



The International  
**Wine Review**

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THE WINES OF

# Bulgaria

The Country's Wine History • Winery Profiles • Tasting Notes & Ratings • Personalities + Much More



# The Wines of Bulgaria

## Introduction



**B**ulgaria is one of Europe's newest producers of premium wine. During the past three decades, following the fall of the Soviet Union, Bulgaria has developed a new, modern wine industry. Shedding the vestiges of a large state managed wine production under Communism, Bulgaria today has a young dynamic wine industry of small, medium and large-scale wineries that are crafting high quality wines for wine enthusiasts in Europe and the United States. In this report, our 67th, the International Wine Review examines the recent history of the wine industry in Bulgaria and its transformation into a quality producer of premium wines.

With approximately 36 thousand hectares (79 thousand acres) of vines in commercial production, Bulgaria's vineyard is a little larger than Sonoma County in California. It grows mostly international varieties, but local varieties like Gamza, Mavrud, and Melnik are on the rise. This is good news as our reviews of wines made from those varieties are very positive, and the wines are distinctly Bulgarian.

Bulgarian wine has a lot going for it. Its wine history stretches back thousands of years to the time of the Thracian kings. It has vineyards bordering the Danube, on the Black Sea, and in the vast Thracian Valley, Struma Valley, and Sakar Mountain to the south. It has its own unique, very promising grape varieties; talented winemakers trained at one of Europe's oldest wine schools; a prestigious wine research institute that has developed multiple new grape varieties; wines that compete with the best in the world; great traditional cuisine; and a huge potential for wine tourism. What it lacks is recognition of the outstanding quality and individuality of its wines among wine enthusiasts in the United States and other major markets.

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This report aims to rectify this shortcoming. We begin by examining Bulgaria's long and unique wine history from the Thracians to the Ottoman Empire, Communism, and current times. We explore Bulgaria's diverse wine growing regions, the post-Communist transformation, the grapes and wines, Bulgarian traditional cuisine, and the global market for Bulgarian wine and the need for a more coherent and inclusive education and marketing strategy. We finish with profiles of Bulgaria's principal wineries and reviews of over 200 wines, many of which are available in Europe and the US.

We have little doubt that when restauranters and sommeliers, wine retailers and wine consumers become familiar with Bulgarian wines, they will share our enthusiasm for the wines of one of Europe's newest (and oldest) producers.

Thanks to photographer Victor Demov for the cover photograph of Villa Melnik

# Bulgaria's Top Rated Producers\*

WINE	
Angel's Estate	Medi Valley
Borovitza	Midalidare
Bratanov	New Bloom F2F
Bulgariana	Orbelus
Castra Rubra	Rupel
Chateau Burgozone	Sintica
Damianitza	Tsarev Brod
Domaine Bessa Valley	Villa Melnik
Domaine Boyar	Villa Yambol
Domaine Menada	Vinal Lovech
Edoardo Miroglio	
Ivo Varbanov	
Katarzyna	

\* Wines scored 91 points and higher.

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