

Grape Escapes



It is indeed surprising that wine tourism in Greece has taken this long to ferment into a fruitful alternative holiday experience. But all is not lost. It has been gaining a steady, loyal following among locals as well as tourists who want to imbibe Greece's liquid gold. Athens Insider suggests two destinations that will quench your Greek wine curiosity, Fantoxometocho in Crete and Megalochori Santorini

THE PIONEERS:

In its 140-year history, the Boutaris have not just paved the way for other Greek wines to receive critical recognition by the extremely competitive international wine industry, they have also been pioneers in wine tourism with two of their wineries in Crete and in Santorini offering wine-drenched holidays throughout the year. The mission? That soon, names of indigenous Greek varieties like Xinomavro and Assyrtiko will roll as easily off the tongue as Chardonnay and Merlot.

THE VINEYARD:

The vineyard at Fantaxometocho, loosely translated as haunted by ghosts (spirits of a different kind have now taken up residence here!) is home to some unique Cretan wines, including Skalani and Fantaxometocho. Savour the Kotsifali, Syrah, Chardonnay, and Malvasia Aromatica varieties while here and come back for a degustation of the newly harvested Vidiano, Assyrtiko and Mavrotragano varieties which will be ready for tasting in two years.

WHERE TO STAY:

Scalani Hills Boutari Winery and Residence, managed by the Aria Group of Hotels, is an intoxicatingly charming retreat open from April to late daily from 9 am to 6 pm; November to March, with prior reservation. Three luxurious residences on the estate provide the perfect sanctuary to acquaint oneself with Greek wines and Crete's breathtakingly beautiful countryside. The rooms can be booked individually or as a group and sleep upto 8.

WHAT TO DO:

Drink: How can you feel guilty about drinking when it is all in the name of acquiring some wisdom? The Winery Tour & Wine Tasting session adds to the merriment of wine-tasting and turns into a learning experience – a bit like converting fat into muscle – what's not to like?

Eat: Tuck into local delicacies at Scalani Hills Restaurant, with a sumptuous view of the vineyard, followed by more wine, of course.

Do and See: Knossos is a mere 4 kms away!

BOOK NOW:

Rates: from 110 € per night (low season in residence for two persons) to 220 € per night (high season, to house up to four people). Prices include homemade breakfast with hearty regional cuisine, Winery Tour and taxes. Tel: 2810 731 899, 2810 731 617. Email : info@scalanihills.com or visit ariahotels.gr

