

## greece 2009 wineries of the year

# Boutari

NAOUSSA



Dr. Yiannis Voyatzis

**Founded:** 1879  
**Winemaker:** Dr. Yiannis Voyatzis  
**Acres owned:** 370  
**Annual production:** 1,372,000 cases  
**Estate grown:** 9%  
**Owners:** Boutari Holdings, SA  
**Known for:** Excellent examples of the country's greatest grapes and winegrowing regions  
**Importer:** Terlato Wines Int'l, Lake Bluff, IL  
**Website:** boutari.gr

Where Boutari goes, other people follow. Case in point: Naoussa, its home base. Not so long ago, Boutari was one of a few wineries in the region, and supported more than a few grape growers by buying their grapes. Today, the region has become so popular that established winemakers such as Angelos Iatridis have moved on to the next great unheralded region—Amyndeon, which, in fact, Boutari was the first to explore on a commercial level (see *W&S* August '09).

The company's biggest success story is Santorini, which Boutari began studying in earnest in the 1980s, back when tourism development was quickly overtaking vineyards. Today, others have joined Boutari in making top-notch Santorini wines—and yet Boutari remains a standard bearer, with Santorinis such as the 2008, an intense experience of this volcanic island. It's ripe enough to enjoy now for its juicy pear flavors, but the searing acidity and chalky minerality beg for it to remain untouched for a decade, by which time it will have mellowed into elegant, beeswax opulence.



Their latest success is with malagousia, a grape that was in danger of extinction before Yiannis Gerovassiliou, a fellow winemaker in Northern Greece, isolated it and brought it to prominence in his exceptional version. In 2008, Boutari released their own. Grown by Roxane Matsa, a self-proclaimed grape fanatic who has worked with the Boutaris for years on her estate just outside of Athens, it's sumptuous with heady peach flavor, from the pleasantly bitter skin to the drippingly juicy flesh, right down to the almond-toned pit, yet as cleanly defined as an eau-de-vie, the acidity holding it to an elegant line.

And as for the Naoussa wines, the xinomavros on which the company built its name? Boutari's have become softer, fruitier and more approachable over the years, while their top wine, the Grande Reserve, remains the benchmark. The 2004 is a case in point: Chewy and ferrous, with sinewy tannin giving the lithe dried cherry and tomato flavors an elegant, if firm, line, and redolent with forest floor scents, it is a lovely rendition of this cool, damp, northerly land and its curious, formerly unloved grape. —T.Q.T.

### TOP-SCORING WINES

- 92 '08 Santorini \$20 (8/09)
- 92 '08 Matsa Malagouzia \$27 (8/09)
- 91 '04 Naoussa Grande Reserve \$26 (8/09)