Lyrarakis

A flagship red from Lyrarakis , Symbolo is only produced in exceptional vintages , showcasing the depth and elegance of Crete's finest vineyards.

Symbolo Grand Cuvee 2019

Crete, Greece

Alcohol :13,50 %

Composition: 48% Syrah

Region and Vineyards

Symbolo is sourced from **select high-altitude vineyards** in the **Heraklion region of central Crete**, at **500 meters above sea level**. These north-facing slopes benefit from steady sunlight and cooling winds, allowing for **slow, even ripening** and excellent preservation of acidity. The soils are **clay-loam**, offering both structure and drainage, key to growing red grapes of concentration and finesse.

The vines are **cordon trained and spur pruned**, farmed without irrigation, and yield a modest **6.5 tons per hectare**. This encourages low-intervention farming and fruit of high quality and ripeness. The inclusion of both **international and indigenous varieties** reflects the unique dual identity of Cretan viticulture: rooted in tradition, yet open to innovation.

Winemaking

The grapes are **hand-harvested in small 15 kg crates**, with meticulous sorting. Fermentation is traditional, lasting **7 days** with controlled temperatures between **20–27 °C** to ensure optimal extraction without over-extraction. After pressing, the wine is aged in **new oak barrels for 20 months**, lending spice, toast, and refinement.

The final blend includes **48% Syrah**, **36% Mandilari**, **11% Kotsifali**, and **5% Vidiano**—a rare choice for a red wine, but one that adds aromatic lift and elegance. Only **3,700 bottles** of the 2021 vintage were produced, affirming the cuvée's rarity and prestige.

Tasting Notes

- **Color**: Deep ruby red with purple highlights.
- **Aroma**: Expressive and dense, with notes of **blackberries**, **red cherries**, **pepper**, and subtle layers of **apricot** and **dried orange peel**.
- **Palate**: Full-bodied and savoury, with ripe **black fruit**, **charred oak**, and a **silky mouthfeel**. Structured with fine tannins and a **long, complex finish**.

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Did you know?

The name "**Symbolo**" refers to the ancient **Cretan ideogram for wine**, found in Linear B and Minoan hieroglyphics—paying homage to Crete's **4,000-year winemaking heritage**. The inclusion of Vidiano in a red blend is both symbolic and technical, contributing brightness and aromatic complexity.

Wine Pairing Ideas

- **Chargrilled ribeye steak with rosemary salt**: The bold tannins and smoky oak match the intensity of grilled red meat.
- **Slow-cooked lamb shoulder**: The wine's depth and spice pair beautifully with rich, long-cooked dishes.
- **Veal parmigiana**: An ideal balance of umami, acidity, and texture.
- **Grilled portobello mushrooms with balsamic glaze**: A plant-based pairing with earthy depth and complementing structure.

Robert Parker (RP) : 91 Points (2014)

The 2014 Symbolo Grand Cuvée is a blend of 79% Syrah with 17% Mandilari and the rest Merlot (a big change from earlier wines), all aged for 17 months in new oak, mostly French (with 17% American). It comes in at 14.5% alcohol. This shows some mid-palate finesse, good structure and a nice finish but not a lot of character at first. Very tight and powerful, it is closed down pretty hard. The Syrah, in particular, does become a bit more expressive as it airs out, but the oak overlay certainly makes it a bit harder to find the fruit as well. Even though this is a late release, it still needs to open up, become better balanced and more expressive. It gave some evidence it could, so I'm leaning up just now, but it does have some questions to answer in the cellar. I'm betting it will age well and develop. Hopefully, the conversation will center around underrating it.