, going far beyond what is in the glass.

This is the splendour of Greek wine. Greece produces wines that, by any measure, have the taste, the balance, the purity, the personality and the sophistication to excite anyone, from the occasional wine drinker to the wine connoisseur. For millennia, these wines have been created to complement food, no matter what is on your plate. The many different, usually rare, indigenous grape varieties have been sculpted by our climates, our people, our traditions, our philosophies and our lifestyles, and these varieties are turned into wines that are truly unique. There are very few things, if any, with the same power as Greek wine to reach you wherever you are and deliver such a detailed portrayal of what Greece is all about.

And, yes, you can have it all in your glass. Greek history, geography, culture, anthropology and more, just a sip away.

I think I'm thirsty... ●

TABOO



why(ne)

Κάθε διαφορετικός άνθρωπος τίθεται αντιμέτωπος με πολλά κοινωνικά «γιατί» κατά τη διάρκεια της ζωής του που τον περιορίζουν στο να ζει όπως πραγματικά θέλει. Και πάντα η απάντηση σε κάθε «γιατί» είναι η «αχατέτη».



CRETE

Traveling across the island of Crete on a winery-hopping trip can be quite an experience. This large island, better known for its beautiful beaches rather than its wine, holds a lot of surprises for anyone who sets out to discover its wines. Cretan viniculture, with its long history, has undergone tremendous improvement in quality over the last years, and now offers some of the most amazing styles of wine one can find, made from indigenous varieties only found on this island. Our trip started in Hania and ended in Irakleio, with a stop in southern Rethymno where we visited some of the oldest vineyards on the island and found out just how challenging viticulture can be on the steep slopes of the Cretan mountains.

Eastern Crete IRAKLEIO

The City

Irakleio, Crete's biggest city, boasts a multicultural past as Byzantine churches stand next to Venetian mansions and Turkish fountains; it also has a thriving present, with many restaurants, coffee shops and bars.

Archaeological Museum

It's one of the greatest museums in Greece and the best in the world for Minoan art, home to the most notable and complete collection of artifacts of the Minoan civilization of Crete.

Historical Museum of Crete

This museum covers the art and history of Crete from the 4th century AD up to and

including the Second World War. The collections include two paintings by Doménikos Theotokópoulos (El Greco), born in Crete.

The Palace of Knossos

The largest Bronze Age archaeological site on Crete, Knossos is considered Europe's oldest city. The Minoan palace is the main site of interest.

The Natural History Museum of Crete

This great museum highlights the diverse flora and fauna of the Eastern Mediterranean.

Western Crete HANIA

Archaeological Museum

The museum contains a substantial collection of

Minoan and Roman artifacts excavated from around the city of Hania. Its exhibit items include model ships, nautical instruments, paintings, historical photographs and war relics, as well as other objects covering the period from the Bronze Age to the present.

WINE & FOOD

Best local food / Ingredients

Olive oil • Tomatoes • Artichokes • Wild onion bulbs • Herbs (wild sage, oregano, thyme, parsley, marjoram and more) • Snails • Wild hare • Goat meat • Pork meat • Local cheeses: graviera, anthotiros (mild and soft), kefalotiri, mizithra (fresh cheese made from sheep's milk) • Dolmas: stuffed vine leaves with rice • Dakos: rusks topped with grated tomato, olive oil, cheese and oregano • Candied fruit • Kaltsounia (local sweet

cheese pies) • Loukoumades (fried donuts topped with honey, cinnamon and dry nuts)

ACTIVITIES

Swimming

Enjoy world-class beaches: Falassarna Beach, Balos Beach and Lagoon, Elafonissi Beach, Seitan Limania Beach and Agii Apostoli Beach.

Samaria Gorge National Park

A World Biosphere Reserve, this gorge in southwest Crete is 16 km long and is a major tourist attraction of the island.

Beneath a bright sky, the grapes were swelling. Huge bunches of fruit peeked out from behind dense foliage, the leaves shining, unblemished, profuse. It was mid-June, the sun was warm, the slopes fell gently away and graceful rows of well-tended vines stretched into the distance.

It was an image of the earth at its most fecund. Along with the elegant, modernist building where the production process and tastings take place, the aesthetics of the Fantaxometochos Estate in Crete were exceptionally beautiful. I stayed the night in a luxurious suite converted from an old building which used to house the grape-pickers. It is situated in the middle of the vineyard, far from the noise of cars and planes, and I woke up to the music of birdsong. After such a peaceful night's sleep, I was full of energy and ready for the tour that the owner, Marina Boutari, was going to give me. Her enthusiasm and knowledge of every aspect of her family's wine business was thrilling in itself. There is nothing more exhilarating than to be with someone who pours so much of themselves into what they do, and, as I was to discover, this dedication is manifested in the end result. I admitted to being an enthusiastic consumer, but also to the fact that this was my very first visit to a winery.

The vineyard itself is managed by Nikos Kostantakis, who seemed to know every plant and every leaf in his care. Each decision, even whether to pluck a leaf now or later, plays a role in either protecting the grapes or exposing them to the sun. He even showed me the bunches that would be discarded to allow others to thrive. Nikos, who took over from his father in 2019, seemed to have an instinct for this work running through his veins. I pictured him as a child, following his father up and down the rows of plants, watching and learning. Later this year, when he sees that the moment is right, every bunch will be hand-picked under his care.

I have always enjoyed the taste of a good wine, but knew nothing of how the vines are tended, how grape varieties differ, which grows best and where, how they are blended, or how the fermentation process is controlled and managed. As every reader of "Grape" probably already knows, it is not just a science, it's an art too, with each stage as finely tuned as a concert piano.



Victoria Hislop at the impressive Boutari Winery at Scalani.

Of course, there was a tasting. We tried three different whites, three different reds and a dessert wine. Why do some have tastes that linger more than others? Why are some wines lighter in alcohol than others? Why do their hues vary? Why do some age better than others? Even the source of the barrels and the type of oak with which they are constructed can make a subtle difference to the end result. It was fascinating! I fearlessly asked questions, but regretfully spat out each mouthful (it seemed so rude! Such a waste!). That day, I saw how the creation of good wine is so much more than a carefully planned chemical process. Of course, there are specific stages to follow and steps to be taken, but the main ingredient in this Boutari winery was a human one.

From now on, when I open a bottle for friends, I will do it with reverence, I will pour it with more care, I will inhale its fragrance, and let it linger on my tongue. Most importantly, I will appreciate not just the science but also the magical ingredient – the love that comes from the people who have made it. ●

MY DAY AT FANTAXOMETOCHO ESTATE BY VICTORIA HISLOP



"As food and wine pairing goes

*invite someone that you really love over,
and I am sure it will be the perfect match!"*

Konstantinos Lazarakis, MW & Greece's Ambassador of Wine abroad



FÖRNUFT
Μαχαιροπίρουνα,
σύνολο 24 τεμ.

14,99€

Ζούμε μαζί





Enjoying local delicacies at the Manousakis winery.

This beautiful estate, situated in Vatolakos, about 15km from the city of Hania, owes its existence to the vision of one man. Born in 1943 in a house that still exists on the estate, Theodoros Manousakis emigrated to the United States at the age of 11 to escape the dire economic situation at home.

MANOUSAKIS WINERY

As a young immigrant, he built a new life but never forgot his homeland, the desire to come back always burning in his heart. A successful businessman and a well traveled individual, Manousakis set out to produce great wines from his home soil. He began by buying a few plots of land and, with the help of experts, decided to plant four Rhone Valley varieties: Syrah, Grenache, Mourvedre and Rousane. Soon the vineyard was expanded to include Greek varieties; Vidiano, Assyrtiko, Romeiko are now all vinified under the guidance of the estate's chief oenologist, Kostas Galanis. Meanwhile, the management of the winery passed into the hands of Manousakis' daughter Alexandra and her husband Afsin Molavi, a sommelier who also owns Salis, an award-winning restaurant in Hania with an impressive wine list.

The winery itself boasts modern production facilities surrounded by beautiful gardens, and orange and lemon groves. It is open to visitors who can also enjoy selected Cretan specialties, chosen to pair perfectly with the wines offered at the wine tasting. The total production is about 120,000 bottles, a large percentage of which is exported mainly to the United States. The most recent addition to the estate's labels is "Hartman Molavi," a sparkling wine from Xinomavro and Romeiko made using traditional methods. It's the result of cooperation between Afsin Molavi and Laurens Hartman, a ground-breaking producer from the north of Greece.

The estate's other labels include five white varietals, Nostos Roussane, Nostos Vidiano, Nostos Muscat of Spina, Nostos Assyrtiko and Nostos Romeiko. The reds include two varietals, Nostos Syrah and Nostos Mourvedre, and two blends, Nostos Alexandra's and Nostos Blend.

We had the pleasure of trying all of them, while enjoying a lovely lunch which included some wonderful local specialties.



ASSYRTIKO AGIORGITIKO

As you have
never tasted
before.

ASSYRTIKO by GAIA - AGIORGITIKO by GAIA

Exploring the limits of their varieties.

DOURAKIS WINERY

Our next stop was Dourakis Winery, in Alikampos. Antonis Dourakis welcomed us with a broad smile on his face, happy to see visitors from Athens after a long period of solitude due to the lockdown.

Settling in around the long wooden table in the winery's well-tended garden, we couldn't help noticing a few tourists who'd already arrived, eager to try the estate's wines. The estate was one of the first ones in the region of Hania to open its doors to visitors and offer wine-tasting sessions and, as Dourakis explained, the plan is to open a kitchen that will prepare traditional Cretan dishes to accompany the wine tastings.

The estate was established in 1988 by Dourakis' father, who had studied oenology in Stuttgart. The first label produced was "Logari," which slowly came to be known at local restaurants and hotels during a period when the dominant trend was to serve wine in bulk, i.e., by the carafe. The elder Dourakis made the decision to invest in the winery, buying equipment and building an elegant building based on traditional architecture. "If it doesn't work out, we can always turn it into a nightclub," he used to joke. Things did work out, however, and the estate now produces 17 different labels, most of them from local varieties. "Within our five-year plan, we intend to grow our vineyard by adding nine new fields," says Antonis Dourakis. The varieties being grown at the estate are a mix of local and international varieties, with an emphasis on the local ones: Vidiano, Malvasia, Kotsifali, Mandilari, and Romeiko, an indigenous variety from the region of Hania which many winemakers find attractive.

The estate produces about 250,000 bottles a year in total volume, 10% of which are being exported, while the rest are released to the local market. As is the case for most winemakers in Greece and worldwide, the pandemic has had a big impact on sales, but Dourakis remains optimistic: "Luckily now that things are opening up again, people have no qualms when visiting our winery to spend a bit more on a bottle of wine; in a way, they are making up for lost time by choosing slightly more pricey but higher quality wines."

Wine Tasting Lychnos Vidiano 2018
Lychnos Vidiano 2016
Kudos Malvasia 2019
Apus Blanc de Noir, from the Romeiko variety
Kudos Syrah 2018
Euphoria, a sweet dessert wine from sun-dried Romeiko grapes

KARAVITAKIS WINERY

Driving across the region of Hania, on the other side of the city of Hania we reached Karavitakis Winery.

We were welcomed by Nikos Karavitakis, a fourth-generation winemaker and an energetic young man who skillfully managed to be engaged in different tasks while still talking to us and tending to the needs of the winery's visitors; on that particular day, they seemed to be flooding in. Karavitakis's great-grandfather was the family's first winemaker, although the estate was established by his father who, upon returning from his studies in Italy, became manager of the local cooperative while also caring for the family's vineyards. Most of the vineyards in the area had been destroyed by phylloxera and the local people had turned to the cultivation of olive groves. Influenced by his studies in Italy, the elder Karavitakis started planting international varieties like Syrah, Grenache and Carignan, but quickly turned his attention to the indigenous varieties, which today make up 85% of the cultivation.

"The estate's philosophy, especially in the past 11 years since I started working here, is to showcase the potential of our indigenous varieties, using them in blends with international varieties but also making good quality varietal wines", explains Karavitakis, who believes in a more modern approach to winemaking with less barrel, more expression of the fruit and lower alcohol levels. According to him, the two indigenous varieties that can stand alone and make it to the international markets are Vidiano for whites and Liatiko for reds. "Vidiano is a strong variety that can have many different expressions; it can make everything from fresh everyday wines to dynamic aged ones. Contrary to what many believe, it is not an aromatic variety," he says. "As far as Liatiko is concerned, we choose to approach it more as a Pinot Noir, producing a fresher, more New World, fruitier style with minimal barrel in comparison to the traditional long barrel-aged style of other producers." Despite the emphasis on Greek varieties, the estate's most premium label is "Elia Blend," which has only been released to the market six times since 2003 when it first came out. With Syrah, Grenache and Carignan, it is a Southern Rhone blend. The estate produces annually approximately 200,000 bottles, of which 45-55% are exported.

Wine Tasting Klima Vidiano 2020
Klima Vidiano, Barrel-aged
Komposos Liatiko red
Elia Blend 2016

ANOSKELI WINERY

After a drive through the more mountainous area of Kolimbari, we found ourselves wondering whether we had, in fact, reached the right place.

We were standing in front of what looked – and smelled – like an olive oil press. Greeted by Gerasimos Vouloudakis, we soon found out that, in Anoskeli, the owners have successfully combined the production of olive oil, the area's main agricultural product, with winemaking that emphasizes the Greek varieties for the whites and international varieties for the reds. The first bottle of wine was produced in 2005 but, as Vouloudakis, the company's chief engineer who took an interest in winemaking, explained, the oenological part of the business really started taking shape in 2011. The overall production is limited to 35,000- 40,000 bottles, but Vouloudakis is a person who loves to experiment, and he cares less about the quantities than he does about trying different winemaking techniques. In the cellar, we found ourselves in front of a barrel where a Romeiko, produced using the solera system (which is used to produce sherry), was being aged. In another barrel across the room, an Assyrtiko resting on the lees had been ageing for three years, waiting its turn to be bottled and released to the market. Anoskeli produces mainly two labels: Ano Plagia, in white, rosé and red (all of them blends of both local and international varieties); and Anoferia, varietal wines of both white and red, with the greatest emphasis being given on the indigenous white varieties of Vilana, Assyrtiko and Vidiano. "I think it's pointless to assume we can make a red wine from local varieties that can become top shelf and be priced accordingly. Our energies need to be focused on our white and rosé varieties," says Vouloudakis.

Our wine tasting was preceded by an olive oil tasting, giving us the opportunity to find out that the two procedures are really quite similar. The winery is open to visitors and is happy to offer them the experience of both tastings.

Wine Tasting Anoferia Vilana 2020
 Ano Plagia, 2020 Vidiano, Vilana, Assyrtiko
 Ano Plagia rosé 2020
 Anoferia Syrah 2018
 Anoskeli Stone Romeiko

ENDOCHORA WINERY

Back in Hania, we found ourselves face to face with a model expression of garage winemaking.

Housed on the ground floor of a two-story building in the center of town, Endochora can hardly be called a winery, but the product that comes out from this 60m² space is really noteworthy. Three or four small stainless steel tanks, a few barrels and a grape selection machine is all Michalis Tsafarakis needs to produce his four labels. "I don't come from a family of winemakers or farmers; I grew up in the city and studied mathematics," he says. "But I became hooked on the process of winemaking, the vineyards, all of it and my hobby became my profession." With the help of oenologist Costas Galanis, he produces about 7,000-8,000 bottles a year, mainly from Vidiano, Kotsifali and Syrah, which he has planted on the 15 acres of vineyards he owns, scattered in different locations around Hania.

Wine Tasting Endochora Vidiano 2020
 Endochora Rosé 2020
 Endochora Kotsifali 2019
 Krostandt Syrah 2017



Michalis Tsafarakis
in his Winery.

If you had to personify Crete, it would be in the form of Iliana Malichin. Strong, beautiful, proud and hospitable, she has, despite her youth, already built up strong roots, and dreams of ways to help her homeland. The vineyards of Melambes are some of the most impressive ones we've ever seen.

ILIANA MALICHIN



Iliana Malichin surrounded by the 150 year old vines.

We're at a vineyard, at an elevation of 900m. The sea is peeking through the mountain ridges, and the views are breathtaking. We've piled into the back of a pick-up truck that Iliana has borrowed specially for our visit, and we're admiring the pre-phylloxera vineyards all around us, some as old as 140 years.

Vineyards this old retain all the old varieties, too. Though Vidiano prevails, there are also Plyto, Melissaki, Thrapsathiri, Rokeiko and Liatiko. "I believe that these old vines have found their own way to keep balance in growing and nurturing their grapes, and that's why I don't intervene in their growth," Iliana tells us, confirming what we see all around us. "The vines huddle close to one another and they seem to like that proximity. It's good for them to be in contact, they seem to make a better time of it, and it's preferable to me coming and hacking away at them."

Raised in Athens, Iliana was looking for a way to relocate to Crete from an early age. She spent winters watching home videos recorded over the summers spent in her ancestral Cretan village, helping out her grandfather in his olive groves and in his small vineyard. He believed them to be, she says, akin to Burgundy vines.

The plan went as follows: university studies in Agriculture, then an MA in Oenology, and then a PhD in Vidiano. Her thesis concerned the isolation and identification of yeasts native to the Vidiano variety, and it caused quite a stir, but the funding to implement its findings is still not at hand.

After working for the Alexakis and Douloufakis Estates on Crete, Iliana's next stop was Santorini, where she met her current associate Spyros Chrysos. She proposed a business partnership. Having joined forces, they set out to search for a Cretan vineyard, and to ultimately become pioneers in the field.

"I came to this place with no vineyards of my own. So, I started by buying grapes from the local producers. I now have my own team of 30 producers who do nothing without first consulting me or unless I tell them to do it. The responsibility is all mine, and I am constantly in the vineyards guiding them. We hold frequent seminars with guest agriculturalists. I buy my grapes at exclusive and pre-arranged prices, which are among the most expensive in Crete: €1.60 for grapes from the older vines, and €1.30 for those from new vines, when the average is between €0.30 and €0.50. I do this because, when I first arrived on the island, the producers were disappointed with the old vines. They kept hearing that they'd see higher yields with grafted vines. And while they worked really hard and toiled to care for five acres of vines, they only saw a return worth a single acre. They wanted to get rid of the old vines, so the only guarantee I could give them was a fixed, high price. My aim for Melambes, as well as for here in Fourfouras, was to save the old vines, because they are our heritage. The changes that we've made in their cultivation, and in the care we show them, have made the old vines increase their yield by 60%. We've also planted 60 new acres, with local help. My first year here, everyone was a bit wary of me. But when they saw that I was on their side and that I keep my word, things changed. Well, they also saw a bit of my crazy side, but they saw my honesty. They're truly happy that today their village is well known elsewhere, even as far away as Australia, where many have family."

This 27-year-old Iliana is undeniably impressive. The winery – gorgeous, by the way – is housed in an old storage space belonging to the Melambes cooperation. Additionally, the Malichin-Chrysos winery, with the help of subsidies, managed to purchase tanks and machinery. They produce three labels at about 7,000 bottled annually. The "Rizes 2" is a blend of Vidiano from Fourfoura in Rethymno and Assyrtiko from the Loyron vines in Santorini. The "Vidiano Young Wines" is from 10-15 year-old vineyards, and the exquisite "Vidiano Old Wines" comes from vineyards that are more than a century old.

From Iliana's tanks, we tasted an 8-month-old Vidiano that is waiting to be blended with Assyrtiko, as well as a 6-month-old Vidiano just before it was to be bottled. During vinification, very few sulfurs are used, the yeasts are only the ones that exist in the must, and the stabilization process is also done in a natural way, without human intervention. Whole bunches are used, and wines stay on the lees for a while at the beginning of the process. The wine's acidity is excellent, as is its minerality and, as Malichin tells us, some may even be able to detect a slight saltiness from the island's sea spray.

Accompanied by Cretan melodies that Iliana finds suit her wines the best, she confides in us, "I believe in the biodynamic processes, and the way the taste of my wines changes with the waxing and waning of the Moon. I also notice that, on certain days, their mood changes, affected by my own. There was a very hard day for me, a day when I was stressed and emotionally drained, that I went to the winery and opened a tank, and the smell was so good and so different, that it really comforted me. I'll never forget that smell – it left such an impression on me. I doubt that it has ever smelled that good to me before, or since." ●



*The ultimate
summer wine!*



WWW.GEORGIOSLAFAZANIS.GR



GEORGIOS LAFAZANIS
WINERY

IRAKLEIO WINERIES

Going down a steep dirt road in the back of a pickup truck can be quite an experience, but it's also the best way to take in all the wild beauty of the Cretan land.

BOUTARI WINERY

Built on the Fantaxometochi Estate – which in Greek means the haunted estate – the Boutari Winery is close to the archaeological site of Knossos. The estate owes its name to a previous owner who, in order to keep thieves away, promulgated a story about the estate being haunted. Surrounded by its vineyards, the winery offers spectacular views of the nearby hills and is open to visitors who wish to tour the cellars, take cooking lessons offered on the premises, or stay in one of the three suites at the estate's old guest house. The Boutaris family bought the estate in the '90s and, in 2014, began to replant the whole vineyard, focusing on the indigenous varieties of Crete. Lately it has been rebranding some of its labels even while new products are also hitting the market. Enjoying a lovely lunch, we had the pleasure of tasting the brand new Scalareia Vidiano-Athiri, a crisp white wine, and the red Scalareia, made from Syrah and Kotsifali.

DOULOFAKIS WINERY

Going down a steep dirt road in the back of a pickup truck can be quite an experience, but it's also the best way to take in all the wild beauty of the Cretan land. Vineyards and olive groves are all you'll see going down the hill from the village where Nikos Doulofakis has his winery. "These are all very small parcels of land, since, according to Cretan tradition, each piece of land had to be divided equally among the family's children," he explains. "So you get a small vineyard here, an olive grove there, and then another vineyard. Unfortunately, this dispersal doesn't help with costs, but it does give our wines complexity," he tells us as we walk under the burning Cretan sun. All the vineyards are located on slopes. "All the work is done in the vineyard," he says. Truly proud of his Cre-

tan heritage, he insists that one of the greatest advantages of Greek wine is its long history. "Crete is a very strong brand of its own, and lately Cretan wines have been doing really well in markets abroad. We export to France, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, the United States and Canada."

LYRARAKIS WINERY

If you're in the area of Irakleio, this is one winery that you shouldn't really miss. Contrary to the local tradition of having small parcels of land, this winery is surrounded by 14.5 hectares of vineyards which Sotiris Lyrarakis obtained in the '60s. The winemaking experience of Lyrarakis was finally "bottled" for the first time in 1996. This is truly a family business; brothers, cousins and nephews are all involved, as the older generation is now giving way to the younger one. "Back in the '90s, the trend was to plant international varieties, mainly Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc. We decided to replant a big part of our vineyards, giving more emphasis to two local unique varieties: Plyto, a white, and Dafni, a red," explains George Lyrarakis. "From a commercial point of view, this was suicide. But we were committed to saving these varieties from extinction. The truth is that most people prefer something more common like a Chardonnay, but we also get a lot of tourists who are looking to try something different." Lyrarakis is also the first winery which worked on blending the indigenous red variety Kotsifali with Syrah, with great success. Since 2005, they have been experimenting with a Mandilari, another indigenous red variety, which was traditionally used in a blend with Kotsifali. According to George, Crete's climate is ideal for producing great wines. In 2007, the winery opened its doors to the public; since then, it has been receiving thousands of visitors every year, mostly tourists. Their wines have won prizes in international contests, and are being ex-



ported to other European countries as well as to the United States, Canada, Australia and China.

PATERIANAKIS WINERY

Walking into the Paterianakis Winery in Arhanes we found ourselves in front of a table covered with Cretan delicacies, cheese, olives, homemade bread there was, of course wine as well, all in a room with enormous windows offering a breathtaking view of the vineyards. The winery, established by George Paterianakis' father, is now being run by his two daughters, Emmanuela and Niki. The estate produces organic wines, following the practices of biodynamic viticulture, which forms part of the tradition of winemaking in Crete. The wines are divided into three groups, according to varieties and vineyards. The Local Treasures are made strictly from local varieties, the Premium Wines are a blend of a local and an international variety, and the Vintage Spirits are wines made from indigenous varieties that come from the older vineyards. In the vineyard, the family follows all the traditional practices of their grandfather, harvesting by hand and taking good care of the grape at all stages. One of their goals is to spread the philosophy of biodynamic cultivation, the tradition of the older generations on Crete. The estate produces 120,000 bottles, many of which end up in Switzerland, Cyprus and the United States.

SILVA DASKALAKI WINERY

A few kilometers away, we came across the Silva Daskalaki Winery. Its owner, Irini Daskalaki full of relentless energy She wakes up every morning at five o'clock to tend to the vines and goes to bed only after having inspected all the work in the winery. A strong believer in biodynamic viticulture, she smiles and says: "I

was born on a full moon; this must have had something to do with it." She follows a special calendar based on the moon phases, according to which she plans all the work that has to be done in the vineyard. "These are practices known to us from our grandmothers," she says, "and we see the result in the quality of our wines. I believe there's something magical behind all this, and it is priceless." Her daughter Haroula is responsible for bottling and marketing.

"You can't be a real winemaker if you're not willing to put your hands in the dirt," Irini says. "You've to be very careful during all the stages of winemaking, because what good is it having a good grape and then messing up with the winemaking?" Her hard work has been recognized; the estate's wines have won numerous prizes, which has helped them to go on despite the problems caused by the economic crisis. The estate's emphasis is on indigenous varieties, although their best wine is considered to be a blend of Kotsifali and Syrah. They also produce a series of sweet wines from local varieties.

DIAMANTAKIS WINERY

One of many young aspiring wine producers in Crete, Zacharias Diamantakis welcomed us to his winery on the steep slopes of the eastern foothills of Crete's highest mountain, Psiloritis. The vineyards here are at an elevation of 400m with a southeastern aspect. They have been planted on terraces because of the steepness of the slope, making manual harvesting quite a challenge. The varieties planted there are the indigenous Mandilari and Malvasia, as well as Chardonnay. A little higher up, at 600m, is a vineyard planted with Assyrtiko. "Crete can produce an excellent Assyrtiko," says Zacharias. He believes that one of the biggest challenges for Cretan wines in the near future will be an increase in exports, a goal, he says, that has been set collectively, through Wines Of Crete, a network created by the producers for the promotion of their wines. ●



When I first decided to send an email to Victoria Hislop, author of the best-selling book “The Island,” asking for an interview, I had no idea we were going to end up chatting under an olive tree overlooking the vines at Fantaxometochos Estate.

VICTORIA HISLOP

Her enthusiastic response was followed by the revelation that she had never visited a winery before so, after making the proper arrangements, we met on a warm sunny day and together enjoyed the brilliant hospitality of Marina Boutari, who was kind enough to arrange a tour of the vineyards, followed by a wine tasting and lunch. Victoria's tight schedule had taken her to Knossos, where she was filming a documentary for fund-raising purposes, a small break from the shooting of “Cartes Postales from Greece,” the new Greek television series based on her novel, expected to air this fall. Her deep love for her adopted country – Victoria Hislop became an honorary Greek citizen last year – was manifest throughout our talk, but what really struck me was her accurate perception of modern Greece and her relentless thirst to learn more.

What is it about Greece that has inspired you to write so many books about this country?

Well, most of my books cover periods of really difficult history. Greece's 20th century was really a very difficult time, and I grew up in a country where we hadn't been invaded since 1066. Generally, life has been pretty straightforward in Britain, whereas in Greece there was never a dull moment in history. When I first started writing about Greece, I didn't really know anything, I didn't know any of it and I think that most British people who come as tourists haven't got a clue about what is going on. They come and they see beautiful landscapes and lovely food and then they go home again. I am just interested in learning about these things; I try to learn so that I am less ignorant. Then they become fiction, because I want to imagine what it was like to live through those things, and then come the characters.

When was the first time you came to Greece?

My love of Greece began when I was a teenager. Back then – I was born in the late 1950s – there was no such thing as commercial travel; people weren't flying anywhere on holiday. Our first holiday was actually to Malta. My mother had started working when I was about 15, and her priority was to travel; until then, she'd never been anywhere. So we got on a plane. And then, the second time we went somewhere, it was to Athens. It was transformative! It was an immediate love affair and it never stopped. I was 17 years old...

Can you recall what made you fall in love with the country?

It was the light. I have been to all the other southern European countries and the light isn't the same. I don't know what it is but the translucence of the light in Greece is definitely not the same as in Spain or in Italy. I don't know how you compare the two scientifically but you know, for me, the light is definitely brighter. It was also the sea. Until then I had only ever swam in the English Channel...

So it was partly the contrast and also something I cannot really define. I remember thinking: This is utterly beautiful, and I want to come here from now on," and I did. It was never a person, nothing like that; I somehow never had that experience, it was the place, the sky and the sea, and the blue – definitely the blue.

Have things changed since you first came to Greece?

Oh yes, things that I'm not sure have been communicated clearly to other British people. Wine is one example; I really get very irritated when I go to supermarkets back in the UK and I can't find Greek wines. Food and wine have come on massively; there are some amazing restaurants in Agios Nikolaos in Crete, for example, restaurants that were not there 10 or 15 years ago. I think food in Greece in general has risen to new levels. And all the restaurants have very good wine lists.

What would you say to someone who is setting out to discover Greece?

Gastronomy and the wine would be their biggest surprise. Most summers, I organize a writer's retreat. One year I had invited Boris Johnson's sister, a journalist and friend of mine, and took her to Chrisofili, one of our favorite places in Agios Nikolaos. She was really impressed. Although she comes to Greece often, she had no idea how good the food could be. Most of the people who participate in my writers' retreat, especially those who have not visited Greece before, are surprised by the quality and variety of the Greek cuisine. I think that wine tourism can be a really big attraction as well. Something that frustrates me is trying to persuade people to come after the three months of the summer; I keep telling them there's much more to see; walking in Greece in the autumn, for example, or visiting the wineries, not necessarily during the summer season.

I love white dry wines that are not fruity. My favorite Greek dish would be spanakorizo; my neighbor goes to the market and gets very fresh horta, or she picks it herself, and she makes a huge tub of it for me and I can't stop eating it.

What is your favorite Greek wine and what's your favorite Greek dish?

It is Assyrtiko. I love white dry wines that are not fruity. My favorite Greek dish would be spanakorizo; my neighbor goes to the market and gets very fresh horta [wild greens], or she picks it herself, and she makes a huge tub of it for me and I can't stop eating it. Food has always played a role in my upbringing. My mother lived with a French chef for 25 years, and he was a big influence in my life.

Your most recent book about Greece was "Those Who Are Loved," a novel that explores some very traumatic moments in recent Greek history.

I was very afraid about having this book published. During the period of my writing it, there was this massive controversy in the United States about a book called "American Dirt," because the writer – an American – was writing from the point of view of a Mexican woman trying to escape from Mexico to the US. The American 'very politically correct' lobby said that she couldn't write this because she wasn't Mexican. But isn't this what fiction allows you to do? Anyway, all this was happening around the time I was writing my book, where I take the view of an elderly Greek woman. I remember thinking: "Am I allowed to do this or not?"

Did you in fact have any problems because of this?

No, fortunately I think Greek readers are not yet so brainwashed as some of these American critics.

You did touch on a lot of sensitive chapters of Greece's recent history. Do you think Greeks have left all this behind them, or can you still detect some scars on the Greek psyche?

There are scars. Where I get a sense of that is when I do my book tours. I go to all these amazing towns, such as Kastoria and Alexandroupoli, and people in Greece aren't at all like the British, where, during book presentations, everyone sits very politely. They are very lively, very bold. They are lovely, generally, fantastic, polite, warm and kind, but there are always a couple of people who become antagonistic... Generally, the ones who want to stand up and say something are the older people. And I'm always kind of waiting for that to happen... I accept that in the civil war there were atrocities on both sides. Themis, the main character in "Those Who Are Loved," is very much somebody who regrets the things she has done.

Odysseus Elytis, the renowned Greek poet and Nobel Laureate once wrote, "If you deconstruct Greece, what will remain is an olive tree, a vine and a boat." What does Greece mean to you?

That's very poetic, very minimalist, but it seems to me that it misses out the people. I never think of deconstructing Greece. When people ask me: "What does Greece mean to you?", I really don't know where to begin. I feel a bit guilty sometimes; I appear not to notice the bad things, or I brush them off because I've seen so many Greeks that only see the bad things. They have forgotten the vine, the olive tree, and the boat. They have a difficult experience of their own country, so I like Elytis' image, but I am aware there's still a darker side, too. But I think the more you focus on the positive, the more space it has to become the greater part. ●



Victoria Hislop at the Boutari Winery.



The journey goes on...

Our Sarakatsani ancestors, nomad cheesemakers of the past, would travel for weeks at Agrafta and Pindos mountains, searching the best grass lands to create the finest feta cheese. Today, two generations later, we continue that exciting journey with unquenchable passion, captivating the palates of feta connoisseurs all over the world, with our multi awarded product.

Roussas Feta P.D.O.
Defines Quality since 1952



roussasdairysa

www.roussas.gr



A few years ago, four friends and I decided to go on a road trip to a part of Greece that might also prove interesting from a wine perspective. To cut a long story short, the destination we finally agreed upon was the island of Kefalonia. I hadn't been there since a five-day school trip in senior year in high school, at a time when I still couldn't tell the difference between beer and wine. Ever since then, I've remained emotionally attached to the island, despite the long distance between us.

KEFALONIA

There are two main reasons why I love Kefalonia. The first one is its people. They have a reputation for being oddballs, nutcases and shouters. I can assure you, after having spent considerable time hanging out with the locals, that this assessment is 100% true. Their extroversion and their way of life make you feel so at home, it's like visiting your hometown or, more accurately, like visiting the quirky hometown of Asterix. The second reason that I love Kefalonia is that, in many ways, the island reminds me of Crete, my birthplace. Mount Aenos has rough, rocky landscapes and steep slopes where mountain goats jump around. As you drive along, mesmerised by the scenery, you suddenly have to hit the brakes to avoid crashing into a flock of sheep and their shepherd! That's right when you realize who's responsible for the bullet holes in the road sign you just drove past.

The National Park, with its dense fir forest is a must-visit all year round. In a matter of less than an hour, you can go from wearing a jacket at the summit of Mount Aenos to drinking a chilled glass of wine in a swimsuit at a beach bar, or diving into the beautiful clear blue water of the Ionian Sea. The local cuisine is simple but delicious, and if you happen to have a friend who's into spear-gun fishing, then you've just found paradise. Kefalonia is definitely included in the top five of Greece's wine-producing zones. However, this doesn't automatically place it on the list of the top wine tourism destinations. Making your way through the island's wineries, you certainly won't find the same organizational skills as at Nemea's wineries, which offer regular tours to visitors, or the architecturally impressive facilities of northern Greece. But, as you walk through their door, you will meet warm-hearted people, winemak-

ers filled with love and passion for wine and for their island. Our first stop was the winery of Evriviades Sklavos in Lixouri. Vladis (as he's known to his friends) is considered the father of biodynamic cultivation in Greece, but if you ask him, he'll look away modestly and say that he doesn't know how to make wine. According to many, he makes the best dry version of Mavrodaphne, a wine named Origion (which definitely does NOT mean what you might think). One of the most beautiful Greek white wines is Metagitnion; the variety is fermented and matured in a large wooden tank for about a year to become a wine that clearly reflects the magnificence of Kefalonia's terroir. The famous Vino di Sasso (Robola) shocks me to the core with its minerality and saltiness every time I try it, while Zakynthino excites my imagination with the range of gastronomic options with which it can be paired.

Our next stop is Ktima Charitatos. The three Charitatos siblings are so hospitable that you're sure to feel at home. As Ioanna impresses you with her French finesse, Charitos starts cracking jokes, poking fun at everything, and Konstantinos plies you with tsipouro and sings "Do You Like Mademoiselle The Greece?" They gave us a very nice tour of the estate, where they only cultivate the three local varieties Mavrodaphne, Moschato, and Vostilidi, and afterwards we tasted their wines. The evening became even more interesting when Evriviades and his partner Spyros Zisimatos joined us, and we all talked about wine. In Kefalonia, winemakers face the same problem with grapes as their colleagues do in Santorini, although perhaps not to the same extent. Even so, here, too, winemakers tear their hair out over every year with worry over whether they'll be able to buy good-quality grapes.

KEFALONIA

The PDO varieties Robola, Mavrodafni and Moschato are known worldwide, have a long tradition and play an important role in the culture of the island.

Ioanna, Haritos (left) and Costas(right) Haritatos, with their four-footed friends.



Just opposite, in Minies in Argostoli, stands Gentilini Winery. Here, you'll find a more "Australian" approach to the whole issue, as both the winery, which offers tours, and its wines are reminiscent of Barossa Valley. Petros Markantonatos attaches great importance to raw material, and this is why he cultivates his vineyards organically. At the same time, like a maestro at the podium, he harmoniously conducts the orchestra of the winery's tanks and barrels, with only one thing in his mind: that the wine be enjoyable. Interventions are not altogether prohibited, and the vinification techniques are very advanced. Every time we meet, he shows me how he can monitor tank temperatures on his mobile phone and talks about all of his "crazy" new projects. The wines he produces are excellent; my personal favorite is his Robola, which, as it evolves in the bottle, displays more mineral and petrol aromas. It can be paired fantastically with the delicious ceviche that he makes himself.

Unfortunately, we did not have time to visit the Petrakopoulos winery (formerly Melissinos). Nikos Petrakopoulos and Kiki Siamei are doing an incredible job there; they produce perhaps the best Robola of Kefalonia, while constantly experimenting with different winemaking practices (including single-vineyard vinification and orange wines). We did talk, however, and they said they were looking forward to seeing us on our next island visit, and we promised we would stop by. To me, Kefalonia is the next big thing in Greek winemaking, thanks to its terroir and grape varieties. It possesses two out of the three most misunderstood varieties in Greece, but it also has a winemakers' association that doesn't give up. They try, as a team, to give a fresher, more modern and more gastronomic character to the wines of their birthplace. Kefalonia is an island which, no matter how many times you visit it, will always give you a reason to come back.

SOK

There is strength in unity, thought a group of wine producers on Kefalonia and Ithaca, and they decided to join forces to promote their fine wines, wines that are increasingly gaining ground in the market. They formed SOK, the Association of Winemakers of Kefalonia, and on our trip we noticed the work they were doing on Kefalonia, efforts focused on transforming the island into one of the top global destinations for wine tourism.

Seven wineries have joined together to promote the wines of Kefalonia and Ithaca:

Foivos (Wines of Greece)
Gentilini Winery & Vineyards
Haritatos Estate – Haritatos Vineyard
Oralios Gi
Petrakopoulos Wines
Sarris Winery
Sclavos Wines

The PDO varieties Robola, Mavrodafni and Moschato are known worldwide, have a long tradition and play an important role in the culture of the island. SOK's mission is to plan promotional and marketing activities throughout the year with the aim of strengthening the brand name of Kefalonian and Ithaca wine. Wine tourism is a priority of the group as well, and SOK aims to put Kefalonia on the map of world destinations for wine tourism. The cultural and gastronomic traditions are integral parts of the wine world here as well, a fact that will also be highlighted by the association. In short, they will be showcasing the viticultural landscape and the wine products of the islands alongside the culinary and cultural riches of the islands.

More about SOK, the Association of Winemakers of Kefalonia - Kefalonia Wines, can be found on facebook and instagram @kefaloniawines. ●

Emphasis on what MATTERS *most.*

© 2019 Ktima Pavlidis

Emphasis. Assyrtiko



KTIMA PAVLIDIS
DRAMA GREECE



follow us on  | 



I was about to take yet another trip. For the following five and a half hours, give or take, I'd be able to enjoy just being a passenger, relaxing in the comfortable back seat of a Golf TSI on the way to Naoussa. For the first time in a long time, I was visiting a wine destination with friends, more to have a good time than as part of my job. Nothing against wine experts, or going on extreme wine missions – which certainly helps you get the full picture of a vintage or a region – but when it comes to Naoussa, it's best to simply sit back and enjoy it.

NAOUSSA

I should make it clear that I love Naoussa's wines very much, but certainly not in the same way that I love, say, Nemea's. I think that I feel towards Naoussa somewhat like a mother who has a bit more love for (if I can say that), or at least is more likely to spoil, the sensitive and weakest among her children. And this is something I've felt since the first time I ever set foot in the region, several years ago. It was that first trip that shattered the image I'd built up in my head about this great wine zone.

You read and hear so many descriptions of Naoussa, you taste its powerful Xinomavro wines, and you imagine a completely different reality. Everything is magnified in your mind. But the truth is quite different. You can drive for nearly half an hour in what is called the "viticultural zone" of the area, and not see the slightest hint that this is one of the most important wine regions in Greece.

Instead of the famous Xinomavro vineyards, the only thing that you see for miles, on both sides of the road that runs through the wine zone, are peach trees, cherry trees, plum trees, apple trees and, if it's the right time of the year, the lean silhouettes of the workers who irrigate their crops incessantly. Unfortunately, Naoussa's vineyards have shrunk to a great extent. And the sad truth is that Amynteo, on the other side of Mount Vermio, is already producing more Xinomavro grapes. From the back seat of the Golf, I could clearly discern the initial surprise, even disappointment, on the face of both of my companions, who were visiting the area for the first time: "Is this Naoussa? Where are its vineyards?" We

talked about what we'd seen as we entered Barolo, in Italy's Piedmont; there were grapevines everywhere, no matter which direction we looked at. Here, niente... Nothing...

And yet, Naoussa has its secrets; all you need to do is be in the right mood and have enough time to unlock them, and a wonderful world will be revealed to you. It will be unconventional and idiosyncratic but, at the same time it will also be harmonious. What has always fascinated me the most about the region are its contrasts: both the different ways in which winemakers approach their favorite grape variety, Xinomavro, and how they deal with concepts such as hospitality and wine tourism.

Arriving at Markovitis Winery in Polla Nera, we saw the 25-acre single vineyard stretching out right in front of our eyes; in the case of Thymiopoulos Vineyards, however, you'll need a 4x4 to reach some of the at least thirty vineyards "hidden" between Fytia and Trilofos. These wineries are representative of the two sub-regions of Naoussa where, in a matter of a fifteen-minute drive, the climate and the soil both change considerably, and which, of course, produce wines of very different styles. Markovitis consistently produces, as a matter of principle, only one wine from his amazing, meticulously attended vineyard; on the other hand, Thymiopoulos constantly makes plans to create different single-vineyard vinifications from his individual vine plots. Two different approaches, with the common denominator being, of course, the winemakers' love for Xinomavro.

NAOUSSA ROAD TRIP #1: In search of Xinomavro's hidden charms



Grape selection during harvest in Naoussa.

At the Boutari winery, you'll get goose bumps at the mere opening of a 1974 Naoussa Boutari. This isn't only because you're about to taste the unabridged history of Greek wine; it's also because you know that, in a minute, you'll be lucky enough to have in your glass a blatantly beautiful wine, full of generosity. It's a Xinomavro truth, that, if it weren't for the Boutari family, the variety could have been lost forever. That same evening, sitting around a table at the Diamantakos winery, you might taste the latest and most modern version of what Naoussa has to present, straight from the barrel, to the rest of the world. Diamantakos' Naoussa has such fruit and finesse, that it justifies those who praise the variety's "Pinot Noir dimension." These two different moments, ones that bridge yesterday and tomorrow in such an exquisite way, are so perfect it's hard to decide in which direction you want to travel.

The following day, you find yourself at the hospitable Dalamara Winery with Kostis and Maria. There, you're served a platter of local cold cuts – which Kostis slices on the spot with a knife – in a warm family environment, as you drink wines with clean lines and a clear philosophy, accompanied by a lot of conversation. You feel nothing short of being in the company of friends, as if you were at home. You taste their breathtaking Paliokalia and, before you leave their company, you make a stop at their own-rooted pre-phylloxera vineyard, where, gazing at the ancient stumps, you discover the true history of Naoussa. A few hours later, you'll enjoy to the fullest the uplifting view and the tranquility that Ktima Kyr-Yianni in Giannakochori has to offer. While there, you might decide to take a sneak peek at the impressive, brand new underground cellar, which houses the winery's barrels and wine collection, as you listen to Stellios Boutaris' brilliant plans for wine tourism in the area. A glass of the now impossible-to-find 2013 Ramnista will make you feel lucky you've have the opportunity to enjoy it. That's Naoussa in a nutshell – in one day, you can find two completely different takes on wine tourism that both highlight the innate passion of Greek winemakers for hospitality.

Under no circumstances would I want Naoussa to be, even in the slightest, different from what it really is. In Naoussa, traditional meets modern, small producers coexist with the big ones, and intense ambition is found side by side with a more relaxed attitude towards life. What I always make sure to do is not give myself enough time to visit everyone. I leave at least one visit for next time, be it either my beloved Argatia, or perhaps Foundis, which I have yet to visit, or Kokkinos, or Chrysochoou, or one of the other twenty or so winemakers in the area. I always need to have an excuse to come back, again and again.

My dear friends, it takes time for Naoussa to enchant you... To be precise, it takes 5 hours and 17 minutes, a 330-mile drive from Athens, and the best possible company you can find. As for those who aren't from Athens, you do your own calculations. One thing's for certain; no matter how long the trip is, it's definitely worth it. ●

Under no circumstances would I want Naoussa to be, even in the slightest, different from what it really is. In Naoussa, traditional meets modern, small producers coexist with the big ones, and intense ambition is found side by side with a more relaxed attitude towards life. What I always make sure to do is not give myself enough time to visit everyone.



1
/
3000

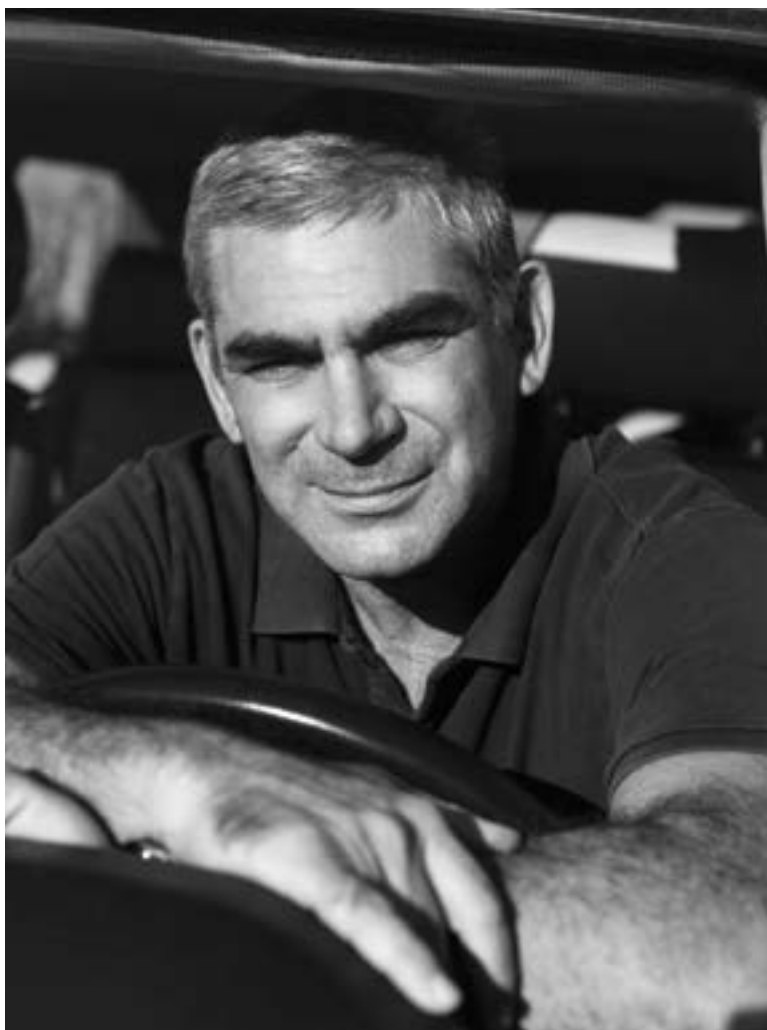
*In the spirit of innovation
and throughout TSANTALI history,
a collection of Limited-Edition wines
has been released.*



There is no product that encompasses the Greek way of life better than Greek wine does! Greek wine is the one and only product that transcends time, linking the Greece of antiquity to that of today, somehow representing everything that modern Greek society is, as well as what it once was. What's more, Greek wine is the best Ambassador of Greece in the world!

THE WINES OF GREECE: A way of life

Stellios Boutaris,
winemaker.



Wine is an agricultural product, yet it has the ability to land on every table with a story to tell. Agriculture is still one of the main pillars of the Greek economy. Whether it is fresh produce, such as tomatoes or kiwi, or artisanal items, Greek products are probably some of the best in the world. Although this has been the case for many years, it has only been recently that farmers and producers have truly understood the value of their goods. Over the last few years, with the help of the Greek government and EU funds, there has been a proliferation of high-quality branded foods that have given Greece a new image in the world.

Wine has been in the forefront of this “revolution,” and many other sectors are following the path that Greek wine has blazed. There are more than 200,000 farmers cultivating grapes and working closely with wineries that are always aiming to increase the quality of the products offered. This has been a major change in the rural economy; young people are staying close to their roots and cultivating the land where they were born, instead of emigrating to Athens and other cities to make a living. The social impact of this development is significant and, once fully realized, will change Greek society. A Greek farmer who used to sell grapes at cost, to the local cooperative is now producing a branded product, capturing added value that was once lost and adding to the chain of the local economy. This success also builds self-confidence among our people, an attribute so much needed for any society to thrive.

The uniqueness of Greek wine, however, based on local varieties and on places, plays an important role in more than just the structure of the society. Greek wine is the only product that mirrors the Greek way of life. We Greeks don't drink wine as an alternative to beer or spirits. Greek wine is consumed with friends, around a table and always with food. Greek wine has always a name on the label that tells a story of the place it was born, the style in which it was made and the people who crafted it. Greek wine is the one and only product that is present in all aspects of the easy, friendly, relaxed and simple way of life we Greeks like to enjoy, and that so many people from around the world experience once they visit Greece.

In recent years, Greek wine has traveled around the world, “preaching” the Greek way of life. The establishment of modern Greek restaurants everywhere and the proliferation of wine people looking for Greek wines have allowed Greek wine to find a place in both cozy and serious restaurants, and in wine shops all over the world. The positioning of Greek wine as a specialty, hard-to-find, almost exotic, sommelier-sweetheart item has further augmented the reputation of Greek wine. As a result, the image of Greek wine-making, and of Greece as a country in general, has been improved. Today, Greece and Greek products are going through a modern renaissance; the quality and the image of both have improved dramatically in the last few years. Greek wine is at the forefront of this development, serving as Greece's best ambassador abroad!

Next time you go out for a meal, ask for a Greek wine from the islands or from the mainland, and you, too, will be part of this great experience! ●



GEORGE VASSILIOU



K T H M A

Basilgion

DOMAINE VASSILIOU



KTHMA
NEMEION
ESTATE

• 1st km Koropi - Markopoulo Ave. • 19400 Koropi
Attica - Greece • Tel. +30 210 6626870, 210 6627686
• E-mail: info@vassilioudomaine.gr

• Karfoxilla • 20500 Nemea - Greece
• Tel. +30 27460 20700 • Fax +30 27460 20701
• E-mail: info@nemeionestate.gr

WHY GREECE COULD BE A WINE TOURISM PARADISE

TEXT

Giorgos Velissarios, Co-owner grapeescape.gr

Those who deal with wine, either as professionals or just as wine lovers, recognize that wine tourism in Greece is at a very early stage and certainly still has a long way to go to establish itself as an interesting and lucrative segment of the very prosperous tourism industry in our country.

Many wineries in several parts of Greece are open to visits and do offer organized guided tours and wine tastings, but at present there's inadequate promotion of their activities, and so attendance remains very limited.

Nevertheless, many of us who love wine, who like to walk in the vineyards, to sample wines selected by those who make them and to talk to them about the world of wine, think that Greece could, in fact, become a paradise of wine tourism.

To help substantiate that claim, let's close our eyes and imagine we're wandering through some of the most important viticultural zones of our country, starting from Macedonia and Central Greece, going on to Evia and the Peloponnese, then stopping at several Aegean and Ionian islands before finishing up, of course, in Crete.

Wine tourism could, for instance, be combined with thematic tourism; the wineries could be matched with those unique ancient monuments that are generously scattered in every corner of our country, from Knossos in Crete to Vergina in Macedonia, and from the sites of Cycladic culture on our islands to the Parthenon in Athens or the Temple of Poseidon at Sounio in Attica.

Wine tourism could also be combined with an exploration of rich local and regional gastronomy. Greece is famous for the uniqueness of the cuisine of its geographical areas. The combination of indigenous grape varieties and local specialties would satisfy even the most demanding connoisseurs.

And, of course, let's not overlook the natural charms of the locations. Santorini, for example, has dozens of wineries to visit, some of which are located in places of unique beauty. Crete does, too, as do Tinos, Paros and other places as well. Even on the mainland, some wineries are located in places that would be envied by the best hotels.

As for the purely wine part, there are thousands of local varieties in Greece and almost 4,000 years of experience in winemaking. In recent years, Greek wine has undoubtedly gone through a period of significant prosperity, and several Greek labels have been recent winners at international competitions and hold places of honor on international wine lists. Indigenous varieties such as Assyrtiko, Xinomavro, Robola, and even Agiorgitiko are internationally recognized.

There are fine efforts being made in organized wine tourism, too, such as the work of Grape Escape (www.grapeescape.gr). On their wine tours, experienced sommeliers accompany participants to the most interesting wineries of each region and point out the true gems of each winery. At the same time, attendees learn all about the wines and the vineyards of Greece, as well as the local gastronomy.

Taking all of this into account, and for a number of other reasons that every wine-loving traveler will discover on their own, Greece might just be the next paradise for wine tourists. ●

WINE TRAVELER

KIR·YIANNI

L' ESPRIT DU LAC

Vieilles Vignes

DRY ROSÉ

gdesignstudio.gr

Drink Responsibly

Kir-Yianni wines are available
in more than 45 countries

Visit our website
for more information

kiryianni.gr



WINE PRODUCERS

DRAMA

Domaine Costa Lazaridi
Nico Lazaridi
Oenops Wines
Oenogenesis
Ktima Pavlidis
Wine Art Estate

NAOOUSSA

Argatia Winery
Boutari Naoussa
Dalamara Winery
Diamantakos
Founti Estate
Domaine Karydas
Ktima Kyr-Yianni
Markovitis Winery
Thymiopoulos Vineyards

AMYNTEO

Alpha Estate
Domaine Karanika

GOUMENISSA Thessaloniki

Aidarini Winery
Arvanitidis Estate
Aslanis Family Winery
Boutari Goumenissa
Chatzivariti Winery
Ktima Gerovassiliou
Kechris Winery
Tatsis Winery

OTHERS

Domaine Glinavos
Katogi Averoff
Ktima Pieria Eratini
Domaine Porto Carras
Theopetra Estate
Tsantali
Ktima Biblia Chora
Ktima Voyatzi

ATTIKI

Aoton Winery
Kokotos Estate
Roxani Matsa Estate
Mylonas Winery
Oenotria Land
Papagiannakos Winery
Strofilia Wines
Domaine Vassiliou

EVIA

Avantis Estate
Vriniotis Winery
Lykos Wines

OTHERS

La Tour Melas
Domaine Hatzimichalis
Muses Estate

THESSALY

Dougos Winery
Karipidis Estate
Ktima Katsarou
Winery Monsieur Nicolas
Domaine Zafeirakis

NEMEA

Aivalis Winery
Barafakas Winery
Ktima Driopi
Gaia Wines
Estate Constantin Gofas
Harlaftis Wines
Ieropoulos Winery
Lafazanis Winery
Lafkioti Winery
Lantides Wines
Mitravelas Estate
Nemeion Estate
Palivou Estate
Papaioannou Wines
Estate Raptis
Semeli Estate
Domaine Skouras

MANTINIA

Bosinakis Winery
Domaine Spiropoulos
Troupis Winery
Ktima Tselepos

OTHERS

Papargyriou Winery
Antonopoulos K. Vineyards
Parparoussis Winery
Rouvalis Winery
Tetramythos Winery
Cavino
Domain Mega Spileo
Mercouri Estate
Ktima Brintziki
Nestor Wines
Monemvasia Winery – Tsimbidi

KEFALONIA

Gentilini Winery & Vineyards
Haritatos Vineyard
Orealios Gaea
Sclavos Wines

SANTORINI

Anhydrous Winery
Estate Argyros
Boutari Santorini
Canava Chrissou & Tselepos
Gaia Wines
Gavalas Winery
Hatzidakis Winery
Mikra Thira
Domaine Sigalas
Vassaltis Vineyards

CRETE

Boutari Skalani
Douloufakis Winery
Idaia Winery
Karavitakis Winery
Lyrarakis Wines
Manousakis Winery
Minos Miliarakis Winery
Silva Daskalaki Winery
Strataridakis Bros Winery

OTHERS

Methymnaeos Organic Wines
Moraitis Winery
T-OINOS
Vakakis Domaine

WHITE WINE

Grape Variety	>	ASSYRTIKO	MOSCHOFILERO	MUSCAT BLANC (à Petits Grains)
Pronounced	>	A-seer'-tee-ko	Mos-ko-fee'-le-ro	Moo-ska-Blawn
Originating From	>	Santorini	Mantinia, Central Peloponnese	Greece (most probably)
Mostly Cultivated	>	Throughout Greece	Central Peloponnese	Samos, Patras, Northern Peloponnese, Kefalonia, Rhodes
Wine Style	>	DRY WINES: austere, mineral SWEET WINES: sun-dried, luscious	Floral and elegant dry white wines	Dry and dessert white wines with a strong aromatic profile
Main Features	>	High acidity, citrus fruit, minerals, saltiness, structure, high alcohol content, full body	High acidity, light body, low alcohol content, aromatic, rose petals, lemon flowers	Medium acidity, citrus fruits, peach, honey, rosé, luscious
Ageing Potential	>	2-10 years	1-3 years	DRY WINES: 1-2 years SWEET WINES: 2-15+ years
Ideally Paired With	>	DRY WINES: Shellfish, sea urchin, clams, sushi, truffle risotto, schnitzel, white meat SWEET WINES: crème brûlée, lemon pie, walnut pie, chocolate fudge with nuts	Green salads, cold appetizers, aperitifs, spicy cuisine	DRY WINES: aromatic dishes, fruits, salads SWEET WINES: desserts (depending on the ageing)
Suggested Producers	>	Domaine Sigalas, Hatzidakis Winery, Estate Argyros, Gaia Wines, Boutari Santorini, Vassaltis Vineyards	Semeli Wines, Bosinakis Winery, Domaine Tselepos, Domaine Skouras, Troupis Winery	UWC Samos, Parparoussis Wines, Sklavos Wines, Avantis Estate
Details	>	Assyrtiko is a rare world-class white variety from Santorini. It mainly gives 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 (the famous Vinsanto wines) are rich, complex and intense dessert wines. Assyrtiko has proven its immense potential, as – apart from Santorini – it is grown throughout continental Greece, with impressive results.	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 is more, in the case of rosé wines, Moschofilero does not lose these features during maceration not even when oak-aged.	Muscat blanc is the most widely cultivated Greek grape variety on a global scale. Muscat blanc à Petits Grains (small-berried) is the finest and most complex of all Muscat varieties and thrives on Samos and other islands of the Aegean, as well as the Greek mainland. Dry wines are fragrant and feminine, ideal for summer sipping with fruits and light appetizers. Sweet wines on the other hand, can range from light and floral to honeyed and concentrated. Barrel-ageing and sun-drying can add additional layers of complexity and expression to the final result.

VARIETIES

VIDIANO	SAVATIANO	ROBOLA	RODITIS
Vee-dia-no	Sa-va-tee-ah-no	Row-bo-lah	Row-dee-tees
Western Crete (Rethymno)	Attiki (Metropolitan Athens area)	Kefalonia	Peloponnese
Crete	Central Greece and Evia	Kefalonia	Throughout Greece
Dry white wines of medium to heavy weight	Dry white wines of medium weight	Dry white wines of medium to light weight	Dry white wines of light weight
Medium acidity, full body, oiliness, peach, apricot, mineral character	Medium acidity, medium body and sweet aromas of banana, peach and herbs	Citrus fruit, mineral aromas, elegance and structure	Citrus fruit, lemony, with underlying acidity and light body
2-4 years	1-6 years	2-4 years	2-6 years
Creamy escalopes, stuffed with blue cheese, portobello mushrooms, poultry	Green salads, Greek pies, stuffed vegetables, whitebait, green pesto	Oven-baked or grilled fish and seafood, cheese pies, cold appetizers, cheese plates	Crispy fried calamari, grilled cheese, red mullet, green salads, avocado dips
Douloufakis Winery, Domaine Lyrarakis, Silva Daskalaki Wines, Diamantakis Winery	Papagiannakos Winery, Mylonas Winery, Domaine Vassiliou, Aoton Winery, Fragou Wines	Gentilini Wines, Sclavos Wines, Orealios Gaea, Haritatos Vineyard	Rouvalis Winery, Tetramythos Winery, Kechri Winery, Sant'Or Winery
Vidiano is a white grape variety from Crete. It yields yellow-green wines with complex aromas of ripe peach, apricot, and aromatic herbs, and has a mineral character. On the palate, they are full-bodied and have a high alcohol content, which is balanced by their moderately high acidity. Some producers make an oak-fermented version of Vidiano that is usually rich, creamy and powerful, with full body.	The most widely cultivated grape variety of Greece, Savatiano gained a bad name as it was used to make cheap retsina. Over the years, technology and modern winemaking techniques allowed producers to bring out the best of the grape. In a nutshell, it gives wines without edges; medium acidity, medium body and moderate alcohol. It produces a very flexible wine that pairs easily with many different dishes and circumstances. Old vines in Attiki are responsible for wines with concentrated fruit and a phenomenal ability to age up to at least 5 years.	A very straightforward white wine with lemony character, ideal with seafood. Its mineral character and refreshing acidity is obtained by cultivation in the high-elevation slopes of Mt Ainos at Kefalonia Island. It has a similar taste mission with Assyrtiko, but lighter in both alcohol and body. Different winemaking techniques (wild yeast, oak-fermentation) can give a wider variety of styles to match different dishes and cuisines.	A clean and crisp white wine that follows the lemony and mineral direction of Assyrtiko and Robola, but with a lighter volume, body and alcohol. The best examples come from the northern Peloponnese, from high-elevation vineyards in the Achaia region. Many winemakers all over Greece use it in their blends to add acidity and nerve to their wines. A flexible, drinkable variety that also has the ability to age.

DECODING THE LEADING INDIGENOUS GREEK GRAPE VARIETIES

Grape Variety	>	XINOMAVRO	AGIORGITIKO	MAVRODAPHNE
Pronounced	>	Ksee-no'-mav-ro	Ah-your-yee-ti-ko	Mav-row-daff-nee
Originating From	>	Naoussa	Nemea	Patras, Peloponnese
Mostly Cultivated	>	Naoussa, Amynteo and most of northern Greece	Nemea, rest of the Peloponnese, parts of northern Greece	Western Greece, mainly Achaia and Kefalonia
Wine Style	>	NAOISSA: dry red wines with an ethereal aromatic profile. AMYNTEO: dry red wines (lighter due to cooler climate) and traditional method white and rosé sparkling wines	Versatile – from elegant young red wines and youthful rosé wines to robust long-ageing wines	Full-bodied dry reds and also fortified, oxidative-style dessert wines
Main Features	>	High acidity, dry tannins, medium body, red currant, tomato sauce, smoke	Medium to high acidity, mild tannins, sour-cherry, cinnamon, clove	Near-black color, dense aromas of dried prunes and currants, high alcohol, medium acidity
Ageing Potential	>	3-20 years	2-8 years	DRY WINES: 5-15 years SWEET WINES: 15+ years
Ideally Paired With	>	Grilled lamb, grilled steak, mushroom risotto	Beef, burgers, spaghetti Bolognese, cannelloni, goat dishes	DRY WINES: mushroom dishes, veal, lamb in a red wine sauce SWEET WINES: chocolate soufflé, bitter chocolate, fudgy stout brownies
Suggested Producers	>	Thymiopoulos Vineyards, Dalamaras Winery, Alpha Estate, Diamantakos Winery, Ktima Kyr-Yianni, Boutari Naoussa, Domaine Karanika	Aivalis Vineyards, Domaine Skouras, Domaine Tselepos, Gaia Wines, Mitravelas Estate	Gentilini Wines, Domaine Mega Spileo, Achaia Clauss, Parparousis Wines
Details	>	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 so as to fully unfold its potential. Xinomavro's color is ruby to garnet, and its aroma profile reminds one of violets, tapenade, 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." Lower yields and extra ageing can tame its character and provide roundness, structure and concentration.	Agiorgitiko is a captivating variety characterized by freshness, intense red fruit and sweet spicy aromas, both on the nose and the palate. 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 from Agiorgitiko are either young, un-oaked dry red wines and red wines aged in barrels for at least 6 months, on rich wines with top-quality, silky tannins. Young wines from Agiorgitiko have a moderately deep red colour, intense aromas of fresh red fruit, moderate acidity and soft tannins.	In recent years, more and more dry wines are being made from Mavrodaphne, a variety largely known for its legendary fortified dessert wines. It gives aromas of dried prunes, currants, and laurel (the Greek word for laurel is "daphne"). It has a great texture, due to its high alcohol and moderate acidity. Mavrodaphne has already earned renown for both its "Port" style dessert wines and its dry version, which has also proven its ability to age and develop further.

MAVROTRAGANO	LIMNIONA
Mav-row-tra-gha-no	Leem-neeoh-nah
Santorini	Karditsa, Central Greece
Santorini and northern Greece	Mainly Central Greece
Full-bodied red wines, suitable for ageing	Ethereal, floral and earthy red wines with the ability to speak of their terroir
Enhanced acidity, tannins and alcohol, full body, black fruit, eucalyptus, smoke, coffee, leather, violets, green pepper, vanilla and nuts	High acidity, medium body, subtle tannins, with aromas of violets and earth
5-15 years	
Veal escalopes in a wine and mushroom sauce; lamb with spicy red sauce; stuffed mushrooms; osso bucco	Tuna or salmon, roasted chicken, duck and other game birds, casserole dishes
Domaine Sigalas, Estate Argyros, Domaine Geroassileiou, T-OINOS	Zafirakis Estate, Monsieur Nicolas Winery, Oenops Wines, Theopetra Estate
Mavrotragano is a very rare red variety from Santorini and, until recently, it was at risk of extinction. The variety combines dense red fruit with roasted coffee and smoke, robust tannins, and a rich and mineral mouth. It is a discreet variety that is able to age for many years, especially the most concentrated, low-yield examples.	Limniona seems to be the next big thing in Greece. It's most often found in Central Greece, near high mountains. Its character brings some of the most intriguing Pinot Noir wines to mind. Young and aged aromas co-exist, making Limniona a complex wine. Its cool character, restrained alcohol and balance offer drinkability and pure pleasure.

RED VARIETIES

REDEMPTION



Robert McCabe first started taking photographs in 1939 when his father, the publisher of a New York newspaper, gave him his first camera, a Kodak Brownie. His deep love for photography took him to different parts of the world, among them Greece, a country he fell in love with, capturing in his pictures its landscapes, its archaeological sites, and a simple lifestyle that has almost vanished. Last year, he was made an honorary Greek citizen in recognition of his efforts to promote Greek culture.

ROBERT McCABE

In the summer of 1954, his brother Charles, who'd had been invited to Greece by a Greek college friend, asked Robert to join them. This unexpected offer led to a surprisingly long stay in a country McCabe had neither seen before nor planned to visit in the near future. The journey was long; it took them fourteen days in a crowded cabin four flights below deck to cross the Atlantic. "On the second or third morning, I was on the upper deck and I climbed down and there was water up to my ankles and I thought: 'Oh my God, this ship is sinking!' There was no one else around, everyone else had already left, and so I grabbed whatever I had with me, which was very little, and I headed upstairs and then, on the way out, I saw that it was the toilet overflowing!" Eventually, that part of the voyage ended in France and, after spending a week in Paris, the brothers took the train to Venice, where they boarded a brand new vessel, the "Achilleas," which took them to the port of Piraeus.

What was it like for a young American to land in Athens in the 1950s and then travel to the islands?

"Athens to me was a very exotic place after Paris and Venice. There were no traffic lights in any of the downtown areas, and it required a kind of a power play by pedestrians trying to cross streets – except on those very rare corners where there was a policeman. But I immediately felt at home. Certainly a part of it was thanks to our friend Peter's hospitality. Out in the street, no one spoke Eng-

lish at that point, absolutely no one. In the US, we lived in a suburb 25 miles from New York City called Rye, a town on Long Island Sound, and I guess after seeing the Aegean, you don't want to go back and spend the summer on Long Island Sound, with the muddy, dirty polluted waters. Really, the murkiness, compared to the Aegean, and the flat terrain... The Aegean is a different world...."

Changing his original plans, Robert McCabe ended up spending most of that summer in Greece, traveling around the Aegean, from Rhodes to Kos to a minute island close to Kos called Yiali, and then to Santorini and Ios. Having fallen in love with the country and its people, he was to return many times, recording in his photographs a way of life that has disappeared from the islands.

Do you feel that a part of the Greek soul has been preserved, or has it all vanished, along with that way of life you saw through your camera lens?

"Well, I think that the answer to that might have been told to me by a lady in Santorini. We were having an exhibition there maybe 12-15 years ago, and there was this lady standing in front of one of the photographs. She had tears in her eyes, and she was saying – and my wife had a long talk with her – that people in Santorini used to say 'kalimera,' or 'good morning,' to one another, and offer glasses of water to any visitor. Now it's all about money, and people don't even have time to say 'kalimera' to you.

"One of my favorite things about all the islands are the old paths where you can walk in peace and quiet through the countryside. I first saw that in Tinos, just amazing pathways down which I walked in the 1950s."

"Travelers in the islands, any island, were a real rarity in the 1950s. When we first went to Santorini, we were absolutely the only visitors there. There were just a couple of motor vehicles. My brother and I were always on the search, even 10-15 years later, for islands where there were no tourists at all. In 1963, I remember I was traveling with my brother, my French friend and his girlfriend, and our family doctor from New York. The mayor of Ios gave his bedroom and his bed to the doctor and slept on the floor in his own living room!

"People wanted to know, obviously, where you were from, and they all wanted to invite you into their homes and give you a sweet and a glass of water. All of that has largely vanished, of course, although I'm sure there are still villages in remote places where they don't get many visitors and where that kind of hospitality prevails. But today, with the country overrun with tourists, it is, of course, very different. Back in 1954, it was very easy to be the only visitor on an island. In 1963, [when] my brother insisted we go to Ios from Santorini, we took the steamer there and, when we arrived, my brother learned there were five French tourists on the island. He wanted to leave! He said: 'This place has already been discovered!'

"During one of our stays in Santorini, we had all our meals at Loukas's taverna, and every time we went to pay, he said: 'Later, later.' Then, on the last day as we were leaving for the boat that was going to take us to Ios, we asked for the bill, and he said 'Souvenir'! We were five people, and we'd been having two or three meals a day for a week; it was an incredible gesture. We left some money under a plate; I don't know whether it was enough or not, but can you imagine that happening today?"

In your book on Santorini, you talk about a marine chart of the island, on which you and your brother drew in imaginary houses, hotels, an airport, and even a cable car before giving it to your friend Peter in thanks for his hospitality. Could you have imagined back then that Santorini would develop into what it has become today?

"Well, we knew it was a unique place, and that there was great potential there, but what we did was a joke, and what's happened of course is a multiple of what we had sketched. I keep exhorting Peter to dig it out, because he's a person who never throws anything away, so I have a feeling it exists somewhere. I know he kept it for a while at least, because he kidded me for a long time that I'd put the airport in the wrong place!"

During your travels in Greece, you must have come across people working in the vineyards. Did you get a sense of the relationship the Greeks have with the vine and wine, especially on Santorini?

"Well, on more than one occasion on Santorini, we went during harvest season to stomp grapes at the 'patitiri,' or 'stomping place.' We ended up with a little farm house on Patmos with a patitiri of its own. The area on the island where we have this little plot of land that we farm had been a grape-growing area, and we were told that they used to ship the must to Egypt. We thought about replanting a vineyard there, but there is a huge water problem; we have to figure out some solution to that before we can really consider a vineyard."

Do you have any Greek favorite wines?

"My Greek favorite wine would be Assyrtiko. I also like some of the Nemea wines."

What would be your advice to a young traveler who is setting out to discover Greece?

"Well, I guess I'd say to see as much as you can, as quickly as you can, because it is going to change. If you look at the endless thirst of the northern Europeans for the Greek climate, and as wealth accumulates and prosperity increases, it's clear why Greece now has a policy of trying to attract retirees from all over the world. It's a policy which, I think, is going to lead to a further erosion of traditional ways of life.

"One of my favorite things about all the islands are the old paths where you can walk in peace and quiet through the countryside. I first saw that in Tinos, just amazing pathways down which I walked in the 1950s. I wish I had taken more photographs of them. In Patmos, there is a beautiful path, which I am doing a book about, actually. It is a path from Vagia to Livadi through the hills with incredible vistas of the island's cliffs and the beautiful Twin Bays. Over the last 20-25 years, it has been chopped away. It started with someone who came in with a bulldozer and, as far as I know, no permit at all, and just bulldozed it into a road. The hiking business is certainly something that can extend the season for the islands, and there are some islands beautifully organized for this, including Andros and Tinos, among others."

Having spent so much time in Greece over the years, what would you advise the Greek people to do in order to preserve what they have?

"Since I became a citizen, I don't think I can give advice to the Greeks anymore...(laughs). Well, they should maintain the beauty of the countryside." ●

Grape Escape goes CRETE

Grape Escape discovers unique wineries with delicious
wines and shares them with you.
Wine experiences designed for lifetime memories.
Say when and your absolute tailor made
itineraries will be planned.
Crete the "Ancient Wine World" is ready to be reexplored.



Say when.

Learn more about our wine tours.

www.grapeescape.gr



SANTORINI

In the twenty years that I've been making a living out of selling wine, I have found myself on the island of Santorini six times, all strictly for business purposes, as we say. I can still recall distinctive moments and details from each trip, although I admit that each time I faced the same difficulties, if not a downright inability to remain focused on my goal.

I suppose that even the most ardent travelers of the 16th century would have a hard time turning their backs on such a majestic and enchanting landscape to concentrate on wine-tasting and on observing the local soil. I know that my own rather compulsive personality has always meant I took home useful information and vivid imagery about winemaking on the island, which time and again I attempt to distill in an effort to explain just what makes Santorini's wines so special and unique. Since the very first moment of the very first trip, one thing has remained clear to me, something that, over time, hasn't changed at all: Santorini is the ultimate terroir.

To put it bluntly, Santorini basically holds the fort, as far as Greek winemaking is concerned. From a practical point of view, the place with the name "Santorini" possesses all of the qualities that result in memorable and exquisite wines. That is to say, it has a historical archive that stretches way back in time, its vineyards and wines have occupied and continue to occupy a dominant position in both the agricultural and social life of the island, and its soil and climatic characteristics are so intense, even extreme in some cases, that they inevitably lead to a wine with an intense personality, fully reflecting its birthplace.

There are times when, messing around a bit with what the experts call "terroir," I arbitrarily divide all the vineyards I've been blessed enough to visit into two categories. The first category consists of the so-called conventional vineyards, where visitors gaze upon wonderful rural landscapes of neatly aligned grapevines. In places such as Tuscany, for instance, the landscape is such a feast for the eyes and at the same time so cinematic that it looks as if the vineyards, the cypresses, and the olive trees have undergone a manicure-pedicure treatment. The wines produced there are usually representative of their respective viticultural zone, although sometimes their recognizability is enhanced by additional factors that are less wine-oriented.

The second category consists of the Vinis Extremis, as I like to call them, situated in regions that, while being well known, are largely difficult to access, such as Valtellina in northern Italy; the volcanic vineyards of Etna in Sicily; Basilicata, deeply hidden between the regions of Campania and Apulia; Valle d'Aosta in the Italian-French borders; Liguria with its steep slopes; Banyuls-sur-Mer

in the southernmost part of France; or the Jerez triangle in Andalusia. These vineyards, despite being just as beautiful as their more typical counterparts in the first category, are also the site of the battle of the grapevine and the winemaker against extreme climate and soil conditions. Indisputably, Santorini belongs to the second category, as it, too, is considered a rugged frontier outpost of the wine world.

The Thera soil ("Thera" being another name for Santorini) specializes in the production of white – mainly dry – wines, based on Assyrtiko, the most important Greek white grape variety, and, to a lesser extent, the varieties Aidani and Athiri. But there are other types of wine to be found on the island as well, such as the sweet sun-dried Vinsanto wines and the dry red ones based on Mavrotragano and Mandilari, albeit in much smaller percentages. The white wines, which are the spearhead of local wineries, are characterised by intense ("dental") acidity, rich body and ageing potential. Today, there are about 20 modern wineries in an area of approximately 2,700 acres of own-rooted vineyards. The plants are cultivated according to the traditional method of *ambeliá*, meaning that they are formed in the shape of a basket, so as to protect the grapes from the seasonal *meltémi* winds and the sand. In fact, it seems to me that *ambeliá* are one of the few remaining bridges connecting the wine producers to their past. The truth is that, nowadays, the vintages aren't as festive as they used to be. Traditional *cánaves* (storage rooms where wooden barrels were once kept) aren't part of modern wineries and their stainless steel tanks. It can even be said that the wines' basic characteristics are somehow different from that of last century's wines.

The bottom line is that the wines of Santorini have experienced both prosperity and decline throughout the years but, having survived difficult historical times, today they're largely well-known, contemporary in nature, and popular. Perhaps this vindicates the abbot of the Lazarist Monastery of Thera, Abbé Pèques (1824-1837), who once wrote: "These wines will not be appreciated, and they will not be sold at their true value, until the people of Santorini learn how to render them fashionable in foreign markets. Because they possess all of the characteristics that can make them welcome everywhere."

SANTORINI

With regard to the region's climatic peculiarities, principally the lack of water, it's worth mentioning that the morning dew that covers the island during the summer months offers the grapevines much-needed moisture. At the same time, the áspa – as the locals call the volcanic soil of Santorini – provides the wines with their famous minerality.

Reminiscing about the past is invariably charming and evokes rather noble, warm and nostalgic feelings in us all. Similarly, the vineyards of Santorini have countless true stories to narrate, thanks to the accounts of Mediterranean travelers and to the efforts of the Fani Boutari Foundation and of Stavroula Kourakou-Dragonas to preserve the island's wine history. This doesn't mean, however, that we should remain dogmatically attached to the habits and traditions of a bygone era. What is certain, in my view, is that the place named Santorini is on the right track. The island's winemakers have managed to produce competitive wines with a distinct identity and a unique role in foreign markets.

Their personalities form a diverse mosaic, where each and every one of them is essential: traditional, modern, innovative, classic, natural, conventional, indigenous or not, they all make their way under the toponymic umbrella of the island, which, truth be told, doesn't leave much room for experimentation or oenological anarchy. To satisfy everyone's thirst for name-dropping, I could refer to a few of them more directly. At the Boutari Santorini winery, there's the Boutari family, who settled on the island in the 80s and played the role of the Noble Family that all place names need in order to establish themselves in the minds of consumers. The winery of Paris Sigalas (located in Baxedes, Oia), which will soon complete 30 vintages on the island, carries out perhaps the most reliable and consistent work among the vineyards of Santorini, with something to satisfy every taste.

Much further south, in the purely viticultural part of the island, stands Estate Argyros, with its accumulated know-how that takes us all the way back to 1903. Their wine style is a straightforward one; their Vinsanto, on the other hand, is so hedonistic that many wine journalists have a hard time accurately describing it. To the east, between Kamari and Monolithos, we find Gaia Estate, where Yannis Paraskevopoulos and Leon Karatsalos have made their mark and added a more innovative approach to the most crystal clear wine profile on the island.

Up north, in Pyrgos, we come across the winery of Haridimos Hatzidakis, who had one of the most effective and, at the same time, idiosyncratic approaches to wine in the whole of Greece. The late founder of this winery left as his legacy a unique, rich and highly expressive wine style, alongside truly beautiful wine memories. Gavalas and Canava Roussos are both family businesses with deep historical roots and a clearly traditional orientation, something that doesn't keep them from attracting enthusiastic supporters/consumers. The winery of Artemis Karamolegos was established in 2004; it, too has family roots in local viticulture and produces very honest, very consistent wines.

Contrary to the lust for commercial titles found in the rest of the country, Santorini has gained its recognition and its current prosperity by building upon its toponymic identity, and on the homogeneity of its wines.

There is, of course, also the dynamo of the island, the "Cooperative" or "Santo Wines," as we call it. In operation since 1947, it currently has 1,200 members and is considered the custodian of Santorini's historical wine heritage. Ktima Tselepos, Ktima Gerovassiliou and Avantis Estate – despite being old acquaintances from other wine-producing zones – all constitute relatively recent arrivals on the island; yet, very much like Vassaltis Vineyards, they had no problem finding their footing and gaining the trust of consumers. To sum up, I'd like to point out that, contrary to the lust for commercial titles found in the rest of the country, Santorini has gained its recognition and its current prosperity by building upon its toponymic identity, and on the homogeneity of its wines. Inevitably, any personal preferences I may have come second to appreciating this united front. ●

Wine tasting at Santo Wines includes enjoying spectacular views of the Caldera.





Les Iles de Sigalas

37°08'54" N | 25°15'15" E



Capturing the Cycladic Zeitgeist

Drink Responsibly

Sigalas wines are available in more than 30 countries.
Visit our website for more information: www.sigalas-wine.com





One might easily think that the most impressive feature of Estate Argyros is its winery. Despite today's visit being my second trip to Episkopi – I was here in 2016, when the winery had just been completed – seeing those characteristic archways set against the surrounding landscape, even for a second time, is still stirring. This time, however, it's not just the architectural features that are making an impact; I soon find myself in the presence of the winemaker himself, a man whose seriousness, confidence and discerning attitude make a lasting impression on everyone he meets.

MATTHEW ARGYROS

A lot has happened in the four years that have elapsed since my first visit. The two top-selling labels of Estate Argyros, Cuvée Monsignori and Cuvée Evdemon, have swept the boards, winning Greek and international awards. When I ask whether he'd anticipated such distinctions, Matthew Argyros, with disarming honesty and without beating around the bush, replies that he'd been expecting them. "And you haven't seen anything yet," he says. "I'm one of those people who's always looking for something better, no matter how good our wines are. That's my goal."

A fourth-generation winemaker-viticulturist on the island of Santorini, Argyros says that his heart and soul are in the vineyard. "My time is spent a lot more pleasantly and creatively in the vineyard; it calms me. Of course, when you're in my position, you need to be everywhere. We've managed to assemble excellent teams; our oenological team is as good as they come, three oenologists with Michalis Probonas at the helm."

Emphasis on the vineyard is part of the family tradition, one that began with his great-grandfather Giorgos, founder of the winery, who was also a vine grower. The baton was then passed on to grandfather Mathio, vine grower, who, when it came to vinification, relied on his father, whereas Matthew's own father placed greater emphasis on the winery. Today, Matthew speaks with great pride about the 1200 acres of vineyard to which he has dedicated so much time, effort and money. A large part of it comprises very old vineyards, some of which are 250 years old. Additionally, a significant part of it has been restructured, mainly with grafting. "After twenty years of hard work, the whole vineyard is in excellent condition," he says.

The Estate has three main labels: the Atlantis series, the Estate Argyros series, and the Cuvée series (with Monsignori, Evde-

mon, and Nychteri, the last of which hasn't been released to the market yet). "The Cuvée are clean-cut wines that express me," Argyros says. "The Atlantis are more marketable. We create wine that the consumer will enjoy, an easy wine, matching the taste of the majority of consumers. Estate Argyros is a wine that also expresses me but, once again, its main focus is the consumer. Of course, what I wanted was a wine that best describes the vineyard. That's why I decided to release Cuvée Monsignori, which comes from the island's oldest vineyards. They belong to the Catholic Church, hence the label's name."

I chose to vinify in stainless steel tanks, because it gave clear and definitive characteristics of each variety, and that was what I was aiming for. Cuvée Evdemon is my favorite; I believe it is Santorini's edgiest wine. There are two vineyards where I cultivate biodynamically – at least, what I interpret as biodynamic culture – where I don't focus on specific recipes or cow horns filled with manure, but on energy. Here, vinification is different; 25% is in French oak barrels and 75% is in stainless steel tanks. Lastly, Cuvée Nychteri could prove to be the winery's greatest label, with the highest scores and the most awards. It's a wine made from some of the greatest vineyards in Pyrgos and Megalochori, and we vinify it in 100% French barrels."

A common feature of all three Cuvée is that, after their bottling, they remain in the cellar for at least a year before being released on the market. "Our desire," Argyros says, "is for consumers, when they buy our wine, to be able to drink it immediately, without needing to wait for it to age. Of course, there are the more knowledgeable ones who will buy a Cuvée Evdemon and will wait five more years before drinking it – all the better."



Detail of the impressive winery at the Argyros Estate.

But how easy is this approach for a winemaker? Doesn't it create financial difficulties? "Of course," Argyros says, "it's not easy to keep product stored in the cellars; it does put a strain on us. We aren't a bank, we're a winery. On the other hand, we can't do it any other way." The experience of ageing Vinsanto, the dessert wines which remain in barrels for many years before being bottled, have paved the way for dry white wines, which reach the market once they are fully ready for consumption. And this, according to the winemaker, is not possible without a privately owned vineyard, which, contrary to popular belief, greatly increases expenses. "In Santorini, it isn't financially beneficial to own your own vineyards, firstly because it requires large amounts of capital to purchase them, and secondly because yields are very small." Yet, despite the difficulties, this is his passion, and the estate's philosophy revolves around the production of these labels.

For Argyros, the winery's trajectory has been very clear from the start, and he's certain that it will lead to the creation of more excellent wines. It's obvious that this is his goal, regardless of cost. "The 2016 Evdemon," he declares, "is an excellent wine, the 2017 is reaching the levels I want it to, the 2018 and 2019 are great wines, top shelf wines. I think that in a few years, Evdemon and Nychteri will be able to hold their own next to some of the biggest white wines in the world. Feeling this way, and seeing how things are going in the vineyard, I believe that within the next decade, the Estate will be making even greater wines, and it's precisely this that gives us strength to continue investing and striving for quality."

Could this winery possibly function as a model for other winemakers operating or aspiring to operate on Santorini? "We are an estate that's on its way," Argyros says. "We've invested in the vineyards, we've invested in a new winery, we're doing the best we can. I hope there will be more wineries that follow suit, because the more of us there are, the stronger we are. The more wineries there are, the more distinctions, the more Santorini's terroir is talked about, and the better it is for all of us."

Where is lacking right now, and what is stopping Santorini from reaching that coveted spot at the top where it belongs? According to Argyros, it's a combination of factors. "To begin with, we winemakers must invest a lot more in the vineyard and the winery. So let us invest, so that things may improve. Many ask if there's room on Santorini for more wineries. Yes, there is, but under one condition: they must invest in the vineyard. For new businesses to come here and get into the process of auctioning off grapes is of no benefit to anyone; that simply leads to skyrocketing prices. What's more, Santorini is in need of proper spatial planning to help straighten out certain plot discrepancies. This, in combination with serious investments which embrace the importance of the vineyard, could lead Santorini to glory. Things are moving, we're headed in the right direction. The more serious we are about our wine, the quicker we'll reach our goal." ●

For Argyros, the winery's trajectory has been very clear from the start, and he's certain that it will lead to the creation of more excellent wines. It's obvious that this is his goal, regardless of cost.



Just a click away!

Wine stories, interesting people, travels, food and wine pairings.

grapemag.gr



The Temple of Zeus
in Ancient Nemea.

I'm still trying to discover why Nemea or, indeed, the whole Peloponnese attracts me so much. It may be due to my Arcadian roots, although it 's been over 130 years since my great-grandfather left Megalopolis in Arcadia to build a new life in Athens.

NEEA

I guess my childhood memories of summer vacations and excursions with my extended family have also played a vital role. You see, for us Athenians, the Peloponnese is the most intriguing and inviting getaway destination, with dozens of beaches, landmarks, attractions and picturesque villages just an hour's drive or two from our doorstep. So what is the Peloponnese about? It's about idyllic walks around Acronafplia and the old town of Nafplio, with the Fortress of Palamidi in the background. It's about enjoying coffee at the relaxed portside cafés while looking out at the small Venetian castle known as Bourtzi. It's about family vacations in Astros Kynourias, in Gythio and in the Mani.

Wandering around Mystras and the fortified town of Monemvasia is important to understanding this place, too, as is swimming in the crystal-clear waters of Stoupa and Kyparissia. The plays at the Ancient Theater of Epidauros, the excursions to Porto Heli and the one-day excursions to the islands of Hydra and Spetses, real jewels of the Saronic Gulf, are yet more of the charms of the area. Discovering the Peloponnese includes riding the cog railway through Vouraikos Gorge and strolling in the mountain villages of Arcadia where the idea of the Greek revolution was born: Vytina, Dimitsana, Stemnitsa, and Valtessiniko. I'm not particularly prone to exaggeration, but I can honestly say that, if the Peloponnese were a country, it would definitely be the most beautiful one in the whole world to me!

NEMEA

As regards wine, Nemea is the highlight. This is the biggest PDO designated wine region in Greece, and it's dedicated to producing red wine from the local Agiorgitiko grape. Juicy, supple and charming, Agiorgitiko is now thriving in various areas of Greece. The Nemea region is a beautiful mosaic of vines, olive trees and cypresses, surrounded by hills and mountains, with the Nemea Valley in the middle. A wonderful, warm Mediterranean climate, elevated areas and different soil types make Nemea a diverse region that gives the winemaker a variety of growing conditions and styles. From the semi-mountainous limestone soils and the stony and gravelly soils on the mountain slopes to the alluvial deposits of the Asopos River in the lowlands, grape growers have a wide range of options at hand.

Nemea's natural beauty is similar to that of Tuscany, although it certainly lacks the cultural and culinary depths of the second. There are no Michelin-starred restaurants here and no celebrity chefs in the area, only a few tavernas with authentic local cuisine that serve the best wines of the region. Nemea, however, can boast of a treasure called Ancient Nemea: a heritage of immeasurable value. The soul of the ancient city is still alive, its spirit firmly rooted in the hearts, minds and feelings of the locals. There are plenty of those who, even today, consider the Nemean lion to be their guardian angel. Nemea can be proud of the excavations of the Ancient Stadium of Nemea, conducted under the auspices of the renowned archaeologist, Dr. Stephen Miller, and of the revival of the Nemean Games, which attract athletes and visitors from all over the world. And, last but not least, there's the Temple and Sanctuary of Nemean Zeus, perhaps the only ancient temple on the planet surrounded by modern vineyards, producing wines for today's wine lovers.

WINES

Visitors to Nemea are invariably fascinated by the nature of the wines. Agiorgitiko is all about roundness, versatility and a sweet aroma profile of sour cherries, red fruits and sweet spices. It is an easy-to-like, round, approachable variety with real depth that can

attract newcomers and wine insiders alike. Nemean wines are really adaptable and can easily accompany countless dishes. The varietal aromas of cinnamon and clove create a bridge with dishes containing minced meat, such as spaghetti Bolognese, stuffed cannelloni or burgers, as well as the famed local dish, rooster marinated in wine. However, the absolutely best Greek pairing for every quality Nemean wine is with a wonderfully caramelized oven-baked giouvetsi. The sweetness of the dish and the acidity of the tomato blend harmoniously with the usually high acidity of the wines, their rich taste and their sweet aromatic character. Nemean wines also work extremely well with other cuisines. Just imagine what such a wine can do alongside an intensely aromatic Chicken tikka masala, with its tomato purée and its curry flavors, how perfectly Agiorgitiko pairs with the tomato and how much its aromatic sweetness relieves the palate before the next deliciously spicy bite. However, the ability of this variety to pair with dishes does not stop here.

THE STYLES

The most common Agiorgitiko wines fall into one of five basic styles. Rosé wines from Agiorgitiko are usually made from grapes grown in high-elevation vineyards (800-850 meters) in areas such as Asprokambos. There is also the young, expressive red wine fermented in stainless steel tanks with zero or minimal maturation in old barrels so that freshness and varietal character are promoted. Older, dry-farmed, densely planted vineyards produce intense wines with complexity and greater ageing potential. Agiorgitiko is also vinified beautifully when blended with international varieties, most often with Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot or Syrah; these grapes contribute with structure, aroma complexity and ageing attributes. Agiorgitiko also produces sweet wines, so few that they can be counted on the fingers of one hand, but equally unique and special.

WINERIES

Visiting the wineries of Nemea, sampling the wines and meeting the people behind them is both fun and educational. In the area of Ancient Nemea, near the archaeological site, one can find producers Papaioannou and Palyvos, while next to Ancient Kleones is the boutique winery of the Lafkiotis family. Near the hill village of Koutsi are the Gaia Winery and the Semeli Estate, while the Dryopi Estate, the majority ownership of which belongs to the Tselepos family, is developing a modern bioclimatic winery which will soon open to the public.

In and around the town of modern Nemea, wine lovers will find a number of exciting options. As you turn off National Road No. 7 (which runs between Corinth and Tripoli) onto the exit for Nemea, you'll come across, in quick succession, the Repanis, Lantidis and Karamitsos wineries. In Nemea itself, you'll find the Nemeion Estate winery and the new Aivalis Wine Guest House where tastings are offered (alternatively, you can attend a session at the Aivalis family winery in Petri). At the other end of the village, the Ieropoulos Winery and the beautiful Gofa Estate are both definitely worth your attention. In the village of Maladreni, in the neighboring prefecture of Argolida but still within the PDO Nemea, is Domaine Skouras, which no wine lover should miss.

This is my Nemea, my Peloponnese, my points of reference, memories and obsessions. I love them all, now and always. In difficult times, I will think, drink and dream of Nemea, and somehow, life will be much more beautiful. The days will be a little more pleasant, and at night the stars that form the constellation of Leo, the symbol and pride of eternal Nemea, will shine that much brighter. ●



ACHAIA AND ILIA, WESTERN PELOPONNESE

Two of Greece's most historic wine regions are rediscovering their heritage. This part of the country, which has had a wine culture for millennia, is an area of diversity and breathtaking natural beauty, and one that's capable of producing exquisite wines.

Achaia and Ilia (also known as Elis) are two of the most celebrated wine regions in Greece. These vinicultural areas lie in the south-western part of the country, in the Peloponnese. West of Ilia is the Ionian Sea, while Achaia borders on both the Ionian Sea to the west and the Gulf of Corinth to the north. Ilia is home to Ancient Olympia, the birthplace of the ancient Olympic Games, while neighboring Achaia hosts the vibrant seaside city of Patras, the third largest city in Greece and a very important trading and transportation center. The port of Patra links the Peloponnese with the Ionian Islands and connects Greece with Italy through regular ferry connections.

This part of western Greece boasts wild mountains that touch the shore and the sky, crystal clear seas, rolling green countryside, forests, archaeological sites, old monasteries, a ski resort, and traditional villages, both on the coast and in the mountains. The abrupt changes in the terrain create dramatic landscapes and provide a large number of micro-terroirs with numerous different soil types in which hardy vines have grown for more than 3000 years. The area is located atop one of the major fault zones in Greece, and the broader area has seen some big earthquakes in the past. It is the movement of tectonic plates, the African plate and the Eurasian plate, that has created this dramatic and complex geomorphology. The combination of sea and mountains provides both magnificent scenery and the ideal Mediterranean climate to help the vines thrive.

ACHAIA AND ILIA: Places of great contrasts

When it comes to size, Achaia and Ilia account for 8.5% of the total area of Greece's vineyards. Achaia's grapevines cover 2900 hectares, and Ilia follows closely behind with 2300 hectares under cultivation. A tour through Ilia's and Achaia's wine regions reveals a beautiful world of both very young and very old vineyards, a combination of excellent indigenous and international varieties, higher elevations and lower-lying spots for viticulture, as well as the contrast of imposing mountain tops within close proximity to the sea. A half-an-hour's drive or less can take you from the shore to an elevation of 1000 meters and a very old vineyard with a sea view. In fact, some of the highest elevations for viticulture, not only in Greece but in all of Europe, are found in this part of Greece and, more specifically, on the mountainous slopes of Aigialia (Achaia region).

A similar contrast can be found in the wineries. The regions of Achaia and Ilia are where some of Greece's iconic large wineries are based, but they're also home to small producers who are just beginning to be recognized in their own right. There are cutting-edge wineries that incorporate the latest technology in their cellars as well as traditional ones that use time-honored approaches to winemaking and a hands-off approach with minimal intervention in the vineyard and the winery.

Among the greatest changes seen throughout the last years is the increased focus on terroir. Passionate producers are doing much more work in both the vineyard and the winery to strengthen the characteristics these special places impart, trying to put as much of the land into the bottle as possible in order to create a unique product which will clearly show its origins.

Overall, the relatively dry Mediterranean climate is excellent for vine-growing. This allows producers to respect nature and practice more sustainable ways of treating the vines. There are wineries practicing sustainable viticulture and others leaning towards organics or even biodynamics. Even those who are applying conventional vinicultural practices are committed to reducing pesticides and producing in a more sustainable way. These efforts can further enhance the importance of terroir.

A TREASURE TROVE OF GRAPES

The diversity of varieties, combined with the majestic terroirs of Achaia and Ilia, is enough to bedazzle any oenophile. Beyond the vines already under exploitation, there is still a treasure trove of unidentified grape varieties waiting to be explored. Pink-skinned Roditis is the "king" of Achaia and Ilia, and the white Muscat is the "jewel" in the crown of some of Greece's best dessert wines, such as those crafted in the PDO Muscat of Patra and the PDO Muscat of Rio Patra. Exotic Mavrodaphne is the undisputed "star" of black grapes and is produced in both regions. Bursting with a lovely herbal quality, it is increasingly being vinified in drier versions, even if the grape's path to fame was carved out by its exquisite sweet fortified wines, made in the style of Port, in the designated PDO Mavrodaphne of Patra. These grapes are well established as some of Greece's best.

Have you ever had tried a unicorn wine, or, in other words, wine from a grape variety grown exclusively in just a tiny part of the world, or vinified from just one producer globally? Asproudes (Tinaktorogos and Santameriana), Sideritis, Black of Kalavrita, Vertzami, Avgoustiatis, Agrippiotis and Koliniatiko are just few of the – tongue-twisting in terms of pronunciation – rare white, pink and red gems you can find in the vineyards of Achaia and Ilia. It's like stepping in a Jurassic world of "grape dinosaurs." What could be more exciting or adventurous than that?

It should be noted that there are some fantastic examples of Assyrtiko, Malagousia, and Agiorgitiko in the vineyards, too, as well as very well-adapted international grape varieties. Not only will you find Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Syrah and Chardonnay thriving here, but rare plantings of Refosco in Ilia and of Pinot Noir on the slopes of Aigialia are present as well. White grapes, such as aromatic Sauvignon Blanc, Riesling or Gewürztraminer, also enjoy the cooler high-elevation spots of Aigialia and produce some amazingly beautiful wines.

ACHAIA AND ILIA, WESTERN PELOPONNESE

THE HOME OF RODITIS (Ro-deé-tees)

The pink-skinned Roditis grape, considered an old grape variety, is the dominant grape variety both in Achaia and Ilia. It accounts for more than 60% of Achaia's vineyards, while in Ilia it covers 35% of the total vineyard. DNA profiling has proved that Roditis is related to the Italian variety Ansonica, found in the region of Tuscany. Molecular analysis yielded conclusive proof of the Greek origin of Ansonica grapes grown on the island of Giglio and in Tuscany. It was imported via the Greek colonies in Sicily in the 4th century BC.

Even the simpler expressions of the grape can be a valuable source of entry-level, value-for-money quaffing wines. These are top-sellers on the Greek and international markets. They are usually sourced from lower-elevation sites with more fertile soil which can give quite high yields. These vineyards are the workhorses of the grape's output and, because of them, Roditis has long been defined more by volume and affordability rather than quality. We shouldn't, however, overlook the fact that Roditis can be both user-friendly and serious. The grape can adapt to a range of styles, from pluggable fruit-driven softies to age-worthy mineral wines.

As consumers become more discerning, producers are looking to create ever more unique wines and styles. More recently, producers have taken it upon themselves to expand the grape's possibilities, striking deeper notes. Many of the best examples nowadays involve an extended period of contact with the lees, which results in greater concentration and texture, and layers of complexity. These wines will benefit from spending extra time in the bottle. As different styles are being explored, there have also been a few experiments with oak (usually partially fermented and aged) that result in a creamier, mouth-coating character.

Following the growing trend of skin-macerated wines, there are some exquisite examples of "orange" Roditis on the market. There are also many producers who are experimenting with new fermentation vessels, such as amphorae and concrete eggs.

Last, but not least, the Roditis grape is very much associated with the traditional style of retsina. Today, producers are embracing a modern new sophisticated style that aims towards delicacy and a balanced resin expression that complements, rather than overwhelms, a good-quality base wine made from Roditis. Some of the best examples are vinified in clay amphorae.

Overall, the quintessential style of Roditis is that of steely minerality, a flinty edge that is both refreshing and age-worthy. Everyone wants acidity, freshness and minerality now. There's something fine and pure about Roditis that most people love.

WINE TOURISM

Traveling through the regions of Achaia and Ilia in the western Peloponnese always means getting to know some very special places and people. A three-to-four-hour drive from Athens on the smooth asphalt of the highway and you'll find yourself sandwiched between craggy mountains and kilometers of golden sandy beaches.

ACHAIA: A visit to the iconic castle of the Achaia Clauss Winery in the suburbs of Patra is an unforgettable experience; its cellars hold some of the oldest wines in Europe, with many bottles dating from the 19th century. The 1979 Mavrodaphni Grand Reserve is bliss, a truly unique and unforgettable taste experience. The Parparoussis Winery, established in 1974 by Athanasios Parparoussis at Bozaitika (now known as Proastio) in Patras, is a serene paradise a short distance from the city. Their dry Taos Mavrodaphne sets a benchmark for this grape variety, bursting with lovely herbal qual-

ΕΘΞΕΑΜΟΥ  UWCSAMOS
SAMOS WINES

DIVINE MUSCAT WINES
— ΤΑ ΚΡΑΣΙΑ ΤΩΝ ΘΕΩΝ —



TRAVEL

ity. Antonopoulos Vineyards is among the best wineries in Greece, crafting elegant, cool-climate wines from indigenous and international grapes. Try, among other beauties, their sublime Nea Dris red made from Bordeaux varieties. Kintonis and Kotrotsos are notable producers who craft excellent wines from a number of different grapes. Patraiki Wines, the co-operative of Patra, is also known for its extensive range of both dry and sweet wines.

Tetramythos Winery is a leading low-intervention winery in the village of Diakopto on the slopes of Aigialia, crafting terroir-driven wines. Their whole range is exciting, including their experiments with rare indigenous varieties such as Black of Kalavrita and Agripiotis. Rouvalis, also located on the slopes of Aigialia, produces unforgettably elegant, cool-climate wines from local and international grape varieties grown at elevations of up to 1000 meters. Another highlight of the Aigialia region is the Mega Spileo vineyard of the Cavino Winery, a leading player in the market. The vineyard is located within the steep Gorge of Vouraikos, at a mean elevation of 800 to 900 meters. The view of the vineyard as you approach from above it is breathtaking, and the wines display fantastic purity and high-elevation freshness.

There are many other wineries in Achaia worth mentioning. SANT'OR is the first biodynamic-certified winery in Greece that makes excellent natural wines from local varieties. Acheon Winery is another family-owned, small-scale producer with a lovely range of local grapes such as Roditis, Mavrodaphne, Sideritis and Muscat. Kanakaris Winery is located on the slopes of Aigialia and is also open to visitors. The range of vines is diverse, with lovely aromatic expressions of domestic varieties such as Malagousia and Roditis as well as the international varieties Syrah and Merlot. Edanos Winery is a very small, quality-oriented producer creating elegant, fresh mineral wines befitting the high-elevation vineyards.

ILIA REGION: The Mercouri Estate includes a beautiful chateau next to the sea with a history that dates back 140 years. It was established in 1864, in Korakohori, Ilia, near Ancient Olympia. It is associated with the Refosco grape, first planted on the estate in the 19th century. Mavrodaphne, Roditis, Avgoustiatis and other local and international grapes are also thriving on the estate.

Brintziki Estate is the first "green" winery in Greece, with a zero-energy footprint. The winery covers all its power requirements with the help of solar and geothermal energy. It is located in Lantzoi-Ilia, near Ancient Olympia, and the facilities are surrounded by a carefully tended organic vineyard planted with varieties such as Tinaktorog, Avgoustiatis, Roditis, Fileri, Assyrtiko, Malagousia and Merlot.

Stavropoulos Estate is one of the newest wineries in Ilia. It is located near the Pineios Delta, an area of spectacular beauty belonging to the Natura 2000 network of protected biotopes. Varieties such as Assyrtiko, Merlot and Avgoustiatis thrive in the privately owned organic vineyards.

Olympia Land Estate continues a long family tradition in the region of Ilia. The privately owned vineyards are planted with varieties that include Assyrtiko, Malagousia, Moschofilero, Chardonnay, Agiorgitiko, Avgoustiatis, Syrah and Merlot.

Very close to the birthplace of the Olympic Games is the Markogianni Winery, a small family winery that experiments with the production of varieties such as Roditis, Mandilaria, Mavrodaphne, Vertzami, Kolliniatiko and other local grapes. Try their orange versions of Assyrtiko and Roditis, as well as their natural rosé made from a field blend of grapes. The family welcomes visitors and conducts guided winery tours and wine-tasting sessions just a few kilometers from the mesmerizingly beautiful River Alfios, famed in mythology. ●



winery
diamantakis

DIAMANTOPETRA
VIDIANO • ASSYRTIKO

Decanter

Blind tasted by **Ronan Sayburn MS**,
Beth Willard, **Andy Howard MW**
(Decanter's Wines of the Year tasting,
London, 15 Oct 2020)

Part of Wines of the Year 2020:
white wines
95

Rich, powerful, distinctive Greek blend with lovely ripeness of stoned fruits, saline minerality and an underlying smokiness. Very good use of oak here, subtle but adds to the complexity on the palate. Long, distinctive and smoke on the finish.

Drinking Window 2021 - 2026



www.diamantakiswines.gr

I first met Austrians Barbara Gruber and Jörg Salchenegger, owners of Lacules Estate, in the summer of 2020 at their fascinating house near Koroni in Messinia, in the Peloponnese. What started as a mere vacation house in the 1990s has become an impressive wine-growing estate by the sea, producing stunning red wines from international grapes. Barbara's father Friedrich Gruber bought the house, but it wasn't until he hosted some winemaking friends from Italy that the wine idea came up.

LACULES ESTATE

The Italians suggested that Friedrich's house would not be complete without a beautiful terraced vineyard around it so, starting with a barrel's worth of wine, produced as a kind of family hobby, Gruber ended up turning professional some years later. His daughter, Barbara Gruber, and her husband, Jörg Salchenegger, have since taken over the estate. Apart from the breathtaking view and the relaxing family atmosphere, I really loved their wines: The Chord (70% Grenache Rouge, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Syrah) is an ideal introduction to the other Lacules wines: a varietal Merlot and a 70% Syrah, 30% Grenache blend. Months after I first visited, we decided to catch up and chat from where we left it.

What's it like to run a business that began as a simple vacation project? How do you turn a hobby into a professional endeavor, and was there a milestone (such as sales figures) that signaled the change in status?

Well, first of all it's still a hobby, because we love it! I believe it'll always be a hobby for us, regardless of sales. But to answer the question, after two years of trying we finally got impressive results from our 2013 vintage. Then we had an internship in Napa that opened our eyes further. I believe this was the point when we realized our hobby could become a professional undertaking.

Another milestone was our decision to expand. We were initially vinifying in half barrique, so that was quite easy! Another milestone was our friendship and collaboration with Christos Kokkalis. Without him, we wouldn't have had any access to more grapes. At the beginning, we needed the grapes to vinify slightly bigger batches, to see how it would go. It was pure luck that we met him. Another crucial step was when we met another Christos, our vineyard manager, who has a Merlot vineyard in Kremmydia. After that, we realized we had enough grapes and resources to move up to another level, so we put together a Greek team and made it happen. Finally, our meeting with Oenocosmos* was very important to our development as it was through them that we started selling our wines to retailers. Up to that point, we had mostly targeted private consumers in Austria and Germany.

How did they discover you?

That's a funny story! At some point, we gave a bottle of our wine to Camvillia, a 5-star resort in Koroni, as a "thank you" for the nice service. Without us knowing it, the bottle passed from the waitress to the boss, and from him to the Oenocosmos salesman, who brought it back to Athens. They tried the wine and gave us a call. Sometimes you don't need a plan; you just need to stay loyal to your goal of delivering the best quality possible.

You are splitting your time between Austria and Greece and, likewise, your wines are grown and initially vinified in Greece, while élevage and ageing are finished in Austria. Do you consider your wines half Greek, half Austrian? Marketing-wise, is this an obstacle?

No, our wines are 100% Greek. The grapes are grown in Greece under the Greek sun; the climate, the soil and everything else the grapes need are Greek. Fermentation takes place in Greece. We also do not use additives, so what arrives in Austria is the same product that will be bottled, only with some extra oak maturation. (For vintages 2013, 2014 and 2018, the wines are placed in barrels in Greece.) We're only doing this because bottling in Austria is a practical solution at this stage. Our ultimate goal is for everything to happen in Greece, from grapes to the finished products.

What is the overall annual production in bottles? Which are the main markets for Lacules?

We currently produce 5,000-7,000 bottles annually, the majority of which are sold to Austrian clients. The remaining quantities are sold in Greece, Germany, Switzerland and Singapore. We plan to grow our production to 15,000, maybe 20,000 bottles.

Is it difficult to sell Greek wines in Austria? Do you think the fact that you're Austrian makes people more eager to buy or to try your wine?

Barbara Gruber and Jörg Salchenegger in their winery at Lacules Estate.



Greek wine is difficult to sell in Austria, especially in restaurants. The Austrian market mainly consumes Austrian, Italian and French wines, and the gastronomic world there is not yet keen to change that, not with the current price structure. So, at present, Greek wine can only be sold in Greek restaurants.

We do have the occasional wine geeks in the food and beverage industry who are always willing to experiment and try new things. But the biggest market for us is the private sector, individual consumers who are more eager to try. Let's not forget that, until recently, quality Greek wine was not well represented in Austria. For most consumers, Greek wine was associated with cheap wine. Only recently has this perception started to change. Now, more and more Austrian consumers are aware that Greece offers great quality wines. This is a promising market, especially for promoting the indigenous varieties.

What would be your advice to any Greek winemaker wanting to make it in the small but demanding Austrian market?

Come in with great quality, some special varieties and the right contacts, people who'll believe in Greece and its wines. Top quality marketing, a constant flow of interesting stories for the sommeliers to inspire their customers, a lot of private tastings, and a lot of talk will be required to convince people. Very hard work, in the end!

Do your customers ask for indigenous Greek grapes? Are there any plans in this direction?

Yes! Our Austrian customers in particular love our wines, but they'd be the ones to buy wines made from indigenous Greek varieties. Three years ago, we planted Avgoustiatis and Limniona; this summer we'll harvest them for the first time. We're still waiting to find out whether the results are satisfactory or not. Coincidentally, just today we also purchased new Mavrotragano cuttings that we intend to plant very soon.

I see you're particularly loyal to the red wine style.

Yes, but not exclusively. This year we are making a brut, tank-fermented sparkling rosé mainly from Kydonitsa and Moschofilero. Grape varieties will not be mentioned on the label, though, for now at least.

From the foreign investor's point of view, did you find it easy or difficult to start and grow your business in a small Greek village? Do you consider Greece an easy or difficult environment for investors?

For us, it wasn't so hard because we didn't come into the area as strangers. Also, if you start small, like we did, and if you have a good network of locals, a reliable community of friends, then problems will be easier to solve. We have a lot of helping hands, a lot of acceptance. The authorities, on the other hand, could be more helpful than they are. Even so, we have our network of supporters who can help us deal with anything that may come up.

What are your plans for the near future?

We are thinking about building a winery near Koroni, in a facility that will be separate from the house. There, we'll be able to host all the different production stages, including, of course, maturation and bottling. ●



I'm strolling down to Piraeus on a calm and glaringly sunny day (before lockdown), and I think again of the foreigners who come here and see all this beauty. They probably run out of words. This is promptly confirmed by the man I've come to visit, Lefteris Lazarou, who greets me with a typically wide smile under his ever-present moustache: "The sun is definitely the main attraction; yet the evenings can be just as magical... What can I tell you, I grew up here, I've played here as a kid, I work here, and I want to believe that I'll end my days here. There's nowhere else for me to go," he says, like a genuine Piraeus lad.

LEFTERIS LAZAROU

Lefteris Lazarou feels like someone you've known for a long time. He's such a familiar and warm-hearted person that I find myself thinking of him as a family member, the one who will cook for you at the next big get-together. But I didn't want to talk with him about beginnings, about cooking or about restaurants; I wanted to have a laid-back conversation about the things he loves.

The fact that you decided to collaborate with the "Shedia"* street magazine, seems to me rather touching – to say the least...

The truth is that I didn't need yet another job. But to me, this was an obligation. I am still indebted to this country that nurtured me, and continues to nurture me. And essentially, and rightfully, everything I have in my mind, in my soul, and in my art belongs to this country. So I believe I should share what I have and pass it on, as a legacy. I don't want people to remember me as a good cook, and nothing else. I want people to remember me as someone who left his mark.

"Shedia," as the word suggests in Greek, is all about making plans, and this is the most important thing: making plans with people who are in genuine need of them. It is extremely difficult to sit down with someone who only knows how to boil an egg and teach them how to cook properly. Yet these people manage to learn, and they do with a great amount of dignity. This is something I'm proud of, because the goal of "Shedia" isn't to gather twenty people, train them and then keep them. It is to train them and then slowly help

them enter the job market, find a job, make a living and support their families with dignity, as they did before. That's the idea. Despite the major problems that exist, "Shedia" aims to become available in Thessaloniki and in other big cities. So when you come across a seller of "Shedia," even if you don't want to buy the magazine, that's perfectly OK. The important thing is to greet them return, to wish them "Good morning." These are people who have and deserve their dignity. I also consider it a great idea that any unsold issues don't get turned into pulp, but instead are returned to Shedia and become useful objects.

Besides your culinary abilities, which are undeniable, what other talents would you like to possess?

I'd love to be a good fisherman. I've never really succeeded at it, not because I'm unlucky at it, but because I lack the patience. I am generally a hyperactive person; it's not easy for me to sit still in a chair.

Do you read cookbooks?

No, I don't. It's really easy for me to come up with a recipe. The last book that made an impression on me was a novel by Alex Michaelides entitled "The Silent Patient." I read it within a week. My schedule allows me very limited time slots when I have the peace of mind to sit down and read. I think that it takes time to properly enjoy a book.

As a creative person, I can never function without other people, without friends. So I attach a great importance to friendship. This is true for many lads from Piraeus. To me, friendship is truly unique and I could never betray it, so I function, I co-operate with these people, whom I love very much, and I embrace this condition.

Looking back, do you recall a particularly bad moment in your career when you said to yourself: "I won't make it, I won't succeed, I won't get over this"?

Not bad moments, no, because I am very optimistic by nature. But I do recall some difficult ones. I went through a difficult decade with my restaurant in Piraeus, with the turbulence in the center of Athens – we all remember these times with a sense of bitterness and pain. I don't recall any bad moments, but I remember some difficult ones, which I managed to overcome one way or another. During the crisis decade, I was among those who had work. And this year again, with COVID-19, I've also had work. Things were tough on the tourism front, but luckily the Greek consumers were there for us. People choose to go to the restaurants where they feel confident and safe, restaurants that respect their employees as well as their guests. That being said, we are probably going through the most difficult period, because, above all, it is uncharted. Unfortunately, after 35 years at Varoulko and 50 years of my own career in the food and beverage business, for the first time I feel, let's not say scared, but very troubled indeed. Still, we are at a time when there are job openings available, there are investments, at a time when the creative aspect of cooking is there. By this I mean the very joy of cooking, which for us cooks is basically to put our ideas into effect and share them with guests; to get their feedback, to see people smiling, see their eyes shining: this is our reward, not the day's earnings. So I want to believe – and I hope – that we will soon get over this and rediscover our lives and who we are, who we must become in order to have every reason to be alive.

How did your relationship with wine begin?

My relationship with wine began when Varoulko first opened in 1986-87. Back then, I had an urge to do things differently, because this is what my personality is like. First of all, I created a style of cooking that was purely my own. Then I started asking around to learn more about wine, and I discovered Geroassiliou's "Château Beau Soleil." I discovered the late Thanassis Papaioannou, who was the first winemaker in Greece to produce a Beaujolais. I discovered the distinguished Thanassis Parparoussis, with his Gifts of Dionysus, Drossalis, and Oenari. I discovered Moraitis, and Anestis Babatzimopoulos, too, a mythical figure of distillation. I have a photo somewhere showing him with an alembic inside the first Varoulko restaurant, where we demonstrated the distillation process, and I am there holding a fire extinguisher. Varoulko was really tiny back then. By the beginning of 1988, I was offering a selection of around 40 wine labels, ranging from Macedonia and Santorini to Kefalonia.

Is it possible to ruin a nice dish by pairing it with the wrong wine?

A wrong wine may not highlight the dish, or it may not take the guest on a very memorable journey. So I think that this lovely marriage, this union, is truly unique when things fit ever so nicely; so the sommelier should be thoroughly informed about the composition of the dish. I used to play this role myself: the lads (the sommeliers) came much later. In 1994, Nikos Loukakis was in charge of Varoulko's wine list. There were no sommeliers in Greece back

then. When it comes to wine, we all have to thank Dimitris Litinas: he owned the Aspro wine bar in Psyrri. He was the one who taught both Loukakis and me the very first things we ever learned about wine. I'll never forget the endless nights we spent at Aspro, where many of us cooks came together to call it a day, to drink a lovely wine, and to eat some meze prepared by the lads: Chrysanthos Karamolegos, Tsingas, then Peskias later on. In 1994, if you had a sommelier at your restaurant, people looked at you a bit strangely. And then, little by little, we started to convince people. We introduced some slightly better wine glasses, we started to insist on pairing red wines with seafood, and on decanting them...

Your favourite grape variety?

Lately, I prefer Malagousia.

Does one's taste in wine change?

Of course; mainly over time, perhaps. The minerality of one's palate begins to function differently. During the course of a dinner, I can go through two or three different wines. When I really want to enjoy a meal, I prefer to start off with a tsipouro – when I have the time, that is, because afterwards it's not easy to return to the kitchen and get to work. I don't get along particularly well with Assyrtiko wines. They're usually not my first option, although I consider them of excellent quality. They simply don't work for me. Chardonnay fascinates me the most: I'd be happy to try a Chardonnay wine at all times.

Your ideal food and wine pairing?

As much as it comes as a surprise, rosé wines have taken a big piece of the pie. I mean, a Xinomavro paired with a steamed anglerfish is just sublime, thanks to the celery, the spring onions, the slight burning sensation left by the pepper plant, the discreet lemon with its mild acidity, and of course the anglerfish's own divine aromas. This fish has such a personality, and it enhances Xinomavro wines in such a way, that you think to yourself: "May I eat a dish like this every day, have two glasses of wine, and may time just stand still."

What do you consider most important in life?

As a creative person, I can never function without other people, without friends. So I attach great importance to friendship. This is true for many lads from Piraeus (and I don't mean University of Piraeus students, I mean people who were born and raised in Piraeus!). To me, friendship is truly unique and I could never betray it, so I function, I co-operate with these people, whom I love very much, and I embrace this condition.

Who would be your hero, in your personal life?

I think that I have many heroes, Greece is full of them, and I have learned many lessons in life from many "ordinary" people. A hero to me is someone who wears the vest of "Shedia," puts his name on the tag, and goes out to the streets to sell the magazine. I've done it myself, and I've felt very proud to do it. ●



1997

Δημιουργείται η Οινοποιητική Μονεμβασιάς από την οικογένεια Τσιμπίδη, με όραμα να ξαναβάλει το μοναδικό, αλλά χαμένο στο χρόνο, terroir της Μονεμβασιάς στον παγκόσμιο οινικό χάρτη, επενδύοντας αποκλειστικά σε ελληνικές, γηγενείς ποικιλίες.

300

Ειρέματα βιολογικών αμπελώνων σήμερα, μας δίνουν κρασιά με τυπικότητα και συμπυκνωμένο χαρακτήρα.

400

Διεθνή βραβεία μας ωθούν να συνεχίσουμε!

Αποκλειστική διάθεση για Ελλάδα: Β. Σ. Καρούλιας — t: 2146 876 200



Sweet wines are very important, both in terms of quality and quantity, for the image of the Greek wine sector.

GREEK SWEET WINES

From a quantity point of view, out of the 40 wine (not regions) PDOs in Greece, 13 are dedicated to sweet wines. This is a third of the total PDO wine system; one out of every three wine PDOs is a sweet wine. This number alone confirms the significance of sweet wines to Greek wine production.

THE PDOS DEDICATED TO SWEET GREEK WINES ARE:

Santorini Vinsanto, Samos, Muscat of Lemnos, Muscat of Rio Patras, Muscat of Rhodes, Muscat of Patras, Muscat of Cephalonia, Mavrodaphne of Patras, Mavrodaphne of Cephalonia, Malvasia Sitia, Monemvasia-Malvasia, Malvasia Paros and Malvasia Handakas-Candia.

Many of these wines sell at high prices and garner high scores from critics around the world, so it's not only a matter of quantity but quality, too. What is it exactly that makes Greek sweet wines so special, and what can they offer the world? First of all, it's the sun; we make great sweet wines because of the sun, rather than the lack of it, as is the case in the northern part of Europe. The main variety used for sweet wines is Muscat (Alexandria and white). You'll find all kinds of Muscat wines: sun-dried, fortified, naturally sweet, and with and without oak. Samos is the most famous PDO by far for sweet Muscat wines. The white Muscat with the small grapes has adapted to the island's terroir in magnificent ways. The grape itself is intense; its acidity is refreshing and balances the sweetness. The high-elevation vineyards of Samos deliver very flavorful fruit which will adapt to any style the winemaker wants to give to the wine. Styles vary from young and refreshing to sun-dried and aged in oak on to fortified and aged in oak. The wines can age gloriously, and are in fact the ultimate value-for-money sweet wine.

According to the style of wine, you can serve it with fresh fruits with honey, creamy desserts like *crème brûlée*, or even chocolate-based desserts. Lemnos is another island where Muscat of Alexandria has adapted well. Wines here are very aromatic and intense but less complex than those of Samos. You can find sun-dried, fortified and naturally sweet wines, but the ideal yield here is a young and seductive wine. All kinds of fruity and creamy desserts pair well with these wines. Muscat of Rio Patras uses the white Muscat, as on Samos. Wines can be sun-dried, fortified or naturally sweet, with great flavor concentration and potential ageing. Muscat of Patras uses white Muscat, too, and is made by the same methods, but its vineyards cover a larger area than that of Rio. You can combine Muscat of Patras with yogurt desserts, with caramelized fruits, and with a milky orange rice pudding we call "*risogalo*." Muscat of Rhodes is a blend of white Muscat and Muscat di Trani. It is a very delicate version of Muscat wine, quite aromatic and less concentrated than that of Samos. Wines are made from sun-dried grapes or using fortification techniques. A very common pairing is with an orange cake topped with "*kaimaki*" ice cream; the acidity of the orange is balanced by the creamy texture of the ice cream and the wine.

Muscat of Cephalonia is 100% white Muscat cultivated in the northern part of the island. Concentrated flavors with refreshing acidity are produced from sun-dried grapes or fortified wines. Two traditional desserts that go well with these wines are "*ravani*" Veria-style, made from yogurt and semolina, and "*honey-pie*" from the

island of Sifnos, made with honey and *anthotyro*, a fresh, salty and creamy cheese. Mavrodaphne of Patras, one of the most famous dessert wines in Greece, is made from Mavrodaphne grapes (at least 51%) and Corinthian black currants. The wine is red, and fortification takes place during the fermentation. The wine matures in large oak casks for a considerable time. Hints of black fruit, raisins, nuts, and chocolate are the main characteristics of this wine. Mavrodaphne of Cephalonia is very similar to Mavrodaphne of Patras. Both wines are ideal for chocolate desserts.

Vinsanto from Santorini is one of the most acclaimed wines of the modern wine era. It is made exclusively from sun-dried Assyrtiko (minimum 51%), Aidani and other native grape varieties. As they dry, the grapes lose water, and acidity becomes concentrated at even higher levels, balancing out the sweetness magnificently. Vinsanto can be aged for a considerable time in oak. After a few years, the wine offers loads of sweetened and caramelized fruits, but as time progresses, its character transforms, and you get dry nut, coffee and chocolate. With its high sugar content, only the sweetest desserts can accompany it, or you can go for contrast with very salty cheeses like San Michali, Kopanisti or Roquefort. Malvasia of Paros is one the newest PDOs in Greece, established in 2011. The grapes are Monemvasia (at least 85%) and Assyrtiko. The wine should be aged for 24 months in oak barrels prior to release. Production can be from sun-dried grapes and/or via fortification. The ideal dessert for this wine is "*ekmek*," made with either *kataifi fyllo* or *tsoureki* as its base, and topped with custard and whipped cream.

Monemvasia-Malvasia was added as a new PDO in 2011 as well; the wine is produced at the southeastern end of the Lakonia region in the Peloponnese. The grapes are Monemvasia (at least 51%), Assyrtiko, Asproudes and Kydonitsa. The wine is made from sun-dried grapes and/or via fortification. Oxidized ageing for at least two years is mandatory; if it is done for longer, it has to be for four years or for multiples of four. Because of its oxidative character, the wine carries notes of honey and nuts, making it appropriate for *baklavas*, the famed dessert of sweet *fylo* stuffed with caramelized nuts.

The PDO Malvasia Handakas-Candia covers a major part of the region of Irakeio, making it the largest PDO on the island of Crete. This wine is more or less a blended wine, rather than a varietal as many of the previous ones; at least 85% should be from a blend of Assyrtiko, Vidiano, Trapsathiri and Liatiko, and no more than 15% of white Muscat and Malvasia di Candia aromatica. The wine is made from sun-dried grapes and/or via fortification, and should be aged for at least 24 months in oak barrels prior to bottling. A traditional Cretan dessert pairs well, a sweet treat called "*mamoulia*" that's made with almonds, walnuts and rosewater. The PDO Malvasia Sitia shares the same blending rules as the Malvasia Handakas-Candia, but its zone is situated in Lasithi, in the eastern part of Crete, at an elevation between 300-700 meters; it, too, was established in 2011. Another traditional dessert from Crete, "*patouda*," a pastry made with nutmeg, walnuts, almonds, sesame and honey, is an option as well. In general, Greek sweet wines are concentrated in flavor, sugar and acidity, with medium to high alcohol levels, and are oak-influenced across most of the winemaking styles, including the many fortified versions. They offer great evolution over time, with tertiary aromas and length in the finish, and are still in a very affordable price range. Enjoy them! ●

- 1 Cuvée De Reserve
Karanika 2106
€30.40**

Cuvée De Reserve, the epitome of sparkling wine in Greece, comes from Amynteo. Laurens Hartman, Annette Van Kampen and oenologist Lia Gatsou choose natural methods of cultivation and vinification and, of course, the “Méthode Traditional.” Without a trace of dosage, and with five years on the lees in the bottle, the Xinomavro has the time to mature and remain fresh and dynamic. Crisp acidity, lime and flint, aromas of dough and butter, long-lasting in sparkling and aftertaste are some of the elegant features of Cuvée de Reserve.
- 2 Can Sumoi Ancestral
Montònega 2018
€17.90**

Can Sumoi Ancestral Montònega is a sparkling wine, produced by the traditional sparkling wine method, in the Penedès region of Spain. Pepe Raventós wants to produce wines with origins, giving the real identity of the place with a sincere and genuine expression of the terroir of the area. To achieve this, he cultivates the vineyard using biodynamic methods. The harvest is done by hand, the yeasts are indigenous, native to the vineyard and the grapes, and the fermentation is completed in the bottle where it remains for a few months until it is marketed. It is a balanced, aromatic and extremely summery sparkling wine with crisp acidity, elegant bubbles and a slightly salty finish.
- 3 Xiropotamos Tatsi 2018
€13.90**

The Tatsi brothers, pioneers of biodynamic cultivation, highlight the Xinomavro in their own way. Since 2011, Xinomavro has been released in the blanc de noir version, which stays on the lees for a year. The wine was made without much oenological intervention; it is a gastronomic wine, with high acidity and, of course, like all “Tatsis” wines, with a strong character.
- 4 Vidiano Young Vines
2020, Iliana Malichin
€16.90**

Vidiano Young Vines, as its name suggests, comes from new vineyards aged 5 to 15 years at an elevation of 650 to 700 meters, in Melampes, Rethymnon. Iliana Malichin shows us that, when it comes to a unique terroir, even the young vines can give an impressively pleasant result with a strong taste and aromatic concentration. Produced by spontaneous fermentation, it stays on the lees for 6 months without further intervention.
- 5 Santorini Vassaltis 2020
€26.90**

Vassaltis' company has grown up and is now developing its talent. Focusing on the best-known label of the winery, they produce a wine that is now established in the market as one of the leading wines of Santorini. The main feature of this wine is the balance between all its elements; minerality, fruit, body, acidity, and alcohol coexist harmoniously to produce an explosive wine.
- 6 Kalabele Karimali 2020
€12.40**

Kalabele 2020 is the first wine of Iliana Karimali. The young chemical engineer-oenologist, daughter of George Karimalis, presents, as a second-generation winemaker, her first wine. Kala-bele, meaning "good vineyard," is a name for the ancestral field of the family, the one most suitable for planting vineyards. Kalabele is a wine of minimal intervention which is made from Begleri and Assyrtiko. The vinification is done with native wild yeasts, and the wine, staying on the lees for a few days, is golden yellow, with a full body and balanced acidity.
- 7 Santameriana
Santor 2020
€14.40**

In 2007, Panagiotis Dimitropoulos decided to continue the tradition of his family in viticulture, and started making wines with minimal interventions from biodynamic cultivation vines. Santameriana is a rare local variety which, until recently, belonged to the "Asproudi" (white wine) family. It ferments spontaneously and remains in stainless steel tanks for about 6 months. Intensely explosive in the nose and mouth, with aromas of mainly citrus, it also offers more ripe exotic fruits.
- 8 Sébastien Riffault,
Akmenine 2017
€23.90**

Sancerre guerrilla Sébastien Riffault does it all in his own unique way. Akmenine, a Sauvignon Blanc from the single vineyard series, is an incredible, oxidizing style and hardcore natural vinification wine, produced from grapes affected by 50% botrytis. It is rich and strong, and its characteristic orange color comes from oxidation and not from contact with the marcs. It offers yellow fruits, jam, honey and dried herbs around a strongly mineral background.
- 9 Santa Maria La Nave,
Millesulmare 2017
€62.40**

When Sonia Spadaro started, she was determined to produce wines of limited availability, with her main ambition being the revival of very old vineyards (80-100 years old) from two selected vineyards in the volcanic soil of Etna, the active volcano of Sicily. Millesulmare is a wine of long ageing from the rare variety Greca.
- 10 Alchymiste Rosé
Sclavos 2020
€11.90**

The rosé Alchymiste by Evryviadis Sklavos, is for all those who feel that they have a complex and erotic relationship with taste. It is far from the modern rosés of the Provence type. This is a field-blend rosé from old Mavrodaphne and Moschatela (Greek varieties). The flower aromas, the fruit and the minerality of the two varieties are mixed, creating one of the most beautiful rosés that come out in our country.
- 11 Pleiades Ktima
Flamourou 2020
€14.90**

Produced on the beautiful island of Anafi, "Pleiades" by Stefanos Michalis comes from the red varieties of the island where they are pressed in basket presses, fermented and fermented... The bottling is done without filtering, and only 700 bottles of this gastronomic rosé are out there!

WINE KIOSK

SUMMER BEST BUYS

12 **IERIA Bosinaki 2020**
€11.90

IERIA is the second label of the Bosinaki family. It's a rosé from 100% Moschofilero that comes from a single vineyard in the area of Mantinea. Its light pink color is acquired after 24 hours on the peels. A light summer rosé wine, it highlights the aromatic character of the variety and has a very interesting nose and light to medium body.

13 **Limnio, Anatolikos Vineyards 2017**
€18.90

In a northern coastal organic vineyard, in Abdera of Xanthi, Limnio is produced by the Nikolaidis brothers. This wine is vinified with minimal intervention and matures for 12 months in old oak barrels. The perfect summer wine, and more, it matches with cream and tomato-based stews, although the

favorite combination of Marios Nikolaidis is with lamb in the oven.

14 **Merle Dalamara 2020**
€11.90

Merle, a Merlot from the vineyard of Paliokalia, spontaneously ferments and is bottled with low sulfites, without any other addition or intervention. It is a pure expression of the variety, with aromas of milk chocolate, black berry and fresh vanilla, all complemented by hints of bitter chocolate and dried mint in the mouth. In short, it's a very tasty and fresh summer wine.

15 **Rapsani Old Vines Dougos 2017**
€19.40

Thanos and Louiza Dougos, second-generation winemakers, have been cultivating 90 acres in the area of mountainous Rapsani since 1991. The cultivation is organic

and done without irrigation in mainly shale soils on slopes. In the Tourtoura area, there are several old vines, aged 65 and over, from which Rapsani Old Vines is made. A wine with red fruit, quite herbal, complex and with intense well-worked tannins, it matures in old French barrels for 18 months.

16 **Laurier Noir natur, ε, Tetramythos 2019**
€20.90

More and more Mavrodaphne is being produced recently, proving that this is indeed a great variety. The latest big surprise for us, and probably the best debut, is "Laurier Noir natur, ε" a red wine, organic and with mild interventions, coming from a unique Mavrodaphne vineyard at an elevation of 915 meters on a hillside in Aigialia. Fermented with native yeasts and matured in a large oak barrel of 1500 liters, it's a real drinking pleasure!

...and, of course, we are all waiting for the wines of Giannis Economou...



VOCABULARY

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 derives from the Greek word "nychta," which means "night."

R — RETSINA

Retsina is a white or rosé resinated Greek wine, made by adding pine resin into the fermentation vessel; the duration of the process is decided by the winemaker and determines the intensity of the resin aroma and flavor in the

wine. This method was used in the past to mask the oxidative aromas of wines at a time when technology did not allow better wine preservation. However, the flavor itself became so popular that retsina is still being made today in traditional and in modern versions that create a great summer wine, ideal for accompanying fried appetizers and other meze.

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 Stamatias Ave., Drosia • CAVA EIGHTEENSCREEN 90 Tzavella St., Piraeus • CAVA FAIDON 28 Agiou Ioannou St., Voula / 4 Skippi St., Kallithea • CAVA GRIVAS Wine 28 Lykourgou & Menelau St., Kallithea • CAVA HOUSE OF WINE 40 Ethnikis Antistaseos St., Chalandri • CAVA KELLARIS 183 Ioanninon St., Athens • CAVA KRASOPOULIO 11 Dimokratias Ave., Melissia • CAVA KYLIX 20 Karneadou St., Kolonaki • CAVA LACOR 5 Iroon Kyprou Sq., Nea Smyrni • CAVA MR. VERTIGO 15 Filikis Etairias Sq., Kolonaki • CAVA OAK 282 Kifissias Ave., Chalandri / 7A Athinas Ave., Voula • CAVA OINIKO 1 Irakleos & Aristotelous St., Peristeri • CAVA OINOPION 10 Amisou St., Ymittos • CAVA SOLERA 77 An. Papandreou St., Chalandri • CAVA STAFILINA 18 Aigaïou St., N. Smyrni • CAVA VEGERA 61 Vas. Pavlou & 11 Poseidonos St., Voula • CAVA VINIFERA 317B Kifissias Ave., Kifissia • CAVA WINE KINGDOM 199 El. Venizelou St., Nea Smyrni • 48 URBAN GARDEN RESTAURANT 48 Armatolon & Klefton St., Ambelokipi • 8 LE BISTRO WINE BAR 8 Frinis St., Ilion St., Ancient Greek Sandals Store 1 Kolokotroni St., Athens • ANTONOPOULOS GALLERY 20 Aristofanous St., Athens • ARK CAFÉ RESTAURANT 2 Gr. Lambraki & Poseidonos Ave., Glyfada • ATHENS WAS HOTEL 5 Dionysiou Areopagitou St., Athens • ATHENS HILTON 46 Vas. Sophias Ave., Athens • BARRIQUE 1 Ymittou Sq., Ymittos • BOTILIA 235 C2 Lykourgou St., Kallithea • BY THE GLASS WINE BAR 3 Souris & Philellinon St., Syntagma • CANAL CAFE STAVROS NIARCHOS FOUNDATION CULTURAL CENTER 6 Evripidou St., Kallithea • CODICE BLU RESTAURANT Haritos & 32 Loukianou St., Kolonaki • COLONIAL RESTAURANT ATHENS GOLF CLUB 14 Kon. Karamanli St., Glyfada • COOKOOVAYA RESTAURANT 2 Hatz. Mexi St., Athens • DRY BISTRO 5 Koumbari St., Kolonaki • FABRICA DE VINO WINE BAR 3 Em. Benaki St., Athens • FITA 1 Ntourm St., Athens • FREUD ORIENTAL ATHENS 48 Ch. Trikoupi St., Kifissia • GREECE & GRAPES 20 Lykourgou St., Kallithea • HETEROCLITO WINE BAR 2 Fokionos & 30 Petraki St., Syntagma • IT RESTAURANT 29 Skoufa St., Kolonaki • JONA'S WINE BAR 31 Ch. Vournazou St., Athens • K2 DESIGN 34 Veranzeros St., Athens • KEDROS BOOKSTORE 3 G. Genadiou St., Athens • KOKOTOS ESTATE WINERY Stamata Attiki • KIKI DE GRÈCE WINE BAR 38 Voulis & 4 Ipitou St., Syntagma • LAFAZANIS WINERY 89 Afon Kypraiou, Eleysina • CHATEAU LAZARIDIS Kapandriti Attiki • LOLLO'S ATENE PIZZA 3A Ethn. Antistaseos Ave., Chalandri • MATERIA Prima WINE BAR 68 Falirou St., Koukaki • MATSUHISA ATHENS SUSHI 40 Apollonos St., Astir Palace, Vouliagmeni • MELIA HOTEL 14 Chalkokondyli St., Athens • MONK GRAPES & SPIRITS WINE BAR 4 Karori St., Athens • MONSIEUR DIDOT 48 Sina St., Athens • BENAKI MUSEUM 1 Koubari St., Kolonaki • MUSEUM OF CYCLADIC ART 4 N. Douka St., Kolonaki • NOEL WINE BAR 59B Kolokotroni St., Stoa Kourtaki • NOAH Eleftheria Park, Athens • NORA'S DELI 11 Anagnostopoulou St., Kolonaki • OINOSCENT WINE BAR 45 Voulis St., Syntagma • PALEO RESTAURANT 39 Polidefous St., Piraeus • PANDAISIA DELI 41 Ag. Ioannou St., Ag. Paraskevi • DOMAINE PAPAGIANNAKOS WINERY Pousi-Kalogeri, Markopoulo • POEMS N' CRIMES WINE BAR 17 Ag. Eirinis St., Athens • SEMELI WINES 3 Mitropoleos St., Athens • TAZZA D' ORO WINE BAR 5 Petraki & 9 Pentelis St., Syntagma • TANINI AGAPI MOU 91 Ippokratous St., Athens • TO THEIO TRAGI PUNK BISTROT 36 Kydantidon, Petralona • VAROULKO SEASIDE 52 Akti Koumoundourou, Piraeus • VASSILAINAS RESTAURANT 13 Vrasida

St., Athens • VILLA GRIZIO 46 46 Ag. Alexandrou St., Palaio Faliro • VINS OENOTOURISM 20 Ithakis St., Pallini • WAREHOUSE WINE BAR Mavromichali & 21 Valtetsiou St., Athens • WINE KINGDOM • WINE UP WINE BAR 86 El. Venizelou St., Petroupoli • WINEPOINT 2 Porinou & Ath. Diakou St., Acropoli • WSPC ACADEMY 11 Glaukou St., Palaio Faliro • YOLEN'S CAFE 9 Solonos St., Athens • ZOUMBOULA KIS GALLERIES 20 Kolonaki Sq., Athens • CAVA ABATZIS 12 Aristotelous St., Thessaloniki • CAVA ABELI Korissia, Kea • CAVA EYOI EYAN 24 Kypron Sq., Gargalianoi Messinias • CAVA IOSIF Parioikia, Paros • CAVA LENIS WINES 4 Vas. Balkou, Preveza • CAVA KRITSINIS 30 St. Proiou, Syros • CAVA OINOCHOROS Komiakis, Naxos • CAVA OLYMPIA 57 Kerasountos, Thessaloniki • CAVA SEIRIOS 160 Karamanlis Ave., Thessaloniki • CAVA TSINAS 146 El. Venizelou St., Larissa • CAVA VINAMORATO 5 Ioustinianou St., Kastoria • CAVA WINE KIOSK 39 Aristomenous St., Kalamata • CAVA WINE VINTAGE STUDIOS 93 Dimokratias Ave., Irakleio, Crete • 10 GR HOTEL & WINEBAR 16 Polydorou St., Old Town, Rhodes • 18 GRAPES HOTEL Agios Prokopios, Naxos • AERINO 9 Grevenon St., Florina • ALPHA ESTATE Amyntaio, Florina • ANDRIAKON DELI KARAVOSTASI Gavrio, Andros • APALLOU 51 Mitropoleos & K. Ntil St., Thessaloniki • ESTATE AVANTIS Mytikas Lylantiou, Eyvoia • BOTTIGLIA DI VINO Alykes Potamou, Corfu • CARDOON G. Drosou Coast, Chora, Tinos • CASABLANCA SOCIAL CLUB 18 Vas. Olgas Ave., Thessaloniki • CAVINO WINERY Aigio • COSTA NAVARINO Pylos Messinia • DALAMARAS WINERY 30 Ch. Alexandrou St., Naoussa • DOME 16 Asklipiou St., Thessaloniki • DOUGOS WINERY Itea, Larissa • DUCATO WINE HOTEL Megalochori Sq., Santorini • GEROVASSILIOU WINERY Epanomi Thessaloniki • GRAPPA VINO & APERITIVO 1 Dim. Kontaratou St., Volos • KIR-YIANNIS ESTATE Giannakochori, Naoussa • KLIMAX WINEBAR 2 Ifaistou & Venizelou St., Larissa • KONTOSOROS Xino Nero Amyntaio, Florina • LA CASA DEL VINO 69 Sissini St., Gastouni • LOCAL 17 Palaion Patron Germanou St., Thessaloniki • LOCAL ASSOCIATION OF NEMEA WINEMAKERS 30 Dervenakion, Nemea • MARATHIA Agios Fokas Beach, Tinos • MARGIORA Chora, Kythnos • MARMITA RESTAURANT 30 Eth. Antistaseos St., Skiathos • MONMARTI 92 Sofouli St., Thessaloniki • MY MYKONOS HOTEL Chontros Gremos, Mykonos • OENOPS WINES Prosotsani, Drama • OENOPS WINEBAR Vergioti Ave. & 1 Ithakis St., Kefalonia • OPSOPOION Maganie 6 Komotinis St., Thessaloniki • PANTHEON P. Koromila & K. Ntil St., Thessaloniki • PATRAS WINE CLUB 38 Norman St., Patras • PAVLIDIS ESTATE Kokkinogea, Drama • PERILION OINOTHIKI 5 Ermou St., Katerini • POSEIDONION GRAND HOTEL Dapia, Spetses • REWINE 25 Tsagri St., Rethymno, Crete • ROUSSAS WINERY 34 Papadiamanti St., Almyros • SALTO 6 K. Ntil, Thessaloniki • SCENARIO WINE BAR 1 Maronias St., Komotini • SCLAVOS WINES Kechrionas-Lixouri, Kefalonia • OUZERI SKOTADIS 46 Dimokratias Ave., Aegina • DOMAINE SKOURAS Malandreni, Argos • Soul Bar 16 Ath. Diakou St., Lamia • TSANTALIS WINERY Agios Pavlos, Chalkidiki • VASSALTIS WINES Vourvoulas-Oia, Santorini • VENETIAN WELL Kremastis Sq. & 1 L. Dessyla St., Corfu • VILLA INCOGNITO 1 Deligianni & 43 T. Sechioti St., Tripoli

Grape is being included as a supplement with The New York Times, KATHIMERINI SUNDAY EDITION (subscribers only).



Stories that stay with you.

Experience the power of local and international journalism in print. Subscribe to The New York Times International Edition and Kathimerini English Edition, for just €7.11 a week for your first 8 weeks.

Order today

+30 210 480 8222

subsgr@ekathimerini.com

Offer expires December 31, 2021 and is valid for new subscribers in Athens and Thessaloniki only.
Hand delivery is subject to confirmation by the local distributor. Smartphone and tablet apps are not supported on all devices.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19

<e-shop>

<p>Γίνεται να δημιουργήσετε e-shop για την επιχείρησή σας

χωρίς γνώσεις προγραμματισμού,

όπως εσείς το θέλετε

και χωρίς έξοδα;</p>

</e-shop>

Γίνεται εύκολα, με την Εθνική Τράπεζα!

Δημιουργήστε τώρα το e-shop της επιχείρησής σας:

- Χωρίς κανένα απολύτως κόστος για εσάς
- Χωρίς να χρειάζεται να έχετε γνώσεις προγραμματισμού
- Εύκολα και γρήγορα

**Λύσεις e-commerce που δουλεύουν για εσάς,
από την Εθνική μας Τράπεζα!**

Πληροφορίες στο www.nbg.gr

