

## Forum Wine Report May 2023

In April we held only our third ever 'Unusual Wines' tasting. Past sessions have featured wines from more remote parts of the world (including India & China!), but this time we had an extended look at Greece, but with quick visits to Georgia and Romania. It would be fair to say that the opener, our **Georgian Tbilvino Quevris Rose 2020** (12% from M&S, cost £6.67) found little favour ('ghastly', 'undrinkable' to quote two members). It was however interesting to hear that this country has produced wine for at least 8,000 years, and that production methods include this wine being buried underground for months in Quevris (amphorae). By contrast our Greek Rose was much better received. The **Myrtia 2020** (12.5% from M&S, cost £8.00 down from £10), a blend of two Greek grapes, Moschofilero 80% & Assyrtiko 20%, was a crisp delight with its long refreshing finish: blended in the Peloponnese it made an excellent aperitif and quickly banished the memory of its Georgian counterpart.

We then moved on to our pair of whites wines both from Greece. Starting again in the Peloponnese we tasted Leonidas Nassiakos' **Moschofilero Reditis 2021** (12.5% and £8.50 from M&S). English buyers (Aldi and M&S in particular) have widened their range recently to include a number of Greek wines, and this blend, adding the Reditis grape to the Moschofilero met in the last wine, was a good, easy-drinking alternative to the more common similar citrus-flavoured examples from Italy and France. We spotted honey undertones here and a saltiness making it a good accompaniment for fish. Then we moved across the 'wine-dark' Aegean to the island of Crete to taste the **Armi Thrapsathiri 2020** (12.5% from Lewis & Cooper at a pricey £18.99): tasting this offered proof that sometimes you get what you pay for! This was a complex white wine, based on the Thrapsathiri grape, with a luscious immediate flavour, but one which then proceeded through various layers of complexity, each exquisite in its own right; an absolute revelation for what is, when all is said and done, an untrumpeted Greek wine!

That leaves our pair of reds to mention. Our last Greek offering was another blend, a **Xinomavro Mandilaria 2020** (13.5% from M&S at £9.50). This 'elegant but flavoursome blend' using Xinomavro grapes 'from the mountainous north' and Mandilaria grapes 'from the Aegean islands in the south' completed a quartet of more than acceptable Greek wines for this month. Smoother than one would expect given the so-so reputation of Greek reds, this one got the thumbs up from Roger, who was then equally impressed by our final wine, a Romanian red, **the Balla Geza Kadarka 2020** (14% from Lidl at £8.00). Dr Balla, the winemaker sends his wines out in a brown paper wrapping to emphasise the quality of his 'gift' to us all. Light in body, this was extremely fruity and provided a very positive end to a session that started unpromisingly in Georgia, improved through Greece and ended well in Romania.

There will be no meeting in May. The next session will be on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> June.

Tim Meacham 20/4/23.