

A WORLD *of* **SPARKLING WINES** *for* **SUMMER**

# Wine & Spirits

## ROSÉ EXPLOSION

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# GREECE

Our ur blind panels tasted **215** new-release wines from Greece for this issue. **Tara Q. Thomas**, our critic for Greek wines, rated **80** as exceptional (90+) and **28** as Best Buys. Find a complete list of wines tasted and all reviews at [wineandspiritsmagazine.com](http://wineandspiritsmagazine.com).

## SPARKLING

**91 | Vassaltis** \$39  
**Greece PetNat** This savatiano *pét-nat* tastes more like a wine from Santorini, where it was made, rather than from Attica, where it was grown. The wine captures sunny richness in its fruit, as well as salinity and chalky minerality to scrub it away. With its gentle bubbles and bright acidity, “this is everything you want in a *pét-nat* but cleaner, more precise,” said Chris Struck of *Ilili* in NYC. Winemaker Ilias Roussakis ships the refrigerated juice over from the mainland; toward the end of fermentation, he bottles the wine and holds it in gyropalettes for six months. Then he disgorges it, topping up with dry wine and sealing it under a crown cap. The unusual vinification gives a clean, fine wine. *Diamond Importers, Chicago, IL*

## ISLAND WHITES

### CEPHALONIA

**95 | Sclavos** \$38  
**2019 Robola of Cephalonia Lacomatia** Phylloxera didn’t arrive on Cephalonia until 1998, so the island is still rich in old, own-rooted vineyards, like Lacomatia, biodynamically farmed by Evriviadis Sclavos and his partner, Spiros Zisimatos. The old bush vines reach an altitude of 1,800 feet, rooted in the limestone soils of Mt. Ainos. Winemaker Evaggelia Moraiti treats the fruit gently in the cellar, with ambient yeast fermentations in 1,500-liter foudres and 7 to 10 months on lees. Bottled unfiltered, with only a small sulfur addition, the result opens up new horizons for robola, a variety often considered simple. This is rich with fruit flavor, from golden raisin and honeyed apple to almond and mandarin, edged in notes of mountain herbs and saline acidity. For all its ripeness, it

feels fresh, crisp and detailed, delicious now and structured to age. *DNS Wines/T. Eleny Imports, NY*

**94 | Sclavos** \$26  
**2019 Robola of Cephalonia Vino di Sasso** Translated as “wine of stone”—what the Venetians once called the island’s wines—this lives up to its name in its saline, mineral flavors. The fruit is restrained but the wine feels rich and substantial with notes of lees, salt air, chalky soil and preserved lemon. It holds that intensity for days after opening, allowing a little more richness of fruit through as it relaxes, as it may with cellar time. *DNS Wines/T. Eleny Imports, NY*

**90 | Orealios Gaea** \$14  
**2020 Robola of Cephalonia R (BEST BUY)** With 300 members, this cooperative controls close to 85 percent of Cephalonia’s vineyards. Winemaker Kostas Bazigos focuses this cuvée on robola from old, own-rooted vines, and ferments the juice in stainless steel tanks. It’s ripe and gentle at first, with sweet apple flavors and a hint of fruit-skin tannins, until a tsunami of sea-air salinity flows over that soft fruit. The effect is sunny and mouth-watering, a wine built to take on rich cheese pies. *Verity, NY*

**90 | Sclavos** \$23  
**2019 Slopes of Aenos Tsaousi** From an 80-year-old own-rooted vineyard farmed under biodynamics, this wine is golden with concentrated apricot flavors. It’s rustic in texture, with some light, scratchy tannins contrasting the honeyed ripeness, but it’s completely compelling, with a seashell minerality and notes of lemon and bitter greens. Play that sweet-salty contrast off something with an element of sweet, like a Moroccan tagine. *DNS Wines/T. Eleny Imports, NY*

### CRETE

**91 | Malihin-Chryssos** \$54  
**2019 Rethymno Old Vines Amygdalos Vidiano** *Amygdalos* means almond, a tip-off to the character of this wine: It’s as smooth as the blanched nut, with a marzipan richness to its texture; it’s also herbal, floral and waxy, bringing Loire chenin blanc to mind. Give

it time in the glass and more detail comes up—orange, quince, heirloom apple—suggesting that this will get more expressive with a few years in the bottle. *DNS Wines/T. Eleny Imports, NY*

**90 | Douloufakis** \$31  
**2019 Crete Amphora Vidiano** Nikos Douloufakis was one of the first winemakers on Crete to take vidiano seriously, working to create something more complex than a vacation quaff. This cuvée is inspired by the ancient Cretan tradition of vinifying wines in *pithoi*—large earthenware vessels. Fermented without added yeasts and very little added sulfur, the wine spends about three months on the skins, and another two months in the *pithoi* before Douloufakis moves it into stainless-steel tanks. A cloudy orange color, the wine smells sweet, like oranges wrapped in caramel, but it’s completely dry, with savory notes of spiced walnuts and citrus, quince and stone. “You can feel the clay in the back of the palate,” noted Kamal Kouiri of *Molyvos* in NYC—a texture that brought to mind a pairing with a Cretan-style pasta dressed with sharp sheep’s milk cheese. *Diamond Importers, Chicago, IL*

**90 | Douloufakis** \$17  
**2020 Crete Dafnios Vidiano (BEST BUY)** First released in 2005, Dafnios set the bar for vidiano in Crete. Vinified in stainless-steel tanks, the wine shows off the variety’s broad, satiny texture, and fills it in with lots of spiced, honed apple and orange flavors. The 2020 has plenty of acidity and salinity to hold it firm and bring it to a clean close. *Diamond Importers, Chicago, IL*

### CYCLADES

**87 | Moraitis** \$16  
**2020 Cyclades Sillogi (BEST BUY)** Made on the island of Paros, this brings together the silky citrus-and-bergamot notes of malagouisia with the saltier, stricter structure of assyrtiko. Just off dry, it’s floral and easy-drinking, for aperitifs alongside crab salad. *V.O.S. Selections, NY*

### SANTORINI

**96 | Estate Argyros** \$90  
**2018 Santorini Cuvée Evdemon** Matthaïos Argyros chooses the fruit for this wine from biodynamically farmed vines in Pyrgos, the highest point on Santorini. Perhaps it’s the careful farming of vines now upwards of 150 years old, their long canes trained into basket shapes low to the ground to protect the fruit from the beating sun and wind: This wine