

BEYOND THE NICHE

THE PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE OF GEORGIAN WINE IN THE US MARKET

A PRELIMINARY QUESTION: WHAT IS 'GEORGIAN WINE'?



IS IT THIS?



OR THIS?



OR THIS?

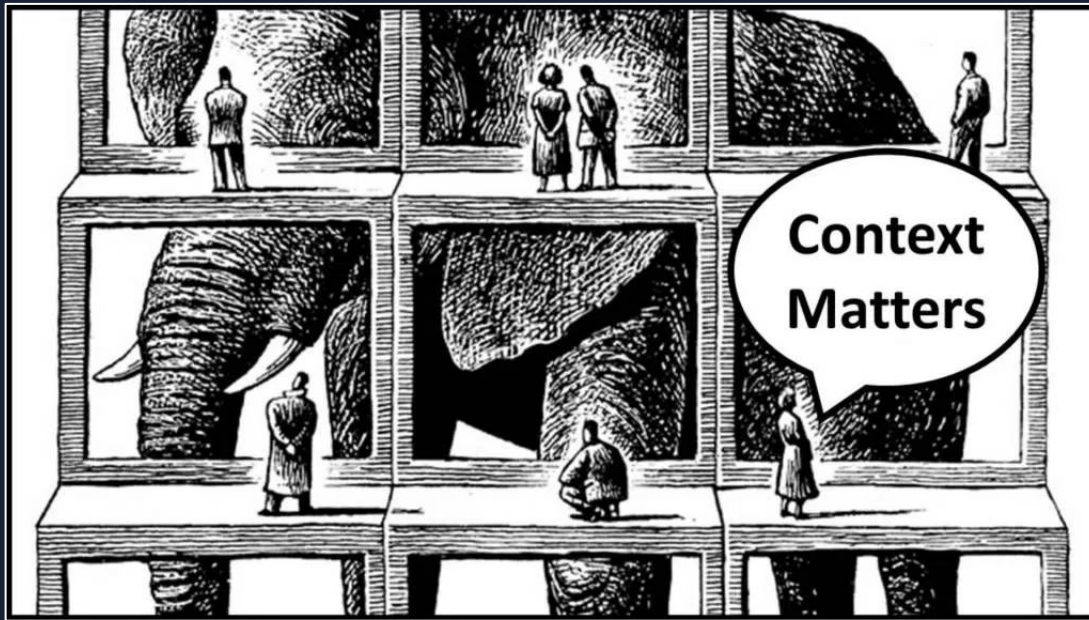


OR THIS?



OR THIS?





CONTEXT IS KEY

FOUR KEY ELEMENTS OF A FOUNDATIONAL UNDERSTANDING

1. ORIENTATION >>> THE LAY OF THE LAND
2. ENVIRONMENT >>> TOPOGRAPHY, CLIMATE, SOILS, MAJOR REGIONS
3. HISTORY & CULTURE >>> APOCRYPHA, BIG-H, LITTLE-H, WINE'S ROLE IN THE CULTURE
4. WINES & WINEMAKING >>> TOOLS, TECHNIQUES, CHALLENGES

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.

NOT THE QUIETEST NEIGHBORHOOD,
GEOLOGICALLY SPEAKING!

POPULATION: 3.7 MILLION

AREA: 69,700KM²*

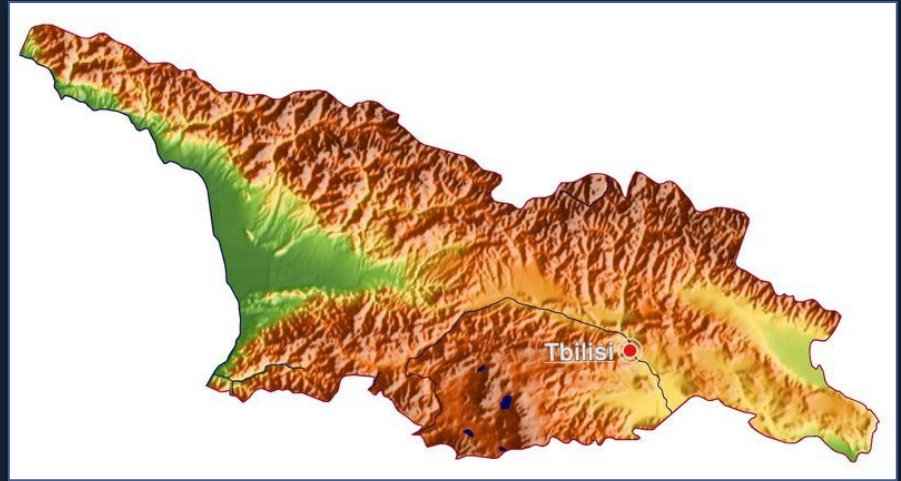
*A BIT BIGGER THAN W VIRGINIA, A BIT SMALLER THAN IRELAND



THE LAND

SO MANY MOUNTAINS!

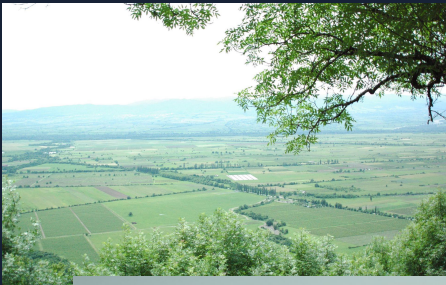
85% OF TOTAL LAND AREA IS MOUNTAINOUS



SO MANY RIVERS!

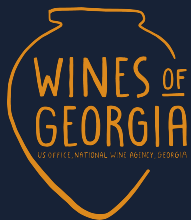
3 MAJOR RIVER BASINS (ALAZANI, IORI, RIONI)

100S OF SMALLER TRIBUTARIES



SO MANY BIOMES!

EVERYTHING FROM SUBTROPICAL
RAINFORESTS TO ARID DESERTS TO
ALPINE GLACIERS



The background of the slide is a photograph of a high-altitude mountain landscape. In the foreground, a lush green grassy slope rises towards the left. At the top of this slope, two stone churches with domes are visible. A paved path leads up to the churches. To the right of the churches, a modern stone building with arched windows is situated. The background consists of steep, rocky mountain peaks with patches of snow or light-colored rock, under a clear blue sky.

THE GEORGIAN ENVIRONMENT

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 ABOUND, IMPACTED BY TOPOGRAPHY

SOME MORE CLIMATE GENERALITIES



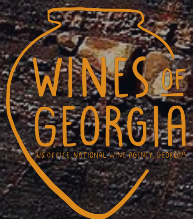
THE SOIL

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

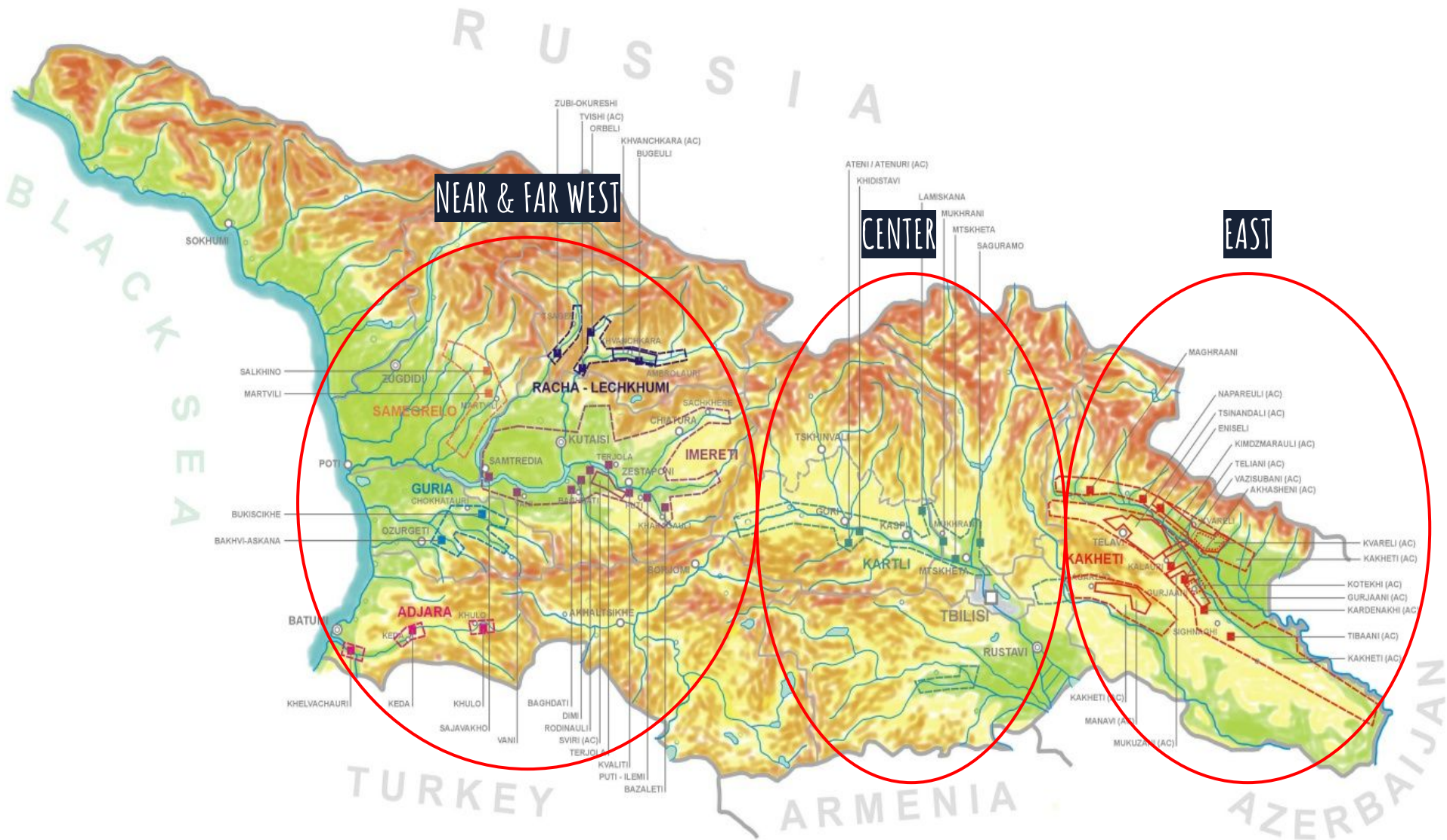
GOOD NEWS: MORE AND MORE GROWERS & SCHOLARS ARE UNDERTAKING INTENSIVE SOIL ANALYSES.

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



GENERALIZING: THREE EASY PIECES



THE WILD WEST: IMERETI & BEYOND

KEY REGIONS

IMERETI, GURIA, SAMEGRELO, RACHA,
LECHKUMI, ADJARA

IMPORTANT VARIETIES

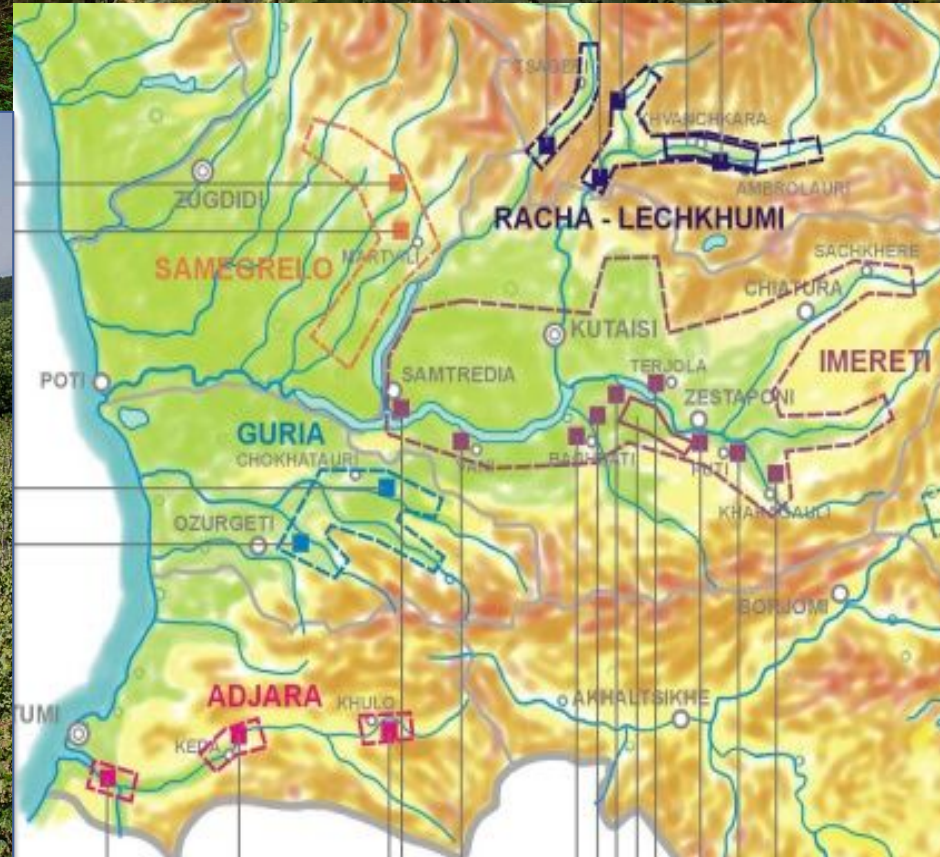
TSOLIKOURI, TSITSKA, KRAKHUNA, CHKHAVERI,
OTSKHANURI SAPERE, ALADASTURI, DZELSHAVI,
OJALESHI, MANY OTHERS

GENERALITIES

- FRACTION OF GEORGIA'S TOTAL PRODUCTION
- WINES TYPICALLY LIGHTER/FRESHER, WITH LESS RIPENESS & EXTRACTION
- MORE VEGETABLE-DRIVEN, SPICIER CUISINE

4 PDOs

SVIRI (IMERETI), TVISHI (LECHKUMI),
KHAVANCHKARA (RACHA), SALKHINO OJALESHI



THE CENTER: KARTLI

KEY SUBZONES

KVEMO (LOWER) KARTLI, MTSKHETA-MTIANETI,
SHIDA (INNER) KARTLI

IMPORTANT VARIETIES

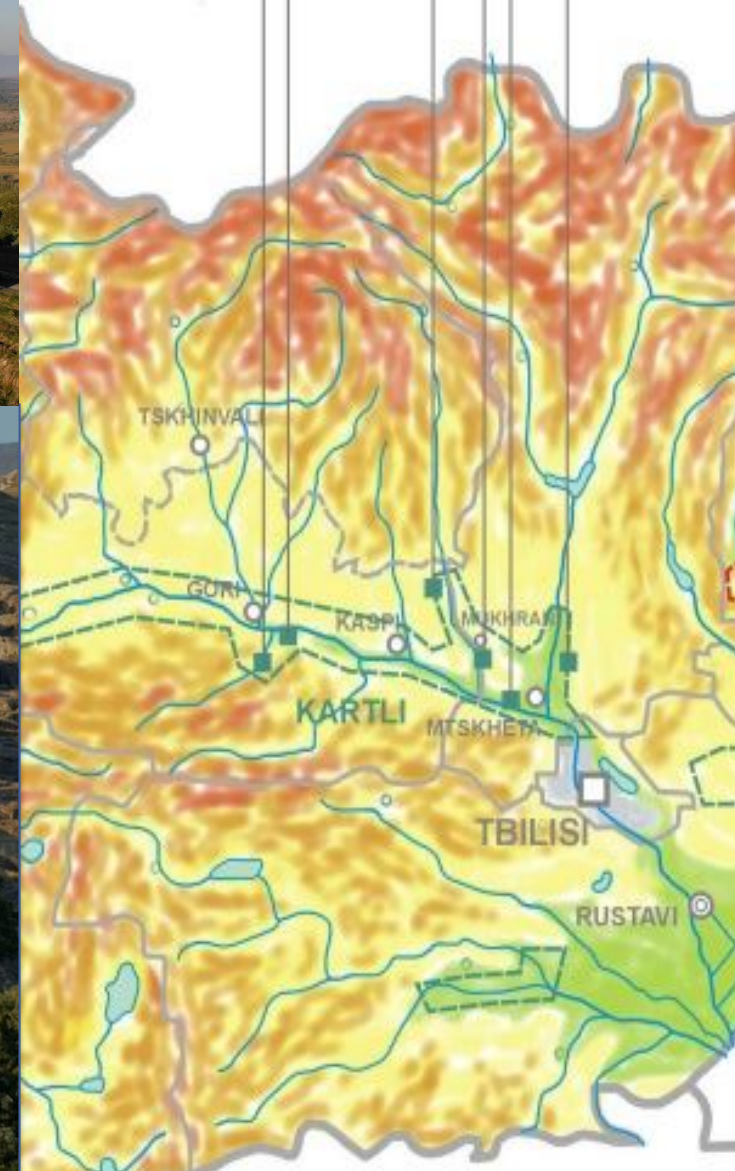
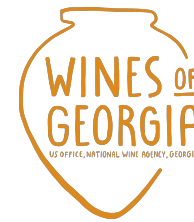
CHINURI, GORULI MTSVANE, TETRI, TSOLIKOURI, KRAKHUNA,
TAVKVERI, SHAVKAPITO, OJALESHI

GENERALITIES

- LESS THAN 10% OF TOTAL VINEYARDS
- GENERALLY DRY, CONTINENTAL CLIMATE
- VARIED SOILS, LEANING VOLCANIC IN SHIDA AND MORE CALCAREOUS IN KVEMO
- MIX OF TRADITIONAL & INTERNATIONAL STYLES

2 PDOS

BOLNISI (KVEMO), ATENURI (SHIDA)



THE EAST: KAKHETI

KEY SUBZONES

INNER KAKHETI (ALAZANI BASIN),
OUTER KAKHETI (IORI BASIN), KIZIKI (SOUTHEAST)

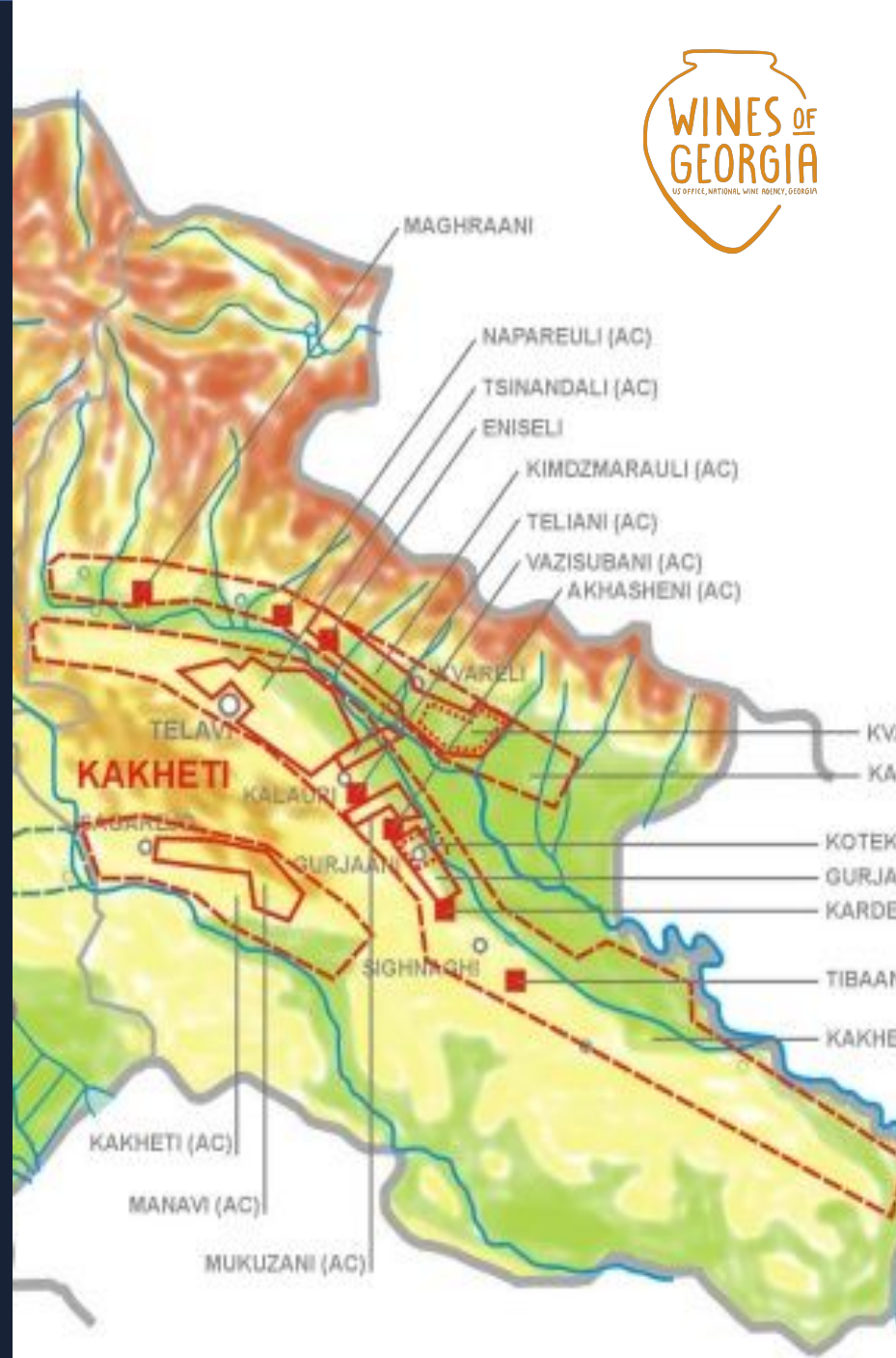
IMPORTANT VARIETIES

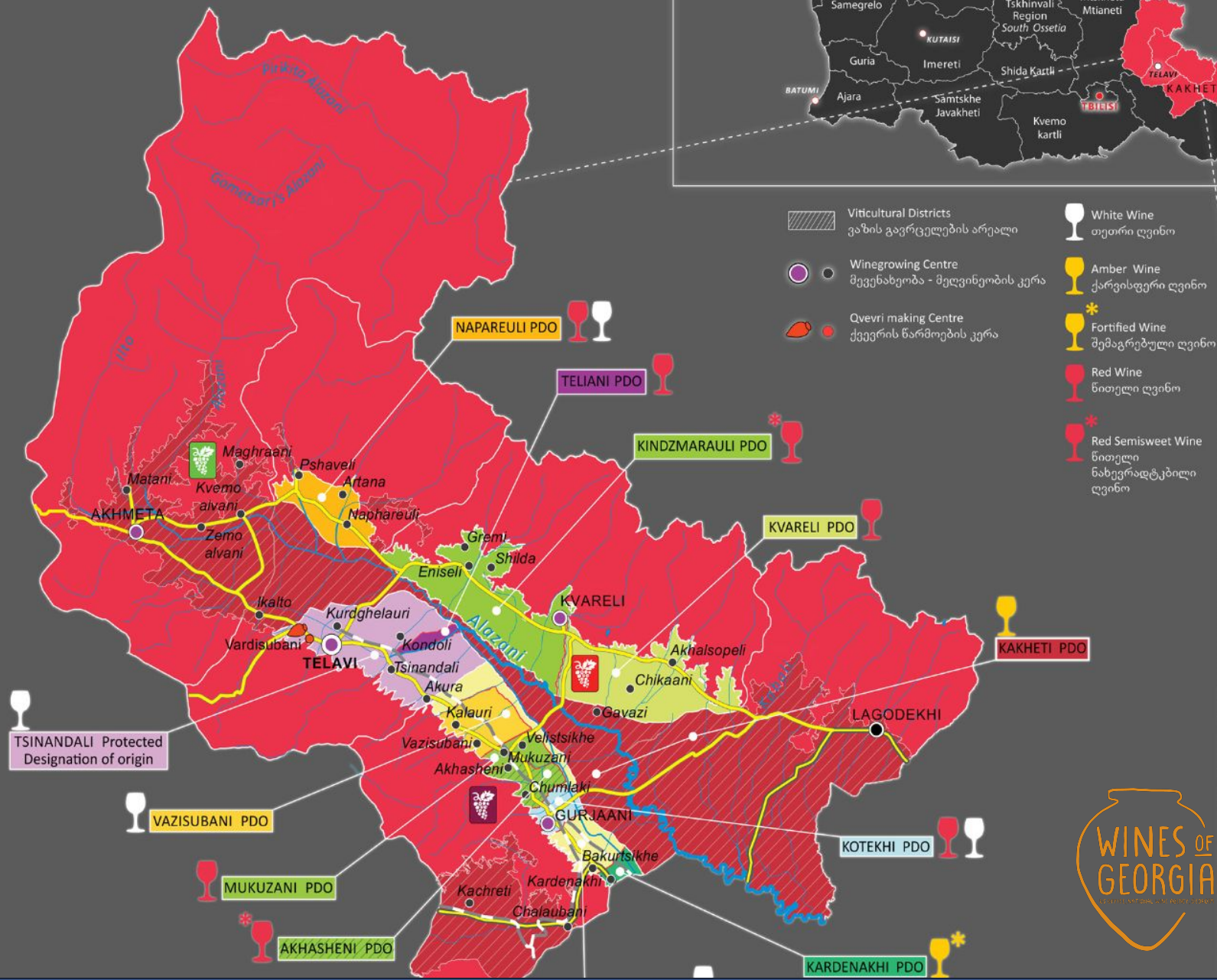
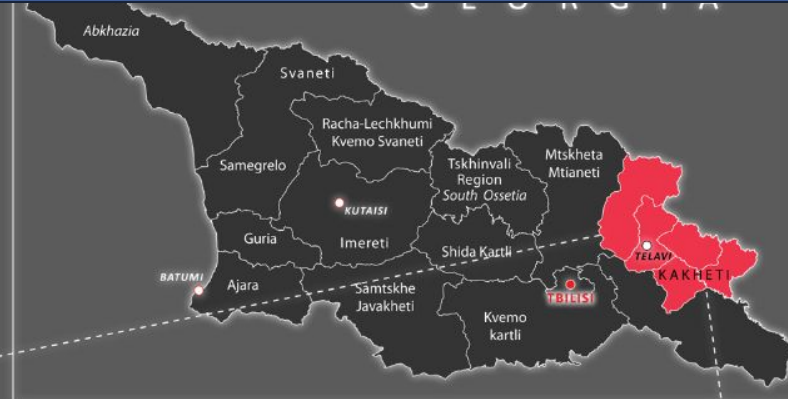
RKATSITELI, MTSVANE, KISI, KHIKHVI, SAPERAVI

GENERALITIES

- 75% OF VYD LAND, 70% OF PRODUCTION
- MOST VYDS IN FERTILE RIVER BASINS
- CONTINENTAL/TRANSITIONAL CLIMATE
- GENERALLY ALLUVIAL AND LOAMY SOILS,
POCKETS OF LIMESTONE ON RB, SHALE &
SLATE OUTCROPPINGS ON LB, VARIATION
ABOUNDS
- MEATY, RUSTIC FOOD & POWERFUL WINES

18 PDOs







A BRIEF REVIEW OF...

GEORGIAN

HISTORY

(WITH THE BIG-H)



...AND

GEORGIAN
CULTURE

(THE SMALL-H HISTORY)



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



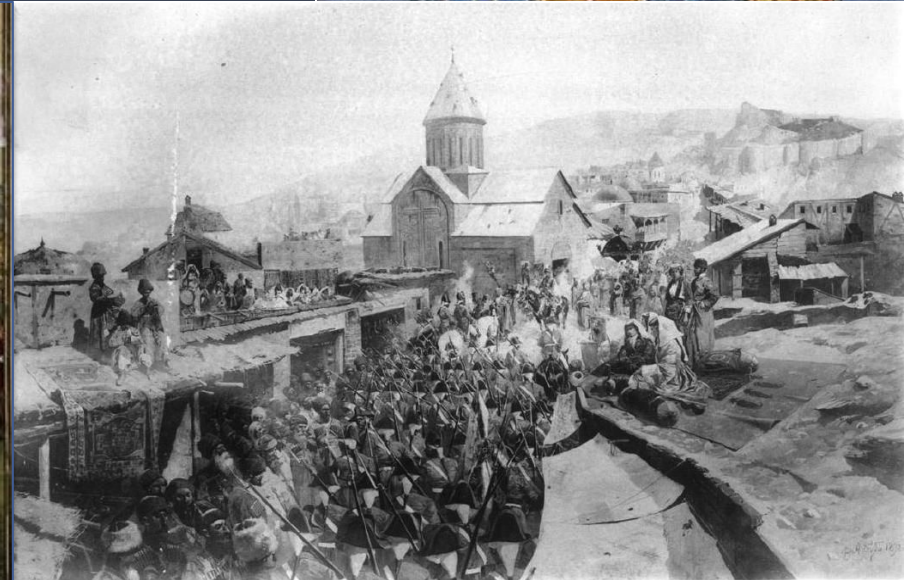
THE LONG & SHORT OF THE BIG-H HISTORY:



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

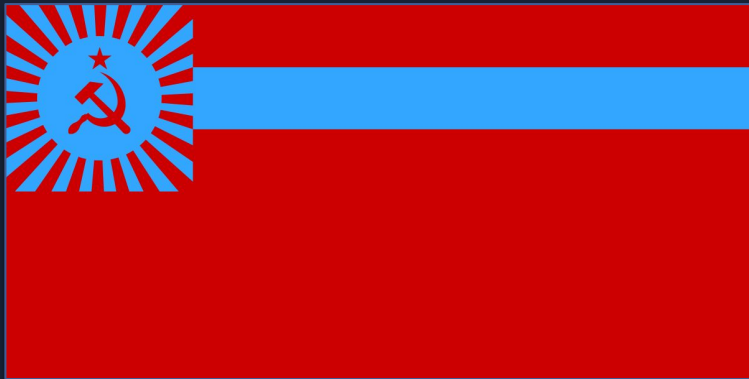
1992 CIVIL WAR & AFTERMATH

2006 RUSSIAN EMBARGO ON GEORGIAN WINE *

2008 BORDER WAR IN S OSSETIA (WITH RUSSIA)



MARCHERS IN TBILISI, 1991



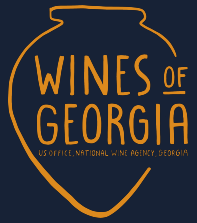
FLAG OF THE GEORGIAN SSR



MARCHERS IN TBILISI, 2021

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

WINE IN THE 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



VITICULTURE, VINIFICATION & OTHER PRACTICES OF GEORGIAN WINE



HISTORICAL CHALLENGES & RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

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

...A VIBRANT MOVEMENT IS UNDERWAY TO REFOCUS AND PROPAGATE.

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, SO₂

LINK TO HISTORIC IMPORTANCE OF HOME WINEMAKING AT SMALL SCALES



A photograph of a wine cellar with rows of wooden barrels. The barrels are made of light-colored wood with metal hoops. They are stacked on wooden pallets. The cellar has white walls and a concrete floor. There are some labels on the barrels, including one that says "TBILVINO".

THE INTERNATIONAL STYLE

USE OF STEEL & OAK FOR FERMENTATION & AGING

USE OF SELECTED YEASTS, TEMP. CONTROL

LIMITED USE OF SKIN MACERATION FOR WHITES

FINING/FILTRATION

THE FUTURE: MIDDLE PATHS

HYBRID APPLICATION OF WINEMAKING TECHNOLOGIES

EMPHASIS ON GEORGIAN TYPICITY

FOCUS ON SOUNDNESS & STABILITY



FLIGHT I: FIRST STEP WINES

TELAVI WINE CELLAR

MTSVANE 'MARANI' 2019

KAKHETI

SCHUCHMANN WINES

SAPERAVI 'PIROSMANI' 2019

KAKHETI



TELAVI WINE CELLAR

MTSVANE 'MARANI' 2019

TELAVI, KAKHETI

WINEMAKER: ZURAB RAMAZASHVILI

FRUIT SOURCED FROM FROM KONDOLI AND NE KAKHETI
100% MTSVANE, HAND-HARVESTED
8HR MACERATION INTO STEEL
LONG, COLD FERMENTATION
MSRP: \$12





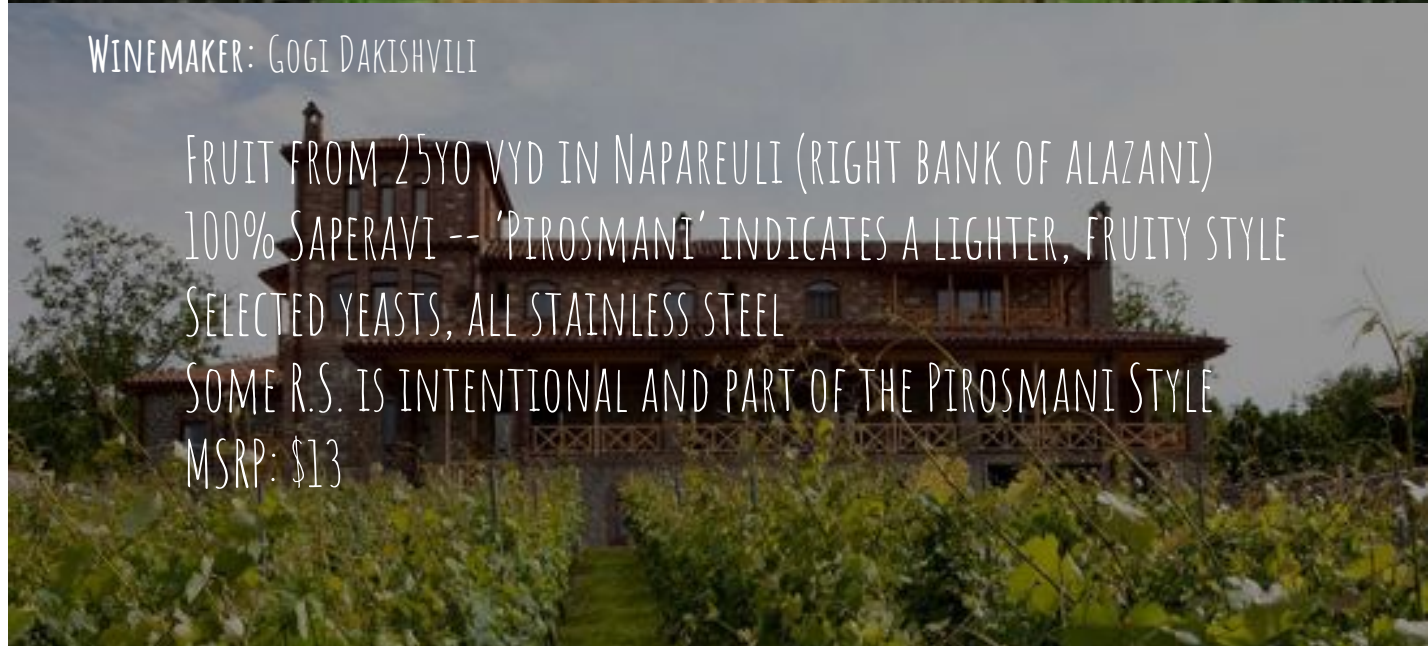
SCHUCHMANN WINES

SAPERAVI 'PIROSMANI' 2019

NAPAREULI, KAKHETI

WINEMAKER: GOGI DAKISHVILI

FRUIT FROM 25YO VYD IN NAPAREULI (RIGHT BANK OF ALAZANI)
100% SAPERAVI -- 'PIROSMANI' INDICATES A LIGHTER, FRUITY STYLE
SELECTED YEASTS, ALL STAINLESS STEEL
SOME R.S. IS INTENTIONAL AND PART OF THE PIROSMANI STYLE
MSRP: \$13



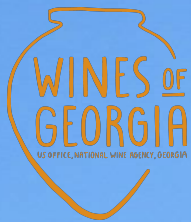
A BIT ABOUT SAPERAVI

MOST WIDELY-PLANTED RED GRAPE, ONE OF THE OLDEST CULTIVARS

MEANS 'DYED' - TEINTURIER VARIETY

HIGH ACID & HIGH TANNIN

FOUNDATION OF SEVERAL HISTORICALLY-IMPORTANT APPELLATION WINES



FLIGHT II: A STEP UP

TELIANI VALLEY (WINERY 97)
TSOLIKOURI 2019

LECHKHUMI

GUARDIANS
SAPERAVI RESERVE 2017
KAKHETI



TELIANI VALLEY WINERY (WINERY 97)

TSOLIKOURI 2019

LECHKHUMI

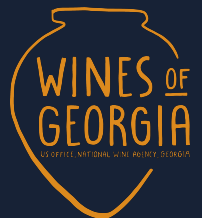
WINEMAKER: TEMURI DAKISHVILI

FRUIT SOURCED FROM VINEYARDS AROUND LECHKHUMI

100% TSOLIKOURI

FERMENTATION IN STAINLESS, NO MALOLACTIC

MSRP: \$16



A BIT ABOUT TSOLIKOURI

CORNERSTONE WHITE GRAPE OF THE WEST

RELATIVELY HIGH YIELDING, LATE RIPENING

DISEASE RESISTANT

YELLOW-FRUITED, LOWISH ACIDITY, MEDIUM- TO FULL-BODIED

OFTEN BLENDED WITH TSITSKA AND/OR KRAKHUNA



TELIANI VALLEY WINERY (GUARDIANS)

SAPERAVI RESERVE 2017

TELAVI, KAKHETI

WINEMAKER: TEMURI DAKISHVILI

FRUIT SOURCED FROM MUKUZANI DISTRICT (RIGHT BANK)

100% SAPERAVI

AGED IN FRENCH OAK FOR 9 MOS

MSRP: \$15



FLIGHT III: BEACON WINES

ORGO
KISI 2019
KAKHETI

ORGO
SAPERAVI 2019
KAKHETI



ORGO

KISI 2019

TELAVI DISTRICT, KAKHETI

WINEMAKER: GIORGI DAKISHVILI

FRUIT SOURCED FROM SINGLE 50YO PARCEL

100% KISI, SUSTAINABLY FARMED

SPONTANEOUS FERMENTATION, FULL MALO

6 MOS MACERATION WITH FULL SKINS (STEMS VARY BY VTG)

MSRP: \$25





ORGO

SAPERAVI 2019

TELAVI DISTRICT, KAKHETI

WINEMAKER: GEORGI DAKISHVILI



SOURCED FROM 70YO PARCELS IN KURDGELAURI & TSINANDALI (RB)

100% SAPERAVI, SUSTAINABLY FARMED

SPONTANEOUS FERMENTATION

30-DAY MACERATION THEN 2 MOS IN QVEVRI, 2 MOS IN STAINLESS

MSRP: \$25





CIRCLING BACK...

WHAT IS GEORGIAN WINE?







NOW

NEW WINE FESTIVAL - TBILISI 2018



FOR MORE INFORMATION

- VISIT WINES OF GEORGIA'S HOMEPAGE: WWW.WINESGEORGIA.COM
- READ ANY OF THESE BOOKS:
 - LISA GRANIK'S THE WINES OF GEORGIA
 - MIQUEL HUDIN'S GEORGIA: A GUIDE TO THE CRADLE OF WINE
 - ALICE FEIRING'S FOR THE LOVE OF WINE
 - CARLA CAPALBO'S TASTING GEORGIA (A GREAT RESOURCE FOCUSED ON THE FOOD!)

AND MOST IMPORTANTLY...

THIS PRESENTATION WAS DEVELOPED AND PRODUCED BY WHOLE CLUSTER CONSULTING & MARQ WINE GROUP FOR THE NATIONAL WINE AGENCY

The background of the entire image is a photograph of a tall, narrow, grey rock formation rising vertically from a dense green forest. At the very top of the rock, there is a small, square, stone building with a red-tiled roof. The sky above is blue with large, white, fluffy clouds. In the distance, rolling green hills and mountains are visible under the same sky.

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

CONTACT WINES OF GEORGIA AND LET THEM KNOW YOU'RE INTERESTED.