

# Vintage Report 2023



## **The calm before the storm**

After wrapping up an extraordinary 2022 harvest, we were happy to rest in the warm autumn and winter before the 2023 growing season really kicked off. Unfortunately, the mild winter we experienced was the last good weather for the year.

A very cold spring left the vines confused about which season we were in. April and May especially had lower than average temperatures, with as much as 5 C degrees lower than previous years. Believing themselves to still be in the winter dormancy period, vines did not grow properly during what should have been the early stages of shoot and canopy development. Already off to a late start, bud burst did not occur until the end of March as opposed to the beginning of the month.

The first disaster of the year struck on April 22 when a massive hail storm hit both Santorini and its sister island Thirassia. Many buds on the verge of flowering were destroyed and both canopies and vines sustained heavy damage. Flowering for the buds that did survive began a week later, ending on May 10 when fruit set began.

## **Everything except volcanoes**

As spring turned into summer, we waited with baited breath for the meltemia, the severe winds that ravage the island every spring and summer. Winds that did not come this year. That was the only climatic grace we had cause to be happy about this year. Beginning with the April hail, the rest of the growing season was so fraught with one weather disaster after another, it felt like the only thing we escaped was another cataclysmic volcanic eruption.

May and June each saw huge rain storms. Not only did the violent rain further damage the vine canopies, it caused a mildew in the vineyards leading to a 7-10% crop loss. July followed with an unprecedented 15-day heat wave. Grapes began losing acidity rapidly during this critical ripening period. In the end, the heat was so severe that grapes not only lost acidity but were never able to fully develop sugars. Not even did the usually hardy and heat-loving Assyrtiko manage to get through the year unscathed.

## Our lowest yields ever

We went into harvest this year with heavy hearts, already knowing that we had lost more than 50% of our usual yield to the extreme weather conditions.

*“Low yield, low sugars, low acidity, high morale”*

Yannis Papaoikonomou, Vassaltis eonologist

Harvest began on August 7 and 8 with our Athiri grapes after which we had a brief pause before picking our Mavrotragano between August 12 and 14. The Assyrtiko harvest on both Santorini and Thirassia was staggered over the last two weeks of the month and we closed harvest on September 3 with the late-ripening Aidani.

Despite the historically low yields, we feel generally optimistic about the 2023 wines. While production will be significantly smaller than usual and we will not produce the Plethora this year, we expect to see quality wines with an average alcohol by volume of 13% and pH levels hovering around 3.4 - 3.5.

dent 25.5 ml of rain on the vineyards, swelling the grapes still on the vine.

## 2023 Relative Data

Average Temperature	Flowering	Harvest Dates	Total Harvest	+/- 2022 Harvest Amt
19,6 C	April 28 - May 10	August 7 - September 3	55.000 kg	-59,56%