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Zambartas Winery in Cyprus: Wines of purity and character

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During my last year's, first visit to Cyprus I had the chance to taste numerous wines, from mineral Xynisteris and richer Promara to structured reds from Maratheftiko and Yiannoudi. You can read my first impressions and my tasting notes [here](#).



From what I have seen and tasted so far it is clear to me that Cyprus Wine Industry undergoes a major transformation. As Demetri Walters MW describes in his excellent article [Cypriot wine: Going Native](#) [1] the industry is changing its skin very rapidly shifting more attention to indigenous varieties. Work in progress maybe the best way to describe the current wine scene which is at crossroads.

One of the pioneer Cypriot wineries is **Zambartas** [2] family winery whose wines I did not have the chance to taste while in Cyprus but winemaker Marcos Zambartas was kind enough to provide me with more food for thought, sending me samples including a single vineyard Xynisteri. The winery was established in 2006 by the late Akis Zambartas a visionary man who during his career as oenologist in KEO, re-discovered 12 native Cypriot grape varieties, which he recorded, planted and vinified. Among them the most important were: Maratheftiko, Lefkada, Promara, Spourtiko and Yiannoudi. Now the legacy of Akis Zambartas is continued through his son Marcos, a winemaker trained in Australia who runs the winery together with his wife Marleen.

Tasting Zambartas wines proved to be an exciting adventure with the wines offering individuality, character and fruit purity. My favourite one was the single vineyard Xynisteri followed by an impressive rosé. Check out the tasting notes below:

Zambartas Xynisteri 2015, 12.5%

From low - yielding old Xynisteri vines grown at 850m altitude this is herbal and lean with a core of citrus fruit. Fresh, pure with bright acid and a very mineralic dimension. Youthful. (90/100)

Zambartas Single Vineyard Xynisteri 2015, 13%

From old vines in Xynisteri Vineyard in Mandria at 900m altitude this is more focused and tight on the nose with herbal nuances. Very fresh, precise and long with lemon and peach aromas. Complete, charming and characterful. (91+/100)

Zambartas Rosé 2015

An intriguing blend of Cabernet Franc and greek variety Lefkada (Vertzami) this has a pale burgundy colour with a savoury nose followed by a gorgeous elegant palate. Intense, with depth of fruit and beautiful expression of raspberries and pomegranate. Light tannins make it a gastronomic wine. Just delicious. (89+/100)

Zambartas Maratheftiko 2014

15% abv but does not show, this is very floral on the nose leaning more to the red fruit spectrum, savoury and yes mineral, definitely terroir-driven. Refined and supple, misses in tension perhaps. Grippy finish. Promising (89+/100).

You can also read about the Cyprus adventure:

Cyprus: A hidden gem [3]

Cypriot wine: Going Native [4] by Demetri Walters MW

Exploring Vouni Panayia winery in Cyprus and new star variety Promara [5]

and a great post by Elizabeth Gabay MW on Cypriot rosés [6].
