



WINE TOURISM
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Editor's note

Wine knowledge

Wine learning can be many thing, but it's always a journey. Whatever you want only to be able to speak about basics wine aromas with friends or that you want to embark in the master of wine program, it's all start with your first glass. I personally choose to learn everything I can about it and that all started around 10 years ago. I use to drink for pleasure with friends but one day everything change with a glass of Chianti.

There are several schools that teach about wine, but the most recognized is clearly WSET (Wine & Spirit Education Trust). They offer multiple level of knowledge form basics tasting (level 1) to advance (Diploma). A definitive study of everything wine: from the vines to the glass, passing by the labelling process and selling it. Here we are Joanie Metivier and myself takes a new step to our trip. We have partnered with the respected school of Commonwealth Wine School in Boston to complete the WSET Diploma program in the next years. We will allow you to follow our adventures, our ups and downs, on social platforms. I hope this will motivate you to continue learning. Whether with friends, following our adventures or registering for one of the courses given by Commonwealth Wine School. Please raise your glasses to the finest of pleasures...wine.



Michael mcduff - Editor in chief



I smelled some aromas, sour Cherries, and I ask myself : How many different aromas you can find in wine? After a quick search on the internet, I find that the possibilities are almost limitless. That was it. How is that possible? How its works? From that day I start learning and learning.

Written by JOANIE METTIER

173

Casa 173
Grădina
1988
76 sticle

176

Casa 176
Negru de Mădăraț
1987
826 sticle

UNDERGROUND MOLDOVA

Moldova is an ancient winemaking country rich in unique tradition and discoveries. I'm sure when you think about wine, the first thing that comes into mind might not be Moldova, but the truth is, this country could literally be described as a sea of wine. The scale of Moldovan winemaking is so great that it is considered the biggest industry of the whole country and it has the highest number of vines per capita worldwide as well as some of the world's largest cellars. No wonder, when you speak to a Moldovan about wine, they will show you the most genuine pride you'll ever see.



History

The culture of wine in Moldova goes back a very long way, thousands of years ago kind of long. However, wine production has passed through various stages of development which has truly shaped the Moldovan wine business.

The most significant step in History is probably the Soviet era when Moldova was the main wine supplier on the Russian market. With the strategic location of the country and already great importance of the agriculture industry, Moldova was the perfect wine ally. Not long after the vines started to recover from the invasion of phylloxera, Moldovan became by 1982, the 6th largest producer in the World. However, producing wine for the Russian market meant a never-ending necessity of large quantity over quality. Crops were pulled in favor of higher yielding grapes, mostly hybrids and there was no time for ageing or proper vinification. You can still see vestige of the infinite amount of large steel and concrete tanks from that era when traveling and visiting producers.





The next step in history involves a prohibition era. On May 16, 1985, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR issued the Decree "On measures to eradicate drunkenness and alcoholism and production of homemade spirits", quickly followed by a by massive destruction of vineyards. Now, it's easier to understand why a country that has a bigger proportion of its land covered with vineyards than any other country, is not better known for it's wines.

It was only in 1991, with gaining its independance, that Moldovan wine Industry was able to rebuilt itself. Even then Russian stayed the biggest export market and wines were made to favor the Russian palate, with sweeter wines mostly. Until another event hit the market. In March 2006, the Russian Federation imposed an embargo on the import of wines from the Republic of Moldova, valid for almost two years, which led to loss of access of Moldovan winemakers to the Russian wine market, representing 80% of Moldovan alcoholic beverages.

The producers were forced to either look for other export markets or go Bankrupt, which many did. Devious work and investments were put into updating winemaking materials and learning more about the international market. While they may appear late to the game, Moldovan producers are incredibly dynamic and shows know-how and passion. Their roots runs deep and winemaking is still one of the priority for the country. Probably even more now than ever. Today Moldovan counts 50 different export markets, and a total of 338 wineries. The Republic of Moldova has an area of 112 thousand ha of vineyards, planted with over 50 technical grape varieties. Now, the country's wine industry is working hard to sell its wares around the world, with a new generation of winemakers focusing on quality not quantity. As well as the classic international grape varieties, Moldova is rightly proud of its indigenous varieties such as red grapes Feteasca Neagra and Rara Neagra, and white variety Viorica.



While on land you can see vines as far as the eye can see, perfectly straight-aligned, state-of-the-art winemaking facilities, gigantic steel tanks and bottling lines that could make any small winemakers jealous, dare to step underground and its another world.

The biggest estates in Moldova are the two state-owned Cricova and Milestii Mici. They both have impressive underground wine cellars. These are actually ancient stone quarries that were turned into "wine factories" during the Soviet period, in the 1960s. These hundred of kilometers of tunnels have won the title of biggest wine collection in the world.

Visitors and tourists comes in masses to visit these collections. You actually have to take a train to do the tour because it would be too long by foot and maybe a bit too creepy in the dark also.

While these are the bigger version, all wineries have some sort of remnants of another time. At Asconi Winery, they have old bottles stored at the estate and no way of knowing exactly what they contain. Rare and unique relic of a different past such as handled-shaped bottles of 1994 mystery wines. Other special finds are hidden in the spectacular secret cellar of Castel Mimi, one of the most beautiful and modern estate

in Moldova. When you go down underground, the secret cellar hides the oldest wine collection in the country, you can also found centuries-old precious Rose Oil flasks that have been perfectly preserved. The beautiful stoned wine cellar was once covered in tiles, from the soviet era, communist decision didn't always make sense and they needed at the time to use these tiles so they did layers of it for nothing in the cellars. It took a lot of time and labor to find out these tiles were ruining the whole environment and aeration of the cellars and had to be taken all out.

Often an harmony of incredible finds and rarity as well as soviet residue of the past, underground Moldova is vast and rich in discoveries and exciting finds.

PURCARI

Written by
Joanie Metivier



Purcari Winery is one of the oldest and most prestigious wine producers in Moldova, with a history that dates back to the 19th century. The winery is located in the Purcari village, in the south-eastern part of the country, in a region that has been renowned for winemaking for centuries.

Purcari Winery is famous for its high-quality wines, which are made from traditional grape varieties and aged in oak barrels.

The winery's flagship wine is the Negru de Purcari, a red wine made from a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and Rara Neagra grapes.



This wine is considered one of the best wines in Moldova, with a rich aroma of blackberries, spices, and vanilla, and a long, elegant finish. The Negru de Purcari has won numerous awards and accolades, including a gold medal at the prestigious Decanter World Wine Awards.

It's a gem of a wine that not only succeed in showing the potential of the region in term of quality but also express Moldovan authenticity and style.

In addition to the Negru de Purcari, Purcari Winery produces a range of other high-quality wines, including high quality, traditional method, elegant and precise sparkling wines.

All of the winery's wines are made from grapes grown in the Purcari vineyards, which cover an area of over 250 hectares.

Purcari Winery is also renowned for its commitment to quality and innovation in winemaking.



The winery uses modern techniques to ensure the highest quality of its wines, while also preserving the traditional methods of winemaking that have been used in Moldova for centuries.

CASTEL MIMI

Written by
Joanie Metivier



Castell Mimi has a rich history that dates back to the late 19th century. The winery was originally founded in 1893 by Constantin Mimi, a prominent politician and winemaker in the region. Mimi was passionate about wine and wanted to create a winery that would produce high-quality wines that could compete with the best in Europe.

The winery thrived under Mimi's leadership, and his wines quickly gained a reputation for their exceptional quality. Castell Mimi's wines were served at royal courts and were awarded numerous prizes at international wine competitions.

However, the winery's success was short-lived. In 1940, Moldova was annexed by the Soviet Union, and Castell Mimi was nationalized. The winery was renamed "Kolkhoz 1 Mai" and was run by the state for several decades. During this time, the winery's production methods and quality suffered, and its wines lost their reputation.

In 1991, Moldova gained its independence from the Soviet Union, and Castell Mimi was returned to the Mimi family. However, the winery was in a state of disrepair, and much of its infrastructure had been destroyed.



Constantin Mimi's great-grandson, Constantin Vinohodovschi, took on the daunting task of restoring the winery to its former glory. Vinohodovschi invested heavily in the winery, rebuilding its facilities, replanting its vineyards, and implementing modern winemaking techniques. He also commissioned the construction of a stunning new winery building, inspired by the traditional architecture of the region.



Today, Castell Mimi is one of the most successful wineries in Moldova, known for its exceptional wines and beautiful surroundings. The winery has won numerous awards and has gained a reputation as a leading producer of high-quality wines in Eastern Europe. Castell Mimi remains a family-owned business, with Vinohodovschi's daughter, Anastasia, and General manager Adrian Trofim now leading the winery into the future.

Castell Mimi's diverse range of wines caters to different tastes and occasions. The winery's wines can be grouped into several distinct ranges, each with a unique character and flavor profile. One of their premium range is called the Governor. The Governor is a premium range of wines that are made in limited quantities and are only released in exceptional vintages. These wines are complex, and layered, and offer a higher level of refinement and sophistication.

On another note, the animalien wines are young wines with fresh and persistent characters. Wines that express the lively and abundant nature of the Moldovan land. Each label depicts the image of an animal from local Moldovan folklore and legends. The colorful symbols represent wine bouquets, and patterns from traditional Moldovan carpets and pay homage to historical places, beliefs, and events. A simple way to discover local varieties such as Saperavi or Feteasca Alba.

The touristic offer of Castell Mimi is the most tailored in the whole country. Castell Mimi offers a range of touristic activities for visitors to experience the winery and the beauty of the Moldovan countryside. From winery tours, to visit the vineyards and beautiful barrel room to wine tastings and Moldovan elevated culinary offers, there are lots to do.

Castell Mimi has also a beautiful event space that can be rented for weddings, corporate events, and other special occasions as well as several guest rooms and suites that are available for overnight stays. The rooms are beautifully appointed and offer views of the winery with luxury comfort.

The establishment was included in the list of the top 15 most beautiful wineries in the world, for its historical and architectural property.



ARIZONA



UNEXPECTED VINES: THE WINE ROUTES OF ARIZONA

BY MARIÈVE ISABEL

Who would have thought that amongst the cacti and the tumble weeds of the Sonoran Desert grew healthy vines, producing some great chardonnay and malbec? Intertwined with the history of the Cochise, Apache, and Navajo Nations, this territory promises unexpected surprises for those braves enough to adventure themselves under the hot desert sun.

Arid Landscape Creates Harsh Challenges

Arizona is not your typical wine country, or so it seems. With its arid and semi-arid climate, this part of the world receives only 3 to 40 inches of rain annually, depending on the location. To complicate matters further, Arizona has suffered a long-term drought for the past 20 years, which has dried up most lakes and rivers.

Drought is not the only challenge. Extremely hot days is another one. Day temperatures average between 60 °F in the winter and a whopping 115 °F in the hottest areas of the state during the summer. Moreover, for the past few years, Arizona's climate has been affected by environmental changes. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Arizonian climate has already risen by 2.5 °F during the 20th century. Droughts, extreme heat waves, and wildfires happen more frequently than ever, posing threat to the local ecosystems, including the vineyards.





TASTING ROOMS AND LOCAL MARKET

Despite these serious roadblocks, vines have flourished in the southwestern part of this state for the past 50 years, thanks to a few factors. First, in the South, where 80% of the grapes grow, a series of mountain ranges – many of which separate The United States and Mexico – provide higher altitude where vines can be cultivated. There, most vineyards are planted between 3 400 and 5 500 feet above sea level on slopes facing East, helping to counteract the heat of the summer days. These mountains also generate cool air currents gliding down their slopes over the vineyards. Second, these high peaks also provide, at least for now, water from melting snow throughout the warmer season. The monsoons running from June until September provide the other main water supply needed to keep the vines healthy during the growing season. As for irrigation, it often comes as a necessity, especially since the drought still looms over. Third, the difference of temperatures between days and nights, typically important in every desertic region, allow the wines to stay cool during the night. These essential variations in temperatures, combined with good vines canopy management, keep the grapes from maturing too rapidly. Thanks to these climatic and geographic characteristics, over 30 wineries have taken up the challenge of growing grapes in one of the three American Viticultural Area (AVA) found in Arizona: Willcox and Sonoita-Elgin, where most of the grapes cultivated in the state grow, and the Valley Verde, up north, where one can find many tasting rooms but also some vineyards.

GROWING VINES DESPITE EVERYTHING

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WHAT TO VISIT?

Amongst the many vineyards worth the detour, some shine brighter than others. While some people may like the commodity of the tasting rooms usually aligned in the main street, wine aficionado will prefer to visit the vineyard, where the vines can be seen in some breathtaking landscapes. The visits are usually limited to a tasting room, although some vineyards offer tours. Not many of them have restaurants, but the ones who do take pride in serving good wine pairing charcuterie boards and more.

In Willcox, one will not want to miss Pillsbury, one of the oldest and best wine producers in Arizona. For \$20, guests will taste many wines in a laid-back atmosphere. At Bird and Barrels Vineyards, visitors can adopt a vine for \$25 and visit it whenever they want. Another spot not to be missed is Coronado Vineyards, the only African American and Indigenous owned vineyard in Arizona. Not only their wines are superb, but they are also the only vineyard in the area to offer food. They are many more places to see, so a well-planned day trip is preferable.

The same advice goes for Sonoita-Elgin, where many great vineyards are also welcoming wine lovers. Deep Sky Vineyards has a beautiful modern glassed tasting room overlooking the vineyards, ready to welcome visitors. Close by, Flying Leaps Vineyards and Distillery offers a quaint décor and a vast tasting room with wooden barrels on display. It's also the only distillery around. Dos Cabezas WineWorks, Callaghan Vineyards, and Rune Wines should also be part of any trip to Elgin.

Lastly, the Verde Valley region also have smaller vineyards where picnics are in order, such as the beautiful Page Springs Cellars. Merkin Vineyards' tasting room is not to be missed; it serves a famous prickly pear infused mac & cheese. Because of its proximity to Sedona and the Grand Canyon, this region is better equipped to welcome visitors. A longer stay is possible thanks to the numerous accommodations found in the area.

TO KNOW MORE

To know more about the wines of Arizona, or to plan a visit, the brochure *Savoring Arizona* provides visitors with useful maps and itineraries, as well as all the contact information one needs to plan a visit.

Lastly, the magistral book *Arizona Uncorked: The Arizona Wine Guide* is another must. This six-pound monumental volume covers all three AVA while providing plenty of useful details about the vineyards, their stories, and their people, on top of containing amazing pictures from Jenelle Bonifield, the initiator of the project. This book is a great piece to add to any wine book collector or wine lover thinking about visiting Arizona and its wine regions.



THE ICONIC ALPHONSE MELLOT

A TRUE SHOWCASE OF THE SANCERRE TERROIR

ARTICLE BY CLAUDE LALONDE



"Incredible" is the most commonly used word during this visit, for the uniqueness of the place, the organic and biodynamic philosophy that underlies the development of the wines, and the wines themselves that optimize and transmit all that the Sancerre terroir has to offer.

Sancerre, one of the most beautiful medieval villages in France, is located just over 2 hours' drive south of Paris. Its truly narrow medieval streets, its breathtaking viewpoint (at 310 meters altitude) over the Sancerrois, and its well-preserved ancient citadel are worth the detour. Sancerre's tourist infrastructure is superbly developed and is primarily based on wine, gastronomy, and the visit of the medieval citadel. It also includes the visit of the great Pyramidale, the House of Sancerre, and the farms and goat farms that produce Crottin de Chavignol cheese.

Of course, there is the essential Grand Sancerrois wine route. In fact, the Sancerre vineyard extends over 14 communes (Bannay, Bué, Crézancy, Menetou-Ratel, Ménétréol, Montigny, St-Satur, Ste Gemme, Sancerre, Sury en Vaux, Thauvenay, Veaugues, Verdigny, Vinon) and 2,800 hectares. It overlooks the Loire from its "piton" and offers an incredible panorama: magnificent hills perfectly suited to the vine, well-oriented, exposed, and protected.

Around Sancerre, a whole set of villages and hamlets located between the slopes unfolds. Chavignol, Ménétréol-sous-Sancerre, or Amigny. So many small localities with charming streets and squares that are worth a visit.

For nineteen generations, knowledge has been passed down from father to son, all named the same. Continuing this tradition, Alphonse Senior (the 18th) recently gave way to Alphonse Junior (the 19th) and his daughter Emmanuelle. Since 2005, the siblings have taken on the challenge of managing the Domaine des Pénitents, located 35 kilometers from Sancerre.

All the cellars were built by hand. None of them are of troglodyte origin. The house operates 57 hectares of vineyards in Sancerre and 18 hectares in Côtes de la Charité, which is the ancestor of Pouilly with its Cistercian monks who began planting on limestone soils long ago. As they say, great wines can only be made on limestone soils with billions of years of marine deposits where everything is assimilable in the wine. This is not the case with flint, granite, or schist soils. In Sancerre, it is very limestone with a Burgundian character, unlike Pouilly.

On limestone, the slightest rain is retained by the microporosity of the limestone. These are good terroirs that can retain water. Limestone is osmotic. If you know how to make the roots dive, they will go and fetch their nutrients up to 10-15m. They will go and fetch the geological memory. That's what makes the wine interesting.

At Alphonse Mellot's, wood is used judiciously in all its formats. There is a multitude of containers that cannot be found anywhere else, which is astonishing. These containers range from 12 to 15 hl up to 80 hl. Unusually, they work with egg-shaped barrels that were made specifically for the house. They have the property of creating a vortex during malolactic conversion. Amphoras and rectangular-shaped barrels made by companions can also be found in this cellar. The highlight of the visit is a completely round barrel, the first in the world, that can be rocked in all directions. The cuvée is called "20,000 feet under Sancerre."

What is surprising during this visit is the incredible number of tanks of different sizes. The vinification is parcelled out. Up to two vinification tanks can be used for the same plot, and everything is bottled plot by plot.

Sauvignon and Riesling are ampelographic brothers and the two best grape varieties for great whites. Mellot do not carry out malolactic conversion with these varieties, which require very good maturity. They were telling this 25 years ago, and everyone was laughing. Now, no one is laughing anymore. These are wines that age well. Alphonse Junior found 6 bottles from 1959. If well kept, we will find truffled and slightly petrol aromas, like Riesling, especially if they come from limestone soils."

All fermentations are carried out under wood except for La Moussière, of which 50% is vinified in cement tanks. A grand cru or a lieu-dit or a climat comes from a terroir that is easily recognizable, such as the soils of La Moussière.



SANCERRE
Alphonse Mellot
VIGNERONS DE PÈRE EN FILS
DEPUIS 1513



Oslavia: a tiny wine enclave with its signature grape *ribolla gialla*

Article by : *Filippo magnani*

In a tiny corner of north-eastern Italy, a small war-torn region has given rise to a truly special place for producing unique wines. Home to just 150 inhabitants the village of Oslavia is just a short walk from the Slovenian border. From the village you can see the surrounding vineyards and a giant war memorial in memory of the many battles fought here during WWI. In fact, its strategic location would force the area to be divided between the two countries for more than 70 years. It wasn't until the fall of the Iron Curtain that these two cultures began to heal and grow. Now most of the road signs are written in both Italian and Slovenian. The local traditions and the food and wine are also a testimony to their unique blend of cultures. So, it is perhaps no surprise that this land has also attracted some of the most revolutionary and strong-minded winemakers who show a profound respect for this land.

The distinct climate and soil give rise to unique wines

Hidden in the eastern foothills of the Collio wine region, Oslavia's location was not only strategic in battles, but it is also ideally located between the Alps and the Adriatic Sea. The Alps protect it from the cold winds from the north while the Adriatic helps to moderate temperatures.



The Oslavia hills are around 150 -190 metres and represent a very heterogeneous environment as far as temperatures, exposure and orientation of the slopes are concerned. This special place also benefits from two other key ingredients: the "Bora" winds and the "Ponca" soil.



The Oslavia hills are around 150 -190 metres and represent a very heterogeneous environment as far as temperatures, exposure and orientation of the slopes are concerned. This special place also benefits from two other key ingredients: the “Bora” winds and the “Ponca” soil. The Bora is a north-easterly wind that sweeps down through the Isonzo River Valley providing proper ventilation for the grapes and a healthy range in temperatures between day and night. This diurnal shift ensures the grapes do not ripen too quickly, allowing their flavour compounds to develop fully. The Ponca is a type of soil in the Collio region typically known to produce elegant wines. Formed 45 million years ago under the sea it is a blend of marl and sandstone that is low in fertility but rich in mineral content due to its marine origins. Concentrations of Ponca can vary drastically from one vineyard location to the next, offering an incredible array of wines depending also on the type of vine planted in it. These variations in soil are one of the reasons why Oslavia is defined as a distinct wine area.

Ribolla Gialla: the signature grape of Oslavia

The Ribolla Gialla grape has become synonymous with Oslavia wines precisely because it thrives in this terroir. Known as “Rebula” just across the border in Slovenia, Ribolla Gialla is an ancient variety with thick skins and long but compact grape clusters. It needs good ventilation from the Bora winds and prefers lower fertility soils like Ponca which helps concentrate the flavours but also provides a distinct minerality. Because of the unique combination of soil and climate producers here believe that Ribolla Gialla expresses its best qualities in Oslavia which is why it has become the signature grape of the region. With its high acidity it will produce light, floral and crisp wines if made with little or no skin contact. However, if fermented and macerated with the skins for longer periods such as in Oslavia, the wine takes on more structure, soft tannin, and flavours from Ribolla’s thick skins. This produces a completely different style of wine that can have deeper colours from golden yellow to amber. These white wines made with extended skin contact are broadly referred to as “orange” wines, a term that can be confusing to some. This is why many proponents prefer to call them “skin-contact wines”. Other native and international grapes are grown in the region as well. For native whites you will find Tocai and Malvasia whereas the native reds showcased by producers are mainly Refosco, Tazzellenche, Schiopettino and Ribolla Rosso. Some producers also use international grapes like Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Pinot Grigio, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Merlot.

A secret spot for an authentic wine vacation

Just a short drive from Venice and Trieste airports, Oslavia is a great place to start your exploration of the Friuli-Venezia Giulia wine region. Follow the Soca River as it winds its way up from the Adriatic to the town of Gorizia nestled against the foothills of the Julian Alps. Its 11th-century castle and alluring palaces earned the town a reputation as the “Austrian Nice”. The vibrant market, restaurants, and cafes have plenty to offer those in search of local specialties. Take some time to explore the beautifully preserved castle and the Coronini Cronberg Palace where King Charles X, the last king of France, stayed and then died. Then it’s a 10-minute drive into the heart of the wine country, where it’s easy to visit small, family-run wineries and their vineyards. Many offer agritourism experiences with B&B accommodation and/or home-cooked meals. Most welcome visits if arranged in advance. The producer’s association APRO has created a self-guided walking tour called the “orange bench trail” which connects all 7 winery members. The trail is marked by orange circles and one orange bench per winery. This orange bench trail is an open invitation, as open as the acronym for the producer’s association itself APRO, which literally translated means “I open”. Not only do the producers open their doors and bottles of wine to visitors, but they also open their minds and their hearts. There is respect for the past and a vision for the future. The trail is an open invitation to reflect not only on these but also on the landscape in front of you and the earth under your feet. For those wanting to learn more about Oslavia’s strategic role in World War I, you can visit the impressive Sacratio di Oslavia. Built like an imposing fortress, this ossuary is a memorial to the over 50,000 Italian soldiers who fell during the battles of Isonzo. It stands on a 150-meter hill and was inaugurated by Benito Mussolini in 1938. Each October wine travelers and enthusiasts from all over the world come together to participate in RibolliAMO, a play on words in Italian essentially meaning “We love Ribolla”. This event went from being an exclusive gathering for just a handful of journalists to an international destination open to all. It was designed to be a multifaceted event with Oslavia at its center. An Orange Symposium was held with many speakers bringing together wine experts, published authors, and journalists as well as a cinema director. Its rich program included a screening of the documentary “Call it Amber” and a guided tour of the Orange Benches by a naturalist and history expert.



United friends with different visions

Oslavia and its producers are credited for bringing fine wine produced with Ribolla Gialla to prominence. Not only did they recognize the land as an ideal terroir for this grape, but they were inspired by their ancestors’ winemaking techniques. In the late 1990s two pioneers, Joško Gravner and Stanko Radikon started to experiment with techniques such as fermentation on the skins for longer periods using only native yeasts, no use of sulfites during the winemaking process, and aging in large amphoras. Several other producers started experimenting in the same area, each with their own strong personalities and their own styles and determination. However, they all agree on a couple of key elements: The Oslavia terroir is the finest expression of Ribolla Gialla answering diligently to each producer’s way of thinking. So, they let nature do what it does best with as little intervention as possible in the winemaking process. Today there are 7 producers in Oslavia that make up the Ribolla of Oslavia Producers’ Association (APRO). The association was founded in 2010 founded from a desire to protect the territory, its land, and its people. Their symbol is the “orange grape” and their goal is to continually invest in the people and land they live in.



Fiegl

Their mission is to tell a story about the Oslavia territory using wine as the means of expression and to continuously invest in the cultivation of their vines to improve their quality. Founded by three brothers Alessio, Giuseppe, and Rinaldo, the winery represents two generations of Fiegl's. The new generation of sons, Martin, Robert e Matej, have completed their oenology studies and bring new passion, enthusiasm, and innovation to the family business. Their approach to viticulture is to create the least environmental impact possible with respect for the vine's natural abilities. Vineyards are maintained with eco-friendly products, complete grass cover between rows and manual harvesting techniques.

Gravner

Joško Gravner is a third-generation winemaker, Slovene by heritage. The family first started bottling wine in 1973. Shortly afterward, Joško, then in his early twenties, took over. In 2014 he was joined by his daughter Mateja. In the 1990s Gravner pioneered a return to ancient winemaking in large amphoras buried underground. All their seeding, pruning, and harvest are done biodynamically according to the moon phases.



Il Carpino

Founded in 1987 by Franco Sosol who transformed his father-in-law Silvio's small bulk wine operation into today's estate. Originally an automobile repairman Franco picked up winemaking in his spare time from watching Silvio. Now he is joined by his wife Anna and children Naike and Manuel. Over the years they have grown their estate to include 40 acres of vineyards. They produce only white wines.

La Castellanda

Named after a hill in Oslavia, La Castellanda was founded in 1985 by Giorgio e Nicolò Bensa who decided to develop their father Giuseppe's bulk wine production and dedicate themselves fully to winemaking. Since 2009 Nicolò's sons Matteo and Stefano have joined the team. They practice complete vineyard grassing to promote biodiversity.





Dario Princic

He started his winery in 1993. Before that Dario sold his grapes to local wineries. From 1988 he hasn't use any chemicals in his vineyards, he started to only use natural fertilizers (cow and horse manure) and copper and sulfur for the spray treatments. In 1999 he started to experiment the maceration of grapes in part of the production, the year after he decided to do it in the whole production. Now the winery is over 10 hectares, all his vineyards are exposed to the southeast.

Primosic

The Primosic family winemaking dates back to Carlo Primosic, who, at the end of the 19th century, supplied wine merchants from the southern Austro-Hungarian Empire. In the 1950's they began their own private sales and in 1964 Carlos's son Silvan was the first to bottle their wine which gained Italian and international recognition after only a few years. The Collio Consortium was founded in 1967, of which Silvan was one of the first members. It is not by coincidence the "Number One" bottle from the Consortium is from the Primosic cellars. Today his two children Marko and Boris run the winery, maintaining the focus on the native and traditional varieties of the area, and striving for a style that favours clear, precise fruit aromas, intense flavours and overall balance.



Radikon

In 1980 Stanko Radikon bottled his first vintage from vines planted by his grandfather. In 1995 he was one of the first winemakers in the region to start macerating his Ribolla on the skins just like his grandfather did. Through experimentation maceration times increased as did and the types of wines macerated on the skins. Today all their wines are macerated for 3 months with the least human intervention possible and with the maximum respect for the soils and nature. After Stanko's passing in 2016, the winery is run now by his wife Suzana and their children Saša and Ivana.

Château St. Agnès Winery



A Gem of Quebec's Eastern Townships

BY Kristine Mansuy

You must have heard about the famous winery in Quebec where Adele filmed her video clip “Easy on Me”? On the flank of the hills of Mount Sutton in the township of Glenn Sutton (just a few kilometers from the U.S. border) resides the 173-acre property of Château Ste. Agnès. Historically known as Chapelle Ste. Agnès, the winery is one of Quebec’s most beautiful sites with its unique architectural design and breathtaking landscape. A true gem of Quebec’s Eastern Townships!

Founded by Henrietta Antony in 1997, the vineyard was named after a stone chapel built several years earlier on the same site and dedicated to Saint Agnès, a thirteenth-century Bohemian saint. The impressive estate spans 2 acres of vines and is home to two private residences, a Castle with two private suites, a Romanesque chapel, a wine Boutique, and an underground medieval cellar with a tasting room.

It was recently bought by a group of three dynamic friends: Alex Surdu, Steffany Grew and Julien Lavallée who share the same passion for wine and gastronomy. The site inspires them to create outstanding events and offer world-class culinary experiences as well as providing high-end hospitality in a welcoming environment.

THE WINES

They currently offer 4 wines including one Dry White Wine made from Vidal (one of Quebec's most prominent hybrid grapes), a Rosé Blend made from Vidal, Petite Pearl and Marquette, one Port-inspired Fortified Wine, and an Ice Wine (that won many wine awards including silver and bronze medals at the International Wine and Spirit (IWSC) Competition in London).



All of the wines are easy to drink and food-friendly made exclusively with local hybrid varieties that can adapt to Quebec's vigorous climate. Winemaking is done with the lowest intervention possible and with only the use of natural products. Production is very small, about 5,000 bottles per year.

Their goal is to keep an artisanal production and sell exclusively at the property and to specialized stores.



FARM TO VINE EXPERIENCE

This past October, I had the chance to experience their Farm to Vine culinary experience and to meet the co-owners Alex and Steffany. I hadn't been to the Estate in a few years and I was impressed by the new modern look of the winery and the re-branding of the wines. Everything is well thought out and decorated with style while still maintaining its old world cachet and mystical charms. As soon as I arrived on the property, I felt at peace and immersed in the beauty of the surroundings. The views from the vineyards (planted on stone terraces) and the mountains are ravishing and if you have the chance to visit them during the fall the colors are spectacular!

The Event started early during the day so we had the opportunity to visit the whole property, walk around the vineyards and enjoy a glass of wine with canapés prepared by our private chef. During the entire cocktail hour, guided tours were offered in both French and English. Unfortunately, the weather conditions didn't allow us to sit outside for dinner but we enjoyed the full indoor experience which was perfect for Thanksgiving weekend! A well-set table in the majestic dining room was waiting for us where the evening started with some live harp music followed by a 4-course meal made from fresh and local ingredients. My highlight of the dinner was their famous Ice Wine paired with a butternut squash marshmallow and maple cake dessert. I would definitely recommend the experience and if you reserve early, you might even have the chance to sleep on-site and try one of their private suites. Something I look forward to doing!

