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Miss Summer? Drink Wines from Domaine Papagiannakos and Donnafugata!

Nov 9, 2017 Cindy Rynning Europe, Red Wine, Regional Wines, White Wine, Wine Reviews

Summer is long gone, but I'm doing my best to experience the feels once more! Although I love the vibrant hues of fall, the sound of crunching leaves beneath my feet, the anticipation and excitement of college football games, the comfort foods that seem to always be on the table and more, that happy-go-lucky vibe in which I indulge during summer is an element that's lacking right now. In particular, I miss the boating life, one that has become a keystone of that lazy, hazy season. Fortunately, I've found a way to return to my happy place without pulling the boat out of storage or booking a cruise to the Mediterranean. And, yep, it has everything to do with wine.



Just imagine yourself soaking in the sunshine while sipping a glass of wine as you sail through the Greek Islands on a private yacht. Perhaps you can see yourself lounging on the grounds of a stunning villa in Sicily while gazing at the colorful sailboats dotting the blue sea...as the attentive staff quickly pours another glass of wine. Trust me, this dream will certainly become a reality (well, part of it, anyway) when you swirl and sip the following wines, all sent as *samples*.

Domaine Papagiannakos

It's difficult to understand, but I've never visited the mainland of Greece or its surrounding islands. However, I have tasted plenty of wines from this fascinating country...and vow to journey there one day. Recently, I tasted a selection of wine from **Domaine Papagiannakos** located in Markopoulo, Mesogaia, Attica, near the beaches of Mesogaia and the archeological site of Vravrona. The Papagiannakos Winery was the first winery "especially designed and built in Greece according to innovative bioclimatic standards".

Surrounded by the sea, vines thrive in its Mediterranean climate with moderate winters and warm summers boasting bright, steady sunlight. Although red varieties Agiorgitiko and Merlot are cultivated, white grape varieties Savatiano, Malagouzia, and Roditis grapes prevail; they compose about 80% of Attica's vineyards that are found on clay, sand, and gravel soil.

The wines I enjoyed are from the Savatiano grape, used most often in traditional Retsina (a resinated wine with a distinctive flavor attributed to the practice of sealing amphorae with pine resin in ancient times) and blended with

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Assyrtiko or Roditis to balance its naturally low acidity.

With each sip of the wines from Domaine Papagiannakos, I remembered the glorious days of summer.



Savatiano Papagiannakos 2015 (\$13) – Lovely, delicate aromas of yellow flowers, lemon, and spice led to a clean, refreshing palate profile boasting bright acidity and notes of honey, more spice, and juicy lemons. Refreshing and pure, this surprisingly broad wine finished with a snap! Pair with your favorite Mediterranean dishes, fish, or white meat.

Papagiannakos 2013 Vareli Savatiano Skin Contact (\$25) – This single variety of Savatiano was barrel fermented and left on the lees. I found enticing aromas of honey, sweet spice, and ripe orchard fruit. Elements of honey, nuts, lemon, spice, and stone fruit were evident on the palate; with mouthwatering acidity and a long, rich finish, this is a fabulous wine with salty cheeses or grilled fish.

Papagiannakos Savatiano Old Vines 2016 (\$10) – Honey and light floral aromas wafted from the glass of this elegant wine from vines that are over 50 years old. Flavors of tropical fruit, pineapples, bananas, and citrus were joined by lip-smacking acidity and refreshing salinity on the palate. The finish was long and satisfying.

Donnafugata

Ahhhh, Sicily! **Donnafugata**, guided by the fifth generation of the family, has now "revolutionized the style and perception of Sicilian wine in the world". It's true. The name alone not only signifies delicious, affordable wine, but represents the Italian island that has become recognized as a producer of world-class wines. Its Sicilian vineyards flourish with a Mediterranean climate exuding dry, windy summers with broad temperature variations. The focus at Donnafugata is not only on exceptional wine crafted from the best grapes possible, but to promote the awareness of Sicilian wine produced from a variety of terroir.



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Interestingly, the name, Donnafugata, means "donna in fuga" or "woman in flight". It refers to the Tomasi di Lampedusa novel **Gattapardo** that relates the story of a queen who found refuge in the area of Sicily where the winery's vineyards are currently located. The company's logo depicts an image of a woman's head with windblown hair, most certainly, the queen in flight. The art on the bottle signifies the beauty of what's inside...



Sur Sur 2016 Grillo Sicilia (\$20) – This flawless wine was produced from the Grillo grape cultivated in vineyards of 200 – 600 meters located in Southwest Sicily and in the hilly lands between Marsala and Salemi. I noted beautiful aromas of lemon, white flowers, fleshy stone fruit, and rosemary that led to a balanced profile with zesty acidity, notes of green apple, stone fruit, juicy pears, citrus and a lip-smacking finish. This wine complemented our seafood appetizers, yet it will also be a luscious pairing with vegetarian dishes or your favorite fish. And the striking label? It exudes the feeling of summer, doesn't it? "Sur Sur" means cricket, a sound that (to me) harkens those hot days and warm nights I love so much.

Lighea 2016 Zibibbo Sicilia DOC (\$20) – The Zibibbo grape is another name for Muscat of Alexandria, a variety replete with aromatics and flavor. The wine was produced on the island of Pantelleria in southwestern Sicily at altitudes of 20 – 400 meters and on mineral-rich volcanic soils. The vines are cultivated in hollows and the low bush vine of Pantelleria "has been inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity as a creative and sustainable practice". Wafting from the glass were intense aromas of grapefruit, citrus, orange blossom, and peaches. On the palate, I explored flavors of pink grapefruit, more citrus, stone fruit, oranges and a brilliant, refreshing vein of minerality. A fun pairing was with baked pasta with white sauce, but you could also fill a picnic basket with sandwiches...

Sedara 2015 Red Sicilia DOC (\$16) – A red wine! From Italian varietal, Nero d'Avola, and Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Syrah, and other grapes, this approachable wine was produced in Southwest Sicily in vineyards on clay loam soils at altitudes of 200 – 600 meters. On the nose, I discovered spice, black cherries, nutmeg, deep red fruit, plums, blueberries, and black pepper. Delectable flavors of spice, earth, and rustic red fruit were woven with mouthwatering acidity and brilliantly integrated tannins. Easy drinking and incredibly affordable, each sip of this red wine will bring back your favorite memory of summer.

Cheers~ Cindy



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