



Welcome To SIP, our new regular column devoted to every delicious thing we can sip; wines, cocktails and non alcoholic delights.

Written by our journalist Maroulla Paul who is a self confessed nerd when it comes to wines and spirits. Maroulla has WSET Wines and Spirits Level 3, WSET Sake Level 1 and Capstone Level 1 (so far!)



THE ART OF FINE WINE

It's a balmy Saturday evening in Kedaes, a sleepy village in Cyprus, at the foothills of the Troodos mountains; a place where you rarely see a car, a person or - truth be told - anything. But tonight there are traffic jams worthy of London or LA; people buzzing in greater abundance than the mosquitoes and instead of the usual air of peace there is an energy of excitement and anticipation.



The occasion is the launch party of the 5th vintage of Yartambellos wine - a totally exquisite Cinsault varietal which is the most perfect drink for the hot climate. Yes, it's a red (unlike the usual rosés made from this grape) but it's light, best served chilled and just utterly quaffable. But be warned, this wine is deceptive, coming in at 13.5% ABV.

Yartambellos is the baby of glass artist and native Cypriot, Yorgos Papadopoulos and his partner in crime (business and life) Arjen De Neve. Yorgos inherited a home in Kedares from his grandfather and this came together with an orange orchard and a vineyard.

Sadly, the vines had been neglected and villagers encouraged the pair to dig them up and replace them with more lucrative fruit trees. But no, why take the easy road? Yorgos and Arjen worked long and hard to bring the vines back to healthy, fruit bearing life and collaborated with Marinos Ioannou, the winemaker from the well known Nelion winery to create Yartambellos.

The name is an amalgamation of the Greek word yerambellos; meaning old vineyard and art which is Yorgos's day job (his life, in reality) and something he is obsessively passionate about. As with everything Yorgos

creates, Yartambellos is an art form in itself, a truly fine wine in a bottle where the label is a piece of art he specially designed.

Marinos's own wines - under the Nelion label - are all masterpieces. He is winning awards left, right and centre for them and deservedly so. He has three expressions of the indigenous xinisteri which showcase the skill of the man as each is completely different and equally delicious. He also makes a pet nat, a rose, reds and dessert wines including an aged chardonnay which will leave your tastebuds dancing with joy.

Over the five year journey with Yartambellos, Marinos, together with Yorgos and Arjen have worked to make as perfect a Cinsault varietal as is humanly possible. This is in keeping with Marinos's philosophy - while the world has swung from an era of maximum intervention and doing huge amounts to force a wine to be something specific to minimum intervention and natural where you could end up with vinegar, Marinos believes in working with not against the grape to make it the best it can possibly be; no more no less.

Yartambellos is fresh fruit; strawberries sing out. Maybe some cherry, and berries. There is a backdrop of pepper and spice. It is smooth; very. No obvious tannins and no hit of alcohol; a perfectly balanced wine that has been achieved with just the right amount of wine making.

In addition to the original version, there is a casked version which adds another dimension and moves this wine from a light summer drink (perfect for the Cyprus climate) to a more conventional red. The richness is magnified and the spices highlighted. But the fruit is still there - both fresh and also dried. It is delicious. On Saturday, 18th May 2024, 150 people gathered to taste the 2023 vintage in the most spectacular setting of the vineyard which was adorned with stratified jewels (as Yorgos describes his glass artworks) hanging amidst the vines and glistening in the setting sun. The entire scene was magical; a saxophonist played; dancers (including Yorgos) performed the tango, food was abundant and the Yartambellos flowed.

Yorgos even gave a demonstration of his glass making process; watching how he shatters the glass to in essence destroy it

from one form and then recreate it into something more beautiful than before is akin to watching a magician at work.

The art is defined by themed collections where Yorgos's Greek roots shine through. There is a range of 'icons' - some which combine different religions, bringing together the Orthodox church with Hinduism as one example; a powerful message in today's fragmented world. Another collection is based on the 'mati'; a Greek superstition whereby people keep a symbol of an eye on their bodies or in their homes to ward off evil spirits. Yorgos's take is eyes to attract good things rather than deflect bad; think eye of confidence, eye of acumen, eye of patience..... These stunningly exquisite pieces literally soak up light and they glisten like jewels. Breathtaking.

While sipping wine in the idyllic setting of the vineyard at the launch party, I was surprised to stumble upon someone from the legal world amidst the guests; the eminent Constantine Partasides KC. For anyone who may not know Constantine, he is an arbitration guru. He began his career at Freshfields LLP where he trained and remained for 20 years. In 2004 he became a partner and led the arbitration team. He left in 2017 to launch Three Crowns LLP with five others. Three Crowns was the world's first global arbitration firm, one that does nothing but arbitration. They have five offices around the world with over 80 lawyers. They are counsel, so they both represent and do the advocacy for clients in high value, high stakes arbitration around the globe. They work for multinationals against states, against other multinationals, and vice versa.

What brought Constantine to Kedaars to taste wine and look at art? Apart from being two Greek Cypriots, it seems initially Yorgos and Constantine are in two very distinct worlds. It transpires that they met around 15 years ago when Yorgos collaborated with Constantine's father, who is a renowned photographer, in an exhibition in London.

Constantine immediately fell in love with Yorgos's art which he thought was "just unique, I have never seen anything like it, before or since."

The two became friends and this was sealed for life when at his silk party Yorgos took his fedora off his head and put it on Constantine's daughter's - she had been eyeing it longingly all evening!

Constantine is a collector of Yorgos's art and they are displayed in his homes in London and Paros. One has a quote about natural law from Aristotle which sits in Constantine's office at home; perfect subject matter. There is also a piece of Yorgos's art in Three Crowns' reception and about this Constantine says;



"It is a striking antidote to the interchangeable and anonymous corporate art that confronts clients at too many law firms."

As well as being a firm fan of the art, Constantine is quite partial to a glass or two of Yartambellos too. Having worked in Paris for almost a decade he confesses to have become a wine snob.

"I went from thinking that wine was just something sour you drink too much of at parties as a student to appreciating what an extraordinary and living drink it is. I know French wine in particular so am familiar with Cinsault - the grape Yorgos has given life to in the Paphos hills - it is a really refreshing summer red, perfect with good company which is how I have always tasted it at Yorgos's vineyard."

If Yorgos has any fault, it is that he is a perfectionist, quite obsessive about every little detail. This is exemplified in both his art and in the wine; both are faultless. But his fault is our gain; and we get to experience perfect wine and art - what a combination.

"After moving back to Cyprus I have been searching my roots deeper. I wanted to express the huge wealth the ancient Greek philosophers brought to Western civilisation. To this purpose I used the decadence of gold leaf. In "Throughout the wide-ruling sky" I quote from Aristotle's Rhetoric where he touches on the subject of the natural origins of law. Being a free spirit, the quote seemed appropriate. But it really came about because of the endless discussions with my lawyer husband. That the work was rented by a City law firm shows how nature makes its wonders." *Yorgos Papadopoloulos* ■

For more information about Yartambellos wines or Yorgos's artworks,
contact Yorgos
+35799352560
www.yartambellos.com
www.yorgos.studio

For more information about Nelion wines visit
nelionwinery.com

Marinos's own wines - under the Nelion label - are all masterpieces. He is winning awards left, right and centre for them and deservedly so.

