

Greek Wine Fair at Assembly Rooms – how to make the most of it

How do you get the most out of a wine fair? Insider tips from wine expert and event organiser Diana Thompson.

Ahead of the Greek Wine Fair, which is taking place at the Assembly Rooms on George Street on Wednesday, 28 June 2023 (6.00 pm – 8.30 pm), the Culture Vulture has been speaking to Diana Thompson, founder of Wine Events Scotland about how to get the best out of it and to share her insider tips from 30 years' experience in the wine industry.

Have you ever gone to a wine fair only to feel at a loss once there, surrounded by hundreds of wines and no idea where to start?

Diana said: "Wine fairs are brilliant, the perfect place to discover a wine you love and try wines you may never even have heard of before. Join us on the 28th of June to discover so much more about the world of Greek wine, meet the producers and taste your way around these fascinating wines from the sun-blessed Greek Islands. It will be an incredible showcase of these wines demonstrating the modern and diverse styles emerging.

"There should be nothing stuffy about wine. The more wines you taste, the more you learn and the more you enjoy them,' Thompson adds. 'Even a little bit of wine knowledge goes a

long way. Just get into the habit of using spittoons, so you can keep tasting with a clear head!

“There will be 32 Greek wineries; showcasing wines primarily made with indigenous varieties including Assyrtiko, Malagousia, Roditis, Savatiano, Xinomavro, Agiorgitiko, Mavrodaphne, Liatiko and many more.

“Although a mature wine-producing region, Greece remains one of the most dynamic producers in the world. With its incredible history, entwined with modern-day winemaking practices, Wines of Greece celebrate and embrace the latest agricultural and vinification practices. There are a staggering 64,000 hectares of vineyards across the Greek Islands, offering an unparalleled array of soil types, microclimates, elevations and expositions. Terroir-driven wines are Greece’s greatest contribution to the winemaking world.

“Sparkling, white, red and dessert wines, Greece does it all brilliantly – and this is the perfect opportunity to discover new favourites.

“This will be a walk-around tasting with the chance to speak to the producers as you taste and enjoy a fantastic range of wines. As well as tasting new wine, this is a great opportunity to learn from and be guided by the experts.”

How to get the most out of a wine fair

1 Check out the exhibitors attending before you go. If there is a particular wine you want to try or producer you want to meet, start there, then return to your favourites at the end of the session.

2. Talk to the producers. They are incredibly knowledgeable, and will guide and advise you. Wine fairs offer a wonderful opportunity to compare and contrast different wines, far more than is possible at home or in a bar.

3 Make like an expert and spit the wine out after you have tasted it. This allows you to try more wines, without a fuzzy head or forgetting what you've tried. Find what you like during the event, then go back and properly enjoy your favourites.

4 Take short notes and a pic of the label, to help you remember wines you particularly like. With so many on display, it's easy to forget a few.

5 Don't be put off if you are a novice – this is a friendly space to learn and discover what you like.

As a beginner's guide:

Tilt the wine in the glass so that you can see the colour in the middle; look for any changes towards the edge of the wine – are the colours clean or cloudy?

Swirl the wine in your glass – this helps the aromas move from the surface of the wine – and take a sniff. Try to pinpoint fruity, floral, vegetal and spicy scents.

Take a sip and swirl the wine around your mouth. Coat your tongue to experience as much of the flavour as possible. See if you can recognise sweetness, acidity, tannin, flavour, and whether the body of the wine is full or lighter.

Focus on the aftertaste and try to describe it. How long does it last?

6 Try something completely new. We are creatures of habit and tend to stick to what we know, but a wine fair offers a whole new tasting experience. Pick one new style and give it a go.

7 Don't be afraid to say you don't like something. Taste is subjective and we all like different things. Explain what you do or don't like about the wine to one of the producers, who will be able to point you in the direction of something you are likely to prefer.

8 The general order of tasting is sparkling, white wine, red wine and dessert wine, although you could switch sparkling and white around, moving on to red after palate-cleansing sparkling.

9 Attend a masterclass. This is an opportunity to learn a lot more about specific wines directly from an expert. These tutored tastings are fascinating, an eye-opener on what to expect from a wine.

10 Enjoy yourself. Wine fairs are wonderfully sociable occasions. There is so much to discover, simply talking to somebody at a tasting table can lead you off on a completely new taste adventure.

**Edinburgh's Greek Wine Fair, 28 June 2023, 6.00 pm – 8.30 pm –
Assembly Rooms, George Street, Edinburgh – Tickets £25
www.wineeventsscotland.co.uk**



Diana Thompson, Founder of Wine Events Scotland shares her tips on how to get the best from a wine fair