

Vintage Report 2016



The year started so well

The winter of 2015-2016 in Santorini was particularly mild in temperature and dry. So dry, in fact, as to be the driest year in a decade. However, four or five good rains during the winter months and one each in March and April kept us safe from a drought year. The growing season began particularly early this year with the Assyrtiko vines showing buds as early as March 5. Spring did not bring its usual problematic southern winds and, with the exception of some light rain before and after Easter, remained dry and cool. This set up the vines to continue berry development easily and without any climatic stressors. Flowering occurred at the end of April with fruit set following in early May. The process was so effortless this year that the number of bunches per stem was perhaps the highest we have seen in the last three years.

Battling the desert

Unfortunately, the uneventful winter and spring turned into a hot and dry summer. We first began to notice the symptoms of insufficient soil moisture in June. That, combined with a heat wave in the middle of the month, resulted in reduced length of main shoots, an absence of mesocardium, and reduced leaf area. Even vines with an increased root system length, which are normally more resistant to water stress, showed symptoms of high salinity and increased osmotic pressure from the soil. Because of this, many bunches and pods were reduced in size by about 30-40% compared to their normal size.

"Now we have serious problems with bunch burn, uneven ripening even on the same plant, let alone in the vineyard, leaf area losses due to downy mildew and heat..." - Yannis Valambous

Assyrtiko's maturation came relatively late, with many vines entering this phase after July 10. The biggest problem in the quality of this year's fruit was the unevenness in ripening, not only within the same plot, but in many cases on the same vine. Thankfully, the fruit was healthy with a complete absence of gray rot. However, due to the uneven ripening, we had to sort out some unripe bunches and the reduced leaf surface led to a small amount of sunburned grapes.

Ending the year on a high note

We opened the harvest month on July 31 with our Mavrotragano plots then on August 3, began gathering Assyrtiko in Vourvoulos and Monolithos. Athiri came later in the month, on August 19, and we closed harvest with the later-ripening Assyrtiko plots in Pyrgos and Imerovigli on August 27.

Already during fermentation the wines showed high acidity, good concentration, and a high presence of phenolics. Lees ageing and battonage before bottling helped add to the wines' end body and richness. In the end the wines achieved high acidity levels with acidity between 5,9 and 7 and pH levels ranging from 3 to 3,2. That, combined with medium to high alcohol (between 13,5 and 14,2%) will give this vintage great ageing potential.

2016 Relative Data

Average Temperature	Budding	Flowering	Harvest Dates	Total Harvest	+/- 2015 Harvest Amt
19,6 C	March 5-15	April 20-25	July 31 - Aug 27	64.000kg	+1,59%