

Wine wedding



Then you think of Lesvos, and wine probably does not come to mind. Ouzo does. Yet Lesvos holds many surprises, as I witnessed while poking around the mountain village of Hydera, which counts seven *kafeneios* (cafes) for 350 inhabitants. I didn't exactly expect to stumble upon an organic winery, but there it was, Methymneos located in an elegant neoclassical building gracing the town's entrance.

At Methymneos, I learned that Lesvos wine was the most expensive brew in the markets of ancient Athens, Rome and Byzantine Constantinople and the only wine in the harems of the Turkish sultans. In the 1940s, unfortunately, almost all of the island's vines were destroyed by the grape disease phylloxera.

Owner Dimitris Lambrou, publisher of the historical research magazine *Davlos*, hails from Hydera, where self-sufficient farmers and tradition reign. In 1985, the Lambrou family began to graft buds from the last remaining island vines onto a rootstock resistant to phylloxera. Using DNA techniques, their ingenious efforts to resurrect the ancient variety bore fruit. Today, the vineyard contains over 5,000 vines perched 300 meters high in the crater of an inactive volcano.

Quietly bursting with knowledge and pride for his family's innovative enterprise, Lambrou provides free guided tours beginning with the cellar, which houses state-of-the-art equipment. An ancient phallic sculpture on display adds a museum touch to the winery and underscores the region's legendary Dionysian history. The tour ends with a complimentary glass of Methymneos whose alluring ruby red color, typical of old wines, coupled with a light bouquet promises a distinctive experience. And indeed, the wine's combination of fresh honey and citrus fruit aromas results in a taste that starts by feeling young in the mouth and feels old by the time it hits the throat. Due to its high acidity from the sulphuric soil, it is a delicious accompaniment to lamb.

Methymneos, an adjective Plutarch used to describe Dionysus, derives from "methyl" (wine) and "hymeneos" (wedding). A wine wedding! The name evokes joy and good times, both sensations aroused by a bottle of Methymneos.

Needless to say, I was taken by Mythymneos and bought a bottle on the spot for 10€.



Info

Where to buy Methymneos in Athens:

Organic products store "Hygeia - Oikologia,"
Panepistimiou 57, Omonoia. Tel: 210.321.0966.
Restaurant - traditional products store
To Bakaliko-de Toute Façon, Skoufa 48, Kolonaki.
Tel: 210.363.8110.

Methymneos Athens Offices

Achilleos 8 & Mousson, Paleo Faliron. Tel: 210.988.4284

On Lesvos

Hydera, Lesvos. Tel: 22530.51518, Fax: 22530.51642
Open July 1st to September 30th
Daily 9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. www.methymnaos.gr