The Grapes of Greece

In an increasingly homogenized world full of Chardonnay and Cabernet, Greece rewards curious drinkers looking for good but different wines. Blessed with indigenous, characterful grapes preserved across generations, Greece is your next frontier. Here are four grapes (pronunciation included) worth finding.

Assyrtiko

Lover of sun and volcanic soil, "a seer' tee ko" gives dry, brisk whites with saline minerality and citrus. Capable of complexity and ageability.



€000 000

Agiorgitiko

Capable of fresh, soft, fruity wines in youth, red grape "ah yor yee' ti ko" gains structure, concentrated berry notes, and complexity when aged in oak.









Moschofilero

Like a floral bouquet, "mos cho FEEL eh roe" delivers beautiful aromatics. From rose petals, citrus, to stone fruit, the palate is crisp, the alcohol moderate.





Xinomavro

"Ksee-NOH-mah-vroh" can age due to firm tannins, tight structure, and elegance. A potpourri of aromatics includes red fruits, olives, tomatoes, and spice





Perfect Pairings

Greek cuisine needs little introduction. It forms the cornerstone of the widely – emulated Mediterranean diet, noted for its taste and health benefits. Greek wine, though, is not only a staple only on the Greek table; it's ability to accompany international cuisines is amazing.

Assyrtiko

Sun-kissed Santorini remains Assyrtiko's spiritual home. Thus, fresh, light "island" fare like seafood and salads with feta and olives, match its bright character.





Agiorgitiko

Soft, juicy, and brimming with red fruits, try with meatballs, grilled steak, moussaka, tomato beef stew and rich cheeses.





WINES OF GREECE



Moschofilero

Dry, fresh, and aromatic, this white works with a range of foods from garden-plucked zucchini, to white fish with lemon, to roast chicken.





A firm tannic structure and crisp acidity call for fat and protein. Think grilled meats, game and sausage. Lamb is a classic partner.







Regions & Appellations

Most dream of islands encircled by cerulean blue, knowing little of the diversity of Greek landscapes. From mountainous hinterland, to miles of coastline, to farflung isles scattered across many Seas, each region's soil, climate, and culture contributes distinct character to its wines.

Northern Greece

Xinomavro rules the Macedonian North. Look for bottles from Naoussa, Amyndeon and Goumenissa. With semi-continental and continental climates, these appellations make intriguing, long – lived reds.





Central Greece

A mystical place known for mountain monasteries, the myriad wines of Central evoke similar magic. Look for velvety Xinomavro from Rapsani at the foothills of Mt. Olympus.





The Peloponnese and the Ionian Islands

This vast region encompassing mainland and islands focuses largely on whites. Find perfumed Moschofilero from Mantinia, or dry reds from Agiorgitiko out of Nemea.





The Aegean Islands

The Greece of travelers' dreams. Santorini's volcanic soil produces renowned Assyrtiko as both dry and dessert-style Vinsanto. Discover sweet, floral Muscats from Samos and Lemnos.





WINES OF GREECE



Crete

This important island for viticulture has seven appellations. A mountainous spine provides cooler temperatures for vineyards dedicated to dry whites, reds, plus sweet wines.





A Guide to the WINES OF GREECE

By Konstantinos Lazarakis MW

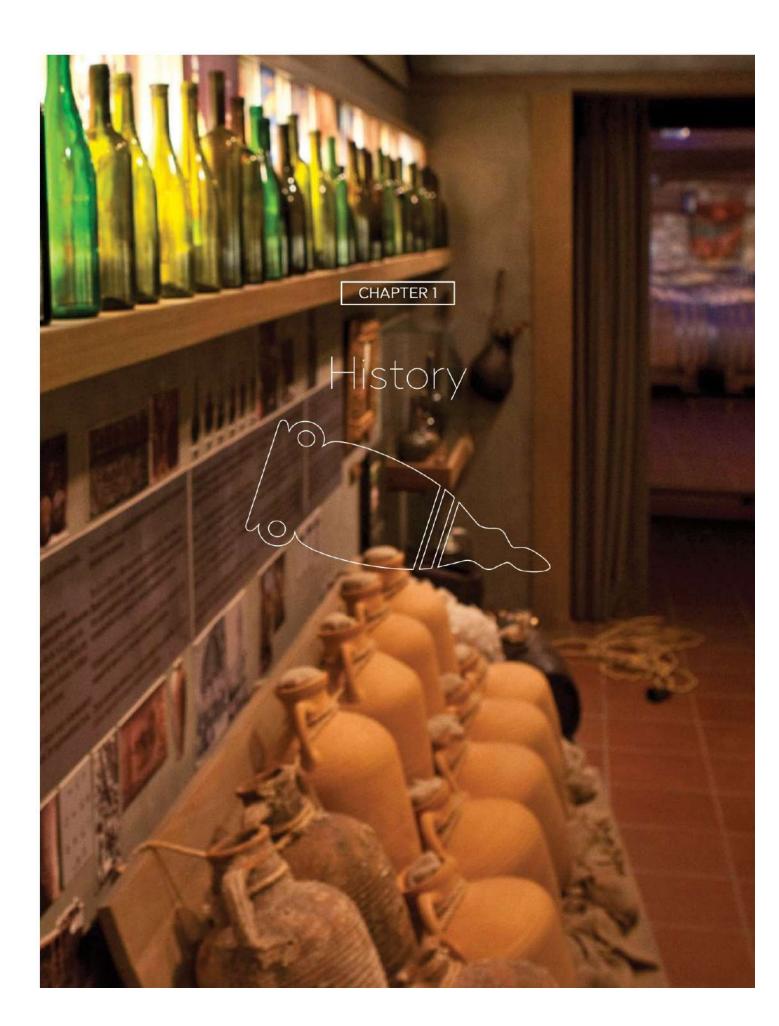
WINES OF GREECE



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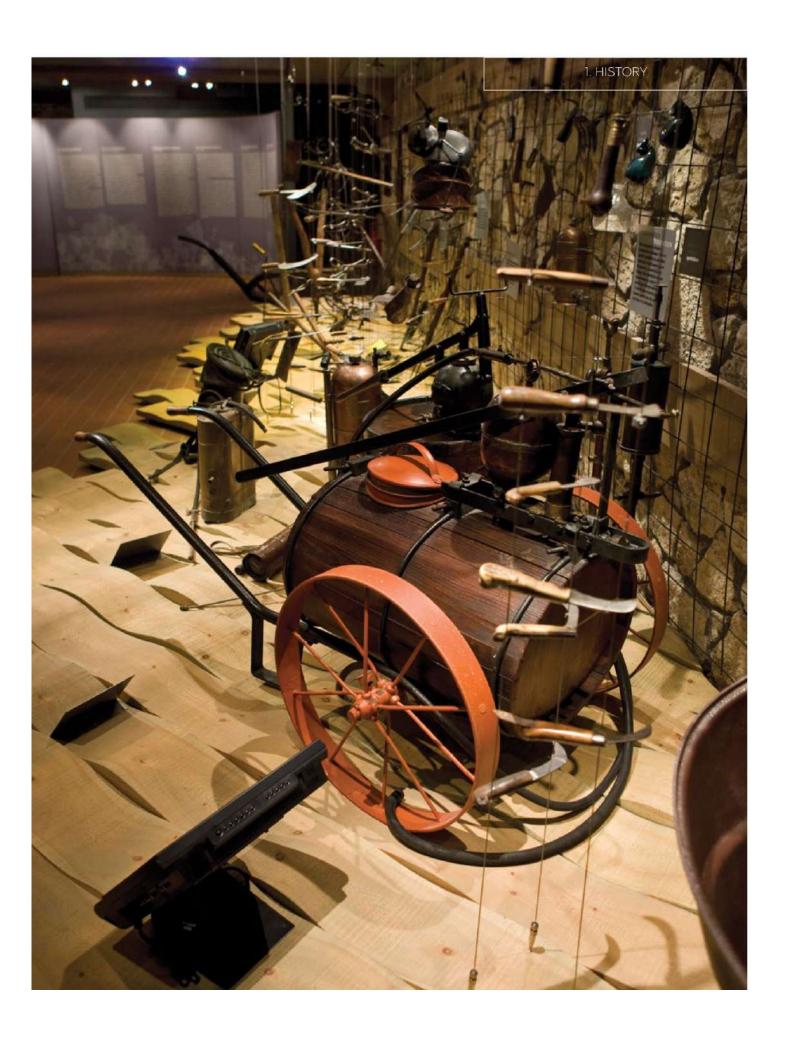
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Historically, Greece's role in forming a global wine culture was catalytic. Wine consumption not only served daily dietary needs, but also was a high cultural criterion, according to which Greeks were distinguished from barbarians. Viticulture and vinification were systematically studied and recorded in order to be disseminated to the rest of the then-known world via the colonies and a particularly developed trade network, one of whose basic commodities was wine. Over time, however, the course and development of Greece's wine sector has been neither stable nor uniform. Through centuries-long development, the new high-quality Greek wine has its own identity and rightfully claims its own place on the global wine scene.

Antiquity/Classical Era

There are no clear indications | as to the exact time viniculture started in Greece. Recent discoveries point to the area of what is now Georgia and Armenia as the most likely places where wine was made for the first time, as well as to the peoples of Mesopotamia, who were familiar with wine as early as 6000 BC and consumed it along with beer, at least as far as the higher social classes were concerned. Importation from these places to Egypt and Greece was easy, without, however, excluding the possibility of viniculture, at least that of wild vineyards, developing independently in some regions. As is evident from important excavations in various locations in Greece, such as a settlement of the Mid-Neolithic and early Copper Ages near the ancient town of Philippi, the findings of crushed grapes have been dated to 6500 years ago and are the earliest indication of viticulture in Europe. In other places, such as Kompoloi on Mt. Olympus, Orchomenos in Boeotia, Poliochni on the island of Lemnos, and Crete, there were findings of preserved grape pips in plinths, wine press installations as well as tools for processing must, thus placing the production and consumption of wine for these areas in the third millennium B.C. Prehistoric settlements, such as that of Minoan Crete and, later, ancient Thera (modern-day Santorini), were in all likelihood the first ones engaging in the production and commercial availability of wine. This is confirmed by numerous discoveries such as the wine press in Vathypetro, Archanes in Heraklion, Crete and the frescoes adorning the houses of the prehistoric settlement of Acrotiri on Thera. The Mycenaean civilisation (17th-11th century B.C.) also played an important role in the evolution and dissemination of wine activity to the rest of Greece. An impressive oenological find was at the archaeological site in Pylos, where an entire cellar with 35 clay pots for storing wine was unearthed. There were also inscriptions with words like 'wine', 'vineyard' and 'wine-seller', proving the importance of wine for Mycenaean society. Part of the production was intended for the markets of other regions, like Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Cyprus, Sicily and Southern Italy, while amphorae from Syria and Palestine point to importation also taking place. Many ancient writers, such as Homer and Hesiod, mention known ancient wines by name and also vividly describe the delights offered by drinking wine. Others, such as Athenaeus in his work The Deipnosophistae (The Banquet of the Learned Philosophers at Dinner) and later Theophrastus in his work On the Causes of Plants, give detailed information on viticulture from planting to harvesting. From their writings, we can glean valuable information on the way that wine was produced in Greece, as well as on the ways to enjoy it. The addition, for instance, of seasonings to wine was common practice in order to make a particular kind of wine, characteristic of each wine-producing region. The most common type of addition was honey or even



dough. Mixing wine with sea water was also widespread and was called *thalassitis* from *thalassa*, the Greek word for 'sea'. The classification of wines was based not only on colour, but also on their organoleptic characteristics, for the assessment of which there was a specific procedure called 'wine-tasting', which the 'wine taster' carried out. Another special category of wine was 'medicinal wine', which was flavoured and enriched with aromatic and medicinal substances and intended for purely therapeutic use. In his works, Hippocrates, considered the father of medicine, made suggestions concerning the quantity and way to consume wine so that one could take advantage of its beneficial properties.

The heavy commercial network established in the Mediterranean by Greek cities led to the development of viticulture since many of these cities based their economic prosperity on wine trade. This is obvious in coin representations with themes such as the grapevine or the amphora. Another indication of the importance of viticulture in



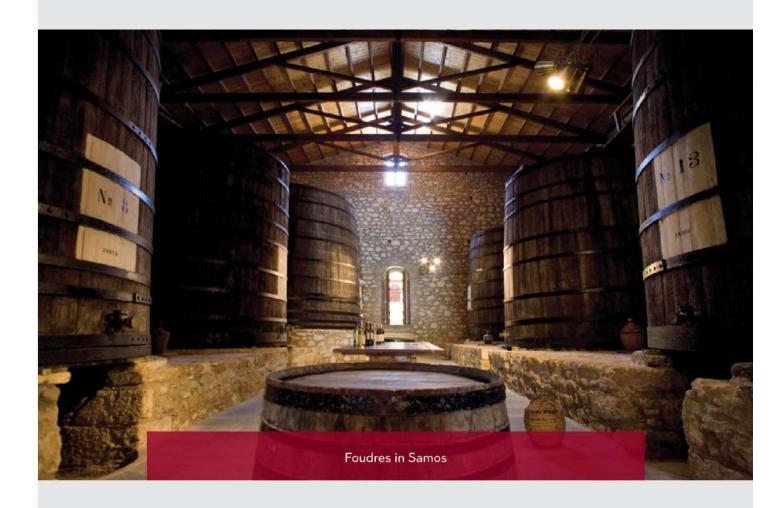
Greece was that the grafts of grape varieties available in Greece were transported to Greek colonies of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea.

Wine was the centrepiece of the Greeks' religious life as was expressed through worship rites dedicated to the god of wine Dionysus. Some of these were the Rural Dionysia (*Dionysia ta kat' agrous*), the City Dionysia or otherwise named Great Dionysia (*Dionysia ta en Astei*), the Lenaia Festival and the Anthesteria. The most glorious festival, the Great Dionysia, included not only impressive processions, but also dithyramb competitions and performances of tragedies and comedies. Every important event or celebration in classical Athens was always a good opportunity, especially for the men of the aristocracy, for social gatherings known as symposiums. These were either public or private events during which the participants passed the time drinking wine mixed with water, usually at a ratio of 1:3, while feasting and having lengthy philosophical discussions and reciting poetry.



Roman Era

With the start of the Roman Era and the close of the Hellenistic Age, an end was put to the domination of Greek wine in the then-known world. However, the contribution of the Greek civilisation to shaping the culture of the new empire was definitive. In the Greek colonies of Southern Italy, viticulture and winemaking were so developed that they influenced the developments in the wine sector throughout the Italian peninsula, although that knowledge pre-existed due to the Etruscans living further north. At the same time, the prevalence of the Greek cities started to dissipate and trade—even wine trade— was transferred to new decision-making centres in Italy and southern France. However, Greek wines continued to hold an eminent place among the rest of the empire's excellent wines. Virgil indicatively mentions that the Greek varieties were innumerable.



Byzantium

Transferring the seat of the Roman Empire | capital from Rome to Constantinople changed the geopolitical map. The political centre of the state was moved to the Hellenised and later Christian East. During the Byzantine era, wine production was in the hands of private citizens and monks. Wine continued to be a staple, holding an important place in the daily life of the people. The participation of Byzantine emperors in the rites for harvest and the contribution of the Patriarch are indicative. The vineyard, the grape and the harvest were used as symbols of Christian faith. The most renowned wines were still those produced on Aegean Islands, Thrace and Mt. Athos. In the 7th century A.D., the first drinking houses and taverns, namely, small eateries serving wine, made their appearance. At the same time, large quantities of cheap, frequently adulterated, wine made their way onto the market, aiming to attract customers from the financially weaker classes. Wine was served undiluted and the word 'krasi' became more frequently used (instead of 'oenos'). Venetians and Genoans financially benefitted from their prominence in the trade of wine and foodstuffs. Not long after, they managed to bring the wines of Monemvassia, Crete and Cyprus under their control. The most renowned wine of the era was considered to be Monemvassian Wine, also known as Malmsey or Malvasian wine by the Franks.

After the Fall of Constantinople in 1453 and the dominance of the Ottomans, the Greeks did not cease their occupation with viticulture, as wine production was a very good opportunity for the conquerors to impose taxation on each stage of production. However, the demand of the local authorities for increasingly higher taxes gradually led to the financial impoverishment of the producers, who, having no other choice, abandoned their vineyards. The worst disaster, however, took place after the 1821 Greek War of Independence when in retaliation the Turks burned everything in their retreat.

Places that were not under the Turkish yoke, such as the Ionian Islands (the Heptanese), were able to maintain close commercial relations with the Western Mediterranean and European markets in general.

Contemporary History

The formation and organisation of the new Greek state after its liberation from the Turks was particularly difficult and laborious. Poverty and the fluid political state in this transitional period did not promote viticulture since priority was given to other key domains of public life. However, the cultivation of currants, the main exported Greek commodity for decades, saw considerable growth. Large quantities of Corinthian currants and Greek wine were channelled mainly to the French wine market, which had been devastated by phylloxera. When wine production in France, however, managed to recover, large quantities of currants remained undisposed. At the same time, cheaper currants from Australia and California inundated the European market since they had the comparative advantage of being lower-priced than the Greek ones. These difficult circumstances were further exacerbated in 1898 by the onset of the vine pest phylloxera, starting in Macedonia, which destroyed vineyards and led to many of them being abandoned. The problem was managed in the same way as in similar cases abroad, by importing phylloxera-resistant American vine rootstocks. In the early 20th century, the planting of vineyards started anew with the Sultana variety for the production of currants mainly in Corinth and Crete.

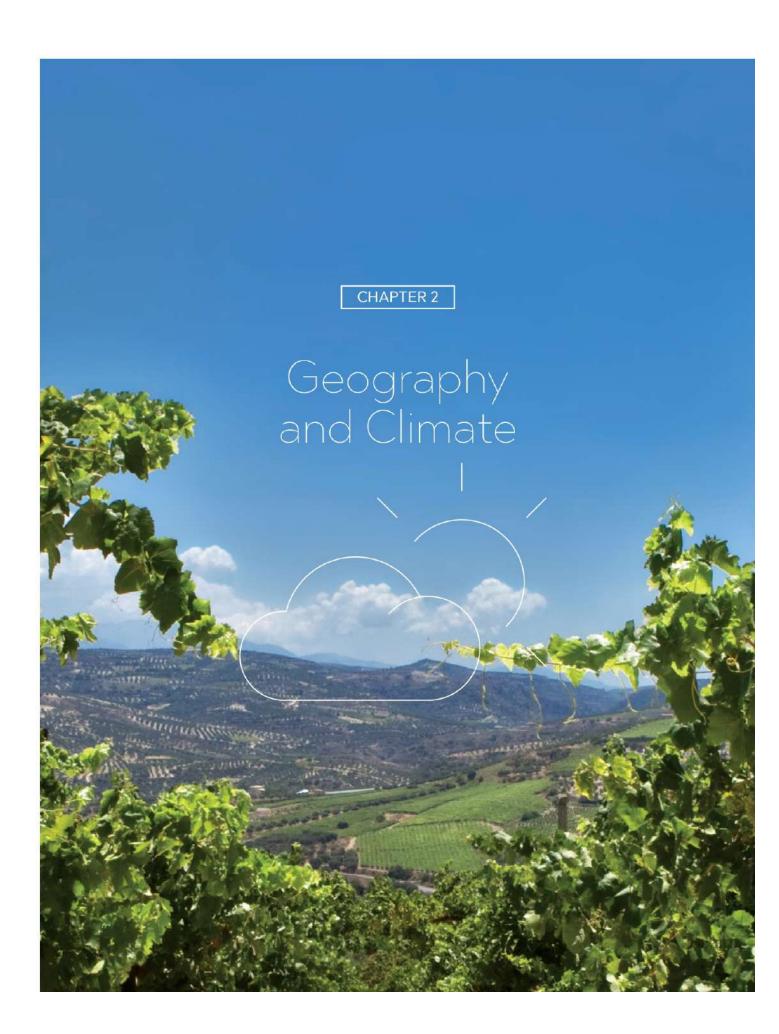
In the mid-19th century, the first wine-producing companies were founded, such as Achaia Clauss by the Bavarian Gustav Clauss in Patras and another by the British Consul Ernest Augustus Toole in Cephalonia. The example was followed by other companies, raising their number to ten, playing a definitive role in the reconstruction of the Greek wine production, albeit with mixed results.

The 20th century could be characterized as one of the richest centuries in Greek history, in terms of both events and developments, and, by extension, in modern Greek wine production. The first half of the century was marked by global political developments, which left a destroyed and impoverished country in their wake. Greek wine was, in most cases, of poor quality and oxidised, with Retsina being the most popular. Despite the adverse circumstances, the acreage of vineyards increased spectacularly during World War II. A large part of the production remained unsold, however, due to the dearth of markets to absorb it and grapevine growers openly faced the possibility of financial disaster. The solution to this problem was provided by the founding of agricultural cooperatives throughout Greece, while large winemaking companies (such as Kourtaki, Tsantali, Boutari, Cambas and Achaia Clauss) invested in new technologies and produced the first brand-name bottled Greek wines. With a population surge towards the major urban centres, the Greek quality of life started to improve and a new class of consumers emerged.



In the early 1970s, the first legislation of appellation wines was passed with the involvement and guidance of chemist/oenologist Dr. Kourakou-Dragona, thus setting the foundation for contemporary wine legislation in alignment with its European counterparts.

The same period saw the appearance of small producers, whose prospects were not based on the size of their enterprise or the volume of production, but on the priority given to the quality of said production. An array of 'cult wines' came to cover the market's need for high-quality wines. Enthusiastic oenologists, educated at universities both in Greece and abroad, introduced new techniques and equipment and helped to upgrade the quality and, consequently, the image of Greek wine in the domestic market as well as abroad. Greek wines are continuously praised in large expos abroad and have received accolades in international wine competitions, thus justifying the high place they have claimed among world wines. The quality of Greek wines is now better than ever, continually raising quality standards with each passing year.



The climate as well as the climatic deviations that may be observed from year to year are definitive factors for the thriving of the grapevine in an area and, therefore, for the quality and type of wine produced. The climatic changes observed globally over the last fifty years, especially due to global warming, are expected to influence the wine-producing regions of Greece considerably. Hence, it is important that climate change becomes a part of the overall strategic management of vineyards.

Greece is located between the 34th and 42nd parallels of the northern hemisphere and comprises the southernmost part of the Balkan Peninsula. Part of the East Mediterranean region, Greece has the Aegean Sea to the east, the Ionian Sea to the west and the Libyan Sea to the south. It borders –from the northwest to the northeast– with Albania, FYROM, Bulgaria and Turkey.

The largest part of its terrain is mountainous with the exception of some plains in Thessaly, Central Greece, Macedonia and Thrace, thus rendering it one of the most mountainous countries in Europe. The mainland consists of the Pindos mountain range, which is an extension of the central European Alps and continues to the southernmost part of the mainland in the Peloponnese. Greece's highest peak, Mt. Olympus, is located to the east of Pindos and very close to the sea. There are no particularly large bodies of water (lakes or rivers) to affect the mesoclimate of each region and, wherever they do exist, viticultural zones are usually located near them.

The Greek soil on the mainland as well as on the islands consists mainly of limestone while in coastal areas and areas close to rivers it is sandy alluvial. However, there are other types of soil such as clay-loam, sandy, shale and chalk or volcanic, like on the island of Santorini. Generally, Greek soil could be characterized as poor and of low fertility, usually with a rocky bedrock beneath its surface.

The climate is Mediterranean with long, dry, hot summers and relatively short and mild winters with long periods of sunshine. Examples of areas with this climate are Crete, the Dodecanese, the Cyclades, the eastern Peloponnese and mostly the eastern part of Central Greece. However, the local climatic types can frequently differ, that is, continental in certain areas or milder in others, due to the mountainous topography, large altitudinal differences or the proximity to the sea. To the continental type belong such regions as Epirus, Western Macedonia, the mountainous areas of Central Greece, Western Thessaly and the mountainous areas of the Central Peloponnese while Central Macedonia, Eastern Macedonia and Thrace have a mild climate.

Generally, a typical year in Greece can be divided into two periods: the cool and wet period, starting in mid-October and lasting until late March, and the warm and dry period, which lasts the rest of the year. During the cool period, the average minimum temperature in coastal areas ranges from 5 to 10°C (84-95°F) while in mainland areas from 0 to 5°C (32-41°F). During the warm period, the weather is sunny with sparse local storms and a high average temperature ranging from 29 to 35°C (84-95°F). The presence of the sea and the cool northern winds blowing from the mountains towards lower altitudes mitigate the high temperatures in vineyards, as does their location in mountainous and semi-mountainous regions. The cooling of the vineyards, especially during the night, favours the formation of more intense aromatic elements in the grape while maintaining acidity at a relatively higher level. Some summers, the prolonged high temperatures and the continuous heat waves may cause water stress to the vineyard and reduce the quantity and quality of the yield. Many north-facing vineyards have the advantage of being cooled by northern winds. The autumn is long and relatively warm.

Rainfall is more intense during the cool period; however, its frequency may vary from place to place. The eastern part of the country is the one with the least rainfall,

whereas it is more frequent in the western and northern regions. Attica is considered to be one of the hottest and driest regions of the country, with Epirus, the lonian Islands and Western Central Greece being the wettest. When rainfall occurs in early autumn, it may cause problems to the crops. Especially in areas that are considered relatively cool, there may even be difficulty in the ripening of late-harvest varieties, such as Moschofilero in the area of Mantinia. However, there are few cases of weather problems that can cause difficulties for the grape to reach full ripeness. Conversely, delayed rainfall at the end of spring may facilitate the appearance of diseases. In the course of a decade, it is doubtful whether there have been two or three years of insufficient yield and, even when that was the case, it was restricted to a specific region.



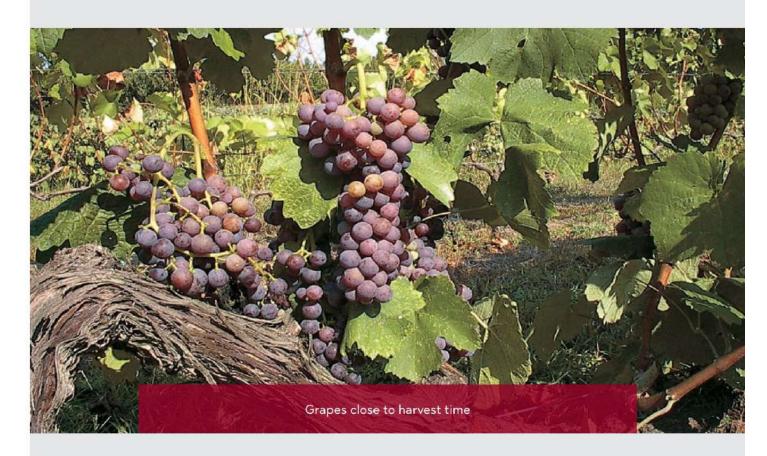
CHAPTER 3 Viticulture over the last few years, the development of wine quality also depends on the improvements implemented in the vineyard and includes, among other things, the selection of a healthy propagating vines and suitable clonal selection. Much of the research has focused on looking for clones of the most important, but lesser known, varieties of the Greek vineyard in order to define their precise potential and interpret their varietal character as fully as possible. The improvement of cultivating techniques and the implementation of young oenologists' know-how give the Greek producers the capability of fully appreciating and utilizing the wealth at their disposal.

Before the emergence of large companies, production was concentrated in the hands of many small, semi-professional producers, who were essentially responsible for the preservation of winemaking in Greece over the centuries. Of course, many things have since changed radically, while others have remained unaltered.

Even today, the Greek vineyard is fragmented into many small parcels with a large portion of winegrowers selling their yield to other producers or cooperatives.

Traditional viticulture in Greece shares many characteristics with the rest of the Mediterranean winemaking countries. In many places, grapevines are cultivated in bush form without the support of a trellis and are pruned to short spurs. Bush vines are the ideal training for arid vineyards in very hot regions. Before phylloxera, planting density was very high –up to 10,000 vines hectare—while new vineyards are much less dense with 2500-4000 vines hectare. This is due mainly to the increased use of trellising, to vine-training systems that encourage vertical shoot positioning—such as Royat or Guyot— and partially to the high cost of buying grafted stock. Specially improved rootstocks, such as 41B, 110 Richter and 1103 Paulsen, are preferred due to their tolerance to drought. Santorini's *kouloura* is another type of pruning, which is unique to the island (see Chapter 14 — Aegean islands). A characteristic of managing vineyards in mountainous and semi-mountainous regions are the specially land-scaped terraces on steep slopes. Examples of this type of vineyard can be found on the islands of Samos, Santorini and many others.

Vineyard work is mostly manual with a very low number of producers using machine harvesters, which is due, on the one hand, to the particular topography and, on the

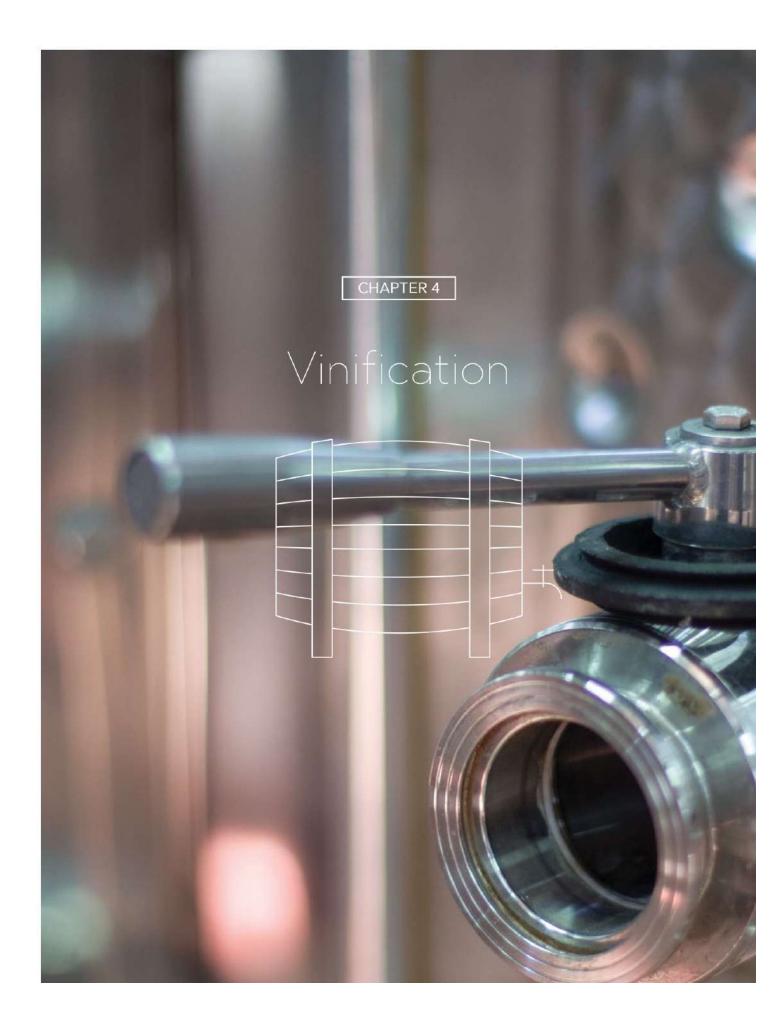


other, to their inability to afford to do so, especially in the case of small wineries. Mechanical cultivation can be utilized only by companies that possess large and easily accessible cultivable parcels with homogenous varietal planting. Part of the vineyard work largely depends on the presence of immigrant workers, usually from East European countries.

In accordance with the EU general directive, vineyard irrigation is prohibited unless there are mitigating circumstances, such as newly planted vines or periods of prolonged drought in combination with very high temperatures, which can cause water stress to the vines and adversely affect the ripening of the grapes. Unregulated irrigation may lead to a higher yield and inferior quality. Quality-orientated producers irrigate their vineyards with planning and moderation, always using the real needs of the vine as a criterion instead of quantitative yield. Greece has started to see the application of farming innovations, such as controlled irrigation systems, which, with the assistance of satellite link-up systems or meteorological installations and sensors in the vineyards, which record and process data such as temperature, humidity and wind speed, according to which the duration and quantity of water required for the irrigation of the vineyard are defined.

Low yields are an important factor in ensuring the high quality of grapes. In order to achieve this, the necessary investments must be made and the proper farming practices must be applied, such as green harvest, canopy management and suitable training systems. It is no accident that in vineyards such as those on the island of Santorini, where yields are very low, the quality of the wine is so high.

Many of the vineyards could be considered organic long before the introduction of the term into agriculture since animal manure was a commonly used fertilizer and the use of chemicals was non-existent. However, for a number of years there was extensive use of agrochemicals, such as fertilizers, pesticides, fungicides and insecticides, which brought significant changes to Greek viticulture with both positive and negative effects on its development. Luckily, the last fifteen years have seen a shift towards organic farming and integrated environmental management of the vineyard. The development of organic farming is considered to be relatively easy and harmless due to the favourable weather conditions in Greece. The implementation of green practices not only lends another qualitative advantage to the Greek wines, but creates a positive image in an increasingly environmentally-aware market. The general demand for the use of environmentally-friendly farming practices, as well as the increase in market demand of organic products, have considerably contributed to the adoption of this specific type of farming by many producers. EU funding has also played a part, though it covers only a small part of the high cost of such cultivation. Although limited, the efforts made in the field of biodynamic farming are noteworthy and have so far presented interesting results.



Before the appearance of the large, organised winemaking companies in Greece and although producers often sold wine on the market in order to secure extra income, vinification mainly served the producers' own personal consumption requirements. The approach and philosophy behind the winemaking process was very simple, lacking in scientific methodology, based mainly on personal experience or random choices. Quality, however, was often exceptional. Since 1950, this situation has been completely reversed with technology and scientific knowledge becoming increasingly crucial, both in the vineyard and in the cellar. Traditionally, many of the winemaking practices included pressing in small wooden vertical presses or by foot in large vats. Maceration, which was usually short, produced mainly white or rosé wines. Fermentation took place in chestnut or oak barrels. At the end of the fermentation, the wine was racked off the gross lees and sealed around the bung with plaster or dough.

The maturation process, carried out according to clearly subjective criteria, rarely lasted longer than six months, and the containers used were mainly large barrels or demijohns. Very often the barrels were buried in the ground and saved for special occasions. The value and contribution of all these semi-professional wine producers and the traditional techniques they used must not, however, be doubted since they played an important role in the continuation and evolution of the winemaking tradition in Greece. Adding pine resin, sun-drying grapes and other particular winemaking practices created a number of unique traditional wines such as Retsina, Vinsanto, Marouvas and Nichteri. Many of these wines are still produced to this day using modern means and are commercially successful because, while they are of high quality, they still manage to preserve their traditional character.

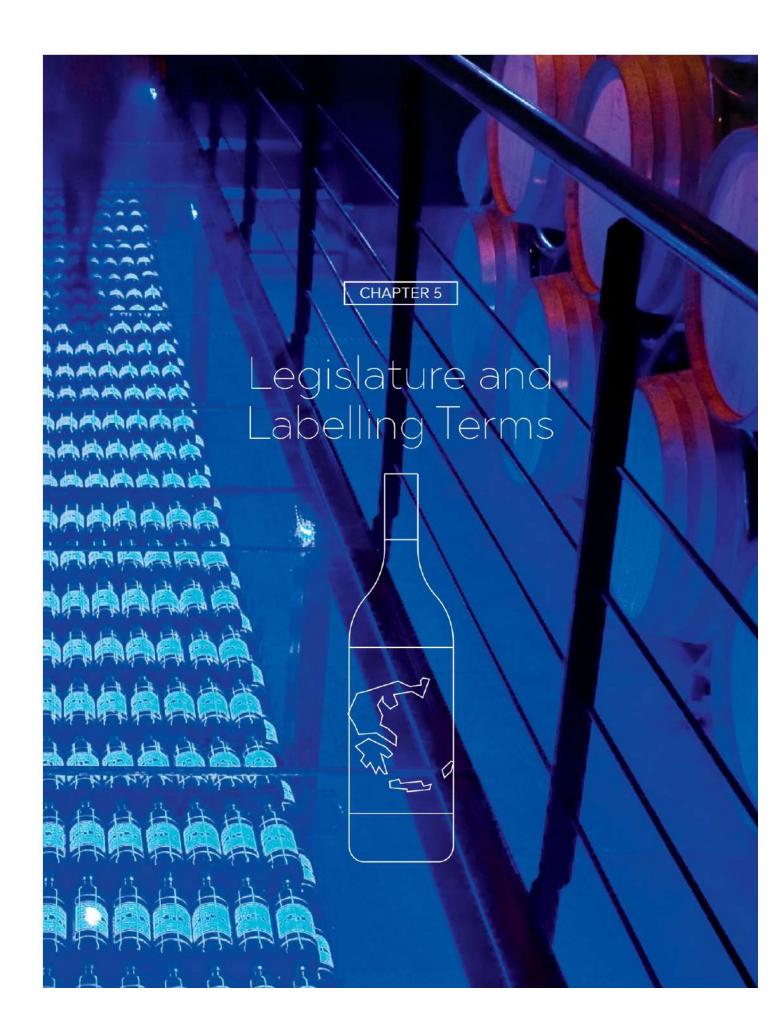
Between 1950 and 1970, with the appearance of the first cooperatives and private companies, new winemaking practices began to be imported and applied. Vertical wooden winepresses were replaced by continuous horizontal ones. Oak casks remained important, but cement, enamel or epoxy resin vats were used for both fermentation and ageing. Since the mid-1980s the implementation of new techno-



logical means in wine production, such as pneumatic presses, stainless steel tanks, small oak barrels (barriques) and refrigeration units are now common practice. Techniques such as skin contact, the use of selected or indigenous yeasts, controlled temperatures during fermentation, micro-oxygenation, lees contact and other methods are being applied increasingly often by enthusiastic oenologists, trained at universities and technological institutes both in Greece and abroad. Many of them are also wine producers themselves and are working towards developing and promoting the potential of the Greek vineyard aided by the plethora of charismatic native varieties.

The establishment of new, model wineries has facilitated experimentation and led to the pursuit of new styles while there has also been significant improvement in the quality of Greek, particularly white, wines. However, efforts do not end here. Enthusiasm for all things new, a necessary ingredient for success, is often accompanied by conscious interventions that allow for the evolution of existing styles and a fresh approach to production methods that, on the one hand, respect the past and, on the other, secure the future of quality Greek wine.





Within the general context of wine legislature in the European Union, similar legislature was introduced in Greece during the 1970s, which defined the criteria of the qualitative classification of Greek wines. Although this system was viewed with considerable scepticism in terms of its effectiveness, it became the primary tool for ensuring qualitative standards in production. Nowadays, however, the new Greek wine sector law and the policies concerning Greek wines are in accordance with general framework of changes and regulations applied in all EU member states. Every endeavour and action aims to qualitatively upgrade European wines through flexible production processes and simplified class certification as they have been defined for all produce. The aim is for European wines –including Greek ones– to gain a competitive edge on the international wine scene.

Even in ancient Greece, legal protection of the authenticity of wines of certain regions was commonplace and there were numerous examples of wines having a Designation of Origin. Since wine was a basic trade commodity, there was a vital need to protect it on the level of production as well as trade. The aim was, on the one hand, to protect the quality of the wines and, on the other, to preserve their identity.

For example, Thasian and Chian wine were the most renowned wines, as were Pramnian, Maronian, Biblian and Lemnian, among others. Hence, for the first time in history, there were wines bearing a Designation of Origin. The island of Thasos seems to have had the strictest and most ancient legislature of all places in Greece. Laws defined not only the production process, standardisation and trade, but also all the characteristics that defined the special aromatic character of the wines. For example, the amphorae in which wine was transported were of a specific shape and size and had to bear a local authority stamp to avoid any kind of adulteration. Moreover, ships carrying wines from other regions were not allowed to approach the island's port.

In the meanwhile and leading up to the present, there have been few examples of wines that managed to link their character with their place of origin. Malvasia wine, a sweet wine of the Middle Ages, can be considered the most successful example.

It was only in the 1970s when the first substantial efforts were made to outline a specific winemaking policy on a national level. The Grape and Wine Institute of the Ministry of Agriculture passed legislation regarding the patenting of quality wine. It was in this way that the foundations were laid to classify Greek wines according to a scale of quality. The chemist/oenologist Dr. Stavroula Kourakou-Dragona played what was perhaps the most important role in this endeavour.

The new system of classification was based on its French counterpart and divided wines into two main categories.

Wines with **Appellation of Origin** (VQPRD Vin de Qualité Produit dans une Région Déterminée), which included the wines with **Controlled Designation of Origin**, similar to the French AOC (Appellation d' Origine Contrôlée) and wines with **Designation of Origin of Superior Quality**, similar to the French VDQS (Vin Délimité de Qualité Supérieure) and **Table Wines**, which included wines with **Traditional Designation**. A new category was added to the class of Table Wines in 1989, which was **Regional Wines**. From that point on, wines had to meet certain production standards and be certified according to their place of origin.

The classification of **Controlled Designation of Origin** was the highest qualitative rank for Greek wines and included renowned sweet wines like Mavrodaphne of Patras and Cephalonia and the Muscats of Patras, Rio, Cephalonia, Samos and Rhodes, since they were the ambassadors of Greek wine abroad at that time. The wines with Registered Designation of Origin had to bear a blue ribbon of authenticity around the neck of the bottle.

The **Designation of Origin of Superior Quality** classification included all the regions which traditionally produced quality wines and were considered of importance in terms of viticulture. There were twenty wines with Designation of Origin of Superior Quality, which had to bear a pink ribbon of authenticity around the neck of the bottle.

Of all classes, that of Table Wines was formed with the least stringent standards and was therefore the most flexible. This category also included some traditional types of wine, the Wines with **Traditional Designation**, such as **Retsina** and **Verdea** of Zakynthos. These wines had followed (and continue to follow, even with the new legislature) specific methods of production, which were responsible for their special character. The production of Retsina is not necessarily linked with a demarcated wine-growing zone, since it is a type of wine and not a wine bearing geographical indication. There are some exceptions when Retsina is a wine with Protected Geographical Indication (see below) and it is allowed to bear a geographical indication.

Lastly, **Regional Wines**, which were technically considered Table Wines, were subject to less strict regulations than wines with Countrols Designation of Origin and Designation of Origin of Superior Quality, but stricter production criteria than Table Wines. Although the variety or varieties were selected from a list of recommended and allowed varieties, the type of wine was not indicated, thus allowing wine producers to explore all the available alternatives. A large part of the progress made in Greek wine industry was due to the emergence and development of these wines.

In 2009, a new EU directive came to replace the aforementioned legal framework and redefine issues that concerned the wine-producing process as well as the factors that defined the European market as a whole, through the new Common Market Organisation for Wine of the member states' wine sectors. Within this framework, Greek wine law assumes the role of interpreting and executing the new European provisions, which also concern new categories of wine.

New Wine Categories

The aim of the new legislative framework is to allow for a better reading of the label by the average consumer and to familiarise the consumer with wines produced even in places that are relatively unknown. At the same time, it strives to protect indications of origin through their electronic listing in the European registry so as to guarantee the uniqueness of the wine of each designation of origin. According to the new categories outlined, wines are classified as:

- PDO (Protected Designation of Origin)
- PGI (Protected Geographical Indication)
- Varietal Wines
- Wines without PDO or PGI (simple Wines from Greece)

PDO (Protected Designation of Origin) Wines

This class includes all the wines with Controlled Designation of Origin and Designation of Origin of Superior Quality. What is important in the use of this indication is the area of origin, that is, a demarcated geographical area within which the wine or wines are produced. The wines produced in this area must conform to the following terms:

- their quality and characteristics are mainly or exclusively the result of the specific geographical environment as well as the human factors active in the production;
- the grapes used for the production come exclusively from this geographical region;
- their processing (vinification) is conducted in the specific wine-growing zone;
- they are produced exclusively from varieties that belong to the Vitis vinifera species.

PGI (Protected Geographical Indication) Wines

This indication refers to the wine or wines that come from a demarcated geographical area or, in exceptional cases, an entire country. The wines of this class include all the Regional Wines and some of the **Traditional Designation** wines (see below) and must conform to the following demands:

 they have a specific quality, fame or other characteristics, which are the result of their geographical origin;

- at least 85% of the grapes used in their production come exclusively from this geographical region;
- their production is made in the specific geographical area;
- they are made from varieties belonging to the Vitis vinifera species or other species of the Vitis genus.

Traditional Designation Wines

Tradition Designation wines include **Retsina**, made of grape must processed with Aleppo pine resin, and the **Verdea of Zakynthos** wine, which is produced on the island of Zakynthos and must meet certain specifications regarding the varieties of grapes used, yield per hectare and the sugar content of the must.

Varietal Wines

This is a new class of wines, the labels of which may include the vintage year, the variety composition, but not the geographical origin. The need to effectively address the continuous and increasing competition with developing countries, whose main means of communication with the consumer is the name of the variety on the label, led to the creation of this new class. Lastly, there is a class that includes the rest of the wines that bear no indication regarding vintage year, varieties used or area of origin and are simply named **Wines from Greece**.

Labelling Terms

The information on the labels is also defined by European legislature. The label of a quality wine (Protected Designation of Origin) must provide the following information: Place name of the Designation of Origin, the full title of the class it belongs to (PDO), alcohol by volume (abv), wine volume per bottle, the name of the producer, license number and the address of the bottling company. The type of wine (colour and character) and the vintage year may also be included, though this is not compulsory. Quality wines produced in PDO zones may also bear on their labels terms defining the period of ageing before being made available on the market. These are the terms **Reserve** and **Grande Reserve**.

a. Reserve

White Wines: A year of ageing is required, with a minimum of six months in oak barrels and a minimum of three months in bottle.

Red Wines: Two years of ageing are required, with a minimum of twelve months in oak barrels and a minimum of six months in bottle.

b. Grande Reserve

White Wines: At least two years of ageing are required, with a minimum of one year in oak barrels and a minimum of six months in bottle.

Red Wines: At least eighteen months of ageing in oak barrels are required and another eighteen months in bottle. They are made available on the market after a total of four years of ageing.

The size of the barrel is not defined for red wines, unlike whites, which must be aged in barrels with a maximum capacity of 600 litres.

Moreover, the red wines that were aged in oak barrels for six months and are made available a year after harvest may include the phrase 'barrel-aged' with the additional phrase 'for six months'. For white and rosé wines, the same term can be used even for an ageing period of three months in oak barrels. When the wine has been fermented and aged in oak barrels, the label includes the phrase 'vinified and aged in barrel'.

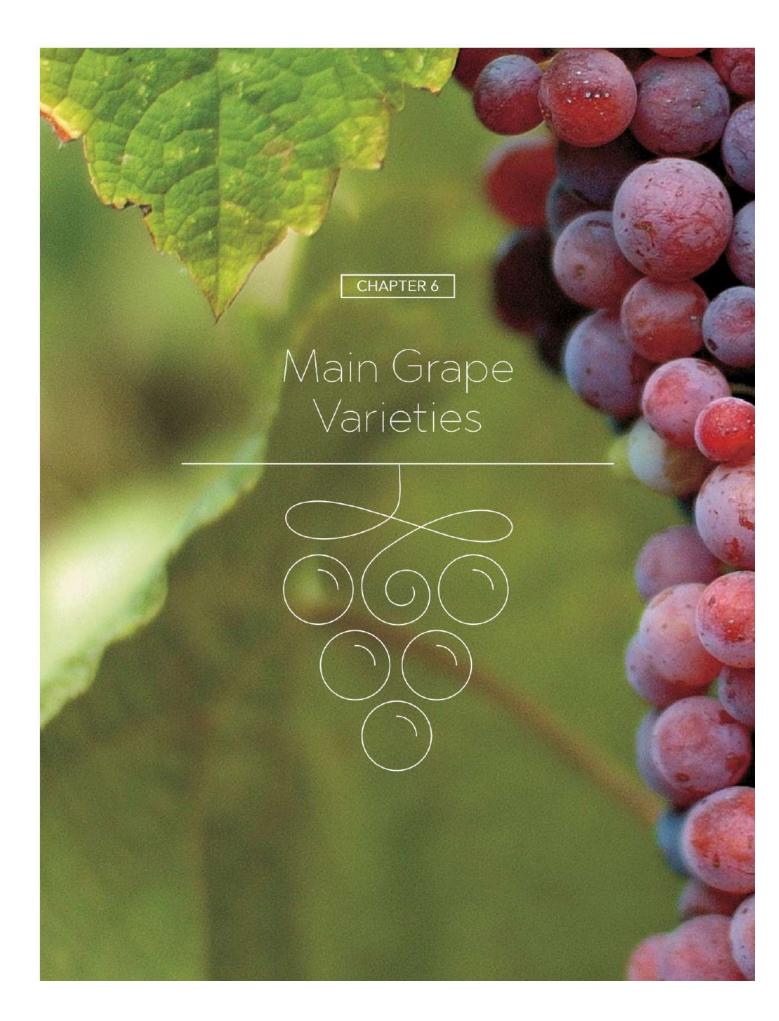
As far as simple Wines are concerned, the terms that continue to be disallowed from being used on the label are the geographical indication, the variety or varieties and vintage year, whereas it is compulsory for the label to bear the producer's name, the bottling location, the alcohol content and the volume. For oak-aged table wines, the term 'Cava' may be used. According to this term, the ageing periods are defined as follows:

White Wines: A minimum of six months in oak barrels and six months in bottle.

Red Wines: A minimum of a year in oak barrels and a year in bottle.

The label may also include terms such as 'estate', 'high-altitude vineyard', 'monastery', 'castle', 'château', 'manor' and 'villa' as long as the wine in question is a PDO or PGI. The same indication cannot be simultaneously used for PDO and PGI wines when they come from the same vineyard, the name of which must be mentioned in combination with the aforementioned indications. The inscription of these terms must be in the Greek language, but also accompanied by the translation of the indication. However, the transliteration of the Greek word using Latin characters is not considered valid and is in breach of regulations.

As far as organic viticulture wines are concerned, certain indications are allowed for use on the label, such as 'wine from organically-grown grapes', 'wine from organically-farmed grapes' or 'organic wine'. Over the last few years, there have been attempts to revise the regulations enforced on a European level with the aim of forming a new legal framework to allow the use of some of the aforementioned terms if the wines meet the respective specifications.



Local grape varieties are a priceless treasure in the hands of Greek winemakers, offering them great commercial advantage on the global market. Over the last few years, important investments and experimentation have been made increasingly more often, aiming at spreading and developing Greek varieties that were underestimated or endangered with extinction. By planting and adapting famous international varieties in various regions of Greece, while at the same time successfully marrying them with local ones, Greek vignerons have developed noteworthy wines, some of which enjoy a high commercial awareness. It is estimated that there are roughly 200 Greek varieties, quite a few of which bear a different name from region to region. Only about fifty of them are used for substantial wine production; less than thirty are known outside the borders of the country or even outside the region they are cultivated.

Greek White Varieties

Assyrtiko

It is one of the noblest white varieties to be found in the Greek vineyards. It dis-



plays high adaptability while at the same time many of its singular characteristics remain unchanged regardless of the soil composition and weather climatic of the areas where it is cultivated. It is resistant to most diseases, its vigour is medium to high and under suitable conditions it can produce high yields.

Even in the warmest of climates, it maintains its generally high levels of acidity. Although its flavour intensity is not considered particularly high, this variety has the

potential to render its aromas with crystal purity. It combines a palatal richness with a nervy structure and usually makes full-bodied wines of high alcohol content. Its aromas are reminiscent of green apple, peach, crushed seashells, stone and minerality - the latter being most evident in wines originating from Santorini. The vinification of Assyrtiko is fairly difficult, for it becomes oxidised easily. It can mature in barrels, but their use is not considered necessary for the variety either to demonstrate its potential or to build more structure. Assyrtiko has become the favourite variety of many wine producers in many regions of Greece and is used for making expressive wines either as a varietal or as a blending partner with other local and international varieties. Assyrtiko is widely seen in the Cyclades and mostly on the island of Santorini. It has a unique way of perfectly expressing the particular morphological characteristics of Santorini, particularly the minerality of the island's terroir.

Assyrtiko is often blended with Sauvignon Blanc because it enhances the acidity levels and adds structure to the wine on the one hand, whereas, thanks to Sauvignon. Blanc, it assumes a more complex and more intense aromatic personality on the other. The blending of Assyrtiko with Malagousia is also a very successful combination, which is quickly becoming a favourite with consumers. Assyrtiko, along with Aidani and Athiri, takes part in the winemaking of PDO Santorini, PDO Plagies Melitona in Halkidiki, PDO Rhodes, PDO Handakas-Candia and many PDOs for sweet wines. We also come across Assyrtiko in many PGI wines (Macedonia, Attika) as well as in many varietal and table wines.

*	Variety	Assyrtiko
0	Colour	medium intensity
0	Acidity	high
6	Aromas	not of high intensity but of particular character. Green apple, peach, crushed seashells and minerals
-21	Bottle ageing	honey, kerosene, high ageing potential
(8)	Unoaked Style	austere, dry, mineral
	Oaked Style	rich, full, complex

SANTORINI	Assyrtiko 100% or Assyrtiko 75%, Aidani, Athiri
PLAGIES MELITONA	Athiri 50%, Roditis 35%, Assyrtiko 15%
HANDAKAS-CANDIA	Vilana 85%, Assyrtiko, Athiri, Vidiano, Thrapsathiri 15%
RHODES	Athiri 70%, Assyrtiko, Malagousia
MONEMVASSIA- MALVASIA	Monemvassia 51%, Assyrtiko, Asproudes, Kidonitsa
MALVASIA PAROS	Monemvassia 85%, Assyrtiko 15%
MALVASIA SITIAS	Assyrtiko, Athiri, Thrapsathiri, Liatiko 85%, Muscat White, Malvasia di Candia Aromatica
HANDAKAS-CANDIA	Assyrtiko, Athiri, Vidiano, Liatiko 85%, White Muscat, Malvasia di Candia Aromatica

Athiri

Athiri is among the most ancient Greek white varieties, traditionally cultivated on



the Aegean Sea Islands, the Dodecanese, the Cyclades and Crete, but currently can be found in many other regions of Greece.

It is a highly productive variety and highly resistant to diseases and drought. It ripens quite early, before the end of August. The timing of harvest is extremely crucial because, as the grapes approach their final ripening stages, acidity levels plummet. This variety exhibits great adaptability to various types of soil, but the best of its

wines are sourced from limestone soils.

Generally speaking, Athiri makes wines with fresh, discreet, fruity aromas, medium body, medium to high alcohol content and medium acidity. The most exemplary wines of this variety come from the vineyards located on the mountains of Rhodes. As far as their style is concerned, Athiri wines may be considered commercial, mass-consumption, simple and easy to drink.

Athiri is the core variety for making dry white wines PDO Rhodes and PDO Plagies Melitona. It is also one of the three basic Santorini varieties, along with Assyrtiko and Aidani, forming the blend for the dry white wine PDO Santorini, whereas it also plays a minor role in the making of the PDO Handakas-Candia wine and for the PDO Malvasia-Sitia and PDO Malvasia Handakas-Candia sweet wines. It is also encountered in many PGI wines as well as in wines without Geographical Indication.

*	Variety	Athiri
0	Colour	low intensity
0	Acidity	medium
6	Aromas	lemon, grapefruit, floral
-21	Bottle ageing	preferably consumed while it is young
T	Wine style	smooth, light

RHODES	Athiri 70%, Assyrtiko, Malagousia 30%
PLAGIES MELITONA	Athiri 50%, Roditis 35%, Assyrtiko 15%
SANTORINI	Assyrtiko, Aidani, Athiri
HANDAKAS-CANDIA	Vilana 85%, Assyrtiko, Athiri, Vidiano, Thrapsathiri 15%
MALVASIA SITIAS	Assyrtiko, Athiri, Thrapsathiri, Liatiko 85%, White Muscat, Malvasia di Candia Aromatica 15%
MALVASIA OF HANDAKAS-CANDIA	Assyrtiko, Athiri, Vidiano, Thrapsathiri, Liatiko 85%, White Muscat, Malvasia di Candia Aromatica

Debina

Debina is the most important white variety of Zitsa in Epirus. It is not considered



to be of Greek origin and most probably was imported from Italy or Northern Epirus in Albania. It is occasionally grown in other areas of western and northern Greece and Thessaly.

Its yields are relatively high and it is susceptible to water stress as well as to various fungal infections. At high altitudes, like those found in Zitsa (700m/2,300 ft.), its grapevines bud and ripen late. The disadvantage of this variety is that its acidity may be lost very fast, before

actually having developed its proper aromatic character.

Debina wines exhibit low aromatic intensity with discreet aromas evoking the fragrance of flowers, green apple and white peach. Their body is light, acidity is medium to high, alcohol content is low and with a lemony finish. PDO Zitsa wines are produced from the Debina variety.

*	Variety	Debina
©	Colour	light intensity
0	Acidity	medium to high
6	Aromas	floral, green apple, white peach
4	Bottle ageing	preferably consumed while it is young
-	Wine style	light, refreshing with a lemony finish

ZITSA	Debina	
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Malagousia



This is a very distinct variety with an intense and singular aromatic profile. Although until a few years ago Malagousia had fallen into oblivion, its re-emergence in the vineyards of many vignerons provided contemporary Greek wines with new impetus and prospects. The Malagousia vine grows vigorously and produces high yields. It is susceptible to diseases and is resistant to drought.

> The wine is as powerful as a Chardonnay and as rich as a 'great' Sémillon. It behaves well in oak, whereas its aromatic profile could be deemed unique. Its flavours are fair-

ly reminiscent of a Muscat, without, however, the latter's sweetness and intense floral character. The vine's ripening level defines the variety's aromatic profile: the riper the grapes, the higher the intensity of its floral characteristics, resembling those of a Muscat. Malagousia provides wines of medium acidity, high alcohol content, high levels of extract, with a full and rich body and aromas that evoke the fragrance of ripe peach, tropical fruits as well as of fresh green peppercorns. If, however, the grapes have not adequately ripened, the wine displays a more herbal or green character.

Over the last few years, Malagousia has been increasingly cultivated in most wine-producing regions of Greece. However, it is most common in Attica, Epanomi, Halkidiki, Drama, Euboea, Mykonos and, of course, in its place of origin, namely Aitoloakarnania, producing a series of notable PGI wines. It is also used for making PDO Rhodes wines.

*	Variety	Malagousia
	Colour	low to medium intensity
0	Acidity	medium
6	Aromas	herbal, mint, herbal tea, citrus fruits, tropical fruits, fresh green peppercorn
4	Bottle ageing	preferably consumed while it is young
•	Wine style	aromatic, spicy, complex, good affinity to oak ageing

RHODES	Athiri 70%, Assyrtiko, Malagousia 30%	
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Muscat of Alexandria

It is an ancient, white and particularly aromatic variety probably originating from



Africa and specifically from Egypt. It belongs to the broader Muscat family and is not as renowned as White Muscat.

Its growth is vigorous and it is susceptible to diseases. In order to reach a satisfactory ripening level, it requires warm climate. It is mainly cultivated on the island of Lemnos, whose poor and volcanic soil enable Muscat of Alexandria to produce wines of appetising fruity aromas, reminiscent of ripe grapes, citrus fruits and flowers; its

wines are of medium acidity and balanced palate. Though the structure and complexity of Muscat of Alexandria are less from those of a White Muscat, it expresses the strength and the appeal of the variety.

In Lemnos, the Muscat of Alexandria accounts for the making of the PDO Lemnos wine, as well as of PDO Muscat of Lemnos. The style of dry wines is light and refreshing with a crisp acidity, whereas sweet, liqueur wine styles are balanced, charming and rich in fruity aromas. The variety is also found in other regions of Greece, such as the Ionian Islands, Thessaly, Macedonia (Thessaloniki) and Rhodes.

*	Variety	Muscat of Alexandria
	Colour	medium intensity
0	Acidity	medium to low
6	Aromas	ripe grapes, citrus fruits, flowers
4	Bottle ageing	preferably consumed while it is young
	Wine style	particularly fruity, mostly sweet

LEMNOS	Muscat of Alexandria	
MUSCAT OF LEMNOS	Muscat of Alexandria	

White Muscat

White Muscat is the oldest and noblest of varieties of the Muscat family. When



compared to the rest of the Muscat wines, its distinct feature is the small size of its berries and the generally higher density of its aromas and flavours.

White Muscat presents moderate vigour and it is less productive than the other Muscat varieties. It is prone to many diseases and displays medium resistance to dry spells. The harvest takes place early or mid-September. The timing of harvesting is crucial because if it takes place too late or too early, the variety easily loses

its floral characteristics aromas.

Dry wines are refreshing and their acidity is lower than the Muscat of Alexandria while their fruity and floral personality is reminiscent of rose petals, citrus fruits, such as orange and bergamot, as well as of citrus flowers. Sweet wines are refined, with intense fruity and sweet fragrances, such as jam, orange and other citrus fruits, ripe apricot, fig and raisin. Aromas of honey, caramelised fruits and mushroom notes are added as soon as the wine matures over a long period of time in oak barrels, but this in no way reduces its aromatic intensity.

*	Variety	White Muscat
(a)	Colour	medium intensity
0	Acidity	low to medium
6	Aromas	rose petals, orange peel, bergamot, white citrus fruit flowers
-21	Bottle ageing	raisin, dried apricot, orange jam, rancio
T	Wine style	aromatic, rich, mostly sweet, good affinity to oak ageing

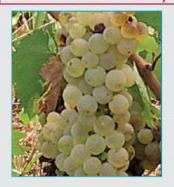
White Muscat produces the sweet wines PDO Samos, which are fine examples of the variety's quality and potential. A mature Samos may be unquestionably considered one of the finest wines of this variety worldwide. Other, equally good sweet PDO wines produced in other regions of Greece are Muscat of Rio Patras and Muscat of Patras in the Peloponnese, Muscat of Cephalonia and Muscat of Rhodes. It also participates in the making of PDO Malvasia Sitia and PDO Malvasia Handakas-Candia.

White Muscat dry wines are mainly classified as PGI wines, such as PGI Aegean Sea or PGI Dodecanese Islands. It is often used in blends along with other varieties. Occasionally, it is found in many other areas and is contained in dry white wines that do not bear the Geographical Indication label. It should also be noted that Greece hosts many other varieties of the Muscat family, although on a much smaller scale and with less impressive results. These varieties include Muscat of Spina in Crete, Muscat of Trani in Rhodes and Muscat of Hamburg, usually encountered in Thessaly.

MUSCAT OF PATRAS	White Muscat
MUSCAT OF RIO PATRAS	White Muscat
MUSCAT OF CE- PHALONIA	White Muscat
MUSCAT OF RHODES	White Muscat, Muscat of Trani
MALVASIA OF SITIA	Assyrtiko, Athiri, Thrapsathiri, Liatiko 85%, White Muscat, Malvasia di Candia Aromatica 15%
MALVASIA OF HANDAKAS-CANDIA	Assyrtiko, Athiri, Vidiano, Thrapsathiri, Liatiko 85%, White Muscat, Malvasia di Candia Aromatica

Robola

Robola is a white variety of the Ionian Islands. It displays better results in re-



gions whose soils are organically poor, well drained and at an altitude exceeding 300m (990 ft.), as in the case of Cephalonia. The vine exhibits vigorous growth and is sensitive to drought and many diseases. The vinification of this variety requires extra care because it becomes easily oxidised.

Provided that it is cultivated in regions that allow it to develop to its full potential, Robola makes wines that exude delicate citrus aromas, such as lemon and citron and mineral

notes, displaying a balanced acidity, medium body and medium to high alcohol content.

The dry white wine produced in the PDO Cephalonia zone may be of exceptional quality and can produce interesting results, as it can age for a few years in the bottle. Robola is also encountered in other regions of Greece, in wines without Geographical Indication and often is blended with other varieties

*	Variety	Robola
(1)	Colour	medium intensity
0	Acidity	high
6	Aromas	lemon, grapefruit, floral
4	Bottle ageing	preferably consumed while it is young
-	Wine style	vibrant, dry with a lemony palate

ROBOL	A OF CEPHALONIA	Robola	
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Savatiano

A mostly popular white variety and particularly known | for making Retsina. It is



mainly found in the region of Attica –which is considered to be its birthplace– but also in Euboea, Boeotia and in many other areas, in which case the variety may be called by many other different names, such as Asprouda, White Kontoura and Stamatiano.

Its vine vigour is moderate and it is resistant to drought and diseases. It gives better results when cultivated in cool climates and on unfertile soils. When the yield is low and harvesting takes place at the right time, Savatiano

makes wine of intense aromas and high levels of delicate, fruity notes, such as white peach, apricot, banana and citrus fruit (mostly lemon) while at the same time it acquires a balanced structure and a refreshing acidity.

Along with the variety of Roditis, Savatiano makes the dry white wine PDO Anchialos and is the principal variety for the production of Retsina. Especially in Attica, most of the vineyards are of the Savatiano and Roditis varieties, producing many PGI wines (Palliniotikos, Paiania and others) as well as Table Wines.

*	Variety	Savatiano
0	Colour	low intensity
0	Acidity	medium
6	Aromas	lemon, peach, apricot, banana
-31	Bottle ageing	preferably consumed while it is young
•	Wine style	soft, fruity, also used for making Retsina wine

ANCHIALOS	Roditis 75%, Savatiano 25%	

Vilana

It is the most important Cretan white variety both in terms of quality and bulk pro-



duction. Vilana is primarily cultivated in the prefectures of Heraklion and Lasithi and on a much smaller scale in the rest of the island's prefectures.

Its dense foliage does not allow for proper air circulation and consequently the variety is prone to fungal infections. Its quality performance depends both on its yield and the vineyard's altitude.

The best examples of this variety are refreshing wines of medium to high alcohol content and medium acidity

with intense aromas of ripe fruits, such as peach, mango and other tropical and citrus fruits. The principal drawback of Vilana is that after harvest it oxidises in a short period of time. Consequently, vinification requires particular attention. Vilana vines grow vigorously and produce high yields.

The PDO Peza white wine is produced entirely from the Vilana variety, which is also found in the PDO Sitia white wine, in PDO Handakas-Candia, as well as in quite a few PGI Cretan wines (Crete, Heraklion and others) It is often blended with Sauvignon Blanc.

*	Variety	Vilana
(1)	Colour	low to medium intensity
0	Acidity	medium
6	Aromas	peach, pear, melon, tropical fruits
41	Bottle ageing	preferably consumed while it is young
•	Wine style	aromatic, fruity

PEZA	Vilana
SITIA	Vilana 70%, Thrapsathiri
HANDAKAS-CANDIA	Vilana 85%, Assyrtiko, Athiri, Vidiano, Thrapsathiri 15%

International White Varieties

Chardonnay

This variety was first cultivated in Attica in the mid-1960s following the interna-



tional trend of that time and soon afterwards it spread across Greece.

Chardonnay performs better in cold and cool regions because it is not very drought-resistant. Along with other varieties, it participates in mass production wines, adding its distinct quality characteristics to neutral blends. As a varietal wine, Chardonnay makes various wine styles; fresh and simple, complex and exuberant, austere or aromatic, with or without oak notes. All too often, the

final blend of Chardonnay wines receives one part of wine that has fermented and matured in a stainless steel tank along with a proportionate amount of wine matured in oak barrels. In this way the intense woody aroma is considerably played down, leading to a wine style that focuses more on the freshness of its primary aromas.

The use of new oak barrels either during maturation or fermentation usually highlights mostly the fragrance of vanilla, coconut and nuts. With the exception of wines originating from the cool areas of Northern Greece, malolactic fermentation proves to be a difficult procedure on account of the low levels of malic acid in young wines.

Most of the Greek Chardonnays usually exhibit a lower alcohol content compared to those of other countries. Generally speaking, these wines develop nicely within two to three years after bottling and the best of them eventually acquire a more complex aromatic structure.

*	Variety	Chardonnay
(1)	Colour	medium intensity
0	Acidity	medium
6	Aromas	lime, grapefruit, white peach, pear
4	Bottle ageing	honey, wax, butter
T	Wine style	full, dense, With affinity to barrel ageing

Sauvignon Blanc

The introduction of Sauvignon Blanc in the Greek vineyards played an important



role with regard to the development of the contemporary profile of Greek white wines. Although its presence is not as strong as that of Chardonnay's, the Sauvignon Blanc variety has undoubtedly been the most influential in shaping the palatal preferences of the modern Greek wine consumer.

Sauvignon Blanc was initially cultivated in the region of Macedonia and was a partner of other varieties for some blends, providing them with some of its individual

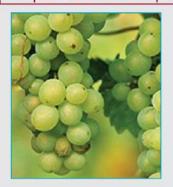
aromatic characteristics and enhancing at the same time the wines' freshness with its high acidity. Certainly, in terms of taste and sales the most successful recipe was the marriage of Sauvignon Blanc with Assyrtiko. Sauvignon Blanc adds fruity aromas and acidity while the less aromatic Assyrtiko adds body, structure, complexity and ageing potential in the blend. The sales of this wine style have soared and especially in Northern Greece many wine producers create equivalent wines in terms of style.

While a number of producers prefer the pure aromatic, herbaceous and refreshing character of Sauvignon Blanc, some others let their wines mature in oak barrels, labelled as 'Fumé'. This term was used purely for commercial reasons and is not frequently encountered any longer. Such wines do not exhibit an intensely fruity aroma, but possess a more profuse oaky character with the fragrance of elder tree flowers, and a denser, more voluptuous mouthfeel. However, ageing is not always recommended. In general, Sauvignon Blanc wines should be consumed while still relatively fresh.

*	Variety	Sauvignon Blanc
1	Colour	low intensity
0	Acidity	high
6	Aromas	greenapple peel, cassis, grass, tropical fruits
4	Bottle ageing	preferably consumed while it is young. Some wines are oaked aged
	Wine style	dry, intense, complex

Sémillon

Despite the small-scale production of Sémillon, this variety has given noteworthy



wines either as a varietal or in blends. However, its actual value and potential in the Greek vineyard go far beyond its reputation.

Either as a varietal or blended with Sauvignon Blanc or Assyrtiko, whether matured in oak or not, it makes wines capable of developing over time, exhibiting complexity as well as sweet flavours and aromas. Sémillon-based wines are possibly among the most long-lived Greek white wines.

*	Variety	Sémillon
©	Colour	low intensity
0	Acidity	medium
6	Aromas	apple, lemon, nectarine
	Bottle ageing	honey, wax, apricot
T	Wine style	rich, full

Viognier

Although its presence in the Greek vineyards | accounts for a very small percentage



of production, Viognier, nonetheless, has its loyal devotees – wine producers and consumers alike. It is encountered as a varietal wine and, commercially speaking, it can be classified as a wine of superior quality.

Its yields are low and it thrives in the cooler regions of Greece. Harvesting takes place from late August until early September. For Viognier to bring out its singular, exotically aromatic personality, reminiscent of peach and pear, it has to reach high ripening levels. Some of these

wines have the potential of maturing and developing in the bottle. The use of oak barrels is possible, but must be done cautiously for it is very easy to spoil the variety's delicate fruity character.

*	Variety	Viognier
©	Colour	medium intensity
0	Acidity	low to medium
6	Aromas	peach, apricot
-2	Bottle ageing	preferably consumed while it is young
	Wine style	rich, full, alcoholic

Greek Pink-skinned Varieties

Moschofilero (Fileri)

Due to the off-white tone that may give to the wine, Moschofilero is usually re-



ferred to as the 'grey' variety. It makes extraordinary wines, distinguished for their freshness, their vivid, yet delicate, aromas, light body, crisp acidity and relatively low alcohol content. It has aromas and flavours of rose petals, citrus fruit, citrus flowers and Turkish delight sweets. The use of barrels is not common during vinification or ageing because its delicate aromatic character can be easily spoiled. Moschofilero wine is preferably consumed while still fresh.

Though Moschofilero shares a few common olfactory features with Muscat and Gewürztraminer varieties, botanically speaking, it has no affiliation to any to them. There are three types of Moschofilero: Mavrofilero (black), Xanthofilero (blond) and Asprofilero (white), but the most impressive results come from Mavrofilero.

Moschofilero has high yields on fertile soils and is relatively drought resistant. Problems may emerge during the periods of flowering and véraison. Depending on the vine and the clone, harvesting begins in late September and may extend to late October.

Moschofilero is mainly cultivated in the region of the Peloponnese and on the Ionian Islands. The best wines of the Moschofilero variety are sourced from the PDO Mantinia area in the Peloponnese. However, some PGI wines (Peloponnese) as well as some others without Geographical Indication can be equally fine wines.

This variety may produce many different wine styles: dry white ones, *gris de noir*, light rosés, sparkling wines produced either with the Charmat method or with the traditional one, as well as sweet wines. It is often blended with other varieties, such as Roditis and Savatiano, enhancing the blend's acidity, aromatic intensity and complexity.

*	Variety	Moschofilero
1	Colour	low intensity
0	Acidity	high
6	Aromas	rose petals, citrus flowers, orange peel, grapefruit, lime
41	Bottle ageing	preferably consumed while it is young
	Wine style	light, aromatic, complex

MANTINIA	Moschofilero	
MANTINIA	Moschofilero	

Roditis

It is one of the most popular and oldest grape varieties in Greece, known by many



different names, such as Alepou, Rogditis, Tourkopoula and others. Among its many variations, Roditis Alepou stands out for its quality.

This variety exhibits vigorous growth and, although it endures spells of drought, Roditis is susceptible to various diseases. Its high yields and over-exploitation considerably compromise its quality and consequently its performance is mediocre to poor. On the contrary, when there is quantity control and the proper selection of

clones, as in the case of Roditis Alepou, the variety can make well-structured wines with intense fruity aromas -such as ripe melon and citrus fruit- often reminiscent of Sauvignon Blanc, with a vivid but refined palate, structure, high alcohol content and medium, yet balanced, acidity. Vineyards at high altitude give remarkable examples of Roditis's high-quality expressiveness.

Roditis makes still dry, medium-dry and medium sweet white PDO Patras wines in the Peloponnese, PDO Anchialos in Magnesia (along with Savatiano) and dry PDO Plagies Melitona in Halkidiki (along with Athiri and Assyrtiko) wines. It is also the basic ingredient for many PGI wines that source from Macedonia, Thessaly and Attica, whereas it pairs with Savatiano for the production of Retsina and wines without Geographical Indication.

*	Variety	Roditis
(a)	Colour	low intensity
0	Acidity	medium to high
6	Aromas	citrus flowers, lemon, melon
-2	Bottle ageing	preferably consumed while it is young
•	Wine style	light, elegant, also used in the making of Retsina

PATRAS	Roditis
PLAGIES MELITONA	Athiri 50%, Roditis 35%, Assyrtiko 15%
ANCHIALOS	Roditis 75%, Savatiano 25%

Greek Red Varieties

Agiorgitiko

Agiorgitiko could be considered the most commercial and the most widely rec-



ognised Greek red variety on the international market. Indeed, one would be hard-pressed to find a consumer whose palate would not relish an Agiorgitiko wine.

This variety is extremely sensitive to diseases and drought and can be particularly high-yielding. It ripens slowly and its somewhat prolonged harvesting begins in mid-September.

It can produce medium- to full-bodied wines of deep, vibrant colour, distinguished by a relatively smooth texture and balance, without being particularly tannic, alcoholic, thick or excessively rich. Its nose is marked

*	Variety	Agiorgitiko
0	Colour	deep
0	Acidity	medium to high
6	Aromas	red fruits, cherry, raspberry, sweet spices, coffee, chocolate Tannins : medium-soft
41	Bottle ageing	develops fast, coffee, chocolate
•	Wine style	fruity, dense rich

NEMEA	Agiorgitiko	

by the intense aromas of red fruits, such as cherry and raspberry, whereas it is known for its ability to pair beautifully with oak, thus adding fragrances of sweet spices, coffee and chocolate, which become more noticeable as the wine matures. A versatile variety, Agiorgitiko creates many different wine styles, ranging from crisp rosés and vividly fruity, nouveau-style wines to very soft and medium-bodied wines or dense reds of a distinct tannic level with a high ageing and development potential, but also sweet, oak-matured wines.

Agiorgitiko is widely cultivated in the Peloponnese, particularly in Nemea, accounting for the dry, medium-sweet and sweet PDO Nemea wines. It participates in many PGI wines in the rest of the Peloponnese, in Attica and in areas of northern Greece, whereas it is also found in wines of no Geographical Indication. Cabernet Sauvignon is often encountered as a blending partner with Agiorgitiko, in order to enhance its acidity and lend structure and aromatic complexity to it. Agiorgitiko also blends with other varieties, such as Syrah and Merlot.

Kotsifali / Mandilaria (Mandilari)

Kotsifali is one of the basic red varieties of Crete with the largest part of its



production coming from the southernmost area of the island and Heraklion. Kotsifali wines exhibit high alcohol content, brisk fruity fragrances and low acidity. Its colour is unstable as its youthfulness fades fast. The vine's growth is vigorous, its yield high and it is extremely resistant to most diseases. It matures in late August or early September.

Kotsifali usually blends with one of Crete's equally widespread red varieties, Mandilari, both of which comple-

ment each other perfectly. Mandilari —or else Mandilaria— gives wines of very deep, vibrant colour, fairly high acidity, striking tannins, low alcohol content, though lacking in aromatic intensity; this is precisely why Kotsifali often enters into partnership with Syrah.

*	Variety	Kotsifali
0	Colour	low intensity
0	Acidity	low
6	Aromas	cherry, blackberry Tannins: low
-41	Bottle ageing	pungent herbs, spices
	Wine style	light, soft, fruity

*	Variety	Mandilaria	
0	Colour	deep	
0	Acidity	medium to high	
6	Aromas	earthy, herbal Tannins : high	
-31	Bottle ageing	squid ink, herbs, spices	
T	Wine style	tannic	

Mandilaria vines also grow vigorously, give high yields, resist drought, but are sensitive to diseases.

The most exemplary wines obtained from the blending of Mandilaria with Kotsifali come from PDO Peza and PDO Archanes in the Prefecture of Heraklion whereas only recently has a new Heraklion appellation, PDO Handakas-Candia, been formally introduced, for which both varieties are used. Kotsifali also participates in many Cretan PGI wines while it is rarely encountered in other areas of Greece.

Mandilaria is blended with the Monemvassia white variety (the only case of a PDO wine that allows the mixture of white and red grapes) to make the PDO Paros. In Rhodes, Mandilaria is called Amorgiano and is used for the PDO Rhodes red and rosé wines.

In Santorini, Mandilaria is used in the production of most red wines as well as for many PGI wines across the Aegean Sea, because wine producers appreciate its property of endowing the wines with an intense and profound colour.

PEZA	Kotsifali, Mandilaria
ARCHANES	Kotsifali, Mandilaria
HANDAKAS-CANDIA	Kotsifali 70%, Mandilaria 30%
SITIA	Liatiko 80%, Mandilaria 20%
RHODES	Mandilaria 70%, Mavrothiriko
PAROS	Mandilaria 30%, Monemvassia 70% (white variety)

Liatiko (louliatiko)

Liatiko is an indigenous variety of Crete, found all over the island. It was initially



thought to be related to the Italian Aleatico. Research, however, has demonstrated that the two varieties are not the same, for they exhibit quite a few genetic differences. Historically, Liatiko was the variety upon which the production of the Malvasia wine was based.

This variety develops into a vigorous wine and produces high yields whereas its resistance to drought is moderate. It ripens fairly early, in July, hence its name, louliatiko, from 'loulios', the Greek name for the month of July.

It produces both dry and sweet wines and although some wine producers make exceptional dry wines, the variety's typical characteristics are best expressed by Liatiko sweet wines. Its wines are very pale in colour and have intense sweet fruity aromas, high alcohol content, medium acidity, medium body and soft tannins.

It accounts for the PDO Daphnes wine in Heraklion, for the PDO Sitia sweet wines, as well as for the PDO Sitia dry wines blended with Mandilaria.

*	Variety	Liatiko
0	Colour	pale
0	Acidity	medium
6	Aromas	ripe red fruits, sweet spices Tannins: low to medium, soft
4	Bottle ageing	spices, red fruit jam
•	Wine style	soft, complex, often sweet, dry

DAPHNES	Liatiko
SITIA	Liatiko 80%, Mandilari (for dry wines)
SITIA	Liatiko (for sweet wines)

Limnio

Limnio is considered, if not the most ancient, at least one of the most ancient



varieties worldwide. This particular variety is extensively mentioned by the writers of antiquity as 'the grape from Lemnos', which denotes its place of origin, no other than the island of Limnos in the north-eastern Aegean Sea.

Limnio grows moderately and is very drought- and disease-resistant. It easily adapts to different soil types, but performs best when cultivated on arid, unfertile with good drainage soils.

Limnio wines are often uninteresting wines – sharp and lacking in density. Nevertheless, with extra care this variety can give wines of high alcohol content, defined by medium-level tannins, medium acidity, medium body and colour intensity, and aromas reminiscent of fresh herbs and red wild berries.

Limnio is not cultivated only on Lemnos, where it produces the PDO Lemnos red wines, and in Halkidiki, participating in the PDO Plagies Melitona dry red wine, but also in many other regions of Macedonia and Thrace, taking part in the production of many PGI wines, thus availing itself of its capability to thrive even in cooler climates.

*	Variety	Limnio
©	Colour	medium intensity
9	Acidity	medium
6	Aromas	fresh herbs, red wild berries Tannins: medium
4	Bottle ageing	spices, red fruit jam
•	Wine style	soft, elegant

PLAGIES MELITONA	Limnio 90%, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc 30%
LEMNOS	Limnio (for dry wines)
LEMNOS	Limnio 90%, Muscat of Alexandria 10% (for sweet wines)

Mavrodaphne

Along with Retsina and Muscat of Samos, Mavrodaphne is one of the most famous



Greek wines abroad, for it has long been the favourite wine of tourists visiting Greece. Thus, the variety's name evolved into a powerful brand name and is exclusively associated with the sweet, red wines that once were – and still are—found in specific markets outside Greece.

The vineyards of Mavrodaphne grow vigorously, are highly productive and very sensitive to dry conditions. The vines ripen around mid to late September. High yields have a negative impact on the quality of the grape

and consequently on the quality of the wine.

Although it is a variety that can make wines of intense colour and high tannins, its most typical examples found in the market are soft wines of not great density with mild tannins. This is mainly due to the vinification method and to the prolonged ox-

*	Variety	Mavrodaphne
0	Colour	deep
0	Acidity	medium
6	Aromas	cherry, dried plum, spices, bay leaf Tannins: medium to high
4	Bottle ageing	chocolate, coffee, dried fig, sugar caramel, fruitcake
	Wine style	mainly sweet, dry, complex

MAVRODAPHNE OF PATRAS	Mavrodaphne 51%, Black Corinth	
MAVRODAPHNE	Mavrodaphne	
OF CEPHALONIA		

idative ageing in oak barrels, through which the wines acquire aromas of spices, herbs, coffee, chocolate and caramelised sugar.

Aged Mavrodaphne can be impressively complex and of a singular personality, comparable to the best fortified sweet Roussillon wines of southern France.

Besides the traditional Mavrodaphne, there are also wines of more modern style, resembling sweet Port. These wines have higher extracts, ripe sweet fruit aromas, such as cherry and dried plum, harmoniously blending with their aromas of spices.

The variety is traditionally cultivated in the northwestern part of the Peloponnese, an area that produces the PDO Mavrodaphne of Patras fortified sweet wine (for which it is stipulated that its blending proportion with Black Corinth may not exceed 49%) in Achaia and in PDO Mavrodaphne of Cephalonia. In recent years there has been a tendency to produce dry wines from Mavrodaphne, often reminiscent of the red wine style of the Douro region in Portugal. Mavrodaphne also takes part in blends along with other varieties, like Refosco and Cabernet Sauvignon.

Xinomavro

Xinomavro is the noblest red variety of northern Greece, capable of making wines



of superior quality. It is often compared to the Italian Nebbiolo or the French Pinot Noir, and justifiably so, because they all share certain common characteristics: their preference for the same type of soil and climate, their acclimatisation difficulties as well as the fact that they do not develop their varietal features unless they reach their full ripeness level. All this explains why Xinomavro is a difficult variety both with regard to its cultivation and vinification.

It is very sensitive to drought (in fact, humidity is essential both in the atmosphere and the soil) and is easily infected by fungi (mostly by *Botrytis cinerea*). It classifies as a late-harvest variety as grape-picking may be extended until as late as mid-October. In cold and wet years, however, or in vineyards located in cool areas, it may

*	Variety	Xinomavro
	Colour	medium
0	Acidity	high
6	Aromas	red wild berries, morello cherry, black olive, tomato, cabbage Tannins: high, austere
4	Bottle ageing	develops slowly, high ageing potential, mush- room, tobacco leaves
•	Wine style	austere, tannic, elegant, powerful

NAOUSSA	Xinomavro	
AMYNTAIO	Xinomavro	
GOUMENISSA	Xinomavro, Negoska	
RAPSANI	Xinomavro, Krassato, Stavroto	

not reach satisfactory ripening levels. In addition, the quality of Xinomavro is compromised by high yields.

Xinomavro is also defined by a high level of dry tannins and high acidity, which necessitates ageing and maturing in oak barrels. Furthermore, it is a variety recommended for long-term ageing and may give one the most long-living Greek wines, for it develops nicely over time, acquiring a particularly complex and appealing aromatic structure.

As far as Xinomavro red wine styles are concerned, these are divided into two categories. There is the traditionally made Xinomavro, of pale, bright colour, a fair share of herbaceous aromas reminiscent of tomato and black olive, with notes of cabbage, dried plums and red wild berries. Its acidity is highlighted by the edgy and aggressive tannins persisting even after the wine has aged. Conversely, the modern Xinomavro usually has a deeper but equally bright colour, tangy acidity, with its fruity aromas prevailing over the vegetal ones, a fairly tight structure, but with less aggressive tannins.

Much like Agiorgitiko, Xinomavro is a versatile variety, able to create different styles of wine, such as dry sparkling or sweet wines, white Blancs de Noirs, dry crisp and fruity rosés and light and smooth or tannin-rich reds.

Xinomavro accounts for the PDO Naoussa dry red wines and PDO Amynteo wines, which may be either dry reds or rosés, but also dry or medium-dry sparkling rosés. It participates in the PDO Goumenissa dry wines in Kilkis along with Negoska, and also blends with Krassato and Stavroto to produce PDO Rapsani wines sourced from Thessaly. It is traced in many PGI wines along with other varieties, such as Merlot and Syrah.

International Red Varieties

Cabernet Sauvignon

The first Cabernet Sauvignon vineyards in Greece were planted in the 1960s in



Metsovo. Since then, many wine producers from every region in the country use it, considering it one of their superior wines. The depth of colour, the particular character of its aromas and flavours, the broad palatal spectrum and its typical varietal features are but a few of the quality elements that prompted many wineries to put this variety to good use.

Cabernet Sauvignon is susceptible to most diseases and is quite sensitive to drought, thus performing better in

the relatively cooler regions of the country.

*	Variety	Sauvignon
0	Colour	deep
0	Acidity	high
6	Aromas	black cassis, eucalyptus, blackberries Tannins: high
4	Bottle ageing	tobacco leaves, mushroom, earthy aromas, leather, coffee
	Wine style	full, rich, aromatic

PLAGIES MELITONA	Limnio 90%, Cabernet Sauvignon,	
	Cabernet Franc 30%	

With regard to style, most Greek Cabernets bear a similarity to their European counterparts, particularly to some Bordeaux wines of warmer vintages, but with a more fruity palate, and more balanced acidity, but without the austerity and the minerality of a typical French wine. Most of the times, its strength exceeds 13% alcohol by volume. It has been proved that good quality Greek Cabernet wines have an ageing potential of at least a decade.

The variety is often used to boost some Greek varieties —an example being Agiorgitiko— adding acidity, body, structure and the complex aromas of blackberries.

Halkidiki is the only appellation region where the use of Cabernet Sauvignon (in partnership with Cabernet Franc and Limnio) is allowed for producing PDO Plagies Melitona wines. It also participates in the production of many PGI wines throughout Greece.

Grenache Rouge

This variety makes a fine match with the terrain and climatic of many regions in



Greece for it with stands very dry and hot environments. Depending on the location and production method, Grenache Rouge produces wines of satisfactory colour in terms of intensity and depth, of medium body and medium acidity. Among the many different wine styles it produces, there are some fruity rosés of exquisite quality and a few soft red ones.

This variety becomes oxidised very rapidly and, unless it is part of a blend with Syrah or other varieties, lengthy

maturation barrel is to be avoided. Its blending with Syrah is a classic and widespread recipe.

Grenache Rouge is encountered in many PGI wines of Macedonia, Crete and the Dodecanese.

*	Variety	Grenache Rouge
	Colour	medium intensity
0	Acidity	medium
6	Aromas	white pepper, red berries, pomegranate Tannins: low
-21	Bottle ageing	preferably consumed while it is young
T	Wine style	soft, fruity, mostly rosé

Merlot

Merlot appeared in Greece during the same period as Cabernet Sauvignon as it



was a variety used for the production of wines similar in style to the Bordeaux wines. The first varietal Merlot emerged quite a few years later and ever since it has earned the trust of producers and consumers alike.

Its vine is not very vigorous or high yielding whereas its extreme sensitivity to drought requires constant irrigation throughout its growth. It starts its vegetative cycle quite early and is therefore exposed to spring frost. Harvesting begins in early September.

Besides the classic combination with Cabernet Sauvignon, the Greek Merlot is quite often blended with Xinomavro, which plays down its heady and aggressive tannins and adds enticing flavours of red and black fruits. It also has the property of stepping up the ageing rate of the wine, rendering it ready for consumption within a shorter period of time.

*	Variety	Merlot
1	Colour	deep
0	Acidity	medium
6	Aromas	blackberry, plum, fruitcake Tannins: medium
4	Bottle ageing	raisin, dried plum, game, butterscotch
•	Wine style	rich, dense

Syrah

Syrah became widespread in Greek vineyards in a relatively short time, making



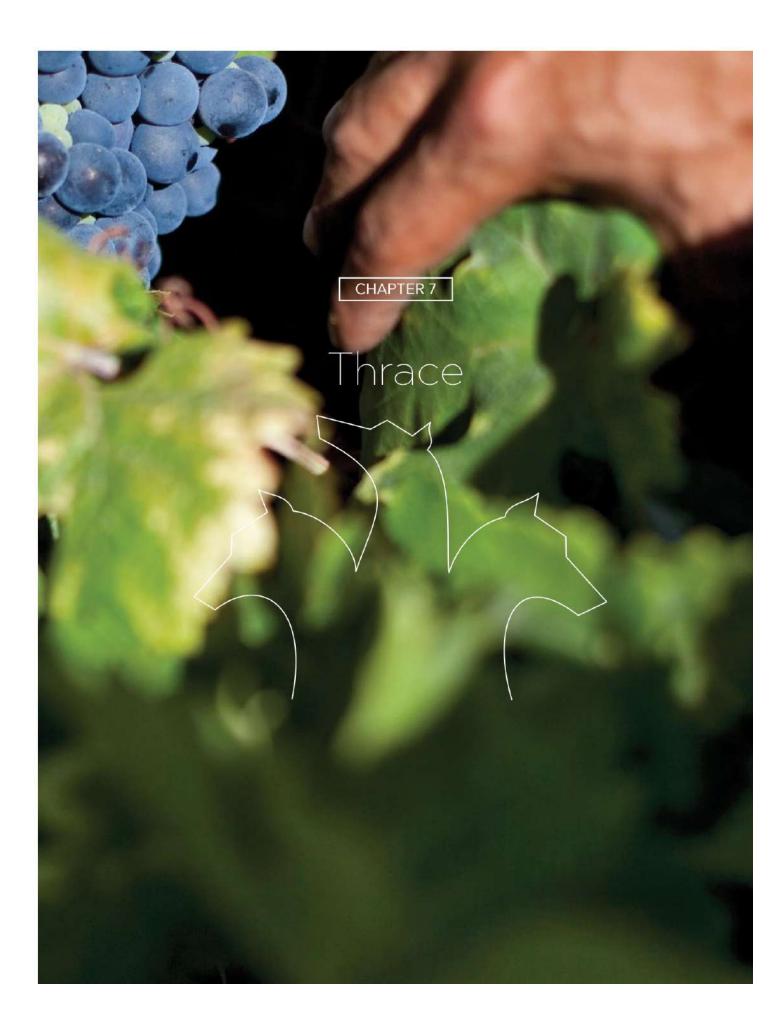
high-quality wines. Undoubtedly, this is no coincidence, for many producers consider Syrah a variety that thrives in the warm Greek climate.

The Syrah vine is vigorous, moderately productive and sensitive in dry conditions. Its cultivation is a difficult task because each clone of the vine needs different treatment. Consequently, those working in the vineyard are required to have an in-depth knowledge of the variety's needs.

The Greek Syrah wine approaches very much the Syrah style of the New World, exhibiting high alcohol content, prolonged extraction, dense structure, powerful tannins, medium acidity and mellow aromas of black fruits and spices. It qualifies for ageing. It frequently pairs with other international and local varieties in blends of northern Greece and with Kotsifali in Crete, for it enhances and highlights (often more so than Cabernet Sauvignon) the quality of the local varieties, thus producing more interesting results. Furthermore, accompanied by Mavro Messenikola and Carignan, it participates in the production of PDO Messenikola wine, as well as in PGI wines of Macedonia, Drama, Epanomi and Crete.

*	Variety	Syrah
	Colour	deep
0	Acidity	high
6	Aromas	plum, spice, black pepper, white pepper, blackberries Tannins: high
4	Bottle ageing	toffee, cooked meat, raisins, coffee
	Wine style	dense, peppery

MESSENIKOLA	Mavro Messenikola 70%, Syrah/Carignan 30%
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Since antiquity, the area of Thrace, along with that of Macedonia, has been a focal point of the Dionysian cult, making it no coincidence that the god Dionysus is believed to have come from this area. During the Homeric Ages, wines such as those from Mt. Ismaros near Maroneia were famous, being traded and exchanged as prestigious gifts. In modern times, however, there has been a shift towards other, more profitable kinds of crops, such as tobacco, leading to the shrinking and eventual abandonment of vineyards. As recently as the last few decades, the situation has changed to the benefit of viticulture. The substantial investments made by Tsantali Winery in Maroneia have created new prospects for growth in the area and at the same time put Thrace back on the Greek wine map. Amidst this evolution, earlier and current efforts of smaller-scale and just as enthusiastic winemakers should be deemed equally important.

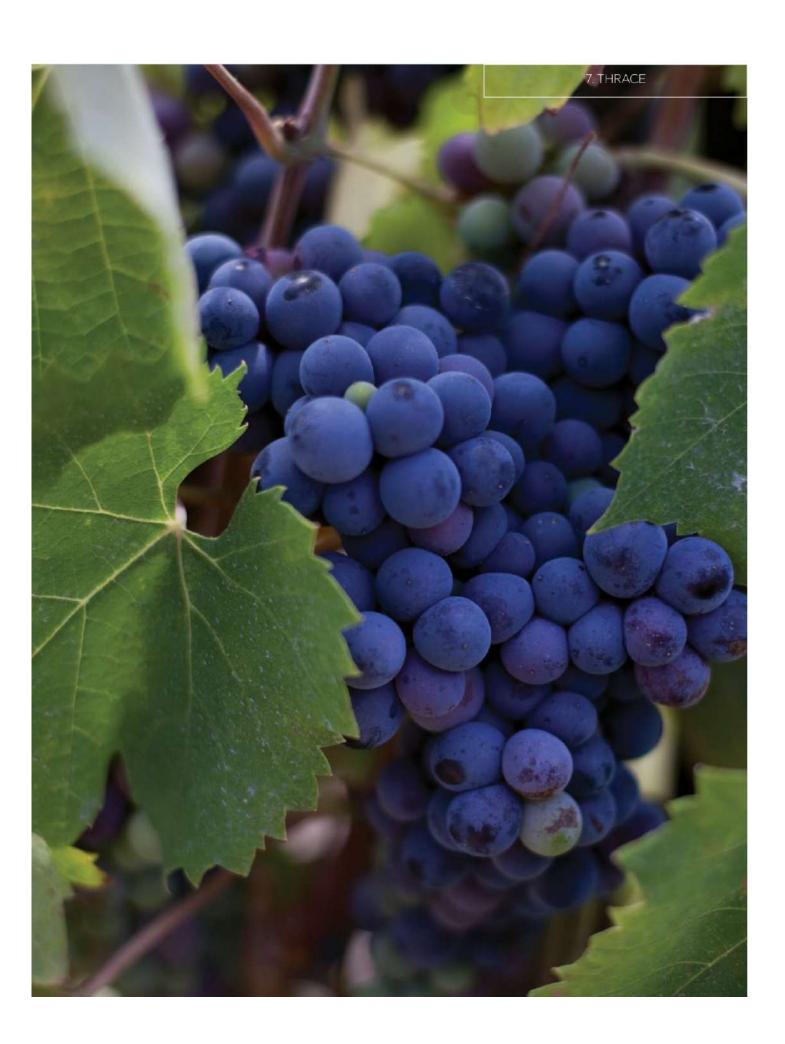
The most suitable areas for cultivating vineyards are specific. The weather conditions prevailing in these areas favour the production of high-quality wine. Generally speaking, the climate there is humid and warm with high rainfall, particularly during the summer. The Rodopi Mountain Range protects the vineyards against the cold northern winds and its proximity to the northern Aegean Sea mitigates the low winter temperatures and ensures cooler ones in summertime. The emergence of the Botrytis fungus is a common phenomenon and this is why the new vineyards are usually planted according to the Cordon de Royat trellis system, allowing air to circulate in the foliage. On the one hand, this system contributes to the constraint of plant diseases and, on the other, enhances the natural ripening process of the grapes.

As far as the coastal regions are concerned, viticulture is favoured only in a small patch of land extending from just after the city of Kavala up to Maroneia, where the levels of rainfalls, especially in the summer, are normal.

In Maroneia, just four kilometres from the seaside and close to Mt. Ismaros, the weather conditions are different. The vineyards are located at an altitude of roughly 350m (1150 ft) and at a lower temperatures compared to those at sea-level, thus producing wines of higher acidity and better levels of colour. The Maroneia wine was famous in ancient times and is mentioned in the works by Greek rhetorician Athenaeus.

Avdira is another important wine-producing area of Thrace and bears many similarities to Maroneia with regard both to its climate and morphology. The wine from Avdira was among the leading wines of the Byzantine Empire.

The grapes grown in Thrace are a mixture of international and local cultivars and many of them are also cultivated in neighbouring Bulgaria. Closely related to the Mavrud variety found in Asenovgrad, Bulgaria, for example, is the Thracian red variety called Mavroudi, which produces intense wines with high levels of tannins. Likewise, the white wine Zoumiatiko is similar to the Bulgarian Dimiat. Another commonly found red variety in Thrace is Pamidi (or Pamiti), which has higher levels of sugars and, either alone or blended with other varieties, is mainly used for the production of rosés. Other common varieties of white wine are Muscat of Alexandria, Roditis, Viognier, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, as well as the red wine varieties of Limnio, Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Merlot, Cinsault and Grenache Rouge. Thrace does not have a PDO zone.





Macedonia, the largest and northernmost geographical and administrative region of Greece, is an area of great variety as regards both the landscape and weather conditions. It is divided into three geographical parts, with striking differences among them as to the varieties and style of their wines. The historical events that unfolded in Macedonia over the course of time greatly affected wine production, which followed a markedly different development from the rest of Greece. With only two co-ops, two big companies in the wine business -Boutari and Tsantali– as well as numerous small-scale producers, the conditions in which wine production developed were highly competitive. This resulted in the creation of some of the best and most modern vineyards in Greece and in the consistent production of a wide range of high-quality wines of differing styles.

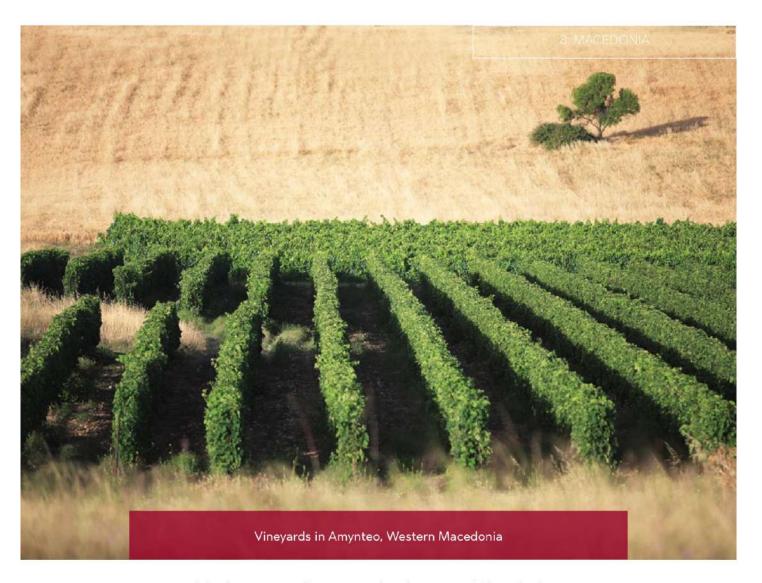
Western Macedonia

Western Macedonia includes the regional units of Florina, Kastoria, Grevena and Kozani. With mostly mountainous terrain, it encompasses part of the Pindos Mountains, while just beyond its boundaries in neighbouring Thessaly, towers Greece's highest mountain, the renowned Mt. Olympus. Rainfall here is slightly higher than in the other parts of Greece and, as a result, there are no problems with water reserves. August is considered the driest month and November the wettest. Hail is quite common throughout the year and snowfall is the rule in winter. The climate is rather cold for Greek standards, with an average temperature of 24°C (75°F) in the summer and only a few degrees above freezing in winter months.

With its climate bordering on continental, Florina is the coldest viticultural area of Greece. There is a diversity of soils depending on the area, including sandy gravel and alluvial types. The main varieties of the region are Xinomavro and Moschomavro. Moschomavro is a red-skinned variety of vigorous growth, which is productive, drought-hardy and botrytis-sensitive. It ripens slowly and harvest takes place from late September to early October. It offers medium-coloured wines of relatively high acidity, high alcohol level and intensely sweet fruity aromas reminiscent of Muscat. The wines are light in body and can be particularly tasty. Apart from the reds, there are several rosé wines from Moschomavro as well as blends with Xinomavro and other international red varieties.

The plateau of Amynteo in Florina is one of the most important viticultural areas in Greece though one of the coldest. The high altitude (750m-2460 ft.), the massive bodies of water, such as Lakes Vegoritis and Petron, the wide diurnal temperature variation as well as the sandy soil are some of the factors affecting the quality and the character of the area's wines. The main part of the production includes dry red wines while the rest are medium-dry and medium-sweet types. In comparison to the Xinomavro of Naoussa, the Xinomavro of Amynteo is usually lighter, less tannic and more floral in character. There are producers, however, who have managed to create a more fruity style, closer to that of Naoussa. The PDO Amynteo zone is the only PDO of Western Macedonia. PDO wines, which must be produced from the Xinomavro variety, can be dry rosé and dry red still as well as dry rosé and medium-dry sparkling wines. Amynteo is the only PDO area where the production of rosé still and rosé sparkling wines is particularly significant. Most sparkling wines are produced using the closed tank method (cuve close) while only a limited percentage is produced using the traditional method.

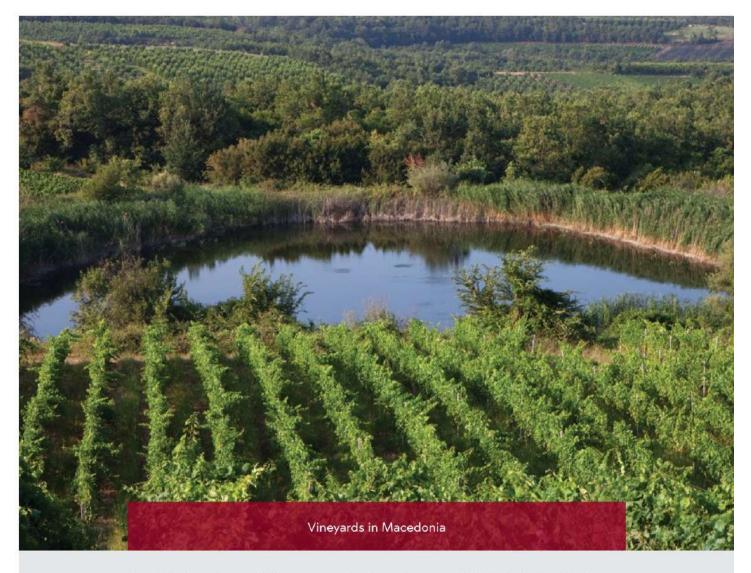
Siatista, in the region of Kozani, produces the traditional 'air-dried' wine Liastos of Siatista from mainly Xinomavro and Moschomavro grapes, which are laid out to dry in special shaded places. The oak-aged wines are pale in colour and high in alcohol



content, while they are usually sweet with soft tannins. Although these wines are consumed locally, in recent years there have been efforts to revive this style by adding amounts of international varieties, such as Cabernet Sauvignon or Merlot. In the production of PGI wines of Western Macedonia, apart from Moschomavro and Xinomavro, several other varieties are also used, such as Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Roditis, Malagousia, Assyrtiko, the highly aromatic Gewürztraminer, Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah. Vins gris (almost white wines), produced mainly from Xinomavro grapes, are available as PGI Florina.

Central Macedonia

In the inner part of Central Macedonia, which includes the prefectures of Kilkis, Thessaloniki, Chalkidiki, Pella and Imathia there are no high mountains like in Western Macedonia. Therefore, the sea greatly affects the climate due to the proximity to the Aegean Sea since many viticultural areas are at low altitudes and very close or next to the coasts.



The viticultural area of Goumenissa, in the prefecture of Kilkis, includes Mt. Paikon, which at an altitude of 150-250m (500-800 ft.) provides easier conditions of cultivation as compared to those in Naoussa. On average, it is a warmer area than Naoussa with lower humidity levels and more sunlight. The dominant varieties are Negoska and Xinomavro, which participate in the production of PDO Goumenissa wines. Negoska must hold a percentage of at least 20% in the blend while the production process involves co-vinification of the two grape varieties and maturation of the wines in oak barrels for twelve months. In comparison with the respective Naoussa PDO wines, these are softer and lighter, with a higher level of primary aromas reminiscent of berries, but also in a more rustic version, with an aromatic character reminiscent of raisins due to the presence of Negoska. The alcohol level is usually lower than Naoussa's. Other significant varieties cultivated in the area are Roditis, Grenache Rouge and Merlot.

One of the most important appellation areas of Greek vineyards is Naoussa, in the prefecture of Imathia, where Xinomavro is exclusively used for producing red dry, medium-dry and medium-sweet wines. The region spreads to the southeast of Mt. Vermion, at altitudes ranging from 50 to 450m (165-1480 ft.). The climate is semi-con-

tinental, not as cold as in Florina, and is affected by Mt. Vermion. The chilly northern winds may bring frost in spring, thus often inhibiting flowering. The composition of the ground varies, ranging from limestone to clay loamy and sandy soils. Naoussa is the area where Xinomavro is at its best. Harvesting starts in late September and is completed in October. The maximum permitted yields is 8,000 litres per hectare, though the producers never reach this amount even in the most fruitful years, given that the high-yielding Xinomavro produces wines of low colour intensity and strong, aggressive tannins.

A typical Naoussa wine is usually medium in colour, which very quickly acquires brownish tinge, with high acidity, frequently firm and dry tannins, medium body, broad structure and fruity, non-sweet, primary aromas. A good Xinomavro has the complexity, depth, and the potential to age and evolve over a long time – probably the longest of all Greek dry red wines.

In the traditional version of Naoussa wine the colour is rather pale, changing into tawny and brownish, while at the same time it fades as the wine ages. The primary fruity aromas seem to recede rapidly, giving way to intense herbaceous, spicy, and animal-like aromas. The body is medium, with a high level of dry tannins, accompanied by the characteristic high acidity of a Xinomavro wine.

The modern Naoussa wines are described by increased extract with deeper and more intense colour. They are softer and milder wines that need less time to mature. Although they have a richer and fuller body, they are still elegant. They have lower acidity levels, with rather soft, though high-level, tannins. As for their aroma, there is a wide range of mainly fruity aromas.

Quite often, in an attempt to respond to a more cosmopolitan and modern style, Xinomavro marries with international varieties, such as Merlot, Syrah or Cabernet Sauvignon in PGI wines.

In Halkidiki, the climate may be considered ideal for viticulture. The sea and the relatively high altitude, where most vineyards lie, are the main features of the local land-scape, and, therefore, the character of the wines is also accordingly affected. On the slopes of Mt. Meliton, at an altitude of 800m (2600 ft.), two PDO wines are produced, both called Plagies Melitona, which translates as 'slopes of Meliton' in English or Côtes de Meliton in French. One is white, made from Athiri, Assyrtiko and Roditis, while the other is red, made from Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Limnio. Other grape varieties cultivated in the area, such as Malagousia and Syrah, are bottled as PGI Sithonia.

Wine production at Mt. Athos dates back more than a thousand years. In particular, there are two monasteries that collect almost all wine production and market it. One is in the area of Mylopotamos, where the largest *metohi* (monastery dependency) of the Megisti Lavra Monastery lies. The vineyard of the monastery was abandoned af-

ter World War II, since the occurrence of phylloxera completely devastated it. Efforts to replant the vineyard started in 1992 so that it could be reconstituted and return to production. The wine produced is white and red, dry, medium-sweet and sweet, coming from organically cultivated grapes and labelled as PGI Mt. Athos. Wine is also produced at the *metohi* of Chromitsa of St. Panteleimon's Monastery, on behalf of Tsantali Wineries, which undertook the task of reviving the region's viticulture, wine production and trade in 1973. The white varieties grown on Mt. Athos are Assyrtiko, Athiri, Sauvignon Blanc, Muscat of Alexandria and Roditis, and the reds are Xinomavro, Limnio, Muscat of Hamburg, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon.

Central Macedonia produces numerous PGI wines that have promoted Greek wine both within the country and abroad, a typical example being PGI wines of, Thessaloniki, which managed to impress with both their style and high quality. The lack of restrictions in the selection of varieties and the production process gave some gifted producers the chance to take their experiments to the extreme and make high-standard and modern-styled wines, which are complex yet rather easy to assess. Both local and international varieties are used, such as Assyrtiko, Malagousia, Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay for whites, and Limnio, Syrah, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Grenache Rouge, among others, for reds.

Eastern Macedonia

Eastern Macedonia comprises the prefectures of Serres, Drama and Kavala. Although no appellation area has been established within its boundaries, it is considered one of the most significant viticultural regions of Greece. It boasts several major and pioneering producers, who have created some of the most special and interesting Greek wines. However, most of the production and the best quality wines come from Kavala and Drama.

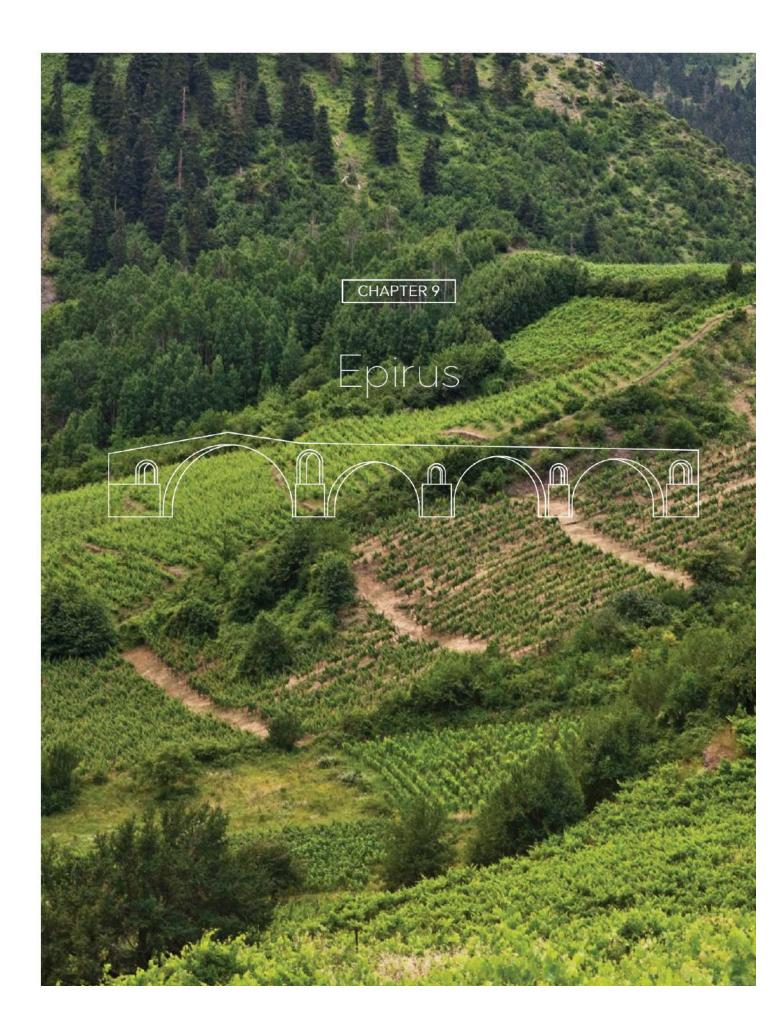
Kavala's vineyards are particularly benefited from their position between the sea and Mt. Pangeon, which protects the area from chilly northern winds, while at the same time it forms a heat trap in the places facing the sea. Temperatures in the region are remarkably lower than those in the southern parts of the country. Many vineyards lie at a considerable altitude, at the foot of Mt. Pangeon. The diurnal temperature variation helps to produce wines with freshness and intense, ripe, fruity aromas. Because there are no dominant local varieties in the region, there is a wide range of Greek and foreign choices, such as Assyrtiko, Roditis, Malagousia, Muscat of Alexandria, Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Semillon, Gewürztraminer, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Syrah, Cabernet Franc, Pamidi and Agiorgitiko.

To the northeast of Kavala lies the region of Drama, where developments in recent decades have positively affected viniculture all over the country. Drama's climate is



considerably colder than Kavala's though most vineyards are not at high altitudes. At least as regards quality, Drama is among the richest and top viticultural areas in Greece. Varieties used are almost the same as Kavala's, with the addition of mainly Viognier and Trebbiano.

It is quite difficult to detect differences and similarities among the wines of these two regions. We could say that the wines of Drama are closer to their European counterparts as regards austerity, finesse and aromatic profile, while Kavala's wines are closer to New World ones as they are fruity, rich and exuberant.



Viticulture and winemaking in Epirus date back as early as the 15th century. Although in terms of quantity its wine production falls short of other geographic regions of the country, this is not the case with regard to quality. As far as wine style is concerned, Epirus produces expressive wines from local varieties of a unique character. Epirus's natural beauty and cultural heritage as well as its many areas whose climate is barely suitable for viticulture can be its trump card in showcasing and promoting a small —but enterprising— regional wine industry. Save for a few lowland areas, Epirus is especially mountainous, most of the terrain at an altitude of 700m (2300 ft.). This high altitude is one of the major factors that contribute to the region's humid and cool climate. To the West, the Ionian Sea moderates extreme weather phenomena, which may occur either in summertime with high temperatures or in wintertime with extreme cold.

The Pindos Mountain Range functions as a natural barrier against the humid winds invading the regions from the Adriatic Sea and considerably contributes to the increased rainfall levels across the whole province of Epirus. This phenomenon, however, is rarely a problem for wine makers.

The soil is clay of a medium lime content, thus retaining enough humidity throughout the year, which consequently renders irrigation unnecessary. The soils of the vineyards carpeting the slopes are poor and dry compared to the rich soil of the vineyards lying lower in the plains, which are only very rarely threatened by drought.

The principal and largest part of production is concentrated around the area of loannina (mainly in Metsovo and Zitsa), where proper, modern and high-capacity wineries have been established.

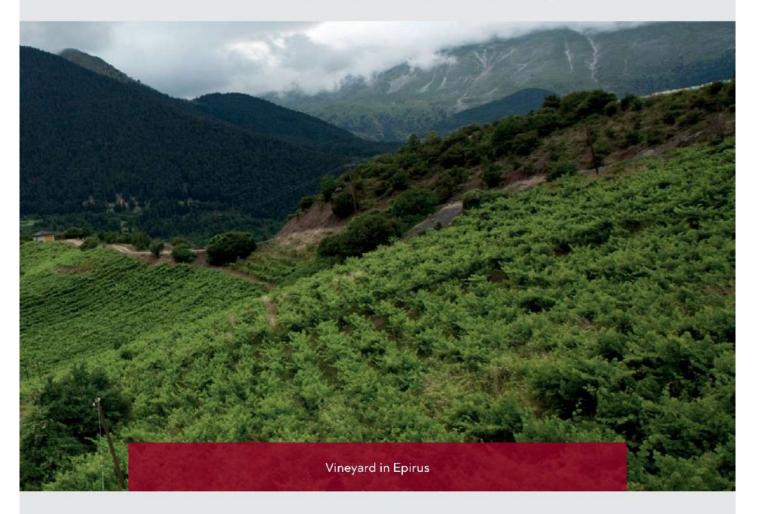
The number of varieties, particularly the indigenous ones, used for winemaking is much more limited when compared to the varieties of other regions. The most important local variety is the white Debina, which is very sensitive to fungal infections and drought, whereas its wines are at their best when the grapes come from

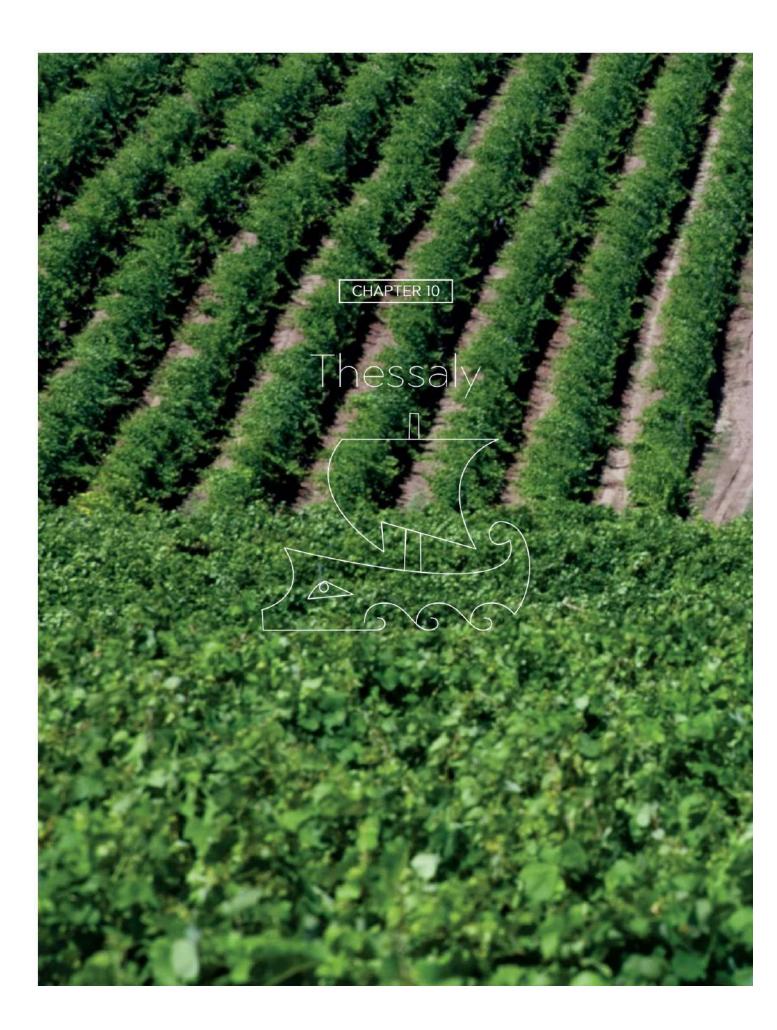


low-yielding vineyards. This variety can produce very fresh and elegant wines with distinctive, subtle citrus and green apple aromas, reminiscent of Central European wines. Wines produced from Debina are usually of low alcohol content, rarely exceeding 11.5 percent, with high acidity, light body and medium intensity of aromas and flavours.

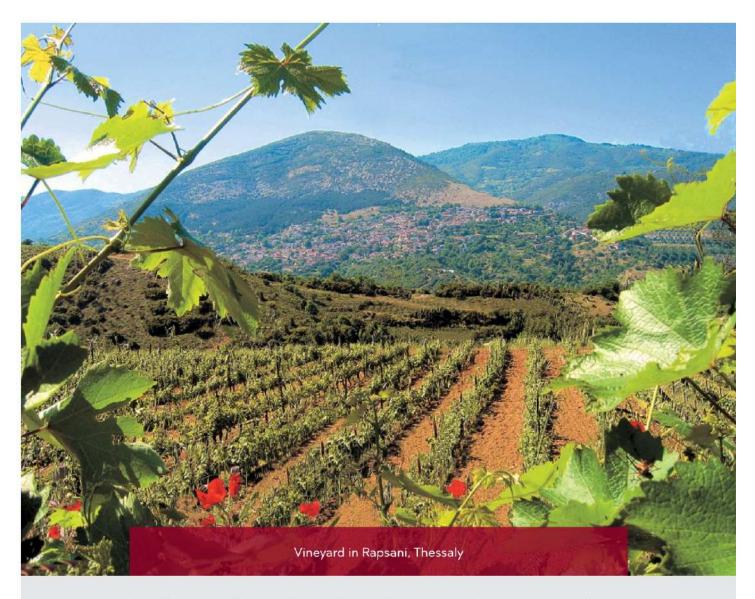
Zitsa, the sole appellation area of Epirus, produces white wines from Debina that could be dry, medium-dry, medium-sweet, sparkling and medium-sparkling.

The local red varieties Bekari and Vlahiko are cultivated in small quantities and mature a lot earlier than Debina, around early September. On the nose Vlahiko is more complex, with higher acidity and lower levels of colour and tannins than Bekari. Vlahiko is often blended with Bekari which, despite its more neutral aroma, is deep in colour. Although the presence of international varieties in Epirus is weak, they have shown impressive results in the area of Metsovo and around loannina, with Cabernet Sauvignon being the main ingredient for PGI wines. The Chardonnay, Riesling, Traminer and Sauvignon Blanc varieties are also encountered in the region.





Thessaly lies at the heart of Central Greece and has always been one of the country's commercial and cultural hubs. The region's economy is mainly based on agriculture while the majority of the farmland is dedicated to crops other than grapes, such as grain and cotton. Viticulture is not widespread because the above products are more profitable. The best vineyards grow on mountain slopes on the boundaries of the region, where the grapes are superior in quality to those growing in the heavy and rich in organic matter soils of the Thessaly plain. Water is abundant since several rivers, the most important being the Pineios, are used for irrigation and the snow in nearby mountains does not melt until late spring. High yields are not unusual in the vineyards of the Thessaly plain.



The vineyards of Thessaly lie mainly near the borders of the plain and particularly on mountain slopes. The presence of high mountains creates a protective shield against the winds blowing from all directions and traps humidity at lower altitudes, in this way encouraging, however, the occurrence of diseases caused by harmful fungi.

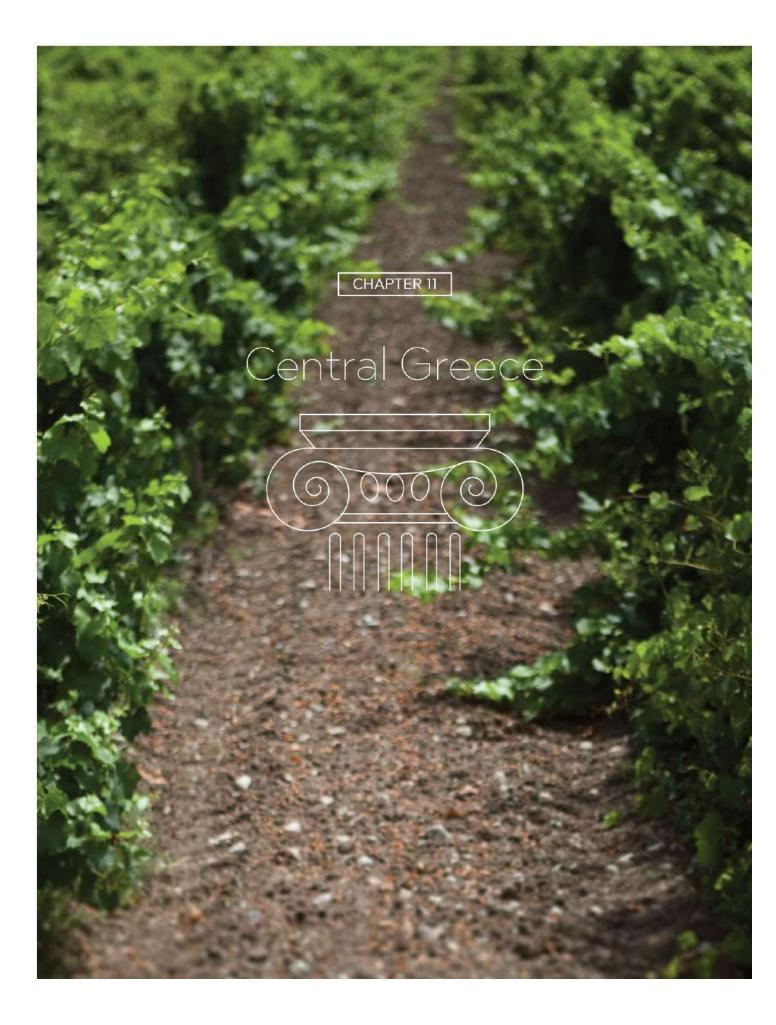
The main varieties are the whites —Assyrtiko, Roditis, Savatiano, Batiki, Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc— and the reds—Limnio, Limniona, Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah and Cinsault— in addition to some Italian varieties, such as Sangiovese and Nebbiolo. Though containing low levels of sugars and acidity, the local variety Batiki can give well-structured wines. Similar as it may be to Limnio, the local Limniona is a different red variety, mainly cultivated in Tyrnavos and Karditsa, and is the most interesting of all as it has produced impressive results after several years of research and experimentation. Limniona wines are deep-coloured, rich, with high, though not excessive, extract. They have a medium to full body, containing relatively soft tannins and quite high levels of acidity. As regards aroma, notes of red and black fruit and herbs prevail.

Thessaly produces three PDO wines. The prefecture of Magnisia includes the Anchialos PDO, exclusively dedicated to the production of white, dry, medium-dry, and medium-sweet wines from Roditis, at a percentage of at least 75%, and Savatiano. The vineyards are close to the sea, benefiting from the cool sea breeze that reduces high summer temperatures. There are detailed rules describing the winemaking process, such as forbidding both skin contact and oak ageing so that the primary fruity aromas of the varieties can be maintained.

Not included in the list of PDO wines until 1994, the PDO Messenikola zone lies at the northeastern edge of Lake Plastira, in the prefecture of Karditsa, where vine-yards are found at altitudes of 200-600m (650-2000 ft.). The soil is light and gravely with some clay spots, which has water-retention capacity and proves invaluable in drought spells. The wine is 70% Mavro Messenikola and 30% Carignan and Syrah. These aromatic wines are pale, sometimes almost rosé in colour, without tannic structure and extracts.

The most important PDO zone, however, with respect to both quantity and quality is Rapsani, at the foot of Mt. Olympus. The vineyards start from a low altitude of 100m (330 ft.) and reach as high as 700m (2300 ft.). Those at relatively high altitudes are considered the best, their soils being light and rocky with ferric-schist while they experience the positive effect of the cold breezes blowing down from the mountains. The three varieties used and mixed in equal amounts are Xinomavro, Krassato and Stavroto, the latter being difficult to cultivate because it is easily infected by fungi. Stavroto has low sugar levels and produces wines with medium acidity and firm tannins. Krassato, on the other hand, is rich in dry extract with high sugar levels and relatively deep in colour. Stavroto is harvested one week after Xinomavro and Krassato. Ageing is a very critical stage for Rapsani wines and is carried out in large oak barrels while the process is closely and carefully monitored. A good Rapsani is a superb example of a modern Greek wine with ripe, though not excessively sweet fruity aromas, with dried herbs and spices indicating the well-integrated oak and velvety tannins. The Rapsani region includes three villages: Pyrgetos, Ampelakia and Rapsani itself. The village of Krania on the eastern slopes of Mt. Olympus was initially incorporated into the Rapsani PDO, but has been exempted since 2001 in order to produce white and red PGI wines from international varieties.

Tyrnavos is another important winemaking region, though known rather for the production of *tsipouro* than for wine. The main varieties here are Hamburg Muscat and Roditis. Hamburg Muscat produces simple and aromatic wine while Roditis, which is frequently called Roditis Damasi, gives good-quality wines with high acidity and high extract.



As the natural continuation of Epirus and Thessaly, Central Greece encompasses part of the Pindos Mountain Range. The massifs of the region, mainly in its central part, form one of the most mountainous areas of the country. The plains lie largely to the East in Attica and Boeotia and to the West in Aetolia-Acarnania. There is a wide diversity of soil composition, ranging from very poor to very fertile. The complex topography results in an amazing variety of mesoclimates, thus affecting each region's style of wines. The western part is quite humid with high rain falllevels; the centre is mainly mountainous and cold, while the eastern region, including Attica, is the warmest and driest. Vineyards cover an overall area of 21,000 hectares, making up 28% of all Greek vineyards. The largest acreage of vineyard sis divided among the prefectures of Boeotia (Viotia), the island of Euboea (Evia) and Attica (Attiki) – the latter being the vastest vineyard in Greece.

Attica (Attiki)

Most of Attica's terrain is mountainous, therefore blocking the winds blowing from the north, but the southern flatter part is exposed to southern winds. The sea cools temperatures in coastal areas, with the largest part of the region being among the driest and warmest areas of Greece. The soil to the east is mainly loamy and to the west composed primarily of limestone.

There are three major viticultural zones: Megara, Mesogeia and northern Attica. Although there are some good small-scale producers in Megara, the area is the source of mainly inexpensive, mass-produced wines. Mesogeia is a flat region with mainly limestone and rather rich soils. If necessary, the plots are occasionally irrigated. Savatiano is the main variety of the region, regularly offering high yields with few problems of ripening. Northern Attica, one of the cool estand least fertile areas of Attica, has higher altitudes and includes the mountains Parnitha and Penteli.

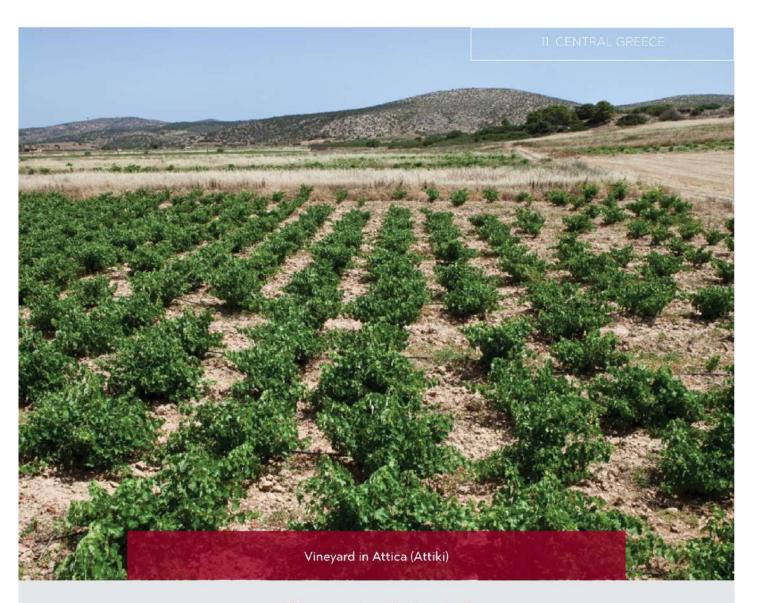
Temperatures in the autumn are markedly lower than in the rest of Attica, which means that even in good years Savatiano of Stamata, for example, will probably not manage to reach the ripening level of grapes from Mesogeia or some of the warmer parts of Attica.

Apart from Savatiano, the white varieties Roditis, Assyrtiko, Malagousia and Chardonnay, and the reds Agiorgitiko, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Syrah are also widely cultivated.

Euboea (Evia)

Euboea is the second largest island of Greece after Crete. The topography is complex, with hills and mountains alternating with low fields and plains. The northern part of the island is the coolest while the southern part of Karystos has more in common with the Cyclades Islands as regards climate and morphology since it is hot, dry and extremely windy. The warmest part is at the centre of the island, around the capital Chalcis (Halkida).

Grape varieties are more or less the same as those of the Cyclades and the rest of the Greek mainland. Savatiano is the main variety, followed by Roditis, Assyrtiko, Malagousia, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc and the red Syrah. There are also a few vineyards planted with Aidani, Limnio, Mandilaria (called Mavrokountoura in Euboea), Liatiko and the local red variety Vradiano, cultivated mainly in northern Euboea.



Boeotia (Viotia)

Boeotia is a significant wine-producing region of mainland Greece, with a dry climate like Attica's, but also with considerably lower temperatures, mainly around the mountains. Vineyards can be found as high as 500m (1650 ft.) on the northern slopes of Mt. Parnitha. Other noteworthy vineyards lie to the west, on Mt. Cithaeron (Kithaironas), at an altitude of approximately 350m (1150 ft.) and at 200-400m (650-1300 ft.) on Mt. Helicon (Elikonas) of central Boeotia, which is the warmest area of the three. However, the warmest and most fertile vineyards of Boeotia, capable of providing high yields, are located in the plains of Arma.

The main grape varieties of Boeotia are the same as those of Attica, with Savatiano dominating, followed by Roditis. There are also white varieties, such as Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc, and the red-skinned Grenache Rouge, Carignan, Syrah and Cabernet Sauvignon. Mouchtaro is a local red variety the producers of the region have tried to revive with very encouraging results.



Phthiotis (Fthiotida)

Phthiotis has a long viticultural tradition, particularly in the area of Atalanti, where wine was produced from antiquity until the outbreak of phylloxera after World War II. The revival and recovery of the modern vineyards of the region started in the early 1970s with the establishment of Domaine Hatzimichalis.

The diversity of the landscape as regards climate and soil provides the region's wine producers with the opportunity to choose and develop their own styles of wine. The most important vineyards of the region are in the valley of Atalanti, where the cool breezes blowing from both Mt. Parnassos and the North Euboean Gulf facilitate the uniform and natural ripening of the grapes.

A great part of the production includes white and red international varieties, such as Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. In addition, Assyrtiko, Malagousia and Robola as well as some other white varieties are also cultivated while it is worth noting that Savatiano is rather rare in Phthiotis.

Retsina

Like no other wine, Retsina (resinated wine) was for many years the protagonist in promoting the international image of Greek wine. The production of Retsina is traditionally associated with mainland Greece, Attica (mainly the area of Mesogeia), Boeotia and Euboea being the main producers.

Striking archaeological findings, such as shards of amphorae found in Crete and the rest of Greece, prove that resin was widely used in the production and storage of wines in antiquity. According to some, resin was used for sealing wine amphorae during long journeys, thus preventing any contact of the wine with the air. Moreover, as a preservation agent and an effective antiseptic, it protected wine from spoilage. Over the course of time, it was used as an aromatic agent, covering any flaws that may have existed in low-quality wines. Gradually, as the standard of living and, consequently, the Greek diet improved, Retsina started to decline and it was restricted to being served in working-class eateries (tavernas), though it was always available on the market. Although today its quality has been undoubtedly enhanced, Retsina has still failed to upgrade its image. Modern Retsina can be a high-quality, fresh, cool, full of fruity aromas wine, with distinct tones of resin, surprisingly balanced and enjoyable.

The term Retsina is used for white dry wines (and occasionally for some rosés), produced with the traditional method of adding pine resin to the must, hence Retsina is a Traditional Designation wine. Although varieties such as Assyrtiko and Muscat are used for producing resinated wines, wines labeled as TDW Retsina must be produced only from the Savatiano and Roditis varieties.

A specific process has always been followed for resinated wines. During alcoholic fermentation, resin is added to the wine and then the substance remains in the tank for a period decided by the producer, depending on the desired fragrance intensity. Then Retsina is racked and bottled. The first bottled Retsina wines appeared on the market in the 1960s. Although their quality was obviously improved, low acidity and high alcohol levels were still the main disadvantages. Nowadays the production of Retsina is subject to strict production specifications. The amount of resin is legally specified, ranging between 0.15 and 1% of the end product's volume, while alcohol level is defined between 10 and 13.5%. The same restrictions also apply to Kokkineli, the rosé version of Retsina, made from the pink Roditis variety.



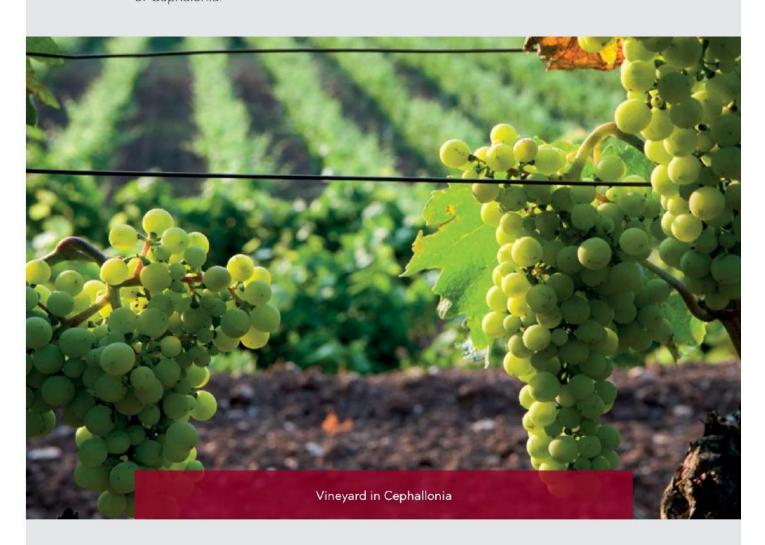
been crucial in shaping the conditions under which winemaking evolved in the region. Viticulture had not been an activity through which business enterprises could ensure their income and viability, but rather a noble cultural expression of daily involvement. On the other hand, significant was the role of the islands' occupation initially by the Venetians and later by the British, who, enjoying the exclusive trade control in the region, encouraged winemaking practices by

offering incentives that eventually helped viticulture to develop.

The political and social developments on the Ionian Islands have

Cephalonia (Kefalonia)

Although wine production holds a prominent position in the region's tradition in almost all the Ionian Islands, Cephalonia is the leading pioneer, producing the most famous and superior quality wines. Its climate is mild, rainfall is abundant in the autumn and winter, and high humidity rates are often a source of problems. The island's semi-mountainous terrain is virtually an extension of the Peloponnesian peninsula, the two of them sharing a similar morphology. The island's soil composition varies widely, with the land around Mt. Ainos exhibiting a high content of limestone, endowing Robola with a mineral profile and elegance. Around the town of Lyxouri, with Moschatella, Mavrodaphne and Muscat, there are heavier clay soils. The most renowned of all varieties is Robola, also to be found on the rest of the Ionian Islands. It produces the only dry white PDO wine of the island, PDO Robola of Cephalonia.



The Robola appellation zone includes specific areas in the southern and central parts of Cephalonia at an altitude above 50 meters (160 ft) and with a maximum yield of 56 hectolitres per hectare. The best wines are sourced from vineyards at an altitude that ranges from 300 to 800m (950-2,600 ft.). Although phylloxera has destroyed the vineyards, there are still old self-rooted vines on the island. In addition to PDO Robola of Cephalonia, the island holds two more appellations for sweet wines: PDO Muscat of Cephalonia and PDO Mavrodaphne of Cephalonia. However, besides the sweet, fortified wines, Mavrodaphne has also been producing extraordinary dry wines in recent years.

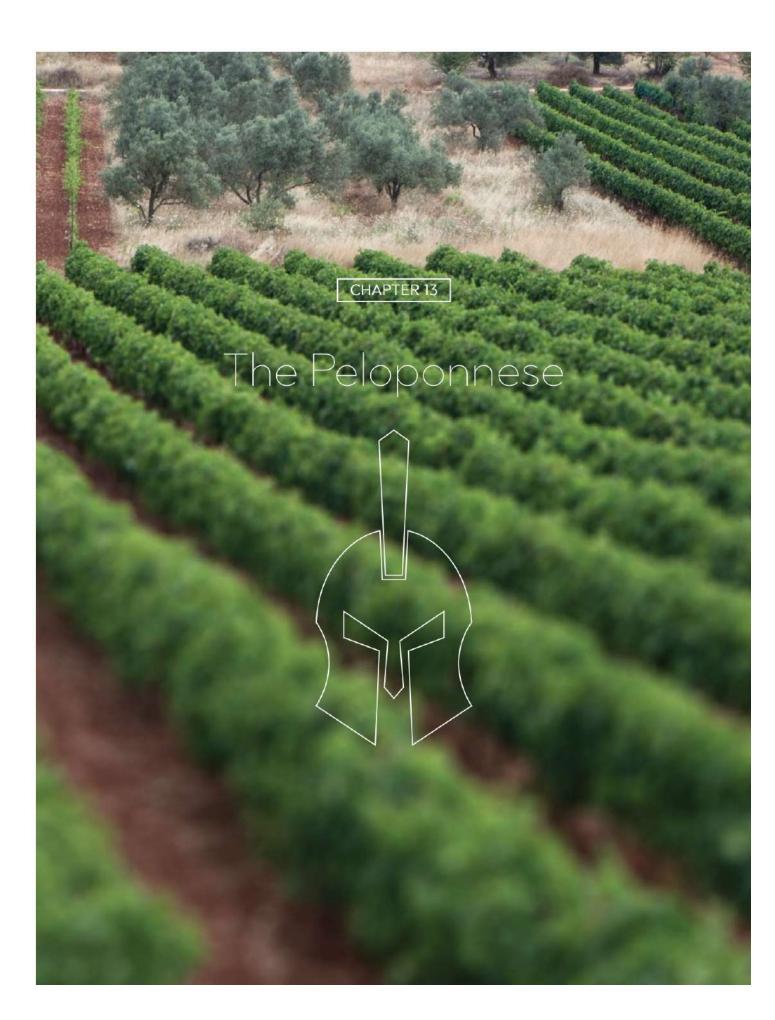
Another significant variety is Tsaousi. It produces wines of low alcohol content, with aromas reminiscent of lemon, honey and melon and is usually blended with Robola. Tsaousi is also widely planted in Corfu. Moschatella, whose aroma resembles that of Muscat, is a separate variety and the two of them are not related. Moschatella is vinified together with other varieties, such as Tsaousi, for the purpose of enhancing the wine's aromatic profile.

The island's largest wine-producer is the agricultural co-operative of Cephalonia Robola producers, currently processing roughly 85% of the total production of wines labelled as PDO Robola of Cephalonia.

The rest of the Ionian Islands also have interesting wines, with Zakynthos being the birthplace of the Traditional Designation Verdea wine, produced on the island since the 19th century. The production of Verdea allows the use of many varieties (such as the local Pavlos and Goustolidi), with Skiadopoulo being the main variety, which is required to account for 50% of the blend. Verdea traditionally was a dry wine with high alcohol content, high acidity and, due to barrel-ageing, a character bearing a striking resemblance to sherry. Nowadays, Verdea is produced in a more commercial version of lighter colour, lower alcohol content and a less oxidised character. The red Avgoustiatis variety also has a strong presence on the island.

Although it is the largest of the Ionian Islands, Corfu is of no particular oenological interest. Its prevailing varieties are the white Kakotrygis and the red Petrokorithos.

Lefkada favours the cultivation of Vertzami, which accounts for the largest percentage of vineyards of the island. Because it is a late-ripening variety, high altitudes make it difficult for Vertzami to ripen, delaying the process of sugar accumulation. Due to their high phenolic potential, wines coming from lower altitudes are deeper in colour, with high level of tannins, which renders them quite coarse while they are young. Their alcohol content is relatively high and aromas of herbs, spices and black fruits prevail.



The Peloponnese belongs to the regions of the world where wine has been cultivated and produced for thousands of years. It reached its peak in the Middle Ages when Malvasia wine was exported to the entire then-known world from the port of Monemvassia. The next big step came after World War II when the main viticultural zones were developed, namely in the central and northern regions of the Peloponnese, such as Patras, Mantinia, Nemea, and on the Corinthian coast. Other less well-known areas of production, where viticulture is developing at an impressive rate, are now being added to these regions, which undoubtedly produce high-quality wines. Over half the Peloponnesian vineyards are located in Achaia and Corinth.

The Peloponnese is the southern-most tip of the Balkan Peninsula. It is a predominantly mountainous region with very few areas of low altitude — mainly the plains in the north. Its climate is Mediterranean with mild winters and long, hot summers. Rainfall is high in the western section in relation to the rest of the peninsula. Factors such as altitude, mountain slopes, aspect and the proximity to the sea create many different mesoclimates.

The Peloponnese has seven Designations of Origin, four of which are in the Achaia prefecture: PDO Mavrodaphne of Patras, PDO Muscat of Patras, PDO Muscat of Rio Patras and PDO Patras. The other three are PDO Mantinia from Arcadia, PDO Nemea from Corinth and Argolida and PDO Monemvassia-Malvasia from Laconia.

Except for the Moschofilero wines, which have the elegance of wines produced in cool climates, most Peloponnesian wines are characterized by the aromas of ripe fruit, herbs and spices, broadness, warmth on the palate and a noticeable acidity.

Corinth (Korinthos)

Perhaps Corinth is the only wine-producing region in Greece with such heterogeneity in the quality of its wine production. On the one hand, there is the production of the high-quality PDO red wine from Nemea and, on the other, we have the mass production of cheap wine, mainly of the Roditis variety, but also of others of secondary importance, which are also cultivated for other purposes, such as the production of currants.

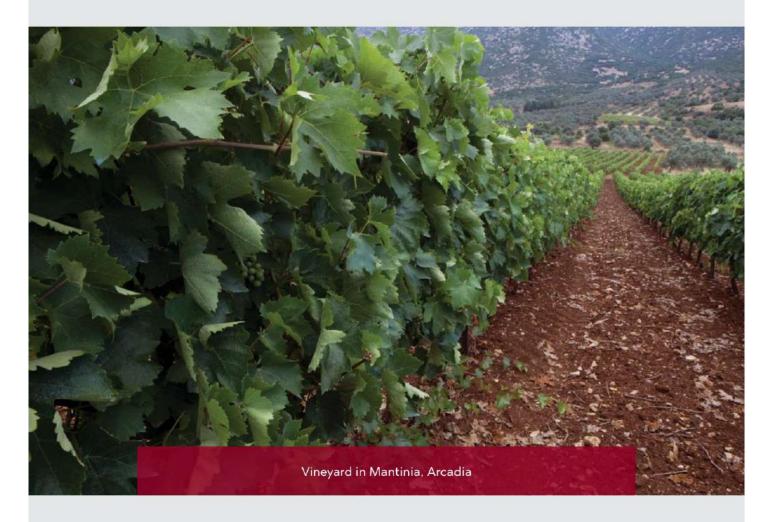
Naoussa in northern Greece and Nemea in the Peloponnese possess the two most significant red wine Designations of Origin in Greece, both regarding quality, quantity and number of producers as well as regarding how recognisable they are. The variety used for PDO Nemea wines is Agiorgitiko, whose name comes from Agios Georgios (St. George), the toponym by which Nemea was known during Ottoman Rule. Nemea's climate is typically Peloponnesian, with mild winters, very hot summers and temperatures that often exceed 40°C (104°F). Harvest often takes place late and in high-altitude vineyards some parcels go to the end of October a month with a relatively high percentage of rainfall. Thus, harvest time depends on not only the level of ripeness but also the threat of rain.

Nemea is divided into three sub-zones, which are generally classified by altitude. The first begins at the Nemea valley floor, at an altitude of 230m and reaches 450m (755-1476 ft.). The next range from 450 to 650m (1476-2133 ft.) while the last includes the highest sections and can reach as high as 900m (2953 ft.). The first zone is the warmest and has the richest, predominantly red clay, soil. Here, grapes ripen quicker and reach high levels of ripeness easily. The area's vineyards are suited to the production of light wines but also *vins* de *liqueur*. The middle zone is considered suitable for the production of

what are called modern wines. Through extra work in the vineyard to reduce yields and with the suitable vinification techniques, wines with more extract, balanced acidity and ageing potential are produced. The last zone includes the highest regions of Nemea, where the climate is cooler that the rest of the PDO zone. Clay-limestone soils and the cool mesoclimate make this a main source of rosé and top quality reds with wines high acidity and an intensely fruity character. These rosé wines, however, cannot bear the PDO label.

Generally, a dry Agiorgitiko from Nemea has a deep and intense colour, sweet aromas of fresh, ripe forest fruits and spices, relatively high acidity, and medium to full body with noticeable yet soft tannins. Legislation allows only red wines to be labelled as PDO, whether they are dry, medium-sweet or sweet. The sweet wines can be produced from sun-dried grapes (naturally sweet) or by fortification with alcohol (natural sweet).

Other varieties cultivated in the area are mainly the pink-skinned Moschofilero and Roditis, the white Assyrtiko, Malagousia, Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc and the red Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Syrah.





Argolis (Argolida)

Laying south of Corinth, Argolis is, in effect, its extension and presents similarities both in climate and vineyard morphology. Argolis has 7% of the total area of the Nemea PDO zones. All the important varieties of grapes found in Corinth are also cultivated in Argolis.

Arcadia

Arcadia is located in the heart of the Peloponnese, surrounded by tall mountains, which influence the region's climate and distinguish it from the rest of the Peloponnese. Temperatures and humidity levels are lower while rainfall is high. Summer and winters are relatively mild. Because of the cool climate, the harvest is one of the latest in the Peloponnese and, depending on the year, can extend into

mid-November. The soil is clay, rocky and nutrient-poor. Because of its dry climate, Mantinia is one of the first regions where organic cultivation was practised.

Generally speaking, white wines dominate the red, with the pink-skinned Moschofilero prevailing, covering 85% of vineyards, followed by Asproudes. Glikerithra, the best of the Asproudes family, is often mixed with Moschofilero because of its high sugar content and low acidity.

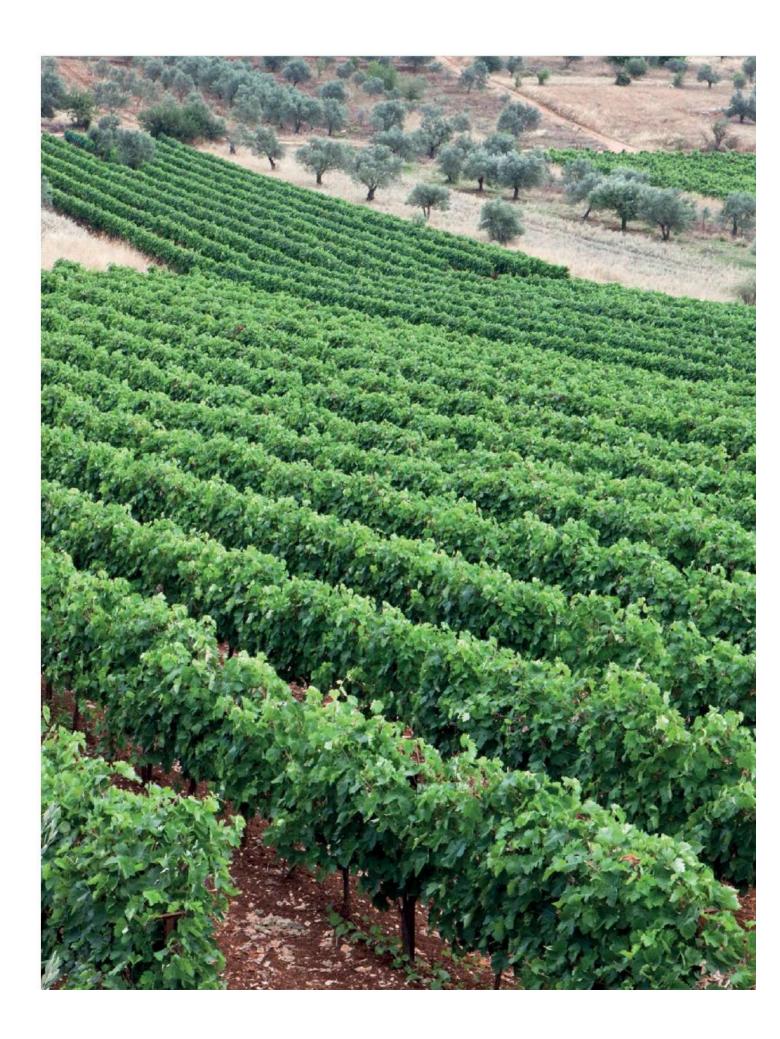
The only appellation zone in Arcadia is PDO Mantinia. It is located to the north of Tripoli, at an altitude that exceeds 600m (1900 ft.). Although most wines are made 100% from Moschofilero, up to 15% Asproudes content is allowed. The wines produced can be dry whites or dry sparkling (brut nature, extra brut, brut, extra sec, sec, demi sec, doux). Sparkling wines can be produced using the traditional method or the closed tank method. The still wines of Mantinia have a sweet nose with intense floral aromas, an alcohol content that usually is around 12% by volume, a light to medium body and crisp acidity. Although Moschofilero does not produce wines of strong complexity, this is a wine with a distinct character that must be drunk relatively fresh. In PGI Arcadia wines Moschofilero must participate with a proportion of at least 50%

Laconia

Compared to the other wine-producing regions of the Peloponnese, laconia has not managed to develop as much as the others, despite being one of the most important viticultural regions of Greece in the Middle Ages. Monemvassia, Laconia's medieval port was, for many centuries, the place of origin of the famous Malvasia wine. The wine's character and the varieties it came from remain unclear to this day. Currently, the number of varieties cultivated in the region is impressively large with producers making significant efforts to promote the area's potential. Proof of this is the emergence of Kidonitsa, a local and relatively unknown white variety, which produces wines of medium acidity and aromas reminiscent of quince and citron.

The creation of a new appellation zone in Laconia, the PDO Monemvassia-Malvasia for sweet wines, is also an indication of positive developments in the oenological activity of the region and, by extension, of Greece as a whole. This white wine is made with at least 51% Monemvassia with the addition of Assyrtiko, Asproudes and Kidonitsa.

As a variety, Monemvassia produces wines with low acidity, high sugar levels and intense citrus aromas. It is usually mixed with other varieties, even added to PGI wines in order to give better results.



Elis (Ilia)

The development of viticulture in the Elis prefecture is due mainly to the wine production companies active in neighbouring Achaia, that absorb most of the production. There are, however, some small, family-run wineries in the region that have managed to promote the region as wine-producing territory. Apart from the local varieties such as Roditis, Mavrodaphne and Corinthiaki, the red Refosco variety is also of interest. It is a clone of the Italian Refosco Penducolo Rosso variety, which has completely adapted to the region's climatic and soil conditions. Both the Italian and Greek version produce high-quality wines with ageing potential. Refosco is also known as Mercoureiko because of its identification with the Mercouris Estate, where it was first cultivated.

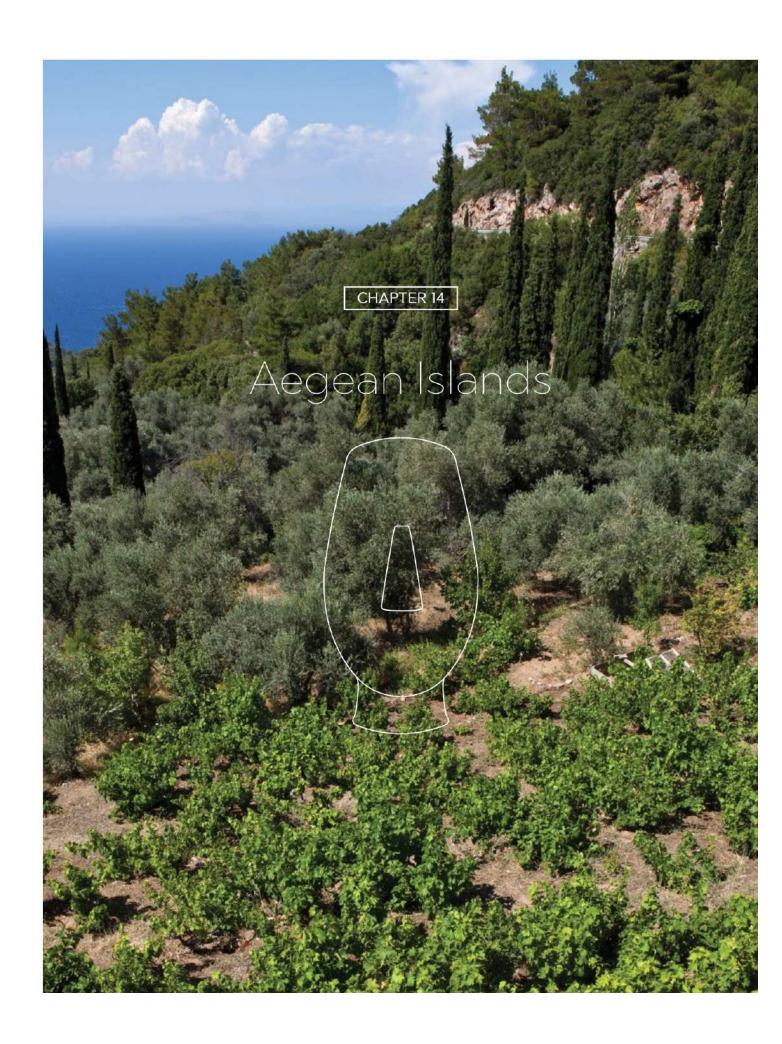
Another rare Greek red variety that thrives in the region and draws the attention of local producers is Avgoustiatis, which produces soft, particularly aromatic wines of deep colour and medium body.

Achaia

Achaia is one of the largest viticultural zones of Greece in terms of volume. The largest part of Achaia is mountainous with steep slopes; the Aigialia vineyards, for example, extend from an altitude of 250m to 850m (820-2700 ft.). The proximity to the sea, the cool northern winds and the northerly aspect of the vineyards are some of the factors that affect the region's climate and, hence, the ripening of the dominating Roditis variety. The most important parcel of PDO Patras zone is located in the mountainous region of Aigialia and produces elegant wines with high aromatic intensity, perhaps the best expression of the Roditis variety. A good PDO Patras wine is rich, lemony, and intense in aroma, with a deep and broad fruity mouthfeel. Its aromas are reminiscent of ripe, honeyed fruit. However, differences are observed in the quality of the production as a whole within the PDO zone. Some mountain locations tend to offer better results in comparison to the lowlands. This is also caused by the selection of Gaidouroroditis, a specific type of Roditis that produces results of a lower standard.

The other appellation zones are dedicated to the production of sweet wines. The most significant of these is PDO Mavrodaphne of Patras, the most popular fortified, sweet Greek red wine of the Mavrodaphne variety. The others are the PDO Muscat of Patras and the PDO Muscat of Rio, which produce dessert, fortified or not wines, exclusively from white Muscat.

Apart from the varieties in the PDO zones, Achaia also produces a plethora of both local and international varieties. The most common whites are the local Lagorthi as well as Malagousia, Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc; reds include the local Mavro Kalavritino, Agiorgitiko, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Syrah.



There are many places around they world that claim they produce "terroir" wines, but very few places can claim that nature shapes their wines in such a significant way as it does in the Aegean Islands. The winds, the sublime mix of rare grape varieties and an extremely complex matrix of soils, violently shaped, until very recently, by earthquakes and volcanoes are decisive factors in shaping some of the most distinctive wine styles found around.

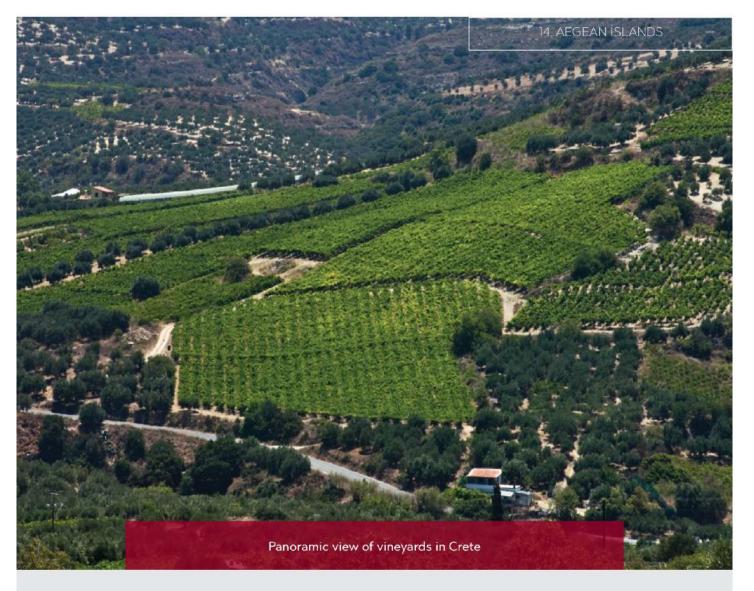
Crete

As the most self-sufficient Greek island, Crete can definitely play an important role on the oenological scene of Greece. Its producers' eagerness and determination for progress and development are indubitable and the messages from these efforts can only be positive. The quality of the wines is now high as are the services offered by winemakers. The important investments being made in the oenological sector offer the opportunity for the potential of the Cretan vineyard to reveal itself.

Crete is Greece's largest island and one of the most significant in the Mediterranean. With numerous archaeological finds dating as far back as the Minoan Era, Crete has been proven to be one of the first wine production centres in history. Much later, viticulture reached a peak during Venetian Rule, which followed the collapse of the Byzantine Empire. This was the same period that the famous wine Malvasia from Monemvassia, called Malvázia by the Venetians and the Franks (changing the syllable stress), dominated the markets of both the East and the West. In order to respond to the demand for Malvasia, the Venetians transported vine grafts to Crete, where similar wines began to be produced. Much later, during the 20th century, there was a rapid growth of agriculture that had a decisive impact on wine production. The establishment of wine cooperatives was a good move for the support of the island's poor and financially ruined producers, but the quality of the wines was sometimes poor. This picture began to change in the 1950s and 1960s with the appearance of a number of large producers that offered smaller ones an alternative form of income and raised the level of production quality. The most important development, however, was the emergence of wine producers who sold their products: on the market themselves during the 1990s. Today, the quality of the wines is better than ever.

Crete is essentially a precipitous island with tall mountains separated by few low-lands. The tallest peaks are Mt. Ida (Psiloritis) at 2456m (8057 ft.), situated between Rethymno and Heraklion, the Lefka Ori (White Mountains) in Chania and Mt. Dikti in Agios Nikolaos.

The highest temperatures are found in the south of the island. In several areas, mainly those at a high altitude, temperatures are lower than expected, comparable to those found on islands in the northern Aegean. The eastern side is hotter and dryer than the western, and the northern is cooler than the southern. This occurs because the northern side is exposed to cooling northerly winds while the southern to the hot winds blowing from Africa. In between, the mountains do not allow the winds to pass from one side to the other. Wine producers of high-quality wine have taken advantage of these tall mountains, establishing their vineyards at an altitude and, particularly, with a northerly aspect.



In most of Crete, the soil consists of clay and limestone while the slopes have the poorest soils. The combination of the climate, the topography, the soil composition and the water availability from the snowy peaks of Mt. Ida and the White Mountains make Crete an ideal land for viticulture. Vines thrive more often than struggle, to a point where relatively high yields are the norm rather the exception. Given its size and long viticultural tradition, Crete, paradoxically, does not have a great variety of indigenous varieties. Vilana is the main white variety while Kotsifali, Mandilaria and Liatiko the main reds. There are, however, others in local vineyards that are equally important such as the white Thrapsathiri and the red Romeiko. Ripening in early September, Thrapsathiri is vigorous, highly productive, drought-resistant but sensitive to downy mildew. When the grapes come from low-yield vineyards, they give wines with intensely fruity aromas of peach and melon, medium acidity and high alcohol content.

It is important to note that Crete has some varieties which, although cultivated on a small scale, produce impressive results and could possibly be Crete's answer to the international expansion of Greek wine. One of these is the white variety Dafni found in



the Heraklion prefecture. It produces wines with aromas reminiscent of bay leaf, other aromatic herbs and citrus fruits, with a medium alcohol content and medium acidity. Respectively, the white Plyto variety, also with very few plantings, has managed to return to the foreground. It produces wines with a refreshing lemony acidity, a characteristic that is at odds with Crete's climatic conditions. It is usually mixed with the fuller, creamier Vidiano currently favoured by producers. Vidiano, from Rethymno, produces white wines with high-intensity aromas reminiscent of white stone fruits, with relatively high acidity, high alcohol content, full body and the ability to maintain its character even after being matured in barrels. Because of the high-quality wines it has been producing over recent years, it is increasingly winning over both consumers and producers and, as a result, plantings are continuously on the rise.

Romeiko, often referred to as Mavroromeiko, produces red, rosé and some specialty white wines with a high alcohol content, low acidity and a colour that loses its intensity very rapidly. It is a drought-resistant, vigorous vine. It ripens in mid-September and the fruit's quality depends on the volume of production. It is considered an important variety in Chania and Rethymno. A very well known and popular local

wine made from Romeiko is Marouvas, produced in Chania. It is a dry wine, with high alcohol content, highly oxidised, with aromas of nuts and dried fruit, creating an impressive depth of complexity. Today, it is available only in Crete and offered mainly to tourists.

There are seven PDO zones in Crete, five of which are in the Heraklion prefecture and two in Lasithi. The best-known Designation of Origin that presents the greatest commercial interest is PDO Peza, which produces dry white and red wines. The white, produced exclusively from Vilana, when yields are low, has the characteristics of a light wine with fruity and spicy aromas. The red is produced from Kotsifali and Mandilaria.

The red wine PDO Archanes is produced according to Peza standards. The differences between these two zones are not clear since the character of the wines depends more on the philosophy, standards and know-how of each producer and less on factors relating to the vineyard's character.

Daphnes is the third PDO zone in the Heraklion prefecture. Although close to the other two, the wines here are red, be they dry or sweet, and are produced from 100% Liatiko. They are very light in colour, low in tannins and have medium-intensity fruity aromas.

The two newest PDOs zones in Heraklion are PDO Handakas-Candia and PDO Malvasia Handakas-Candia. PDO Handakas-Candia includes the white wines produced from at least 85% Vilana mixed with Vidiano, Assyrtiko, Athiri and Thrapsathiri and the dry red wines from 70% Kotsifali and 30% Mandilaria. PDO Malvasia Handakas-Candia includes sweet white wines produced from at least 85% Assyrtiko, Vidiano, Thrapsathiri and Liatiko and the rest from White Muscat and Malvasia di Candia aromatica.

In relation to the two Cretan PDOs in the Sitia area, the sun-dried sweet wines produced in the Sitia PDO zones from 100% Liatiko can be excellent as can the dry red wines made with at least 80% Liatiko and Mandilaria. Apart from the dry and sweet reds, the Sitia PDO also produces white dry wines made from 70% Vilana and 30% Thrapsathiri. The recent PDO Malvasia-Sitia includes sweet white wines made from at least 85% Assyrtiko, Athiri, Thrapsathiri and Liatiko and the addition of White Muscat and Malvasia di Candia aromatica.

International varieties also have an important presence in Crete, some of which have adapted better to the island's geo-climatic conditions than others. Although less suited to the climatic conditions of Crete, the white Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc dominate. Other classic white varieties with some isolated plantings are Semillon, Viognier and Roussane. On the contrary, international red varieties such as Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Sangiovese, Grenache and Syrah display better results. The latter two have adapted completely to the island's warm natural climate and have the most impressive performance.

Santorini

Santorini is not only one of the most beautiful and exciting parts of the world, but also an area where some of the world's best white wines are produced. There are indications that wine production on Santorini has a history of 3500 years from the pre-historic era before the eruption of the volcano that occurred circa 1700 BC.

The island has a complex, volcanic soil dominated by schist, limestone, lava and ferrous rocks. Pumice is found everywhere, in various sizes, both on the surface and at deeper layers. There is minimum organic matter and water. The soil's sandy texture is the reason the local vineyards remained unaffected by phylloxera, a fact that allows the Santorini vineyard to be considered among the oldest in the world.

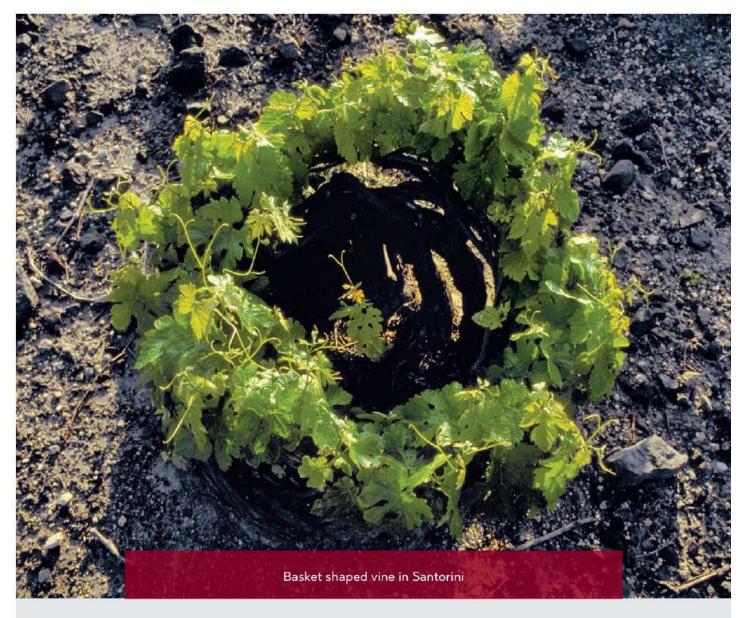
Rainfall is almost non-existent in the summer while water springs are rare and not used for irrigation. The evening or morning dew that can cover large sections of the island in the form of mist soothes the vines from the day's high temperatures. The most serious problem faced by winegrowers is the strong northerly winds blowing in off the Aegean that can interrupt flowering and berry-set or increase water stress in July and August. A specific pruning technique has been developed in order to deal with these climatic conditions; it is used to this day and is called *amoliti*. The vines are formed into a basket shape called *kouloura* or *ambelia*; the vines are knitted together, forming a wreath within which the bunches can grow. The Santorini vineyard is one of the very few European vineyards where vines are self rooted and over 50 years old. The replacement of old vines is performed with layerings. According to this technique, a cane is bent down and buried at the point where the vine is to be replaced. Over the first few years the vine essentially feeds off the mother vine until it forms its own root system. When this happens, after three to five years, the new vine is separated from the mother vine and grows independently.

There are vineyards almost everywhere on the island. In their majority, these are traditional with scattered, *kouloura*-shaped vines. However, linear vineyards have also been established over recent years aimed at revealing and/or further investigation of the vineyard's potential.

Santorini has its own PDO indication both for its dry whites, produced from at least 75% Assyrtiko mixed with Athiri and Aidani, and for its sweet wines, called Vinsanto. A percentage of 85% of the total 1800 hectares grows white varieties. Of these, 75% are Assyrtiko and the rest Aidani and Athiri while a minimum percentage of other local varieties is also grown.

Assyrtiko is, admittedly, Santorini's best white variety and one of the best in the Mediterranean. Although not particularly aromatic, it manages to harmoniously combine a dense structure, a complexity of aromas and depth on the palate, high





acidity and high alcoholic content. When added, Aidani and Athiri somewhat tone down its rather intense character and add aromatic depth and breadth. Mandilaria covers a small part of the cultivated land and is used for the production of dry and sweet rosé wines as well as some dry reds. The variety, however, that is hugely interesting despite covering an extremely small percentage of the Santorini vineyard is the native red variety Mavrotragano. It was traditionally used to enhance the aroma and taste of sweet red wines. Over recent years, experimental cultivations and vinification efforts have yielded very positive results and the distinctions it has won at international competitions are proof of its rich potential. It produces wines of deep colour, rich and concentrated aromas of ripe black fruits, herbs and earthy notes with perceptible but pleasant tannins and a structure that allows it to mature and develop in the bottle.

Santorini's reputation is not confined to dry wines, but includes a range of tradi-

tional wines with a very particular and unique character. One of these is the traditional sun-dried sweet wine Vinsanto, produced mainly from the Assyrtiko and Aidani varieties, which can bear the Santorini PDO label. Mezzo, which cannot bear the PDO indication, is also a sweet wine produced in the same way as Vinsanto but from the Mandilaria variety and, as its name suggests, is less sweet and undergoes a shorter ageing period. Brousko is a general category of traditional wine (brusco in Italian means 'rough' or 'coarse'), the result of a very traditional winemaking method that produces pronounced characteristics of oxidation, intense tannins, high acidity and low alcohol content. It is occasionally found on the market and is destined for local consumption.

Nichteri, which can bear the PDO indication, is a traditional dry wine produced from ripe grapes harvested before dawn and pressed on the same day. It is aged in used oak barrels for at least three months, producing a more rustic character. Its alcohol content is high without, however, giving the sense of burning in the mouth since this is offset by its full body and high acidity. The minimum alcohol content allowed is 13.5%.

Paros

Paros is, for the most part, a flat island with a strong summer winds (called *meltemia*) and limited to minimum rainfall during the summer period, but also with higher levels of humidity than other Cycladic islands. The central part of the island is mountainous with an altitude of 724m (2375 ft.).

The vines grow freely in bush form, many of them self-rooted. The old wood extends horizontally and young shoots grow vertically, creating a floor covering of vines, a system known locally as *aplotaries* (from the Greek verb 'aplono', which means 'to spread'). Vineyards are scattered all over the island with the best located around Mt. Profitis Ilias at an altitude of 250-40m (820-1300 ft.).

Paros has two PDOs. The first is called PDO Paros, which produces dry white and red wines. The whites are produced from the Monemvassia variety, which is the island's dominant white variety. The reds are blends of Mandilaria and Monemvassia at a ratio of 1:2. It is the only Greek PDO that allows the blending of white and red wine or the co-vinification of a white and red variety for the production of red wines. The second is PDO Malvasia Paros that produces sweet wines made of at least 85% Monemvassia and up to 15% Assyrtiko. Other varieties found on the island are Savatiano, whose presence is constantly dropping, Assyrtiko and the inferior Mavro Aidani variety.

The Rest of Aegean

Wine production on the remaining Cyclades islands is small and confined to the efforts of some small-scale producers who exclusively use Greek varieties. Of these islands, an notable position is held by Tinos, where important and ambitious investments in the viticulture sector have been made in recent years, and by Mykonos.

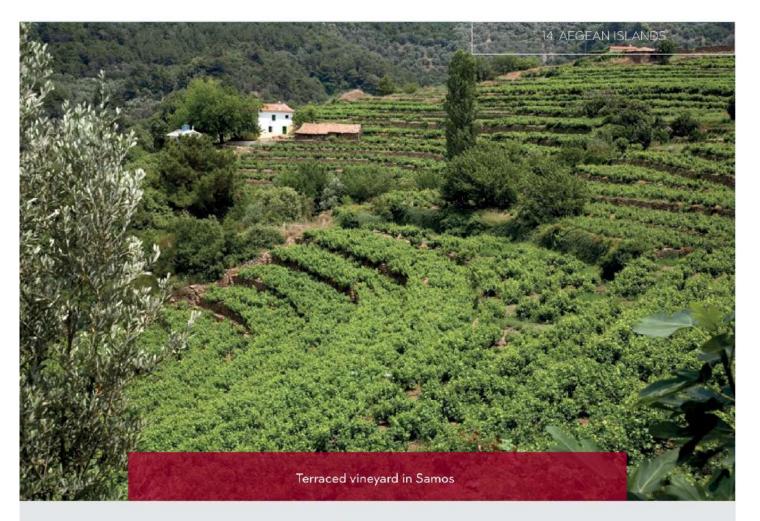
Rhodes

Viticulture in Rhodes has a long history that began in antiquity when it was a significant hub of wine production. The favourable climate facilitated viticulture to a very large degree. Rhodes has large water reserves, some of the highest in the Aegean. Prevailing conditions are warm to hot but vineyards at high altitudes are not affected by the heat to the extent they are in Crete or Santorini. This is also clear in the styles of its wines, including a large percentage of characteristically subtle and fresh sparkling wines.

The vineyards in Rhodes are divided into two zones. Zone A includes the lower-altitude vineyards while zone B includes the slopes of Mt. Atavyros with a peak of 2216m (7270 ft.). Rhodes has two PDOs: PDO Rhodes, which includes whites ranging from dry, medium-dry, medium-sweet to sparkling wines made from 70% Athiri blended with Malagousia and Assyrtiko; rosés that are dry, medium-dry, medium-sweet and sparkling; and reds that are dry, medium-dry and medium-sweet made of at least 70% Mandilaria (or Amorgiano, as it is known on the island) and Mavrothiriko. The PDO Muscat of Rhodes produces sweet wines from Muscat of Trani and White Muscat. Apart from the native varieties mentioned above, the varietal composition of the Rhodes vineyards is enhanced by French varieties such as Cabernet Sauvignon.

Kos

The majority of vineyards in Kos are located at the foot of Mt. Dikaio at an altitude of 300m (980 ft.). Although viticulture has been taking place on the island since antiquity, it was never a serious source of income for its inhabitants. These days, significant efforts are being made for the revival and qualitative improvement of viticulture by the island's only two wine producers. The varieties cultivated are mainly international and have generally produced good results. The greatest part of the production is offered on the local market, serving the needs of the tourist season.



Samos

Samos is the most distinguished appellation in Greece. It is the only area where the mention of the Muscat variety is not mandatory as part of its PDO characterisation since 'Samos' alone is enough for the wine's designation. At times the island was the focus of pirate incursions that gradually led to its desertion. Samos began being inhabited again during Ottoman Rule and its inhabitants acquired significant privileges compared to other Greek islands. New plantings started to bring the island's vineyards back to life and Samos Muscat became known in Europe after the mid-19th century. Prosperity lasted until phylloxera arrived on the island in 1892, destroying a large part of the vineyards. It took at least a decade for the producers to contain the damage and recover. With a regulation that followed in 1934, only wines made from Muscat were allowed to bear the name 'Samos'. In the same year, the Union of Winemaking Cooperatives of Samos (UWCS) was established with the participation of 25 local cooperatives, a development that was decisive for the future of the Samos vineyard. New vineyards were created with Muscat gaining over other varieties; to-day it covers almost 95% of the island's vineyards.

The island of Samos, like Rhodes, is self-sufficient in water reserves with one of the highest rainfall levels in Greece. Winds are not as strong as in Santorini and sunshine is almost uninterrupted during the summer months. Most vineyards are concentrat-

ed around Mt. Ambelos. They extend on terraces with a northerly aspect, which can reach altitudes of 800m (2600 ft.). Altitude and aspect are factors that contribute to the creation of numerous mesoclimates, with a decisive impact on both the quality and the character of the wines produced. Often, harvest in vineyards at high altitude can take place in October, much later than at lower, warmer locations.

The dominant variety is White Muscat. Almost the entire production goes to the white, sweet PDO Samos wine for which the island is best known. The production of dry wines from the White Muscat variety could be considered a relatively recent development. First-harvest grapes later fruits and some from higher altitudes are used in these wines, which are light and distinguishable for the floral, fruity aromas typical of Muscat and their invigorating freshness. These wines can be labelled as PGI Aegean Sea.

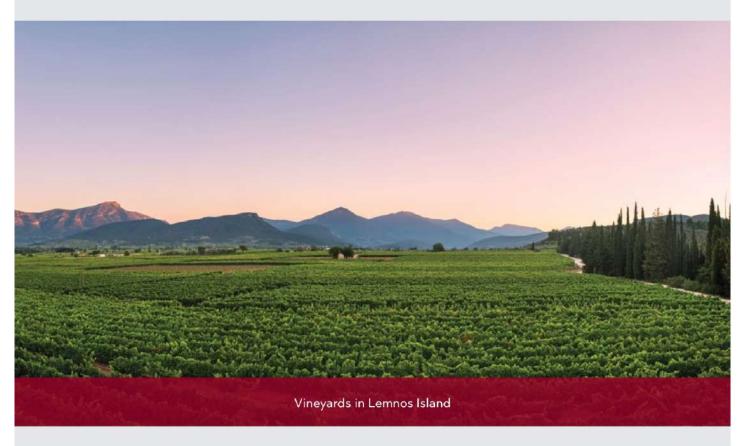
Wine production is connected and completely identified with the history of the UWCS, which has the exclusive responsibility for the production, retailing and marketing of all of Samos' wines. Producers transport their grapes to one of the island's wineries at Karlovasi on the western side of the island's north coast and at Malagari, near Vathi on the eastern side. The largest percentage of the production is exported throughout the world. France alone absorbs 60% of total production. UWCS is an excellent example of a cooperative with international recognition.

Icaria (Ikaria)

Icaria's topography and climate are similar to Rhodes', with the island's high vine-yards planted in terraces. Even in antiquity Icaria produced the famous Pramnian Wine, which, according to references in ancient sources, was a high-alcohol red wine. These days, viticulture is confined to three producers. Mandilaria is the most important variety with Assyrtiko, Athiri, Fokiano, Kotsifali and Begleri following. Of these, the white Begleri variety, also found on other islands such as Samos, Chios and Lesbos, is of particular interest. It is a vigorous variety, sensitive to drought, which produces wines with citrus aromas and medium levels of acidity and alcohol.

Lemnos (Limnos)

Lemnos is the second, most important, island of the North Aegean, in terms of wine production. It has volcanic, infertile, light and mainly limestone soil. It does not have particularly tall mountains like Samos with the exception of a small area in the northwest of the island. The majority of vineyards are located on the cooler western



side of the island. During the summer months, Lemnos is one of the hottest islands of the Aegean.

Although known since antiquity for its red wines produced from the native Limnio variety, it was the Muscat of Alexandria variety that gave the island its fame. Limnio, or Kalambaki as it is called on the island, produces both red and rosé wines. Lemnos Muscat wines are light, aromatic, floral and very attractive. Compared to the Muscat of Samos, they are perhaps less complex, but this is, of course, influenced by the yields, which are much higher than those on Samos, and by the use of Muscat of Alexandria, which is not considered as expressive of the Muscat Blanc a petit grain (White Muscat) found in other PDO wines.

Lemnos has two PDOs. PDO Lemnos produces dry, medium-dry and medium-sweet whites made from Muscat of Alexandria, dry reds made from Limnio and sweet wines made from 90% Limnio and 10% Muscat of Alexandria. PDO Muscat of Lemnos produces sweet white wines from Muscat of Alexandria.



have been made in only a few areas, though new sparkling wines are continually being made throughout the country. The most important areas are Zitsa of Epirus, Rhodes Island and Amynteo of Florina, while in the last twenty years sparkling wines have also been produced in Mantinia of the Arcadia prefecture.

Epirus

Epirus' sparkling wines are mainly white and rosé, the latter ranging from light to deep rosé. As for the style, they can be fully sparkling, medium sparkling or lightly sparkling, while as regards sweetness, they can be dry, off-dry or medium-sweet. The quality of the wines depends on the production method used. All known methods are followed: the traditional method, the tank method (Charmat) and the carbonation method (the addition of carbon dioxide) in the case of inexpensive and simple wines made in the broader region. PDO Zitsa wines are produced using only the first two methods.

Sparkling wines were originally reddish due to the co-vinification of the white variety Debina and the reds Bekiari and Vlahiko. However, today Debina, widespread all over Epirus, is the main variety (and the only one permissible for PDO wines) used in the production of such wines. Harvesting starts in late September and continues even until mid-October. Zitsa has mainly limestone soil. The climate is affected by the altitude, which reaches as high as 700m (2300 ft.), and the area's proximity to the River Kalamas. All these features favour the production of sparkling wines, the most typical examples being expressive wines with delicate aromas of citrus fruit and green apple and discreet tones of autolytic aromas when produced using the traditional method.

Amynteo

Amynteo was the first PDO of Greece for rose sparkling wines and its production of rosé sparkling wines is considered noteworthy as regards both the quality and quantity produced. The variety used is Xinomavro. Amynteo lies on a plateau to the southeast of Florina and is one of the coldest viticultural zones of Greece. The features of a Xinomavro cultivated in so cool a region, that is, the medium intensity of the colour, the high acidity and its intense fruity aroma, make it ideal for the production of a sparkling wine. Most sparkling wines are produced using the tank method (Charmat). These wines give off primary fruity and floral aromas, reminiscent of small red and dark-coloured fruit, such as strawberries, red cowberries and blackberries while they are fresh with a crisp acidity. They can be dry or off-dry.

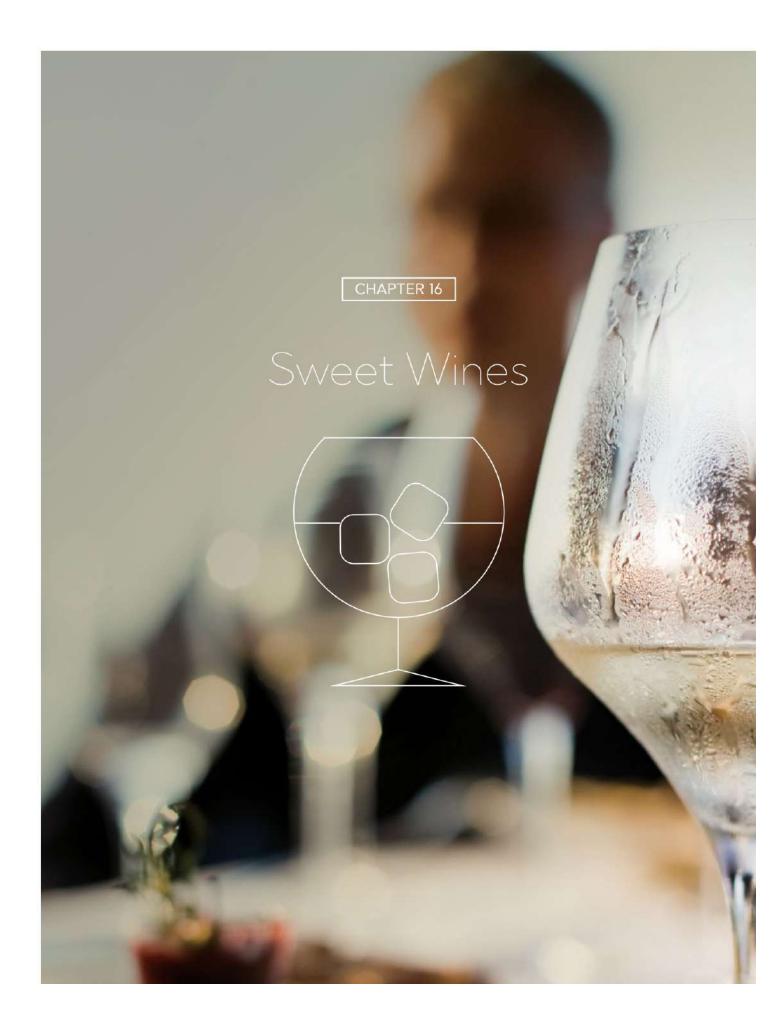
Rhodes

For several decades Rhodes was the main source of sparkling wines in Greece. Cair and Emery are two of the most important wineries on the island and produce this type of wine almost exclusively. Both the tank (Charmat) and the traditional methods are used. Cair also uses the transfer method, while wines are based on the Athiri variety. The production process involves refermentation of the base wine in the bottle, ageing on lees for some time (at least one year), transferring them into large tanks under pressure and finally filtration and bottling. The red Mandilaria variety is used for the production of rosé sparkling wines, which can be either dry or off-dry. Emery produces two styles of sparkling wines, dry and off-dry, following the traditional method in which the wine is left in contact with the lees in the bottle for two years. Both white and rosé sparkling wines made from the above varieties can be labelled as PDO Rhodes.

The Peloponnese

The versatile Moschofilero variety is also used, though to a lesser extent, in the production of sparkling wines, following either the tank or the traditional method. Floral, elegant and fresh in the case of tank method, or full of toasty and yeasty flavours, harmoniously blending with its typical floral aromas when using the traditional method, thus proving that Moschofilero, even as a sparkling wine, manages to emphasise its quality features. Sparkling wines produced from Moschofilero in the region of Mantinia have been established as PDO Mantinia wines.





The tradition of sweet wine production in Greece could be considered anything but poor. Ancient Greek literature contains ample references to the production of sweet wines. Dioscorides, for instance, the father of pharmacology, mentions a type of sweet wine–known as Protropo, Cretan or Pramnian Wine– produced by pressing and partially fermenting sun-dried, half-raisined grapes.

Although most probably the main reason for producing sweet wines was the favourable climate of each region, the exact conditions that led to the systematic production of sweet wine have not been historically recorded. The various production techniques evolved over time and still remain in use to this day. Despite that sweet wines are not exclusively produced in the usual and renowned regions, but all over Greece as well and mostly in areas favouring their production, very few consumers include a bottle of sweet wine either in their meals or their daily lives.

Nonetheless, most wine producers have included at least one type of sweet wine in their portfolio, bearing testimony, on the one hand, to these wines' classic value as a traditional product, and, on the other, to the producers' estimations concerning the growth prospects of the sweet wines both in the Greek and international markets. In the past, wine producers were not able to use selected yeasts that could carry out fermentation, the result of this being sweet wines of low alcohol content and producers finding recourse in fortifying them with alcohol of agricultural origin, in order to raise the alcohol content to an adequate level, a practice also used nowadays. Hence, sweet wine classifications today are as follows:

- 1. Liqueur wines including the following categories:
 - sweet wines or vin doux: Wines produced by adding spirit before fermentation begins.
 - natural sweet wines or vin doux naturel: Wines produced by adding spirit during fermentation.
 - natural sweet wines from select vineyards or vin doux naturel-Grand Cru: Wines produced from grapes sourced from select vineyards, usually at an altitude above 400m (1300 ft.), and with the addition of spirit during fermentation.
 - <u>liqueur wines from sun-dried grapes</u>: Wines produced from sun-dried grapes to which spirit has been added at some stage of their production.
- 2. Wines from sun-dried grapes or naturally sweet wines or vins naturellement doux: Wines made from sun-dried grapes and with no addition of spirit at any stage of their production.

Samos

The sweet wines from Samos, bearing the indication PDO Samos or simply 'Samos', are produced following three different methods, each giving three types of wine defined by the degree of sweetness.

In sweet wines (vin doux), right after crushing the grapes, their juice is fortified with alcohol of vinous origin, the unfermented sugars reach 200 gr. per litre and the alcohol by volume (abv) content rises to 15%. The lack of aromas that could come from fermentation accentuates the variety's original fruity fragrances. The final result, though fresh and intense in aromas, falls short in terms of complexity. In natural sweet wines (vin doux naturel), fermentation is interrupted in its first stages –however, after having reached 5-6% abv– by adding spirit. In the case of Grand Cru natural sweet wines, the fruit comes from exceptional vineyards, in other words from superior vineyard parcels, lying at an altitude exceeding 400m (1300 ft.). Producers use



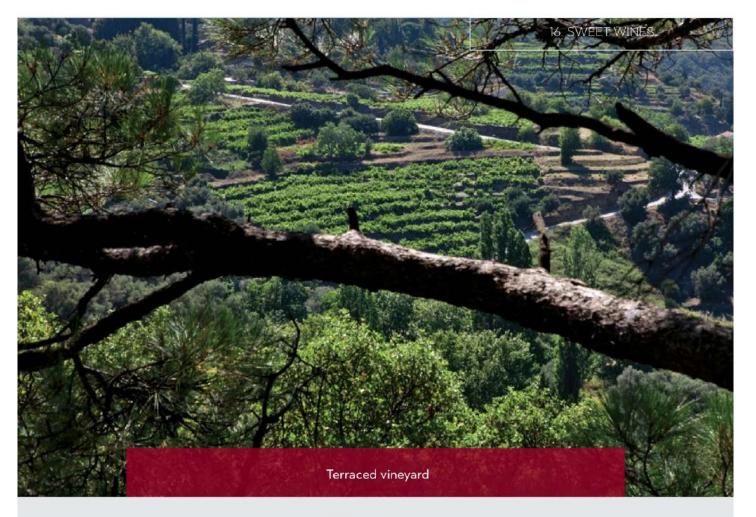
only high-quality grapes of a yield lower than 35 hectolitres per hectare. The grapes are collected when they are fully ripened, resulting in a high (circa 150 gr/lt) rate of unfermented sugars after the fermentation procedure is over. A smaller quantity of spirit is added and the aromas are more complex and dense. The production of naturally sweet wines (*vin naturellement doux*) is completely different, as it requires overripe grapes coming from the most mountainous vineyards. The selected healthy bunches of grapes dry in the sun for seven to ten days and then the grapes are pressed, and afterwards the slow fermentation of the must begins. The fermenting yeasts are selected according to their resistance to alcohol, as sugar levels may reach up to 360 gr/lt. However, fermenting yeasts die when the alcohol reaches 14% abv, leaving residual sugars exceeding 130 gr/lt. Some of these wines mature in new or old oak barrels, whose capacity is usually 2.5 tons and 500 litres. In recent years, *barriques* (225-litre oak barrels) are also used.

Due to significant variations in terms of altitude, aspect, soil composition and mesoclimatic conditions, harvesting times differ from area to area. The harvesting, for instance, of the first grapes from the warm vineyards located at a low altitude begins before mid-August, whereas for higher-altitude vineyards it may occur as late as October. This diversity enables the winemakers of the co-operative to appraise the features of each region, identify the best locations and seek ways in order to ensure the best possible quality of the various wines they produce. This is why the Samos wines are among the finest co-operative wines in the world.

Lemnos

Like many other areas in Greece, Lemnos has a great tradition in producing sweet wines, mainly of the Muscat variety. For the production of the PDO Muscat of Lemnos sweet wine producers use Muscat of Alexandria. The same variety also produces raisins, consumed, however, as fresh grapes. As of late, the PDO Lemnos includes the production of red liqueur wine and of red wines from sun-dried grapes, containing 90% Limnio and 10% Muscat of Alexandria.

The styles produced from the PDO Muscat of Lemnos wines include naturally sweet wines, natural sweet wines, natural sweet wines from selected vineyards and sweet wines, such as Samos wines. There are some examples of short-maturation wines in oak barrels, unlike the Muscat of Samos wines that can mature in barrels for a much longer period of time the main purpose being for the former wines to bring out their subtle varietal character. Compared to the Muscat of Samos, the Muscat of Lemnos is less complex, with less extract and a lower ageing potential, but by no means less serious. They are profound, youthful, more floral and far more forward

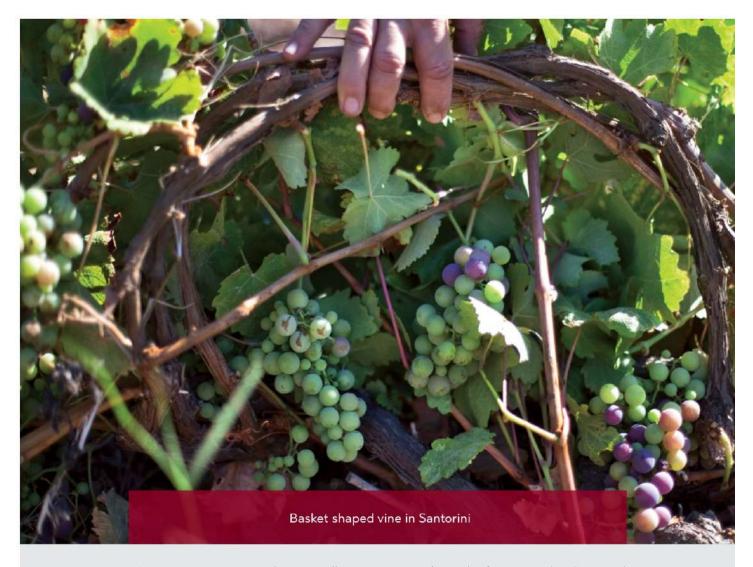


Rhodes

The sweet wines of Rhodes qualify for the region's appellation and legislation covers all styles, ranging from sun-dried to fortified wines. The traditional Muscat of Rhodes was the White Muscat, whereas the Muscat Trani is a subsequent import, most probably from Venice. It still remains unclear whether these varieties are the same thing or if the Muscat of Trani is a clone of the White Muscat. In most cases, compared to the Muscat of Samos, the Muscat of Rhodes lacks complexity, but has a richer and fruitier character in comparison to the Muscat of Lemnos.

Santorini

Santorini is traditionally known for producing sweet wines of particular and singular character. Vinsanto is one these and, along with the rest of the dry white wines of Santorini, classifies as a PDO wine. Vinsanto should not be confused with Vin Santo from Tuscany, for they are substantially different as regards their production procedure, the varieties used for each wine and their style (Vin Santo can be dry, resembling to sherry, and oxidised sweet). The appellation allows for two types of



Vinsanto sweet wines: the naturally sweet wines (namely, from sun-dried grapes) and liqueur wines from sun-dried grapes. With regard to the production of liqueur wine, legislation stipulates that the varieties that may be used are 75% Assyrtiko and the remaining 25% from Aidani and Athiri, just like the blend for dry wines. Vinsanto, which is produced exclusively from sun-dried grapes, is an exception since legislation stipulates that the least contentrate of Assyrtikois 51% and the rest may be of the Athiriand Aidani varieties, as well as of small quantities of varieties such as Gaidouria, Katsano, Muscat White, Monemvassia, Platani, Potamissi and Roditis. Most Vinsanto wines are produced exclusively from sun-dried grapes without fortification.

During production, the grapes spend some hangtime on the vine in order to become adequately ripe, thus substantially raising sugar levels (exceeding 16 degrees Baumé). After harvesting, the grapes are spread out either in the sun or shade to dry for a period extending from six to fourteen days. This procedure increases volatile acidity, which at a low level adds to the wine's complexity and is not considered a flaw. A more traditional approach, aiming at mitigating the negative impact of sun-

drying, is to harvest as late as possible, in which case the level of sugars is higher and the grapes require less time in the sun in order to reach the desirable sugar content. After drying, the grapes are pressed and fermented, usually along with the skins. The production for one lite of Vinsanto requires ten kilos of raisined grapes. In many traditionally-produced Vinsanto wines, when fermentation was over, the alcohol content was low (below 9% abv) and some producers used to fortify the wines with some kind of spirit (tsipouro, for instance), raising the alcohol content to 13% abv. However, in the last decade, winemakers often use resistant yeasts and so, without adding spirit, fermentation can naturally reach an alcohol content of 13% abv.

According to law, Vinsanto has to mature for two years in old or new oak barrels with a minimum capacity of 500 litres. During maturation, the barrels are usually topped up with wine of more recent vintages, whereas racking is not practiced.

Mezzo is another sweet wine from Santorini, whose style is similar to Vinsanto's, but cannot labelled as PDO. It is produced in almost the same way, but with the participation of red grapes, mainly of the Mandilaria variety. Mezzo wines are usually less sweet than Vinsanto because the grapes spend less than ten days in the sun, but also on account of the Mandilaria variety, which does not increase the sugar levels as high as Assyrtiko does. The alcohol content exceeds 13% abv and the residual sugars are less than 200 gr per litre. Most Mezzo wines age in oak barrels for at least one year.

Paros

Paros is the second island of the Cyclades allowing for the production of PDO sweet wines. The PDO Malvasia-Paros, established as recently as 2011, includes white naturally sweet wines or liqueur wines from sun-dried grapes, aged for at least 24 months in oak barrels. Grapes of the Monemvassia variety are used at a proportion of 85% and Assyrtiko makes up for the remaining 15%.

Laconia

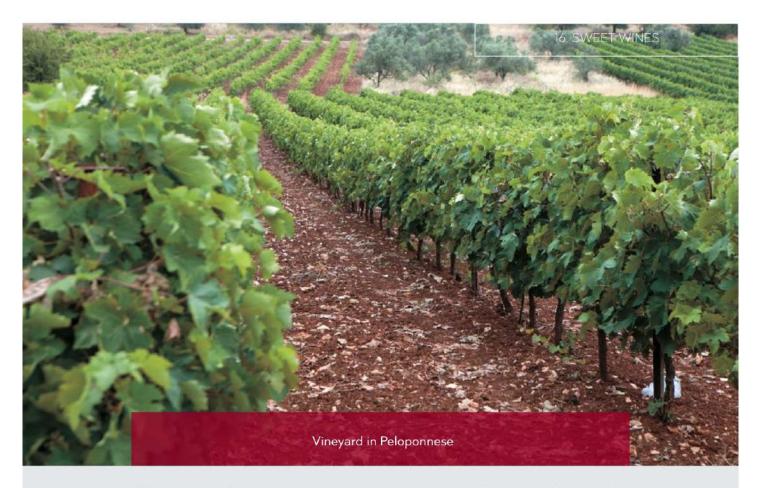
Monemvassia-Malvasia in Laconia is a new PDO exclusively for naturally sweet wines or liqueur wines from sun-dried grapes. The varieties qualifying for these wines are Monemvassia at a minimum percentage of at least 51% and the remaining percentage is made up by Assyrtiko, Asproudes and Kidonitsa. The production of such wines requires at least two years of oxidative ageing in barrels. The wines may be produced by blending different vintages and the label should indicate the most recent one.

Achaia

Mavrodaphne of Patras is the most famous Greek appellation both in Greece and abroad, including liqueur wines (sweet and natural sweet wines alike). The style of this sweet wine is due to the Mavrodaphne variety, on the one hand, and on the efforts of Gustav Clauss –founder of the Achaia Clauss company– on the other. In 1861 Clauss decided to settle in Patras and create a wine comparable to Portugal's Port. The brand name has remained highly recognisable for 150 years and the wine itself is one of Greece's strongest export goods.

Although the creation of Mavrodaphne was initially inspired by Port wine, soon enough experimentation led to the creation of different methods both as regards the production and ageing procedures. Some producers followed the production standards of Port, namely, allowing for a fast fermentation before fortifying the wine with spirit. Others adopted a different approach by adding spirit immediately after pressing the grapes, thus forestalling the commencement of alcoholic fermentation. Though both methods produce wines of 15% abv, they differ with regard to the degree of sweetness. Wines produced according to the latter method have a higher residual sugar level, rendering them sweeter compared to wines of the former method.

The style of Mavrodaphne is significantly influenced by the ageing procedure and its duration, in which the production cost, the desired quantity and the producer's outlook play an important role. Hence, a cheap Mavrodaphne may age in stainless steel or concrete tanks whereas a Mavrodaphne of superior quality ages in big, old oak barrels. Oxidation management is also an integral part of the whole procedure. The impact of oxygen on the wine is greatly enhanced by the air present in the partially filled barrels. The denser wines age in barrels that are not completely full in order for the wines to oxidise gradually and acquire dense and more complex aromas. For whatever loss in volume, the barrel is topped up with wine of a more recent vintage, according to the standards of the solera system. As a result, most of the Mavrodaphne wines found on the market are blends of different vintages and their labels have no vintage mention. The duration the wine remains inside the 1000-litre oak barrel also plays a crucial role in the final product's quality. The least time required is one year. Reserve wines require two years in barrel and one year in bottle; Vieille Reserve wines need a total of five years, of which at least two are spent in barrel and another two in bottle; Grand Reserve wines, on the other hand, need seven years, with three in barrel and another three in bottle. For the wine to develop its typical, dense texture and a more complex nose, the ageing procedure is prolonged beyond the legally established standards, even extending for as long as a century.



With regard to the varietal composition of the blend, the law allows for the addition of maximum 49% Corinthian raisin, because Mavrodaphne in Patras does not as reach high sugar levels as it does in Cephalonia. Nonetheless, the higher the proportion of Mavrodaphne, the higher the quality of the wine.

Another two appellation wines of Achaia for sweet wines is the PDO Muscat of Patras and the PDO Muscat of Rio, both requiring White Muscat. The most common production method is to fortify the wine during fermentation, giving sweeter, less costly and more commercial wines. Both appellations include all four wine subcategories, similar to the sweet Samos PDO wines. Despite the geographic proximity of Achaia's two appellation zones, their wines seem to have some differences. The Muscat of Patras wine is richer, more intense and fruitier, whereas the Muscat of Rio wine is softer with a more intense floral character.

Cephalonia

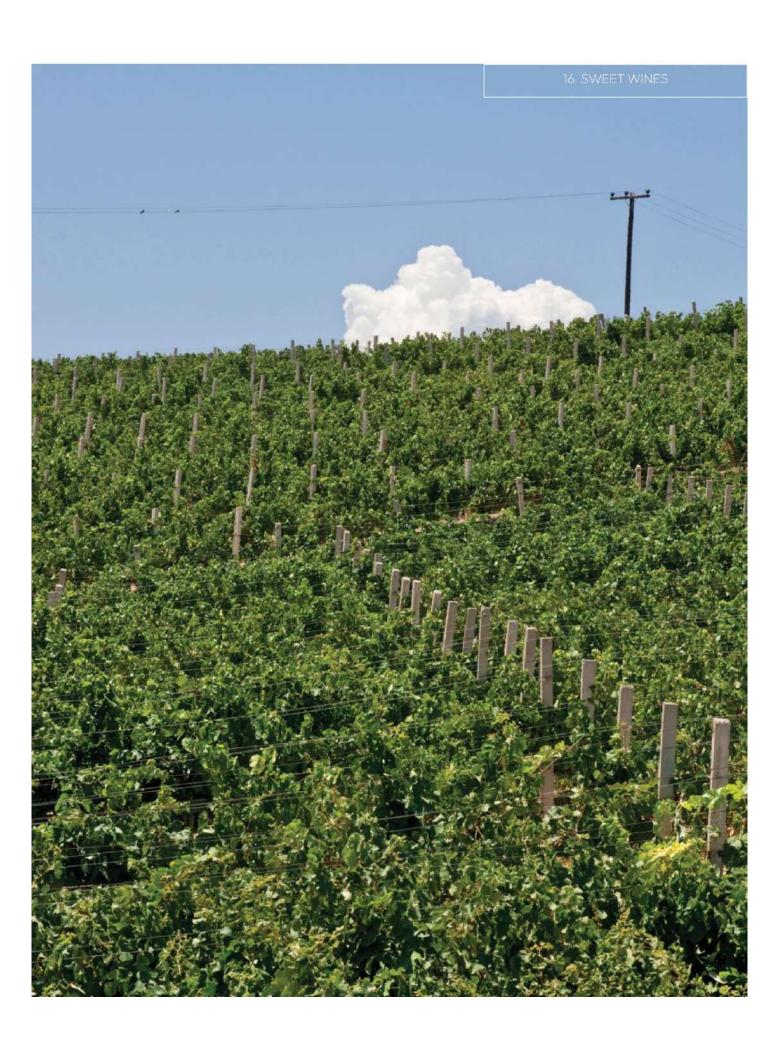
In addition to the PDO Robola dry wines, Cephalonia has two more sweet wine appellations, the PDO Muscat of Cephalonia and the PDO Mavrodaphne of Cephalonia. The Muscat is produced from White Muscat and includes the same wine types as those of Samos.

Mavrodaphne is produced from a specific –called Tsigelo, whose grapes are smaller and more concentrated than common Mavrodaphne grapes— and belongs to the liqueur wines like Mavrodaphne of Patras. At the southeastern edge of the island, as well as south of Ithaca, acidity may be high —which is uncommon for the variety—whereas the wine's potential alcohol content does not exceed 12.5% abv. Conversely, Mavrodaphne of Lixouri easily reaches 14% abv.

Crete

The diversity of Crete's wines is enriched by some sweet wines that, though less known compared to similar wines of other regions, exemplify and bear witness to the potential of the Cretan vineyards. Today, many producers in Crete make sweet wines, mostly from sun-dried grapes, of which the most typical are sourced from the Liatiko variety. Especially the PDO Sitia variety encompasses all types of sweet wines, which are produced exclusively from Liatiko and all of them, despite their limited production, are brilliant examples of the variety's potential.

The renowned Malvasia wine was also produced in Crete during Venetian Rule and was exported to all the markets of Europe. In an effort to revive this traditional wine, two new appellation zones were formally established in 2011 for the making of naturally sweet wines or liqueur wines from sun-dried grapes. The PDO Malvasia-Sitia in the Lasithi prefecture includes wines containing a minimum of 85% of the Assyrtiko, Athiri, Thrapsathiri and Liatiko varieties and of the White Muscat and Malvasia di Candia Aromatic varieties for the remaining 15%. The PDO Malvasia Handakas-Candia wines have a proportion of at least 85% of the Assyrtiko, Vidiano, Thrapsathiri and Liatiko varieties, and the remaining percentage is covered by the White Muscat and Malvasia di Candia Aromatica varieties. Both PDO wines require a maturation period of at least two years in oak barrels before reaching the shelves.





Wine or grape distillates have traditionally accompanied the enjoyment of food in Greece and the successful pairing of food and wine has always been based on clear, simple principles. This is due to a number of factors, such as the great variety and intensed of flavours and textures of the dishes that may be served in a single meal, the climate, the diversity of wine styles produced almost throughout Greece, the local character of both the ingredients used in every local cuisine and the wines produced in the same area. In recent years, however, particular emphasis has been placed on the ability of Greek wines to accompany international cuisines. This prospect not only proves the versatility of Greek wines, but may also become a powerful weapon in their international promotion.

Main Principles

The idea of attaining a good, or even perfect, match between food and wine is frequently based on the way the individual features of the wine and food can be harmoniously paired. Some basic principles allowing the smooth munching of these features play an important role in achieving the desired result. Balance is the main principle so that neither food nor wine prevails. In order to strike this balance, the following should be taken into account:

- Substantial and rich food calls for a full-bodied wine;
- The intense flavours of the dish should be accompanied by a wine of similar intensity;
- Acidic dishes need acidic wines, as combining them does not makes for overly acidic taste; instead they complement each other;
- Sweet dishes and desserts need wines of at least the same level of sweetness:

Though the ultimate decisive factor in pairing food and wine is personal taste, in the following combinations the wine can intensify and enhance the enjoyment of both the food and the wine:

- Red meats and tannic wines:
- Savoury dishes and sweet or very acidic wines;
- Fatty dishes and very acidic wines.

Sparkling Wines

Greece produces top-quality sparkling wines, available in several different styles that may be combined with a wide range of dishes. For example, the light structure of sparkling wines produced in Epirus and the Peloponnese showcases light dishes, such as starters and salads, while their freshness and acidity break down the fattiness of some dishes, such as quiche Lorraine, tempura-fried vegetables, fried tomato balls or traditional Greek pies with cheese and wild greens. The sweetest wine versions are easily married with Asian cuisine, thus offsetting the spiciness of curry and blending well with fruit chutneys such as mango.

Dry rosé sparkling wines of the Xinomavro variety perfectly accompany white cheeses like Brie, cold cuts like Prosciutto or cold meats like roast beef, or it can even



go with smoked salmon. The sweetest styles could be paired with forest fruit, such as cranberries, with cornelian cherry tarts or even with chocolate due the acidity, sweetness and the respective fruity flavours emitted.

Sparkling wines of Rhodes, with their floral aromas and refreshing acidity, match very well with shellfish, salty olives and feta cheese, while rosé sparkling wines, due to their more intense character, can be successfully combined with crab, tomato bruschetta, tempura-fried shrimp and salads with vinaigrette dressing.

All sparkling wines can be extremely enjoyable on their own as aperitifs.

White Wines

Light and aromatic wines with fairly high acidity, such as Moschofilero and Roditis, or refreshing and fresh ones, like Athiri, Debina and Robola, are ideal for accompanying light dishes, such as salads (especially those with lemon or lime dressing), stewed artichokes and wild greens. They also match with chèvre, pasta with seafood, shellfish, in addition to crispy, stir-fried vegetables or grilled fish.

Richer wines with a fuller body and intense aromas, such as Vilana, Muscat, Malagousia and Savatiano, can help temper the intense and singular flavours in dishes like sushi, pasta with seafood and tomato sauce, grilled fish or Niçoise salad, Asian



cuisine with white meat, seafood risotto, shrimp and, generally, dishes with exotic Indian spices as well as Greek olive oil-based vegetable dishes called *ladera* and eggplant salad.

Expressive and fuller wines with unique aromas and good structure, such as an Assyrtiko with an intense minerality and high acidity, are a good match for rich, fatty dishes, such as grilled or fried fish and seafood, rich white sauces, Indian cuisine, fava beans and fried tomato balls. If the wines are oaked, they match well with roast lamb, the Cretan smoked pork with vinegar called *apaki*, Thai meat stews with curry, codfish with garlic sauce, bean and lentil soup as well as with rich fatty fish.

The special aromatic and flavourful texture of Retsina is good match with dishes with more intense yet simpler flavours, such as savoury tapas, the Greek *mezedes* (appetizers), olives, sardines and smoked fish.

Rosé Wines

Although consumed mainly in the summer, rosé wines are among the best and easiest choices as they can accompany a wide range of dishes. Whatever the variety they come from, their common features are strong fruity aromas, freshness and the fact that they are very enjoyable. Be it a starter or an entree, there is always a rosé that will accompany it successfully. With Mexican or Thai dishes, where spice and heat prevail, slightly sweeter wines can temper and offset these tastes.

Red Wines

The long, sunny spells and high temperatures of Greece offer the ideal conditions for the production of wines from ripe and healthy grapes. The wines produced may be dense with a high extract, yet at the same time elegant with a complex aromatic character.

Light and soft red wines, such as Kotsifali or its blend with Mandilaria, marry well with pizza, lamb, chili con carne, sausages and spicy cold cuts as well as with tuna steak or octopus stew.

The fruity and spicy Agiorgitiko is highlighted while bringing out the flavours of red meat dishes, such as meatballs, grilled steak, moussaka, tomato beef stew and rich cheeses.

Sweet Wines

Greek sweet wines can claim a prominent position among the best sweet wines in the world and be ideal matches to several dishes of Greek and international cuisine.

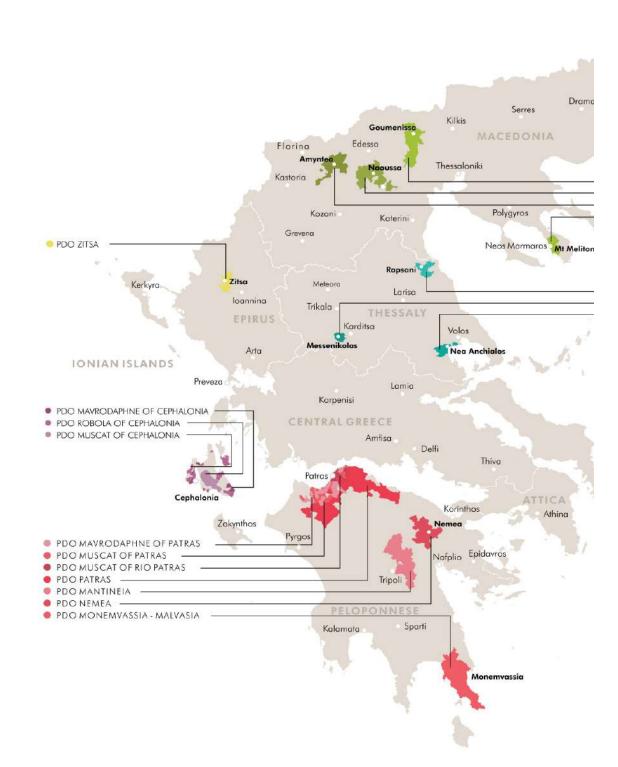
Caramelised fruit, spoon sweets, gingersnaps, apple or peach tarts, white chocolate as well as salty flavours, such as savoury dishes, feta cheese, blue cheeses, Stilton or Roquefort, match perfectly with the flavours of honey and citrus fruits rising from sweet wines made from Muscat or Malagousia grapes.

On the other hand, Mavrodaphne dessert wine with its aromas of nuts and caramel does well with chocolate and walnut desserts and cinnamon cookies, while it can also be used as a flavouring agent in sauces accompanying grilled meat.

The particularly sweet syrupy desserts, like the Greek *baklava*, need the acidity of a rich Vinsanto, which brings out their flavours. Vinsanto can also be paired with a variety of cakes, baked quince, and caramelised apples as well as with rich pâtés and cheeses.

MAP OF GREEK WINES

PROTECTED DESIGNATIONS OF ORIGIN



33 PROTECTED **DESIGNATIONS OF ORIGIN** MACEDONIA PDO GOUMENISSA R PDO NAOUSSA R PDO AMYNTEO R PDO SLOPES OF MELITON R, W **AEGEAN ISLANDS** Xanthi Komotini THRACE PDO SAMOS W Kavala PDO PAROS R, W Alexandroupoli PDO MALVASIA PAROS W PDO SANTORINI W PDO GOLIMENISSA PDO VINSANTO W PDO NAOUSSA 🌘 PDO RHODES R, W PDO AMYNTEO . PDO SLOPES OF MELITON ... PDO MUSCAT OF RHODES W PDO LEMNOS . Mt Athos PDO LEMNOS R, W PDO MUSCAT OF LEMNOS PDO KALAMBAKI LEMNOS PDO MUSCAT OF LEMNOS W Lemnos PDO KALAMBAKI LEMNOS R PDO RAPSANI PDO MESSENIKOLA THESSALY PDO ANCHIALOS | PDO RAPSANI R PDO MESSENIKOLA R Mytilini PDO ANCHIALOS W PELOPONNESE PDO MAVRODAPHNE OF PATRAS R PDO MUSCAT OF PATRAS W Chios PDO MUSCAT OF RIO PATRAS W AEGEAN SEA PDO PATRAS W PDO MANTINEIA W PDO NEMEA R Samos PDO MONEMVASSIA - MALVASIA W **IONIAN ISLANDS** PDO SAMOS . PDO PAROS | PDO MAVRODAPHNE OF CEPHALONIA R CYCLADES PDO MALVASIA PAROS PDO ROBOLA OF CEPHALONIA W PDO SANTORINI — PDO MUSCAT OF CEPHALONIA W PDO VINSANTO ... PDO RHODES | 0 PDO MUSCAT OF RHODES **EPIRUS** PDO ZITSA W . 10 Rhodes DODECANESE M CRETE Santorini PDO HANDAKAS - CANDIA W PDO CANDIA R, W PDO HANDAKAS - CANDIA . PDO CANDIA . PDO DAPHNES R PDO DAPHNES . PDO ARCHANES R PDO ARCHANES PDO PEZA PDO PEZA R.W

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