



## Wines of the Mediterranean Coast – North Africa & the Eastern Mediterranean

The Mediterranean is one of the world's oldest wine-producing regions with wine production on its coasts dating back several thousand years. Interrupted in many areas by the advent of Islam, production in countries of North Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean fell into desuetude, and is only now being revived for international export and consumption. In others, notably Spain and Italy production continued robustly. Production in Greece came to be sourced from wild growing grapes rather than formally cultivated vineyards but is now being revived and improved.

### The Eastern Mediterranean

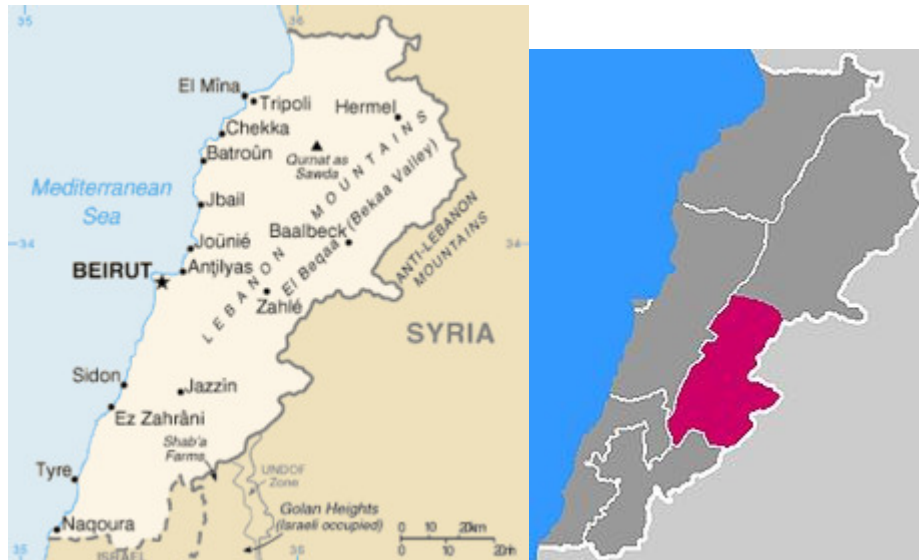
Whether it was in Turkey, Georgia or Armenia that the first wine was made, there is no doubt that the Middle East is wine's birthplace. The Eastern Mediterranean was the France and Italy of wine in the ancient world. Today Turkey has the fourth largest vineyard acreage in the world, but hardly 3% of the grapes are made into wine. The rest is eaten fresh or dried. The wine industry has been held back by lack of a domestic market in this Muslim country but tourism, the abolition of a ban on foreign imports, and the early 21st century privatization of the state monopoly Tekel, now called Mey, is changing that. Younger Turks are beginning to take an interest in wine rather than raki, the country's aniseed-flavored spirit.

### The Western Mediterranean

Some research was carried out on the wines of Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. While the wines of Morocco apparently have great potential due particularly to the influence of the Atlantic, the research did not yield any native varieties, a consideration that formed a part of the criteriaia of selection for the presentation. The same was true of Algerian wines. During the peak of Algerian wine production, the main grapes of the region were [Carignan](#), [Cinsaut](#) and [Alicante Bouschet](#). Both countries' wine production dates from Carthage and Rome, interrupted by the Islamic conquest and revived until the 1950's by French producers.

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## Lebanon



Map of Lebanon

Lebanon is among the oldest sites of wine production in the world. The Israelite prophet [Hosea](#) (780–725 BC) is said to have urged his followers to return to Yahweh so that "they will blossom as the vine, [and] their fragrance will be like the wine of Lebanon. The Phoenicians of its coastal strip were instrumental in spreading wine and viticulture throughout the Mediterranean in ancient times. Despite the many conflicts of the region, the country has an annual production of about 600,000 cases of wine. Recently the sector has been witnessing an unprecedented growth. The number of wineries went from 5 in 1998 to over 30 nowadays.

Technical advance and modern demand have been good for both the Lebanese and Israeli wine industries. If pressed to name an Eastern Mediterranean wine, many drinkers would cite Chateau Musar of Lebanon, which one remarkable man Serge Hochar, somehow continued to produce through the country's 20 years of civil war in the last century. From dry farmed Cabernet Sauvignon, Cinsault, and Carignan he produced extraordinary aromatic wines, like rich and exotic Bordeaux, long-aged before sale and capable of aging for decades after.

All the major wineries have their vineyards in the southern [Bekaa Valley](#). [Chateau Ksara](#) remains much the biggest, with 70% of all the country's production.<sup>[10]</sup> It is no longer connected with the Jesuit house of Tanail, it was sold in 1972 and suffered considerably during the civil war, but has now bounced back with reds and rosés made from Rhone varietals such as [Carignan](#) and [Cinsaut](#).

Several other Lebanese wineries are also based on vines in the war ravaged western Bekaa Valley and in the hills above Zahle, where vineyard altitudes of around 3,280 feet help to produce fresh wines not spoiled by sun baked flavors. Chateau Keffraya

makes refreshing rose', as well as a serious Bordeaux Rhone combination red. The senior and biggest operation is Chateau Ksara, while Massaya (set up by an impressive triumvirate from Bordeaux and the Rhone), Domaine Wardy, and Clos St. Thomas are all serious, albeit much newer enterprises.



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The wine chosen for the presentation's main course of beef in a red wine reduction with vegetables is a 2009 Chateau Musar, developed by recently-passed Lebanese winemaker Serge Hochar who ran Lebanon's most famous winery until his death as the result of a swimming accident during a 2015 New Year's holiday in Acapulco, Mexico. The spirited oenophile won the respect of his peers in the wine world and received an outpouring of support from his colleagues across the world. Master of Wine Jancis Robinson said Hochar was a glass half-full type of person. "He had a strong spiritual character, but was very far from ascetic – positively impish in fact," she wrote. She characterized him as the driving force behind the Lebanese wine industry amid 20 years of civil war. Hochar's father Gaston started Chateau Musar in 1930. Serge took over the winery in 1959 "while completing his winemaking studies at the University of Oenology in Bordeaux. In 1984, he won the Man of the Year award for his dedication to Lebanese wines amid the chaos and danger of the country's civil war.

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## Greece



The modern winescape of Greece is even more exciting than most because it holds such potential for going backwards as well as forwards in time. In the past decade, Greece has built a newly respected name not on imported international grapes although these are certainly grown - but on indigenous grapes. Some of them (they are predominantly white) may well be able to trace their lineage back to Ancient Greece, the cradle of modern wine culture as we know it.

The new era for Greek wine began in 1985 with the return of a handful of agronomists and oenologists from formal training in France. An influx of funds from both the EU and ambitious individuals allowed them to upgrade technology in some of the larger wine areas. They were also able to establish new, much smaller wineries in cooler areas where land was relatively cheap.

Greece now has a quality designation system modeled on the French one with eight OPEs, equivalent to ACs, and a generous 25 OPAPs, supposedly equivalent to VDQSs.

Physically Macedonia relates more to the Balkan landmass than to the Aegean limbs of Greece. This is red wine country, dominated by one variety, Xinomavro, whose name ("black acid") denotes sourness but whose slow maturing wines are some of the

most impressive in the country. With age the best made wines can acquire a bouquet as haunting as all but the finest Barolo although many wineries in the north are still poorly equipped.

Of all of the Greek Islands Santorini is the most original and compelling. It's potent and intense wines, white, sented with lemon and minerals and very dry, are made mainly from ancient Assyrtiko vines, trained in little nests crouching on the windswept heights of the dormant volcano. The problem on Santorini is not shortage of wine making enthusiasm and ingenuity but that the thriving tourist business has pushed up land prices, calling into question the very survival of these unique vineyards.

Greek varietals to be mentioned are: assyrtiko, aidani, malagousia, robola, savatiano, white Muscat, athiri, lagorthi, moschofilero, roditis, tsaoussi – the whites – and agiorghitiko, mandelaria, xinomavro, mavrodaphne – the reds.

For the presentation's apperitif the white wine chosen is a 2013 Axia wine with the malagouzia grape.



Malagousia [ Mah lah gou zya'

Malagousia originated in the region of Nafpaktos in western Greece. The winemaker Gerovassiliou, was the first to begin experimenting with the nearly extinct Malagousia grape realizing its vast potential for producing high quality wines. It is found mainly in Macedonia and is now cultivated in some vineyards in Attica and the Peloponnese. It is an especially

aromatic grape leading to elegant full bodied wines, with medium acidity and exciting aromas of exotic

For the presentation's corvina course, the grape is a xinomavro from Naoussa.

### **Xynomavro**



The predominant grape variety in Macedonia is a native red called Xinomavro, (meaning "acid-black"). The wines made from Xinomavro are known for their superb aging potential and their rich tannic character. Their complex aromas combine such red fruits as gooseberry with hints of olives, spices and dried tomatoes.

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## Turkey

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia  
Wine-producing regions in Turkey.



Map of Turkey showing the wine production regions, and the sum of temperature above the zero growth of the vine (10 °C) from April to September.

With between 600 to 1200 indigenous grape varieties of which 600-800 are genetically different, there are numerous options that Turkish winemakers can pursue to make wine. Currently only 60 varieties are commercially cultivated. There are around 30 outstanding wine grape varieties among all these types.

Some of the native Turkish varieties include the [Yapincak](#) and [Papazkarası](#) grown in Thrace; the [Sultaniye](#) of the Aegean coast;<sup>[1]</sup> the [Öküzgözü](#) and [Boğazkere](#) (used to make [Buzbağ](#)) of Eastern Anatolia; the [Çalkarası](#) of the [Denizli Province](#) in Western Anatolia, and the [Kalecik Karası](#), [Narince](#) and [Emir](#) of Central Anatolia. In recent years, some of the international grape varieties have increased their presence, including [Sémillon](#) (known as Trakya), [Riesling](#), [Muscat](#), [Gamay](#), [Cinsault](#), [Grenache](#), [Carignan](#), [Cabernet Sauvignon](#) and [Merlot](#).

The indigenous and international grape varieties below are those that are widely used for wine making.

Adakarası, Alicante Bouchet, Boğazkere, Bornova Misketi, Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Carignan, Chardonnay, Cinsault, Çalkarası, Çavuş, Dimrit, Emir, Gamay, Grenache, Kalecik Karası, Karalahna, Kuntra, Malbec, Merlot, Narince, Öküzgözü, Papazkarası, Petit Verdot, Pinot Noir, Riesling, Sangiovese, Sauvignon Blanc, Semillon, Shiraz, Sultaniye, Tempranillo, Vasilaki, Viognier.

The [Caucasus](#) region, where the countries of [Georgia](#), [Armenia](#), [Azerbaijan](#) and Turkey are located today, played a pivotal role in the early [history of wine](#) and is likely to have been one of the earliest wine-producing regions of the world.

[Mustafa Kemal Atatürk](#), Turkey's first [president](#), established the country's first commercial winery in 1925. As of 2008, the largest winery of Turkey was operated by [Tekel](#). Other notable wineries include [Sarafin](#) on the Gallipoli peninsula in Thrace, [Doluca](#) of Thrace, [Kavaklıdere](#) of Anatolia, [Sevilen](#) and the [Pamukkale Winery](#). [Sevilen](#) produces grapes for premium wines in the Aegean area around İzmir, which has a warm Mediterranean climate and on the Anatolia plateau, a cool Mediterranean climate. The [LA Organik](#) which uses organic grapes won international acclaim in [Decanter](#) magazine in their first year. **Buzbağ** is a full flavored red [wine](#) of high tannic levels made from [Boğazkere](#) grapes grown in the [Anatolia](#) region. It is sometimes produced in an [ice wine](#) fashion. The Buzbağ production area is considered a possible birthplace of wine. Biblical accounts of [Noah](#) after the flood have him planting a vineyard in an area presumed to be [Mt. Ararat](#).  
Climate and wine regions

The size and geography of Turkey accounts for the wide climatic variation of Turkey's wine regions. Forty percent of national production comes from the wine regions of [Thrace](#) along the [Sea of Marmara](#) whose slight Mediterranean climates resemble those of southwest [Bulgaria](#) and northeast Greece. This region produces the most elegant and balanced wines in Turkey. [Thrace](#)'s subregion of [Kırklareli](#), is known for crisp white wines and fine reds. With more pronounced Mediterranean climates, the Aegean coast wine regions near [İzmir](#) account for 20% of national production, with the remaining portion taking place in scattered pockets throughout [Eastern](#) and Central Anatolia. The latter is climatically the most difficult due to winter frost and altitude. The vineyards of Eastern Anatolia around [Elazığ](#), [Malatya](#) and [Diyarbakır](#) are located in the [Euphrates](#) valley, one of the world's oldest wine regions and the anecdotal location of Noah's vineyards after the flood.

### Okuzgozu Wine



An Okuzgozu wine label

**Öküzgözü** is a dark-skinned variety native to [Turkey](#) and grown throughout the vast interior of the Anatolian region, where it benefits from the [continental climate](#). Wine made from Öküzgözü is bright ruby-colored with red fruit aromas of raspberries and cherries and well as hints of mint. The variety has an excellent [acidity](#) and fine [tannins](#). Its name is said to refer to the resemblance of the large, fleshy berries to a bull's eye.

It has characteristics that have brought about comparisons with [Pinot Noir](#), and like that variety has the ability to faithfully reflect the environments from where it is grown.

Öküzgözü is produced as a [varietal](#) wine and can also be blended with another Turkish native [Boğazkere](#) to form more powerful wines.

For the presentation a 2009 Öküzgözü wine by Prestige will pair the lasagna.

## Methodology

In researching wines for our presentation, we had several strokes of luck, both physically and virtually. The first, the discovery of two D.C. restaurants (**Kelleri & Agora**) serving Greek and Turkish wines facilitated tasting and led to recommendations on indigenous grapes and our decision to present indigenous grape wines that would be relatively unknown to most Club wine drinkers. Second, fortuitous encounters with another Club's Greek wine recommendations and with a wholesale vendor of Greek wines opened up access. Third, the discovery of a Georgetown wine shop, **Potomac Wines and Spirits**, which specializes in Turkish and other Eastern Mediterranean wines gave us a wider choice of products.

Virtually, the discovery of **Snooth**, a wine lovers' web site ([www.snooth.com](http://www.snooth.com)) which lists worldwide production of wine and spirits by country, facilitated our search. Wikipedia of course started us off. Recourse was had to Wine Searcher ([www.winesearcher.com](http://www.winesearcher.com)). Wines of Turkey gave us some very interesting statistics on production and international prizes awarded to some of the countries' wines (<http://www.winesofturkey.org/turkeys-grape-production/>). For information on the Maghreb wines, see Cliff Wines (<http://www.chiff.com/wine/africa/maghreb.htm>)