

## FOOD

## Recreating Homer's wine

Penni Pappas takes a look at the Ariousios winery, a winery that is giving back to Chios its winemaking reputation

**When you think Chios, your mind automatically ventures to mastic, the resin taken from the mastic tree. Known in Greece as the "tears of Chios", mastic is a product well-known to this region. But it's Chios' association with wine that is making an astounding resurgence and gaining a wide-spread comeback.**

The Ariousios winery in the northwest of Chios is doing its best to live up to the historical relevance of wine in Chios. According to Chian folklore, Oenopion, son of the god Dionysus, taught Chians to plant, cultivate and produce the "black wine", which at the time was one of the most remarkable and famous products produced by Chios in antiquity.

It took ancient geographer Strabon to define the region of Ariousia, between the area of Pelinnaion Mountain and Cape Melena Akra, as the ancient wine making region. The wine produced here was known as Homer's wine, the ancient poets called it the "nectar of the Gods", and it was a favourite wine of the Romans. The reputation of these wines continued during the Byzantine period. Basically, wine from the region of Ariousia was as well-known and as highly regarded as wine from Bordeaux.

This historical knowledge



Arioussos winery bottles: the nectar of the Gods.



The Ariousios region in northwest Chios.

spurred the owners of Ariousios Company Inc winery to cultivate a wine that would not only live up to its rich historical tapestry, but also produce a wine for modern times. The founders of the winery decided to

revive the cultivation of the vine and relive the reputation Chian wine once had. The winery, which opened in 2008, cultivates grape varieties on the slopes of the Amani mountain. The varieties grown included



Homer's drop ageing in the cellar.

chian krassero, agiannitis and bigleri. It's located about 59 kilometres from Chios in a gorgeous location overlooking the Aegean sea.

The wines produced are done in a way that respects the ancient rituals, but also

adheres to modern-day wine making styles. The winery has been constructed to keep the ancient tradition of this wine making alive, but also accommodate the ability to create and hold 150 tonnes of wine. In the future, the winery

is hoping this will increase to 300 tonnes. The winery is made up of three levels that includes an ageing cellar and an integrated and modern wine analysis laboratory.

Like all wineries, the founders encourage visitors to tour the inner sanctum of the winery but also revel in traditional agricultural tools and objects used in times gone by. Visitors can view wine production sites, explore oak barrels in the cellars and purchase their favourite drop or other items relating to wine and wine making. And of course, the Ariousios winery has a tasting hall for visitors to sample the local wines, and enjoy the landscape and view of the environment whilst sipping a wine that dates back to ancient times.

The winery creates seven Greek wines that incorporate the varieties of grapes available in this region and, at times, create a blend to match every palate. The Ariousios Afstiros - a red dry wine - uses the varieties of krassero and ayanittis to provide a rich and balanced wine; the Inanthis - a white dry wine - uses the bigleri, moschato and savatiano varieties to give the wine a young and fresh balanced taste; there is the Ariousios Glikason - a semi-sweet red wine - is made by keeping the traditional red wine making, and is produced by the sun-dried grapes grown in the slopes of the Amani mountain; Protolatis - a red semi-sweet wine - is the ideal wine for relaxation and romantic getaways featuring the first grapes of the krasero and agiannitis varieties;

Amanitis - a dry white wine - is a harmonic blend of bigleri, savatiano and moschato, creating a fruity balanced white; and Exi - a dry red wine - is a combination of grapes from northern Chios to create a deep purple wine for people who like drinking the best.



## Dora's Recipe

**Bianco is the Italian word for white.**

This recipe is from Kerkyra (Corfu), an island in the Ionian which was occupied by the Venetians for 400 years. I saw this recipe on a cooking show in Greece. I have to say that the Greek cooking shows are extremely interesting, often combining travel, history and culinary culture together.

I have since looked Psari Bianco up in many sources and have discovered that it is one of those rare recipes that is consistent in its make-up: I

have yet to find a variation.

I made it last week and it was one of the most delicious dishes I have made. It is simple and quick to put together and very healthy

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## Psari Bianco (White Fish)

**Ingredients**

1 kilo fish  
(I usually use barramundi, but any meaty fillet fish will do. In Greece, they often use bakaliaro or perka.)  
4 cloves garlic, chopped thickly  
1 cup olive oil

1 cup white wine  
4-5 potatoes, cut into thick slices or wedges  
A sprig of fresh rosemary  
1 teaspoon pepper  
1 level teaspoon salt  
(if using bakaliaro, omit salt)  
1 teaspoon oregano  
Juice of 2 lemons  
Hot water

**Method**

1. In a shallow saucepan, heat up 2/3 of the oil and sauté the potatoes and the garlic.
2. Add the wine, put in enough hot water to just barely cover the potatoes, add pepper and salt,

rosemary and oregano.

3. Allow to cook for 15 minutes on a medium heat.
4. Lay the fish on top of potatoes, cover and cook on low heat until fish is cooked. The time will depend on the type of fish used, but is usually about 15 minutes.
5. Just before removing from the cooktop, add lemon juice and remainder of olive oil.
6. Serve hot, with a sprig of rosemary or parsley for decoration.

Kali Orexi