



CYPRUS  
**WINE**  
ROUTES

*cheers along!*

## **Come - tour, taste and enjoy!**

Wine is not a new story for Cyprus. Recent archaeological excavations which have been undertaken on the island have confirmed the thinking that this small tranche of earth has been producing wine for almost 5000 years. The discoveries testify that Cyprus may well be the cradle of wine development in the entire Mediterranean basin, from Greece, to Italy and France.

This historic panorama of continuous wine history that the island possesses is just one of the reasons that make a trip to the wine villages such a fascinating prospect. A second important reason is the wines of today - finding and getting to know our regional wineries, which are mostly small and enchanting. Remember, though, it is important always to make contact first to arrange your visit.

The third and best reason is the wine you will sample during your journeys along the “Wine Routes” of Cyprus. From the traditional indigenous varieties of Mavro (for red and rosé wines) and the white grape Xynisteri, plus the globally unique Koumandaria to well - known global varieties, such as Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon and Shiraz. Let’s take a wine walk. The wine is waiting for us!









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## A long story...

The human, cultural and gastronomic customs and traditions of the vine and wine do, indeed, go back a long time in Cyprus, to the times of ancient Egypt and early civilisations in neighbouring areas. Belief that Cyprus has had one of the very oldest wine industries of the world was proven by the recent excavations of the noted archaeologist Dr. Maria Belgiorno, from Italy. Her findings confirmed what many experts had long suspected, that the vine and wine-making had flourished on this island since at least 3500 BC, five and a half thousand years ago. The most up-to-date equipment and techniques were used to establish that grape seeds in two wine vessels excavated in Pyrgos, were more than 5,000 years old. And then, in Erimi village, the archaeologists unearthed 18 vessels, 12 of which had been used for wine, dating from 3500 - 3000 BC. This priceless cultural heritage is the oldest in the Mediterranean and proves beyond doubt that Cyprus is the cradle of oenological development throughout the Mediterranean basin, from Greece to Italy and France and all other corners where there was vine and wine-making activity in ancient times.

Cyprus is littered with the story of its wine history, visible in many ways. From Greco - Roman times are the colourful and exciting mosaics in Pafos and elsewhere, whose

tableaux demonstrate more than one aspect of wine making and consumption (even excess!) including the god Dionysos. Archaeological relics, ancient depictions on mosaic and other items give way to the practical, like the ancient wine presses in Omodos, Laneia and elsewhere, and the enormous "Amphora" (terra cotta jar) dated by their makers. The Greek for these is Pithari and Pitharia (plural) and they are a very visible component of old winemaking in Cyprus. All these, and the simple tools for crafting the vineyards and the equipment for making wine used by our forebears, can be found in museums and collections small and large all over Cyprus. They are the remarkable testimony of our wine heritage.

At Laneia, which is not far from the Koumandaria villages, the old wine press is in close proximity to two huge clay vessels (used until quite recently for fermenting wine), which are clearly dated 1844. This is an interesting coincidence because it is the year that Cyprus's first contemporary wine company, ETKO Ltd., was founded by the Haggipavlou family. The vine press is of unique pan-Hellenic design and is unaltered since its making and in working order. This makes it a particularly precious item of Cyprus wine history...

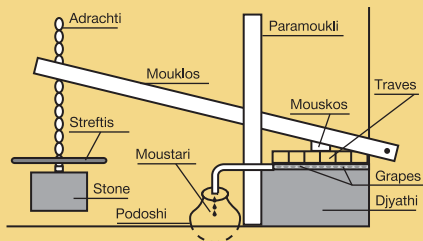
Omodos is a large busy village with considerable archaeological interest and it is also one of the most important wine villages

of Cyprus, surrounded by vineyards and with four wine - making enterprises. Here, too, there is a very old wine press, that has been declared an Ancient Monument and belongs to the Department of Antiquities. The press and the building housing it, have been rebuilt and restored.

Before electricity, every process was carried out by humans or domesticated animals. The olive press, and the pumps at water wells, were powered by donkeys. Wine was pressed either by the feet of the winery workers or pressed by various devices made of seasoned wood. In this stone building, dominated by an arch similar to the one at the Monastery of Timios Stavros (Holy Cross) not far away, is a very large example. Its operation depended upon a crew of three or more people - to load the grapes (and later, after pressing, remove the debris), manipulate the press and organise the flow of juice. It was a complex and tiring operation, today replaced by electrically powered metal machinery of considerable sophistication.



**LINOS - GRAPE MANUAL COMPRESSOR**



An old wine press, of which there is a very good example in Fikardou village, having been maintained by the Department of Antiquities since 1988.

## Laona - Akamas

Pafos, Mesogi, Tsada, Stroumpi, Kathikas, Akourdaleia,  
Pano Arodes, Kato Arodes, Ineia, Drouseia, Polis Chrysochous,  
Pegeia, Pafos

### CREATING THE MOOD TO EXPLORE!

This route follows age-old pathways in the north-western department of Cyprus. It offers some uniquely interesting vistas, not merely those associated with vines and wines. Whilst exploring this area, the touring lover of food and wine will have the opportunity to visit five wineries and to try some most interesting wines, which they will find add to our Cyprus food on their palate. There are plenty of tavernas along the way, where the hosts will ensure they do not disappoint. The bonus, however, is that as well as tickling the taste buds and satisfying our needs for food and drink, there is a remarkable panorama of scenery, cultural, geographic and geological interest spread out, of which there is nothing similar on the island.

Generally speaking we shall travel along secondary roads, mainly on the E701 and E709. The road ascends steadily, passing from the cultivated fields, shrubs and bushes to taller vegetation and the crowning glory of the patch worked fields of vines. One fascinating vista follows another as we weave our way upwards through delightful valleys and views to the forest areas. And then,

almost unexpectedly, we come to tiny villages which figure the landscape from time to time - the area is sparsely populated and this, perhaps, is a contributory factor to create the lovely rustic, rural atmosphere...

Nature's crowning glory of this particular vines and wines region is the Akamas Peninsula. Away from building development, it is the unspoilt area of Cyprus, with its flora and fauna rooted in the mists of time. In the set of the land, its close association with the sea, in its vegetation and wild life, Akamas is a wondrous place. Here the visitor can immerse themselves in simply experiencing the beauty and revel in the timelessness of the place. The traveller, perhaps replete from Cyprus hospitality with its ever-ready supplies of food and drink, can enter here another world, a perfect antidote to the pleasures of the table.





## GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

The paths we take in the Akamas peninsula quickly demonstrate what a unique place it is, with much more than the superficial views to see, lovely though they are. For anyone interested in geology, vegetation and wild life, it is a place where time spent rewards the visitor. The relatively peaceful environment and the charm of many rural buildings ensure that the route is a pleasure for the walker and lover of birds, insects and plant growth. And, needless to say, almost wherever we go we encounter vines, vines and more vines. Along our route we shall find five wineries we can visit.

**Climate:** From sea level, the land rises to hilly undulations of 450 to 600 m altitude. Annual rainfall is about 620 millimetres. The climate is generally mild.

**Terrain:** Most vine yards on this route grow on limestone formations while some, on gypsum - clay beds.

• **Vineyards:** The region of Kathikas is best known for white varieties, mainly the indigenous Xynisteri. Most of the villages on the route are classified with the "Controlled Denomination of Origin" (WCNO) "Laona - Akamas". Nineteen grape varieties are cultivated:

• **White varieties:** Plant X Malvasia G., Plant X, Sauvignon Blanc, Riesling, Semillon, Chardonnay, Muscat, Xynisteri.

• **Red varieties:** Mavro, Ofthalmo, Carignan, Mataro, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Alicante B., Grenache, Shiraz, Merlot, Lefkada, Maratheftiko

This route follows age-old pathways in the north-western department of Cyprus.





## THE ROUTE

We start our journey northwards on the B7 road to Polis. After a very short drive (about 5 km) and while still surrounded by shops, showrooms, businesses of all descriptions and residences, we make our first stop. We turn off left, at Mesogi, into the Industrial Estate, where, near the top of the area we find one of the foremost wineries of Cyprus, that of “FIKARDOS”. One of the first regional producers, established in 1990, owner Theodoros inherited the family traditions of winemaking, adding to them state-of-the-art equipment and modern know-how in planning, production and marketing. Although owning no vineyards of his own, he has long-term contracts with local grape-growers and a deep understanding of wine-making.

This has resulted in a sustained and reliable flow of many grape varieties, enabling the winery both to experiment and to produce a large range of table wines.

The grapes “FIKARDOS” Winery uses are the red Maratheftiko, Lefkada, Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and the white Xynisteri, Chardonnay and Semillon. Fikardos offers both “varietals” (made from just one grape variety) and blends of several grape varieties. When visiting, taste across the range, such as the “Valentina” rosé, the white “Amalthia” and “Alkisti” and the red Shiraz. The winery is open to visitors every day and offers a very good perspective of the wine-making capabilities of this area. Across the main road from the Industrial Estate you can find the nice little village of Mesogi, which is well known for making cane baskets. You can buy them from the local shops if you wish.

Before we continue our wine exploration, we can make an interesting side visit to an important site, the Monastery of the Cypriot Agios Neofytos the Recluse. Take the turning sign-posted off the B7 at the top of Mesogi. Drive through the village of Tremithousa through an area of considerable natural beauty that leads to a winding road through a deep

verdant valley. The monastery is in a beautiful location at an altitude of 412 metres. The site is enhanced by a marvellous paved square, surrounded by sycamore, cypress and poplar trees. The Chapel, carved out of the rock in which the hermit saint (1134-1214) lived, is well preserved and may be visited.

After this, we return to the B7 and continue in a northerly direction to the village of Tsada. It's a picturesque place, with both traditional and modern buildings sitting comfortably together, with charming walks through the small streets. The stone-built fountains, by the names of Gerolakkos, Rodkias and Pyadkia, have a folklore beauty. What makes the stop even more pleasant is the exceptional views across the vines and plantations to the sea. Tsada is one of the important viticultural villages of the region.

Now to continue our travel, the well made road up to Stroumpi twists and turns, with scenic views upwards and down into gorges.

## Organising a Winery Visit

On any of the Wine Routes set out in these pages, you are never more than 15 minutes by car from a winery that has visitor facilities. For example, in Koilani Village there are no less than four producers within walking distance. Omodos and Vasa have another five between them. There are very few isolated wineries, just a couple in the Lefkosia District, so it's not difficult to plan an itinerary to suit your wishes. It is important to bear in mind that many wineries have a small number of staff, so it is best always to telephone to fix the day and time of your visit.





Stroumpi is at an altitude of 450 metres, and, not surprisingly, it is deeply involved in vines and wine.

Anyone accustomed to large open flatlands planted with millions of vines is often surprised at Cyprus's many tiny vineyards frequently planted on steep slopes, which are often inaccessible to any form of vehicle, necessitating the use of donkeys or mules to bring out the grapes at harvest time. More than a thousand of these animals are still working on the island.

Here the predominant grape varieties are the Mavro -red and Xynisteri -white. The Mavro, a low-acid grape, is being phased out, with high-acid local and well-known international varieties planted in its place. Every year, in August, Stroumpi organises the "Dionysia" Grape Festival. If you are visiting at that time, it's a good event to go to. In walking around Stroumpi you may see a number of interesting churches, old and new, small and large and all of some architectural, historical or religious interest.

One kilometre from Stroumpi, on the road to Polemi, lies the "KAMANTERENA" Winery of the big Co-Operative organisation SODAP. It is the largest wine production plant in Cyprus, built in 2004. A large functional building with thoroughly modern equipment and with rows of almond trees and vineyards outside, a range of successful wines is made

here. Millions of bottles of its "Islands Vines" are exported to Britain every year, and a number of interesting varieties and blends (such as Riesling-Xynisteri) are made. The well established medium-priced "Mountain Vines" (the red based on mostly Cabernet Sauvignon and the white on Xynisteri with a little Semillon) are worth trying.

SODAP is also installing a museum showing old grape cultivation and wine-making equipment and machinery, as well as a modern tasting room, a restaurant / cafeteria and other amenities for the wine visitor.

At Polemi village, a few kilometres to the eastward, is the next winery on our itinerary, "TSALAPATIS WINES". This is a moderately sized modern plant, making 100,000 bottles a year of quality wines. Grapes come from 30 acres of privately owned vineyards. In the naturally cool below-ground wine 'caves' you can taste and buy from a small but interesting range: Xynisteri, of course, but also Sauvignon Blanc and a red blend of Mataro and Lefkada.

We continue our travel north-westerly and one kilometre after Stroumpi we leave the B7 and take a left street turn (E7 11) for Kathikas. On the way, through mellow vine-strewn countryside, we can take a side-trip to the right to the tiny village of Theletra (200 residents) and on the same road another hamlet called Giolou, where there is a small restaurant. You will remember the wine you



drink with your meal, but most especially the fresh bread that accompanies the food!

And so to Kathikas, set in a rolling patchwork of vineyards, trees, dry stone walls and agricultural activity. It is a pretty area with plenty of photo opportunities.

Spreading out from a central square housing its Church, the little streets of Kathikas enchant the walking visitor with small village houses, family-run shops selling local produce, as well as good places to eat. Kathikas has two wineries. Both, in different ways, are worth a visit.

"K&K VASILIKON WINERY" has an excellent reputation for its two popular staple wines. The white wine, "Vasilikon" is made from 95% Xynisteri and 5% Semillon. It is fresh, fruity and ideal with locally caught fresh fish and seafood. The red "Ayios Onoufrios", blended from Mavro, Mataro, Cabernet Sauvignon and Grenache, is a best-seller. The Kyriakides brothers, who started the winery in 1993, now produce more than 300,000 bottles a year. Their wines are made largely from grapes grown in their own vineyards, in a modern purpose-built plant faced in stone and with tiled roof to blend into the local rural environment. Visitors are welcome by appointment and may taste the wines and tour the winery.

On the other side of the village you find "STERNA" winery, a very popular tourist destination, where many people happily sit outside the front door or on the terrace sampling the wines and enjoying local food. Here the cave is a very genuine one, said to be around 2,000 years old, where Sterna wines are stored. At weekends your guide could well be the son of the producer, the ten year old Panagiotis! The north-eastern view from the enormous balcony of the winery is stunning. The range features pungent, earthy wines which suit the local pork and sausage specialties. The Xynisteri goes well with grilled fish. The grapes which make these unique products are from 140 acres of privately owned vineyards.

The sun moves across its arc and reminds the traveller it is time to move on and see more. In short we motor on to the viticultural area Laona - Akamas! So, we leave Kathikas behind us and after two kilometres we take the small road to our left that leads to several picturesque villages. Stops to just gaze and take in the scenery are called for, with lots of photo chances, too. A cup of the traditional Cyprus coffee, with its attendant glass of cool water, is also a good idea -to help digest what we have eaten and drunk so far, and to clear our organs of taste and smell and our appetites for delights to come.

Firstly we come to Pano Arodes village, characterised by well maintained stone - built houses and the renovated Church of Agios Kalantionas. In the square there is a pretty coffee shop at which to relax if you so desire and take in the local scene, which includes the residents. Locals, sometimes just sitting and talking, other times playing Tavli (Backgammon), seem to shout at each other and visitors may think they are arguing. But this is just the way people converse. But here there is space and bird-song to compensate for loud conversation!

One kilometre north, in Kato Arodes, we propose that you stand for a few moments and consider the white oblong vaulted Community Office, which reminds one of an 18th century church without a bell tower. Carrying on northwards we come to the village of Ineia, where the panoramic view to the sea is breathtaking. The slope shelves gently down to the coast of Akamas, where our turtles breed. In Ineia, the observant traveller will note that the local signs are old-fashioned, denoting the village as "Oinia", which indicates its origin from the Greek word for «Wine». Here you can visit a museum of basketry.

Just a little up the road is busy Drouseia, a large village, and a popular destination for tourists - Cypriots and visitors alike. Set in the rolling hills with lovely views in each direction, it is a great place for a weekend, with hotels and other accommodations, restaurants,



## **Don't take it down, it's no shame!**

Bearing in mind that you are in charge of a motor car and that wine consumption should always be made in moderation, if you plan to visit a number of wineries, it is advisable not to swallow all the wine you taste. In all the wineries on our Routes you will find receptacles for emptying your glass after tasting, and for expelling the wine when you have looked, sniffed, swirled and tasted.

tavernas and shops. Almost needless to say, there are vineyards all around, providing swathes of green throughout even the hottest summers. Among Drouseia's attractions is the Textile Museum.

Instead of taking the direct road to Polis out of Drouseia, we can go back to the E709 and cross it to visit Kritou Tera. "Park and Walk" is the motto here, as you will see when you encounter the narrow little streets of this traditional settlement with ample evidence of its long rural heritage. The water-driven mill, the old coffee shop with its murals and paved ways are things that will live in our memories as we turn back to drive the few kilometres to Polis.

There is plenty of choice here for an overnight or longer stay, when we can review the many sights and sounds we have encountered during the journey so far, the people we have encountered and the food and drink we have partaken. Polis is a modern coastal town with many tourist amenities, including water sports, sailing, fishing and sporting.

Then, when we are ready, we can return to Pafos, taking a right turn at Kathikas on to the E709 to bring us to Pegeia, a vibrant small town at the edge of the steep escarpment and the coastal road with its many hotels and restaurants.

## Zivania, the Sociable Spirit

Koumandaria is not the only indigenous drink of Cyprus. Our other national alcoholic beverage is a rural spirit that has its roots in the antiquities of distillation - the famed "Zivania".

In "The Good Old Days" most houses in a village would have their own still, to make Zivania. A properly made Zivania is actually an *Eau de vie*, on the lines of Italian Grappa or French Marc. The distillation process is quite simple. The equipment comprises:

- \* The kiln, which helps to heat up the system.
- \* The cauldron, which is usually made of copper or tin-plate.
- \* The pomace, where the residue of the pressed grapes to be distilled are placed inside with a certain amount of water or wine.
- \* The cover or lid, with which the cauldron is closed before it is hermetically sealed, usually with some dough, so that no losses are incurred.
- \* A copper pipe, which connects the main cauldron with the cooler.
- \* The cooler, usually a barrel or a reservoir, in which there is water in order to liquefy the distillate. Inside the barrel there is a hosepipe that ends up in a clay jug, where the distillate is collected.

To produce Zivania, wild bush are placed at the bottom of the cauldron so that the

pressed grape residue does not stick or burn. Once the cauldron is loaded and sealed, the copper pipe is connected and the wood is lit in the oven. When the liquid begins to flow the fire is reduced so that the distillation takes place at a steady pace.

The process then continues steadily, and the alcohol grades of the Zivania are often checked. When the distillate reaches about 16 grades, in other words 40% volume, it is collected in a different container. The flow of the so-called tails then begins, until the grades go down to zero. The tails are re-distilled with the next load. A good Zivania contains about 21 grades (49% volume).

What makes Zivania unique is the fact that it is produced exclusively from grapes and that «it is made with a simple, direct distillation of pressed-grape residues with or without clean wine sediments, and with or without wine...» in a simple still, with a concentration of ethyl alcohol very close to the permissible levels (52% max.). Therefore, the addition of water for thinning purposes is little or none.

You can drink Zivania as cold as you like, but it should never be consumed with ice-cubes. Its production used to be very much "home-based", but in recent times legal production is confined to licenced wineries and distilleries. Mention should be made of the Zivania made at Kykkos Monastery, where there is a unique "Red" variety which gains its colour from the addition of cinnamon and other spices. Since the 18th century it was offered as drink of welcome to visitors.





## WINERIES



### FIKARDOS WINERY

26949814, 26937439  
Mesogi



### KAMANTERENA SODAP

26633000  
Stroumpi



### TSALAPATIS WINES CO LTD

99624929, Polemi



### K & K VASILIKON

26633237, 26632520  
Kathikas



### STERNA WINERY LTD

99699082  
Kathikas



## TAVERNAS/ RESTAURANTS

### FARMA

26632745, 99421706,  
Kathikas, Pafos,  
[www.kathikasvillage.com](http://www.kathikasvillage.com)

### FOINIKAS

26332276, 26332336, 99458316  
Agiou Georgiou 10, Drouseia, Pafos

### IMOGENI

26633269, 26632954, 99618177  
Georgiou Kleanthous 33,  
Kathikas, Pafos

### KYPARISSOS

26633600, 99557545,  
Kathikas, Pafos

**YIANNIS KATHIKAS**

26633353, 99914067  
Georgiou Kleanthous 11  
Kathikas, Pafos

**LEMONARI**

26633434, 99420033  
Stroumpi, Pafos

**A. ARAOUZOS**

26632076, 99471540, 99186496  
Georgiou Kleanthous 17  
Kathikas, Pafos

**PETRADAKI**

26814191, 99596528  
Kato Vrysi 45, Kathikas, Pafos

**STATHMOS**

26332604, 99699182  
Akamantos 3, Drouseia, Pafos

**N.M. HADJIMORFOS**

26818919, 99341155  
Mesogi, Pafos

**KOUGIOUKAS NEROMYLOS**

99543619, 99626672  
Giolou







## Vouni Panagias - Ampelitis

Pafos, Mesogi, Tsada, Stroumpi, Polemi, Psathi, Kannaviou, Asprogia, Pano Panagia, Chrysorrogiatissa, Agia Moni, Statos - Agios Fotios, Koilineia, Galataria, Pentalia, Amargeti, Eledio, Agia Varvara or Statos - Agios Fotios, Choulou, Lemona, Kourdaka, Letymvou, Kallepeia

### VISIONS OF DIONYSOS AND WINE RIVERS...

If you have visited the Mosaics at Kato Pafos or have seen illustrations of them you will know of the early depictions of winemakers, wine drinking and drunkenness. In the "House of Dionysos" - God of wine, we can see King Ikarios holding the reins of two oxen that are drawing a cart loaded with wine. Mythology has it that Ikarios, encouraged by Dionysos, was the first human wine-maker. The mosaic of the first two "Wine drinkers" shows one with a jug of wine and the other distinctly the worse for wear....

All this demonstrates that drunkenness leading to violence has long been with us. The myth states that after the first wine drinkers had over-imbibed, they thought that Ikarios had tried to poison them, so they killed him. What it doesn't tell us is how the knowledge acquired by Ikarios as the first winemaker was passed on. Presumably, as the art and craft of winemaking spread and grew, he must have handed on the know-how before departing this life!

Indeed, in Cyprus as elsewhere, winemaking is an ancient activity, handed down from father to son for generation after generation. And, as we start to traverse the wine route "Vouni Panagias - Ampelitis",

we shall encounter many families long, long involved in wine.

Yes, there is tradition aplenty in Cyprus wine and there are many villagers who still make it in the old terracotta pots called Pithari (though mostly the wine is used for steeping pork meat used for the traditional Loukanika - sausages, and for distilling into the local *Eau-de-vie*, Zivania). Today's winemakers courteously lend an eye and an ear to the myths and traditions of wine in history, but their wineries house the most up to date, frequently computerised and nearly always temperature controlled equipment. And the winemakers are well trained, often having graduated in oenology from Universities in France, Greece, USA and elsewhere. There is also a worthy government-sponsored Vines and Wines Institute in Lemesos which has done marvellous work in the development of Cyprus wine. Our winemakers are young, charming, passionate about their work, friendly and hospitable.

Nevertheless, for the romantic, and for many a visitor, here legend meets reality... And there is more than vines and wine. Revel in the naturalness of the countryside with its diverse range of trees... oak, olives, walnuts, cypresses, pines and poplars and many more.



## GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

North-Eastwards from Pafos it is hilly and we can see the south-western ridges and peaks of the Troodos range. Open vistas of vineyards and other cultivation change as we wind our way upwards (as always on a good road), where groups of oak trees (*Quercus infectoria*) may be seen. In the north-eastern corner of this itinerary occur handsome and often dense pine woods. Sometimes the region is almost wild, so no wonder, it is home to plentiful wild life - plants, trees, animals and birds. It also offers us the chance to visit seven wineries.

**Climate:** The region reaches an altitude of 1,141 metres at its highest, which naturally brings higher rainfall than lower areas. The climate is mostly mild.

**Terrain:** Flanking the narrow valley alongside the river running through the area, the region's grounds possess a mostly clay to gypsum - clay structural composition.

**Grape Varieties:** Most of the villages of this way belong in the region of production "Controlled Denomination of Origin" (WCNO) "Vouni Panagias - Ampelitis". There are no less than 27 different grape varieties to be found, with substantial plantings of Carignan Noir and Cabernet Sauvignon. Among others present are Muscat of Alexandria and Palomino.

**White Grapes:** Xynisteri, Palomino, Malvasia L., Malvasia G., Ugni Blanc, Plant X., Sauvignon Blanc, Riesling, Semillon, Chardonnay, Sultana Malaga, Muscat of Alexandria

**Red Grapes:** Mavro, Ofthalmo, Maratheftiko, Lefkada, Carignan Noir, Mataro, Oellade, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Alicante B., Black Muscat, Grenache, Shiraz, Merlot

In this wine region, legend meets reality, as you travel ages old terrain, where wine has been made for thousands of years, to encounter the dedicated young oenologists making today's stylish Cyprus wines in 21st century wineries.





## THE ROUTE

From Pafos we take the B7, sign-posted to Polis, passing through the newly built suburban areas of the town, with their many shops, showrooms and businesses offering all kinds of furniture, furnishings, merchandise, foods and services. Turn for Tsada, pass by and drive a further 5 km, and then take a right turn to Polemi.

This is a moderate sized village of some 800 inhabitants. It's not really necessary to say there are vineyards all around! There are old rural dwellings amongst the new, too. A former religious establishment, called the "Metochi of Kykkos", is a building worth having a look at. Not long ago renovated and now a cultural centre for the village community, it's open every day and welcomes visitors. It boasts a charming garden. To find it you turn left before the school on the road leaving the village, and then follow the signs on your right. The village centre has cafés and shops.

Leaving Polemi the E703 takes a north-eastern direction, and after two kilometres, we reach Psathi. The village, surrounded by greenery, has a most favourable elevation, and overlooks the river Polis Valley. Naturally, there are vineyards here, too!

Just one kilometre further, in similar surroundings as Psathi, we come to Agios Dimitrianos, a smaller, but equally green village. Between the two settlements the "Arnies" nature trail commences. Three kilometres beyond, in the depth of the valley of the river of Ezousa, we come across Kannaviou village, with a panoramic view on the left. At the entrance to Kannaviou, at the river, there is a very old oak tree, and, opposite, the "EZOYSA" winery. It is a modern wine production facility built in 2003, which makes a range of wines from local grape producers.

## A Sip from an Old (or a New) Oak Barrel

One of the pleasures of getting to know a winemaker is that he or she is passionately proud of what is gurgling, slowly fermenting, or maturing in the stainless steel containers or wooden barrels in the winery. You will be offered a taste, according to season. Soon after harvest you can taste what is virtually grape juice, then partially fermented juice, then fermented juice and finally wine during various stages of maturation.

At its early stages before fermentation commences the juice or must is extremely sweet. As the sugars are consumed by the yeasts, the sweetness goes, to be converted into alcohol. At this time and in early fermentation the juice can have a decided spritz.

To let the fluid run across your tongue to reach all of its tasting areas is a wonderful part of getting to know wine. Here you can differentiate between grape varieties.

Moving from the winery into the cellar, it is even more interesting to chart the progress of a wine over weeks, months and especially in the case of red wines, years. It is at these times that the real wine experts can gauge how good the wine is going to be (and, consequently, how much it will be worth). In the cellar, too, you will learn to differentiate between wines maturing in different types of barrels, such as French, American and even Romanian oak. It is here that another layer of complexity can be given to a fine wine.



The owner and winemaker Michael Constantinides welcomes visitors and he has a comfortable tasting room in which to sample the wines. Michael makes around 50,000 bottles of wine a year, in five main styles, using both indigenous and international grape varieties. Recommended are: “Agios Chrysostomos”, a dry, fresh and fruity young white wine made from the Xynisteri grape; the crisp, dry, Maratheftiko rosé, “Eros” and the fragrant and rich berry-like Cabernet Sauvignon “Aenos”.

The winery isn't the only appealing thing about Kannaviou. It is a relatively big settlement for the region, with 250 residents. Just beyond the winery, there is a place to walk and relax by the river, whilst a further stroll up the street reveals the village's unique taverna. The nature study path, “Palloures”, starts at Kannaviou. It offers the nature-lover, student or expert a lot of plant life to see, note and enjoy... wild and cultivated plants and trees abound: vines, almonds, oranges, walnuts, olives, eucalyptuses and oaks, to name but a few.

Leaving the village in a northerly direction, and in sight of Kannaviou Reservoir, we make a small detour of four kilometres to our left to the pretty villages of Kritou Marottou and Fyti. As you might expect, these are long

established settlements, inheritors of the old and traditional ways of the countryside. Open spaces give way to lovely rural dwellings and green gardens. At Fyti the Church tops the village's little streets, all winding around the slopes. This is a super place for a stroll, providing you with a charming view of Kritou Marottou, Kannaviou and Agios Dimitrianos. Varied examples of architecture and building materials may be seen. Mostly, local stone is used in construction, and several types of single and double arches may be seen, as well as old roof tiling and mud-brick. After your walk, you can relax at the Fyti tavern, where you will find local people chatting over coffee, as well as Cypriots and foreigners who come for the excellent cooking of Maria and her helpers. The tavern was once the village school (alas now closed due to lack of pupils) and is 170 years old. A few metres up the street there is an interesting museum of Popular and Textile Art -textiles having been an important activity of Fyti.

Retracing our steps, we take a left turn out of Kannaviou and drive six km to Asprogia, a small vinicultural village close to the edge of the dense forest of Pafos. From here, the street





leads us to the most important destination of this route, Pano Panagia. The distance is short, but here we climb quite steeply, but as always the road is a smooth one. Just outside the village we find our next “Wine Stop”, at 850 metres altitude, the “VOUNI PANAGIA WINERY”.

This modern wine production plant, which has an active “Visitors Welcome” policy, is one of the largest regional wineries of Cyprus, with an annual production of more than half a million bottles. The panoramic view from its balconies is absolutely stunning, especially on clear days, covering a great portion of the Pafos district, north-westwards from Chrysochou Bay to the Akamas and the Laona heights, in a broad sweep south-east to the coast at Pafos Airport. At this point, too, rise the hills of “Vouni”, with the Monastery of Panagia Chrysorrogiatissa in sight. Here you will see many vineyards located at least a thousand metres above sea level -which is very good for the grapes, as well as the wine.

Established in 1987 in temporary premises as a family business, the “VOUNI PANAYIA” winery is now housed in a modern, custom-built plant which was designed to treat visitors too. The facilities include tasting and buying areas and a restaurant. Conducted tours demonstrate the capabilities of the wine - making equipment and take in the large and attractive cellars, where oak barrels and many thousands of bottles store the maturing wines.

The winery people also inform and entertain visitors with multi-media presentations in English and Greek, graphically describing vine-growing and wine-making processes. When the tour and presentations conclude, visitors may nibble local cheeses as they sample the range of wines and the local *Eau de vie*, Zivania.

Winemaking director Andreas Kyriakides uses both local and international grape varieties from neighbouring vineyards and produces a range of both high-volume and limited edition wines. From the staple range, try either the dry or medium-dry “Alina”, made from Xynisteri. The popular red “Plakota”, light and quite gentle, is an excellent summer wine, when it may be served slightly chilled. Andreas has also made interesting wines with the red Maratheftiko and other varieties.

Pano Panagia is less than a kilometre away from the winery. It is a large, picturesque village, with its traditionally stone built houses literally clinging to the steep slopes... It is the centre of the denominated wine region Vouni Panagias - Ampelitis and provides ample choice for all kinds of agro-tourism. The vineyards of the region grow no less than twenty five varieties of grapes.

Two kilometres from Pano Panagia, to our right, we come to the Monastery of Panagia Chrysorrogiatissa, which dates from 1152. Day-time visitors are welcome. After a fire in 1967 the monastery was fully restored. Fortunately the fire missed part of the church that is dated from 1770.

Wine has been made here for centuries, but its modern history started in the early 1980s when it was one of the first regional wineries to be given government approval for construction. German equipment and technology were used and this influence is evident in the style of the wines, which are made from grapes grown nearby at a considerable altitude. The winery is located in the lower areas of the monastery by the gardens and vineyards and you may see the whole sequence of manufacture, from grape crushing to bottling and storage. If you wish to visit, please make an appointment. There is also a shop at which the wines can be purchased. From the range, try the Xynisteri “Agios Andronikos” (which, in a good year, is one of Cyprus’s best whites) and the red blend, “Agios Elias”, made from local Mavro, Ophthalmo and Maratheftiko grapes.





Wine sold at their facilities is an important source of income for a number of wineries. "VOUNI PANAGIA" is one, and another is a short distance away at Statos-Agios Fotios - where a warm welcome awaits at "KOLIOS WINERY". Here, too, there are spectacular views, including the entire Ezousa Valley. On the ridges around the cliff-perched winery are the Kolios family's vineyards, at an altitude of about thousand metres. Provided a table reservation is made, very good Cyprus food can be had in the winery's little restaurant at lunchtimes. It is open daily except Saturdays. During construction, a natural spring was discovered, and now this is the source of some very pretty fountains. Winery tours are given in English and Greek, followed by wine and cheese tastings. Like all the wineries you visit you will find enthusiasm and passion for making good wine... and making it better every year - "KOLIOS" is no exception. Although many winemakers use the same grape varieties, each has his own style.

Here, try the fresh and fruity dry or medium dry white "Persephoni", the excellent rosé "Cornetto" (nothing to do with ice-cream!) and the well-blended red "Agios Fotios". If you have decided you want to investigate wines made from the high-acid and high tannin red Cyprus grape Maratheftiko, Kolios makes an estimable one.

You have a choice of where to go next... from Choulou and beyond, or to Statos-Agios Fotios itself, which is at the highest point of the Pafos district. There is much recent building here, dating from the 1970s, to provide new accommodation for the villagers of Statos and Agios Fotios, which had suffered problems with land subsidence. The new village is open, well planned and with plenty of space for gardens. At the Community Centre there is a coffee-shop and a taverna.

From Statos-Agios Fotios there are two routes we can take. One goes southwards to

Pentalia and the coast at Acheleia; the other, westwards to Choulou and lots of pretty villages, joining the main road at Tsada.

From here, taking the southwards road to Pentalia, we will soon come to a 180 degrees bend on our left. The road leading to the villages of Koilinia and Galataria starts here. The road turns a bit and it's steep in parts, but the mountainous scenery and vinous greenery please the eye. So many vines, virtually a homage to Dionysos! Eastwards, the fertile River Xeros Valley beckons in the distance. Our way winds through dense vineyards, countless almond trees and many cypress trees, concluding at the pretty village of Koilinia. At its centre, you will find the "SHOUFAS" winery.

This is a small, family-run producer, making its wines in an extension of traditional buildings. Though new and equipped with an up-to-date plant, it has a strong family wine tradition. Grandfather Costas Filippou is a viticulturist who has many decades of experience. Try Shoufas wines made from traditional grapes of the region: the dry red "Maratheftiko" and the white dry "Xynisteri". Visitors are welcome daily, but it's best to call

## How should we try the wine?

Wine is not a drink to gulp or take large draughts of. It is a beverage of medium level alcohol, to sniff, smell, savour and enjoy, especially with food. Every wine has its own character, texture, aroma and flavours, even ones that are made from the same grapes as others. So our approach to wine is not to hurry. Let it tell us about itself - from its looks, its smell and its taste.



## Always look at the Label

A wine label must give you basic information: the name of the wine, the producer, the region and country of origin, the quantity of wine in the bottle and the level of Alcohol by Volume. This is the obligatory front label. Very often the producer will add further information on a “back label”, which can be very useful. This may tell you more about the grapes, where they were grown, the wine making processes (such as barrel aging), the winemaker and which foods match the wine. You can learn a lot about wine this way (although very often the producer may exaggerate just a little about his wine!).

Having looked at the bottle, now let's open it...

first, especially if you want to take a group. A bonus here is the view around.

Continuing downhill, the road will take us to the village of Galataria. The distance between the two villages is tiny, so we soon come upon this settlement. So close are the two villages that the dwellings, the vineyards and little tracks and roadways practically intermingle! At dawn and especially at sunset, such magic places seem to make time stop... One finds oneself in spirit back to the time of the gods, especially Dionysos!

If we retrace our steps to the point where we took the 180 degrees turn we will find on our left the road which leads to Pentalia. We come to this village after four km. This village is built on a charming but steep mountainside and it contains a lot of traditional, stone-built houses. Many face towards the scenic view of the Xeros Valley, which unfolds below.

Soon after we exit this settlement we meet again the road leading from Statos-Agios Fotios, and from which we detoured to visit Koilinia. Four km later, it will bring us to Amargeti village. It is truly a beautiful place,





rising on the right side of the road amidst an emerald valley. Some of its traditional stone houses are refurbished. Here you will find a number of tavernas, coffee shops, and a combination hostel-taverna in the main street. You will also find the “KALAMOS WINERY” very close to the church, at the village’s centre.

At this producer you can taste wines from local as well as imported varieties, cultivated in the family vine yards, in combination with grapes from selected vine growers. Taste the red “Ayia Sotira” in dry and medium-dry, made from Mataro grapes, and the dry or semi-dry “Livades”, produced from Xynisteri. One is encouraged to also try the “Zivania” of the owner, Mr. Nikos Ignatiou, which matures in oak barrels. Tasting, which is complemented by a platter of cheeses and dry fruit, carries a fee for organised groups of visitors. Tours are conducted in Greek and English.

Continuing on our way downwards, we will soon come upon Eledio, a small but picturesque settlement. It is almost joined with its southern neighbour, Axilou village, and from here the distance to Agia Varvara, quite close to the motorway and the sea, is

about ten km. Once we reach that area, at the entrance of the Ezousa Valley, nature seems like a heavenly garden: the fertile soil is awash with groves featuring tall cypress trees at their perimetre, and with seasonal cultivations stitching the plateau.

If, from Statos-Agios Fotios, you elected to head west towards Choulou, then you will traverse five kilometres of breathtaking natural beauty, possibly unique in all of the island. The road descends through vine yards, grazing fields and steep slopes marked by abandoned ancient cultivations, which have a romantic charm all their own. The age-old, painstakingly erected dry-stone walls, hold the slopes in check and the land by them hosts wild, short shrubs. The sparse trees aid in the impression of gigantic scaffolding reaching towards infinity, towards time and space. When, eventually, the road closes in on the river bank, the sight is one of utter seduction, with aquatic greenery going wild, leading a frenzied dance, a hymn to Dionysos. Laurel is the leading lady, followed by reeds, ivy and plane trees, and then turpentine and pine trees from the surrounding hillsides join in the



chorus... until, finally, the first stony houses of a settlement appear at the end of the straight.

And so we arrive at Choulou. Here is another charming village that once upon a time was big, busy and flourishing. An indication of this is the number of two storey houses, a sure sign of prosperity.

In many respects Choulou is typical of European villages. The church holds a prominent position at the heart of village life, whilst the Coffee Shops are close by. The elders of the village sit and discuss the events of the day, often including the contents of the newspaper of their political view, some of them twiddling their "Worry Beads", others playing "Tavli" (Backgammon). Visitors are of great interest to them and they will soon invite you to a small cup of Cypriot coffee ("Sketos" -no sugar'; "Metrios" -medium sweet and "Glicos" -sweet) with a glass of cool mountain water, whilst they tell you of local life, legend and history. There's a timeless feeling to all this, Mediaeval in some respects. Walk round Choulou's little streets and feel the drama of *Arodafnousa*, the girl who stole the heart of *Rigas* (King), causing the anger of the *Rigaina* (Queen), who lived in a tower (no longer existing). These and other stories date from the time of the Franks, when the area was in the fief of a knight named Choulou, hence the name of the village.

A peculiar coincidence, or connection maybe, is the name of the next village, Lemona -in that there is a city of the same name in Vasco, Spain.

To go to Lemona we turn left just outside Choulou and take a small detour. It is a tiny settlement, whose residents have close links with those of Choulou. These links are often through family, land-ownership and working relationships. Like so many others, some village houses are being restored whilst others are neglected (very often the owning families emigrated to places like Australia and South Africa). Now the village is, so to say, 'back on the map', because nearby

is “TSANGARIDES WINERY”, not far from the church and sited in a pleasant position adjacent to vineyards, oaks and olive trees and the River Ezousa.

The Tsangarides family has been tilling the soil and making wine here for generations, and the representative of the present generation, Angelos Tsangarides, is winning awards for his wines. The winery is modern and efficient, housed in a new building which, nevertheless, has traditional character. In particular, try two fine reds, one made from Mataro and the other from Cabernet Sauvignon. Visitors are welcome, but should call first.

Now, back on track we re-join the southward road and head for Letymvou, about four kilometres. We pass over the River Ezousa and, on the right, see the very small and almost abandoned village of Kourdaka. There are vines aplenty hereabouts. Some pretty old stone-work may be seen in the buildings of this settlement.

Two kilometres from the river (we are now on its west bank) we come to Letymvou. Nearby are the sites of two late Byzantine churches. At the village’s heart are walnut trees and stone fountains, some nice gardens and leafy places to find shade. Every year, in July, the “Resi” festival is held here. Resi is a truly rural traditional dish, most often found these days at wedding parties.

In this area there are almonds and deciduous trees, but the view, especially as we leave westwards from Letymvou, is of vine-clad valley slopes. After about two kilometres we turn left and take another short detour to Kallepeia village. This is quite a large and attractive place with a go-ahead administration, developing fast with both renovated and new houses and apartments in evidence. The area around the Church is good for strolling and there is a traditional taverna. Letymvou is becoming a popular place in which to live for people of several nationalities. In these modern times it is within a short commuting car drive to Pafos.

When we return to our route, we arrive back at Tsada village, which we passed in the morning. It is modern and well developed, whilst retaining enough of its traditional Cypriot character. Shops, restaurants, food stores and plenty going on mark this very up-to-date place.

Whichever route chosen for this tour, the total distance is not more than 100 kilometres, so it is within the compass of most drivers! All along there are countless places to stop, look and explore. And, of course, you have been able to sample and buy a remarkable range of our wines. Proof, if any is needed, that dear old Dionysos is still with us in spirit...

## Looking

Choose an appropriate glass for the wine you are tasting. Good glasses should be of a size to let the wine tell you about itself, i.e. fairly large. Pour some wine -not more than a third of a glass. Now hold the glass up to a clear light or white surface and look. Has it a dark colour or light? Is it clear (good) or cloudy (not good)? When you swirl the wine around the glass does it run thinly down inside or does it leave a viscous trail?

Darkly coloured wines are usually richer in aromas and flavours. You will note that the yellow or light gold or clear green-tinged yellow of most young white wine evolves to deeper yellow to intense gold as the wine ages. In red wines, the vibrant purple of extreme youth deepens, to quite bright red, and then deep and finally in age taking on brownish edges and tones.







## WINERIES



### EZOUSA WINERY

70008844, 99415909

Kannaviou

30



### VOUNI PANAYIA WINERY LTD

26722770, 26722878,

99453138, Panagia



80



### KOLIOS WINERY LTD

26724090

Statos - Agios Fotios



200



### CHRYSORROGIATISSA WINERY

26722457, 99626642

Panagia



15



### TSANGARIDES WINERY

26722777

Lemona



50



### SHOUFAS WINERY LTD

99447424, 99435436,

22442744, Koilineia



50



### KALAMOS WINERY

26723224, 99519268,

99450568, Amargeti



50



## TAVERNAS / RESTAURANTS

### MITAS

99683982, 96657777

Choulou, Pafos

### ZODOCHOS PIGI GIA PANTA

26723212, 99771592

Chrysorrogiatissis 31, Amargeti, Pafos

### PHITI VILLAGE

26732540, 99138573

Fyti, Pafos

### APOLLON

26723030, 99632631

Amargeti, Pafos

### TO KONATZI TIS KALLEPEIAS

26642368, 99677744

Arch. Kyprianou, Kallepeia, Pafos







## Diarizos Valley

Pafos, Acheleia, Kouklia, Nikokleia, Choletria, Stavrokonnou, Kelokedara, Salamiou, Mesana, Arminou, Filousa, Praitori, Agios Nicolaos, Kedares, Agios Georgios, Mamonia, Fasoula.

### DRIVING ALONG THE PATH OF THE RIVER... AND OF HISTORY

This itinerary takes us eastwards from the city of Pafos and among many other things covers the three fertile valleys of the rivers Ezousa, Xeros and Diarizos. After a coastal run at sea level, we shall climb the south-western foothills of the Troodos mountain range, observing the flowing course of the River Diarizos, crossing it several times. We are going to traverse an elongated circuit, with fourteen mountain villages *en route*, with, during the course of our trip, visits to two small, but interesting regional wineries.

Something more; we shall discover the places where a Goddess, the pre-Christian Venus of Pafos, was worshipped and is, so it is said, devoutly worshipped until now by some. There are unusual and interesting rock formations to wonder at, too, in the Mamonia area.

Life has gone on here for millennia in these fertile valleys. Hints are everywhere of its continuity and its customs, but no accurate historical documentation exists. Yet each succeeding kilometre reveals pictures, scents and sounds of the circle of fertility.

With every little look into of the surroundings, discoveries and monuments attest to its worship. Venus passes on her influence to the Virgin Mary, mother of today's faithful.





## GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

The Diarizos Valley lies south-west of the Troodos hills and takes its name from the river that runs through it. In a relatively small area, this valley has a wide variety of fauna and flora, with a number of important and protected species.

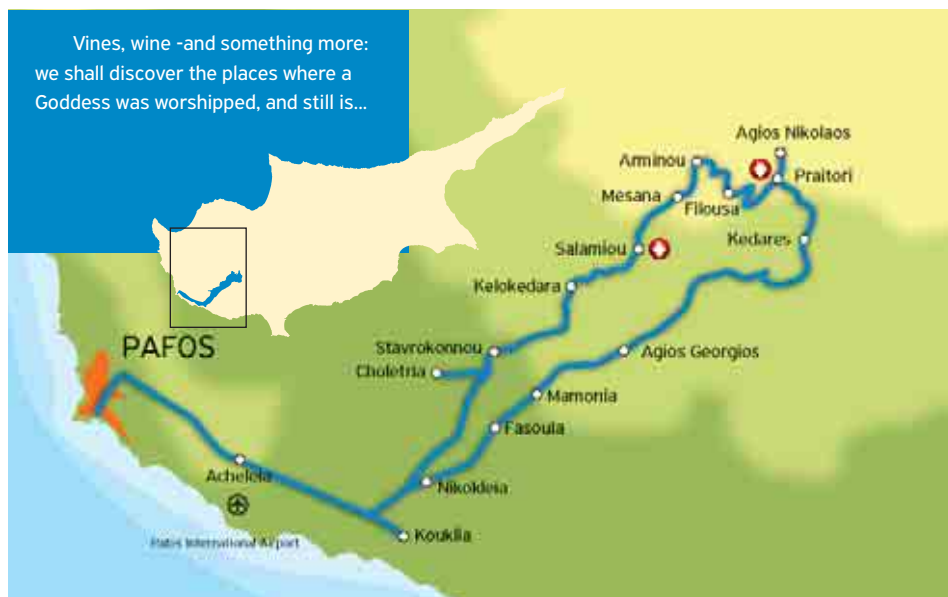
**Climate:** The region is characterised by a relatively gentle climate: moderately cold in the winter and temperate in the summer.

**Terrain:** Following the ancient creation of Cyprus as a result of volcanic activity, the Troodos Mountains were thrust above the rest of the terrain, creating the various springs and rivers that flow down or within it. In the region we also find the “Mamonia Area” a complicated tectonic concentration of volcanic and sedimentary rocks.

**Vineyards:** This region does not have a “Controlled Denomination of Origin”. Nevertheless, we shall encounter some interesting wines and come across 18 grape varieties.

**Red varieties:** Mavro, Othhalmo, Maratheftiko, Lefkada, Carignan, Mataro, Oellade, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Alicante B., Grenache, Shiraz, Merlot

**White varieties:** Xynisteri, Palomino, Chardonnay, Sultana, Malaga





...and from the residue off from the grapes press (the stalks, pips and pulm), Zivania is made!

## THE ROUTE

Our starting point is the Pafos motorway round-about. From there we head towards Lemesos for about six km, until we reach the exit to Acheleia (B6). On the “old” Pafos - Lemesos road you can see the experimental plantations run by the Institute of Agricultural Research. Much interesting work is done here and forests, plantations and even ordinary gardeners benefit from it.

Continuing eastwards, towards Lemesos, for about eight more km, we pass under the motorway and over the River Xeros, which runs down from the Asprogremnos Reservoir to the sea. On our left, we see the side road to Nikokleia, which we take, before the road reaches the bridge. This road, to Nikokleia, lies on the west bank of the River Diarizos and rises up on the side of the valley away from the river bed. Within a short distance (4 km) we come upon the village, overlooking the wide river valley. On the opposite, eastern side of the valley, lies the ancient settlement of Palaipafos, today’s “Kouklia”. In ancient times it was the centre of worship of the Cyprus Aphrodite.

When we reach this first focal point of our journey, we turn left when we reach the village, taking the road which firstly leads to Choletria, at a distance of about six km. On each side, the land is covered with seasonal plants, olive and lemon groves and fields of other citrus trees.

Climbing up towards Choletria, grazing land appears on the landscape, their colours changing with the seasons, vineyards, almond groves and indigenous Cyprus trees -like pines, cypress, and “Tremithi” (a small wild tree producing tiny, edible berries). There are newly - introduced species here, too, like eucalyptus.

The village of Choletria is located on one of the plateaus on the eastern side of the River Xeros, and it is literally awash with green. Most houses are modern and are surrounded by gardens, groves of almonds and citrus, by

- groups of conifers and eucalyptus trees.
- It is a small village, typical of the settlements
- in the region.

- Leaving from the north point of the village,
- we drive about four km to the settlement of
- Stavrokonnou. This is also a small village but,
- in contrast to the preceding one, it largely
- maintains its traditional architecture. Its
- characteristic “Makrynarka” houses have
- suffered limited modern “intrusion”

## Swirling and Sniffing

Now the wine is in the glass and fully inspected visually. Holding the glass by its stem or base, rotate it so that the wine swirls around it. This helps to “open” the wine, and to release its aromas. A good glass should be narrower at the top than in the middle, allowing the aromas to concentrate ready for you to smell.

Lift the glass slowly to your nose. Breathe in and savour the sensation. The alcohol will waft up, as will the notes of the fruit, acidity and, with a barrel fermented or aged wine, the oak. In all this there will be traces of the whole story of the grape from which the wine was made -the soil, the climate, the care and the making.

Repeat this several times. Each time the wine will tell you more and gradually your perceptions will sharpen and a whole encyclopaedia of wine will be there for you.



- it's as if time froze somewhere in the 1970s or 1980s. The landscape that surrounds the village maintains the same characteristics of plants, shrubs and trees, but now the difference in altitude begins to make itself felt and the number of vine yards increases.

Almost five km further on we come across the village of Kelokedara, at an altitude of around 700 m. It is a small settlement with a fountain at its entrance and mostly with traditional buildings. Here, too, we can find typical samples of "Makrynarka" houses, visible even from the level of the road we are on. These characteristic houses got their name from their elongated shape. This came about as a result of the custom of the region's families to add a new room either to the left or to the right of the old house to accommodate each child as they married.

For those with 4 x 4 vehicles, after Kelokedara, we can turn to the left for about three kilometres on an un made-up track and visit the renovated monastery of Panagia tou Sinti, at the bottom of the Xeros Valley and on its opposite bank.

Continuing in a northerly direction, the road climbs up steep and imposing hillsides. It twists and turns excitingly by turn on mountain ridges and varying inclines, frequently revealing brilliant views of the river valley, below and to the left. On each side there is a vigorous panorama of vineyards, olive groves, farms and grazing land with ground level growth as well as copses of cypresses, pines and eucalyptus.

Before arriving at Salamiou, our next port -of-call, half way into the six km that separate it from Kelokedara, we are presented with a wonderful double view: to the left (west) lies the Xeros Valley, while to the right the Diarizos Valley unfolds, both viewed from a height of almost 700 m.

In Salamiou village the settlement and the farms command a vantage point over the River



Diarizos to the east. Just outside the village, to the left, there is a picnic area with shaded benches and tables, this time overlooking the Xeros Valley. A little further on, at the cross roads before the village and to the left, another side road can be found leading to the Panagia tou Sinti monastery. On the right, a small unpaved road leads to the Lagria hill, and the winery by the same name.

This hill, rising up 40 to 50 metres higher than the village, covers an area of almost a square kilometre and is covered with many vineyards. Bushes, low vegetation and sparse trees grow up at its inaccessible or rocky parts. The vines are planted at different levels, and at varying inclines, in an advantageous location blessed with long hours of daily sunshine. Although dry, and rooted on essentially rocky terrain, the vineyards of Lagria -as well as those of the wider area here- traditionally produce wines of very good quality.

The “LAGRIA” Winery is owned by the President of the community of Salamiou, Mr. Kostakis Avgousti, whose family have grown vines and made wine for many generations. The winery has quite a small production, utilising grapes from its own vineyards and those of growers near the village. It bottles four wines: one white from local Xynisteri (fresh and fruity and best drunk well chilled when it is young), a dry red blend of local and imported grape varieties, a Cabernet Sauvignon varietal and a rosé, which is a blend of the local “Mavro” and “Xynisteri” varieties. It is best to pre-arrange your visit if your group will be large. The tour, which is given in English and Greek, ends up in the winery’s tasting rooms, where the wines may be tasted and purchased.

You’re looking at a long history in Salamiou. There have been people living on this site for four or five thousand years. Today’s village demonstrates the popular architecture and construction of the last several centuries. In one traditional two-storied building just along

## Sip!

Now at last has come the moment to taste!

Lift the glass and take a good sip. To start with, let the wine run over and around your tongue. The taste buds in each part examine four basic flavours: sweet, sour, salty and bitter. The sweet flavour taste buds are located at the front of the tongue, so the sweetness is the first sensation. The taste buds for sour are at the side of the tongue, and those for bitter are at the back part, the nearest to the swallowing process. There is little for the salty taste buds to do. The important thing is to roll the wine around continuously and if you breathe quite deeply through your nose at the same time, the appreciation will be increased. Now, swallow or expel the wine into the receptacle provided.

There are three distinctive sensations. Firstly “Attack”: the impact/ taste noticed in the first few seconds after sipping. Secondly: “Evolution”: the continuing changing sensations. Thirdly: “Finish”: the after-taste left by the wine after swallowing or expelling (this is often bitter). You will now have an overall impression, of whether you like it or not.



from the church you'll find the local taverna, complete with a nice balcony. "Kafeneia" (local coffee shops) and other shops are also at hand.

By Salamiou's fountain, stop awhile and admire the imperious Cypress tree, an estimated 750 years of age and dedicated to the Virgin Mary. On the higher reaches of the village, by the sadly closed school, your eye gazes upon the dramatic sight of an 800 metre drop to the depth of the Diarizos Valley. The ancients called the river the "one hundred mouth flows", indicating its sources from a hundred gullies.

Very near, in a region covered with fertile plots, vineyards and gardens, is the monastery of Panagia Salamiotissa, where the church is about 500 years old.

Northwards, after a couple of kilometres the road leads to Mesana, a small and pretty village that it is close by the edge of the Troodos forest, which will decorate part of our way for some time. Three kilometres onwards we come to Arminou on the western slopes of the Diarizos Valley, which is sparsely populated. Amid the pines are almond and olive trees. Here the road bends and descends down the river valley crossing the River Diarizos. After a while the road starts heading uphill through lovely scenery and gorgeous air and we

soon conclude the five kilometres separating Arminou from Filousa. The route abounds in "mountain greenery" indeed, and the ubiquitous vine as well.

In a short while we come upon the pretty hamlet of Praitori. We can take a short side-trip to another great little place if we wish, Agios Nikolaos (see below).

It is at Praitori that we can visit our second winery of this trip. "NELION WINERY" belongs to Neofytos and Helen Ioannou, who have built a small, compact winemaking plant in a lovely location, near the village. Mr. and Mrs. Ioannou are dedicated to their art and produce a range of interesting wines, among them a notable Rosé. They are unique in growing and making wine with one of the great grape varieties of Bordeaux, the red Cinsault. Visits are by arrangement and presentations for groups are given in English or Greek. Wine and other items can be purchased at their shop and light meals are also available.

After seeing the winery and trying its products, Agios Nikolaos village is worth a little detour, with its minaret's green cone visible above its rooftops.

At a number of points here, the road crosses a river by bridges of recent

construction. There are others, from the Venetian period that are worth visiting. Six km north, through the forest, is the Tzelephiou Bridge, over the River Diarizos. In the forest you can also find the bridge of Roudkias, over the River Xeros (six km west of Tzelephou Bridge) and Elias (Olive) Bridge, over a tributary of the River Diarizos.

From Agios Nikolaos village drive back to Praitori, and after three kilometres southwards we arrive on the eastern side of the valley at the picturesque village of Kedares. More greenery here with plenty of vineyards around it...

The road undulates considerably as it winds its way down to the river for the next five kilometres. It crosses the River Diarizos and almost immediately its tributary the River Xeragaka. We arrive at the almost abandoned settlement of Kidasi village. Then comes a spectacularly beautiful drive along the bottom of the valley with the river close by on the left hand side. On the right the view is sometimes green, at others of steep cliff. Nearby are the "Rocks of Hasamboulia", an interesting natural oddity. These two huge blocks of stone lean against each other, leaving enough room between for us to pass. Their name derives from that of three fleeing robbers of the 19th century who evaded their pursuers by sheltering here.

## Tasting many wines

If you intend to try a lot of wines, please follow the advice already given: Don't swallow! Otherwise you may not be able to drive.

Later, by all means, relax with a glass or two of the wines you liked best, preferably with matching food. Let the wine run down the route to your stomach -and savour the taste sensation it leaves at your palate, what is known as "aftertaste".

The distance from Kedares to Agios Georgios is approximately 14 kilometres. This settlement, at the river-side, has singularly fertile land around it. It is a pleasant place to stop awhile. Mamonía village, about three and a half kilometres further on, is the next habitation. The area's name describes the structure of its rock outcrops, which are characterised by both volcanic (lava) and sedimentary (crystallised) limestone.

From Mamonía it is just a kilometre or so to the next settlement, Fasoula, attractively placed astride the River Diarizos, which runs through the centre of the village.

The next spot, five kilometres south, is Nikokleia village. Before we reach the village, on the right hand side of the road, is a well restored building of traditional architecture that is now a hostel.









Its original function was as a *Caravansera* (resting place for travellers and their animals) and later as a coffee shop, before being unoccupied for thirty years. It is a suitable base for the exploration of archaeological sites of the nearby villages, Kouklia, the Pantheon of Venus, Asprogremmos Reservoir and the abandoned Souskiou village, where cross-shaped statuettes from the Bronze Age were discovered. Near here there is an important Neolithic cemetery, where the archaeological excavations revealed intact burial sites and gems from ancient tombs which have enriched the collection of the Museum of Cyprus.

Our final stop on this little journey before our return to Pafos is at our starting-point, Nikokleia village. It is a beautiful settlement, and calls to mind the long history of the area and the glory of its ancient King of Pafos, Nikoklis, from whom it took its name. After our wine tastings, we can relax here and enjoy some coffee to wash away the taste of wine. And then, with the memories of the hills, the forests and the lovely scenery of our drive down by the River Diarizos fresh in our minds, we can return to our base. A lovely "Wine Route" fruitfully accomplished.





## WINERIES

### LAGRIA WINERY

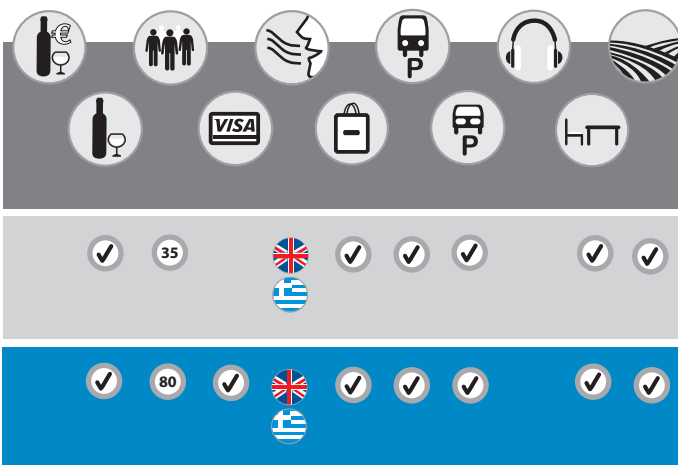
99346990, 99425273

Salamiou

### NELION WINERY LTD

25442445, 99666414

Praitori



## TAVERNAS / RESTAURANTS

### STOU VIOLARI

26442929, 99413898, 99180095

Agia Varvara 1, Salamiou, Pafos

### VASILIAS NIKOKLIS

26432211, 99309279

Nikokleia, Pafos



## Krasochoria Lemesou (Wine Villages of Lemesos)

Lemesos, Kolossi, Erimi, Kantou, Souni-Zanakia, Pano Kivides, Agios Amvrosios, Lofou, Vouni, Koilani, Pera Pedi, Mandria, Kato Platres, Omodos, Vasa, Malia, Arsos, Pachna, Anogyra, Avdimou

### THE FOOTHILLS OF TROODOS ARE A LOVELY SIGHT!

Spread out over a wonderful sloping panoply on the southern slopes of the Troodos mountain range, majestically overlooking thousands of vineyards, the route of the wine Villages of Lemesos offers the traveller everything. Scenery, forests, vegetation, farm lands, orchards, olive and almond groves, pretty villages, local produce and, at a break in the journey, rest, relaxation, and delicious wines to tempt the palate.

Along this Wine Route there are 20 villages. It is the fourth region of "Wines of Controlled Denomination" in Cyprus. Large quantities of indigenous grapes are grown here.

This is a Route to savour, so pleasant that the words of the Greek poet Constantinos Kavafis come to mind: "You should want the road to be a long one". Here both to travel the route and to arrive are pleasures. The places where one can stop and revel in the surroundings are many. Nature and man's cultivation of it are all about. For the lover of history, there is plenty to engage the attention too.

Village life has always included a welcome for the traveller -even in the poorest times a householder would give his bed and bread to the traveller. There is no need for such gestures today, but everywhere, in the coffee shops, the tavernas, restaurants, hostels and hotels, the Cyprus welcome is warm and friendly. Nowhere is there a warmer welcome than in our wineries. This route has no less than 11 to visit.





## GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

Thrust up by a huge volcanic eruption 90 million years ago, the island of Cyprus is dominated by its Troodos range, with its highest point Mount Olympus (1952 m altitude). Below, sloping down to the southern coast, the terrain provides excellent conditions for the cultivation of the vine.

**Climate:** Winters here can be cold, and part of this route goes up to the snow line, at its highest point 1,100 metres, but sunshine is never far away. Autumn is short, but its rains bring spring-like conditions and hosts of wild flowers and plenty of greenery. Summers are warm to hot, but generally there is a breeze to provide a breath of cool air.

**Terrain:** hilly, and undulating, often with stepped cultivation. The soil and general “terroir” are very suitable for vines.

**Vineyards:** The twenty villages that lie along the way belong in the fourth region of the Wines of Controlled Denomination of Origin (WCNO). 23 grape varieties are grown.

**Red varieties:** Mavro, Othlamo, Maratheftiko, Carignan Noire, Mataro, Oellade, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Alicante B., Grenache, Shiraz, Merlot, Lefkada

**White varieties:** Xynisteri, Palomino, Malvasia L., Malvasia G., Sauvignon Black, Sauvignon Blanc, Riesling, Semillon, Chardonnay, Malaga





## Wine at the Table

This is really the big moment. The winemaker didn't intend you to stand in a cold room sipping a little of dozens of wines and expelling them. He wanted you to crack a bottle open (preferably his!) at a table with good food and good company. Now is the time the wine is called upon to reward our senses, after its long march from the vine yard, its fermentation and maturation.

So, what to drink with what food? Read on...

## THE ROUTE

Taking the A6 Motorway westwards from Lemesos, we look out for the exit to Kolossi (about seven kilometres along the way), turn off and drive south a kilometre. Here is a modern, vibrant village spreading northwards from the old Crusader Castle. Not far away are "The Plantations", where millions of citrus fruits are picked every year and the scent during blossom time is intense. Kolossi offers shops and services of all kinds, traditional and modern alike.

Kolossi Castle recalls the age of the Crusades and one of the Orders, the Koumandaria of the Knights of St. John, that spent many years here. Their period in Cyprus coincided with the international fame of Cyprus's great sweet wine in the Royal and Ecclesiastical Courts of Europe, and it eventually took their name, becoming "Kourmandaria".

Leaving Kolossi westwards, we soon come to Erimi Village. As we drive down a short slope, opposite a row of shops, on the left is the Wine Museum of Cyprus. Here, in a



marvellous building constructed in traditional stone and tile, you can see vine and wine exhibits of historical and current interest, view an audio-visual presentation, taste and buy a range of Cyprus wines.

A few metres from the Wine Museum, across the bridge, we turn right on to the E601 road and begin our ascent into the hills. We pass Kantou Village and after about six kilometres, Souni and Zanakia. This is a pleasing countryside location, in which you can refresh mind and body and enjoy a seat under the pine trees in the Zanakia square. Nearby is the first modern winery to be built by the Haggipavlou family in 1893, surrounded by a model vineyard.

As we drive on upwards, we pass the new village of Pano Kivides, with its well laid out streets, neat new houses and nice gardens. The residents were moved here in 1971 from the old village bearing the name because of a severe land-slip, rendering the dwellings unsafe. Shortly after passing the petrol station (which has a fascinating connection with Cyprus's independence struggles of the

1950s and 60s) and its attached taverna, you may take a right turn down a steep cobbled road to the old village, cradled in an attractive hillside, with a charming little church. The land is no longer unsafe. From here the more adventurous driver may take fascinating unmade-up tracks through the area, which are quite safe, beautiful and peaceful; and you can't get lost!

Back on the main road, we drive 4 km along and down a long slope to the second village of the "Wine Villages Region", Agios Amvrosios. It repays a stop -surrounded by hillocks and deep little valleys, there are some spectacular drives/walks to be had here. The streets of the village, too, reward the walker -most houses are very well restored and they wind around the slopes delightfully. The main street is lively with its village store, coffee shops and a taverna which has a magnificent old Mulberry tree outside ("Sykaminia" in Greek, which is the name of the taverna).

On the main road is the winery "GAIA OINOTECHNIKI", established in 1988 and known for its EU-certified organic red and rosé



wines. Try the “Ambelida” white, which is a popular wine, with a pleasing flowery nose and fresh taste, made from the Xynisteri variety.

One hundred metres up the road from the “GAIA OINOTECHNIKI” winery, take the right turn to Vouni Village. In February almond blossoms dot the way -and when you get there you will see that Vouni is covered with almond trees! Nestled in a large hollow in the hillside, the village lies between two rivers and it is noted for its steep, cobbled, narrow streets, with some very interesting old houses with traditional court-yards and Venetian arches at their heart. Everywhere there are balconies to be seen, small and large, all with sensational views. Vouni has trees-lots of them! Big pine trees dot through the buildings, and the fields and gardens have almonds, pomegranates, figs, citrus, peach and apricots, whilst just outside there are clusters of cypress and eucalyptus trees. Thirty years ago Vouni had 2,500 inhabitants, but now less than 100 live there permanently. Urbanisation accounted for the loss, but families are returning, if only to restore their old homes for weekends and holidays. In Cyprus, people are very loyal to the villages of their ancestors.

The village has several small ethnic and religious museums, coffee shops and tavernas. It also hosts the Cyprus Donkey Sanctuary, founded in 1994, which looks after more than 120 sick, old or unwanted former working

donkeys, as well as operating a health service for those still working. Leaving the village centre eastwards, we can see the old olive press, a recently built small amphitheatre, with attached refreshment booth and children’s playground and the new Lemesos district wine centre. Everywhere there are vineyards, alas many of them now abandoned (most are planted with the Mavro grape, now no longer loved by winemakers) but as we motor on towards Koilani more spaces are cultivated and planted with new grape varieties, supplying the wineries of that village.

Four kilometres lie between Vouni and Koilani -it is a winding road with gorgeous views along the long valley to the right. Koilani is utterly charming with winding shaded streets and some delightful village houses hidden away behind their tree-lined court-yards. It is a lively busy village with some local industry and commercial activities and includes several wineries.

As a former administrative village of the region, and centre of this “Afames” area, with some of the best red grape vineyards in Cyprus, it is a place to linger awhile in...

The “AGIA MAVRI” winery, started in the 1980s by Dr. and Mrs. Ioannides, makes a large range of wines; dry, medium and sweet. It is one of the latter, the “Mosxatos”, that has made the winery famous internationally



through the Gold, Silver and Bronze medals it has won. It is gently sweet, with a dry finish and is a delightful dessert wine. Mrs. Ioannides is the chief winemaker.

In the centre of this hilly village there is the community taverna, a general store and several styles of coffee shop.

Back on the main road you can take in “VARDALIS KILANI WINERY”, which welcomes visitors by appointment. Here is another chance for wine buffs to try the Cyprus red grape, the Maratheftiko.


Wine is not the only grape product to be tasted. “Palouzé” and “Soudjoukos” are Cyprus sweets made from grape juice, boiled in huge copper cauldrons and cleared with “white earth”. It is then cooled and thickened with flour and brought to the boil once more, sometimes with rose-water or orange water flavouring, to make a blancmange like dessert and a chewy whole almond filled sweet.

In October, on the first weekend, Koilani stages the “Afamia” festival, where palouzé and other delights are offered for free, among many other attractions. The village also hosts an ecclesiastical Museum which accommodates the skull of Agia Mavri, Patron Saint of the village. A small wine museum is currently being renovated.

Down the road from Koilani is the tiny old Byzantine Church of Agia Mavri which you must stop and see. A big café/restaurant operates on both sides of the road, part of it in the shade of a huge 800 year old Platanus (Plane) tree. A short drive up a twisting road through a green gorge to Pera Pedi follows.

Pera Pedi Village is equally spread on either side of the Saittas to Mandria road. On the south side the village is old and compact, whilst on the other side, going up the pine - clad slopes, the buildings are newer and larger, with some lovely houses hidden away in the pine trees. Apples are a crop here -we are






## **“Red wine with meat, white wine with fish”**

We all know this general rule. Is it set in stone? The answer is “No”. The rule is simple, drink the wine you like (red, white, rosé; sweet, medium, dry) with the food you like. Nevertheless, it is true that in general red wine is better with red meat, and white with fish.

The tannins in red wine find a match in the proteins of meat, but with chicken, rabbit and some other white meat, there are many vigorous white wines which can match them. The heavier the red meat, then the more intense the red wine that may be drunk with them.

## **Whites and Seafood**

Grilled fish calls for a soft, well balanced white -and here our local Xynisteri does very well. With lobster, prawns and other seafood, especially dishes with sauces made with cheese, or tomatoes, something more robust is called for: Semillon, Chardonnay or Sauvignon Blanc -all of which are good matches.



on the snow line; above it apples, below it olives. Here you can see the buildings that comprised the second commercial winery of Cyprus, started in 1894 by the English Chaplin family, and bought by KEO on their formation in 1928. Restoration is a possibility.

Now we take the road to Mandria. After five kilometres or so we bear left down into this pretty village. Rainfall is generally good here, so it is green and well planted. At the bottom of the village, we can visit the “M. ANTONIADES” Winery, another family business, where the winemaker uses the unusual “free flow” system to produce the grape juice (the weight of the grapes in the vat is sufficient to ensure this flow of juice). There are old winemaking implements on show, and a splendid tasting room, with a large balcony giving wonderful views across the landscape. The Antoniadès brand name is “Castellani” and you can try both the red and white wines.

Back on the main road we head north for another five kilometres, when we reach Kato Platres Village. Plenty of hills surround us, with pine trees galore and wonderful air. There is a touristic feeling here and it is popular with Cypriots and foreigners alike. It is pleasantly cool in high summer.

Along the way near the church is the splendid *Chateau* of “LAMBOURIS WINERY”, where group visitors are welcome. Founded in 1989, from small beginnings making wine in a chilled fruit store, it has become quite a large and successful, exporting producer. Try the Xynisteri, “Lambouri White”, and barrel-fermented Chardonnay.

To get back on to our route we re-trace our path to Mandria Village and head southwest to Omodos. Just before we get there we come upon the family-run “ZENON” winery, which is a middle-sized producer. Its premises show off a lot of viticultural and household implements of historical interest. From the range of wines try ZENON’S fresh and fruity Xynisteri.

After 72 km, so far, our next port-of-call is Omodos, where we leave the car in the ample car park and walk into the pedestrianised village square “Timios Stavros” - “Holy Cross”, which is bounded by craft and fashion shops, coffee shops and eating places, with the fine monastery building at its foot. The village is bustling and beautifully restored throughout. It lies on the western bank of River Chapotami, at an altitude of 810 metres and is surrounded by hills. Good rainfall ensures much more than just vineyards, with various





crops and all kinds of orchard fruit grown. The huge renovated wine press (Linos) is well worth a visit. Omodos is popular with tourists, so there are plenty of restaurants and several good places to stay.

Leaving Omodos we return to the E601 road to Erimi. Shortly after we do so we spot the “LINOS WINERY”, which welcomes the visitor. Grapes from privately owned vineyards (currently being extended) of both local and foreign varieties make a range of popular table wines. LINOS is family-run and the current director is Mr. Herodotos Herodotou. From the winery you can admire the splendid view across the valley to the east and the chalky ridge of Afames with its prominent vineyards. The area is steeped in history, ancient and modern.

Not far along the road, we take a short detour to Vasa village, four kilometres roughly from Omodos. The way in, down a deep little valley with a 180° turn at the bottom, where a charming little chapel has to be seen, is really lovely. Then, upwards into Vasa, yet another rural village, with yet another character all of its own. The products of the good earth have supported this community for hundreds of years and wine has been a commercial business here for a long time as well.

As we arrive, the village church of Agios Georgios dominates the view. Another building that catches the eye is an imposing restored stone house which hosts “VASA WINERY”. This is a ‘boutique’ winery founded by former international businessman Pambos Argyrides. Pambos has inherited the wine-making mantle of his great grandfather, grandfather and father, turning their traditions into stylish modern wines using Xynisteri and Chardonnay, Mataro, Cabernet Sauvignon and Maratheftiko. In his complex there reside his forbears’ winemaking tools and the huge

## Exceptions can be pleasing

Do you know of any rule that carries no exception? Of course not, and it is the same with matching wines to food! Depending on one’s knowledge, one’s mood and one’s imagination, the “Red with meat, White with fish” rule can be bent with no ill effect. It’s all a question of what you cook and how.

If you are serving chicken with a red, spicy gravy, it’s rather difficult to escape the cardinal rule. But if you “dress” poultry with a simple white sauce (mushroom, for instance), then you can easily complement it with a rich white wine which has fermented or matured in an oak barrel. As a result, it will possess a denser and more “weighty” presence.

In contrast, fish can be combined with a light red wine, provided that, on the one hand, we select a fatty sea-dweller such as swordfish, eel, salmon et al and, on the other hand, we cook our dish in a relatively spicy manner.



terra cotta jars (“Pitharia”) in which the wine was made. Alongside are the gleaming temperature controlled stainless steel fermenters and storage tanks with today’s vintages in them. Through a doorway and you enter Pambos’s delightful residence, complete with tasting room. Down below are cool cellars, with elegant new French oak barrels maturing Argyrides wines.

Vasa is not a large village, but worth a stroll around its pleasant streets, with several tavernas, shops and coffee shops adorning them. Here, and indeed in virtually all winemaking villages, as you walk the streets you see the huge “Pitharia” close to the houses, in yards and sometimes in the dwellings themselves. They are a reminder that in days gone by every family made its own wine -some for consumption, some for distilling and some for marinating pork meat and sausages, to keep for winter. There is a charming Folklore Museum here as well, with a lot of exhibits and information about vines and wines.

From Vasa take the local, tarmac road to Malia Village, passing along an undulating plateau with a myriad of vineyards. Before the Turkish invasion of 1974 Malia was a bi-communal village and this is evident from the tall Minaret of the village Mosque. Malia

- Village is one of the vinicultural villages
- which largely maintains its old character, less
- touristically developed than Omodos and
- Vasa. It is most noticeable for the multi-million
- Euro wine development close by-the “MALIA”
- (KEO) winery. Originally built in 1930,
- the chateau-like structure was completely
- re-built in 1996 and a large modern wine-
- making plant added. Visits can be arranged
- by appointment. Around the winery are 50
- hectares of model vineyards, planted with a
- wide variety of indigenous and international
- grapes. From the range, the “Ktima Malia”
- Riesling is interesting, because it is one of the
- few successful manifestations of this grape in
- Cyprus. The Chardonnay is also worth trying,
- with characteristic flower and fruit notes of
- this grape.

- Another essentially rural ride takes us
- four kilometres to Arsos Village. Like so
- many others it is built on a hill (good for
- defensive purposes), its streets plunge
- down into a green valley with a stream at its
- foot. This provides excellent opportunities
- for walks. Arsos has a gentrified look about
- it, with many houses either restored or re-
- constructed or new ones built in traditional
- local stone. It is becoming a popular place
- to live. Along the valley track, or by another
- road from the village, on the western side, is
- the “NIKOLETTINO” winery. Its position offers

the visitor and wine taster handsome views to the village and around the countryside. The winery's grapes are essentially local and from the range you may try the white Xynisteri.

Arsos Village has an ecclesiastical and a folkloric museum, both of which should be visited. In the centre of the village there is an excellent produce shop, where you may buy the fine-quality local olive oil (a fast expanding growth industry in Cyprus, as befits the move to the healthy Mediterranean diet) and dine well at the local taverna.

From Arsos village go back to the E601 and drive south. After about eight kilometres we take a right turn to Pachna. This is a large and purposeful village, with a lot going on. There is a number of outstanding country walks from here, with churches old and new that demand a visit. After our look around, we go on again, this time on the cross-country gravelled road to Anogyra, a distance of 7 km. Olives, vines and goat herds dot the landscape but all are now in carob country! These lovely old trees fight for their existence today, as their crop is desired less and less. As you approach Anogyra on the left is the "Oleastro"

- olive park, with a busy modern olive press
- at the heart of a complex that includes olive
- museum, restaurant, art gallery and shop.

Anogyra is a forward-thinking, modern village with a large expatriate population who work with their Cypriot residents on some fine cultural, traditional and artistic programmes.

In a lovely village setting is the "NICOLAIDES" family winery, now run by Mr Nikos Nikolaides, third generation winemaker who graduated in Oenology in France. Nikos has taken traditions and married them to modern techniques. He produces around 100,000 bottles a year from grapes from family vineyards and those of contracted growers. From the reds, taste the Maratheftiko, the white dry Chardonnay and the interesting Rosé. Nicos makes a very good Muscat liqueur wine, too.

- Now it is time to descend to sea level,
- taking the twisting road to Avdimou village.
- Avdimou is handily placed near the Motorway
- roughly equidistant from Lemesos and Pafos.
- It's a friendly place, an unspoilt place, with
- a truly Cypriot taverna and coffee shops.
- From here some excellent beaches (with





their 'resident' tavernas) are but a couple of kilometres away over the Motorway Bridge and following the well signposted tracks.

And so ends this major wine route.

At the end of it, one considers the people we have encountered, the sights we have seen in countryside and village, the sounds we have heard, and, of course, the times at the table and tasting room. At this point, so many of us have fallen in love with the real Cyprus, and feel no surprise that so many people, from ancient history onwards have done the same...



## And what about Rosé?

Rosé is an often neglected and under-rated wine. Cyprus winemakers produce a number of good ones, from various grapes ranging from Maratheftiko and Mataro, to the classic grape for rosé, Grenache, and, blended, the local Mavro. They come as dry and medium-dry, and on a hot summer's evening, they are the ideal wine for a salad selection, a buffet or Cyprus Meze.

Where there is a mixture of flavours and a table with vegetables, meat, fish and seafood, then a bottle of rosé is the wine choice. With Chinese, Thai and Japanese food, it's excellent. It can match milder curries and other Indian dishes, and with a platter of Italian Antipasto it's a good choice. So, when you're dining, try a Cyprus rosé!

## Mellow Fellows

Dessert wines, which are sweet because fermentation has either ceased naturally or has been stopped before all the sugar is converted into alcohol, can have much to offer. The traditional Cyprus meal finale of a big bowl of fresh fruits and usually sugary, sometimes beautifully cheesy pastries, is a fine time to sip a glass of Koumandaria, a Muscat, Moscato or Fortified wine. For those who are full up by this time, they can be a pleasing digestif.

And then... what about the exotic, rich, match of a good dessert wine and a fine blue cheese, like Roquefort, Stilton, or Gorgonzola? Or even more extravagantly, as a starter with Foie Gras?

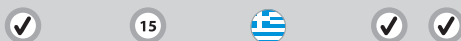


## WINERIES



### I.M. GAIA OINOTECHNIKI

25943981, 99442472  
Agios Amvrosios



### AGIA MAVRI LTD

25470225, 25370777  
Koiloni



### VARDALIS WINERY LTD

25470261, 25392198  
99642255, Koiloni



### LAMBOURIS WINERY LTD

70009463  
Kato Platres



### M. ANTONIADES WINERY

25384121, 25422638  
99824475, Mandria



### NIKOLETTINO WINERY

99437137  
Arsos



### ZENON WINERY

25423555, 99492979  
Omodos



### VASA WINERY

25945999, 99588848  
Vasa



### MALIA (KEO) LTD

25942131, 99692295  
Malia



## WINERIES

### DOMAINE NIKOLAIDES

25333821, 99649655

Anogyra

### LINOS WINERY

25422700

Omodos



## TAVERNAS / RESTAURANTS

### KAMARES

25470719

Ilia Kannaourou, Lofou, Lemesos

### ARIADNI

25942185

Vasa Koilaniou, Lemesos

### STAVROS

25422647, 99612772

Dimokratias 24, Omodos, Lemesos

### STOU KYR GIANNI

25422100, 99308555

Omodos, Lemesos

### FOREST PARK BLUE

25421751

Platres, Lemesos

### SKYLIGHT

25422244,

Faneromenis, Omodos, Lemesos

### TO PALATI

25943888, 99649139

Vasa Koilaniou, Lemesos

### LOFOU

25470202

Tsintouri, Lofou, Lemesos



**PIRKOS**

25942655, 99491455  
Vasa Koilaniou, Lemesos

**AGORA**

99630077, 99325396  
Plateia Apostolou Filipou 1, Arsos, Lemesos

**I OREA ELLAS**

25944328  
Ellados 3, Vouni, Lemesos

**OCHIRO**

25945055, 99614602  
Vouniou 6, Agios Amvrosios, Lemesos





## Koumandaria

Lemesos, Kolossi, Erimi, Alassa, Agios Georgios Silikou, Doros, Laneia, Trimiklini, Agios Mamas, Kapileio, Zoopigi, Kalo Chorio, Agios Pavlos, Agios Konstantinos, Louvaras, Gerasa, Apsiou, Paramytha, Palodeia, Agia Fyla

### THE SWEET OLD GRAND-DADDY WINE OF CYPRUS...

As we drive north out of Lemesos on the B6 main road, leaving the hustle and bustle of the city behind, a feeling of some anticipation occurs. The road rises up steadily and soon open country is around us. We are going to see a lot of villages today and we are going to investigate Cyprus's great wine tradition, that of a sweet wine produced since time immemorial. The very word sounds romantic and historic: "Koumandaria". Now it covers not just the wine, but the denominated region of its production, too. Fourteen villages make it and they are to be found at altitudes of between 500 and 900 metres, encompassed within an area of 12 kilometres which lies parallel to the coast, approximately 25 km away.

This is a captivating tour with splendid views all around as we drive along the heights of a wide valley, above and below. The wine we have come to discover is renowned in history.

Probably sweet wine was made in Cyprus in antiquity and most certainly it is older than its name, "Koumandaria". A millennia ago, or even almost two, it was a mellow Communion

wine, referred to as such by Isiodos in his 10th century work "Days and Work".

Today's name, Koumandaria, dates from 1191, when Richard Coeur de Lion sold Cyprus to the Order of the Knights of the Temple. It is thought that this wine was served at his wedding to Queen Berengaria in that year. The territories in which the Templars settled they called "Commanderies". In Cyprus, the largest was at Kolossi Castle, which, as we have noted on a previous page, is well worth a visit.

So the wine took its name from the Knights who were involved in its making and exporting it to the Courts of Europe and the Mediterranean region. Therefore, for more than sentimental regions, this tour starts at Kolossi, and as we explore the castle, we can transport our minds back to the Mediaeval feasting that once went on in its rooms, where the vast roasts and other dishes were accompanied by this luscious sweet wine, whose consumption we confine today to desserts, a digestif, or -if we are adventurous- with *Paté de Foie Gras*.

## GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

As we drive upwards, the road takes a dip downwards, running along the northern edge of the Kouris Reservoir. This is an interesting region, with seasonal interests for bird-watchers and other nature seekers, as well as hikers, walkers and ramblers. There are ancient sites, too, and everywhere vistas in the foreground, middle ground and northwards in the mountainous distance. Along the way, there are two wineries to visit.

**Climate:** With its altitude the Koumandaria region has a temperate climate with a pronounced variation between winter (which can be cold and frosty, with, in most years, regular rainfall) and summer, which is generally dry and warm, but with the cooling air and breezes one finds in the Troodos foothills.

**Terrain:** In contrast with other wine areas the region often offers poor, shallow soil with comparatively high amounts of carbon and calcium. Consequently the grape yield per hectare is lower than, say the Pafos region.

**Vineyards:** All the villages on this route lie in the region of production of “Wines of Controlled Denomination of Origin”, “Koumandaria”. The majority of vineyards are planted with the indigenous Mavro and Xynisteri. Five other varieties are also in evidence.

**Red varieties:** Mavro, Ofthalmo, Cabernet Sauvignon, Grenache

**White varieties:** Palomino, Malaga, Xynisteri





## Ten Points of Serving

1. Normally, whites are served first, followed by rosé and finally the red.

2. If only white wine is to be served, then start with the lightest (usually meaning level of alcohol) and least complex wine, moving through to the fullest (often barrel fermented and/or matured).

3. Youngest wines are served first, moving through to the oldest.

4. Generally, wines of lower calibre (usually the least expensive) are served first, moving up the scale as the meal progresses.

5. Champagne and sparkling wines are usually served first, mostly as aperitifs. Sweet “sparklers” can accompany desserts or are served at the conclusion of a meal.

6. Sweet wines are for desserts and the conclusion the meal.

7. For red wines you can find ranges of glasses suitable for each style. A large glass with the top narrower than the waist is recommended. White wine glasses are smaller, but should still be of a size to let the wine have room in which to open and disclose its aroma. The best measure to pour is one third of a glass -never, ever, fill a glass more than half full!

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## THE ROUTE

Though we are going on a northwards route, it is appropriate to start at Kolossi, at a distance of about 14 kilometres from Lemesos on the B6. Despite the predations of modern man and the expansion of his residence and commercial activities, there is plenty of fertile farming and fruit growing land hereabouts. The region has a long agricultural history, frequently reported appreciatively in the diaries and logs of travellers in the Middle Ages.

Imagine the rich plantations of old surrounding the Crusader Castle of the Knights of St. John at Kolossi -sugar cane, cotton, vines, vegetables and fruits of every description.

Dominating the flat landscape is the square and rugged, stone-built and strong Castle, dating from the 13th century, where the Knights made their regional Headquarters.

When you sip a lovely little measure of Koumandaria, whether with dessert, fruit or even a liver paté, you are sampling quite a lot more than a wine of “Controlled Denomination of Origin”. You are imbibing a wine that is very





much like those made in Biblical times, and you have encountered a method of making that is globally unusual, if not unique. The texture, the aroma, the flavour, these are just found in this noble wine of Cyprus.

To start with, the grapes are the indigenous varieties whose origins are lost in the mists of time, the red “Mavro” and the white “Xynisteri”, all grown here on the southern slopes of Troodos, laced by the rivers Mesa Potamos, Limnatis and Garyllis. But there is more to it than “terroir”; the vinification is preceded by the grapes being laid out in the sun for a week after picking, to enhance sugar level and density. Vinification wine is barrelled for maturation in the sun. Wine which evaporates and is replaced by fresh, a process not unlike the Bodega system of Sherry making.

Visit the Castle. Walk around or relax in its shaded corners, interior and exterior. Marvel at the huge tree “Machairion” (Machaerium Tibu) in the courtyard, which, extraordinarily came from Argentina two hundred years ago. Even in this day and age the vineyards almost reach to the walls of the castle.

Leaving Kolossi westwards, we soon come to Erimi Village, the main part of which extends from this, the old Pafos road, to the boundaries of the Motorway. As we drive down a short slope, opposite a row of shops, on the left is the Wine Museum of Cyprus. Here, in a marvellous building constructed in traditional stone and tile, you can see vine and wine exhibits of historical and current interest, view an audio-visual presentation and taste and buy a range of Cyprus wines. The building is on the site of the former family home of the Museum’s creator Anastasia Guy, a noted musician and composer.

Now we cross the little bridge of Erimi, and turn right returning to the Lemesos - Pafos Motorway, where we strike out eastwards towards Lemesos. We drive on to the big flyover and look out for the turn off left to Agia Fyla, the B8 road. Agia Fyla is now a suburb of Lemesos, but we are soon in open country and climbing on a fine wide road. Shortly we will pass the Kouris Reservoir on the left -the biggest in the island- and Alassa village on the hill to our right.



We are ascending continually with a wonderful valley vista spread out to the left and the Troodos Mountains ahead. Turn off left when you see the sign to Monagri village, where wine has been made since time immemorial. A visit to the restored monastery and the little Church of the Archangel and the nearby monastery of the Virgin Mary of Amasgos are rewarding.

The bendy, undulating little road here weaves among delightful views and it is no wonder many people come to live here, in countryside residences or restored village houses. The next village is the tiny one of Agios Georgios, where the “terroir” is ideal for growing the grapes that make Koumandaria.

Continuing on this well made country road we proceed to climb to 650 metres altitude, and Silikou village. A pretty little place, where one can relax, walk, take coffee or a meal and enjoy the scene. Sadly, the old wine presses (Linos) are abandoned, but there are fountains to be enjoyed, where in one’s mind’s eye we may see horsemen of olden days refreshing themselves and their animals! The springs that serve these have long helped irrigate the fruit trees and plots around the village. Silikou is famous for the quality of its raisins.

We retrace our steps to Agios Georgios, noting the completely different aspects of the scenery as we go in the opposite direction and from there to Monagri. We take a left turn to Doros village. The distances here are short, just a kilometre or two. In open situations, above the River Mesa Potamos, those villages constitute the western part of the Koumandaria region.

Stroll the paved streets of Doros, take some coffee and a glass of cool mountain water, and then make for this first of two Koumandaria Wineries: “PANAGIOTIS KARSERAS” winery is next to the church of Agios Epifanios - 16th century.

## Ten Points of Serving

8. Don’t chill wine in the freezer, because the abrupt fall in temperature may alter it.

9. Don’t keep wine in the refrigerator for a long time, because the temperature is too low for storing most wines and if the wine has been opened, it can acquire an odour.

10. Keep a wine cooler on the table to keep white and rosé wines at an appropriate serving temperature.



Production here is around 100,000 bottles a year, half of which is made for the large Lemesos wine firm ETKO. The winery is owned by the Community President of the village, who has run it for more than 10 years. The winery uses both traditional and modern equipment and techniques in making this lovely sweet wine, taking in grapes from vine growers all around the village.

Conducted tours with Greek, English and Russian commentaries may be arranged, and it is recommended to contact the winery to set up your visit.

Our visit over and our Koumandaria tasted and purchased, we head back to the B8 and turn left. Very shortly we see the sign for Laneia and turn right. Laneia has not only remained well preserved, it has been lovingly restored and it is a popular place to live, whose residents include noted artists and writers. Here you may see a traditional wine press which has been well restored. There are restaurants, coffee shops as well as places to buy souvenirs, art-works, craft items and sweet-meats like the famous Soudjouko, the *Eau-de-Vie* Zivania and, of course Koumandaria and other local wines. A walk around will demonstrate the harmony in which this modern, but traditional, village exists with the surrounding nature.

Returning once more to the B8 road, we turn right and head for Trimiklini village. The ride is only a few minutes. On the north side of the village we turn right and after about two kilometres we come to the settlement of Agios Mamas, in fertile and wooded areas, at an altitude of 600 metres. This is truly lovely rural Cyprus and it is the location of the Koumandaria winery of the Co-Operative.

We carry on; the woods thicken and the slopes around us become a lot steeper, and we find the tiny village of Kapilio, standing out on a hill, dominating the Limnatis village valley, which is also referred to as Ampelikos.

Driving back to Agios Mamas we turn right and, after driving along this pretty valley for about seven kilometres, we reach the E110 road. Going northwards, we come to Zoopigi village at an altitude of 885 metres. The views here are stunning, the powerful mountains of the region, dissected by the tributaries of River Limnatis, (locally known as "Xilourikos") and River Germasoyias, providing unexpected, harsh-seeming even, beauty.

We next make for Kalo Chorio village, which is an important centre of Koumandaria production and a land-mark of the village. The winery, the "COOPERATIVE COMPANY OF VINICULTURE" is close by the Church of Agios Georgios in "Koumandaria Avenue".



## Recommended Serving Temperatures

|  |                |
|--|----------------|
| Champagne, Sparkling wines, Sweet wines  | <b>7-9°C</b>   |
| Dry White Wines                          | <b>8-10°C</b>  |
| Mature Dry White barrel-aged wines       | <b>10-12°C</b> |
| Rosé Wines                               | <b>10-12°C</b> |
| Light Red and <i>Nouveau</i> style wines | <b>12-14°C</b> |
| Red wine with medium body                | <b>15-16°C</b> |
| Rich or well matured red wines           | <b>16-18°C</b> |



## Wine Glasses

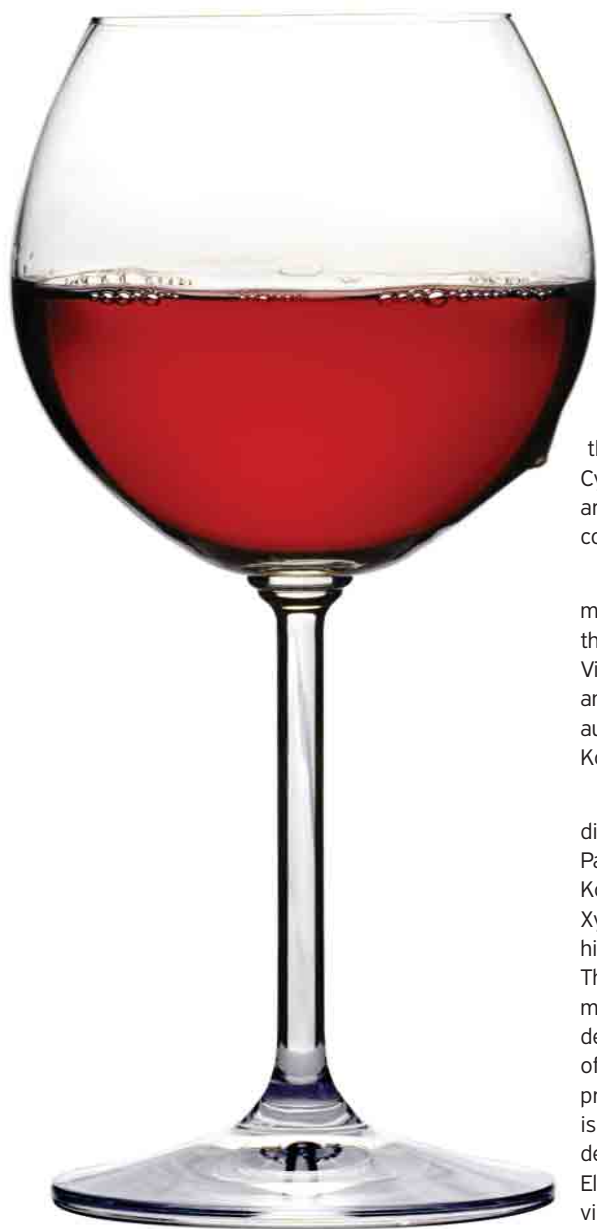
The simpler, the better! Ignore fancy engraving, coloured sand sculpted glasses. Most good supermarkets have good basic wine glasses of the right shape to get the best out of the main styles of wine. More specialised glasses can be had, in varying price ranges, from catering suppliers and wine stores.

Good glasses are of thin, clear glass or crystal. Less expensive ones are machine made and are perfectly adequate. The best ranges are hand-blown in designs to get the best from certain grapes or types of wine.

Glasses for table wines have a base, a stalk and the bowl, which is tulip shaped. The widest part is at the waist and the glass should become narrower near the top.

Champagne used to be served in what looks like an ice-cream glass, formally known as “Marie Antoinette”, but today a long narrow glass called a “Flute” is the ideal method to serve your “bubbly”. For Fortified Wines like Port, Sherry and Madeira, a shorter glass like a Flute is ideal, whilst dessert wines can also use such a receptacle, or a rounder small glass.





As is the case with most of the wineries we shall visit in these Wine Routes, the grapes used are essentially local. In this case, they are exclusively of the white Cyprus grape, Xynisteri. The wines produced are taken, aged and bottled by the two major companies, KEO and ETKO.

Here there may be no shop, but you may try a sip or two of the wine direct from the barrel, an experience not to be missed! Visitors may take a conducted tour (Greek and English languages) and see a fascinating audio visual presentation about the making of Koumandaria.

As we continue our journey in an eastern direction, after a short while we come to Agios Pavlos and Agios Constantinos villages. The Koumandaria here is fine stuff, made from Xynisteri and Mavro, and benefiting from the high altitude at which the grapes are grown. The surroundings are almost Alpine -the mountain slopes, the forest, the air and the dense vineyard plantations. In the square of Agios Pavlos you can see a truly old wine press, while in Agios Constantinos there is an old church of traditional architecture, dedicated to the Agios Constantinos and Eleni. Also to be seen are an old mill and a fine village fountain.





The next village on our way is Louvaras. To get to it with drive back to Kalo Chorio village and, at the end of Koumandaria avenue, turn left and again left at a second road.

Louvaras is a very picturesque village, built on an open and flat place, above the beginning of the River Garillis Valley, surrounded by dense woodland punctuated by abrupt slopes and small canyons. Near the village is the small church of Agios Mamas, which was built in 1455 and includes murals of Philippos Goul.

The last and lower villages of the region of Koumandaria are Apsiou and Gerasa. Although there is an un-made-up track parallel to the river that runs through the forest which can take you there, it will be more comfortable if you go back to Kalo Chorio. From here, downwards to the left for about five kilometres you will come to Apsiou village on the left and Gerasa village on the right side of the road. The distance between them is about one kilometre. Gerasa village is found in a fertile open and flat place in a thinly wooded area, above River Garillis. The vines most cultivated at this altitude (430 meters) are of the Mavro variety. Gerasa village maintains some characteristics of the traditional architecture of the semi-highland region but its having less water makes it less green.

Lemesos isn't far from here, about twelve kilometres south. After we have passed Paramytha and Palodia villages we reach Agia Fyla and the motorway. The total distance of our drive has been a little more than a hundred kilometres. For us, we have enjoyed a modern-age, speedy travelling of an olden-days wine route, making the acquaintance of one of the world's oldest wines.



## WINERIES

### CO-OPERATIVE COMPANY OF VINICULTURE

25542266, 99534060

Kalo Chorio

### KARSERAS WINERY

99413238, 99589325

Doros



50



80



## TAVERNAS / RESTAURANTS

### PARAMYTHA

25452444, 99645247

Makedonias 1, Paramythia, Lemesos

### RAFTIS

25774001

Michalaki Karaoli 16, Palodeia, Lemesos

### SILIKOU VILLAGE

25470001, 99892027

Silikou, Lemesos

### TO STEKI TOU MELI

25770225, 99752919

Eleftherias 5, Palodeia, Lemesos

### ESTIATORIO FILITOS

25543344, 99608135

Kalo Chorio, Lemesos

### TAVERNA TO APTALIKO

99639321

Peukou 1, Kalo Chorio, Lemesos

### VILLAGE TAVERN KALO CHORIO

25542737, 99429119

Kalo Chorio, Lemesos

### LANEIA

25432398, 99464759

Laneia, Lemesos

## 6

## Pitsilia

Lemesos, Agia Fyla, Palodeia, Alassa, Trimiklini, Pelendri, Potamitissa, Dymes, Kyperounta, Chandria, Polystypos, Alona, Agros, Agios Ioannis, Agios Theodoros, Zoopigi

## WILD... AND BEAUTIFUL

This route takes us through the eastern aspects of the Troodos Mountains. It is called Pitsilia and the wine tourist comes upon no less than 14 villages involved in vine growing or winemaking in one way or another. The hills are sturdy and steep and the good tarmac road twists its way upwards and round them. Villages are dramatically revealed to us as we round the bends. The three peaks of Troodos look down on the vineyards of Pitsilia. The highest peak is Olympus, at 1952 metres, followed by Madari (1672m) and Papoutsa (1530m).

In this almost wild landscape, cultivated land clings to the steep slopes, a tribute to man's determination. Trees abound, in orchards, gardens, streets and yards: almonds, olives, walnuts, apples and wild berries. But the loveliest array of greenery (especially in dry summers) is that of the vineyards. Their produce here feeds the two wineries we can visit on this itinerary.

Rural life in Cyprus has always been hard. People's lives were totally related to the land and geared to the seasons -and the phases of the moon. Indeed many vine growers still plan their pruning and other aspects of the

- vine year by the moon's positions -something
- that some modern organic winemakers are
- returning to today. For the wine-lover each
- season brings something different: the cold
- winter lull in vine growth and vine pruning in
- the coldest temperatures... Spring, and the
- warming of the air and land bringing shoots
- of new growth of leaves and buds. Then, bud
- - burst and flowering and the watch through
- the summer to ensure healthy vines and
- grapes. And, finally, as the hot months fade into
- autumn, the making of the year's wine. Vine
- leaves turn gold, red and dark and then fall -
- their greenery replaced by new grass and plant
- growth following the fall and winter rains.



## GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

Plenty goes on in Pitsilia villages and their nearby areas, quite a lot of it to do with food and wine. The area is surrounded by four forests: Troodos forest in the west, Mahairas forest in east, the Adelfoi forest in the north, and Lemesos forest to the south. It is dominated by the peak of Madari (1,672 m). Generally, there is ample rainfall here, producing rich vegetation.

Noted for its scenery and its many activities, the Pitsilia area is also well known for the friendliness and hospitality of its residents. Two wineries lie before us to look at, taste and enjoy...

**Climate:** This is pleasant light Alpine-winters can be fresh and cold, with frosts and snowfalls. Summers are warm and pleasant with the altitude to temper the sun's heat.

• **Terrain:** The region is intensely mountainous, but there are substantial cultivated areas that pleasingly co-exist with the natural vegetation and woodlands. The soil is usually grey in colour, as befits a limestone area, with some sandy constituents.

• **Vineyards:** 32 villages of the region are included in the area of production of "Controlled Denomination of Origin" (WCNO) "Pitsilia". Apart from local Mavro and Xynisteri, 11 other varieties of vines are cultivated.

• **Red Varieties:** Ofthalmo, Maratheftiko, Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Mataro, Mavro, Shiraz, Lefkada

• **White Varieties:** Xynisteri, Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Malaga





## Cyprus Grape Varieties

### White Wines

#### **Xynisteri**

Xynisteri is the indigenous white grape of Cyprus. Modern technology and winery practice have combined in recent years to produce a fresh, fruity, pleasing white wine, which is best drunk within a year of bottling. Many good examples of 100% Xynisteri are available, and it also blends well with varieties such as Semillon.

#### **Chardonnay**

The “World’s White Wine” grape has settled well in Cyprus and there are a number of quite enjoyable local examples -some have been fermented in oak, some barrel-aged and others produced without oak. Flowery notes, fruitiness, good body and a nice finish are its characteristics.

#### **Sauvignon Blanc**

Another French grape that has travelled the globe (especially to the New World). Its vigorous fragrance, its bite and forward fruit are noticeable in a few Cypriot-made examples

#### **Semillon**

Semillon has settled well here and there are some noticeable examples. Gentle citrus notes combine with excellent acidity, and it blends well with Cyprus Xynisteri.

#### **Muscat of Alexandria**

Some of our winemakers produce both dry and sweet wines from this old variety. It is also blended with Xynisteri to produce a nicely rounded white wine.

*(continued on page 83)*



## THE ROUTE

We leave the A1 Motorway and take the B8 road towards Troodos. It is a wide and good road, and we can make progress upwards. After a few kilometres we descend to a valley which opens into the largest Reservoir in Cyprus, Kouris, whilst on our right above us is Alassa village. Motoring further north we come to Trimiklini village which really constitutes the lower boundary of the Pitsilia area.

Strung along either side of this main road, newly re-built through the village, Trimiklini nevertheless preserves its village identity. It's worth a stop, for the shops, coffee shops and places to eat. Virtually year-round there are stalls selling all kinds of local fruits, preserves and other food products. In the village, too, there are good places to buy basketwear, pottery, and, if you are a resident, shrubs and plants for the garden. Truly a modern Cypriot village!

A little northwards, we turn right on the E806 to Pelendri village. The road takes quite a spectacular climb, with the scenery marked by rocky outcrops, pine trees and natural plant life. Sadly, areas here have been decimated by recent forest fires, leaving a moonscape rather than the green landscapes we are accustomed

to. Incredibly good fortune stalled the fires literally at the gates of our first wine stop of the tour. Up a winding track deep in what was the forest is "TSIAKKAS WINERY", a ten year old family run business, whose founder gave up a career in banking to start the winery and make his own wine. Even after the fires, this is a spectacular location in which to taste some Cyprus wines.

Costas and Marina Tsiakkas make a good range of wines from both indigenous and international grape varieties. They strive to enhance the quality of their wines, with the help of specialised oenologists, and are achieving growing success. Their small team is passionately dedicated and their enthusiasm charms visitors. You may try whites made from Chardonnay, Xynisteri and Sauvignon Blanc, and their red Cabernet Sauvignon is also highly praised.

Group visits are preferred, by prior appointment. There are good facilities for tastings and sales (including Koumandaria), snacks, souvenirs and picnics.

We leave the winery and re-join the E806, turning left towards Pelendri. This is semi-





circularly located in the hillsides overlooking the Limnatis River Valley. As we have seen before, there is old and new here, as befits a village with its own businesses and agricultural activities, with recently built homes side by side with old as well as restored structures.

The narrow, bustling main street of Pelendri can be quite testing for the visiting driver, but mercifully it is only a couple of minutes before we are through and on our way to Potamitissa (3 kms), and a little further on, Dymes village. Though these hamlets do have some permanent residents, a great many houses are weekend places for city dwellers. Those who do live here year round have some lovely little places, with shaded courtyards and peaceful surroundings.

We pass through Dymes and head for Kyperounta village four kilometres away. This is one of the larger villages of Pitsilia and continues to grow and flourish. It is a green patchwork of dwellings, smallholdings and vineyards, with, of course, the presence of the forest close at hand. Our second wine port-of-call is just outside, on the way to Chandria.

“KYPEROUNTA” Winery is accommodated in modern, purpose-built premises, with pleasant village views down the slopes on which it is sited.

This is a medium sized winery with an annual production which is rising beyond

300,000 bottles. It is owned by the Photos Photiades group, notable for their Carlsberg Cyprus Brewery, and who have utilised the expertise of Greece’s largest wine producer, *Boutari*, to develop this winery.

The result of all this is that the plant is modern and the range of four wines, produced by skilled oenologists, is achieving deserved success. Try the white “Petritis” Xynisteri and Chardonnay; the red blend “Andessitis” as well as the Cabernet Sauvignon.

Visits are by arrangement. The conducted tour has both English and Greek commentaries, and there are facilities for tasting and buying the wines.

On a ridge close to Kyperounta Winery, we find Chandria village. Here the altitude is around 1 300 metres with Madari peak 300 metres higher, north of the village. On the south side of Madari, with the pine trees prominent, the local Mavro and Xynisteri grapes grow in little, utterly timeless vineyards. No mechanical cultivation or harvesting of grapes here!

Lagoudera, the next village, is a pretty little settlement which is built in amphitheatric style on the northern side of Madari. It completely maintains its traditional character. Higher than Lagoudera, in a north-westerly direction, we move on to Saranti village, where we may visit the Monastery of Virgin Mary of Arakas. It is a typical 12th century provincial church with wooden roof adapted to the mountainous



areas, and it is well maintained. It is included in UNESCO's list of World Cultural Heritage monuments.

From Lagoudera village our road moves south taking us to Polystypos at an altitude of 1 150 metres. It's a lovely little place, rich in almond, walnut and cherry trees, surrounded by - yes, you've guessed! - vineyards of our own Cyprus grapes.

From here turn eastwards awhile to Alona village, about four kilometres. Just at the entry to the village in the last but one bend in the road, lies the fountain "I Vrisi ton Poulion", which is quite hidden. Best to get out, walk and find it on foot, and it's worth it. It is an isolated place, cool and silent, but also, in a way, full of life! Colours and aromas assail one's senses. And then down into the village, with tree shaded streets and stone steps to take us around this traditional neighbourhood.

Our next stop is Agros, south-west of Alona, a distance of a little more than 15 km. The first half of the way is decidedly rural and packed with mostly "Mavro", mainly of black variety. There's a certain wild beauty here, perhaps the trademark of the Pitsilia area. In the second half of the way we pick up the E903 road that runs down from Palaichori village.

At an altitude of 1 100 metres Agros is the heart of the Pitsilia area. It is quite a large place, with a lot going on, under the guidance of an enterprising Development Board. It is a tourist centre for both local and foreign visitors, with a good hotel, other accommodation, as well as shops, coffee shops and restaurants. Local Industries include rose and flower waters, bottled spring water, wine, flowers, honey and preserves.

For the observant visitor, the streets demonstrate building design of many generations, and virtually every house of whatever provenance has its balconies with

## Cyprus Grape Varieties

### Red Varieties

#### Mavro

A falling percentage of land area is planted with the Mavro, but still 60% of vineyards are planted with it. As a varietal it produces low-acid flaccid wine, and modern winemakers use it very little, except as a blender. In days past it was used for distilling, for marinating meats and as a basis of *Sangria* and other aromatics. It is being replaced by Cabernet Sauvignon, Shiraz, Merlot, Mataro, Grenache and other grapes.

#### Maratheftiko

The most dynamic indigenous variety of Cyprus. Not long re-discovered, it is now being developed for high-acid varietal and blended red wines, with enormous possibilities. At present only 2% of vineyard area is planted with it, but further vineyards are being put to it.

*(continued on page 85)*



attendant flowers in hanging pots -oil drums cut in half to house larger plants are not unknown either- Agros is vibrant! A good centre for touring or walking holidays.

Now we drive south and after three kilometres reach Agios Ioannis, a picturesque village. Its immediate neighbour is Agios Theodoros (on the left), which is our last stop before the return to Lemesos. It used to be called Eptalofos, meaning Seven Hills. It is a village with a unique character, with a seldom seen harmony of people and nature. Streets well planted with pines take your eye to the forest, to the fields and vineyards around. Almond trees mingle with apple trees, pines mingle with poplars, which seem to embrace the entire village.

And so we say Farewell to the Pitsilia area. Descending southwards, we pass Zoopigi, Gerasa and Paramytha (the home village of Cyprus's tennis star Marcos Bagdatis). Finally we pass the hospitable features of Palodeia village, and then the northern suburb of Lemesos, Agia Fyla village, where we end this tour. The distance did not exceed 120 kilometres, but its many sights will remain with us.

## Cyprus Grape Varieties

### Ofthalgo

Another local variety that is cultivated in quite small quantities, mainly in the region of Pitsilia, but also in some villages of the Pafos district. It usually produces wine of light colour, characteristic perfume, light body and low acidity, which is best drunk young. Also a useful blender.

### Levkada

A variety that comes from the Greek island of the same name, Lefkada was first cultivated in Cyprus in the 1930s. Lefkada has a deep red colour, a powerful grapy aroma, a red colour, and good attack. Blends well with Shiraz.

### Cabernet Sauvignon

The most famous red grape in the world which has been planted for more than 25 years in Cyprus. The Cypriot Cabernet Sauvignons are usually deep purple-red, with forward berry aromas and tastes of red and black berries, green pepper, grasses and cedar, with plenty of tannins. Some present possibilities for aging.

### Cabernet Franc

Cultivated fairly widely. It is aromatic, more herbaceous and less fruity than Cabernet Sauvignon, with lighter body and colour, and matures faster than Cabernet Sauvignon. Good blender.

### Merlot

There is very little Merlot in Cyprus, but recent plantings have produced some interesting wines. In its early days yet!

### Syrah or Shiraz

Shiraz is doing well here, producing some rich, big, powerful and intense wines. They have acidity and tannins to allow considerable aging. Oak plays an important role. Several styles have been observed, ranging from very New World, to less intense more European.

### Mataro

Cyprus suits Mataro, a variety of Spanish origin, also known as Mourvèdre in France, where it is a noted blender. It is made as a varietal, notably in Pafos district, and as a blender. Produces well balanced reds with good body, fruit and tannins.

### Carignan

Carignan is the most planted, foreign variety in Cyprus. In the wine villages of Lemesos and in the Pafos district, hundreds of hectares are planted with this variety. Carignan is rich in tannins, colour and acidity. The result is a wine best drunk several years after bottling.

*(continued on page 86)*



## Cyprus Grape Varieties

### Grenache

Grenache is a satisfactory variety for Cyprus, as it has adapted perfectly to the ecosystems of the island. Red wines are light and pleasant, with the typical flavour of the grape very evident. As in many other countries it makes some excellent rosé, and it is a fine blender, too, with such varieties as Shiraz, Mataro or Cabernet Sauvignon.



# Lemesos' "Wine Mile"

## a walk full of memories...

On the way from The Old Port of Lemesos to the New Port there is a substantial trading area with bonded warehouses and offices of many of Cyprus's wineries, spirit and beer producers. Now in transition with new company headquarters, international organisations and a magnificent Marina, it is worth having a look at. Here you will find the sites of the four long-standing leaders of the wine industry.

### The Route

The total distance from the old harbour to the last wine producing plant does not exceed two kilometres, so unless it is very hot it can be comfortably accomplished on foot.

From the Old Port roundabout (with its noted fish restaurant) and taking the narrow street westwards, the first point of interest is the old wine factory of the "HAGGIPAVLOU" family, now mostly concerned with the company's production of "Koniak" (Cyprus Brandy). Seeming to resist modernity, it actually houses some very interesting old vintages.

As we walk on the road widens and after a couple of hundred metres we enter Franklyn Roosevelt Avenue. Presently, our first interesting sight on the left is the KEO Brewery and then the offices and premises of KEO Winery. Like the other three of the so-called "Big Four", KEO have traditionally made a large range of grape products -from juice and grape must, through table wines of all types, to vermouths, liqueurs and spirits. Until quite recently visitors could see the wonderful Bodega wherein KEO's "Fino" used to be made, and the distillery using French equipment dating from 1870, which is still in action. Today KEO make a modern range of wines at their winery at Malia, and the taster is recommended to sample their "Maratheftiko", "Riesling" and "Xynisteri". KEO is the second oldest wine firm in Cyprus dating from 1927.

Just 150 metres along the avenue we turn left down towards the sea and come upon the "LOEL" wine factory. Founded in 1943 it is run on co-operative lines and has always had a close relationship with countries of Eastern Europe, to which it exported large quantities of wines and spirits. It is the only one of the Big Four still conducting all the wine production processes in Lemesos, but like the others, will eventually move wine-making to the hills near the vineyards. Try "Mediterranean Cabernet Sauvignon" - a dry wine, with a pleasant aroma and good structure.

Our third winery, just along the avenue, past the traffic lights, is down another turning to the left. At the end of the road "SODAP" wine factory awaits us. Established in 1947 by many thousands of vine-growers, it is a Co-operative company, whose production has now been moved to a new purpose-built winery near Stroumpi in the Pafos district. Today SODAP is Cyprus's largest producer and exporter of table wines. Of a large and popular range, try "Mountain Vines" Semillon white.

Now, back on Franklyn Roosevelt Avenue, we turn off left again after just a few metres to find the last of the Big Four, and the oldest. It is the premises of ETKO, the brand name of the Haggipavlou family's winery. Founded in 1844 by Chistodoulos Haggipavlou, who bought sailing ships to transport the wine he brought from the hills in goatskins, blended and barrelled, to markets in Egypt, Palestine and other countries. ETKO built the first contemporary winemaking plant at Zanakia in 1893. They now make their wine at the Olympus winery in Omodos and their range of varieties is worth investigating.

To visit any or all of these wineries, telephone to find times of opening and facilities for tours. All have tasting rooms and shops to buy the wines and other items.

## Out of the way, but worth a Visit!

The two wineries in this section are well spaced, but worth an individual visit. They are part of the growingly rich fabric of the Cyprus wine industry.

### AES AMBELIS

At distance of 30 kilometres from Lefkosia, this winery is the closest one to the Capital. To get there, take the E903, to Palaichori and Agros. As you approach Kalo Chorio Orinis you will find it on the right hand side, set back a little from the road.

The Aes Ambelis winery is an attractive building. The owner, George Tripatas, designed and built a modern structure on several levels so that the gravity feed system for juice, must and wine could be utilised. At its heart is a rotunda shaped structure which is most attractive. Off the rotunda are temperature controlled rooms with American and French oak barrels maturing the four main wines made by the winery. Visitors are welcome every day (but call first!). Aes Ambelis are popular wines and you may try their good “every day” white, their Cabernet Sauvignon and Liasto, a dessert wine from Moscato grapes dried in the sun.

### DOMAINE HADJANTONAS

This winery traces its roots to the early 20th century, when the grandfather of the present owner, Doros Hadjiantona, established a winery in Pera Pedi, in the Lemesos district below Platres. Several generations ran it, but operations ceased in 1978.

Twenty one years later, the young Doros decided to regenerate the family enterprise. He built a modern plant near Parekklesia, 15 minutes north - east of Lemesos and started production in 2004, aiming for around 45,000 bottles annually.

Hadjiantonas is unique among Cyprus wineries in using the fine Greek red grape “Agoritiko” from their own vineyards. They also buy in Shiraz, Chardonnay and other varieties from contracted growers. You may try the Chardonnay which matures for six months in oak barrels, and the Shiraz. There is also the semi-sparkling, sweet wine made from the Moscato variety.



## WINERIES

### KYPEROUNTA WINERY

25532043, 99589612  
Kyperounta, Lemesos



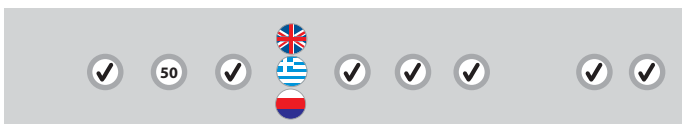
### TSIAKKAS WINERY

25991080, 99567898  
Pelendri, Lemesos



### AES AMPELIS WINERY

99651361, 99335358  
Kalo Chorio



### DOMAINE HADJANTONAS

25991199, 99553351  
Parekkklisia



## TAVERNAS / RESTAURANTS

### DIONYSOS RESTAURANT (Rodon Hotel)

25521201  
Agros, Lemesos

### TO PEZEMA

25521046, 99551381  
Steliou Hadjipetri 50, Agros, Lemesos









# CYPRUS TOURISM ORGANISATION

## OFFICES IN CYPRUS

### Lefkosia (Nicosia)

#### Cyprus Tourism Organisation (Head Office)

Leoforos Lemesou 19,  
Lefkosia, Cyprus  
Postal address:  
P.O. Box 24535, CY-1390 Lefkosia  
(Nicosia)  
Tel: + 357 22 69 11 00  
Telefax: + 357 22 33 16 44  
E-mail: [cytour@visitcyprus.com](mailto:cytour@visitcyprus.com)  
Website: [www.visitcyprus.com](http://www.visitcyprus.com)

Aristokyprou 11  
Laiki Geitonia (East of Plateia  
Eleftherias)  
CY-1011 Lefkosia,  
Tel: 22 67 42 64

### Lemesos (Limassol)

a) Spyrou Araouzou 115A  
CY-3036 Lemesos,  
Tel: 25 36 27 56

b) Georgiou A' 22  
CY-4047 Lemesos,  
Potamos tis Germanogeias  
(eastern entrance of  
Dasoudi beach)  
Tel: 25 32 32 11

c) Lemesos Harbour  
Service to all passenger boats.  
Tel: 25 57 18 68

### Larnaka

a) Plateia Vasileos Pavlou  
CY-6023 Larnaka,  
Tel: 24 65 43 22

b) Larnaka International Airport  
CY-7130 Larnaka,  
Tel. 24 64 35 76

### Pafos

a) Gladstonos 3  
CY-8046 Pafos  
Tel: 26 93 28 41

b) Poseidonos Ave. 63A  
CY-8042 Kato Pafos  
Tel: 26 93 05 21

c) Pafos International Airport  
CY-8320 Pafos,  
Tel: 26 42 31 61 (Service to all  
flights)

### Polis

Vasileos Stasioikou A' 2  
CY-8820, Polis Chrysochous  
Tel: 26 32 24 68

### Paralimni - Protaras

Leoforos Protara -  
Kavo Gkreko 356  
CY 5296 Protaras-Paralimni  
Tel: 23 83 28 65

### Agia Napa

Leoforos Kryou Nerou 12  
CY-5330 Agia Napa,  
Tel: 23 72 17 96

### Platres

CY-4820 Platres,  
Tel: 25 42 13 16

## OFFICES ABROAD

### UNITED KINGDOM

#### CYPRUS TOURIST OFFICE

17, Hanover Street London W1S 1YP  
Tel.: 0207 569 8800, Fax: 0207 499 4935  
E-mail: informationcto@btconnect.com

### IRELAND

#### CYPRUS TOURISM ORGANISATION

71 Lower Leeson St, Dublin 2  
Tel: +353.1.6629269, Fax: +353.1.6629270  
E-mail: cyprusinfo@eircom.net

### GERMANY

#### FREMDENERKEHRSZENTRALE ZYPERN FRANKFURT

Zeil 127, 60313 Frankfurt  
Tel.: (069) 25 1919, Fax: (069) 25 0288  
E-mail: info@cto-fra.de

### BERLIN

Wallstr. 27, 10179 Berlin  
Tel.: 030-23 45-7590, Fax: 030-23 45-7592  
E-mail: cto\_berlin@t-online.de

### SWITZERLAND

#### FREMDENERKEHRSZENTRALE ZYPERN

Gottfried Keller-Strasse 7, CH-8001 Zurich  
Tel. +4144 262 3303, Fax: +4144 251 2417  
Geneva: Tel: +4122 741 33 03  
E-mail: ctoturich@bluewin.ch

### AUSTRIA

#### ZYPERN TOURISMUS

Parkring 20, A-1010 Wien  
Tel. (01) 513 18 70, Fax: (01) 513 18 72  
E-mail: office@zyperntourismus.at

### FRANCE

#### OFFICE DU TOURISME DE CHYPRE

15, Rue de la Paix, 75002 Paris  
Tel. 01. 42.61.42.49, Fax: 01. 42.61.65.13  
E-mail: cto.chypre.paris@wanadoo.fr

### BELGIUM

#### OFFICE DU TOURISME DE CHYPRE DIENST VOOR TOERISME VAN CYPRUS

Avenue de Cortenberg 61, Kortenberglaan  
B-1000 Bruxelles/Brussel  
Tel. 02/735.06.21, Fax: 02/735.66.07  
E-mail: cyprus@skynet.be

### SWEDEN

#### CYPERNS TURISTRÄD

Sveavägen 66, 111 43 Stockholm  
Tel. (08) 10 50 25, Fax: (08) 10 64 14  
E-mail: info@ctosweden.org

### GREECE

#### CYPRUS TOURISM ORGANISATION ATHENS

Voukouristiou Str. 38, Kolonaki  
Athens 10673  
Tel. (210) 36 10 178, (210) 36 10 057  
Fax: (210) 36 44 798  
E-mail: cto-athens@ath.forthnet.gr

### THESSALONIKI

Nikis Ave. 37, Thessaloniki, 54013  
P.O.Box 50046  
Tel. (2310) 242880, Fax: (2310) 286881  
E-mail: kotthes@the.forthnet.gr

### FINLAND

#### KYPROKSEN MATKAILUTOIMISTO

Aleksanterinkatu, 48B, 00100 Helsinki  
Tel. (0) 9-476 09 100, Fax: (0) 9-476 09 120  
E-mail: info@ctofinland.org

### ITALY

#### ENTE NAZIONALE PER IL TURISMO DI CIPRO

Via Santa Sofia 6, 20122 Milano  
Tel. 02 58 31 98 35, 02 58 30 33 28,  
Fax: 02 58 30 33 75  
E-mail: info@turismocipro.it

### UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

#### CYPRUS TOURISM ORGANIZATION

13 East 40th Str. New York, NY 10016  
Tel. (00 1212) 683-5280  
Fax: (00 1212) 683-5282  
E-mail: gocypirus@aol.com

### THE NETHERLANDS

#### CYPRUS VERKEERSBUREAU

Keizersgracht 635, 1017 DS Amsterdam  
Tel. (020) 624 4358, Fax: (020) 638 3369  
E-mail: cyprus.sun@planet.nl

### ISRAEL

#### CYPRUS TOURISM ORGANISATION

Top Tower-14th floor, Dizengoff Centre  
50 Dizengoff Str., - Tel-Aviv 64332  
Tel. 00-972-3-52 57 442  
Fax: 00-972-3-52 57 443  
E-mail: cto@netvision.net.il

### RUSSIAN FEDERATION

#### CYPRUS TOURISM ORGANISATION

##### MOSCOW

Povarskaya 9, Building 2, 121069 Moscow  
Tel: 007- 495-744-2953/54  
Fax: 007-495-744-2955  
E-mail: moscowcto@yandex.ru

### ST. PETERSBURG

27 Furshtatskaya street  
191123 St. Petersburg  
Tel: 007-812-332-58-08  
Fax: 007-812-332-58-09  
E-mail: spcto@yandex.ru

### HUNGARY

#### CIPRUSI IDEGENFORGALMI HIVATAL

H-1051 Budapest  
Dorottya Str. 3. III floor  
Tel. 00-36-1-266 6044, Fax: 00-36-1-266 6043  
E-mail: ciprusinfo@t-online.hu

### POLAND

#### CYPRYSKA ORGANIZACJA TURYSTYCZNA

Piekna 20, 00-549 Warszawa  
Tel.+ 48 22 827 90 36, Fax: + 48 22 - 827 90 34  
E-mail: cto@cypir.pl

### CZECH REPUBLIC

#### KYPERSKÁ ORGANIZACE CESTOVNÍHO RUCHU

Pod Hradbami 662/9, 160 00 Praha 6  
Tel. 00-420-222-253 097  
Fax: 00-420-222 -251 639  
E-mail: cto.prague@volny.cz

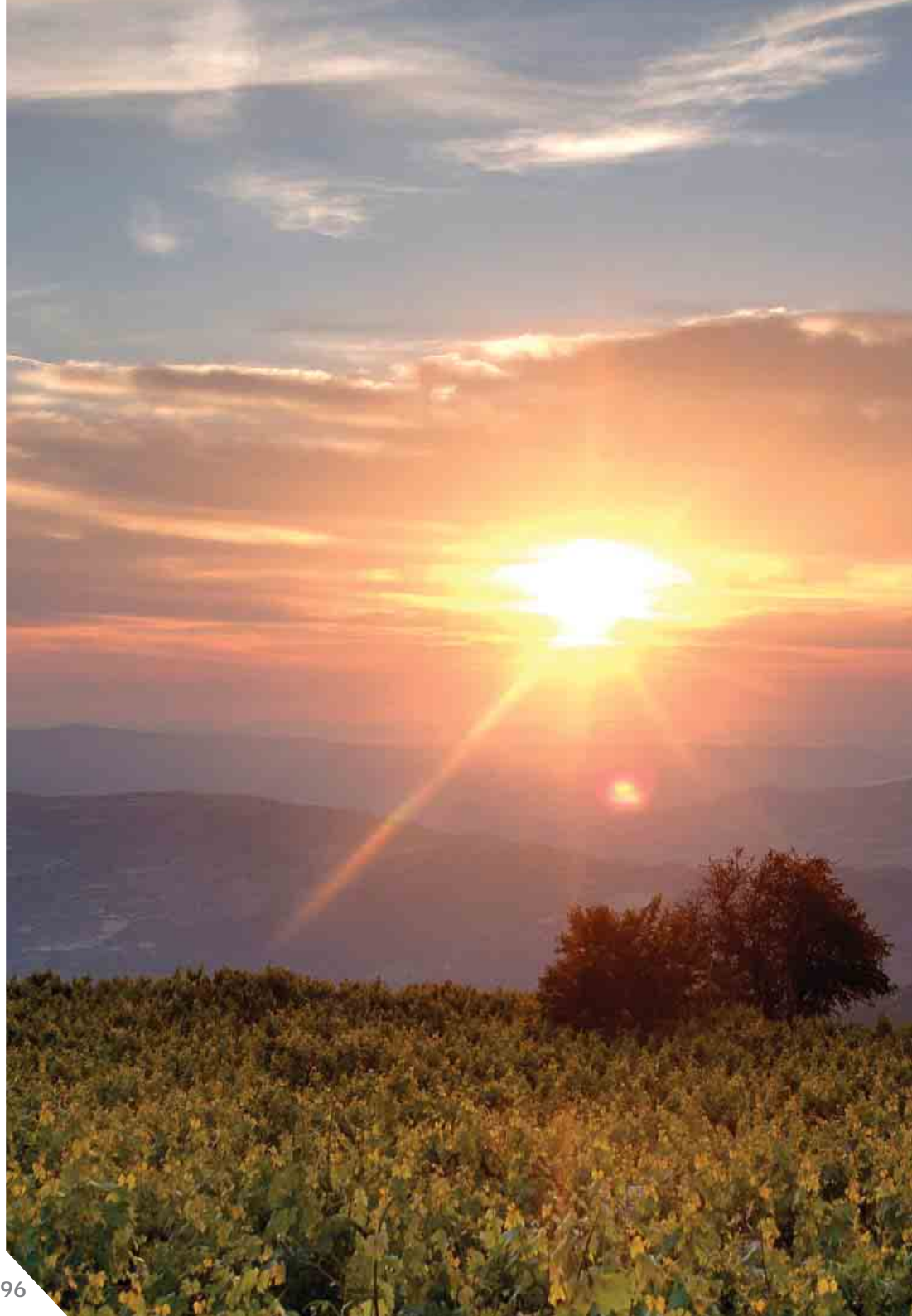
### MIDDLE EAST AND ARABIAN GULF

#### CYPRUS TOURISM ORGANISATION

Al Ghurair Center, Office Tower, 436B  
P.O. Box 94670 Deira  
Dubai - UAE  
Tel: +971 4 22 77637, Fax: +971 4 22 77638  
E-mail: tourism@cyprusme.com







## Criteria set down by the Cyprus Tourism Organisation for the inclusion of wineries and places of interest in the “Wine Routes” network

### Wineries

1. Must have the necessary licence for operation.
2. Must provide sign-posted directions from the road to the reception point in the winery.
3. Must provide adequate vehicle parking areas not more than 200 metres from the winery.
4. Must be maintained in excellent condition, with cleanliness and proper maintenance the buildings, equipment and environment of the winery.
5. Must provide separate toilet facilities for men and women and other approved amenities for health and safety of visitors.
6. Must provide a room or rooms for wine tasting, inside or outside the winery, suitably equipped for the whole process and comfort for visitors. If these facilities are not accessible by the disabled, alternative facilities should be available.
7. Suitable tasting glasses must be provided with facilities for washing, drying and storing them. Cuspidors (receptacles for expelling wine during tastings) must be provided.
8. If a charge is made for tasting it must bear a relation to the cost of the wines and services.
9. During the hours in which the winery is open to visitors, it must provide suitable personnel, knowledgeable about wine-making, the products of the winery and wine service, to receive and inform visitors in Greek or English.
10. The working hours and the seasons of operation must be displayed.
11. The printed promotional materials and maps of “Wine Routes” must be on show.
12. The winery must have a current insurance for Public Liability.
13. Failure to observe the above conditions may result in a winery being withdrawn from the “Wine Routes” programme.

### Tavernas

1. Must have operational certification from CTO (Cyprus Tourism Organisation) plus, following evaluation, approval of integration in the “Wine Routes” network.
2. Must include in its Menu and Wine List a representative selection of local wines. The lists must also describe briefly the general characteristics of each wine in Greek and English.
3. The taverna must observe the correct serving procedures for the various types of wine and provide:
  - Suitable glasses for red and white wine.
  - Appropriate methods of bottle opening.
  - Ice buckets for keeping cool sparkling, white and rosé wines.
  - Suitable places for the storage of wine.
  - Serving of wine at the correct temperature.
4. Must have a certificate of attendance at CTO wine seminars concerning wine serving, wine care and so forth.
5. Taverna décor and furnishings should follow as far as possible traditional Cypriot character.
6. The menu must include a selection of traditional Cypriot dishes.
7. “Wine Routes” promotional materials and literature must be displayed.
8. Deviation from the above criteria may result in a winery being withdrawn from the “Wine Routes” programme.





MEDITERRANEAN SEA











# MAP OF CYPRUS



## Wineries

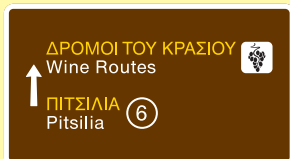
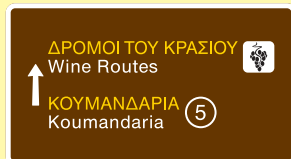
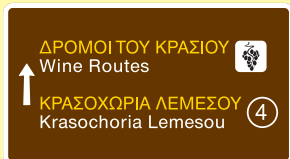
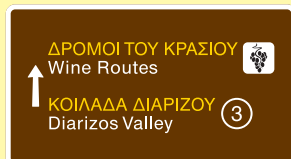
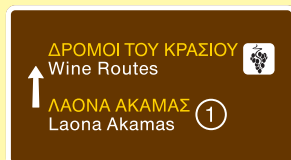
-  1 Wine Route: Laona - Akamas
-  2 Wine Route: Vouni Panagias - Ampelitis
-  3 Wine Route: Diarizos Valley
-  4 Wine Route: Krasochoria Lemesou  
(Wine Villages of Lemesos)
-  5 Wine Route: Koumandaria
-  6 Wine Route: Pitsilia



Every year in September, at the Wine Festival in Lemesos, the spirit of Dionysos, the God of Wine, is with us. Come, join us -enjoy our wine and meet our winemakers!



...explore them!



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The task of ERDF is:

«Helping reduce the gap between development levels and living standards among the regions and the extent to which least-favoured regions are lagging behind.

Helping redress the main regional imbalances in the Community by participating in the development and structural adjustment of regions whose development is lagging behind and the economic and social conversion of regions».

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EUROPEAN UNION



REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS



CYPRUS  
TOURISM ORGANISATION