

And then, in the middle of nowhere, we suddenly saw the first manicured rows of vines and, set low against the skyline, the state-of-the-art winery at Domaine Gerovassiliou. My battered, rather out-of-date paperback copy of Konstantinos Lazarakis MW's book on Greek wines emphasised both Vangelis Gerovassiliou's talent and his judgement, as he expanded step by step from the original 2 hectares (5 acres) of vines to the present 62 hectares. Taught in Bordeaux by Professor Emile Peynaud, but determined to shine the spotlight on what Jancis describes as 'its rich heritage of indigenous grape varieties', Vangelis (pictured below tending his vines) has built a family winery that bears comparison with any other first-class family winery we have visited around the world.



The investment in stainless-steel fermentation tanks and French barriques, and indeed a dedicated bottling line, is immediately evident – but closer inspection makes me realise that this winery is not only cleverly designed, but also spotlessly clean, immaculate, in a way that Domaine de Chevalier or Haut-Brion or Dominus are. Sitting in the adjacent restaurant, with its panoramic view across the vineyard, where his sister-in-law briskly sorted out what we should have for lunch – sea bass caught that morning a few kilometres away – and his son, also now a graduate in oenology from Bordeaux, walked over to share a glass of an older vintage of their flagship red to taste, Judith and I agreed we could be in Margaret River, or Napa - until we tasted his Malagousia, which Vangelis saved from extinction. It is a wine we tasted on Sunday at the Greek Wine Fair but here, in the sunshine, with the sea bass, it is of course an altogether more civilised, peaceful experience.

Whether you believe in the concept of *terroir* or not, there is something magical about tasting the wine while looking at the vineyard it comes from. I respect the sincerity of those adherents of biodynamics, without quite being sure if it is just hocus-pocus or not, and so I am familiar with their suggestion that the same wines will taste more open or closed on any given day. Bottle