



GEORGIA 201

THE WILD, WILD WEST

REVIEWING GEORGIA 101

EVERYTHING WE COVERED IN THE PREVIOUS SESSION...IN UNDER FIFTEEN MINUTES

OUR GOAL LAST TIME WAS TO
ESTABLISH CONTEXT...

ORIENTATION

THE LAY OF THE LAND

ENVIRONMENT

TOPOGRAPHY, CLIMATE, SOILS

WINEMAKING

TOOLS, TECHNIQUES, CHALLENGES

HISTORY & CULTURE

APOCRYPHA, BIG-H, LITTLE-H, CULTURE



WHERE IS GEORGIA, ANYWAY?

SHORT ANSWER: IT'S THE FULCRUM BETWEEN EASTERN EUROPE & WESTERN ASIA

GEORGIA BORDERS...

RUSSIA TO THE NORTH,
THE BLACK SEA TO THE WEST,
TURKEY TO THE SOUTHWEST, AND
ARMENIA & AZERBAIJAN TO THE SOUTHEAST.

THIS IS NOT THE QUIETEST NEIGHBORHOOD,
GEOPOLITICALLY SPEAKING!

POPULATION: 3.7 MILLION

AREA: 69,700KM²*

*A BIT BIGGER THAN W VIRGINIA, A BIT SMALLER THAN IRELAND



THE LAND

SO MANY MOUNTAINS!

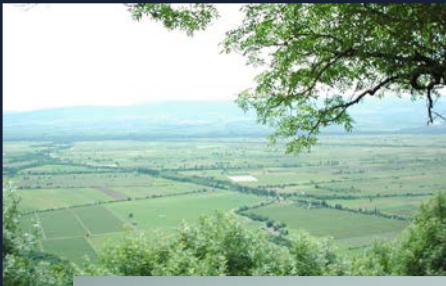
85% OF TOTAL LAND AREA IS MOUNTAINOUS



SO MANY RIVERS!

3 MAJOR RIVER BASINS (ALAZANI, IORI, RIONI)

100S OF SMALLER TRIBUTARIES



SO MANY BIOMES!

EVERYTHING FROM SUBTROPICAL
RAINFORESTS TO ARID DESERTS TO

ALPINE GLACIERS



THE CLIMATE (IN GENERAL)*



IN THE COASTAL AND WESTERN AREAS (ZONE #1), CLIMATE IS SUBTROPICAL

→ MODERATE TEMPERATURES -- THANKS, BLACK SEA! -- AND PLENTIFUL RAIN

MOVING EAST (ZONE #2), THE CLIMATE BECOMES CONTINENTAL

→ HOT AND DRY...SOME AREAS HAVE 10% OR LESS OF THE RAINFALL SEEN IN THE WEST

IN THE HIGH MOUNTAINS (ZONES #3), CLIMATE IS TRULY ALPINE

→ VERY COLD WITH ABUNDANT SNOW, ESPECIALLY CLOSE TO GREATER CAUCASUS RANGE

*NB: MICROCLIMATIC VARIATION ABOUNDS, OFTEN RELATED TO TOPOGRAPHY

SOME MORE CLIMATE GENERALITIES

WETTER

DRYER

COLDER

WARMER



SUBTROPICAL

CONTINENTAL

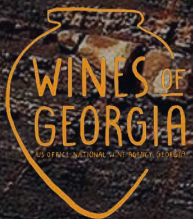
THE SOIL

BAD NEWS: CONSISTENT, COMPREHENSIVE INFORMATION ON VINEYARD SOILS IS RARE.

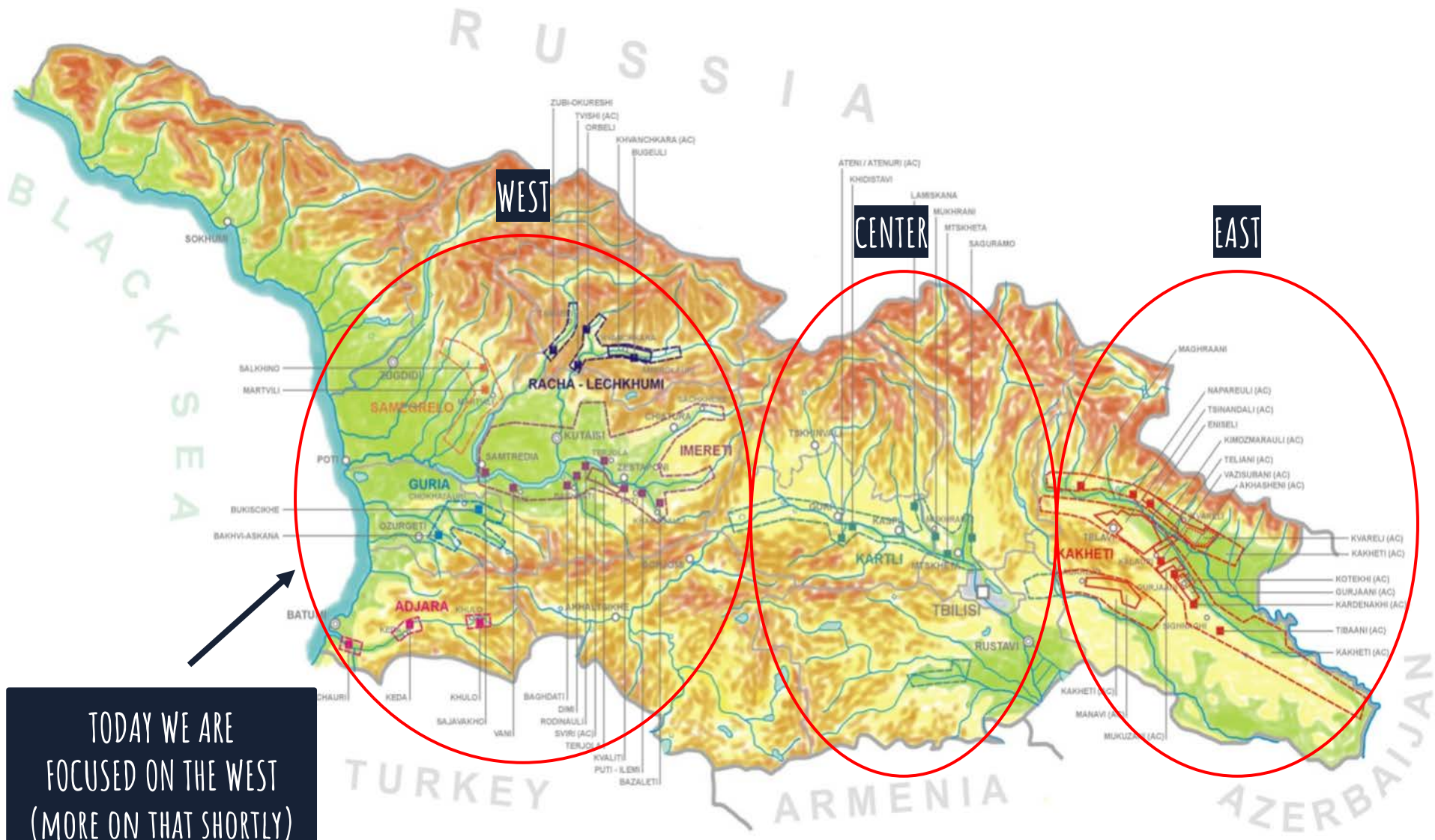
GOOD NEWS: MORE AND MORE GROWERS & SCHOLARS ARE UNDERTAKING INTENSIVE SOIL ANALYSES.

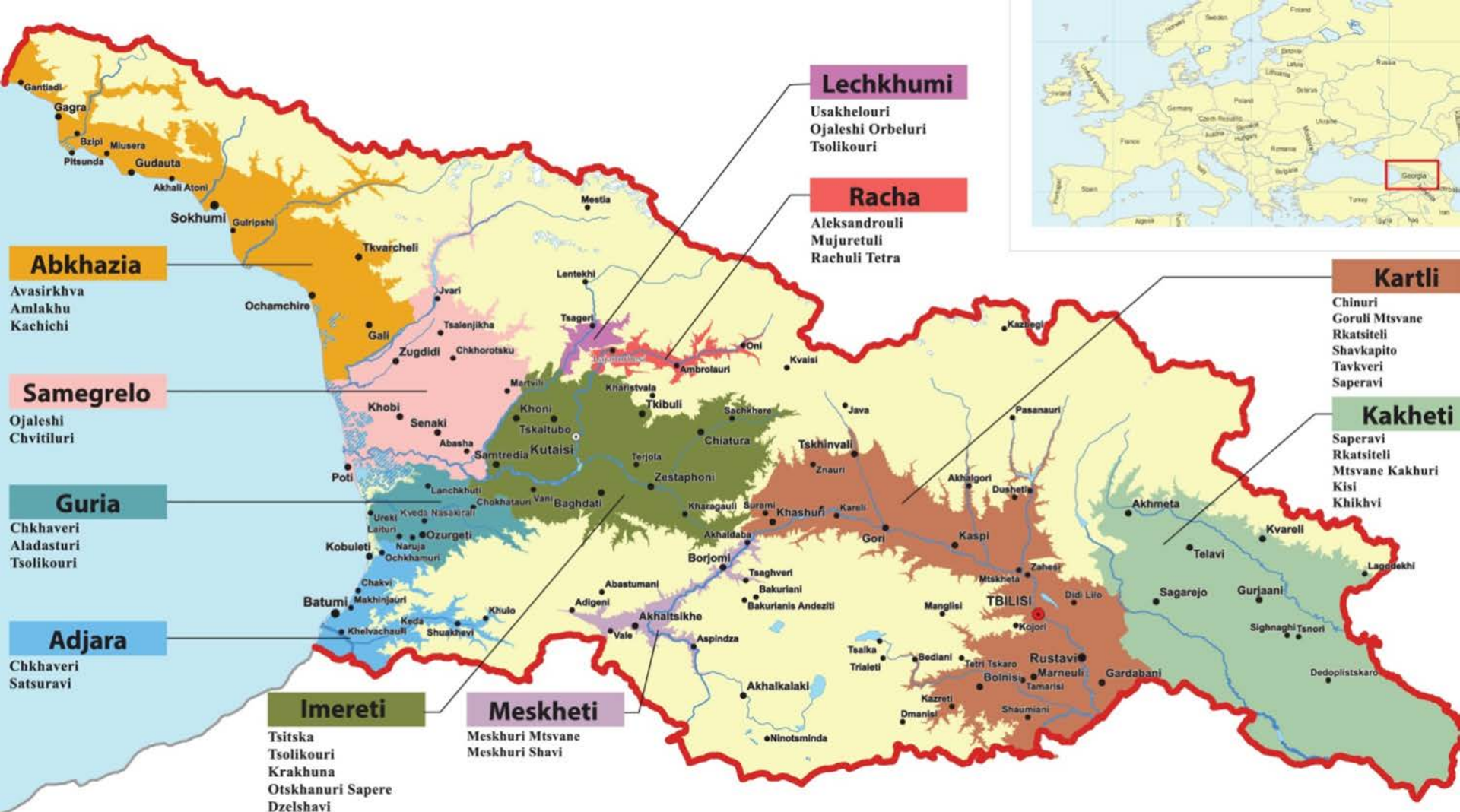
IN GENERAL (AS MUCH AS GENERALIZING IS POSSIBLE, WHICH ISN'T VERY MUCH):

- SOILS IN THE WEST ARE HEAVIER CLAYS, WITH LOWER PH - OFTEN VOLCANIC PRIMARY MATERIAL
- MOVING EAST, PH RISES ALONG WITH CONTENT OF LIMESTONE, ALLUVIUM, SAND
- SOILS IN MORE NORTHERLY REGIONS ARE STONIER AND GENERALLY MORE ALKALINE



MACRO-REGIONS





THE WINE REGIONS





VITICULTURE, VINIFICATION & OTHER PRACTICES OF GEORGIAN WINE



VITICULTURAL CHALLENGES & RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

IN A FAMOUSLY DEEP ENDEMIC AMPELOGRAPHIC POOL WITH MANY ENDANGERED VARIETIES...

...A VIBRANT MOVEMENT IS UNDERWAY TO FIND, REPLANT AND REPROGATE

THOUGH MANY OLD VINEYARDS WERE LOST IN THE 20TH CENTURY AS WINE INDUSTRIALIZED...

...REPLANTING IS OCCURRING ALL OVER THE COUNTRY AND OLDER SITES ARE BEING REHABILITATED

IN SPITE OF LITTLE INFRASTRUCTURE...

...VITICULTURAL TRAINING & KNOWLEDGE OF BEST PRACTICES IS RAPIDLY EXPANDING



TRADITIONAL WINEMAKING

RELIANCE ON AUTOCHTHONOUS VARIETIES

WIDESPREAD USE OF EXTENDED SKIN MACERATION

NEAR-EXCLUSIVE RELIANCE ON QVEVRI

LIMITED OR NO FILTRATION/FINING

LINK TO HISTORICAL GEORGIAN RELIANCE ON HOME WINEMAKING





A WORD ON QVEVRI

ORIGINS OF QVEVRI

MANUFACTURING PROCESS

DIFFERENT CLAY TECHNOLOGIES - EUROPEAN VS. GEORGIAN

CLAY TYPES

THE SOVIET LEGACY & THE INTERNATIONAL STYLE

USE OF STEEL, OAK FOR FERMENTATION & AGING

USE OF CULTURED YEASTS AND TEMP. CONTROL

LIMITED USE OF SKIN MACERATION FOR WHITES

FINING/FILTRATION COMMON



GEORGIA'S WINE APOCRYPHA

ORIGIN STORIES...A CLEAR PATTERN EMERGES

- GOD'S SPECIAL STASH
- ST NINO & THE GRAPEVINE CROSS
- "OUR BLOOD IS WINE"
- THE 8000 VINTAGE MYSTIQUE



WINES OF
GEORGIA

US OFFICE, NATIONAL WINE INSTITUTE, GEORGIA



A BRIEF REVIEW OF...



GEORGIAN

HISTORY

(WITH THE BIG-H)

...AND

GEORGIAN
CULTURE

(THE SMALL-H HISTORY)



THE LONG & SHORT OF THE BIG-H HISTORY:



DESPITE NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS...

(SUCH AS THE DEVELOPMENT OF ADVANCED PROTO-STATES LIKE IBERIA AND COLCHIS AS EARLY AS 400BCE, AND TWO DISTINCT 'GOLDEN AGES' IN THE 12TH & 13TH CENTURIES)

...GEORGIA HAS ENDURED A NEAR-CONTINUOUS SERIES OF INVASIONS FROM THE 4TH CENTURY BCE (ALEXANDER THE GREAT) STRAIGHT THROUGH TO THE 1800S, WHEN THE RUSSIANS ARRIVED.



THE LAST (TUMULTUOUS) 200+ YEARS

1801 INTEGRATION INTO RUSSIAN EMPIRE

1922 INTEGRATION INTO USSR

1991 INDEPENDENCE

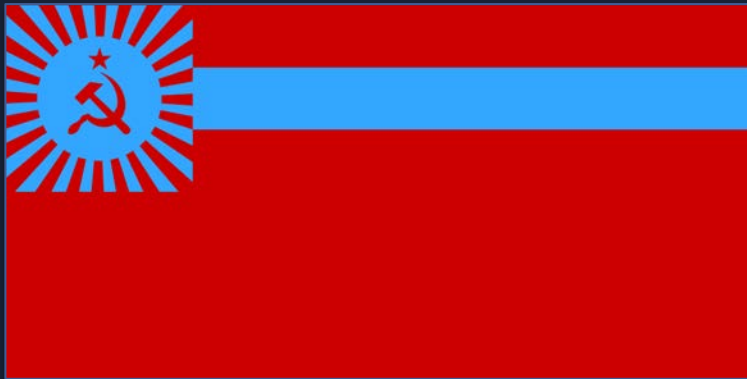
1992 CIVIL WAR & AFTERMATH

2006 RUSSIAN EMBARGO ON GEORGIAN WINE *

2008 BORDER WAR IN S OSSETIA (WITH RUSSIA)



MARCHERS IN TBILISI, 1991



FLAG OF THE GEORGIAN SSR



MARCHERS IN TBILISI, 2021

* EMBARGO LASTED UNTIL 2013 -- EIGHT YEARS IN WHICH GEORGIA LOST 90% OF ITS WINE EXPORT MARKET

WINE & GEORGIAN CULTURE



WINE AS COMMUNITY: THE SUPRA & BEYOND

- RELATIVELY RECENT CUSTOM AS A FORMALIZED CULTURAL EXPRESSION, BUT DEEPLY EMBEDDED
- THREE PILLARS: HOSPITALITY, ABUNDANCE, TOASTING

WINE AS RESISTANCE: GUARDING TRADITIONS

- IMPORTANCE OF HOME WINEMAKING
- AUTOCHTHONOUS GRAPES, AUTOCHTHONOUS TECHNIQUES

WINE AS IDENTITY: EXPRESSING GEORGIANNES

- WHAT GEORGIAN WINES SAY ABOUT GEORGIA

LET'S GO WEST!

IMERETI AT A GLANCE

- CORE REGION OF THE WEST -- 15% OF TOTAL HECTARES PLANTED
- TERRAIN: MOUNTAINS TO NORTH AND EAST, KOLKHETI PLAIN IN WEST, RIONI RIVER VALLEY IN CENTER
- VINEYARD ELEVATION: 80-800M
- CLIMATE: VARIED. SUBTROPICAL IN SOUTHWEST, GROWING DRIER FURTHER TO THE EAST
- SOILS: EXTREMELY VARIED, MOSTLY HEAVY CLAYS, HUMUS-RICH 'FOREST' SOILS IN EAST AND FERROUS RED SOILS TO THE WEST
- PDOs: SVIRI

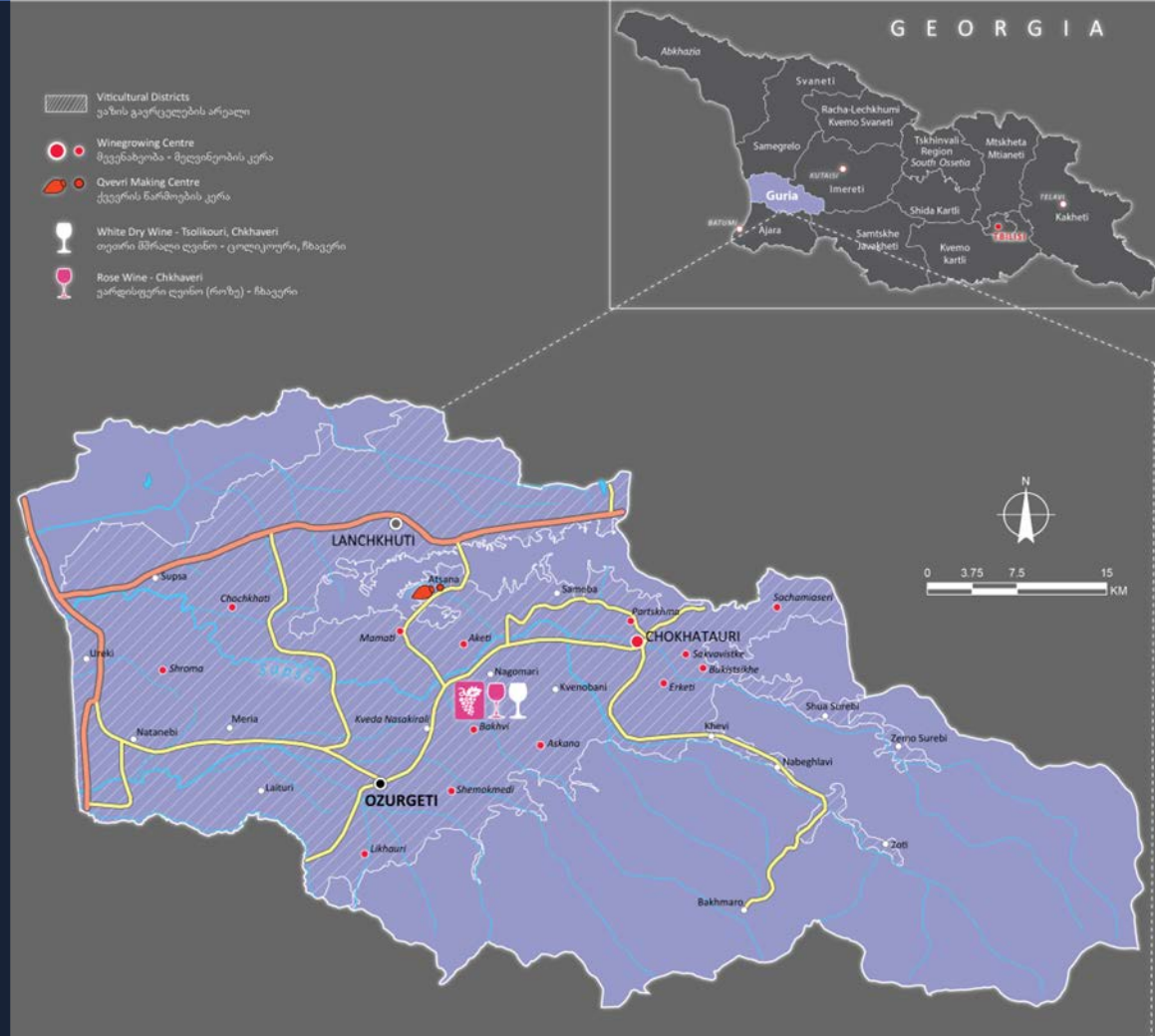


- KEY VARIETIES: TSOLIKOURI, TSITSKA, KRAKHUNA, DZELSHAVI, OJALESHI, OTSKHANURI SAPERE



GURIA AT A GLANCE

- ONE OF THE SMALLEST REGIONS IN PRODUCTION TERMS, PRIMARILY KNOWN FOR RED WINE
- **TERRAIN:** COASTAL LOWLANDS ON WESTERN EDGE RISING TO MOUNTAINS IN SOUTHEAST AND NORTH, SUPSA RIVER IN CENTER
- **VINEYARD ELEVATION:** 0-500M
- **CLIMATE:** SUBTROPICAL, VERY HUMID (WETTEST REGION IN GEORGIA)
- **SOILS:** IRON-RICH RED CLAYS OVER BASALT, SOME POCKETS OF TERRA ROSSA AND BROWN SOILS
- **PDOs:** N/A

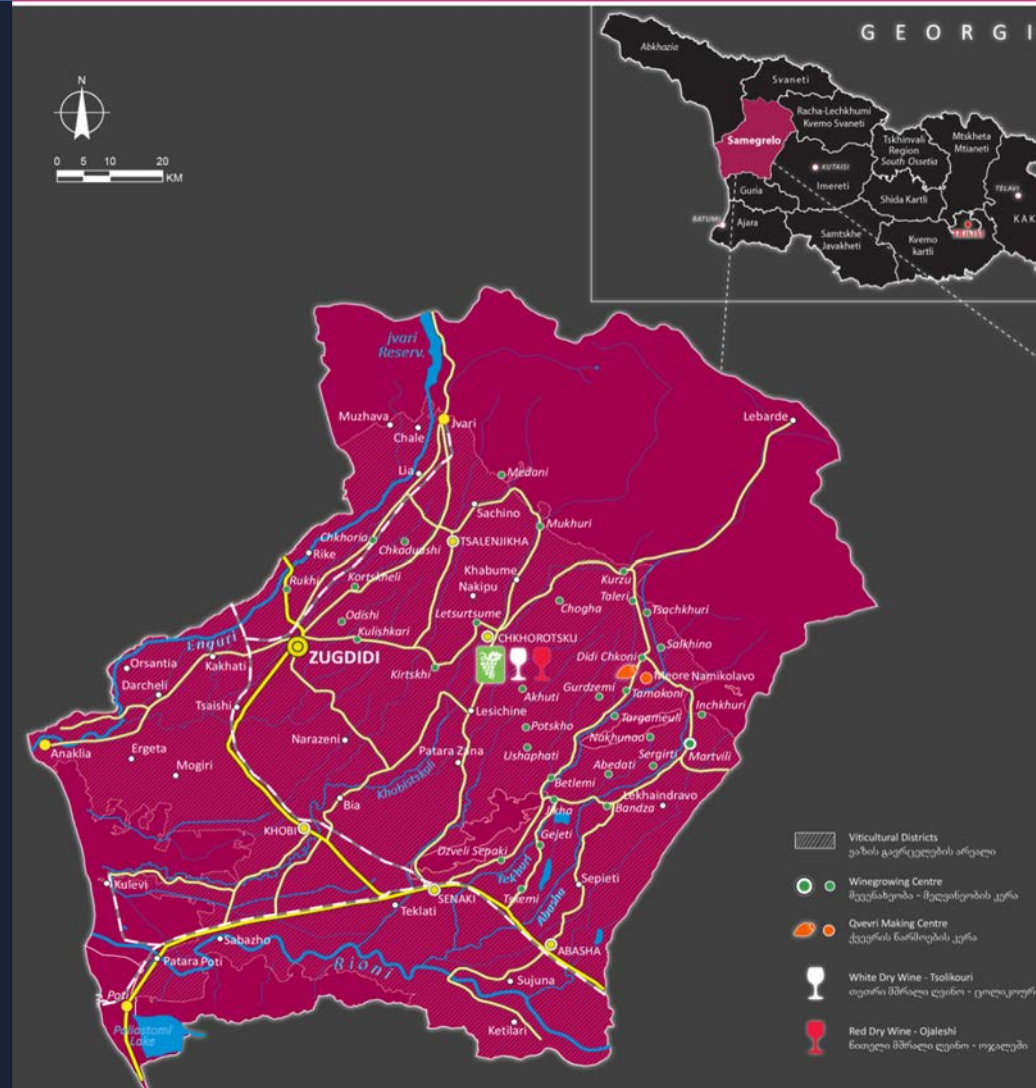


- KEY VARIETIES: TSOLIKOURI, CHKHAVERI, ALADASTURI



SAMEGRELO AT A GLANCE

- RUGGED, CULTURALLY-DISTINCT REGION WITH A LONG (AND NEARLY LOST) WINEMAKING TRADITION
- TERRAIN: FLAT TOWARDS THE COAST, RISING TO VERY HIGH MOUNTAINS IN THE NORTH AND EAST. RIVER GORGES AND STEEP CLIFFS ABOUND.
- VINEYARD ELEVATION: 0-600M
- CLIMATE: SUBTROPICAL, WET, SIMILAR TO GURIA
- SOILS: FERROUS, HUMUS-RICH CLAYS IN FLATS, ARGILO-CALCAIRE IN THE MOUNTAINS.
- PDOS: SALKHINO OJALESHI



- KEY VARIETIES: OJALESHI, CHVITILURI, KOLOSHI, DUDUGHUSHI



RACHA AT A GLANCE

- ISOLATED, MOUNTAINOUS REGION ON GEORGIA'S NORTHERN BORDER
- **TERRAIN:** DENSELY-FORESTED AND MOUNTAINOUS, DOMINATED BY RIONI RIVER AND TRIBUTARY GORGES
- **VINEYARD ELEVATION:** 400-800M+
- **CLIMATE:** LONG, COLD WINTERS AND SHORT, WARM (AND INCREASINGLY RAINY) SUMMERS
- **SOILS:** SOME SILEX AND SAND IN POCKETS BUT PREDOMINANTLY LIMESTONE TO NORTH AND AT HIGHER ELEVATIONS
- **PDOS:** KHVANCHKARA



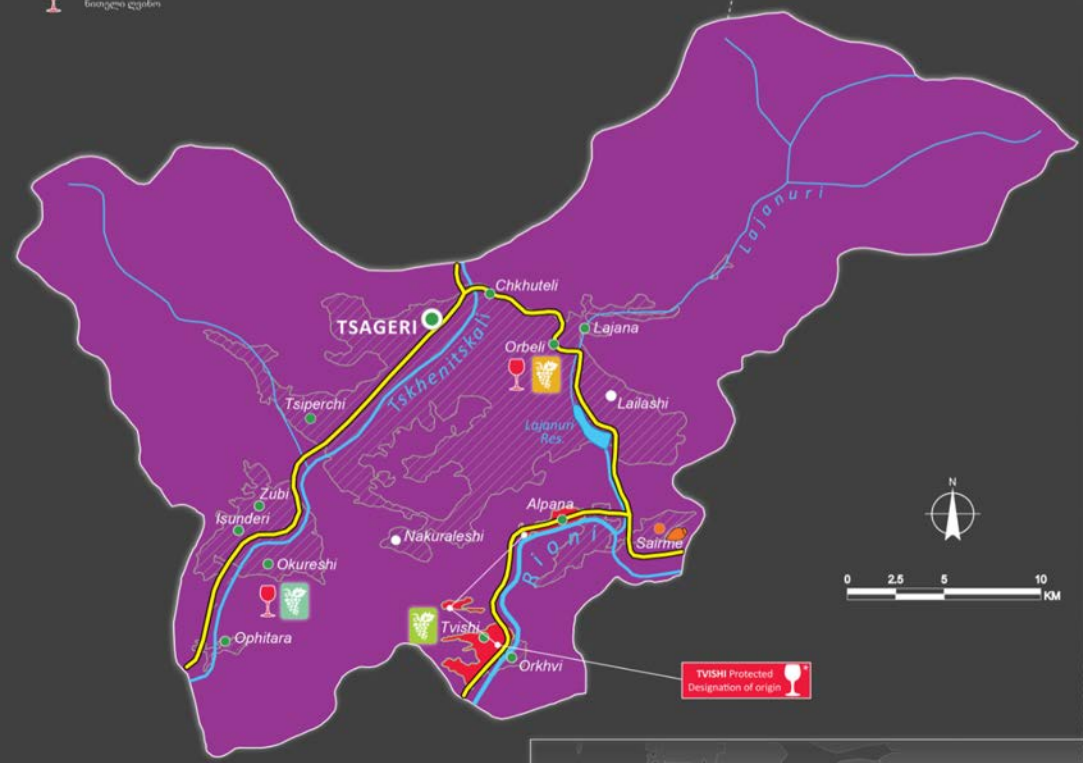
- **KEY VARIETIES:** TSULUKIDZE TETRA, TSOLIKOURI, TAVKVERI, ALEKSANDROULI, MUJURETULI, OJALESHI





LECHKHUMI AT A GLANCE

- SPARSELY POPULATED REGION LINKED WITH RACHA TO THE NORTHEAST
- **TERRAIN:** MOSTLY MOUNTAINOUS, SLOPING DOWNWARD TO THE WEST AND DOMINATED BY RIVER GORGES (RIONI & LAJANURI)
- **VINEYARD ELEVATION:** VERY HIGH -- 600 TO 900M
- **CLIMATE:** COLD AND SNOWY IN HIGHER ELEVATIONS TO NORTHEAST, WARMER AND WETTER TOWARDS IMERETI/SAMEGRELO
- **SOILS:** HEAVY CLAY-LOAM IN LOWER ELEVATIONS, MORE MINERAL-RICH IN HIGHER ELEVATIONS. AMPLE LIMESTONE.
- **PDOs:** TVISHI



- **KEY VARIETIES:** TSOLIKOURI, USAKHELOURI, ORBELURI OJALESHI, ALEKSANDROULI, MUJURETULI





SOME IMPORTANT WESTERN WHITE GRAPES (FAR FROM EXHAUSTIVE!)

TSOLIKOURI (TWO VARIETIES - YELLOW & GREEN)

CORNERSTONE WHITE GRAPE OF THE WEST, YELLOW-FRUITED, LOW TO MEDIUM ACIDITY, MEDIUM- TO FULL-BODIED, OFTEN BLENDED. GREEN VARIETY HAS MORE FRESHNESS AND CUT.

TSITSKA

WIDELY PLANTED IN IMERETI, OFTEN BLENDED. VERY HIGH ACID AND LATE-RIPENING. TYPICALLY YELLOW- AND GREEN-FRUITED CHARACTER. ALSO WIDELY USED FOR SPARKLING WINES.

KRAKHUNA

MEANS 'CRISPY' IN IMERETIAN. ALMOST LOST BUT PLANTED WIDELY SINCE EARLY 2000S. DISEASE-PRONE, BUT MASSIVE FLAVORS (STONE & TROPICAL FRUITS) AND GOOD STRUCTURE.

OTHERS OF INTEREST

TETRA FROM RACHA, CHECHIPESHI, KUDURAVLI, ETC ETC ETC.

SOME IMPORTANT RED GRAPES OF THE WEST (ALSO NOT EXHAUSTIVE!)

ALADASTURI

ONCE WIDESPREAD, NOW RETURNING, PARTICULARLY IN IMERETI. DARK BLUE/BLACK FRUIT, THIN SKINS. WINES ARE LIGHT RUBY, BRIGHT AND FRESH WITH A TANGY, SPICY PROFILE.

OJALESHI

DOMINANT THROUGHOUT FAR WEST UNTIL PHYLLOXERA. NOW RECOVERING. LIKES ROCKY TERROIRS. STURDY AND JUICY FRUIT THAT PRODUCES ROUND, SOFT, BRAMBLY WINES. ORBELURIAN VARIANT IS NOTEWORTHY AND DISTINCT, MORE FRAGRANT AND ENERGETIC.

CHKHAVERI

GURIAN NATIVE. ROSE-PINK AND THIN-SKINNED. (MORE DETAILS IN A MOMENT!)

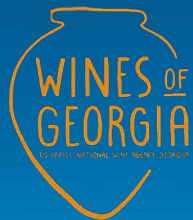
OTSKHANURI SAPERE

VERY OLD VARIETY, WIDELY PLANTED IN IMERETI AND RACHA-LECHKHUMI. DARK, BROODING, VERY INTENSELY-FLAVORED WINES. AGLIANICO-TYPE CHARACTER.

OTHERS OF INTEREST

USAKHELOURI, ALEKSANDROULI, MUJURETULI, RE-EMERGING MEGRELIAN VARIETIES, ETC ETC.





FLIGHT I: THE MOUNTAINS

IGAVI WINES

TSOLIKOURI 2019

TSILAMIERI, LECHKHUMI

ODA WINES

ORBELURI OJALESHI 2019

ORBELURI, LECHKHUMI

A man with short grey hair, wearing a dark t-shirt and blue jeans, is sitting on the grass in a vineyard. In front of him are several green plastic baskets filled with green grapes. Behind him is a corrugated metal fence, and in the background, there is a large mountain under a clear blue sky.

IGAVI WINES

TSOLIKOURI 2019

TSLAMTERT, LECHKHUMI (AIDAN'S MARANI IS IN ZEINDARTI, IMERETI)

WINEMAKER: AIDAN RAFTERY

0.2HA VINEYARD, FARMED ORGANICALLY, 30YO VINES

CLAY TOPSOIL OVER LIMESTONE SUBSTRATE

WHOLE BUNCHES, BASKET PRESSED DIRECT INTO TANK, 9MOS IN INOX

ZERO SULFUR, 900 BOTTLES PRODUCED





ODA FAMILY WINERY

ORBELURI OJALESHI 2019

ORBELI, LECHKHUMI - MARANI LOCATED IN MARTVILI (SAMEGRELO)

WINEMAKER: KETO NINIDZE

- AUTOCHTHONOUS VARIETY PRODUCED ONLY IN THIS VILLAGE
- PLANTED IN 1950S ON ROCKY, STEEP LIMESTONE SLOPES
- ORGANIC SINCE 2017 (UNCERTIFIED)
- 40% SKINS FOR 8 MOS IN INOX
- NO ADDITIONAL SO2, NO FILTRATION. 400 BOTTLES PRODUCED.



FLIGHT II: THE PLAINS

GOGITA MAKARIDZE

TSITSKA 2019

TERJOLA, IMERETI

VARTSIKHE MARANI

ALADASTURI 2019

BAGHDATI, IMERETI



MAKARIDZE WINERY

TSITSKA 2019

TERJOLA, IMERETI

WINEMAKER: GOGITA MAKARIDZE

0.3HA VINEYARD, FARMED ORGANICALLY, 38YO VINES (AVG)

MOUNTAIN CLAY SOILS

DESTEMMED THEN DIRECT-PRESSED INTO QVEVRI

7MOS ELEVAGE, RACKED INTO TANK FOR 2MOS BEFORE BOTTLING

NO SULFUR, 1700 BOTTLES PRODUCED





VARTSIKHE MARANI

ALADASTURI 2019

BAGHDATI, IMERETI

WINEMAKER: KAKHA TCHOTIASHVILI

ORGANICALLY FARMED

19YO VINEYARD AT 225M

SANDY LOAM SOILS

SPONTANEOUS FERM. IN QVEVRI

ALL SKINS, NO STEMS

3 MOS MACERATION

UNFINED, UNFILTERED

MINIMAL SO2 AT BOTTLING



FLIGHT III: THE (SUB)TROPICS

DATO'S WINE
CHKHAVERI ROSÉ 2019
ERKETI, GURIA

IBERIeli
CHKHAVERI AMBER 2019
SAKVAVITSKE, GURIA

A WORD ABOUT CHKHAVERI

- PLANTED MOSTLY IN COASTAL REGIONS (GURIA, ADJARA, ABKHAZIA) AND IN IMERETI (IN MUTATED FORM)
- LATE-RIPENING, CAN REACH VERY HIGH SUGAR LEVELS WHILE PRESERVING ACIDITY
- PRONE TO FUNGAL INFECTION -- ORIGINALLY MAGHLARI-TRAINED -- AND SENSITIVE TO SITE.
- PINK-SKINNED WITH GENERALLY FRESH RED BERRY AROMAS & FLAVORS
- TYPICALLY USED TO PRODUCE DRY AND OFF-DRY ROSÉS AND, WITH LESS MACERATION, A PALE GOLDEN WHITE

IBERIeli

CHKHAVERI AMBER 2019

SAKVAVITSKE, GURIA

WINEMAKER: ZURAB TOPURIDZE

0.5HA VINEYARD, FARMED ORGANICALLY
VINES BETWEEN 5-20YRS OLD
ONE WEEK MACERATION WITH STEMS
8MOS ELEVAGE IN QVEVRI
TOTAL ADDED SO₂ - 40MG/L
1800BTLS PRODUCED





DATO'S WINE

CHKHAVERI ROSÉ

ERKETI, GURIA

WINEMAKER: DATO KOBIDZE

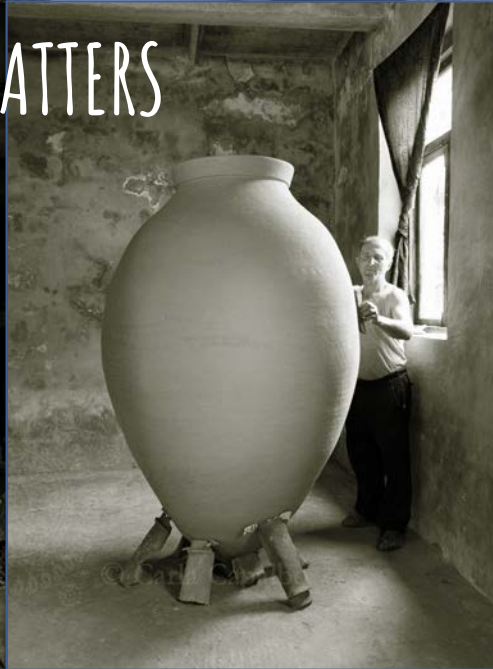
PRACTICING ORGANIC
TERRA ROSSA & LATERITE SOILS
LATE HARVEST (MID-NOVEMBER)
25-DAY MACERATION
MINIMAL SULFUR AT BOTTLING
800 BOTTLES PRODUCED





QUESTIONS?

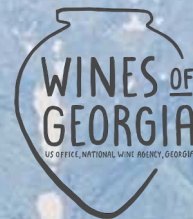




REDUX: WHY GEORGIA MATTERS

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- VISIT WINES OF GEORGIA'S HOMEPAGE: WWW.WINESGEORGIA.COM
- READ ANY OF THESE BOOKS:
 - ALICE FEIRING'S FOR THE LOVE OF WINE
 - LISA GRANIK'S RECENTLY PUBLISHED THE WINES OF GEORGIA
 - MIQUEL HUDIN'S GEORGIA: A GUIDE TO THE CRADLE OF WINE
 - CARLA CAPALBO'S TASTING GEORGIA (ABOUT THE FOOD!)
- AND MOST IMPORTANTLY...



GO TO THE SOURCE!
VISIT GEORGIA AS SOON AS IT'S SAFE TO DO SO!!!

THEM KNOW YOU'RE INTERESTED.

CONTACT WINES OF GEORGIA AND LET