

Ouzo gets some competition

Just in time for Christmas, a new liqueur from Greece is trying to outdo ouzo as that country's unofficial national spirit.

Skinos Mastiha is relatively new to LCBO shelves but the sweet clear liqueur is already a hit back in Greece. Its name comes from the mastiha or mastic "weeping trees" that grow on the Greek island of Chios in the Aegean Sea and produce crystalline resin droplets.

People have been using mastiha (pronounced mahs-TEEKH-hah) all the way back to ancient times. The aromatic

resin from the evergreen mastic trees is said to aid digestion, freshen your breath (it was the original chewing gum) and even cure ulcers.

Distilled into a spirit, it's found in all the top bars, restaurants and hotels in Greece, says Steve Kriaris, president of Kolonaki Group, which distributes the Skinos Mastiha here.

What does it taste like?

"It's like a rainbow of taste on the tongue!" I was informed at the recent Toronto Gourmet Food and Wine Expo, where Skinos had a booth. With

its hints of juniper and spearmint and aromas of cedar and violet, it does defy easy description.

It's sweet. Kriaris says the distillers spent a long time figuring out the perfect ratio of alcohol to sugars, finally settling on 30 per cent alcohol per volume with an "Opa!"-inducing 25 grams of sugar.

Skinos is versatile. Suggested uses include as an aperitif, a martini base (called a "mastini," naturally) or in today's cocktail, the Med. Light and refreshing, the fresh basil adds a savoury note.



Justice for slain son, at last

JUSTICE, like almost everything else, moves slowly in the Greek isles. Family and friends of Doujon Zammit (foto) have been waiting 16 months for a court date to be set over his bashing death on Mykonos. That finally happened yesterday.



Greek court officials announced that 26-year-old bouncer Marios Antonopoulos would face trial on January 13 on nearby island Lesbos.

Under Greek law, a prisoner cannot remain in custody for more than 18 months without facing trial.

Any further delays could result in Mr Antonopoulos walking free from prison.

"It's a relief to finally have a trial date but it's just as important that the proceed-

ings commence on schedule," Doujon's mother Rosemarie Zammit said yesterday.

His father Oliver Zammit said the accused had the rights of appeal and avenues available to delay proceedings.

"But Doujon doesn't have any of these rights ... he's not here to speak up for himself," he said.

"Everything seems to

revolve around those that are charged and in jail and not the victim's family and friends."

The Zammits commented only days after Greece's top judicial body, the Supreme Court, rejected Mr Antonopoulos's second appeal over pre-trial procedures.

Mr Antonopoulos is facing several charges over Doujon's death, including murder with intent, possession of a lethal weapon and attempted murder. Police claim Doujon and his cousin, Cameron, also 20, were attacked by at least four bouncers - who allegedly impersonated police officers - after leaving the beachfront Tropicana Bar and refusing demands to hand over their passports.

Mr Antonopoulos is accused of using a fold-out baton in the attack, inflicting severe head injuries that resulted in Doujon's death.

Police claim they later found the weapon wrapped in a blood-soaked T-shirt under Mr Antonopoulos's Mykonos home.

Two alleged accomplices are also facing attempted

murder charges, while details of charges being faced by at least one other accomplice were not immediately available.

Head of Greece's press and communications office in Australia, Nicolas Economidis, said Greek justice was "fully aware of the seriousness of the case and has undertaken all the legal measures to ensure there will not be any miscarriage in this matter".

"Greek justice is also fully aware of the deadlines and will ensure that the charged person will be brought to a trial," he said.

The Zammits have appointed high-profile Sydney lawyer Nick Pappas to liaise between the family and Greek authorities. He has waived his fees, citing the tragic circumstances and the considerable legal fees the Zammits have paid out so far.

"While the case has received considerable media attention in Greece, there has been a perceived slackness on the part of the prosecuting authorities," Mr Pappas said.

He said due to steps undertaken by the Zammits, there has been more urgency shown by Greek authorities, including expediting a decision rejecting Mr Antonopoulos's latest appeal and quickly setting the trial date.

"The Greek authorities now understand the importance of not only justice being done, but being seen to be done," he said.

ANTHONY STAVRINOS
(source: Sydney Morning Herald)



Christoforou and Evagorou confirmed performers in Eurovision

As Cyprus is a small island and while the broadcaster was strict to the national final rules about nationality, we see some familiar names. First of all we see Mike Konnaris who composed several NF entries along with the 2004 Eurovision entry, the most recent high ranking of Cyprus in the contest.

Oikotimes.com can confirm that Constantinos Christoforou (foto) and Evagoras Evagorou will be the performers of their own entries. Constantinos participated 3 times in Eurovision already and Evagoras participated in the 2006 national final of Cyprus.

CyBC claims that the choice of the songs was made under production quality criteria. If you consider that popularity counts most among the viewers in Cyprus, currently Constantinos with the song Angel is the hot favorite for the selection.

The songs cannot be heard prior to the national final. The voting will be controlled and monitored by external logistics company and the Cyprus final winner will be guest in the Greek national final as well.

(source: oikotimes)

NYC lecture on New Acropolis Museum

Dimitris Pandermalis, President of the Board of Directors of the New Acropolis Museum and Professor of Classical Archaeology at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, presented a lecture on "the Acropolis Museum and Its Collections" on Saturday evening at Columbia University in New York, in Schermerhorn Hall at the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation (GSAPP). Pandermalis made a historic review of the landmarks in the search for the appropriate site for the New Acropolis Museum, the obstacles that arose along the way, the excavations that necessitated a change of plan, and the final result that he said enchanted humanity.

Speaking to a packed auditorium, which also included the Museum's architect, Bernard Tschumi, Pandermalis also outlined aspects unknown to the wider public concerning the entire course from inception of the idea of the New Acropolis Museum to the completion of the project.