

Articles on greek wineswww.allaboutgreekwine.com**New York Daily News****Vintage Greece - Greek wines return to their glorious roots***By Amy Cortese*

Four thousand years before wine lovers flooded to Napa Valley, Greece was the epicenter of grape-stomping. But under the rule of teetotaling Turks, production dwindled and the country's best-known wine became its bitter and budget-friendly retsina, whose name is derived from the pine resin used to coat the vessels it's stored in.

But these days, there's more to Greek wines than just a bitter after-taste. Following Southern Italy's wine renaissance, vintners are producing top-notch red and white wines made from 300 varieties of native grapes cultivated in Greece for thousands of years. While the grapes may be harder to pronounce than Merlot or Chardonnay, in the hands of a great winemaker, they're just as delicious.

Assyrtiko ("A seer' tee ko") grows in the mountains of Santorini, the volcanic island famed for its black sand beaches. It produces a dry white wine that tastes of minerals and sea salt, with strong acidity that stands up to food. There's also a sweet version called Vin Santo. Try: Domaine Sigalas Santorini 2006 (\$14.99). Pair with shellfish or grilled octopus.

Xinomavro ("Ksee no' ma vro") is a red grape grown in northern Greece near Albania. Meaning "acid black," it yields rich, tannic wines that can age like a top-shelf Bordeaux. It is often blended with other grapes or made into pleasant rosés. Try: Ktima Kir-Yianni Xinomavro Akakies Rosé 2006 (\$10.99) or Boutari Naoussa Grand Reserve 2001 (\$18). Pair with roast pork or chicken for the rosé; duck, venison or lamb shank for the full-bodied red.

Moschofilero (pronounced "Mos ko fee' le ro"), a grape grown in the Peloponnese, makes beautiful crisp white wines that smell like a bouquet of roses, and are refreshing on their own or with food. Try: Moschofilero Tselepo 2005 (\$14.99). Pair with oysters, seafood salad or Asian food.

Agiorgitiko ("Ah yor yee' ti ko") is one of Greece's most famous grapes. Also known as St. George and referred to in ancient literature as "the Blood of Hercules," it makes an enjoyably mellow red wine. Try: Gaia Estate Agiorgitiko 2004 (\$40). Pair with grilled steak, wild mushrooms or cheese.

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