

A dimly lit bar scene with a bartender and patrons. The bartender, wearing a white shirt and a dark apron, is standing behind the bar, looking towards the camera. In the foreground, a man in a dark jacket is seated at the bar, looking down at his hands. To the left, another man in a light-colored shirt is seated at the bar, looking away. Several wine glasses are on the bar, including one with white wine and one with red wine. The background shows shelves with bottles and a blurred interior.

CINQUE WINE & DELI BARS

THE STORY OF A GREEK WINE
EXPERIENCE

*A family journey through Greek wine, tradition, and
urban hospitality*

CINQUE WINE & DELI BARS - THE STORY



CINQUE WINE & DELI BARS – THE STORY

Prologue

Cinque is not just a wine bar. It is a story about how authenticity, family dedication, and love for Greek wine can create something unique in the urban landscape of Athens. This book is not just a record of a business journey – it narrates a way of life. A way that combines flavor with tradition, aesthetics with knowledge, emotion with experience. It is dedicated to those who believe that hospitality can be an act of culture.



CINQUE WINE & DELI BARS – THE STORY

Introduction

The wine experience in Greece has radically changed over the past two decades. From a marginal part of gastronomic life, wine culture has evolved into an integral element of the country's tourism and cultural identity. Restaurants, wine cellars, tasting events, visit-friendly wineries, and even wine-centered tours have become appealing options for the modern visitor, whether Greek or foreign.

Within this new landscape, wine bars played a decisive role. And none managed to express the essence of this transformation with such consistency, character, and obsession with quality as the Cinque Wine & Deli Bars.

The story of Cinque is not just the narrative of a successful business journey. It is a microcosm of the transformation of Greek wine—from a misunderstood everyday supplement to a product of culture and high-quality taste experience. At the same time, it is the story of a family that invested in its passion, against the backdrop of an economic crisis, and managed not only to survive but to inspire, innovate, and expand.

This essay thoroughly analyzes the journey of Cinque Wine & Deli Bars, aiming to present not only their business model and strategy but also their deeper cultural and social role. From the initial inspiration to the current form of the chain, Cinque serves as a mirror of the changing trends in Greek society, tourism, consumption, and—ultimately—the very concept of hospitality.



CINQUE WINE & DELI BARS - THE STORY

CHAPTER 1: THE PHILOSOPHY OF CINQUE - THE FIVE SENSES AT THE CENTER

The choice of the name 'Cinque' was not accidental. During a professional trip to Friuli, Italy in 2004, Grigoris Prassas and his wife Evangelia Tseliou-Prassa encountered a different wine culture—one that did not view wine merely as a product, but as an experience.

In a small, traditional Italian wine shop, they became aware of how a glass of wine could activate all five senses: Sight through its color; Smell through its aroma; Taste through its complexity; Touch through the texture in the mouth; and—most importantly—Hearing, through conversation, music, and laughter. All these sensations were captured in one word: 'Cinque', which means 'five' in Italian—the five senses.

1.2 The Idea of Experience, Not Consumption

From the outset, the founders' approach was clear: they did not want to create just another 'bar'. The goal was to craft an experience. Cinque is not simply a place to drink wine—it is a space that educates you to appreciate wine, challenges you to understand it, explore it, pair it with food, and share it with others.

The word 'deli' in the business name was no coincidence. Food at Cinque is not a side to wine—it is part of the experience. Platters of Greek products, handmade jams, and cheeses from small producers are integrated into a taste narrative that begins with the wine's aroma and ends in the visitor's memory.

1.3 Wine as Culture - Not a Product

A fundamental philosophical choice at Cinque is that wine is not treated as a mere commercial unit. It is a cultural asset. This is expressed in many ways:

- The selection of wine labels is based on authenticity and quality—not popularity or price.
- Preference for small Greek producers is a strategic decision—Cinque serves as a platform to showcase the hidden gems of Greek viticulture.
- The language used by the staff is encouraging, not sales-driven—each employee is trained to speak respectfully about the wine and convey its story to the customer.



CHAPTER 1: THE PHILOSOPHY OF CINQUE – THE FIVE SENSES AT THE CENTER

1.4 The Five Senses in Practice

Analyzing the operation of Cinque through the lens of the five senses:

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- Sight: Space design is based on minimalist aesthetics, using natural materials, low lighting, and soft color contrasts. Wine is served with attention to the cleanliness of the glass and the presentation of the bottle.
- Smell: Every serving includes an invitation to smell the wine first—its aromatic profile is as important as its taste.
- Taste: Tasting goes beyond wine—it's paired with traditional Greek products selected to highlight each variety's characteristics.
- Touch: Wine tasting involves feeling the glass temperature, the texture of wine on the palate, and the tactile experience of deli items.
- Hearing: Carefully chosen music, soft sounds, and natural conversations—nothing disrupts the experience. Instead, it enhances memory and emotion.



CHAPTER 2: HISTORICAL CONTEXT – GREECE, CRISIS AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF WINE (2000–2015)

2.1 The Early 2000s: Wine in a Transitional Phase

In the early 2000s, the Greek wine market was sharply divided. On one side, there was the traditional, almost domestic relationship Greeks had with wine: bulk wine served in carafes, often of dubious origin but accepted for everyday consumption. On the other side, a new generation of winemakers began focusing on quality, systematic cultivation, native grape varieties, and modern bottling techniques. These were the first cracks in a market driven largely by habit and price.

However, the general public remained skeptical. Wine had not yet developed strong brand identity, nor was knowledge about it easily accessible. Wine terminology was perceived as luxurious or pretentious. The concept of a wine bar—a venue dedicated solely to wine—seemed foreign, even unnecessary, for a Greek mindset that associated wine with taverns or home consumption.

2.2 The Role of Globalization and Travel

Meanwhile, globalization and the rise of tourism introduced new standards into Greek daily life. Greeks traveling to Italy, France, or Spain encountered store models that merged wine with culture. Foreign wine bars functioned as small ambassadors of taste, offering organized tastings, specialized staff, and a relaxed, non-elitist approach.

Such experiences—like the one the Prassas family had in Friuli—were pivotal. The realization that wine could be 'entertainment for all the senses' resonated with a society beginning to seek experiences, not just products.

2.3 The Financial Crisis and the Role of Survival

The period from 2010 to 2015 permanently reshaped entrepreneurship in Greece. The economic crisis brought recession, unemployment, and deep societal disappointment. Yet, the same crisis became a chance for thousands of people to redefine themselves. Small, focused businesses with character, identity, and a personal stamp began to stand out amid widespread closures.

Notably, many new ventures in gastronomy emerged during this tough time. Consumers, though financially constrained, sought authentic, truthful experiences. Wine—because of its ties to the Greek land, tradition, and culture—found its place at the table during the crisis. Not as a luxury, but as a part of an alternative, meaningful everyday life.



CHAPTER 2: HISTORICAL CONTEXT - GREECE, CRISIS AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF WINE (2000-2015)

2.4 The Renaissance of Greek Wine

The upgrading of Greek wine was impressive. New labels, the revival of local varieties (Mavrotragano, Assyrtiko, Limnio, Moschofilero), investments in modern vinification methods, international distinctions, and exports. Greek winemakers began to talk about terroir, about 'flavor imprints of place', treating wine with professionalism and love.

This 'new generation of wine' had yet to find its promotion channels. Wine shops were few, supermarkets dominated the options, and taverns continued to serve bulk wine. This gap was filled by the first pioneering wine bars—especially by Cinque.

2.5 The Right Timing

The decision by the Prassas family to open a wine bar—first in Lamia and later in Athens—came at the perfect time:

- Consumers were becoming more discerning
- Small producers were seeking direct exposure
- Storytelling and experience were more valued than mere consumption
- Greece's tourism was shifting from 'sun and sea' to gastronomic culture

In this context, Cinque was not just a wine bar filling a gap. It was a lifestyle proposal. A response to the question: how can you create something with substance, aesthetics, and true value during difficult times?



CHAPTER 3: THE BEGINNING IN LAMIA - 7 SQUARE METERS, ONE BIG IDEA

3.1 A Provincial Town, A Different Goal

In 2012, Greece was in the depths of economic recession. News headlines spoke daily of closures, layoffs, reduced incomes, and uncertainty. Lamia, like many provincial towns, was no exception: its commercial center was beginning to empty, and the local market faced serious survival challenges.

Amid this adverse environment, one family decided to swim against the current. Grigoris Prassas and Evangelia Tseliou-Prassa did not have a business background in the food service sector. But they shared a vision: to create a space that would offer people a meaningful taste experience—not just a product to consume, but a story to discover.

3.2 The Smallest Wine Bar in Greece

The first Cinque was housed in a space just 7 square meters in size. As Evangelia later described in an interview: 'It was a box. We had only one counter, one shelf, and two stools.' Yet this small 'box' was filled with energy, dedication, and a love for wine.

The space was designed to accommodate only the essentials—a small wine fridge, basic serving tools, and a mini deli with Greek products: rusks, olives, handmade jams, and cheeses. Although there was no full kitchen, the goal was clear: to showcase Greek wine through simple, clean, local flavors.

3.3 The Challenge of First Contact

The first weeks were tough. People in Lamia were not used to this type of establishment. Many passed by, looked confused, and moved on. Others asked, 'Is it only wine? No coffee?' or 'Such a small space—where are the tables?'

But there were also those—few at first—who came in, tasted, asked questions, and learned. They became the first ambassadors of Cinque's philosophy. Each visit turned into an opportunity for conversation, flavor analysis, mini tours of grape varieties, producer stories, and a map of Greek wine.



CHAPTER 3: THE BEGINNING IN LAMIA - 7 SQUARE METERS, ONE BIG IDEA

3.4 Learning by Doing

With no prior experience, the couple learned the wine world through constant interaction with the product and its people. They read books, attended seminars, and traveled to visit producers, sample labels, and build a network.

Their first collaborations with small wineries started without intermediaries—direct, personal, based on the phrase: 'We want to tell your story.' And that had power.

At the same time, Nikitas, their son who was finishing his studies in Thessaloniki, began to get more involved. His knowledge of oenology and wine production provided the technical foundation Cinque needed to evolve from a place of taste to a place of knowledge.

3.5 From Taste to Community

Cinque in Lamia eventually became a point of reference. Not on a mass scale—but in quality. It started attracting people who loved local production, who appreciated the quiet luxury of knowledge and personal connection. It functioned more like a 'club'—not in an exclusive sense, but in a sense of intimacy.

Hospitality was the foundation: every customer was treated like a friend. There were no 'service speeds.' Everyone took their time, sat at the counter, drank with a small story alongside, and left with new knowledge.

3.6 The Realization: Cinque Had 'Something'

Within the first two years, the Cinque team realized they had something special. Not because they got rich—the revenues were modest. But because an identity was being built. A clear message: you can create something of quality even when everything around you seems negative.

Success was not measured in numbers, but in relationships: with customers, producers, and the very concept of wine as experience. This realization led to the big decision: to move Cinque to the heart of the Greek capital.



CHAPTER 4: MOVING TO ATHENS – THE EXPANSION INTO PSYRRI (2015)

4.1 The Decision: From Local to Urban

The year 2015 marked a turning point for the Prassas family. After two years of operating in Lamia, it became clear that Cinque could thrive not only in a small provincial setting but also at the epicenter of cultural and touristic activity. The decision to move to Athens was difficult, but necessary.

The reasoning was clear: If you want to bring Greek wine to the center of culture and tourism, you have to be present where the pulse beats. And in Athens, that place was—and still is—Psyrrri.

4.2 Why Psyrrri?

In the 2010s, Psyrrri was at the heart of Athens' gastronomic evolution. From a traditional working-class neighborhood, it was transforming into a hub for modern dining, small bars, alternative shops, and quality tourism.

Cinque found in Psyrrri the environment it was looking for: a neighborhood with identity, multiculturalism, tourism, and neighbors with character. The choice of 15 Agatharchou Street was deliberate—a narrow, atmospheric alleyway, away from noise but full of 'pulse', and without pretense.

4.3 The Design of the Space

The new location was significantly larger than the one in Lamia, yet it retained the feel of a 'taste nest.' Cinque never wanted to become a mainstream wine bar with dozens of tables and impersonal service. The architectural plan focused on personal connection: counter, open shelves with bottles, labels in plain sight, neutral colors, low lighting, soft music.

The goal was to create a space that embraces you from the entrance—to make you feel like a guest, not a customer. The materials were simple: wood, metal, stone—all aligned with the brand's values: authenticity, grounding, and respect for the handmade.

4.4 A New Reality: Customers from Around the World

From the very first weeks, it became obvious that Cinque in Athens would not have the same clientele as in Lamia. Now, customers were tourists from America, Asia, and Northern Europe. Visitors who had heard of Greek wine but didn't know where or how to try it. Cinque became an embassy of the Greek vineyard, a place for discovering the richness and complexity of Greek grape varieties.

Grigoris and Nikitas were behind the counter every day. They didn't just serve—they gave guided tours: of flavors, aromas, regions, and terroirs. The first tastings were organized with themed sections, maps, and examples from different regions: Mantinia, Naousa, Santorini, Drama.



CHAPTER 4: MOVING TO ATHENS – THE EXPANSION INTO PSYRRI (2015)

4.5 The Innovation of 'Wine by the Glass'

A major innovation was offering almost every label by the glass. Until then, most wine venues in Greece offered only basic options by the glass, keeping higher-end bottles for full-bottle purchases.

Cinque changed that rule. With special equipment preserving wine freshness (nitrogen/vacuum systems), it offered customers the chance to taste any label without committing to a full bottle.

This opened the door to customers who wanted to explore—not invest in something unknown. The concept of wine tasting flights (three or five varieties in small portions with tasting notes) started gaining traction. A small serving turned into a journey across Greece.

4.6 The Philosophy of 'Everyday Luxury'

Cinque was not aimed at an elite audience—neither in pricing nor in aesthetics. Instead, it gave customers the feeling that they could enjoy something exceptional at an accessible price.

What changed wasn't the price—but the quality of the experience. Small details like handmade placemats with information about grape varieties, note cards, and personal discussions with the sommelier highlighted the value of service—not the luxury of the space. This approach became the brand's signature.

4.7 First Reviews – Entry into TripAdvisor

Within the first six months, Cinque began receiving spectacular reviews on TripAdvisor. Not just for the product quality, but for the hospitality—something that came up again and again in comments:

- **“The best wine experience we had in Europe.”**
- **“The owners welcomed us like family.”**
- **“I never thought Greek wine could be so interesting.”**

Cinque became a top wine tasting destination in Athens—not through advertising, but through word of mouth, positive experiences, and the personal involvement of the family in service.



CHAPTER 5: THE EVOLUTION OF THE CINQUE EXPERIENCE – FROM WINE TO A JOURNEY OF THE SENSES

5.1 The Concept of Experience as the Core of Identity

From the very first day of operation, Cinque was never a traditional wine bar. It was not built solely on bottles, food, or good interior design. The entire approach was founded on the concept of experience—and a truly multi-sensory one at that.

The philosophy of 'the five senses' was carried from the name into action. The Cinque team aimed to make the visitor feel, not merely consume. To turn a visit into a cultural meal, a lasting memory.

5.2 Not Just Service, but a 'Guided Experience'

Staff at Cinque are not just trained to serve. They are trained to guide the customer on a small wine journey. Waiters/waitresses know the grape varieties, the regions, the producers, the vinification techniques. They are storytellers—they present the wine as a story, not as a product.

For example, if a customer asks for 'white, fruity', they might hear: 'I would recommend a Moschofilero from Mantinia. It's aromatic, with rose and citrus notes, cultivated at 600 meters altitude. The producer is third-generation and uses natural yeasts. Would you like to try it with lemon marmalade and Cretan graviera cheese?'

The experience is not just gustatory—it is educational and emotional. The customer learns, listens, connects with the place, feels intimacy and respect.

5.3 Pairing Wine with Greek Products

One of Cinque's strongest points is the pairing of wine with traditional Greek products—not just as side dishes, but as meaningful pairings.

Cinque's famous platters are carefully designed to highlight each wine. Products are selected from small producers based on:

- Authenticity and geographical origin
- Complementarity in flavor and texture
- Harmony with the selected wines

Each tasting is accompanied by an explanation—not just of the wine, but also of the food. Homemade jams (fig, eggplant, orange), olives, breadsticks, cold cuts, and cheeses create a complete experience of taste, story, and culture.



CHAPTER 5: THE EVOLUTION OF THE CINQUE EXPERIENCE – FROM WINE TO A JOURNEY OF THE SENSES

5.4 Wine Flights as a Discovery Tool

One of Cinque's most important innovations is the wine flight: serving 3 or 5 glasses of different varieties in small quantities, so the visitor can taste, compare, and discover the differences.

This model:

- **Allows exploration without financial risk**
- **Enables presentation of many regions and wine styles**
- **Offers fun and knowledge simultaneously**

The wine flights are accompanied by tasting sheets where customers can note impressions, questions, and preferences—acting like a personal flavor diary.

5.5 Aesthetic as an Ingredient of the Experience

The atmosphere at Cinque is carefully curated down to the last detail. Nothing flashy—and that's exactly its strength. Low lighting, natural materials, soft colors, shelves with wines and products on display, soft music carefully selected.

The experience is immersive but not overwhelming. It doesn't shout—it invites. It calms. It gives space to listen, smell, and reflect.

5.6 Experience for All – Not Elitist

Cinque succeeded in 'democratizing' wine. It made it accessible to all without lowering quality. No prior knowledge is needed—it is provided. No fancy words required—they are explained. Visitors don't feel ignorant—they're invited on a journey.

This was a key factor in Cinque's success among tourists. An American, a Japanese visitor, a Swede—anyone could walk in and feel they were part of something authentic and welcoming, without being intimidated by technical terms or complex wine lists.



CHAPTER 6: THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE PRASSAS FAMILY – HEART, TRADITION, AND EVOLUTION

6.1 A Family Business with Professional Ethos

From the very beginning, Cinque Wine & Deli Bars was a family business—not just in ownership, but in full and active participation. The concept, operation, philosophy, service, and product selection all came from the Prassas family: Grigoris, Evangelia, and Nikitas.

Their presence was not symbolic. It was daily, personal, and organic. They led by example with ethics, consistency, and love for what they do. This human element, in a sector often impersonal and industrialized, made an immediate difference.

6.2 Grigoris Prassas – The Storyteller

Grigoris was the voice of Cinque. With roots in Lamia and professional experience outside the hospitality industry, he brought the element of storytelling to the brand. Comfortable with words, patient, and sincere, he became the guide for customers in the world of wine.

His stories—sometimes historical, sometimes personal, sometimes folkloric—were not just wine accompaniments. They were part of the experience. The customer left not just having drunk something, but having heard something they would remember.

His role quickly expanded: managing venues, selecting collaborators, organizing tasting events, maintaining relationships with producers. But even now, despite the brand's expansion, he still works behind the counter, talks to guests, pours wine, and serves jam.

6.3 Evangelia Tseliou-Prassa – The Soul of the Space

Evangelia is the mother of Cinque. Not only because she co-founded the business, but because she infused it with warmth, attention to detail, and care. She is responsible for:

- The aesthetic of the space
- The selection of accompanying products (jams, rusks, cheeses)
- Implementing the concept of 'hospitality'

She doesn't see Cinque as a store—she sees it as her home. And every customer is a guest. She offers, suggests, discusses, remembers who came last year, which wine they liked, what they tasted. The level of personalization she brings to the brand is incredibly rare.

She is also the emotional core—anything to do with wishes, care, or philosophy passes through her hands.



CHAPTER 6: THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE PRASSAS FAMILY – HEART, TRADITION, AND EVOLUTION

6.4 Nikitas Prassas – The New Generation of Greek Wine

Nikitas is the know-how of Cinque. He completed studies in sommelier training and oenology, gaining expertise in wine not only theoretically but also practically, with winery visits, participation in production processes, and tastings in Greece and abroad.

With scientific training and the freshness of his generation, Nikitas contributed to Cinque by:

- Proper classification and curation of labels
- Personalized recommendations based on chemistry and terroir
- Organizing thematic tasting menus
- Hosting masterclasses and educational tastings

He also manages the brand's digital presence, coordinates the e-shop, and handles collaboration with winemakers and the business's overall evolution. His presence brings youth and growth to Cinque. He doesn't settle for the traditional—he seeks new labels, experiments, listens, and refreshes. He has vision, but keeps the humility that defines the brand.

6.5 The Collaboration: A Rare Balance

Cinque's success wouldn't exist without the complementary roles of the three family members. They don't have the same roles—and that's the key.

- Grigoris brings the storytelling
- Evangelia brings the soul
- Nikitas brings the knowledge and direction

Their relationship is defined by respect, freedom, and dedication. Every decision is a result of discussion, not hierarchy. The result is a rare blend of tradition and innovation, homely warmth, and professionalism.

6.6 Family Identity as Brand Strategy

The fact that Cinque is a family business is not just internal—it's part of the brand identity. On the website, on social media, in interactions with customers, the family is present: with photos, stories, videos, and involvement in every activity.

This builds trust and emotional connection with visitors. Tourists don't feel like they're entering a chain—they feel welcomed by a family that loves what it does. This sense of authenticity is what sets Cinque apart from every other wine bar.



CHAPTER 7: THE SECOND LOCATION IN MONASTIRAKI - EXPANSION AND STABILITY (AND THE POP-UP IN MYKONOS)

7.1 The Need for a Second Location: Scaling the Philosophy

By 2017, the first Cinque store in Psyrrri had become a landmark for wine lovers. Visitors came systematically, often after researching on TripAdvisor or following personal recommendations. However, increasing demand, long wait times, and the desire to share the experience with more people led the Prassas family to a strategic move: opening a second, permanent Cinque, this time in Monastiraki.

7.2 Cinque on Voreou - A New Experience in the Heart of the City

The new store was chosen at 10 Voreou Street, a strategically located point between Monastiraki and Syntagma Square. The area attracts high foot traffic from both tourists and Greeks in the historic triangle of the city.

Larger than the original in Psyrrri, this new space allowed full development of the concept:

- More tables
- Indoor and outdoor seating
- Wine tasting bar
- Capacity for larger events (private tastings, team-building, professional presentations)

The aim was to maintain the brand identity despite increased capacity. And indeed, the hospitality, storytelling, attentive service, and product selection remained intact.

7.3 Special Experiences for Small Groups and Tasting Workshops

With the new space, the Cinque team could now organize:

- Private tasting workshops
- Tourist seminars focusing on Greek varieties
- Closed events for professionals (sommeliers, bloggers, journalists)

The concept of 'wine as cultural tour' came to life. Every guest could learn about the history of the Greek vineyard, PDO zones, vinification techniques, and the uniqueness of each terroir.

Cinque was no longer just a wine bar. It was a school—with a wine glass in hand.



CHAPTER 7: THE SECOND LOCATION IN MONASTIRAKI – EXPANSION AND STABILITY (AND THE POP-UP IN MYKONOS)

7.4.1 The Pop-Up Philosophy

The Mykonos pop-up was based on Cinque's core principles:

- Quality Greek wines, exclusively from small producers
- Mini tasting flights for sampling
- Platters of Greek products, tailored for summer flavors
- Personal service, in a unique space

It offered a counterbalance to the island's glam lifestyle. It didn't rely on luxury, but on the 'authentic, discreet, and Greek.'

7.4.2 The Challenges

Mykonos was a demanding environment: high operating costs, competition from luxury brands, and an international clientele with specific expectations. The Cinque team had to preserve the authenticity of the experience without diluting the brand identity.

The challenge was met through:

- Staff training in four languages
- Label preparation with historical notes for each variety
- Promoting the philosophy of 'you taste, we guide—not sell'

7.4.3 The Reception

The project was a success. Mykonos visitors appreciated Cinque because it gave them something missing: substance, human connection, and a deeper introduction to Greece beyond the tourist package.

The season ended with excellent reviews and strong online feedback. Although it didn't become a permanent location, the pop-up helped position Cinque as a 'mobile experience brand', not just a fixed wine bar.

7.5 From Expansion to Stability

By 2018, the Cinque team had achieved something unique:

- Two permanent locations (Psyrris and Monastiraki)
- A successful pop-up concept (Mykonos)
- International recognition on TripAdvisor, Google, and travel guides
- A loyal customer base, not just tourists, but also Greeks discovering the charm of Greek wine

Unlike many businesses that expand and lose their identity, Cinque remained consistent: small, meticulous, personal.



CHAPTER 8: THE POP-UP BAR IN MAROUSI – AN EXPERIMENTAL APPROACH IN THE NORTHERN SUBURBS (2021)

8.1 A New Environment, A New Challenge

In 2021, shortly after the strict pandemic restrictions were lifted, the Prassas family decided to try something new: to bring the Cinque experience to a purely urban neighborhood with no touristic profile, to an audience that wasn't actively seeking wine—but might come to love it.

The choice of Marousi was deliberate. The area boasts high income, diverse age groups, professionals, and families who seek alternative experiences beyond classic cafés and restaurants. At the time, there wasn't a single wine bar with a Greek focus in the neighborhood.

The bet was clear: Can Cinque thrive outside the historic center?

8.2 Pop-Up Philosophy: Short Duration, Maximum Impact

Cinque in Marousi was designed as a pop-up wine bar. A space with a limited lifespan (a few months), light infrastructure, and a goal to make noise—not in volume, but in quality.

The team brought from the center:

- The same curated wine list
- The same handmade accompaniment products
- The same staff trained in the brand's philosophy
- And above all: the same experience

The location was chosen near a thoroughfare, but with a neighborhood feel. The interior was created on a limited budget but followed the same design logic: minimal aesthetic, emphasis on experience, not flashiness.

8.3 The Marousi Audience: A Surprise

Although the Cinque team prepared for an 'educational approach'—to introduce the concept to a new crowd—the response was immediate and warm:

- Many locals already knew Cinque from the city center and were thrilled it came 'to the north'
- Others discovered it via friends, social media, or simply by walking by
- Many came back a second or third time—not just for wine, but to try something new, talk, and learn

The team noticed that the Marousi audience:

- Requested more information about the wines
- Was more 'experimental'—willing to try without fixed preferences
- Deeply appreciated the wine-food pairing experience, especially the platters



CHAPTER 8: THE POP-UP BAR IN MAROUSI – AN EXPERIMENTAL APPROACH IN THE NORTHERN SUBURBS (2021)

8.4 Adaptations and Small Innovations

Cinque in Marousi also introduced some small variations from its other locations:

- Created a special 'after-office wine pairing', ideal for local professionals
- Organized 'wine and music' nights, where each wine was accompanied by curated playlists
- Adopted online reservation systems, especially for small groups wanting tasting workshops

As a result, a local audience with genuine interest in wine was built quickly—something not always easy in non-touristic areas.

8.5 What Marousi Proved

The pop-up bar in Marousi demonstrated several important things for the Cinque team:

1. The experience is transferable—if its essence is preserved
2. Wine, service, and storytelling matter more than location
3. The Greek public is eager to learn
4. If given space, respect, and opportunity to learn, they respond with enthusiasm
5. Cinque is not just a 'tourist product'
6. It has an identity and can stand in any environment—if it maintains the same quality and approach

8.6 Conclusion: Locality and Globality Together

Cinque in Marousi was not just another store. It was a testing lab. From it emerged a new understanding of the brand: that it can thrive not only through tourism, but also in the daily lives of modern Greeks—professionals, quality seekers, and curious individuals looking for something real in a world full of shallow choices.

This understanding laid the groundwork for Cinque's next steps: brand expansion through franchising, production of its own products, and international presence at exhibitions and platforms.



CHAPTER 9: THE FRANCHISE IN KOUKAKI – FROM FAMILY BUSINESS TO NETWORK (2024)

9.1 The Vision: Scaling Without Losing Soul

By 2023, the Cinque brand had achieved something rare: a strong identity, excellent reviews, and a loyal audience—both local and international. The next step was not simply more stores, but careful expansion. How do you grow a brand whose strength lies in intimacy, family values, and personalized experience?

The answer: by franchising selectively, with partners who don't just invest financially, but also believe in the Cinque philosophy.

9.2 Why Koukaki?

Koukaki is a neighborhood full of contrasts. Touristic, yet residential. Stylish, yet low-key. With museums, Airbnbs, Neoclassical homes, and a lively food scene, it was the ideal location for the first franchised Cinque.

It is a place where both Greeks and foreigners live and move with interest in culture, gastronomy, and quality. The franchise model could be tested here—with the right partner.

9.3 The Partner: More Than an Investor

The franchise in Koukaki was not sold to an anonymous investor. The partner selected was someone who had followed Cinque for years, visited often, admired the philosophy, and wanted to bring it to his own neighborhood.

Training was intensive:

- Product knowledge
- Wine tasting technique
- Service philosophy
- Brand storytelling

The partner didn't just replicate the model. He internalized it—adding his own personality without altering the core.

9.4 What Stays the Same, What Changes

The franchise maintained the following elements:

- Product list
- Interior design and branding
- Staff training

Philosophy of service

What was allowed to change:

- Layout (based on building limitations)
- Local collaborations (e.g., artisanal products from Attica)
- Events tailored to local audience

This balance preserved identity while allowing necessary adaptation.



CHAPTER 9: THE FRANCHISE IN KOUKAKI – FROM FAMILY BUSINESS TO NETWORK (2024)

9.5 The First Months: Reception and Growth

From its opening in early 2024, Cinque Koukaki received an enthusiastic response. Regulars from the center visited, and local residents embraced the new space as their own.

- Wine flights sold out almost daily
- Social media engagement increased
- Tourists recommended it online before even arriving in Athens

It was clear: the Cinque experience could scale without dilution—if done with care and authenticity.

9.6 Toward a Network – But Not a Chain

The franchise model opened the door for further expansion—but the Prassas family made it clear: Cinque would never become a generic chain.

Each new store must:

- Be led by people who love wine
- Share the Cinque values
- Receive full training and ongoing support
- Retain autonomy for local character, within a common framework

The goal is not multiplication, but resonance: more points of contact with the same emotional depth.



CHAPTER 10: CINQUE'S ROLE IN GREEK WINE TOURISM - FROM WINE BAR TO EMBASSY OF GREEK WINE

10.1 Wine Tourism in Greece: From Delay to Revival

Until the 2000s, the term “wine tourism” in Greece was almost unknown. Despite the country's rich wine heritage, unique grape varieties, and impressive wineries, there was minimal organized effort to promote these assets to tourists.

Only in the past fifteen years—especially following the economic crisis—have small producers begun to open their wineries to the public, invest in aesthetics, offer guided tours, collaborate with local businesses, and participate in international exhibitions.

In this evolving landscape, Cinque was not just another wine bar. It became what was missing in between: the bridge between visitor and producer, between the culture of wine and the everyday experience.

10.2 Cinque as a Gateway to the Greek Vineyard

For a tourist arriving in Athens, the Cinque Wine & Deli Bars serve as an introduction to the world of Greek wine. It's the first stop, the first experience—often the first time they hear words like:

- Assyrtiko
- Xinomavro
- Roditis
- Limniona
- PDO / PGI / terroir

Cinque's tastings are not commercial presentations—they are cultural lessons. Through maps, stories, food, and human connection, the visitor starts to understand that wine in Greece is not just a product of consumption—it's a part of identity.

10.3 Ambassador of Small Wineries

Cinque does not operate like a traditional wine shop. It doesn't aim for well-known labels or international brands. On the contrary, it has made a conscious decision to highlight small Greek producers. The brand has been built through partnerships with wineries that are:

- family-owned
- organic
- experimental
- from mountain vineyards
- from remote areas

This gives the producers a platform for visibility while ensuring Cinque retains the authenticity it strives for.

Through tastings, presentations, and direct interaction with the public, these labels gain meaning, recognition, and narrative.

Some tourists even continue the experience by visiting wineries in the countryside—because they first discovered them at Cinque.



CHAPTER 10: CINQUE'S ROLE IN GREEK WINE TOURISM – FROM WINE BAR TO EMBASSY OF GREEK WINE

10.4 Participation in Wine Routes and Institutions

Cinque is not limited to its own venues. It has actively participated in and supported initiatives such as:

- Open Cellar Days, inviting customers to visit and explore wineries
- Wines of Greece, promoting Greek grape varieties abroad
- Collaborations with travel agencies, incorporating Cinque tastings into city tours
- Participation in international exhibitions, where the brand represents not just itself but Greek wine as a whole

In doing so, Cinque becomes an active member of the Greek wine ecosystem—with a unique role: it bridges wine tourism with wine education.

10.5 Staff Training – Wine Tourism with a Human Face

A key part of Cinque's success lies in the training of its team. All staff members:

- Know the grape varieties
- Have tasted the labels
- Are familiar with the history of the wine regions
- Speak foreign languages and explain clearly

This makes each tasting personal and meaningful. The tourist doesn't feel like a customer—they feel like they're being offered knowledge and culture.

The Cinque experience isn't copy-paste. It's human. And that's rare in wine tourism.

10.6 Multiplier Benefits for Greece

Cinque contributes to something much greater than its own success:

- It promotes Greek wine to tourists who have never tasted it before
- It creates ambassadors abroad, as visitors often return home with bottles or recommend the brand
- It boosts small producers by generating demand for them
- It connects Athens with the wine-producing countryside, building routes and relationships

Essentially, it has created an unofficial map of wine tourism—with its wine bars as the starting point.



CHAPTER 11: INTERNATIONAL MEDIA EXPOSURE AND DIGITAL RECOGNITION – THE POWER OF ONLINE EXPERIENCES

11.1 From Word of Mouth to... TripAdvisor

When the first Cinque opened its doors in Psyrrí in 2015, the Prassa family didn't have a formal marketing plan. The brand didn't launch with an advertising budget or features in lifestyle magazines. Instead, all promotion began and grew organically—through genuine reviews and experiences shared by the customers themselves.

Cinque joined TripAdvisor, and within a few months, it started receiving glowing reviews. The most frequent phrases were:

- “authentic experience”
- “warm welcome”
- “best wine tasting ever”
- “Greek wine redefined”

Without any calculated effort, Cinque became a digital discovery. Every guest who had a great time shared their recommendation—and that recommendation stayed online, multiplying over time.

11.2 Traveller's Choice Awards: The Power of Consistency

From 2016 through 2024, Cinque has consistently received the Traveller's Choice Award from TripAdvisor, ranking among:

- The top wine bars in Athens
- The best gastronomic experiences
- The top 10 attractions in the TripAdvisor Athens Experience Ranking

This repeated recognition isn't based on marketing “tricks” but on something more solid: a consistently high-quality experience, regardless of season, team, or location.

11.3 The Impact of Google Reviews and Local Reputation

Beyond TripAdvisor, Cinque also gained a significant number of positive reviews on Google—particularly from Greek customers. This played a key role in breaking the image of Cinque as “just a wine bar for tourists,” making it a true destination for locals as well.

Comments such as:

- “Affordable, knowledgeable, and with a smile”
- “This is where I learned what Assyrtiko is”
- “Worth every euro for what you get”

cemented the brand's status and reinforced its reputation within the community—not just on the tourist map.



CHAPTER 11: INTERNATIONAL MEDIA EXPOSURE AND DIGITAL RECOGNITION – THE POWER OF ONLINE EXPERIENCES

11.4 International Blogs, YouTube, and Travel Shows

Cinque has been featured in:

- International wine blogs (detailed articles and tasting recaps)
- YouTube travel channels, where vloggers visited the venue and documented their experience
- Instagram influencers, who showcased the atmosphere, the presentation, and—of course—the glasses

Without investing in influencer marketing, Cinque attracted genuine wine lovers and slow tourism advocates who appreciated the substance, not just the “packaging.”

11.5 Website and E-shop: Expanding to the Digital Shelf

The professional relaunch of Cinque’s website around 2021 was a crucial step in its digital maturity. The platform:

- Clearly presents the brand identity
- Provides access to tasting menus and reservations
- Enables purchases of wines and products through the e-shop

Greek and international customers alike can extend the Cinque experience from home—by ordering a bottle they tasted or gifting a curated tasting box of Greek products.

11.6 International Guides and Travel Media

Cinque has been featured in outlets such as:

- Lonely Planet
- Culture Trip
- Condé Nast Traveller
- Wine Enthusiast

Most describe the brand as:

- “The best place to taste Greek wine in Athens”
- “A family-run gem in the heart of Psyrrí”
- “A lesson in Greek hospitality, one glass at a time”

These mentions have established Cinque as a must-visit for any traveler seeking authentic experiences—not just for foodies or wine enthusiasts.

11.7 Digital Reputation as a Tool for International Growth

Cinque’s accumulated positive online image has also served as a foundation for partnerships and invitations abroad:

- Participation in international wine exhibitions
- Collaboration proposals from travel agencies
- Franchise inquiries from Europe, the U.S., and the Middle East

Its digital reputation wasn’t just “advertising.” It became a form of certification—a living proof that the brand has a real emotional and cultural impact on people across the globe.



CHAPTER 12: STORYTELLING AS STRATEGY - HOW CINQUE SELLS STORIES, NOT JUST WINE

12.1 History as Experience

From the beginning, Cinque never intended to be just another wine bar. Instead, it functions as a living narrative. Everything—from its name to the conversations with guests—is built around a central idea:

Wine is not a drink. It's history. It's land. It's people. It's memory.

This concept became the foundation of Cinque's strategy: every sip tells a story—not an advertising one, but a true one.

12.2 Five Senses, Five Stories

The word Cinque isn't just an Italian name. It's a conscious invitation to engage the senses:

- Sight: wine color, dish presentation, space atmosphere
- Smell: aromas of fruit, spice, wood
- Taste: complex notes, textures, evolving flavors
- Touch: feel of the glass, plate, setting
- Sound: the voices, music, clinking glasses

Each sense is not activated randomly, but through a structured narrative. Guests don't just learn what they drink, but what it means.

12.3 Storytelling as Action, Not Marketing

In most businesses, storytelling is a branding tool—narratives are created around products to increase market appeal.

At Cinque, the process is reversed:

- The product is chosen because it has a story
- The staff speaks from genuine knowledge—not sales scripts
- The customer feels part of a living tradition—not a sales pitch

12.4 Personal, Friendly, Emotional

- The storytelling style is:
 - Personal - tailored to each customer
 - Friendly - clear, simple language, no elitism
 - Emotional - connecting flavor with feeling

This approach turns Cinque into a kind of living museum of Greek wine—with a glass in your hand.



CHAPTER 12: STORYTELLING AS STRATEGY – HOW CINQUE SELLS STORIES, NOT JUST WINE

2.5 The Aesthetic Narrative of the Space

Even the design of each Cinque location functions as a form of storytelling:

- Wooden shelves: like an old wine cellar
- Wine boards: like libraries
- Lighting: warm and familiar – like home
- Objects: old labels, geographical maps, tasting notes
- The space is not "decorated." It tells a story. The customer is inside a story – not just standing in front of a display.

12.6 Storytelling on Social Media

Cinque's presence on Instagram, Facebook, and its website is not "promotional." It is educational and experiential.

Posts include:

- Short stories of wine producers
- Tasting guides
- Personal moments from tastings
- Visitors' memories
- Each post builds character, not sales. And it is this authenticity that creates a connection with the audience.

12.7 Narrative Consistency Over Time

The most important aspect: Cinque doesn't change its narrative to follow trends.

It doesn't use slang, influencers, or seasonal campaigns.

The story has remained the same since 2012:

"Come taste Greek wine. Let us tell you where it comes from. Meet the people behind it.

Feel like you're part of something real."

This consistency in storytelling is what has won people over. Because it builds trust – and trust leads to loyalty.



CHAPTER 13: THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY – FROM E-SHOP TO THE ONLINE WINE EXPERIENCE

13.1 Technology as a Tool for Outreach

Although Cinque began as a purely physical experience, it never ignored the power of technology. On the contrary, it chose to use it as a means of:

- expanding the experience
- maintaining relationships with visitors
- offering accessibility to those who can't visit in person

At Cinque, technology doesn't replace human connection—it complements it, extends it, and enhances it.

13.2 The Creation of the E-shop – Bringing Wine Home with the Spirit of Cinque

The first major technological step was the development of a functional, user-friendly, and well-designed e-shop, where customers can purchase:

- Bottled wines served at the physical locations
- Platters and sets of Greek artisanal products
- Curated Tasting Boxes
- Special gift options for various occasions

The goal was not simply to sell products—it was to deliver the Cinque experience into the customer's home. Therefore:

- Packages include printed guides with information about each label
- The website features videos on how to conduct a tasting at home
- Customers can call for guidance or send in questions

In short: we don't just sell wine—we show you how to experience it.

13.3 Online Reservations and Digital Personalization

Cinque adopted an online booking system early on, allowing visitors to:

- Choose the date, time, and type of tasting
- Note dietary preferences
- Prepay securely
- Create a "tasting profile" (e.g., first-time vs. returning customer)

The staff receives this information and tailors the experience accordingly.

So, a tourist from Paris who visited last year and returns again can receive a different, personalized set of recommendations based on their previous preferences.

This level of personalization—powered by technology—builds deeper, lasting connections.

CHAPTER 13: THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY – FROM E-SHOP TO THE ONLINE WINE EXPERIENCE

13.4 Social Media with Purpose and Soul

Cinque's presence on Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube is active and intentional. It's not just about showcasing products, but about sharing:

- Real moments from tastings
- Customer feedback and reactions
- Educational posts about grape varieties
- Q&As with Nikitas or the team
- Behind-the-scenes glimpses from producers

The goal is to build a community. Users engage, ask questions, give suggestions, leave comments—they feel like they're part of the Cinque circle.

13.5 Digital Tasting – An Experience Born in the Pandemic

During lockdown, Cinque launched a series of online wine tastings via Zoom and YouTube Live. Participants received at home:

- A curated wine package
- Tasting accompaniments (cheeses, rusks, jams)
- Informational material
- A link to join the Cinque team online

These events weren't just "webinars." They were live, interactive, and engaging experiences that:

- Educated people both in and outside of Greece
- Created bonds with the Greek diaspora
- Opened the door for virtual visits—even beyond the pandemic

Today, many clients request private digital tastings as corporate gifts or for friends abroad—a form of Greek wine ambassadorship via screen.

13.6 Data & Analytics for Insight, Not Control

Cinque's use of digital tools goes beyond the customer-facing experience. The team tracks:

- Which grape varieties sell best
- What different nationalities request most
- Peak times and days for visits
- Which social media posts generate the most engagement

This information isn't used for aggressive marketing—it's used to enhance the experience. Technology doesn't dictate—it supports.



CHAPTER 14: CINQUE'S RELATIONSHIP WITH SMALL PRODUCERS – FROM LABEL TO FAMILY

14.1 Not Just “Suppliers,” but Companions on the Journey

From the very beginning, Cinque's philosophy has been rooted in direct and personal relationships with small, independent producers. The Prassa family wasn't looking for “famous labels” to fill shelves. Instead, they sought out stories, people, and vineyards with character.

This orientation gave rise to a new kind of relationship in the market: not business-to-business, but person-to-person.

Producers don't just send price lists—they send updates from the harvest, photos from the vineyard, sample bottles, and often visit Cinque themselves to speak directly with customers.

14.2 Selection Based on Authenticity

Wine selection at Cinque follows specific criteria:

- Origin from Greek vineyards
- Unique labels, not commercially established ones
- Production that respects the terroir
- A handmade story, not an industrial product

Cinque is one of the few places in Athens where visitors can taste wines such as:

- A Limnio from Maroneia
- A Mavroudi from Thrace
- A Mavrotragano from Andros
- A naturally vinified Xinomavro from a small winery in Pella

14.3 Supporting and Empowering New Winemakers

Cinque is not afraid to showcase wines from producers who:

- Are just starting out
- Don't yet have a distribution network
- Lack strong marketing resources

On the contrary, it supports them by:

- Organizing introduction events
- Including their labels in tasting flights
- Recommending them to customers looking for “something special”
- Gathering feedback from guests and passing it back to the winemaker

This creates a sustainable, evolving, and collaborative relationship that benefits both sides.



CHAPTER 14: CINQUE'S RELATIONSHIP WITH SMALL PRODUCERS – FROM LABEL TO FAMILY

14.4 Collaborations with Small Food Producers

This philosophy extends beyond wine. Cinque's platters feature products sourced from:

- Small cheese dairies
- Charcuterie makers using traditional recipes
- Women's cooperatives producing handmade jams
- Artisan bakeries making sourdough rusks or using ancient grains like Zea

Each product has a face, a place, and an identity. These stories are shared with the customer, creating a complete tasting and cultural experience.

14.5 Producers Become Part of the Experience

Beyond simply featuring their products, producers:

- Are hosted at the venues for live tastings
- Give interviews that are shared on Cinque's social media
- Participate in presentations with visitors
- Collaborate on pairing ideas with new wines

In this way, Cinque acts as an incubator for small producers—a space where flavor is directly linked to the people behind it.

14.6 Highlighting Local Varieties and Forgotten Stories

One of Cinque's most meaningful contributions is its effort to promote:

- Old grape varieties that were nearly extinct
- Lesser-known regions with remarkable potential
- Producers who work with natural, organic, or low-intervention methods

Customers are educated to distinguish between industrial and natural wines. They learn the importance of origin, altitude, and hand-harvesting.

And most importantly, they learn to appreciate the humility and honesty hidden in a glass of wine you won't find at the supermarket.



CHAPTER 15: CINQUE AS AN EDUCATIONAL HUB – CLASSES, SEMINARS, AND A LEADING ROLE IN WINE KNOWLEDGE

15.1 Learning as a Core Part of the Experience

From its very first day, Cinque never treated wine as a mere product. It treated it as knowledge to be shared. And that’s what made the difference: the customer experience was never passive—it was participatory.

At Cinque, the visitor:

- Tastes wine with expert guidance
- Learns about grape varieties, history, and production methods
- Gains insight into wine and food pairing
- Compares, asks questions, and actively participates

In simple terms, Cinque turns customers into wine learners—without pretentious language or technical jargon.

15.2 Internal Staff Training

Education begins in-house. Every member of the Cinque team—new or experienced—goes through:

- Lessons in wine knowledge and terminology
- Training in tasting presentation
- Language support for describing wines in English, French, etc.
- Technical instruction on tools, service, and temperature control
- Hands-on tastings (staff must personally taste every wine served)

This ensures that every customer, no matter who they speak to, receives the same high-quality, consistent, and informed experience.

15.3 Tasting Workshops for the Public

Cinque regularly organizes:

- Group seminars on Greek grape varieties
- Introductory wine tasting classes
- Regional tastings (e.g. Cyclades, Macedonia, Crete)
- Specialized events (e.g. natural wines, organic wines, orange wines)
- Pairing sessions (wine & cheese, wine & chocolate, etc.)

All workshops share the same core values:

- Friendly and accessible—not just for “experts”
- Always supported by printed material and visual aids
- Designed for interaction and questions—not lectures

The goal is to educate both palate and mind, so customers can enjoy wine with depth and understanding.



CHAPTER 16: IMPACT ON THE LOCAL ECONOMY – PRODUCTION, EMPLOYMENT, AND VALUE FOR THE COMMUNITY

16.1 Localism Not as a Trend, But as a Principle

Many businesses use “localism” as a marketing tool. For Cinque, localism is the core of its operation.

This means that:

- Products come from small- and medium-scale Greek producers
- Service is provided by local staff and partners
- The interior design uses Greek materials and local craftsmen
- Each location functions as an active part of its neighborhood

It's not branding. It's an economic and social stance.

16.2 Supporting Greek Businesses

Cinque collaborates consistently with:

- Wineries from across Greece
- Cheesemakers, food artisans, and cooperatives
- Artists and creators for tableware, placemats, and decor
- Logistics companies and packaging firms based in Attica

Every glass of wine sold at Cinque supports multiple layers of production and services—from the vineyard to the delivery driver.

16.3 Quality Jobs with Continuity

Cinque doesn't just create jobs—it creates lasting employment relationships with growth potential.

- Every team member undergoes training
- Staff teams remain stable—with low turnover
- The philosophy is: “we learn together, we grow together”

Many team members have evolved into:

- Tasting guides
- Event coordinators
- Managers in new stores or franchise leaders

Cinque is not “just a bar job”—it's an environment of knowledge and professional development.

16.4 Boosting Local Confidence

In the neighborhoods where it operates (Psyri, Monastiraki, Koukaki, and formerly Marousi), Cinque has left a positive mark:

- It has increased demand for authentic experiences
- It has attracted quality tourism
- It has created a “hub of taste and culture”
- It has inspired nearby businesses to upgrade their services

In short, Cinque's presence is not competitive—it's empowering for the local market.



CHAPTER 16: IMPACT ON THE LOCAL ECONOMY – PRODUCTION, EMPLOYMENT, AND VALUE FOR THE COMMUNITY

16.5 Participation in Local Initiatives and Events

Cinque actively participates in and supports:

- Local cultural events (e.g. music nights, food festivals)
- Collaborations with municipalities or institutions to promote Greek wine
- Sponsorships for environmental awareness and recycling campaigns

It does not operate in isolation—it acts as an engaged citizen of its neighborhood.

16.6 Strengthening Small Scale Over Centralization

At a time when many businesses focus on scaling and mass production, Cinque proves that small scale can be more powerful:

- More contact → more trust
- More knowledge → better product
- More personal connection → greater customer loyalty

This model can inspire other small businesses to invest in quality, locality, and a consistent identity.



CHAPTER 17: AESTHETICS AND SPACE - HOW CINQUE CREATES AN ATMOSPHERE THAT SPEAKS TO THE HEART

17.1 Space as Experience

From its very first location, Cinque has never treated its physical space as just a commercial venue. Instead, every store has been designed to evoke emotion, engage the senses, and give visitors a feeling of familiarity, authenticity, and uniqueness.

The wine experience doesn't begin when the glass arrives—it begins the moment the door opens.

17.2 The Philosophy of “Minimal and Warm”

Cinque's aesthetic is based on four key principles:

- Simplicity - no excess, no luxury for show
- Warmth - materials like wood, metal, and stone
- Naturalness - earthy tones, soft lighting, human textures
- Subtle elegance - nothing loud, but everything intentional

The result is an atmosphere that doesn't pressure you to consume, but invites you to sit, feel, and observe.

17.3 The Table as a Stage for Taste

Cinque's tables are designed so that:

- They are not large - encouraging intimacy
- They are not too many - giving space to the experience
- They always offer a view of the shelf, the fridge, or the bottles
- They retain personality - each seat feels like a small, private tasting table

The spatial layout turns every meal into a narrative setting. The guest becomes a participant, not a spectator.

17.4 The Shelves: Wine Libraries

At Cinque, wine shelves are not storage spaces. They resemble libraries. Every label is like a book—with its own story, origin, and visual identity.

- Bottles are displayed face-forward, never with the label hidden
- Categories are organized geographically and thematically
- Guests are encouraged to stand up, browse, ask questions—to leaf through the cellar

This approach removes the fear of the “unknown” and makes wine approachable—something to explore with joy, not intimidation.



CHAPTER 17: AESTHETICS AND SPACE – HOW CINQUE CREATES AN ATMOSPHERE THAT SPEAKS TO THE HEART

17.5 Music, Light, and Color as “Accompaniments”

The Cinque experience is not limited to sight and taste. It also includes:

- Lighting: always soft, natural, never harsh or contrasting
- Music: curated playlists with jazz, world, ambient—not music for consumption, but for atmosphere
- Color palette: earthy tones, olive green, terracotta, natural woods

This combination creates a sense of psychological calm. The visitor relaxes and focuses on their senses—not the surroundings.

17.6 Connection to the Neighborhood

Each Cinque location is fully integrated into its neighborhood. It doesn't try to change the area—it honors and collaborates with it:

- Cinque Psyrri respects the vintage, low-key character of the district
- Cinque Monastiraki welcomes tourists without diluting the area's traditional charm
- Cinque Koukaki embraces the cultural vibe of the neighborhood, serving as a small cultural stop itself

This makes Cinque a natural extension of the urban environment—not a foreign object imposed on it.

17.7 Space as an Extension of Hospitality

Ultimately, the space reflects the personality of the Prassa family. It's not anonymous, not mass-produced, not industrial. It is human, understated, and kind.

Every detail—from the glass to the welcome smile—is designed to make you feel:

“I didn't come here just to consume. I came here to feel.”



CHAPTER 18: THE SOCIAL DIMENSION OF CINQUE – RESPONSIBILITY, SUSTAINABILITY, AND URBAN ENGAGEMENT

18.1 A Business with Social Awareness

From day one, Cinque has not defined itself solely as a wine bar. On the contrary, it has consistently expressed its intention to act as an active hub of hospitality, respect, and community engagement.

This means its decisions are not based solely on business logic, but also on ethical and social criteria. Cinque cares about:

- Sustainability
- Supporting small-scale producers
- Providing a safe and human-centered work environment
- Building connections with the local community
-

18.2 Environmental Responsibility in Practice

Without fanfare or marketing around a “green” identity, Cinque applies environmentally conscious practices:

- Recycling of all wine bottles—each location works with local programs
- Minimization of plastics—all serving materials are glass, wood, or recyclable
- Eco-friendly e-shop packaging
- Local sourcing—reducing transportation and environmental footprint

Additionally, Cinque gently raises customer awareness around responsible consumption—not only of alcohol, but of natural resources in general.

18.3 Supporting Social Groups and Conscious Initiatives

Over the years, Cinque has supported or collaborated with:

- Local initiatives helping community food pantries
- Events aiming to raise funds for charitable causes
- Nonprofit youth or cultural groups in need of space, exposure, or presence

The brand doesn’t use these actions for publicity. It supports them quietly—with contributions of products, space, staff, or expertise.



CHAPTER 18: THE SOCIAL DIMENSION OF CINQUE – RESPONSIBILITY, SUSTAINABILITY, AND URBAN ENGAGEMENT

18.5 Connection with the Neighborhood and Public Space

Each Cinque location coexists respectfully and actively within its neighborhood. This includes:

- Collaborating with other local businesses for joint initiatives
- Respecting operating hours and designated quiet zones for residents
- Participating in cultural events (e.g. festivals, street fairs, open art nights)
- Hosting small cultural happenings (live music, readings, local artists)

Cinque is not a foreign element in the city—it's a living cell that adds quality to urban life without causing disruption, exaggeration, or detachment from its surroundings.

18.6 A Cultural Role Without Pretension

Finally, it's worth noting that Cinque serves as a cultural space naturally. It doesn't cloak itself in artificial sophistication or aim to impress. Instead:

- It offers knowledge—both gustatory and linguistic—in a simple, accessible way
- It fosters a quiet, understated atmosphere of cultural experience
- It brings together people from different cultures through a shared language: wine and hospitality

And perhaps this is Cinque's most meaningful social contribution: showing that culture can be simple, everyday, and deeply human.



CHAPTER 19: THE RESILIENCE OF CINQUE - HOW IT SURVIVED CRISES AND THE PANDEMIC WITHOUT LOSING ITS SOUL

19.1 Crisis as a Starting Point

Cinque's first and most defining challenge wasn't the pandemic—it was the Greek economic crisis.

The brand was born in 2012, at a time when:

- Businesses were closing daily
- People were cutting out “non-essentials”
- Tourism was in a transitional phase
- The word “investment” sounded almost ironic

And yet, in the midst of this environment, Cinque chose to go against the logic of the times: it invested—in quality products, human connection, and experiential storytelling.

Its very foundation was an act of resistance and belief—and that laid the groundwork for a business that endures because it is rooted.

19.2 The COVID-19 Pandemic: From Physical to Digital Experience

In 2020, when restrictive measures shut down the hospitality industry, Cinque lost its key strength: personal interaction.

It could no longer welcome guests, host tastings, or tell stories face to face.

But instead of freezing, the team responded with creativity and speed:

- Fully activated its e-shop
- Created curated Tasting Boxes for home delivery
- Designed digital tastings via Zoom and YouTube
- Produced educational content for Instagram and the website
- Stayed in touch with the community through newsletters, social media, and phone support

The pandemic didn't destroy the Cinque experience—it transformed it. And this was made possible through rapid adaptation, without ever compromising the brand's core values.

19.3 Staff and Stability

While many businesses laid off or downsized staff, Cinque kept its entire team.

The philosophy was clear:

"If we make it through, we make it through together."

This fostered stronger bonds, loyalty, and a sense of family—not only within the team, but also with customers, who noticed and appreciated it.



CHAPTER 19: THE RESILIENCE OF CINQUE – HOW IT SURVIVED CRISES AND THE PANDEMIC WITHOUT LOSING ITS SOUL

19.4 Trust, Not Opportunistic Selling

During the pandemic, Cinque didn't resort to desperate sales tactics. It didn't cut quality, offer false discounts, or exploit fear.

Instead, it invested in trust:

- Offered thoughtful, curated selections
- Maintained its aesthetic integrity
- Provided personal service—even over the phone
- Communicated with calm and dignity

This ethos reinforced Cinque's image as a brand of stability and respect, even under pressure.

19.5 Restarting with Rhythm, Not Panic

When restrictions were lifted, Cinque reopened gradually—with awareness and sensitivity to people's emotional state.

- Tasting sessions returned with small groups
- Relationships with producers were renewed
- Online components were retained for remote audiences
- Personalized experiences were expanded (e.g. private tastings, curated gifts, tasting boxes)

This “calm restart” demonstrated that Cinque doesn't operate out of panic, but out of principles.

And that strengthened its reputation—not just as a business that “survived,” but as one that remained human through difficult times.

19.6 Lessons and Future Resilience

The pandemic left Cinque with a set of resilience lessons that have now become part of its structure:

- A dual presence: physical + digital
- Ongoing investment in its team
- Small scale, but high connection with its audience
- Strong ties with community and producers
- Flexibility without compromising quality

Its survival through crises was no accident. It was the result of a strategy rooted in trust and authenticity.



CHAPTER 20: THE FUTURE OF CINQUE – VISION, OUTREACH, AND THE LIMITS OF GROWTH

20.1 The Challenge of the Next Step

After more than ten years, Cinque has built:

- A strong and consistent brand
- A loyal, multinational audience
- A family of collaborators and producers
- A unique experiential and cultural tasting model

Its success brings with it the hardest question:

How do you grow without losing what you are?

Cinque’s future depends not on how much it grows, but how and why it grows.

20.2 Vision: Maintaining Identity Through Outreach

Cinque does not aspire to become a chain—and has made that clear in both word and practice. Its future doesn’t lie in fifty shops with the same logo, but in selected locations with the same spirit.

The vision includes:

- New locations in culturally or touristically meaningful areas—not random spots
- Franchises with strict value alignment—not just investors
- Collaborations with cultural institutions or museums where wine becomes a storytelling medium
- International pop-ups at events, exhibitions, and in cities that embrace wine culture

20.3 The Next Generation

Nikitas Prassas—and newer members of the Cinque team—demonstrate that there is continuity and evolution. They are not simply preserving Cinque “as it was.” They are moving it forward:

- With new tastings
- By integrating new technologies
- By promoting the Greek wine ecosystem abroad
- Through collaborations in storytelling, packaging, and content creation

The next generation isn’t replacing—they’re building on the integrity of those who came before.

20.4 Growth with Limits and Responsibility

Cinque knows that every form of growth has its limits. You cannot maintain quality, personality, and consistency if you grow too fast or too wide.

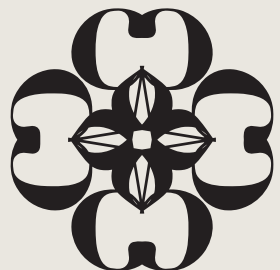
That’s why all decisions are made with:

- Strict quality criteria
- Partners who respect the brand’s story
- A limited number of simultaneous expansions
- Representative presence—not mass distribution

Cinque’s growth is careful, deliberate, and ethical.



CINQUE WINE & DELI BARS - THE STORY



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Epilogue

More than just a business, Cinque has become a point of reference for Greek wine, urban hospitality, and personal experience.

With respect for people, the environment, and the cultural heritage of its land, it proves that there is still room for quality and consistency, even in a rapidly changing world.

Its future belongs not merely to the market, but to the people who recognize the value of what is true.

