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## **Georgian Wine Exports to the U.S. +30% YOY for 5<sup>th</sup> Consecutive Year, with U.S. Taking the Lead as the Largest “Western” Export Market**

### ***U.S. Demand for Quality Drives Ex-Cellar Prices Double Those of CIS Countries***

**New York / March 16, 2020:** In 2019, the country of Georgia's wine exports to the U.S. surged another 46% and represented 90 producers. This was the 5<sup>th</sup> straight year of annualized average 30% growth by volume, making the U.S. the largest Western export market for Georgia, following only China and other CIS (former Soviet Bloc) countries. The value figure is also notable, as U.S. importers purchased at an average ex-cellar price of \$5.11/bottle, which is more than double the average export price to China and other CIS countries.

Levan Mekhuzla, Chairman of The National Wine Agency, says: “The most significant trend of the Georgian wine sector since 2008 has been the rapid and determined diversification of export markets. While the former Soviet markets still account for the majority of exports by volume, the strategic and trend-setting U.S. market shows not only encouraging growth, but a focus on the high value, premium-quality segment, with particular demand for premium red, qvevri, amber, low intervention, and natural wines.”

According to the Marq Wine Group's Managing Partner, Julie Peterson, who has been leading the U.S. strategy since 2015, “The robust results we are seeing are the result of two market dynamics being played out simultaneously. The first is growing awareness among American consumers of both Georgia and the diversity of artisanal, hand-crafted wines that are produced in this ancient land. The second is the energetic growth and development of Georgian vineyards and wineries. Georgians have been producing wines for thousands of years, but while their tradition runs deep, their access to western markets had been limited. With new markets now open, demand has encouraged a significant number of family wineries to increase both their vineyards and their production.”

### **About the Wines of Georgia**

Home to more than 525 indigenous grape varieties, Georgia's wine industry has been transformed from a cottage industry into an artisanal powerhouse, with winemakers producing some of the world's most unique and distinctive fine wines using both qvevri and European winemaking methods.

The origin of wine is currently attributed to Georgia during the Neolithic period. In 2016 in southwest Georgia, archaeologists discovered clay vessels containing cultivated grape seeds that were dated to 6000 BC using archaeological, archaeobotanical, climatic, and chemical methods. The results were published in November 2017 the [National Academy of Sciences](#).

Continually, since the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, Georgians have made wine in *qvevris*, giant clay vessels lined with beeswax and buried underground to keep temperatures constant. Winemakers ferment the juice in these vessels, simultaneously allowing the grape skins to macerate with the juice, which turn what many American consumers expect to be white wines into an amber color, and adding tannin to both the resultant amber and red wines. (European vintners ferment red grapes along with their skins and stems to lend them color and tannins, but omit them when making white wine.)

Qvevris are still made by hand by one of Georgia's five "master" qvevri-making families; there is an ever-increasing demand for wine produced in this tradition, both in Georgia and around the world. This tradition of winemaking defines the lifestyle of families and local communities and forms an inseparable part of their cultural identity and inheritance. In 2013, the United Nations added qvevri winemaking to the [UNESCO](#) list of "Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity."

The National Wine Agency of Georgia is tasked to preserve the country's qvevri winemaking tradition, control the quality of all Georgian wines, and promote these wines globally.

[www.WinesGeorgia.com](http://www.WinesGeorgia.com)

*Interviews and hi-res imagery available upon request.*

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