

The Commandaria Villages & Their Wine



A 3,000-year tradition rooted in the foothills of the Troodos

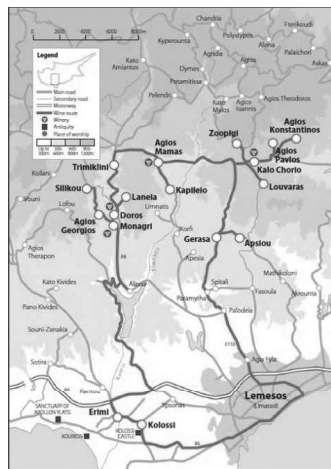
1. What Are the Commandaria Villages?

The **Commandaria Villages** are a cluster of **14 historic wine-producing communities** in the foothills of the Troodos Mountains. Lania is one of them — and one of the most picturesque.

These villages form the world’s **oldest legally defined wine region**, protected by EU law and recognized for producing **Commandaria**, a sweet amber wine with a lineage stretching back to antiquity.

The 14 villages are: **Agios Georgios, Agios Mamas, Agios Pavlos, Apsiou, Doros, Gerasa, Kapilio, Kalo Chorio, Lania, Louvaras, Monagri, Silikou, Souni-Zanakia, Zoopigi.**

Together, they form a cultural landscape where **grape terraces, stone houses, and ancient presses** tell the story of a wine older than Champagne, Burgundy, or Port.



2. The Wine: Commandaria

Commandaria is not just a wine — it is a **legend in a bottle**.

A. Ancient Origins

The wine was first described by **Hesiod** in the 7th century BC as “*Cyprus Nama*”, a sweet wine made from sun-dried grapes. It was praised by:

- **Richard the Lionheart**, who called it “*the wine of kings and the king of wines*”
- Medieval chroniclers who recorded its export across Europe
- Crusaders who carried it to the West

This makes Commandaria the **oldest continuously produced wine in the world**.

B. How It's Made

The method has barely changed in 3,000 years:

1. Grapes (Mavro & Xynisteri) are harvested late.
2. They are **sun-dried** on mats for several days, concentrating their sugars.
3. The raisins are pressed — traditionally in a **linos** like the one in Lania.
4. The must ferments naturally.
5. The wine ages in barrels, often for many years.

The result is a **deep, honeyed, amber wine** with flavours of figs, caramel, dried fruit, and warm spice.

3. Why These Villages?

The Commandaria region has a **unique microclimate**:

- high altitude
- cool nights
- dry summers
- mineral-rich soils
- centuries-old terraces

These conditions allow grapes to ripen slowly and develop the intense sweetness needed for sun-drying.

Lania, in particular, sits at the **gateway to the Commandaria zone**, with vineyards that have been cultivated since the Bronze Age.

4. Lania's Role in the Commandaria Story



Lania has always been a **wine village**:

- It preserves one of Cyprus's **oldest traditional wine presses** (1822).
- Its families cultivated vines for generations.
- Local tradition claims that **vines from Lania** were once taken to France to help restore the vineyards of Champagne after disease — a story that reflects the village's reputation for high-quality grapes.
- The village's identity — its festivals, its courtyards, its architecture — is shaped by wine culture.

The **Commanderia Museum** in Lania is part of this heritage, preserving tools, jars, and stories from the village's winemaking past.

5. The Commandaria Route Today

The Commanderia Villages form a **wine route** visited by thousands each year. Travellers come for:

- tastings in small wineries
- medieval churches
- stone-built villages
- traditional wine presses
- Commanderia museums
- walking trails through vineyards

Lania is often described as one of the **most beautiful stops** on the route — a village where the wine story is still visible in every lane.

6. Why Commandaria Still Matters

Commandaria is more than a product. It is: a **symbol of Cypriot identity**

- a **living link** to ancient winemaking
- a **cultural treasure** protected by law
- a **source of pride** for the villages that produce it

And for Lania, it is part of the village's soul — woven into its history, its architecture, and its memory.