



The Carob Museum – Anogyra



Cyprus Wine Museum – Erimi

The Cyprus Sustainable Tourism Initiative (CSTI)

The Travel Foundation and Responsible Tourism in Cyprus

Sunvil has long been involved in helping to guide Cyprus along the ‘sustainable tourism’ path. In the mid 1980s, we were instrumental in marketing village based tourism as an alternative to mass-market coastal development which is difficult to control and can change the nature of a destination. Our initial collaboration with the ‘Laona Project’, which was set up to loan renovation funds to owners of village properties, led to the Cyprus Government taking an active role in a much bigger scheme. Many Cyprus villages have been transformed and their beauty realised.

The Cyprus Sustainable Tourism initiative is a Cyprus charity affiliated to **The Travel Foundation**, a unique UK travel industry charity set up to ‘care for the places we love to visit.’ Members of the CSTI include Sunvil, Tui, Thomas Cook, and Virgin Holidays, village communities, village producers and crafts people, various environmental organisations and the Cyprus Tourism Organisation.

In April 2010, the Cyprus Tourism Organisation, The Travel Foundation and the CSTI signed a five year co-funded agreement to make Cyprus the first

‘sustainable destination’. Water, energy and waste will be looked at in great detail and sustainability in hotel management especially so. This is an enormous undertaking, spanning several government departments and progress will understandably be slow and there will be many obstacles to overcome. But, as long as the will is there to make a difference, then success will follow.

One of the ways the CSTI meets the changing needs of today’s more sophisticated travellers is through the production of a series of six village routes. These routes can easily be linked to a fly-drive holiday. The routes encourage visitors to discover the ‘real’ Cyprus and this will help boost the economy and regenerate people’s lives in the villages.

The detailed booklets, including maps, are available at a small charge (which goes towards helping the work of the CSTI) from our Paphos office. The routes cover the whole island and are ideal for anyone incorporating car hire in their holiday.

Village Route 1 – Central and Western Limassol District

Village Route 2 – Inland from Larnaca

Village Route 3 – The Famagusta District – red earth villages and windmills

Village Route 4 – Troodos Mountains

and Southern Villages

Village Route 5 – Troodos Mountains and Northern Villages

Village Route 6 – Akamas National Park Area

There are small and interesting museums in many of the villages, mostly funded by individuals or the local communities, which give an interesting insight into the history and daily life of the inhabitants. Usually there is a nominal entry charge.

Listed below are three private village museums worth visiting.

Cyprus Wine Museum on village route one

The museum is located in Erimi village at the crossroads of the wine routes of Cyprus. It is near to Kolossi Castle, a medieval Commanderie of the Knights Hospitaller that gave the name to the Commanderia Wine first produced by them. Anastasia Guy, who created the museum in 2004, was “inspired by the fact that Cyprus is one of the first wine producing countries and, with the advantage of owning a traditional Cypriot building that has been in my family for generations”, instigated the creation of the Cyprus Wine Museum as a tribute to this integral part of the history of the island.

Oleastro (the wild olive tree) Olive Park on village route one

Located between Limassol and Paphos on the outskirts of the picturesque village of Anogyra, Oleastro is the brainchild of Andreas and Lina Ellinas. Oleastro is all about teaching the visitor the history of olive oil. A small but dynamic company, Oleastro Enterprises is the market leader in the production of Cyprus organic olive oil. The centre and olive oil museum offer a wealth of information, interesting items to purchase and a good taverna and coffee shop.

The Carob Museum on village route one

The picturesque village of Anogyra is the only village where the tradition of Pastelli (carob, honey and sesame pie) making is still practised.

The seeds of the carob bean, a tree seen over many areas of the island, are so consistent in weight, shape and size, that they were used to weigh gold – hence the word ‘carat.’

The museum traces the history of the carob tree and the uses to which this unusual looking bean pod is put. An unusual and interesting visit. Many families in the village are still involved in this cottage industry. There is an annual Pastelli festival in September.



The Traditional Wine Villages

The area, known as the “Krassochochia” (the Wine Villages) is located north of Limassol, on the southern slopes of the Troodos mountain range. Traditional forms of viticulture are still kept alive in these villages. Wine production is still the main occupation for most of the inhabitants. Villages in the area house various local wine museums, which are well worth a visit. This is the area which produces the island’s renowned dry red wine. The area is best reached from the Limassol to Paphos road, turning right after Erimi village.



Koilani Village

Koilani is an attractive, wine-producing village. On the outskirts sits the single-aisled vaulted church of Agia Mavri dating from the 12th century, with wall paintings from the 15th century.

The Koilani Ecclesiastical Museum was created by the Holy Bishopic of Limassol as a district branch of the larger Byzantine Museum being planned in the city itself. It houses a collection of icons and ecclesiastical objects from the parish. The museum occupies a two room building in the courtyard of Panagia Eleousa church. The exhibits span a period of about seven centuries and include pieces of an icon-stand from 1735, icons dating from the 13th to the 19th centuries, holy utensils and old books.

The Museum of Viniculture (currently under refurbishment) is housed in a traditional village house. Viniculture equipment and items of folk art are on exhibition. In the yard, a large cauldron used for the preparation of the local spirit Zivania can also be seen.

Omodos

The wine producing village of Omodos, built on the Troodos hillsides amidst acres of vines - with its narrow cobbled streets and the majestic monastery in the village square - is one of the most picturesque villages in Cyprus.

Omodos was once the property of Sir John de Brie, Prince of Galilee, as was the Monastery of Stavros (Holy Cross), in the centre of the village. The monastery

contains old icons, excellent wood carvings and other ecclesiastical objects of interest, as well as a small museum of the national Liberation Struggle of 1955-59. An old wine-press known as Linos is a short distance from the Monastery and is open to visitors.

Foini Village

Nestling in the heart of the Troodos mountains amidst green and fragrant pines is yet another picturesque village, that of Foini. According to tradition, the village was named after a Frankish lord, Juan de Fejniu or Feniu, while another says its name originates from the Greek word for palm tree “foinikas”. The village is renowned for its pottery, for the manufacture of traditional furniture and for the local “lokoumi” (Greek delight).

The Pylavakion, a private museum of folk art, displays examples of local pottery, traditional agricultural tools and kitchen utensils.

Vasa Village

Vasa is one of the most important wine producing villages of the region with over 40% of its agricultural land being allocated to viticulture. Some of the best red wines of the island are produced here. It is a picturesque village with cobbled streets and traditional architecture.

The ecclesiastic museum of Vasa houses important icons and religious objects.

To arrange a visit, one has to contact the village priest. There are two excellent tavernas in the village.

Arsos Village

This is one of the largest wine producing villages of Cyprus. There are two theories as to the derivation of its name: one suggests it comes from the Holy Alsos (grove) of the goddess Aphrodite where the village is built, the other that it was one of the four towns founded by Ptolemy Philadelphos in honour of Arsinoe. It has been associated with wine production since ancient times. Nowadays, most inhabitants still make their own wine, while the village womenfolk have a reputation for the special dishes they prepare using wine. The Folk Art Museum of Arsos is housed in a traditional house. Its exhibits present traditional village life.

Fasoula Village

The village of Fasoula dates back to the Middle Ages and is depicted on old maps of Cyprus with the name Fasula or Pasula. The most likely origin of the name is that it comes from the Frankish word “Fasoula” meaning scythe, the tool for harvesting. The Agricultural Museum is in a traditional house and contains agricultural tools, such as a plough, yoke, scythe and earthenware jars for everyday use or for storing wine or olive oil.

For further details on the area of the wine villages see CSTI Village Route One. Why not stay a few nights in the region? We have accommodation in Arsos – see page 59 and many other villages.

Note: Some of the private museums mentioned charge a nominal entry fee.

Wine Village information courtesy of the Cyprus Tourism Organisation.