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SELECTION OF TRADITION, AUTHENCITY AND TASTE

Heritage of authentic wines from the ancient Thracian Lowlands

Protected Geographical Indication (PGI)

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PGI AND PDO

**Wines from Thracian Lowlands region –
distinctive taste with European guarantee of quality**

The two EU quality schemes - Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) and Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) - were created to help protect and promote products with particular characteristics linked to their geographical origin.

Wines marked with the PGI logo are genuine products of high quality, not imitations. Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) identifies wines whose quality or reputation is linked to the place or region where it is produced, processed or prepared, although the ingredients used need not necessarily come from that geographical area. All PGI wines must also adhere to a precise set of specifications and may bear the logo. These labels were first used in 1996 when the first products were registered. Geographical indications are mostly used for spirits and aromatized wines.

Wines marked with the PDO logo are authentic and have the strongest links to the place in which they are made. Protected designation of origin (PDO) identifies products that have the strongest links to the place in which they are made. Every part of the production, processing and preparation process must take place in the specific region. PDOs are mostly used for food, agricultural products and wines. For wines, PDO means that the grapes have to come exclusively from the geographical area where the wine is made.

The EU quality logos of PDO and PGI attest to the specific traditions and qualities of food, agricultural products and wines, aromatized wines and spirit drinks produced in the European Union or in other countries. The PDO and PGI logos allow consumers to easily recognize traditional quality wines and consumers can rely on product authenticity in terms of regional origin or traditional production.

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FOREWORD BY DR JAMIE GOODE
The Ancient Thracian Lowlands PGI

The Thracian culture has a rich history of winemaking, with archaeological evidence of wine production in the Thracian Valley dating back 6000 years. The Thracians were a group of tribes who occupied large parts of southeast Europe from 2000 BC to 500 AD covering modern-day Bulgaria and much of the Balkans.

It is worth paying special attention to the wine from the region of the Thracian lowlands, because of its history and traditions. The Thracians were considered one of the best winemakers in Antiquity, and the aromatic and strong wine produced by them was famous all over the world. The Thracian cultural heritage in the area of wine-making, wine traditions and rituals drift through the ages and is evidenced in the modern Bulgaria - Plovdiv is perhaps the most vivid evidence of the cultural imprint of the Thracian heritage. Once called Philippopolis, the town was developed on a strategic path for merchants. Located in an extremely fruitful area along the ancient river Hebrus (nowadays Struma), Plovdiv has perfectly preserved Thracian golden treasures, architecture wonders and numerous tales and legends.

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The Ancient Thracian Lowlands PGI

The Thracian Lowlands PGI stands out as an area of great viticultural potential, stretching from the southwest Struma Valley to the Black Sea coast in the east and abutting the Greek and Turkish borders. The region offers a diverse range of terroirs, influenced by both continental and coastal climates with hot summers and very cold winters. However, this is moderated in many parts by proximity to the sea. While some vineyards are spread across flat land, others are nestled on picturesque rolling hills. The Balkan Mountain range divides the country, creating a mountainous west except for the Struma River Valley, where the nearby river influences and moderates the climate. To the north, the Danube Plains PGI offers a more continental climate. There are also 52 different PDOs (protected designations of origin), which is a lot for this small territory.

The Thracian Lowlands PGI boasts an array of grape varieties. Alongside internationally renowned stars, you'll find indigenous varieties and intriguing communist era crosses including Mavrud, Rubin, Melnik, Misket, Tamyanka, and Pamid.

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ABOUT

Europe SHARES its most beloved and authentic wines. We proudly SHARE with you wines of the highest quality, proven history and tradition. Presenting a great variety of wines with unique flavours and traditional taste, Europe SHARES its authentic wines.

The PDO and PGI labels are awarded only to wines with certified origin and authentic heritage. These signs of recognition help protect and promote wines with particular characteristics linked to their geographical origin, produced under strict safety standards in an environmentally friendly way. The European values we proudly stand for are reflected in our most precious wines.

The Bulgarian Winemaking and Export Association (BWEA) is a non-profit organisation aiming to promote Bulgarian wines on international markets. Since its establishment in 2012, we have been working on boosting the export of high-quality wines and the recognition of Bulgaria's long-lasting winemaking traditions, wine tourism and know-how.

The main activities of the Association include:

- Promotion of wines of the members of BWEA
- Contact with government and non-government organisations aiming for long-term partnership
- Preparation and distribution of market research and key tendencies for global wine production
- Organisation of conferences, workshops and seminars with promotional and informative purposes
- Support for increasing wine export through the creation and management of projects, financed by EU funds.

For our project, we developed a partnership with the Baltic Gastronomy Leaders (BGL). BGL is an alliance of Lithuanian food and other agricultural producers', founded in 2018. Its main purpose is to support producers' exports and increase awareness of their quality and added value to foreign markets. BGL is a federation of cereals, soft drinks, spirits, organic foods, and other food industry sector associations.

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THRACIAN WINE

Europe SHARES 6,000 years of history with its finest collection of Thracian wines. Incorporating a long-lasting tradition in winemaking, whilst using the newest technology.

With a history dating back to Ancient times, the Thracian wine fascinates with its rich flavour, astonishing colour and memorable aroma. Ancient Thracians brought vines from the Middle East and cultivated them in the Thrace Lowland, where the favourable climate created the unique Mavrud – nowadays exclusive to the region.

Dionysus, the Thracian God of wine, was worshipped with the Act of Winemaking. The thick, dark red beverage was attributed with magical properties which healed the body and soul, bringing enchantment and uplifting spirits.

The ritual of drinking the sacred wine was performed in specially made “amphorae” with the golden expression of the patron Dionysus. Evidence of the long, rich history of winemaking is still found in the Thracian Lowlands.

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WINE REGIONS

The Thracian Lowland area includes the central part of the lowland, as well as parts of Sakar Mountain. It is characterized by a temperate-continental climate and favourable distribution of precipitation. Typical Bulgarian wines from this region include Mavrud, Rubin, Melnik, Misket, Tamyanka and Pamid.

The Rose Valley is located between the Balkan mountain and Sredna gora and it produces mainly white dry wines. The Rose Valley is the birthplace of the Red Misket – a variety of white grape with pink skin which produces white aromatic wines similar to those of the Muskat family. Among the most famous grape varieties in the region are Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Riesling.

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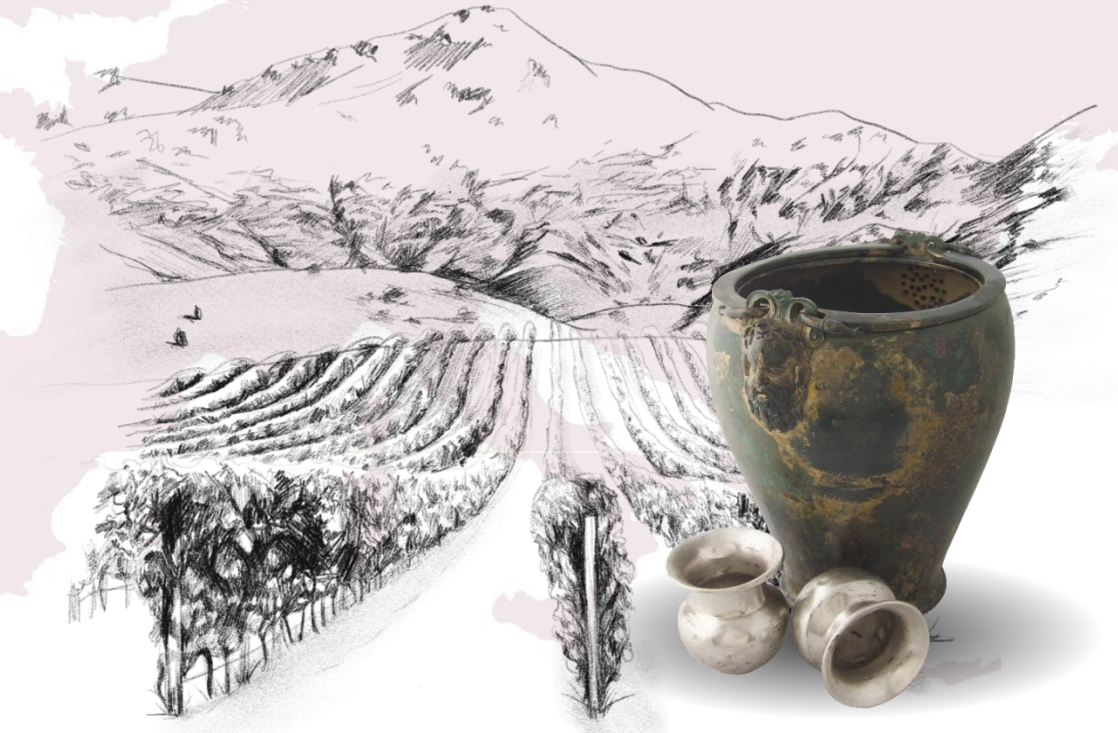
WINE REGIONS

The Danubian Plain covers the southern bank of the Danube River and is characterized by a temperate continental climate, hot summers and sunny days. Commonly grown vineyards in this area are Merlot, Pamid, Cabernet Sauvignon, Gamza, and Muscat Otonel.

The Black Sea region is characterized by mild autumn which allows growing white varieties with a high sugar concentration. Dimyat, Muscat Otonel and Sauvignon Blanc are among the most common vineyards in the area. Of the reds, Pinot Noir is definitely the star of the region.

The Struma Valley includes the valley of the Struma River. The climate is typically Mediterranean, with mild, rainy winters and hot summers. Typical grape varieties traditionally grown here include Melnik, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot.



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THRACIAN LOWLANDS

The Thracian Lowland area includes the central part of the lowland, as well as parts of Sakar Mountain. It is characterized by a temperate-continental climate and favourable distribution of precipitation. Typical Bulgarian wines from this region include Mavrud, Rubin, Melnik, Misket, Tamyanka and Pamid.

Local grape varieties

Mavrud

Believed to date back to ancient Thrace, Mavrud is a red grape variety that has been grown for centuries only in the area of ancient Philippopolis, north of the Rhodopes. This variety is usually used to make wines with a dark and rich colour and mild taste. Its cultivation is difficult and requires special attention. However, the unique qualities of the wines produced by Mavrud are worth the effort!

Melnik is a red grape variety grown in the area of the Struma River valley, characterized by a typical Mediterranean climate. According to the legend, Melnik wine is among Winston Churchill's favourites. This variety produces more powerful wines with a rich texture, exotic perfume and soft tannins.

Cultivated since ancient times, the **Gamza** variety, also known as "Kadarka" in many Balkan countries, is best grown in the Danube region. The wine is characterized by a bright, sparkling red colour, with a pleasant fruity taste and captivating freshness. The variety requires specific climatic conditions, due to which it is grown mainly in the Danube Plain.

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Dimyat

Known for its fragrant grapes, the Dimyat variety has been grown for centuries in the Black Sea region. The wines produced from it have a sweet taste, strong aroma and light amber colour. The smoke ripens in late September. This variety is among the most popular in the Black Sea region.

Pamid

According to legend, the ancient Thracians were avid fans of Pamid wines, characterized by a pleasant freshness and fruity taste. Although widely cultivated by the Thracians for centuries, today it is grown mainly in the Thracian lowlands.

Rubin

A successful cross between Syrah and Nebiolo, a variety with a typical dark purple colour, mostly planted in the region of the Thracian lowlands on the border with Strandzha mountain. Rubin wines are characterized by a rich and rich taste and colour. Try them, you will be amazed!
Additionally, wines that grow favourably in the area are Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Fran, Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc.

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Syrah

The wines of the Syrah variety have a remarkable, bright red colour with violet hues. Intense aroma of ripe berries and tobacco notes lined with elegant French oak. The taste is rich, and soft, with a rich flavour, long finish and velvety aftertaste.

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Cabernet Sauvignon

The wines produced by the Cabernet Sauvignon variety have a ruby red colour with a purple tinge. The aroma is intense, combining red and black berries. Ageing in oak barrels brings elegant notes of vanilla and other exotic spices. The body is usually balanced, and elegant, with an inviting flavour and a soft finish.

Merlot

The wines produced from the Merlot variety have a rich purple colour. The aroma combines concentrated notes of black fruit, plum, cherry jam, spices, vanilla and earthy tone. The taste is usually harmonious, and intense, the body has velvety tannins and good volume.

Cabernet Franc

The wines produced by the Cabernet Franc variety have a rich and rich purple colour. Classy and harmonious, the aroma of the wine combines concentrated shades of spices, black pepper, black fruit and exquisite French oak. A taste is defined by a harmony of volume, sweetness, velvety, intense flavour and exceptional length.

Chardonnay

Chardonnay wines have an intense yellow-green colour. Concentrated and harmonious aroma of citrus, peach, vanilla and toast. The balanced and elegant taste, which includes volume, softness, citrus freshness and intense flavour, leads to a long and attractive aftertaste.

Sauvignon Blanc

Sauvignon Blanc wines are characterised by a pleasant yellow-green colour. Prominent aroma, intertwining green pepper, grassy and citrus nuances, complemented by a hint of green peach. The soft, pleasant taste filled with volume, pronounced freshness and length is the final touch that complements a good Sauvignon Blanc.

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Thrace is a historical area which today covers south Bulgaria, northern Greece and the European part of Turkey. The name Thrace is related to the name of one of the numerous tribes that inhabited the area – the Thracians. In around 6000 BC Thrace was predominantly a agricultural population famous for three main things: waging war, making jewelry and exquisite ornamentation, and producing wine.

The Thracians were wine-making masters and avid consumers and had multiple rituals connected to it. The Thracians worshipped Dionysus (or Bacchus as the Romans called him) the God of Wine who inspired some of their most important rituals and cults.

The Thracian cultural heritage in the area of wine-making, wine traditions and rituals drift through the ages and is evidenced in the modern Bulgaria - Plovdiv is perhaps the most vivid evidence of the cultural imprint of the Thracian heritage. Once called Philippopolis, the town was developed on a strategic path for merchants. Located in an extremely fruitful area along the ancient river Hebrus (nowadays Struma), Plovdiv has perfectly preserved Thracian golden treasures, architecture wonders and numerous tales and legends.

Modern Bulgarian wineries implement generations of knowledge and experience when producing wine of the highest quality. The importance of the Thracians in wine production in Bulgaria is demonstrated in almost every name, label, story and idea behind the wineries in the country.

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