



Catching up with Dionysos

It was exactly a year ago when the friends of the ArtExchange were introduced to Greece as a “renascent” wine producing country (see the newsletter at: www.artexchange-greece.com/aenews-3pdf). For the last quarter century, an increasing number of small, independent artisan producers have been making wines worthy of Dionysos’ benevolence. Let us not forget that it all started in Greece, when Dionysos – this eccentric, wily, temperamental but so fabulously socially sensitive God – revealed his secret of wine making to the peasant *Icarius* and his daughter *Erigone*. The secret of wine making was bestowed as a token of appreciation for the hospitality extended to the wandering God. Now that was a gift that keeps on giving!!

A recent perusal of the summer editions of food and wine magazines uncovered three,¹ no less, that have devoted space to Greek wines and/or food. But if you do not reside in New York, Montreal or Toronto, cities flush with occasions to sample and buy some of the reviewed wines, then you might think that you are destined to merely dream of partaking in the great god’s blessings to mere mortals!



With the Greek Women of Wine at the Ktima Kyr-Yanni in Yanakohori, Naoussa, Macedonia. Its owner Yiannis Boutaris, a “rebel with a cause” in the current revival of excellence in Greek wines, is second from the left standing

Despair no more! The ArtExchange has kept in close step with Dionysos and his modern day descendants for quite some time. Not only that, we are about to embark on a journey to re-trace some of the places where Dionysos has left his mark—not as a history lesson, mind you, but as a means of sharing in his “blessings!” We’ll visit the small estates that have been the true descendants of the quirky god, and hear the winemakers’ stories of “taking up” from where the gods left off. While we sit around dinner tables laden with local delicacies, Nico Manessis² will bring to life – with his truly inspired (by Dionysos, of course) manner – the history as well as the folklore of the fine art of wine making.



With Nico Manessis at the Assimina Fragou Estate in Spata, Attica

Check out our up coming fall journey “In the Footsteps of Dionysos,” where the focus will be on experiencing first hand the fabled wines of Greece. The ArtExchange is clearly a new way to experience Greece. We hope you will join us this fall for the proper libations to the God who loved us mortals above all.

¹ *Wine Tidings* (May-June 2001), *Wine & Spirits* (August 2001), *Wine Access* (July-August 2001)

² To get your own copy of Nico Manessis’ *The Illustrated Greek Wine Book*, a must have book for all oenofiles, contact Olive Press at olivepress@ath.forthnet.gr. Jancis Robinson – of the *The Oxford Companion to Wine* fame – has written about this book: “If only every country had a guide as useful and reliable as this”....or “worth the price of the whole trip” as some of our participants have said.