

# Kontozisis 'A-Grafo Assyrtiko' 2018

**Producer** - Andreas Kontozisis and Aphrodite Tousia

**Provenance:** Karditsa, Northern Greece

**Farming:** Organic - certified

**Grape(s):** 100% Assyrtiko

**Vineyard:** The 20 year old vineyard is planted with Malagousia and Assyrtiko on a flat, exposed portion at the top of a small hill with cracked, schist soils.

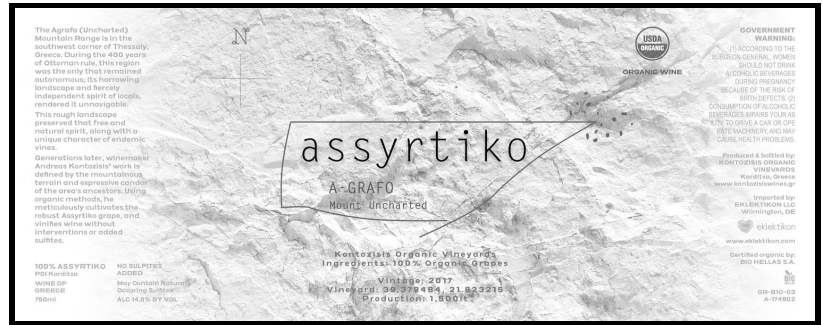
**Vintage:** 2018 was an extremely hot and dry year producing wines of subtler aroma and charming dry spice.

**Fermentation/ Aging:** Harvested and fermented in stainless steel without temperature control including about 30% in tact clusters in the vat. After fermentation, free run juice is racked to steel for lees aging for 6 months.

**Fining/ Filtration:**

**Sulfur:** none.

**Misc:** When the vineyard was first established, the laws forbade the planting of Assyrtiko so the family was obliged to tell officials it was Moscato.



## The Producer:

Located at the edge of the famously unconquerable A-Grafo mountain range, the Kontozisis story begins in the early 90's when Andreas and his brother start helping their father make wine for the family tavern. The winemaking was informed by Andreas' father's upbringing in a small mountain village where wine was purely country ('natural'). The family's early winery is a small, open-air shack adjacent to their restaurant with three concrete tanks where they were processing 18 tons of fruit up until 2003 with the creation of the modern winery. Under Andreas' stewardship the winery has become a standard for oenological excellence producing supremely clean wines under the 'Sun' label alongside the zero sulfur, hyper pure 'A-Grafo' wines with more experiments and vineyards planned for the future.

## The Vineyard

Today, serious and focused Andreas and his ebullient partner Aphrodite care for 13 hectares of scattered vineyards making them the largest single grower in Karditsa. The overwhelming majority of their fruit (about 10 ha worth) is sourced from about 150 tiny backyard plots.

'It's a blessed place' Aphrodite says from the crest of the 1.2 ha white vineyard where the Malagousia and Assyrtiko thrive in soils that speak volumes of Karditsa's marine

past (clay and loam with a schistic character). Due the aridity they can employ a very minimalistic method and have no need to green harvest; the site naturally balances yields. The 'A-Grafo' wines are farmed to get more concentration and a longer growing window so they can harvest later with more tannins and phenolics to help naturally protect the wine.

The Assyrtiko was planted ungrafted from cuttings sourced from Andreas' friend in Santorini which, at the time was quite risky because of a government ban on planting new grape varieties in the area; they were obliged to lie to the government that the new plot was Moscato! This was the first vineyard the Kontozisis family established themselves about 20 years ago in the late 90's

### **The Cellar**

With the right eyes, stepping into a winery can reveal a great deal about a producer and so it is no surprise that the Kontozisis facility would be as utterly immaculate as their wines. This is a very modern picture of a winery with pneumatic presses, a hyper-specific style up pump that allows them to transfer wine without losing lees or skins if they choose; a great asset for the reductive style of winemaking (minimal oxygen) they prefer.

The 'A-Grafo' wines are an antidote to all the stock objections to zero zero wines being rough, untamed things. Fermented on skins in steel without temperature control with 30% whole clusters. All the 'A-Grafo' wines are made from purely free run juice (the press run goes into the 'Sun' wines and other things they make for the local market) and is bottled without fining, filtration or added sulfur. The 2018 vintage was broadly hot and dry across Greece and so the 18's show a little more power and concentration than the 17's.

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