

grape



Lenga



Η ΟΙΝΙΚΗ ΑΦΙΕΡΩΣΗ ΤΟΥ ΟΙΝΟΠΟΙΟΥ ΣΤΗΝ ΣΤΖΥΓΟ ΤΟΥ ΛΕΝΓΚΑ



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Απολαύστε Υπεύθυνα

Issue n° 30

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A MAGAZINE ABOUT WINE ■ PUBLISHED AND DISTRIBUTED BY PKATSATOU & CO GRAND CRU ■ ADDRESS • 6 PLATEIA VASILEOS GEORGIOU II, 15452 PSYCHIKO ■ PHONE • [+30] 215 555 4430, EMAIL • INFO@GRAPEMAG.GR ■ EDITORIAL TEAM • THALIA KARTALI AND PENELOPE KATSATOU ■ PUBLISHING CONSULTANT • WSPC ■ COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT • REGINA MASSELOU AND ARIS GERTSOS ■ COVER DESIGN • YIANNIS KOUROURDIS [K2DESIGN] ■ LAYOUT DESIGN • YIANNIS KONDYLIS [K2DESIGN] ■ ILLUSTRATION • FILIPPOS AVRAMIDIS [K2DESIGN] ■ PHOTOGRAPHERS • GIORGOS KAPLANIDIS [THIS IS NOT ANOTHER AGENCY], MARTHA VOSDOU [THIS IS NOT ANOTHER AGENCY], ALEXANDROS AVRAMIDIS ■ CONTRIBUTORS • KONSTANTINOS LAZARAKIS MW, GRIGORIS KONTOS DIP WSET, GRIGORIS MICHAILOS DIP WSET, NIKOS LOUKAKIS SENIOR LECTURER WSPC, YIANNIS KAYMENAKIS [WINE SOMMELIER], GIORGOS VELISSARIOS [GRAPE ESCAPE], GIANNIS PAPPAS [MR VERTIGO], DENNY KALLIVOKA, GIOVANNA LYKOU [SOMMELIER, WINE AND SPIRITS INSTRUCTOR], NIKOS IOANNIDIS ■ PROOFREADING AND EDITING • DON DOMOKOS ■ SECRETARIAL SUPPORT • MARIA DAMIANOU ■ PRINTING AND BINDING • NEES KATHIMERINES EKDOSEIS MONOPROSOPI AE ■ © PKATSATOU & CO GRAND CRU. REPRODUCTION OR PARTIAL TRANSFER OF TEXTS WITHOUT THE WRITTEN CONSENT OF THE RIGHTS HOLDERS IS PROHIBITED. ■ @ GRAPE WINE STORIES ■ @ GRAPE_WINE_STORIES

Grape

Walking around the center of Athens these days, one realizes how much it has changed in the last few years. This city is never quiet anymore, not even during the hot August days when everyone is away on some time off, either taking a dive in the deep blue waters of the Aegean or hiking on one of the numerous beautiful mountains on the mainland. It's full of life, with thousands of tourists wandering through the narrow streets of Plaka and Monastiraki, milling around Syntagma Square and even popping up in Thisio and Petralona. As the sun sets, these vibrant neighborhoods come alive, welcoming anyone who's in the mood for a traditional Greek meal or a glass of wine at one of the many wine bars which have opened around the city center. Even for us locals, this city is full of surprises. There's always a new place to discover, a nice little corner in which to enjoy an after-work drink, or a cozy new restaurant with an interesting wine list and good food based on the local cuisine.

This year, while preparing the English issue of Grape that you're now holding in your hands, we were thinking a lot about the boom in tourism that Greece is experiencing. Lately we've been having a lot of heated discussions about the necessity of preserving the country's character while still embracing its numerous visitors. Greece has become a favorite destination for millions of people around the globe, with the Aegean islands being top of the list. This makes sense: our country has a lot to offer in addition to its unique history and ancient sites. It's a warm and welcoming place, where history, natural beauty and rich cultural traditions come together to create unique experiences.

Greek cuisine is an integral part of the Greek summer experience as well, and the truth is that the culinary scene has improved immensely over the years. The same is true about our wines. Although wine has always been part of our tradition, tourists used to find their glasses filled with cheap wine that left a bad aftertaste. It is to be hoped that this is not the case anymore; all around Greece, from north to south and from east to west, both on the mainland and on the islands, hundreds of wineries are producing fine quality wines which everyone can enjoy. As Ted Diamantis, founder of Diamond Wine Importer, writes in this issue, when he first entered the business of importing Greek wines for the US market back in the '90s, there were less than 100 wineries across Greece and today there are at

least 1600, and the number's rising. "Slowly but surely, because of the work of many individuals dedicated to their craft and to the mission of expressing Greece's ecosystems and staying true to the history of respective regions, Greece marched forward, producing better and better wines, and we (the importers and distributors) worked diligently to establish those wines in very challenging export markets..."

Greece has a unique heritage when it comes to indigenous grape varieties. "The sheer range of the autochthonous grape varieties of a wine-producing country is directly related to the length of its wine history. You go to a New World country, where grapes have been grown for a few centuries, and you get forty or so vine varieties. You come to Greece, and we've identified about 200, with more to be discovered in isolated, old vineyards - experts say the final number will pass the 300 mark," notes Konstantinos Lazarakis MW, who in his article urges our visitors to be a bit adventurous and experiment with a Xinomavro instead of a Merlot, even if it's a bit harder to pronounce, and even for the simple reason that they will be drinking a piece of history.

History aside, the country's wine scene is already welcoming a new generation of aspiring winemakers, young people who, following the path set by their parents, are determined to take Greek wine-making even further. All of them seem to be ready to meet the new challenges posed not only by an extremely competitive world market but also by climate change, which is already having an impact on viticulture. They all seem to realize the enormous opportunities as well for further expansion, especially when it comes to wine tourism.

Most Greek wineries, whether on the islands or the mainland, are open to visitors and offer well organized wine tastings, tours around the vineyards, and a pairing with traditional local products. According to George Velissarios, co-founder of Grape Escape, "Emerging wine regions such as Greece have the potential to offer their own unique and authentic experiences to wine tourists. Greece's smaller boutique wineries offer a more personalized and intimate wine-tasting experience... With the right financial support and the proper promotion, Greece's wine tourism industry can become a significant contributor to the country's economy and an international champion of its cultural heritage."

So, this year we urge all of you to take a break from the wonderful sandy beaches, and instead of just diving into the deep blue waters of the Aegean or the Ionian, be a bit more adventurous and throw yourself into the wonderful world of Greek wine. We promise that you won't regret the plunge!

Cheers, or, as we say in Greek, "Stin ygeia mas!" ▶

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Why should Greek grape varieties matter to you? (Spoiler alert: they should matter to everyone!)

If you're reading this, it is highly likely that you are in Greece and you love wine. If you're not a statistical anomaly, and if it's not too early to drink alcohol, then put the magazine (or the tablet, or the smartphone) down, go grab a glass of wine made from a Greek grape variety, come back, make yourself comfy, and read on...

A few months ago, I was talking with an executive of the company who runs duty-free shops in Greek airports and, naturally, the conversation turned to sales of wines. "We see more and more people buying a bottle of Greek wine on their way out of the country," he said. I was delighted! The news was great! But, for no apparent reason, I went on to ask, "What are they buying?" Without hesitation, he said, "More than 75% international grape varieties."

My smile faded. I was shocked. Buying wine from duty-free shops in airports is a notoriously challenging thing to do. A wine bottle is heavy. It clinks and clanks. The air stewards will insist, if they spot you, that you not put it in the overhead compartments, and nobody really wants to spent a long flight with a bottle rolling around their feet or stopping a good stretch of the legs. What's more, it's fragile and, if it breaks, it will create a mess. On top of which, if there's a connecting flight in your future with an extra security check, you really don't know if the bottle will make it through.

So, it takes a lot of dedication to grab a bottle on your way back home. It's logical to assume that these people had a nice experience with Greek wine – they enjoyed a glass or two, and were pleased enough to try and emulate this experience in their natural habitat, or gift it to someone. And then, there they stand, fully determined to take a bottle of Greek wine on board, and the question is: "Shall we get the Xinomavro or the Greek Merlot?" And, apparently, Merlot comes out ahead more often than not.

TABOO

I do understand the underlying issues. Greek varieties are hard to pronounce, and you don't want to sound like you're having a stroke while presenting the wine to fellow diners. Wine is, for most people, a most complex product, which means that Greek wine is an impossibly complex sub-genre, and so familiarity is important.

YES, BUT STILL, WHY?

I urge you to put more faith in wines made from these varieties; here are just some of the reasons to do this.

- **YOU'LL BE DRINKING A PIECE OF HISTORY.** The sheer range of the autochthonous grape varieties of a wine-producing country is directly related to the length of its wine history. You go to a New World country, where grapes have been grown for a few centuries, and you get forty or so vine varieties. You come to Greece, and we've identified about 200, with more to be discovered in isolated, old vineyards – experts say the final number will pass the 300 mark. Even Italy, producing more than twenty times the amount of wine that Greece does, boasts less than four times that number of cultivars.
- **YOU'LL BE PRESERVING THE HERITAGE.** Since these vines have been around for millennia, they need some support from the marketplace. Like the "heirloom tomatoes" kind of support: you gain in taste, they gain in survival. That being said, these wines will make you a whole lot happier than a tomato will.

Go beyond the obvious. In many parts of the wine world, things can get a bit stale, or, at least, homogeneous. Boredom prevails if you taste only the famous grapes,

the Chardonnays and the Sauvignons out there. Greek varieties have unique tastes that will surprise you. The more you taste, the more you will find the grapes that will make you fall in love.

- **GREEK GRAPE VARIETIES HAVE BEEN SELECTED FOR PAIRING.** The food friendliness of these wines has to be tested and tasted to be believed. We Greeks have always had food with our wine, and wine with our food (unless it's breakfast, or should I say a workday breakfast?). So, as the result of co-evolution for millennia, Greeks preferred those vines that have the capacity to produce wines that complement food while providing refreshment. These wine styles emerged out of real-life trial-and-error, not out of a marketing plan.
- **CHOOSING GREEK VARIETIES SHOWS YOU'RE IN THE KNOW.** Everyone can pick a wine list and go for the house white, or the Chablis. Be brave and life will reward you. Go for the unpronounceables, and I bet that a single drop will not be left in the bottle.
- **GEAR UP FOR CLIMATE CHANGE.** More and more wine producers around the world, in countries such as Australia, France, South Africa, or in Italy, are planting Greek varieties. There are many reasons for this, from pure quality to differentiation, but getting prepared for climate change is possibly the most important. Many vine-growing regions are getting hotter and drier, and traditional grapes are having a hard time coping with the climate shift. Here come the Greek vines, which have been flourishing in hot, dry places for eons.

And, since Greek varietals are already marching out of Greece to dominate the world, why not taste these gems while you can still afford them? ▲



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Cycladic Islands

The Cycladic islands have always been synonymous with the Greek summer, offering deep blue waters, wonderful beaches, plenty of sun, great hospitality, and excellent food. Unfortunately, as in many regions of Greece, visitors did not always have a great experience when it came to wine.

TEXT

Giovanna Lykou • Sommelier, Wine and Spirits Instructor

ILLUSTRATION

Philippos Avramidis

PHOTOGRAPHY

Yiorgos Kaplanidis

In the past, cheap wine would fill the glasses at waterfront tavernas, leaving customers with a bad taste in their mouths. However, it's important to note that the Cycladic islands do produce good wine and that, in fact, they are home to some of the most important Greek varieties, with Assyrtiko being a celebrated example.

Over the past decade, Santorini and many other islands have been developing their wineries and can now offer great wine-tasting experiences and excellent wines that perfectly complement the fine food products these wind-ravaged islands have to offer. Visitors can taste sun-dried tomatoes from Santorini, rare cheeses from Naxos and Paros, and other delicacies from islands like Tinos and Syros alongside the wines, creating a unique culinary experience for those who wish to go beyond just lying in the sun. Of course, there's nothing wrong with stretching out on the beach, but if you can combine it with excellent food and wine, then even just lying in the sun can be a whole new experience...



Santorini

World renowned for its sunsets, its savage beauty of volcanic terroir, its breathtaking sea views and its luxurious hospitality, the island now offers another great thing. Santorini is a mesmerizing wine region in Greece, a true vinicultural gem. Its unique volcanic soil, ancient vineyards, and Cycladic terroir create an exceptional winemaking environment.

It's renowned for its indigenous Assyrtiko grape variety, which produces vibrant, mineral-driven whites that beautifully capture the island's essence. From bone-dry to lusciously sweet, Santorini wines display remarkable complexity and character.



THE OLD RESERVOIR WHERE THE JUICE FROM PRESSED GRAPES ENDED UP FOR FERMENTATION.

Wineries offer unforgettable tastings, allowing visitors to immerse themselves in the region's rich winemaking heritage. The breathtaking sunsets, cliffside vineyards, and the Aegean Sea as a backdrop create an enchanting ambiance, making Santorini an unparalleled destination for wine enthusiasts.

ESTATE ARGYROS

Estate Argyros captivates with its unparalleled charm. Immerse yourself in their enchanting vineyards and savor their award-winning wines, crafted with passion and precision. Indulge in the luxurious accommodations they offer and relish breathtaking views of the Aegean Sea. A truly unforgettable experience awaits you at the estate.

↪ ESTATEARGYROS.COM

HATZIDAKIS WINERY

Hatzidakis Winery provides a taste of Santorini's wine legacy and embodies a centuries-old winemaking tradition. Explore their vineyards, where ancient vines thrive in volcanic soil, and sample the handcrafted wines, celebrated for their distinct character and unparalleled quality.

↪ HATZIDAKISWINES.GR

DOMAINE SIGALAS

Domaine Sigala Santorini invites wine enthusiasts on a sensory journey. Explore volcanic terroir, sip crisp Assyrtiko, and savor sun-kissed Santorini flavors. Uncover ancient vineyards, breathe in the sea breeze, and witness traditional viticulture in action. Taste the essence of Santorini, where passion and terroir blend harmoniously.

↪ SIGALAS-WINE.COM

ANHYDROUS WINERY

Set in a breathtaking Santorini landscape, Anhydrous Winery crafts wines of unparalleled purity. From sun-kissed grapes nurtured in volcanic soil, the winemaker creates remarkable expressions of terroir. Visitors will enjoy a journey of the senses that will leave indelible impressions on their palates.

↪ ANHYDROUSWINERY.COM

VENETSANOS WINERY

Venetsanos Winery is a testament to timeless craftsmanship. With sweeping views of the caldera and exceptional wines, carefully crafted from hand-picked grapes, it's a perfect destination. Explore their state-of-the-art facilities and delve into the artistry behind each bottle.

↪ VENETSANOSWINERY.COM

SANTO WINES WINERY

Explore the captivating world of Santo Wines, where passion for winemaking is intermingled with Santorini's volcanic essence. Taste thoughtfully crafted wine labels showcasing indigenous grape varieties. Enjoy a tour of their modern winery, surrounded by panoramic vistas.

↪ SANTOWINES.GR

BOUTARI WINERY

Boutari Winery showcases a rich legacy of winemaking expertise. Visit the vineyards, where indigenous grape varieties flourish. Witness the art of vinification in their historic cellars and taste exceptional wines that celebrate a harmonious fusion of tradition and innovation.

↪ BOUTARIWINERYSANTORINI.GR

ARTEMIS KARAMOLEGOS WINERY

Artemis Karamolegos Winery's exquisite portfolio combines passion and expertise. From elegant to "hardcore" whites, the labels showcase the artistry of Santorini's terroir. Visit the modern winery, witness the craftsmanship and experience the allure of Greek wines at their finest.

↪ ARTEMISKARAMOLEGOS-WINERY.COM

KOUTSOGIANNOPoulos WINERY

Meet the intricate wines of Koutsogiannopoulos Winery, where each bottle showcases the rich heritage of Santorini's indigenous grape varieties. Stroll through the historic winery, witness the art of vinification, and savor the symphony of flavors that exemplify the essence of Santorini wines.

↪ SANTORINIWINEMUSEUM.COM



TRANSPORTING AND STORING GRAPES
IN AN OLD WINERY IN THE CYCLADES.

VASSALTIS VINEYARDS

Vassaltis Vineyards' portfolio showcases a harmonious blend of aesthetic excellence and oenological craftsmanship. The exquisite wine labels are a testament to the artistry within each bottle. Explore this modern winery, where innovation meets tradition, and indulge in the refined flavors that define their exceptional wines.

[VASSALTIS.COM](#)

GAVALAS WINERY

Gavalas Winery in Santorini is an esteemed historic winery that's been producing exceptional wines since 1885. With a focus on indigenous grape varieties and a commitment to quality, their wines showcase the unique terroir of the island. A visit offers a captivating blend of tradition, innovation and breathtaking scenery.

[GAVALASWINES.GR](#)

CANAVA CHRISOU-TSELEPOS WINERY

Canava Chriessou-Tselepos Winery's wine labels reflect their commitment to quality and showcase the unique character of the Santorini terroir. Explore this charming winery, where traditional techniques complement modern innovation, resulting in exceptional wines that delight the senses.

[TSELEPOS.GR](#)

GAIA WINES SANTORINI

Gaia is known for high-quality wines that reflect the unique terroir of the region. Blending tradition and innovation by combining ancient winemaking techniques with modern practices to create exceptional wines, Gaia Wines showcases the distinct flavors of Santorini's volcanic soil and the Assyrtiko grape variety.

[GAIAWINES.GR](#)

CANAVA ROUSSOS WINERY

Canava Roussos Winery has a history that dates back to 1836. The winery is situated in an old traditional canava, a cave-like structure commonly used on the island for wine production and storage, where winemaking methods have been passed down through generations.

[CANAVAROUSSOS.GR](#)

OENO Π

OENO Π was founded by Paris Sigalas in an old canava belonging to his family; it's located right on the shore in Baxedes-Oia, near the area of the active underwater Kolumbo volcano. The winery was created for the production of high-quality wine and puts out a limited number of bottles (no more than 20,000) annually.

[OENOP.COM](#)

ART SPACE WINERY

Art Space Santorini Winery is a welcoming place that honors tradition and yet boasts all the contemporary technology to ensure that the winery's motto, "quality over quantity", remains a true reflection of its operation.

[ARTSPACE-SANTORINI.COM](#)

MIKRA THIRA WINERY

Mikra Thira is the first and so far only winery built on the small island of Therasia, just to the west of Santorini. The structure that houses the winery was built to blend into the natural environment. It was constructed using local materials and reflects the traditional Cycladic architectural design with its geometric elements. The vineyard, which operates according to organic growing principles, yielded its very first harvest in 2018 and is already producing exciting wines.

[MIKRATHIRA.COM](#)

Sikinos is one of the smaller Cycladic islands, with less tourism development and therefore more areas of untouched natural beauty. Syros is one of the first gems you'll spot from the ship if you're approaching the Cycladic islands from the west.



THE CHURCH OF AGIOS NIKOLAOS, LOCATED A FEW DOZEN METERS FROM THE PORT OF ERMOPYPOLIS, IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT CHURCHES ON SYROS. WITH ITS IMPRESSIVE BLUE DOME, IT IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE MODERN HISTORY OF THE ISLAND.

SIKINOS

If you're looking for tranquility, purity and an absence of mass tourism, then it's the island for you. Despite its small size, Sikinos boasts a noteworthy wine region and wines renowned for the unique craftsmanship that produced them. The island's steep terraced vineyards, carved into the rugged hillsides, produce exquisite wines. Whether they're made from indigenous Aidani and Assyrtiko grapes or the delightful Mavrotragano red variety, Sikinos wines captivate with their distinct flavors and aromas. With a rich wine-making tradition rooted in ancient times, the island offers a wine experience that reflects both its stunning landscapes and its passion for winemaking.

MANALIS WINERY

Manalis Winery captivates visitors with its charming wines. Set in stunning surroundings, this family-owned winery produces a diverse range of products. From refreshing whites to robust reds, each bottle showcases the winery's dedication to traditional winemaking methods. Enjoy the tranquil atmosphere of Manalis Winery, visit its welcoming family restaurant and take part in a wine-tasting experience that will leave a lasting impression.

→ MANALISWINERY.GR

SYROS

Ermoupoli, the stunningly picturesque port, happens to be the capital city of the island group. The island's rich cultural history is notable, and there are museums and performance venues attesting to this. The wealth of 19th-century neoclassical architecture sets it apart from the other Cycladic islands. Its favorable Mediterranean climate, abundant sunshine, and gentle sea breezes all contribute to an ideal terroir for grape cultivation. Growing on the terraced vineyards that dot the landscape are a delightful range of varieties; with them, skilled winemakers craft exceptional wines capturing the essence of the island.

CHATZAKIS SYROS WINERY

Drawing on experienced oenologists and holding a clear vision for the future, Chatzakis Winery began operations in 2011, working with local grape growers. Today, it continues to be dedicated to crafting exceptional wines that reflect the island's unique terroir, in a stunning location that is a must-visit destination on the island.

→ [+30] 694 630 2920

OUSYRA WINERY

The Ousyra Winery is a small family-run winery creating terroir-driven wines from rare indigenous Cycladic varieties. The philosophy of the winery dictates the curation of organically farmed ungrafted vineyards.

→ OUSYRAWINERY.COM

PARA KOPOIS WINERY

Para Kopois Winery embraces the ethos of small-scale artisanal production, focusing on quality rather than quantity. The winery's name, "Para Kopois," translates to "Extra Work" in Greek, reflecting the owners' commitment to meticulous care and attention throughout the winemaking process.

→ [+30] 697 498 9560

Sikinos and Syros

VOLACUS



The people behind Volacus Wine, Irene and Michalis will welcome you and give you a private tour of their remarkable vineyards. They will inform you about the past and the present Tinos' wine traditions and will offer you their wine alongside local cheeses and cold cuts.

*The estate is open to visitors daily and upon request for wine tasting.

volacuswine@gmail.com

mob +30 6978485671

www.volacuswine.gr

Falatados | Tinos, Cyclades | Greece



A VIEW OF NAOUSSA ON PAROS.

Paros and Naxos

Situated at the center of the Cyclades island group, Paros is a famous tourist attraction that offers numerous sandy beaches of extreme beauty, crystal clear waters, and beautiful inland landscapes. Naxos is the largest of all Cycladic islands and the most fertile, too.

PAROS

Paros, although it's less famous, has a winemaking history along as impressive as that of Santorini, and is worth discovering. Its sun-kissed vineyards and fertile soil produce wines of exceptional quality and character. With a rich winemaking tradition dating back centuries, Paros offers a diverse range of varietals, including the indigenous white grape variety Monemvasia and the red grape variety Mandilaria earning to a unique PDO.

MORAITIS WINERY PAROS

This family-owned and operated winery, with a commitment to quality and a deep-rooted passion for winemaking, employs sustainable and organic viticulture practices that ensure the wines are not only delicious but also environmentally friendly. Visit for a tasting and enjoy the diversity of a range that captures the flavor of the unique Paros PDO.

MORAITISWINES.GR

ASTERAS PAROS WINERY [KTIMA ROUSSOS]

This new winery is located in the Asteras region, near Ysterni. Over time, on its 130 family-owned acres, new vineyards have been planted linearly with local varieties. With the quality that comes with the highest standards in wine production, Paros can yield great wines through the revival of traditional viticulture and winemaking.

KTIMAROUSSOS.GR

PFC [PAROS FARMING COMMUNITY]

Nearly a century of activity has made the cooperative an inseparable part of the social fabric of the island. Always working to support the agricultural producer, PFC is evolving as it adapts to the demands of the modern market. The knowledgeable PFC team vinifies the indigenous varieties Monemvasia and Mandilaria with a spirit of experimentation, redefining their true potential.

SEIRADIPFC.GR

NAXOS

Along with its size comes a diversity of landscapes, sandy beaches, castles, amazing local cuisine, and some of the most famous cheeses of Greece. This island is a very promising wine region that will delight wine enthusiasts with its exceptional selections. Blessed with abundant sunshine and volcanic soil, Naxos can produce wines of exceptional quality and depth.

SAINT ANNA WINERY

Saint Anna Winery has been operating since 2016, producing both dry and semi-sweet styles of wine. The winery's name comes from a little chapel which stands on the grounds of the estate and attracts visitors interested in its historical importance.

SAINTANNAWINERY.GR

Tinos



VOLAKAS IS ONE OF THE TRADITIONAL VILLAGES OF TINOS, RENOWNED FOR ITS DOVECOTES AND IT'S TRADITION IN SCULPTURE.

Tinos is a captivating Greek island that delights both those travelers who are seeking a picturesque getaway and the wine enthusiasts in search of exquisite flavors. As a tourist destination, Tinos enchants visitors with its charming villages, pristine beaches, and stunning landscapes.

The island's rich history and cultural heritage are reflected in its impressive architecture and iconic landmarks, such as the Panagia Evangelistria, a renowned Greek Orthodox pilgrimage site. Tinos boasts a thriving wine industry that captivates oenophiles. The finds on display in the archaeological museum confirm the special devotion the people of this island felt for Dionysus, and wine is still important here. With its fertile soil and favorable microclimate, Tinos produces exceptional wines characterized by the unique terroir. With crisp whites, savory rosés and amazing reds, the island's wineries offer unforgettable tasting experiences, blending traditional vinicultural methods and innovative new technologies to create remarkable vintages that embody the essence of Tinos.

VOLACUS WINES

The Volacus story begins in 2009 with the acquisition of a plot of land in Gardari, Falatados, which was planted a year later with Malagouzia. In subsequent years, Assyrtiko and Mavrotragano were introduced. The vineyards are located at an elevation of 400 meters, in clay-sandy and granitic soil.

→ VOLACUSWINE.GR

VAPTISTIS WINERY

The Vaptistis Winery is located in Steni, close to the vineyards of the village of Mesa, near Falatados. Its first wines were produced in 2016. Today, the winery works with such indigenous Greek varieties as Assyrtiko, Monemvasia, Roditis, Mavrotragano, Mandilaria and the rare Mavrothiriko.

→ VAPTISTISWINERY.COM

DOMAINE DE KALATHAS

Respecting the island's winemaking roots, vigneron Jerome Binda uses a natural approach with his old vines and focuses on rare local varieties such as Aspro Potamisi, Mavro Potamisi, Koumariano and the much-misunderstood Rozaki.

→ DNSWINES.COM

T-OINOS WINERY AND VINEYARDS [TINIAKOI AMPELONES]

With a focus on sustainability and the use of organic and biodynamic practices in their vineyards, T-Oinos embraces the island's terroir. Their meticulous winemaking process results in elegant and expressive premium wines that communicate the essence of Tinos to consumers in both Greek and international markets.

→ TOINOS.COM

CHRISTOS FONSOS WINERY

The first person who bottled his production on Tinos was Christos Fonsos, who did this in 1996, in the village of Komi, drawing on then-unknown traditional local grape varieties such as Potamisi, Koumariano, and Monemvasia. Today, Fonsos produces 3,500 to 4,000 bottles each year, all of which are sold exclusively on the island.

→ [+30] 22830 51221

X-BOURGO

Founded by Theodore Kosmopoulos, X-Bourgo in the village of Exombourgo is a new winemaking endeavor that shows great promise. They are producing a white made from Assyrtiko and a red made from Mavrotragano and Mavrothiriko, with grapes exclusively sourced from their private vineyard. The grapes are transported to an Attica winery for vinification, but the vineyard is open to visitors.

Exploring local Cycladic food products

On the Cycladic islands, in the heart of the Aegean, local products reign supreme, tantalizing the palate and other sensory organs as well. From the sun-soaked vineyards to the fertile soils, this region boasts an array of culinary treasures that beautifully complement its renowned wines. These islands are a haven for food enthusiasts seeking an authentic taste of Greece, and it's impossible to overlook the significance of the local agricultural products that grace the dining tables here.

The sun-dried tomatoes of Santorini, famous for their intense flavor and unique sweetness, pair harmoniously with the island's crisp and mineral-rich Assyrtiko wine. The bright acidity and vibrant citrus notes of the wine provide the perfect balance to the tomato's rich character.

On Paros, the island's famous cheese, the aromatic and tangy Xinotyro, takes center stage. This delightful cheese, made from goat's or sheep's milk, finds its perfect companion in the delicate and refreshing white variety Monemvasia. The wine's floral aromas and fruit flavors elegantly elevate the creamy and slightly salty Xinotyro, creating a delightful harmony on the palate.

Syros, the capital of the Cyclades, offers culinary gems that are sure to captivate your taste buds. The island's louza, a cured pork

delicacy infused with fragrant spices, pairs exquisitely with a robust and velvety local red wine, whose dark fruit flavors and hints of spices complement the savory and aromatic profile of the meat.

Tinos also boasts an array of delectable local products. One standout is the flavorful artichoke, a prized vegetable cultivated on the island. Tinos artichokes, with their tender hearts and delicate, slightly nutty flavor, pair beautifully with a crisp and vibrant white wine such as a refreshing Assyrtiko, either from Tinos itself or from nearby Santorini. The wine's zesty acidity and mineral undertones complement the artichoke's subtle bitterness and earthy notes.

In addition to artichokes, Tinos is well known for its exceptional cheeses, particularly the piquant Volaki and the tangy Kopanisti. These cheeses go wonderfully well with a dry white wine, such as a well-chilled Malagouzia or a lively Assyrtiko. The wine's fruit-forward profile and crisp acidity cut through the cheeses' richness, enhancing their flavors and providing a delightful contrast. Kariki, on the other hand, is a blue cheese that needs a full-bodied Mavrotragano or an oxidative Rozaki.

The island of Naxos is renowned for, among other delicacies, for its high-qual-

ity cheeses, including its famous Graviera Naxou, a delicious hard cheese with a distinctive flavor. When it comes to wine pairing with Graviera Naxou, you'll want to choose a wine that complements its rich and savory characteristics. Assyrtiko, known for its vibrant acidity and mineral notes, can successfully cut through the creaminess of the cheese.

Naxos is also the home of a unique traditional liqueur, Kitro Naxou. Made from the leaves of the citron tree, Kitro Naxou has a distinctly refreshing flavor. Its production, which involves careful distillation and blending techniques, results in a delightful and aromatic drink.

There are three varieties of Kitro Naxou: green, yellow, and clear. Each version offers its own characteristics and taste profile. Green Kitro has a vibrant and herbal flavor, while the yellow variety is slightly sweeter and fruitier. Clear Kitro, on the other hand, provides a pure and intense citron taste. These varieties aren't just enjoyed on their own; they appear as key ingredients in various cocktails and mixed drinks. The versatility of Kitro Naxou means it goes well with a wide range of flavors, making it a favorite among locals and visitors alike. Visitors to the island should not leave without exploring the production process for Kitro Naxou, and then tasting the results, too. ▲





Nestled in the azure waters of the Mediterranean, the island of Crete is a gastronomic paradise that entices travelers with its rich culinary heritage and delightful wines. The largest Greek island, Crete boasts a vibrant culinary scene that reflects its historical influences and its many natural resources.

TEXT

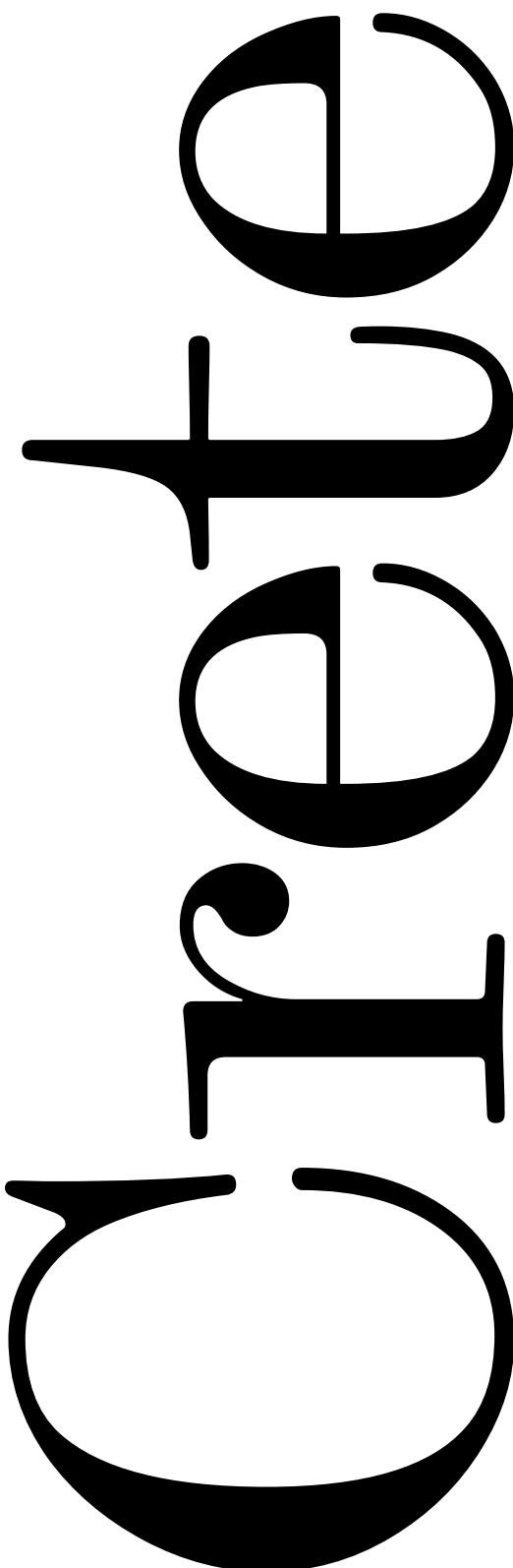
Thalia Kartali and Penelope Katsatou

ILLUSTRATION

Philippos Avramidis

PHOTOGRAPHY

Yiorgos Kaplanidis



Crete's gastronomy goes hand in hand with its exceptional wines. The island's vineyards produce a diverse range of wines, from robust reds to crisp whites and delightful rosés. Its winemaking tradition dates back thousands of years and today local wineries combine traditional techniques with modern expertise to create unique and flavorful wines. Its many indigenous varieties and the region's warm climate, fertile soil, and proximity to the sea all contribute to the distinctive characteristics of Cretan wines, making them a must-try for wine enthusiasts.

Accompanying the wines is Crete's delicious cuisine, which is a celebration of fresh, locally sourced ingredients. The island's fertile soil yields an abundance of vegetables, fruits, and herbs, while the surrounding Mediterranean Sea provides an abundance of seafood. Cretan cuisine is known for its simplicity, and for its emphasis on natural flavors. From the iconic dakos (rustic barley rusks topped with tomatoes, olive oil, and feta cheese) to the mouthwatering lamb dishes cooked with aromatic herbs, every bite you take in Crete is a revelation.

In addition to its other flavorful ingredients, Cretan cuisine also incorporates the island's famed olive oil. With a long history of olive cultivation, Crete is renowned for producing some of the world's finest olive oils. The locals use this golden elixir liberally, infusing their dishes with its distinct flavor and health benefits.

Exploring Crete's gastronomy is a journey through its history and culture. Visitors can savor traditional dishes in cozy tavernas, visit local markets bursting with fresh produce, and even participate in cooking classes to learn the secrets of Cretan cuisine firsthand.

Crete's wines and its gastronomic wealth are testaments to the island's rich heritage and the passion of its people. Both in the vineyards and in the kitchens, every step of the production process is infused with a deep appreciation for quality and tradition. Whether you're a wine connoisseur or a food lover, a visit to Crete promises an unforgettable culinary adventure that will leave your taste buds yearning for more.



Irakleio

The area of Irakleio is home to a number of wineries that embody the rich tradition of winemaking of the island. Nestled among sun-drenched hills and fertile plateaus, these wineries welcome hundreds of visitors every year who are eager to explore the vineyards and learn the secrets to cultivating indigenous varieties such as Vidiano, Assyrtiko and Malvasia.

Guided tours offer fascinating glimpses into the winemaking process, while wine tastings constitute unique experiences, especially when they're held out in the open air, under the olive trees.

A few summers ago, we took a tour around the wineries in Irakleio and met with the people who are dedicating their lives to reviving the island's great indigenous varieties. We enjoyed their warm hospitality, but have yet to fulfill our promise to return.

LYRARAKIS WINERY

Contrary to the local tradition of working with small parcels of land, this winery is surrounded by 14.5 hectares of vineyards which Sotiris Lyrarakis obtained in the 1960s. Organic viticulture has been applied to all the family-owned vineyards over the last few years, and the winery's main philosophy is to support sustainability both in viticulture and during the winemaking process. Four of the winery's varietals – Vilana Queen, Vidiano Queen, Single Area Plyto Psarades and Vidiano Ippodromos – from rare indigenous varieties are now certified as organic.

This is truly a family business; brothers, cousins and nephews are all involved, as the older generation gives way to the younger one. The family is devoted to reviving Crete's indigenous varieties, some of which were close to extinction, including the white varieties Dafni, Plyto and Melissaki. During the last few years, the winery has opened its doors to thousands of tourists, offering wine tours and rare wine-tasting experiences with food pairings involving traditional Cretan dishes.

LYRARAKIS.COM

SCALAREA ESTATE (Boutari Winery)

One visit is never enough to absorb the fascinating beauty of this estate, situated just 8 km from the archaeological site of Knossos. One of its previous owners had named the estate "Fantaxometcho" which, in Greek, means "the haunted estate." The idea was to keep pirates away by spreading the rumor that location was 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 and enjoy a wine-tasting session (accompanied by local cheese and cold cuts) or a wonderful wine picnic in a unique setting. Visitors can also choose to stay in one of the three suites at the estate's old guesthouse. The Boutaris family, one of Greece's oldest wine producers, bought the estate in the 1990s and, in 2014, began to replant the whole vineyard, focusing on Crete's indigenous varieties: the reds of Kotsifali and Liatiko and the whites of Vidiano, Assyrtiko Athiri. Today, the estate is the property of a new company, Ellinika Oinopoieia.

SCALAREATESTATE.GR

DOULOUFAKIS WINERY

Bouncing down a steep dirt road in the back of a pickup truck might be a bit out of the ordinary, but it's also the best way to take in all the wild beauty of the Cretan landscape. Vineyards and olive groves are all you'll see descending the hill from Dafnes, the village where Nikos Douloufakis has his winery. The vineyards are small parcels of land scattered among olive groves around the area, a dispersal which doesn't help with costs but does give the wines greater complexity. All the vineyards are located on steep slopes, harvesting is done manually and the main varieties are Vidiano, Vilana, Assyrtiko, Mandilaria, Malvasia, Liatiko and Kotsifali, for the indigenous varieties, and Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Sangiovese and Syrah for the internationals.

DOULOUFAKIS.WINE

DOMAINE PATERIANAKIS

Along with the breathtaking views of the vineyards from the windows of the winery, we were treated to Cretan delicacies, cheese, olives, homemade bread, and true Cretan hospitality during our visit to this estate in the area of Arhanes. Emanuela and Niki Paterianaki now run the winery established by their father George, and they're producing organic wines, following the practices of biodynamic viticulture which forms part of the tradition of winemaking in Crete. The winery building, designed by their father – a civil engineer by profession – was built with six levels in order to take advantage of gravity during all stages of production. The winery's philosophy involves the production of high quality wines with the least possible intervention. The wines produced belong to four different groups: natural wines; premium wines; local wines, with an emphasis on local varieties such as Vidiano, Assyrtiko, Kotsifali and Mandilaria; and a varietal wine made from Moschato Spinias, a rare indigenous variety that originated in western Crete.

PATERIANAKIS.GR

SILVA DASKALAKI WINERY

Irini Daskalaki is an impressive woman. She wakes up every morning to tend to her vines before the sun rises and only goes to bed after having inspected all the work in the winery. A strong believer in biodynamic viticulture, she follows a special calendar based on moon phases, according to which she plans all the work that has to be done in the vineyard. 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 to have a good grape and then mess up with the winemaking?" Her hard work has been recognized; the estate's wines have won numerous prizes. The winery'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.

SILVAWINES.GR

DIAMANTAKIS WINERY

Zacharias Diamantakis is one of the many young aspiring wine producers on Crete. The Diamantakis Winery is located in Kato Assites, surrounded by vineyards scattered around the eastern foothills of Crete's highest mountain, Mt. Psiloritis. The views from the winery are spectacular, and the wine-tasting experience that Zacharias organized for us was unique.

The vineyards here are at an elevation of 400 m with a southeastern aspect. They have been planted on terraces because of the steepness of the slope; manual harvesting is quite a challenge. The varieties planted here are the indigenous Mandilaria and Malvasia, as well as Chardonnay. A little higher up, at 600 m, is a vineyard planted with Assyrtiko. Diamantopetra White, a blend of Vidiano and Assyrtiko, is one of this winery's best wines.

DIAMANTAKISWINES.GR



A glass of tradition, two generations long.

Our story begins with Dimitris Hatzimichalis making his first wine at the young age of 19.

His passion evolved, and in 1973, he acquired his first 9 hectares in Atalanti Valley. Today, he runs his winery's 220 hectares of vineyards with his sons, Leonidas and Panagiotis.

www.hatzimichalis.com | #hatzimichalis

KTHMA
ΧΑΤΖΗΜΙΧΑΛΗ
DOMAINE HATZIMICHALIS

Rethimno is home to one of the best known Cretan varieties, Vidiano, which survived in the really old vineyards of this area, some of which are over a hundred years old. The planted area in Rethimno is smaller than those in the other regions of the island, and most of the old vines can be found at high elevations of 600 meters or more. Having started out in this mountainous area, the Vidiano variety is now considered one of the most promising varieties, not only of Crete but of Greece as a whole.

ILIANA MALIHIN WINERY

Hidden away in the small village of Melambes is a small winery that belongs to one of the most interesting young winemakers of Greece. Iliana Malihin is the embodiment of heroic viticulture. Having moved to the area from which her grandparents came, Iliana decided to dedicate herself to salvaging old abandoned vineyards that had once belonged to the villagers. For years now, she has been taking care of vines, some as old as 140 years, that grow at an elevation of 900 meters. It is a unique vineyard, a part of which, unfortunately, suffered serious destruction during a brush fire two years ago. Malihin has put all her efforts in keeping it alive, managing to get funding from a number of people, including fellow winemakers who wanted to help. She's a strong advocate of organic farming, which she has been trying to teach to the local farmers, and the wines she produces are made with minimal intervention. The winery, housed in an old storage facility in the village of Melambes, has been turned into a welcoming space now open to visitors.

↗ ILIANAMALIHINWINERY.COM

KLADOS WINERY

This is a family-run business, founded in 1997 by chemist-oenologist Emmanouil Klados. In 2000, the winery team began an effort to promote the local Vidiano variety and, since 2003, it has been organically growing the variety. Today, the second generation is in charge. His son Stelios, who studied chemistry at the University of Crete and got a post-graduate degree in oenology in Italy, has been in charge of the winery since 2014. The emphasis of this winery is on Vidiano, which is produced both as a varietal under the label "White Diva" and in a blend with Moschato Spinas that comes under the name "The Great Hawk". The winery is open to visitors and offers further option to those who aren't just interested in tasting the wines.

↗ KLADOSWINERY.GR

Rethimno



A VINEYARD THRIVING UNDER THE CRETAN SUN.

On the other side of Crete, near the picturesque port of Chania, we came across a number of wineries producing exceptional wines that reflect the unique terroir of the area, from crisp whites to robust reds.

MANOUSAKIS WINERY

This beautiful estate, situated in Vatolakos, about 15 km from the city of Chania, 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. As a young immigrant, he built a new life but never forgot his homeland; the desire to come back was always ablaze 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 Roussane. 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. Today, the management of the winery has passed into the hands of Manousakis' daughter Alexandra and her husband Afsin Molavi, a sommelier who also owns Salis, an award-winning restaurant in Chania that offers an impressive wine list.

The winery itself boasts modern production facilities surrounded by beautiful gardens and orange and lemon groves. Visitors to the winery can also enjoy selected Cretan specialties, chosen because they pair perfectly with the wines offered at the wine tasting.

→ MANOUSAKISWINERY.COM

DOURAKIS WINERY

Situated in the area of Alikampos, this winery was one of the first ones in the region of Chania to open its doors to visitors and offer wine-tasting sessions. The estate was established in 1988 by Andreas Dourakis, who had studied oenology in Stuttgart; today, it's run by his son Antonis. The first label produced was "Logari", which slowly came to be known at local restaurants and hotels during a time when the dominant trend was to serve wine in bulk, i.e., by the carafe rather than the bottle. The elder Dourakis made the decision to invest in the winery, buying equipment and building an elegant building whose design was 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. The grapes being grown on the estate are a mix of local and international varieties, but with an emphasis on the Cretan ones: Vidiano, Malvasia, Kotsifali, Mandilaria, and Romeiko, an indigenous variety from the area of Chania that many winemakers find attractive.

→ DOURAKISWINERY.GR

KARAVITAKIS WINERY

Still in the region of Chania but on the other side of the area's capital city, we found Karavitakis Winery, where we were welcomed by Nikos Karavitakis, a fourth-generation winemaker. Karavitakis's great-grandfather was the family's first winemaker, although the estate was established by Nikos' father Manolis 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 olives. Influenced by his studies in Italy, Manolis started planting international varieties such as 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," Nikos explains, adding that he 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."

→ KARAVITAKISWINES.COM

Chania



KREOKAKAVO, A DISH OF PORK PANCIETTA WITH LEEKS, CARROTS, AND THYME-INFUSED HONEY.



SALAD PALIKARIA OR PSAROKOLIVA, ONE OF THE SPECIALTIES OF CRETE'S PESKESI RESTAURANT.



PESKESI RESTAURANT IS IN A WELL-HIDDEN COURTYARD IN THE HEART OF IRAKLEIO, CRETE.

PESKESI RESTAURANT

Sustainability seems to be dominating conversations everywhere, emerging as the trend of our time. In discussions surrounding gastronomy projects, sustainability often takes center stage as well, reflecting this phenomenon.

TEXT

Nikos Ioannidis

PHOTOGRAPHY

Yiorgos Kaplanidis

There is, of course, good reason for this; both environmental awareness and the need to curb costs are growing more important with each passing day, particularly as raw materials become more expensive. Zero waste is not a passing fad, it's a necessity.

In Greece, when we talk about sustainability in gastronomy, it's almost obligatory to refer to a project that has achieved remarkable success in a short period of time. Peskesi is a restaurant located in Irakleio, Crete, offering traditional local cuisine. It serves dishes that go beyond fulfilling the basic need for sustenance, acting as carriers of culture and history. These dishes are prepared not to impress but rather to effortlessly convey the richness of the Cretan soil. Pure ingredients and recipes that have withstood the test of time are presented through contemporary and sustainable methods.

In 1998, the owners of the restaurant established a 12-hectare farm in Charaso. They cultivate their own vegetables, herbs, and fruits using organic and biodynamic methods. Their olive groves yield high-quality extra virgin olive oil. They maintain beehives and raise their own animals. The facilities are open to the public (by appointment) for visits, allowing people to explore the premises and the estate, and to indulge in the products they produce, accompanied by raki, wine, or coffee. The Peskesi team also organize cooking classes, where participants can engage in the whole process, from harvesting to preparation. The chefs share insights into the nutritional value of the products, traditional recipes, and practices that have shaped Cretan cuisine.

RESERVATIONS FOR TOURS, CLASSES, AND DINING CAN BE MADE THROUGH THEIR WEBSITE.

Embracing the spirit of the circular economy, Peskesi started with the slogan "From farm to table" and have now come around to endorsing the reverse flow as well, "From table to farm." This means that nothing goes to waste, and any surplus returns to the land as fertilizer or becomes feed for the estate's animals. In doing this, Peskesi ensures the responsible use of resources such as water and energy. Through intensive research, they are able to deconstruct every dish and calculate the energy consumed in its preparation. Reducing their energy footprint is one of the key priorities of their sustainability project, an effort which is ongoing.

PESKESICRETE.GR



The Ionian Sea, with its turquoise waters and verdant landscapes, is one of the most popular destinations in Greece. The islands offer many options for accommodations and entertainment, depending on personal preferences. Exploring the cuisine and wines of this area can be an exceptional journey and can often lead to discovering hidden treasures with unique flavors and fascinating stories. The Ionian islands also boast some of the most magnificent beaches in the world, offering their visitors unforgettable experiences of turquoise waters and white sands.

TEXT

Nikos Ioannidis

ILLUSTRATION

Philippos Avramidis

PHOTOGRAPHY

Yiorgos Kaplanidis

The Ionian Islands

Kefalonia

Kefalonia is considered one of “the next big things” when it comes to Greek wine. It offers quality wines, amazing local cuisine based on authentic ingredients, wonderful boutique wineries, unique beaches and picturesque villages. It's the perfect place for the discerning traveler seeking something other than the crowded tourist destinations.



Wine tourism in Kefalonia is growing rapidly, and while most Ionian islands rely more on mass tourism, Kefalonia has many options for those who want to discover its gastronomy and wines. Year on year, the number of people visiting wineries increases. Small estates on the island offer visitors a number of different options, including tours of the vineyards, production facilities and wine cellars. Guests can taste wines, mainly made from unique local varieties, and wineries tailor experiences to the visitor's needs, offering both tasting sessions and meals. There are six wineries on the island that participate in the Kefalonia Winemakers Association, which in recent years has managed to promote their wines in Greece and abroad. The wineries in the association organize joint wine events, participate in exhibitions, and are more than eager to showcase their products.

THE MAGICAL BLUE CAVE OF BELOVED BY TOURISTS AND LOCALS ALIKE.



THE TALENTED WINEMAKER EVRIVIADIS SKLAVOS TASTING HIS WINES IN KEFALONIA.

OREALIOS GAEA

The largest winery on the island, Orealios Gaea, is, in fact, a recently rebranded cooperative; it can be found in the village of Omala in the heart of the Robola zone. Robola dominates the grape varieties cultivated in this area; it is responsible for Kefalonia's wine-making history. (There are around 180 hectares of vineyards under cultivation on the slopes and plateaus of Mount Ainos in the Robola PDO zone) Most grape growers supply their grapes to this cooperative, which was established in 1982 and now boasts about 300 members. The different expressions of Robola that dominate its portfolio are complemented by wines made from Vostilidi, Mavrodaphne, Tsaousi, and Muscat grapes. About 70,000 people visit the winery every year to sample the wines. The estate facilities, offering modern and welcoming spaces for wine tasting and sales, are located near Saint Gerassimos Monastery and are open to the public year-round.

[→ OREALIOS.GR](http://OREALIOS.GR)

GENTILINI WINES

This is one of the first wineries that invested in wine tourism. Since 1997, it has been open to visitors, producing quality wines that have won important awards, the most recent being third place in the "50 Great Greek Wines" for its red wine, known as Iri's Vineyard, a fresh Mavrodaphne named after the daughter of Petros Markantonatos and Marianna Kosmetatou, the owners of the winery. Robola is the main grape variety, and it's produced in four different versions, but significant efforts are also being dedicated to the second most important variety of the island, Mavrodaphne. The range of wines covers all consumer needs, from simple to premium wines. Interested parties can book their visit to the winery, located in the village of Minies near Kefalonia's airport, directly through the winery's website.

[→ GENTILINI.GR](http://GENTILINI.GR)

PETRAKOPoulos WINES

Nikos Petrakopoulos is continuing the family tradition of wine production in Thiramona, a picturesque little village in the south of Kefalonia. The history of winemaking here dates back to around 1500 AD. In order to produce high-quality wines, Petrakopoulos collaborates with oenologist and winemaker Kiki Siameli. Organic cultivation, careful hand-harvesting of the grapes, and gentle wine-making methods with as little intervention as possible are the main focus of their efforts. The wines, mainly from Robola, Zakynthino, White Muscat, Tsaoussi and Mavrodaphne, have true character, fully expressing the land on which the grapes were grown. A limited number of bottles is produced annually, but the winery and e-shop also offer bottles from old vintages. Wine tastings take place either at the winery or in the shade of the olive trees in the vineyards.

[→ PETRAKOPoulosWINES.GR](http://PETRAKOPoulosWINES.GR)

SARRIS WINERY

Panos Sarris has made a name for himself due mainly to his unique style. He carefully cultivates his grapes, allowing for minimal intervention in the winemaking process, and uses indigenous yeasts. He chooses large, used barrels for ageing and bottles his wines unfiltered, aiming to express the terroir of the region and the unique characteristics of each local variety. Sarris, who was a distinguished sommelier before turning to winemaking, has invested significantly in wine tourism. The winery is located very close to Avithos, a small beach in the south of the island. Although the production facilities are not large, the location and the sea views make the tasting experience unique. A large shaded terrace is the setting for tasting the wines and for informing visitors about the estate. For those looking for something extra, a visit to the nearby family-run taverna with traditional Kefalonian cuisine is a must.

[→ SARRISWINERY.COM](http://SARRISWINERY.COM)

SCLAVOS WINES

Sklavos Winery is one of the pioneers of the movement for low-intervention wine production in Greece, and Evriviadis Sklavos, a winemaker for nearly three decades, has become well known for his unique approach to his craft. The winery focuses on producing natural wines and respecting the environment. Committed to the principles of organic and biodynamic farming, Sklavos cultivates his ungrafted vines within the Mavrodaphne Kefalonia zone on the peninsula of Paliki and in the Robola zone. Special Robola wines come from the difficult calcareous soils at an elevation of about 500 meters. In addition to the clean expressions of the varieties that result from his classical winemaking methods, Sklavos also produces three special single-varietal wines, Muscat, Vostilidi, and Zakynthino, all as orange wines. Wine tasting is available, with knowledgeable staff on hand to help make the experience even more memorable.

[→ SCLAVOSWINES.GR](http://SCLAVOSWINES.GR)

HARITATOS VINEYARDS

In Kladata, a 12-hectare estate with a 19th-century farmhouse, vineyards, forests, and lakes provides a charming wine tourism experience. The Haritatos family, with roots in the area since the 14th century, has revived a 4.5 hectares vineyard that now produces, using organic methods, a limited range of seven labels that includes White Muscat, Mavrodaphne, and Vostilidi. Visitors can explore the old farmhouse, a "museum" that depicts the way of life on the island a century and a half ago, or enjoy walks around the estate. Lunches or dinners with typical Kefalonian dishes and the estate's wines are also available. The Haritatos family's hospitality will make this an unforgettable experience.

[→ HARITATOSVINEYARD.COM](http://HARITATOSVINEYARD.COM)

Kefalonia Beaches

Kefalonia is renowned for the abundant oleander, oak, and fir trees that form a verdant canopy on the island, for the charming coastal villages of Fiskardo and Assos, and for the otherworldly allure of the Melissani Cave. But first, let's talk about the beaches: Kefalonia boasts an abundance of breathtaking beaches, but if you plan on exploring them all, be prepared to do some driving. To help you out, here are five recommendations for your summer Instagram posts!

MYRTOS BEACH • The star

The deep, turquoise waters and smooth, white pebbles are part of a distinctive panorama. While a small section of the beach has facilities and services, the rest remains untouched, perfect for those who desire seclusion. If you're traveling with children, be aware that the water gets deep quickly. Make sure to stay for the stunning sunset, and note that the village of Assos is located nearby.

PETANI BEACH • The alternative

Some believe that Petani Beach is even better than Myrtos. The steep cliffs drop into waters dancing with reflections of blue and green. Don't forget to bring your snorkeling gear to explore the seabed. One side of the beach has an area with sun loungers and restaurants, while the other offers a more pristine beach experience.

XI BEACH • The red one

Xi Beach on the Paliki peninsula is a captivating destination. Its distinctive red sand and warm, shallow waters make it an excellent spot for families with children. It's also known for its clay cliffs; visitors often apply the mineral-rich clay to their skin for a natural and rejuvenating spa treatment. The beach features numerous amenities, including sun loungers and umbrellas, and there are plenty of water sports available for adventure seekers.

SKALA BEACH • Endless sand

Skala Beach, on the eastern coast of the island, is one of the island's largest and most beautiful beaches, spanning over 5km of golden sand and turquoise waters. The beach backs onto a lovely pine forest and has a promenade, perfect for strolling or jogging. Skala Beach offers numerous amenities, including beach bars, cafes, and restaurants, as well as a number of water sports.

KAKO LAGADI BEACH • The secret one

Kako Lagadi is a tiny cove nestled between steep rocks topped with vegetation; it has calm azure waters and a pebble-covered shore, with natural shade from rocks on one side. Although it takes a bit of effort to get here, visitors are rewarded with breathtaking turquoise waters, large white pebbles, and an impressive cave at the edge of the beach. It's a hidden gem that attracts people who appreciate pristine locations.



Zakynthos may have limited options for wine tourism, but they are of high quality. Essentially, the island's main viticultural zone forms a circle in the center of the island. The traditional wine of the region is the white Verdea*, produced exclusively in the wineries of Zakynthos. The main grape varieties used in the production of Verdea are Skiadopoulos, Pavlos, Robola, Vostilidi, and Avgoustiatis. All the wineries in Zakynthos produce Verdea, while the majority of red production comes from the Avgoustiatis grape. Winemakers here are increasingly turning to organically cultivated grapes and to wines made with gentle intervention.

GRAMPSAS ESTATE

Grampsas Estate is noted for the quality of its wines, a result of concerted efforts, applied knowledge, professionalism, and a love for wine and the land it comes from. The people here value local grape varieties such as Vostilidi, Pavlos, and Avgoustiatis. Among the estate's labels, the one to look out for is Verdea, aged for six months in oak barrels and made from Skiadopoulos, Vostilidi, Robola, and Pavlos grapes. The winery is open to visitors, and there is an excellent restaurant on the premises. It's advisable to make a reservation for your meal, and it's also recommended to book the tour and tasting in advance.

KTIMAGRAMPSA.GR

OENOLPI WINERY

Founded in 2000 by oenologists Timotheos Christoforos and Christina Maria Leftaki, the Oenolpi Winery cultivates a total of 170 hectares of vineyards with indigenous varieties such as Skiadopoulos, Vostilidi, Avgoustiatis, Katsakoulia, and Koutsoubeli. They also grow the black Zakynthian raisin which, for many years, was the main source of income for the people of Zakynthos. The winery is open for tours and tastings, and dinner can be arranged upon request.

OENOLPI.GR

SOLOMOS WINERY

The Solomos family has been making wine on the island of Zakynthos since the early 19th century. The modern winery is located at the foot of the Venetian Castle of Zakynthos. Most of the vineyards are old, with ungrafted, dry-farmed vines located in different areas, both plain and semi-mountainous. The grape varieties that are used for winemaking include Avgoustiatis, Vostilidi, Pavlos, Skiadopoulos, Robola, Muscat, Violetto and the Black Robola. The winery is open for visits by appointment.

FACEBOOK.COM/SOLOMOSWINES

GOUMAS ESTATE

The Goumas Estate boasts a rich history dating back to 1780. Visitors today are treated to a unique tour, led by the family themselves, which explores the estate and vineyards as well as the specially designed spaces of the winery and the restored 19th-century buildings. Here, guests can enjoy wine tastings and pairing experiences coupled with the chance to view an exhibition of religious icons belonging to the estate's current owner, Giannis Giatras-Goumas.

ARTANDWINE.GR

AMPELOSTRATES

Ampelostrates is not a winery, but a restaurant offering a dining experience set in a stunning vineyard at the edge of the village of Kiliomenos. What sets it apart from other dining establishments is that it produces and bottles its own wine. The stone buildings exude a sense of grandeur in the lush countryside. Alekos Maroudas, whose family has a long tradition of winemaking, studied oenology abroad before returning permanently to his ancestral island, where he cultivates the vineyards of his ancestors. Traditionally, in Zakynthos, all white grape varieties were planted together. Thus, the old vineyard has Pavlos, Robola, and Lagorthi varieties growing together. Indigenous red grape varieties are also cultivated, including Augoustiatis, Katsakoulia, and Koutsoubeli, along with the extremely rare Glykopati. Four labels, two whites, one rosé, and one red with a total production of 5,000 to 6,000 bottles, depending on the year, are available exclusively at Ampelostrates. Gradually, newer vineyards are contributing their grapes; additional wines, including an oak barrel-aged Augoustiatis are also being introduced. The restaurant is open daily during summer and on weekends during the winter months. A meal here is a dining experience not to be missed!

FACEBOOK.COM/AMPELOSTRATES

Zakynthos



THE TRADITIONAL TOWN OF CORFU AS SEEN FROM ABOVE.

The northernmost Ionian island has a tradition of winemaking that dates back thousands of years. Most vineyards are old, dry-farmed and ungrafted, as phylloxera never made it to the island.

THEOTOKY ESTATE

The Theotoky family is one of the most historic families in Greece, with a long history of participation in the public life of the country. Georgios Theotoky served as Prime Minister of the country four times in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, while his son Ioannis Theotoky, the father of the current owner of the estate, briefly held the same position in the 1950s. The family's estate is now in the hands of the fifth generation. The Estate covers 120 hectares, of which 5.5 have been certified organic vineyards since 2016, while the rest of the land is covered with olive trees, pines, and pastureland for animals. The grape varieties grown include Robola, Kakotrygi, Vartzami, Skopelitiko, Syrah, and Cabernet Sauvignon. The estate offers guided tours that include a wine tasting and a visit to the on-site museum with family heirlooms. Online reservations or prior contact is necessary to arrange a visit. The Theotoky Estate is one of the few in Greece that also offers accommodation on the premises.

↗ THEOTOKY.COM

PONTIGLIO WINERY

The Pontiglio Winery was founded relatively recently, in 2014, near Lefkimi in Corfu. The word "Pontiglio" has Italian origins but it's also used in the local dialect, in which it means "determination". It describes the family's persistent effort to create quality wines in the face of current trends embracing easy-to-consume products. They focus exclusively on indigenous varieties and cultivate vineyards with the Skopelitiko and Kakotrygi varieties. The small winery is open for visits, and tastings are held both in the tasting rooms and outdoors, sometimes even in the vineyards.

↗ PONTIGLIO.GR

Corfu



NORTHERN AEGEAN

One cannot talk about the northern Aegean without mentioning its delectable seafood. The islands' location in the bountiful Aegean Sea ensures a constant supply of fresh fish and seafood delicacies. From grilled octopus to succulent shrimp and mouthwatering sardines, the seafood dishes here are unrivaled.

TEXT

Giovanna Lykou • Sommelier, Wine and Spirits Instructor

ILLUSTRATION

Philippos Avramidis

The northern Aegean islands are famous for their exceptional olive oil as well, produced from groves that thrive in the Mediterranean climate. This golden elixir adds a distinctive flavor to local dishes and is a staple in traditional recipes. Enriched by locally grown vegetables and aromatic herbs, the cuisine of the Northern Aegean showcases simplicity, freshness, and an emphasis on natural flavors.

To complement this exquisite cuisine, the islands offer a diverse selection of wines. Samos is celebrated for its sweet Muscat wines, characterized by their intense aromas and honeyed notes. Limnos, on the other hand, is home to the ancient variety known as Limnio, while Ikaria's volcanic soil and maritime climate produces fine wines coming from a unique terroir.

The islands of the northern Aegean provide a delightful gastronomic adventure, inviting visitors to savor the flavors of the sea, indulge in the richness of olive oil, and raise a glass of exceptional wine.

SAMOS, IKARIA

With each bite and sip, one can truly appreciate the harmonious marriage of tradition, nature, and culinary excellence that defines this enchanting region.

SAMOS

Samos is a destination beloved by tourists and one that offers a diverse range of attractions and experiences. Visitors can explore ancient ruins such as the Heraion and the Tunnel of Eupalinos, or relax on picturesque beaches with crystal-clear waters. A visit to the island's charming villages, such as Pythagoreio and Kokkari, provides glimpses into local life and offers delightful dining options. Nature lovers can hike through lush forests and enjoy panoramic views. Overall, Samos combines cultural heritage, natural beauty, and warm hospitality.

The celebrated wine region of the island is famous for its exceptional, world-renowned Muscat wines, luscious dessert wines known for their aromatic profiles, honeyed notes, and balanced sweetness. The vineyards that produce them are blessed with abundant sunshine and volcanic soil.

UNITED WINEMAKING AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVE OF SAMOS [UWC Samos]

The UWC Samos (EOS Samos) is one of the oldest and most successful cooperatives in Greece and is, in fact, among the top 10 largest wineries in our country! Samian wine serves as a major ambassador for Greek wine abroad, with exports reaching markets all over the world. Today, the cooperative counts 2,200 members.

[SAMOSWINE.GR](#)

COUTSODONTIS WINERY

Two young people saw the possibility of creating something unique and pure. Their aim, to make the most of the island's long heritage in viticulture, its unique morphology and its micro-climate, is already being reflected in the quality and the organoleptic profile of their elegant wines.

[COUTSODONTISWINERY.GR](#)

VAKAKIS WINERY

This winery with a limited number of high-quality wine bottles has a habit of placing great importance on not just the wine-making process, but on selecting the finest grapes as well. Organic cultivation is taking place in the vineyards of the entire group of vine growers working with the winery; they are cultivating Muscat at elevations ranging from 600 m to 1000 m.

[VAKAKISWINES.GR](#)

NOPERA WINERY

Its history began back in the 19th century, when the Nopera family left Malta and moved to Samos. Today, the Nopera Winery, combining tradition and innovation, is producing unique sweet and dry Samian Muscat wines, in what was the first private winery on the island. Its wines includes high-quality sweet Muscats as well as selected dry wines.

[NOPERAWINE.COM](#)

IKARIA

Ikaria is a beautiful Greek island known for its unique blend of stunning natural landscapes, rich history, and a laid-back, relaxed way of life. As a tourist destination, it offers a diverse range of attractions and activities, with trails leading to breathtaking viewpoints and hidden gems like the famous Seychelles Beach. Ikaria is also renowned for the healthy lifestyle and consequent long life expectancy of its inhabitants, who know the art of living well. (The island has been deemed a "Blue Zone," a place where residents have a higher life expectancy.) In recent years, Ikaria has gained recognition as a wine region, attracting wine enthusiasts from around the world. The island's unique terroir, with its volcanic soil and maritime climate, contributes to the distinct character of Ikarian wines.

LIMNOS, AND LESVOS

AFIANES WINES

Afianes Winery is busy reviving winemaking techniques from antiquity and combining them with modern practices. In doing so, it is producing an impressive and internationally recognized range of organic wines that reflect the unique terroir of the island. The winery cultivates local grape varieties such as Fokiano and Begleri.

[→ AFIANESWINES.GR](http://AFIANESWINES.GR)

KARIMALIS WINERY

A family enterprise with the foresight to preserve the 500-year-old estate they had inherited, Karimalis Winery also carried out all the work necessary to showcase the Ikarian way of life through the exemplary renovation of some Ikarian residences, where guests can enjoy modern amenities in traditional surroundings. What's more, they did this while producing a wine range driven by terroir and the varieties that thrive here.

[\(+30\) 22750 319 45](tel:+302275031945)

LIMNOS [OR LEMNOS]

Limnos has pristine natural beauty, picturesque landscapes, and serene beaches. There are charming villages, delicious local cuisine, ancient sites like the Sanctuary of Hephaestus, and activities like windsurfing. Along with all this, Limnos is a captivating wine region that delivers a delightful experience to wine enthusiasts. The island is particularly known for its unique PDO wines made from the indigenous grape varieties, Muscat of Alexandria, which produces aromatic and flavorful wines, and the ancient Limnio, also known locally as Kalampaki. The island's soil and Mediterranean climate create the perfect conditions for grape cultivation. The combination of stunning landscapes, traditional wineries and exceptional wines make Limnos a must-visit destination.

LIMNOS WINES

The bedrock, the spirit and the future of this cooperative are its producers. These are people engaged exclusively with the land, preserving the character of local varieties and combining traditional agricultural practices with modern methods of cultivation and vine care.

[→ LIMNOSWINES.GR](http://LIMNOSWINES.GR)

CHATZIGEORGIOU ESTATE

Located in the village of Karpasi, this winery is the first private winery established on the island. It was founded by Petros Chatzigeorgiou, who set out to improve the quality of wines produced on the island with hard work in the vineyard and a focus on research and innovation. Products such as this winery's semi-sparkling Muscat represent a new trend in wine production for the island.

[\(+30\) 22540.310.82](tel:+302254031082)

GARALIS WINERY

This family winery, based on Limnos since 2000, produces both conventional and mild intervention wines. White wines, orange wines made with extended grape skin contact, rosé wines, reds and two kinds of high-quality retsina wine are solid foundations for the winery's present and good omens for its future.

[→ GARALISWINERY.GR](http://GARALISWINERY.GR)

MYRM FAMILY WINERY

A family-run winery that produces wines in small quantities, this establishment is located in Palaio Pedino, where it collects grapes from producers in the wider area. The predominant variety used here is Muscat of Alexandria; on a very small scale, the ancient red variety known as Limnio or Kalampaki is also cultivated.

[→ MYRMFAMILY.WEEBLY.COM](http://MYRMFAMILY.WEEBLY.COM)

LIMNOS ORGANIC WINES

Founded in 2002, this winery draws on a total of approximately 200h of vines (owned by grape growers on a cooperative basis) and strives to produce limited, superior quality wines from organic grapes, taking full advantage of the reliably rich soil on the island of Limnos.

[→ LIMNOSORGANICWINES.GR](http://LIMNOSORGANICWINES.GR)

LESVOS [OR LESBOS]

The third largest Greek island, its size allows for a diverse mix of landscapes, from enchanting coastlines to mountainous regions and fertile plains. Lesvos boasts stunning beaches and beautiful countryside; among the sights are the shores near Eressos; the Byzantine Castle and archaeological museum at Mytilene, the medieval village of Molyvos; and the Petrified Forest of Sigri, a Unesco Global Geopark. It's also famous for its traditional ouzo production, and visitors can explore local distilleries. What's more, the island is gaining recognition for its wine production, with the local Chidiriotiko variety as its ambassador.

METHYMNAEOS WINERY

Methymnaeos Winery saved the local Chidiriotiko grape from extinction in 1985. The distinct volcanic terroir where this unique and elegant variety is organically cultivated endows the wines with minerality and depth of expression. This winery, and its wines, are working hard to win wine lovers over to the dynamic terroir of Lesvos.

[→ METHYMNAEOS.COM](http://METHYMNAEOS.COM)

Ouzo, a traditional Greek product, holds a special place in the heart of Greek culture, and Lesvos is renowned for its high-quality production.

EXPLORING OUZO



Historically, it appears to have emerged in Greece as an evolution of another wonderful spirit, tsipouro, and for this reason, it was initially called "matavrasmeni", which means re-distilled. The name "ouzo" prevailed in the second half of the 19th century, and although it means nothing in modern Greek, etymologically it can be traced back to three words: the Latin word "uso", which means "for use", the ancient Greek word "οζω" which means "to smell" and the Turkish word "üzüm", which means "grape."

Among other worthy efforts to protect Greek products is the decision to award Lesvos with two PDO (Protected Designation of Origin) designations, one for Plomari and one for Mytilene, which has helped in establishing high-quality ouzo first in the domestic market and then, surpassing local borders, in introducing ouzo internationally.

Ouzo is an alcoholic beverage of distilled anise traditionally and exclusively produced in Greece. It is a high-volume distillate with a minimum alcohol content of 37.5% for Mytilene ouzo and 40% for that of Plomari. Organoleptically, its characteristics include the aromas of the ingredients used in making it. The most prominent aroma is of anise, cultivated in the Lisvori region of Lesvos, or, to be more specific, of the dried ripe fruits of the anise plant (*Pimpinella anisum rhomboidal*). It is colorless and transparent; when mixed with water and/or ice, it turns milky. The alcohol that acts as the base for ouzo production is 100% pure agricultural ethyl alcohol, primarily derived from grapes, molasses, and occasionally grains.

When it comes to serving it, ouzo requires its own glass: a smaller version of a highball glass, also known as "σωλήνας", or "pipe" in Greek. Ouzo can be enjoyed neat and chilled, or with water and/or ice. For pairings, items such as smoked fish, shellfish, spicy cheese, black olives, tomatoes, traditional cheeses, or rice-stuffed zucchini blossoms are all outstanding choices.

Most of the prominent ouzo producers on the island are family-owned distilleries that have been producing ouzo since last century. These are the most famous ouzo producers in Greece, offering a wide range of ouzo variations and showcasing the diversity and craftsmanship found in the region's ouzo production. They are happy to provide visitors with an opportunity to explore and appreciate the nuances of this beloved Greek spirit.

- ↪ BARBAYANNI-OUZO.COM
- ↪ OUZOPLOMARI.GR
- ↪ OUZOVETO.GR
- ↪ GIANNATISIS.GR
- ↪ EVA-DISTILLERY.GR
- ↪ OUZOSAMARA.GR
- ↪ MATARELLIS.GR
- ↪ OUZOMINI.GR

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About twenty years ago, I had the good fortune to work with an investor – an avid wine collector – in a restaurant in Athens.



One of the many incidents that I remember was at our first meeting, in a wine cellar full of the best vintages of the greatest houses of France, when, naive and perhaps a bit embarrassed, I asked him about his preferences in Greek wine. I can still remember the expression on his face as he let me know, calmly and politely, that Greek wine was not among his priorities. He explained to me that, while he had quite a few Greek wines in his personal collection, every time he went down into the cellar for supplies, he came back up with more tempting options. It took me a while to understand that I wasn't dealing with a snob, but rather someone who was just fairly assessing the selections he had in stock.

Twenty years have passed since that afternoon in that wine cellar somewhere in Athens, and I'm afraid that the conversation we had that day remains relevant because, although Greek wine has taken several steps forward, it hasn't managed to establish itself in the preferences of consumers at a global level.

I don't like to focus on the negative side of things, so let's first take a look at what we have achieved so far. It's been a while since we shrugged off the bad reputation Greek wines used to have. If Greek wine was once considered in the same light as, say, as televisions from Algeria, nowadays appellations such as Santorini, Naoussa, Mantinea, and Nemea are leading the way and gaining the appreciation of more and more consumers. I'm sure that other regions of our country will follow, including Crete, Kefalonia and other Ionian islands; the rest of the Aegean islands, which seem to offer us more and more interesting examples every year; Attica; Goumenissa; Amynteo; and Rapsani. Inevitably, we have to concentrate on native varieties, as the price range of our wines made with international varieties is not competitive with their New World counterparts.

Taste-wise, we may not yet have achieved the iconic great wine that would act as a headliner with the

potential to drag the rest along, like Vega Sicilia has done in the case of Spain, but across markets around the world we do have dozens of good-quality wines that could be considered competitive for the mid-range wine cellar shelves.

The increasing numbers in the tourism sector are both a blessing and a heavy responsibility, as many visitors from abroad are trying our wines during their stays here and will, in all likelihood, be eager to find them at home, too. I believe that we also need to find better ways to promote Greek gastronomy abroad, particularly the local cuisines of our country; if these were to become part of the daily eating habits in other countries, they would serve as a much better vehicle for the promotion of Greek wines than the existing (not so decent) Greek restaurants abroad.

As for the question "Which is the best Greek wine?", I'm sure that we all have an answer based on our own personal tastes, but it would be wonderful to be able to answer this question while taking into consideration the global realities of wine, not just the narrow reality of Greek winemaking. ▲



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VASSILIKI MARIANTHI ARGYRIS

“Are we going to talk about the same old things over and over again?” was the frustrated response of Vangelis Gerovassiliou – one of the most significant figures in the world of Greek wine – to my persistent request for an interview for our English-edition issue.

TEXT

Penelope Katsatou

PHOTOGRAPHY

Alexandros Avramidis

With this rebuff still ringing in my ears, I decided not to opt for the Zoom, Skype, or similar virtual meeting formats of the pandemic, and caught a plane instead, flying off to meet Vangelis Gerovassiliou’s children – Vassiliki, Marianthi, and Argyris Gerovassiliou – in their wonderful estate in Epanomi.

The new generation of the family seems to have it all: modesty, innovative ideas, an awareness of the family’s history, an enthusiasm for new challenges, and a vision for the future of Greek wine. Ktima Gerovassiliou – one of the family’s five wineries – has changed in every aspect since the last time I visited. It has expanded to cover 95 hectares and will reach 100 hectares next year, making it one of the largest contiguous vineyards in our country.

Expansion also took place in the winery facilities; after changes in 2018, it can now manage 100% of the production needs. Ten new projects are ongoing at the on-site museum, which hosts exceptional events, and the entire production process of the winery operates on green energy. Waste management is carried out through biological purification, enhancing progress on sustainability. Forty-two new grape varieties are being cultivated; they will undergo testing involving new techniques in both the vineyard and the winemaking process.

It’s a considerable amount of work, but it seems to be evenly distributed, as the roles of the younger family members are clear. Argyris

is the estate’s oenologist, Marianthi is in charge of human resources, and Vassiliki has taken on marketing. At the bustling restaurant on the estate, our conversation focused on the future. We skipped the clichéd questions like “How it is to work with your famous father?” and instead focused on the new things that are happening at the estate and in the wine world at large.

PENELOPE KATSATOU How do you feel about wine in aluminum cans?

VASSILIKI GEROVASSILIOU “I did a university project on this topic. Essentially, it significantly changes the way people consume wine since they don’t need to carry a corkscrew anymore. They can simply take their wine to the beach, a concert, or a picnic. Usually, these wines have lower alcohol content, but I believe this approach brings young people closer to wine. Instead of drinking something else at a concert, they can bring their own wine.”

ARGYRIS GEROVASSILIOU “I’m a bit older, and I have experienced things in a more romantic way. I grew up with corks and heavy bottles, for example. I won’t forget how scared we were when the screw cap was first introduced, wondering how we would move on from cork. But times have changed, and while it seemed strange to us at first, now, ten years later, nine out of ten bottles in our winery have screw caps. Perhaps we’re closer to doing the right thing than we realize.”

"We have a proprietary single vineyard, but we cultivate a variety, Malagousia, which is very challenging to grow organically."



MARIANTHI PHOTOGRAPHED IN FRONT OF THE ARTWORK "HORIZON" BY COSTAS VAROTOS.



ARGIRIS PHOTOGRAPHED IN FRONT OF THE ARTWORK "FLAMES OF FREEDOM" BY GIORGOS TSARAS.

PK However, beyond the emotional aspect, there's also the practical side, as the environmental footprint of bottles is significant.

AG Absolutely. We're a winery that exports to Canada as well. And things there are quite strict, especially regarding the environment. So, we've had to change our bottle to a lighter one in the past two years to avoid any issues. There are fines if you exceed a certain weight limit.

VG However, in practice, it's much more challenging because, when we received quotes, we realized that the lighter bottle is actually more expensive! The transition needs to take place in a way that also permits a company to survive. We want to make the transition, but it has to be economically advantageous for us as well.

PK What about the organic approach at the Gerovassiliou estate?

AG All of our wineries, except Ktima Gerovassiliou, are organically certified. Here, we are one step away from organic, meaning we have certified organic management but not wines, except for our rosé Xinomavro, which is organic. We have a proprietary single vineyard, but we cultivate a variety, Malagousia, which is very challenging to grow organically. We've been trying to isolate our red wines in recent years to progress in this area. Gradually, through replanting, the entire Gerovassiliou estate will become organic.

MG We also focus a lot on longevity. We want to make excellent wine for many years. We won't change our entire vineyard just to

follow trends. We must take certain steps to reach that point. Moreover, we know that those who aren't organic won't exist in the coming years.

VG We are certainly moving in that direction for the future, but it needs to happen properly and without rushing, and, above all, without being influenced by trends. We need to consider the entire process, starting from the vineyard, progressing to packaging and distribution. Our customers from abroad are already demanding certifications, pushing us to see what we need to do to adapt to new requirements.

AG We install temperature sensors in the containers to monitor the conditions during the transportation of our wine. When the container reaches its destination, our representative can see the entire journey laid out in data. We also cover the extra funds needed to maintain a stable temperature.

PK Your opinion on natural wines?

AG I'm very annoyed by the labels on wines. What does "natural" or "low intervention" mean? It's like saying "I'm a good person." That's not the issue. Sometimes they talk about our wines, saying that we have good wine every year from Biblia Chora or from Ktima Gerovassiliou. But isn't that the point? If you change every year, how can a wine be successful? Consistency and quality characteristics are what matter. Usually, when a wine changes, it's a different vineyard. Why should consistency be punished? When we maintain this, we're rewarded by the consumer.

VG It's dangerous to try to compare wine

to Coca-Cola and, unfortunately, that's where those who make the distinction between natural wines and others are heading, automatically turning them into industrial products. We don't want or need this polarization.

PK Are there significant differences in your work compared to what the business was like at the beginning, during the early steps of your parents?

AG Regarding the two generations, I'll say that the main difference is that I grew up in this field, whereas my father entered it later in life. Both my character and how I think have been shaped around wine. The first generation is the one that truly built and labored for it, but we, because we were born into it, have an advantage in that it's part of our DNA, which allows us to easily talk about our wine in environments such as exhibitions. Plus, I was fortunate to grow up alongside one of Greece's greatest oenologists. Not having worked in many wineries may not be ideal in terms of experience, but I had the good fortune of growing up alongside two great wine-makers. If my father were starting now, things would be different because circumstances have really changed. His talent and his astuteness helped him accomplish many things. However, I'm not sure a young person today, armed with the same tools, could achieve the same success because the competition is fierce, and things move at a completely different pace. Land is expensive, costs are high, and so on. I also have a greater margin for making mistakes, since I have different tools at my disposal.

For those dreamy days that become
endless summers.



ΣΚΟΥΡΑΣ

DOMAINE SKOURAS
EST. 1986

Winery in Nemea PDO



VASSILIKI PHOTOGRAPHED IN FRONT OF THE ARTWORK "PHOENIX" BY RENZO GALLO.

"The visitor experience is going very well in general; we took steps to promote it from the beginning."

VG The classic thing our parents tell us is that they had the luxury back then of being able to make mistakes, recover from them and move forward. Now there's no room for error. That's the difficulty. We constantly want to do things, but we are constrained by the fact that we represent an estate that's already highly regarded and carries a name that we don't want to jeopardize. We are judged much more harshly.

MG I'd also like to talk about my mother, who's been there from the beginning, working alongside our father, managing the human resources aspect of the business, which is equally important. The human resources part has expanded to 70 people nowadays; my parents had four or five employees in the early years. We provide training and empowerment, and this is something new for everyone, just like our visitor experience, which has evolved significantly. In our parents' time, we had a dirt road leading to the estate. Sometimes we hear people saying "I'd change what my father did." That's not our approach. Our parents give us a lot of space and don't interfere. None of the three of us are interested in becoming famous individually, we're interested in preserving the reputation of our name. The personal aspect of it is secondary; we're solely interested in Ktima Gerovassiliou.

PK Do you have many visitors?

AG The visitor experience is going very well in general; we took steps to promote it from the beginning. Even before the museum, where my father conducted tours, we were open to the public, allowing people to spend a considerable amount of time here with tasting experiences. We've had many visits from schools, everything from toddlers to 17-year-olds, and we have a special area where we accommodate them. The downside is that we're alone in this; we don't have other wineries nearby that are open for visits, which we'd like to have. The village and the wetlands of Epanomi are very interesting, and the local gastronomy has developed significantly.

VG We're getting many foreign visitors, especially this year. We have fewer Russians and more Israelis, especially now that the Holocaust Museum of Greece is being built in Thessaloniki. We also have several visitors from the Balkans on a daily basis. The last good year for visits was in 2019, when we had around 15,000 arrivals; this year we expect more than 20,000. The cost for a tour of the museum and the vineyard is €5, and there are various tasting packages available.

PK Regarding Santorini?

AG I really like our project, but I consider it challenging. After starting in PDO areas with Biblia Chora, it made sense for us to explore regions that have been highlighted by

other wine producers, such as Goumenissa, Naoussa, and Santorini. Besides, it's always been my father's burning desire to produce wine there. We started during the difficult COVID period on an island that takes your breath away, but everything is very challenging there, including prices and construction issues. It was a difficult start, and we required substantial financial support, but we're producing around 22,000 bottles now and we have the potential to reach 40,000.

VG In terms of the romantic aspect, it's a gem, this first winery on Therasia. It's perfectly integrated into the environment, with its three levels harmoniously blending in with the colors of the sand. The views of Ios and Folegandros are accompanied by an exquisitely "unexciting" tranquility. We'll receive fewer visitors because we don't want it to become overly touristic. We believe it's truly a unique place that will attract high-level tourists.

We wrapped up our conversation with my promise that we'd soon host the team of this unique winery at Grape.

THE GEROVASSILIOU FAMILY WINERIES

- Ktima Gerovassiliou Estate
- Biblia Chora Estate in Pangeo
- Dyo Ypsi Estate in Peloponnese
- Goumenissa Tito's Small Estate
- Mikra Thira in Santorini ▶

THE WILD YET
ENCHANTING
NATURE OF THE
BEAST IS CAPTURED
IN AN ELEGANT,
SUMMERY ROSÉ.

Mavroudi, Agiorgitiko, Limniona



MONEMVASIA WINERY
TSIMBIDI



“People do not remember days; they remember moments.” Wines, restaurants, aromas, moments and ideas, captured in journal form.

WINE JOURNAL

I recently visited Milos Restaurant in the center of Athens, just behind the Old Parliament. I just love Milos and there is more to that love than just the fact that it offers authentic, unadulterated Greek food, paired with top-notch Greek wines. What I like most is that it celebrates the simplicity, freshness and sincerity of the Greek cuisine, with no chef's ego being imposed whatsoever. The raw material, mainly seafood and vegetables, is the real star. The restaurant is located on the ground floor of the world's first Milos Hotel and is part of the "Milos concept," which presents Greek cuisine through restaurants in cities such as London, Montreal, Miami, New York, Las Vegas, Los Cabos and Dubai. We loved the oysters, the caviar, the raw fresh tuna and the salmon, while the grilled sea bass was just phenomenal. With the raw food and the starters, we enjoyed the bubbles of an Amalia Vintage by Ktima Tselepos, before switching to a powerful Domaine Costa Lazaridi Sémitlon 2021. We'll be back!

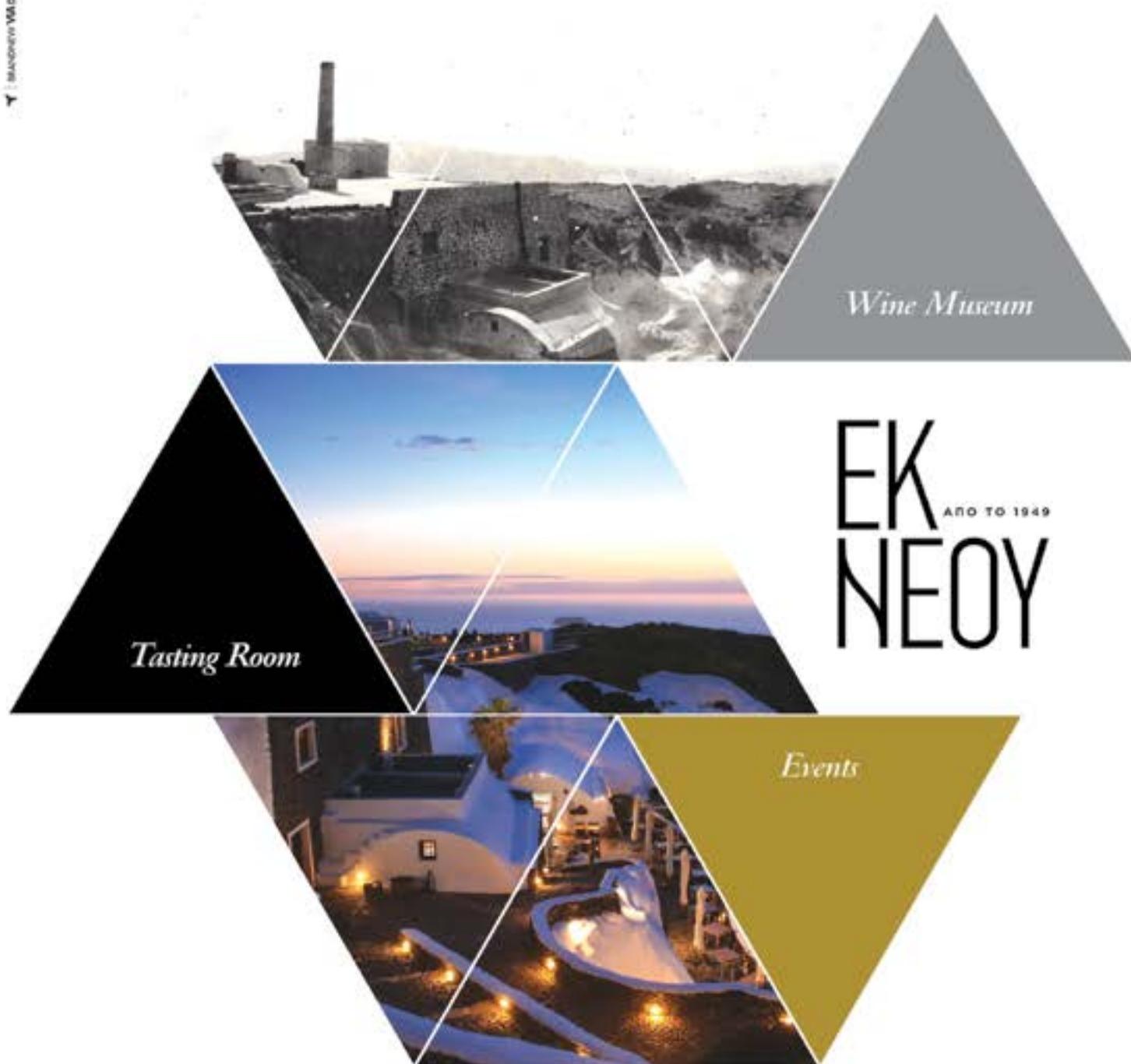
This is the place to be if you're visiting Athens from abroad; ideally located near archaeological sites such as the Agora, Kerameikos and Phyx Hill, and with plenty of cafés and restaurant terraces with jaw-dropping views of the Acropolis, the area surely deserves a visit. It has, however, become a little touristy, and it's difficult to find quality-oriented wine places here. But there's a brilliant exception called Caravin Wine Bar, where owners Leoni and Anna offer a great list of selected Greek wines, with a variety of foods considered classics: octopus carpaccio; moussakas; stuffed vine leaves; and more. We chose a Gentilini Robola from Kefalonia that was lemony, mineral and extremely mouthwatering.

What's the status of the Domaine Sigalas legacy, after Paris Sigalas departed from the winery he founded? I recently had a great opportunity to revisit all their wines and I was pleasantly surprised! Santorini was as lemony and mineral as ever, Kavalieros was focused and precise, Mavrotragano was dense and powerful, their Vinsanto was luscious and exotic, and Apiliotis was still charming and compelling. I later met Paris Sigalas and asked him his opinion of his old Estate. “I think the wine culture we established is still there,” he responded, even as he offered me a glass of his new baby: an out-of-this-world Tria Ampelia Santorini 2021, from his new winery Oeno Π. Yes, life is good!

Seafood is the most popular Greek island food. But Greece also has a mainland, and there, and especially in Central Greece, lamb is king. Grilled or baked, lamb is very popular among Greeks for its deliciously meaty, savory and earthy flavors. So when we visited a village near Amfilochia in the west of Central Greece, we had some amazing kokoretsi, which is (hold your breath!) lamb intestines wrapped around seasoned offal consisting of sweetbreads, hearts and lungs. We chose Thymiopoulos Earth & Sky Naoussa 2020 to pair with the rustic and earthy flavors, and the pairing was classic! The pronounced acidity of Xinomavro refreshes the palate, while its structure and firm tannins work wonderfully with the protein. I never get bored of classics like this one!

JERÁR: what a restaurant it is! Youthful, full of energy and clearly wine-oriented, it's located in Dafni, a quiet neighborhood in the southern portion of the city center. While it offers an inspired wine list, we chose the BYOB option as part of a Spanish wine

evening, with wines such as R. Lopez de Heredia Vina Tondonia Reserva Blanco 2015, Vega Sicilia Tinto Valbuena 5, and Ribera del Duero 2017... not bad! We enjoyed a little bit of many different flavors: a creamy tarama with smoked herb oil; their home-cured charcuterie hand-crafted in-house; a sophisticated and rich pâté en croûte made with free range pork; a foie gras, dry fruit, nuts and date purée; an umami-tasting beef tartare; and a velvety risotto Amarone with smoked chestnut, lard, red basil and red-wine pickled onion. The epic dinner ended with a lovely medovik (a Russian honey pie) with poppy seeds and ice cream. It was a delicious evening from start to finish! ▲



ΕΚ
ΑΠΟ ΤΟ 1949
ΝΕΟΥ

venetsanoswinery.com
Megalochori Caldera, Santorini
Cyclades GREECE



Cyclades GREECE

V
VENETSANOS
WINERY
SANTORINI

WHITE VARIETIES

GRAPE VARIETY

PRONOUNCED

ORIGINATING FROM

MOSTLY CULTIVATED

WINE STYLE

MAIN FEATURES

AGEING POTENTIAL

IDEALLY PAIRED WITH

SUGGESTED PRODUCERS

DETAILS

ASSYRTIKO	MOSCHOFILEROS	MUSCAT BLANC (à Petits Grains)
A-seer'-tee-ko	Mos-ko-fee'-le-ro	Moo-ska-Blawn
Santorini	Mantinia, Central Peloponnese	Greece (most probably)
Throughout Greece	Central Peloponnese	Samos, Patras, Northern Peloponnese, Kefalonia, Rhodes
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
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
2 – 10 years	1 – 3 years	DRY WINES • 1 – 2 years SWEET WINES • 2 – 15+ years
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)
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, Sclavos Wines, Avantis Estate
Assyrtiko is a rare world-class white variety from Santorini. It gives mainly 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 – in addition to 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, 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.

Decoding the leading Indigenous Greek grape varieties.

VIDIANO	SAVATIANO	ROBOLA	RODITIS
Vee-dia-no	Sa-va-tee-ah-no	Roh-bo-lah	Roh-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, 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, Aton 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, these wines 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 on Kefalonia. It has a similar taste mission to Assyrtiko, but is 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.

RED VARIETIES

GRAPE VARIETY	XINOMAVRO	AGIORGITIKO	MAVRODAPHNE
PRONOUNCED	Ksee-no'-mav-ro	Ah-your-yee-ti-ko	Mav-roh-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	NAOUSSA • 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 WINE • 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, brownies
SUGGESTED PRODUCERS	Thymiopoulos Vineyards, Dalamaras Winery, Alpha Estate, Diamantakos Winery, Ktima Kir-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, or rich wines with top-quality, silky tannins. Young wines from Agiorgitiko have a moderately deep red color, intense aromas of fresh red fruit, moderate acidity and soft tannins.	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.

Decoding the leading Indigenous Greek grape varieties.

MAVROTRAGANO	LIMNIONA
Mav-roh-tra-gha-no	Leem-neeh-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 Gerovassileiou, 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.



CHLOE

Chloe Chatzivariti belongs to the next generation of Greek winemakers. As she's the daughter of Vangelis Chatzivaritis, a well-known wine producer from the area of Goumenisa in northern Greece, one might assume that her path had already been laid out for her from a young age, but that's not quite so.

TEXT

Thalia Kartali

PHOTOGRAPHY

Alexandros Avramidis

Despite her parents' aspirations, what young Chloe really wanted to be was an actress. However, after completing her degree in viticulture at the University of Thessaloniki, she decided to move on to postgraduate studies in oenology in Montpellier. Her adventurous nature took her to different places around the globe, from Bordeaux to Lisbon and from there to Argentina, Chile and New Zealand, participating in harvests and winemaking at different wineries, experiences that helped her discover her own approach towards winemaking. From the earliest stage of her studies, she had already decided that she wanted to focus more on organic viticulture, and her experience in France persuaded her that natural winemaking was for her. After quite a bit of experimentation, and having finally decided to return to Greece and take over the family winery, she is now an example of those winemakers of her generation who want to focus on producing good quality wines with the least possible intervention, but without necessarily declaring them "natural wines".

"I don't like this division between natural wines and all the rest," Chloe says. "For me, it's all wine. The way each one of us chooses to produce it is his or her decision, and that choice should not pit us against one another. I'm really tired of this debate."

THALIA KARTALI You've travelled a lot around the globe, taking part in different harvests, in different countries. Which of these experiences did you find most interesting for your own work?

CHLOE CHATZIVARITI All of them, for different reasons. While I was already aware of my preference towards wines that have been produced with the least possible intervention, it was important for me to work at wineries

with a completely different philosophy. It was important to understand how you deal with the production of premium wines and how you deal with the production of bulk wines. And, of course, it was vital to understand the philosophy behind natural winemaking. After I'd returned to Greece in 2016, I ran a few experiments at the family winery and concluded that my own style was indeed closer to that used in the production of natural wines.

TK Have you always felt this way in general or did your experiences in those wineries lead you there?

CC Well, ever since I began studying Viticulture at the University of Thessaloniki, I was always very interested in organic and biodynamic farming. All the vineyards my father had planted were organic, and certified so since 1993, back when even the word, let alone the practice, was unknown to most people in Greece. I remember people at my university used to call me a hippy because of this approach; sadly, up until I graduated, there wasn't even one course on organic farming at the Greek university.

TK What has changed since those days, in your opinion? Are people really more interested in organic farming and producing natural wines, or is it just another marketing tool?

CC I think it depends on the producer. There are some who just think it's a good marketing tool and are simply following the trend. But there are others who really believe in this philosophy. Having worked in the vineyards and seen the difference between organic or biodynamic farming and other methods up close, they've realized what is best for their vines and, consequently, for the environment as whole.



CHLOE CHATZIVARYTI, ENJOYING A GLASS ONE OF HER FAMOUS WINES.

“There’s room for everyone in the wine market.”

TK There are people who love natural wines and people who can't stand them. What do you think of this division?

CC I believe it's very tiring. The truth is that there are a lot of wines out there which are simply faulty. The fact that we can call a wine with volatile acidity a terroir wine just because it does not contain sulfites is, in my opinion just unacceptable. Having said that, however, I think that when these wines are produced with care and following the right procedures, the result can be really beautiful. This polemic between natural and conventional wine production is kind of sad. You either love wine or you don't. Embracing one category while completely denouncing the other is a very elitist way of thinking. There's room for everyone in the wine market; we can each choose the path we want to follow and try to do our best by producing good-quality wines.

TK Do you believe that Greek winemakers who export their wines should focus more on the indigenous Greek varieties?

CC Absolutely. I believe that, in the last 10-15 years, the quality of Greek wines has changed a lot for the better. Ever since we started appreciating our indigenous varieties and realizing that they were our marketing

strength in the global markets, and that people in different countries will choose a wine even if they cannot pronounce it correctly, we've seen a huge increase in our exports. Nobody could pronounce Sauvignon Blanc correctly at the beginning, except from the French, right? Now everybody drinks it.

TK Do you have any specific projects in mind for the near future?

CC Well, I always have something in mind, something that I'd like to experiment with, without necessarily releasing a new product on the market. We already have so many labels; I don't think we really want to release any new ones at this point. Right now, I produce eight wines, and I have a side project or two running each year. Add these to the ones that already existed before I came back, and that means we produce a total of 15 different labels. For me, that's a lot. Gradually, when I have full control of the production, I might consider reducing them. Of course it's also a matter of sales; if a label is selling well, you don't want to pull it from the market. Up until now, we have been producing approximately 70,000 bottles annually. I don't think we can produce more than 120,000 in total per year.

TK As far as climate is concerned, have you seen any changes since you

started working more regularly in the winery?

CC I've seen great changes since 2007. Sadly, I expect many more extreme weather conditions to come. In my opinion, 2021 was a milestone. For ten days we had temperatures as high as 43° C during the day, and it only dropped to 36° C in the evening. This isn't normal for an area like ours. Then, last year, we suffered from huge amounts of rain. It was raining in August, and the older farmers confirmed to me that this was, indeed, very unusual. So, yes, I believe we are seeing big climate changes in our area, and the only thing we can do is try to adapt and find the best solutions to the problems that will occur because of these changes.

TK Recently, there was an EU law adopted which makes it obligatory for all wines to carry a QR code on the label containing information about all the ingredients of a wine. Do you agree?

CC Why not? Absolutely. I think it's very interesting to know exactly what's in the wine that we drink. And we winemakers need to reveal what we put in our wine. What I saw in New Zealand, to be honest with you, scared me. I mean the amount of SO₂ was really frightening but, then again, the production was also huge... What I'm trying to say is that it's good to know exactly what we're drinking. I mean, if there's something we producers are adding to our wines and we don't want to talk about it, well... It's better not to add it then, don't you think?

TK Can you ever imagine using cans instead of glass bottles for your wine?

CC Right now, to be honest with you, no. But I can't say I will never use them, because... Who knows?

TK Why don't you like the idea?

CC Well, I have this image about how wine ages in a bottle. It cannot be the same in a can. But we could be having this conversation in ten years' time and I might be telling you then that I will never go back to using glass. Right now, I think it's weird. But because I care for the environment very much, I believe I will use cans if I have to. Things are changing very rapidly, and since we've been doing so little to protect our environment, I believe it will fall on my generation and the next one to make some big changes.

TK Could you please describe to me what wine really means to you?

CC For me, wine has always been associated with joy, with dinners and lunches with family and friends, with sharing beautiful moments with them. But it's not only that, of course, since I'm not just a consumer. Wine is also a product made of grapes, and for me, it's a lot of hard work and stress, because good wine production depends not on the winemaker but on nature.

So, for me, it's a very real product, which is produced with lots of love. And what I love about it is that it can give joy to the people who drink it! ▶



Emphasis. Chardonnay

 KTIMA PAVLIDIS
KOKKINOGLIA DRAMA

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ARIS

Aris Tselepos, son of winemaker Yiannis Tselepos, is a very creative yet modest young man with a gift for making people feel at ease.

TEXT

Penelope Katsatou

PHOTOGRAPHY

Yiorgos Kaplanidis

When I first met him, I felt immediately as though I'd known him for years. The meeting took place at a wine tourism conference in Nemea, where I was truly impressed by the thorough yet relaxed tour he gave me of his family's winery.

The younger Tselepos does not seem to have inherited his father's exuberant personality, but he has certainly inherited his passion for wine, going so far in our conversation as to compare his life to the "cycle of the vineyard". Aris Tselepos, who grew up in Athens, was born in 1990, the same year the family's winery was established. He wasn't entirely a child of the city, spending his summers in the village of Rizes in Arcadia, the ancestral home of his mother.

His ambition was to become an engineer. The way he speaks and thinks clearly shows he is a practical person. He chose to study chemical engineering, leaving the door open for a career connected to wine, and wrote his thesis on the phenolics of wine; the research he did completely changed his career path.

"While working on my thesis," Tselepos told me, "I realized wine had a complexity I had never expected. What really impressed me was the realization that, no matter how many things one might know about wine, one can never claim to know everything. We're constantly finding out new things but, at the same time, what I find most fascinating is that there are certain aspects to this field that are objective and certain aspects, such as wine tasting, for example, that are completely subjective, too."

Somewhere along the way, he decided that he couldn't get the full picture without having harvested grapes himself, and so he began to travel, enjoying his freedom but also accumulating experience, which, he says, he applies today in many aspects of his work.

Aris has traveled almost everywhere where there's knowledge to be had about wine, from Napa to New Zealand. South Africa is in his plans for the near future. "I went to Canada for two months and worked at the LCBO [Liquor Control Board of Ontario] laboratory; I really liked the laboratory aspect. I decided to do a master's degree, to learn about wine from scratch, and not in France where my father had studied, but in America, knowing that I might not have another opportunity to go there. I applied to UC Davis and it changed everything for me. I went there, a 26-year-old graduate of a technical university, and there were students who were 21 or 22 years old in the school who had five times more experience than me. So that's where I got serious and it was then that I really fell in love with wine and realized that it was the job I wanted to do."

PENELOPE KATSATOU Although you were born into a "wine" family, it took you some time to discover your love for wine. Did your father's strong personality and his success play a role in that, or did you simply need time?

ARIS TSELEPOS At first, they definitely played a role, I'm a bit rebellious, too... But for me, it was important that it be a conscious decision of mine. I chose it, and I'm 100% okay with my choice. I'm happy with my life, and my own path helped me a lot in this area. I left Napa and went to New Zealand. Cloudy Bay was a lifelong dream, I loved the travel aspect, but on the other hand, I also had the security that I could return to something stable whenever I wanted.

It was ultimately important for me and for my relationship with my father for my first experiences to be far away from the family winery.

When I came back, my father was very supportive in integrating me, and the fact that this large company was already up and running and there was someone already who knew all the difficulties that might come up was a safety cushion for me. Also, my sister Andriani had already started working there a few months before, and that helped me a lot, too.

Andriani Tselepou is responsible for all the administrative duties, including communications, marketing, and a little bit of sales inspection, while Aris handles production and exports. They collaborate perfectly together. As for their father, he is, in the words of his son, "Fully active; a Tselepos doesn't retire." The team also includes Takis Sfiniotis, responsible for the vineyard and production, and Yiannis Sivris, a colleague and companion of Yiannis Tselepos from the early days who's also the oenologist responsible for the entire process of the grapes from the vineyard to bottling.

We're a team of four people; all of us have oenological backgrounds and we have complete trust in each other. On the one hand, there's the experience of the three, who have been harvesting for 30 years, and on the other hand, this is balanced against my new ideas and efforts, such as XMF*. Yiannis has a great experience in the oenological field, and we collaborate, and Takis in the vineyard is incredible. I believe he's one of the people who has done the most work with Greek varieties. It's very important to mention him.

PK What interests you the most? What intrigues you about this job?

AT My life has, I think, become a bit like the cycle of the vine, fully seasonal, and I like that. I mean, I don't have a routine at all. Andriani, my father and the guys at the winery have certain things they have to do at certain times, but for me, I can take customers on a tour of the winery one day and deal with sales the next, or I might be busy in production. I do a little bit of everything, and I really like that. But it also has its difficulties. In other words, my life consists of spending half-days in Athens, half-days in Tegea in Arcadia, and then there are two-month stints on Santorini in the summer.

PK How is Santorini?

AT It's special. It's going really well, and has its own magic. My father and I have been going to Santorini together since I was four years old; we had friends there even back then. It was his dream to make wine in Santorini, but he wanted to do it on his own terms. Because the land is broken up into such small parcels, it's not easy to invest in a vineyard and so, because of the cost, he waited a long time for an opportunity.

One finally did arise with the Chrysos family, who have a long tradition on the island and who owned a vineyard. They decided to collaborate with my father and made it possible for him to work the way he wanted to. But I also feel that I have a special relationship with the island, because this is the place where I feel that I make the wine, one hundred percent.



ARIS TSELEPOS, ONE OF THE MOST TALENTED WINEMAKERS OF HIS YOUNG GENERATION.

"My life has, I think, become a bit like the cycle of the vine, fully seasonal, and I like that."

PK So, with this model in mind, would you go to Naousa in a few years?

AT In theory, yes, because our philosophy is not to plant... 5,000 Greek varieties, even if they are in Mantinea or in Nemea. If we're very interested in a variety and consider it important, we'll go to the region where it has adapted best. So I'm not saying we'll do it, because the area has grown a lot now and it's difficult to manage many wineries, but if we were to deal with Xinomavro at some point, yes, we would go.

PK Would you make wine in a soft drink can?

AT For me, the biggest long-term problem with wine is glass bottles. Whether we like it or not, in a few years, if your production is very large, you will have to find a way, for environmental reasons, to transport your wine in bulk and have it bottled there, because the weight alone has a huge environmental footprint. In America, wine in cans was already beginning to spread when I was there. We went to wineries and exhibitions, and had tastings from the cans.

PK The idea of reusable bottles is a bit annoying, isn't it?

AT Yes. Personally, I wouldn't want to apply it to my wines yet, but I'm not completely against it. Based on what we see from the SEV [Hellenic Federation of Enterprises], they are floating some ideas, nothing certain yet, but they may reach the point of obliging wineries to reuse a percentage of their bottles. Not to recycle them, but to find a way to wash them and reuse them, something

that will be very difficult for small wineries, because to carry out this sterilization, some central units will have to be created.

PK Where do you see yourself in the next five years? Do you have a plan?

AT Personally, I'm happy with my life and feel fully creative. We have many things we want to implement in the future, we're in a very good market phase after COVID, and we're finally able to plan for the future. More specifically, now that we've completed establishing the visitor program in Mantinia, we're planning the same for the winery in Nemea and then the one in Santorini.

PK Do you envy anything professionally, in a good way?

AT Yes, what I really envy is that, in the big wineries where I worked, they don't care about the cost of anything. For example, in Napa, at Quintessa, there was a biodynamic winery that produced a label, a red Bordeaux blend with a run of 200,000 bottles. It was pre-sold and was leaving the winery at \$190 per bottle. Or when I was in New Zealand, it rained a lot and I started to worry about the harvest. I asked them, "How are we going to harvest, it's wet, and there will be water?" They told me not to worry. Out in front of the harvesting machines, which were the best there was, I saw three helicopters leading the way, flying low and... drying the vineyard with their blades.

PK What's your favorite variety?

AT Moschofilero, as you might expect, for better or for worse. ▶

A great wine experience starts on the table.

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TÄRNÖ
outdoor foldable table
and 2 chairs

71,99€



RETSINA AND ATTICA – A CASE OF ORIGINALITY AND AUTHENTICITY.



TEXT
Grigoris Michailos • DipWSET

PHOTOS
Roxani Matsa Archive



A NOSTALGIC LOOK BACK: SCENES FROM THE GRAPE HARVEST OF YESTERYEAR ON THE MESOGEIAN PLAIN.

Together with Yiannis Karakasis MW, we're about to launch the 3rd edition of “50 Great Greek Wines” this September, and so the word “greatness” has been on my mind a lot lately. What does “greatness” mean in a wine? Can a bottle of our traditional retsina be a great wine?

The desire to achieve greatness in wine often means figuring out how others define it. If I go by last year's competition results, where a bottle of retsina was ranked 2nd among the 50 greatest Greek wines, I could easily say that retsina can indeed be defined as a great wine. But for me, retsina is something more than just a potentially great wine. It's a wine that starts with a humbler ambition: to be original and true to itself.

For my generation, retsina seemed passé, rejected by critics, until a new generation of Attica producers was inspired to make the best of a style of wine synonymous with their land, their grapes and their ancestors; this was, I feel, a very enlightened approach. These winemakers were not motivated by sales, or profits, or critics' notions of what is proper and desirable. They felt that they should create their own aesthetic standards. In a world of wine where similarly made products are perceived as what will sell best, retsina is an example of originality and authenticity.

A BIT OF HISTORY

Wine that's been flavored with resin has been produced in Greece since antiquity. Early in its storied history, the city of Athens developed strong commercial ties to all of the known ancient world. Amphorae containing wine were sent to the far reaches of the civilized world; Athenian kylix, kraters and other clay vessels used for wine have been found in archaeological excavations and shipwrecks, evidence of the city's importance in wine-making. But why did Greeks decide to add resin to their wine? Archaeological evidence indicates that hundreds of ceramic transport jars (amphorae) destined for long sea journeys were sealed with pine resin to protect the wine from spoilage. Inevitably, the strong flavor of the resin was infused into the wine. This is one possible explanation of how the style evolved.

WHAT IS RETSINA?

Retsina is a wine infused with the resin of Aleppo pine trees, abundance found in the region of Attica. The resin is added during the fermentation of the must; the total quantity of resin cannot exceed 1kg per 100 liters of must. The resin is removed at some point during fermentation to control the infusion of flavors and aromas. Retsina is one of the two wines of Traditional Designation in Greece, and it can be made throughout the country, but Attica is a very special place for retsina, with nine area PGIs (Protected Geographical Indication). For Attica producers, retsina is a source of pride that's also inextricably linked to the region's wine tradition.

A NEW AGE

It took a new generation of determined winemakers to realize the quality potential of retsina. These innovators have been experimenting with improved production methods and high-quality grapes and resin in order to re-invent the style from a quality perspective. The finest examples feature a harmonious marriage of the aromas and flavors of pine, sage, rosemary, mastic resin and ginger that complement and bring out the varietal fruit of the wine. Each sip reveals a lovely interplay of intensity, freshness and complexity, making retsina an incredibly food-friendly wine, especially for the variety of different flavors that define the Greek dinner table.

THE ULTIMATE FOOD-FRIENDLY WINE

For us Greeks, retsina has always been seen in a food context. It pairs extremely well with a range of different cuisines and recipes, and pairing is the best way to fully appreciate the wine's unique character and flavors. Retsina works extremely well with contrasting and intense flavors. The wine's pungent kick can stand up to the profusion of flavors that define classic Greek cuisine, and this versatility is a key aspect of retsina's character.

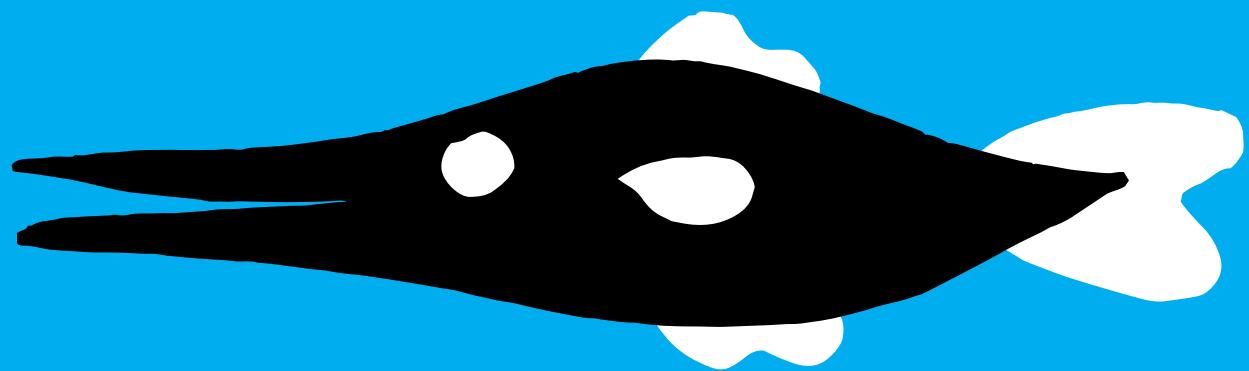
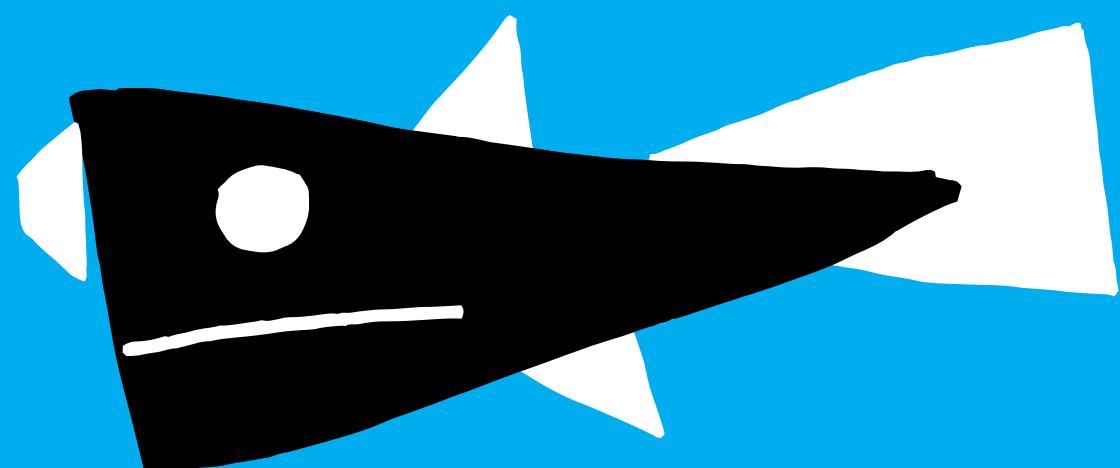
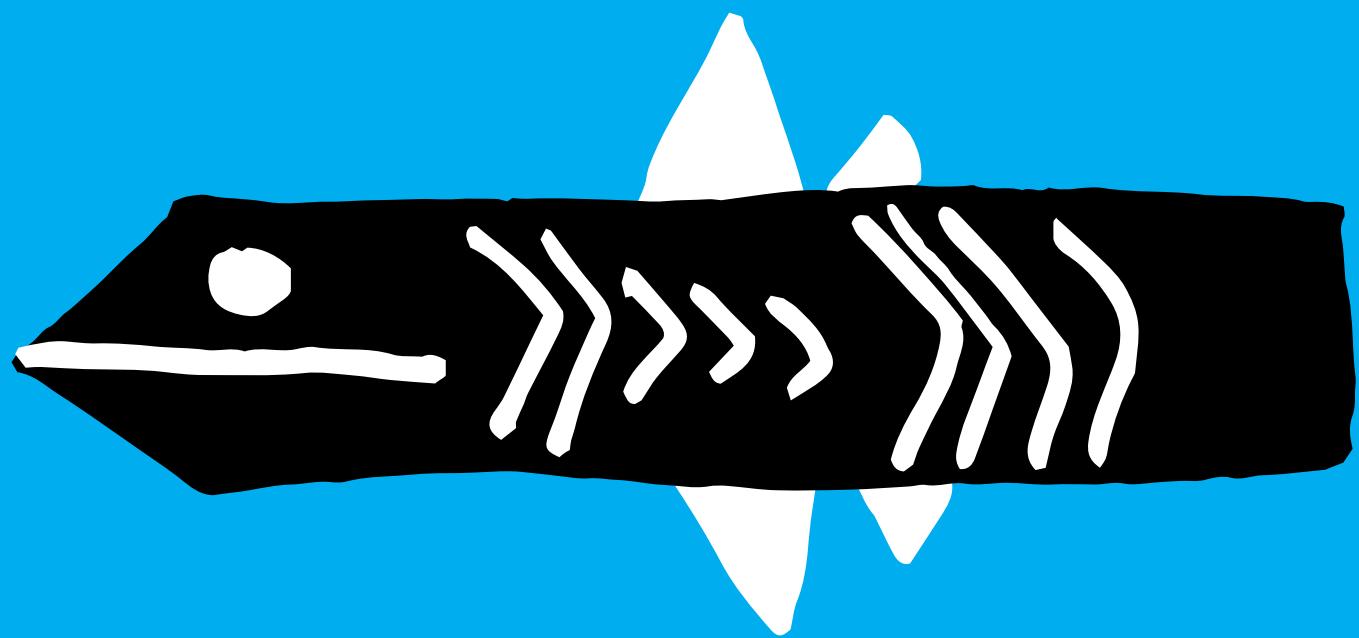
SOME PAIRING IDEAS

- Greek salad with feta cheese
- Salted anchovies with olive oil and lemon or vinegar
- Small fried fish
- Fried cod with a garlic sauce
- Grilled sea bream with an olive oil-and-lemon sauce.
- Chickpeas, slow-cooked in the oven with aromatic herbs

IT'S WHAT TO DRINK THIS SUMMER ON THE ATHENS RIVIERA

Many people still scoff at retsina because they haven't tried the real thing. The cheap tin carafes are a thing of the past, nearly folklore now, although they still harm the reputation of Greece's most traditional wine. Some people dismiss retsina not because it's inherently bad, but because they've been tasting only bad versions of it. This style of wine, however, can be delicious; in fact, it can be both delicious and original as well, and that combination is the best you can get in any wine.

- Anastasia Fragou Winery, Retsina of Attica, NV
- Aton Winery, Retsina of Mesogia, NV
- Georgas Family, Retsina Black Label, NV
- Gikas Winery, Pine Forest Retsina, NV
- Liepouris Wines, Retsina, NV
- Markou Vineyards, Schinopefko Retsina, NV
- Mylonas Winery, Retsina, NV
- Nikolou, Kodra Retsina Orange, NV
- Papagiannakos Winery, Retsina of Mesogia, NV
- Papagianni Winery, Retsina of Attica, NV ▶



GREEK WINE AND SEAFOOD

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

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

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

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

The climate plays a crucial role in the creation of Greece's gastronomic culture. For eight months of the year, we eat outside, under a hot sun or a warm star-lit sky. The bounty of the sea is perfect for such weather; it's low in fat, easier to digest and pairs perfectly with a refreshing glass of chilled white wine. The sea provides a wide variety of foodstuffs with different textures, flavors and intensities that can be prepared using many different cooking methods. Greek white varietals offer a great diversity of styles to match the broad range of seafood options. Here, you'll find some of our suggestions.

SAVATIANO

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

RETSINA

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

RODITIS

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

ROBOLA

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

VILANA

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

MOSCHOFILERI

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

MALAGOUSIA

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

VIDIANO

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

ASSYRTIKO

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

I say this because, having launched Diamond Wine Importers, a company I formed for the myopic purpose of bringing artisanal Greek wines to the US market, the realization occurred to me early on that there was much to learn about the world of wine and the business of wine.

Almost immediately, it became clear to me that there was a mountain ahead and I had to adjust my approach from a traditional business model to a modus operandi more similar to apostolic preaching.

Eventually, I ended up tasking myself with the responsibility of spreading the gospel of Greek wine and evangelizing about the greatest untold story in the wine world, GREECE.

For me, this zeal was fueled by a deep sense of duty and a deep pride in being Greek, originally instilled in me by parents but carried forward by my own romantic vision of Greece and, of course, my stubbornness.

It seemed like a Sisyphean task to me because of the obstacles I faced and the battles I was waging, including the fight against outdated negative perceptions of Greece and Greek wines. What's more, there was the lack of consumer knowledge that existed, the lack of information about Greece, little to no marketing support and a Greek wine industry which was itself taking its initial steps in defining itself as a world-class wine region. Patience and persistence became my mantra, and attaining respect for myself and for Greece became my goal.

Slowly and surely, because of the work of many individuals dedicated to their craft and to the mission of expressing Greece's ecosystems and staying true to the history of respective regions, Greece marched forward, producing better and better wines, and we (the importers and distributors) worked diligently to establish those wines in very challenging export markets, fighting for every wine-list placement, battling for every inch on the retail shelf and always telling that great story.

Fast forward 30 years to the present, and it's amazing to see the progress that's been made.

We've taken massive strides; for example, when I entered the Greek wine world, there was less than 100 wineries in Greece, whereas today the total stands at 1600 and counting.

Other changes have occurred as well; we have changed our appellation classification system to PDO and PGI, a marked improvement over the classifications that we had in the '70s, '80s and '90s. This was a much needed and important step forward.

We've started clonal research for some of the indigenous varieties, put new plantings in regions that were previously not being cultivated, and initiated better viticulture techniques, among many other changes.

Today, Greek wines can express themselves with more depth and diversity than any other wine-producing country of its size and, in many cases, can provide more depth and diversity than larger wine-producing countries as well. All these great steps forward for Greece's wine sector has, however, created dilemmas of its own and has brought us yet again to a crossroads. How do we define ourselves? What are the new challenges, and what is our future in the context of the worldwide market?

OPPORTUNITIES /CHALLENGES:

1 INCREASED TOURISM

Greece is chic, tourism is booming, investments are pouring in and awareness of Greek food products and wines is on the rise. For the wine sector, this presents a unique challenge; as tourism grows and as Greece becomes better known as a food and wine destination, the demand, both domestic and international, for Greek wines increases .

This puts greater pressure on all the producers, but especially the smaller ones, by increasing competition for grapes, driving up land prices, and boosting labor costs. All of this leads to the difficult decision: what's the smarter and more profitable move, to sell more wine at home or to keep fighting in the export markets?

2 PACKAGING COSTS

Greece has disproportionately higher costs associated with packaging. Due to the lack of local glass production, paper production, capsules and all other material needs surrounding bottling and packaging, we are at a disadvantage when compared to other European countries such as Spain, France, and Germany. To keep ourselves competitive and relevant, this needs to addressed at some level.

THE FUTURE OF GREEK WINES

It was 1992 when I began my journey into the world of wine. At that time, I approached it as a business venture, but it quickly morphed into more of an odyssey and eventually into a crusade.

3 LABOR

Wineries are struggling to find competent, reliable workers, both for seasonal (harvest) and full-time employment. What's more, agricultural labor costs are on the rise. This is good news for the workers, as Greece has some of the lowest wages in Europe, but it creates new financial challenges for the wineries because wine production is highly labor intensive.

4 LACK OF EFFECTIVE MARKETING COORDINATION

This is not so much willful obstruction as it a matter of mistaken approach. There has always been marketing efforts to support the wine industry, and there have always been marketing efforts concerning tourism. The problem is, to date, Greece has never had the all-encompassing, overarching messaging/branding campaign that joins the two. Tourism, or, to be more specific, agrotourism has been on the rise globally for decades in places such as the US, Italy, France and other countries, but Greece has yet to fully tap into that sector, and it has also failed to brand itself as a fine-wine and food destination.

This is extremely important for the growth of Greek wines and for Greece in general. The successful marketing of a country's products tends to help develop positive opinions of the country and its people, and to create new opportunities. This type of "soft diplomacy" is an essential tool for Greece. We need to stimulate, for our country, that same warm, fuzzy feeling that people have for Italy. This feeling is linked to lifestyle, which includes, food, wine, fashion and, of course, Italian sports cars (that last category is, unfortunately, the one area where we can't compete).

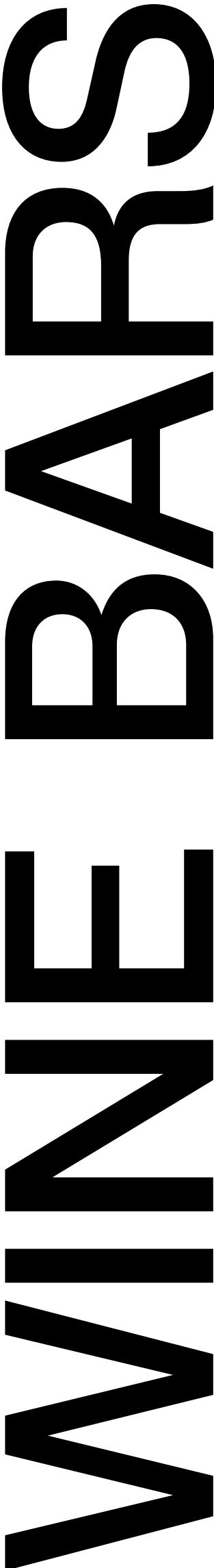
The future of Greece on the world wine stage is complicated because of these above-mentioned challenges, and for many others reasons that I haven't yet broached. For instance, there are regions such as Santorini that need to change to survive as wine-producing areas. Santorini needs to redefine itself as a home to rare, small-production historic vineyards whose products can command a luxury price and appeal to the collector class of wine drinkers.

There are other regions, such as Nemea, the largest geographic red wine region of Greece, that very few wine drinkers outside of Greece know of at all. Nemea has everything it needs to produce great wines, and it does, but Nemea is not a one-size-fits-all region, and to date it has had neither the messaging nor the identity it needs to raise its profile. What it does have going for it is location; in this, it's blessed like no other wine region of Greece. It's close to Athens. What's more, it has a rich history, with both ancient and medieval sites nearby, it's not far from some very nice beaches, and there are castles and vineyards. Nonetheless, it remains undefined and underutilized by international standards.

I recently had the pleasure of visiting Delphi, which always serves to remind us of the dangers of predictions and of the power of manifest destiny. Predicting the future of Greek wines can be complex, because so many external and internal events can occur to flip the script on the best-laid plans. Nonetheless, I'm very optimistic about the future, as long as a strategic plan can be put in place and we have an honest opinion of who we are, where we fit in, and how we can compete with the rest of the wine world.

"Patience and persistence" is still my mantra as we push forward! ▲





BOBO, THE WINEBAR

A bohème-bourgeois atmosphere, warm people, and a short but select wine list that puts emphasis on Greek wines. Enjoy the tasting flight and explore the indigenous varieties. Ask for the mushrooms and the beef carpaccio.

→ BOBOWINEBAR.GR

WINE WITH ELENI

A unique wine bar with an interesting and ever changing wine list located in a cozy little garden next to the Acropolis Museum. Special Greek wines, wine tastings and more, thanks to Eleni. Proudly pet friendly.

→ WINEWITHELENI.COM

MATERIA PRIMA

Located in a lovely urban square in the historic and exciting neighborhood of Pagrati, this wine bar has a lot to say with its excellent wine list. The staff introduces and guides customers through a variety of wine labels, varieties and regions.

→ MATERIAPRIMA.GR

WINE POINT

One of the oldest wine bars in Athens, has maintained its focus on the wine list and the accompaniments, including cheese and cut cured meats from Greek producers. The bar's laid-back atmosphere and friendly staff make it a great place to relax and explore different wine regions.

→ [+30] 210 922 7050

CARAVIN WINE AND WANDERLUST

Chic and sophisticated environment, friendly service, and delicious food. The medium sized wine list stresses Greek grapes and leads itself to an excellent pairing with classic local recipes, with a modern twist.

→ INSTAGRAM.COM/CARAVINWINEBAR

KIKI DE GRECE

A charming wine bar known for its warm and inviting atmosphere. They specialize in Greek wines, showcasing the country's diverse wine regions. They also offer a selection of traditional Greek dishes, allowing visitors to savor local flavors while enjoying their favorite wine.

→ INSTAGRAM.COM/KIKIDEGRECE

WAREHOUSE

Cozy and intimate all-day set up, great wine selection including both Greek and international wine labels by the glass and by the bottle, an all-day delicious food menu, and variety of spirits and several other beverages as well as high-quality coffees.

→ WAREHOUSE.GR

WINE O' CLOCK

Located in the vibrant neighborhood near the Acropolis, Wine O' Clock offers a small but very interesting menu featuring a variety of Greek and some select international wines, as well as Greek aperitifs. When it comes to bites it's all about Greek PDO products, fresh ingredients and superfoods.

→ WINEOCLOCK.GR

Many wine bars have opened in Athens in recent years, giving the opportunity for anyone who wishes to taste Greek wines. Most of them are located in the city center, where taking a wine-hopping stroll is a great idea. These are just a few of the many wine bars available. Each place offers a unique selection of Greek wines and a cozy atmosphere for wine enthusiasts to enjoy.

BY THE GLASS

200+ wines by the glass served in 0.25ml, 0.50ml, 150ml, 500+ wines sold by the bottle, from creamy whites to exotic reds. Book for dinner on the Rallou Manou square.

[BYTHEGLASS.GR](#)

JUNIOR DOES WINE

A cozy, friendly and extremely cute place to enjoy wine in a casual yet pleasant atmosphere. The friendly wine list, the delicious bites and the very kind staff create a pleasant experience in an intimate setting.

[INSTAGRAM.COM/JUNIORDOESWINE](#)

WAREHOUSE CO2

If you love bubbles this is the place to be. The wine list includes some of the most famous bubbles available. From Champagne to Crémant, Prosecco to Franciacorta, Cava, or even amazing Greek sparkling wines, you will find what you are looking for.

[WAREHOUSE.GR](#)

LOST ROOTS

A group of friends have created a passionate wine bar. The wine list covers different, varieties and regions from all over the world along with low-intervention and natural wines, whilst 25 by-the-glass options are available on a rotating basis.

[\[+30 \] 210 34 57644](#)

HETEROCLITO CAVE AND BAR à VIN

A comfortable set up for walk ins only, with 20+ constantly updated wines by the glass. Heterocrito successfully highlights natural or low-intervention wines which it serves with small bites and finger food.

[HETEROCLITO.GR](#)

TANINI AGAPI MOU

Tanini agapi mou, which means “Tannin my love”, is proving it's love in every way. The focus is on Greek wines with an emphasis on natural, low intervention, organic and biodynamic wine labels. A great place, if you are looking for a comfortable approach and a cool set up.

[TANINIAGAPIMOU.GR](#)

FABRICA DE VINO

One of the first, if not the first the last decade, wine establishments in Athens is Fabrica de Vino which has moved its fine wine selection to a new cellar. Located now on the famous pedestrian street of Fokianos Negri in the historic and currently popular Kypseli area.

[FABRICADEVINO.GR](#)

WINE IS FINE

A contemporary urban version of a dining cellar located in the heart of Athens. The wine list is exclusively oriented towards natural wines and the food menu has chosen the multi-culti path while also enjoying influences and techniques from French cuisine.

[\[+30 \] 210 323 0304](#)

OINOSCENT

Wine bar, wine bistro, cellar. An excellent and diverse selection of local and international wines. Ask your sommelier for advice and pay a visit to the cellar. In case you are not in the mood for wine, ask for a Greek beer.

[OINOSCENT.GR](#)

MATERIA PRIMA

Located in the historic and exciting neighborhood of Koukaki this wine bar has an extensive wine list and a cozy environment including a few bar stools. The menu includes interesting greek deli products and a selection of local cheeses.

[MATERIAPRIMA.GR](#)

VINTAGE

Vintage is a bistro style wine bar with a highly appealing ambiance. Classically luxurious, Vintage serves 300+ wines by the glass, providing a great fine-wine selection that includes Bordeaux vintages and Champagnes.

[WINEBARATHENS.COM](#)

Greek spirits in summer cocktails.

SPIRITS

I had a vision that began to take real form three years ago, through the establishment of "Aegean Cocktails & Spirits," an initiative to promote Greece and its products: thyme and oregano, other local herbs, and spirits such as tsipouro (a grape-based spirit), ouzo (an aniseed spirit), masticha (flavored with mastic gum), and more!

How did it all start? Six years ago, I was trying a new batch of tsipouro made from Moschato grapes. Had it been a blind tasting, you might have thought you were drinking a great New Western gin, and wonder how it might work in a Negroni. The reality, however, is that Greek bar professionals would never give this fine spirit a chance, never judging it purely on its characteristics but instead dismissing it as "just tsipouro," a Greek "grappa" produced by wine growers after vinification. The most characteristic DPO Greek spirit, tsipouro was consumed by older generations of Greeks in modest kafeneia, the country's traditional cafés.

To be honest, I, too, had been guilty of believing in those stereotypes. That was, until the summer of 2013 when, on a train trip from Edinburgh to London during which I was interviewing Steve Olsen, we got to talking about Greek wines and spirits. "I'm a tsipouro and ouzo fanatic" Olsen said. "Some people think tsipouro is like grappa but it's very different, and better in fact. There are some great grappa labels, but the overall quality is low. On the other hand, your average tsipouro is only marginally inferior to top grappa names, and on the whole it's of much higher quality."

With this in mind, I posted about the tsipouro I was trying, quoting Steve. He reacted by commenting: "It is, indeed, the most underestimated spirit in the world".

That's when the idea of a long-term project to boost the international stature of this drink and other products was first born.

During the spring of 2016, we contacted Steve Olson so he could deliver his "The Most Underestimated Spirit in the World" speech at the Athens Bar Show. It was a crowning moment, an apotheosis of tsipouro from the man who took mezcal beyond Mexico and

made it a world-wide trend. During his presentation, he was joined by Yiannis Samaras (The Trap), Sullivan Doh (Le Syndicat in Paris, where they only use French spirits) and Yiannis Boutaris, the creator of the Kir Yianni winery. At the events, attendees were able to try amazing tsipouro cocktails made by Steve Olson himself, including a tsipouro and mezcal blend, his version of a Martinez or a punch.

Our goal at Diffords Guide Greece with the "Aegean Cocktail & Spirits" initiative was to bring Greek spirits in general to the forefront and the present, to see them used in cocktails, and to have Greek bars give us a touch of Greece in their drinks menus. We are in Greece, after all! With locality being such an international trend, a country like Greece, with all its amazing raw ingredients, has to support them. Today, we're very happy to note that quite a few great Greek bars have included Greek spirits in their drinks lists and their cocktail menus.

Tsipouro is a Greek distilled spirit made from grape pomace, similar to Italian grappa and Spanish orujo. The major difference between tsipouro and other grape pomace spirits is its aromatic profile. This is due to the fact that the pomace used contains more juice. After fermentation, it undergoes double distillation in copper stills, during which the heads and tails are removed.

The leading protagonist in bottled tsipouro is that of Tyrnavos, which has been recognized as a PDO product since 1989. Tyrnavos is the only town registered as a PDO, while the other three tsipouro regions protected by the EU are Macedonia, Thessaly, and Crete. In recent years, besides traditional tsipouro, many producers have been doing excellent work with aged distillates, creating gems. Favorite tsipouro brands include Dekaraki, made from Moscato Hamburg, and Tsilili, Kardasi, and Apostolakis. For aged varieties, try Agioneri, Dark Cave, and Kardasi. The top choice is Puro, which comes from the Karathanos Distillery, but O/PURIST, a premium and

innovative tsipouro crafted by 10 top bartenders to perfectly complement cocktails, is also noteworthy.

Another amazing Greek product is mastiha liqueur, a rare product produced nowhere in the world but on the island of Chios. While the mastic tree, known as Pistacia lentiscus, grows in many countries of the eastern Mediterranean, only on Chios does it yield the mastic resin we have come to treasure, a juice that oozes from the trunk and branches of the mastic tree when they are expertly tapped in a process called "kentima." What's more, the trees are not found throughout the entire island, but only in the southern part, where the Mastic Villages are located! The whole process of mastic production is quite fascinating. You "injure" a tree, and the "tear" that it yields at the site of the injury is used as an aroma or flavor. It's as if this tear carries the beauty of nature concentrated in one scent. The care of the mastic tree is not difficult, but the collection and cleaning of the resin makes the production process arduous. It can take someone three months to clean 20-30 kilograms of mastic, since all the work is done by hand, one tear at a time. Mastic has been officially used in distilleries since 1912, right after the liberation of Chios. Since then, the production of mastic liqueur and mastic-infused ouzo on the island has been continuously thriving.

BRANDS WORTH TRYING INCLUDE

- **SKINOS MASTIHA SPIRIT**
The first modern mastic liqueur in Greece. You can find it internationally. It's a favorite among bartenders.
- **HOMERICON STOUPAKI**
Produced 100% from authentic mastic distillation. It's balanced and not overly sweet.
- **MASTIHA PSYCHIS**
Very tasty mastic liqueur produced from distilled natural mastic.
- **AXIA MASTIHA SPIRIT**
An extra dry mastiha spirit with minimal sugar added. ▶

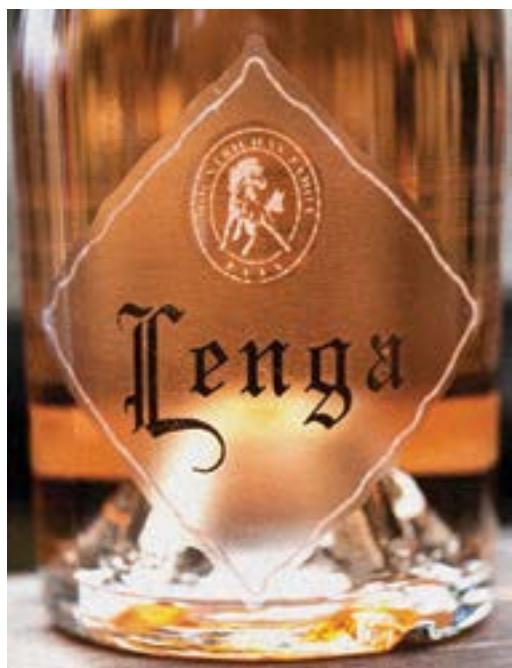


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CELEBRATE LA VIDA!

AVANTIS ESTATE

For many Greek wine enthusiasts, Avantis Estate has evolved alongside the modern Greek wine industry. Emerging in the 1990s, it played a significant role in reshaping wine culture for thousands of Greeks who had only been accustomed to homemade village wines. Avantis Estate introduced them to a new era by offering modern, expressive, aromatic white wines, as well as robust, rich red wines with the potential for ageing.



LENGA, ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS WINES OF THE ESTATE, BEARS ONE OF ITS OWNERS NAMES.

In essence, Avantis Estate provided wines that appealed successfully to an international audience, guiding both modern Greek wine lovers and food enthusiasts into a new realm of wine appreciation. Of course, nothing happens by luck. What characterizes winemaker Apostolos Mountrichas and his wife, oenologist Lenga Grigoriadou, is their open-mindedness, enthusiasm and willingness to meet their audience, while also learning from them. Needless to say, their followers really love the couple and their wines, and they have good reasons to do so. Avantis Estate has never been dogmatic, and this has helped Apostolos and Lenga adapt, reshape, transform and progress. In a quite conservative wine world, Avantis has always been happy to experiment, try out different things and never say "no". Their followers and friends include almost everyone. They offer four rosé wines, for goodness' sake! There's one for each taste preference and, like the couple who produced them, they're beautiful and charming. I met Apostolos and Lenga early in May to hear their story in greater detail and, of course, to taste all their wines once again.

Avantis Estate is located in Evia, the second largest island in Greece, after Crete. It is a long, narrow island, similar to Crete in shape, running parallel to the shore of the mainland of Central Greece. Many visitors don't see Evia as an island, as there is a bridge halfway along its length, linking the capital city of Chalkida with the mainland and making the distance just a 50-minute drive

from Athens. "This is good and bad," says Apostolos, who feels his homeland is more like a suburb of Athens nowadays. He feels young people are attracted to whatever the Greek capital offers, so they don't see working their land as an option. The motivations in his case were a little different. "Educate yourself so you don't have to work in the dirt!" was his mother's advice when he was younger. So, he studied economics at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens before returning to his village.

While a university undergraduate, he had visited France, thanks to the Erasmus program. He had the chance to taste quite a few Cabernet Sauvignon reds and Sauvignon Blanc whites. The former did not attract him, but he fell in love with the latter, and so, upon returning to Evia, he suggested to his father that they re-plant the 1.5 hectare vineyard that surrounds their home, and today's main winery building, with Sauvignon Blanc, replacing the Savatiano and Roditis varieties. This was quite a bold move at the time, but it proved successful. This early 1990s action was, in fact, the very first Sauvignon Blanc planting in Evia. This was also when supplying the local co-operative stopped being mandatory, enabling young Apostolos and his father Nikolaos to found Avantis Estate in 1993. That year saw their first productive vintage, 3,652 bottles of a Savatiano, Roditis and Sauvignon Blanc blend that they released a year later under their new brand name "Avantis" the ancient name for the island of Evia.

TEXT

Gregory Kontos [DipWSET]

PHOTOGRAPHY

Yiorgos Kaplanidis

Quality in the glass that highlights the quality on the plate.

With prominent aromas of strawberry and raspberry, it is an ideal accompaniment for pasta and white meats, fresh tomato sauce, shrimps, and charcuterie with melon and figs.

ENJOY RESPONSIBLY



Semi-dry rosé
wine "Ε" P.G.I.

750 ml

5,15€

1L = 6,87€



Κάθε μέρα αξίζει!

We visited most of their vineyards, located in the foothills of Mt Dirfis amid spectacular views, breathtaking pine forests, surging rivers and diverse landscapes.

Soon after, Apostolos met his future wife Lenga Grigoriadou. She was an oenologist working at the sales department of a wine company. Apart from starting a beautiful family – they are one of many Greek wine-makers with twins – they became business partners, too, joining forces and transforming the local village winery into a Greek wine powerhouse. Today, they produce 650, 000 bottles annually in Evia, while their sister winery in Santorini (called Anhydrous Winery) produces some 50,000 bottles of its own. And while many Greek wineries distill their grape pomace to make tsipouro, a spirit equivalent to grappa, Lenga chose to go in another direction entirely, cleverly using the winemaking leftovers, including the grape skins, lees and seeds, to create a beauty and cosmetics range called Lenga Oenotherapy.

We visited most of their vineyards, located in the foothills of Mt Dirfis amid spectacular views, breathtaking pine forests, surging rivers and diverse landscapes. Their largest vineyard is Gerakaria Afratiou, which stretches from 150 to 250 meters above sea level. Nearby, the well-known Agios Chronos vineyard is planted with 92% Syrah, 8% Viognier; the Didima (meaning "Twins") vineyard with Sauvignon Blanc, Malagousia and Mavrokountoura; and there are Lenga and Amygdalies vineyards, too. The Dyo Pirgoi vineyard, with Malagousia, Gewürztraminer and Viognier, and the contracting vineyard Pireni at Krasas, with Malagousia, are all part of their planted holdings. But as Avantis grows, their vineyards grow, too. In 2022, they planted another 10 hectares at Palioikamara (80% Syrah and 20% Gewürztraminer), and another 4 hectares at Stavros is resting, due to be planted in 2024.

We tried all their wines and they were all charming, delivering aromas, expressiveness and great structure. Their whites are all mouthwatering, from entry-level Historia (50% Assyrtiko and 50% Viognier) to their varietals of Malagousia, Sauvignon Blanc and Viognier (the last of these is sold under the brand name "Agios Chronos White"). They all deliver citrus fruits, Mediterranean herbs and can vary from herbal (Sauvignon Blanc) to creamy (Viognier). Gewürztraminer delivers exotic spiciness and floral charm in both the Lenga white and the Lenga rosé, the first being an off-dry wine, ideal to pair Asian cuisine. The Amygdalies (meaning "Almond Trees") is a darker rosé with lovely aromas of candies,



APOSTOLIS AND LENGA, A SUCCESSFUL COUPLE BOTH IN LIFE AND IN THE WORLD OF WINE.

Turkish delight, red fruits and caramel. The reds are equally mouthwatering. Red Historia is "the Greek GSM", made with Grenache, Syrah and Mavrokountoura. Syrah is the Estate's most popular varietal, with 120,000 bottles produced annually; it's juicy and dense, with lovely chocolaty tannins.

Their best red wines, however, are red Agios Chronos (92% Syrah and 8% Viognier) and their Collection Syrah, sourced from a 2-hectare vineyard and benefiting from a strict selection of the best barrels. There is also the Falcons Hill range (white, rosé and red), produced in small quantities.

Whoever thinks Greece should only produce Xinomavro and Agiorgitiko should try all the different Avantis expressions of Syrah. They will be overwhelmed by the dense mouthfeel and aromas of black fruits, leather and black pepper, and the sometime earthy and savory character. The Estate's next endeavor is an amphorae-fermented Savatiano from their upcoming 2023 vintage, scheduled to be released around Easter 2024. Their varietal Malagousia, until recently only exported, will become available in Greece as well by late 2023 and, on a longer-term plan, they plan to release a dry red made from the Greek variety Mouchtaro. It seems that, with its excellent stewardship, the winery is on the right path, and that it will continue to prosper, grow and shine in the future. ▲

Sunkissed vines on rolling hills in the shadow of the majestic Vermion Mountain: this idyllic scenery blessed by nature is the home of the Kir-Yianni Estate, one of the world's most renowned Greek wineries. Located in Naoussa in northern Greece a city that's known as the heartland of the celebrated red variety of Xinomavro, it's just a 90-minute drive from Thessaloniki.

Arriving at Kir-Yianni is very much like stepping into a vibrant, openhearted world of authentic charm and unpretentious elegance. It's the ideal destination for adventurous spirits seeking to explore long lasting traditions and inspiring possibilities of Greek wines. The traits that this winery's iconic founder Yiannis Boutaris and his son Stellios, a fifth generation winemaker, instilled here are still evident, the product of an outstanding heritage of two decades.

It's no wonder this original Kir-Yianni DNA is reflected in the wine tourism facilities that were completed in 2022. There's so much more than standard tours and tastings. Around wine and its production from vine to glass, a fascinating world has emerged, beautifully adjusted to the natural surroundings, the local traditions and the impactful story of Stellios' trail-blazing family.

What makes a visit to Kir-Yianni special is that everyone feels instantly at home, connected to the place, the history, and its vibes, whether they are looking to relax over a wine picnic with friends by the lake, take an electric bike ride following the trails among the vines, or explore the Estate's legacy with a Xinomavro vertical tasting of rare Ramnista vintages. A monthly agenda – available online at the Estate's website and social media – is set up in a timely manner by the restless Kir-Yianni hospitality team and packed with diverse activities and events for all wine enthusiasts, from novices to connoisseurs.

As fine and food go hand in hand, one should really try Kir-Yianni's menu offered at the equally excellent restaurant. Award-winning Chef Kiriaki Fotopoulou gracefully blends her creativity with local culinary traditions, offering a feast of flavors that complement Kir Yianni wines in perfect harmony. What's more, every dish reflects a mindful minimum-waste philosophy that respects the land, the produce and the fascinating "cucina povera" culinary heritage of Naoussa. Contemporary takes on old recipes pair perfectly with the just-released Kir-Yianni MALAGOU-SIA Single Vineyard from a tiny high-elevation vineyard at the Estate's holding at Amynteo and with AGATHOTO, a sophisticated single-vineyard rose from Xinomavro grown in the small vineyard in Gastra.

If you are in vacation mode, visiting Kir-Yianni in Naoussa is a must-do, an exceptional discovery, a cool wine trip and a chance to relax, learn, taste, enjoy and share. On selected summer nights, an open-air cinema experience, with a glass of your favorite Kir-Yianni wine under the Naoussa sky and just a stone's throw away from the vines, is a Greek dream come true.

IT'S A WONDERFUL KIR-YIANNI WINE WORLD!



Global trends of wine tourism and what they mean for Greece.

Wine tourism has become a popular trend across the globe, as people seek new and unique experiences. With the emergence of new and innovative wine regions, however, there has been a shift in the way wine tourism is conducted. One of the new trends in wine tourism is the rise of wine experiences. Visitors are no longer content with just visiting wineries and tasting rooms. They want to experience the wine-making process firsthand. Wineries are now offering experiences such as grape stomping, barrel tastings, and vineyard tours. This trend has also seen the rise of wine blending experiences, where visitors can create their own unique blends of wine.

Another trend that is gaining popularity is wine and wellness. Visitors are now looking to combine their love of wine with wellness activities such as yoga, meditation, and spa treatments. Many wineries are now offering yoga classes in their vineyards or have partnered with nearby spas to offer visitors a complete wellness experience.

Sustainability has become a significant trend in wine tourism, too, as visitors are now more conscious of the impact of their travel on the environment. Wineries are focusing more and more on sustainable practices such as organic and biodynamic farming methods. Visitors can now take tours of these eco-friendly wineries to learn more about the sustainable practices they employ.

Wine festivals are another form of wine tourism that is gaining momentum. Such events, which provide visitors with the opportunity to taste wines from various wineries in one location, are usually accompanied by live music, food, and other entertainment activities. At one exciting venue, visitors can sample a wide range of wines and learn about different wine regions.

Wine and food pairings have always been popular, but now there's a movement towards a more immersive experience. Wineries are offering food and wine pairing experiences that go beyond the traditional cheese and crackers. Guests can now enjoy a multi-course meal paired with different wines, each carefully selected to complement the different flavors of the dish.

Virtual wine tastings have become increasingly popular in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Wineries had to adapt

to the changing times by offering virtual wine tastings to customers who could not visit in person. This evolution has allowed wineries to reach a wider audience and provide customers with a unique wine-tasting experience from the comfort of their homes.

Wine tourism is no longer limited to traditional wine regions such as France, Italy, and Spain. Emerging wine regions such as Argentina, Chile, South Africa, and Australia are now attracting visitors who want to explore new and exciting wine regions. These regions offer visitors a chance to taste unique wines and experience different cultures. Wine tourism in Greece is still in its early stages, but there is potential for growth here, too. The country has a rich cultural heritage, picturesque landscapes, and a Mediterranean climate, all of which provide ideal conditions for wine tourism. Additionally, the country has a strong culinary tradition with a wide variety of local dishes that pair well with its wines.

One of the challenges that Greece faces in developing its wine tourism industry is the lack of infrastructure and marketing. Many small wineries do not have the resources to invest in tourism infrastructure such as tasting rooms or accommodations. What's more, Greece's wine regions are dispersed throughout the country, making it difficult to promote them as a single destination. However, efforts are being made to promote wine tourism in Greece, with initiatives such as wine trails and wine festivals to attract visitors to the country's wine regions.

In comparison, France is one of the leading wine tourism destinations in the world, with a long history of wine production and a

Despite such advantages among the competition, emerging wine regions such as Greece have the potential to offer their own unique and authentic experiences to wine tourists. Greece's smaller boutique wineries offer a more personalized and intimate wine-tasting experience than the larger commercial wineries in France. Additionally, Greece's cultural heritage, culinary traditions, and stunning natural beauty provide a diverse range of activities and experiences for visitors to the country's wine regions.

It's certainly possible for Greece to compete in wine tourism; this will, however require significant investment in development, infrastructure and marketing. Initiatives such as wine trails and wine festivals can help promote wine tourism in Greece and attract visitors to the country's wine regions. With the right financial support and the proper promotion, Greece's wine tourism industry can become a significant contributor to the country's economy and an international champion of its cultural heritage. ▲

TRAVELER

well-developed tourism infrastructure. The country has several famous wine regions such as Bordeaux, Burgundy, Champagne, and the Rhone Valley, which attract millions of visitors each year. France's wine tourism industry offers a range of experiences, from vineyard tours and tastings to luxury wine-themed vacations.



KEEP IT
SIMPLE,
KEEP
IT
APLA*

* APLA: / a'pla / adverb /
in Greek means simply,
plain, natural.

simplicity | elegance | authenticity



APLA

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KIR-YIANNI ESTATE

There's nothing more rewarding than seeing a person's vision come to life. Five years had passed since our first visit to Kir-Yianni winery in Giannakochori near Naoussa in northern Greece, an area famous for its Xinonavro wines, and what awaited us on our return was a great surprise.

During our first visit, Stellios Boutaris, one of Greece's leading winemakers, had taken us around the areas under construction and talked enthusiastically about his plans, which included the creation of a visitor center and a restaurant he had dreamed of creating, with views of the wonderful vineyards. Today, five years later, having gone through great difficulties and setbacks, including the COVID pandemic, the excellent team of dedicated individuals at the Kir-Yianni Estate can rightly be proud that it's now acknowledged as one of the most beautiful wine tourism destinations in Greece.

Kir-Yianni Estate has always had a great deal of charm. The sight of those perfectly maintained vineyards that surround the winery, together with the iconic "Kula" tower in the background (although now unfortunately without the century-old oak, symbol of the Estate, which came down in unprecedented bad weather in 2019), has always left visitors speechless. On that sunny day of our return, however, as we walked over to the renovated winery building, nothing resembled what we remembered from our first visit. In the courtyard, there were tables full of guests enjoying their wine, accompanied by the excellent menu curated by the Executive Chef of the Estate, Kiriaki Fotopoulou, which we would enjoy a little later: great flavors based on local cuisine, dishes set to perfectly match the labels of the Estate, and excellent raw materials from the vegetable garden, from which seasonal produce is always available, as well as wonderful handmade breads. What more could anyone ask...?

A little further down, in an area overlooking the vineyards, another group was enjoying treats from a picnic basket created by the Estate, while electric bikes awaited those more in the mood to explore the steep slopes of the vineyards.

The interior of the restaurant, done in warm colors and decorated simply as befits such a space, is designed to accommodate visitors on days when the weather does not permit outdoor seating. On the walls, photos of the founders of I. Boutaris & Co. - Ioannis Boutaris, Stellios Boutaris and Konstantinos Nitsiotas - and of the company's first labels remind visitors of the long history and tradition of this family which, although originally from Nympheo, a small village near the city of Florina, has become inextricably linked with the city of Naoussa.

On our most recent trip, Stellios Boutaris once again took it upon himself to guide us around the premises of the winery, this time explaining how his father, Yiannis Boutaris - the great visionary of the family and a man who has had a great impact on the history of Greek wine - bought the land the vineyard now occupies in the late '60s from a local farmer, with the aim of getting into viticulture, much to the chagrin of his own father, who'd never imagined the family as viticulturists. The Boutaris men had been, until then, primarily merchants. "We, my son, go to work in a suit," Yiannis' father used to tell him. Nonetheless, Yiannis persisted, and the first harvest took place at this winery in 1997; this was when the story of the

Kir-Yianni Estate began. Our tour of the winery premises continued with an excellent tasting session in a wonderful room above the cellar, next to where the old vintages are stored, where guests can have private wine tastings. We had the opportunity to sample three different versions of Xinomavro wines, from Naoussa, Amynteo and Goumenissa respectively, and to try different vintages of Ramista - from the Estate's most premium labels - in a small vertical tasting.

Seated at the wonderful table that had been prepared for us by the helpful members of the Estate team, we shared smiles with our fellow guests. The menu was excellent; every dish we tried, from the beetroot with smoked beef tongue and walnut to the trachana with mushroom, sausage, hazelnut and truffle oil, kept us happily rooted in our seats until well after dark, chatting and slowly sipping the excellent wines.

The surprises on this second visit to the area were not limited to the Kir-Yianni Estate. Having more time at our disposal on this trip, we were able to tour the city of Naoussa as well, and discover its hidden charms. We saw some of the old mansions that are still standing, including the Matthias Mansion and its water mill, which dominates the Old Town, and we got to know the people who are working to preserve the "Janissaries and Boules" custom, an exclusively local tradition whose roots have been lost over the centuries. A three-story house in the Batania area of the town serves as the headquarters for a group of dancers, young and old, who prepare all year round to take to the streets of Naoussa every Carnival season in traditional costumes and masks.

Our exploration of the city began in the inner courtyard of the Palaia Poli Hotel, a beautifully renovated traditional mansion; led by the tireless Elpida Palamida, the manager of the Kyr-Yianni Estate's visitor area, we wandered upward through the alleys of Naoussa's Old Town, bisected by the river Arapitsa, climbing to the district's highest point, from where a small waterfall drops to a pool below. From this spot, just as the Turkish forces were invading the city during the Greek War of Independence, a number of Naoussa women, their children in their arms, jumped to their deaths to avoid falling into the clutches of the victors. Today, near that same fateful pool of water, different wineries in the area have submerged 140 bottles of Xinomavro in the river as part of an ageing experiment.

Perhaps when we think of tourist destinations in Greece, Naoussa is not the first that comes to mind. The truth, however, is that the wider area of Imathia is of great interest. The Royal Macedonian Tombs and the wonderful museum of Vergina can be found here, as can the ruins of the School of Aristotle, a magical place with a very special aura. What's more, the Wine Routes of Northern Greece, of which the Naoussa Wine Route is a part, was one of the first wine-tourism networks created in Greece; today, plays a very important role in this constantly growing industry. ▲



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SUMMER BEST BUYS

Greece has a long-standing tradition in the art of winemaking. It's known as one of the oldest wine-producing regions globally and among the pioneers in the industry. The historical roots of Greek winemaking can be traced back approximately 6500 years.

However, this summer, the focus is on the present, as contemporary Greek wines have reached new heights in terms of quality and flavor. Let us embark on a journey through the essence of Greek summer encapsulated in a glass of wine.

Exploring Greece and delving into its vineyards and wines can be an incredible experience, embracing island life, finding tranquility on the mainland and, to borrow the words of Nobel laureate Odysseas Elytis, being able to witness “olive trees and vineyards stretching to the sea.” Allow me to introduce you to the best wine selections for this summer.

**1 RODITIS NATUR,
TETRAMYTHOS WINERY**

[Roditis] • €13.00

If you're going to go natural, do it right. This is an amazing natural vinification of the Roditis grape from old vines at an elevation of 850m in beautiful Aegialia. Tetramythos Winery introduces us to a pale gold wine with intense aromatic personality featuring expressive citrus fruits, apricot, melon and pineapple. In addition to being fruity, the wine is also a bit herbaceous and slightly salty and flinty, with lemony acidity and a creamy texture.

**2 NOVITA GRAMPSAS
WINERY**

[Goustolidi] • €13.50

Grampas Winery has made great and successful efforts to save and promote Goustolidi, a rare local grape variety. This wine shows the variety's great potential and the importance of having revived it. Along with charming aromas of lemon blossoms, citrus fruits, jasmine and pear, the nose is round and well balanced, while the lemony and floral flavor in the mouth lasts through to the aftertaste.

**3 F BY FOIVOS
PAPASTRATIS**

[Assyrtiko, Muscat] • €12.20

F is a wine that puts a smile on your face, just as a good easy-drinking wine should bring you a sense of satisfaction right away. This blend combines the aromatic Muscat with the lean Assyrtiko to make a wine that's fresh and fruity, with floral aromas, crispy acidity, and an elegant flavor. Ideal as an aperitif, it's also a good pairing with seafood dishes and olive oil-based Greek recipes.

**4 INATOS, STRATARIDAKIS
WINERY**

[Muscat of Spina] • €34.90

With this wine, Strataridakis, a.k.a. the master of Muscat of Spina, presents a premium and quite surprising varietal expression. All the extroverted fruit and floral aromas, such as ripe peach, citrus peels and flowers, are embraced by the "barrel effect". If you crave rich and complex aromatic wines with balanced acidity and a long fatty aftertaste, you've just found the right wine to pair with either fish or white meat.

**5 A PRIORI MANTINEIA,
NOVUS**

[Moschofilero] • €10.70

NOVUS Winery is the creation of Leonidas Nassiakos, whose name is linked with Moschofilero and its PDO region. This wine is a charming, well-structured and charismatic PDO Mantinea, with delicate and demonstrative aromas of rose petals, rose water and loukoumi. It also has herbaceous hints and notes of orange, as well as a round sip with luscious acidity and a long, intense aftertaste.

**6 TACHTAS, DOULOUFAKIS
WINERY**

[Tachtas] • €11.50

Crete has an inexhaustible wealth of hidden wine treasures, including the white variety Tachtas. This wine is unique! The deep yellow hints at an aromatic profile of ripe pears, peaches, apricots and white flowers, while the velvety texture and creamy sweet sensation harmonize perfectly with the mildly refreshing acidity.

7 ISEXY, HTERO WINES

[Vilana, Thapsathiri] • €14.90

Inspired by sexiness as an attitude, this wine is an impressive result of gypsy winemaking. Cretan grape varieties Vilana and Thapsathiri blend harmoniously. Melon, peach, apricot, and grapefruit, along with orange blossoms and lemon blossoms, define the aromatic palette. As a result, this white is aromatically confident enough to become your next obsession.

**8 NEGOSKA ROSÉ MIKRO
KTIMA TITOS**

[Negoska] • €14.30

The Goumenissa region, known for its quality wine production, has a new member in its wine club, a 100% Negoska rosé that will amaze you as much as the fairytale set-up of the winery, hidden in the dense oak forest. Red fruit aromas, floral notes, pink grapefruit, lime and bergamot hints direct a pleasantly fresh, silky sip.

**9 SAN GERASIMO,
OREALIOS GAEA**

[Robola] • €13.60

The grapes that go into San Gerasimo PDO Robola of Cephalonia are sourced from semi-mountainous vineyards of Kefalonia still cultivated using traditional techniques, producing low yields of exquisite quality. This formula is how Ionian wines reply to their Aegean counterparts, and here it results in complex aromas of citrus fruits, crispy acidity, and an intense and fresh finish.

**10 ERGO ROSÉ,
LANTIDES WINERY**

[Assyrtiko, Agiorgitiko] • €19.20

This is a blend of white Assyrtiko and red Agiorgitiko from Lantides Winery, which employs a variety of winemaking methods, including the use of amphorae, cement and stainless steel tanks and oak barrels, to create premium, complex and food-friendly wines that excite the nose and the palate with mild aromas and diverse flavor profiles. This fine rosé is a perfect match for seafood in particular and Mediterranean cuisine in general.

11 VOLACUS WINE

[Mavrotragano] • €55.00

The special energy of an undoubtedly unique terroir and the multidimensional personality of the Mavrotragano grape combine to create impressive results. After undergoing fermentation with native yeasts, the wine takes its time – two years – in French oak barrels before it's bottled unfiltered. Only 400 bottles are out there, so you'd better visit Tinos soon!

**12 PASSAGE STROFILIA
ESTATE WINERY**

[Savatiano] • €7.70

This contemporary version of Savatiano, the indigenous grape of Attica, is tasty and exciting! Delicate citrusy aromas join with notes of orange blossom, pear and herbs. A balanced, full yet refreshing taste gives way to a pleasant fruity aftertaste with a hint of white pepper. It's an amazing accompaniment to different Greek mezedes, seafood, green salads and even white meat.

**13 SANTORINI, GAVALAS
WINERY**

[Assyrtiko] • €30.90

If you like volcanic wines, you'll love Santorini. Free-flowing juice from more than 50-year-old Assyrtiko vines take part in classic white vinification. The extraordinary terroir of the island provides amazing minerality and flinty scents to the wine. The light aromas of lemon and peach, the typical saltiness and the high acidity all match perfectly with clams and oysters!

**14 MEGALI PETRA,
SARRIS WINERY**

[Mavrodaphne] • €21.10

The zero-elevation 55-year-old Melissa vineyard in the Minies area of southern Kefalonia yields high-quality grapes, and the result here is a seductive red that's round and balanced, oak free with black fruits, balanced and refreshing acidity in combination with velvety tannins and a long-lasting aftertaste.

15 AGERIKO, LIPSI WINERY

[Athiri, Assyrtiko, Fokiano]

• €13.30

This beautiful white blend put the island of Leipso's on the wine map of Greece. Three charming varieties, the red Fokiano (in white vinification) and the whites, Assyrtiko and Athiri maintain their typical characteristics while highlighting their origin. There are extroverted aromas of pears, melons and apricots, minerality, refreshing acidity and lasting aftertaste.

16 DIASELO WILD YEAST KIDONITSA,

PALIVOU ESTATE

[Kidonitsa] • €21.10

Palivou Estate redefines the profile of the ultimate up-and-coming white Greek grape, Kidonitsa, in a terroir-driven wine with a touch of French and American oak (2 months each in a row). With complex aromas of citrus fruit, quince (the characteristic for the variety), peach, honey and caramel butter. The refreshing acidity balances perfectly with the creamy, almost full body, texture and leads to a long lasting finish.

17 AIDANI, HATZIDAKIS WINERY

[Aidani] • €28.50

This PGI Cyclades Aidani, from the Santorini vineyards in Pyrgos, Megalohori, Akrotiri and Emporio is an absolute must-try. Having remained on fine lees for 6 months and bottled unfiltered, it boasts fine aromas of citrus fruits, pear and nuts, blended with floral notes such as gardenia. It has an elegant yet buttery texture with hints of saltiness through to the finish.

18 ORATOR, AKRATHOS NEWLANDS WINERY

[Agiorgitiko, Syrah, Grenache Rouge] • €14.20

Orator pays homage to the role that wine has played throughout history in Greece. A successful blend of three varieties – Agiorgitiko, Syrah and Grenache Rouge – vinified separately, before their final blending, this pale rosé is honest and seductive, crispy and refreshing, well-made and delicious. Strawberries, cherries, peaches, mint, and jasmine are about to dominate your palate. Be ready!

19 MAGIOVOTANO WILD FERMENT, AMPELOURGEIN

[Liatiko] • €24.50

Liatiko is for sure a jewel of the Cretan vineyard. Ampelourgein Winery grows this native grape organically and the result is amazing. Magiovotano is a low-intervention, gently oxidative, naturally sweet wine. With hedonistic aromas of red fruits such as strawberry and sour cherry, raisins, carob, sweet spices, coffee and chocolate. Smooth tannins, and exceptionally refreshing acidity contribute to an everlasting finish.

20 SAMOS GRAND CRU, UWC SAMOS

[Muscat of Samos] • €9.80

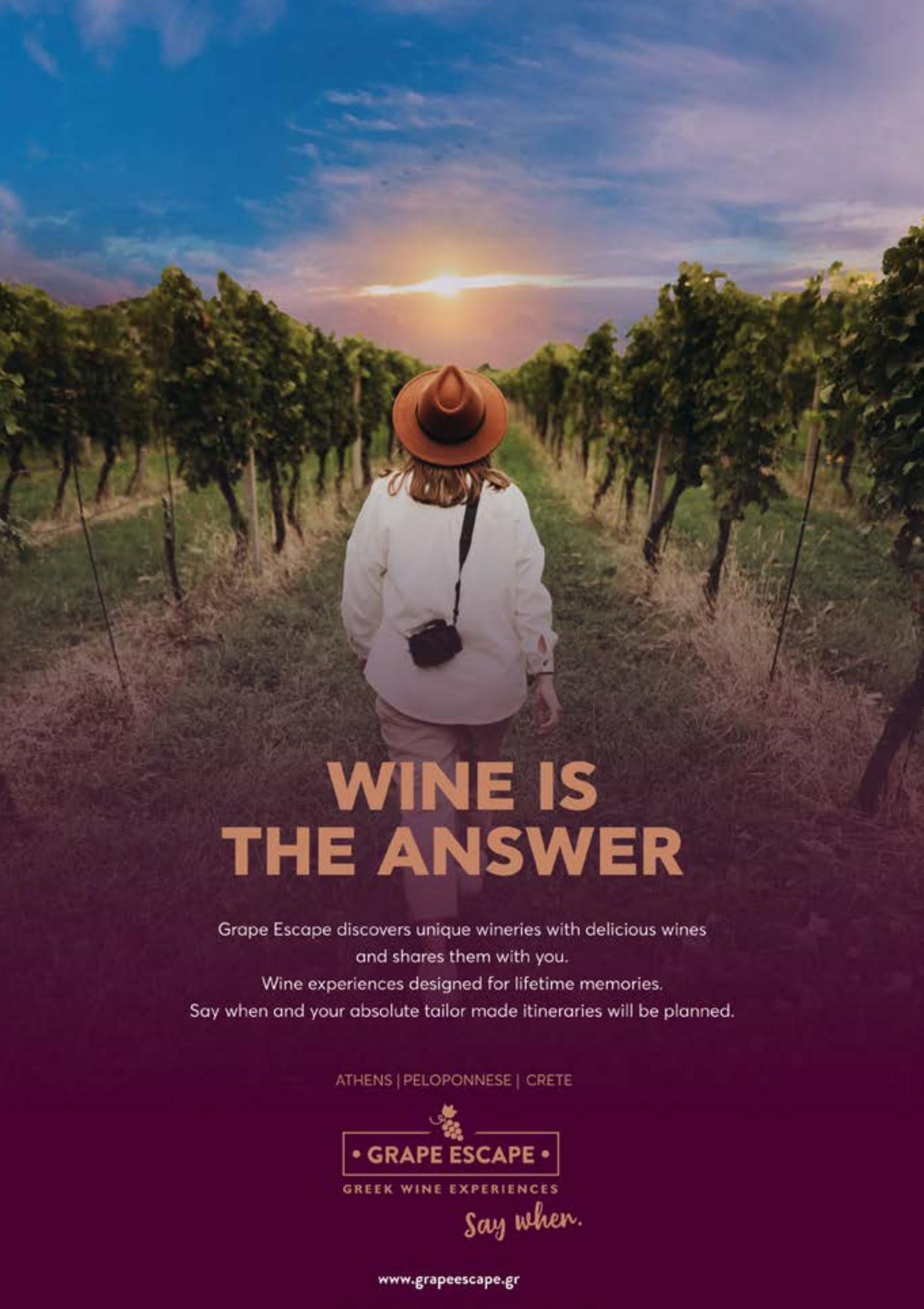
This classic Vin Doux Naturel is considered to be the most important ambassador of the Samos PDO. This terroir-driven varietal dessert wine is an excellent example of balance between sweetness and freshness. The grapes are sourced from selected semi-mountainous vineyards. Exotic fruits and blooming flowers help to facilitate challenging food pairings with sweet or salty bites. ▲



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Fresco fragment, Akrotiri, Thera, c. 1600 BC · Thera, aka Santorini, c. early 21st century CE

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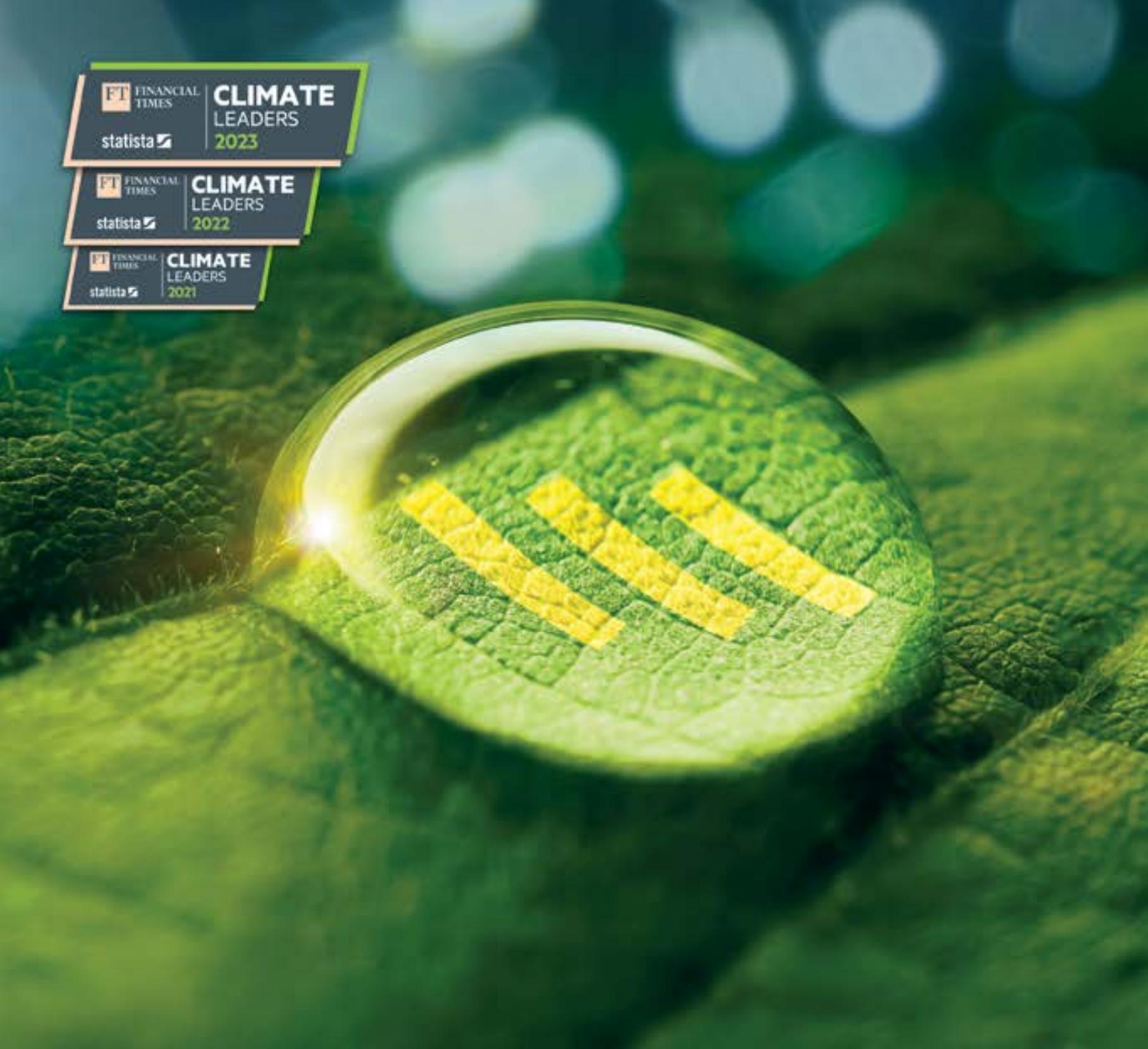
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