

Exploring Greek Wines

GREECE:

- Vines first arrived in Crete around 2500 BC; the Minoans cultivated the vine and spread it to the mainland and eventually to western Europe
- Greeks were also the first to drink socially rather than for religious ceremonies, and across all social demographics
- Contemporary Greek wines were jinxed by *retsina*, a wine flavored with pine resin that sealed the amphorae in which it was stored and transported
- Recently, quantity rather than quality often dominated (at least in exported wines)
- Today: renewed focus on smaller production, higher quality, over 300 indigenous grapes and a very long tradition of winemaking
- Greek appellations and wine laws established 1969-1971; now refined to match EU standards and mimic French system... though producers sometimes use Greek language/abbreviations, sometimes English, sometimes French
 - PDO (Protected Designation of Origin) is like AOC; they are from a specific, designated, protected place and imply a typical, local style
 - May be labeled with Greek OPE (typically sweet) or OPAP (dry)
 - PGI (Protected Geographical Indication) is like IGP (or Vin de Pays); designated by broader region, district or local area; often use international grapes
 - May be labeled with Greek TO
 - Below this are table wines, which may be labeled with Greek EO



CORKBUZZ
WINE STUDIO

1) Domaine Spiropoulos Mantinia '12 – Mantinia, Greece

- Made from the Moschofilero grape, which is red-skinned but makes an aromatic white
- Mantinia is the PDO within the Peloponnese region, known for mostly Moschofilero
- Spiropoulos family has owned vineyards and made wine in the region since around 1890, but only in 1980s did Epaminodas Spiropoulos decide to commercially produce and sell their wine
- All certified organic and family-owned vineyards, situated at around 2,000 feet

2) Estate Argyros Assyrtiko '11 – Santorini, Greece

- Assyrtiko is the grape, which is high in acidity with lemony notes
- Assyrtiko is main grape on the Cyclades island of Santorini, known for its volcanic soil; vines are trained in *stefani* shape baskets to protect from wind and to collect moisture
- Vines for this are 50-60 years old
- Estate Argyros established in 1903; currently run by 4th generation Matthew Argyros

3) Domaine Porto Carras Malagousia '10 – Slopes of Meliton, Greece

- Carras is a trailblazing Greek estate started by Evangelos Gerovassiliou, who is recognized for having brought native Malagousia back from near-extinction
- Malagousia is a slightly richer, aromatic white with intense fruit and herbal notes
- Carras is on Macedonia and was granted its own PDO, Slopes of Meliton, and the domaine operates in conjunction with a grand resort

4) Spiropoulos Red Stag '08 – Nemea, Greece

- Also made by Domaine Spiropoulos, but from their Nemea estate, established in 2007
- Nemea is a PDO in Peloponnese region; makes only reds from local Agiorgitiko grape
- Style of Nemea wines can vary based on altitude; this is from the middle-altitude slopes and has the area's signature ripe, bold yet well-structured style
- Domaine Spiropoulos has strong focus on protecting and preserving the environment

5) Thymiopoulos Young Vines '11 – Naoussa, Greece

- Naoussa is a PDO in Macedonia region; makes only red wines from Xinomavro grape
- Xinomavro means “acid black” implying that the grape has good acidity and black fruit
- Overall notion is that “young vines” are more easy-drinking, fruit-forward; older vines pack more complexity and nuance—so their “young vines” cuvée is for earlier drinking
- Thymiopoulos family owned vines for many years and just started making wines in 2004 under Apostolos Thymiopoulos, who studied oenology at University of Athens

6) Gentilini Eclipse '10 – Cephalonia, Greece

- Cephalonia is in Ionian Islands; makes both dry and sweet whites and reds
- Mavrodaphne is a local, darkly colored red grape
- Gentilini is an Italian family that came to Greece via London; first commercial release in 1984, now super focused on small, quality production and environmental preservation

