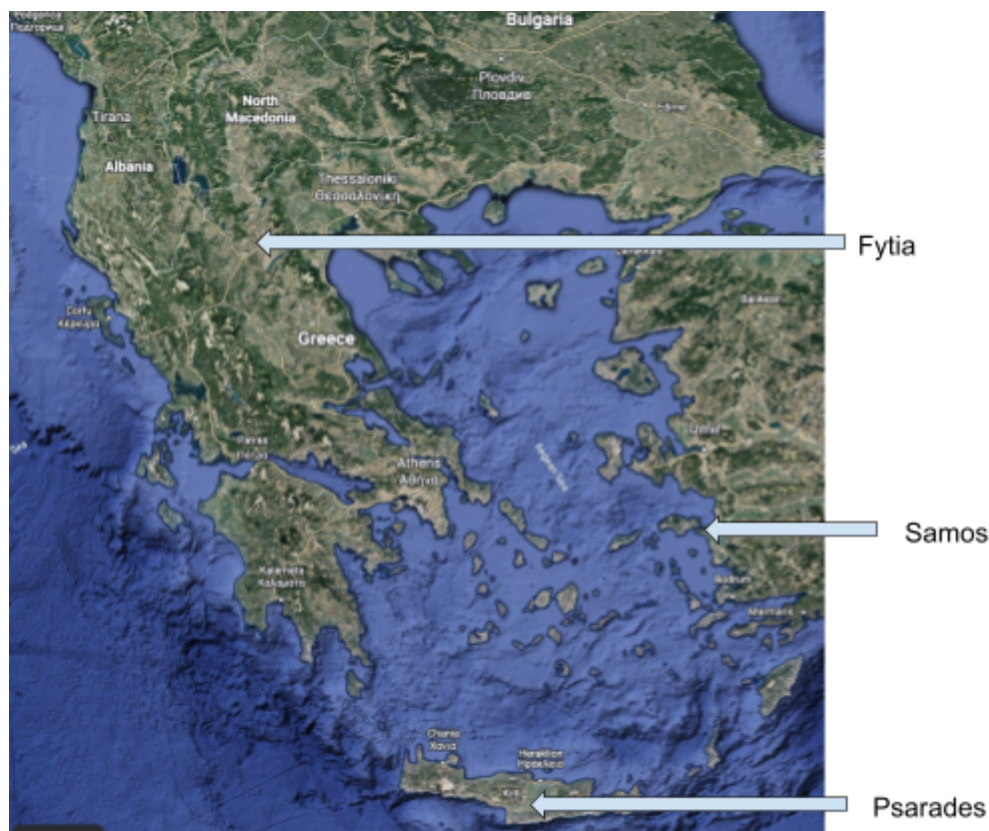


Twenty Club Tasting Notes 7 December 2022

Greece from The Wine Society



Psarades Dafni, Domaine Lyrarakis (Crete) 2021 £9.50 elsewhere £13-15

Dafni is one of the oldest and rarest grape varieties. It was rescued from extinction in the 1990's by Lyrarakis and there are 8-10 hectares in existence at about 450m. A local museum exhibits a Bronze-Age copper vessel inscribed "Dafnitos Oinos" found just a couple of kilometres from the vineyard.

The wine has very unusual characteristics. "Dafni" means bay or laurel leaf and the wines take flavours from the large thick skinned grapes including; bay (Indian bay), juniper, eucalyptus, rosemary, honey and ginger with some citrus, and tropical fruits. I also thought lavatory cleaner. 10 hours skin contact, 5% green grapes, fermented in stainless steel, 4-5 months on lees. No oak. pH3.3. 12%

Food pairings: Feta, Greek salad, fish soup, olives, prawns, swordfish, tuna.

Xinomavro 'Alta' Naoussa, Thymiopoulos 2020 £16.50 Elsewhere £22

100% Xinomavro from Northern Greece, specifically Naoussa in Macedonia (near the site of the school of Aristotle). Meaning 'sour black' there is usually relatively high acidity and tannin. Often compared to Nebbiolo, to which it has no genetic relationship. I have found the few I've tasted to have similarities to (some) red Burgundies. Thymiopoulos only make Xinomavro and all their wines are organic and biodynamic to an extent. This wine is from a high altitude vineyard at 450-600m where the vines grow on schist and granite.

Grapes are macerated for 18 days, a small amount as whole clusters followed by fermentation with natural yeasts. The same producer also makes a Jeunes Vignes (£11.95) as well as Earth and Sky (approx £28). I'd highly recommend the Jeunes Vignes (it was even better when it was £9.95).

Flavours should include cherry, other red berries and violets with supple tannins and some cedar from the eight months in French oak. 12.5%

Food pairings: I've found Xinomavro's to work well with grilled meats with Lebanese 7 spice. Alternatively other hearty fare.

Samos Anthemis 2016 £9.50 for 50cl Elsewhere £12-22 (oddly)

Samos- 1.6km off the coast of Turkey and home to Pythagoras, Epicurus and Aristarchus. Having been assisted by the population to kill the Amazons Dionysus taught the Samians to make wine- ordering them to drink 'just enough'. Alternatively it was one of the Argonauts who brought them viticulture. Either way this wine is produced by UWC- The United Winemaking Agricultural Cooperative of Samos with 26 villages tending 1600 hectares of vines, many above 800m.

100% Muscat- 5 years in oak. Deep orange with bronze hues. Almost every sweet flavour. Honey, butterscotch, caramel, fig, honeysuckle. Long finish.

Food pairings: Christmas pudding and mince pies. Fruit tarts, Tarte Tatin, Chocolate, anything sweet. Foie gras, blue cheeses, figs.

The Society's Exhibition Crusted Port, Bottled 2013 £17.50

Gold medals in 2022 from Decanter and the IWC. Bronze in the 2021 IWC. Blended from the 2009, 2010 and (the universally declared) 2011 vintages

It is always a bit mysterious to know exactly what is in the Wine Society's own blends. Especially with this. The Symington family own; 26 estates with over 1000 hectares of vines and control Graham's, Dow's, Warre's, Quinto do Vesuvio, Smith Woodhouse, Gould Campbell, Quarles Harris and Cockburn's. So what is this? I don't know. It is whatever the buyer negotiated, TWS does an excellent job at exactly this sort of thing. Highly praised by both The Daily Mail and The Telegraph.

Being a crusted port it behaves like a vintage and needs careful storage then handling before decanting and serving.

20% Port blend. Drinking now to 2030. Stilton or similar.

In 1785 Lewis Bagot, the then Bishop of Norwich dined with the Master and Fellows at Christ's College Cambridge. Being an epicurean (v.s.) he drank a lot of port, but to the neglect of his fellow diners. When he went to preach a sermon the next day he discovered a note on the lectern. *The Bishop of Norwich is fond of his Port. Too fond, for the Villain won't pass when he ought.* But he may have been maligned. Etiquette was highly regional, he may have assumed the bottle was his to drink. (Thanks Wikipedia).

Ed Silva, Locum Sommelier