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## 16 best Greek wines

Whether it's from the mainland or one the islands, these are the bottles you need to try

Stacey Smith | Wednesday 27 December 2017 13:45 GMT | [🗨](#)



It's safe to say Greek wine is officially having a moment, and rightly so. The rugged landscape provides the perfect terroir for red, white, rose and even sparkling wines. With a rich history of wine-making, it may seem odd that it's only just started to gain momentum, however recent events such as the [Greek Wine Festival in London](#) have helped shine a light on the great grape varieties found in this part of the Mediterranean.

And it's not just the mainland that's in the spotlight. Islands like Santorini and Crete have received many awards for their wines. In fact, many of the white wines we've selected do very well on Greece's cooler islands, with vineyards that benefit from the strong winds and nightly drop in temperature. Expect the ashen soil to produce crisp, bone-dry wines with

excellent minerality and high acidity. The lush vineyards in Greece's north-western regions, meanwhile, produce velvety smooth reds which pair beautifully with food.

10 best alcohol-free drinks

14 best natural wines

12 best albariño wines

15 best malbec wines

So although Greek wine may still have some work to do before it can completely shake off its reputation for bad retsina, it's clear the region is worth taking notice of. And while your summer holiday may be a distant memory, it's never too late to get a taste of sunshine, right here in the UK. We'll be the first to admit we struggle to pronounce some of these names (especially after a glass or two) but don't let that put you off – the team at **Crummbs** have ensured this selection is much easier to drink than they are to say.

Cheers – or, as the Greek say, *gia mas!*

## **Thea Mantinia 2016 Seméli, 12%: £20, Roberson Wine**



This wine is gold in more ways than one – as well as its beautiful golden hue, it was awarded a gold medal at 2017's Decanter World Wine Awards. Semeli is a superb white wine, with a combination of stone fruit, floral aromas and refreshing minerality. It's left to age for six months, which results in a complex, rich taste, making it a great wine to drink by itself, but one that also pairs well with creamy pasta dishes. Produced in a vineyard in

Nemea – an ancient site in the north-eastern part of the Peloponnese – it was bought bang up to date with a state of the art winery built in 2003, blending the old traditions with new techniques to wonderful affect.

**Buy now**

## **Thymiopoulos Xinomavro, 14%: £11, Marks & Spencer**



Notoriously tricky to grow, the xinomavro grape (pronounced *ksee-NOH-mah-vroh*) is the base for this smooth-drinking biodynamic red, from north-west Greece. And what a fine example it is. Bursting with ripe juicy fruit – think blackberries, damsons and gooseberry – it's finished with a touch of spice. We'll be drinking this fragrant bottle of wine throughout the winter months with roast lamb and cheese boards – ideally next to a roaring fire.

**Buy now**

## **Domaine Karanika Brut Cuvee Speciale Xinomavro , 11.5%: £23.50, Maltby & Greek**



Probably the best Greek sparkling wine your money can buy, this is made by a Dutchman in northern Greece from 100 per cent xinomavro grapes and is both organic and biodynamic – with no sulphites, your hangover shouldn't be quite as severe. An elegant alternative to champagne, expect to find it full of fine bubbles, punchy strawberries and cheery with a toasted nuttiness, balanced by fresh citrus and stone fruit. Refreshing yet rich and creamy, this makes for an excellent aperitif.

**Buy now**

**Domaine Lyrarakis Okto Red, 13%: £11.95, Berry Bros & Rudd**



If you haven't tried Cretan wine before, this is a good place to start. It's a blend of grapes – kotsifali, syrah and mandilari – and Greece's largest island is home to all three, which you'll find grown in the mountains, 500m above sea level. The result is an aromatic red with fresh red berries and an excitingly spicy, peppery twist. Its impressive full character means it stands up well to rich meat dishes. There's also an easy-drinking white in the range, but we'd recommend saving that for some sunshine.

**Buy now**

**Kir Yianni Ramnista 2013, 14.5%: €16.40 (plus shipping from €14), Greece and Grapes**



Kir Yianni is a prominent producer in the world of Greek wine, renowned for its progressive wine-making. This is a lip-smackingly intense red that works very well with steak and game. Expect an aromatic blend of jammy tomato, cherries and strawberries with a smooth-as-silk smoked finish. This full-bodied beauty was recently awarded a silver medal in the Decanter 2017 awards.

**Buy now**

**Hatzidakis Santorini Assyrtiko, 13.5%: £17.80, Trouva**



Here's another fresh and minerally bone-dry white wine from the volcanic island of Santorini. As you'd expect from the assyrtiko grape, there's a palate-tingling acidity but you'll also find a softened, baked honey element to balance the citrus lift. It's delicious on its own, but it's also worth trying it with freshly grilled seafood or halloumi alongside crisp salad – this refreshing white will cut through any saltiness in the food.

**Buy now**

**Boutari Legacy 1879, 14%: £29.17, The Drink Shop**



Although at the pricier end of the spectrum, this punchy red warrants the price tag. Aged for 12 months in French oak barrels for a smoked vanilla flavour, you'll also be able to taste roasted nuts, cocoa and juicy red fruit. A

real pleasure to drink, this velvety, full-bodied red can be enjoyed alone or teamed with tomato based dishes and barbecued meat.

**Buy now**

## **Douloufakis Winery Dafnios White Vidiano 2016, 13.5%: £14.50, Maltby & Greek**



Produced in one of the four PDO (protected designation of origin) regions of Crete, vidiano is an indigenous grape, gaining popularity due to its reputation for its excellent, distinctive taste. This was one of the more buttery whites we sampled, with a full, round body. You should get apricot and orange on the nose. As you'd expect, it's delicious with chicken.

**Buy now**

## **Markovitis Xinomavro Naoussa 2012, 13.5%: £16.70, Honest Grapes**



Located in Naoussa in Northern Greece, near the border of Macedonia, Markovitis was the very first organic wine producer in Greece. The xinomavro (meaning "acid-black") grapes used are aged in old chestnut barrels, which results in a complex aroma full of gooseberry with hints of olives, spices and dried tomatoes. Expect a grippy tannin (which will dry the mouth) with a lot of body. We expect this will age well.

**Buy now**

**Alpha Estate Rose Xinomavro 2016, 13%: £18.80 for 75cl, Maltby & Greek**



Alpha Estate is one of the most well-respected wineries in Greece, producing some amazing full-bodied red wines from xinomavro grapes



which can be likened to a nebiollo or pinot noir. Its rosé, from the 2016 vintage, is the first one to be 100 per cent xinomavro-based and has a distinctive, vibrant, salmon-pink hue. You should be able to smell faint rose and juicy strawberries with a slightly spicy finish, making it a great choice with chilli based dishes.

**Buy now**

### **Porto Carras Chateau Porto Carras 2007, 13.5%: €12.90 (plus shipping from €14), Greece and Grapes**



Made from a blend of French bordeaux and Greek limnio grapes, the Porto Carras is a deep purple colour, rich with ripe fruit, spice and smoke and with a touch of chocolate and vanilla. Full yet smooth, its long finish makes it ideal for more complex red meat dishes, spicy tomato sauces and aged cheeses.

**Buy now**

### **Papagiannakos Retsina 2016, 12%: £9, The Greek Larder**



We couldn't bring you a round-up of the best Greek wine without mentioning a retsina. This one is made traditionally with 100 per cent savatiano grapes and is best enjoyed in the sun with typical Greek dishes like fried zucchini with tzatziki, fried fish and stuffed vegetables. Pale yellow in colour, with the expected pine on the nose, it's an easy-drinking joy that will transport you to sunnier climes.

**Buy now**

**Junique Juniper and Wine, 17%: £32.50, Harvey Nichols**



We thought we'd throw a curve ball into the mix and introduce you to this Greek aperitif made with white wine and juniper extract. It's best enjoyed chilled but can be drunk either on its own, in cocktails or with a mixer such

as tonic or soda. If you're a fan of a Aperol Spritz or G&T, we think you'll like this.

**Buy now**

## **Gaia Wines Wild Ferment Assyrtiko, 13%: £26.50, The Greek Larder**



Made from those exceptional assyrtiko grapes from Santorini, this is a truly elegant white wine from one of Greece's most well-respected vineyards. "Wild Ferment" refers to the natural yeast used in production and the result is a fresh, lively aromatic wine with the minerality you'd expect and a touch of oak. It's a versatile wine that works as well with fish as it does with lamb.

**Buy now**

## **Domaine Hatzimichalis 2010 Alfega Greek Red Dry Wine, 14%: £17.49, Amazon**



This family-owned vineyard produces white, rosé and this beautiful, deep purple-hued red wine made from cabernet sauvignon, merlot and cabernet franc grapes. Aromatic and complex, we enjoyed the spicy, ripe dark fruits on the palette and the slight oak on the nose. It has strong tannins, so pair this with steaks, charcuterie or cheese.

**Buy now**

### **Kleftes Natural Savatiano Markou 2015, 12.5%: £13.50 for 75cl, Southern Wine Roads**



This organic and natural wine (made with low intervention) is created with rare savatiano grapes in the Koropi area, in Attica. Expect ripe peach and apricot with sweet rose and creamy biscuit. Medium-bodied, it's not as dry

as some of the Santorini styles, but has a perfectly balanced acidity with an ever so slightly spicy aftertaste. Try it with shellfish.

[Buy now](#)

## The Verdict: Greek wines

We were delighted with the exceptionally high quality wines tasted from regions all over the mainland and Greece's islands. There truly is something for everyone here and it was a hard job narrowing it down. If you're a fan of dry white wines with perfect acidity and minerality, any bottle from Santorini should be top of your shopping list, while the reds were aromatic and smooth. Our top pick has to go to [Thea Mantinia 2016 Seméli](#), which was both easy to drink, but just a little bit different. It's a memorable wine that's worth spending a little more on.

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