



LEPL NATIONAL WINE AGENCY

Annual Report 2024

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Introduction

The primary function of the LEPL National Wine Agency of Georgia is to foster the growth of the viticulture and winemaking industry. In pursuit of this objective, the National Wine Agency engages in various initiatives:

- ◆ Development of viticulture;
- ◆ Promotion of the popularization of Georgian wine and export growth;
- ◆ Organization of the harvest process;
- ◆ Research and popularization of Georgian grape culture;
- ◆ Development of the Georgian wine designation of origin system;
- ◆ Laboratory research of wine.

The year 2024 proved to be a remarkable period for the Georgian wine industry. The export volume and revenue of Georgian wines and alcoholic beverages achieved unprecedented heights, while a record quantity of grapes was harvested and processed. Georgian wine products were showcased at all significant international exhibitions and festivals globally. Efforts to promote Georgian wine and enhance its consumer culture persisted throughout the nation. Additionally, initiatives to monitor the quality of Georgian wine were implemented, the National Vineyard Cadastre Program progressed, and various other significant events aimed at advancing the viticulture and winemaking sector took place.

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Popularization of Georgian wine

The State Program for the Promotion of Georgian Wine, designed to enhance market diversification and bolster export potential, has been allocated a budget of 16 million GEL for 2024, reflecting an increase of 2 million GEL compared to the previous year's budget.

Georgian wine was showcased at 24 international exhibitions, 13 festivals, and 98 tasting events, with participation from a total of 170 Georgian wine companies. Presentations of Georgian wine took place in 21 countries worldwide, including the USA, Portugal, Finland, Denmark, Austria, Norway, Italy, the Netherlands, Japan, Poland, Germany, China, France, Great Britain, Belgium, Hungary, the Republic of Korea, Switzerland, Turkey, Brazil, and Latvia.

Priority markets for Georgian wine include the United States, Great Britain, Germany, Poland, the Baltic States, China, South Korea, and Japan. In these regions, various promotional activities are organized by the contractor companies of the National Wine Agency to enhance the visibility of Georgian wine and boost its export capabilities.

As part of the State Program aimed at promoting Georgian wine production within the domestic market, numerous wine exhibitions, competitions, tours, and festivals have been conducted across Georgia. These initiatives are crucial for fostering wine tourism and enhancing the culture of wine consumption among the local populace. The program allocated a total of 1,559,284 GEL in co-financing. Georgian wine was showcased at 54 events within the country, which included 17 exhibitions and festivals, 15 tasting

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presentations, and 16 wine tours featuring international wine experts, along with various competitions and a symposium.

Among the events held in 2024, supported by the National Wine Agency, it is worth noting:

Introducing Georgian wine in France

On February 11-12, a total of 12 Georgian companies showcased their products at the international exhibition of natural wines, "RAW Wine Paris." Additionally, these same 12 companies took part in the international exhibition of wines and alcoholic beverages, "VinExpo Paris," which occurred from February 12-14.

Simplesmente Vinho

From February 23 to 25, eleven qvevri wineries took part in the "Simplesmente Vinho" exhibition in Porto, Portugal. The event featured Georgian wine tastings and a gala dinner aimed at wine professionals and trade representatives. Additionally, a conference titled "Qvevri, Dolia E Talha" focused on the winemaking technology associated with qvevri, and a screening of the full-length documentary "Wine is Flowing in Our Veins" was also arranged.

Foodex Japan 2024

On March 5-8, a total of 16 Georgian wine-producing companies took part in the international food and beverage exhibition "Foodex Japan 2024," held in Tokyo, the capital of Japan. During the exhibition, representatives from the National Wine Agency engaged in discussions with Japanese marketing and consulting firms to explore opportunities for future collaboration.

ProWein Dusseldorf 2024

On March 10-12, 28 Georgian wine producers took part in ProWein Dusseldorf, one of the largest exhibitions for wine and alcoholic beverages globally, which took place in Düsseldorf, Germany. The exhibition featured four professional presentations and tastings of Georgian wine. Notably, the tasting at the stand of the esteemed German media group "Meininger" was conducted by the "Georgia - Homeland of Wine" masters of wine, Janek Schumann and Konstantin Baum. Additionally, three events titled "Georgian Wine Day" were led by the renowned influencer and sommelier, Toni Askitis.

Conference in Germany

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On March 12, a conference took place in Düsseldorf, Germany, featuring the leaders of the National Wine Agency's partner companies focused on the strategic markets for Georgian wine. The representatives from these companies delivered presentations outlining their respective activities. It was highlighted that the initiatives undertaken have significantly contributed to the increased recognition and export of Georgian wine in recent years. The meeting was attended by the heads of the National Wine Agency's partner organizations, including Colangelo & Partners (USA), Meiburg Wine Media (China), Swirl Wine Group (United Kingdom), People PR (Poland), ff.k Public Relations (Germany), and Master of Wine Cassidy Dart (China).

The 108th China Food & Drinks Fair

On March 20-22, the 108th China Food & Drinks Fair, an international exhibition dedicated to wine and food, took place in Chengdu, People's Republic of China, featuring the participation of 21 Georgian wine producers. During the event, Master of Wine Cassidy Dart from China showcased a diverse selection of Georgian wines at a designated stand for the attendees.

TEXSOM International Wine Competition

The National Wine Agency, in collaboration with the American marketing firm “Colangelo & Partners,” facilitated the participation of Georgian wines at the Texas State Sommeliers Conference (TEXSOM) International Wine Competition in the United States. A total of 25 wines from different Georgian producers were awarded platinum, gold, silver, and bronze medals. The TEXSOM competition showcased a diverse selection of wines from 50 Georgian companies, all of which are currently available in the US market. Among the 25 award-winning wines, one received a platinum medal, five were honored with gold, ten achieved silver, and nine were recognized with bronze medals.

Presentation of Georgian wine at gastronomy festivals

In March, Georgian wine was showcased at various esteemed wine and gastronomy festivals across France, facilitated by the National Wine Agency and organized by its contractor, Le Pont Caucasien. The SAVIM Printemps Salon des Vignerons et de la Gastronomie took place in Marseille, while LA FETE des VINS et de la GASTRONOMI was held in Toulon, and the SALON DU VIN POUR PROFESSIONNELS occurred in Nice. Ilia Kakhoidze, the director of Le Pont Caucasien and an enologist based in France, presented the wines from eight Georgian wine companies that are currently available in the French market to the attendees of the festivals.

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Exhibitions "Vinitaly" and "Orange Wine Festival"

On April 15, two Georgian wine-producing companies, along with 25 family-owned wineries, took part in the Vinitaly and Orange Wine Festival exhibitions held in Verona. Engaging in these exhibitions is crucial for diversifying and promoting the export markets of Georgian wine, as they draw the attention of wine professionals and trade representatives from various countries around the globe.

German Wine Professionals Tour

From April 17 to 21, a delegation of ten German wine professionals, comprising sommeliers, commercial sector representatives, and media personnel, visited Georgia, facilitated by the National Wine Agency and organized by the agency's contractor, the German marketing firm "ff.k Public Relations." During the five-day tour, the group explored various Georgian wine-producing companies located in the regions of Kartli and Kakheti, where they had the opportunity to sample a range of Georgian wine styles.

Georgian Wine Tasting in Amsterdam

On April 21, a Georgian wine tasting seminar took place in Amsterdam, the capital of the Netherlands, with the support of the National Wine Agency and organized by the agency's contractor, "Wijnimport Bleeker." The event featured notable attendees, including David Tkemaladze, Deputy Chairman of the National Wine Agency; David Solomonia, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Georgia to the Netherlands; and Giorgi Tevzadze, Advisor to the Chairman of the National Wine Agency.

„Real Wine Fair”

The "Real Wine Fair" took place in London, the capital of Great Britain, on April 28-29, featuring the participation of seven Georgian wine producers. This exhibition is an annual event and is regarded as one of the most significant occasions in the realm of natural winemaking.

RAW Wine LA

On April 28-29, with the backing of the National Wine Agency, seven family-owned wineries from the United States showcased Georgian wines at the "RAW Wine LA" exhibition. This event, known as The Artisan Wine Fair, unites producers of premium natural, organic, and biodynamic wines.

“ZERO COMPROMISE”

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On May 9, Tbilisi hosted the annual natural wine festival "ZERO COMPROMISE." The two-day event attracted approximately 100 local association members, along with wineries from various countries, including France, Italy, Spain, Austria, Japan, Australia, and Slovenia.

New Wine Festival

On May 13, the New Wine Festival took place, aiming to enhance the popularity of Georgian wine, highlight emerging wineries, and foster the growth of wine tourism and consumer culture. Approximately 200 producers, ranging from large to small, participated in the event, where attendees enjoyed tastings of wines from the 2023 harvest sourced from various regions of Georgia.

RAW Wine Tokyo

On May 12-13, with the backing of the National Wine Agency, 11 family-owned wineries showcased their offerings at the RAW Wine Tokyo exhibition in the Japanese capital. Attendees had the opportunity to explore Georgian wines and gain insights into the ancient traditions and cultural practices surrounding Georgian wine production.

Canadian Wine Professionals Tour

From April 28 to May 5, a group of 17 Canadian wine professionals visited Georgia, supported by the National Wine Agency and the Embassy of Georgia in Canada, with the objective of diversifying the markets for Georgian wine. During their stay, the guests toured wine-producing companies and family wineries in Kakheti, and they were educated on the qvevri winemaking technique. A special tasting event featuring wines from approximately 20 different companies was organized for them in Tbilisi.

“WinetoAsia”

From May 9 to 11, Georgian wine producers took part in the prominent wine and spirits exhibition "WinetoAsia," which took place in Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, People's Republic of China. This initiative aimed to enhance the export of Georgian wines to the Chinese market. The presentation of Georgian wines was facilitated by Cassidy Dart, a master of wine based in China. Furthermore, Cassidy Dart conducted a presentation and tasting session of Georgian wines as part of the exhibition activities.

Gastronomy Festival “Les Festives Gourmandes”

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From May 18 to 20, Georgian wine was showcased at the esteemed French Wine and Gastronomy Festival, supported by the National Wine Agency and organized by its contractor, “Le Pont Caucasien.” During the festival “Les Festives Gourmandes,” held in Chalon-sur-Saône, Ilia Kakhoidze, the head of “Le Pont Caucasien” and an enologist based in France, presented wines from ten Georgian producers to the attendees.

Tour of American Wine Professionals

Between May 7 and 15, the National Wine Agency organized a tour for American wine professionals in Georgia. This group comprised sommeliers and a representative from the American firm “Colangelo&Partners,” which collaborates with the National Wine Agency. Throughout the tour, the wine professionals explored various Georgian wine production companies located in Kakheti and Kartli.

London Wine Fair

From May 20 to 22, thirteen Georgian wine-producing companies participated in the London Wine Fair 2024, an international exhibition dedicated to wine and spirits. The London Wine Fair serves as a significant platform for Georgian producers to establish new trading relationships, promote their offerings, and enhance export opportunities.

Independence Day of Georgia

On May 26, as part of the celebrations for Georgia's Independence Day, the National Wine Agency, under the Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture, unveiled the concept "Georgia is the Homeland of Wine" in the city of Mtskheta. The event featured participation from approximately 10 local wine producers. Attendees were presented with visual and informational materials that highlighted the rich history and traditions of Georgian wine and vine culture, showcasing the variety of wine and vine types native to the Kartli region.

Georgian Natural Wine Day

On June 1, the National Wine Agency facilitated a significant Georgian wine tasting event in Brussels, Belgium, known as Georgian Natural Wine Day. This occasion showcased 10 distinct varieties of Georgian wines and attracted around 1,000 attendees, including journalists, bloggers, and industry representatives. The event was organized by the National Wine Agency's contractor, the company "FLOW SRL."

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Bolnisi Protected Designation of Origin Wine Festival

On June 3, the Bolnisi Protected Designation of Origin Wine Festival took place, supported by the National Wine Agency. Approximately 50 wine producers from various regions of Georgia participated in this unique festival, which exclusively features wines with protected designation of origin.

WinExpo Georgia

The 16th International Wine and Spirits Exhibition, WinExpo Georgia, took place from June 7 to June 9, featuring approximately 200 companies from eight different countries. The exhibition showcased a diverse range of participants, including large and medium-sized wine and spirits producers, small wineries, as well as innovations in wine technology, packaging materials, viticulture, and winemaking machinery and equipment. Additionally, nurseries, glassware, accessories, and various services were represented. Concurrently, the 14th International Wine Competition, known as the Georgia International Wine Award, was conducted during the event. A total of 21 wines were honored with gold medals, with six of these receiving the prestigious trophy award. Furthermore, 77 wines were recognized with silver medals, while 96 wines earned bronze medals.

Saferika Festival

On June 7-8, a two-day Saperavi festival titled “Saferika” took place in the Finger Lakes region of New York State, facilitated by the National Wine Agency and organized by its contractor, “Saferika.” The event showcased Saperavi wines from a variety of producers, including those from both Georgia and the Finger Lakes area. It is significant to mention that local vintners in the Finger Lakes have been cultivating Saperavi and Rkatsiteli grapes for six decades, creating wines from this renowned Georgian grape variety.

Japanese Wine Professionals Tour

From June 8 to June 12, a delegation of Japanese wine professionals, led by Master of Wine Kenichi Ohashi and organized by the National Wine Agency, traveled to Georgia. During their visit, the group explored various wine companies and wineries in the Kakheti region, where they sampled a range of Georgian wines and gained insights into the qvevri winemaking process. The ten-member delegation comprised wine importers and representatives from the media.

Introducing Georgian wine in Japan

On June 15-16, a significant Georgian wine festival took place at Yoyogi Central Park in Tokyo, coinciding with the Georgia Days in Japan. This event featured over 12 varieties of Georgian wines showcased by nine different Georgian wine companies catering to the Japanese market. The presentation and tasting sessions were conducted by the esteemed Japanese sommelier, Ryunosuke Yoshihara.

„Georgian Wine Grand Tasting“

On June 20, the Georgian Wine Tasting event titled "Georgian Wine Grand Tasting" took place in Warsaw, the capital of Poland. This event was organized by the contractor of the National Wine Agency, the company "Peopl.Pr," with the support of the Embassy of Georgia in Poland. Approximately 100 wines from over 20 Georgian wine producers were showcased during the tasting. The gathering attracted more than 200 attendees, including journalists, bloggers, and members of the commercial sector.

„Vinexpo America“

On June 24-25, twenty companies showcased Georgian wine at the Vinexpo America exhibition held in the United States. Engaging in an international exhibition of this magnitude is crucial for diversifying wine markets and enhancing export opportunities. Through their participation in Vinexpo America, Georgian companies can gain insights into emerging trends and challenges within the global wine market, as well as establish trade partnerships in the United States, a strategic market for Georgian wine known for its stringent quality standards.

„The 8th Eurasia Expo“

From June 26 to June 30, twelve Georgian wine producers showcased their products at the 8th Eurasia Expo held in Urumqi, Xinjiang Province, with the backing of the National Wine Agency and the Embassy of Georgia in the People's Republic of China. This initiative aimed to enhance the export of Georgian wines to the Chinese market. The exhibition draws approximately 2 million visitors each year, offering Georgian wine manufacturers an excellent platform to forge business connections with prospective partners in the Asian wine industry.

Wine Professionals Tour from China

From June 24 to June 29, a delegation of 14 wine professionals from the People's Republic of China visited Georgia, facilitated by the National Wine Agency and organized by the marketing firm Meiburg Wine Media. This group, comprising sommeliers and importers, toured various wineries in the Kartli and Kakheti regions, sampling a diverse array of Georgian wines. Additionally, a special Walkaround Tasting event was conducted in Tbilisi, showcasing wines from 15 different Georgian wine producers.

„Seoul International Wine and Spirits Expo 2024“

From July 4 to July 6, 2024, ten Georgian wine-producing companies took part in the Seoul International Wine and Spirits Expo held in Seoul. Furthermore, a significant Georgian wine tasting event was organized with the assistance of the National Wine Agency and the efforts of Chan Jun Park, who serves as the Vice President of the Korea International Sommeliers Association and is the founder of the Korea Wine Writers Club. This event attracted over 150 attendees.

Georgian Wine Festival in Krakow

On July 7-8, the Georgian Wine Festival took place at the renowned historical palace, Dwór w Tomaszowicach, in Krakow, with the backing of the National Wine Agency and the organization of its contractor in Poland. Approximately 20 Georgian wine producers, encompassing large, medium-sized, and small companies, showcased their offerings at the event. The festival attracted around 1,000 attendees, including local importers, members of the HoReCa sector, wine enthusiasts, journalists, and bloggers.

Georgian Wine Presentation in Berlin

On July 9, a seminar showcasing Georgian wine took place at the Deutsche Wein und Sommelierschule in Berlin. The event, organized by Yvonne Heistermann, the President of the German Sommeliers Association, attracted a diverse audience, including international marketing professionals, students, and wine enthusiasts.

Texas Sommeliers Conference TEXSOM

On August 25-27, a significant Georgian wine tasting took place in Irving, Texas, USA, as part of the TEXSOM Sommeliers Conference. Approximately 70 different varieties of Georgian wines were showcased during this event. The gathering attracted numerous experts and professionals from the wine industry.

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Visit of German wine professionals

From September 3 to 8, a delegation of German wine journalists, bloggers, and sommeliers traveled to Georgia. During their visit, they explored over ten Georgian wine-producing companies and wineries located in the regions of Kartli and Kakheti, sampling a variety of Georgian wine styles. Among the attendees was the renowned influencer and sommelier Toni Askitis, who disseminates news and trends in the wine industry through his widely followed channel, #Asktoni.

Georgian wine campaign in the USA

The United States represents a key market for Georgian wine. Since 2013, initiatives supported by the National Wine Agency have played a significant role in enhancing the recognition of Georgian wine within the United States.

During September and October, a vigorous campaign was conducted to promote and elevate the profile of Georgian wine in the US market.

- On September 16-18, Emily Saladino, an editor and member of the tasting committee for the esteemed American wine magazine "Wine Enthusiast," traveled to Georgia. During her stay, she performed a blind tasting of Georgian wines, assessing the entries using the Wine Enthusiast 100-point rating scale. Additionally, she explored the Kakheti region. The results of the wine evaluations conducted during this tasting will be made available on the Wine Enthusiast website.
- From September 7 to 13, a delegation of American wine professionals visited Georgia. This group, consisting of 12 members, included individuals from the wine industry as well as representatives from Colangelo & Partners. During their visit, the professionals explored various Georgian winemaking companies located in the regions of Kakheti and Kartli, where they gained insights into Georgian winemaking techniques and sampled wines produced through both classical and traditional methods.
- From September 15 to 20, a press tour featuring American wine journalists took place in Georgia. During this event, wine professionals explored various Georgian wine-producing companies located in the regions of Kakheti and Kartli. They gained insights into Georgian winemaking techniques and had the opportunity to sample wines crafted through both classical and traditional methods.
- Beginning on September 23 and continuing for a duration of two weeks, an outdoor campaign in Manhattan, New York City, featured advertising banners for Georgian wine displayed on 25 lightboxes.

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- On September 26, New York City hosted a significant event titled the “Grand Tasting,” which showcased Georgian wine to an audience comprising wine professionals, media representatives, and members of the commercial sector. Approximately 400 attendees participated in this extensive presentation of Georgian wine.
- In the months of October and November, the esteemed publication "New York Times" conducted an advertising campaign promoting Georgian wine. A prominent block banner was featured on the official website of the New York Times, allowing every visitor to the site to view a slideshow of advertisements showcasing Georgian wine. This publication enjoys an average weekly readership that surpasses 100 million users.

Presentation of Georgian wine in the Republic of Korea

On September 24, a significant presentation showcasing Georgian wine took place in Seoul. This event featured a professional master class and was attended by 300 invited guests, comprising wine experts, sommeliers, buyers, media representatives, and influencers. Attendees had the opportunity to taste 40 distinct wines from 15 Georgian wine producers. Additionally, a master class focused on pairing Georgian wine with Korean cuisine was conducted during the event.

"The Best Sommelier of Georgia" competition

On October 9, a competition was held under the auspices of the Georgian Sommeliers Association, with the backing of the National Wine Agency. Thirteen sommeliers took part in the event, with three advancing to the final round. Following the evaluation of the competition tasks, the jury concluded that Saba Kitiashvili was awarded the title of the best sommelier in Georgia for 2024. This event highlights the exceptional skills and professionalism of sommeliers in Georgia and aims to foster their professional development, thereby enhancing the prominence of Georgian wine culture on the global stage.

Gurjaani Wine Festival

On October 12, the sixth wine festival took place in Gurjaani, facilitated by the Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture along with the National Wine Agency. Over 400 wine companies and wineries showcased a diverse array of wines, chacha, and other alcoholic beverages at the event. This year's festival, hosted in Akhtali Park, attracted a significant number of attendees. Since 2022, the Gurjaani Wine Festival has

been recognized as an official partner of the International Wine and Spirits Competition (IWSC), thanks to the support of the National Wine Agency.

Polish Wine Professionals Tour

From October 7 to 10, the National Wine Agency, in collaboration with the marketing firm "People PR," organized a tour for Polish wine professionals in Georgia to enhance the export of Georgian wines to the Polish market. During this tour, the participants explored several wine-producing companies located in the Kakheti region. Additionally, a "Walkaround Tasting" event took place in Tbilisi, showcasing a selection of wines from 20 different Georgian wine producers.

British Wine Professionals Tour

From October 7 to 11, a group of 13 wine professionals from Britain traveled to Georgia. This delegation, which included importers and journalists, explored various Georgian wine producers in the regions of Kartli and Kakheti, sampling a range of Georgian wine styles. During a special "Walk-around Tasting" event in Tbilisi, the British visitors had the opportunity to discover wines from 10 different companies representing various denominations.

Large-scale Saperavi presentation event in Poland

On October 15, as part of the General Assembly of the Polish Sommeliers Association, a tasting seminar titled "Saperavi Experience: Secrets of Georgia's Red Treasure" was conducted. The event attracted over 100 local sommeliers in the Polish town of Pszczew and was hosted by Ketevan Prangulaishvili, the head of the agency's contractor, O-Lille.

"New Small Wineries on the Big Stage"

On October 19, the sixth wine festival titled "New Small Wineries on the Big Stage" took place in Mtatsminda Park, Tbilisi, facilitated by the National Wine Agency and organized by the Georgian Wine Club. This event showcased the offerings of 50 wine producers from various regions renowned for viticulture and winemaking in Georgia. The growing interest in the festival is reflected in the consistently increasing number of participating wineries and attendees each year.

Georgian Wine Presentation in the Netherlands

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On October 18, the Georgian wine tasting event “Folie culinaire” was conducted in Maastricht, Netherlands. This three-day occasion highlighted 50 wines from five Georgian wine-producing companies and attracted approximately 1,000 attendees, including local wine experts, sommeliers, and representatives from the commercial, HoReCa, and media sectors.

“Theoule Arts and Vin”

On October 20, a presentation showcasing Georgian wine took place at the "Theoule Arts and Vin" festival, dedicated to wine and gastronomy, in the French city of Théoule-sur-Mer. This event was supported by the National Wine Agency and organized by its contractor, "Le Pont Caucasiens." Attendees had the opportunity to explore 15 different varieties of wine from 12 Georgian wine producers and small wineries.

Georgian Wine Tasting in Osaka

On October 22, a Georgian wine presentation was conducted in Osaka, attracting approximately 120 attendees, including wine importers, buyers, representatives from trade networks, and members of the media. Kenichi Ohashi, the Director of Red Bridge and a distinguished Master of Wine, delivered a presentation on the culture, history, grape varieties, and contemporary practices of Georgian winemaking. Additionally, the esteemed Japanese sommelier Motohiro Okoshi introduced eight Georgian wines to the audience and discussed his experiences in pairing these wines with Japanese cuisine.

„Salon Savim TERRAVINI”

On October 25, the “Salon Savim TERRAVINI” wine and gastronomy festival took place in Nice, France, where a presentation dedicated to Georgian wine was featured. Attendees had the chance to explore the offerings from eight Georgian wine-producing companies and smaller wineries. Recognized as one of the premier wine and gastronomy events in France, “Salon Savim TERRAVINI” attracts tens of thousands of wine professionals and enthusiasts each year.

"Daejeon International Wine Festival"

From November 1 to 3, the “Daejeon International Wine Festival” in Daejeon showcased wines from eight Georgian producers, encompassing both large enterprises and smaller wineries. The inclusion of Georgian wine in such prominent events aims to broaden the scope of export markets.

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„EnoExpo 2024”

Additionally, five Georgian wine producers will participate in the “EnoExpo 2024” international wine and spirits exhibition in Krakow from November 8 to 10. Now in its 21st year, “EnoExpo” is regarded as one of the largest and most esteemed exhibitions in Eastern and Central Europe.

RAW Wine NY

On November 10-11, eight qvevri wine producers took part in the international natural wine exhibition "RAW Wine 2024" (The Artisan Wine Fair) held in New York City. The "RAW Wine" exhibition, curated by renowned French master of wine Isabelle Legeron, showcases producers of premium natural and biodynamic wines from various countries around the globe.

Georgian Wine Presentation in Finland

On November 7, over 40 sommeliers, wine importers, media representatives, and members of the HoReCa sector gathered in Helsinki, the capital of Finland, for a presentation and tasting event dedicated to Georgian wine. Irakli Cholobargia, a wine expert and representative of the National Wine Agency, provided insights into the history of Georgian wine production, its varietal diversity, and the traditional qvevri wine-making technique. The discussion also explored the current landscape of Georgian wine production, market demands, and export trends.

Merano Wine Festival

From November 8 to 10, twenty Georgian wine producers showcased their offerings at the Merano Wine Festival in Italy, with the backing of the National Wine Agency and the Georgian Wine Association. The festival featured an extensive Georgian wine tasting event, highlighting selections from various regions, including award-winning wines from the Qvevri Wine and Saperavi International Competitions. The event attracted wine industry professionals and journalists, with the tasting led by renowned Italian sommelier Guido Invernizzi.

ProWine Shanghai

Between November 12 and 14, twenty-four Georgian wine producers participated in ProWine Shanghai, a premier exhibition in the global wine sector, held in Shanghai, People's Republic of China. Additionally, Georgian wines were featured at the “Amber Wine Symposium,” which took place during the exhibition and attracted prominent wine

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experts, media representatives, sommeliers, importers, and distributors from the People's Republic of China. The symposium included participants from thirteen countries, such as Italy, France, Australia, Spain, and Austria, among others.

Expovina

The Expovina exhibition, held from October 31 to November 14, took place across nine ships and attracted thousands of attendees. Among the diverse selection of wines from nearly all wine-producing nations, Georgian wine was showcased by the Georgian Wine House (GeoHaus). During the event, David Tkemaladze, the Deputy Chairman of the National Wine Agency, engaged in discussions with Pascal Schlitler, the Executive Director of Expovina. They explored the potential for a significant presentation of Georgian wine at the 70th Expovina exhibition scheduled for 2025.

HORECA EXPO

From November 17 to 20, the city of Ghent in the Kingdom of Belgium hosted the "HORECA EXPO" exhibition, where Georgian wine was presented with the support of the National Wine Agency and organized by its contractor, "FLOW SRL." This exhibition is recognized as the largest event in the hotel, restaurant, and café sector, featuring workshops, culinary competitions, and seminars. Georgian wine was highlighted in the "Chef's Place" section, attracting top chefs, sommeliers, bloggers, and journalists. Approximately ten wines from three Georgian wine producers were showcased at the exhibition.

„Orange Wine Festival“

On November 19, approximately 30 Georgian wine producers took part in the "Orange Wine Festival" held in Vienna, the capital of Austria. This festival occurs multiple times a year in various countries across the globe. The involvement of Georgian wine cellars in this event provides an excellent opportunity for Georgian wines to be showcased to both consumers and international wine experts, as well as representatives from the wine trade.

RAW Wine Berlin

On December 1, twelve qvevri wine producers represented their craft at the international natural wine exhibition "RAW Wine Berlin 2024" in Berlin. "RAW Wine" is recognized as a premier international exhibition that brings together producers of high-quality natural, organic, and biodynamic wines. The event is organized by the renowned French wine expert Isabelle Legeron.

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State program to promote Georgian wine

To enhance the export capabilities of Georgian wine, the Government of Georgia sanctioned the "State Program for Promoting the Popularization of Georgian Wine" in September 2021.

This initiative aims to boost the export potential, competitiveness, and recognition of Georgian wine in global markets while also diversifying key and strategic export destinations.

The program is executed by the LEPL National Wine Agency, in collaboration with the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia.

Under the provisions of the allocated budget, the National Wine Agency will provide co-financing for marketing expenses exclusively to those companies that export to priority markets and various countries worldwide, excluding the CIS and GUAM regions.

- Last year, the program co-financed marketing costs for 416,707 liters of exported wine, with five companies benefiting from the program. The amount of co-financing amounted to 243,281.28 GEL.

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Export of wine and alcoholic beverages in 2024

In 2024, Georgia's wine exports reached approximately 95 million liters, generating a revenue of 276.1 million USD across 72 countries globally. This represents a 6% increase in volume and a 7% increase in revenue compared to the previous year.

Significant growth in exports was observed in several countries, including Poland with a 12% increase (6.7 million liters), Germany with a 30% increase (1.28 million liters), and the USA with a 32% increase (1.2 million liters). Other notable increases were seen in Lithuania at 11% (707 thousand liters), Great Britain at 42% (425.6 thousand liters), Turkey at 62% (538 thousand liters), Azerbaijan at 34% (237 thousand liters), Canada at 16% (198 thousand liters), Israel at 2% (314 thousand liters), the United Arab Emirates at 80% (70 thousand liters), and South Korea at 26% (72.5 thousand liters), among others.

Furthermore, 48 million liters of alcoholic beverages were exported to 56 countries globally, marking a 53% increase compared to the same period last year. The revenue generated from the export of alcoholic beverages reached up to 289 million USD, reflecting a 47% rise.

In total, the income from the export of wine and alcoholic beverages amounted to 565 million USD, representing the highest figure recorded in the history of independent Georgia.

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Grape Harvest 2024

In 2024, the grape harvest in independent Georgia reached an extraordinary milestone, with processing figures soaring to approximately 320 thousand tons. This represents a remarkable increase of around 45% compared to the previous year's figures.

The 2024 harvest was not only notable for its volume but also for its exceptional quality. The private wine sector prioritized the acquisition of high-quality grapes, ensuring that the wines produced from this year's harvest will be characterized by their distinctiveness, variety, and superior quality.

A total of approximately 21,300 winegrowers contributed to the delivery of grapes to wine enterprises.

In the primary wine-producing regions of Kakheti and Racha-Lechkhumi, around 291 thousand tons of grapes were processed, generating an income of 390 million GEL from grape sales.

Due to favorable climatic conditions, the harvest commenced earlier than usual in both Kakheti and Racha-Lechkhumi: starting on August 13 in Kakheti, September 23 in Racha, and October 4 in Lechkhumi. Although the peak harvesting periods in Kakheti and Racha overlapped, the organizing headquarters effectively managed the harvesting process. In total, 600 large, medium-sized, and small wineries participated in the grape processing activities.

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Of the main industrial varieties, the following are processed:

Rkatsiteli - 136 thousand tons

Saperavi - 130 thousand tons

Kakheti Mtsvane - 5.9 thousand tons

Alexandreuli/Mujuretuli, Racha - 1618 tons

Tsolikauri, Tsageri - 753 tons

The rest are grapes of other varieties

Prices of 1 kg of grapes of the main industrial varieties:

Rkatsiteli - within 1.00 to 1.20 GEL

Saperavi - within 1.50-1.60 GEL

Alexandreuli/Mujuretuli - 8.00 GEL

Tsolikauri (Tvishi) - 8.00 GEL, Tsageri Tsolikauri - 5.00 GEL.

To promote the sale of grapes by growers, ensure the quality of the harvest, and foster the sustainable growth of the winemaking sector, the government of Georgia has introduced a subsidy for grape harvesting.

- In the Kakheti region, all enterprises that disbursed a minimum of 1.00 GEL to winegrowers for Rkatsiteli grapes were eligible for a government subsidy.
- Additionally, starting from September 13, LLC “Crop Management Company” has been procuring 1 kg of Saperavi grapes from winegrowers at a rate of 1.50 GEL. For those winegrowers who had previously sold Saperavi grapes for less than 1.50 GEL before this date, the Georgian government provided compensation to cover the difference between the 1.50 GEL rate and the price they received.
- In the Racha region, all companies that paid at least 8 GEL to winegrowers for 1 kg of Alexandrouli and Mujuretuli grapes sourced from the Khvanchkara microzone were granted a subsidy. In return for acquiring 1 kg of Alexandrouli and 1 kg of Mujuretuli, these companies received a state subsidy amounting to 4 GEL.

The Coordination Headquarters organized a prompt response to the delivery of grapes affected by the severe hail and wind that struck the Kakheti region on August 23-24. On the second day following the disaster, Harvest Management Company LLC commenced the delivery of hail-damaged grapes from the municipalities of Kvareli, Telavi, and Akhmeta to the municipalities of Telavi and Kvareli. Growers provided unconditioned grapes, weighing 1 kg, at a price of 1.00 GEL. In total, approximately 1,800 tons of grapes damaged

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by hail were processed. The state-owned Harvest Management Company LLC utilized these grapes for alcohol production.

During the harvest season, the National Wine Agency engaged around 100 young individuals as operators within wine enterprises. The harvest registration program, which has been in place since 2013, facilitates the collection of comprehensive and accurate data regarding the delivered grapes, a crucial element in ensuring the production of high-quality wine.



Quality control

To enhance the competitiveness of alcoholic beverages produced in Georgia within both local and international markets, the relevant divisions of the National Wine Agency consistently conduct quality assessments of Georgian wine and other alcoholic products.

In 2024, a total of 17 state inspections and 376 additional control measures were executed to ensure quality. During the state inspections, 154 samples from 28 companies were analyzed, revealing violations in 34 samples from 6 companies. Furthermore, inspection controls were performed across 83 companies, where 1,927 samples were collected, resulting in 37 violations from 16 companies.

Additionally, inspections conducted by the Agency's contracted firms, LLC "Bureau Veritas" and LLC "SGS," involved 74 companies, with violations identified in 11 samples from 4 companies out of a total of 459 samples collected.

Quality control in the domestic market encompassed products from 78 companies, with 136 samples taken, of which 73 were found to be non-compliant. Consequently, 23 reports of administrative violations were filed for the submission of grape-origin alcoholic beverage

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samples that did not conform to the certification lot, leading to fines imposed on 15 companies.

Tastings

For the purpose of organoleptic testing of exported alcoholic beverages, 284 tastings were conducted. A total of 13,006 samples were submitted. 12,383 samples were evaluated positively and 623 samples were evaluated negatively.

Certification

During the reporting period, there were 27,800 applications submitted for certification to acquire export documentation. From these applications, several types of documentation were issued: 8,717 VI-1 form certificates for European Union countries, and 25,832 Certificates of Conformity. In total, the Certification Department of the National Wine Agency issued 34,549 certificates to companies engaged in the production of various alcoholic beverages.



Vineyard Cadastre Program

The subsequent activities were undertaken to enhance the vineyard cadastre, guarantee the effective operation of the system, and refresh cadastral data.

- To facilitate the organization of interviews with winegrowers and the collection of cadastral information, six operators were appointed to the viticulture regions of Western Georgia, specifically Guria, Samegrelo, Adjara, and Imereti, and were strategically positioned in relevant areas.
- Personnel from the National Wine Agency consistently updated vineyard data in line with the established cadastre operational norms, which include changes in vineyard status, such as planting or uprooting. A total of 4,020 vineyard extracts were generated.
- Field inspections were conducted throughout Georgia, resulting in the examination of 300 plots across 190 vineyards.
- Efforts were made to enhance the Abaco database utilized for the cadastre, involving discussions with Abaco experts to improve its functionality.
- The vineyard extracts issued up to and including the year 2021 underwent verification, with documentation being scanned and the Abaco database updated accordingly. Additionally, an archival register of vineyard extracts was established.
- A tender proposal was developed, leading to the selection of Ruka Mapping LLC as the winning company under competitive conditions. This company conducted aerial photography and produced orthophotos for the Meskheti (Aspindza, Abastumani) and Adjara (Keda) viticultural zones. The collected material is currently undergoing processing for server upload.
- Data from the previous year was compiled, resulting in the preparation and publication of the 2023 Vineyard Cadastre Report, which spans 61 pages and is available in both Georgian and English.



Scientific Program for Research and Popularization of Vine and Wine Culture

The following works were carried out within the framework of the program:

Two books were published within the series “Georgian Vine and Wine: Literary Heritage” established by the agency:

1. “Racha-Lechkhumi Viticulture Regions”. Author Luka Gventsadze, written in 1940, which has not been published yet.
 2. “Georgian Viticulture and Its Development Prospects”. Authors Solomon Cholokashvili and Irakli Rtskhiladze, first published in 1939.
- The publication of the book "Kakheti Viticulture-Winery" has been completed, authored by Tamaz Kobaidze and Otari Kurtiashvili.
 - Archaeological investigations were organized and executed with the collaboration of archaeologists from the Georgian National Museum and the University of Toronto, under the leadership of Stefan Batiuk, at three archaeological sites located in the Marneuli Valley: Gadachrili Gora (Gadachrili Hill) and Imiri Gora (Imiri Hill), dating back to the Neolithic period, as well as Azikendi from the Chalcolithic period. Samples were collected for subsequent laboratory and interdisciplinary analysis.

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- Additionally, a collection of grape samples comprising 19 wild forms and vine varieties was finalized, alongside the production of experimental wines, with the involvement of researchers from Caucasus International University. This initiative aimed to establish the theoretical foundations of bio-molecular analysis as developed by Professor Patrick McGovern from the United States. A total of 318 samples were gathered and subsequently sent to Professor McGovern for chemical analysis in a laboratory in the United States.
- Researchers from the Georgian National Museum have conducted laboratory analyses of archaeobotanical and paleobotanical materials retrieved from various excavation sites in Georgia. These include: 1) the archaeological site known as “Gadachrili Gora (Gadachrili Hill), associated with the Shulaveri culture dating back to the 6th millennium BC; 2) the Chalcolithic site “Azizkend,” where samples were collected during collaborative excavations by the Georgian National Museum and the University of Toronto in Canada in June 2024; and 3) the medieval site of Ilmazlo. The findings facilitated an evaluation of the historical development of viticulture, winemaking, and agriculture within these settlements.
- At the radiocarbon research laboratory of Weizmann University in Israel, Elizabeth Boareto utilized the C14 dating method on three samples of grape seeds unearthed during the archaeological excavations at the ancient site of Dzalisi. The results indicated that these seeds date back to the 4th-5th centuries AD.
- The dated grape seeds from the Dzalisi excavations were subsequently sent to Laurent Bouby, a researcher at the University of Montpellier in France, for further analysis using morphometric techniques. The findings will be incorporated into the Georgian archaeological seeds database and will contribute to a deeper understanding of the history of grapevine cultivation in Georgia.
- Gabriele Cola, a researcher affiliated with the University of Milan in Italy, collaborated with Georgian researchers to investigate the agroclimatic traits and physical-geographical distribution of the wild grapevine in Georgia. The findings of this study have been compiled into a scientific article titled "The Status of Wild Grapevines (*Vitis vinifera* L. subsp. *sylvestris* (C.C. Gmel.) Hegi) Populations in Georgia (Southern Caucasus)," which has been submitted for publication in the peer-reviewed journal *Plants*.
- Gabriela De Lorenzi, also a researcher at the University of Milan, undertook a laboratory analysis of 38 wild grapevine samples that were collected as part of the project and preserved in the field collection using molecular markers (10k SNPs). The subsequent phase of the research will involve comparing the forms of wild grapevines

with cultivated grapevine varieties, culminating in the preparation of a scientific article based on the findings.

- David Maghradze participated in the Amphora Evolution forum, which took place in Verona, Italy, on June 7-8, where presentations regarding Georgian vines and wine were delivered.
- Project participants Osvaldo Failla and Gabriele Cola from the University of Milan, along with project coordinator David Maghradze, attended the “International Qvevri Wine Symposium” in Tsinandali. During this event, they took the opportunity to showcase and advocate for the outcomes of their project.
- Additionally, a documentary titled “The Old Method of Growing Vine on Trees” was produced, featuring footage captured in the village of Erketi, located in the Chokhatauri district, with winemaker David Kobidze.
- The following articles were published in the newspaper “Our Village” of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture:
 1. Wild Vine of Georgia. №2 (96)
 2. What is the grape variety known as Aladasturi in Eastern Georgia? №6 (99)



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WWTG

At the recent meeting of the World Wine Trade Group (WWTG) convened in Brussels, the capital of Belgium, on April 15-16, the member states positively evaluated Georgia's one-year chairmanship and the accomplishments achieved during this period.

Effective May 1, 2023, the chairmanship transitioned from the United States to Georgia for a one-year term, following a rotational leadership model. The National Wine Agency served as the primary coordinator of the organization's initiatives during this tenure. The organization's primary objective is to enhance wine trade, promote international commerce in wine, and undertake collaborative efforts to eliminate trade barriers.

In addition to the member states of the WWTG, which include Georgia, the USA, Argentina, Australia, Canada, Chile, New Zealand, South Africa, and Uruguay, a delegation from the United Kingdom participated as an observer.

Throughout the two-day session, the group engaged in discussions regarding trade barriers, international trade facilitation, collaboration with the World Trade Organization, packaging and labeling standards, as well as resolutions from the International Organization of Vine and Wine (OIV) and European Union regulations concerning wine ingredient labeling.



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"Obcha" has been added to the list of wines with protected designation of origin registered in Georgia.

The count of wines recognized by their designation of origin has risen to 30, reflecting the rich diversity of Georgian wine, which is crucial for enhancing its popularity and expanding export opportunities.

The National Intellectual Property Center "Sakpatenti" and the LLC "Imeretian Wine Association" have submitted a request to the National Wine Agency for the registration of a geographical indication. The National Wine Agency has been involved in developing the wine production specifications and addressing other technical matters related to the registration as part of the "Program for Promoting the Development of the Georgian Wine Designation System and the Protection of Georgian Wine Designations."

Obcha is classified as a dry wine, which can be either amber or red. This microzone is situated in the Baghdati municipality and encompasses the city of Baghdati along with the villages of Pirveli Obcha, Meore Obcha, Dimi, Rokiti, and Persati, all located at altitudes ranging from 120 to 420 meters above sea level. Amber Obcha wine is exclusively produced from the Tsolikouri grape variety cultivated in the Obcha microzone, with the inclusion of Tsitska and/or Krakhuna grape varieties permitted up to 15%. Conversely, Red Obcha wine must be made solely from the Otskhanuri Sapere grape variety sourced from the Obcha microzone, with no other varieties allowed.

The unique soil composition and climatic conditions of the Obcha microzone contribute significantly to the exceptional quality of Obcha wine.

Currently, the following wines with protected designations of origin have been officially registered in Georgia: Kindzmarauli, Manavi, Kakheti, Napareuli, Teliani, Mukuzani, Tsinandali, Akhasheni, Gurjaani, Khvanchkara, Ateni, Sviri, Vazisubani, Kardenakhi, Tibaani, Tvishi, Kvareli, Kotekhi, Khashmi Saperavi, Bolnisi, Salkhino Ojaleshi, Akhmeta, Tsarafi, Akhoebi, Maghraani Kisi, Okureshi Usakhelouri, Zegaani, Asuretuli Shala, Okami, and Obcha.

The initiatives undertaken by the National Wine Agency receive extensive coverage across print, electronic, social, and television media platforms: (<http://wine.gov.ge/>,

<https://www.facebook.com/nationalwineagency/>,

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0CPwXo8f7-QA329kmicFwQ>)