

A Greek adventure wining and dining in Elinos vineyards

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The vineyards at Elinos in Naoussa, Greece.
Cori Solomon

Picnicking in the vineyard is one of the many highlights one enjoys with the [wine tasting](#) experience. Take this idea one step beyond what many of us are acquainted with at an American [winery](#), more specifically in California where you enjoy a luncheon on the well-manicured vineyard grounds with tables that have become fixtures at each [wine](#) establishment. Vision yourself in Naoussa, Greece traveling along a bumpy gravel dirt back road to the [vineyards](#) with the Tzitzikas, a locust type bug chattering their song in the background and you will find yourself in the most rural yet lovely spot of [Elinos Vineyards](#) for an enchanting afternoon picnic.

This was the perfect ending to four wine journalist's adventures in the Greek wine region of Naoussa. Elinos is a family owned winery that is now run by the exuberant Christos and Nikoletta Tarala, a brother and sister team, who just happen to be twins. Christos is the winemaker and Nikoletta is the

sales manager. The family purchased the vineyard in 2006. Although this winery is relatively new, the Tarala family's interest in the wine business goes back to the 19th century. The twins' great grandfather practiced winemaking. Later their grandfather not only produced wine but also owned a wine trading company. Finally after their father, Dimitrios Taralas retired from banking; he decided to go back to his roots by reestablishing the family's legacy of making wine.



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The vineyard is located at the Eastern end of Mount Vermion in the Imathia region of Macedonia, Greece. In addition to Xinamavro, Elinos grows Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Malagouzia, Preknadi, Moschomavro, Negoska and Roditis. The vineyards utilize organic practices and are certified DIO.

Besides featuring the wines of Elinos, this picnic's cuisine showcased dishes that utilized grape leaves in the preparation of the foods. It was a welcomed treat and was prepared by Christos and Nikoletta's mother. There were sardines wrapped in grape leaves, a grape leaf pesto, potato salad with grape leaves, stuffed grape leaves, a salad served with dressing made from grape must, pickled grape stems and more.

The wines of Elinos are outstanding. You might say they are representative not only of the terroir in Naoussa but the traditions of the region with their own unique youthful expression of place created in an elegant style. The style represents the energy and vitality of Elinos' younger generation. As winemaker, Christos signifies the new world approach found with many of the current winemakers in the area.

Elinos is most notably known for their Xinamavro, considered the grape of Naoussa. Having sampled the 2007 Xinamavro at an event in Los Angeles, the 2009 Xinamavro was consistent in quality, smoothness and balance as its predecessor. With a little bolder yet elegant more fruit forward style, it shows off the Mediterranean flavors, olive and dried tomato of this variety.

The 2011 Local Red Wine combines an equal amount of Xinamavro with Merlot. The Merlot softens the acidity of the Xinamavro making this a favorite wine from the Imathia area. This wine has won a German Silver Metal for organic wines.

The 2013 Orizontes, a white wine that we started our luncheon with is a blend of Preknadi and Roditis. With floral aromas, the wine delivered a refreshing and balanced that one could sip the entire afternoon.

The 2013 Rosé from Xinomavro was also refreshing with its crisp flavors of strawberry.

Our final wine was the 2013 Blanc De Noir. The wine has a slight sweetness and is created by a method called blank dennoir, which means during the winemaking process, the vintners are able to

obtain the white grape must from the red Xinamavro grape. The wine is aged for one to two years.

One noticeable factor in all the wines of Elinos is the moderate alcohol levels. It ranges from 12% to 13% depending of whether it is a white, Rosé or red wine.

Christos surprised us by ending the meal with his version of a homemade Mohito. Instead of using rum he adds Tsipouro to a mixture of lime, brown sugar, mint and soda. Tsipouro is a Greek distilled spirit similar to Grappa made from the pomace of grapes. Christos has branded this drink as his Tsipourito.

Christos, Nikoletta and Dimitrios charmed us all afternoon, making this delicious luncheon one of the highlights of our journey through this wine region. It was the ultimate expression of the true hospitality that was present on every step of our visit to Naoussa and will be an experience each of us will never forget.

It is exciting to announce that Elinos Wines can now be purchased in the United States as they have recently signed up with an importer here.

For more information:

[Elinos Vineyards](#)



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