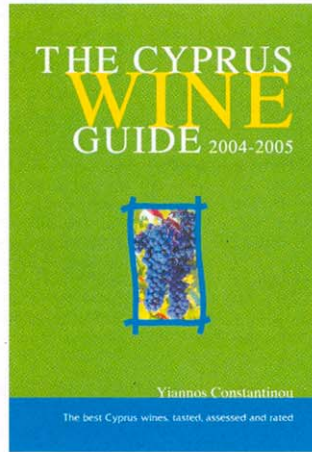
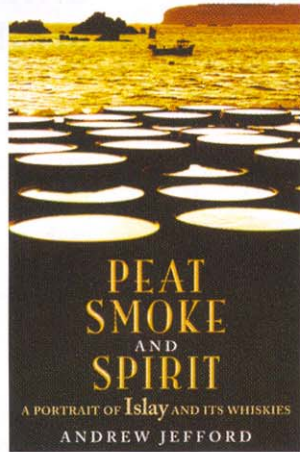


Let Nico Guide You

Nico's annual shortlist of recommendations include three books sure to broaden your wine and liquor horizons



The Cyprus Wine Guide 2004 – 2005

Yiannos Constantinou
Dinosymvouleftiki, 143 pages

Three years ago at a wine competition I blind tasted a 'flight' of white wines that I could not readily place on the world wine map. It turned out they were Cypriot. My knowledge on the wine scene of this island was close to nil. A few months later I was having a glass of wine at the roof garden at the Hilton with the author of a book on wines from Cyprus. Yiannos Constantinou is a high school teacher with a second vocation in wine writing. His second guide is a much more grown up affair. It is better structured too. The Winery at a Glance box has helpful background information and useful as well should you be visiting the wineries. The author steers away from techno jargon which is a good thing. The chapters on *Commandaria* and *Zivania* are fascinating and bring us closer to these Cypriot specialties. *Zivania* has started to make an appearance in Greece and several *tsipouradika* and *ouzeries* offer this grape spirit.

Despite its youthful shortcomings this is a brave effort, a labor of love and fills a gap in wine bibliography. I look forward to the next edition.

Peat Smoke and Spirit

A portrait of Islay and its whiskies
Andrew Jefford, headline-Hodder, pages 406

The Greek scotch whisky market is one of the largest in Europe. While the lion's share of the market has been blended whiskies the Greek Whisky Drinker has become increasingly sophisticated and demanding. There is a bewildering range of single Malts now available around town and a great book about them. It is rare that an author can capture so well a sense of place. The book goes beyond Jefford's critical *tour de force* descriptions of the seven distilleries that dot the isle of Islay, home to the finest of Malt

whiskies. The narrative weaving description of topography, its cruel and bloody history is a treat. It is also an in depth portrait of this microcosm with particularly thorough thumbnail portraits of its locals and incomers shaping its fascinating history. Above all, this major new book transcends beyond the malt aficionados' quest for the minute differences of hers or his favorite tippie. It is informative and fun throughout and the brief details on the illicit distilleries had me chuckling. The black and white photography captures in a hazily the austere beauty of this remote countryside. This meaty volume is irresistible as it is a Laphroaig or a Caol Ila evening of drinks.

Wine Report 2005

Tom Stevenson Dorling
Kindersely, 432 pages

I have to declare a certain interest in this publication as I am the contributor for Greece. Though only in its second edition, this compact annual pocket book has become the favorite tool of wine professionals. A level of knowledge is helpful though one can soon pick up how to navigate through the myriad of tips from the 42 insider contributors. In essence the regional specialists offer a comprehensive snapshot of their wine region: insight, news, advance and rated vintage reports. There are top ten lists naming Greatest Wine Producers, Fastest-Improving Producers, New- Up and-Coming-Producers, Best-Value Producers, Greatest- Quality Producers, Best Bargains and Most Exciting or Unusual Finds. Tom Stevenson then tastes 400 wines his regional specialists sent him and selects the 100 Most Exciting Wine Finds. Armed with this annual report, one can be confident in quizzing the sommelier or in judiciously buying locally anywhere in the world and at the Duty Free. It also covers other important topics including Classic Wine Vintage Guide, Wine Auctions & Investment and the hot topic of Wine & Health. This new angle thought up by prolific wine writer Tom Stevenson is a winning formula.

All the above can be found at Eleftheroudakis and other fine bookstores.