



Schuchmann

Wines

Georgia



Dear Wine Lover:

It was a coincidence that during a transport-industry conference I attended in Berlin back in 2006 a number of colleagues drew my attention to Georgia. Months later I found myself traveling through this country for the first time in my life. As an industrial manager from the world of rail I was quite unprepared for the unspoilt natural beauty that greeted me. I vividly recall how quickly I developed close ties to the country and its people. Driven by my own enthusiasm and Georgian hospitality I dug deeper into this world of wines that for millenniums have been produced here.

Captivated by their quality I felt a need to draw attention beyond the boundaries of Georgia to both the traditional Georgian wines from Qvevris and those made to Western standards. For this dream to materialize a team of enthusiasts was necessary led by George Dakishvili, winemaker and inspiration of the entire project. He is, in fact, the third generation of his family to have embraced the profession. From a tender age closely conversant with winemaking he has over the years through training and experience acquired the skills and cultivated the art essential to the realization of the project. His proficiency will put us in a position to create premium quality wines.

We also wanted to give the country something in return for the support and friendship shown and so Schuchmann Wines got involved in setting up a three-year winemaking qualification project and introducing a related theoretical-cum-practical vocational training program.

Join us in Georgia and form an impression of your own! Or, as starters, simply sample our product from a country in which travelers are welcomed in a language they all understand — by a glass of wine.

Yours,

Burkhard Schuchmann



Georgia — a country infused by a spirit of change

Georgia lies where Europe and Asia meet. Its topography is varied and its history checkered. The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) counts the country among the 238 most important ecoregions on earth. With its sheltered valleys, Georgia has proven fertile in the development of plants and animal species that can be found nowhere else on the planet.

A country that can look back over some 7,000 years of winemaking tradition in a climate protected from gusts of cold northern air by the Caucasus and at the same time warmed by the Black Sea. The various climatic zones range from subtropical humid in the west to dry, temperate continental in the east.

Despite Georgia's many unresolved problems, Burkhard Schuchmann has a vision that European standards and quality assurance, coupled with Georgia's high-quality grape varieties, would yield wines to satisfy even the most demanding connoisseurs, wines that promise pure enjoyment, wines that stand for the new Georgia.



Georgia — an attempt at a description

Amid craggy mountains and nestled valleys, visitors can enjoy a myriad of features that make Georgia so unique. Colorful houses, carved doors and ornate wooden balconies are just as much a part of the country as is the bustling downtown of Tbilisi, evocative of Paris or Bucharest.



Omnipresent oases of natural tranquility and color contrast with urban vibrancy. In a wine tavern in the Georgian province of Kakheti, after a journey along bumpy, dusty country roads, visitors can enjoy traditional hospitality while savoring the wine of Georgia accompanied by grilled meat and sweet watermelon.

Quality assured and sustained through local education and ongoing training

Thanks to its indigenous grape varieties, Georgia today is able to create a wine with a character of its own — one that enjoys respect on the international market. The blend of Georgian wine tradition with Western quality standards was a top priority for Schuchmann Wines from day one.

The new degree course Sustainable Viticulture at the Jakob Gogebashvili Telavi State University has elevated university education to an international level with the support of Heilbronn University in Germany. By 2011, the Georgian wine industry will be employing its own enologists with at least six months' working experience abroad. Schuchmann Wines also offers internships.

The German-Georgian Professional Training project at Heilbronn University and the vocational training schools in Telavi and Kachreti will assist in raising formal training standards and emphasize their importance within the wine industry.

Schuchmann Wines is also helping to develop a three-year project for qualifying the vineyard owners and for theoretical-cum-practical training in Georgian viticulture.



Qvevri

Our wines, produced in amphorae, are an absolute rarity and the traditional embodiment of Georgian wine history in one. This wine production method has a thousand-year-old tradition in Georgia, but is only cultivated by a few vineyards today.

The clay amphorae (Qvevries) are sunk into the ground. The hand-picked grapes (the mash) are inserted into the amphora through the opening at the top and left to ferment for three to four weeks. The red wine mash is then removed and the wine separated from the grape skins and placed in small barrique barrels to mature further.

For white wine, the process is somewhat different. White wine is also fermented on top of the mash, which in itself is unusual, but once the fermentation process is complete, the amphora is sealed and the wine left to mature further in the clay container. This can take up to six months.



“Vinoterra”

Wine has shaped life in Georgia since time immemorial. Archaeological finds such as wine presses, jugs and wine vessels have proven that wine has played an important part in the lives and consciousness of the Georgians. Pips of cultivated grapes found near the city of Shulaveri have been dated at 7,000 years old.

Particular conditions are required to obtain a high-quality wine. The climate and method of wine production are extremely important. In the region of Telavi/Kakheti, there is a small village called Kisiskhevi. The people who live in this village are still proud today that the wine from Kisiskhevi was the favourite wine at the royal court. All the conditions needed to grow high-quality grapes exist here:



the climate, the location and fertile soil. Mariam Zurshvili, an old lady from Kisiskhevi, suffers neither from health problems nor from memory loss at the ripe old age of 96. Instead, she assures people that the secret of her health lies in the wine. Each day she drinks a glass of wine from the region with her evening meal and has always maintained that a good wine gives you energy and keeps you looking young.

People in the village often discuss the origin of the name Kisiskhevi. Some of the villagers are certain the name is derived from a powerful tribe and their leader named “Kiskisa”. Others claim that Kisiskhevi comes from a grape variety – the Kisi. Everyday life of the residents of Kisiskhevi revolves around wine



production and vine-growing. Almost all families have their small own vineyards and use traditional production methods. The main varieties of vine cultivated by the people of Kisiskhevi are Rkatsiteli, Saperavi, Mtsvane, Kisi and Khikhvi.

In 2002, a winemaker got together with a small group from Telavi to set up a company. They called it "Vinoterra". In 2008, Schuchmann Wines Georgia bought this company.

Experts are of the opinion that the grape varieties from Kisiskhevi are something special. This is due in part to the altitude of the village (660 m above sea level) and the contrast between day and night temperatures (in the first half of September, when the grapes are ripe, the temperature is around 25–30°C by day, while it drops to 15°C at night). Such daily temperature differences have a very positive effect on the quality of the grapes. Such exposed vineyards produce grapes of very good quality.

After the grapes have been pressed and fermented, the amphorae are sealed with stone slabs and clay and ash. The wine is then left to rest for six months. After it has fermented, the wine is transferred to oak casks to mature. This gives the wine its distinctive flavour, enriching it with the antioxidants which promote good health.

Antioxidants bind free radicals which would otherwise accelerate the body's ageing process. This is precisely the reason why Kakhetian wine is reputed to be the "elixir of eternal youth". But the brand "Vinoterra" also produces wine using western methods. Although the Schuchmann Wines Georgia Company "Vinoterra" has not been in existence long, its wines have already won several awards. In March 2009 the company was awarded the title of "The Best Small Enterprise".



Burkhard Schuchmann

On his travels, wine connoisseur Burkhard Schuchmann discovered Georgia and its longstanding wine tradition. He soon recognized the potential of the Caucasus-sheltered grape varieties such as Saperavi, Rkatsiteli, Mtsvane, Ojaleshi, and Kisi — to name but a few — from which great wines are made.



Having traveled countless kilometers across Kakheti and surveyed scores of vineyards along with viticulturists and other experts, he worked out a plan to both ensure and even enhance to European standards the quality of Georgian grapes.



Questions?

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