

VASSALTIS POST

QUARTELY EDITION

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Vassaltis launches its own wine club

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Alcyone 2022, the next step

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Gramina among the twenty-three mind-blowing wines of 2023

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Kalupi review

We asked George Zervogiannis, Head of Wine at Scorpis Group to taste our new vintage of Kalupi, and here are his thoughts! “KALUPI”, stands for mould because what the Vassaltis team has done with this wine, is to break the mould! Everything in this wine is so groundbreaking and unique but then again, this is the winery's DNA. To question common practice in favor of evolution and experimentation. But let me explain why • P. 05

Aidáni stepping into the spotlight

On Santorini, Aidáni has long played second fiddle to the powerful Assyrtiko. More often than not, this aromatic grape has been relegated to the 15% allowable in PDO Santorini wines. However, in recent years more and more wineries, vinify and bottle this grape on its own, helping it to step out of Assyrtiko's shadow and into the spotlight. • P. 06



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We are launching a new way to become part of the Vassaltis family – through our new wine club. What we envision is a wine club like no other. A closely knit society of like-minded friends and family who all have one thing in common: a love for wine. A club that will reward you for your loyalty to our wines while giving us the opportunity to share our passion with you.

The first step was this newsletter. A newsletter that we treat with a lot of love and care with the sole purpose of keeping you in the loop about what is happening in the winery. We actively try to create content that shows you an in-depth view into our winery. News about us, wine reviews, pairing suggestions and even some theory for those who are more wine geeks than others!.

The second was the creation of Vassaltis Downtown, to which our members will have

access. Our hybrid space is a sleek storage and events venue located in the center of Athens. More importantly it will be our own club headquarters! A place to host events, get together and enjoy some special moments. Whether it's a dinner crafted by our chef specifically for our wines or during a vertical tasting with our winemakers the sure thing is we have exciting things in store for you.

And now, our eshop! Well, actually not a shop but rather a platform through which we will make available special things we think you will enjoy. Through this platform our members will get early access to current and old vintage releases, allocation of limited bottlings and micro vinifications.

The platform will only be open during brief windows throughout the year, for instance Christmas gifts, new vintage releases, Magnum releases, and so on.

And of course, no membership would be

complete without a special welcome and hosting to our winery. Our members are entitled to a free tour and tasting once a year at our tasting room in Santorini.

To mark the launch of the platform we will be offering our two red wines pre-release: MAVROTRAGANO 2021 and KALUPI 2022. You can read a review of KALUPI 2022 by George Zervogiannis, Wine director of the Scorpis group and Greece's latest Advanced Sommelier here.

To obtain your access, please apply via <https://club.vassaltis.com/>. We have already started accepting the first round of membership applicants! We look forward to welcoming old and new friends of Vassaltis to our wine club and hope to get to know each other better and share a glass of wine soon, either at one of the Vassaltis Downtown events or overlooking the Aegean Sea from the patio of our tasting room. Cheers! ●

Alcyone 2022, the next step



This coming March marks the 10th anniversary since we broke ground to start building our winery. Over these years we have changed a lot of things across all the fields of operation starting from the vineyard down to the tasting room. It is part of our DNA to constantly evolve. We learn from our mistakes, look to correct them and always question if there is something we can do better. We add on to our strengths, pushing the boundaries and constantly reexamining the way we work. This, is the only way to pursue excellence and keep our founding resolution: To produce top quality wines, without fail or excuses.

And while a lot of things that happen behind the scenes might not be evident to the consumer, our final product offering surely is. Those of you who follow us closely will remember the rebranding of our two PGI wines, Nassitis and Vassanos from 2019. From this year, another new wine will be joining our family. Its name? Alcyone!

Alcyone, takes inspiration from Greek mythology. Alcyone, the beautiful daughter of Aeolus, god of the winds, was transformed by Zeus into a bird known as Halcyon. The Halcyon bird had the power to calm rough seas during its hatching period. Nowadays, Halcyon is a symbol of peace and protection and. In fact, her legend gave birth to the phrase “Halcyon days”, the sunny calm days in the middle of the winter.

And now to the winemaking: Much like the power of taming rough seas, our Alcyone has the power to tame the immensely powerful Assyrtiko. How? By using various maturation vessels like oak tanks and barrels as well as steel tanks to let the wine mature. The grapes are sourced from selected plots in Vourvoulos, Pyrgos, and Megalochori, and partially ferment in large oak vats as well as stainless steel tanks. We age the fermented wine further in 500-liter barrels where it receives regular battonage before bottling and cellar ageing.

The result? An elegant wine with balance and complexity between the minerality of Assyrtiko, and the structure and layers from the oak component. Despite the criticism on the use of oak in Assyrtiko, our experience from past vinifications shows that if used properly it adds complexity and richness resulting in a perfectly balanced wine with a long ageing potential.

We look forward to sharing this wine with you on April 1st (no lie!) when our new vintage will be released! ●



Gramina among the twenty-three mind-blowing wines of 2023



distraction and focuses on purity and 2021 is a great vintage. It celebrates assyrtiko from where it thrives and conveys that all important message of place. After tasting the Vassaltis Cuvée Des Vignerons 2021 winemakers around the world will ask their farmers to plant the grape in the place where they are. They will do so because even a fraction of this excellence will be worth pursuing. Drink 2023-2033. Tasted February 2023. ●

Read the whole article at: <https://godello.ca/2023/12/28/twenty-three-mind-blowing-wines-of-2023/>



Instagram Photo

This Edition's most popular Instagram photo comes from our christmas wine tasting in Estonia, with our beloved friend and talented sommelier Karoline Reinhold.

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"Twenty-three mind-blowing wines of 2023" by Michael Godel

Vassaltis Gramina Cuvée Des Vignerons 2021, PDO Santorini, Greece

Of course 100 per cent assyrtiko, picked and collected between six and eight AM, straight

into the press, stainless steel vinified, no cooling, no passing go, no collecting 200 drachmas. All about preserving essential freshness, finesse and elegance. Spontaneous fermentation, a year on lees, in bottle six months. It is right here where we are to understand why Yiannis Valambous gave up a life 14 years ago that was not focused on Santorini, chose to return and altered his history. Santorini once a place of summers spent without purpose or tension is now all encompassing, focused on assyrtiko and for good reason. It is the variety to which all white grapes now aspire. Gramina sheds

Kalupi review



We asked George Zervogiannis, Head of Wine at Scorpis Group to taste our new vintage of Kalupi, and here are his thoughts!

“KALUPI”, stands for mould because what the Vassaltis team has done with this wine, is to break the mould! Everything in this wine is so groundbreaking and unique but then again, this is the winery’s DNA. To question common practice in favor of evolution and experimentation. But let me explain why: Firstly, it is the first (and only) wine out of Santorini and the Cyclades in general that is a blend of white and red grape varieties. This gives the wine a light but structured style which combines and complements each variety: Assyrtiko, Mavrotragano and Mandilaria.

Secondly, the most fascinating characteristic comes from the three different approaches to vinification. Assyrtiko is a whole bunch pressed giving acidity and length, sundried Mandiraria gives us complexity and marmalade fruit character and finally, Mavrotragano gives power and structure to the wine. The red grapes are co-fermented via semi-carbonic Maceration giving the wine a kinky character with no oak influence.

On the nose, the wine has a vibrant aromatic intensity with notes of red and blue fruits like strawberry, raspberry, and blueberry with some dried tangerine notes coming from the Assyrtiko. Last but not least, we can see a potpourri mix of red & white flowers.

On the palate, the wine is dry with high acidity which can be described as mouthwatering, with velvety tannins, and a juicy texture for the wine. As a result, the flavors confirm the nose with the finish being long with a nice fruity sense. The low alcohol measurement of 12.5% is supportive of the

style and definitely not something we see often on an island so hot and dry. What I like particularly about this wine is the light and elegant style that makes it a wine that you could enjoy a bit chilled at 14 degrees during those hot summer days but also its unique pairing with all those Mediterranean dishes we are lucky to find in Greek cuisine such as eggplant, briam (Greek style roasted vegetables, think of ratatouille) or even stuffed tomatoes, all cool fresh and summery dishes you would find at a Greek family’s lunch table. ●



Aidáni stepping into the spotlight

On Santorini, Aidáni has long played second fiddle to the powerful Assyrtiko. More often than not, this aromatic grape has been relegated to the 15% allowable in PDO Santorini wines. However, in recent years more and more wineries, vinify and bottle this grape on its own, helping it to step out of Assyrtiko's shadow and into the spotlight.

An aromatic grape, it offers more perfume than Assyrtiko with jasmine, peach, and tropical fruits like lychee and melon and a creamy palate. While it exhibits the high acidity and minerality wines from Santorini do, it sometimes lacks body and after taste. And this is the challenge faced by winemakers and eventually what will separate a good Aidani from a bad one. Winemaking leans largely one of two ways: more linear and mineral, or fuller and riper. So far, examples have shown the grape can stand on its own and recent vinifications also act as mythbusters that the variety produces wines that are not age worthy. We have been repeatedly amazed by how well our Aidanis age.

If the grape makes such nice wine, why is it only now becoming popular? The reason is twofold.



Firstly, only in recent years have PDO Santorini wines started becoming monovarietal Assyrtikos, meaning that up to now, most wineries would blend their Aidani with the Assyrtiko (up to 25% was allowed). This would help the wines become more aromatic, something that appealed more to the Greek consumer. With the recent jump in the fame of Assyrtiko and its subsequent global reach, consumers seem to appreciate more the clean, bone dry, mineral character Assyrtiko is known for. This has left the Aidani with no space to go, leading eventually to single varietal Aidani wines.

Secondly, Aidáni is difficult to work with in the vineyard. While its thick skins can withstand fierce winds - important on Santorini - the grape is prone to downy and powdery mildew as well as potassium and magnesium imbalances. It ripens late and unevenly and harvesting is both demanding and crucial in order to avoid flabby wines. Because of its uneven ripening, workers need to pass through the vineyard multiple times

to harvest individual bunches with the optimum acidity.

Currently, Aidáni makes up a mere 30 hectares of vineyards in Santorini (making it the third most planted variety after Assyrtiko and Mantilaria), but as its popularity grows, so will plantings.

At Vassaltis, we'll only produce 1000 bottles of Aidani on vintages where we get good grapes. On other years, we will blend the Aidani into Nassitis, our white blend, giving it this attractive floral nose that blends so nicely with the minerality of Assyrtiko. Overall, Aidani, gives an intensely floral wines that work well as an aperitif and as flexible pairing with a variety of foods. Ranging from vegetable based Mediterranean cuisine to great seafood.

If you want to taste our Aidani, it will be hard to find in the market, as we release it solely for winery sale. One more reason to visit us this coming summer! ●

