

The Lusch List

UNIQUE WINE RECOMMENDATIONS & EXPERIENCES



THE NECTAR OF THE GODS

Are Greek wines, shall I say, Greek to me? Not quite but my knowledge is somewhat limited when it comes to the region and varietals. And frankly, I don't believe I am alone in this either. It can be a struggle to just pronounce the names of the grapes correctly: Assyrtiko, Xinomavro, Agiorgitiko. Thanks, Google, for providing the phonetic spellings: (Ah-seer-tee-ko), (Zhee-no-mahv-roh), (Ah-yor-yee—ti-ko). So...it seems we will expand our knowledge of Greek wines together! I can say with confidence that I have enjoyed all Greek wines I have tasted previously but that hardly qualifies as a well-rounded sampling. But one must start somewhere! Luckily, I have made a few connections along the way allowing me to taste and share some great options with you now. Thank you Stephen & Caraline Roussos, with R&R Selections, a premier Greek wine importer, for the samples and Zoom tasting. I think this is a start of a beautiful Greek wine friendship! I can also guarantee that while this might be the first discussion of Greek wine, it certainly won't be the last.

The Wine: Wine Art Estate, Techni Alipias White, 2018, Drama, Macedonia, Greece

Where I Purchased: [Veritas](#)

Cost: \$21

The Wine: Palivou Estate, Single Vineyard Selection Red, 2017, Nemea, Peloponnese, Greece

Where I Purchased: [Veritas](#)

Cost: \$21

From what I have read and been told, Greece should be looked at from the perspective of climate. It is rich and varied, to say the least. From arid to wet, from blazing sun to windy islands, not to mention that vineyards can grow on flat lands, volcanic islands, and up mountainous slopes. Diversity plays a major role in the wine industry of Greece and it shows in the various flavor profiles. With over 300 indigenous grape varieties and 33 Protected Designation of Origins (PDO's), Greece produces wines that cannot be found anywhere else in the world.

Wine Enthusiast has outlined the main wine regions with the noted top appellation and grape variety for each:

- *Northern Greece is home to the region of Macedonia, with Naoussa being the stand out appellation. The Xinomavro grape is used to make high acid and tannic wines quite similar to those of Italy's Nebbiolo-based Barolo. Even though they are light in nature, they tend to be quite complex and unique.* _
- Peloponnese is responsible for about one third of all Greek wine production and is home to the Nemea appellation. These soft and fruity Agiorgitiko wines tend to be low in acid and can exhibit lush and spicy plum flavors.
- The island of Santorini is where dry and crisp white wines made from the Assyrtiko grape are renowned for their racy acidity and keen minerality. Vines are tied into a basket shape to protect the fruit against the continuous wind_.

And because we might not be as familiar with many of the varieties at this time, here are a few to get us started:

Agiorgitiko (ah-gee-or-gee-tee-ko): produces lush, velvety reds with black-cherry flavors

Assyrtiko (ah-sir-tee-ko): mineral, bone-dry, citrus-edged white wines

Athiri (ah-thee-ree): whites with a scent of stone fruits, like nectarines

Malagousia (mah-la-goo-see-ah): a melony, jasmine-scented white

Moscofilero (mos-ko-fi-ler-oh): tangerine and blossom scented white

Roditis (ro-dee-tis): pink-skinned grape that produces elegant, light-bodied, crisp whites and rosés

Xinomavro (zhee-no-mav-ro): red grape with floral and spice aromas, firm

tannins, and vibrant fruit

Now that we are armed with some basic knowledge, let's talk about our first featured wine, Techni Alipias White. This is a blended white wine from Wine Art Estate located in Northern Greece. Founded in 1993, it is considered one of the top wineries in Greece and known mostly for their bright, fresh white wines. The winery is located in the village of Mikrochori, which is a short drive to the town of Drama in Macedonia. The region is known to be the original site of the cult of Dionysus in ancient Greece. Wine has obviously played a significant role in everyday life around Drama for the last 2000 years, at least.

Tasting Notes:

80% Sauvignon Blanc, 20% Assyrtiko (Ah-seer-tee-ko)

Style: fruity, aromatic, fresh

Nose: rich white-fleshed fruits, citrus

Palate: citrus, mango, mineral notes

Finish: crisp, dry, good acidity

Pairing:

Obviously, Greek wines are a natural partner for Greek cuisine but you can serve Greek wines with any type of food. Following the general rule of pairing lighter wines with lighter-flavored foods, this wine pairs well with lightly seasoned fish and steamed shellfish. A seafood paella would be lovely or your favorite sushi topped with wasabi.

Our featured red wine is the flagship wine of the Palivou Estate, a multigenerational winemaking family located in the Ancient Nemea region in Peloponnese. Founded by the Palivou family in the early 1990s, it is now operated by their two daughters. The wines are recognized among the best in Greece and the Palivou family is recognized as the expert of the Agiorgitiko varietal. The estate is a certified organic winery and they use many biodynamic practices. Plus, each of their labels is a single vineyard selection elevating the quality of precision of their cultivation and winemaking.

Tasting Notes:

100% Agiorgitiko (Ah-yor-yee-ti-ko)

Style: round, rich, aromatic, medium-plus bodied

Nose: dark black cherries, vanilla, chocolate, toasted wood

Palate: rich ripe cherries, plums, spices

Finish: smooth, soft tannins, spice, long finish

Pairing:

This wine can be compared to a Tempranillo or Sangiovese style of red wine so pair food similarly. Think spiced and herbed poultry dishes with rich sauces, tomato and cheese baked pasta, venison, or smoked sausages. Or follow the “what grows together goes together” and pair it with some traditional style foods like spanakopita, Mediterranean style wine braised lamb shanks, or kreatopita. Kreatopita is a Greek meat pie with beef, pork, and a bechamel sauce spiced with cinnamon and nutmeg wrapped in buttered phyllo dough. Yum!

Where to buy:

[Veritas Wine Room](#) and did you know that because you are a Lusch List Subscriber, **YOU NOW GET 10% OFF ANY BOTTLE OF WINE YOU ORDER ONLINE!** That’s right 10% off any bottle, not just Lusch List wines. Thank you Veritas!

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