



## **ATHENA INTERNATIONAL OLIVE OIL COMPETITION**

***With a new participation record, ATHENA 2021 was held in a former olive mill***

Organized in Greece every year, the 2021 Athena International Olive Oil Competition (ATHENA IOOC) set a record of participations from its homeland and abroad. At the sixth edition of the competition on Lesbos island in June, 575 samples of extra virgin or flavored olive oils from 24 countries (+35%) were judged by a panel of 25 olive oil experts from 12 countries.

This year, the number of samples from abroad, i.e. outside Greece, was 48.5% of the total, in other words, 278 olive oils from 23 countries of all continents and from both hemispheres (Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Brazil, France, USA, Japan, Spain, Israel, Italy, China, Croatia, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, New Zealand, South Africa, Uruguay, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Slovenia, Turkey and Tunisia). The overall increase in participating samples was 25%, while the number from abroad increased by 57%. In conjunction with the high number of international judges (2/3 of the tasting panel), this establishes "ATHENA" as one of the few truly international extra virgin olive oil competitions in the world. This year, judges came from Argentina, Brazil, Great Britain, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Japan, Portugal, Spain, Turkey, and the United States.

ATHENA IOOC 2021 awarded 269 medals in the following categories: 38 Double Gold (scoring 95-100%), 144 Gold (scoring 85-95%), 101 Silver (scoring 75-85%) and 86 Bronze (scoring 65-75%). There were also several special prizes including Best of Show, which went to Il Cavallino Special Edition (Azienda Agricola Il Cavallino di Salvadori Romina) from Livorno, Tuscany (Italy).

A notable increase in the number of cultivars tasted during the competition underscores the amazing diversity of contemporary extra virgin olive oil. Out of the 146 different varieties present this year, the majority of samples (403) were single-variety olive oils and not blends.

ATHENA IOOC is held in a different olive oil producing region of Greece each year. Following the inaugural edition in Athens, the competition then travelled to Messinia with its Kalamata olive groves, to Delphi, to Nafplion, to Spata and, this year, to the island of Lesbos, which is Greece's 3<sup>rd</sup> most important olive oil producing region. The competition took place in a former communal olive mill, now a beautifully restored museum, where judges evaluated the samples amongst various oil production exhibits.

The full list of medals and special awards is available online at: [www.athenaoliveoil.gr](http://www.athenaoliveoil.gr). For further information: [info@vinetum.gr](mailto:info@vinetum.gr) and +30 210 766 0560 (Ms. Anna Aga).