



Assyrtiko, all over the place!

-Presentation by Mark Rashap, CWE



Warm up question:

What is the 2nd most widely planted grape on Santorini?

- 1. Assyrtiko Most widely planted on Santorini
- 2. Robola Robola Of Cephalonia
- 3. Moscofilero From Mantinia
- 4. Muscat Prominent in the N. and E. Aegean
- 5. Mandilaria Yay!



How did Greece's modern winemaking age begin in the 1970s?



- 1898: Phylloxera first recorded in Greece (almost 40 years after France)
- 1912-13: Balkan Wars
- 1914-18: World War I
- 1919-22: Greco-Turkish War
- 1939-45: World War II, Italian troops entered in 1940
- 1946-49: Greek Civil War
- 1971: We see wine laws solidifying emulating the European Community



Let's start talking about Assyrtiko (Assyrtico)



- Assyrtiko is extremely drought and heat tolerant
- Vines are trained in a "kouloura" (basket) shape
- Protects from the wind, minimizing the water evaporation, captures the "sea fog" that comes in at night
- The shape also protects from sun and heat
- After the first few years of training in this spiral, the vine continues to grow in this shape
- Often planted on it's own rootstock, phylloxera cannot live in the volcanic soils of Santorini
- Incredibly strenuous to harvest
- Yields are very low, 2500 vines per Ha
- After about 75 years, the "basket" is cut off and a new vine starts to grow, some rootstock is believed to be over 300 years old





It's a magnificent place



A closer look at Santorini!

- Total of 15 wineries, 2 wineries off island bottle a PDO
- 1400 Ha (3500 acres) total
 - Down from 4000 Ha 100 yrs ago
 - Up from 1200 in 2005
- Tourism hurt the wine industry
- 70% Assyrtiko, 20% Mandilaria (red), 10%- 30 other varieties
- Assyrtiko often blended with Athiri and Aidani
- Santorini PDO allows Assyrtiko (Min 75%) blends, dry and sweet
- Nykteri- "working the night away"
 - Grapes must be harvested at night
 - Min Alc of 13.5-15%
 - Min 3 months barrel age
- Mavrotragano is a grape of particular interest for reds, pioneered by Sigalas
- Santos (coop of 2500 members) produces the lion's share



Soils of Santorini

Limestone: subsoil

Ferrous iron: Lava rock

Schist: subsoil

Asper: High in Ca, Mg, very porous



So, what does it actually taste like?



- Assyrtiko has the incredible ability to achieve ripeness and maintain acidity
- Intense structure and extract, tropical fruit and honeysuckle
- Reminiscent of dry Chenin Blanc from the Loire and Cru Classé White Bordeaux
- Athiri and Aidani are added to soften
- Salinity and minerality
- Assyrtiko planted elsewhere in Greece shows more fruit and less structure



Vinsanto: How Divine!



- Made from Assyrtiko and Aidani only, Athiri not allowed.
- Grapes over-ripened on vine then dried on the ground (mold is never a problem)
- Allowed to be *Vin Naturellement Doux* (naturally sweet) or *Vin Doux Naturel* (Fortified)
- Must be barrel aged 24 months, many are aged much more
- Just divine with "sweet of spoon"
- What's another agricultural product of Santorini dried on the ground?



Where else can we find Assyrtiko?



- Found throughout the Cyclades PGI and the greater Aegean
 - Throughout the Cyclades it's blended with Monemvasia
 - TO's: Syros TO (50/50), Tinos
- Very prospective in Macedonia
 - PDO Slopes of Meliton white (Aidani 50%, Roditis 35%, Assyrtiko 15%)
 - PGI Halkidiki: blends with Viognier, SB, and Chard
- Also found in Central Greece and Peloponnese, not part of any PDO
- Clare Valley Australia
 - Jim Barry took plant material from Argyros
 - 2014 first vintage, 2015- 2,600 bottles
 - 3 Hectares (yield 35 Hl/Ha), trellised, experiments w/ bushvines
- California
 - 1983 donated to the National Clonal Germplasm Repository
 - 2011 achieved provisional status and now available at Yuba Nursery
 - Tryphon Vineyards in Sierra Foothills is first to plant

Can they rival Santorini?



Thank You!
-mrashap@societyofwineeducators.org



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