LYRARAKIS
Jancis Robinson

Lyrarakis, Psarades Dafni 2024 PGI Crete
17/20
A variety resurrected by the Lyrarakis family, planted at 480 m.
Wonderfully aromatic with the pure laurel aroma of this variety and for which it is named. But even with that intense aroma there is still a light stony citrus quality to add complexity. Light-bodied yet persistent. (JH)

Lyrarakis, Gerodeti Melissaki 2024 PGI Crete
17/20
Full bottle 1,306 g. Another rare variety resurrected by Lyrarakis. They took cuttings from its place of origin, the foothills of Mt Psiloritis, then planted the little-known Melissaki variety in their family-owned vineyard, Gerodeti, in 2010. Dry-farmed at 480 m on loam soil. Harvested 7 August, when the grapes changed colour from greenish into yellowish with rose shades. The grapes were macerated on skins in second-use 400-litre French oak (Perle) casks for 13 days. The wine was aged in oak for almost 4 months. Alcoholic fermentation and malolactic conversion were spontaneous. No fining, no cold treatment. Bottled unfiltered. Total SO_2 just 30 ppm. TA 5 g/l, pH 3.59.
Pale gold. Gorgeous aroma that is both rich/ripe and slightly bitter/herbal. Firmly tannic but not aggressively so, the deep flavours framed by the tannins. Acidity is moderate yet the whole effect is refreshing. Layers of flavour even in such a young wine. Really persistent aftertaste. Hard to judge its ageing potential but I'd estimate at least 5 years. The producer suggests drinking it with 'hare with vine shoots, lamb stew, pulses and Cretan pies'. I think it would be pretty versatile as a relatively subtle skin-fermented white. It is marked much more by the skin fermentation than by the oak ageing. (JH)
Alcohol: 12.5%
Drink: 2025 – 2030

Lyrarakis Assyrtiko/Vidiano 2024 PGI Crete
16.5/20
Full bottle 1,296 g. A 50/50 blend. The grapes were macerated on skins in stainless-steel tank for 16 days at 11 °C and 4 days at 14–17 °C. The alcoholic fermentation was spontaneous and lasted 20 days, not going above 17 °C. Aged in stainless steel for almost 4 months. TA 5.25 g/l, pH 3.47.
Light amber-gold. Inviting and intense aroma of golden fruits, apricots, and a hint of hay. On the palate, chewy with tannins but not too much – just the right level of grip for the richness of fruit. So much flavour and depth for a wine of just 12.5%. The balance between fruit and texture should make this a versatile wine at the table. The producer suggests: 'starters, white cheese, white meat in white sauces, Greek *mezedakia* or Spanish tapas'. A very well-made orange/amber wine that is chewy enough for those who love white wines with tannins but not too much for those new to this style of wine. But it does need food. (JH)
Alcohol: 12.5%
Drink: 2025 – 2029

Lyrarakis Vilana 2024 PGI Crete
16.5/20
Full bottle 1,283 g. This is their 'Queen' bottling, distinguished by the drawing of a Cretan queen on the label, and basically their first tier of varietal wines. The fruit comes from Alagni in central Crete (near the winery), dry-farmed at 600 m. Harvested by hand during the last days of July and first days of August. 83% of the grapes were whole-bunch crushed and then subjected to a 7-hour skin contact. The free-run juice was clarified and fermented at 16–19 °C, while 40% of the must was fermented by indigenous yeasts from the vineyard. Two-thirds of the wine went through malolactic fermentation. Certified organic (GR-BIO-01). TA 5.55 g/l, pH 3.29.
Citrus, fresh herbs and green fruits, very slightly floral but not really perfumed. Also a hint of something stony/mineral. Relatively light-bodied with a gentle texture from the skin contact. Refreshing, benchmark Vilana made in quite a complex way to produce a relatively easy but far from simple wine. As you taste, this builds in the mouth and becomes more powerful. Surprisingly long finish and should go well with food even though you could drink this on its own if you want something quite dry as an aperitif. (JH)
Alcohol: 12.5%
Drink: 2025 – 2027

Lyrarakis Liatiko 2023 PGI Crete
16/20
Full bottle 1,295 g. They refer to this wine as 'Queen' because of the stylised drawing of a queen on the label. Fruit from Rethymnon in central Crete (at 850 m) and from Sitia, eastern Crete (580 m). Dry-farmed, harvested during the whole harvest period, from 28 August until 20 September. 93% of the grapes were macerated for 8–10 days at 10–24 °C. 7% of the grapes were whole-bunch fermented for 9 days at 25–29 °C. The wine remained in stainless-steel tanks, where it completed malo. TA 5.4 g/l, pH 3.46.
Light bricky red, typical for Liatiko, especially as it ages. Spicy, sweet, wild red berries – wild strawberry and sweet-sour cherry. Light, chalky tannins, really fresh. A great example of varietal Liatiko with no make-up and lots of heart. Relatively light-bodied with plenty of freshness from both the acidity and the nicely dry tannins.
Alcohol: 13.5%
Drink: 2025 – 2029

Lyrarakis, Aggelis Liatiko 2021 PGI Crete
17/20
Light to mid bricky red. Highly perfumed with red fruits and flowers, so aromatic! Tight, finely and drily tannic as well as scented on the palate. Utterly distinctive. Long, fresh, bone dry. The dry tannins may be challenging for some but I think they add to the freshness. (JH)