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2020

Drinks' clock

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Drink less, read more!

"The only fault
of wine is that
there is always
a lack of wine"

Ukraine is not Georgia, that's true. Yes, this country is not a cradle of wine and cannot boast of its 8-thousand-year history. And the history recorded in the annals is just as sad as the history of the entire Ukrainian nation: "perestroika", a row of economic crises, criminalization of the alcohol sector. The last straw was the occupation of Crimea by Russia and the loss of production sites and unique vineyards, including autochthonous varieties. Nevertheless, the industry is alive. It produces millions of decalitres, and even showed a revival in the last year. At least on a moral level 😊.

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Azerbaijan

Wines from decline to a revival

The production of Azerbaijani winemakers may be compared to the Phoenix bird. Just like this mythological creature, in the 21st century, Azerbaijani wine begins to revive after almost a complete decline in the 90s, when over 130 thousand hectares of vineyards were cut out in the country not only with technical varieties but also with unique table varieties.

As a new century set in, they managed to breathe a new life into national winemaking. Thanks to foreign technologies, the equipment was replaced in many wineries. Experienced enologists, agronomists, and technologists from other countries came to Azerbaijan, and the vineyard area has more than doubled in the last decade. Of course, Azerbaijan still belongs to the non-obvious wine-producing countries. Still, local winemakers have the grounds for prospects. First, this country has a unique geographical location – 9 of 11 possible climatic zones of the planet are represented on its territory. It gives winemakers excellent opportunities to experiment with terroirs and varieties. By the way, experts claim that there are more than 300 autochthonous grape varieties in Azerbaijan,



which also opens up an incredibly vast field of activity for crossing the Pan-Caucasian and local varieties.

In addition, many Azerbaijani wineries have recently attracted foreign specialists. Thus, the Italian Andrea Uliva is the head of the "Chabiant" winery in Ismailli, the "ASPI Winery" is managed by the spouses from Italy Daniel D'Andrea and Eliza Vagnoni, whereas the production of wine at the "Shirvan" company in Shamakhi is supervised by William Lavallar from France.

And of course, in Azerbaijan, you can try an amazing drink of pomegranate – a local fruit king, which is represented here by more than 20 varieties. In this country, pomegranate wine is produced according to the classic winemaking technology, resulting in a somewhat astringent drink with a long nutty aftertaste.

Alcohol production is growing

Over the past 2019, brandy production has grown in Armenia (by 41,5%, to 43 505,7 thousand l), wine (by 31,6%, up to 12 676.2 thousand l), sparkling wines (by 34, 2%, up to 1 011 thousand l). According to the National Statistical Committee of the Republic, the production of vodka, liqueurs, and other alcoholic beverages has also increased, in general, by 18.6%, to 5 981.2 thousand l. There was 11,4% more beer brewed, up to 26 257.6 thousand l. Statistics show that the indicators of fruit, berry,

and vegetable non-alcoholic beverages production are growing, namely by 5,7% more compared to 2018, to 13,532.6 thousand l; carbonated mineral water by 9,9%, to 45 012,3 thousand l; non-carbonated water – by 26,5%, to 49 814.3 thousand l. However, along with the growth of these indicators, it is worth noting the decrease of whiskey production by 11,4% over the past year, to 712,9 thousand l. Data of the National Statistical Committee of the Republic.

Moldova

The most “award-winning” country in Eastern Europe

At the recent international competition Mundus Vini, Moldova took the 7th place in the medal standings. Moldova got a total of 72 awards, and the country itself received the title of the most “award-winning” country in Eastern Europe. The top three places went to Italy (658 medals), Spain (631 medals), France (325 medals). With its results, Moldova has outperformed such winemaking countries as Argentina (49), Chile (48), Australia (69), South Africa (55), Greece (51), and New Zealand (29). Two of the total number of medals won were Grand Gold top rank prizes, which went to Gitana Winery, Saperavi 2017 and

laloveni, Heres Armonios Reserva 1994 (Jerez). Moldovan winemakers also received 35 gold and 35 silver awards. The highest number of medals went to Faufar: 5 gold and 3 silver. Red wines of Moldova prevail among the gold medallists, whereas the distribution of silver awards is equal. Sparkling wines of Moldova received 8 medals, including 4 gold (Cricova, Alb de Onitcani 2018; Apriori, Glera Alb Brut 2019; Aurelius, Brut Rosé; Aurelius, Brut Nature Rosé 2018) and 4 silver ones, all of which went to Purcari winery (Cuvée de Purcari, Grand Cuvée de Purcari 2016, Cuvée de Purcari Rose, Cuvée de Purcari Feteasca Alba).

Kazakhstan

Alcohol market: facts and figure

Following the results of 2019, the volume of strong alcohol production in Kazakhstan decreased. Compared to the previous similar period, vodka production fell by 32.3% to 19.5 million liters, liqueurs – by 32.7%, to 2.3 million liters, cognac – by 13.2% to 11.9 million liters. At the same time, analysts noted an increase in the production of wine and beer – Kazakh brewers produced 663.6 million liters of foamy drink, and it is 10.9% more than the result of the previous period. And local winemakers improved their performance by 14.3%, having offered buyers 49.9 million liters of wine, including grape wine

(21.6 million liters) and sparkling wine (3.1 million liters). Domestic producers account for a lion's share of the vodka and strong alcoholic beverages market, providing 77.7% of demand, whereas the influence of Kazakh winemakers in the wine segment is less noticeable. They cover the needs of the market only by 68.1%, and almost a third of wine products are imported from other countries. However, we can observe almost the complete absence of foreign producers in the beer sector – the shelves of Kazakhstan supermarkets are 91.3% filled with domestic product.

Georgia

In June, Tbilisi will host the only international wine and spirits exhibition of the entire Caucasus region



photo: winexpo.ge

The only international exhibition of wines and spirits in Georgia and throughout the Caucasus region – WinExpo Georgia – will be held from June 5 to June 7. The event was organized by the exhibition center Expo Georgia Fair ground with the support of the Ministry of Agriculture of Georgia and the National Wine Agency of Georgia.

The full spectrum of the wine industry, products, and services will be represented at WinExpo Georgia. This exhibition is

a unique opportunity for wine producers and exporters, manufacturers of equipment, processing lines, viticulture equipment, glassware, and packaging to succeed in this market.

Georgia

Editor's Choice

Tasting at Wine Paris & Vinexpo



The slogan of the first Georgian whiskey: Jimsher – A new word in the world of whiskey industry. Once again, a vivid word from the Jimsher brand sounded and was supported by numerous positive reviews from the reputable professionals of the global market. Despite the fact that the Jimsher brand of whiskey, that was established in Georgia by winemaker and businessman Jimsher Chkhaidze, is already well known to

abroad public and has been awarded the highest awards in international competitions over its three years of existence, this drink is still a new word in the whiskey world. After all, Georgia is a generally recognized as 'The cradle of wine' and the production of whiskey using traditional Scottish technology, but aged in barrels of local wines and brandy, was almost a revolutionary step in its time. This was once again demonstrated by the presentation of Jimsher whiskey as a part of the Drinks+ Editor's Choice tasting that took place recently in Paris at the joint expo hub Wine Paris & Vinexpo.

The moderators of the Drinks+ international media group presented to buyers and distributors, sommeliers, and wine journalists, who came from all over the world, the samples of Georgian whiskey: Jimsher Tsinandali Cask, Jimsher Saperavi Cask, Jimsher Brandy Cask.

By the way, the Drinks+ media group, with over 25 years of experience, credibility and trust from many brands all around the world, in the condition of the global quarantine, offers its services for conducting distance tastings (without clients' participation) for importers and buyers in different parts of the world.



Ukrainian Craft Spirits Awards were given out in Kyiv

On 24th of February, the Ukrainian Craft Distillers Association conducted the taste-off – CRAFT UKRAINIAN WHISKEY – in Kyiv. 20 whiskey samples were competing for the awards in several categories: single malt (barley) cask-aged; malt cask-aged; corn bourbon type whiskey cask-aged; blend (blending of grain distillates) cask-aged; white whiskey (unaged whiskey).

Pursuant to terms of the contest, the samples could not contain additional flavourings and colouring compounds. 17 whiskey production professionals and 7 whiskey lovers judged at the contest. The judges' overall assessment was positive.

The winners in the following categories:

White Whiskey Category:

- 1st Place – Barley Whiskey, TM Bazylsprings
- 2nd Place – Barley Whiskey, TM No Name Whiskey
- 3rd Place – Corn Whiskey by Alexander Plahuta

Cask Aged Whiskey Category:

- 1st Place – Barley Whiskey cask-aged in Port (TM Massandra) 17 YO cask, TM Pidgorodnyansk
- 2nd Place – Barley Whiskey Marsala cask-aged, TM Bazylsprings
- 3rd Place – Barley Whiskey 51% AbV, TM Negotiant

Other Cask Aged Whiskey Category:

- 1st Place – Barley and Rye Blanded Whiskey, TM SHEVA'S DESTILLERIE
- 2nd Place – Corn and Rye Blanded Whiskey, TM Narovylo
- 3rd place – Rye with Rye malt Blanded Whiskey, TM Narovylo

Ukraine

WineHub: The ball was set rolling!!

After its vivid presentation, which was held on 02/02/20, the new winemaking company 46 Parallel Wine Group kept an unprecedented event in Kyiv on 20.02. It was the first Ukrainian WineHub forum, which, finally and against all the odds, showed distinct signs of life of the Ukrainian winemaking. The strategic goal of the organizers of the event and 46 Parallel Wine Group brand was to state Ukraine as an equal player in the world wine market.

46 Parallel has made a kind of information revolution on WineHub sites: the forum has demonstrated readiness to fill the empty information niches of the field. Already at the first forum, there were several successful professional panel discussions and speeches by Ukrainian and foreign speakers, who shared a vision of how the Ukrainian wine market should develop. Specifically, the speech of Aleksandr Smirnov, creative director and partner of

"TABASCO" agency, was dedicated to the way creative solutions help alcohol brands promote their products, whereas Anje Yereb, regional executive and creative director at "BBDO Ukraine&Central Asia", showed how proper design affects the consumers, as exemplifies by the wine brands from Slovenia.

The speech of Vladimir Bandura, CEO of "Innolytics Group", was dedicated to promising innovations in the wine industry, and the founder of neuromarketing agency "Neuro-Knowledge" Ekaterina Ilchenko revealed the secrets of neuromarketing and shared the tips with marketers on how to ingratiate themselves with millennials. The financial panel raised the issues of investing and credit financing in the field. The experience was shared by investment banker Sergey Budkin, head of the International Financial Corporation (IFC) in Ukraine Elena Voloshina, associate partner of "Capital



Times" Irina Starodubova, and strategic adviser to the Honorary President of KSE Vladimir Lavrenchuk. And the guest from Moldova, founder of Gustos. Life Vyacheslav Kunev, made everyone slightly jealous after a story about the state support of winemaking in his country, as well as the presence of numerous startups and smart projects in the wine field of Moldova.

In the third panel, which was dedicated to the geographical indications and certificates of origin PDO and PGI, the following speakers performed: CEO of "46 Parallel Wine Group" Anna Gorkun, CEO of "Comité Champagne" Perrin Vincent, and Oksana Tkachenko, Head of the Department of Merchandising and Expertise of Odessa National Academy of Food Technologies. The founder and the wine educator of "Master Class" school Natalia Blagopoluchnaya,

founder and trainer of the "School of sommeliers" Dmitry Sydorenko told about how to become a professional sommelier and how to improve one's skills to raise professionalism.

The founder of Ukrainian "Wine&Spirit School" Ekaterina Yushchenko and the co-founder of "Like a local's wine-bars" chain Yevgeniya Nikolaychuk also gave their speeches in this panel, and oenologist-consultant at "Giotto Consulting" Alessandro Bellotto (Italy) gave a professional outlook regarding the prospects of Ukraine in production of great wines.

At the end of the event, there was a tasting of new wines: in addition to the Grand Admiral and El Capitan lines, the presentation of which took place on February 2, a new Ukrainian brand Apostrophe by 46 Parallel Wine Group was presented.

“The only fault of wine is that there is always a lack of wine”

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Regions and terroirs

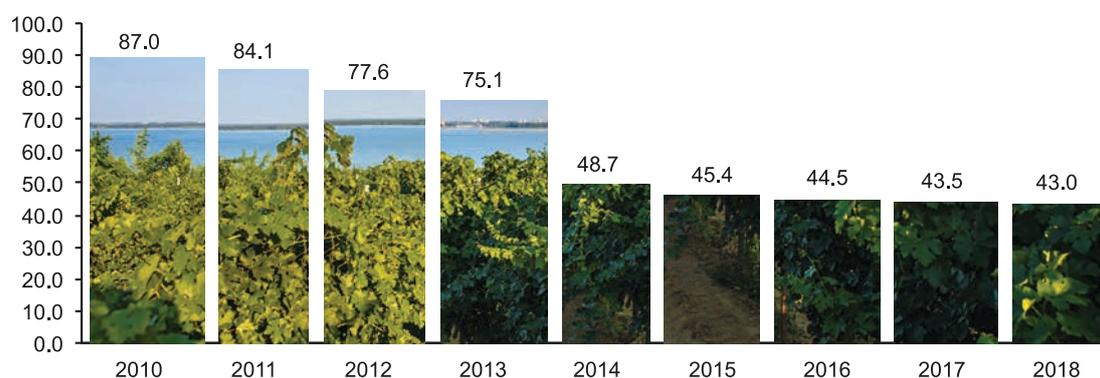
Of course, the most favorable place for winemaking, in terms of climate, is the south of Ukraine and Transcarpathia. However, they make attempts to grow a number of varieties in other regions of the country. Experts predict that due to warming, wine-making microzones may appear in Zaporizhzhia, Dnipropetrovsk and other regions. Among the currently existing wine areas, the following zones are distinguished as the zones of industrial viticulture: the southern part of Ukraine – Odessa, Kherson and Mykolaiv regions. The wine is also produced in the microzones in the west of the country. Bessarabia is the most promising in the south of the country. It was for a reason that the team of the EU project “Geographical Indications in Ukraine” started its work from this region, where a file for registering geographical names in both Ukraine and the EU has already been prepared. The documentation for the names in the western part of Ukraine is being developed: in an area between the towns of Beregovo and Mukachevo, as well as in one more area of Odessa region. As of today, the area of vineyards in Ukraine is 43.5 thousand hectares. **(Figure №1)**

In annexed Crimea, there were more than 60% of Ukrainian vineyards. Statistics says that the area of the Crimean vineyards in 2013 was 75 thousand hectares, but already in 2016 the area reduced to 45.1 thousand hectares.

Varieties and names

Ukraine understands that in order to enter the world market it needs a locomotive variety, an autochthon that will help the country to stand out among its more successful neighbors in Eastern Europe.

1 The dynamics of the area of vineyards of Ukraine, thousand hectares (from 2014 onwards, the Autonomous Republic of Crimea is not taken into account)



In the Odessa region, in addition to European varieties, there are several local ones. Perhaps the number one variety (and in fact, it is our unique variety) is Telti-Kuruk. In translation from Turkic it means “a fox tail” (a bunch looks like a fox’s tail). This unique variety is cultivated in the Shabo district of Odessa region. It is used for production of the promising white wines.

Odessa Black variety (the second name is Alibernet) is popular among the winemakers. It was bred in the 50s of the twentieth century by crossing Cabernet Sauvignon and Alicante Bouschet at the Institute of Viticulture and Winemaking named after V.E. Tairov. Frankly speaking, the variety is prospective, still much work has to be done. Also, it is worth to mention Sukholimansky White variety obtained in Ukraine by crossing Chardonnay and Plavay varieties.

The main varieties for sparkling wines are European, however, Ukrainian winemakers also often use the Georgian variety Rkatsiteli. The varietal composition of the vines cultivated in Transcarpathia is diverse and comprises about 150 names, around 30 of which are used in winemaking. The

worthy wines are made from the European varieties such as Pinot Noir, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Bastardo, Traminer Rose, Muller-Thurgau, Pinot Grigio, Pinot Blanc, Rhine Riesling. Château Chizay produces its wines from the Hungarian varieties – Furmint, Chersegi – and the Western European Muscat Ottonel. The iconic wine of this producer is “Troyanda Karpat”, made of Traminer Rose variety. We should also mention another major producer of the Transcarpathian region – “Kotnar”.

As of today, there are about 180 producers in Ukrainian winemaking. 61 of them are minor producers who have recently got a chance to legalize their business thanks to legislative amendments.

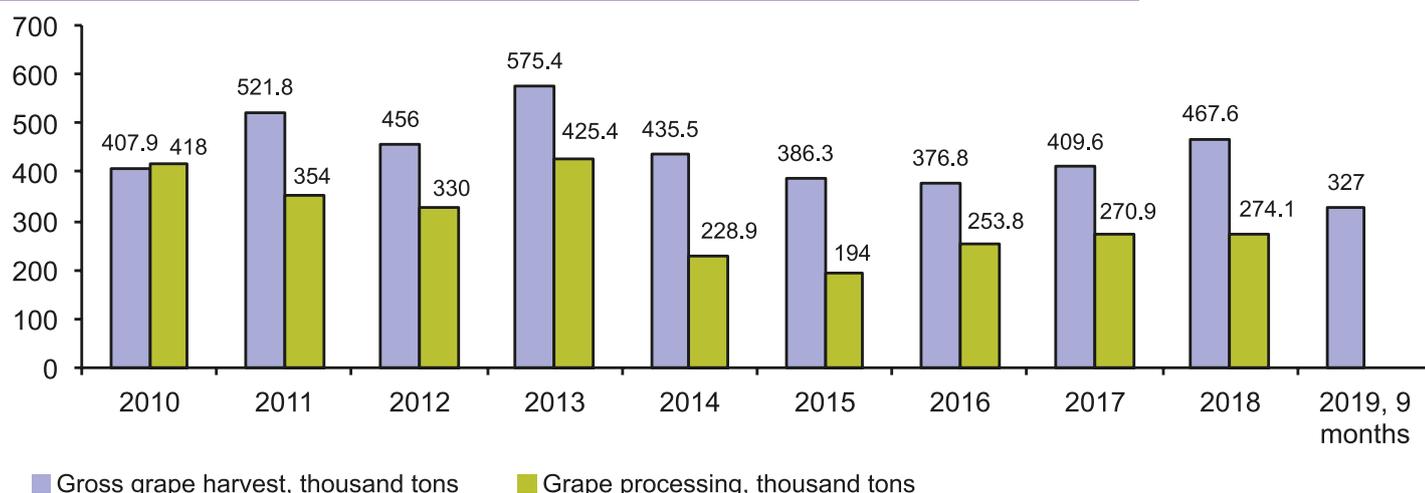
In short, the process is underway. At a recent forum of winemakers, the professional association “Ukrvynprom” presented a national brand “Wine of Ukraine”. And minor winemakers, or as they call them in Europe, the garage producers, are taking an increasingly active position. We hope that one day they will find their place in the market.

Experts predict that due to warming, wine-making microzones may appear in Zaporizhzhia, Dnipropetrovsk and other regions.



(Figure №2) Since 2015, the growth rate of gross harvest and grape processing has been steadily growing. Compared to 2015, in 2018 the increase in gross grape harvest was 21%, and in processing – 41%.

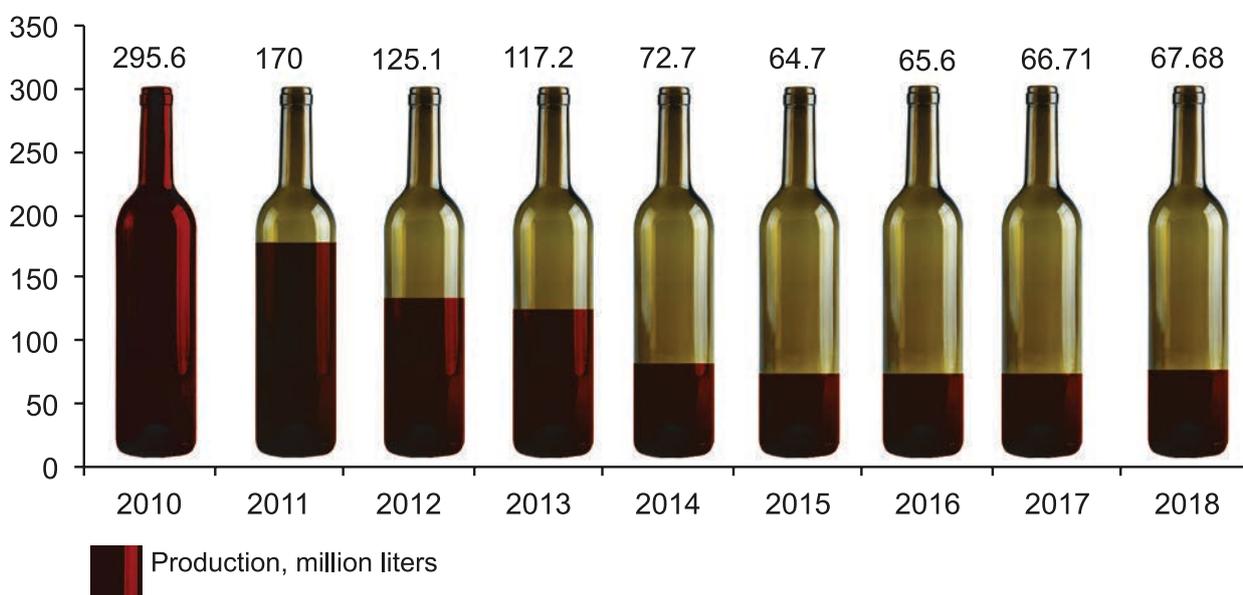
2 The dynamics of the main indicators of viticulture and winemaking (from 2014 onwards, the Autonomous Republic of Crimea is not taken into account)



Data Source: Ukrvynprom Corporation, State Statistics Service of Ukraine

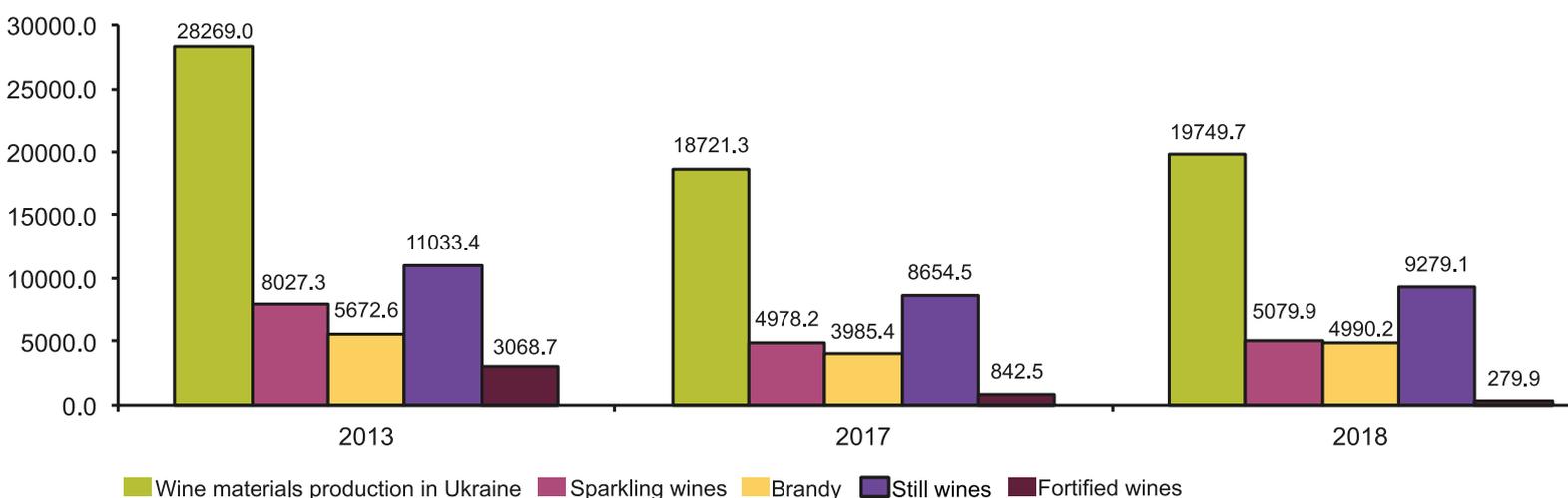
(Figure №3) We have seen stable production growth since 2015, after the annexation of Crimea. However, if we compare 2010 and 2018, the decrease is 77%.

3 The dynamics of wine production in Ukraine, million liters (from 2014 onwards, the Autonomous Republic of Crimea is not taken into account)

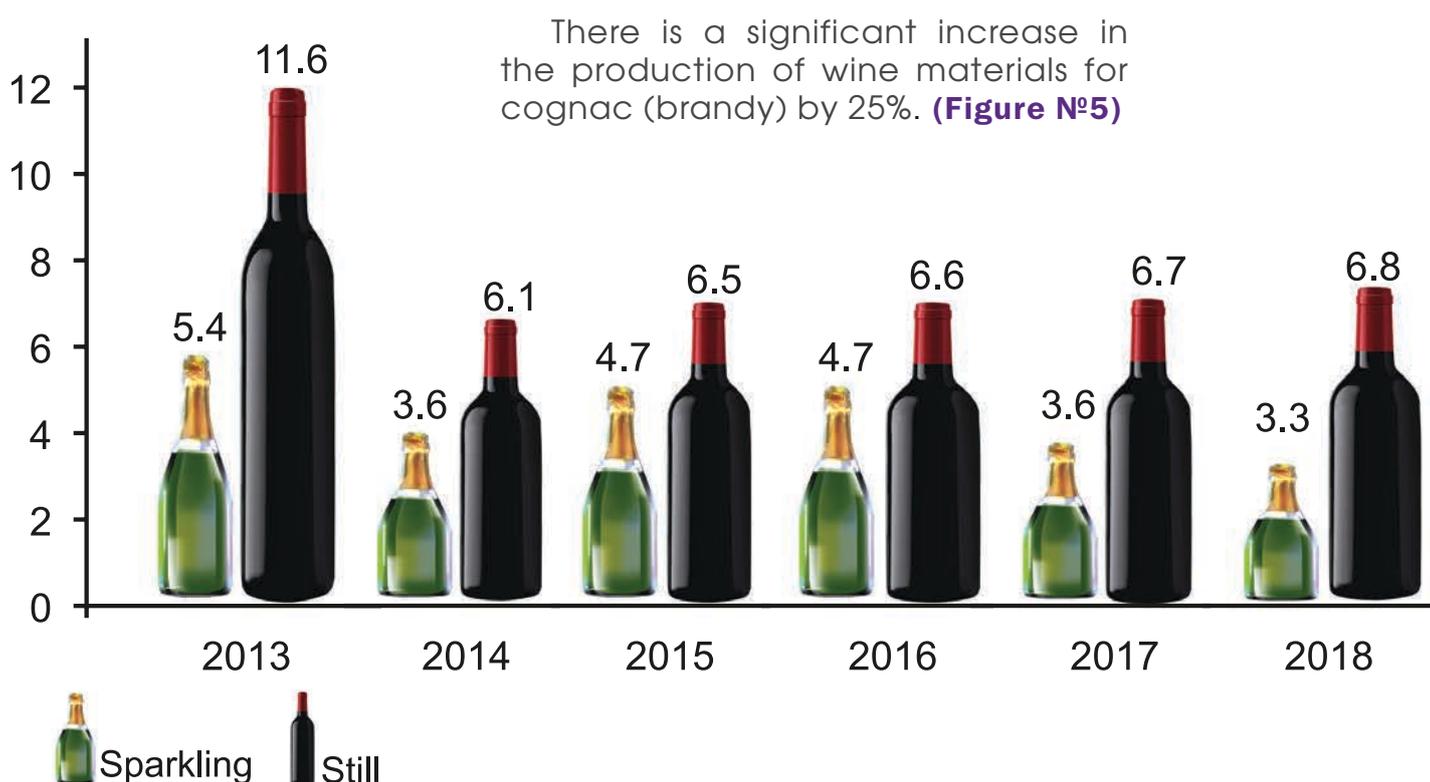


(Figure №4) In 2017-2018, wine materials production was growing steadily, on average by 5%.

4 Wine materials production in Ukraine, thousand decaliters

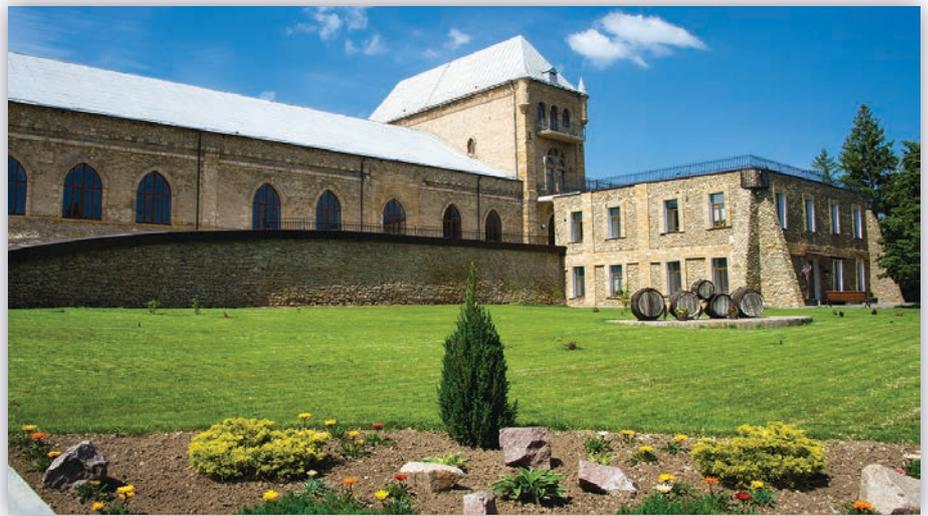


5 Dynamics of sparkling and still wine production in Ukraine in 2013-2018, million decaliters



In the bottom line

The Ukrainian wine market is promising both in terms of export and import. And the most far-sighted operators realize it and seem to take advantage of it. In the recent years, the export of Ukrainian wine to Europe has increased several times. Ukrainian wine is becoming much more popular in the EU. It already shows good financial dynamics in Germany. If to judge by the first steps, it is loyally accepted by the Asian markets. It also shows success in Great Britain which is considered to be an exhibition ramp for the world wine traders. If you look at the figures of the last 5 years, the wine market did not change significantly in terms of sales and imports. There was rapid growth until 2013-2014. Now the situation is stable. Time will show what the situation will be like in future. As well as in winemaking, Ukraine needs maturity.



The Ukrainian wine market is promising both in terms of export and import. And the most far-sighted operators realize it and seem to take advantage of it.

Christian Wolf:

‘MUNDUS VINI feels like a family’



Christian Wolf, Director Degustation at MUNDUS VINI GmbH, told the DoC: about his career, organizational features of contest-tastings, innovations and plans.

DoC: Christian, you have been working in the international wine business for more than 10 years and most of your professional career as a Director Degustation at MUNDUS VINI GmbH. Tell us a few words about yourself. What attracts you in the wine business? Why did you decide to connect your life with the wine?

Christian Wolf: I grew up in the second largest wine growing region in Germany, the Pfalz (Palatina). My grandfather owned 1 ha of vineyards, planted with Riesling, Silvaner, Scheurebe, Grauburgunder (Pinot Gris), Dornfelder as well as some Portugieser. He was a member of a small wine cooperative.



As you know, this is the fifth generation of family business. We felt from the start that it will fit 100 percent.

During my school time I was working a lot in the vineyard to help my grandparents. On the weekends, I helped them as well working in the wine shop of the cooperative. My grandfather also produced his “house wine”, about 200 liters per year, not very tasty, but it was his own! This was when I began to fall in love with wine. In a professional sense I really started to plan my career in the wine business after finishing school and doing my social service at the wine school Neustadt, which is also a research center for viticulture. The head of it is Prof. Ph.D. Ulrich Fischer, who is today my colleague in the board of MUNDUS VINI.

After finishing my study at Geisenheim University, I worked seven years in the wine trade, before I joined the team of MUNDUS VINI and Meininger Verlag. What wine makes so special and different from anything else I know, is three things: the people, the influence of the nature, the endless diversity. I love the people in the wine business, those are different to the people from any other business I know. Of course, everybody needs to earn money with his business, but I love the passion and the collegiality you feel every day in the wine business.

DoC: How did you become a part of Meininger Verlag team?

C.W.: This was quite funny. I worked for a major wine importer as the head product manager for the portfolio, which was mainly France with some famous wineries from Champagne, Burgundy, Alsace and some more. A member of the management of Meininger Verlag and one of my former lecturers at Geisenheim university phoned me in the office, asking me if I would be interested in a meeting with Christoph Meininger to talk about the position of Director Degustation at Meininger Verlag and MUNDUS VINI.

Before I decided to start at Meininger, I had some really good meetings and discussions with Christoph Meininger and his sister Andrea Meininger-Apfel. As you know, this is the fifth generation of family business. We felt from the start that it will fit 100 percent.

And Neustadt, where the publication house is located, is my hometown, so I was really coming back to my origins.



Our team is not as big as someone might think, but as we are working over the whole year with this team, it makes many things very effective and detailed at one time.

DoC: What were the first changes at MUNDUS VINI processes with your arrival at the company? Perhaps you developed a plan to improve the system of the competition, supplemented the team, attracted new participants, new wine regions?

C.W.: First of all, I have to say that my predecessors in this position really did a great job. MUNDUS VINI is a fantastic, a unique competition. All the team and the judges feel like a family. Of course, we did some major changes also at the beginning, like implementing a new marketing strategy, building new and more advantages to the participants and also focusing not only on the main wine growing regions, but taking care also about growing regions like Armenia or at the moment Czech Republic.

DoC: Tell us more about your work as a Director Degustation at MUNDUS VINI GmbH. I would like to know more about the team,

because organizing, conducting and summing up the results of the competition as we see year after year is a huge job.

C.W.: To be honest, sometimes I am really happy that nobody really knows how much effort we put in this competition. Some may say this is too much looking for the details, but exactly this is what I want to push and which differs us from all the others. Our team is not as big as someone might think, but as we are working over the whole year with this team, it makes many things very effective and detailed at one time. The organization for the competition start two years before, the main part about half a year before we start tasting. Inviting the perfect judges for the competition, checking the wine samples, building the flights and the right teams for the specific wines and origins is a part we are investing a lot of time. The communication after the competition is getting more and more important, as we see a lot of wine



As a competition taking place on European mainland, I feel very happy that we are attracting more and more wines also from “New World” countries like Australia, Chile, New Zealand. But since five years we really see significant numbers of wines from Eastern Europe.

competitions out there and we improved and expanded our marketing activities and the support to the participants very much over the last five years. The most important maybe is to have a very good team. This takes of course some time, as all the work for MUNDUS VINI has to be spread over several shoulders. We have people in the team taking care about the judges, other about the delivered wine samples, other about the development of our tasting system and marketing. More and more important is the contact to the wine regions and the winegrowers. If we do not listen to them, we will not be able to help them in the future.

DoC: From your point of view, what is the most difficult part in the MUNDUS VINI organization?

C.W.: Hard to say. As I mentioned before, we spend a lot of time in finding and inviting the perfect judges. Short time before MUNDUS VINI it is the most difficult to build the tasting panels and the flights for the competition. And you always have to take care to see “the whole thing”, if you get lost in too many details, it will not work.

DoC: What is the dynamics of the growth in participants’ number over the past few years?

C.W.: At the first MUNDUS VINI Tasting about 20 years ago we tasted around 3,000 wines. With the start of the Spring Tasting in 2014, which is in perfect time short before ProWein, we increased to a total number of wines of 11,000 wines a year. MUNDUS VINI has established itself as one of the major international wine competitions.

DoC: What new wine-growing regions, from which countries have been actively participating in the competition in recent years?

C.W.: Since two years we see increasing numbers of wine samples from China, but also from the Scandinavian countries like Denmark or Sweden. In times of climate change those areas are getting more and more suitable for wine growing. As a competition taking place on European mainland, I feel very happy that we are attracting more and more wines also from “New World” countries like Australia, Chile, New Zealand. But since five years we really see significant numbers of wines from Eastern Europe. In quantity but much more in quality. Wines from Armenia, Czech Republic and some others are coming more and more into the competition and the quality is very good. We will hear a lot more from this wines in the next years.

DoC: As for the jury members. Professionals from all over the world several times a year come to take part in the international competition and do tremendous work in a blind tasting of all around the world wines' (many of them more than for 20 times already). What can you say about judges? Did you update the list? Perhaps, the jury members have been supplemented in recent years.

C.W.: As mentioned before, MUNDUS VINI feels like a family. Over the 20 years we built up a unique team of judges from more than 50 countries at the moment. They all have different background, come from different cultures, are different age and so much more things. But when we meet in Neustadt/Germany, we are one family. Just to give you an example: we all know about the situation in Israel and Lebanon. Since so many years we have some in the jury from both countries. I do not want to

to change the group year by year. For the Spring Tasting in February 2020 we accepted 270 judges, 40 of them are with us for the first time. To say it in one sentence: over the last five years MUNDUS VINI is getting more female and younger. You know, still most of the people in the wine business are men, but this Spring Tasting 40% of the group is female.

DoC: Last year, MUNDUS VINI expanded the geography of the competition. German winemakers presented their wines in the Scandinavian market at the MUNDUS VINI NORDIC competition. Why Northern Europe? Are there any plans for further expansion on other continents?

C.W.: The MUNDUS VINI NORDIC competition is organised in cooperation with the German Wine Institute – Wines of Germany. Most of the German wine export goes to the US, Netherlands and

Just to give you an example: we all know about the situation in Israel and Lebanon. Since so many years we have some in the jury from both countries. I do not want to say that we are the “United Nations of Wine”, that doesn't really fit. But we are a place where politics doesn't mean anything, just the people that we are.

say that we are the “United Nations of Wine”, that doesn't really fit. But we are a place where politics doesn't mean anything, just the people that we are. In my five years there were a lot of changes in the group. Some, as you mentioned in your questions, were part of MUNDUS VINI since the beginning and we are so thankful that they believed in our idea at a very early stage. But of course, we have

Great Britain. But if you sum up the export volume to Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden, the Nordic countries are number 2 after US. The aim of the competition is to have more attention to German wine in the Nordic countries. Special about the competition is, that we only invited judges from those four countries. MUNDUS VINI always wants to give an international judgment on the wines, which is perfect.

But with this competition, which only aims to a specific region, we wanted to give the “Nordic” taste into. And I worked very well. For the year 2020 we decided not to do it in the “Nordic” countries, because we believe that a biennial rhythm makes more sense. This year we are going to organise MUNDUS VINI EAST, which focuses on the Eastern European markets, supplemented by countries like Belarus, Russia and some others. Some people in those countries know very well about German wine, but we

see a lot of more potential for German wine. Those countries are growing and it is not very far to go there. The current economic situation with the US, a decreasing Chinese market, a lot of regulations and tariffs is not very satisfying for the German wine growers. With MUNDUS VINI EAST we believe to “open the eyes” of the German wine growers for high interesting consumers and the chance to have German wine more and more well placed in those countries.



“ Some people in those countries know very well about German wine, but we see a lot of more potential for German wine. Those countries are growing and it is not very far to go there. ”

There we have the so-called Waldhuetten (forest cottages), which are offering wine, small snacks and typical Palatinate food.

DoC: What would be your advice to those who plan to taste wine blindly, how to develop the necessary skills, is it worth relying on knowledge and experience, trust only sensations, or use all this together?

C.W.: First of all, it is very important to know the different aromas. If you have never smelt and ate a banana, how can you find it in your description of a wine??? The easiest way is to find some friends, buy some bottles of wine and taste them. In a second step, buy a "neutral" wine, get some apple in one glass, some banana in the other, some cherries and so on. This is how we train sensory skill on our consumer wine fairs. If you are interested in getting more knowledge, I know so many wine merchants all over the world offering wine tastings, wine dinner and some also wine courses. Don't be shy, if you don't taste, you will never know.

DoC: When you are not in a process of organizing a tasting, what do you like to do most – is there a hobby?

C.W.: We are in the lucky situation to have the vineyards and the forest (Pfaelzer Wald) in front of the door. I love hiking with my family through the vineyards and especially on the Pfalz forest. There we have the so-called

Waldhuetten (forest cottages), which are offering wine, small snacks and typical Palatinate food. You always meet friends or you find some new. Before I started at Meininger Verlag, I loved skiing, but as I have full program with the Spring Tasting in February and ProWein in March, it is impossible now.

DoC: What kind of wine do you drink with your family? Favorite wine region (Germany, World).

C.W.: OK, I am German, I grew up in the Pfalz region, which is famous for its great Riesling wines from some of the best single vineyards in the world. But during my work at a fine wine merchant, which focuses on France and German sweet wines, I really fell in love with German Riesling sweet wines. If you ever tasted a matured Mosel Spätlese or Kabinett, you will understand.

Some of my favorite red wines come from Burgundy, I love the fineness of Pinot Noir. But for my private consumption, the most important thing is the story of the wine. I want to know and to understand the soil, the vineyard, the vintage, the idea of the wine maker, the history, let us call it the "terroir", which is much more than only the geography. If you want, call me an "intellectual wine drinker".

Steven Spurrier:

“The real Judgement of Paris movie was never made”



DoC was honored to interview the organizer and judge of the legendary Judgement of Paris – Steven Spurrier. The legend who provoke lots of discussions, rumored and there are movies about him, gave an exclusive interview, telling how it was not like in the movies. Well, and, of course, what other shocks to expect from him in the wine world nearest future. In honor to the unique person, we decided to upgrade the interview genre – and here is the premiere: there is only one speaker 😊, and he answered not only the editor-in-chief of DoC questions, but also Ukrainian wine market trendsetters’ questions.

DoC: How did it happen that when you were born in Great Britain, you moved to France at that time when these countries had a difficult relationship. You started selling French wines and teaching in a wine school in English? 😊 Are you a rebel by nature? You're a maverick, aren't you?

Steven Spurrier: I wasn't aware that France and GB had a bad relationship, but there has always been a love/hate relationship between the two countries. I moved to Provence the day of my marriage in January 1968 because I had bought a property in the Var which had a large ruin on it and had had plans drawn up to turn this into a fine country residence. This didn't work out and that was the reason for moving to Paris in September 1970. As for being a maverick, I think I am more of a dreamer, but being a younger son – in the UK the elder son inherits the estate but has to live there! – and with some family money I knew from my 'teens I could do what I wanted in life and, with all the ups and downs, this has been the case.

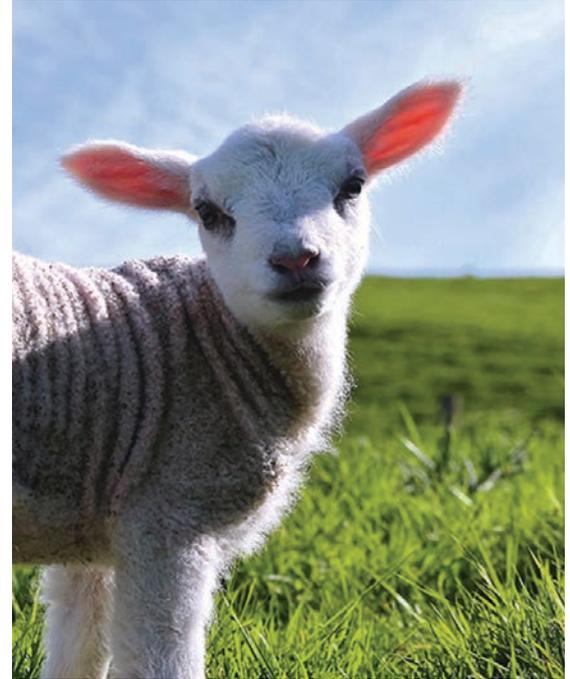
DoC: At which stage of the preparation for the "Judgment of Paris" you had an idea of tasting not just American wines for US Independence Day, but comparatively blind with the best French wines, as a result – nine of the best tasters in France put California wines higher points comparing with the great French Châteaux, changing the global wine forever? What was your main goal? Were you annoyed with the French confidence in their unwavering primacy?



I moved to Provence the day of my marriage in January 1968 because I had bought a property in the Var which had a large ruin on it and had had plans drawn up to turn this into a fine country residence.

S.S.: American Independence Day is July 4th, the Paris Tasting was held on May 24th. Having opened the Académie du Vin in early 1973, we were bang in the middle of Paris and were the only place with a tasting room and the only people who spoke English, so of course visiting wine makers and wine critics from the US came to see us. The quality of the wines they brought impressed my American partner in the Académie du Vin and me so much that we decided to hold a tasting with the aim of getting this quality recognized outside California. It was not at all to beat the French, and from the 10 wines in each category we would have been happy with just two in the top five, as that would have brought the recognition we thought the wines deserved. Nobody was more surprised than me when the results were read out.

Having opened the Académie du Vin in early 1973, we were bang in the middle of Paris and were the only place with a tasting room and the only people who spoke English, so of course visiting wine makers and wine critics from the US came to see us.



DoC: Why did you decide to put in the ring the American wines against the only one country – the long-term leader – France? Not Italy – where you spent your childhood, not Australia or South Africa?

S.S.: I didn't spend any part of my childhood in Italy and in 1976 the wines from Australia and South Africa (still closed because of Apartheid) were not known in Europe. My shop was in Paris and the wine we chose from California were Chardonnays and Cabernet Sauvignons, so it was only logical that we chose the best of Burgundy and the best of Bordeaux to be tasted blind against them.

Terroirs are planted by humans who have to discover them in the first place.

Pavel Mnuhin, Brand ambassador Wine Bureau. Do you still believe that California wines are bigger than Bordeaux and Burgundy?

S.S.: Of course the wines from California are bigger than those from Bordeaux and Burgundy, as the climate is much warmer. I think you mean "better" and while there are some very, very good wines from California, I am sure that today and for twenty or so years the wines from Burgundy and Bordeaux are finer. "Better" is in the eye of the beholder.

DoC: You should forgive us, but it's interesting: how could it happen that such an experienced taster just not only set high marks for California wines, but put them because, apparently, they thought that they were French? You were also in the tasting team, but at that time you



knew what the wines of Napa Valley are? But how to explain the puncture of the rest of the team – a real pro is able to recognize “terroir” and even vintage in a blind tasting – not that made a mistake in countries?

S.S.: I do not agree. Both my partner Patricia Gallagher and I tasted the wines, but our notes were not counted in the ranking. Anyway, although we knew which the wines were, we did not know in which order they were served. At the tasting the wines were served one by one and the glass removed, so there was no chance for the tasters to compare the 10 wines side by side, as would be the case today. Only when a white or a red wine was particularly high in alcohol or low in acidity did the tasters recognize it as Californian. You have to remember that in 1976, hardly any of the judges had tasted a wine from California before and this meant that if they gave the wine a high mark, they recognized its inherent quality.

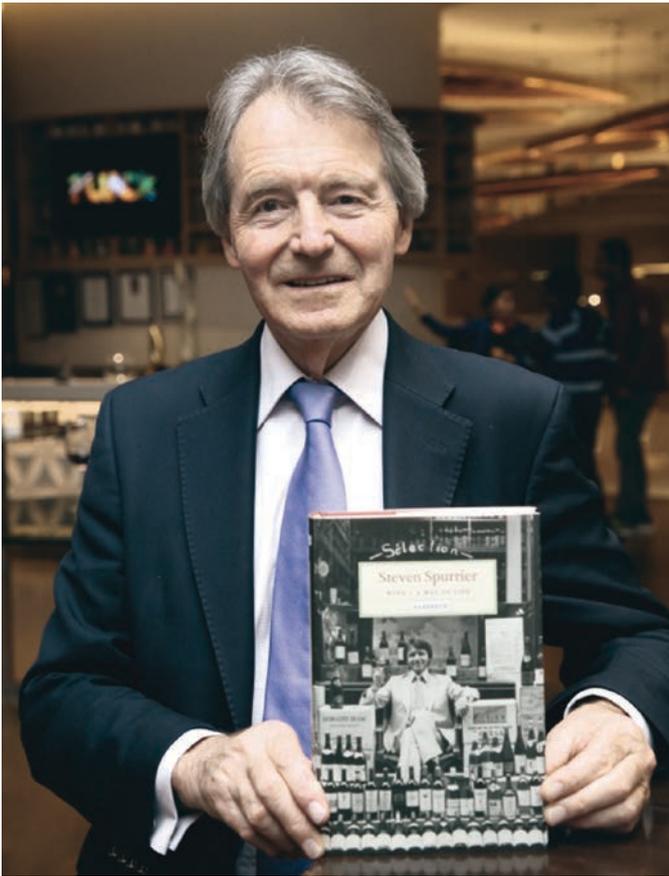
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Alexandra Voropai, Brand Manager of the wine direction of the DDS+ company: It is probably difficult to surprise you as such an experienced person in the wine world... Was the winning of California wines at the Paris Tasting in 1976 a shock for you personally, or you were you sure of the result?

S.S.: As noted earlier, I did not expect a wine from California to “win” and, although in the long term it was beneficial from France, this is not the result I would have wanted in the city where I lived and worked. The result was a shock to me.

Alexandra Voropai: What other interesting paradoxes have you experienced in the wine world?

S.S.: Too many. The wine world is like a kaleidoscope: each time you look through it, the image is utterly different and can never be reproduced.



DoC: For what purpose did you organized the “Paris Tasting” again in 2006: there is a version – to restore relations with French winemakers 😊. Did you realize that California wines could get the same results again? Or you wanted to see the trend? What was the reaction of your French partners in 2006 after another fiasco?

S.S.: After the 1976 tasting, the Bordelais maintained that the result was false as their wines had been tasted too young. I held the tasting again in May 1986 in New York, just he red wines and instead of two California Cabernets coming in the top five, there were three. This caused me so many problems from Bordeaux that I refused to do a 20 year tasting and it was only at the request or

Lord Rothschild from England and Robert Mondavi from Napa that I agree to hold the tasting in 2006. This proved the simple point that in the early 1970s the wines of Bordeaux were resting on their laurels and those from California were doing their damndest to make the best possible wine. By the early 2000s this situation had been reversed, as a non-blind tasting of the wines from the 2000 vintage so clearly showed.

Alexandra Voropai: When you tasted the same wines again in 2006, what surprised you in California and French wines? Samples taken for tasting were in your private collection or did you have to buy them from other collectors?

S.S.: All the California wines came from the producers themselves and all the Bordeaux were bought from the top merchants in London. For comparison, see above.

DoC: Did you really call ‘Bottle shock’ ‘deeply insulting’ because of inaccuracies. What was wrong?

S.S.: The theme of this movie was that my shop in Paris was doing badly commercially, the top estates wouldn’t supply me with wine, and so I had to hold this tasting to gain publicity. The reality was completely opposite. This is why I have been quoted as describing the movie as “More Bullshit than Bottle Shock.”

DoC: Can you say that your book ‘Wine – A Way Of Life’ – the story of your rich wine life – was an answer to the film in order to tell the truth about your personality?

S.S.: Not at all, it was simply an urge to tell my story in my own words.

DoC: In the interview for our magazine, Fiona Morrison called your book ‘the one of the best books in the modern wine world.’ Who from your point view is your reader: a professional or a wine lover?

S.S.: I would hope it to be both, but it doesn’t need to be either. It is the story of someone’s life told in the most straightforward manner. If Fiona called the book important, this is probably because my wine life covers the most interesting five decades that the wine world has ever experienced.

DoC: Your book has a lot of stories. Which one has become the most over-shared for you, on which for a long time you have been thinking – to tell or not?

S.S.: Certainly the Judgement of Paris is the most told story and the only one to merit a whole chapter to itself.

Alexandra Voropai: You probably has a wine collection? How many bottles do you have? What is the oldest wine in your collection? Are there mostly from France?

S.S.: Around 3000 bottles, 65% French, 15% Italian and a bit of Spanish, 15% New World and 5% Port. The oldest bottle is Taylor 1977 Port.

’ If Fiona called the book important, this is probably because my winelife covers the most interesting fivedecades that the wine world hasever experienced. ‘

Inna Petrukh, Chef Sommelier of delicacy market Le Silpo, wine trainer: What was the most memorable wine for you? What wine would you like to taste in 5-10 years?

S.S.: Impossible to answer the first question. For the second, I would like to learn more about Sangiovese, particularly Chianti Classico.

Inna Petrukh: Wines of the nearest future – is it a trend of variety, region or style?

S.S.: A good wine has to have a sense of place, so it is region over verity.

Inna Petrukh: Due to the climate changes and taste preferences, which of the once outsider wines can take a leading position?

S.S.: Virginia in the US, British Columbia in Canada, and any cool climate, high altitude vineyards.



The founding of the Académie du Vin was in response to a demand from my Anglo-Saxon clientele to learn more about wine. The way to satisfy this demand was to create a wine school, so it wasn't difficult at all.

Oleg Kravchenko, Chief Sommelier and Co-founder of Win Bar, Kyiv: Whether it will continue the confrontation between the New World and the Old World continue in the future?

S.S.: No, there is no reason for it to continue this way, but it probably always will. The most important thing the Paris Tasting gave to the world of wine was to create a Template where unknown wines of quality could be tasted blind against known wines of quality and if tasters themselves were or quality, they judgement would be respected.

Oleg Kravchenko: In which country of the New World, in your opinion, the terroir is most expressed?

S.S.: Probably Chile, for the huge difference between the vineyards from north (very hot) to the south (quite cold.).

Oleg Kravchenko: Over the next 10 years, which new European wine-mak-

ing countries will come out on top and with which varieties?

S.S.: Italy and Spain, but particularly Italy.

DoC: Which of wine regions are the most undervalued in the world?

S.S.: South Africa for value as the Rand is very weak, Portugal for quality.

DoC: If there could be an opportunity to erase borders, in what place on the earth does an ideal vineyard exist, an ideal terroir, where can you create the perfect wine?

S.S.: As Remington Norman said on his introductory presentation to the Académie Internationale du Vin, "perhaps the greatest terroir in the world has not yet been discovered." This was 20 years ago. Terroirs are planted by humans who have to discover them in the first place.

Ivan Bachurin, President of Ukrainian Sommelier Association: Have you ever tasted Ukrainian wines and what are their prospects?

S.S.: Sadly not and I would like to.

DoC: According to your observations, is there an obvious difference between European, Asian and American sommeliers? What about English and French?

S.S.: This is too complicated to address. Of course there are differences because people are different from each other.

DoC: You founded L'Académie du Vin, the first French private wine school. Probably it was not easy – do you remember how it was? What are the differences between your school and others?

S.S.: The founding of the Académie du Vin was in response to a demand from my Anglo-Saxon clientele to learn more about wine. The way to satisfy this demand was to create a wine school, so it wasn't difficult at all.

DoC: What was your work on the Christie's Wine Course? Does this course exist today?

S.S.: I created the Christie's Wine Course, based very much on the courses we gave in Paris, at the request of Michael Broadbent in 1982. Michael and I taught the classes, as well as many others, until 2012. Christie's closed the school in 2015.

DoC: And your projects in India – what did you do there and how are things going with this business now?

S.S.: I created a mail order company called The Wine Society of India and it lasted for about 7 years, getting up to 12000 members, but due to the difficulties of doing business in India, it never made a profit. The company was closed down about 5 years ago.

DoC: You led the wine department at Harrods. What are the most outstanding moments that you remember, what was the most difficult, and why did you say goodbye to this department store?

S.S.: When I arrived in July 1991 the department was badly run with a dull selection of wines. When I was let go in January 1992 it was much better run with a very good selection of wines, but Harrods' management and myself did not see eye to eye.

DoC: Could you please remember how you started working with Decanter, who involved you and what attracted you in such work?

S.S.: I had already written some well-regarded books on wine in the 1980s, so when I returned to London from Paris in 1991, it was logical that Decanter would want to see me.

DoC: Do you agree with the opinion that today people read less? What do you think about journalists, Instagram bloggers impact on the consumer of the opinions?

Anyone who gives out information on wine is useful, provided this information is factually true, but there are certainly too many opinions out there. My advice to anyone asking me how they should buy wine is to “find a wine merchant you can trust.”

S.S.: People read less because they think they have less time, but actually their time is taken up on iPhones and so on. Anyone who gives out information on wine is useful, provided this information is factually true, but there are certainly too many opinions out there. My advice to anyone asking me how they should buy wine is to “find a wine merchant you can trust.” It is the same with information, better to stick with a reduced number of sources.

DoC: Nowadays, in the wine world, the opinion of wine critics has a great importance, they affect the sale and consumption of wine. Do you think that their assessments are objective, taking into account their possible financial interest?

S.S.: If they have a possible financial interest, it is unlikely their opinions will be objective.

DoC: Please, tell us about your “Three Ps rule”.

S.S.: Very simple: P1 is the place where the vineyards are, generally a

good place to be; P2 is the person who owns the vineyard or makes the wine, generally a good person and if he/she is a bad person they will make bad wine. $P1+P2=P3$ which is the product, also generally good to drink.

DoC: Is your relatively new own business, **Bride Valley Vineyard**, the next revolutionary step on the winning road? To make sparkling wine you have bought seedlings in a Burgundy and planted grapes in England, on the site of the former sheep pastures that belonged to your wife Bella. We should expect soon another blind Parisian tasting of sparkling England vs France? ☺

S.S.: There have already been many tastings of English Sparkling Wine vs Champagne. On the same price level, the English wines do quite well, but at a higher price level the Champagnes do better.

DoC: Eric de Rothschild commented about your new business: ‘Welcome to the Club’. What did he mean?

S.S.: That owning a vineyard is a worldwide club, but behind this remark was the knowledge that it is not an easy project.

DoC: In your book, you talk about this project in a chapter called ‘Poacher turned Gamekeeper’. Decipher the meaning, please.

S.S.: The poacher steals the game that the gamekeeper is trying to bring up for the shooting season. It is a simple expression of joining the opposite side to that you have been on before.

DoC: What happened with your wife's farm, how easily she agreed to give pasture land to vineyards in a risky climate zone?

S.S.: Only 28 acres of the 200 acre farm are under vines, but the vineyards needs 50 acres overall for access. The rest still have sheep on them, but farmed by someone else.

DoC: Some wineries specifically get sheep to destroy the seedlings in the vineyards – do you use the symbiosis of plants and animals?

S.S.: The sheep eat down the grass and weeds between the vines, that's all.

DoC: You call the dog Maud a member of the wine team. What responsibilities does it have?

S.S.: Dogs love running up and down in between the vines and every vineyard needs at least one dog.

DoC: Could you please tell us what is your attitude to biodynamic and organic wines? Is this a marketing or a necessity, a new level of evolution of the wine world?

S.S.: I admire vineyards that are organic and especially those that are biodynamic, as they let the vine fend for itself.

DoC: Your vines gave the first harvest in 2011, today your three wines are already on sale in different countries – from Northern Europe to Japan and Taiwan. Could you tell what is a strategy for sailing?

S.S.: I don't really have a strategy, but imagine that a balance of 70/30 UK/Export would be good, and in the UK 70% into the Trade, 30% more local sales with a higher margin. We have opened a Tasting Room and a Wine & Art Room in the stable block behind our house, which is getting us some regular B2C clients.

DoC: What channels do you use to promote them through – exhibitions, contests, online platforms? In general, do your wines need additional advertising or your name is a guarantee of attention to them?

S.S.: I don't advertise and have a minimal budget for competitions, my intention being to build the brand on the quality and of course this benefits from the recognition of my name.

DoC: During your career, you have experienced several financial ups and downs. What are the most important rules for you in your work?

S.S.: Don't give up.

DoC: How do you think Brexit affects the development of the wine business?

S.S.: I don't see how it can, except via the exchange rate.

DoC: What other coups could the wine world wait from you?

S.S.: My new publishing venture, the Académie du Vin Library is very exciting indeed and will have a great impact on the world of wine books.



DoC: blitz

DoC: You sold wine, promoted wine, and produced wine. Which of these roles are the easiest for you?

S.S.: In all of these roles I was communicating about wine and that is what I am good at.

DoC: Paris tasting – looking back, – what was the effect more: more fame or more problems?

S.S.: More and lasting fame.

DoC: What is the biggest achievement in your life?

S.S.: Creating L'Académie du Vin de Paris. Everything flowed from that.
www.academievin.fr

“ We have opened a Tasting Room and a Wine & Art Room in the stable block behind our house, which is getting us some regular B2C clients. ”

DoC: The biggest failure?

S.S.: Trusting too many people.

DoC: What else will you like to do if you would live in a world where there is no wine?

S.S.: This is not conceivable.

DoC: Favorite wine that you could drink on weekdays and the most expensive – which you possibly drink for special occasions. If there is a favorite food pairing? (although, as we know, you think that wine is not for food, but for mood).

S.S.: I can't answer this question as since I drink for mood not for food and my mood changes often, so does the wine, which always suits my mood at the time.

DoC: What is your favorite movie?

S.S.: The real Judgement of Paris movie that was never made due to obstruction from Warren Winiarski of Stag's Leap Wine Cellars, who proclaimed that “I don't need this movie for my legacy.” It wasn't just his legacy, it was California's and the world's.

Legend of Saracena

or No so dolce vita of passito

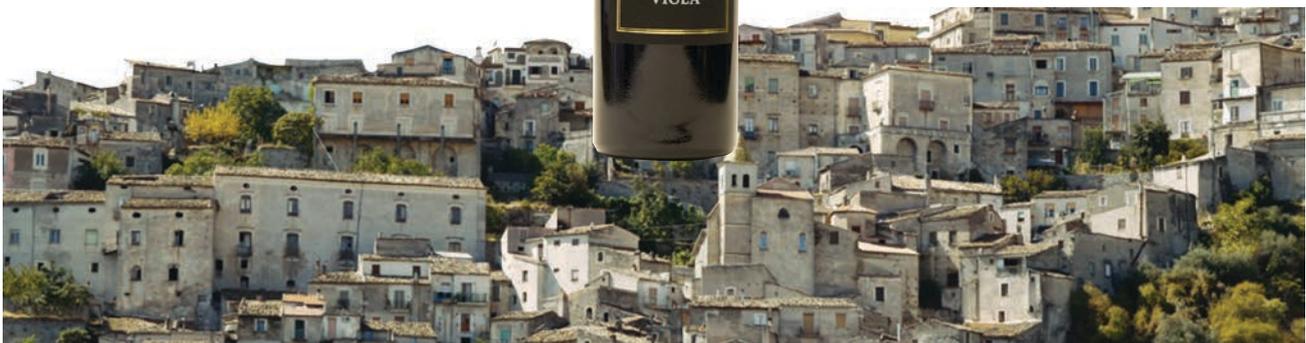
Our correspondents came to the very edge – albeit not of the Earth, but of Italy, in order to get acquainted with the world’s unique dessert wine production – Moscato Passito di Saracena. Saracena is located at the foot of the Pollino massif, dividing Calabria and Puglia. This is a cosy place without tourists, where your only desire is to “lay low” (or rather, ascend to one of the mountain peaks) and think about the meaning of life... And nothing helps philosophize better than a glass of Moscato Passito di Saracena.



Very few wine critics can get to Saracena. To see the place where the world’s unique wine, Moscato Passito di Saracena, is produced, the D+ team has come a long way along the deserted coast of Calabria. It took several hours of a rather high-speed drive from Taranto by car to get to a small medieval town of Saracena and Cantine Viola winery, that clung like a swallow’s nest on the rocks above a deep gorge. However, we did not regret a single minute spent on the road:



we were lucky to get acquainted with people who rehabbed an old production. And, of course, to taste this world’s unique sweet wine, created with the help unusually sophisticated technology and possessing a perfect balance and luxurious, truly southern bouquet. No wonder it has been supplied to the Pope’s court for centuries. However, Moscato Passito di Saracena nowadays has its own “Papa” – and he personally met us at the door of his house.



The head of the family of winemakers Luigi Viola, surrounded by the whole family, was patiently waiting for us, who were wandering for several hours by car along the tangled roads and paths of Calabria.

Many years ago, a school teacher, Luigi Viola, after retiring, decided to devote his life to the wine, which Saracena has been famous for centuries. «...There is a thriving city of Saracena, known from

past centuries for its Moscato wine. It is obtained from grapes that the Saracena people have once brought from Masqat,» ethnographer Norman Douglas wrote in 1915 in his book "Old Calabria".

The salvation of Moscato di Saracena dessert wine, the name of which has almost been erased from the Italian winemaking card since the end of the 20th century, became the purpose of life for the Viola family. Luigi could not allow the great name of nectar, which was served at papal meals in the 16th century, to be so ingloriously forgotten. And besides, the vineyards and production used to give work to generations of local residents, and when winemaking was on the decline here, the mountain town became empty too – young people started to leave



their native lands in search of work. And so, since 1999, Luigi has been reviving local Moscato that was close to disappearing. In this mission, his whole family joined him: the wife Marguerite and three sons – Roberto, Alessandro, and Claudio. The production process of the local Moscato Passito di Saracena wine has been handed down from generation to generation – and this is really fantastic!



Cantine Viola Moscato Passito di Saracena wine is made from 4 varieties of grapes harvested by hand. Wine production consists of 2 parts. From the selected grapes, 50% of Guarnaccia Bianca and 50% Malvasia, harvested in early October, they manually squeeze the grape must, which is then boiled away to 1/3 part and cooled down. The second part of the yield from the autochthonous varieties of Moscato di Saracena and a small percentage of Addruocca (Addruocca is a dialect word which stands for a very fragrant grape variety) are harvested in September, but then they are slightly dried, and the best berries are manually selected. Then they

remove seeds from almost raisined grapes and squeeze them. Both parts of the must are mixed and stored in stainless tanks during 7 months for slow fermentation using local yeast, then bottled and left for another 6 months in bottles according to winemakers' rules of the 16th century. Wine has excellent potential – from 10 to 20 years.

This is how Moscato Passito di Saracena was produced many centuries ago, but today this process of producing sweet wine is at variance with the regulations prescribed by current Italian legislation. Despite the fact that Moscato happened to be outlawed, Saracena winemakers place traditions above anything else, and,





relying on the “indulgence” of the Pope, continue to adhere to their own ancient rules. Thanks to their stubbornness, the present world can enjoy this amazing wine.

Moscato Passito di Saracena is characterized by untypical to passito saturated orange colour, aromas of dried figs, honey, candied citrus fruits, apricot, and has good acidity. The best way to try this wine is a combination with almond cookies, marzipans, pastry made from shortcrust, pastry stuffed with orange jam, dried fruits, chocolate or pecorino cheese. The vineyards of Cantine Viola are located in Saracena, in the Rinni region, at an altitude of 350 m above sea level. They are cultivated in accordance with the Bioagricert organic certification.

Vines for the famous Moscato di Saracena occupy 2 hectares. The annual production of this wine is 10 thousand bottles of 0.5 litres. Apart from Moscato Passito, the wine collection of the winery also includes rose wine Rosso Viola, white Bianco Margherita, and grappa, which is produced by distillation of grapes from which Moscato Passito di Saracena is produced. It is curious that the younger generation of the family founded a brewery a floor lower to the winery and produce unique beer based on oilcake obtained from the production of Moscato Passito di Saracena. Moscato Passito di Saracena is recognized as the best sweet wine of Italy year after year and for four years in a row gets the highest score of Gambero Rosso — “Tre Bicchieri”.



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