



Dušan Terčelj



*The Culture
of Wine in
Slovenia*

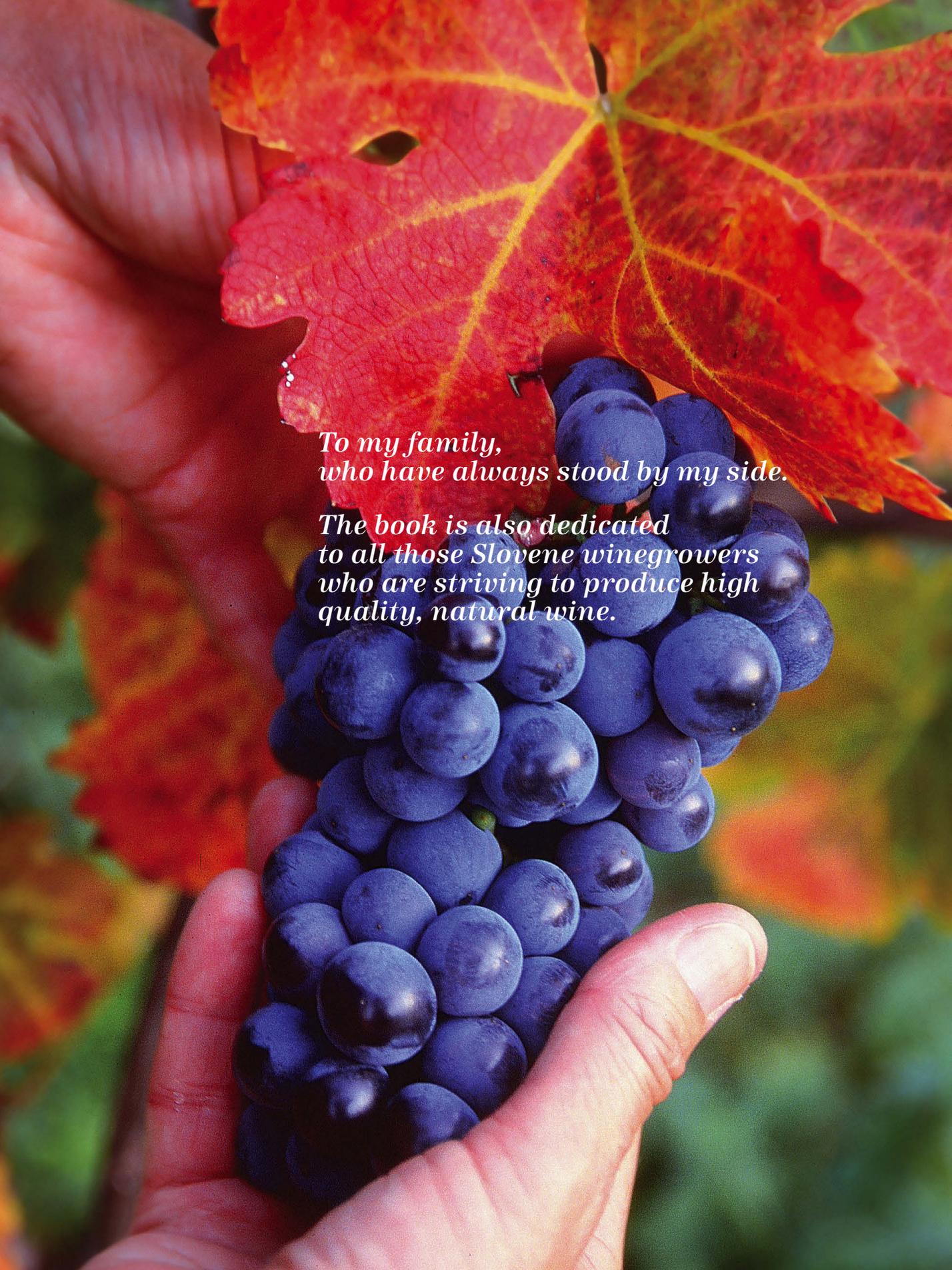


Edited by Aleš Gačnik

Dušan Terčelj

*The Culture
of Wine in
Slovenia*

Edited by Aleš Gačnik
2015

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a bunch of dark blue grapes. A large, vibrant red and orange autumn leaf is positioned above the grapes, partially obscuring them. The background is a soft-focus green and yellow, suggesting a vineyard setting.

*To my family,
who have always stood by my side.*

*The book is also dedicated
to all those Slovene winegrowers
who are striving to produce high
quality, natural wine.*

Dušan Terčelj

The Culture of Wine in Slovenia



SLOVENSKI ETNOGRAFSKI MUZEJ



Photograph on the title page: Aleš Gačnik

Photographs on the spine: The protected wine-related wisdom of the Haloze cellars, Turški vrh, 2006.
Photo: Staša Cafuta

The enchanting poetics of the winegrowing areas, Mestni vrh, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik

Photograph on page 2:
The grape of life, 2003. Photo: Staša Cafuta

Photograph on this page:
Turški vrh, 2006. Photo: Staša Cafuta

Photograph on the back cover: Aleš Gačnik

CIP - Kataložni zapis o publikaciji
Narodna in univerzitetna knjižnica, Ljubljana

663.2(497.4)(0.034.2)
392.86:663.2(497.4)(0.034.2)

TERČELJ, Dušan

The culture of wine in Slovenia [Elektronski vir] /
Dušan Terčelj ; edited by Aleš Gačnik ;
[foreword Mojmir Wondra ; introduction Marija Mojca Terčelj ;
editor's introduction Aleš Gačnik ;
English translation David Limon,
Summary translation into French U.T.A. Prevajanje,
Summary translation into German U.T.A. Prevajanje ;
selection of photographs and other visual elements Aleš Gačnik ;
photographs Aleš Gačnik ... et al.].
- El. knjiga. - Koper : University of Primorska Press ;
Ljubljana : Slovene Ethnographic Museum, 2015

Način dostopa (URL): <http://www.hippocampus.si/ISBN/978-961-6963-93-0.pdf>
Način dostopa (URL): <http://www.hippocampus.si/ISBN/978-961-6963-94-7/index.html>

ISBN 978-961-6963-93-0 (University of Primorska Press, pdf)
ISBN 978-961-6963-94-7 (University of Primorska Press, html)

281134848

The Culture of Wine in Slovenia

Written by Dušan Terčelj, PhD

Captions Aleš Gačnik, PhD

Foreword and expert review Mojmir Wondra, PhD

Introduction and expert review Marija Mojca Terčelj, PhD

Editor's introduction Aleš Gačnik, PhD

Book edited by Aleš Gačnik, PhD

Editorial board Marija Mojca Terčelj, PhD
Bojana Rogelj Škafar, PhD
Stanka Gačnik
Simon Kerma
Sonja Sibila Lebe, PhD
Oto Luthar, PhD
Jonatan Vinkler, PhD

English translation David Limon

Summary translation into French: U.T.A. Prevajanje.

Summary translation into German: U.T.A. Prevajanje.

*Selection of photographs and
other visual elements* Aleš Gačnik

Photographs Aleš Gačnik, Staša Cafuta,
The Terčelj family archive,
Photo library of the Ptuj Regional Museum,
Archive of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum, SloVino Institute,
Milan Belec archive, Jure Černec, Zlatko Fišer, Črtomir Goznik,
Dušan Grča (Delo), Marko Habič, Feručo Hrovatin, Sebastjan Kolednik,
Alojz Konec, Franc Krošelj, Vlado Lešnik, Umberto Pelizzon, Andrej Sajko,
Janez Šekoranja, Bortu Šraj, Miloš Toni, Ana Zavadlav, Marko Habič,
Matjaž Ledinek, Martin Vičar, Jeanne Chugunova

Other visual materials Archives of various wine cellars, The Terčelj family archive,
Franc Golob collection, Stanislav Bačar collection,
Slovene Ethnographic Museum, Ptuj Regional Museum, Ivan Potrč Library Ptuj,
Ptuj Historical Archive, Brežice Municipality, Steklarna Rogaška,
Slovene Wine Society

Design s.kolibri

Published by University of Primorska Press on behalf of
Centre of gastronomy and wine culture, University of Primorska

Represented by Aleš Gačnik

Co-publisher Slovene Ethnographic Museum

Represented by Bojana Rogelj Škafar

Contents

- 8 Aleš Gačnik
Wine Eternity
- 19 Mojmir Wondra
Foreword
- 21 Marija Mojca Terčelj
The play of mysterious test tubes
- 25 Aleš Gačnik
*From the heritage of winegrowing and winemaking
to the culture of wine and wine tourism in Slovenia*
- 33 ***Preface***
- 35 ***The culture of wine drinking***
35 *What is culture? What is wine?*
37 *How I entered this profession*
39 *Wine is goodness*
42 *Wine past and present*
- 73 ***The components of wine***
73 *The components of wine made
using traditional production methods*
84 *The components of wine made from overripe grapes*
- 89 ***Recognising a wine***
92 *By appearance*
92 *By odour*
93 *By taste*
97 *By origin (or provenance)*
100 *By variety and blend*
113 *Brand names*
116 *By quality*
117 *By the method of production of grapes and wine*

I29	<i>Getting to know wine</i>
I34	<i>Personal contact with wine experts</i>
I4I	<i>Specialist societies</i>
I47	<i>Wine-related festivities</i>
I50	<i>Open days at wine cellars</i>
I5I	<i>Wine routes (VTC) and wine farms (VTK)</i>
I9I	<i>The wine trade and innkeeping</i>
I95	<i>Catering establishments</i>
I98	<i>Vinoteka wine shops</i>
20I	<i>Wine fairs</i>
205	<i>Wine and food</i>
208	<i>Oenologists and sommeliers</i>
2II	<i>Wine and health</i>
2I7	<i>Conclusion</i>
227	<i>Appendix</i>
227	<i>A speech at the second Slovene viticultural congress in Otočec in 2001</i>
23I	<i>Summary</i>
236	<i>Sommaire</i>
239	<i>Zusammenfassung</i>
245	<i>About the author</i>

Wine eternity – international communication of the culture of wine in Slovenia

“Doctor Gačnik, Terčelj here. I’m still alive!”

was his introduction to every phone call. And then we began to talk...



he champion of modern Slovene viticulture and winemaking, Dr. Dušan Terčelj (7 July 1923 - 23 November 2013), was a man worthy of respect, full of knowledge, vitality and optimism, critical and mischievous, a theoretician, practitioner and promoter, a dedicated and admired European Wine Knight (Ordo equestris vini Europea). He had a historical memory for flavour and a continuous desire to learn about new ones and think about future ones. However, he was not only interested in wine itself, but rather the culture of wine in the broadest sense of the word. And that is precisely where he differed from his contemporaries.

Even in 2007, when the Slovene version of the book *The Culture of Wine in Slovenia* was created and published, there was talk of an English edition. Perhaps this would be even more important than the original since it addresses not only “us” but also “others”, which is very important with regard to the international impact and the communication of the culture of wine in Slovenia. If we want to be internationally visible and respected we must first respect ourselves, our own heritage and culture, including that of wine. And that is precisely the guiding idea behind this book.

On 7 June 2007, in a packed Ptuj Wine Cellar, we had the premiere presentation of Terčelj’s book, which filled the gap in this type of literature. It is based on close familiarity with historical sources and literature, with the then conditions in Slovene viticulture and winemaking, as well as on the invaluable personal experience of the always critical Dr. Dušan Terčelj and his encyclopaedic knowledge. The Ptuj presentation was followed by others in Ljubljana, Vipava, Gornja Radgona, Brič and Novo mesto. And everywhere, Dr. Terčelj was warmly received because of his knowledge and critical reflections, not only on the past but also on the future of viticulture and winemaking in Slovenia.



A special and highly effective way of popularising the heritage of winegrowing and winemaking, of winemakers and researchers is the public presentation of books combined with an artistic and tasting programme. Moments at the presentation of the Slovene version of this book, *Kultura vina na Slovenskem*, by Dušan Terčelj in the Ptuj wine cellar, June 2007. Photo: Staša Cafuta.

The Culture of Wine in Slovenia



Successful presentations of Dr. Dušan Trčelj's book *The Culture of Wine in Slovenia* in various winegrowing regions of Slovenia. Photos: Aleš Gačnik, Staša Cafuta.





In connection with the publication of the electronic version of the book in English, there were important editorial decisions to be made: should the text be amended or left unchanged? The latter option prevailed since it is important for the future of various disciplines and knowledge that we preserve and publish books, even posthumously, in as an authentic a way as possible – both textually and visually. It has to be said that during the last decade numerous wine brands, the corporate identity of wine labels, the ownership of wine cellars, the level of the development of individual wine-tourist roads, as well as knowledge and trends in the field of oenology and wine tourism have changed. But this in no way reduces the importance of the publication of this type of book as this is the only methodological and editorial approach that facilitates a faithful and historical insight into research and understanding of the culture of wine in Slovenia. The sole changes made are to some photographs and captions, whilst the structure and content of the text remain unaltered. The intention was to make the electronic version of the book all the more communicative and attractive.



The book had aroused a great deal of interest within the international professional public, which only goes to confirm and affirm Dr. Dušan Terčelj's international reputation. In 2009 we were very pleased to learn that the Paris-based International Organisation of Vine and Wine (OIV) had awarded the book *The Culture of Wine in Slovenia* a prestigious international award for the best written work in the world with scientific dimensions and originality in the category History, Literature and Fine Art. On 19 October 2009 Dr. Janez Šumrada, the then Ambassador of the Republic of Slovenia to France and a permanent delegate of the Republic of Slovenia to UNESCO, received the award at the OIV offices in Paris. This is another reason why the publication of the English version of the book became highly desirable.



At the awarding of the prestigious OIV international award to the book *The Culture of Wine in Slovenia* by Dr. Dušan Terčelj for the best written work in the world with scientific dimensions and originality in the category History, Literature and Fine Art. The International Organisation of Vine and Wine in Paris: Dr. Janez Šumrada, the then ambassador of the Republic of Slovenia to France and a permanent delegate of the Republic of Slovenia to UNESCO (second from the left); on his left is Federico Castellucci, the Director General of the OIV, on his right are František Lipka, the Slovak ambassador and the president of the Awards Committee, while on the far right is Yves Bénard, the OIV President.
Photo: Jeanne Chugunova, 2009.

The knowledge and wisdom contained in this book, the fruit of the author's lifetime of research into wine, was a valuable source of inspiration when creating the exhibition "Anew the vines have fruited: the Culture of Wine in Slovenia", at the Slovene Ethnographic Museum in Ljubljana between November 2008 and June 2009. This museum exhibition also contributed to the communication of Dr. Terčelj's knowledge and wisdom.





Snippets from the opening of the exhibition Anew the vines have fruited: the Culture of Wine in Slovenia, the Slovene Ethnographic Museum, Ljubljana, 20 October 2008, photo: Marko Habič.





In October 2013, on the occasion of Dr. Dušan Terčelj's 90th birthday, all the Primorska region oenologists, wine cellars and institutes – from Vipava, Koper, Nova Gorica and Sežana – organised in the Vipava wine cellar a special festivity for their colleague and wine knight whose work and name have played a prominent role in the history not only of Primorska, but also Slovene viticulture and particularly winemaking – as was emphasised a number of times. One of the speakers was Dr. Friderik Vodopivec, who concluded his speech about Dr. Dušan Terčelj as a “Slovene wine eccentric” with the following words: “Dear Dušan, with regard to your knowledge and experience, your contributions to the professional and lay public, to everything you knew about wine, you’re the best vintage we have. May the mild sunshine of the day and the beauty of the evening stars keep you among us for a long time to come!”

From left to right:
Nevijo Pucer
(Managing Director of the Vinakoper wine cellar),
Boris Jež
(Director of Agroind Vipava 1894),
Dr. Dušan Terčelj,
Marjan Colja
(Director of Vinakras).
Photo: Terčelj family archive.

On the occasion of the publication of the electronic edition of the book in English I must first and foremost thank the Terčelj family for all their help, support and encouragement, for friendly communication and honest experiences. Special thanks go to the translator David Limon, Savo and Valerija Školiber from the s.kolibri graphic design studio, Dr. Bojana Rogelj Škafar, Director of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum, Dr. Jonatan Vinkler, editor-in-chief of the University of Primorska Publishing House, the members of the editorial committee, the photographers and all the faithful readers and supporters.

Ad maiorem vini gloriam ...

And finally, a return call:

***“Doctor Terčelj, Gačnik here.
I’m still alive and I want you to know
that you will always be alive –
through your thoughts, words
and deeds!***

See you in wine eternity.”

Aleš Gačnik



The presentation of the book at Brič wine cellar, 2007. Photo: Martin Vičar.



Dr. Dušan Terčelj, 2003. Photo: Boris Farič, Photo library of the Ptuj Regional Museum.

Foreword



Writing about wine, that most noble of drinks, is no easy task: much has already been said, but there is still a great deal to say; the subject is so extensive that it is very difficult to include all that is worthy of mention.

There are not many things in life that are mentioned as often as wine, either positively or negatively. There are wine connoisseurs and worshippers, those who simply enjoy it and wine experts, as well as opponents of wine, among which I include addicts, as they constantly tarnish wine's reputation while looking for something to alleviate the bad feelings they have about their own lack of success in life. And wine does not deserve this.

Let us learn about this unique gift of nature, understand it and imbibe it to our advantage and for our pleasure. When we have learnt how to drink it properly it will improve, enrich and ennoble our everyday life. And then we shall realise that we have been culturally enriched.

This is precisely what the author of this book is encouraging us to do – to adopt the right attitude to wine. He links wine to culture and to history, invoking curiosity and interest. Some aspects of wine and some of its components are deliberately only mentioned in passing, while others, less well-known to lay people, are emphasised and explained in a simple and interesting manner. For those touched by the book and who wish to delve deeper into the art of winemaking there is extensive literature available on this subject.

I believe the author has fulfilled his goal, as he has woven into the text in a fascinating way his knowledge and wisdom about wine, to which he has dedicated his life. He is a living proof that wine, looked at from the right perspective, cannot ruin you, but only fill you with enthusiasm and, through its unique nature, improve you spiritually. This book preserves a precious value, i.e. the love of wine, for future generations.

Mojmir Wondra



The author, during his research in the laboratory of the Agricultural Institute of Slovenia in the 1960s. The Terčelj family archive.

The play of mysterious test tubes



It all started on those rotating stools in the central laboratory of the Agricultural Institute of Slovenia when, as a young girl, I accompanied my father to work. We went there on his big bicycle, chained it in front of the office window and then walked along the corridor that smelt of yeast straight to the laboratory. There, my father reached for his white coat, put it on, lifted me onto one of the rotating stools and then started his magic show. Magic to me, of course, as I saw chemistry as a kind of alchemy, while in fact I was only witnessing my father's "tricks" that were supposed to cover for the absence of a nanny at home. Usually, the best scientific achievements result from improvisation. And anyway, I think my father enjoyed it all as much as I did, as I know he still sees wine as a "magic" drink.

He poured colourless fluid into a test tube and asked me which colour I would like to see. "Blue!" I shouted and he added a few drops of another colourless fluid and immediately it changed to blue. "Which colour now?" And I said: "Red!" And so we played scientists and magicians and I could never get enough of it. I could go on staring at the master for ever; to me his work was a genuine mystery, even though I knew that to him it was all just a joke. Inside, I wished that I, too, when I grew up, would do something exciting and mysterious, something that would spin me into a new adventure day after day.

Later, no chemistry teacher could make her subject so attractive in such a charming way. It was other teachers who did that, such as my history and Latin teacher, who was the first to explain to me that the science my father was involved in was called oenology. Until then, whenever I was asked at school what my parents did for a living, I had said that my father was a wine expert, which always resulted in everybody in the class laughing at me, making me embarrassed, as Slovenia is full of "wine experts" of one sort or another. That was at primary school. Later, at secondary school and university, my brother and I were already sampling my father's banned treasures in the cellar, often stealing the odd bottle, preferably something

exotic: a French, Australian or New Zealand wine. They all had an aroma of a different kind of soil.

From an early age, father would take us round winegrowing areas and wine cellars, teaching us about wine tasting and drinking. I personally always liked most the smell of wine and I often competed with my father to see who would be best at identifying what variety it was. I think this game had been with us ever since those mysterious test tube days. We did not visit only Slovene wine cellars, but also those across a large part of Europe, as well as the best-known museums and historical sites, which my father could so interestingly include in his story about wine. This was probably why I chose my profession, only slightly changing the name of my father's: from oenologist to ethnologist was for me just a simple step. And so a few years ago we started talking about a book which would span our professions, something to which we could both contribute our knowledge and which would be more interesting to the reader than "pure chemistry". I say a few years ago because this idea was quite some time maturing.

When my father started writing this book I decided to withdraw and leave it to him. His erudition, not just in oenology but also in his second greatest love, history, and his ethnological knowledge about the subject he is describing was so complex



Sparkling wine at a family celebration of Majda Terčelj's birthday, 2005. Terčelj family archive.

that in spite of decades of research and recently also educational work, I am still just that little curious girl on a rotating stool, forever marvelling at his new “alchemist’s tricks”. And it is this amazement of mine and careful observation of my father’s work that filled him with trust, as I was the first to read the text, evaluate it and edit it. Thus I was the first reviewer of this book.

I have learnt a great deal from my father. He had strong personal characteristics that sustained his professional freshness: constant curiosity, creativity, enthusiasm for his work and perseverance in it, and, in spite of his achievements, that great modesty that is typical of the greatest scientists. We had never heard him boast



Father and daughter. Ljubljana, 2007. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

of his discoveries and improvements. I had never wondered why he was as he was, as I knew that how he was was right and that what he did fulfils him. But it is probably only now that I understand why there is so much unexpressed attachment to the soil, so much patriotism and stubborn perseverance in his soul that was so very emotionally involved with vine and vineyards. When one is working with the soil or in science too many words are unnecessary. But grapevines grow everywhere where the soil and wind allow it. And it was the wind and the soil that had been determineted my father’s perseverance and joie de vivre.

Marija Mojca Terčelj



A welcome. Father Visenjak, Veliki vrh, 2003. Photo: Aleš Gačnik

From the heritage of winegrowing and winemaking to the culture of wine and wine tourism in Slovenia



Wine is part of Slovenia's identity. It symbolically unites Slovenes in their national anthem, *Zdravljica* (A Toast), which honours the vine and its fruit and sings the praises of the Slovene nation. Thus the culture of wine is becoming an important element of the Slovene cultural and economic heritage and an ever increasingly important medium for our identity, international profile and attractiveness. The unique nature of Slovenia as a country at the crossroads of European civilisations, where the Mediterranean, Alpine and Pannonian environments meet, is also apparent in the fact that on such a small territory there co-exist so many different cultures and preserved viticultural and winemaking traditions, wonderful aromas and flavours which can otherwise be encountered only in dispersed European winegrowing localities. This matters so much more because these traditions are not just remnants from the history of a nation, but a living economic activity and culture, in which precious, centuries-old knowledge is combined with modern forms of creativity. Wine or the culture of wine has been our companion for thousands of years, through good times and bad, shaping the life of various Slovene regions; it is the culture that we would find hardest to give up precisely because it is so tightly interwoven into every facet of everyday life and special occasions, so that Slovenia is in fact a miniature viticultural Europe.

Slovenia is a winemaking country with superb winegrowing regions and localities, where people know how to produce some of the best wines in the world that are respected and established outside Europe. This is why we are delighted by the increasing endeavours towards a redefinition of the culture of wine and its strategic inclusion in the country's social, cultural and economic life. The constant improvements in the knowledge about wine drinking, not just among wine

connoisseurs but particularly among lay wine drinkers, has recently been brought about chiefly by the appearance of ever higher quality books about wine. One of them is *The Culture of Wine in Slovenia*, written by Dušan Terčelj, the father of modern winemaking in Slovenia.



The first talks about the appearance of this book are connected with Dušan Terčelj's traditional journey around the wine cellars of Slovenia (for an "overview" of the year) in 2003. The evening reached its peak while tasting the wines produced by the legendary Stanko Čurin from Kog, one of Terčelj's great friends. Photo: Boris Farič, photo library of the Ptuj Regional Museum.

This internationally established scientist, "winemaking ideologue" and font of new knowledge and practical experience has dedicated his life to wine and the culture of wine in the broadest sense. He has striven to constantly increase our knowledge about wine, to popularise it and, in particular, for it to receive the veneration it deserves. He is aware that the future of this agricultural and economic activity that is so important for Slovenia is very dependent on the cultural and educational level of the nation. A culturally aware drinker is not only one who recognises and differentiates various wines, combining them in an appropriate fashion with dishes and events, but in particular one who senses, understands and feels wine, with its many cultural and economic connections with past and present civilisations. A cultured drinker is a generator and guide of high quality viticulture and winemaking, as well as of tourism based on wine.

The Culture of Wine in Slovenia is the first in a new series of books entitled *Tradicije Slovenije* (Traditions of Slovenia). An interdisciplinary editorial board of recognised experts has been set up that will guide publication in various areas of Slovenia's heritage – movable and immovable, material and immaterial. The series will be directed towards the international promotion of Slovenia and Slovene quality at the local, regional and national level. It will emphasise achievements and findings from both

historical and contemporary creativity that seek inspiration in traditional knowledge, technology and wisdom. The connections and strategic partnerships among various aspects of cultural heritage and tourism will be the main rationale of the series. We are convinced that tourism based on and derived from heritage represents a major international opportunity for the development of local communities, regions and the state. This certainly applies to



A summer working meeting of the narrower project team under "Zois's trellis" at the author's home in Ptuj, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

the heritage of winemaking and the culture of wine in Slovenia.

In the process of creating this book, which spanned a number of years, we decided that current knowledge and experience in oenology, winegrowing and winemaking should be taken into account, while Dušan Terčelj was led by his wish to publish a "different" book about wine, one that focuses not only on modern knowledge and achievements, but which at the same time talks about the importance of the invaluable personal experience the author gained during the multitude of his encounters with wine, winegrowers, winemakers, wine sellers, wine connoisseurs and their opponents at home and



That genetics has shown that Slovenes are just a class of wine flies is an amusing thought by the aphorist Milan Fridauer Fredi, which was excellently illustrated by the caricaturist Aljana Primožič in the book *V vinu je resnica, resnost pa ne / Vinsko pivski aforizmi in karikature* (There is Truth in Wine, but no Seriousness / Aphorisms and Caricatures Relating to Wine and Drinking). The collection *Umetnosti Slovenije* (The Arts of Slovenia), Tovarna tradicij, 2006.

abroad. To this, we added the idea of paying particular attention to “niche stories” which readers of similar books usually do not encounter. In our editorial work we wished to make as few changes to the book and its terminology as possible, as the writing itself reflects the historical nature of knowledge and experience. In order to make the book both highly communicative and narrative, a great deal of editorial attention was paid to obtaining high quality documentary and visual material (photographs, documents) from all the Slovene regions to supplement the text. This has led us to a uniquely lively and useful monument¹ to Slovene specialists of which (future) generations of winegrowers and wine producers, oenologists and ethnologists, caterers and tourist workers will be able to feel very proud.



Mastery of the cooper's craft. The cooper F. Fijan in the first half of the 20th century. The photo library of the Ptuj Regional Museum.

¹ My heartfelt thanks go to Dušan Terčelj for his basic trust in the concept, organisation and implementation of this demanding publishing project. He has impressed us with his exceptionally well-rounded and critical knowledge, experience and anecdotes about wine. He has inspired us with his vitality, accessibility and simplicity, which makes him so impressively unique. The sharing of a table with him and other wine lovers, the tasting of selected wines and the talks about wine and the culture of wine have been engraved on my memory as wonderful and unforgettable experiences. I would also like to thank my colleague and friend Marija Mojca Terčelj, the ethnographer, who during the process of the development of the project concept and the appearance of the book acted as a kind of “guardian angel” who symbolically and operatively connected both the book and the communication that took place among us all. Moreover, I would like to thank Barbara Sosič of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum and Bojana Rogelj Škafar, the museum's director, as well as Aleš Arih, the director of the Ptuj Regional Museum, for allowing us to include precious archive material. My thanks also goes to Staša Cafuta and other photographers and owners of photographic materials for their contribution to the gathering of data and the creation of new visual material on wine in Slovenia. In addition, let me thank the acclaimed members of the editorial board, the design studio s.kolibri and, of course, all the business partners and friends for their readiness to help in the development of this book collection as a whole.

The exceptionally rich and high quality heritage of viticulture and winemaking in Slovenia is an excellent accompaniment on the journey to a common European future, in particular if we combine the multitude of winemaking traditions with the modern way of life, modern technologies and knowledge. Let us seek in the treasure house of viticultural and winemaking traditions both invention and innovation as constants which can guide the care given to the persistent raising of the quality and international profile of Slovene wines. The more familiar we are with the history of European viticulture, winemaking and the culture of wine, the easier it will be for us to understand and evaluate our local special features and the more competitive and sought after will be the excellent wines produced in Slovene regions.



Neža Pavlič, Slovene Wine Queen 2013, at the harvesting of the oldest grapevine in the world. Maribor, 2013. Photo: Aleš Gačnik



The culture of vine trellises as a marginal story in the history of Slovene viticulture? A traditional trellis construction on Dravsko polje, 2002. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

The journey from the heritage of viticulture and winemaking to the culture of wine and wine tourism in Slovenia seems natural and simple. But it needed to be conceived, mapped out and travelled. And this is what Dušan Terčelj has done for us. Let us make the journey with him.

Aleš Gačnik PhD

*The Culture
in Slovenia*

ure of Wine

enia



A *klopotec* (a wind-driven rattle for scaring birds) – a symbol of winegrowing areas in the Podravje region. An evening view of Destrnik, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik



Preface

This book is aimed at all those who wish to know more about wine. Many people wonder why there is so much talk about wine, what is the point of the special legislation pertaining to wine, why statesmen after the completion of talks toast each other with wine, and so on. In this book I thus wish to throw some light on what wine is and on its significance past and present. I would also like to make clear the abundance of wine's components, over a thousand of which have so far been identified. Moreover, I wish to help readers acquaint themselves with wine through other written sources and through practical learning about the wealth of wine's aromas and flavours. And last but not least, I wish to show ways of improving wine drinking habits.

The book is not written in a uniform way: it is not technical, although it touches upon many technical issues, and it is not only popular, although the genre of popular writing helped me tremendously with individual descriptions. Wine experts will perhaps criticise my approach, even say that the book contains a great deal of historical data in comparison to the amount of attention paid to the current state of the discipline and its new directions. The main wine components barely get a mention, while there is a great deal of emphasis on aroma. While technological procedures (for example, the traditional method) are talked about very briefly, there is a detailed description of the technology involved in the production of barrique wines. In the portrayal of wine routes, I do not dwell as much on the description of wines as I do on the description of local cultural sites. This is all true. The book's emphasis does not lie merely in the kind of technical presentation typical of wine literature, as I am assuming that those who become interested in wine after reading this book will reach for the extensive literature on, for example, the composition of wine, the methods involved in the production of wine, on the sensory evaluation of wine, and so on.

My purpose is to encourage readers to want to learn more about wine, to value it more and to enjoy its richness and variety. This will help them to improve their view of wine's quality. In this way the book will achieve its goal. It presents my personal view of wine acquired through fifty years of working in oenology, but it does not state an eternal truth. That would, of course, be mistaken.



A natural monument of the Republic of Slovenia. The Maribor Old Vine, a *Žametna Črnina*, which has been growing and bearing fruit for over 400 years, is entered in the *Guinness Book of Records* as the oldest noble grape in the world, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik

The culture of wine drinking

What is culture? What is wine?

Wine is a beverage with exceptional qualities and a special status. It is consumed by both manual labourers at work and top diplomats when concluding important international agreements. Wine acquired its privileges through its historical role and its rich array of properties. It helped shape European culture and has accompanied it throughout. For most Europeans, wine is not just a consumer good – we feel an emotional connection with it. The richness of its components, in particular polyphenols and aromatic substances, offers a diversity of aromas and qualities. These two facts speak about the culture of wine. And the culture of wine means talking about our attitude to wine and wine being a subject of enjoyment.

The culture of a nation, population or society changes: it was different in the past from what it is now and what it will be in the future. If culture consists of customs, habits and way of life, it is influenced by the environment in which we live. This is why wine-drinking habits of Slovenes in the winegrowing areas of the Primorje region are different from those in Alpine areas without grapevines and in pre-Alpine winegrowing localities, and different again in places where the pre-Alpine hills drop down to the plains along the rivers Drava, Sava and Krka.

We talk about low and high levels of culture, depending on a society's level of development. Drinking habits have improved along with society as a whole and are now better than they were a hundred years ago. But sadly, society and culture do not always go hand-in-hand, they sometimes part company. If we look at the previous century – a century of warped ideologies and the horrors of war – we can see great technological progress alongside a sharp fall in the level of general culture. Unfortunately, even today, when the level of social development in Slovenia is high, there are disparities in the enjoyment of wine drinking: a large number of Slovenes persist in getting thoroughly intoxicated on excursions and at parties.

I believe that the study of the culture of wine, past and present, is immensely useful in enabling wine consumers to drink wisely and moderately. My aim is not to produce a scientific study based on a multitude of data, but to offer advice on how to enable the refined consumption of wine.

But what is wine and what does it mean to us? Pasteur offered a short definition: “Wine can be the healthiest and most hygienic drink.” What purpose does wine serve? It can be:

- a means of hydration, quenching thirst,
- a food that can partly replace calories,
- a substance that improves the digestion of heavy food,
- a sterilising substance for polluted water,
- a stimulant, while it still has a positive neurological effect,
- a social drink,
- a drink used in rituals.



A tabernacle richly decorated with vine leaves and grapes bears witness to the ritual and symbolic significance of wine in Christian liturgy. The Church of St. George in Ptuj, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik

Winemaking is an important branch of the economy that provides income to farmers, retailers, caterers, hauliers and others. Wine unites its lovers into societies and clubs that organise a range of events. Wine is also a sign of social status.

Wine consumption, sadly, also has negative aspects, when wine becomes an intoxicant. Excessive drinking is a perennial problem in Slovenia. That is why it is especially important to improve wine-drinking habits, as this is the only possible way of eradicating this evil from our society. Legislative bans (prohibition) have so far not produced positive results.

A colleague once lamented that she regretted being involved in wine production and in educating personnel involved in this profession as wine produces so much harm. I told her it was our mission to pass on to people at our lectures and through the education we offer the knowledge of how to value wine. If people learn how to do this, if they know of wine’s benefits and respect it, they will not use it to get drunk.



Enjoying wine, 2008. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

How I entered this profession

Why did I decide to work in oenology? To re-educate Slovenes? Of course not. The house I was born in stood on a gentle hill. On three sides it was surrounded by vineyards belonging to farmers in the village of Žapuže, just over a kilometre from Ajdovščina on the way to Vipava. Beyond the vineyards, approximately one hundred metres behind the house, stood an old church, which we called St. Martin's, even though there was a statue of St. Peter on the altar. My maternal uncle had a vineyard in the neighbouring village. I often used to visit him and accompanied him while he was working. In the summer heat I would rock on a branch of a perry pear tree and listen to the cicadas singing in the oak trees above the vineyard, or to the crickets guarding the grapes in the autumn. So even when still very young I was invisibly tied to what went on in the vineyards and I have very fond memories of this.

My first memory of wine comes from tasting a young *Rebula*. When still a child, I went to Gorizia with my father one autumnal day. In an inn, he ordered himself a quarter of a litre of *Rebula*. It was cloudy, fresh and still in the process of becoming wine. I took a small sip and it seemed pleasant, resembling lemonade, slightly sweet.

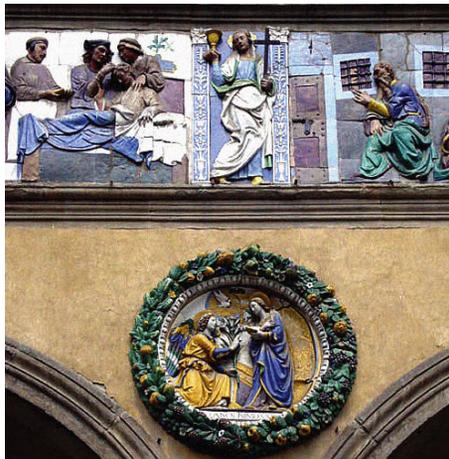


Žapuže near Ajdovščina in the past and now. The author remembers his youth in front of the house in which he was born, the author as a ten-year-old boy and the Church of St. Martin. Photo: Staša Cafuta and the Terčelj family archive.

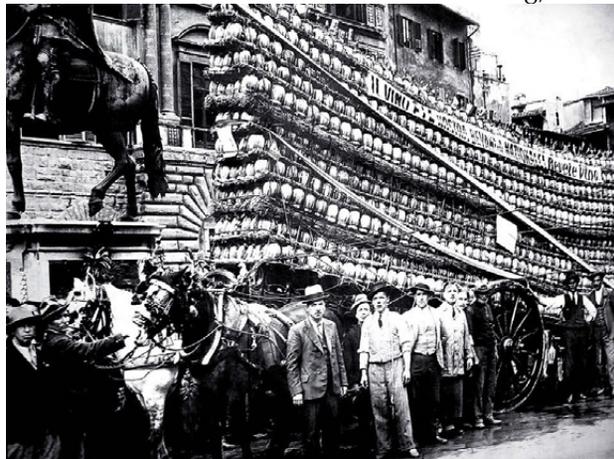
When I was eight, my father sent me to school in Ljubljana. He was a great patriot and did not want to buy me the black shirt worn by the Fascist *balilla* (the Vipava area was at that time under Italian control, tr. note). I lived in various institutions until the second half of grammar school and never really came into contact with the world outside or with wine. When the Italians came to Ljubljana and I continued my education at the classical grammar school, students had the habit of promenading along the street now known as Cankarjeva ulica and in Tivoli Park up to the mansion with the statues of wolves in front of it. At the start of sixth grade, a school friend invited me to a tavern for a glass of *Portugalka* (Portugieser). When I asked him what *Portugalka* was, he explained that the Italians had

brought the wine over from Portugal. We were showing off. And that is my second memory of wine from my youth.

The third memory is from the time when I was in the army. In the autumn of 1942 the Italian authorities called up all the eligible men in the Littoral or Primorska region – Italian citizens – into their military working battalions. We had no weapons, just military uniforms. And that is how I found myself in Pistoia in central Tuscany, in a military unit comprised purely of Slovenes. Our squad consisted mainly of boys from farms in the Tolmin and Idrija areas. After a certain time, when the commander realised that we “*ribelli*” were not “wild animals”, we were allowed to go to the nearby village in the evenings. We went straight to the bar. We ordered so much wine that the tavern ran out of it on our first evening, while



Pistoia in Tuscany – a short stop in the life of Dušan Terčelj.



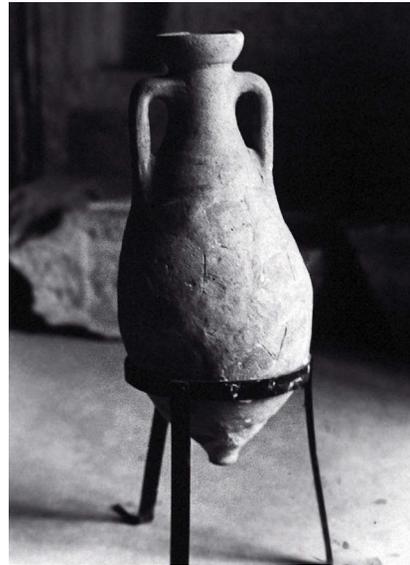
An archive photograph of the transport of the legendary Tuscan wine Chianti on display in the Bruni wine shop in San Gimignano, 2005. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

the Italian guests sat there all evening with a single glass. We sang Slovene folk songs and went back to the barracks in very high spirits. We were punished for not being able to behave in a suitable military manner and for singing in the street to boot. When we went out after this we would meet in the tavern and talk while drinking wine. The Italians just could not understand this. They were used to their soldiers trying to seduce girls rather than sitting around drinking. In the company of Slovene boys I learnt that wine was a social drink.

In the barracks there was a canteen which sold wine, but there was not much demand for it. In early May 1943, the canteen supervisor brought his Chianti. I tried it. It was so enjoyable that I kept drinking it every evening in May, falling pleasantly asleep afterwards. When at the end of the month he brought another wine, I did not enjoy it and I no longer bought it or drank it. I am still wondering how I managed to drink about a litre of wine every night throughout that month, as I have never done anything like that since.

Wine is goodness

Wine has accompanied humankind since the appearance of the Mediterranean culture, which is the foundation of Western European civilisation. Wine was one of the basic elements of this culture: it was a drink, food and medicine. It had an important economic role and, due to its special characteristics, also a symbolic meaning. The Ancient Greeks and Romans were very familiar with the culinary art: the enjoyment of different wines accompanying different dishes. Antique writers described the pleasures of drinking wine and the richness of its aromas and flavours. Progress in winemaking has been made right up to this day. Slovenes, too, soon after settling in the lands they now inhabit, started producing grapes and wine. Wine became a popular national drink, with which every holiday and important event was celebrated. We acquired the knowledge of how to create wines typical of each region, even each locality and position. This is our wealth, our cultural heritage.



A Roman amphora for the transportation and storage of wine, 1976. Photo library of the Ptuj Regional Museum.

Today we are witnessing the advance of economic globalisation, striving to produce everything as cheaply as possible and to maximise profit, even in winemaking. Anything goes, as long as it does not harm our health; it does not matter that everything tastes the same. Should we be drinking “McDonald’s” wine? This is what the non-European countries that make up the new wine producing world are in favour of. On the other side are the members of the International Organisation of Vine and Wine (O.I.V.), headed by France, who



Shots from the filming of *Slovenija, Winegrowing Country* in cooperation with experts from the International Vine and Wine Office, Železne dveri, 1 October 1992. Photo: Aleš Gačnik, photo library of the Ptuj Regional Museum.

advocate the preservation of tradition, natural production, the specific characteristics of provenance and the wealth of diversity. Thus wine should remain an agricultural product (not an industrial one), with its own romantic charm and a hint of mystery. It is up to us to decide which of these ideas to pursue in our legislation.

Years ago I was given for my birthday the book *The Little Prince* by the French writer Antoine de Saint-Exupery. It is a fairy tale for adults, written by a child (the little prince) as he learns about the world and wonders why grown-ups act so illogically. The book contains the thought that if you want to see in the right way, you have to look with your heart, as that which is important is invisible to the eye. I would like to apply this to wine. Some people see in wine just a market commodity, a source of income that might earn us, let us say, a dollar, but if we add foreign provenance or some tannin powder, we can make two dollars. If we approach wine with our heart, we see a different image. We see the beauty of our hills, covered with vines, glowing with the colours of the individual seasons. In wine, we see thousands of years of effort invested in the creation of a wealth of incredibly different aromas and flavours. We feel and understand the worries, difficulties and the joy of vine growers. We wish to talk to them, to learn about their character as it is expressed in their wine. We learn to understand differences between wines, not just in terms of varieties, but also with respect to each and every barrel by each and every winemaker. Wine reflects their knowledge, character, the love of their calling and the subtle qualities they invest in winemaking. Wine is goodness.



A wine barrel carved with an 18th century image of St. George, 1976. Photo library of the Ptuj Regional Museum.



The poetic nature of Čotar's wine cellar on the Kras, 2006. Photo: Staša Cafuta.

The wealth of Slovene wines is in their diversity, which is the result of the natural conditions as well as the love of winemakers who create this wealth. This is our cultural heritage, which we must not abandon but pass on to our successors. This is why I see the winemaker as an artist. Wine is a work of art. Artists do not allow themselves to be globalised. It is them that we Slovenes must thank for being a European nation and for having our own country.

But should we reject the new winemaking knowledge? Of course not, all that is required is to adopt it in such a way that we do not destroy everything that is good about what our forbears created, but rather enrich the already existing wealth. We must approach the task with love. And how is love expressed? The little prince says that it is expressed in the care, attention and time he dedicated to a flower.

Sometimes, new fangled ideas can be introduced somewhat carelessly. Even I, when still working at the Viticultural Cooperative in Vipava, in my youthful enthusiasm tried to turn a wine typical of the Vipava area into one typical of the Štajerska region. No more fermenting the pulp on the skins! Would it not have been more beneficial to listen to Matija Vertovec, who advised the winemakers of Vipava to leave the must on the skins overnight only, rather than a whole week, so that the wine does not develop an unpleasant taste? The people of Vipava should retain at least some wine with a Vipava character. But that is youthful enthusiasm for you, even though I am pleased that I was trying to improve the quality of Vipava wines. Now, however, we are going to the other extreme, adding tannins to wine, chemically changing it. Let us rather go for tradition, the controlled and organic production of grapes and wine. Let a barrique be a barrique with its noble aromas and flavours, not only the smell of oak.



Traditional wine vessels in Herberštajn's wine cellar in Juršinci, today owned by Alojz Kavčič, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



The modern Santomas wine cellar in Šmarje, 2008. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

Wine gave me other pleasures, too. When I used to get home in the evening, tired, from the Vipava wine cellar, I would sit on the wall in front of the house, listening to the crickets. Autumnal evenings, when the cold is starting to seep in, fill you with a sense of mortality and melancholy, heightened by the sad song of the crickets. It is like listening to Puccini's *Madam Butterfly* when Cio-Cio San is expecting her beloved, but in vain. At first the music overwhelms you, you can still hear it, but then you become one with it and float away on your feelings. How many times I enjoyed such a scene! Have you? Or am I being too romantic?

Wine needs romanticism. Is not the atmosphere you get when tasting a wine in a vaulted cellar among oak barrels the best there is? When on training in Bordeaux, I visited the cellars of Mouton Rothschild and Lafitte Rothschild and the vintner led us to the cellar carrying a lit candle on a long, metal candleholder. It emphasised the age and mystery of their wine. Wine is unpredictable and mystifying in its development. When on another

occasion we visited a cellar in Burgundy and were somewhat noisy, the vintner told us that there must be silence in the cellar so that the wine was not disturbed in its development. This attitude fills you with respect for wine, which it greatly deserves.

Let us enjoy nature, preserve it, take all the goodness it offers. Let us not discard the thousands of years of efforts by our forbears who created for us such wonderful wines, let us only improve wine's quality, try to extract the hitherto hidden qualities that the vine still hides in its fruit. Let us preserve the wealth we have inherited from our predecessors and leave it to our children.

Slovenia is part of the European Union. Now we have to preserve or even create our own identity in every domain, including that of wine. Globalisation, with its goal of uniformity, will pass; what will be left will be the global struggle for survival. Man will always strive for quality, goodness, beauty and diversity, even with respect to wine. That is our future. And these are my thoughts at a time when we are adopting new legislation. Let this also be a farewell and a testament to the fifty years I have worked in this wonderful profession.

Wine past and present

The history of viniculture in Slovenia

Wine is the fermented juice of the fruit of the vine – *Vitis vinifera*. Louis Pasteur defined it as the healthiest and most hygienic drink. No other drink has been so well researched with regard to its components and is so varied in terms of aromas and flavours. Numerous research laboratories study the technology of winemaking, trying to further improve its quality and arrive at new findings. Wine is the most respected and valued drink. As early as in Antiquity



Bacchus, the god of wine, is a popular decorative element in Tuscan wine shops and hosteries, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



The worshipping of Dionysius can still be recognised in the traditional rituals at Shrovetide in some of the masked characters in central Sardinia. The ritually sacrificed dead sheep or goat is revived with wine, stored in wooden vessels, which symbolises the natural cycle. Members of Mamutzones of Samugheo on Sardinia, 2001, 2004. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

it became a sacral drink. Greeks and Romans both had a god of wine, Dionysus and Bacchus. Jesus Christ elevated wine into a sacred drink at the last supper.

From where does the vine originate? When does it first appear in literature? When did it arrive on Slovene territory? What was the development of viticulture in these lands after Slovenes settled here? What makes wine such a unique drink? What effects does wine have on us and what does it mean to us? There are many more questions we could ask about wine.

The origin and history of wine

Vitis vinifera or the European (not in a literal sense) vine is a part of the large botanical group *Vitis* that appears right across the Earth's temperate zone. *Vitis vinifera* originated in a wild plant from the hilly areas of the Middle East, Anatolia, Iraq, Iran and areas south of the Caspian Sea. The wild vine is a creeper with small bunches of tiny grapes. Man used to pick those as early as in the Stone Age when still living a nomadic lifestyle and grazing sheep.

The growing of the vine and its improvement started around 10,000 BC, when man in the Middle East changed to an agricultural way of life. Civilisation developed where the natural conditions and the type of soil enabled a farming surplus. That is also when the more effective exchange of goods began. Trade led to general well-being, the division of labour, the appearance of crafts, high art and research. All these, as we know, contributed to progress.

The first villages in the wider Mediterranean basin began to appear along the rivers and in the oases of southern and eastern Anatolia, where there was enough precipitation to enable primitive irrigation. Simultaneously with the cultivation of grains, man also started cultivating the vine and olive trees. The first written sources from Mesopotamia and Egypt show that it was these two cultured plants that made life possible in the poor, dry areas of Asia Minor, Palestine and the rest of the eastern Mediterranean.

From an early stage, man cultivated numerous subspecies of vine, adapting them to local climatic and soil conditions. Wine not only enabled man to survive, but offered wealth, particularly with the growth of trade. Wine soon became a source of sustenance after a heavy day's work and a medicine in non-hygienic conditions. Man also learned about the sweetness and intoxicating quality of a wine-induced stupor. According to the Old Testament, God created wine for man's pleasure.

In Mesopotamia, along the Euphrates and the Tigris, where irrigation was possible, the appearance of (our) civilisation began around 4000 BC. That is when the first writing on clay and ceramic plates dates from. Urukagin's texts from around 2350 BC mention that in Uru there were royal wine cellars. Thus we can see from the very first Mesopotamian written sources, *cuneiforms*, that wine was a social drink that united people. The Mesopotamian rulers encouraged the cultivation of vines and built cellars among their granaries. Wine was also imported from Anatolia. King Sargon brought various vine subspecies from his advance on central Anatolia in order to adapt them to the inhospitable desert climate. Around 2000 BC King Hammurabi published a code that very precisely prescribed social relations. Thus, for example, all transactions involving immobile property, loans and trading

deals had to be registered, together with the names of the parties involved; weights had to have denotations guaranteed by the authorities; victuallers were not allowed to add water to wine; and so on.

The vine and the olive tree facilitated the dense populations in the states along the eastern Mediterranean. In Mycenae on Crete archaeologists have found vine seeds. Historians assume that the vine and the olive tree were also the foundations of Cretan culture. In Egyptian tombs vessels containing wine, marked with its origin or provenance, which was the mark of the quality of the ruler's favourite wine, were included among the favourite objects buried with the pharaohs.

Around 1000 BC, numerous subspecies of vine were created. These already had large clusters of grapes. In the Old Testament, there are numerous references to vines and wine. Viticulture signified wealth. When Moses led the Israelis out of Egyptian slavery back to Palestine, he sent scouts from the edge of the desert to Canaan (Palestine). They returned with a large bunch of grapes, which encouraged the Israelis to return to the Promised Land.



Biblical scene of the carrying of a large bunch of grapes. The 25th agricultural festivity in Svečina, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

The wise Jewish ruler Solomon, who is thought to have written the *Song of Songs*, a lyrical poem that belongs at the very apex of ancient poetry, connected love with the vine in the following way:

Lover: Let your breasts be like clusters of the vine,
the smell of your breath like apples,
Your mouth like the best wine,
that goes down smoothly for my beloved,
gliding through the lips of those who are asleep.

Beloved: I am my beloved's.

His desire is toward me.
Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field.
Let us lodge in the villages.
Let's go early up to the vineyards.
Let's see whether the vine has budded,
its blossom is open,
and the pomegranates are in flower.
There I will give you my love.

And the wise Sirah, when giving advice about life, says this about wine:

Do not aim to be valiant over wine,
for wine has destroyed many.
Fire and water prove the temper of steel,
so wine tests hearts in the strife of the proud.
Wine is like life to men,
if you drink it in moderation.
What is life to a man who is without wine?
It has been created to make men glad.
Wine drunk in season and temperately
is rejoicing of heart and gladness of soul.
Wine drunk to excess is bitterness of soul,
with provocation and stumbling.
Drunkenness increases the anger of a fool to his injury,
reducing his strength and adding wounds.
Do not reprove your neighbour at a banquet of wine,
and do not despise him in his merrymaking;
speak no word of reproach to him,
and do not afflict him by making demands of him.

Jesus Christ elevated wine into a ritual drink when during the Last Supper he took a goblet of wine, gave it to his disciples and said: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." The Church fulfils this instruction in the daily Eucharist. The use of wine in worship greatly speeded up the development of viticulture, in particular its spread towards Northern Europe, as far as southern England and northern Germany. New subspecies of vine were created, adapted to the cold conditions of the north. Although the Church elevated wine to a high position, water always remained the symbol of the purification of body and soul. Christening, already known in Jewish and other religions such as Buddhism, was preserved. During mass, water is added to wine as a symbol of purification.



Elevation of the host. At the fiftieth anniversary of the first mass given by Stanko Ojnik in the parish church of St. Jacob in Limbuš, 2006. Photo: Staša Cafuta.

The first celebrated Greek writers such as Homer, Xenophon and Herodotus described wine as a social drink. Homer describes the custom of toasting the honour of celebrations and events, but recommends drinking only moderately. The Ancient Greeks had wines of different quality, usually described by their origin. Later writers, philosophers and tragedians also mention the consumption of wine. In Ancient Greece, wine accompanied man at all the most important events, at all celebrations and in everyday life. Ordinary people enjoyed wine during heavy labour and at meals. Writers only described in detail the feasts of the rich. They were already familiar with glass vessels from Alexandria and Tyre. Aristocrats held private feasts in honour of Dionysius. These developed into parties with heavy drinking, called *symposia*, led by a *symposiarch*. The wine was always mixed with at least the same amount of water or more; cheese, walnuts, fruit, sweet pastries and so on were also served. Entertainment was provided by female singers, dancers and *hetaerae*. There was often excessive drinking, which is why all writers warned that wine had to be enjoyed in moderation. After 500 BC, Greeks started establishing colonies along the whole of the eastern coast of the Adriatic. They started growing vines there, which is shown by the numerous reliefs from Dalmatia preserved from that time.

The Romans inherited from the Greeks the custom of drinking wine (in addition to many other things, as the Greeks had a much higher level of culture). When the Roman Empire first appeared, only men over 30 were allowed to drink wine, although later this rule was dropped. At feasts it was customary to consume a few sips of pure wine. After eating, heavy drinking – known as *commisatio* or *comus* – began, when wine was greatly diluted and large quantities were often consumed. Among the many writers describing the aristocratic custom of wine drinking I will mention only the text by Petronius, *Dinner with Trimalchio*, written at the time of Nero. The writer describes Roman culinary specialities and the course of the dinner. Aristocrats drank from goblets made of gold or glass. Glass vessels were at the time already made in southern Italy. Particularly valued was wine from Falerno near Naples, which was three times more expensive than the rest.

During the forced migration of nations at the collapse of the Roman Empire, many settlements, as well as much agricultural land and many vineyards, were destroyed, especially along migration routes. The original inhabitants on the territory of the present-day Slovenia – the Celts and Illyrians – withdrew into the hills, while the descendants of the Romans moved to the coastal towns. It is likely that the original inhabitants preserved vineyards in remote places. After settlement, the Slavs became acquainted with the cultivation of vines and the enjoyment of wine, particularly after converting to Christianity, as wine was used in worship. Josip Gruden in his *Zgodovina slovenskega naroda* (The History of the Slovene Nation)¹ mentions that as early as in the 8th century wine was consumed at the mansions of Slovene dukes (for example, during the time of Duke Inko). We can also read that in 1046 the Blessed Hema donated all her vineyards around Mittertrixen and Hochosterwitz in Carinthia to the monastery in Gurk. In the Jauntal Valley the Bishop of Brixen Albuin inherited a number of vineyards near Kamen Castle and in 994 donated them to the Church. This much about Carinthia. With regard to Carniola, Gruden mentions that in the 11th century the area around Lake Bled was copiously covered with vineyards and all the winegrowers seemed to be Slovene. In the Škofja Loka area, the Freising bishops

¹ Gruden, 1992, p. 439

had their vineyards around Loka and on Šmarjetna gora. The vine also grew in the Savinja Valley and all around Styria, Carniola and the Littoral, which is confirmed by the register of tributes paid to various lords or the Church. In the register of the Freising Škofja Loka estate from 1291, it says that in the Poljane area, near St. Martin, there were two farms that had to hand over a sheep and wine as an annual tribute.

In the first period after settlement, the early Slovenes lived in cooperatives. When they fell under Bavarian rule, they adopted the feudal way of life. The land became the property of the Holy Roman Emperor in Aachen, who then gave it to the lords governing individual provinces. The aristocrats in individual regions, as well as Church dignitaries, divided their property to be farmed by their vassals; these had socage tenure, whereby they had to give away a tenth of their produce and also perform socage services for a certain number of days a year. The Slovene inhabitants mainly became vassals. They lived on farms that were called *huba* and were not free. The few free farmers that remained tended to live in the rather infertile mountainous parts.

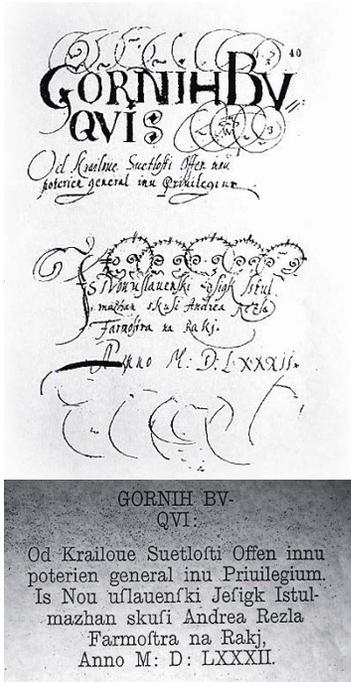
In the Middle Ages there were a number of different tenures in viticulture:

- dominical vineyards, owned by the lord and worked by his vassals;
- *huba* vineyards which were worked by the peasants responsible for them, who had to give their lords a prescribed share of produce;
- vineyards which appeared on the newly cleared soil on wooded hills outside the village agricultural complexes, particularly in Carniola and Styria. The landlords who owned the woods divided a large complex of land suitable for vineyards among individuals who turned them into plots. These complexes were called *gora*, hence the common name *gorice* for vineyards on hills. Individual vineyards were then let out by landlords in line with the special rights known as Vineyard Rights, which were inherited and free. Tributes had to be paid in the form of a fixed amount of must or wine.



In the fresco of the crucifixion on the wall of St. George's church in Ptuj from the second third of the 15th century there are images of winegrowing, which testify to the centuries of tradition of winegrowing in this area, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

² Vilfan, 1996, pp. 353-358.



'Mountain books', the Archive of the Republic of Slovenia, book 1582, Anton Recelj. With the help of Stanislav Bačar from Ajdovščina.

As the Vineyard Rights pertaining to these vineyards were specific to Carniola and Styria, I will describe them in more detail. Sergej Vilfan in his *Pravna zgodovina Slovencev*² (The Legal History of the Slovenes) interprets them as special ownership relations. Landlords gave the right for the clearing of woodlands and the creation of vineyards to individuals irrespective of their residence and personal status, i.e. to vassals, free townspeople and aristocrats. Winegrowers formed a community of those who reaped from this land that was, however, still feudal. As the members of the community were of different class origin, matters pertaining to these vineyards were resolved separately, at community meetings. The first such meetings were mentioned in Styria as early as in 1236³. At these meetings any problems or conflicts among the community members were resolved: the management of paths, the setting of a grape picking date, the resolution of conflicts about borders, and so on. With time, the number of conflicts increased and the problem arose of the judicial resolution of conflicts among different estates of the realm, so the provincial Duke of Styria in 1543 issued the *gorske bukve* (vineyard books)⁴. Later, such books which contained the official rules applying to 'vineyard rights', were also issued by the Duke of Carniola.

Sergej Vilfan⁵ says that these meetings of the members of a community of winegrowers were the height of popular justice in Slovenia, which remained in place until the 19th century. The historian Josip Gruden⁶ also mentions that these meetings were of special value, as they protected against the arbitrariness of lords and adds: "In 1584, Archduke Charles approved the 'mountain code' for inner Austria, which was written in Slovene. This was the first government document issued in the Slovene language."

In the Slovene Littoral, on the other hand, there was something called *kolonat*. This appeared on the basis of Roman law during the collapse of slavery when the work of slaves proved uneconomical in regions where Rome was still strong; it was part of the transition to feudalism and its system of tenure. Estate owners wanted to keep both slaves and Roman freemen on their estates. A *kolon* or tenure holder took part of an estate and worked it, paying a rent. This was inherited and tied the tenure holder to the land and its owner. *Koloni* were with regard to their personal discipline subject to their lords, but according to Roman law also free. This is mentioned in Istra from the 9th century onwards.

In the early 13th century there developed in Italy a freer form of *kolonat*, known as communal *kolonat*, which differed from the Roman one. A peasant was free and no longer tied to the land, but had short-term tenure. Free contracts with those who worked the land

³ Vilfan, 1996, p. 355

⁴ Ibid., 356

⁵ Ibid., 360

⁶ Gruden, 1992, p. 440

were introduced and it was up to the landlords with whom they concluded these contracts. Usually, peasants gave half of their produce to the land owner. Thus instead of a legally enforced tie to the land, an economic force was now used (resulting in famines). This form of *kolonat* developed in Istra under the influence of the coastal towns and in the Goriška Brda Hills and around Gorizia under Venetian influence. This system of relations persevered in the Brda until 1945.



Šmartno in the Brda, 2006.
Photo: Staša Cafuta.

The significance of wine in the Middle Ages and how it was consumed

Two writers from this time are particularly significant for Slovenia: Paolo Santonino and Janez Vajkard Valvasor, who described in detail the customs not only of the nobility, but also of simple people and serfs. Paolo Santonino was the secretary to the patriarch's vicar in Aquileia, Bishop Carli. Between 1485 and 1487, he accompanied the vicar on his visits to his estates and parishes around Carinthia and Styria. In his diary he described numerous local customs, particularly culinary ones associated with both aristocratic and peasant homes. I would like to cite a few paragraphs from these diaries.

In the Drava Valley in Carinthia “we stopped at a public tavern, where they served us seven courses. One consisted of very sweet pears, which were first boiled, then arranged in a dish and then had melted butter with semi-sweet spices poured over them. There was no shortage of fish, expensive and tasty, fried in oil or boiled. In addition, they served us three varieties of wine in silver goblets: to begin with there was the excellent Malvasia, followed by a Friuli wine, and with dessert there was the sweet and very drinkable Rebula.”⁷

A note in relation to the Zilja Valley (Gailtal in Austria): “From the parish of St. Daniel along the Gailtal down to Villach, Germans are mixed with Slovenes and both nations speak both languages. It is quite astonishing how much time they have for feasts and drinking, they go on night and day.”⁸

⁷ Santonino, 1991, p. 12

⁸ Santonino, 1991, p.37

Travelling around Styria, he described his meeting with the Celje governor Andrej Hohenwarter: "... he served more than six courses, consisting of fish cooked in various ways, two kinds of wine, in addition to a sweet *Rebula*..."⁹ and "... when on that day the mighty Celje governor found out that Santonino was not dining with the others, in the early evening he sent him a large tin jug, filled with excellent Malvasia, so that Santonino could have a drink with his friends..."¹⁰

It is clear from Santonino's diary that both serfs and the nobility took wine during meals and that even in that period wine was an important drink. The best wines were produced in vineyards belonging to castles and monasteries. In the Middle Ages, the latter were the centres of science. They ensured that there was progress in viticulture, in the quality of life and in the quality of wine drinking. The serf winegrowers gave their lords a part of their produce, which was of worse quality.



An inhabitant of the Vipava area with his grape tub, 1689 (etching). From the book *The Glory of the Duchy of Carniola* by Janez Vajkard Valvasor, a copy of the original. The archive of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum.

The Glory of the Duchy of Carniola from 1689 by Janez Vajkard Valvasor is of particular importance. In it, the author describes Slovene customs in the 17th century. He mentions the variety and excellence of wine on the Kras plateau and the Vipava Valley: "In the aforementioned Vipava and on the Kras there grow the most noble wines of various kinds in huge quantities. The red wines have various names, such as *Teran*, *Marcevin* or *Marcemin*, *Pinol* or *Pignol*, *Refoško* and many others. White wines, too, come in a number of varieties: thus there is *Vipavec* (which, as mentioned above, its makers call *Kindermacher*, as it warms up all the limbs), *White Teran* or *Cividin*, *Prosekar*, *Črni Kalec*, *Mušcatelec* and many other selections of exceedingly flavoursome wines; it would be difficult to find a greater variety or better quality in any other country. How excellent, delicious and strong these wines are is shown by the fact that they are sold in German lands as *Vin de Canea*, as *Malvasia* and other such strong wines."¹¹ With regard to Lower Carniola, he said: "They say that where there is no wine, there is no happiness. Lower Carniola must thus consider itself happier than many other lands where the vine does not grow, as it has a large family of vineyards; it has no right to complain in this respect about the lack of happiness."¹²

⁹ Santonino, 1991, p.89

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Valvasor, 1984, p.50

¹² Valvasor, 1984, p.33

The Culture of Wine in Slovenia

Winegrowers themselves had different wine-drinking customs to people in the towns, with their growing populations. At that time wine was not bottled, with the exception of a small quantity of superior wines in Styria bottled by wine merchants for elite restaurants. Wine was thus sold on draught, mostly in catering establishments. This is why workers, craftsmen and the newly appearing administrative class enjoyed their wine in taverns after work. The result of this was that many, in particular manual workers, drank on empty stomachs and soon got drunk. For them, wine was a means of getting intoxicated, thus alleviating their difficult social position. Wine was served in ordinary glasses without stems. There were only a few inns where they had table cloths and stemmed glasses.



The culture of wine and a set table as an element of the attractions offered by hotel marketing, 1895. A postcard from the personal collection of Franc Golob.

Attitudes among winegrowers varied between the individual regions of Styria, Carniola and the Littoral. Serfdom was abolished in 1848: the land was given to the vassals who had worked it, but they had to pay off their lords. In Styria, in pronouncedly winegrowing areas, winegrowers did not have the money for this and thus had to sell it off to rich townspeople, while they themselves became vine-dressers.



The renewed Herberštajn vine-dresser's cottage in Mestni vrh near Ptuj, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



A vine-dresser's cottage in Semič in Bela Krajina, 1925. Photo: Stanko Vurnik, the archive of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum.



Trenching up a vineyard. Bodislavci, 1938. Reproduction from the archive of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum.

Winegrowers with arable land managed to keep their vineyards. After the destruction of vineyards by vine-louse, rich owners of the best winegrowing positions managed to renew their vineyards with the best varieties. Vine-dressers and farmers who owned low-lying land planted hybrid varieties, in particular *Šmarnica*, which did not need spraying. Drinking this wine, which poor peasants gave even to their children, frequently turned to excess.

In Carniola, most winegrowers were able to hold onto their vineyards, as they had arable land. However, in Lower Carniola and in White Carniola it was harder to sell wine as the areas were very poor. Fran Levstik in his *Popotovanje od Litije do Čateža* (A Journey from Litija to Čatež) said: "Wine rules in our lands, we look after it better than any other crop." He goes on to say: "A Lower Carniolan never drinks it as gladly as in the autumn, when he does not feel sorry for the wine. Everyone is in good spirits then, be they big or small, young or old. Those who do not have a vineyard of their own go from one friend to another. This lasts almost until Christmas. Only when barrels start to sing do people become more parsimonious with wine."¹⁵ The writer Ivan Trdina¹⁶, when describing the customs of the inhabitants of Lower Carniola and White Carniola, mentions the custom of drinking wine in the autumn, from St. Martin's Day until Christmas. Often there was a lack of wine for heavy labour in spring and early autumn. The inhabitants of White Carniola were more practical, establishing neighbourhood cellars in villages. The ethnologist Andrej Dular writes: "Neighbourhoods were a special form of association of villagers in their community. Particularly where there were vineyards, they had a joint cellar, called a village or church cellar. It served as a kind of borrowing shop for wine and grains under the village administration, the members of which were usually all the householders in the village. The

¹⁵ Levstik, 1978, p.48

¹⁶ Trdina, 1958, p.14

debtors who borrowed wine from these cellars had to return their debt after the following grape harvest in the form of must to the measure of one-and-a-half times what they had borrowed.”¹⁷ In the 17th century such neighbourhood cellars existed in every village, but most stopped functioning when in the late 19th century the vine-louse destroyed most of the vineyards. After they were renewed, some cellars continued functioning, but the tradition has been preserved to this day only in Drašiči and even that more as a tourist attraction.



A typical Dolenjska house with a cellar at ground level. From the pre-War photo library of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum.

The vineyards in Lower Carniola and White Carniola were on south-facing hillsides. Beside them were *zidanice*, where wine was produced and stored, to be taken home as and when needed. Wine was drunk at meals and during heavy labour. The ethnologist Dular mentions that most wine was drunk (and still is) at weddings, as well as at name-day celebrations and other festivities. “If a guest, a neighbour or an acquaintance comes to the house, they are always offered a glass of wine. This custom is generally established on farms which have their own wine. Drinking customs are particularly interesting at holiday times and at other celebrations. *Zidanice* are thus the place where various celebrations, stag and hen parties, and personal and family festivities are held. In White Carniola, as elsewhere in Slovenia, wine is a welcoming drink.”¹⁸



An excellent architectural example – the Mihelič *zidanica* (vineyard cottage) in Semič. From the pre-War photo library of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum.

The Littoral, encompassing the Vipava area, the Kras, the Brda Hills and Slovene Istra, has since the settlement of the Slovenes been a big wine producer, as shown by old documents,

¹⁷ Dular, 1994, p.170

¹⁸ Ibid.



Carrying grapes in "dzeji" with a "buinč", 1953.
Photo: Sergej Vilfan, the archive of the Slovene
Ethnographic Museum.

such as those related to the giving of wine to the Venetian Republic. Serfs had to give a tithe to their lords, but they were still left with enough to sell and for their own everyday use, in particular for consumption during heavy labour. In the Vipava area and on the Kras, farmers became independent quite early on. Wine was kept at home in cool, vaulted cellars, providing daily access, but it was used frugally, there was hardly any excessive drinking – wine was a social drink, accompanying important events. Even in the 19th century the inhabitants were mostly free farmers. In the Brda Hills, on the other hand, there were quite a few *koloni*. These had agreements with land owners whereby they worked the land, paying their dues in produce, wine or money. The rest of what they produced was theirs to do with as they pleased. This situation remained in place until the end of World War Two, just like vine-dressing in Styria. The post-War socialist system brought many changes. The land in the Brda Hills was given to winegrowers. In Štajerska the land was nationalised and state-owned estates were set up. Vine-dressers now became workers on these estates, rather than owning their own land.

Wine was both drink and food (at meals and during heavy labour), as well as a social drink on special occasions. Irrespective of the different historical conditions in Styria, Carniola and the Littoral, and the different customs in different areas, to the Slovenes wine



The birth of a baby is in many places in Štajerska always "watered" with wine. Lovrenc on Dravsko polje, 2006. Photo: Sebastjan Kolednik.



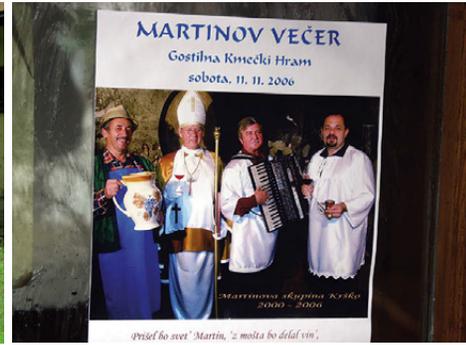
Wine brings people closer together, 2006, 2014. Photo: Aleš Gačnik, Staša Cafuta.

has always been a drink that has united and connected them, improving their lives and accompanying them from cradle to grave at all the important milestones, such as conscription, marriage, the birth of children, and other events that broke the everyday monotony, such as visits by friends and acquaintances, name-day and birthday celebrations, parties, holidays and so on. Special festivities connected with wine, such as grape picking, St. Martin's Day and the blessing of new wine are also important.



Grape-picking scenes in Ptuj, Mestni vrh, Turški vrh, Kog and Bodislavci, 1938, 2006. Photos: the archive of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum, Aleš Gačnik, Staša Cafuta.





Club celebrations and St. Martin's. In numerous European carnival centres on 11 November at 11.11 a.m., the carnival season begins with the selection of the carnival prince. Juršinci, Kostanjevica, Ptuj, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

Vineyards

At the beginning of the Modern Age the development of trade and the production of grapes and wine increased in the pronouncedly winegrowing areas of Styria and the Littoral, but was being abolished in areas where the quality of produce was low, i.e. in Upper Carniola, Carinthia and in the Savinja Valley. Even in regions where the quality of wine was satisfactory, viticulture was at a very low level right up until the 19th century. Many poor varieties of grapes were grown, there was no order in the way vines were planted, and the wine produced was light and sour. The renowned wine expert Ivo Zupanič has pointed out that the price then depended on the level of acidity: the more acid the wine, the lower its price.

An important milestone in the development of agriculture, and with it viticulture, was the appearance in the early 19th century of new agricultural societies in individual regions. The first such society was established in 1819 for Styria; later others appeared for Carniola and the Littoral. The president of the agricultural society for Styria (based in Graz) was Archduke Johann, the Emperor's brother. In Pekre near Maribor he bought an estate and in straight rows planted high quality vines from the Rhineland: Rhine Riesling, Traminer, Pinot Gris, Pinot Noir, Pinot Blanc and Welschriesling. This brought about a change in the composition of grape varieties and the technique of planting vines in rows, first in Styria and later also in Carniola. In the latter, the development of viticulture was greatly influenced by Matija Vertovec, who in 1844 published the first specialised Slovene book on winegrowing.



On the occasion of the renovation of a house in Podkoren near Kranjska gora a family coat-of-arms was revealed with a grape motif. The current owners of the house believe that the coat-of-arms belonged to the counts from the Bela Peč castle, who used to collect taxes in this area. The house, for some time used as a shop, was supposedly the counts' summer residence, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik

The second important milestone was the March Revolution in 1848. In Vienna, the March Constitution was adopted, which abolished serfdom, but not without compensation. Sadly, winegrowers, particularly in Styria, were unable to pay this compensation and thus the best vineyards in the Slovene part of Styria were bought by merchants and foreigners, while Slovene winegrowers became vine-dressers.



In the 1830s the cosmopolitan and educator Archduke Johann (1782-1859) planted vineyards and built a small mansion on the Meranovo estate above Limbuš near Maribor, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

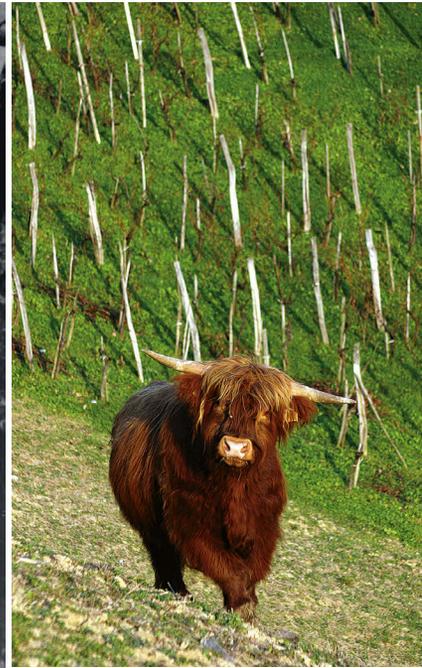
The second half of the 19th century was nationally and economically very eventful. Agricultural schools were established which ensured agricultural progress, including in viticulture: in 1872, a school for fruit and wine growers was established in Maribor, in 1869 a similar school in Gorizia and in 1873 another one in Slap near Vipava. The latter was in 1886 moved to Grm near Novo mesto. The school in Slap was the first agricultural school where the language of instruction was Slovene. This period also saw the appearance of numerous books and publications on viticulture.

The third milestone was the vine-louse epidemic in 1880 in the Bizeljsko region, which within a decade destroyed all the vineyards on the present-day territory of Slovenia. In spite of this tragedy, vine-louse actually accelerated the development of viticulture. The renovation was carried out in a planned fashion. The soil had to be trenched up one metre deep. Vines were then planted in rows, using selected quality varieties. The growing of mass produced, low quality varieties was abandoned. Vinicultural development was managed by the state.

Agricultural societies began setting up testing stations for agricultural research. One such institution was opened in 1867 in Gorizia, then in 1894 in Maribor (the precursor of the present-day Agricultural Institute) and in 1898 in Ljubljana (now the Agricultural Institute of Slovenia). Thus three Austrian provinces that encompassed Slovene regions with well-developed viticulture each had their own scientific and research centre.



A school for winegrowers on Kemeňšćak, 1906.
Photo library of the Ptuj Regional Museum.



The winegrowing areas of Haloze are increasingly becoming overgrown, which is greatly altering the appearance of the landscape. Breeding Scottish cattle has been introduced as an alternative to winegrowing in the less accessible parts of Haloze. The Brodnjak farm in Veliki Okič, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

There is ample data on surfaces and yields over the past 200 years, but a comparison is rather complicated. The data refers to administration units that changed over time. Styria did not include the Prekmurje region, but did include the present-day Bizeljsko-Sremič area. Carniola thus at that time did not encompass Bizeljsko-Sremič, but did have the upper Vipava region. The Littoral encompassed the Gorizia area, the Brda Hills, the Kras and some localities beyond the present-day Slovene-Italian border.

The borders of the plots entered in the land register have also changed over time. We are familiar with the Josephine land register and the later improved land register created at the time of Franz I, and today we have aerial photographs. Vines were not always planted together on a particular plot of land. In the Littoral in particular there was a custom, which disappeared only after World War Two, of planting vines in rows along fields. Thus the official Austrian statistics until 1895 included these fields among vineyards and only from 1896 onwards took into account plots planted solely with vines.

If I were to write a study of land planted with vines, I would have to make an effort to gather much more data, but my intention here is merely to illustrate, using the tables below, only the overall direction of development of winegrowing areas.

Table 1

Land area planted with vines and yields in the late 18th century, according to the Josephine land register ¹⁹

	Area in hectares	Yield in hectolitres	Yield in hectolitres/hectare
Styria	29,186	335,169	11.5
Carniola	8,659	93,166	10,7

Table 2

Land area and yields in 1870, according to the land register created during the rule of Franz I ²⁰

	Area in hectares	Yield in hectolitres	Yield in hectolitres/hectare
Styria	23,512	517,616	22.0
Carniola (with the upper Vipava area)	9,621	222,671	23.1
Littoral (without the upper Vipava area and Koper)	5,952	80,226	13.5

Table 3

Land area after the renovation of 1896 ²¹

	Surface in hectares
Styria	22,746
Carniola (with the upper Vipava area)	10,871
Littoral (without the upper Vipava area)	6,928
Koper area	5,950
Total:	46,495

Table 4

Land area in Podravje and Posavje (without Primorska) ²²

1896	22,968 hectares
1954	15,493
1969	22,879

Table 5

Total winegrowing area on the territory of the present-day Slovenia²³

	hectares	reduction of hectares
1896	45,938	/
1954	31,346	-14,592
1969	21,881	-9,465

¹⁹ Valenčič, 1970, p. 294.

²⁰ Valenčič, 1970, p. 296-97

²¹ Valenčič, 1970, p. 301

²² Belec, 1976, p. 34

²³ Ibid., p. 34

Table 6
Reduction in hectares of winegrowing land by village in the Vipava municipality²⁴

Village	Hectares prior to Phylloxera	Hectares before WW1 (1913)	Hectares in 1955
Lozice	75 ha	40.29	19
Podnanos	125 ha 45 a	71.46	42
Podraga	47 ha 69 a	75.31	57
Lože	82 ha 5 a	73.60	51
Goče	121 ha 7 a	53.63	38
Slap	41 ha 61 a	73.88	65
Total	492 ha 87 a	388.17	272

Table 7
Winegrowing land and yields in Slovenia in 2002 by individual district
(according to Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food)

District	No. of wine-growers	Hectares	Hectares for market production	Yield for 2001 in hectolitres	Yield per hectare	Yield for 2002 in hectolitres	Yield per hectare
Maribor	1,354	1,767	1,463	62,525	42.7	57,522	39.3
Radgona-Kapela	825	932	795	47,200	59.4	33,562	42.2
Ljutomer-Ormož	1,462	1,701	1,585	69,283	43.7	64,800	40.9
Haloze	1,162	865	633	26,742	26.7	18,189	28.7
Central							
Slovenske Gorice	997	624	459	18,339	40.0	16,836	36.7
Prekmurje	2,391	563	351	21,179	60.3	19,711	56.1
Šmarje-Virštajn	1,231	549	300	10,952	36.5	10,918	36.4
Bizeljsko-Sremič	1,754	935	565	25,078	44.4	19,916	35.2
Dolenjska	5,690	1,391	614	27,763	45.2	39,547	64.4
Bela Krajina	1,816	407	220	10,533	47.9	12,487	56.8
Goriška Brda	913	1,875	1,810	124,923	69.0	79,270	43.8
Vipava	1,840	2,443	2,260	123,252	54.5	96,698	42.8
Kras	862	537	435	18,119	41.7	12,417	28.5
Koper	736	1,317	1,176	59,060	50.2	57,828	68.0
Total		15,906	12,666	644,948	50.9	539,702	42.6

²⁴ Terčelj, 1956, p. 27

This data show that the area devoted to vineyards was continually shrinking. However, the yield fell to a lesser extent as quality was increased due to modern technological procedures involved in the growing of grapes and the production of wine. World competition in wine production is forcing us to make fuller and more harmonious wines and we will therefore have to reduce the yield per hectare, which will result in a smaller overall production of wine. In view of this it would make sense for the EU to decree that it is yields that may not increase rather than that we should not increase the land area devoted to winegrowing.

Wine between the two World Wars

Wine was present at all business deals and conclusions of contracts, many of which were carried out in taverns. Slovenes used wine for toasts, wishing one another luck, good health and happiness. Wine helped form brotherhoods. Wherever there is wine, there are hospitable people. The ethnologist Dular says: "The custom of a winegrower inviting every passer-by to his vineyard cottage is very widespread."²⁵ A winegrower shows special honour to a guest by inviting him or her to the wine cellar for wine tasting, telling his visitor all about his problems and successes. He expects the guest to give his opinion and is quite upset by any criticism of his wine, particularly if it is unjustified.



In front of a vineyard cottage in Bela Krajina, undated. The archive of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum

²⁵ Dular, 1994, p.

Until the mid-20th century, individual winegrowing regions in Slovenia would have only one or two kinds of wine, usually blended from a number of varieties. In the Brda Hills there was *Rebula*, in the Vipava area *Vipavec*, in Dolenjska *Cviček*, in Bela Krajina *Metliška Črnina*, in the Bizeljsko area *Bizeljčan* and in Haloze *Haložan*. In Štajerska, there was *Ljutomerčan*, *Jeruzalemčan*, *Ritoznojčan*, *Pekrčan*, etc. The following were examples of better quality wines from a single variety of grapes: on the Kras *Kraški Teran*, in Istra *Refošk* and *Malvazija*, in Bela Krajina *Laški Rizling*, in the Jeruzalem and Ormož hills *Šipon*, etc. Only the most modern winegrowers from individual areas made small quantities of single-variety wines for special occasions. In the Vipava area, they would produce *Zelen* and *Pinela*, in the Brda *Tokay*, in Štajerska Sauvignon, *Rulandec* (Pinot Gris), Chardonnay, *Beli Pinot* (Pinot Blanc), *Traminec* and so on.

These wines were dry, without any residual sugar and suitable for quenching thirst, during a meal or heavy physical work. They were drunk from ordinary glasses and only inns aimed at those that were rather well-off had table cloths, glasses with stems and single-variety bottled wine. If we were to evaluate wine-drinking habits during the one hundred and fifty years until World War Two, we could not really say that they were undeveloped: wine was consumed with a reasonable degree of respect, it was valued, it united people and raised the quality of life. It contributed to the latter even though wines were not yet chosen by their flavour to accompany a particular dish. When innkeepers went shopping for wine, they would take with them someone who was an expert: he would offer advice as to which wine should be bought, which was of good quality and which was drinkable enough to satisfy the drinkers in his establishment. The main criterion was drinkability. Today, this criterion no longer applies in local and national wine assessments. With regard to the quality of wine and food served, inns were divided into quality catering establishments and ordinary public houses, which served only as places for excessive drinking.

The significance of wine today

After World War Two and in the second half of the 20th century conditions in viticulture, the consumption of wine, the way wine was drunk and the lifestyle changed dramatically. In all three winegrowing regions vineyards were planted and grown in line with modern technological principles to produce high yields of top-quality grape varieties. The varieties thought suitable for the northern areas and grown in Podravje spread around the whole country. At the same time, each district built modern wine cellars that produced and bottled high quality wines. With time, small private winegrowers also switched to the modern production of grapes and wines for bottling. Bottled wines were sold in all retail establishments, promoting wine drinking at home, while an increase in the number of cars and stricter driving laws limited the consumption of wine in catering establishments.

The large differences in the organoleptic properties of wine in all three regions diminished, while the character and fine features of individual wines remained. A drinker must learn how to distinguish and enjoy the subtle differences between various wines. In the past, there were very few educated wine experts: only the biggest wine cellars had a few technicians who improved their knowledge through practical work. Now the number of experts or educated oenologists, who have started training personnel in technical schools and at university, has increased. Various institutes connected with wine have appeared and

there is an advisory service boosting viticulture by offering courses for winemakers. The number of the latter has grown since Slovenia's independence and they have placed new bottled wines on the market.

Consumers, too, have increased their knowledge through visits to national and international wine exhibitions. There are also numerous courses for wine testers. The goal of all these measures is to raise the quality of wine drinking. Wine consumers must become acquainted with the varieties of wine, differentiating the many aromas and flavours, and by constantly improving their skills they must get used to the aroma and flavour that best suits them. In addition, they must learn which wine should be drunk with which food, which will improve the quality of their life. Wine will contribute to a better style of life rather than being a source of intoxication. They will drink their favourite wine in small quantities, for pleasure. Excessive drinking would thus no longer happen, with the exception of very special occasions, perhaps once a year, when they would go beyond the line separating good spirits from intoxication which, however, should never lead to loss of control or of dignity. We have already achieved good results in the narrow circle of wine connoisseurs, but these results will have to be extended into a general awareness of the quality of wine enjoyment. Before World War Two there were abstinence societies, but they had little success widening the circle of their members. Let us hope that re-education produces better results and this should be our constant concern.



In September 2005, the Council of Europe declared St. Martin to be a European Figure, which is not surprising as he was born in the present-day Szombathely in Hungary, spent his childhood near Pavia in Italy, died in Tours in France and with his charitable deeds and the example of his life marked the whole of Europe. A major European cultural route is woven around him, leading through many countries, including Slovenia.

The Slovene treasury of "Martin's heritage" is very diverse, reaching from excellent Gothic frescoes to rich Baroque paintings. Our best known "wine" saint marked European culture more with his charitable gesture of sharing his cloak with a beggar than with wine. In Slovenia, eighty churches are named after him and many popular traditions are connected with him. One of the goals of the creation of St. Martin's European cultural route, marked with "Martin's footprint", is to evaluate the cultural heritage linked to this saint.

In the photographs: Martin's chapel next to St. Martin's church in Sp. Hajdina near Ptuj, the Baroque church of St. Martin in Kamnica near Maribor, Martin's footprint (the symbol), the Gothic church of St. Martin in Martjanci near Murska Sobota, 2006. Photos: Aleš Gačnik.

But we can not be satisfied with just the results of re-education. We should take another step up the wine culture ladder. Wine is a product of nature and nature affects its characteristics and quality. The character of wine depends greatly on the winegrower, who is also, in a

sense, a product of nature, as he lives with it every day. In addition, winegrowers are also formed by local customs, and by cultural and historical circumstances.

The vine is a cultured plant; it feels best where it first appeared of its own accord, i.e. on dry stony ground with poor soil in very sunny localities, surrounded by warmth, on both steep and gentle slopes. In Slovenia, man created the best winegrowing locations through deforestation in hilly areas with poor soil and toiled to create an appropriate medium out of layers of marl. Over the centuries he cultivated many varieties, partly adapting those brought from remote lands, which produced better wine. Even a hundred years ago there were more than a hundred varieties, which were later mostly abandoned; only the best were kept.

Although the grapevine comes from dry regions and needs plenty of sunshine when flowering and maturing, it also needs rain in order to grow. It requires warm, sunny days when it can obtain a multitude of components from the soil and the sun. Slovenia is very varied in terms of the structure of the ground and climate. If we want to learn about the conditions producing the variety of grapes from which our favourite wine is made, we have to go to the relevant winegrowing districts, among the vineyards of Podravje,



The diversity of winegrowing landscapes: Slovenske Konjice, Lendavske gorice, the Goriška Brda, Ptuj, Mestni vrh, Drašiči, 2006. Photos: Aleš Gačnik, Staša Cafuta.

Posavje or Primorska. From the main roads we can usually not see vineyards: we need to turn onto side roads, wine routes that often run uphill. It is only when we are driving along the hilltops that the full beauty of the landscape, so different from district to district and from one season to another, is revealed. In spring, we see rows of vines coloured light yellow or pink; in the summer a lush green covers the hillsides; and then in the autumn it changes into a multitude of colours from burnt sienna to violet red. Some prefer the diversity of landscape on the Kras, others in the Brda or in the hills surrounding Jeruzalem, not to mention all the other areas.

When one is admiring the carefully nurtured vineyards with their simple cottages in Dolenjska and Štajerska, one wants to get to know the winegrower responsible for them. In Primorska there are no such



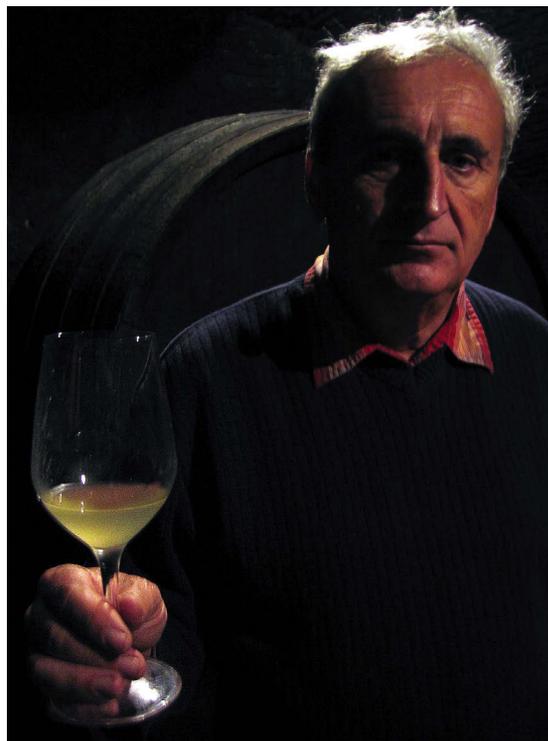


Encounters with wines and winemakers: at wine tastings, walks, wine festivals, special excursions, etc.
Photos: Aleš Gačnik, Staša Cafuta, Miloš Toni.

cottages, as villages of stone houses clumped together are dotted around the winegrowing areas. The houses are enclosed in walled courtyards, even further increasing their sense of homeliness and mystery. Wine is hidden in vaulted cellars, maturing in their coolness.

The quality of wine is greatly influenced by the temperament, character, worldview and attitude of its maker. A winegrower chooses a plot for planting the vine and the varieties, and then decides how he will nurture them. Thus he decides in advance what wine he wishes to have. Wine may mean to him just a product that will bring him as high an income as possible; or he may want to take a more artistic approach that will express his attitude and his desire to create something unique. As he gives his product his own personal imprint, it borders on a work of art, even though some will perhaps say that all we are dealing with is a refined craft. But making wine does not mean just following a certain pattern over and over again. The natural conditions in vineyards differ from year to year. There are dry years and rainy ones, beautiful sunny autumns or those where the temperature falls too early or there is rain during grape-picking. The consistency of grapes thus differs from one year to another. Moreover, the winemaker may not have envisaged the appropriate measures in time. When processing the grapes and nurturing his wine he must be very careful in order to achieve his goal. He will not succeed every time, but what is important is what use he makes of what mother nature has provided, so that he gets a product that is of optimum quality under the given circumstances.

A winegrower invests knowledge, experience, feeling and love, leading to the end product – wine. Like an artist creating a work of art into which he has put the thoughts, wishes and emotions he wants it to express, a winemaker is guided by his intuition about how to nurture wine. He lives with and for it every day, assessing it, thinking about it and often he has



The magical atmosphere, light and wines in Herberštajn's cellar in Juršinci. Alojz Kavčič, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

an idea of what he might do at the right moment. This is why there is a great difference between wines made by individual winegrowers, even when they all have the same basic conditions, i.e. the grape variety and location. A winemaker puts himself into his wine. Around the world and in Slovenia there is a growing recognition of the fact that when we are choosing a wine what is important is the name of the house and its owner. It is beneficial if we meet the winemaker and talk to him. There are a number of possibilities of how to get to know a winemaker and more will be said about this later.

A winemaker lives in a specific environment that is the product of tradition, i.e. customs, worldviews, and so on. If we want to understand him correctly, we must also learn about the cultural characteristics of where he lives and its past: customs, the way of life, the way of thinking – everything that contributed to what he is. The past changes with education and new wine producing technology, but a certain identity of the environment remains.

In spite of all the richness of wine, there is still in Slovenia a relatively low cultural level of wine-drinking. The lowest level is when wine is drunk only for intoxication. We should drink just enough to make us merry. Our ancestors were much better in this regard as they enjoyed wine during meals and physical work, and wine was a predominantly social drink. This is why oenologists wish to change attitudes to wine-drinking habits. We are striving for people to:

- learn what wine is and about its natural richness;
- know how to differentiate wines by their origin (provenance), variety and quality;
- enjoy wine with food, choose wines according to their aroma and flavour;
- learn about winegrowing districts and the winemakers who live there.

I see in wine thousands of years of effort to create a wealth of completely different aromas and flavours. Wine reflects the winemaker's knowledge, his love for his profession and the subtlety he invests in its production. The wealth of our wines lies in their diversity. In



Wine samples for an international assessment in the cellar of Ljubljana's Gospodarsko razstavišče exhibition centre in 1988. The Terčelj family archive.

Slovenia this view is advocated by some of the professionals involved in wine and private small producers. On the other hand, there are some large producers and wine experts who wish to create a uniform wine that can be made in larger quantities under the pretext of it being easier to sell on foreign markets, thus renouncing any originality.

What is important for the future of our winemaking is whether we decide that wine should become an industrial product or remain an agricultural one. Industrial wine would bring a uniform wine, adapted to the taste of the modern world, created according to fashion, with an unclear origin and character. Slovene consumers would no longer be interested in our wine as they would be able to buy wine of the same type from abroad, probably of better quality and for a lower price. The consequence of this would be that the best winegrowing localities and large cellars would become the property of foreigners. Most other vineyards would be abandoned and become overgrown, so that the beauty of Slovenia's landscape would be lost. Perhaps this is a rather pessimistic view, but if we think about it, even today we have only half the area of vineyards that we had a hundred and fifty years ago. And what would wine as an agricultural product bring? Initially, a difficult struggle for the survival of our winemaking in competition with foreign wines. We would have to improve the quality of our wine as much as possible, especially its



The presentation of Slovene wines at the ProWein wine fair in Düsseldorf (left) and a scene from the 4th salon of the Prlekija area winemakers in Svetinje (center), the construction of a *klopotec* bird scarer in Svetinje as a tourist event (right), 2006. Photos: Staša Cafuta.

fullness and harmony, thus retaining at least the domestic consumer. We would have to find foreign buyers through quality rather than quantity. We would need to be aware of our smallness and look for advantages in it. We would have to increase the proportion of grapes and wine produced without unnecessary chemical additives. Such wines are sought after and bring a high price. We would have to look for buyers in exclusive clubs, hotels, restaurants and wine shops, which is already done by some of our private winegrowers.

The Culture of Wine Drinking

Our trump card must be high quality and naturalness with the establishment of our own brand names, provenance and names of wine houses. This would demand great long-term efforts as we just do not have people who know how to sell wine. The opinion that we do not have capable oenologists and that this is why we look for foreigners who then destroy the identity of our wines, is wrong: what we lack are capable sales people. The future of our economy is in tourism and this is where we can best profit from our agricultural produce and wine and at the same time get the cheapest advertising for our wines.



Challenges – cigars and wines. Majda Debevc, expert in tobacco and alcohol. On the occasion of the establishment of the Robusto cigar lovers club in Ptuj, 2008.
Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

The Culture of Wine in Slovenia



The 2006 and previous wine queens at the 25th agricultural festivity in Svečina, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



The throne of the wine queen. The agricultural festival in Svečina, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



At the Art & heritage festival in Ptuj, the organisers devoted particular attention to an attractive promotion of the culture of wine drinking and the presentation of champions from the Ptuj wine cellar. From left to right: Janja Korošec (the current wine queen of the Radgona – Kapela vineyards), Bojan Kobal (the chief oenologist from the Ptuj wine cellar), Urška Vučak (actress and compère), the main guest of the evening actor Bojan Emeršič (in the role of the popular Zmago Batina, and expert in “the wine Mafia in Ptuj and Slovenia”), Majda Dreisibner (one of the previous Maribor wine queens), Svetlana Širec (the current Slovene wine queen) and Aleš and Stanka Gačnik (the festival organizers). Ptuj Summer Night, 2008. Photo: Uroš Grbič.



The symbol of the Slovene wine kingdom, which brings together all the regional wine queens from the three wine regions.





Wine reflections, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

The components of wine

The components of wine made using traditional production methods

What makes wine so attractive? Why do top researchers study wine so fervently? Why are there so many excellently equipped institutions in the world researching the composition of wine? Why are at the same time numerous doctors so sceptical?



An international wine tasting commission for the assessment of wine in Ljubljana, 2004. Photo: Miloš Toni.

Wine always has been and still is a part of Western European culture. Wine's home is in the Near East or, to be precise, in Mesopotamia and the coastal regions of the eastern Mediterranean. No other culture or civilisation in the world developed viticulture and winemaking. In the grapevine's birthplaces Islam suppressed the making of wine as it was a symbol of Christian civilisation.

In ancient times, in addition to grains and olive oil, wine enabled the development of trade and civilisation. It served as a drink, food and medicine. And it means much more today as we discover the diversity of its composition. Researchers have found over a thousand components which are represented in various quantities in each type of wine, giving each its own aroma and flavour, thus satisfying even the most demanding drinkers. This exceptional diversity has encouraged numerous researchers to continue to study wine. The composition of wine depends on the grape variety, on the climatic conditions and soil, and on the method of production.

It is not my intention to list all the components and their quantities. There are numerous extensive technical and scientific books on this subject. I simply wish to present the richness of the composition of grapes and wine, a wealth that makes wine such a unique drink that no other beverage has managed to replace. I thus apologise in advance to those readers who are in this book looking for a detailed description of wine's chemical components.

Grape juice contains the following main groups of substances: water, sugars, organic acids, nitrogen substances, minerals, enzymes and vitamins; in the skin, there are phenols (colours and tannins), pectins and aromatic substances.



One of the most modern wine cellars on the Istra wine route. The Brič wine cellar, 2007. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

Water

Grapevines draw water from the soil and with it minerals and nitrogen, as well as the substances polluting the soil. Water affects the composition of wine and with nuclear magnetic resonance it is possible to ascertain where a particular wine originates from, i.e. its provenance.

Sugar

Grape juice contains two main sugars in the form of hexoses, i.e. sugars with six carbon atoms in a molecule: glucose or grape sugar and fructose or fruit sugar. These two sugars can ferment into ethanol and carbonic acid. As by their nature they are aldehydes, they can oxidise and bind with sulphur dioxide (the sulphurisation of must or wine). In addition to these two sugars, there are also small quantities of pentoses with five carbon atoms in a molecule, which cannot be fermented by yeast.

On the basis of the quantity of residual sugar they contain, wines are divided into:

- dry wines, which have up to 4g of residual sugar per litre (the sugar can almost not be tasted);
- semi-dry wines, which have 4-12g of sugar per litre (the wine is not yet sweet, but the sugar does give it fullness)
- semi-sweet wines, which have 12-45g of residual sugar per litre (the wine tastes slightly sweet)
- sweet wines, which have over 45g of residual sugar (these wines have a sweet flavour).

Polysaccharides

In the noble varieties of the European grapevine, saccharose appears in very low quantities (up to 0.5g per litre), while in American varieties and their hybrids with European varieties, this quantity is higher. Saccharose as a disaccharide consists of D-glucose and D-fructose.

Glucose molecules can combine into larger molecules of new compounds when still in the grapes, imparting fullness. Glucose compounds give starch and cellulose.

Acids

Acids affect the taste of wine: various acids give wine different acidity. In grape juice there are organic acids, releasing hydrogen ions (H⁺). These give wine its acidity, measured with a pH value, which is usually between 3 and 3.5. The acidity of a must or wine must be in harmony with other substances, mainly sugars and tannins. Acidity influences numerous bio-chemical processes. The stability of other substances, such as proteins, also depends on the pH value. These are the most important organic acids in grape juice:

Tartaric acid

is the most characteristic acid in must and wine and contributes most to their acidity. Although noticeable, it is not unpleasant like malic acid or soft like lactic acid. It is strongest and most stable, although as an organic acid it is still weak in comparison to inorganic acids. Acid does not serve any energy needs and can be decomposed in wine only by malolactic bacteria. Tartaric acid can appear freely or is bound to potassium or calcium. If it is too concentrated, it is excreted as potassium or calcium tartrate, i.e. wine stone. Metatartaric acid is produced by heating tartaric acid. It is an anhydride of tartaric acid and serves as a means of preventing wine stone sedimentation. The appearance of tartaric acid and its quantity in grapes depend mainly on the variety, as well as on the climatic and soil conditions. Until recently it was the only organic acid which researchers were unable to synthesise in a laboratory. They used to obtain it from grapes and side products in winemaking, i.e. wine lees and wine stone.

Malic acid

is present in all fruits. When grapes are fully mature, the ratio between tartaric acid and malic acid is approximately 1:1. This acid serves the energy needs of the grapevine. During the ripening of grapes, its quantity is reduced due to the plant's increased respiration and this process increases the warmer the climate. The quantity of malic acid is partly reduced during fermentation. There are strains of yeast which decompose it. Malolactic bacteria in wine decompose raw malic acid into a milder tasting lactic acid and CO₂. The salts of malic acid are known as malates.

The following acids are present in wine in smaller quantities:

Citric acid

appears in grape juice in very small quantities. It gives wine a fresh, acidulous flavour. In nature it is found particularly in citrus fruits. In grape juice there is up to 0.7g of citric acid per litre. Citric acid salts are known as citrates.

Fatty acids

Most of these appear as the product of yeast activities during fermentation. Higher fatty acids form aromatic esters with suitable alcohols. Some fatty acids, such as butyric acid, spoil wine while others, such as capric acid and caprylic acid, give it a pleasant aroma.

Acetic acid

During fermentation, yeasts produce small quantities of acetic acid, but more of it is produced by lactic acid bacteria from sugar and ethanol. In concentrations over 1g per litre of wine, it causes an acidic smell and together with alcohols form ester-acetates, which contribute towards the wine's aroma.

Lactic acid

appears in small quantities during fermentation and in larger quantities during the biological freeing of wine from acidity (malic lactic fermentation). Lactic acid is a weak organic acid, contributing to a pleasant taste and softness. Its salts and esters are known as lactates.

Amino acids

participate in the creation of aromatic substances with the assistance of yeast and bacteria converted by amino acids into higher alcohols.

Gluconic acid

Can be the predominant acid in wines made from overripe grapes infected with *Botrytis cinerea* – noble rot. It appears with the oxidation of glucose.

Succinic acid

Produced by yeast during fermentation up to the value of 1g per litre. Its salts are succinates.

Ascorbic acid or vitamin C.

Oxalic acid

Appears mainly in the form of oxalate salts.

D-Galacturonic acid

Is a component of pectin, which is the building material of the cells of grapes.

Phenolic compounds

Phenols are compounds consisting of a benzol ring, which can in nature only be found in plants. They are divided into two large groups:

- phenolic acids with a single benzol ring or linked into two rings maximum;
- antocyanins and tannins, compounds in a molecule with three rings.

In grapes there are numerous phenolic acids, which give a bitter taste. They can bind with organic acids into new compounds and with alcohols into aromatic substances. They can be found mainly in grape skins and pips. The best known compound with one ring is catechin, and with two rings resveratrol. The latter gives the skin rot resistance and is beneficial to man as it prevents the blocking of veins, i.e. cardiovascular diseases. The researcher Urška Vrhovšek from the Agricultural Institute of Slovenia has ascertained that *Modra Frankinja*²⁶ is particularly rich in resveratrol.

Antocyanins

give red wines their colour. Each variety of grapes contains different quantities of individual antocyanins and thus a different shade of red. Their quantity depends on the variety of grapes, as well as on their maturity and health condition and the extraction techniques used. Antocyanins are in nature bound to one molecule of glucose in *Vitis vinifera* and with two molecules of glucose in the American grapevine and its hybrids. Thus with respect to red wines we can chemically differentiate between the noble European varieties and hybrids with American varieties, which are more resistant to disease. Acids can bind to the glucose in antocyanins, creating new compounds called acylated forms. Antocyanins, which give colour to red wine, can be coloured or colourless. At lower acidity and a higher redox value, i.e. oxidation-reduction potential, they have a stronger colour as their level in the coloured version is higher.

In the skin and later in the must antocyanins appear in free form. They quickly travel from the skin to the must as they are both water and alcohol soluble, especially at higher temperatures. In must they bind to oxygen and oxidise, but they also quickly bind to

²⁶ Vrhovšek, Urška: *Bioaktivne polifenolne spojine grozdja in vina* (Bioactive polyphenolic compounds in grapes and wine). In: *Vino-hrana, zdravje 2000*. Strokovni posvet. Zbornik referatov. Poslovna skupnost za vinogradništvo in vinarstvo Slovenije, Celje 2000, pp. 42-56.

each other or with tannins into larger, more stable forms. New compounds change hue from pronouncedly ruby or violet-red to the colour of brick or brownish red. In research into phenolic substances, in particular antocyanins, I ascertained²⁷ that, in comparison to other varieties of grapes, the *Refošk* variety in *Kraški Teran* has a high anthocyan delphinine content.

Tannins

have a similar composition to antocyanins, i.e. three phenolic rings, but have different chemical properties. They give wine tartness and fullness. They appear in grape skins and in pips. They can appear freely or bound to each other and with antocyanins. Chemically, they are divided into a number of groups; the most noticeable among flavans is catechin with its isomers. Catechin forms two sub-groups: procyanidols, which release anthocyan cyanin, and prodelphinidins, i.e. gallo catechins.

There are other groups of tannins which we shall not list here. We need only to be aware that, during the processing of grapes and the maceration of crushed grapes, numerous tannin substances are transferred from the skin and pips into the juice. Tannins give red wine its character and have a bitter taste. They are alcohol soluble and leach faster when alcohol appears during fermentation. Tannins may oxidise with the aid of oxidising enzymes, but they themselves have a reducing effect. When oxidised, they turn the juice dark brown and spoil the appearance of must and wine. When tannins in wine bind to each other into ten or more molecules, they lose their unpleasant bitterness. Thus they affect changes in flavour during the maturing of wine. Tannins bound to polysaccharides give wine its body. Of particular importance are tannins coming from pips, as they have a different composition from those in the skin. Wine can be enriched in tannin substances, in particular in proanthocyanidols, by adding a greater quantity of pips during the maceration of crushed grapes. Wine enriched in this way is beneficial for heart disease. Wines of this kind can be recognised by a special name, such as *Paradoks* from Vipava.

Tannins have an antioxidising effect. They bind harmful free radicals that accelerate atherosclerosis. Tannins also have a slightly septic effect on yeast and bacteria. They bind to proteins, causing them to sink, thus having a stabilising effect.

Tannins in oak wood are of a different composition: these are ellagitannins, but they behave similarly to tannins in grapes. They bind to each other into larger molecules. They, too, give a bitter and astringent taste. Due to the varied bitterness they bring to wine, tannins and colours are very important for red wines. The composition of phenolic substances changes during the maturing of grapes. Noble tannins which give wine a pleasant sweet and tart flavour can be found only in well-ripened grapes.

Pectins

are large molecules, consisting of galacturonic acids, bound in long chains. There are a number of different pectins. Chemically they are colloids. They are very soluble, but change into an insoluble state, making wine cloudy and creating sediment. Pectins give

²⁷ Terčelj, Dušan: *Vpliv vinifikacije in običajnih tretmanov na gibanje barvnih snovi in organoleptičnih lastnosti Kraškega terana*. Disertacija. Fakultet poljoprivrednih znanosti sveučilišta u Zagrebu 1983.

juice its viscosity. The hybrid grape *Šmarnica*, for example, has plenty of pectins. When we squeeze one of its grapes, we are left with the skin, while the grape retains its shape and the juice does not separate. During fermentation, pectins decompose into methyl alcohol. Usually, some of this alcohol is found in wine, but in such small quantities that it is not harmful.

Nitrogen substances²⁸

are an important component of grape juice. There is inorganic nitrogen (NH₄), which yeasts consume, and organic nitrogen that consists of amino acids, polypeptides and proteins. Polypeptides are amino acids bound into a number of molecules and make up 60 to 90 percent of the total nitrogen. Proteins are made from amino acids, bound into large molecules and have the character of colloids. In their insoluble state they spoil the appearance of wine. In bottled wine they can change from soluble into insoluble form, therefore it is beneficial if they are extracted as soon as possible (from must or at least later from wine). They are removed if bentonite is added, i.e. pure clay, as it extracts proteins.

Amino acids

are consumed by yeasts during the phase of multiplication. Out of amino acids yeasts make higher alcohols that later bind into aromatic substances. Some toxic nitrogen substances, such as ethyl carbamate and histamine, appear in such small quantities that they are not harmful to health.

Enzymes

are the catalysts of biochemical processes. They are involved in every biochemical change. There are a great number of them and they are divided into two basic groups: oxidising enzymes and hydrolytic enzymes.

Vitamins

are present in both must and wine. They are required for yeast growth. In grapes, the main vitamins present are vitamin C (ascorbic acid) and the whole group of B vitamins.

Minerals

are usually present in grapes in the form of salts. The main mineral in grapes is potassium (approximately 50 percent). It is bound to wine acid into potassium tartrate. When it changes into an oversaturated form, it crystallises and is excreted as wine stone. After fermentation it coats the vessels and bottles in which wine is stored with small crystals, which can confuse a layperson. Juice also contains sodium, calcium and magnesium. Anions are present in the form of salt (sulphates, chlorides and phosphates). Must also contains small quantities of iron, copper, aluminium, zinc, manganese, boron and silicon, and miniscule traces of arsenic, cadmium and lead.

These are just the main groups of substances present in must that carry over to wine. But just a short description of a few substances gives the reader the idea of the wealth of goodness that grapes bring to wine.

²⁸ The author was the first in the world to determine quantitatively the nucleic composition of nitrogen (bases, nucleosides and nucleotides) in Sauvignon from Ormož and published his findings in 1965 in *Annales de Technologie Agricole, INRA, Paris, 1965: pp. 307-319.*



Checking a young must, Ptuj, 2006.
Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



Great expectations. The Movia wine cellar, Ceglo in the Goriška Brda, 2006. Photo: Staša Cafuta.

Alcoholic fermentation is a biochemical process in which the two sugars contained in grapes, with the help of yeast enzymes, ferment into ethanol, carbon dioxide and other side products. Grapes are first removed from their stalks as these would spoil the taste and they are then crushed. In the processing of white grapes, they are pressed immediately so that the juice is separated from the skin and pips. The must is then left to ferment. Red crushed grapes are left to macerate for a few days so that colours and tannins extract. The red dregs partially or fully ferment and are only then pressed, i.e. the juice is separated from the solid parts.

While must is changing into wine, the winemakers' most important task is to supervise the fermentation. While sugar is fermenting into ethanol, many other chemical processes take place. In addition to ethanol, other higher alcohols appear. Fermentation is aided by enzymes excreted by yeast via numerous in-between products. In this way side products appear, such as glycerol, butanediol, methanol and new acids: acetic, succinic acid, formic acid, butyric acid, lactic acid and so on. In wine there are over one hundred different acids. These appear in small quantities, but are important in the creation of new aromas and flavours. The wealth of acids and higher alcohols creates aromatic esters. The newly appearing aromas are described as fermented or secondary, in contrast to the primary aromatic substances in grapes, characteristic of each variety.

Let me mention here the indigenous variety from the Vipava Valley, ***Pinela***, which can be recognised by its characteristic acidic taste. When the winemaker Miško from Erzelj once let me taste various varieties of wine, I recognised ***Pinela*** immediately by its original acid. Our late oenologist Rudl, who used to work in the Maribor Winemaking Cooperative, would every year go to the Vipava Winemaking Cooperative, where I was the manager. Each time he asked for ***Pinela***, about which he said that it had acidity most similar to that of the wines of the Podravje region.

During the fermentation of red wines, phenolic substances are leached, i.e. colour and tannins, which gives them their particular characteristics. Phenolic substances are not stable, they keep combining. The colour and bitterness of red wine therefore keep changing. While maturing, the colour takes on brownish hues and tannins turn into more pleasant, less tart flavours.

The aromatic substances in grapes are numerous, but only a few are perceivable by our senses. Most of them – there are a few hundred in total – appear in such small quantities that we can only identify them using gas chromatography, although together they still affect the perception of the aromatic substances and give the aroma of wine its tone.

The primary aromas are the aromas of the grape variety. They appear in the skin and are different in composition in each variety. They consist of various terpenes. Researchers have already determined over seventy of these. Approximately 10 percent are in free form, giving grapes their aroma, while the remaining 90 percent are bound to sugars and do not give an aroma, as they do not vaporise at normal temperature, but are potential carriers of aroma if we release them with enzymes. In addition to terpenes, grapes contain small quantities of other aromatic substances. Some varieties have a stable aroma, such as Chardonnay, which is, depending on its provenance, always recognisable. Other varieties are more sensitive and give aromas of different intensity, depending on the conditions, such as Sauvignon or Rhine Riesling. There are also varieties with exceptionally unstable aromas, such as *Zelen*. Its aroma and the right conditions for the grapes to become aromatic have not yet been determined. The essential properties of primary aromas are gentleness and the smell of flowers and fruit. Aromas can be intensified by the maceration of crushed grapes for a few hours even in white grapes varieties. The bound terpenes release glucose with the aid of the enzyme β -glucosidase. The enzyme is also synthesised by some strains of yeast. Some *S. cerevisiae* strains of yeast contain enzymes that release bound terpenes into free ones, which intensifies the aroma of a particular variety. There is also “aromatic yeast”, which creates its own aroma that is not the aroma by which the grape variety is identified. On the basis of terpene alcohols, which are specific to each variety, we can ascertain (with gas chromatography) the variety of wine. In Slovenia, Mojmir Wondra has studied the aromatic substances in Chardonnay wine and the influence of yeast on their composition during fermentation. Primary aromas appear in grape skin and develop the highest concentration just before the grapes reach full maturity. Let me list a few characteristic ones:

- coumarin – the aroma of grass (Sauvignon);
- terpinol – the aroma of elder flower;
- geraniol, linalool, citronellol – Muscat varieties;
- ionone – the aroma of violets (*Traminec*);
- the ester of octanoic acid – the aroma of blackberries (*Modri Pinot* (Pinot Noir), *Modra Frankinja*);
- hotrienol – the aroma of peaches (Rhine Riesling);
- terpendiol – the aroma of roses (*Traminec*, Pinot Blanc);
- diphenyl ketone – the aroma of raspberries (*Refošk*, *Žametna Črnina*, *Teran*).

In addition, there are **secondary aromas**, which appear during alcoholic fermentation, such as higher alcohols and higher fatty acids. Higher alcohols bind with acids to form aromatic esters, which complement the wine's aroma. Most of them have a pleasant scent. Only some have a spoiling effect, such as ethyl acetate, i.e. acetic acid and ethanol ester. It is the winemaker's duty to prevent this from happening. Every strain of yeast, even different strains of the same species, has its own characteristics and thus has a different effect on the appearance of substances combined into aromas. The climate and soil also affect the composition of must and wine, which thus contain different quantities of substances bound into aromatic esters. This produces a diversity of aromas even in the same variety. We have to take into account that every variety of grapes has a characteristic aroma. This is why it is not surprising that every vessel containing young wine has its own characteristics. The winemaker's guiding of the course of fermentation, enabling the diversity of the appearance of side products, gives it a personal mark. Let me list a few fermentation aromas:

- isoamyl acetate – the aroma of bananas;
- ethyl acetate – the aroma of fruit;
- 2-phenylethanol and its acetate ester – the aroma of roses;
- phenylacetaldehyde – the aroma of honey;
- ethyl butyrate – the aroma of pineapple;
- ethyl isobutyrate – the aroma of apple;
- ethyl caproate – the aroma of dry fruit;
- ethyl lactate – the aroma of milk.

The winemaker guides the maturation of the wine; during this maturation and ageing other aromatic substances are formed, which we call tertiary aromas. Wine is a living substance



Must sampling at Stanko Čurin's in Kog, 2003. Photo: Boris Farič, the photo library of the Ptuj Regional Museum.



Samples for oenological analysis, Ormož, 2003. Photo: Boris Farič, the photo library of the Ptuj Regional Museum.

The Components of Wine

that is constantly changing. Immediately after fermentation, it is cloudy, somewhat wild and fresh. With time, it settles down and matures, which means that a new balance is established among the components. Insoluble substances are precipitated and the wine becomes clearer



An "overview of the vintage" with Dušan Terčelj in the Ptuj wine cellar, 2003. Photo: Boris Farič, the photo library of the Ptuj Regional Museum.

in appearance. It gains in harmony and new aromatic substances appear, creating a unique bouquet so that in relation to mature wine we speak of noble maturity. With the passing of years, wine ages: it loses its finesse and the aromatic substances oxidise, so the noble aroma and flavour are lost. Young cloudy wines can be clarified by filtration, then bottled fresh and put on the market without having been "educated" to noble maturity.



Oenologist Erich Krutzler (Dveri Pax) in the Jareninski dol cellar, 2006. Photo: Staša Cafuta.

In the maturation of wine, i.e. the establishment of a balance among the components, their pH value, i.e. the measure of acidity, and the redox state play an important role. Any change in either pH or redox changes the balance and flavour of wine and thus also its character. When maturing, wine must be in a reductive state. Maturation processes benefit from a slow intake of air, in particular oxygen through barrel staves. New aromatic substances are created in this way. An interesting new substance is acetaldehyde, which originates from alcohol. In small quantities it has a beneficial effect on the appearance of an aroma, but in larger concentrations and stronger oxidation, it causes the browning of wine. In red wine, acetaldehyde accelerates the condensation of substances, i.e. the binding of colour and tannin substances, which has a beneficial effect on the flavour. Thus red wines become less bitter and more harmonious with maturity. The gentle input of air through barrel staves enables small quantities of wine acid to change into dihydroxymaleinic acid, which is important in the appearance of aroma. With stronger airing, dihydroxymaleinic acid turns into oxalic acid, which leads to the loss of aromatic substances.

Wine must be in a reductive state. This is aided by its own antioxidants, i.e. polyphenols in red wine and the appropriate sulphurisation and the addition of ascorbic acid in white wine.

When wine has matured, we put it into stainless steel vessels or immediately bottle it. The aim of this is for the wine to stop changing and thus we talk about stabilisation. However, wine is alive. The processes taking place in bottled wine are very slow. Wine ages more slowly, but still changes even in a reductive state. With this, the primary varietal aromas disappear, as do the fruit and flower aromas, but new aromatic substances develop, in particular the aroma of leather, forest soil, tobacco and so on. In red wines, the ageing processes appear more slowly due to the reductive activities of polyphenols. Phenols can never be stabilised, they are always binding to each other, becoming insoluble and forming sediment. When in mature red bottled wines we can see brownish deposits and sediment on the inside of the bottle, we must not be disturbed by this. From such a bottle, lying in a basket, wine must be poured very carefully.

Perhaps the reader will be under the impression that in comparison to other components I have spent too much time describing aromatic substances, but we must be aware that there are hundreds of them and that we still do not know much about them. I have mentioned only a few main groups. Aromatic substances give wine its varietal character, maturity and character. I wish the reader to learn wherein lies the richness and diversity of wine. We must know that wine is a living substance in a constant process of change: that young wine is still cloudy, wild and fresh, that with maturity it gains finesse and harmony, and that wine ages and dies. The wealth of various substances that are constantly changing enable it to do so. When we have learnt this and follow wine from its birth to its old age, we can respect it and behave respectfully towards it.

We have not yet exhausted the diversity and richness of wine: there is also the making of wine from overripe grapes and the barrique method.

The components of wine made from overripe grapes

After they have ripened, grapes can be left on the vine for quite some time. Different concentrations appear of substances such as sugar and aromatic substances. During the overripe phase, grapes are also infected by noble rot – *Botrytis cinerea*.

Grapes are normally picked when fully mature, i.e. when the sugar content is no longer rising and the stalk starts to become woody. The time this happens differs from variety to variety. There are early, moderately early, moderately late and late varieties. But even when fully mature, different varieties of grapes have a different concentration of sugars. If during fine weather we leave grapes on the vine for a longer time, the components change due to water evaporation, resulting in a greater concentration of the other substances. A different character of wine is obtained in this way. There are various degrees of overripe grapes.

Slovenia's Wine Act divides special quality wines into the following categories with respect to the maturity of grapes at harvest and the ageing of wine:

The Components of Wine

- superior late harvest wine,
- superior wine, selection,
- superior wine, berry selection,
- superior wine, dry berry selection,
- superior ice wine,
- superior archive wine.

Late harvest

wine is a superior wine made from grapes left on the vine 7-14 days after the main harvest, so that the grapes contain at least 20 percent sugar and that they are partly infected with noble rot, which gives wine a unique aroma and flavour. Such wine may be dry (up to 4g of sugar per litre) or with remains of residual sugar.

Selection

is the term used for wine obtained by picking overripe grapes containing at least 23.5 percent sugar, which are partly infected with noble rot.

Berry selection

is the term used for wines obtained from overripe and partly dried berries infected with noble rot. These grapes contain at least 29.5 percent sugar. Such wines are usually sweet and have a unique aroma and the flavour of raisins.

Dry berry

selection denotes a wine that has acquired this classification by being made from over-ripe, already dried grapes infected with noble rot. The grapes, i.e. must, are at least 30 percent sugar. This is exceptionally rich wine with a special bouquet and flavour. The aroma and flavour of dry fruit, citrus fruit, etc. can be detected.



Stanko Čurin from Kog was the first private winemaker in Slovenia to produce ice wine. A grape-picking scene, 1987. The archive of the Čurin family.

Ice wine

is obtained by picking overripe grapes when the average temperature for at least three consecutive days falls under -7°C . The overripe grapes are infected with noble rot. The frozen grapes are pressed when water crystals appear in the berries. This thickens the must and gives it a special character that is later present in the wine.



On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Slovene wines trademark (1969-94), the Commercial Community for Viticulture and Winemaking published a small brochure with information on quality wine vintages in Slovenia between 1968 and 1993 and about the temperature at which wine should be served.

The wines with from the last three classifications above are usually sweet, as the sugar can not ferment fully. In Slovenia these kinds of wines, demanding special climatic conditions, can be produced only in the Podravje and Posavje winegrowing regions, and even there not every vintage. These wines are not found in the Primorska region. Why? The conditions there are not favourable to the development of noble rot, although there is enough sunshine for the formation of sugar. Noble rot develops on warm sunny autumnal days when it does not rain but there is enough humidity at night and in the morning when the fog rises from nearby rivers. Such conditions accelerate the development of noble rot, which disintegrates the skin. If there is too much humidity and rain the rot turns into a rotten mass that destroy the grapes. When the conditions are right, the spreading mycelia gently harm the skin, damaging it only enough for the water to evaporate faster from the berry so that the concentration of other substances increases. Mycelia give wine a unique aroma. Such particular conditions are not achieved every vintage. In addition, there is always a risk that the grapes will be wasted if they are not picked in time. With the higher classifications of wine, a maximum of 20 percent of must is produced in comparison with a normal harvest. So, we must not be surprised if we have to reach quite deep into our pockets for only a small bottle. But there is nothing nicer for a connoisseur than to be given a high "predicate" wine. These are not wines to be drunk quickly, but savoured slowly, allowing one to enjoy their rich flavour and aroma.

"Straw wine" is wine made from dried grapes that were picked early and, prior to being pressed, were dried on straw or on crates "under the roof", so that all the substances are concentrated. Such wines are according to Slovenia's Wine Act classified as natural dessert wines.

In overripe grapes, the components are concentrated in the juice, while at the same time phenols are decomposed and new aromatic substances are created, giving these superior wines their unique character. Such wines are not to be used for quenching one's thirst or as food. They are divine nectars and we must enjoy the wealth of flavours and aromas. We drink them in small sips, with long pauses in between, as the richness of the after-taste remains on our palate for a long time. These wines are natural "liqueurs".

Sugar in wine

During the fermentation of must, its sugar can fully or only partly ferment into alcohol. Thus, we get wines that are classified as:

- **Dry wine** in which sugar has fully fermented. There can be a maximum of 4g of residual sugar per litre of wine. The newest rules, adopted in 2004, also allow this classification to be used for wines with more than 4g of sugar per litre, depending on the total of acids in the wine. Thus there can be 2g of sugar per litre more than there are grams of total acids in a litre. So wine with 7g per litre of wine acid can have $7 + 2 = 9$ g per litre of sugar in order to be defined as a dry wine. The Slovene legislator took this definition from German legislation, while most countries do not allow it. I believe that this is harmful to Slovene winemaking, in particular in Podravje. It is also not beneficial to the consumer, as it is impossible to see from the wine's label whether it is without sugar or not. If things must stay as they are, then another category "extra dry" should be introduced for wines with up to 4g of sugar per litre.

The Components of Wine

- **Semi-dry wine** contains 4-12g of residual sugar per litre.
- **Semi-sweet wine** contains 12-45g of residual sugar per litre.
- **Sweet wine** contains over 45g of residual sugar per litre.

With regard to sparkling wines, the classifications with respect to the sugar content are different:

- **Brut Nature** contains less than 3g of residual sugar per litre.
- **Extra Brut** contains less than 6g of residual sugar per litre.
- **Brut** contains less than 15g of residual sugar per litre.
- **Extra Sec** contains 12-20g of residual sugar per litre.
- **Sec** contains 17-35g of residual sugar per litre.
- **Demi-Sec** contains 33-50g of residual sugar per litre.
- **Doux** contains more than 50g of residual sugar per litre.

The bubbles of life. *Ormoška Penina* sparkling wine, 2003. Photo: Boris Farič, the photo library of the Ptuj Regional Museum.





Upon arrival at the great regional exhibition entitled "The Culture of Wine" in Gamlitz in Austria the visitors first learned about the sensory organs that help us to sense and recognise wine, 1990. Photo: Aleš Gačnik, the photo library of the Ptuj Regional Museum.



A "test". Čeglo in the Goriška Brda, 2006. Photo: Staša Cafuta.

Recognising a wine

Wine can be recognised by its:

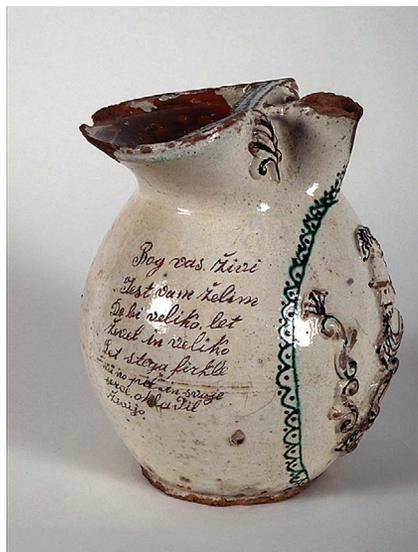
- appearance – colour and clarity
- odour
- taste
- varieties and blends
- geographical origin
- quality
- production method.



The "Toast" series of glasses by Steklarna Rogaška.



Majolica made by F. Graf, Gradac in Bela Krajina. From the collection of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum. Photo: Marko Habič.



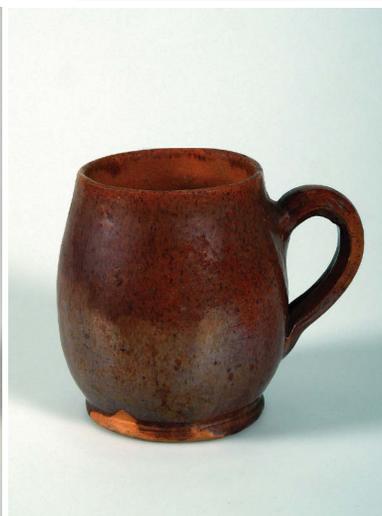
Majolica, made by F. Piletič in 1929, Gradac in Bela Krajina. From the collection of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum. Photo: Marko Habič.



A glass, uniquely engraved, made by the Zagorje glassworks in 1925 (a souvenir owned by the firefighter and tavern owner Ivan Hočevar from Zagorje). From the collection of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum. Photo: Marko Habič.



Half-litre mugs, made by Janez Kern, a potter from Komenda, bought at the Ljubljana fair in 1935. From the collection of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum. Photo: Marko Habič.



A wine mug, made in 1967 in Ptuj. From the collection of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum. Photo: Marko Habič.

Drinking vessels from the past.

Recognising a wine

Sampling glass



Sparkling wine glass



Sauvignon



White wine



Rebula

Red wine



Old red wines



Superior wine



Dessert wine



Modern drinking vessels (the Toast series made by Steklarna Rogaška glassworks).

By appearance

The colour of wine and its clarity is assessed by looking at it. Both these properties inform us about the wine's condition, the winemaking techniques, the variety of grapes, the stability of wine and even its quality.



Assessment by sight. Photo: the Terčelj family archive, Miloš Toni, Aleš Gačnik.

By odour

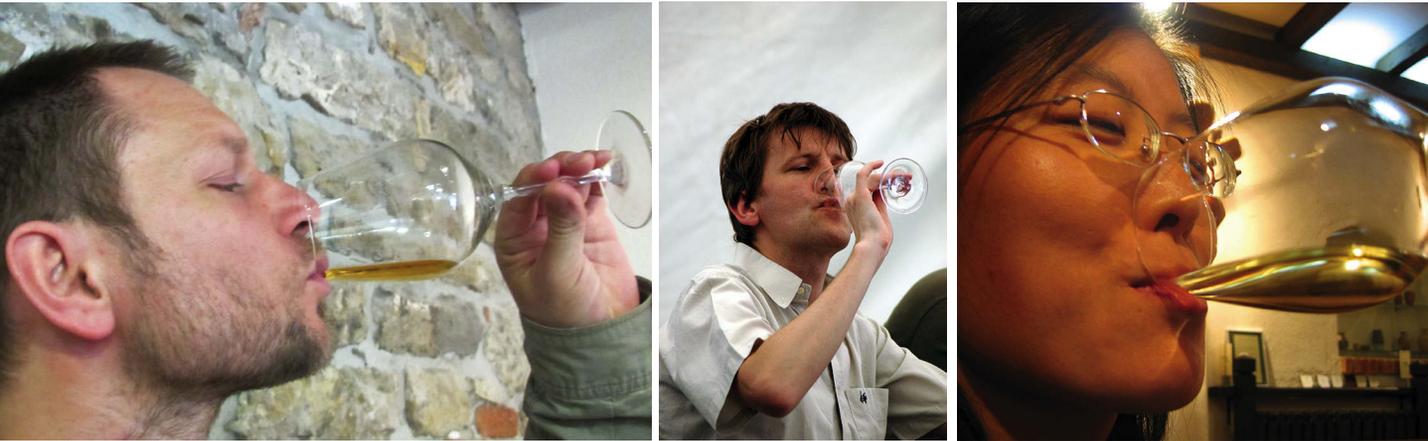
The nose is the organ with which we detect the wealth of aromas, how pleasant and harmonious they are, their finesse or roughness, aggressiveness or gentleness. It also tells us about the presence of undesirable odours. Smells are detected by olfactory receptors in the nose, which are connected via nerves to the brain, where there is a sensory centre. The olfactory receptors must be well-rested when we want to detect smells, i.e. the wine's odours, so we cannot try to recognise a wine by its odour when we have a cold. The most volatile substances, i.e. the wine's bouquet, are detected by smell. The other, less volatile components, which are released in our mouth, are also detected in the nasal passage. Both these sensations constitute the aroma of wine. Its detection depends also on the chemical composition of the non-volatile components (acids, mineral substances, etc.).



Assessment by smell. Photos: Aleš Gačnik, Miloš Toni, Boris Farič, the photo library of the Ptuj Regional Museum.

By taste

We taste wine with our tongue, which has sensors – taste-buds – for the four main flavours: sweet, salty, sour and bitter. Taste buds are also linked to the brain. Numerous non-volatile components (out of 1300 known today at least one third are non-volatile) contribute to the taste of wine. In order for the wine to be harmonious, individual flavours have to follow one another in the correct order and none of them can stand out excessively.



Assessment by taste. Photo: Aleš Gačnik, Staša Cafuta.

Food that is too spicy numbs the taste buds, thus lessening the capacity to taste. A similar thing happens when we test a considerable number of wine samples. Taste is the most important indicator of wine's quality. With our taste buds we can sense the harmony of all the basic flavours, and when this is combined with the wine's aroma, we know whether the wine is pleasant, full-bodied and harmonious. Moreover, it even tells us about the wine's character and origin, sometimes even about the year of the vintage.

The sensitivity of the taste buds is different in different people. Our gift for detecting smells and flavours varies. Some people can detect even very small quantities of aromas and flavours, while others cannot. The lowest still detectable quantity of an aroma or flavour is called the sensory threshold. This threshold can be lowered with constant practice. This is why some people are better tasters than others. It is interesting that some people are better at detecting only specific tastes, for example bitterness, and for specific aromas, for example the smell of sulphur. This can be improved by practice. It is beneficial if an experienced wine taster explains to us the unfamiliar aromas and flavours that are typical of specific varieties or blends, i.e. mixtures of a number of varieties. Constant tasting practice and the ability to remember different aromas and flavours enables us to enjoy the goodness of wine.

Two characteristics are important for the good detection and recognition of aromas and flavours: memory and mental concentration. When an experienced wine taster is explaining aromas and flavours, we must remember these characteristics so that we can use that knowledge in subsequent tastings. Concentration is also very important. It is critical for the correct assessment of wine when tasting a number of them at once, or when we are

buying wine and trying to decide which one to choose by comparing the good and bad points of each one.

Our concentration can be disturbed by internal and external factors. When assessing wines, we must be rested, calm and healthy. Worries or feeling unwell must be put aside. Our concentration is also affected by external factors, such as disturbances around us, noise, talking, movement, walking and visual perceptions that take our mind off the wine. Especially disturbing are comments by other tasters. If we exaggerate somewhat, we can say that even a fly buzzing around the room can be a distraction. If we are tasting wine in a wine cellar with other people present, we must move to a corner so that we can focus only on the wine. At group tastings and wine assessments, the organiser must ensure that samples are anonymous and that each taster is assessing the wine independently from the others.

When assessing a wine, we first determine its appearance: that is, its clarity and colour. Then we smell the wine, assessing its bouquet. This is followed by tasting the wine so that we can obtain the final impression about its harmony, quality and stability. We keep the wine in our mouth for a while so that we can detect the aromas that travel from the wine warmed in our mouth to the nasal passage. Then we spit the wine so that we can taste a number of samples. The written wine assessment appears both as a description and as a number. In Slovenia, the Buxbaum system with 1 to 20 points is commonly used.



A part of the evaluation commission at the International Wine Competition at the Gospodarsko razstavišče exhibition complex in Ljubljana, 2003. Photo: Miloš Toni.

Analysis of samples, 2003. Photo: Miloš Toni.

At wine tastings, the air must be without odours that could disturb the detection of wine's finesses. Even in a wine cellar, when we are tasting wines straight from the barrels or tanks, the air should be clear. The atmosphere in a wine cellar is pleasanter, more mysterious and romantic which, however, can mislead us.

Recognising a wine



The evaluation commission at work. The International Wine Competition at the Gospodarsko razstavišče exhibition complex in Ljubljana, 2003. Photo: Miloš Toni.



Mojmir Wondra (left) and Dušan Terčelj (right) assessing wine samples at the Gospodarsko razstavišče exhibition complex in Ljubljana, 2003. Photo: Miloš Toni.



Dušan Terčelj and Mojmir Wondra at the International Wine Competition at the Gospodarsko razstavišče exhibition complex in Ljubljana, 2003. Photo: Miloš Toni.



The Japanese wine assessment expert Toshihiko Tsukamoto alone and with his colleague Shikego Kida at the 49th assessment of wine samples in Ljubljana, 2003. Photo: Miloš Toni.



Scenes from the international wine assessment at the Gospodarsko razstavišče exhibition complex in Ljubljana, 2003. Photos: Miloš Toni.

For the proper detection of aromas and flavours and for assessments, wine has to be presented at the following temperatures:

- dry sparkling wines at 8°C or less (semi-dry and semi-sweet up to 10°C)
- bottled white extract wines at 10-12°C
- white wines with residual sugar at 11-13°C
- rosé and reddish wines at 11-12°C
- red wines at 14-15°C
- full-bodied, extract and old red wines at 15-18°C.

These temperatures should be adhered to when serving wine with food.

Light white wine is not expressive if presented at higher temperatures, its acidity can be too perceptible and the fruity notes are lost. Equally, cold red wines are not drinkable: they give the impression of being more bitter, even more astringent, than they really are and the bouquet is not quite so pronounced. When we open a bottle of wine, we put it in a special vessel: sparkling wine should lie on ice; a bottle of still white wine should be put in a vessel made of plastic or ceramic that prevents it from getting warm; old red wines with a sediment are placed in a basket so that the bottle is lying down and the sediment does not disturb the wine when it is poured. Wine must be poured into glasses carefully, while it runs clear. It is recommended that old red wines should be decanted into a glass carafe with a wide bottom, where wine is left for a short time to be aired. This makes the heavy, sometimes undesirable odours evaporate and the wine aromas become more pronounced. White wines, particularly young wines, are rich in very volatile flowery and fruity aromas. These aromas can be enjoyed only in a cooled wine. Stemmed glasses with a tulip shaped cup must be used, in which the aromas become concentrated. Red wines contain heavier aromatic substances that are more easily released in contact with air at a slightly higher temperature. This is why red wine is poured into roundish glasses up to half way, where the surface of the wine is largest so that it can get more air. Wine should always be poured only up to the middle of the glass, never to the top. This ensures a better detection of aromatic substances as we can swirl the wine in the glass.

By origin (or provenance)

The origin or provenance of wine denotes the region, district or locality of the grapes from which it was made. The soil and climate affect the properties of both grapes and wine. The same variety of grapes produces different characteristics when grown in different winegrowing areas. With new technology in viticulture and winemaking these differences are diminishing. Natural factors have an increasingly less important influence on the characteristics of wine. This is why the French have added to the term of origin also the expression “*terroir*” (environment), i.e. all the factors, including the influence of man with his viticultural traditions and culture. We could add the influence of fashion, dictated by competitive trade.



A map of Slovene winegrowing regions.

Cartography: Jerneja Fridl

Source: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food © Anton Melik Geographical Institute ZRC SAZU, 2008

Considering a number of typical characteristics, Slovenia has been divided into three winegrowing regions: Podravje, Posavje and Primorska, and each of these further into winegrowing districts.

The winegrowing region of Podravje is divided into the following districts:

- Slovene Štajerska with sub-districts:
 - Maribor
 - Radgona – Kapela
 - Ljutomer – Ormož
 - Haloze
 - Central Slovenske Gorice
 - Šmarje - Virštajn
- Prekmurje

Podravje extends along the low hills of north-eastern Slovenia, on both sides of the River Drava, gently descending to the Pannonian Plain. Here, the cool, fresh Alpine summer mingles with the dry, hot Pannonian continental summer. Moderately warm days and cool nights during the maturing of grapes create less sugar and more acids, which emphasise gentler floral and fruity aromas.

The winegrowing region of Posavje is divided into three districts:

- Bizeljsko-Sremič
- Dolenjska
- Bela Krajina

Posavje encompasses the low hills between the Kočevje forests and pre-Alpine chains of hills through which the River Sava winds its way. This is where Dolenjska and Bizeljsko are. The landscape is undulating and very densely wooded, which cools the heated air coming from the Croatian plains along the rivers Krka, Temenica and Sotla. Bela Krajina is situated on the southern, sunny side of the Gorjanci hills, with a unique landscape favourable to winegrowing. In Posavje, there are light white and red wines that are aromatic with a pleasant acidity and are close to the northern type of wine.

The winegrowing region of Primorska is divided into four districts:

- Slovenian Istria
- Brda or Goriška Brda
- Vipava Valley or Vipava
- Kras



Debeli Rtič, the Koper winegrowing region. Source: Vinakoper, Koper.

Primorska includes the areas stretching from the last Alpine foothills where grapevine can still be grown down to the Adriatic Sea. The region has a pronounced influence of the Mediterranean climate, only occasionally and evenly cooled by winds coming from the Alps. The soil consists of sediments that appeared as the sea was withdrawing. The Kras is a limestone plateau with red soil (*terra rossa*). Warm days and nights during the maturing of grapes create wines with a higher level of alcohol, less acid and fewer aromatic substances, but with more colour, which is the precondition for the production of high quality red wines. These wines have a somewhat southern, Mediterranean character and represent an intermediate stage between northern and Mediterranean wine types.

We can boast that there is no other country in the world that has, on such a small territory, such varied conditions for viticulture. This influences the variety and character of Slovene wines. It is our special feature which we should make better use of instead of yearning for large quantities of one and the same type of Slovene wine. Limited size can be an advantage and people in politics and business should be aware of this, as should those involved in winemaking, which is a part of our economy.

Every country, every winegrowing region, as well as every individual winemaker wishes to protect their winegrowing areas through legislation. Even the Yugoslav monarchy and socialist Yugoslavia had a division of winegrowing areas. Slovenia largely accepted and legislated these same areas. Labels on wine bottles must display in clearly visible lettering the origin of the wine, i.e. the winegrowing region, district, sub-district and even locality.



The expert commission for the assessment of wine at the Agricultural Institute of Slovenia, 1991. The Terčelj family archive.

By variety and blend

Over the millennia, through selection, numerous varieties of grapes were created, taking into account and making use of natural mutations. Even in ancient times, there were different varieties of grapes in the Mediterranean. After the collapse of the Roman Empire and the introduction of Christianity, the processing of grapes spread far north, where new varieties appeared, adapted to the prevailing natural conditions. Until the collapse of the old viticultural methods and the appearance of vine-lice, varieties created in a particular area only slowly spread around Europe. Later, with the revitalisation of viticulture, this happened much faster. Over the last two centuries, the French varieties of grapes have spread even outside Europe.

Different blends of wine consist of a number of varieties of grapes. The purpose of blending is the improvement of the quality of wine. Winemakers like creating various combinations, thus giving their wine a special mark and character. These combinations or blends are

given fancy names or become protected brands. Pure single varietal wines are produced mainly by winegrowers in German-speaking countries and the countries where German winemakers had the greatest influence. Latin winemaking countries, on the other hand, like making blends of a number of varieties and then call them by their origin. In various parts of Slovenia we have different blended wines, such as *Vipavec*, *Metliška črnina*, *Cviček*, *Bizeljčan* and *Ljutomerčan*.

Varieties of grapes and wines produced in Slovenia with the same names

Until the destruction of the vineyards by vine-louse during the period 1880 to 1890, numerous varieties of grapes had been grown on the territory of the present-day Slovenia. Unfortunately, most of those varieties produced low quality wines. Thus, Trummer²⁹ described nearly 300 different varieties of grapes in Styria in 1844. The most widespread were: *Šipon*, *Belina*, *Ranfol*, *Lipovna* and *Kavka*. Vertovec mentions that the dominant varieties in Carniola included *Žametovka*, *Kraljevina*, *Belina*, *Volovna* and *Lipovna*. In Primorska, they grew *Rebula*, *Malvazija*, *Grganja*, *Čividin*, *Pergoli* and *Sivka*; and around Vipava *Pinela* and *Zelen* and the red *Refošk*.

The president of the agricultural society for Styria in Graz, Archduke Johann, by introducing high quality white varieties, contributed towards new varieties from France and the Rhine Valley being brought in. But a true turnaround in the selection of varieties came with the destruction of vineyards. In 1905, the selection of varieties for Styria was chosen, which had to be taken into account by all the nurseries cultivating vines for planting. Styria was then divided into nine still existing districts. The following new white varieties were selected: *Šipon*, Welschriesling and *Zeleni Silvanec* (Ger. *Grüner Silvaner*) as the main varieties, and *Modri Pinot* (Pinot Blanc), Riesling and *Rumeni Muškat* (Muscatel) as optional varieties. The following were the red varieties grown: *Portugalka*, *Modra frankinja*, *Žametovka* and *Vranek*. For every district two or three varieties were defined as the main ones and then there were others that were permitted. The renovation of the vineyards in Styria took so little time that by 1912, according to the official Austrian statistics, 19,368 hectares of vineyards were already revitalised and yielding 449,712 hectolitres of wine, i.e. 25.6 hectolitres per hectare.

In Carniola, the change of varieties was not quite so thorough. In Lower Carniola, the varieties used to make the *Cviček* wine remained: *Žametna črnina*, *Modra Frankinja* and *Kraljevina* as the red varieties, with another variety added, and Welschriesling as the white variety. In the Littoral, the old high quality varieties remained, only the mass-produced varieties that yielded worse quality wine were abandoned. The varieties grown in the Littoral only changed after World War Two. The same happened in Posavje, in relation to which a law was passed allowing high quality white varieties to be grown.

In 1929, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia adopted a law on wine and in 1935 rules on the selection of grape varieties for the Drava province, i.e. Slovenia without the Littoral (Primorska). In socialist Yugoslavia, a law on wine was adopted in 1965, with numerous rules regarding the selection of varieties being added later.

²⁹ Zupanič, 1976:17

In the independent Slovenia, the Wine Act was adopted in 1997 with numerous supplements governing the selection of varieties and production, as well as the trade in grapes and wine.

I would now like to give a short description of the main varieties currently grown in all three winegrowing regions, with emphasis on the old varieties.

Grapevine varieties in the winegrowing area of Podravje

White varieties

Šipon (Furmint)

is an old indigenous variety, grown in hilly areas of the north-eastern part of Pannonia (eastern Podravje, Slavonia and northern Hungary). In Hungary, it is used to produce the famous wines called Tokaji (the name in this case denotes the region of origin). The name Tokaji is internationally protected and can only be used for wines produced from the Furmint (Hungarian for what is in Slovenia known as *Šipon*) in the region called Tokaji. This variety of grapes is in Slovenia most widespread around the Ljutomer district and produces neutral, white wines with pronounced acidity. A good vintage with a low yield will give a full-bodied wine with a very pleasant varietal bouquet. *Šipon* grapes can also produce superior “predicate” wines. Ordinary tart wines are suitable for mixing with mineral water and making *spritzers*, which are a popular thirst quencher. The *Šipon* Club unites winegrowers from this region who wish to return to this wine the reputation it once had. They have set themselves very high standards for the growing of these grapes and are marketing a wine of high-quality, recognisable by the design of the bottle label.

Laški Rizling (Welschriesling)

is most widespread around the Podravje and Posavje regions, although it is also grown around Vipava. The name *laški* (Italian) came from the German Welschriesling. Germans denoted this variety as foreign to distinguish it from their own (Rhine) Riesling. *Laški Rizling* produces neutral wine with a pleasant acidity. A good vintage, i.e. if it ripens well, will give a pronounced fruity bouquet. Although it is a late variety, under favourable conditions it will also give good “predicate” wines.

Renski rizling (Rhine Riesling)

is a high quality white variety from the Rhine Valley. It produces pleasant, harmonious and high quality wine with a refined but pronounced bouquet for which it is well-known and which reminds the drinker of the aroma of acacia, peach and apple. It is

Ave, Probe, philologi te salutant!
(Rur. Vict. de Caes. p. 523: Probus Galliam, Pannoniasque et Moesiam vinetis replevit).



CORPVS VINORVM
POETOVIENSIVM
KRL. OCT. MCMIX.

Nr.	Sorte; Ried; Jahr; Produzent	Anmerkung
Gemischter Satz:		
1	Paradeiser 1907, Kofler	
2	Rodinsberger 1907, Preindl	
3	Sauritscher 1908, Hutter	
4	Sauritscher 1908, Strasschill	
5	Maiberger 1908, Strasschill	
Cabernet:		
6	Pfaffenberger 1907, Herrsch. Oberpettau	
Mosler:		
7	Leskowitz 1900, Perko	
8	Poppenberger 1908, M. Leskoschegg	
9	Lichtenegger 1908, Steierm. Sparkasse	
10	Sauritscher 1908, Wibmer	
Welschriesling:		
11	Leskowitz 1907, Perko	
12	Johannesberger 1908, K. Kasper	
Sylvaner:		
13	Gruschikaberge 1908, v. Fichtenau	
Ruländer:		
14	Poppenberger 1908, M. Leskoschegg	
15	Lichtenegger 1908, Steierm. Sparkasse	
16	Gorzberger 1908, Strohmayer	
Traminer:		
17	Domainberger 1905, Osterberger	
18	Gruschikaberge 1908, v. Fichtenau	
19	Poppenberger 1908, M. Leskoschegg	
20	Lichtenegger 1908, Steierm. Sparkasse	
Burgunder, rot:		
21	Hochstermetzer 1908, Herrsch. Dornau	
22	Wellaushegger 1908, Scheichenbauer	
Burgunder, weiß:		
23	Domainberger 1907, Osterberger	
24	Pettauer Stadtberger 1908, Kollenz	
25	Sauritscher 1908, Pettauer Weinbaugen.	
26	Lichtenegger 1908, Steierm. Sparkasse	
27	Gorzberger 1908, Strohmayer	
Rheinriesling:		
28	Tramberger 1868, Kravagna	

a demanding variety for excellent localities. The best wines from this variety come from Haloze and the area around Maribor, right up to Svečina. Micro locations in the Ormož Ljutomer hills also suit it. Particularly famous is the *Renski Rizling* from Kalvarija in Maribor. Sadly, by choosing to get a higher yield, the Germans have greatly reduced the high quality of this variety. Hybrids of this variety with others produced in order to get a high yield with a refined bouquet are also unsuitable. These hybrids have new names and do not reach the quality of *Renski Rizling*.

Beli Pinot (Pinot Blanc)

comes from Burgundy and was in the past also known as White Burgundy. It is an early variety as it ripens early even when there is a high yield and unfavourable autumnal weather. It produces full harmonious wines with unpronounced acid and a gentle bouquet.

Chardonnay

gives full-bodied and aromatic wines with a more pronounced varietal bouquet than Pinot Blanc. The aroma typical of this variety is fairly stable and pronounced in all winegrowing regions around the world; this is why it is very popular in non-European winegrowing areas. This variety produces excellent full-bodied and harmonious wines. In Slovenia, it is grown in all three winegrowing regions.

Sivi Pinot (Pinot Gris)

The grapes are red, with a greyish hue. The wine, too, is reddish unless the colour is modified. It produces a pronouncedly full-bodied extract wine and has a gentle bouquet. The new selections of this variety offer higher yields, but the wines made from them are not as full-bodied and do not have such a high extract. In Alsace and Switzerland it is called "Tokay", but has no connection with the Friulian or Hungarian Tokaji. In Slovenia, it is grown in all three winegrowing regions.

Sauvignon

in Podravje and Posavje produces exceptionally aromatic wines with an aroma of elder flowers or freshly cut grass. The aroma is strongest in wines produced from grapes that are not fully ripe. The variety originates in Bordeaux, where famous Sauternes wines are produced.

Traminec (Traminer)

gives small yields. The small clusters of grapes are of reddish colour. It produces full-bodied, aromatic wines with a low acid content, but a high extract and a pronounced varietal bouquet. In Slovenia, the highest quality is achieved in the Radgona-Kapela vineyards. The "fragrant" variety has an even stronger, better bouquet with an aroma of roses.

Nr.	Sorte; Ried; Jah; Produzent	Anmerkung
Gemischter Satz:		
1	Paradeiser 1907, Kofler	
2	Rodinsberger 1907, Preindl	
3	Sauritscher 1908, Hutter	
4	Sauritscher 1908, Straschill	
5	Maiberger 1908, Straschill	
Cabernet:		
6	Pfaffenberger 1907, Herrsch. Oberpettau	
Mosler:		
7	Leskowitz 1900, Perko	
8	Poppenberger 1908, M. Leskoschegg	
9	Lichtenegger 1908, Steierm. Sparkasse	
10	Sauritscher 1908, Wibmer	
Welschriesling:		
11	Leskowitz 1907, Perko	
12	Johannesberger 1908, K. Kasper	
Sylvaner:		
13	Gruschkabberger 1908, v. Fichtenau	
Ruländer:		
14	Poppenberger 1908, M. Leskoschegg	
15	Lichtenegger 1908, Steierm. Sparkasse	
16	Gorzaberge 1908, Strohmayer	
Traminer:		
17	Domainberger 1905, Osterberger	
18	Gruschkabberger 1908, v. Fichtenau	
19	Poppenberger 1908, M. Leskoschegg	
20	Lichtenegger 1908, Steierm. Sparkasse	
Burgunder, rot:		
21	Hochstermetzer 1908, Herrsch. Dornau	
22	Wellauschegger 1908, Scheichenbauer	
Burgunder, weiß:		
23	Domainberger 1907, Osterberger	
24	Pettauer Stadtberger 1908, Kollenz	
25	Sauritscher 1908, Pettauer Weinbaugen.	
26	Lichtenegger 1908, Steierm. Sparkasse	
27	Gorzaberge 1908, Strohmayer	
Rheinriesling:		
28	Tramberger 1868, Kravagna	
29	Domainberger 1907, Osterberger	
30	Gruschkowetz 1907, Rossmann	
31	Johannisberger 1907, Steierm. Sparkasse	
32	Hochstermetzer 1908, Herrsch. Dornau	
33	Poppenberger 1908, M. Leskoschegg	
34	Sauritscher Ruslese 1908, Ornig	
35	Pettauer Stadtberger 1908, Sadnik	
36	Wellauschegger 1908, Scheichenbauer	
37	Johannisberger 1908, Steierm. Sparkasse	
~~~~~ Sed satis de his! ~~~~~		



Corpus Vinorum Poetovionensium, a three-part postcard, 1909. From the collection of small prints, the Ivan Potrč Library in Ptuj.



*Laški Rizling, Traminec, Rizvanec, Šipon.* Source: 1979 calendar of the Pinus Rače chemical factory, photos: Vlado Lešnik and Staša Cafuta.

### **Zeleni Silvanec (Green Silvaner)**

gives pleasant, soft and neutral wines. It is not suitable for ageing and should be consumed young.

### **Rumeni Muškata (Yellow Muscatel)**

is an old Mediterranean variety. It likes marly, stony ground. In Istra, where it produces very renowned quality wines, it has been grown since the Middle Ages. In Podravje and Posavje it spread after the first revitalisation of vineyards. The wine is full of Muscatel bouquet. Nowadays, the best Muscatels grow in Bela Krajina, around Maribor and in Haloze.

### **Ranina**

This variety was grown prior to 1900 by Bouvier in Gornja Radgona and was probably brought from France. It is an early variety, which ripens well and gives soft, mild and pleasant wines with a gentle aroma. It is also suitable for making “predicate” wines.

### **Ramfol or Belina**

is an old variety from Podravje and Posavje. Nowadays, it is hard to find vineyards containing only this variety, except in Haloze. It produces light, acidic wines without a pronounced varietal bouquet.



*“Šipon club”, the Puklavec farm in Kog, 2006.*  
Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

*Red varieties*

**Modri Pinot (Pinot Noir)**

This variety was brought from Champagne in France and was first planted in the vineyards around Radgonske gorice before World War One. Now it is grown in all winegrowing regions in Slovenia. It is a fairly early northern variety, very demanding with regard to natural conditions and the production of wine. It thrives on dry, light soil, with sunny but not too hot days during ripening so that all the finesses in the aroma can develop fully. In favourable conditions it gives an extract full-bodied wine with a fairly high alcohol content, not so rich in acids, colours and tannins. This variety has a very pronounced finesse in its aroma. In a climate that is too warm the refined aromatic substances cannot develop due to the lack of acids, but this does make wine richer in polyphenols.

***Grapevine varieties  
in the winegrowing region of Posavje***

*White varieties*

**Rumeni Plavec**

is an old indigenous variety from the Bizeljsko area and the neighbouring border area with Croatia. It produces wine with a pronounced acidity and a unique character. It has a neutral wine aroma and flavour and is a pleasant thirst quencher, in particular if diluted with mineral water.

**Kraljevina**

is an old variety, grown mainly in the Posavje region and in north-eastern Croatia. It produces light white wine. It is added to *Cviček* in order to tone down its acidity.

**Laški Rizling** and, since World War Two, the high quality varieties described under the section on the Podravje region, are also grown in Posavje.

*Red indigenous varieties*

**Žametovka or Žametna Črnina**

is an old Slovene variety, widespread in Posavje. In previous centuries it was also grown in Podravje and in the Middle Ages even in Gorenjska. Around Kranj a few rare *Žametovka* vines can still be found, which came from the old grapevines grown here before the appearance of vine-louse. The variety gives high yields, ripens late and poorly in bad vintages. The wine is dry, very drinkable and smooth, but rather empty and poorly coloured, without any tartness and with a low extract and



*Rumeni Plavec, Bizeljsko 2004.*  
Photo: Janez Šekoranja.

alcohol levels. The lack of colour, tannins and sugars comes from its specific features; it does, however, have a pleasant bouquet reminiscent of fruits of the forest. It is usually added to wines with other varieties, such as *Cviček*, *Metliška Črnina* and *Bizeljsko Rdeče*.

#### **Modra Frankinja (Blue Frankonian)**

is an old Slovene variety, also growing in Austria and northern Croatia. It is a fairly early variety, usually ripening well and giving full-bodied, nicely coloured wines with a pleasant acidity and a fine varietal aroma. It can be bought as an independent high quality wine or in blended wines, mixed with other varieties, in particular with *Žametna Črnina*, making them quite full-bodied wines with an attractive colour.

#### **Portugalka (Portugieser)**

is another old Slovene variety that is also grown in Austria and northern Croatia. It is a very early variety and the its must can appear on the market as early as the beginning of September. It is grown in smallish quantities and is sold either as must or young wine, which is a pleasant, nicely coloured wine with a violet hue and a low level of acidity.

#### **Šentlovrenka (Saint Lorent)**

originates in Alsace and started being grown in Posavje after World War Two in order to replace the *Modra Frankinja*. *Šentlovrenka* ripens somewhat early and gives a full-bodied red wine with high extract. It has a different character than *Modra Frankinja* and thus cannot replace it in the combination used to make *Cviček*.

#### **Zweigelt**

is a new Austrian hybrid between *Modra Frankinja* and *Šentlovrenka*, which after WW2 started being grown in Posavje. However, this variety also cannot replace *Modra Frankinja* in *Cviček*. The variety alone gives a pleasant, full-bodied red wine, but without the aroma finesse of the *Modra Frankinja*.

There are also other better known wines sold in Posavje.

#### **Cviček**

is a reddish wine from the winegrowing district of Dolenjska. In the 1960s and 1970s the author of this book, together with Darko Marjetič, an oenologist from the Krško wine cellar, studied the composition of *Cviček* and in 1974, after seven years of research, established that *Cviček* consisted of the following varieties: 70% *Žametna Črnina*, 20% *Modra Frankinja* and 10% *Kraljevina*. *Žametna Črnina* gives *Cviček* its drinkability, smoothness, low alcohol content, pleasant acidity and aroma,



*Modra Frankinja*. A variety used in *Cviček*, from the vineyards on Trška Gora, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



*Žametna Črnina*. A variety used in *Metliška Črnina* from the vineyards in Drašiči, 2006. Photo: Staša Cafuta.



The assessment of *Cviček* in Kostanjevica, 2000. The Terčelj family archive.



In conversation with colleagues at the assessment of *Cviček* in Kostanjevica, 2003. The Terčelj family archive.

which forms *Cviček's* central character. *Modra Frankinja* gives it a nice colour and body, and *Kraljevina* the mildness that tones down the acidity. If we measure quality only by the fullness and harmony of its composition, then *Cviček*, of course, is not a quality wine. *Cviček's* main value is in *Žametna Črnina*. The general view that *Cviček* is a very acidic wine is, of course, wrong. It has a pleasant and moderate acidity, which is more pronounced because the wine has little alcohol and a low extract. It is suitable as an aid to digestion, especially with foods containing a fair amount of fat. The regulations on the protection of *Cviček* with its traditional name *Cviček PTP* prescribes and determines the processing of the grapes used and the composition of the wine. It describes *Cviček* as a red wine with 40 to 50% (in exceptional cases 60%) of *Žametna Črnina*, 10 to 15% of *Kraljevina*, 15% of *Modra Frankinja*, up to 10% of *Laški Rizling* and up to 15% of other varieties that are still traditionally grown in Posavje. The *Cviček* consortium is in charge of raising the quality of this wine and of supervising its marketing. In the past, the grape varieties used for *Cviček* were grown together in mixed vineyards and were then together processed into wine. Now it is recommended that each variety is planted, picked and processed separately into must and young wine. Only then are they blended in order to produce the proper *Cviček* character. I personally believe that in very good vintages, *Žametna Črnina* would be enough for *Cviček*.

### Metliška Črnina

is a blend of *Žametna Črnina* and *Modra Frankinja*, the latter appearing in a higher proportion. The wine is full, nicely coloured, pleasant, with quite a bit of acidity and moderate tartness. It is pleasantly drinkable, as its composition and flavour are adapted to the market. The rules pertaining to the protection of traditional names also protected *Metliška Črnina* and *Belokranjec*.

### Bizeljsko Rdeče or Rdeče Bizeljsko

is composed of *Žametna Črnina*, *Laški Rizling* and *Rumeni Plavec*. The wine is light red, full-bodied and with pronounced acidity. It has been known for centuries and also deserves to have its name protected.

## ***Grapevine varieties in the winegrowing region of Primorska***

The winegrowing region of Primorska has unique natural conditions for the cultivation of grapes: a Mediterranean climate and marly soil, i.e. the sediments left by the sea withdrawing to the present-day Adriatic basin. On the Kras there is red *terra rossa* soil. In the past, this area was influenced by different socio-political and economic conditions from those in Podravje and Posavje, where there was a greater German-Austrian influence. In addition, the influence of the Mediterranean culture is reflected in the Slovene Primorje in the method of the traditional cultivation of grapes and wine: first there was the Greek influence in Istra, then the Roman and Venetian influence throughout the region. Right up until the 1970s old Primorska varieties, originally brought over by the Ancient Greeks and later the Romans, were cultivated here. Thus in the Koper area, the following were mainly grown: *Refošk*, *Malvazija*, *Rumeni Muškat* and *Maločrn* (*Plavina* / *Negra tenera*). Historical sources tell us that Istra was off the main travel route connecting the Vipava Valley with Friuli. In 538, the Ostrogoth military commander Cassiodorus put in writing how much wine should be ordered for the army in Istra.³⁰ Viticulture in Istra flourished without any particular destruction of vineyards. There is also a document from 932, in which Koper undertook to give 100 amphorae of wine to the Venetian doge³¹. In documents from 1313, the then Venetian doge ordered how much wine must be handed over by Koper, Izola and Piran³². There is a special mention of *Rebula*. In 1837 Tommassini, the bishop of Novi grad in present-day Croatia, described in detail the history of viticulture in Istra, mentioning the variety “*Pirella*”. Another author in 1823 mentioned the “*Pinella*” that was grown around Koper³³. Tommassini also mentioned other varieties that are no longer cultivated, such as *Cividin*, *Hrvatica* and *Tribian*.

On the Kras, *Refošk* has always been grown for *Kraški Teran* wine. It is mentioned by the Roman writer Pliny. *Rebula* was mentioned in the 11th century in the Brda and later again by Santonino, Valvasor and Vertovec. In the Vipava Valley, in addition to *Rebula*, *Klarnica* was widespread and in the upper part of the valley *Zelen* and *Pinela*, in addition to numerous others which are no longer grown.

Nowadays, many other varieties are grown in the Primorska region. In the last fifty years the following red varieties have been planted: Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Frank and Barbera. With regard to white varieties, in the last twenty years the high quality varieties from Podravje have been planted, with the exception of *Traminec*, *Renski Rizling*, *Šipon* and *Ranina*. The main varieties in this region are: Chardonnay, *Sivi Pinot* (Pinot Gris) and Sauvignon. They are also reintroducing and trying some old varieties that have almost sunk into oblivion, such as *Poljšakica*, *Pergolin* and *Klarnica*.



*Klarnica*

³⁰ Darovec, 2004, p. 257

³¹ Ibid., 258

³² Ibid., 280

³³ Ibid., 282

### White varieties

#### Malvazija

is an old variety from the Koper winegrowing region, mentioned as early as in the Middle Ages. It was most likely brought here by the Greeks, as it is grown in those areas of the Mediterranean where they had their colonies: on Sicily, on Sardinia and in Spain, where it is known as a sweet dessert wine. Many dessert wines in the Mediterranean are not made only from *Malvazija*, but it still became known as a sweet alcoholic wine. A similar example is *Pikolit*, which used to be considered a sweet dessert wine in the Vipava area. This variety is known in the Brda and gives full-bodied wines with a pleasant acidity and bouquet. *Malvazija's* aroma is less pronounced on the marly ground in the Koper area. More aromatic wines from this variety are produced on the red soil around Buje in Croatian Istra. *Malvazija* grapes are hard to press. People in Istra have overcome this problem by maceration of pomace for a few days before pressing. Wine made in this way has a golden yellow colour. *Malvazija* is also widespread in the Vipava area. Blended with other varieties, it produces a wine called *Vipavec*.

#### Rebula (Ribolla)

is indigenous to Primorska. Wine made from this variety has a nice bouquet and a neutral flavour. It is fairly harmonious, depending on the size of the yield; it has a tart nuance, which gives it a unique character. The people in the Brda believe that it is the Brda Hills where *Rebula* originates from, as it is thought to have been grown there as early as in the Antique period. The first mention of this variety is from 1336. Even fifty years ago, over 90 percent of the vineyards in this area were planted with *Rebula*.

#### Tokaj (Friulian Tokay or "Green Sauvignon")

is an old Friulian variety that has been grown in the Brda for two hundred years. It is a high quality variety and if it is not picked early enough, it gives full-bodied wines with



*Zelen, Pikolit, Pinela, Rebula, Malvazija*. The Vipava Valley, 2006. Photos: Staša Cafuta.

a higher content of alcohol and low acidity. The wine has a pleasant, well- pronounced varietal bouquet. As Hungary has internationally protected the name “Tokaj” as its own wine, the new name for this variety in the Brda, according to the proposal put forward by the Ministry of Agriculture, is to be *Zeleni Sauvignon* (Green Sauvignon). The people of the Brda, however, would like it to be called *Točaj* (pronounced *tocheye*).

### **Pinela (Pinella)**

is an indigenous variety of the upper Vipava Valley. It is probable that, like *Rebula*, in previous centuries it was also grown in the Koper area, but there is insufficient data to prove this. *Pinela* produces a wine with a unique, recognisable acidity, which distinguishes it from other varieties. A hundred different acids have thus far been identified in various wines, but we do not yet know which of them give *Pinela* its uniqueness. According to Urška Vrhovšek, *Pinela* has, in comparison to other wines, the highest concentration of shikimic acid. This acid is determined genetically and can serve as a test of the authenticity of the variety. The wine produced is pleasant and harmonious, with a gentle bouquet and an inviting flavour, as the acid does not repel the drinker.

### **Zelen**

Vertovec describes it as having a “specially noble spirit”. It is the most pleasant aromatic indigenous variety of the upper Vipava Valley. Its aroma of fruit and lemon is subtle, but very demanding with respect to stability. So far, the aromatic composition of this variety and the best way to produce it has not been fully researched. This is an elegant wine, fairly full-bodied and with a moderate alcohol content. The *Verduc* variety in the Brda has nothing in common with *Zelen*: it is more aromatic and has a more stable aroma. A special consortium has been established by the growers of *Zelen* in the upper Vipava Valley, which has set itself very strict conditions for the preservation and the marketing of the superb quality of this wine.

### *Red varieties*

Until the first revitalisation of vineyards after their destruction by vine-lice, only white varieties were grown in the Brda and in the Vipava area. After World War Two, however, red varieties began also to be planted: initially Merlot, then Barbera, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc, while recently Pinot Noir and Syrah have been added.

### **Refošk**

is an old indigenous variety grown on the Kras and in the Slovene Istria winegrowing district. It is exceptionally rich in colour, as the wine always has an intensive violet-red colour and a pronounced acidity. This wine is very drinkable and sought after, although its organoleptic properties are not that harmonious. Around Koper, it produces a fuller and less acidic wine in comparison to the *Refošk* made on the Kras and is known under the name *Kraški Teran*. *Refošk* produced in other winegrowing countries, even Macedonia, can be found on the wine market. This is why winegrowers wish to protect



the Istrian *Refošk* with a visible denotation on the bottle labels. For this purpose, a new consortium – *Konzorcij vin Istre* – has been established.

### **Kraški Teran**

On the Kras it is made from a variety of *Refošk* and was in 2000 protected with a PTP label. The regulation describes it as a wine with a moderate quantity of alcohol, and a higher concentration of lactic and other organic acids and polyphenols. The wine is produced following the principles of integrated production of grapes and wine. In my doctoral thesis I studied *Teran's* composition with respect to the polyphenols it contained and its colour composition. This is a wine very rich in colour substances, i.e. anthocyanins, a characteristic of which is delphinidol, the content of which is higher in this wine than in other varieties. *Teran's* colour is characteristically violet-ruby-red. This wine has historically been considered to be medicinal – small sips are supposed to have a beneficial effect on those convalescing, on those with anaemia and women in labour. I believe that the greatest value of this wine is the wealth of lactic acid, which acts beneficially on the digestive tract and that in small quantities, via colour substances and tannins, i.e. antioxidants that prevent various harmful processes in the body, it has a beneficial effect on the overall health. Its antioxidant power can be seen from the non-use of sulphur dioxide, which has to be used in relatively high quantities in white wines and in smaller quantities in red wines. Winegrowers on the Kras have never used



A *Refošk* vineyard; *Refošk* and Merlot grapes. The Kras and the Vipava Valley, 2006. Photos: Staša Cafuta.

sulphur in the making of *Teran*, but in spite of this, the wine never oxidises. Nowadays, a low dose of sulphurisation is recommended, only for a feeling of safety rather than from a real need. The poet Oton Župančič very fittingly described the Slovene (drinking) character with the words “My soul is merry, as if it had been drinking *Kraški Teran*.”

### **Merlot**

comes from Bordeaux in France and is a moderately early variety with a high yield, which ripens well and gives full-bodied, ruby red wines with a high extract. Its aroma of ripe fruit is unique and almost too aggressive, as it lacks finesse. It produces excellent full-bodied wines. If we blend it with Cabernet Sauvignon, we enrich the aroma. It is suitable for ageing, in particular as ripened grapes produce sweet tannins that quickly ripen further.

### **Cabernet Sauvignon**

is another French variety from Bordeaux: it is the main variety out of the highly acclaimed quality wines from this area. In comparison to Merlot, this variety ripens slightly later and produces wines with higher acids. The wine is fairly full-bodied, with a high-extract; its main good point is expressed in its aroma. With ageing, tertiary aromas are developed, reminiscent of forest soil, peppers and even tobacco. The variety preserves its bouquet in various natural environments and is therefore – like Chardonnay – the main variety grown in countries outside Europe, i.e. in the New World.

### **Syrah**

originates in Persia and is now spreading via France to all the warm winegrowing regions of the world, including Primorska. If it produces a small yield and succeeds in dry warm soil, it gives exceptionally full-bodied, extract wine. In rich soil and with a higher yield, wine of average quality is obtained. As a young wine it has a fairly neutral aroma, but with ageing it develops excellent tertiary aromas.

### **Barbera**

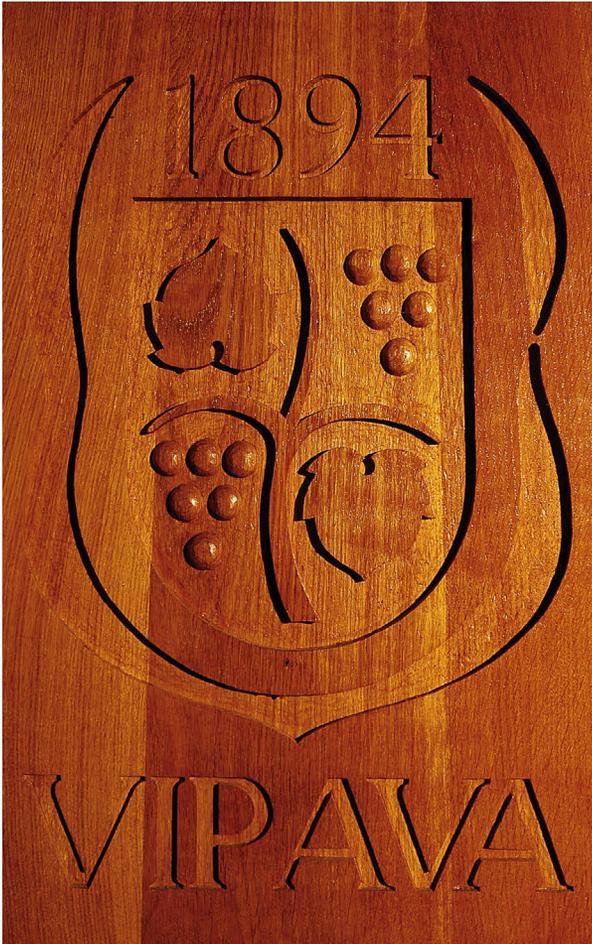
originates in Piedmont in Italy, from where it came to the Vipava area. With a small yield, the wine is a fairly full-bodied, high quality, ruby red with a violet hue, with a pronounced level of acidity and thus to Slovenes more drinkable. If a high yield is produced, the wine is less full, of a lighter red and worse quality. After the initial success in the Vipava area, the variety quickly started spreading around the whole of Primorska, but with the high yields enthusiasm soon waned.

### **Modri Pinot (Pinot Noir)**

has already been described under the winegrowing region of Podravje, from where this variety has in recent years spread to Primorska. It is a northern variety, which in Primorska gives fuller wines with higher alcohol content and more colour, but which lacks the refined bouquet.

## *Brand names*

Recently in Slovenia, as elsewhere, brand names have started appearing on wine bottle labels; these may be varietal wines, but more often blended ones. The brand name is legally protected and thus may not be used by anyone else; winemakers also use it to describe the wine's quality, the method used for its production and its provenance. If buyers know what a particular brand has to offer, they know they are making a good purchasing decision.



Some examples of the basics and ...

*The Culture of Wine in Slovenia*

... applications of Slovene trade marks by Slovene winemakers: Agroind – Vipava wine cellar, Goriška Brda wine cellar, Vinakoper wine cellar, Brič wine cellar, Jeruzalem Ormož wine cellar, ...



Recognising a wine



... Radgonske Gorice wine cellar,  
Ptuj wine cellar, Santomas wine  
cellar, Ščurek wine cellar.



## *By quality*

Drinkers must find wine tasty, pleasant and drinkable. Together with food, it must offer a physical feel-good factor, comfort and, if consumed appropriately, also mental satisfaction. Wine thus contributes to quality of life and health. Often one wishes for another glass, but can be dissuaded from this by the thought that physical and mental satisfaction lie in the slow sipping of small quantities and in contemplation of the goodness of wine. And that is a true hedonistic pleasure.

We professionals, however, have set ourselves stricter standards. In addition to having a full flavour, a high quality wine must possess a high extract and a harmony among all its components, including the aroma. In particular, the following must never stand out: alcohol and acidity or polyphenols, the latter imparting a tartness to the wine. All these components must, in addition to being harmonious and fully flavoured, also linger on the palate. Wine has to have a gentle bouquet, expressing finesse, not aggression, and a true character. When looking at wine from a professional viewpoint, its drinkability is not included. Of course, there are wines that are drinkable but not full-bodied or harmonious and that can offer satisfaction only when consumed together with food. Such a wine is *Cviček* which, sadly, with regard to international norms, is not considered a high quality wine.

The grape varieties which facilitate the production of quality wines are themselves called quality varieties. There are also table and mass varieties. Each demands suitable natural conditions for the development of the best grapes as encoded in its genetic make-up. Moreover, there is an optimum winemaking method for each variety. Yields that are too high reduce not just the quality of the grapes, but also of the wine.

The high quality, low yield white varieties first introduced in Štajerska by Archduke Johann were initially grown in Burgundy in France, from where they spread to the Rhine Valley. In Slovenia, these varieties found better natural conditions with more sun and warmth; when we started producing a higher yield, the quality of these wines fell. In Slovenia, as in Germany, we started creating clones with high yields. We obtained more grapes and wine, but of lower quality. These clones (such as Riesling, Pinot Gris, etc.) do not give wines with the refined bouquet, full body and harmony for which this variety is renowned: instead, they have only retained the name of the variety from which they have been selected. Thus we nowadays have no way of knowing whether we are drinking wine produced from a clone or the old variety that produces the highest quality. Unfortunately, things have gone even further and new varieties have been created through crossbreeding, which was supposed to result in the good qualities of the original high quality variety and the higher yield of the other variety used. But these new varieties did not produce the desired results either, i.e. the excellent quality of the high quality varieties.

With the re-establishment of the grapevine after the vine-louse epidemic, regulations were put in place in Slovenia allowing and recommending the varieties to be re-established in each winegrowing region. In this way the production of grapes and wine was managed and the quality of wine raised. High quality white varieties were envisaged to be suitable for the Podravje winegrowing region. It is only in the last thirty years that high quality white varieties have also been established in the Posavje and Primorska winegrowing regions

and permission given for these varieties to be grown. The new wine-producing methods showed that these varieties were suitable for Posavje and Primorska and they do, in fact, produce excellent wine there. But their original character is changed.

The Wine Act from 1997 classifies wines according to quality as follows:

1st category – table wines:

- no origin
- regional wines with an origin.

2nd category – quality wines with a protected geographic origin:

- quality wines
- high-quality wines
- high-quality wines with a “predicate”.

The quality of wine is assessed by officially appointed commissions from authorised organisations. The quality category and origin appear on the label.

## *By the method of production of grapes and wine*

In addition to the natural conditions, the quality and character of wine is most influenced by man and his methods of production. A winegrower decides on the varieties and the method of the cultivation of grapes, i.e. what sort of raw material he requires so that he can achieve the best quality and character of wine. A winegrower wishes to use the given natural characteristics in the best way. When the grapes are picked, the processing method is decided upon:

a) the classical method:

- white grapes are immediately taken off their stalks, crushed and pressed and the resulting must is then left to ferment;
- red grapes are taken off their stalks, crushed and macerated for a few days so that colour, tannin and aromatic substances are extracted out of the skin and pips during fermentation.

b) red grapes can be carbon macerated in a carbonated atmosphere so that the aromatic substances and polyphenols are leached out; due to fermentation being more difficult under CO₂ pressure, a fruitier aroma appears;

c) production of wine using the barrique method;

d) production of sparkling wine.

A winegrower must also decide whether he will pick the grapes when they are not fully mature if he wants the wine to have sufficient acidity. Some varieties in particular, such as Sauvignon, benefit from being picked early in warm climates, which preserves the varietal

aroma. With regard to red varieties, the winegrower will usually wait with the harvest until the grapes are fully ripened and pleasant polyphenols are produced, in particular if he wants to age his wine or use the barrique method. All other procedures in winemaking are down to the wine producer.

Vertovec, in his book on winemaking from 1844, mentioned two schools: the German and the French. The German method strives for the immediate processing of white grape varieties, without maceration, and the use of considerable quantities of sulphur. The French-Mediterranean school, on the other hand, recommends that white grapes should be macerated so that the wine has a fuller body, a better aroma and partly extracted tannins that act as preservatives, giving wine a slightly bitter taste. For this reason, such wine requires a smaller quantity of sulphur. The French method involving the maceration of white grapes was until recently popular in Primorska, except in the Brda, and in Dolenjska and Bela Krajina. Winegrowers, who are by nature traditionalists, find it difficult to adapt to new procedures. Vertovec recommended to the Vipava winemakers that white grapes should be macerated only overnight, or for 24 hours at the most, so that more marketable wine would be obtained. In spite of their reluctance, after World War Two the market forced winemakers to adopt more modern views and improve their wines. But we must understand our forebears. Hygienic conditions in wine cellars were bad, due to the shortage of water and of knowledge. Tannin, together with acid and alcohol, was a good preservative of wine and it was the only way to prevent it from spoiling. When I was still working as the manager of the winemaker's cooperative in Vipava, I visited a winegrower one summer who invited me to his cellar to try the wine and I was in for quite a surprise. Although the wine was very tart, it was not spoilt, in spite of the fact that he was keeping it in an unsuitably warm place and in a started barrel, from which he would daily take the required quantity.

Young winegrowers who have finished agricultural schools find it much easier to introduce new methods if, of course, their parents let them do things their own way. Currently, there are two main tendencies: the first sees wine as an agricultural product, emphasising its naturalness, origin and tradition; the other, introduced by the New World, sees wine as an industrial product and in industry anything goes, as long as it is not harmful to health. This direction is producing new fashion trends.

Of course, there is no such thing as tradition in the New World. There, winegrowing only began in earnest just over a hundred years ago. Immediately, they wanted to produce wines of the same quality as those from France, which has always been the leading force in winemaking. The New World chose the French varieties Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon, which in France produce wine of the highest quality. In order to obtain the same reputation as the French, they started using the barrique method, i.e. the method used in Bordeaux and the cellars of Burgundy. But this method is expensive and lengthy. In order to accelerate the process and reduce the cost, they introduced "light barrique" wines by mixing wines produced with the classical method and a certain percentage of a true barrique wine. In order to take this even further, they created a new type of wine, which only has the aroma and flavour of oak as shavings of oak wood, or even tannin powder, are added for a few months to wine being produced using the classical method. This new fashion trend introduces the flavour of wood, the wine gets a slight hint of bitterness and is full bodied, but does not possess the finesse and aroma of a wine produced with the proper barrique

method. I believe these modernists went too far, as the new wine is no longer made using a natural high quality production method. If we wish to have a slightly tart white wine, this can be achieved through the natural maceration procedure. In this way, other substances are extracted in addition to tannin, in particular aromas present in the skin and pips. If our economists and young oenologists wish to follow the modern trends they would do well to use old natural procedures recommended by Vertovec as far back as 1844.

The newer technological procedures for the production of white and red wine are currently moving in the following directions:

1. The production of white wines:

- For a better varietal bouquet: using a short, cold maceration, lasting a few hours or by adding to the crushed grapes during fermentation 2 to 3 percent whole grapes. With a slightly lower fermentation temperature of 15-18°C a better varietal bouquet can be achieved that has a gentle floral or fruity note. Such wines are fresher, more drinkable and have a lower extract.
- To achieve a higher extract in white wines: using hyperoxidation of must or with the maturation of wine on lees for 3 to 6 months in smaller wooden barrels, which no longer have the barrique function. By mixing we prevent rotting and accelerate the extraction of glycoproteins (mannoproteins) from the dead yeast. At the same time, a malolactic fermentation takes place with the transformation of malic acid into lactic acid, as the latter is milder and softer on the palate. Such wines have a higher alcohol content, a rich aroma of ripe fruit, citrus fruits and herby notes. They are suitable for long maturation in the bottle.

The use of hyperoxidation in must facilitates a faster multiplication of yeast and the clearing of must. During alcohol fermentation more alcohol and glycerol is produced, giving the wine its body and high extract.

2. The production of red wines:

- A short carbon maceration of 2 to 3 days in order to obtain young wines with a great deal of freshness, fruity aroma and tartness that is not the result of tannin.
- Long-term classical or carbon maceration (up to a month), known as post-maceration. These wines are undrinkable when young; they have a bitter taste, but are suited to spending a few years maturing in a wooden vessel. Their colour is stable and with years of maturation, due to the oxidation and polymerisation of polyphenols, they become velvety, full-bodied with a rich aroma, with a plant or even animal character (esters and ethers). The maturation of these wines can be shortened with the use of microoxidation: that is, the introduction of small quantities of oxygen from an oxygen cylinder. This technology can also be used for red wines kept in stainless steel vessels.

## *Barrique wines*

In ancient times in the eastern Mediterranean wine was nurtured, stored and transported in clay vessels with a characteristic shape, called an amphora. Wood, in particular oak, was first used by the Celts in Galicia in the present-day France when making and storing

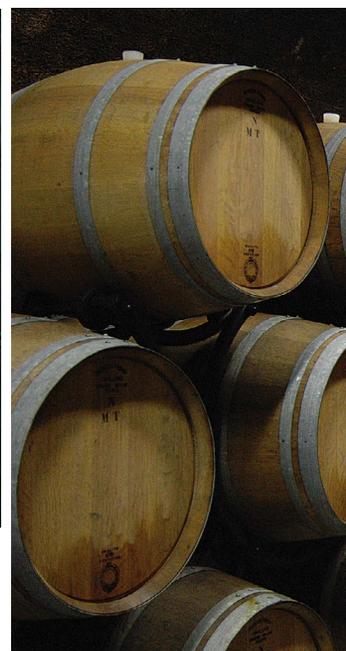
wine. Only when, in the last century BC, Caesar occupied Galicia did the Romans adopt the Celtic method of barrel-making and started using barrels in winemaking.

Oak wood is most suitable for barrels. In winemaking, oak is still irreplaceable in the production of high quality wines. When making a barrel, the wood is heated on the inside in order to bend the staves. Chemical changes occur in the wood. In order to understand the changes appearing in the chemical composition of wine stored in new oak barrels, we must first acquaint ourselves with changes that occur in this heating of oak wood. Chemical substances from the wood are transferred to wine, giving it a unique character.

The chemical composition of oak wood is: cellulose, hemicellulose and lignin. Oak substances transfer to wine, but which components transfer depends on the type of oak and the drying and heating method. The best results are achieved at a high temperature, at 225 °C. The wood must be heated evenly along the entire surface. With heating sugars, a constituent part of cellulose, produce furane aldehydes and pentoses in the wood, which form hemicellulose, producing aldehyde furfural or the higher alcohol furfural, which both have the aroma of rye bread crust or caramel, while lignin when heated produces volatile phenols, aldehydes and ketones, which affect the aromatic properties of wine. Volatile phenols contain strong aromatic substances, such as guaiacol, the aroma of smoke, and eugenol, the aroma of cloves. In addition, heating produces the benzo-aldehydes vanillin and syringaldehyde, as well as cinnamic acid aldehydes and phenol ketones. In the oxidation of fatty acids resulting from heating other aromatic substances are produced. Oak tannins exist as esters of gallic and cinnamic acid with glucose. These transfer into wine, take part



A combination of old and new vessels in the Ptuj wine cellar, 2006.  
Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



in oxidation-reduction reactions and produce a bitter taste, but they greatly decompose during heating. Octalactones, already present in the non-heated state, produce the flavour of wood. These chemical changes in the wood, transferring to the wine and changing its composition, show just what their influence is on wine's quality and character.

### *Recognising a wine*

For the production of high quality red and white wines large, old oak barrels are used. With these, there is no leaching of aromatic substances otherwise occurring during the heating of staves. The wood facilitates only the slow input of air necessary for the oxidation processes involved in the ageing of wine. For the barrique method of wine production new small oak barrels (226 litres) are used, as is the custom in the production of red Bordeaux wines. In these, tannin and aromatic substances leach out from the wood into the wine. This method has been known in France for a long time and is used for the production of high quality Burgundy and Bordeaux wines, but they are not classified there as barrique wines. This identification has become popular recently in winegrowing countries wanting to imitate the special French method of production in order to achieve a higher reputation and price for their wines.

In the production of white barrique wines, the wine is after fermentation left on fine lees in small barrels. The lees are regularly (initially every other day) mixed with the wine. Yeast has polymer, polysaccharide, glucan and mannoprotein walls. When the yeast dies, these transfer to the wine, which becomes richer in the colloids that bind to phenols. With this method, wine has fewer polyphenols than wine in steel vessels and has a reduced flavour of wood; it is also lighter and less tart. In the maturation of wine on lees the oxidation-reduction potential is lowered, as the lees act reductively. Aromas from the heated wood enter the wine.

Only rich and full-bodied wines with high extract are suitable to be processed as red barrique wines. With this method, wine is particularly rich in aromatic substances. Due



Wooden barrique wine barrels:  
wine cellars in the Goriška Brda and  
Jareninski dol (Dveri Pax), 2006.  
Photos: Staša Cafuta

to oxidation-reduction processes, the composition and quality of wine are altered. The wood does allow air through, which affects the maturation of the wine, enriching it with polyphenols. Soluble tannins, such as gallic and cinnamic acid bind the oxygen dissolved in the wine. Red wine matures slowly in new oak barrels, for a year or more, getting richer in the aromatic polyphenols described above.

I have described the classical barrique method and what has to be taken into account if we want to produce quality wine. Let me mention also what can be bought today under the barrique label. The method is lengthy and expensive and only a few winemakers use it and even those only for selected wines. Most winemakers keep wine in new barrels only for a few months so that it obtains the aroma and flavour of wood. Then they combine this wine with wine produced with the classical method and this results in what is known as mild barrique wine. In order to make the production even cheaper and simpler, some winemakers only put some oak shavings into the wine. In this case, no extraction of aroma appears and the wine only “smells” of wood. Some merchants selling substances used in winemaking even offer tannin extracts for achieving the barrique effect. Wines made in this way bear no similarity to a true classical barrique wine. The true barrique method is a lengthy enrichment of wine with aromatic and tannin substances, which demands a great deal of time for these to combine with other substances in wine.

Let me list a few of the aromatic compounds that may appear in a barrique wine:

- Furane derivatives: appear with the heating of wood from hemicellulose (pentoses and hexoses in the Maillard reaction), from pentoses there appears furfural, a typical caramel aroma, and from hexoses hydroxymethylfurfural, producing the aroma of almonds;
- Lactones: mostly  $\gamma$ -lactones, originating in grapes and synthesised during alcohol fermentation; during the maturation of wine they are extracted from the wood, a component of oak wood is 3-methyl- $\gamma$ -lactone with the aroma of coconut;
- Volatile phenols: from unheated wood, eugenol – the aroma of cloves – is extracted, and from heated wood (lignin), guayakol appears, the aroma of smoke;
- Aromatic alcohols, aldehydes and ketones: lignin with acid and alcohol hydrolysis transforms into aldehydes: syringaldehyde, synapaldehyde and coniferaldehyde (the aroma of bread), vanillin (the aroma of vanilla); from aldehydes, suitable acids also appear: vanillin, cinnamic, sinapic, syringic, etc.; the aromatic ketones produce the aroma of caramel.



*Zlata Trta* from 1917 is the oldest Slovene archive wine. The Ptuj wine cellar, 2006. Photo: Staša Cafuta.

## Archive wines

High quality wine may have to mature for three years or more before it reaches top quality. A winemaker may decide not to sell it immediately, but to keep 'training' it to become an archive wine and sell it then. He will oversee the maturation process and when wine reaches the highest quality after three, five or even ten years, he may decide to sell most of it and keep a small quantity for even longer. Such wine is no longer labelled as high quality wine but is sold as a particular vintage with an age of 30, 50 or 70 years or more. Our law states that such wines can be called "archive" wines, while in the Mediterranean countries they are labelled as "reserve" or "grand reserve".

## Sparkling wine

Sparkling wine, be it table or high quality, is a wine which foams up when the bottle is opened due to the release of carbon dioxide. Carbon dioxide appears exclusively as a consequence of the secondary fermentation of the sugar in wine. If sugar ferments in the bottle, we talk about the classical, traditional or Champagne method. Wine fermented in closed tanks and then bottled is labelled as wine produced with the Charmat method. The carbon dioxide pressure in the bottle is between 3.5 and 6 bars at 20°C.

Sparkling wine that is produced with secondary fermentation, but in which the CO₂ pressure is below 3 bars at 20°C is called *Biser* (Pearl).

Carbonated wine is wine to which CO₂ has been added from a tank and where the pressure is above 3.5 bars.



Talking about wines and sparkling wines in the Radgona wine cellar, 1997. The Terčelj family archive.



The serving of sparkling wines at the 4th Salon of Prlekija Winemakers Jeruzalem 2006 in Svetinje. Photo: Staša Cafuta.

In Slovenia, as in Germany, sparkling wine is made with the classical method using fresh wine with low alcohol and a pleasant, but noticeable acidity. The French in Champagne, the home of sparkling wines, use full-bodied mature wines with a fruity aroma. In the production of sparkling wine, yeast and sugar is added, so that the yeast ferments in the alcohol. Fermentation produces lees, i.e. dead yeast, and these slowly settle in the bottle neck. The longer the wine lies on lees before being separated, the higher the quality of the wine and the smaller and longer lasting the bubbles when the wine is poured. Amino acids and polypeptides from the lees transfer into the wine (creating the cores from which CO₂ bubbles are released), and together with alcohols create aromatic substances, as well as making it easier for the CO₂ to dissolve in the wine. If yeast that does not produce lees is used, as it is contained in special capsules, the wine is ready to be sold immediately after fermentation, but the quality is lower as there is no finesse in the aroma and the CO₂ bubbles are large and quickly disappear. But it is exactly the foaming and sparkling of sparkling wines that gives them their charm. Sparkling wine produced using the classical method is in Slovenia made by the Gornja Radgona Wine Cellar (*Zlata Penina* – golden label) and by private winemakers such as Janez Istenič in the Bizeljsko area, Jože Freljih in Šentrupert in Dolenjska, Sirk-Bjana in the Brda, Jazbec in Tupelče on the Kras.

Most of the other wine cellars use the Charmat procedure. A number of smaller winemakers use the fast classical procedure using immobilised yeast (small spherical shapes), which do not create lees.

The name *Champagne* can only be used for sparkling wine made in Champagne in France.

## ***Special wines***

The Rules from 2004 (Official Journal of the Republic of Slovenia, 43/04) prescribe the conditions for special wines. Wines are classified as:

- a) natural, sweet or dessert wines,
- b) alcoholised or liqueur wines,
- c) aromatised wines.

In the description below I have slightly modified this classification, taking into account international regulations. Internationally, there are the following categories:

- a) natural dessert wines or special wines,
- b) liqueur wines,
- c) aromatised wines.

### **Natural dessert wines**

are special wines made using a specific method, without anything being added to the must or the wine. They can be dry or sweet:

- a./1 wine obtained under a “veil” (usually dry)

Such wine is produced when must is fully fermented and the wine remains in a barrel that is not full. On the surface of the wine special yeasts develop and create a membrane or a veil (*souis-voile*), preventing the oxidation of the wine and maintaining a reductive state, which gives the wine a unique aroma and flavour. These wines are called Sherry.

### Recognising a wine

Tokaj Szamorodni in Hungary, Chateau-Chalon in France and the dry Jerez wine in Spain are produced in this way.

a./2 straw wine

Straw wines are made from dried grapes in which sugar is very concentrated. These are sweet natural dessert wines.

### Liqueur wines

As the production of dessert wines is expensive, the production of liqueur wines has gradually developed. These wines are made by adding wine alcohol to unfermented or partially fermented must, interrupting fermentation. If necessary, sugar can be added. These wines are sweet and contain 15 to 22 percent alcohol. The best known liqueur wines are: Porto, Sherry, Malaga, Sweet Malvasia, as well as Tokaj Aszu, although this one is without added alcohol. The production of Tokaj Aszu is based on the addition of must from over-ripe, botrytised grapes to a young wine. To each 160 litre barrel of wine 32 litres of must is added, which is denoted as one *puttony* (tub). Two, three or five *puttonyos* can be added and this is written on the label: the more *puttonyos*, the better the quality. If the Tokaji wine is made only from over-ripe grapes, affected by noble rot,



The legendary Stanko Čurin from Kog at the Jeruzalem 2004 event at the winemaker's Milan Hlebec. Kog, 2004. Photo: Staša Cafuta.

it is called Tokaj Eszencia, which is roughly equivalent to our dry strawberry selection. Tokaji is a wine made under a “veil”, which gives it a special quality and classifies it as a liqueur wine.



Gold fragments in the special series produced by Konrad Janžekovič (Turčan) in Turški vrh in Haloze, 1006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

### **Aromatised wines**

In the production of these wines natural aromas are added in addition to sugar and alcohol. The best-known and most acclaimed wine of this kind is Vermouth.

### ***Organic and integrated production of wine***

The organic and integrated food production movement is spreading rapidly around the world. This emphasises production that is as natural as possible, with a minimal use of protective substances, artificial fertilisers and other additives. In Slovenia, organic production started in the 1990s and in 1997 the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food issued

### *Recognising a wine*

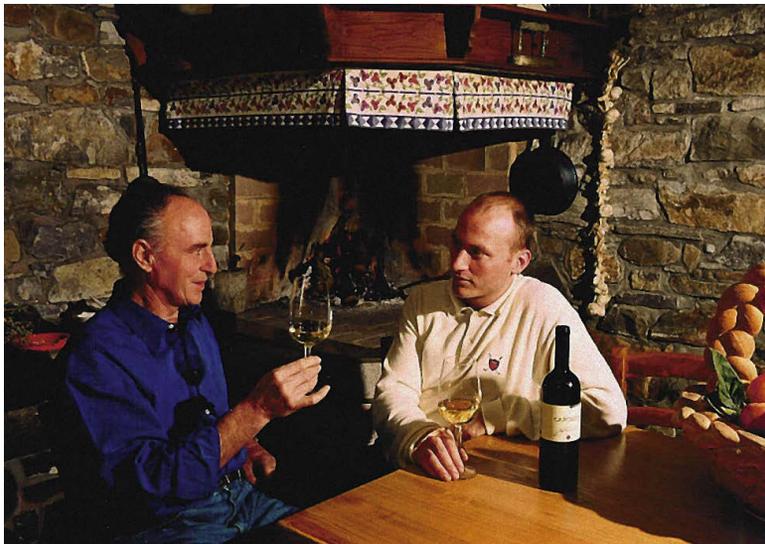
recommendations for organic farming. The same year a number of societies were founded, as well as an association of organic farmers. The Ministry in 2001 issued “Rules on organic cultivation and production of agricultural produce, i.e. food” and “Rules on the control of organic and agricultural produce, i.e. food”. In 2002, the Ministry issued guidelines for the integrated production of grapes and wine, which specify even stricter criteria. A year later, in 2004, “Rules on integrated production of grapes (IPG) and wine (IPW)” were also issued.

IPG is a cultivation method of grapes that is directed towards the preservation of the landscape, the environment, water and soil with suitably modern, but still economical, measures, as well as towards the improvement of the quality of grapes, which is a prerequisite for the high quality of wine. The greatest focus is on soil and fertilisation and the controlled choice and use of phytopharmaceuticals. The goals of integrated production are:

- the protection of the environment,
- modest use of mineral fertilisers and phytopharmaceuticals,
- the preservation of vineyards as a varied and stable agro-ecosystem.

The IPG rules precisely determine the methodological requirements and limitations for the production of must and wine, as well as the method of control over the production and labelling of the grapes and wine. They also limit the quantity of grapes per surface unit, i.e. producing a lower yield, thus improving the quality, as well as determining the technological conditions for the making of wine in order to preserve its naturalness. The production of grapes and wine following this principle is more expensive, but it provides the consumer with a guaranteed natural and healthy wine.

In Slovenia, integrated production has only just begun, although we do have winemakers who have already started integrated production, which will be stated on the label. I believe that this will increase the sale of wine, help with the preservation of vineyards in poorer areas and contribute towards Slovenia making its name in the world.



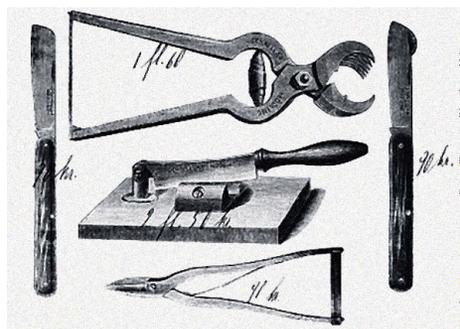
Igor and Aljoša Jakončič, who are excellently carrying on the rich winemaking tradition at their family farm (1847). Kozana, 2001. Photo: Feručo Hrovatin.



Direct marketing, Goričko, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

# Getting to know wine

Wine is the Slovene national drink and we are constantly in contact with it in our everyday life. It is a part of our culture and general education, at least in its most basic elements. Thus it is normal for a Slovene to want to know at least something about wine, so as not to look foolish in social situations when discussing the bad and good characteristics of this drink. How can we get to know wine? First, we have to acquire the theory and then the practice. In terms of theory, we can look at books, magazines, specialist journals about wine, brochures, labels, leaflets, etc.; there are also videos and films on the theme of wine.



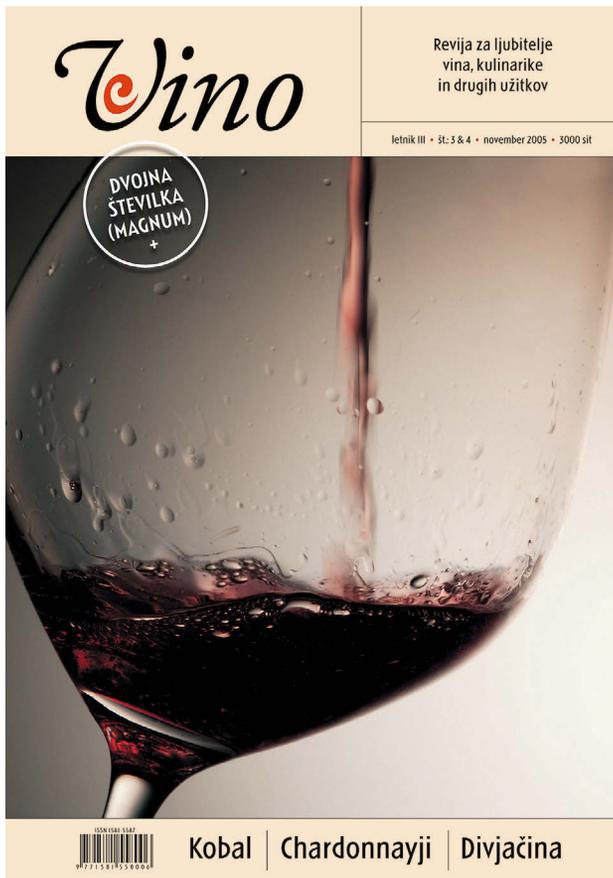
Books about wine can be popular, professional and scientific. For the beginner, popular literature is recommended that introduces wine in the most understandable way possible. I have already mentioned the first specialist Slovene book on viticulture published by Matija Vertovec in 1844. Vertovec was a priest in what is today Podnanos in the Vipava area. He was a very educated man, with extensive knowledge of everything that was in those days published in the German and French literature. In his book he described what were then the latest findings in viticulture and chemistry, telling winegrowers how to improve their wine production. He also published a book about agricultural chemistry.

There are two anecdotes connected with Vertovec's life worthy of mention here. When he was still a curate in Planina above Ajdovščina and there was an outbreak of smallpox in the area, he persuaded Dr. Majer from Vipava to be the first in the country to inoculate children. This was in 1810, when that part of Slovenia was still under the French in the Illyrian Provinces. He mentions this fact in his book, emphasising that children in Vipava were inoculated even before Paris newspapers boasted that it was the French who introduced inoculation to the Illyrian Provinces. It is also interesting what he wrote to France Prešeren

in the newspaper *Novice* on 19 July 1843: “Your honour, the grapevine! I will ask the first poet among us, the poet of love, to do what I cannot do, to sing your praises in beautiful verse for an everlasting memory.” It was probably this that encouraged Prešeren to write his celebrated poem *Zdravljica* (A Toast).

Since then, many other books about wine have been published by both popular and specialist writers. Two very popular writers with a great deal of knowledge about and love for wine are Dioniz Amfora and Anton Medved. I beg others to forgive me for not mentioning them, in particular all the expert writers.

The wine journals worthy of mention are *Veritas*, which ceased publication with the closure of the Wine Academy in Ptuj, and *Vino*, which I hope will survive longer. There are other occasional publications that bring interesting articles about wine, such as *Gurman*, *Tartuf* and *Trta-vino*. Slovene viticultural societies once a year publish something about the work and life of our winegrowers. Those who bottle wine, both individuals and wine cellars, publish numerous brochures and leaflets with descriptions of their wines.



*Vino*, a magazine for lovers of wine and of culinary and other pleasures is successfully filling a gap in the market for such publications.



The wine guide written by Robert Gorjak from the Belvin wine school offers opportunities to learn about the topical wines of the current year, as well as presentations of the most important winemakers and tables of the best wines.

## Getting to know wine

There are many short films about the cultivation of grapes and winemaking, as well as about winegrowing areas and localities. The Commercial Community for Viticulture and Winemaking has made a long series of films about viticulture in each winegrowing district. The last such series was *Okus po vinu* (The Taste of Wine). Nowadays, more and more information about wine, winemakers and wine events is also available on the Internet. In fact, this has become a wonderful tool for getting the most up-to-date information of any sort, including about wine.

www.slovino.com is the most frequently visited Slovene wine portal. It is managed by the SloVino Institute.



I am often asked: “How can I get to know wine?”, “How do I find out more about wine?”, “How should I learn about the varieties, aromas, flavours and the goodness of wine?”, “Who can explain it all to me?” A book, without any practical experience to back it up is obviously not enough. Those who are truly interested in wine must be shown how to learn about the aroma of a *Traminer* or a Riesling, about the characteristics of oxidised wine or the aroma of a “predicate” wine, in short about all the good points and the shortcoming of a sample of wine. This is why I will give a short description of how to get to know wine.

### THE MOST EXCELLENT VINTAGES DURING THE LAST THREE DECADES

- 1983 – exceptionally good
- 1985
- 1992
- 1993
- 1999
- 2002
- 2003

Photo: Aleš Gačnik

I would like to single out a few practical possibilities. It is not my intention to list the addresses, names or telephone numbers of winemakers. There is a serious danger I would forget to include someone and offend them. I will only give an insight into the practical possibilities of learning about wine, so that every reader can then find his or her own way of broadening their horizon. Everyone has to constantly develop their sensory abilities. Even good wine tasters have to keep tasting wine, thus training their senses to perceive all the aromas and flavours and memorise them. Wine's composition is different every year and even in the same year its richness differs from barrel to barrel, and this is something the taster will have to store in their memory. The better the perception of all the wine's finesses, the easier it is to remember the characteristics of wines and to compare them.

## *How to get to know wine*

For vocational education about viticulture, there are lower, secondary and further education schools, the Biotechnical Faculty in Ljubljana and the Faculty of Agriculture in Maribor, all of which include a wine specialisation in their programmes.

For those for whom wine is just a hobby, but who wish to get to know it better and improve their knowledge, the faculties above, as well as the Agricultural Institute of Slovenia and regional wine institutes in Maribor, Novo Mesto and Nova Gorica, occasionally organise courses and workshops about wine. I would like to single out the following:

- The Agricultural Institute of Slovenia and the Biotechnical Faculty organise courses for winegrowers' societies, with an emphasis on sensory perception.
- The Belvin wine school organises group courses in Ljubljana.
- The Chair of Viticulture at the Biotechnical Faculty is officially authorised for the training of wine tasters. Seminars consist of 80 hours of theoretical and practical work in sensory perception. Attendees can sit a test at the end, which enables them to take part in organised wine tastings.





Thirty Slovene wines from all the winegrowing regions, selected from over 1200 samples, are invited to the Prestige TOP 30 gala wine event and tasting organised by the SloVino Institute. The Zlati grič golf course, Slovenske Konjice, 2004. Photo: SloVino Institute.

## *Personal contact with wine experts*

The best and the quickest way of getting to know about wine is personal contact with a wine expert, who is a friend or at least a good acquaintance. He or she can acquaint us in practice with every sample separately by describing the wine, drawing our attention to the flavours and aromas, and comparing it to other samples of wine. The more this is repeated with many varied wine samples, the better. It is good if we can visit, together with an expert, different wine cellars and wine events so that we can get an insight into the differences between wines. When we are fairly familiar with different wines, we have to be able to describe to the expert what we perceive when tasting a wine and he or she can then add to that, correct it and discuss our assessment.



Personal contacts with winemakers are an excellent opportunity for getting acquainted with the secrets of wine: the journalist Jan Rook (the Flying Wine Writer) and Marjan Simčič, Stanko Čurin and Dušan Terčelj, Vasja and Branko Čotar with Dušan Terčelj, the artists from the international "Art Stays" colony at Konrad Janžekovič's cellar. Photos: Staša Cafuta, Boris Farič, the photo library of the Ptuj Regional Museum, Aleš Gačnik.



Only after we have advanced in this way can we venture to wine cellars on our own so that we can be shown their wines and talk to the people working there. In this way we establish personal contact with the winemaker, who should also be a wine expert. Winemakers are not interested only in merely selling their wine, it is also important to them that their buyers learn about it. Winegrowers in a particular winegrowing area, village or a number of villages are usually united into societies and all of these are included in the *Vinis* association³⁴. Societies organise assessments of their wines, usually in spring.

Getting acquainted with the secrets of wine and culinary specialities on wine routes and at farms. With the Mahnič family in Dragonja, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

³⁴ The Appendix contains a list of these societies together with their addresses.

## Getting to know wine



Trying excellent *Cvičeks* in Šentjernej; wine united the artists at the artistic colony at Milan Hlebec's house in Kog, as well as the artists at the opening of the Medana Art II exhibition. Photos: the Terčelj family archive, Staša Cafuta.



After the assessment there is usually an exhibition with tastings of the assessed samples. Most often these events take place on local holidays. This enables us to get acquainted with wines and their evaluations. When we try wine ourselves, we can compare our assessment with the official results and see how they differ. These events are also an opportunity for us to talk to winemakers and establish personal contact.



Orange wine festival, Izola, 2014: Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



At the event Thought and Wine, the winemaker Danilo Steyer revealed his wine story. Park Hotel Ptuj, 2008. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

Societies in certain winegrowing districts also organise wine days. The better known are *Vinska vigred* in Metlika, the *Cviček* week in Dolenjska, the *Refošk* festivities in Marežige and numerous wine fairs. In the Brda, there is a festival of cherries and wine in June and of young wine in the autumn. In Medana, there is a festival of poetry and wine in September. In nearly all the larger winegrowing towns there are events associated



Wine brings together winegrowers and wine lovers at the *Refošk* festival in Marežige, 2004. Photo: Miloš Toni.

with the grape harvest and St. Martin's Day celebrations. In some places in Štajerska, 15 August is the day of the erection of wind-driven bird scarers, which are a symbol of viticulture in this area. Then there are local assessments and fairs, the national assessment and fair in Gornja Radgona and the international wine assessment in Ljubljana which, however, has abandoned its wine fair, where it was possible to get acquainted with internationally



The *Vinska vigred* (Wine spring) event in Metlika. Source: Metlika Wine Cellar.



Celebrating the harvest at the Ptuj town vineyard, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



The construction of a *klopotec* bird scarer by the Belec family in Železne dveri, 1995. From Ivan Belec's archive.

assessed wines. The organisers of all these assessments publish special catalogues with the evaluation of samples and their producers, which is a great help when choosing which wine we are interested in and when comparing the commission's assessments with our own impressions. In November of every year INFOS organises in Ljubljana a Wine Festival, where you can try various wines, talk to their makers and attend guided tastings and lectures.



Dušan Terčelj and the vintner Žolnir during the selection of samples for the international wine assessment at the *Gospodarsko razstavišče* exhibition centre in Ljubljana, 1981. The Terčelj family archive.

*Getting to know wine*



The Ptuj students club has for 7 years been organising the festival *Wine is Not Water*, which in a very appropriate way acquaints students with cultured wine drinking. It includes presentations by winemakers at different locations in the old town and visits to wine cellars. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

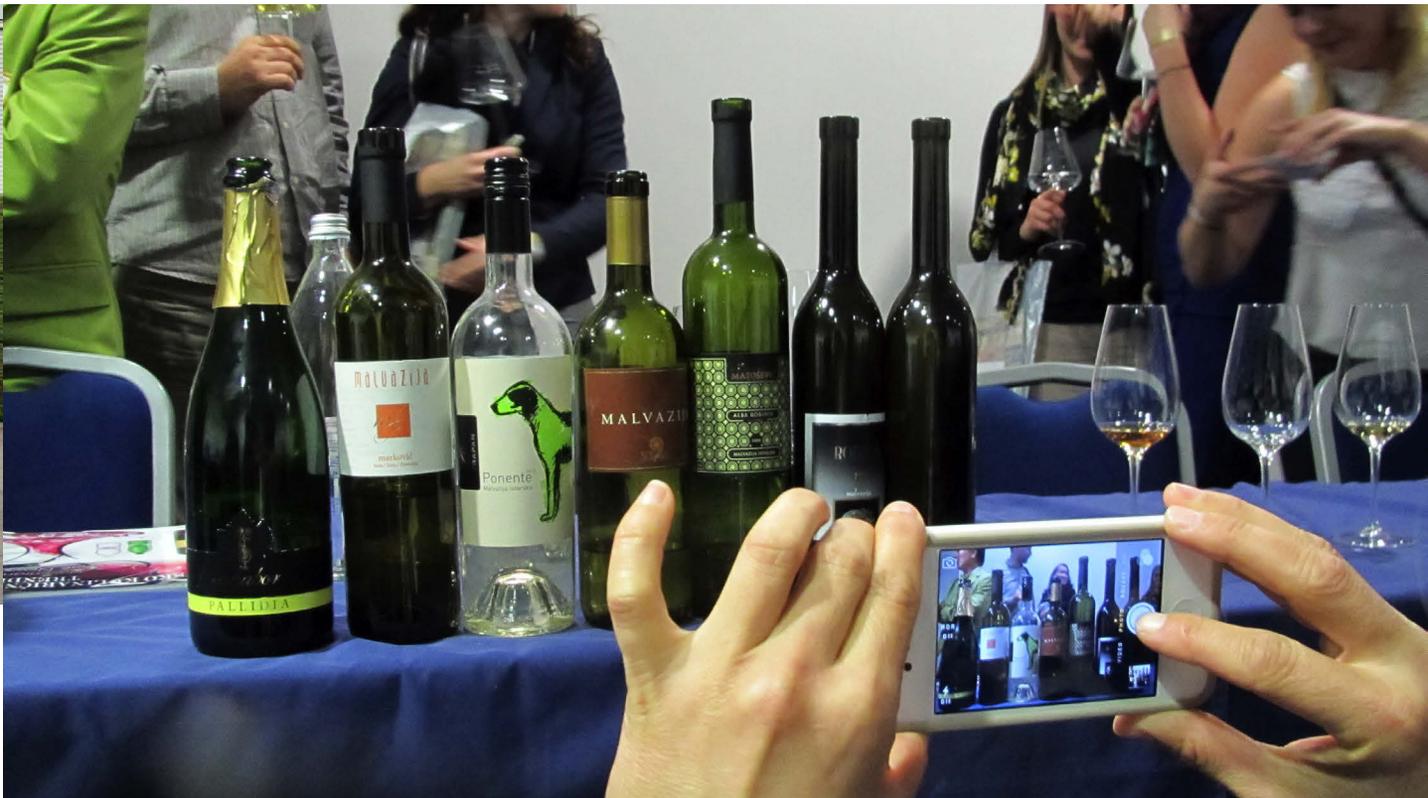


Exclusive encounters with wine and art have for a number of years been taking place at the winemaker's Franci Cvetko at Kogl farm, 2008. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



An innovative form of promotion of Slovene winemakers and wines is presented by the Wine Team of Slovenia, led by Miha Istenič, the president of the administrative board. The goal of the society ZDRUŽENJE VINARJEV VINSKA REPREZENTANCA SLOVENIJE is to raise the standard and knowledge of Slovene wines in the EU and the rest of the world through public relations and charity sports events at the national and international level. In addition, we wish to build bridges between large and small Slovene winemakers, as only the participation of both at professional, sporting and cultural events will give us sufficient openness, while the ultimate goal of our activities is cooperation and striving for the best possible results (<http://vinska-reprezentanca.si>). A friendly match involving Slovene celebrities was watched by well-known university teachers (Professor Mojmir Wondra), winemakers, journalists and numerous wine lovers. Gornja Radgona, 2008. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.





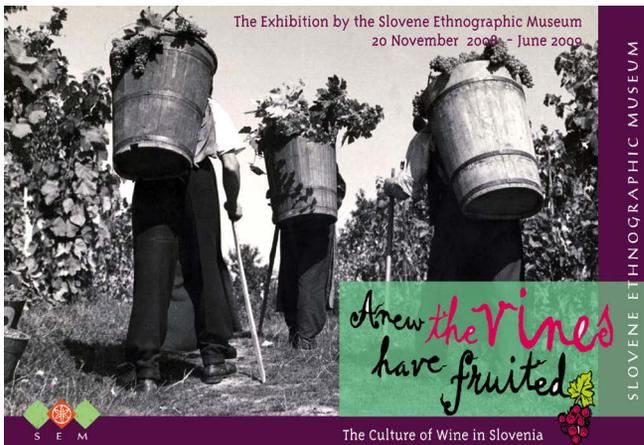
Wine events and festivals (VinDel, Festival of Malvasia, Festival of Sauvignon, Wine buds, Slovenian wine festival).  
Photo: Aleš Gačnik, Matjaž Ledinek.

*The Culture of Wine in Slovenia*

A festive "academy" with Stanko Čurin at the 6th salon of Prlekija wines: lectures by wine experts and the tasting of wine and food completed the excellent promotion of winemakers from Prlekija. Jeruzalem Mansion, 2008. Photo: Zavod SloVino.



An encounter with poetry, the visual arts and reflections of Drago Medved, wine stories by Stojan Ščurek and the music of Aleš Črnko.



An invitation to the exhibition at the Slovene Ethnographic Museum, 2008.

## Specialist societies

Specialist societies facilitate contacts between experts, discussions about problems associated with wine and learning more about wine. As already mentioned, winegrowers are united in societies where they organise assessments of the wines produced by the society's members, in the form of competitions. Societies also offer educational courses about the modern cultivation of grapes and wine production, and in particular about the sensory aspects of wine tasting, which enables members to sharpen their tasting abilities.



The St. Martin's Brotherhood was founded as an association of friends and wine lovers in 1997 with the goal of getting to know the heritage and culture of wine in Slovenia and abroad. St. Martin's celebrations in 2002 were planned as a project under the title *Along the Šipon Way*, and reached their peak at Puklavec's wine cellar in Kog. Photo: Zlatko Fišer.

The Martin's Brotherhood was, according to Drago Medved, established in 1906 in the small village of Žablje in Kal above Kanal. In 1953 Pavel Medvešček enquired there about the brotherhood. Anton Žabar told him that the idea came from the Vipava Valley as one of the locals went to work in the vineyards there. The brotherhood was founded on 11 November 1906 and had nine founding members. The oldest member put another member forward as the head, whom they called the *starod* or "old one" and who conducted the oath-taking ceremony. He sat down and the others put a kind of crown on his head; in his hand he held a wine jug. The *starod* appointed two assistants and this gave the brotherhood its leadership; he also had a linen bag containing special stones, which were used when electing members. The members were known as *martinci*, and apprentices as *vincenci*. The brotherhood would meet every 11 November (St. Martin's Day) and 22 January (St. Vincent's Day). They also had traditional dishes that were eaten on those days. The brotherhood stopped its activities in 1926 because of Fascism. All its members were patriotic Slovene boys and men, the brotherhood acted in secret and all the rules were kept only in the members' heads, nothing was written down. The word they gave had to be upheld. In 2001, Radivoj Humar, Boris Lieber and Drago Medved established the *Abča* society, within which they renewed the work of the Martin's Brotherhood. Martinci in Maribor. Photo: Borut Šraj.



For a number of years, Smiljan Benkovič led the event *Presenting Wine* at the Ptuj Castle café. Ptuj Castle, 2006. Photo: Črtomir Goznik.

The purpose of wine lovers' societies was to improve members' knowledge of wine and wine drinking in general; excessive drinking was not welcome. These societies were set up in the 1970s, but mostly faded away, with the exception of the one in Ljutomer. Nowadays, there are similar societies of the friends of wine.

In addition, there are also wine-drinking clubs. There are open or closed types: anyone interested in its programme and willing to follow it can join the former; the number of members, however, is limited, so novices are only accepted after being recommended by two or more existing members. One example of an open club is The Club of Friends of *Vipava 1894* Wines. The club rules state that membership is voluntary and that the club is an independent and non-profit making association of individuals, who associate with the aim of learning more about wine and how to truly enjoy their free time with wine and food. The club's purpose is education about the healthy, cultivated and modern enjoyment of wines from the *Vipava 1894* wine cellar, relaxation and pleasant conversation, as well as the promotion of wine. Club members nurture positive feelings by advocating freedom, justice, truth and the sanctity of promises, as well as the principle: "It is always me who is talking, not the wine." Members fulfil their goals through:

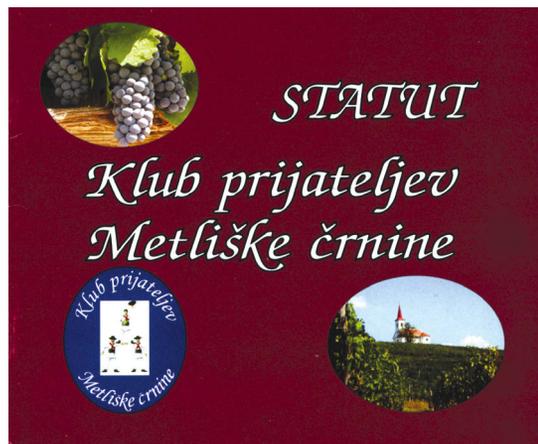


The club of the friends of the Vipava 1894 wine cellar.

- participation in all forms of club activities;
- public appearances by exemplary ambassadors who know that wine from *Vipava 1894* is not just a thirst quencher;
- learning about wine and its good points and learning about consuming wine as food;
- participation in the organisation and realisation of projects that spread the reputation of *Vipava 1894* wines.

Other clubs, such as The Club of Friends of *Metliška Črnina* in Metlika and The Club of Friends of *Rebula* in Višnjevnik have similar rules, adapted to their specific needs.

Closed-type clubs with a limited number of members accept new members only on the basis of recommendations relating to services to the dissemination of cultured wine drinking. Clubs of this sort include various orders and brotherhoods united in the F.I.C.B. federation. In Slovenia, where there was a world congress of the F.I.C.B. in 2004, organised by the Consulate for Slovenia of the Association of the European Order of the Knights of Wine, there are the following wine brotherhoods:



Manka podnapis!!!

## The European Order of the Knights of Wine



The plaque on the administration building of the Ptuj Wine Cellar, 2005. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

was created from the “Pannonian Burgenland Order of the Knights of Wine” with its seat in Eisenstadt in Burgenland, Austria. The Consulate for Slovenia was established on 27 September 1991, after Slovenia’s independence. At the moment, the order has 132 members, gathered in seven knights’ tables. Members start off as *hospes*, are then promoted to wine councillors, wine judges and finally become knights of wine. Consulates are headed by two pro-consuls. The order’s duty is to venerate noble wine, nurture and spread wine culture, disseminate new findings about wine, charity activities and true knightly friendship. Being a knight means supporting the idea of true nobleness. The Consulate for Slovenia each year organises the following events:



The members of the European Order of the Knights of Wine like attending various protocol events associated with wine. The harvesting of *Žametna Črnina/Modra Kavčina*, a successor of the oldest vine in the world from Lent in Maribor. Ptuj Castle, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

- a silent spring ceremony, aimed at the spiritual life of the order;
- a wine knight tournament, in which selected wine samples of different varieties compete;
- an assembly in November; in addition members often meet at the gatherings of knights’ tables.



The order’s motto is: *In honorem Dei et in honorem vini*³⁵. This is also the official greeting of the European Order of the Knights of Wine, who greet each other in Latin.

Coat-of-arms, 2006. Photo: Staša Cafuta.



The European Order of the Knights of Wine, Consulate for Slovenia, publication from 2002.

³⁵In honour of God and wine



9. Januarja 2004 je bilo na Ptuj ustanovljeno Združenje slovenskega reda vitezov vina, ki ima osem omizij: 1 - Brda in Vipavska dolina, 2 - Celje, 3 - Dolenjska, Bela krajina in Posavje, 4 - Ljubljana, 5 - Maribor, 6 - Pomurje, 7 - Ptuj, Ormož, 8 - Slovenska Istra in Kras. Foto: Aleš Gačnik.

### The Order of St. Fortunat

present in all European countries, including Slovenia since 1991. The Order is named after Bishop Fortunat, who worked in France and died in 600 AD in Poitiers. He strove for the quality of life of both the poor and the wealthy. This is why the Order's members must strive for quality of life, proper food and wine culture. The Order bestows the title *Maison de qualité*, i.e. "house of quality". The Order is led by the general priorate with a seat in Wurzburg, which consists of three general priors. After joining the order, members get the title of Chevalier, then Officier, Commandeur, Marechal and the highest title of Grand Marechal. The number of members is limited. In Slovenia, the Order can have only 38 members.



St. Fortunatus de Poitiers (535 – 609) Patron de l'ordre de Saint Fortunat.



The image of St. Fortunat (535-609) and the insignia of his order. Photo: Borut Šraj.

## The Convent of St. Urban

active in Slovenia since 1989 and has two branches, one in Maribor and the other in Ljubljana. The Convent's motto is: *Ad Maiorem – vini gloriam* (For the greater glory of wine). Every convent is led by a praetor. The Convent is named after Pope Urban, whose day is on 25 May, at the time of the flowering of grapevines. Members strive for cultured wine drinking and the preservation of cultural heritage, particularly culinary heritage. The Convent of St. Urban is a male-only organisation with only 21 members. All new members must be accepted unanimously.

There are, of course, other such clubs and brotherhoods around the world.



The Honourable Wine Convent of St. Urban: the symbols of the Maribor, Ljubljana and Portorož convents. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



The Praetorian Guard of the Honourable Wine Convent of St. Urban at the harvesting of the graft of the oldest grapevine in the world. Ljubljana Castle, 2014. From left to right: Vojko Čok (Portorož), Edi Berk (Ljubljana), Jože Protner (Maribor). Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



The ceremonial dress of the knight Gorazd Šifrer, member of the Honourable Wine Convent of St. Urban, Maribor. At the harvesting of the oldest grapevine in the world. Maribor, 2013. Photo: Aleš Gačnik

## Wine-related festivities

The best-known and most widely celebrated wine-related festivity in Slovenia is *martinovanje* (the celebration of St. Martin's Day), organised by winegrowers, their societies, large wine cellars and victuallers. The festivity has its origins in the old pagan custom when peasants in early November organised thanksgiving offerings after the harvest had been stored and the livestock brought in from pasture. Later, under Christianity, this holiday



The baptism of must at the village celebrations of St. Martin's Day in Leskovec near Krško, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

was set for 11 November, the day of St. Martin, who is a very popular saint. Winegrowers chose him as their patron and St. Martin's became the holiday of young wine, when the must stops fermenting and wine becomes clearer. There is a saying that "St. Martin turns must to wine". The custom includes a feast consisting of St. Martin's goose and other local dishes. In a convivial atmosphere, young wines are tasted. The person leading the celebration blesses the wine, thus performing a ritual of turning must into young wine. Winegrowers in Štajerska and Dolenjska celebrate very lavishly, while the festivities in Primorska are somewhat toned down as a result of the Italians in the past suppressing old Slovene customs. In large towns, all that is really left from St. Martin's is the name, applying to any occasion around this date when good food and young wine are consumed.



A somewhat satirical St. Martin on the façade of the Kapelski hram wine cellar, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

In rural Dolenjska, Kozjansko and the Slovenske gorice area they still celebrate St. John the Baptist (27 December), when priests bless the wine brought to church by winemakers. The blessed wine is called St. John's wine (*Šentjanževo vino* or *Šentjanževac*). Winemakers then take it home and divide it among all the barrels so that the rest of their wine is also blessed. *Šentjanževac* is also stored for special occasions, such as transition rituals (christening, marriage, conscription, leaving home and death), for help in storms and serious illness.

Personal and family celebrations, as well as national, municipal and church holidays cannot go by without toasts and the enjoyment of wine.



Celebrations are always connected with toasts. Maribor, Veliki vrh, Ptuj, 1994, 2005, 2008. Photos: Aleš Gačnik.

Recently, two other ways of increasing consumer knowledge about wine have developed in Slovenia: open days at wine cellars and tourist wine routes (VTC) with wine farms. These two modern-day forms of wine promotion enable wine lovers to truly get acquainted with wine and winemakers. There is direct contact between the winemaker and the consumer, and wine can be bought immediately after tasting. Wine lovers and visitors can also take part in work related to winemaking, such as grape picking, pressing, or the transferring of wine. On wine routes it is possible to enjoy regional gastronomy, participate in various cultural, educational, recreational and sports activities, and go on excursions and treks. Farm tourism should become a more important economic activity: the home sale of produce enables farmers to get a higher income and thus smaller farms threatened with collapse find it easier to survive. Needless to say, big trade is against this as it diminishes its profits, while victuallers

Getting to know wine



This depiction of a toast where the participants use stemmed wine glasses tells of wine drinking in Ptuj, 1910. From the personal collection of Franc Golob.

Vinomer near Metlika, 2006.  
Photo: Staša Cafuta.

are adapting by allowing their customers to drink the wine they bring with them, but only if they pay a fee. I believe that direct contact between producers and consumers contributes to the improvement of wine-drinking habits. I would thus like to say a little more about the benefit of these two new opportunities of getting to know wine, which contribute towards the improvement of wine-drinking and the quality of life.



Side wine roads are more attractive than the main ones. Kostanjevica, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

## *Open days at wine cellars*

On a certain day or a number of days each year winemakers in a certain region organise open days when they welcome visitors and show them around their farms and wine cellars. Everyone can either on their own or with a guide travel from cellar to cellar, where the hosts make sure that their visitors try all of their wines and talk to them. Everyone can ask anything they wish to know about winemaking. Winemakers also collect assessments and comments. Usually, they also lay on some snacks to help the wine tasting along.

Winegrowers usually register their open days around St. Martin's Day so as to combine these consumer visits with the celebration of young wine. The best-organised open days are in the Vipava area, where there are 27 winegrowing villages. The Development Agency in Ajdovščina takes a great deal of credit for this. Every Saturday and Sunday in November and December there are open days in individual villages. The schedule can be obtained from the agency in Ajdovščina or from its website.



Vineyards in the upper Vipava Valley. Slap near Vipava, 2006. Photo: Staša Cafuta.

Smaller winegrowers who do not bottle their wine themselves are also interested in such organised viewings. I think that open days are beneficial and pleasant events in villages, both for winemakers and visitors. When I have visited villages on this day, I have received a very good impression. Together with other visitors, I tasted wines and talked to the winemakers. I never saw any excess drinking. The conversation revolved around the wine being tasted and its characteristics, the problems winemakers face and the description of methods which differ from one cellar to another.

In the Brda, open days are on the last Sunday in May.

The introduction of open days led to permanently open farms, i.e. to tourist farms along wine routes, to the formation of a long-term relationship between winemakers and their customers, and to the participation of customers in festivities and various tasks on farms.

## ***Wine routes (VTC) and wine farms***

As the character of wine and its quality is not affected only by the soil and climate, that is its origin, but also by man through his choice of the method of the cultivation of grapes and winemaking, another opportunity to learn about wine is to get to know the winemaker in the environment that influences him and which is expressed in his wine. When we get to know better the customs that have shaped an individual winemaker and when we can experience his way of thinking and the world surrounding him, we will truly get to know his wine. With regard to this, wine routes and tourist farms are of great help.

In European winegrowing countries there have been wine roads for quite a number of years. They are united into the council of wine tourist roads (*Le conseil Européen des Routes du vin*). The council is linked to the European inter-regional institute for tourism and wine and they draw up guidelines and conditions that wine routes must fulfil if they wish to join the European network. The organisation's goals are to bring wine closer to the consumer in the place of origin. The Slovene Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food in



Wine routes have many different signs. Zlati grič, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik



(This house serves us, but it is not ours. They who come after us, will also leave it. So, my friend, ask yourself – whose is this house?) The Hlebce farm in Kog, 2006. Photo: Staša Cafuta.

1993 created a national VTC project. They established 20 wine routes, with tourist farms along them. Establishing wine routes and reviving tourist farms demands a great deal of effort and resources. We expect, however, that this will help Slovenia to preserve its winegrowing areas, particularly in hilly, backward localities and to bring life back to the villages there. This is why wine routes, in addition to allowing consumers to meet with winemakers and their produce, also have a significant economic importance.

On the territory of the present-day Slovenia, the grapevine was at the end of the Middle Ages also widespread in Gorenjska, Koroška and the Savinja Valley. With the development of trade, the improvement of transport routes and communications, vineyards withdrew to pronouncedly winegrowing localities. In the late 19th century, just before the vine-louse epidemic which destroyed all the vineyards, there were 51,000 hectares or vineyards, while today there are only 20,000 ha, although 35,500 ha are registered as such.

In the EU only those farms that produce high quality grapes on at least five hectares of vineyards will be able to survive. And what is the real structure of our winegrowing farms? I take this information from the Master's dissertation by Doroteja Ozimič³⁶: 32 percent of farms in Slovenia have a vineyard, which points to how widespread viticulture traditionally is. Thirty-eight percent of these farms have less than 0.1 ha; most, i.e. 52 %, have from 0.11 to 0.5 ha of vineyards. Only approximately 5,000 farms have vineyards measuring over

³⁶ Ozimič, Doroteja, *Vinogradništvo in vinske ceste kot element razvoja podeželja na primeru podpohorske vinske turistične ceste* (Viticulture and wine routes as an element of rural development with the example of the Below Pohorje wine route). Master's dissertation. University of Ljubljana, Biotechnical Faculty, Department of Agronomy, Ljubljana 2000, p. 37.

0.5 ha. Only 1500 farms, i.e. 3.2% of all the farms with vineyards, have at least 1 ha of vineyards. As the size of vineyards increases, the number of farms falls dramatically, thus only 200 farms have over 3 ha. These farms have organised themselves into an association of family winegrowers with their own trade mark *VZDVVS* and an emblem. The members of this association are exclusively winegrowers who make a living from the cultivation of grapes and winemaking. Considering EU norms, this structure is worrying. I wonder if all that will be left will be around 200 farms with approximately 5,000 ha of vineyards: in other words, only a quarter of the land currently planted with vineyards. Should the rest simply vanish because they are not economically viable? Should the image of our cultural heritage on those friendly hills, in particular in Dolenjska, but also in Štajerska and the Vipava area, simply disappear? Is it all to be overgrown by trees and brambles?



(I'm down in the vineyard.) Haloze, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik

I see one way of retaining at least a part of these vineyards in the sale to tourists of wine at the winemakers' homes, which is what wine routes facilitate. Thus the vineyards would remain cultivated and the Slovene hills populated, otherwise the landscape will soon become neglected and largely uninhabited, with perhaps just a few weekend houses remaining. Winemaking tourist farms need to be organised along wine routes, which will sell wine to visitors and offer them culinary specialities, thus informing wine lovers about the local cultural and historical characteristics. I believe, although it is already somewhat late, that it is necessary in order to preserve our cultural heritage and to stop the shrinking of winegrowing areas to improve the economic position

of those living in winegrowing areas, particularly the poorer ones along the borders. I have long advocated the solution proposed by Ozimič: "The point of a wine route is in offering wine as a cultural product and not just as an agricultural product, in the location where it is produced. Visitors should be able to experience the winegrowing landscape in all its dimensions."³⁷

³⁷ Ibid., p. 38.

A wine route that exists only on paper solves nothing. It must be well-organised and fulfil certain conditions:

- there has to be a well-organised information centre with information about what is on offer;
- there has to be a detailed geographical map of the wine route showing all the winemakers, catering establishments and tourist attractions;
- it has to offer organised trips and visits to cultural sites, guided tastings and lectures.

Only a well-organised information service can attract wine lovers and tourists. This has thus far been organised by Tourist Information Offices (TIC) in municipalities. Recently, independent regional organisations began to be established, which will oversee rural development and information provision.

In Slovenia, most wine routes are established in the poor, hilly, poorly developed areas that lie on the peripheries and are under demographic threat, but also have incredibly varied and beautiful landscape, with relatively good, albeit narrow, roads. Since 1993, the following 20 wine routes have been included in the project:

- VTC 1: The Brda wine route
- VTC 2: The Vipava wine route
- VTC 3: The Kras wine route
- VTC 4: The Istra wine route
- VTC 5: The Bela Krajina wine route
- VTC 6: The Below Gorjanci wine route
- VTC 7: The Lower Dolenjska wine route
- VTC 8: The Upper Dolenjska wine route
- VTC 9: The Bizeljsko-Sremič wine route
- VTC 10: The Šmarje-Virštajn wine route
- VTC 11: The Haloze wine route
- VTC 12: The Goričko wine route
- VTC 13: The Middle Slovenske gorice wine route
- VTC 14: The Ormož wine route
- VTC 15: The Jeruzalem wine route
- VTC 16: The Radgona-Kapela wine route
- VTC 17: The Below Pohorje wine route
- VTC 18: The Maribor wine route
- VTC 19: The Upper Slovenske gorice wine route
- VTC 20: The Lendava wine route

Winemakers, municipalities and the Ministry of Culture will have to be fully included in this project for these wine routes to come truly alive, which demands a great deal of effort and resources. On some of these routes this has been achieved, although the routes still do not fulfil all the requirements and do not have suitably prepared tourist farms. So far, only the Below Pohorje route has been properly analysed³⁸, and it would be beneficial to carry out similarly detailed analyses for all the other routes. The author of the dissertation concerned presents all the registered farms en route, as well as potential ones, stating for each the farm's size, the surface area of the vineyards, the varieties of grapevine grown and other supplementary activities the farm is involved in. There are also area maps showing the farms and the information centre. The author says she would like to add a detailed analysis of the following: the history of the area, the architectural heritage, cultural sites, culinary characteristics, environmentally friendly viticulture and winemaking (i.e. integrated cultivation of grapes and winemaking), and the marketing and promotion of wine. Only with the help of such research studies can VTCs create good information material that can serve as a guideline for wine lovers and tourists.

It is not the intention of this book to give a detailed description of the wine routes and farms, only to show where they are and to draw attention to a few of the oenological and cultural characteristics that the reader may encounter along the way.

## *The Winegrowing Region of Primorska*

### *VTC 1: The Brda wine route*



Petra. Medana, 2006. Photo: Staša Cafuta.

The Brda Hills are a special winegrowing area. In the north, they are enclosed by mountains, but in the south the countryside opens up into the Friuli plain. Temperate air from the Adriatic warms the slopes and the villages on them. The Brda Hills are a land of wine and fruit, covered in vineyards and orchards of cherry and peach trees. This is Slovenia's paradise, where in a small area there are numerous villages scattered around the hill ridges and intensively cultivated vineyards. This area has always been a border area in which the interests of the Holy Roman Empire and the Habsburgs have been in conflict with those of Aquileia and Venice. In the Brda Hills there are the remains of fortresses, castles and fortified villages which are a part of our historical and artistic heritage.

³⁸ Ozimič 2000, op.cit.



St. Michael's church in Biljana in Goriška Brda, Šmartno v Brdih, Dobrovo Castle, 2006. Photos: Staša Cafuta.



The viticultural landscape of Goriška Brda, 2006. Photo: Staša Cafuta.

Šmartno, which was once a Roman stronghold, is a town-museum with an interesting church of St. Martin, a Gothic house and a gallery. The first mention of the village dates back to 1317. It was surrounded with a wall and fortified defence towers. The border between the Venice and the Habsburg empires ran here, on the line Šmartno – Vipolže – Kojško – Števerjan. Kojško is a village with interesting architecture and boasts the largest Gothic winged altar in Slovenia. Višnjevnik, which was first mentioned in 1258 and where there are still the remnants of the old castle, is considered the home of *Rebula*. It boasts the first written record of this grapevine in 1336.

Dobrovo, the present-day centre of Brda is the modern centre of the area's viticulture, with a large modern grape-processing and bottling cellar. There is also an attractively restored castle with a museum of Renaissance ceramics, medieval wall paintings and a gallery with the works of the painter Zoran Mušič. Medana, the birthplace of the poets Alojz Gradnik and Ludvik Zorzut, is known for its festival of poetry and wine.

In the nearby villages of Plešivo, Ceglo and Vipolže there are numerous winemakers who independently bottle and market their wines at home and abroad. Just across the Italian border near Hum, there is a largish Slovene village Števerjan (San Floriano del Collio) with very interesting wines.

In the Brda, the following wine-related events take place: in Medana, in April there is the event *Spring, Nature and Wine*; the event *Moments in a Glass* takes place in Dobrovo on 10 August; and in Medana, Vipolže, Cerovo and Dobrovo on 11 November there are celebrations of St. Martin's Day.

## VTC 2: The Vipava wine route

The Vipava Valley is a basin that lies between Mount Nanos and the Trnovski gozd plateau in the north and the Kras plateau in the south. In the west it extends into the Friuli plain. Along the valley there are marly hills covered in grapevines, with just a narrow band of completely flat land in the middle along the main road. Vineyards appear on the gentler slopes. The villages are clustered together, displaying typical Primorska architecture. The houses are enclosed within walled yards (*borjač*). Beneath the houses or outhouses there are old vaulted wine cellars, where you can still experience a romantic atmosphere as you sample the Vipava wines, particularly *Pinela* and *Zelen*. Most winemakers sell primarily draught wines and bottle only small quantities.



Vineyards in the upper Vipava Valley: Vipavski Križ and Slap, 2006.  
Photos: Staša Cafuta.

The Vipava wine route is divided into the Upper Vipava half and Lower Vipava half. Currently, the best organised is the Upper Vipava route, mainly thanks to the *Rod* development agency in the town of Ajdovščina and the agricultural advisory service, which organises open days at winegrowing tourist farms.

A monument in Podnanos reminds us that this is the birthplace of the national hero Janko Premrl, also known by his Partisan name Vojko, and the composer Stanko Premrl. Matija Vertovec also lived and worked here. The village of Orehovica at the foot of the elongated Pasji rep hill is famous for *Zelen*, a variety mentioned by Valvasor as producing good wine.

A special locality on Pasji rep is Tercelj. The succursal church in Podbrdje boasts of a gold filigree altar from 1657, the pillars of which are decorated with vines and grapes. With regard to Podraga, Valvasor wrote that its wines are “not bad”. The village of Lože has Leutenberg Castle, built in the 12th century and later rebuilt by Count Kobencelj.

On the way from Lože to Slap stands a single-arch bridge from 1803 bearing a plaque with writing in the Bohorič alphabet. In Slap, there is a manor house where in 1878 the first Slovene agricultural school was established, which was later moved to Novo mesto. With regard to the wine from Slap, Valvasor made a rather romantic comment: “The teardrops of the vineyard in Slap near Lože are even more delicious.”³⁹



The church in Branik and an old outhouse in Goče, 2006. Photos: Staša Cafuta.

Above Lože, are the villages of Goče and Erzelj. The former is an old village with characteristic narrow streets, an interesting church and approximately sixty vaulted wine cellars. The village is under heritage protection.

Planina is a high-lying village with beautifully elongated vineyards, producing excellent wines. Vertovec worked here before he was transferred to become a priest in Šentvid. Each November walkers organise an open day and a hike to Vertovec’s birthplace Šmarje. Brje is another elongated, high-lying village where winegrowers still cultivate old varieties such

³⁹ Valvasor, 1984, p. 50

as *Klarnica*, *Poljšakica* and *Pergulin*. *Poljšakica* was grown by Poljšak in Šmarje, but its true origin is not known.



The richly carved, decorated and gold filigree altar from the 17th century in the church in Podbrdo near Podnanos, 2006. Photo: Staša Cafuta.

Above the villages at the foot of the Trnovo plateau, where the soil is poorer but still sufficiently rich for grapevines, are the remains of an old Roman road that led from Italy to Pannonia, as well as of Roman fortifications, wells and of even older archaeological traces. The church in Vrtovin has a gold Baroque altar that is approximately three hundred years old. In the middle of the valley, on a small hill, there is the medieval town of Vipavski Križ with a monastery whose extensive library has been preserved. In 1482, the counts of Gorizia surrounded the town with a strong wall. In 1507, it obtained the rights of a market town, while in 1632 Emperor Ferdinand elevated it into a proper town.

In Ajdovščina, where by the river *Fluvium frigidum* (the present-day River Hubelj) there was an important Roman fortress, can still be found the remains of the Roman walls. The parish church has interesting 18th century paintings by Anton Čebej. The artist also painted other churches in the area, such as the one in Dobravlje. The main wine cellar is in Vipava, where there is also the famous Lanthieri Castle. Vipava was a town as early as the Middle Ages. In Valvasor's book there is a picture of the town's coat-of-arms, displaying a grapevine and grapes, the image that is now used by the Vipava municipality and the wine cellar as their trade mark. In 1894, the first wine cooperative in Carniola was established in Vipava.

The Lower Vipava wine route runs between Branik and the Italian border, crossing the strongest winegrowing part of the Vipava Valley with the villages of Branik, Preserje, Dornberk, Zalošče, Prvačina and Biljenski griči. Here, too, there are many interesting sites that are worth visiting, such as Rihenberg Castle in Branik with its striking round tower. It was first mentioned in 1230 as the property of the Brixen bishops, and later became the property of the Gorizia counts, the Habsburgs and the Lanthieri family.

The villages of Tabor above Dornberk and Gradišče, where the poet Josip Gregorčič lived and worked, are both fortified. In Dornberk there is an unusual enlarged parish church with new paintings, in Vitovlje the church of St. Peter from the 13th century, built above the pre-historic burial ground and the later defence encampment against the Turks. Kromberk boasts a well-preserved and nicely renovated castle, housing the Gorica Museum. The slopes behind the castle slowly rise to the Trnovo plateau, where there are the remains of trenches from World War One and the well-known Škabrijel Hill.

### **VTC 3: The Kras wine route**

The Kras is a unique plateau, rising 300 metres above sea level. It is a stony landscape with sinkholes and red *terra rosa* soil, the product of decomposed limestone. The sinkholes containing vineyards are surrounded by stone walls, created by the locals to protect the soil. Outside these walls the ground is stony, offering enough sustenance only for sparse pine trees, tufts of grass and sumac; the latter becomes very red in the autumn. The Kras certainly has to be experienced.

The area has no water and no industry. Any dust in the air is swept away by the *burja* wind so that people and plants can breathe easily. The villages are made of stone, the roofs are covered with slate and houses are enclosed by stone walls. The only way to enter the courtyards is through stone arches. The unique characteristics of this landscape have nurtured artists such as Slovenia's important architect Jože Plečnik, the painters Jože Spacal and Avgust Černigoj, and the poet Srečko Kosovel. If Slovenia did not have this stony area, it would lack some of its greats. As everything else



At the entrance to a wine-tasting cellar in Sežana, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



The stylised trellis as the symbol of the Kras wine route is depicted on the memorial glasses made as souvenirs for visitors, 2006. Photos: Aleš Gačnik, Staša Cafuta.

on the Kras is special, the people living there, their vineyards and the wine *Kraški Teran* must be special too. The latter was described and valued by the Roman writer Pliny, who called it a healing wine.



The viticultural landscape of Tomaj on the Kras, 2006.  
Photo: Staša Cafuta.

The Kras wine route leads through ethnologically interesting villages. The church in Križ is built entirely of stone and covered with slate. On Turk's farm in Šepulje there grows the oldest *Teranovka* grapevine. The centres of Kras viticulture are Tomaj and Dutovlje, where the full beauty of the Kras can be seen, especially in the autumn when the grapes are ripe and glow in all possible hues of red. Štanjel, a medieval stone town, dominates the area. In the villages of Komen, Pliskovica, Skopo, Kopriva, Ponikve, Avber, Dobravlje, Kazle and Štorje there are a number of tourist winegrowing farms and excellent restaurants, where you can try the *Kraški Teran* wine, *pršut* air-dried ham and other local specialities. In Sežana there is a large wine cellar, a botanical garden and, nearby, the Lipica stud farm.



The wine routes overall graphic design, 2006.  
Photo: Staša Cafuta.

## **VTC 4: The Istra wine route**

The Slovene part of Istra is our only truly Mediterranean area. It lies below the Kras plateau and stretches from Črni Kal to the River Dragonja. It is slightly hilly, with an altitude of at least 100 metres above sea level. Here, the Karst landscape with its stony ground ends and the soil consists of marl. The sea and the sun ensure that it is warm enough for the grapevine to build up enough sugar.

On the coast, in the historically interesting towns of Koper, Izola and Piran, tourism is well-developed. All three towns are full of artistic and historical monuments. Until the arrival of Napoleon, who abolished the Venetian Republic, the territory was under the authority of Aquileia and Venice. Only after Napoleon's time did it become a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and had more contact with other Slovene lands. In addition, the twenty-five years of Italian occupation (1918-1943) also left their mark. Thus coastal towns show the influences of the Romance culture and in central Istra those of the Slavic culture.

The wine route does not run along the coast, but through villages and hilly plateaux in the hinterland, from Hubed and Hrastovlje, across Sv. Anton, through Marezige, Škocjan, Bertoki, Šmarje, Sv. Peter, Sečovlje and Korte. In the Koper winegrowing region there are many tourist farms and gourmet restaurants along the route. The villages in the hills are



A goat as the symbol of Istra is also the symbol of the Koper wine cellar, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



The procession at the *Refošk festival* event in Marezige, 2004. Photo: Miloš Toni.

### Getting to know wine

completely Slovene and their historic sites are connected with the Slovene people of Istra: in Hrastovlje there is the church of the Holy Trinity, in which there are numerous frescoes from 1490 painted by Janez from Kastvo; in Podpeč there is a defence tower and in Predloka an old Slavic burial ground; there are archaeological finds in caves along the edge of the Kras plateau and the late-Romanic church of St. Stephen in Zanigrad. Just before Črni Kal there is Socerb Castle and the Osp Valley, where there are vineyards.



The Koper wine cellar was built in the early 1950s. It has room for 7 million litres of wine. The part of the cellar with wooden vessels is open to visitors, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

The Koper winegrowing region is the home of *Refošk* and *Malvazija*, which have been cultivated here for a thousand years, together with *Muscat*. Nowadays, there are other varieties such as Merlot, Cabernet, Sauvignon, *Sivi Pinot* (Pinot Gris) and Chardonnay. Marežige, which hosts a festival, is the centre of *Refošk*.



A view of the concentrated 42 hectares of vineyards belonging to the Brijuni wine cellar, 2007. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



One of the most exclusive modern wine cellars in Slovenia (Santomas) was built with great respect for local history. Šmarje, 2008. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

# *The Winegrowing Region of Posavje*

## *VTC 5: The Bela Krajina wine route*

The route runs around the villages and vineyards on the sunny south side of the Gorjanci Hills. Although the soil is poor, the climate is warm, and so full-bodied white and red wines are produced. In contrast to previous periods, when in this area viticulture lagged behind, during the last few decades the people of Bela Krajina have developed modern wine cellars and improved their varietal selection. They have kept the old blended wines, in particular *Metliška Črnina*, which is made from combining *Modra Frankinja* and *Žametovka*. Muscat grapes also grow very well here, producing a harmonious wine and exceptionally nice “predicate” wines. The centre of viticulture is in the villages around Drašiči, while the centre of modern winemaking is the town of Metlika.



Drašiči, 2006. Photos: Staša Cafuta.

The Bela Krajina wine route starting in Metlika has three branches. The first leads through Drašiči, Krmačina, Vidošiči and Vinomer. In Drašiči, the biggest viticultural centre is the only remaining “neighbourhood”, i.e. village cooperative wine cellar, where each autumn all the members invest some of their must into the joint wine “fund”. They can then later, particularly in the summer, borrow some wine if they have run out of their own. Prior to the vine-lice epidemic such “neighbourhoods” existed in every village, now the one in Drašiči is the only one left, more as a tourist



### Getting to know wine

attraction rather than a fully functioning cooperative. The second branch of the wine route leads to Boldraž and Radovica, and the third branch through Trnovec, past Lokvice to Bušinja vas and then to Suhor and back again via Gabrovica and Berčica to Metlika, where there is a large cooperative wine cellar, which can by appointment receive groups interested in sampling the Bela Krajina wines. In Metlika itself, which obtained its town rights as early as in 1365, there is the church of St. Nicholas, a castle and a museum housing a rich archaeological and ethnological collection, as well as a firefighters' museum. Nearby is the village of Rosalnica with a Gothic pilgrimage complex of three churches dating from the 15th century.

The other part of the Bela Krajina wine route is the Semič road. This leads around the villages and vineyards lying below the Kočevski Rog plateau: Semič and Semiška gora, Sadni vrh, Gradnik, Krvavčji vrh and Češnjavec. In Semič, there is a viticultural museum collection, while nearby there are the castle ruins of Smuk, a wine cottage that belonged to the castle, the caves of Lebica and Malikovec, the church of the Holy Trinity on Vinjen vrh and the pre-historic settlement in Movernava. In Črnomelj, there is a wine cellar with many Bela Krajina wines.

The most popular traditional events are *Vinska vigred* (Wine Spring) in Metlika and a wine exhibition as part of the celebration of St. George's Day in Črnomelj.



The typical viticultural landscape of Bela Krajina. The Drašiči area, 2006. Photos: Staša Cafuta.

## VTC 6: The Below Gorjanci wine route

In the Dolenjska wine growing district there are three wine routes, the most interesting being the Below Gorjanci one.

It leads along the foot of the Gorjanci Hills, where vineyards appear quite high up, looking for sunny localities: from Žužemberk via Dolenjske Toplice to Pleterje, Kostanjevica, Čatež, Mokrice and to Velika dolina. The numerous vineyards are surrounded by woods that alleviate the summer heat. This is where the best *Cviček* can be found, in particular in Gadova peč. In these villages they have always made a slightly darker *Cviček* compared to that on the Dolenjska hills.⁴⁰ Along the way, there are the following castles and manor houses: Žužemberk, Soteska and Mokrice, as well as the Carthusian monastery in Pleterje, where excellent wines are made. In Kostanjevica there is the wine cellar of the



Children grape-picking in Stari grad, 2003. Photo: Stane Košir.



*Cviček* cellar in Božidar Jakac Gallery in Kostanjevica on the River Krka with the custodian Helena Rožman, 2006. Photos: Aleš Gačnik.

former wine cooperative that succeeded in giving *Cviček* the reputation of being a healing wine. Also in Kostanjevica there is a very nicely restored Cistercian monastery with a gallery displaying the works of Božidar Jakac and other artists, as well as a *forma viva* with oak-wood sculptures. In Brežice there is a castle with a large hall, a museum and a gallery displaying the work of the painter Franjo Stiplovšek. There is also a wine cellar with Bizeljsko wines.



Gadova peč, 2003. Photo: Alojz Konec.

⁴⁰ Since *Cviček* was given legal protection in 2000, the very light red colour is no longer desirable. A slight tartness is now also allowed, whereas in the past it had to be very smooth.

## VTC 7: The Lower Dolenjska wine route

This route runs along the southern part of the Dolenjska hills, i.e. past vineyards with vineyard cottages, scattered around the best vine growing localities, where the woods were cleared for this purpose many centuries ago. Above the town of Novo mesto there is the hill Trška gora and not far from it Hmeljnik Castle. The wine road leads through Šmarjeta, Škocjan, Šmarješke Toplice and Trebeljno to Mirna peč with its new vine growing localities. In the Suha Krajina, Žužemberk and Straža areas, *Šmarnica* was planted until recently,



Above Novo mesto there are excellent viticultural localities on the slopes of Trška gora, 2006. Photos: Aleš Gačnik.



Trška gora, 2006.  
Photos: Aleš Gačnik.

but is now being abandoned, quality white and red varieties are being grown instead, which produce very good wines. The sampling of these new varieties takes place in Žužemberk on the municipal holiday. Some of the large winegrowing farms bottle their produce. At the foot of Trška gora near Novo mesto there is the nicely organised wine cellar Bajnof, named after a castle which was demolished.

## ***VTC 8: The Upper Dolenjska wine route***

This route connects villages and vineyards in the upper Dolenjska hills: it leads from the town of Krško through Leskovec to Raka, Bučko, Studenec and Malkovec, then turns near Mokronog into the large viticultural centre of Šentrupert with the hill Vesela gora, then goes across Kaldje, Boštanj and Veliki trn back to Krško. This is also a *Cviček* PTP area. I agree with the writer Janez Trdina, who said that the people in Dolenjska are jovial and if they have their own vineyard, their social standing is immediately enhanced.



Brezovska gora, 2006.  
Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



The glorification of *Cviček* in the form of folk theatre on St. Martin's Day in Leskovec near Krško, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

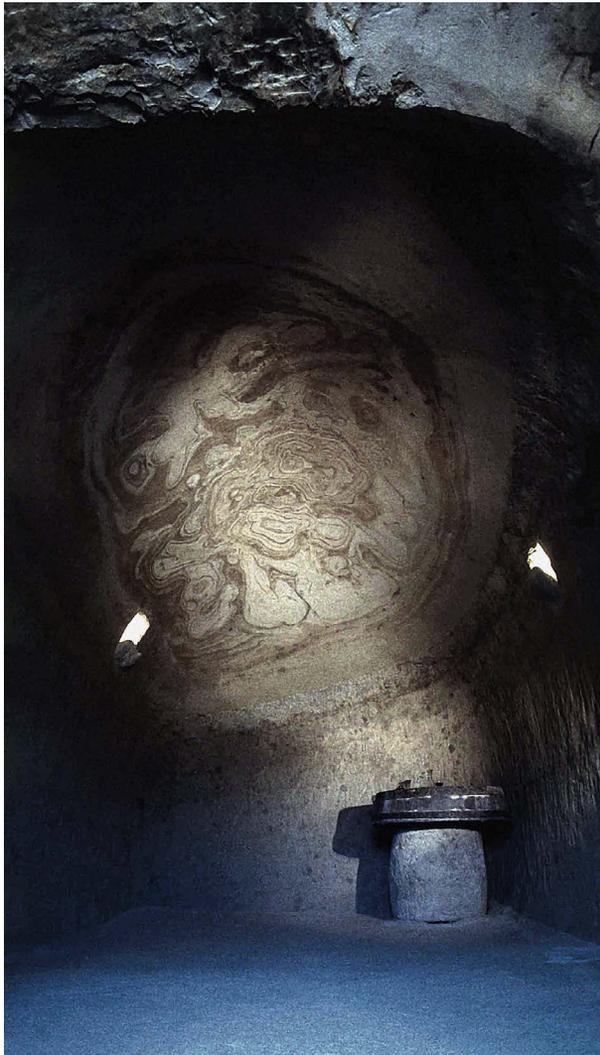
My first encounter with *Cviček* was in the Brežice wine cellar. Later, as a researcher at the Agricultural Institute in Ljubljana, together with the young oenologist Darko Marjetič, I researched the composition of this wine so that its origin could be properly protected. When our research, lasting a number of years, was finished, we were overtaken by the agricultural secretariat which, following a proposal from the SloVino Institute, decreed that *Cviček* could also come from the Bizeljsko-Sremiš district, not only Dolenjska. It was not until after Slovenia's independence that a young team from the wine cellar in Leskovec, with a new study carried out at the Agricultural Institute, managed to get legal protection of origin for this wine limited to the Dolenjska winegrowing district.

## VTC 9: The Bizeljsko – Sremič wine route

This route runs from east to west, starting in Orešje below Bohor Hill, and past Bizeljsko Castle, below which there are the best viticultural localities. Bizeljsko's vineyards are quite large, producing excellent white wines, in particular the aromatic Sauvignon. Visitors should take a look at the *repnice* – caves dug into silicic sand – owned by some winegrowers. Silicic sand is a part of the composition of the hills in the area. These caves with their constant temperature and humidity are excellent storage places for all sorts of foodstuffs, including wine.



An information panel, 2006.  
Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



*Repnica* caves remain an important element in the attractiveness and uniqueness of this area. Najger's *repnica*, 2002. Photos: Jure Černivec, the archive of the Brežice Municipality.



The Bizeljsko Sremič wine road is among the best marked in Slovenia, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



Signposting systems, 2006. Photos: Aleš Gačnik.

In the Brežice area the two main white varieties are *Laški Rizling* and *Rumeni Plavec*; there are also Sauvignon and Pinot Blanc. In 1952 I was working as an oenologist in the Brežice wine cellar. I cannot forget the Sauvignon from 1947, which was bottled and then stored in the castle archive cellar: it was quite exceptional.

The wine route leads through the vineyards of Pišec and Sromelj to Sremič above the town of Krško, where before World War Two they had excellent wines, past Rajhenburg Castle, Brestanica, Senovo and Poklek to Zajčja gora above Sevnica. The area is famous for excellent white wine, but they also produce red wines, in particular *Modra Frankinja*. In Stara vas you can taste the acclaimed Istenič sparkling wines. There are other interesting sites, such as the castles in Bizeljsko, Brežice and Brestanica (Rajhenburg).



The repnica next to the Bizeljsko wine cellar, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



Bizeljsko Castle, an important element in local development, awaits a revamp, both in terms of architecture and use, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

# The Wine Growing Region of Podravje

## VTC 10: The Šmarje-Virštajn wine route

The viticulture in Šmarje-Virštajn winegrowing district, situated in the Kozjansko region, is too much behind the times in terms of the economic aspects of wine production to be able to appear on the European Union market. But this is not the district's own fault. Kozjansko has simply been left to its own devices. Here, unlike in other winegrowing districts, the state did not built wine-producing cellars which would direct and shape viticultural development. The people



The VTC 10 sign, 2006.  
Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



Signposts along wine routes around Rogaška Slatina, 2006.  
Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



A cockerel chases birds away from trellises. Jerčin, 2006.  
Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

of Kozjansko, rather late, thus built their own cellar in Imeno, which is slowly making its way onto the market. The area does have all the conditions for the production of quality white and red wines, in particular *Modra Frankinja*. This is proven by the success of individual winegrowers, who deserve a visit. The landscape in this area is varied and hilly, and in sunny localities very favourable to the cultivation of the vine.



A *klopotec* bird scarer on Sekirnikova gorca in Kamence, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

The Šmarje-Virštajn wine route leads from Šentjur near Celje through Gorica and Slivnica to Virštajn and from there to Pilštajn, Lesična and Podsreda, where there is the best preserved castle in Slovenia; it goes through the Trebče memorial park, past the hill Sveta gora to Bistrica and then back via the spa Atomske Toplice, past Šmarje near Jelše to Rogaška Slatina. On the way there are tourist resorts with thermal waters or spas and many well-managed winemaking tourist farms. Near the spa resort of Rogaška Slatina, at the top of a slope, neatly planted with grapevines, there is a vineyard cottage and next to it a new chapel dedicated to the patron saint of Slovene winemakers, Anton Martin Slomšek. On the route there are many works of sacral art, such as the Olimje monastery, which houses the oldest pharmacy in Slovenia.



(Life without holidays is like a long road without an inn.) The legendary sign on the way to Svete Gore above Bistrica on the River Sotla, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

## VTC 11: The Haloze wine route

Haloze is something special in Podravje. It is a poor area, but rich in terms of the high quality of its wines. In spite of being wrung dry by numerous rich, mainly foreign wine merchants from Ptuj, winegrowers in the area managed to persevere in spite of their poverty.

Haloze has steep viticultural localities with marly soil. Vineyards lie on hills such as Gorca, Turški vrh, Veliki vrh, Majski vrh and Janški vrh. Grapes of the highest quality grow there, producing the famous Haloze wines. I fondly remember the time in 1948 – I was still a student – that



The once plush residence and restaurant with accommodation on Gorca above Podlehnik, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



Masterpieces of folk and sacral art. St. Ana in Ptujška Gora, 2006. Photos: Aleš Gačnik.



Signposts on VTC 11, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

I spent in Podlehnik on a practical year-long assignment, on an estate where there was an agricultural school. The teacher of the subject *vintner's trade and viticulture* took me in mid-August to Gorca, where Muscat grapes were planted. We climbed among the vertical rows of vines; each one had only a couple of bunches of grapes that were already ripe. The harvest did not take place until October, when they picked the already withered berries that produced a concentrated must. The slope was so steep I found it difficult to walk. I thought about how all the work there, from the digging to the spraying, was done by young women under the age 25, as all the young men at the time had to go to work in Šterntal, the present-day Kidričevo. How much those people had to suffer and what a healthy lot they must be! Every night, the teacher and I went to try wines in the cellars, where all the barrels were still full, waiting for the company Slovenijavino to take them away before the new harvest and export them. I shall never forget the richness of those wines and their varietal characteristics and my teacher, who took me from barrel to barrel, from one variety to another. I can still taste all the goodness of the Muscatel.



Wine cellar and wine shop, Videm, 2014. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



The overall graphic design of the tourist village of Halonga and the area around it. Videm near Ptuj, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



The Minorite vineyard above Ptuj Castle is adorned by a Haloze klopotec bird scarer, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



A winter idyll. Veliki Okič, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

The starting point of the tourist route is Ptuj, which is in itself worthy of a visit and demands we spend at least a day. The old town centre is one big museum. At the castle, dominating the town, there is a museum with many exhibits. The underground of the old town is criss-crossed with vaulted corridors, full of wine barrels. The Haloze wine is still aged and nurtured in these cellars. There is also a rich collection of archive wines, including the oldest wine from 1917 and all the years from 1921 onwards. Jože Ornik, the then owner of the archive cellar, blocked the entrance during World War Two and at the end of the war no one knew about it. Only after a few years was it found by accident and Slovenia acquired a rich collection of archive wines.



The traditional address (Drink well, drink Haloze wine) at the entrance to the renovated vineyard cottage belonging to Stanko Brodnjak in Haloze. Veliki Okič, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

From Ptuj, the route leads to Borl Castle and then to Zavrč, the numerous hills around which are covered with vineyards. Next to the River Drava there is an old wine cellar where the best *Renski Rizling* is produced, which is then bottled in the Ptuj cellar. The route continues along the southern side of Haloze to Gruškovje, from where, shortly after Podlehnik, we can have a look at the viticultural museum on Gorca and then return to Ptuj. Or we can go on from Gruškovje to Poljčane and back

through Majšperk, Ptujška gora and then to Ptuj. On Ptujška gora there is the church of the Holy Mother, the largest pilgrimage church in Štajerska which is considered the most beautiful Gothic church in Slovenia. Haloze, not just the landscape, but also its people, are very special. It is good to get to know them and to appreciate just how demanding the production of their high quality wine is.



Veliki vrh, 2005. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

## VTC 12: The Goričko wine route

An average Slovene, in particular from the western part of the country, pictures the Prekmurje region as the Slovene granary, with a flat landscape. But this is not quite the case. Prekmurje's northern part, above Murska Sobota, known as Goričko, consists of gentle hills. Twenty years ago the viticultural expert Ernest Novak took me there. He wanted to show me this part of our country, which is neither flat nor hilly. I admired the gently undulating landscape with both vineyards and orchards growing in unique localities, where large viticultural and orchard complexes could be set up, in particular in view of the dry climate suited to the grapevine. Unfortunately, at that time the villages did not have many inhabitants and the majority were old and had neither the strength nor the resources for large projects, while the state just left them to their own devices. Such a shame. Perhaps the situation is improving now and young people are coming back as more money is being earmarked for these border areas.



The Goričko wine route leads through Vaneča, where the terrain starts to rise gently, to Mačkovec, Zgornji Petrovci, Fokovci, Ivanovci and Selo, and from there to Kobilje, Filovci, Pečarovci, Bogojina, ending in Moravske Toplice. En route, one can get an impression of Goričko and its vineyards, try various wines at tourist farms and in Ivanovci have a look at the Goričko winegrowers' society viticultural centre, which has a wine cellar, information centre and museum.

In Selo near Fokovci, there is the church of St. Nicholas, dating from the 13th century, while Bogojina has a church designed by Jože Plečnik. In the church in Kuzma there is an interesting depiction of the Stations of the Cross by Lojze Perko: black contours carved into white stone. In Grad, there is a castle, first mentioned in 1214, with 365 rooms, the biggest in Slovenia. The village of Pečarovci is known for its pottery. In Krišec near Vaneče, there is still the practice of roof thatching. Nature lovers will want to visit the small lake Ledavsko jezero and its surroundings, rich in wildlife.

The unique information signposts on VTC 12, 2006.  
Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



The Goričko area can boast of one of the best and clearest systems of signposting wine routes, as well as natural and cultural heritage sites, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

The traditional festivities in this area are: *borovo gostüvanje* (pine-tree wedding), pig slaughtering for the making of sausages and pork products, the harvest, grape-picking and celebrations of St. Martin's Day. The Prekmurje Slovenes were in the past separate from the rest of Slovenia. They lived under Hungarian rule and preserved many old customs from that period. It is interesting to meet the Prekmurje people and learn about their way of life and the special cultural characteristics that have shaped them.



The unique landscape of the Goričko area, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

## VTC 13: The Middle Slovenske gorice wine route

This route leads through the central Slovenske gorice, a gently undulating landscape between the rivers Drava and Mura, traversed by the valley of the River Pesnica. The area is rich in water and has numerous small lakes, as well as fields and meadows and, in sunny localities, vineyards that are connected to the large Ptuj wine cellar. Vineyards do not appear in one large concentrated area as they do in the nearby Ljutomer-Ormož district, which makes the

countryside here more varied and rich.

The route consists of two circular roads, leading across the hills west of the River Pesnica. From Ptuj, the road leads to the nearby hill of Mestni vrh, covered in vineyards, past the remains of Vurberg Castle, to Voličina and back along the Pesnica Valley to Ptuj. The other road leads from Dornava with its beautiful Baroque mansion up to Sv. Trojica, Sv. Trije Kralji and then back to Mala Nedelja,



*Klopotec* bird scarers are an indispensable element of the viticultural landscape of Slovenske gorice. The Destrnik area, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



Signposts on VTC 13, 2006.  
Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

Juršinci and Dornava. On both circular routes there are well-managed tourist farms. There are many interesting cultural features that tell of the life of the locals. There is a particularly beautiful big old church and a castle in Hrastovec. In Sv. Trojica there is a pilgrimage church with a large monastery; on Stara gora you can see a wooden windmill; on Juršinski vrh there is the vaulted wine cellar that belonged to Count Otto Herberstein. On Zavrh near Voličina there is an old winemaking farm with a coat-of-arms from the 16th century and a memorial room dedicated to Rudolf Maister. Juršinci is renowned for the largest and oldest Slovene vine nursery. It depends on us how we approach these winegrowers, talk to them and find out what is concealed here, but Štajerska is widely known as a hospitable region.

A melancholy viticultural landscape. Mestni vrh, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



The village of Juršinci can boast of a tradition of vine nurseries going back a hundred years. The winegrower Simon Toplak is greatly responsible for the continuation of this tradition, 2006. Photos: Aleš Gačnik.

## VTC 14: The Ormož wine route

This route runs along the hills to the west of the valley of the stream Pavlovski potok, along which a road leads from Ormož past Ivanjkovci to Ljutomer, and to the valley of the stream Sejanski potok. The wine route leads from Ormož to Velika Nedelja, which is an excellent grapevine locality, to Kogl Hill and then onwards to Lahončak, Sv. Tomaž and back past Litmerk to Ormož. Along the route there



A *klopotec* bird scarer – the symbol of viticultural areas. Hardek near Ormož, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



The renovation of old houses remains a great opportunity for the development of tourism in Slovenske gorice, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



Signposts on VTC 14. Velika Nedelja, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



The monumental Breznik vineyard cottage on Hardek near Ormož, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



The Kogl estate, owned by the successful and innovative winegrower Franci Cvetko, 2006, 2007. Photos: Aleš Gačnik.



are individual tourist farms and vineyard cottages. In Podgorci there is a wine festival in May. Historical and artistic sites can be found in Velika Nedelja: a castle from the 13th century, an ethnological museum and the old church of the Holy Trinity. In Ormož, there is a large manor plus a park with rare trees; there is also the largest Central European archaeological site. In the wine cellar, we can make an appointment for a guided wine sampling for large groups.



Velika Nedelja and Ormož castles are important cultural sites on VTC 14, 2006. Photos: Aleš Gačnik.

## VTC 15: The Jeruzalem wine route

This route leads through the largest and most beautiful concentrated viticultural localities around the well-known centre of Jeruzalem. In the Ljutomer-Ormož area there are two wine cellars, one in each town. There exceptional localities include Svetinje, Brebrovnik, Kajžar, Železne dveri, Nunska graba and Rinčetova graba, Slamnjak, Radomerščak and Kog. From Ljutomer, the route winds along the ridges of the winegrowing hills to Jeruzalem and Veličani. On this route there is a series of renowned localities, winemaking tourist farms and nicely managed restaurants. In Veličani there is a “Wine Academy”, where you can try the excellent wines from this area. Of particular renown is the old local variety *Šipon*, to which the “*Šipon* Club” is trying to return the fame it once enjoyed.



Along VTC 15 there are many important cultural heritage sites, excellent vineyards, interesting wine cellars and beautiful vistas. At the Puklavec farm on Kog: winter melancholy and a summer view of Svetinje, 2003, 2006. Photos: Boris Farič, the photo library of Ptuj Regional Museum, Aleš Gačnik, Staša Cafuta.

When visiting this tourist route, we have an opportunity to acquaint ourselves with the cultural heritage of this area: there is the Blacksmith’s Museum in Razkrižje, the Apicultural Museum in Krapje, the Pottery Museum in Veličane and an old wine cellar belonging to the Benedictine monks in Železne dveri.



The manor house in Železne dveri, once an important economic centre of the Benedictine monks, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



The mighty Brenholc wine cellar is positioned above and among the dreamy, endless green hills that have long been producing world-renowned wines, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



The village of Svetinje is becoming an important oenological and tourist centre in Jeruzalemske gorice, 2006. Photo: Staša Cafuta.



Wine roads and cycling paths. Železne dveri, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



The legendary restaurant Taverna and recently renovated house of wine belonging to Franc Kupljen, built in 1836, is important to the development of tourism in Slovenske gorice. Jeruzalemske gorice, 2003, 2006. Photos: Boris Farič, the photo library of the Ptuj Regional Museum, Staša Cafuta.



In Veličane, there is also the Malek vineyard cottage with its old grape press, a viticultural museum and a chapel with frescoes from the 17th century. In Radomerščak is the house in which the linguist Fran Miklošič was born, which has a memorial museum, and in Cerovci the birthplace of the Illyrian poet Stanko Vraz. Ljutomer has a museum containing a collection of artefacts from the Slovene national gathering for a united Slovenia in 1868, which took place in this town.

Malek – a vineyard cottage with a cellar, a large press and a chapel – is a representative cultural heritage site. Over the years it has belonged to many important and renowned owners (aristocracy, counts, and wine merchants). Jeruzalemske gorice, 2006. Photos: Staša Cafuta.

## VTC 16: The Radgona-Kapela wine route

The road leads through the vineyards on the gentle slopes between Gornja Radgona and Kapela. This is a concentrated viticultural area with specific characteristics. The wines produced here are aromatic, with a high level of acidity: the *Traminec* is the best in the country and another well-known variety is *Ranina*. From Gornja Radgona, the route continues winding its way among vineyards from Hercegovščak, Police, Črešnjevci, Zbigovci, Orehovski vrh, Janževski vrh and Radmirski vrh all the way to Kapelski vrh above Radenci.



VTC 16 connects with walking routes, including Attila's historical route. Kapelski vrh, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

In Gornja Radgona and in Kapela there are interesting wine cellars, where you can try the local wines. Gornja Radgona boasts the oldest cellar in Slovenia for the production of sparkling wines using the classical Champagne method. The winemaker Klenovšek produced the first sparkling wine in Slovenia as early as 1852.



The folklore-like entrance to Kapelske gorice, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



Signposts on VTC 16, 2007. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



The renovated cultural heritage site serves as a catering and tourist establishment, Kapelski hram, 2006, 2005. Photos: Aleš Gačnik, Zlatko Fišer.

## **VTC 17: The Below Pohorje wine route**

This is the best-analysed wine route in Slovenia and offers detailed information about all the tourist farms along the way. It combines viticultural localities from Pekre and Limbuš to Slovenske Konjice.

In addition to tourist farms, there are many other sites of historical and ethnological interest: in the town of Slovenska Bistrica there is a castle in the courtyard of which there is an annual exhibition entitled *Images of Bistrica farms, with local culinary specialities and wines*. In Slovenske Konjice there is an old castle, as well as Trebnik Manor, the church of St. George, a picture gallery and the Žiče Carthusian monastery. In Špitalič there is an old inn from the 16th century, known as *gastuš*. In Loče there is an ethnological museum and in Skalce an old vinedresser's cottage and the *Zrno* museum. Two events take place in the area: the celebration of St. George's Day and the week of celebrations dedicated to St. Martin, including the blessing of must and the tasting of young wines.



The idyllic viticultural landscape above Slovenske Konjice, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

In Meranovo, where Archduke Johann had his wine cellar, there is a viticultural and winemaking learning centre belonging to the Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Maribor, where there are guided tastings of the wines produced in the Maribor district. In Pekre, *Laški Rizling* of extremely high quality is produced. In Ruše, there is a sacrificial altar dedicated to Mitra. Near Slovenska Bistrica on the southern side of the Pohorje Hills opens up a wide area of vineyards with renowned localities for *Ritoznoj*. The wine road winds among the hills around Slovenske Konjice: from Skalce through Tepanjsko, Žička gora and Zbegovska gora as far as Dravinjske gorice. On the way, we come across very well-managed winegrowing tourist farms. You can also sample wine in the large diocesan wine cellar in Slovenska Bistrica and the Zlati grič wine shop in Slovenske Konjice. I think that winegrowers, together with the municipalities in this area, have ensured that this VTC is the best one in Podravje.



Just above the golf course in Slovenske Konjice are the Škalski vineyards, at the top of which there is the very popular catering establishment the Zlati Grič wine shop, and a thoroughly refurbished viticultural manor with apartments, which used to belong to the Konjice lords, 2006. Photos: Aleš Gačnik.



Signposts on VTC 17, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

## ***VTC 18: The Maribor wine route***

This route links the vineyards close to Maribor, which reach into the very centre of this town, to the main park, which continues into the vineyards on the Kalvarija hill. In the old part of the town, known as Lent, there is a 400-year old vine, the oldest in the world.



The viticultural localities of Piramida Hill in Maribor, an important landscape symbol of this town, reach as far as the town park, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



St. Mary's church on Gorca, surrounded by vineyards, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



The vineyards belonging to the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Maribor, on Meranovo, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



Signposts on VTC 18, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



A view from Gorca of St. Peter's church in Malečnik near Maribor and a huge klopotec bird scarer, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

It produces *Žametovka* or *Kavščina*, as it is also known. Maribor is thus truly a town of the vine and wine. In the town centre there is the extensive wine cellar belonging to the company Vinag, which was established on the basis of the former cooperative wine cellar. The Maribor town manor, housing a regional museum and galleries, dates from 1483 and the town received its town rights as early as in 1254. There is also a water tower with a wine cellar. In Šempeterska gorca, in the middle of vineyards, there is a statue to St. John of Nepomuk.

To the north, the wine route links viticultural localities along the hills of Kalvarija, Piramida and Mestni trg and to the west it leads through the wider Kozjak area. East of the road from Maribor to Šentilj there are excellent viticultural localities. Along the route, there are numerous well-managed tourist farms, where you can sample wines such as *Renski rizling*, which is of excellent quality in this area. There are also vinedressers' cottages, old wine presses, wine shops and good restaurants serving local specialities.



The vine in Lent in Maribor, which is over 400 years old, is becoming a symbol and trade mark of Maribor, Slovene and European viticulture, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

## VTC 19: The Upper Slovenske gorice wine route

This route connects the hilly viticultural area north of Kozjak and Lenart. It leads from Zgornja Kungota through Janževski vrh to Svečina and Plače, and then back through Sladki vrh, Jurovski dol and Jarenina. The hills consist of elongated ridges separated by valleys; the sunny slopes are planted with vineyards, while the north-facing sides are covered with woodlands. This is an area of wines with the most intense varietal aroma.



At the agricultural fair in Svečina – an increasingly important and well thought-out tourist event – most locals take part, attracting masses of visitors and wine lovers from home and abroad, 2006. Photos: Aleš Gačnik.

Wine queens also play their part, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



Scenes from the 25th agricultural fair in Svečina, 2006. Photos: Aleš Gačnik.

Winemaking here was much improved with the help of the viticultural school at Svečina Castle. The most attractive part of this route is the landscape itself, but there are also interesting details, such as the image of Bachhus on the church in Zgornja Kungota, the viticultural museum on Kopica Hill, the fossils from the Pannonian sea at Plački vrh and Pezdíček's vineyard cottage with an old wooded press in Vukovski dol. In Jakovski dol there is Vogrin's museum with a windmill, an oenological collection and a technical museum. The last weekend in September, there is a festival in Svečina, where wine can be tasted.

## *VTC 20: The Lendava wine route*

At the edge of the plain around the town of Lendava there stretches a range of low hills with numerous, well-tended vineyards. The wines from here have only recently begun to appear on the Slovene market. The wine cellar in Lendava Castle has become more active and has started bottling the local wines. Much more work is needed for these wines to truly establish themselves, but there is no doubt that these vineyards produce excellent dry wines.



Signposts on VTC 20, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



Lendava Castle, surrounded by vineyards and excellent examples of folk building construction in Új Tomas (Novi Tomaž) near Lendava, 2006. Photos: Aleš Gačnik.

The Lendava wine route runs from Pince, Dolina and Čertoba to the very centre of Lendavske gorice and then to Dolgoveške gorice. Along the route among the vineyards there are well-managed tourist farms offering local wines, as well as numerous vineyard cottages, the owners of which live nearby, particularly in Lendava. There is also a wine cellar at Lendava Castle. In the church of the Holy Trinity on one of the hills in Lendavske gorice there is the mummified body of Captain Hadik, the defender of Lendava Castle against the Turks. There is also the wine cellar that used to belong to the writer Miško Kranjec and



A unique viticultural landscape. Lendavske gorice, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

### *Getting to know wine*

the Lendava museum and gallery in the castle. Lendava events and culinary specialities are quite out of the ordinary as they are a mixture of Hungarian and Slavic influences – this area was for a thousand years, until the end of World War One, under Hungarian rule.

I very much hope that the VTC project helps to save Slovene viticulture, i.e. the winemakers and vineyards, thus keeping the slopes planted with grapevines cultivated and inhabited. In this way, the beauty of the landscape and the cultural heritage will be preserved, as otherwise the area would be overgrown by the brushwood of eternal memories.



A decaying piece of cultural heritage – the vineyard cottage that belonged to the writer Miško Kranjec, Lendavske gorice, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



The renovated Hojnik vineyard cottage dating back to 1895, Lendavske gorice, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



It would not be right to forget wine must – fresh grape juice before fermentation. It has many components that have a beneficial effect on the human organism. We can consume it fresh after a grape harvest or pasteurised throughout the year. Must is recommended for children, those with health problems, nursing mothers and those abstaining from alcohol. There are special sanatoriums around the world where convalescents are helped with courses of must. It has helped me when my organism was weakened and with diarrhoea, says Dušan Terčelj. Lendavske gorice, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

*The Culture of Wine in Slovenia*



In readiness, 2005. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

# *The wine trade and innkeeping*

One of the aims of this book is to acquaint the reader with the appearance of the trade in wine and with innkeeping in ancient times, as well as with their development in the Middle Ages and over the last one hundred and fifty years in Slovene lands.

The first written sources from Mesopotamia and Egypt show that wine, in addition to grains and olive oil, was one of the first goods that man produced with a surplus and used in exchange for other goods, in particular the newly appearing crafts products. With the exchange of goods along the caravan routes in the countries of the eastern Mediterranean inns began to appear, offering accommodation, food and drink to travelling merchants. In Egypt such hostelries existed as early as 6000 years BC. In Babylonia and Assyria hostelries could be found in settlements along caravan routes. Hammurabi's code prohibited innkeepers from mixing water with wine.

At the time of the Mycenaean and Greek cultures hospitality developed first: as described by Homer around 1000 BC, strangers – mainly merchants – had to be given accommodation and sustenance free of charge. This was prescribed by towns, which were like small states. Hospitality developed into bestowing the status of honorary citizens on guests with permanent trading contacts and special privileges. These ties were thus still more on a personal, private and diplomatic level. Due to increasing trade, there appeared *proxenia*, a kind of consulate, thus establishing the first international official contacts. With the growing number of merchants and other foreigners and poor folk, cities started to set up special houses which provided sustenance and accommodation against payment and this was the true beginning of innkeeping.

In the fifth century BC, Athens had 500,000 citizens and very well-developed trade involving numerous transport routes and sea connections. Innkeeping was well-developed, too, with specialised hostleries:

- pandokeion* accommodation with some food and drink
- katagogion (katalgion)* accommodation for people and animals
- katalion* an inn with food, drink and a small food shop
- oinopolis* a wine shop
- prytaneon* a catering establishment for state officials

In Sparta, they also had joint kitchens, similar to our canteens.

The Romans, who modelled themselves on the Greeks, had a quite well-developed wine trade and innkeeping. They built numerous roads that connected the lands of their Empire, accelerating the development of trade and innkeeping both in towns as well as alongside the roads. They had:

- stabulae* catering establishments with stables for animals
- deversoria* catering establishments in towns
- cauponia* inns with a shop
- popina* a catering establishment serving food next to a spa, circus or pilgrim temple
- oinopolia* a wine shop
- taberna* initially a shop and an establishment offering refreshments, later a tavern with accommodation

There was also the *Villa Publica*, an inn outside Rome, which was for citizens of unfriendly states and the *Hospicium* for citizens of states with which Rome had an agreement on hospitality. Foreigners were given a token known as a *tessera hospitalis*, with which they could get food and drink in a *Hospicium*. The wholesale trade in wine took place in the *Forum Vinarium* square in Rome. Inns in the city were open only during the day and were allowed to sell wine only to men over 30, which was monitored by inspectors (*aediles*).

During the migration of nations numerous roads, shops and catering establishments were destroyed. They were only partly preserved in some isolated places, for example in Istra. After settlement, the early Slovenes started planting grapevines on the whole of the territory of the present-day Slovenia. The slopes of Ljubljana Castle Hill and Rožnik Hill were planted with vines and Ljubljana was a true town of the vine and wine. Soon after settlement the exchange of goods began, including wine. Traders carried their goods on horseback; after a partial reconstruction of old roads and the building of new ones, goods began to be transported by cart. Ljubljana lay on the transit route between Venice and Central Europe: it was the centre of the wine trade,





The administration building of the Ptuj Wine Cellar, 2005. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



The modern Brič Wine Cellar is the work of architect Boris Podrecca, 2007. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



The transportation of wine as depicted in the book *The Glory of the Duchy of Carniola* by Janez Vajkard Valvasor (1689), a copy. The photo library of the Ptuj Regional Museum.

and wine from the Primorska region was shipped from here to Austrian and south German lands. The first wines arriving in Ljubljana were from the Vipava area and Primorska⁴¹. In 1376, the Duke of Carniola banned Ljubljana from trading in wine from Ptuj. The Duke of Styria in Graz granted Maribor special privileges and closed the route to the northern lands via Maribor to Ptuj wine merchants. Thus Ptuj wine traders had to transport their goods via Slovenska Bistrica, where the wine then had to be re-loaded, and this situation continued for a number of years.

Wine was an important commodity and there were numerous taxes imposed on wine traders, which filled town budgets: Imperial, provincial and town taxes, as well as various tolls collected by the towns through which wine was transported. Trade in the towns was the exclusive right of townspeople, but the aristocracy and clergy, who owned extensive vineyards in the countryside, wanted to market their wines in the towns themselves. This led to conflicts which went on until the abolition of the privileges of the aristocracy in the 19th century. Wine merchants managed to negotiate the right to sell in Carniola all the “better wines”, also known as “sweet” (although they did not contain unfermented sugar), such as *Vipavec*, *Rebula*, *Istrsko vino* and *Laško vino*. Only the wines of worse quality which were acidic, such as *Markwein* or regional wines, were exported to northern lands.

⁴¹ At that time, the upper Vipava Valley was a part of Carniola and was not considered as Primorska, and so the wine from this region was not considered to be Primorska wine.

Ljubljana held a monopoly until 1550: until then, wines from Primorska and Italy were sold and bought in Ljubljana. The records from 1565 show clearly that German merchants started buying wine in Vipava and Primorska themselves. The town authorities in Ljubljana in 1561 determined a place on Breg, by the river, where wine transactions took place. They also issued a decree that foreign merchants were allowed to buy young wines after St. Martin's Day. In 1582, the town authorities also prescribed an official record of the wine sold by caterers and in draught wine shops, and used this as a base for taxation. Those transporting wine had to measure the quantity of wine before selling it and pay a contribution. The data for Ljubljana on the sale of wine and prices is quite interesting. According to the first recording of wine in 1582, there were in Ljubljana:

- 8 inns with more than 10 barrels of wine,
- 8 inns with 5 to 10 barrels of wine,
- 22 inns with 1 to 5 barrels of wine,
- 23 inns with less than one barrel of wine.

These 61 inns had:

- 160 barrels and 41.5 loads of *Teran*,
- 74 barrels and 20 loads of *Vipavec*,
- 2 barrels and 5 loads of *Dolenjc*.

One load was a unit of measure weighing 85 kg, the amount carried by a beast of burden on each side. The record also contains smaller quantities of *Črnokalec*, *Malvazija*, *Muškatelj* and *Rebula*.

In 1622 all the stocks of wine held by the citizens of Ljubljana were recorded:

- 784 loads of Vipava and other Primorska wines
- 416 loads of wine from Lower Carniola.

Other units of measure were valid in Styria. During the Middle Ages, they used the same measures as in Graz: 1 tub of 104.96 litres. Five of these tubs formed a *polovnjak* with 524.60 litres, two of which made one *štrtinjek*. Later, they adopted Viennese units: a Viennese tub contained 56.6 litres, a *polovnjak* 5 tubs with 283 litres and a *štrtinjak* 10 tubs.



A model of a cart used in the transportation of grapes in Primorska inside a house in Šepulje, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

## Catering establishments

In Ljubljana, it was prohibited to bring in wines from Styria in general and Ptuj in particular. Valvasor mentions that wine from Dolenjska was sold for the first time in Ljubljana in 1569 by the victualler Krumberger in Ribič's House in the square Stari trg. Until then, i.e. throughout the Middle Ages, only wines from Vipava and Primorska were sold. The town authorities set the price of wine on a price list that was to be used by victuallers. The prices changed according to the economic and political situation. The relationship between wine prices is interesting:

Wine	in 1607	in 1622	in 1633
From Dolenjska	5	11	11 <i>krajcars</i> for a jug
From Vipava	18	23	14 <i>krajcars</i> for a jug
<i>Črnokalec</i> (from Istra)	18	24	16 <i>krajcars</i> for a jug

In urban areas, catering establishments started being divided into those for the higher social classes and better or lower quality taverns, depending on the interior and the selection of food and drink served. There were also wine shops and brandy shops, which served mainly drunks and idlers. The first catering establishment in Ljubljana is mentioned in 1306; by 1725 there were already 162 of them.

Inns were also appearing along busy roads. These were aimed chiefly at those transporting goods using beasts of burden or carts and had large stables. Slovenia is a hilly land and roads go up and down a lot. Additional animals were needed for pulling carts uphill, so in most places it was possible to hire additional horses for this. Along the route from Trieste to Vienna there are still large buildings with stables that are now falling apart: for example, in Senožeče, Razdrto, Postojna, Planina, Logatec and Vrhnika. With the construction of the southern railway in 1850, these establishments started doing badly. With the arrival of cars, new catering establishments appeared, but many then lost their role once more with the building of motorways.



The century-old Ojnik-Firbas inn at Moškanjci, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



The transport of wine in the past and today. Radgonske gorice, Sežana, 2006. Photos: Aleš Gačnik.

In the 19th century, catering establishments in rural areas served as meeting places for business deals and for concluding contracts. They also played a central part in social life: various organisations gathered in them, especially educational and political ones, and cultural events were often held, even theatre performances. And wine was the drink served on all these occasions. In lower quality taverns and wine shops wine was



Advertising a cellar: a hanging wicker bottle, Janški vrh in Haloze, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



Advertising a cellar: a stone hanging sign, Štanjel, 2001. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

In the 20th century the first specialised catering establishments were opened, concentrating on particular foods or drinks: bars, fish restaurants, restaurants serving game or local, home-made food, gourmet restaurants, slow-food restaurants, and so on. Some served selected bottled wines. In 1978, there was a prohibition of the sale of draught wines, which caused wine shops to slowly close down. In the late 20th century and early 21st century, catering took another direction – serving the tourist trade. There is now also farm tourism, which will in winegrowing areas also take on the role of selling wine for private use at home, while at the same time educating consumers about the characteristics of the wine on offer.

Increasingly, coffee, tea and various alcohol-free beverages are drunk at social occasions, in particular due to the alcohol limits when driving. Bottled wines are sold in large shopping centres, offering an extensive selection of wines of different qualities and at different prices. The consumption of wine is relocating to people's homes, where it takes place at meal times, in particular at dinner and when people have guests. At the same time, the habit of drink-

served to exploited workers and drunks, who drowned their sorrows every night. The appearance of the custom of excessive drinking is often described by the writers of the period. In the 19th century other catering establishments appeared in Slovenia, such as those for better-to-do guests and for the female population – cafés and patisseries.



Advertising a cellar: a wayside wine barrel, Bizeljsko, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



Young wine in a historical ambience. Ptuj Castle, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



Thousands of years of winemaking in Istra, combined with the modern marketing of Koper wines. Vinakoper, 2007. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

ing wine with food is growing, in line with the slogan “Drink little, drink well!” While the mass consumption of wine is falling, the number of those addicted to alcohol is not decreasing, which



Bottling wine as a souvenir of a visit to a cellar. Brodnjak's house, Veliki Okič in Haloze. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



The Cuk wine house in Lendavske gorice is making an increasingly important contribution to the development of this area, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

demands that wine professionals put even more effort into the re-education of drinkers towards a healthier approach to drinking. Legislation states that all the processing of wine up to the bottling can take place only in a winemaking area: winemakers then deliver their wines to distribution centres or catering establishments, so wine cellars and draught wine shops in towns have become history. Catering is modernising: establishments with gourmet food and drink, offering a place for friendly gatherings, celebrations and for tourists will be the ones that survive.



If the average Slovene consumer wants to learn about the quality of Slovene wines, he or she must compare them to wines from other countries. San Gimignano (Tuscany), 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

## *Vinoteka wine shops*

*Vinotekas* are wine shops or enoteche specialising in high quality wines produced in small quantities, which are otherwise hard to find elsewhere. These shops are frequented by wine connoisseurs who wish to buy excellent wines for special occasions, i.e. wines that can satisfy even the most demanding consumers. Wine lovers will also go to a *vinoteka* when they want to buy a gift for a friend or business partner. If someone does not really know what to buy, he or she can consult the shop owner, who usually knows a great deal about wine and winemakers. It is good to find out about the characteristics of the wine you are giving and the winemaker who made it, so that there is something to tell the recipient.

When choosing wine as a gift, the most important rule to follow is that the recipient must like the wine and should be pleasantly surprised. High “predicate” wines and expensive wines should only be given to connoisseurs, who will be able to appreciate them, without making them



Lent, Maribor, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

aware of how much the wine cost. I once gave a “dry strawberry selection” wine to a good acquaintance who likes a good dry wine with his food. When I saw him a month later and asked him what he thought of the wine, he said: “Oh, we opened it at lunch, but it didn’t really go with it and we didn’t know what to do with it.” Giving an old archive wine is equally questionable, especially if it had lost some of its quality during the ageing process. Only a true connoisseur will be able to properly value such a wine as he will appreciate the age, rather than quality – for him or her, the vintage will be more important than anything else. When in Bordeaux I visited one of the best wine cellars, Lafitte-Rothschild, where they have in their archive all the vintages from 1801 onwards. The vintner pointed out that two bottles were missing for 1894. Of course I immediately asked why. That year the Soviet president Nikita Khrushchev was born and those two bottles were given to him on the occasion of his visit as a special gift from France and the town of Bordeaux. The French must have known that the Russians had very old archive wines in Crimea that had belonged to the Russian tsars.



Wine cellars are an excellent medium for the international promotion of Slovene oenological traditions and quality. Wine brings together researchers from Shanghai and Ptuj, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



As wine is also a fashionable commodity, we can give or offer a fashionable wine only to people who would themselves choose such wines. Some fifteen years ago, Pinot Blanc was very fashionable in Slovenia, then Chardonnay, then Pinot Gris or *Zelen* and Shiraz among the red wines. Now, wines with the aroma of oak imitating barrique wines are all the rage. Wine can also be a status symbol: for someone who places great importance on clothes, labels, cars or similar goods, an expensive wine made by an exclusive winemaker, the vintage and the fact that wine is not easily available on the market are the most important criteria.

Some wine connoisseurs have private *vinotekas*. More and more wine lovers are creating their own collections, in particular of their favourite wines. They collect them according to a specific principle: for example, only “predicate” wines or wines made from particular grape varieties, and sometimes they have no specific system. This hobby demands special conditions if you want to keep wine for more than a few months. Wine is a living thing that is constantly changing, which is why it needs to



Wine and art at the Medana Art II event (Ščurek), Medana, 2006. Photo: Staša Cafuta.

be kept at a constant temperature of around 12 degrees Celsius or with just a slight deviation during the summer. Bottles should be lying down so that the cork remains moist, in a dark place, without any external vibration so that the ageing process is slowed down. I knew a dentist who had a house just north of Ljubljana. He invited me 30 years ago to have a look at his cellar. He had a special place there, where he bottled the wine he had brought from a winemaker. He also had a room that was insulated and air-conditioned with a constant temperature of 12 degrees Celsius. I was surprised at his knowledge about how to store wine and I admired his efforts in displaying a very professional attitude to wine.

Even if we stabilise wine and add plenty of sulphur in order for it to last longer without oxidation, it still keeps changing. The enzymatic processes, although slowed down, still take place: the wine is ageing and losing quality. This of course happens at a different rate in different wines, depending on the composition. When wine reaches its optimum quality, it is advisable to drink it. This is why large wine cellars with large stocks of high quality wines occasionally check the quality and on the basis of this make the decision about the right time for selling each wine. Only a small proportion is kept for the archive and the value of this wine will be in the year of its production rather than in its quality. A very suitable gift for somebody's 50th birthday, for example, is a wine that is 50 years old.

While we are on the subject of archive cellars, where the large winemakers keep their best wines, I would like to mention my experience on a visit in July 1991 to the agricultural school *Landwirtschaftliche Fachschule* in Haidegg near Graz in Austria. We were unable to organise an international wine assessment in Ljubljana due to the fear of some foreign wine tasters about the political changes in Slovenia and so the assessment was held at the above-mentioned school. The headmaster was so delighted to be able to host this event and all the foreign tasters that in the evening, after the assessment was over, he invited us to the school's archive cellar, full of selected top quality Austrian wines from all varieties from every year since World War Two. Every taster was able to choose any wine and open it to have a taste. It was a unique, unforget-



Dušan Terčelj and Jože Kupljen in the Wine House, Jeruzalem-Svetine, 2003. Photo: Boris Barič, the photo library of the Ptuj Regional Museum.

table occasion: I have been given the odd archive wine in Slovene cellars, but I was never able to choose one myself, let alone rummage around an archive. I have to thank Stanko Čurin from Kog, who I have been visiting every season for years, for giving me a chance to taste with him his “predicate” wines to see how they are maturing. This, too, was a unique experience for me.

## *Wine fairs*

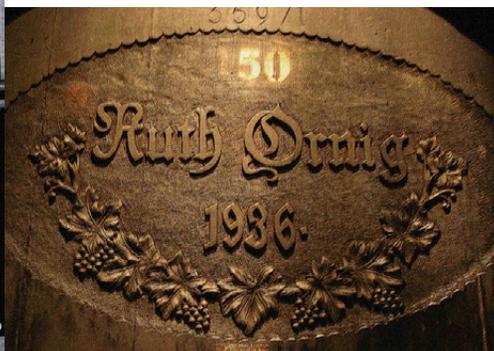
Dukes of the land were entrusted with the duty of giving towns their market rights. They also determined the dates – annual or weekly – when fairs were held in specific places and where buying and selling could be done. These places were usually along transport routes. Some larger towns, such as Ljubljana, Maribor and Ptuj had special rights. There were no true wine fairs yet, but these towns had a well-developed wine trade. In Ljubljana, wine was traded on Breg and in Maribor on Lent.

In the Middle Ages, Ljubljana was a true town of the vine and wine. Wine was brought in from Primorska and the Ljubljana merchants then sold it on to the north, i.e. Austrian lands and Bavaria. Maribor and Ptuj exported wine there, too, as Carniola prohibited the trade in Styrian wines. Lower Carniola and White Carniola sold their wines to the Military Krajina or southern borderland area and only at the start of the Modern Age to Ljubljana. By today’s standards, the wine trade was very badly developed until the 18th century and only

the rich could afford foreign wines. It was not until after the construction of roads and the building of the railway in the 19th century that the wine trade began to flourish. In the late 19th century, lands and regions started organising wine exhibitions and fairs so that wine merchants and victuallers could learn about different wines. This is when the first competition, almost a struggle for a share of the market, appeared.

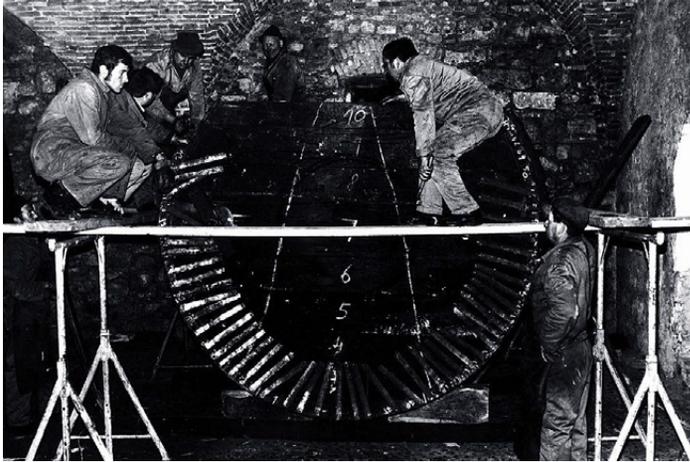


Grape pressing in the cellar of the important wine merchant and hotel owner Osterberger in Ptuj, the first quarter of the 20th century, Dolena in Haloze. The photo library of the Ptuj Regional Museum.



Until the end of World War Two, the management of the Ptuj Wine Cellar was in the hands of the company Vinogradniške posesti and of the Josip Ornic (JO) Wine Cellar, founded in 1853. Only one barrel (Ruth Ornic) has been preserved. The wedding photograph of the wine merchant, the Ptuj mayor and visionary Josef Ornic (1894-1917), 1886, 2005. Source: Historical archive in Ptuj, photo: Aleš Gačnik.

In 1811 the French, after the establishment of the Illyrian Provinces in Ljubljana, organised an exhibition of Illyrian wines. Carniola organised the first exhibition of its wines in 1903 in Prague. After World War One, in 1921, an industrial fair for the development of agriculture was established in Ljubljana; agricultural shows, including wine shows, were organised. In 1922 the first regional show was organised and in 1927 the second. Each year individual locations, wine merchants or winemakers exhibited their wines at the Ljubljana fair.



The placing of a barrel in the former winemaking collection on the premises of the castle granary in Ptuj, 1974. The photo library of the Ptuj Regional Museum.

In 1954, the first Yugoslav exhibition of wine was organised in Ljubljana at the newly established Gospodarsko razstavišče exhibition centre and in 1955, the first international wine exhibition. Since then, Ljubljana has hosted an annual international wine assessment. Until 2002, the assessment was followed by a wine fair, where it was possible to taste the exhibited wines. Initially, the fair had the character of a jolly party event, but after 1985 it became more of an educational event with an emphasis on the re-education of consumers, through lectures and guided tastings, into cultured wine drinkers. Unfortunately, there was not enough stress on marketing and after 2002 the fair did not take place, whereas the international assessment continued. I would like to see the wine fair re-established, as it made a great contribution towards public knowledge about winemakers and their products, as well as to the general wine-drinking culture.



A brochure containing the results of the assessment of wine samples, fruit juices and wine packaging at the 6th international wine fair in Ljubljana, 1960.



Slovenija vino advertisement. In: *Razvoj, stanje in perspektive vinogradništva Jugoslavije* (Development, current state of affairs and the future of Yugoslav viticulture) published by the Preparatory Committee for the organisation of the 1st Yugoslav wine exhibition in Ljubljana, 1954, between pages 14 and 15.

For seven years now, a wine festival has been held in Ljubljana and the stress here is on professionalism. In addition, the annual agricultural and food fair in Gornja Radgona, which started in 1963, is also gaining in importance. The fair includes a wine assessment and a fair where the sampled wines are sold and which is attended by a large number of Slovene winemakers.



The Japanese wine assessment experts Shigeki Kida and Toshihiko Tsukamoto with Dušan Terčelj at the 49th assessment of wine samples in Ljubljana, 2003. Photo: Miloš Toni.



The title page of the catalogue accompanying the 9th Slovene wine festival (Infos Ljubljana), which is an excellent opportunity for socialising and talking with winemakers and other wine lovers. Ljubljana, 2006. More on: [www.islovenskifestivalvin.si](http://www.islovenskifestivalvin.si).



Bread baked in a wood-burning oven and grapes. The agricultural festival in Svečina, 2006. Photo: Staša Cafuta.

# Wine and food



Until the appearance of vine-lice, vineyards included grapevines of different varieties, which produced just one type of blended wine, which was then named according to its origin: *Vipavec*, *Bizeljčan*, *Haložan*, etc. Thus only one type of wine was consumed at a meal and other social occasions. The only difference lay in whose wine was the best. Every caterer strove for his establishment to have a good reputation and that was only possible if the wine was good. Only the aristocracy and the richer townspeople were able to afford wines of different origins and those that were known as “sweet”. Valvasor categorised wines as sweet, i.e. better wines with less acidity, dry and harmonious. He only used these categories for wines from Primorska. Ivo Zupanič says that in Styria wine was classified by the acid content and the price reflected this. Less acidic wines had a higher price as they were considered better quality.



A feast for the members of the Ptuj leather guild, 1769, oil on canvas, 62 x 92.7 cm, 1769. Source: Ptuj Regional Museum.

Wine has always been a part of sustenance. Nowadays, this role is emphasised even more and it is recommended that wine is consumed exclusively with food. Over the last hundred and fifty years great changes have occurred in the production of grapes and wine. The consumption of wine has changed, too. The introduction of new, high quality varieties and modern methods of wine production have led to a better and more varied selection

of wines on the market. We now have wines with more finesse in aroma and taste. The sensory art of smelling and tasting food and wine has progressed, striving to find the best combinations of the two. For a long time, the French were far ahead in this regard as they consumed high quality wines with refined food in the preparation of which many spices and herbs were used. They established some international rules regarding the choice of wine and food:

- White wine is consumed with “white” meat, i.e. fish and poultry;
- Red wine is consumed with red meat, in particular game;
- Only dry wines should be consumed with food, except with desserts that require wine with some residual sugar;
- Young wines should be drunk before older ones;
- Light wines should be drunk before high quality wines;
- White wines should be consumed before red wines;
- The higher the quality of food, the higher should be the quality of the wine;
- White or sparkling wine can be served as an aperitif;
- Strong alcoholic drinks are served after food;
- The right temperature of wine is very important: white wine should be served at 10-12 °C and red at 14-18 °C.

These French rules were the first of their kind and still apply. Another rule must be added, though: the aroma and taste of the food must be in harmony with the aroma and taste of the wine. But rules are no longer adhered to as strictly as they used to be, be it with regard to dress code or good manners or, indeed, food and drink. Everything is more relaxed and new ways and combinations are sought after.



The assessment of stew in comparison with selected wines. The Ptuj Lion's Club *obarjada* (stew festival). Ptuj, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



Bread is an irreplaceable component of wine tastings, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

I believe that we must apply the new trends as well as listening to tradition. There is no point in demanding that people from Štajerska, who have been drinking white wines all their lives, start drinking red wine with red meat or with game. In the extensive range of the aromas and flavours of white wines, a person from Štajerska will be able to select one that is to his or her taste. The same goes for people from the Mediterranean: we would never start persuading them to drink white wine with fish. They will simply choose a lighter, less tart red wine. There is also a great variety of blended wines, both red and white and with different provenances, even with the special personal note of a specific winemaker.

I also believe that the declarations of which wine is recommended with which food that are found in specialist and popular literature are just clichés that fail to follow the most important rule of all: “wine must be in harmony with food”. Every chef gives the food he or she prepares a special character with regard to taste by adding varying amounts of different spices and herbs and every winemaker does the same with his or her wine. This is why there are so many different Chardonnays, Cabernet Sauvignons and other wines that come from the same variety. Wines from the same variety and the same provenance do not necessarily

have the same aroma and flavour. Thus we have to choose the wine that will most suit the food we prepare at home; and in restaurants we should consult the sommelier. I remember how I was once in company asked to choose the wine to be served with individual dishes. I suggested a high “predicate” wine with the dessert without actually trying the food first. The dish had a pronounced taste of cinnamon, which did not suit the wine at all and I had to advise my companions to rinse their mouth with water.

Clichéd recommendations perhaps suit simple, ordinary dishes that we sometimes label peasant food, although this description is not always accurate. These dishes suit a quality wine without much of an aroma, but with a nice bouquet. Thus, for example, *Cviček* or a red from Dolenjska would go well with roast pork or blood sausage.

Even the old Romans had a saying: “*De gustibus non est disputandum*” meaning ‘in matters of taste there is



Hospitality in a Haloze wine cellar: dry salami from pork and boar meat and the “house” white wine. The Flajs wine cellar, Majski vrh, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

no dispute'. Wine is drunk with food for pure enjoyment and for the improvement of our appetite and digestion. And if the wine is supposed to supplement and improve the quality of the food, then the selection of wine is up to each individual. The perception of the aroma and flavour are dependent on how well our sensory abilities are developed, how high our threshold of perception is and which aromas and tastes we find pleasant and unpleasant. This is why strict rules on which wines are to be served with which foods are of benefit only those who do not know much about wine.

In the consumption and enjoyment of wine, temperature, the choice of glasses, proper service, ambience and everything else that affects our mood are also very important. It is always good if the host knows the characteristics of the available wines so that he or she can impart it on the guests if they so desire.



An important new wine and culinary event is the international salon of wine and delicatessen products *VinDel*, held for the first time in Maribor in October 2008, organised by Zavod SloVino.

Wine still life. Source: The Brič wine cellar.

## *Oenologists and sommeliers*

Both these professions require well-developed sensory abilities in order to perceive aromas and flavours even in small quantities, so in this regard both need a very low sensory threshold. It is an oenologist's job to produce as good a wine as possible, i.e. to exploit the natural characteristics of grapes to their maximum and, using technological procedures, to achieve the highest possible quality of wine. It is very useful here to be able to perceive finesses as well as any shortcomings. But it is not the job of an oenologist to prepare a wine for a particular dish: that task is the sommelier's. This is why they have to be very familiar with the aromas and flavours of wines and food. Only someone who is a good taster can have a truly good knowledge of food and drink.



Oenologists have their own professional society of winegrowers and winemakers. Sommeliers in Slovenia are united in two societies, based in Maribor and Nova Gorica. The latter is, via the society of Italian sommeliers, also a part of an international organisation. There are three levels of courses for sommeliers: each includes 80 hours of theoretical and practical work, and after the exams at all three levels students can work as sommeliers, i.e. advising on food and drink, usually in elite hotels and restaurants. Most Slovene sommeliers have completed catering school.



The sommelier's outfit and equipment, 2006.  
Photos: Staša Cafuta.

I would like to advise those who like wine to attend sommelier courses even if they do not intend to work in this profession, as it will improve their enjoyment of food and drink. It is also useful if winegrowers who themselves produce bottled wines, as well as oenologists, improve their culinary knowledge.



A sommelier team at the Prestige TOP 30 wine tasting. The Zlati grič golf course, Slovenske konjice, 2004.  
Photo: Zavod SloVino.



Wine enlivens and opens up the soul, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

# *Wine and health*

Wine is a drink whose main component is alcohol, without which wine would not be wine. Alcohol can have either harmful or medicinal effects on the human organism – it all depends on the quantity consumed, just like with any medicine. However, wine is not just an alcoholic solution, but contains a myriad of other substances which may also have a positive or negative effect.

The alcohol in wine provides energy and can replace a part of the calories consumed with food when we are working hard in the open air. The alcohol contained in one litre of wine supplies about 750 calories. Nowadays, with all the technology we have, there are very few types of work that demand a great deal of physical energy which could beneficially be partly replaced with one or two litres of wine a day. American authors advise that only up to 6 percent of one's daily caloric needs should be supplied by the alcohol in wine. For a man this means 0.3 litres of wine with a 9 percent alcohol content. French experts, on the other hand, allow 20 percent of caloric value to be consumed in the form of wine, i.e. 0.9 litres of wine with a 9 percent alcohol content or 0.75 litres of wine with a 12 percent alcohol content. Other substances in wine also supply energy.

The effect of alcohol on fats is beneficial as it helps dissolve them. In food, the harmful substances are lipoproteins, such as the harmful LDL cholesterol, which collects on the walls of blood vessels, causing them to narrow or even become blocked – i.e. atherosclerosis or cardiovascular disease. Atherosclerosis leads to heart attacks, cardiac arrests and strokes. In order to prevent it, or to at least slow down the process of the narrowing of blood vessels, it is important to consume healthy food and to adopt a healthy lifestyle, such as plenty of exercise in the fresh air and the reduction of stress. The tendency for the blood vessels to narrow may be genetically determined. It is also increased by free radicals, i.e. the products of metabolism and oxygen, which enter the organism through breathing and oxidise fats. Free radicals can cause numerous other diseases. Antioxidants, which are obtained from food, protect against free radicals as they prevent the oxidation processes. So free radicals and antioxidants must be balanced if we are to preserve our health: if free radicals prevail, they can cause many health problems with their oxidising power. Moderate consumption of alcohol has a positive effect: it increases the protective HDL cholesterol and lowers the LDL cholesterol. Unsaturated fatty acids (oleic acid in oil) lower the LDL cholesterol level in blood and increase the HDL cholesterol.

In wine, particularly in red wine, there are other components that act as antioxidants, binding free radicals. These are polyphenols, in particular flavonols, which consist of around 20 percent catechins, 10 percent antocyanins and 70 percent pro-antocyanins. They do the following:

- prevent oxidation, in particular oxidation of fats in the body;
- slow down the adhesion of blood platelets;
- prevent the oxidation of the bad LDL cholesterol and slow down atherosclerosis, the narrowing of arteries;
- cause the widening of blood vessels;
- have a mild antimicrobial effect.



With wine we share celebratory and intimate moments. It can bring pleasure into our everyday life, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik

When studying the spread of atherosclerosis, researchers found that in France there were fewer cardiovascular problems, such as heart attacks and strokes, than in the northern countries and America, although the French consume food that is equally rich in fat; however, they drink more red wine, which has an antioxidant effect. In 1991, American television in a programme on wine called this the “French paradox” and after the programme there was a marked increase in the consumption of red wine in the rest of the world. Research shows that red wine has a protective effect with regard to atherosclerosis even if we drink only 1 to 2 glasses. Andreja Vonzo from the Agricultural Institute of Slovenia as a young researcher studied the absorption of antocyanins in rats and found that grape antocyanins in the stomach quickly get absorbed into the bloodstream. Chemically unchanged antocyanins were identified in the blood, liver, kidneys and brain even after only ten minutes of absorption and as such were able

to act as antioxidants at the cell level. The differences between absorption rates of different animals are considerable.

Having described the positive effects of moderate quantities of wine, we should look at the harmful results of excessive drinking. The moderate dose of alcohol in wine influences alertness, but with a greater dose it no longer encourages greater activity but rather reduces it. A person loses his or her ability to judge, reason and exercise caution, which is problematic when he or she wants to drive. Alcohol gets absorbed into the bloodstream when still in the mouth and even more in the stomach, but mostly in the small intestine. Alcohol also reduces the acuity of vision, the eyes' ability to adapt to rapid changes of light, and increases reaction time. Through the bloodstream, alcohol reaches the liver, where it oxidises into acetaldehyde and then decays with the help of alcohol dehydrogenase into acetal, which causes liver damage – cirrhosis. The critical limits at which this effect is still prevented are 0.7 litres a day of wine for men and 0.25 litres for women. However, the effect varies from person to person due to the differing composition of enzymes. Wine has a harmful effect particularly when consumed on an empty stomach and when we consume an insufficient amount of essential nutrients, such as proteins, vitamins and minerals. Long-term excessive drinking of wine damages the central nervous system, the heart and brain. In moderate drinking, the alcohol in wine is less harmful than an equal amount of pure alcohol. It has also been proven that the effects of excessive drinking of wine are not the same as those from consuming the same quantity of pure alcohol. Wine has other components which affect the way we feel and this differs from person to person. In some wines, due to unsatisfactory methods of production, there are various substances in increased quantities, which can damage our health: particularly acetaldehyde, sulphur dioxide and its combinations with acetaldehydes, which are released in the acidic stomach environment and slow down the binding of oxygen with haemoglobin. There are also harmful sulphites, biogenic amines, such as histamine, and higher alcohols.

The most dangerous effect of alcohol is addiction, which can be hereditary. In the chromosomes of every cell there are over a hundred thousand genes, each one of which carries

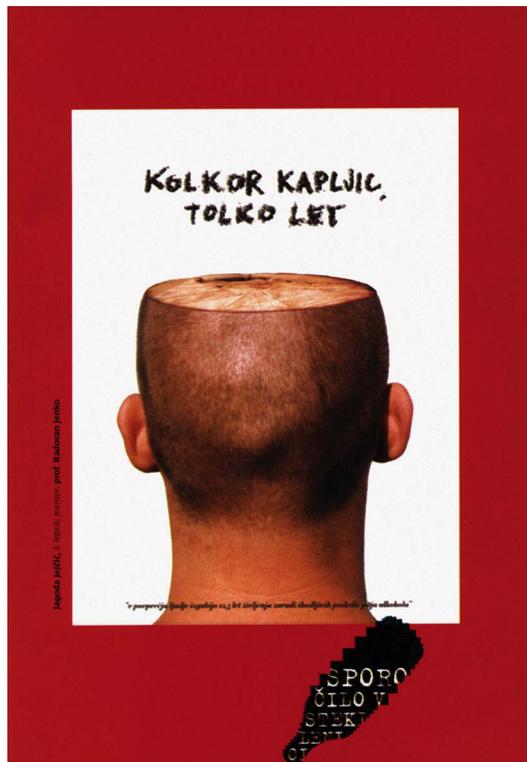


"The saying that in wine there is truth is still taken far too seriously."  
Milan Fridauer Fredi, Aljana Primožič, V vinu je resnica, resnost pa ne / Vinsko pivski aforizmi in karikature (In Wine There is Truth, but no Seriousness / Aphorisms and Caricatures Relating to Wine and Drinking), in the collection *Umetnosti Slovenije, Tovarna tradicij*, Ptuj, 2006, page 50.

*Souvenirs*, 2006. Photo Staša Cafuta.

certain inherited characteristics. Doctors have found that approximately 10 percent of people have a gene that makes them more prone to alcohol addiction. If such a person starts consuming wine, he or she is almost bound to become an alcoholic. Alcohol dependency is a medical condition that needs treatment. Our ancestors said: "A drunk converts only when he falls into his grave."

Nowadays, we recommend moderate drinking of wine at meals and only for healthy, stable adults, not for alcoholics: unstable, depressive persons looking for intoxication and momentary oblivion should not drink wine. The only reliable treatment is complete abstinence from alcohol. Moderate wine drinking is thus beneficial only for those who are able to control their actions and for adults who have

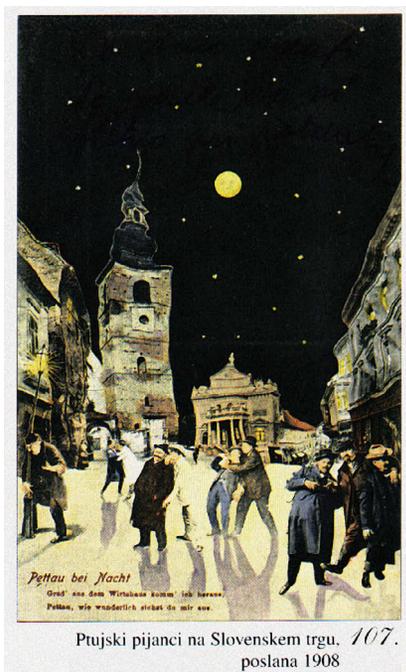


Message in a bottle. This small brochure was designed by Radovan Jenko, CINDI Slovenia, 2003.

Message in a bottle. Young designers from the Design department of the Academy of Fine Arts, under the mentorship of their teachers, designed a series of posters which drew attention to alcohol-related problems at home and abroad. Ljubljana, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

completed their growth and development. It is a well-known fact that in Slovenia there are over one hundred thousand alcoholics.

In 1994 I wrote the following in a short brochure on drinking habits "The main problem of drinking wine is excessive consumption at inappropriate times. With regard to alcohol poisoning we talk about drunkenness and when this becomes a chronic condition about alcoholism. The health, well-being and family of an alcoholic suffer greatly. Alcohol in a chronic alcoholic damages the nerves and paralyses the digestive and respiratory systems. Even just small quantities of alcohol (when we do not feel it) reduce our physical and mental capacities, quickly diminishing them even when the alcohol has not yet affected our mood."



*Ptuj drunks on the square Slovenski trg, sent in 1908*

Ptuj at night, 1908. An excellent postcard, which in a witty way refers to the problems of excessive drinking. Franc Golob's private collection.

Civilised wine drinking is moderate enjoyment of wine and its goodness, expressed in its aroma and flavour. This becomes most noticeable with food, when our senses are aroused and our digestion improved. For hereditary and metabolic reasons, the alcohol in wine has a different effect on each individual, which is why everyone has to establish for themselves what their limit is and how much wine they can consume without adverse effects on their organism. Occasional abstinence from wine is also recommended so that we can see whether we are becoming addicted.

Most doctors recommend on average 10 – 20 grams of pure alcohol a day or 2 to 3 decilitres of wine for men and a third less for women, over the whole day with food.

Excessive drinking of wine is not civilised and is harmful.

Wine must thus remain a foodstuff and not be used to drown our sorrows. As alcoholism is Slovenia's national evil, we have to strive for re-education. We Slovenes should learn how to enjoy wine only as food, only occasionally as a slight stimulant, but never as comfort. And as every alcoholic starts off as a moderate drinker and a proportion of moderate drinkers will end up as alcoholics, only strong personalities should be able to consume wine and not those who are driven to despair by any difficulty. I am certain that the issue I am focusing on here again is increasingly pertinent, although some even back then opposed the publication of my brochure. It is understandable that doctors, although they consume moderate amounts of wine themselves, do not recommend drinking or even warn against alcohol.

What do I mean by civilised wine drinking and what sort of daily doses do I recommend?



"Even if you get drunk on the purest of wines, you have a dirtiest hangover the next day." Milan Fridauer Fredi, Aljana Primožič, *V vinu je resnica, resnost pa ne / Vinsko pivski aforizmi in karikature* (In Wine There is Truth, but no Seriousness / Aphorisms and Caricatures Relating to Wine and Drinking), in the collection *Umetnosti Slovenije, Tovarna tradicij*, Ptuj, 2006, pages 52-53.



Friends. The Čurin wine cellar in Kog, 2003. Photo: Boris Farič, the photo library of the Ptuj Regional Museum.

# Conclusion



It is up to us whether we drink wine for its medicinal properties and to improve our quality of life or as an intoxicant. My only wish is that wine should contribute to a better life and that its drinkers should drink in the most cultured way possible. We must get to know wine better in order to be able to drink it and enjoy the full richness of its aromas and flavours. Then we will have a respectful attitude towards it and will know how to value it. We will also value the winegrower, the winemaker and the vintner, who are constantly striving towards improving the wine's quality.

What does wine mean to me? Wine has accompanied us since the beginning of our civilisation and is thus a civilised drink. For Slovenes, wine is part of the national heritage and for many of us even a status symbol. Nearly everyone would like to own a vineyard. Viticulture is in Slovenia developed particularly in hilly rural areas, where it enriches the beauty of our natural environment and offers a high yield.

In wine there is an endless wealth of aromas and flavours. This wealth originates in the diversity of our country, both with regard to soil and climate. In wine, there is such natural richness that it needs no additives which would destroy its identity. It must remain a natural instead of an industrial product with a uniform character. And it is precisely in its naturalness where its mystery and romanticism lies.

Wine is like a capricious beauty – you never know how it will behave. From its makers it demands a great deal of knowledge and an ability to recognise naturally given qualities. When we assess wine with our hearts, it reveals to us its mystery and enriches us. Only then we can comprehend all its goodness and begin to respect it, not become addicted.

The diversity of wines on offer provides us with the opportunity to develop modern ecological tourism, which could help save the fragmented viticulture on Slovene hills. Tourism offers an opportunity for additional income to small farms, ensuring their survival while also helping to preserve the beauty of cultured landscapes and cultural heritage.

An individual winemaker can elevate wine from an agricultural product into a creative one. Wine and art have always been intertwined. To me, the winegrowers who can inject into wine their desires and wants – who can create something new, something better – are artists. When someone seeks new qualities in their creations they create something of artistic value. Am I going too far? It is no wonder that so many works of art, even at the beginning of our civilisation, are connected with wine. Ancient Egyptian reliefs showed grapevines and the tasks involved in winemaking. The Ancient Greeks bequeathed us numerous ornaments,

carved in stone, depicting grapes and vine leaves, as well as Dionysus, the god of wine. The Romans imitated the Greeks in their art: around Ptuj and Celje archaeologists have found Roman artefacts with depictions of wine. A medallion with the image of Bacchus from Ptuj has been used by the Commercial Community for Viticulture and Winemaking as the trade mark of Slovene wines. There is also the famous Vače situla, which features scenes of wine drinking.



The motif of the trade mark of Slovene wines was taken from a Roman model for the baking of celebratory bread kept by the Ptuj Regional Museum. The front of the bottling plant belonging to the Ptuj wine cellar, 2006. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

From the Middle Ages and the early Modern Age, when art was mainly connected with religion, there are many artefacts involving wine. How beautiful are the Slovene gold filigree altars on which grapevines wind their way up the pillars. Let us remember Muljava or Podbrje near Podnanos. The same applies to literature. I do not want to start listing examples. You can explore for yourself which literary works talk about wine. There are many of them. I would just like to end with our national pride, *A Toast*, written by our greatest poet, France Prešeren, following a request by Vertovec. We are the only nation in the world which has such a toast calling for peace and co-existence as an anthem. This, too, is the Slovene contribution towards a respectful attitude to wine.



A creation made from vine tendrils, designed by the fashion designer Stanislava Vauda Benčević, 2004.  
Photo: Ana Zavadlav.



Reflecting on wine, 2008. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

# *Sources and literature*

Adamič, France: Oris slovenskega vinogradništva in vinarstva. Zbornik Biotehniške fakultete Univerze v Ljubljani, 1997.

Belec, Borut: "Nekaj geografskih značilnosti vinogradništva v severovzhodni Sloveniji." In: Gorice in vino. Pokrajinski muzej v Ptuj, 1976. pp. 33 – 42.

Blaznik, Pavle: "Podložniške obveznosti do zemljiškega gospodstva". In: Gospodarska in družbena zgodovina Slovencev. Zgodovina agrarnih panog, II. Zvezek. Slovenska akademija znanosti in umetnosti. Državna založba Slovenije, Ljubljana, 1980. pp. 241 – 278.

Bračič, Vladimir: "Viničarstvo". In: Gorice in vino. Pokrajinski muzej v Ptuj, 1976. pp. 73 – 84.

Čuš, Jožef: "Viničarji". In: Gorice in vino. Pokrajinski muzej v Ptuj, 1976. pp. 88 – 110.

Darovec, Darko: Davki nam pijejo kri. Annales majora, Koper 2004. Zgodovinsko društvo za južno Primorsko Univerze na Primorskem.

Darovec, Darko (ed.) Dežela Refoška. Knjižnica Annales. Zgodovinsko društvo za južno Primorsko, Koper 1995.

Dionizij, Amfora: Vinski tabernakelj. Obzorja, Maribor 1981.

Dular, Andrej: Pij, kume moj dragi. Dolenjska založba, Novo mesto 1994.

Flanzy, Claude: Oenologie. TEC, Lavoisier, Paris 1998.

Gačnik, Aleš: Vinologija – mogoče in nemogoče v raziskovanju ljudi in vina. Diplomski naloga na oddelku za etnologijo, Filozofske fakultete, Ljubljana 1990.

Geay, Louis: Le guide des vins. Editions de la courtille 1975.

Gregorčič, Ana, Kocjančič, Mitja, Terčelj, Dušan and Pajk, Iva: "Der Gehalt an einigen aromatischen Substanzen von Eichenfassern verschiedener Arten (quercus petraea und quercus robur)". In: Mitteilungen Klosterneuburg, Rebe und Wein. Klosterneuburg 1995, pp. 49 – 56.

Gruden, Josip: Zgodovina slovenskega naroda. Mohorjeva družba Celje, Celje, 1992. (original: 1910 - 1916).

Guimberteau, Guy. "Le bois et la qualité des vins et eau-de-vie". In: Journal International des Sciences de la Vigne et du Vin. Vigne et Vin, Publications Internationales, Bordeaux 1992.

Hrček, Lojze and Korošec Koruza, Zora: Sorte in podlage vinske trte. Slovenska vinska Akademija Veritas, Ptuj 1996.

Kapš, Peter: Vino in zdravje. Erro, Novo mesto, 1997.

Kapš, Peter: "Vino in zdravje". In: Vino – hrana, zdravje 2000. Strokovni posvet. Zbornik referatov, Poslovna skupnost za vinogradništvo in vinarstvo Slovenije, Celje 2000, pp. 15 – 20.

Kocjančič, Mitja: Prispevek k določevanju porekla sladkorja v vinih Republike Slovenije s pomočjo nuklearne magnetne resonance (NMR). Disertacija. Prehrambeno tehnološki fakultet sveučilišta u Zagrebu, 1995.

Kodre, Elena: Orehovica – 500 let. Občina Vipava, Vaška skupnost Orehovica 1999.

Kos, Milko: Srednjeveška Ljubljana. Kronika, časopis za slovensko krajevno zgodovino, Ljubljana 1995.

Kuljaj, Ivo: Črna Kraljica, vinstvo Bele Krajine. Magnolija, Ljubljana 2000.

Kuljaj, Ivo: Zidanice. Magnolija, Ljubljana 2003.

- Kuret, Niko: Maske slovenskih pokrajin. Cankarjeva založba Slovenije, Znanstveno raziskovalni center SAZU, Ljubljana 1994.
- Kuret, Niko: Praznično leto Slovencev. Družina, Ljubljana 1989.
- Kveder, Marjan (ed.) VINO in zdravje. Mednarodni simpozij, povzetki. Institut za higieno Medicinske fakultete Ljubljana, Poslovna skupnost za vinogradništvo in vinarstvo Slovenije, Ljubljana 1994.
- Levstik, Fran: Martin Krpan z Vrha – Potovanje od Litije do Čateža. Mladinska knjiga, Ljubljana, 1978.
- Medved, Drago: Trta življenja. Kmečki glas, Ljubljana, 1992.
- Medved, Drago: Vinski brevir. Rokus, Ljubljana, 1997.
- Medved, Drago: Stoletne gostilne na Slovenskem. Pozoj, Velenje 2003.
- Melik, Anton: "Razvoj Ljubljane". In: Geografski vestnik V./VI. Ljubljana, 1930.
- Melik, Vasilij: Slovenci 1848 – 1918. Littera, Maribor 2002.
- Navarre, Collete: L'Oenologie. Tec, Lavoisier, Paris 1994.
- Navarre, Collete and Langlade, Françoise: L'Oenologie. (5e édition). TEC, Lavoisier, Paris 2002.
- Nemanič, Julij: Spoznavajmo vino. Kmečki glas, Ljubljana 1996.
- Nemanič, Julij: Seminar o senzorični analizi vin. Prikazi in informacije 205. Kmetijski inštitut Slovenije, Ljubljana 1999.
- Ozimič, Doroteja: Vinogradništvo in vinske ceste kot element razvoja podeželja na primeru podpohorske vinske turistične ceste. Magistersko delo. Univerza v Ljubljani, Biotehniška fakulteta, oddelek za agronomijo, Ljubljana 2000.
- Ozimič, Doroteja and Vodovnik, Tadeja. (eds.) Laški rizling. Zbornik ob 110-letnici rojstva g. Iva Zupaniča. Kmetijski zavod Maribor, 2000.
- Pokorn, Dražigost: VINO in življenje. Gospodarsko razstavišče, Ljubljana, 1989.
- Pokorn, Dražigost: "VINO in zdravje v Republiki Sloveniji". In: VINO in zdravje. Mednarodni simpozij, Zbornik povzetkov. Ed.: Kveder Marjan, Ljubljana 1994, str.: 30 –35.
- Pokorn, Dražigost: "VINO kot del zdrave prehrane". In: VINO – hrana, zdravje 2000. Strokovni posvet, Zbornik referatov. Poslovna skupnost za vinogradništvo in vinarstvo Slovenije, Celje 2000, pp. 8 – 14.
- Prunk, Janko: Vodnik po slovenskih vinorodnih okoliših. Grad, zbirka BIO, Ljubljana 1994.
- Puissais, Jean (ed.) Précis d'initiation à la dégustation. L'Institut technique du vin, Paris 1969.
- Rajher, Zdenko (ed.) VINO-hrana, zdravje 1998. Strokovni posvet. Zbornik referatov. Poslovna skupnost za vinogradništvo in vinarstvo Slovenije, Celje 1998.
- Rosa, Jurij: Št. Vid – Podnanos. Pokrajinski arhiv v Novi Gorici 1996.
- Santonino, Paolo: Popotni dnevnik 1485 – 1487. Mohorjeva založba Celovec, Celovec, 1991.
- Seršen, Tomaž: Wines from Slovenia. Ministrstvo za kmetijstvo, gozdarstvo in prehrano Republike Slovenije. Ljubljana 2002.
- Skaza, Anton: "Zgodovinski razvoj vinarstva na Slovenskem Štajerskem". In: Gorice in vino. Pokrajinski muzej v Ptujju 1976, str.: 54- 71.
- Slovenija in njena vina. Poslovna skupnost za vinogradništvo in vinarstvo Slovenije, Celje 1976.
- Spurrier, Steven and Dovaz, Michel: La Degustazione. Accademia del vino AEB Brescia 1989.

- Statistični letopis. Mestna občina Ljubljana 2004. Center za informatiko, Služba za mestno statistiko in analize.
- Šajn, Vanja: "Antioksidativna mikrohranila. In: Vino – hrana, zdravje 2000. Strokovni posvet. Zbornik referatov. Poslovna skupnost za vinogradništvo in vinarstvo Slovenije, Celje 2000, pp. 26 – 33.
- Terčelj, Dušan: Vina Gornje Vipavske in vpliv na njihovo kvaliteto. Naloga za strokovni izpit na Ministrstvu za kmetijstvo, Ljubljana 1956.
- Terčelj, Dušan: "Étude des composés azotés du vin". In: Annales de technologie agricole. INRA, Paris 1965, pp. 307 – 319.
- Terčelj, Dušan: Značilnosti dolenskega cvička. In: Raziskave in študije št. 53. Kmetijski inštitut Slovenije, Ljubljana 1974.
- Terčelj, Dušan: Vpliv vinifiki kacije in običajnih tretmanov na gibanje barvnih snovi in organoleptičnih lastnosti Kraškega terana. Disertacija. Fakultet poljoprivrednih znanosti sveučilišta u Zagrebu 1983.
- Terčelj, Dušan: "Vertovčevi pogledi na kletarstvo". In: Goriški letnik 11, Nova Gorica 1984.
- Terčelj, Dušan: Poznavanje pijač – Vino. Srednje izobraževanje. Državna založba Slovenije, Ljubljana 1990.
- Terčelj, Dušan: "Gli antociani del vino terrano del Carso (Kraški teran). In: Vini d'Italia, rivista internazionale di enologia. ABC – Brescia, 1991, pp. 33- 42.
- Terčelj, Dušan: Kultura pitja. Založba Vesta, Ljubljana, 1994.
- Terčelj, Dušan: "Pridelava barrique vin." In: Zbornik referatov 1. slovenskega vinogradniško-vinarskega kongresa, Portorož 1996. Slovenska vinska akademija Veritas, Ptuj 1996.
- Terčelj, Dušan: "Kriteriji ocenjevanja vina." In: Vinogradniško-vinarski dan. Prikazi in informacije 185. Kmetijski inštitut Slovenije, Ljubljana 1998, pp. 96 – 100.
- Terčelj, Dušan: "Nekatere pomembnosti pri mednarodnem ocenjevanju vina". In: Enološki dan. Prikazi in informacije 199. Kmetijski inštitut Slovenije, Ljubljana 1999, pp. 75 – 77.
- Terčelj, Dušan: "Zakonodaja mora sloneti na strokovnosti." In: Zbornik referatov 2. Slovenskega vinogradniško-vinarskega kongresa z mednarodno udeležbo. Otočec 2002. Poslovna skupnost za vinogradništvo in vinarstvo Slovenije, Celje 2002, pp. 377 – 383.
- Tomažič, Tanja: "Gostilne kakršnih se pri nas spominjamo". In: Slovenski etnograf, letnik 1976. Ljubljana 1978.
- Tomažič, Jana: Vinska trgovina v Ljubljani v času od konca srednjega veka do konca druge svetovne vojne. Diplomatska naloga na Oddelku za etnologijo Filozofske fakultete, Ljubljana 1990.
- Trdina, Janez: Podobe prednikov. Zapiski Trdine Janeza iz obdobja 1870 – 1879. (1-3 knjige), Krt, Ljubljana 1987.
- Trdina, Janez: Izbrana dela. Črtice in povesti iz narodnega življenja. Sprehod v Belo krajino. Vol. 11. Državna založba Slovenije, 1958.
- Usseglio-Tomasset, Luciano: Chimie oenologique. TEC, Lavoisier, Paris 1989.
- Valenčič, Vlado: "Vinogradništvo". In: Gospodarska in družbena zgodovina Slovencev. Zgodovina agrarnih reform. (I. zvezek) Slovenska akademija znanosti in umetnosti. Državna založba Slovenije, Ljubljana 1970.
- Valvasor, Janez Vajkard: Slava Vojvodine Kranjske. Izbrana poglavja, Mladinska knjiga, Ljubljana 1984.

Vanzo, Andreja: Bioavailability of Wine polyphenols (Biološka dostopnost polifenolov vina). Doctoral dissertation. University of Ljubljana, Biotechnical Faculty, Department of Food Science and Technology. Ljubljana, 2005.

Vertovz, Matija: Vinoreja. Vipava 1994 (original: Blasnik Joshef, Ljubljana 1844).

Vilfan, Sergej: "Soseske in druge podeželske skupnosti." In: Gospodarska in družbena zgodovina Slovencev. Zgodovina agrarnih panog. (II. Zvezek) Slovenska akademija znanosti in umetnosti. Državna založba Slovenije, Ljubljana 1980, pp. 9 – 74

Vilfan, Sergej: "Zemljiška gospodstva". In: idem, pp. 75 – 239

Vilfan, Sergej: "Kmečko prebivalstvo po osebnem položaju". In: idem, pp. 279 – 353

Vilfan, Sergej: "Agrarna premoženjska razmerja". In: idem, pp. 403 – 479

Vilfan, Sergej: Pravna zgodovina Slovencev. Slovenska matica, Ljubljana 1996.

Vivoda, Vido: Malvasia istriana. Annales Majora, Koper 2003. Zgodovinsko društvo za Južno Primorsko, Univerze za Primorsko.

Vodovnik, Anton and Vodovnik Plevnik, Tadeja: Od mošta do kozarca. Kmetijski zavod Maribor, 2003

Vrhovšek, Urška: "Bioaktivne polifenolne spojine grozdja in vina". In: Vino-hrana, zdravje 2000. Strokovni posvet. Zbornik referatov. Poslovna skupnost za vinogradništvo in vinarstvo Slovenije, Celje 2000, pp. 42 – 56.

Wondra, Mojmir: Odvisnost aromatičnih snovi vina od različnih sevov *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*. Doktorska disertacija. Univerza v Ljubljani, Biotehniška fakulteta, Oddelek za živilstvo. Ljubljana, 1996.

Zupanič, Ivo: "Zgodovina vinogradništva na Slovenskem Štajerskem". In: Gorice in vino. Pokrajinski muzej v Ptujju 1976, pp. 1 – 30.

"Štok" at Mestni vrh, 2006.  
Photo: Aleš Gačnik.





Researching and discovering the culture of wine:

Left: Drago Medved, Terčelj's friend and colleague in the Order of European Wine Knights, with his monumental book *Vinska bravura* (Wine Bravura), 2015. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

Upper right: research in the field as part of the cross-border project Malvasia Tour Istra, 2014. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

Lower right: Awaiting a wine tasting at the Festival of Malvasia, 2014. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.



The wine of life, 2006.  
Photo: Staša Cafuta.

# Appendix

## *A speech at the second Slovene viticultural congress in Otočec in 2002*

Wine has accompanied mankind since the inception of the Mediterranean culture, which is the foundation of the European civilisation. Wine was one of the basic elements with which that civilisation was established: it was a drink, a foodstuff and a medicine. It played an important economic role and, due to its special characteristics, also had a symbolic meaning. The Ancient Greeks and Romans had a highly developed culinary art: the enjoyment of different wines with different foods. The writers of that time described the pleasures offered by wine and the richness of its aromas and flavours. The methods of winemaking have been progressing to this day. Wine became a national drink with which we have marked all our festivities and special events. We have learned how to create characteristic wines in each region, each place or locality. That is our wealth, our cultural heritage.

Today, globalisation is on the march: with its uniform industrial production, producing goods as cheaply as possible in order to create the highest possible profit, even in viticulture. Anything goes, as long as it does not harm our health. The fact that everything, even wine, tastes the same is not important. Should we thus drink “McDonald’s” wine? This is what non-European countries seem to want. On the other hand, there are the O.I.V. countries, headed by France, which are in favour of the preservation of tradition, naturalness, specific provenance and diversity. Wine should thus remain an agricultural product (rather than an industrial one) and retain its romantic and mysterious character. It is up to us which way our own legislation goes.

Last autumn, I was given for my birthday the book *The Little Prince*. This is a fairy tale for adults, narrated by a child (the little prince) as he learns about the world and wonders why grown-ups act so illogically. The book contains the thought that if you want to see properly you have to look with your heart, as that which is essential is invisible to the

eye. I would like to apply this to wine. Some people only see profit in wine – a few cents, perhaps, but if we add foreign provenance or powdered tannins, we can double that. If we approach winemaking with our hearts, we see a different image. We see the beauty of our hills, planted with vines, glowing in a multitude of hues in different seasons. In wine, we can see thousands of years of effort in the creation of the wealth of an endless variety of aromas and flavours. We can feel and understand all the worries, hardships and joys experienced by the winemaker. We wish to talk to him, to learn about his personality, which is expressed in his wine. We understand the difference, not just among varieties, but also among wines made by different winemakers and, indeed, of every single barrel of wine. Wine reflects their knowledge, character, the love of their profession and the subtlety they invest in the making of wine.

The richness of our wines lies in their diversity, which is the result of the natural conditions and the love of winemakers. We must not reject this heritage, but pass it on to our successors. I consider winemakers to be artists. Artists do not allow themselves to be globalised. It is them we have to thank that we are a European nation in the broadest sense and that we have our own state.

Should we reject the new winemaking knowledge? Of course not. However, we must adopt it carefully, so as not to destroy that which has been created by our predecessors, but rather ennoble it. We must approach winemaking with love. And how do we express love? The little prince says that with the care, attention and the time we dedicate to nourishing a flower.



Enjoy life, 2014. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

Sometimes, new things are adopted too arbitrarily. Even I, in my youthful enthusiasm, tried to create a Štajerska wine out of a Vipava one. No more fermenting the pulp on the skins. Would it not have been more beneficial to listen to Matija Vertovec, who advised the winemakers of Vipava to leave the must on the skins overnight only, not a whole week so that the wine does not develop an unpleasant taste? The people of Vipava should retain at least some wine with a Vipava character. But that is youthful enthusiasm for you, even though I am pleased that I was trying to improve the quality of Vipava wines. Now, however, we are going to the other extreme, adding tannins to wine.

The grapevine has given me other pleasures, too. My old home in the Vipava area was surrounded by vineyards on three sides, while towards the south, a meadow led to the valley. When I used to get home in the evening, tired, from the Vipava wine cellar, I would sit on the wall in front of the house, listening to the crickets. Autumnal evenings, when the cold is starting to seep in, fill you with a feeling of mortality and melancholy, heightened by the sad song of the crickets. It is like listening to Puccini's *Madam Butterfly* when Cio-Cio San is expecting her beloved, but in vain. At first the music overwhelms you, you can still hear it, but then you become one with it and float away on your feelings. How many times I enjoyed such a scene! Have you?

Let us enjoy nature, preserve it and benefit from the goodness it has to offer. Let us not throw away the thousands of years of efforts by our predecessors, who created such wonderful wines. Let us instead improve their quality and try to uncover the still-hidden secrets the grapevine conceals in its fruit. Let us preserve the wealth we have inherited from our forbears and pass it on to our children.

Globalisation, with its goal of uniformity, will pass; what will be left will be the global struggle for survival. Man will always strive for goodness, beauty and diversity, even with respect to wine. Therein lies our future. These are my thoughts at a time when we are adopting new legislation. Let this also be a farewell and a testament to the fifty years I have worked in this wonderful profession.



Metal eight-bladed *klopotec* beside Zois's trellis at Ptuj. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

# *The Culture of Wine in Slovenia*

## *Summary*

*Dušan Terčelj, PhD*

The wine has been part of the humanity since the dawn of the Mediterranean culture which is the basis of the west European civilisation. The wine was one of the essential elements that helped this culture to come into existence. It meant drink, food and medicine. It had an important economical role and, because of its particular characteristics, also a symbolic meaning. Appreciated by ordinary people, it equally found its place on tables of rulers. The dead Egyptian pharaohs were buried with wine. With Christ, the wine was elevated into a sacred drink.

Old Greeks and Romans excelled in the culinary art which included wine consumption matched with various dishes. The wine production has improved from antiquity till nowadays. The Slovenes too started with grape and wine production pretty soon after their settlement. Wine had become not only an ordinary drink for people, but also a ceremonial one, for the wine helps mark and celebrate important days and events in somebody's life. The Slovenes have created wines typical of every region, place and sun exposure. This is what makes us rich, this is our cultural legacy.

Today, the economic globalisation and the uniformed production are on their victorious march: the cheapest possible production of goods, the highest possible profit; this is true also of wine production. Wine should therefore become pure industrial produce, the theory defended especially by non-European countries, that are still very green in the branch of wine production. European wine-producing countries on the other hand defend the traditional way, natural features of wine, the specificity of provenence, and its rich variety.

It is also my opinion that wine should remain agricultural produce preserving all romantic charms and mysteries.

The richness of Slovene wines lies in their variety. It is the result of natural features and love of a wine producer who has created this variety and will continue it. The wine reflects thousands of years of creative efforts invested by man in order to achieve an infinite number of flavours and odours. The wine deserves our respect. And if a man respects something, he behaves accordingly.

Man will respect wine if he knows its origin and the reason of its existence from antiquity on. Written evidence proves that in the Middle Ages wine grape was cultivated on the whole territory of today's Slovenia. Forests were cleared on hill slopes, and wine grape was planted instead. These were the so-called »gorice« vineyards governed by specific rules. The vineyard rights are the specific form of legal rights. The »gorice« case represents the topmost of the Slovene popular justice kept until the 19th century. In 1584, the archduke Karel confirmed the vineyard code for inner Austria which was written in the Slovene language. This was the first governmental paper issued in Slovene.



The perennial uncovering of wine's secrets. Dr Dušan Terčelj in Stanko Čurin's cellar at Kog, 2003.  
Photo: Boris Farič, photo library of the Ptuj Regional Museum.

The expansion of trade and demands for a better quality of wine resulted in the shrinking of vineyards in the flatland, and their development on slopes favourable to the wine growing. These slopes have always been, even today, planted with top quality grape varieties.

And consequently, this resulted in a high quality of Slovene wines at the same time as in a wide diversity of wine growing regions.

The wine accompanies man in his everyday life, at every important moment in his life: at birth, baptism, recruitment, marriage, death, during negotiations, conclusion of contracts, and many other. Back in time, the wine was drunk only after difficult labour and with nourishing food. But its consumption has been changing with time and different ways of living. Besides that, the level of education, and awareness of its positive but also negative effects, such as addiction, equally matter.

After WW II, the quality of wine has improved. The consumer has become more educated and able to discover the richness of wine, its numerous odours and flavours. More he gets to know it, more his quality and standard of life rise. The wine helps to make life nicer. It is no longer only a stuporous substance, but something agreeable to be consumed in small quantities and for pleasure. In order to achieve a high level of wine consumption culture, people ought to:

- realise what the wine is and what its richness is;
- recognise the wine by its provenence, variety and quality;
- consume wine with food – choose wines according to smell and taste;
- get to know wine-growing regions and wine-growers.

The compounds of wine are of extreme importance. Everybody knows that wine contains ethanol, sugar, acids, probably tannins and some minerals. Far less known are polyphenols which have beneficial effects on the cardiovascular system, and acids which fuse with alcohols during the fermentation process into aromatic esters. Very important are many other aromatic substances which give wine its specific aromas. Changes in the wine composition due to alcoholic and maleolactic fermentation, as well as the redox reactions potential in the wine, cannot be neglected either. Wine compounds directly affect wine's quality which is assessed by specific commissions using the sensory perception. The acquired degree of quality is then marked on a label.

When evaluating wine, the first step is to observe its »looks« - colour and clarity. Follow smell, taste, grape variety or blend, geographic origin, quality and technology of production. The book comprehensively explains the technology of »barrique«, and outlines the future of wine also as eco- and integrated production.

To enjoy the wine, we have to get to know it, first in theory, and then in practice. Different books and other literature, films, videos and similar take care of the theory. But more important is practice. There are various possibilities to practice:

- personal acquaintance with wine connoisseurs;
- specific associations, orders, clubs, fraternities, and similar;
- celebrations involving wine;
- open-door events in wine cellars;
- tourist wine roads and tourist farms.

Tourist wine roads and farms represent an important economic element because of the direct link between tourism and wine production. The true sense of a wine road lies in the fact that wine is offered and sold as cultural goods and not only as agricultural produce. Moreover, it is sold at the very spot of production. In this way, a tourist has an opportunity to experience a wine-growing region in all its various aspects, and to get to know a wine producer in his own cultural environment. It is expected that this is the right way to preserve the existence and genuineness of wine-growing regions, especially in hilly and far distant areas; to renovate villages in these areas, and to stop the shrinking of wine-growing surfaces in order to preserve beauties of our countryside. In Slovenia, there are 20 registered tourist-wine roads, all described with their particularities and characteristics.

The description of wine trade and catering shows that the two have been well developed through centuries, since their very beginning.



Sandra Vučko, Wine Queen of Slovenia 2015. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

International standards are taken into account when talking about wine and food, although nowadays a growing liberty in behaviour often clashes with well established standards in every field of life. It is quite a natural consequence that general liberty affects the wine consumption by breaking well-known patterns. It is up to every individual to find wine which matches a dish and pleases the mouth.



Reasonable quantities of consumed wine are beneficial to our body due to wine's compounds. Such as polyphenols that preserve the cardiovascular system. But on the other hand, wine can be toxic when consumed daily in huge quantities. Therefore, it is not recommended to the youth and those who get easily addicted.

We have to know the wine, its qualities to enjoy and respect it. The level of wine consumption culture should be raised, for with it life standard will raise too. Thus, the wine will no longer be abused, which is precisely what has earned the Slovenes the label of »nation of drunkards«.

She, 2015. Photo: Aleš Gačnik.

# Sommaire

Le vin a accompagné l'humanité depuis les débuts de la culture méditerranéenne, dont est issue la culture occidentale et dont il constituait l'un des éléments fondamentaux. Tout à la fois breuvage, aliment et médicament, il jouait alors un rôle économique important et avait également, grâce à ses vertus, une valeur de symbole. Les gens simples en consommaient, ainsi que les seigneurs. Les Egyptiens en déposaient dans les tombeaux des pharaons. Le Christ l'éleva au rang de boisson sacrée.

Dans l'Antiquité, Grecs et Romains déjà fins gourmets, servaient du vin pour accompagner leurs mets. Quant à nous Slovènes, la culture de la vigne date de nos lointains ancêtres pour lesquels son précieux produit devint à la fois populaire et festif. Le vin marque depuis de nombreuses générations toutes les fêtes et événements importants de nos vies. Chaque région, village et vignoble s'est appliqué à enrichir et à perfectionner le produit de son terroir. Le vin est notre richesse, notre patrimoine culturel.

Aujourd'hui, la mondialisation tend à uniformiser la production et à en réduire les coûts pour un maximum de profits. Il faudrait faire du vin un produit industriel – comme le prétendent notamment certains pays hors d'Europe, le nouveau monde de la viticulture. Les pays viticulteurs européens plaident pour la conservation des traditions, l'aspect naturel du vin, la spécificité des vins d'origines variées et la richesse de la diversité. Je suis personnellement convaincu que le vin doit rester un produit de terroir et conserver son charme et son mystère.

La richesse des vins slovènes réside dans leur diversité due aux conditions naturelles et à la passion des vignerons, qui ont créé cette richesse et continuent de le faire. Se reflètent dans le vin les efforts millénaires de l'homme pour créer des arômes et des goûts d'une diversité presque infinie. Le vin mérite d'être respecté. Si l'on respecte quelque chose, on la traite avec considération.

Chacun pourra respecter le vin quand il en connaîtra l'origine et qu'il prendra conscience du rôle capital qu'il a joué du moyen-âge à nos jours. Des documents attestent que la vigne fut cultivée sur l'ensemble du territoire slovène actuel. Les agriculteurs déboisèrent les pentes douces des 'gorice', les 'collines viticoles', pour y planter des vignobles. Ces terrains furent soumis à une réglementation spéciale, nommée 'Loi des montagnes'. Les dits litiges de montagne représentèrent l'apogée du système juridique de droit civil, qui perdura jusqu'au XIX^{ème} siècle. En 1584, l'archiduc Karl fit appliquer cette loi des montagnes slovène à l'Autriche centrale. Ce fut le premier document gouvernemental à être publié en langue slovène.

Avec l'expansion du commerce, de nouvelles exigences se firent sentir en matière de qualité. C'est ainsi que les vignobles furent progressivement réduits pour finir par se limiter aux emplacements les plus propices et aux cépages de grande qualité qui ont subsisté jusqu'à nos jours. Ceci permit de rehausser la qualité des vins slovènes et d'en conserver la grande diversité liée aux différences entre les régions.

Le vin accompagne l'homme tant au quotidien qu'à chaque étape de la vie, naissances, baptêmes, départs à l'armée, mariages, enterrements, signatures de contrats, etc. Jadis,

le vin accompagnait des repas copieux après de durs labeurs. Avec le temps, le mode de consommation changea avec les habitudes de la vie quotidienne. Outre le mode de vie, c'est surtout l'éducation et une meilleure connaissance des qualités du vin, mais aussi de ses dangers, comme l'alcoolisme, qui contribua à modifier les habitudes.

Après la deuxième guerre mondiale, la qualité du vin s'améliora. Le consommateur commençait à approfondir ses connaissances pour mieux en apprécier la richesse, les nombreux arômes et les goûts. C'est en découvrant cette richesse que chacun pourra améliorer la qualité de sa vie. Le vin l'aidera à embellir son existence. Il cessera d'être potentiellement nocif et chacun pourra déguster ses vins préférés en quantités modérées et pour son plaisir. Pour parvenir à une meilleure appréciation gustative, il faut :

- Apprendre ce qu'est réellement le vin et prendre conscience de sa richesse ;
- Savoir distinguer entre les vins selon leur origine, cépages et qualité ;
- En consommer en complément des repas – et les sélectionner avec soin selon leurs arômes et goûts ;
- Se familiariser avec les différentes régions viticoles et avec les producteurs.

La composition du vin est de la plus haute importance. La plupart des gens savent que le vin contient de l'éthanol, des sucres et des acides, du tanin et quelques minéraux. Beaucoup moins connus sont les nombreux polyphénols, bénéfiques pour le fonctionnement du cœur, et les acides qui lors de l'élevage du vin se lient aux alcools pour former des esters aromatiques. Les nombreuses substances aromatiques qui donnent au vin son bouquet spécifique jouent elles aussi un rôle important. Les transformations sont essentielles pour les fermentations alcoolique et lactique et le potentiel d'oxydo-réduction. De la composition d'un vin dépend sa qualité que des organismes officiels évaluent selon des critères définis et qui figure sur l'étiquette.

Pour évaluer les qualités d'un vin, il convient tout d'abord de vérifier son aspect (couleur et clarté), puis son bouquet (arôme), goût, cépages et assemblages, origine géographique, qualité et technologie de la vinification. Le livre explique en détail la technologie de barrique et esquisse le futur du vin qui consiste, entre autres, en une production écologique et intégrée.

Nous devons donc nous familiariser avec le vin pour vraiment l'apprécier. D'abord du point de vue théorique et ensuite pratique. Pour approfondir nos connaissances théoriques, nous avons à notre disposition une bibliographie, des films et autres matériaux vidéo. Pour la pratique, qui est naturellement essentielle, il y a plusieurs possibilités :

- Contacts personnels avec des oenologues ;
- Associations professionnelles ou culturelles, clubs, confréries, etc. ;
- Visites guidées et dégustations ;
- Journées portes ouvertes des caves à vin ;
- Routes des vins, entreprises vinicoles.

Les routes des vins avec les fermes auberges vigneronnes sont un élément important de l'économie car ils lient le tourisme à la viticulture et à ses produits. Leur but est de présenter le

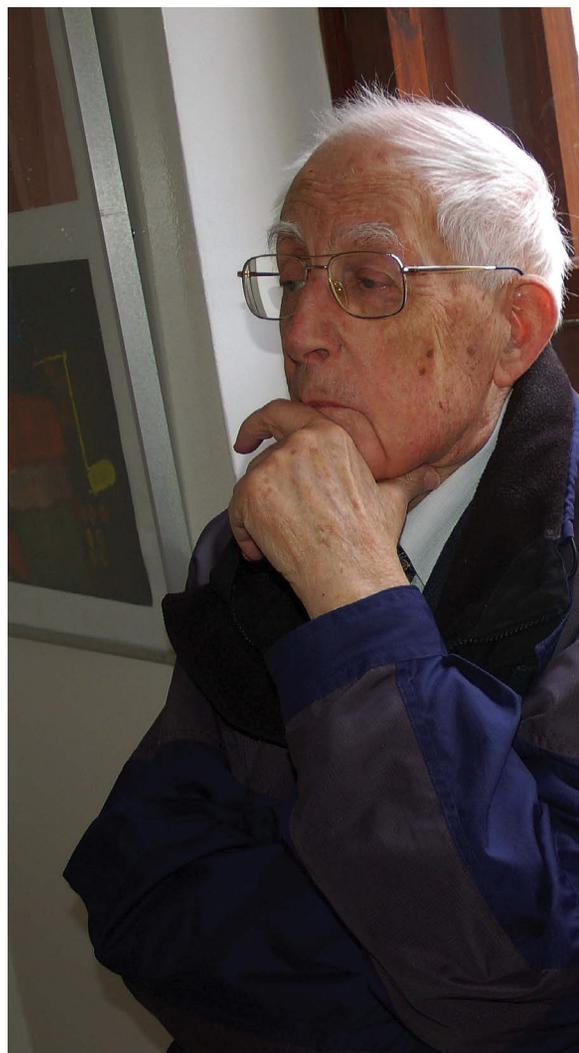
vin comme un bien culturel et pas seulement comme un simple produit de consommation ; le vin est vendu à l'endroit même où il est produit. Chacun peut profiter de l'occasion pour découvrir le paysage viticole sous tous ses aspects et faire connaissance avec les vignerons et leur milieu culturel. Nous estimons pouvoir ainsi parvenir à assurer la pérennité de nos régions viticoles, surtout dans les régions montagneuses et peu développées, rénover les villages qui s'y trouvent, arrêter le défrichage des surfaces viticoles et conserver les beautés de notre paysage. En Slovénie, vingt routes du vin touristiques sont officiellement enregistrées avec les descriptions de leurs caractéristiques respectives.

Une étude approfondie du commerce du vin et de l'hôtellerie nous révèle que ces deux branches de l'économie furent bien développées pendant toutes les périodes historiques de notre pays..

En ce qui concerne la consommation de vin aux repas, il existe des règles bien établies au niveau international, mais la période actuelle permet plus de liberté vis-à-vis des normes établies dans tous les domaines et notre consommation de vin en est par conséquent directement affectée. Nous abandonnons les modèles prescrits. Nous devons nous-mêmes trouver un vin qui corresponde à la fois au plat choisi et à notre goût.

Correctement dosées, les composantes du vin peuvent être bénéfiques à notre organisme. Aujourd'hui, nous soulignons l'importance des polyphénols, qui protègent notre système cardiovasculaire. Consommé quotidiennement aux quantités excessives, le vin peut cependant être toxique. C'est pourquoi nous le déconseillons surtout aux jeunes et à toute personne susceptible de développer une dépendance à l'alcool.

Nous devons apprendre à connaître les vins, à en apprécier les richesses et à y prendre plaisir, pour parvenir à en respecter la noblesse. Nous devons en améliorer l'aspect culturel, qui permettra une meilleure qualité de vie. Le vin ne sera plus une drogue qui nous détruit et les Slovènes cesseront d'être considérés comme d'affreux « buvards ». (« une nation d'ivrognes »



The great teacher ...

# Zusammenfassung

Wein begleitet die Menschen schon seit den Ursprüngen der mediterranen Kultur, die die Basis der westeuropäischen Zivilisation darstellt. Er war eines der Grundelemente dieser Kultur. Weil Wein sowohl als Getränk und Nahrungsmittel, als auch als Medizin diente, war er gleichermaßen bei der Oberschicht wie auch beim einfachen Volk beliebt. Aus diesem Grund hatte er nicht nur einen großen wirtschaftlichen sondern auch symbolischen Wert. Im alten Ägypten war Wein sehr beliebt als Grabbeigabe für gestorbene Pharaonen und Jesus Christus machte ihn sogar zum sakralen Getränk.



... and his "apprentice", 2007. Photo: Martin Vičar.

Schon die alten Griechen und Römer wussten um die kulinarische Kunst des Weingenußes beim Essen. Diese Kunst hat sich bis heute ohne größere Veränderungen erhalten und erfreut sich weiterhin größter Beliebtheit. Die Weinanbautechnik dagegen hat sich mit der Zeit ständig verändert und vervollständigt. Auch im heutigen Slowenien fing man schon kurz nach der Ansiedlung mit dem Weinanbau an. Wein wurde dadurch zum Volksgetränk aber auch zum Festgetränk. Er wurde obligatorischer Teil so ziemlich jedes wichtigeren Ereignisses im Leben. Die Slowenen entwickelten mit der Zeit charakteristische Weine, die durch ihre Herkunft und verschiedene Anbauhöhen geprägt sind. Dies ist nationales Kulturgut und unser kulturelles Erbe.

Heutzutage gehen die wirtschaftliche Globalisierung und die vereinheitlichte Produktion Hand in Hand. Das Ziel ist es alle Produkte so kostensparend wie möglich herzustellen und dadurch einen großen Gewinn zu erlangen, auch im Weinbau. Der Wein soll also ein Indus-

trieprodukt werden – diese These wird vor allem außerhalb Europas, von den Neulingen im Weingeschäft, befürwortet. Die europäischen Weinanbauländer dagegen wollen die Tradition, die Natürlichkeit des Weines, die Spezifität der Herkunft und die Vielfalt erhalten. Auch ich bin der Meinung, dass Wein ein Agrarprodukt bleiben soll, in dem ein Hauch Romantik und Mystik steckt.

Die Besonderheit der slowenischen Weine ist ihre Vielfalt. Sie sind das Produkt der natürlichen Bedingungen und der Liebe des Winzers, der diese Kostbarkeit erschafft. Wein verdient unseren Respekt. Wenn man etwas respektiert, wird dies auch mit Respekt behandelt.

Der Mensch wird den Wein nur dann respektieren, wenn er seine Herkunft und seine Bedeutung vom Altertum bis heute versteht. Es gibt Aufzeichnungen, die belegen, dass im Mittelalter auf der gesamten Fläche Sloweniens Weinanbau betrieben wurde.

Wälder in niedrigeren Bergregionen wurden gerodet und Weinreben angepflanzt. Dies waren Weinberge, die wegen ihrer hohen Lage besondere Regeln brauchten. Das Bergrecht ist eine eigene Art von Rechtsordnung und stellt den Höhepunkt der slowenischen Volksjustiz dar. Im Jahr 1584 besiegelte Erzherzog Karel die Bergordnungen für Innerösterreich, die auf Slowenisch geschrieben waren. Dies war das erste Regierungsschreiben in slowenischer Sprache.

Durch den Weinhandel und die steigenden Qualitätsanforderungen haben sich die Weinbergflächen ständig verkleinert und blieben nur an ausgeprägten Weinbaugebieten erhalten. In diesen Weinbergen werden bis heute nur hochwertige Rebsorten angebaut. Dies ermöglicht sowohl die hohe Qualität als auch die Vielfältigkeit der slowenischen Weine.

Wein ist unser ständiger Begleiter im alltäglichen Leben, aber auch bei wichtigen Ereignissen: bei Geburten, Taufen, Hochzeiten, Todesfällen, Neuanstellungen, beim Schließen von Verträgen und Ähnlichem. Früher wurde Wein vor allem bei schwerer Arbeit und beim Essen getrunken.. Doch die Art des Weingenusses hat sich im Laufe der Zeit durch den Wandel des Lebensstils ständig verändert. Außer durch den Lebensstil wurde diese Änderung vor allem durch die Aufklärung über die Risiken und das Bewusstsein für die Abhängigkeitsgefahr beeinflusst.

Nach dem zweiten Weltkrieg erhöhte sich die Qualität des Weines erheblich. Die Verbraucher begannen sich in Bezug auf Wein zu bilden. Sie erkannten den Reichtum des Weines, seine zahlreichen Düfte und Geschmacksrichtungen. Je mehr sie den Wein schätzten, umso mehr ermöglichte ihnen dies, ihre Lebensqualität und ihren Lebensstil zu verbessern. Wein hilft ihnen, ihr Leben zu verschönern. Er wird nicht mehr als Rauschmittel angesehen, sondern wird in kleinen Mengen und wegen des Genusses getrunken. Um ein hohes Niveau beim Genuss von Wein zu erreichen, müsste man:

- erkennen, was Wein wirklich ist und ihn schätzen,
- Wein beim Essen verzehren – ihn nach Geschmack und Duft auswählen,
- die Weinsorten, Weinqualitäten und Weinprovenienzen erkennen,
- sich über die Weinanbauregionen und die Winzer informieren.

Die Hauptsache beim Wein ist die Zusammensetzung. Allgemein bekannt ist, dass die Bestandteile Ethanol, Zucker, Säuren und Tannin sind. Weniger bekannt sind zahlreiche

## *Zusammenfassung*

Polyphenole, die sich positiv auf das Herz auswirken und Säuren, die beim Reifen durch die Verbindung mit dem Alkohol aromatischen Ester erzeugen. Außerdem spielen auch weitere geschmacksbildende Stoffe eine große Rolle, denn sie geben dem Wein das spezifische Aroma. Nicht zu vergessen sind natürlich auch die Veränderungen in der Weinzusammensetzung durch die Gärung und das Redoxpotenzial im Wein. Die Weinqualität, die vor allem von der Zusammensetzung abhängt, wird sensorisch von zuständigen Kommissionen bewertet. Die Qualitätsstufe ist auf dem Etikette angegeben.

Bei der Weinbewertung konzentriert man sich zunächst auf das Aussehen (Farbe und Klarheit) und danach bewertet man den Duft, den Geschmack, die Sorte, die geographische Herkunft, die Qualität und die Herstellungstechnologie. Im Buch findet man eine detaillierte Beschreibung der Barrique-Technik sowie Informationen zur Zukunft des Weines, die auch in der ökologischen und nachhaltigen Herstellung liegt.

Um im Wein Genuss zu finden, muss man sich zunächst theoretisch informieren und erst danach praktisch. Für die theoretischen Informationen stehen Bücher, Filme, Video usw. zur Verfügung. Das Wichtigste ist das praktische Informieren. Möglichkeiten dafür sind folgende:

- persönlicher Kontakt mit guten Weinkennern,
- fachmännische Gesellschaft, Vereine, Klubs usw.,
- Programmproduktion mit Weinen,
- Tage der offenen Tür in Weinkellern,
- Weinstraßen und Bauernhöfe.

Weinstraßen mit touristischen Bauernhöfen sind ein wichtiger wirtschaftlicher Faktor, denn sie verbinden den Tourismus mit der Weinproduktion. Der Zweck der Weinstraßen ist es, den Wein nicht nur als Landwirtschaftsprodukt, sondern auch als Kulturgut zu vermarkten. Der Verkauf findet direkt am Herstellungsort statt. Die Gäste haben die Möglichkeit die Weinanbaugebiete in ihrer ganzen Vielfalt zu erleben und den Hersteller in seiner Kulturregion kennenzulernen. Wir erhoffen uns damit etwas für den Erhalt der Weinanbaugebiete zu tun, vor allem in den Bergregionen und in den weniger entwickelten Gebieten. Des Weiteren erhoffen wir uns, die Dörfer in den Weinanbaugebieten zu renovieren und eine weitere Reduzierung der Weinanbauflächen zu vermeiden. In Slowenien gibt es 20 registrierte Weinstraßen, die detailliert beschrieben sind.

Aus der Beschreibung von Weinhandel und Gastronomie ist ersichtlich, dass diese Bereiche in unserer Kultur zu allen Zeiten sehr weit entwickelt waren.

Bei der Suche nach dem passenden Wein zum Essen gibt es einige international etablierte Kriterien. Die heutige Zeit erlaubt allerdings mehr Freiheit und geht lockerer mit diesen etablierten Normen um. Die natürliche Konsequenz daraus ist, dass diese Lockerheit sich auch auf den Weingenuss auswirkt. Wir entfernen uns von den vorgeschriebenen Richtlinien. Dies bedeutet, dass wir uns selber einen Wein aussuchen müssen, der zu einem bestimmten Gericht passt und uns schmeckt.

Wein kann sich wegen der Inhaltsstoffe durchaus positiv auf unseren Körper auswirken. Heutzutage werden oft die Polyphenole erwähnt, die das Gefäßnetz und das Herz schützen.

Doch gleichzeitig kann Wein in zu großen, regelmäßigen Mengen auch sehr schädlich sein. Aus diesem Grund raten wir Jugendlichen und denjenigen, die das Abhängigkeitsgen schon im Körper haben vom Weintrinken ab

Wein muss man kennenlernen, sich darüber informieren, ihn genießen – das wird den nötigen Respekt diesem edlen Getränk gegenüber schaffen. Das Niveau der Weintrinkkultur muss gehoben werden, denn dadurch können wir die gesamte Lebensqualität verbessern. Wein wird somit nicht mehr nur als Rauschmittel dienen und wir Slowenen können endlich das Image eines „Säufervolks“ loswerden.

Under »Zois's trellis«. Ptuj, 2006.  
Photo: Aleš Gačnik.







# About the Author

***Dušan Terčelj*** was born on 7 September 1923 in Žapuže near Ajdovščina, which then came under Italy. His father was a great patriot who sent him, after the second year of primary school, at the age of eight, to be educated in Ljubljana. He attended grammar school in Šentvid and then Ljubljana. After the end of the war, in 1945, he enrolled on an agronomy course in Zagreb, where in his last year at the university he specialised in winemaking. He completed



Medana, 2004. Photo: Miloš Toni

his studies in early 1950. During his university holidays he worked at the Wine Institute in Maribor and on the Pekre and Podlehnik estates.

He commenced his first employment in 1950 at the viticultural estate in Kapela and the Radgona wine cellar, and that same year left to become a trainee at VINO Brežice. He started putting his professional ideas and theoretical knowledge into practice at the Vinarska zadruga cooperative in Vipava, where between 1953 and 1959 he was the chief oenologist and the manager of the wine cellar. The Vipava wines were then high in tannins; they were rough and of a brownish colour as the farmers were in the habit of macerating the grapes on their skins for a number of days. Terčelj strove for the crushed grapes to be pressed immediately so as to achieve smoother, softer wines with a light golden colour, as demanded by the market and as

had been recommended a hundred years earlier by Vertovec. He obtained very good results with a modern method of processing the grapes. During his employment at the Vipava cooperative he also strove for the establishment of varietal quality wines, such as *Rebula*, *Pinela*, *Zelen* and Sauvignon.

In 1959, he started working at the Agricultural Institute of Slovenia, where he stayed until his retirement in 1993. He was a research oenologist and in his later years there also the head of oenology and the central laboratory. As a researcher, he went on a number of field trips to France, which enabled him to cooperate with French institutes. In 1960, he spent six months at the Institut National de Recherche Agronomique (INRA) in Narbonne, where he became acquainted with the research work of Michel Bourzeix on polyphenols. They began to cooperate and Bourzeix enabled Terčelj to join the international research group Groupe Polyphenols. Between 1964 and 1965, Terčelj worked for six months at the Laboratoire de Metabolizme (CNRZ) in Jouy-en-Josas, researching nitrogen substances in wine under the mentorship of M. Fauconneau, who was the head of research into nitrogen in meat, as this institute was involved in agricultural studies. Terčelj carried out his studies into nitrogen on samples of Sauvignon from Ormož, where with paper chromatography he determined the composition of amino acids and was the first to determine the quantities of bases, nucleosides and nucleotides. The Ormož Sauvignon also contained an unusually high level of arginine (30%), which was subsequently confirmed by microbiological method. The results were published in French specialist journals. The experience he gained in France helped him in his research in Slovenia. His field of research was very broad and he worked on a number of issues and published papers on his studies at home and abroad; he also delivered lectures at agricultural congresses. He provided expert advice to Slovene wine cellars and private wine makers when they were introducing new winemaking methods, in particular with regard to red wines, thus contributing to the improved quality of Slovene wines. He was successful because he worked with his younger colleagues in wine cellars on equal terms.

In addition, he cooperated with industry in the introduction of new products, e.g. with the Tovarna organskih kislin, a factory producing organic acids. He also participated in the creation of the production of tartaric acid and in the improvement of pectolitic enzymes in winemaking. Unfortunately, this factory in Ilirska Bistrica had to close because of the environmental harm it caused.

In 1981, Dušan Terčelj completed his Masters studies and in 1983 his doctorate at the Faculty of Agronomy at the University of Zagreb on the colour composition of *Kraški Teran*. Prior to retirement, he worked on the determination of aromatic substances released from new oak barrels made from *Quercus petraea*, i.e. the Kras oak, and *Quercus robur* (the Slavonia oak tree), in the production of barrique wines.

In 1988, he received an award from the Yugoslav Presidency (the Order of Labour with a Golden Wreath). In 1995, he received the Award of the Republic of Slovenia for his research and his life's work in oenology.

His hobby was spreading knowledge about wine, not just Slovene wines but also those produced in other countries. Between 1975 and 2003, he was the technical organiser of the International Wine Assessment in Ljubljana and from 1990 onwards the president of the international commission for the assessment of wine. After 1975, he transformed the Ljubljana Wine Fair into a professional event that strove to educate consumers about wine.

*About the Author*

His slogan is: wine deserves respect. If we respect something, we must behave towards in a respectful way. Let us enjoy nature, preserve it and make use of all the goodness it has to offer. Let us not throw away the thousands of years of efforts invested by our forbears, who created such wonderful wines: rather let us improve the quality of wine and seek the still hidden characteristics of the grapevine. Let us preserve the wealth we have inherited from our predecessors and bequeath it to those who come after us.

Dr. Dušan Terčelj died on 23 November 2013 in Ljubljana.



On "home ground". The Vipava wine cellar, 2006. Photo: Staša Cafuta.





Renski Rizling flowering, Podlehnik, 2006. Photo: Andrej Sajko.











his book is for:

*all lovers of Slovene wine and those  
who would like to become so,*

*all those who wish to become familiar  
with the culture of wine in Slovenia,*

*all the Slovene winegrowers and winemakers  
who strive to produce high quality, natural wine.*



This is precisely what the author of this book is encouraging us to do – to adopt the right attitude to wine. He links wine to culture and to history, invoking curiosity and interest. Some aspects of wine and some of its components are deliberately only mentioned in passing, while others, less well-known to lay people, are emphasised and explained in a simple and interesting manner. For those touched by the book and who wish to delve deeper into the art of winemaking there is extensive literature available on this subject.

**Mojmir Wondra PhD**  
Foreword

From an early age, father would take us round winegrowing areas and wine cellars, teaching us about wine tasting and drinking. I personally always liked most the smell of wine and I often competed with my father to see who would be best at identifying what variety it was. I think this game has been with us ever since those mysterious test tube days. We did not visit only Slovene wine cellars, but also those across a large part of Europe, as well as the best-known museums and historical sites, which my father could so interestingly include in his story about wine.

**Marija Mojca Terčelj PhD**  
The play of mysterious test tubes

The more familiar we are with the history of European viticulture, winemaking and the culture of wine, the easier it will be for us to understand and evaluate our local special features and the more competitive and sought after will be the excellent wines produced in Slovene regions. The journey from the heritage of viticulture and winemaking to the culture of wine and wine tourism in Slovenia seems natural and simple. But it needed to be conceived, mapped out and travelled. And this is what Dušan Terčelj has done for us. Let us make the journey with him.

**Aleš Gačnik PhD**  
From the heritage of winegrowing and winemaking to the culture  
of wine and wine tourism in Slovenia



Dušan Terčelj was one of the most important and internationally respected Slovene oenologists, whose work marked the second half of the 20th century and whose way of thinking became part of the history of winemaking in Slovenia. His extremely rich knowledge and experience was gained in many fields, from working in a wine cellar, as a researcher, developer, promoter and adviser, to being the expert organiser of the International Wine Competition in Ljubljana (1975 to 2003) and the president of the international committee for the assessment of wine (from 1990). His invaluable insights are collected in the book *The Culture of Wine in Slovenia*.

