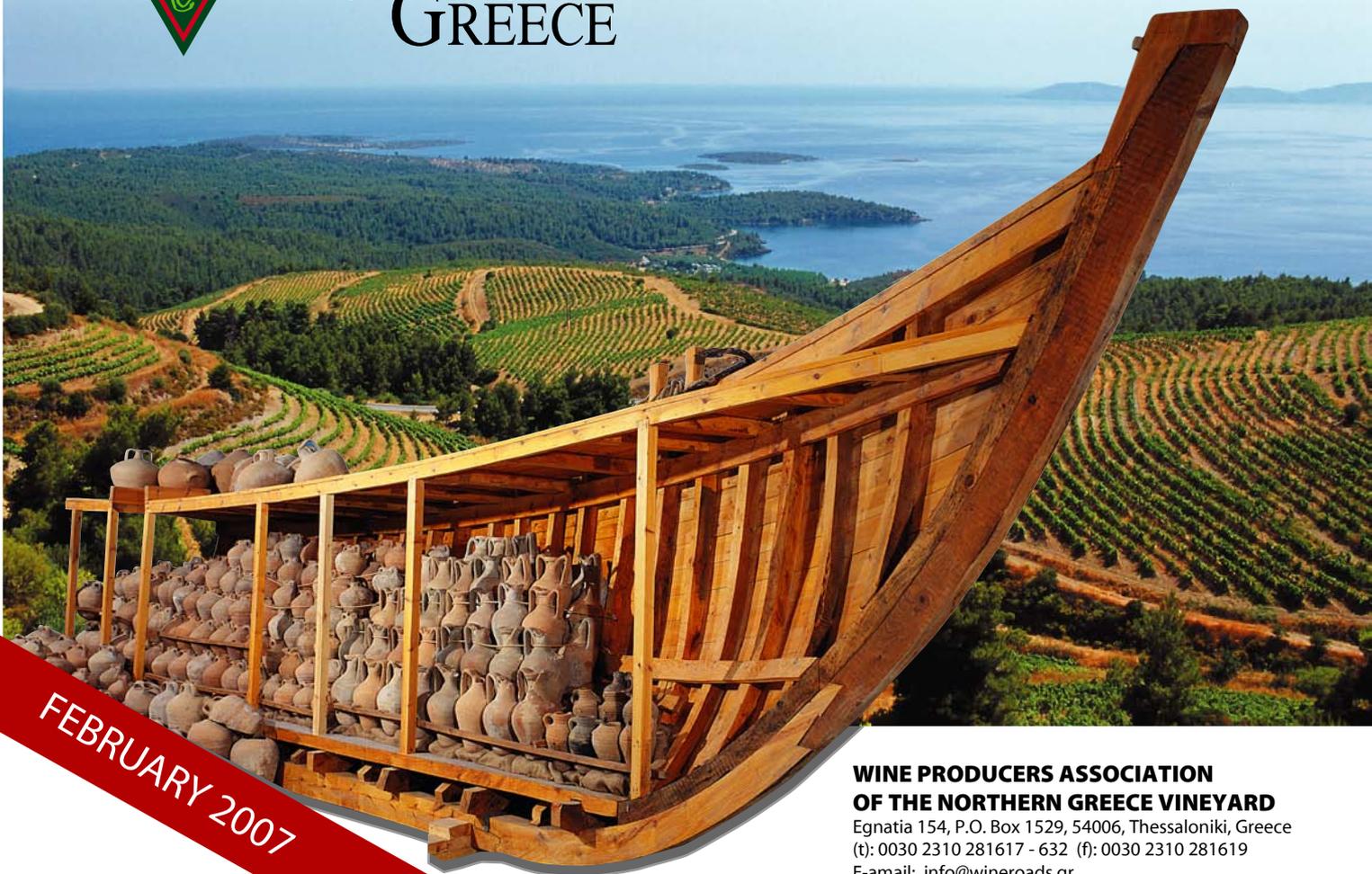




The Greek Wine experience



WINE ROADS
OF NORTHERN
GREECE



FEBRUARY 2007

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THE WINES FROM GREECE



Wine has been an important part of Greek culture for over 4000 years as the numerous archaeological discoveries throughout Greece indicate. The ancient Greeks knew well the nutritional value of wine as it became an inseparable part of their daily regimen. They loved to organize intellectual gatherings called "symposia" where they would eat and talk about philosophical subjects while drinking wine. Our ancestors also realized the important influence of the local ecosystem on the characteristics of wine. They traded their wines throughout the ancient world inside sealed amphorae and even created their own Appellations of Origin.

In recent years, the Greek wine industry has undergone tremendous improvements with serious investments in modern wine making technology. The new generation of native winemakers is being trained in the best wine schools around the world and their efforts are paying off as Greek wines continue to receive the highest awards in international competitions as well as the recognition they deserve throughout the world.

What makes Greek wine so unique are the more than 300 indigenous grape varieties grown there, some of which have been cultivated since ancient times. Many of the world's best wine critics agree that the distinct flavours that come from these native grape varieties are a strong marketing advantage for the Greek wine industry. Many well-known international grape varieties are also used in Greek wine making. This extensive variety of grapes together with the moderate Greek climate, plentiful sunshine, low average rainfall and soils of moderate fertility combine to provide an excellent environment for the production of high quality wines.

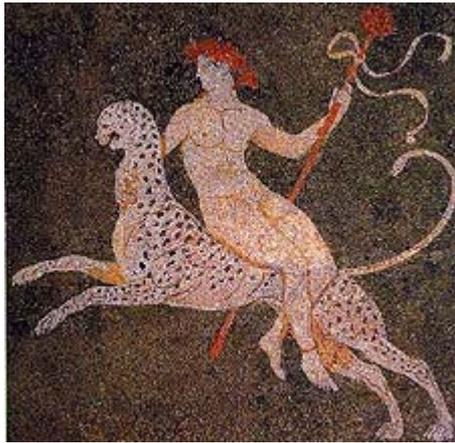
Map of wine regions



Map kindly supplied by Decanter Magazine

Wine, Religion and Culture

The cultivation of the vine, the creation of wine from the grape and the effects of wine-drinking on the human organism have always inspired a sense of awe in humanity, and this is why they have been associated with the divine. In the ancient world the god associated with wine was Dionysus, a rural deity who was worshipped particularly in Macedonia and Thrace, where the twelve principal gods of Greek mythology were not venerated with the same enthusiasm as in southern Greece.



Depictions of Dionysus in ancient mosaics

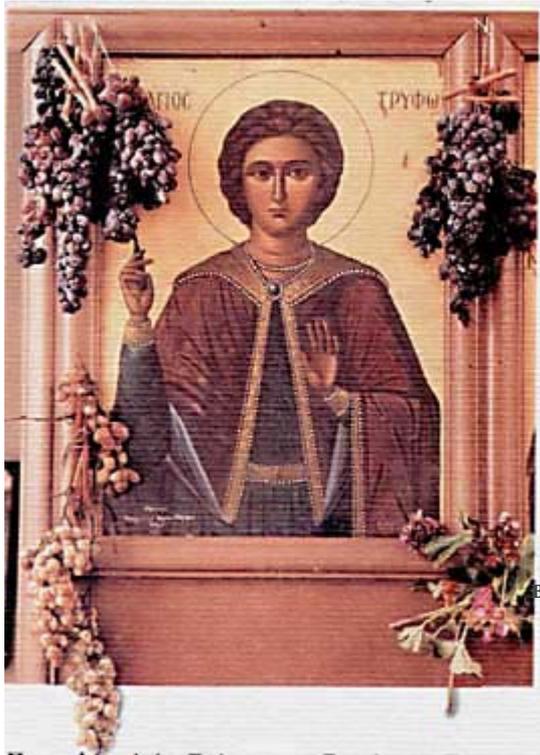
One of the myths has it that Dionysus was born on Mt. Pangaion and lived there, worshipped by the Edonians, a Thracian tribe. According to another myth Semele dwelled on the slopes of Mt. Vermion, where she gave birth to Silenus, who was later captured by Midas.

In certain areas of Macedonia and of Thrace

Dionysus was represented in earlier times in the form of an animal, the relic of a totemic habit of thought. His cult was particularly strong in Pangaio and Kissos, together with the Maenads, who are referred to as Klodones and Mimallones. The cult of the Maenads survived into later times in Macedonia, until the end of the ancient world, and some aspects of their rites were adopted in the theatre. The troupe of Maenads, very popular in Macedonia, consisted of women, while the leader of the chorus was a man, who wore *cothornos* (buskins), *krokoton* (saffron-coloured frock) and *mitra* (headband) — the original, in other words, of the figure of Dionysus in women's clothes, in contrast to the other regions of Greece where the prevalent image was that of the phallic Dionysus. At the performances and festivals large quantities of wine were consumed. The same occurred at the Bacchanalian orgies, which were also very popular in Macedonia. The cult of Dionysus survived into Hellenistic times, especially at Pella, and into the Roman period and the early years of the Byzantine Empire, particularly at Amphipolis.

At Lagadas, a few kilometres outside Thessaloniki, refugees from the coastal regions of eastern Thrace and the Black Sea still celebrate a festival on 21 May, the name day of Constantine and Eleni, which is known as the *anastenaria*. It is a tradition with roots in the Bacchanalian orgies of antiquity. The occasion involves reckless consumption of wine and walking with bare feet on glowing coals, two activities inseparably linked to the cult of the god Dionysus in Thrace.

In the Christian religion God is presented as the keeper of a vineyard and the church as his vine. In the rite of the Holy Communion the faithful drink wine in representation of the blood of the Lord. The Orthodox Church has made [St. Tryphon](#) guardian saint of vines and vineyard workers, thereby assimilating extremely ancient beliefs concerning vegetation and fertility. This saint had for centuries been extremely well-known and venerated in the vine-growing regions of Macedonia. However, the settlement in Macedonia after 1924 of Greeks from eastern Romylia, eastern Thrace and the Black Sea region led to an increased reverence for the saint and the annual observance of traditions associated with him.



St. Tryphon, the guardian saint of vineyard workers and vines

In many parts of Macedonia St. Tryphon is commemorated even today in celebrations of great solemnity and splendour. At Goumenissa the festival known as *Kourbani* is held on 1st February.



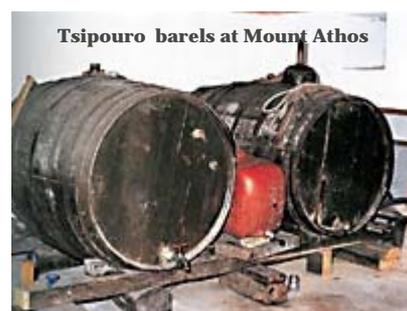
Blessing of the sacrificial meat during the Kourbani festival

A male calf is sacrificed and cooked. The priest blesses the meat, which is then distributed among the members of the community, who wash down the meat with large quantities of wine. We encounter a variation of the same

custom at Trilofos and Stenimachos, close to Naoussa. At Gefyra, a village outside Thessaloniki, on the eve of the feast day of St. Tryphon the villagers feast on wine, and then on the feast day itself they carry the icon of the saint in procession and the priest says prayers over platters of *kollyva* — a preparation of boiled wheat distributed at funerals and memorial services. They also prepare *kollyva* on the feast day of St. Tryphon at Anchialos and Mesimvria, while the vine growers cast holy water on their vines.

The feast day of St. Tryphon is not the only traditional occasion in Macedonia associated with wine. Their origins are lost in the mists of time, but almost all of them have been observed without interruption up until the present day. Wine, companion in joy and grief, accompanies all the important moments in a man's life, as well as forming part of his ordinary daily round. Wine has been — and still is — considered an essential adjunct to birth, baptism, betrothal, marriage and death. But every day of man's life wine has accompanied the food on his table, especially to add savour to the meat dishes prepared on cold winter days.

Wine is invariably present, too, at the local festivities and customs of Macedonia. At Amyntaio and Xyno Nero, even today, on the eve of the feast day of St. Barbara the villagers light great bonfires and make merry with music and abundant supplies of local wine. In the region of Naoussa on the day before Christmas Eve the local people light big fires for the occasion they



Tsipouro barrels at Mount Athos

know as the *Kolde*, which is followed by revelry with wine and *tsipouro*. In western and eastern Macedonia the traditional carnival festivities which take place at the beginning of January, the *Ragoutsaria*, the *Momogeroi*, etc., are always accompanied during the night hours by much consumption of wine.

As the modern world turns back to its traditions in search of its roots, the link between wine and culture is becoming ever stronger. All the festivities and revivals of popular customs involve the drinking of wine. The wine museums which have been established in Naoussa, Rapsani and Amyntaio are seeking to show the historical role of wine in our lives in the region of Macedonia; visits to wineries are intended to transform the image of wine from a simple consumer product to a decisive element in our cultural identity.

WINE REGIONS

Greek vineyards lie between 34 and 42 degrees latitude, which positions them amongst the world's hotter wine-producing regions. Inland and mountainous areas are subject to continental influences of varying degrees, but generally the climate is maritime.



Macedonia – Thrace

Macedonia constitutes the northernmost and largest geographic unit of Greece. Vine cultivation and the production and consumption of wine in the region has a long history, and today the wine industry continues to flourish. Western Macedonia is a predominantly mountainous region, whereas in central Macedonia lies the biggest plain of Greece. Eastern Macedonia is mostly flat. The plains and mountainous regions are crossed by several of the biggest Greek rivers. There is also an ample number of lakes.

The climate in Macedonia is quite different from the rest of Greece with temperatures ranges much wider than the average variation within the Greek territory. Coastal regions, especially Chalkidiki, have a considerably milder climate with Mediterranean characteristics. It is in such regions, as well as regions with year-round sunshine and protected from northern winds, that most vine cultivations and wineries are located. Macedonia is different in many ways from the other wine regions of Greece. Despite its proximity to the northern Aegean, a distinct set of meso-climates and geological environments give the land – and its wines – an unparalleled continental flavour. The topography, though widely varied, is more Balkan than Aegean. Even along the coast, the sandy softness of the land is in contrast to the rugged coastlines of southern Greece and most of the islands. Mountainous western Macedonia has a distinct alpine feel in various places.

Rolling hills and flat plains in the north and central areas are a soothing respite from the drama of southern Greece. Although winemaking was never dealt a death-blow, phylloxera in the early 1900s, the Balkan wars of 1912-13 and the Second World War took a further toll on wine production in Naoussa and other parts of Macedonia.

Epirus

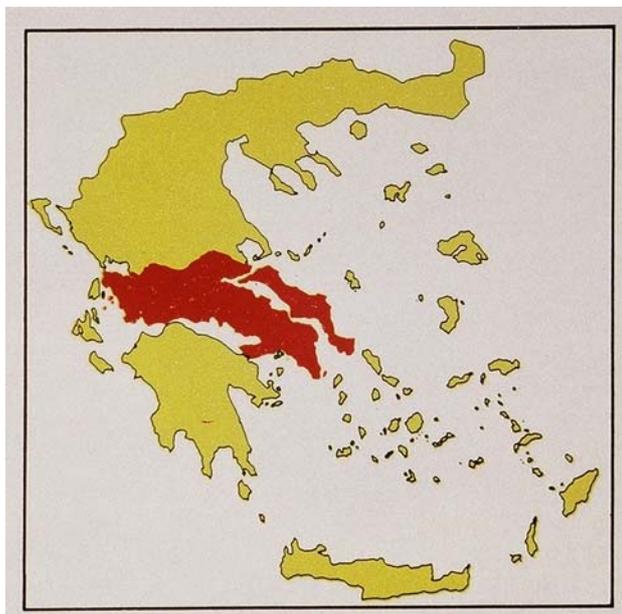


Some of the most mountainous and difficult vineyards to reach in Greece are in Epirus, hidden between the slopes of Mt. Pindos. Despite the difficult growing conditions many wine experts agree that some excellent wines are being produced in this region.

Thessaly

On the southeastern slopes of Mt Olympos we find the AOC region of Rapsani. The peaks of Mt Olympos and the neighboring Aegean sea form a unique microclimate that provide a positive effect on the production of the distinct Rapsani red wines made from a combination of indigenous Xinomavro, Krassato and Stavroto.

Sterea Ellada



The region of Attica in Sterea Ellada is one of the oldest winemaking areas of Greece. It is here that Dionysus, the God of Wine, introduced the culture of wine to the Greeks. A number of inspired winemakers have shown that the region exhibits all of the necessary

qualities for the production of world class wines.

Peloponnese



The first reference to the wine tradition of the Peloponnese came from Homer who called it Ampeloessa, meaning “full of vines.” Neither wars nor phylloxera were able to stop the production of wine here in one of the most historic wine regions of Greece. Spread throughout hillsides, plains and plateaus, the vineyards of the Peloponnese are known for their diversity and complexity. Not far from the pretty town of Nafplion we find Nemea, the most important AOC region in southern Greece for the production of

red wines. Here the Aghiorghitiko grape is used and produces wines famous for their deep red color, complex aroma and long, velvety palate. In the high altitudes of Mantinia, the noble Moschofilero grape is cultivated producing the AOC wines, Mantinia. The continental climate together with the poor, but well drained soil also leads to the production of some exciting aromatic white wines. On the northwestern part of the Peloponnese is the viticultural region of Patras. Four AOC wines are produced in this area: a savory dry white named Patra, made from the Roditis grape, two delicious aromatic white dessert wines, Moschato Patron and Moschato Rio of Patras, and the popular Mavrodaphne, a fortified red wine made from the Mavrodaphne and Korinthiaki grapes.

Island of Crete



The winemaking tradition of Crete dates back almost 4000 years ago to the celebrated Minoan Civilization. In fact it was on Crete near the village of Archanes that the oldest wine press in the world was discovered. The vineyards of Crete are planted on the northern part of the island, protected from the warm African winds by the mountains that crisscross the island from east to west. The unique Cretan ecosystem provides the ideal environment for the production of the AOC Archanes, Peza,

Dafnes and Sitia wines in addition to several well made vins-de-pays. The most popular grapes are Vilana, Kotsifali, Mandelaria and Liatico as well as Chardonnay, Syrah and the hard to find Plyto, Dafni and Thrapsathiri varieties.

Aegean Islands

The Aegean islands have an important winemaking tradition that dates back to the Neolithic age. Having developed a strong shipping network, our Aegean ancestors traded their wines throughout the known ancient world. The moderate Mediterranean climate of the Aegean combined with the rocky, volcanic soil, plentiful sunshine and constant sea breezes provide excellent conditions for the cultivation of grapes.

The island of Rhodes, legendary island of the knights, was one of the first areas in ancient Greece known for the production of wine. Rhodes enjoys the longest periods of sunshine and the shortest periods of rainfall in all of Greece, favorable factors in the production of the high quality AOC Rhodos wines. The dominant grapes are the white *Athiri* and the red *Mandelaria*, (known locally as *Amorgiano*), which produce elegant white and red AOC Rhodos wines. A sweet AOC wine from *Muscat* grapes is also made in Rhodes.

On the breathtaking island of Santorini, the production of wine dates back to the time of the Bronze Age. After the devastating volcanic explosion, circa 1650 BC, the island was covered with volcanic ash, lava and pumice stone. This catastrophe created perfect soil conditions in which now are produced very distinctive wines. The vines are cultivated in low basket shaped crowns, close to the ground for protection from the strong winds. Coming off the sea, the nocturnal fog brings needed water to the vines during the hot summer nights and together with the refreshing northerly winds provide excellent growing conditions for the creation of the superb AOC Santorini wines.

Ionian Islands

The beautifully green and mountainous island of Cephalonia is recognized as the most important of the Ionian Islands for the production of new style Greek wines. The native *Tsaoussi* and *Robola* grapes are the local viticultural treasures together with small quantities of *Mavrodaphne* and white *Muscat*. *Robola* of Cephalonia is one of the three AOC wines produced here.

WINE CLASSIFICATION: NAMING WINES IN GREECE

Greece implemented appellation laws in 1971 and 1972. Utilizing criteria similar to France and most European countries, the technical aspects of the legislation were established by the members of the Wine Institute, a department of the Ministry of Agriculture. A number of factors play a role in the determination of qualifying areas and products. These include: the suitability, pedigree and historical role of grape varieties; soil composition; vineyard elevation; yield per stremma (1 stremma=1/10th of a hectare); sugar levels, the effect of oenological practices such as barrel aging and any additional factors likely to affect the quality of wine within regions under consideration.

O.P.A.P. / Appellation of Origin of Superior Quality

O.P.A.P. (Onomasia Proelefseos Anoteras Piotitos) is equivalent to ‘Appellation of Origin of Superior Quality’ or the French ‘V.Q.P.R.D.’ There are currently 25 designations for this appellation, almost all of them for dry red and white wines. This list has been growing slowly since the inception of the laws—too slowly for a number of producers who feel justified in receiving qualification on the basis of the consistent production of wines of quality equal to or greater than those produced in some previously authorized regions.

<u>O.P.A.P.</u>	<u>WINE TYPE</u>	<u>GRAPE VARIETY</u>
<i>MACEDONIA</i>		
Amyntaio	Red, dry rose Rose, sparkling Rose, still	Xynomavro
Goumenissa	Red, dry	Xynomavro, Negoska
Naussa	Red, dry Red, semi-sweet	Xynomavro
Plagies Melitona	White, dry Red, dry	Athiri, Asyrtiko, Roditis Limnio , Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet franc
<i>THESSALY</i>		
Aghialos	White, dry	Roditis, Savatiano
Rapsani	Red, dry	Xynomavro, Krassato, Stavroto

Mesenikola	Red, dry	Black of Mesenikola, Carignan, Syrah
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EPIRUS

Zitsa	White, sparkling / semi-sparkling / dry / semi-dry	Debina
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IONIAN ISLANDS

Cephalonia Robola	White, dry	Robola
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PELOPONESSE

Mantinia	White, dry	Moschofilero, Asproudes
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Nemea	Red, dry Red Vin de Liqueur Red, semi-sweet	Aghiorghitiko
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Patras	White, dry	Roditis
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AEGEAN ISLANDS

Limnos	White, dry	Muscat of Alexandria
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Paros	Red, dry White, dry	Monemvasia, Mantilaria Monemvasia
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Santorini	White, dry White Vin de Liqueur	Assyrtico Assyrtico, Aidani
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Rhodes	White, dry Red, dry	Athiri Mantilaria (Ámorgiano)
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CRETE

Acharnes	Red, dry	Kotsifali, Mantilaria
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Dafnes	Red, dry Red, Vin de Liqueur	Liatiko
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Peza	White, dry Red, dry	Vilana Kotsifali, Mantilaria
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Sitia	Red, dry	Liatiko, Mantilaria
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Red, Vin de Liqueur

Liatiko

White, dry

Vilana, Thrapsathiri

O.P.E / Controlled Appellation of Origin

O.P.E (Onomasia Proelefseos Eleghomeni) is equivalent to 'Controlled Appellation of Origin' or the French 'V.Q.P.R.D.' There are currently seven qualified regions or products, all of them for sweet wine (including Samos).

<u>O.P.E.</u>	<u>WINE TYPE</u>	<u>GRAPE VARIETY</u>
Samos	White, Vin de Liqueur	Muscat white
Patras Muscat	White, Vin de Liqueur	Muscat white
Rio-Patras Muscat	White, Vin de Liqueur	Muscat white
Cephalonia Muscat	White, Vin de Liqueur	Muscat white
Rhodes Muscat	White, Vin de Liqueur	Muscat white, Muscat Trani
Limnos Muscat	White, Vin de Liqueur	Muscat of Alexandria
Patras Mavrodaphne	Red, Vin de Liqueur	Corinthiaki, Mavrodaphne
Cephalonia Mavrodaphne	Red, Vin de Liqueur	Corinthiaki, Mavrodaphne

Reserve and Grande Reserve

Producers of **OPAP** and **OPE** wines have the option to use the term Reserve for white wines that are aged for two years (spending a minimum of 6 months in barrel and 6 months in bottle) and red wines that are aged for 3 years (same minimums). Grand reserve can be used for white wines that age for three years or more (spending a minimum of one year in barrel and one year in bottle) and red wines that are aged for 4 years (spending a minimum of two years in barrel and two years in bottle). Naturally, the white Reserve and Grand Reserve is almost exclusively the domain of producers of what in America would call dessert wines.

Topikos Oenos

Topikos Oenos (Local wine) is the Greek equivalent to the French Vins de Pays. There are currently 139 qualifying Local wines. This category provides the greatest relief for individual producers hoping to gain an appellation on the

basis of more innovative, original or, in some cases, traditional combinations of cultivar and location. Labels permit the use of confidence-inspiring “domaine” names, including, Domaine or Estate (Ktima), Monastery (Monastiri) and Chateau (Archondiko) and Villa as long as the requirement of sufficient locality is met. The guidelines are less strict and proposals for new designations are always under consideration. Within this category is a special designation, Appellation by Tradition, which includes Retsina and Verdea, and is designed to insure the quality and survival of distinct ethnic genres.

Epitrapezios Oenos

Epitrapezios Oenos (Table wine) is equivalent to the French Vin de Table. Not surprisingly, in Greece as in France and Italy, winemakers, frustrated by the limitations inherent in conforming to existing appellations, are increasingly opting out of the appellation game. Knowing full well that export markets tend to evaluate products on an individual basis, if not on the reputations and abilities of the winemakers themselves, many have chosen to simply opt out of the system. So many outstanding products began appearing as ‘Table wine’ during the last decade that for Americans deeply familiar with Greek wine, this designation has nearly become a mark of superior quality.

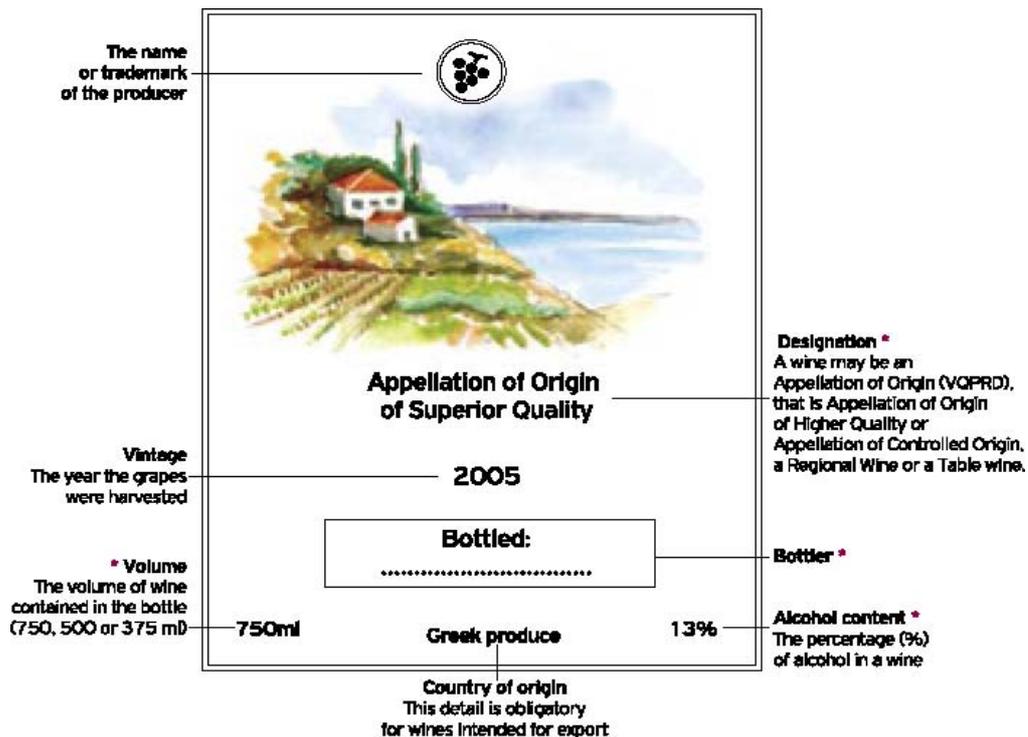
Retsina

The term *Appellation by Tradition* states indirectly the origin of a wine by using a word that is traditionally found in the general area or region of origin. For example, a very famous wine of *Appellation by Tradition* is Retsina, which is well known throughout the world as being traditionally produced in Greece. Retsina is mainly produced in the area surrounding Athens called Attica, known for its abundance of pine trees. The grapes primarily used are *Savatiano* and *Roditis*. Pine resin is added during the fermentation process producing its characteristic flavor. The ancient Greeks added pine resin to their wines in order to preserve them. Retsina is an excellent companion to most fried Greek dishes. Recently, the consumption of Retsina has decreased following the current trend of healthier eating habits. The contemporary style of Greek cooking produces foods that are lighter and less fried. The new style Greek white wines are light and fresh and are a better match for this lighter fare than Retsina.

THE LABEL

Just as the ancient Greeks applied the seal of origin on amphorae carrying wine, in the modern world we affix labels to the glass bottles. We have learnt to depend on the label for information regarding the variety of wine protected in the bottle, and possibly its origin, producer and bottler, its flavour qualities and much more.

Let us then see what we can read on the label of the wine we have chosen to taste:



We can also read:

- > The grape variety used to produce the wine. This indication is not permitted for table wines

- > The type of wine

White, rosé or red – dry, semi-dry, semi-sweet or sweet – sparkling or semi-sparkling

- > Information on winemaking and possibly on ageing of the wine

- > Suggestions on the proper serving temperature and the dishes the wine accompanies ideally.

(* Obligatory features)

GREEK VARIETIES

White Varieties

Athiri



Athiri is one of the most ancient Greek grape varieties. The name of the grape indicates its origin from the island of Santorini, also known as Thira, where it is used together with Assyrtiko and Aidani for the production of AOC Santorini wines. Athiri is found in other regions in Greece including Macedonia, Attica and Rhodes where it produces AOC Rhodes wines. Athiri grapes have a thin skin and give sweet and fruity juice. It produces wines slightly aromatic, having medium alcoholic content with low acidity.

Assyrtiko



Assyrtiko is one of Greece's finest multi-purpose (white grape varieties). It was first cultivated on the island of Santorini, where it has developed a unique character producing excellent AOC wines. Assyrtiko has the ability to maintain its acidity as it ripens. It yields a bone-dry wine that has citrus aromas mixed with an earthy, mineral aftertaste due to the volcanic soil of Santorini. In the last 25 years Assyrtiko has been planted throughout Greece including Macedonia and Attica where it expresses a milder and more fruity character. Assyrtiko can also be used together with the aromatic Aidani and Athiri grapes for the production of the unique, naturally sweet wines called VINSANTO (wine from SANTORini), well known since Byzantine times.

Aidani



Aidani is another ancient Greek grape variety and is mainly found in the Cyclades Islands. It produces wines pleasantly aromatic with medium alcoholic content and acidity. It can be successfully mixed with grapes having a high alcoholic content and acidity such as Assyrtiko.

Lagorthi



A very promising grape originating in Kalavrita in the Peloponnese. Since its revival, the Lagorthi grape is cultivated mainly on the slopes of Aegialia at an altitude of 850m. Lagorthi grapes produce wines with medium levels of alcohol that have a pronounced acidity derived primarily from the malic acid content of the grape. Its elegant aroma combines hints of peach, melon and basil together with citrus and mineral flavours.

Malagousia



A white variety originating from Etoloakarnania and cultivated in Macedonia (Halkidiki, Thessaloniki) and here and there in Central Greece (Etoloakarnania, Phthiotis, Attica) and the Peloponnese. It ripens in late August.

Malagousia may yield barrel-fermented or barrel-aged wines that have a high alcoholic strength, a distinctive, rich aroma, medium acidity and a full and well-rounded palate. It is used in making certain Vins de Pays (of Epanomi, of Sithonia).

Debina



A remarkable white variety of Epirus, grown mainly in Zitsa and sporadically in other regions (Arcadia, Thesprotia, Thessaloniki, Karditsa, Larissa and Trikala), spanning a total 750 hectares.

It ripens after mid September and yields dry wines with medium alcoholic strength, a distinctive fruity aroma and crisp palate as well as semi-sparkling wines of note.

Debina produces the dry still wines, and the dry and semi-sweet sparkling wines of Zitsa (V.Q.P.R.D. and V.M.Q.P.R.D. "Zitsa" respectively) as well as the Vin de Pays of Ioannina.

Roditis



As the name implies, Roditis is a rosé colored grape that is very popular in Attica, Macedonia, Thessaly and Peloponnese where it is cultivated for the production of AOC Patra wines. It produces the best results when cultivated with low yields on mountainous slopes. Roditis produces elegant, light white wines with citrus flavors and a pleasant aftertaste.

Vilana



A white Cretan variety found in the prefectures of Herakleion and Lassithi and sporadically in the prefectures of Rethymno and Chania, on cultivated expanses spanning approximately 350 hectares. It ripens after mid September.

When Vilana is cultivated in suitable soil with a low yield per vine, it yields wines of average to high alcoholic strength, high acidity and with a mediocre

aromatic potential. This variety is easily oxidised and requires constant attention during wine-making.

Vilana is used to produce the dry white V.Q.P.R.D. "Peza" (100%) and "Siteia" (together with the Thrapstathi variety) as well as certain Vins de Pays (Kritikos [Cretan], Lassithiotikos [of Lassithi], of Kissamos, Irakleiotikos [of Herakleion]).

White Muscat



An aromatic grape which leads to the production of excellent dessert wines and interesting dry whites. Fresh or aged, natural or fortified the dessert Muscat wines are ready to please even the most difficult wine enthusiast. It is cultivated in many regions of Greece but is known to produce the best results and AOC wines in Samos, Patra and Rio of Patra. It also yields a small production of AOC Rhodes and Cephalonia wines.

Moschofilero



A distinct aromatic grape from the AOC region of Mantinia, in the Peloponnese, Moschofilero grapes have a blue-gray colored skin and therefore produce a wine that is a "blanc de gris". Its crisp character and beautiful floral aroma of roses and violets with hints of spices can be drunk as an aperitif or with food.

Robola



Grown most notably in the mountainous vineyards of Cephalonia, the noble Robola grapes yield distinguished wines with citrus and peach aromas mixed with smoky, mineral hints and a long lemony aftertaste. Robola's fine character assisted in its qualification as the AOC Robola of Cephalonia.

Savatiano



A white variety mainly grown in the prefectures of Attica, Evia, Viotia and, to a lesser extent, in the Cyclades, Western Crete, Peloponnese and Macedonia, on more than 18.000 hectares. It has average vigour, is fertile, productive and resistant to drought. Savatiano is adapted to different soil types but yields better quality wines if grown on dry, limy soil of average fertility. It ripens in mid September.

A rather misjudged variety, Savatiano can yield remarkable white wines with a fine aroma and balanced taste if it is planted at relatively high altitudes, is not overloaded and is harvested when it has reached its prime ripeness. It otherwise produces rather high-alcohol, low-acidity wines.

Savatiano is blended with Roditis to make the dry white V.Q.P.R.D. "Anghialos". It is used in making a number of Vins de Pays (Geranion, Karytsinos [of Karystos], Markopoulou [of Markopoulo], Pallinotikos [of Pallini], Peanitikos [of Peania], Ritsonas [of Ritsona], etc.), wines with the Traditional Appellation Retsina as well as Table wines.

Tsaoussi



A very interesting Mediterranean variety producing pleasant light wines with fruit and honey aromas. This grape is now found mainly on the island of Cephalonia where it usually blends well with the local Robola giving well structured wines

Red Varieties

Xinomavro



Xinomavro is one of the two most highly regarded Greek red cultivars (Aghiorghitiko being the other). It is ubiquitous in Macedonia but is best known for the role it plays in the wines of Naoussa. It is the sole variety permitted under the Naoussa and Amyntaio (OPAP) appellations and one of two (with Negoska) under the Goumenissa appellation. Xinomavro is regarded as the most unwieldy of the major Greek cultivars. Temperamental and unforgiving, its wines

are greatly affected by weather, so that vintage often means more in regard to quality of Xynomavro than to most other Greek wines.

Aghiorghitiko



One of the most noble of the Greek red grapes, Aghiorghitiko (meaning St. George's) is grown mainly in the AOC region Nemea in Peloponnese. It produces wines that stand out for their deep red color and remarkable aromatic complexity. Aghiorghitiko's soft tannins, in combination with its balanced acidity lead to the production of many different styles of wine, ranging from fresh aromatic reds to extraordinary aged

reds. It also produces pleasant aromatic rosé wines.

Krassato



A red Thessalian variety mainly grown in the region of Rapsani. It ripens in late September.

Krassato yields high-alcohol wines of medium acidity and chromatic intensity that are rich in tannins and age quickly. It is blended with Stavroto and Xinomavro varieties to produce the dry red VQPRD V.Q.P.R.D. "Rapsani".

Moschomavro



A red variety grown over a small area in Western Macedonia (Grevena, Kozani) and sporadically in Thessaly (Karditsa, Trikala).

It is a vigorous, robust, fertile, productive variety susceptible to botrytis and acid rot and relatively resistant to periods of drought. It ripens after mid September.

Moschomavro yields high-alcohol, balanced-acidity wines that are mildly aromatic and have a medium

colour.

It is used in making the Vin de Pays of Grevena.

Stavroto



A red variety grown in the prefecture of Larissa, mainly at Ambelakia and Rapsani and sporadically at Trikomo, Grevena, and in the prefectures of Kozani and Magnesia.

It ripens in late September to early October.

Stavroto yields wines of average alcoholic strength and acidity, medium colour and enough tannins, which do not age well. It is blended with Krassato and Xinomavro to produce the dry red V.Q.P.R.D.

"Rapsani".

Limnio or Kalambaki



Limnio is universally believed to be the ancient variety Limnia, mentioned by both Polydeuctes and Hesiodos. The name denotes its origin on Limnos, one of the Aegean Islands. On Limnos itself, the grape diminished in importance with the rise in dominance of Moschato Alexandreias, the only cultivar on the island to achieve appellation status.

Limnio vines are hardy and late-ripening, producing herbaceous wines of considerable body (alcohol) and extraction.

Negoska



Negoska (or Negotska), an important variety in Macedonia, derives its name from the Slavic word for Naoussa, Negush and is believed to be a close relative of Xynomavro. Negoska is nevertheless associated at present more with Goumenissa, where its higher sugar content and riper, berry-like fruit are ideal for rounding out the more austere Xynomavro in Goumenissa

OPAP reds. The appellation stipulate an admixture of Xynomavro with a minimum of 20% Negoska.

Kotsifali



One of the most notable red varieties in Crete, largely cultivated in the prefecture of Herakleion. It ripens in late August to early September. The Kotsifali yields high-alcohol, aromatic wines of low acidity and unstable colour. For this reason it is blended with the Mandilaria variety, which is known for its intense colour and high phenol content, in order to produce the dry red V.Q.P.R.D. "Peza" and "Archanes". Kotsifali is

also used in making certain Vins de Pays (Kritikos [Cretan], Lassithiotikos [of Lassithi], Irakleiotikos [of Herakleion]).

Mandelari or Mandelaria or Amorgiano



Mandelaria grape, rich in color, is also known as Amorgiano. It is mainly cultivated on the islands of Rhodes and Crete. Mandelaria participates in various Appellations of Origin, usually with other grapes such as Monemvassia in Paros, Kotsifali in Crete or as a single variety on the island of Rhodes, producing distinctive red wines.

Mavrodaphne



Mavrodaphne, meaning black laurel, is mainly found in the Peloponnesean regions of Achaia and Ilia as well as the Ionian Islands. It is blended with Korinthiaki grape to produce a delicious fortified dessert wine known as Mavrodaphne. It also yields very good results when blended with Refosco, Agiorghitico and Cabernet Sauvignon grapes.



Profile

The **ASSOCIATION OF WINE PRODUCERS OF THE VINEYARDS OF NORTHERN GREECE**, with the trade name **“WINE ROADS OF NORTHERN GREECE”** was set up in 1993 as a not-for-profit non-stock corporation by the joint efforts of the 13 visionary members of the Association

is a tourism programme quite unlike anything else in the country, and an innovative way for any visitor, Greek or foreign, to discover and explore the lush vine-growing areas of this part of Greece, in conjunction with a host of local cultural activities.

The programme was created by the joint efforts of the members of the Association of Wine-Producers of the Vineyards of Northern Greece, with support from the European Union Leader II Initiative. Their object is to find solutions adapted to rural districts and actively involve local authorities, cultural organisations, bodies of various sorts, local enterprise and the population in general, which, through the medium of a Local Action Group, will devise and carry out development actions appropriate to the particular district and with lasting effects and results.

These might include signposting, creating folklore museums centring on grapes, wine and local gastronomy, publishing books and organising various kinds of cultural events. All, of course, in conjunction with local history, local festivals, local customs and

traditions.

It is the Association's aspiration and ambition to expand the network of the Wine Roads of Northern Greece by involving selected hotels, new wineries open to visitors, restaurants, municipal and township authorities, so that together they will be able to create a framework for the support of our cultural and gastronomic tradition.

A not-for-profit non-stock corporation was set up in 1993 under the official name **THE ASSOCIATION OF WINE PRODUCERS OF THE MACEDONIAN VINEYARD** and the trade name "**WINE ROADS OF MACEDONIA**". On the basis of Greece's viticultural history, the term "Vineyard of Macedonia" applies to the broad geographical area of Northern Greece, embracing not only our own province of Macedonia but also the wine district of Rapsani to the south, as well as the prefectures of Xanthi and Rhodopi to the east.

In 1997, the Wine Roads were integrated into the official programme of the Cultural Capital of Europe Organisation, under the title "Wine Roads & Gastronomy".

Today, the 24 wineries that have joined forces within the association, which now includes Epirus and has been renamed the **ASSOCIATION OF WINE PRODUCERS OF THE VINEYARDS OF NORTHERN GREECE** and **WINE ROADS OF NORTHERN GREECE**, have directed part of their corporate activity towards a set of common objectives. These are:

- **Building up the image of the wines of the Vineyards of Northern Greece** and promoting them in Greece and abroad. This is a very worthwhile initiative, since on the one hand the Greeks are still generally very poorly informed about wine and continue to perpetuate a host of myths about it (e.g., bulk wine is traditional, home-made wine is healthy, etc.), and on the other there has never been any organised action or state support for the effective promotion of Greek wine, either in Greece or abroad.
- **Developing, and exploiting for tourism purposes**, the Vineyards of Northern Greece and the natural environment of the various regions.
- **Supporting Greece's cultural heritage**, focusing primarily on grape growing and wine and on local cultural activities.
- Participating in the **formulation of general rules** governing the relations between growers, wine-makers and wine merchants, with a view to optimising co-operation, serving the consumer and **improving the quality of both products and services.**

The vine and its fruits have always profoundly influenced the social life of the Greek. This divine gift of the Hellenic soil is part and parcel of the country's history, art and mores, and is in addition an

incomparable food of great nutritive value, contributing to both physical and spiritual health. This is why the association has taken on the toilsome and multifaceted task of educating today's consumers, Greek and foreign, and giving them an opportunity to acquire general and specialised wine-related knowledge, through a variety of specific actions:

Marking and signposting tourist trails through the Vineyards of Northern Greece, indicating all points of oenological, cultural and tourist interest, such as vineyards, wineries, archaeological and historical sites, spots of natural beauty, etc.

Educating people in wine-related occupations, such as restaurant owners, hotelkeepers, waiters, special guides, etc.

Participating in international societies and organisations with similar or related objectives. The development of this type of tourism co-operation reinforces the positive results and further activities of the regional economy.

Organising gastronomic and cultural events and conferences, aimed at familiarising Greek and foreign visitors with our rich wine and gastronomic tradition and the cultural elements associated with it, through selected dining venues, interdisciplinary meetings and cultural activities.

Participating in international trade fairs in Greece and abroad. Organising an **International Wine Competition** in Greece, in the framework of the trade fairs DETROP (International Food & Beverage Fair), HELEXPO-TIF and, in Athens, OENORAMA (Exhibition of Wines, Spirits and Related Equipment).

Activities **promoting the tourism products** of the Wine Roads.

With a host of informative and entertaining events, the Wine Roads of Northern Greece continue to play a leading role in support of wine, a key element in the cultural identity of the Greek, and offer the visitor to the Northern Greek vineyard a total of 8 different routes, leading from Mount Olympus, home of the gods, and Zitsa in Epirus to Byzantine Thessaloniki, and from Amyntaio in the north to the Aegean playground of Halkidiki, the Dionysiac heartland of Mount Pangaio and delightful, distant Thrace.

Info & Links

- Description and photos of the varieties from Haroula Spinthropoulou's book
 - **"Wine varieties of the Greek Vineyards",
email:argatia@yahoo.gr**

Links and information on the brochure

- www.wineroads.gr The web site of The **ASSOCIATION OF WINE PRODUCERS OF THE VINEYARDS OF NORTHERN GREECE**, with the trade name **"WINE ROADS OF NORTHERN GREECE"**
- <http://www.allaboutgreekwine.com>
- www.kerasma.gr
- www.opee.gr
- <http://www.macedonian-heritage.gr/Wine/WineHistory.html>