

GEORGIA ON MY MIND

By Stuart George

Winemaking is deeply embedded in Georgian culture. Children's schoolbooks show the grape harvest. The 20-metre high Kartlis Deda, or Mother Georgia, statue in Tbilisi is said to represent the Georgian national character: in her right hand is a sword to greet enemies; in her left hand she holds a bowl of wine to greet friends.

Meals are usually drunk with wine, often homemade. Special occasions are celebrated with a supra (feast) overseen by a tamada (toastmaster).

The Georgian language, with a 33-letter alphabet, dates to the fifth century. The Kartvelian "ywino" is still the spoken word for wine in Georgia today. Georgians assert that the word "wine" is derived from "ywino".

The Caucasian mountains in Georgia and Armenia harbour what Patrick E. McGovern, author of *Ancient Wine: The Search For The Origins of Viticulture*, describes as "probably the most ethnically diverse and linguistically rich area in the world."

A long history

Early human fossils were uncovered between 1991 and 2005 at Dminisi, a small town in the province of Kvemo Kartli in southeast Georgia. The fossils are about 1.8 million years old, the oldest ever found in Europe. It was here that archaeologists found grape pips dating to the 5th and 6th centuries BC.

According to McGovern, *Vitis Vinifera*, which accounts for 99% of the world's table wines, originates from the Taurus, Caucasus and Zagros Mountains. The greatest concentration of wild and domestic grape remains from the Neolithic to the Bronze Age (c. 8,000-3,000 BC) is in Georgia.

Nikolai Vavilov, a Russian botanist, claimed that wine was first made in Transcaucasia, the region that is now Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. Revaz Ramishvili, an ampelographer at the Georgian Agricultural University, studied wild grapevines in Georgia and believed that the high morphological variability of the wild plant fitted well with Vavilov's theory that Transcaucasia was the world



centre of the domesticated grape.

Dry weather and dry wines

Georgia is about the same size as Switzerland. For such a relatively small country, it has a very diverse climate and ecology. For example, there are 26,000 rivers in Georgia.

Western Georgia is wet and humid, with annual rainfall of 4,000 mm. The extreme east, however, is as dry as a desert, with only 100 mm of rain per annum. Georgia has many microclimates in which to grow grapes for wine production.

There are more than 500 indigenous wine grape varieties. The main white grape is Rkatsiteli and the main red grape is Saperavi.

In Soviet days there were 120,000 hectares of vines but Georgia's vineyards were cut by 2/3 during Gorbachev's crackdown on alcohol. Today total plantings are 44,000 hectares.

Kvevri

The Travels of Sir John Chardin was published in 1686. In it Chardin describes how wine was made in Georgia: "They hollow the larger trunks of great trees, which they make use of instead of tubs. In these they bruise and squeeze the grapes, and then pour out the juice into great earthen jars, which they bury in their houses, or else hard by... And when the vessel is

full, they close it up with a wooden cover, then lay the earth upon it." Over 300 years later, this is exactly how wine continues to be made in Georgia.

Kvevri are earthen jars in which wine is fermented and stored. In the Georgian National Museum in Tbilisi, there is a kvevri that has been dated to 5,000-6,000 BC, 3,000 years before the Xia Dynasty. Kvevri winemaking is a tradition that spans 8,000 years - or 8,000 vintages.

As Georgians always assert, a kvevri is not an amphora, which refers principally to clay vessels in Greece and Italy that were used mainly for storage and always above ground. By contrast, a kvevri is buried underground up to the neck in the marani (wine cellar) to create a simple form of temperature control.

Like an amphora, a kvevri is usually made from clay but it is a slightly different, conical shape, which allows the lees to fall to the bottom and makes racking easier.

When wine is made everything goes into the kvevri - the grapes with their skins, stalks and everything else. The kvevri is used for all the main processes of winemaking - primary fermentation, malolactic fermentation and storage. The wine sometimes stays for up to two years in the kvevri before bottling.

Into the future

Dissonance and rough edges come naturally to the Georgians. Their polyphonic music is dissonant; kvevri wines can be dauntingly tannic.

The Russian embargo has forced winemakers to find other export markets. This has forced up quality and introduced kvevri wines to a new audience.

"Georgian Wine in Jars" is listed by Slow Food as one of its "Presidia" that "comply with production rules that respect tradition and environmental stability." With 8,000 years of history, Georgian wine looks set to endure for many more years.



惦念不忘格鲁吉亚葡萄酒

文 / 斯图亚特·乔治 (英国) 译 / Jan

种学家勒瓦兹·拉迷斯维利研究了格鲁吉亚的野生葡萄藤，并相信野生植物的高度可变性肯定了瓦维洛夫的研究发现，即外高加索是世界种植酿酒葡萄的中心。

干燥天气，干葡萄酒

格鲁吉亚的面积与瑞士一般大。对于一个面积如此小的国家来说，它的气候和生态却是多种多样的。例如，在格鲁吉亚有26000条河。

格鲁吉亚西部很潮湿，年降雨量为4000毫米。然而东部却像沙漠般干燥，年降雨量才100毫米。格鲁吉亚有很多微气候，适合种植酿酒葡萄以酿酒。

格鲁吉亚有超过500种本土的酿酒葡萄品种。主要的白葡萄品种是白羽，主要的红葡萄品种是沙贝拉。

在苏联时期，葡萄藤的种植面积曾达12万公顷，但在戈尔巴乔夫对酒类的禁管下，格鲁吉亚的葡萄园锐减了三分之二，今天只有4.4万公顷了。

奎弗瑞陶制酒罐

《约翰·夏尔丹游记》一书出版于1686年。书中夏尔丹描述了格鲁吉亚的葡萄酒是怎么酿造的：“他们挖空了大树粗壮的树干用来做桶。在里面他们压榨葡萄，然后把葡萄汁倒进巨大的陶罐子里埋在家里……当容器装满时，他们用木盖子盖住容器，又在上边盖上泥土。”300多年过去了，在今天的格鲁吉亚，葡萄酒仍然是这样酿制出来的。

奎弗瑞是葡萄酒发酵和储藏的陶制酒罐。在格鲁吉亚首都第比利斯的格鲁吉亚国家博物馆，有一个可以追溯至公元前5000年到6000年的奎弗瑞陶制酒罐，比夏朝还早了3000年。奎弗瑞酿酒法是一个跨越了8000年历史——或8000年年份酒的传统。

就像格鲁吉亚人经常声称的那样，奎弗瑞陶制酒罐并不是双耳细颈椭圆土罐。双耳细颈椭圆土罐主要是在希腊和意大利用来储存葡萄酒的置于地面上的粘土容器。而奎弗瑞陶制酒罐则恰恰相反，奎弗瑞陶制酒罐是埋在地下的，以简单的方式

来调控气温。

就像双耳细颈椭圆土罐那样，奎弗瑞陶制酒罐通常是用粘土制作的，但有一点点不同，是圆锥形的，以便酒渣沉淀物掉到底部，分离时容易点。

酿制葡萄酒时，所有东西——葡萄连同葡萄皮、葡萄梗和所有其它东西——都在奎弗瑞陶制酒罐里。奎弗瑞陶制酒罐在酿酒的主要过程，如初次发酵、苹果乳酸发酵和储存等都派上用场。有时候在装瓶前，葡萄酒甚至在那里躺上两年。

走进将来

不和谐和粗燥边缘对格鲁吉亚人来说是很自然的。他们的复调音乐也是不和谐的，在奎弗瑞陶制酒罐里酿出的酒，单宁也可以强劲得使人畏缩。

俄罗斯贸易禁运令迫使酒商寻找其它出口市场。这迫使葡萄酒的品质走上一个新台阶，并把奎弗瑞酒带到新的观众面前。

“罐子里的格鲁吉亚葡萄酒”被“慢食运动”列为其中的一种遵从尊重传统与环境稳定性原则生产的“最好的食材”。拥有8000年的历史，格鲁吉亚葡萄酒看来在未来许多年内仍会广受欢迎。



作者简介

Stuart George, with a 14 year career in the wine industry, visited the wine regions of Europe as well as South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Brazil etc. In 2003 he was the UK Young Wine Writer of the Year. He has also

contributed over 120 entries to the best-selling book *1001 Wines You Must Taste Before You Die*.

斯图亚特·乔治，已从事酿酒业十四年，走访了欧洲酿酒区，并到访南非、澳大利亚、新西兰、美国加州、智利和巴西等地的酿酒区。2003年，他被评为“英国年度年轻葡萄酒作家”，是畅销书《1001瓶你死之前必喝的酒》的作者之一。

酿制葡萄酒已深深嵌入格鲁吉亚文化中。孩子们的教科书也出现葡萄采摘的情节。据说，座落在格鲁吉亚首都第比利斯的20米高的巨大雕像“格鲁吉亚的母亲”也象征了格鲁吉亚的民族性：她右手握着一柄剑以迎接敌人，左手捧着一碗葡萄酒以欢迎朋友。

当地，一般的用餐都会配以葡萄酒，通常是自家酿制的。特殊场合则安排以宴会形式来庆祝，通常由宴会的主持人来组织实施。

拥有33个字母的格鲁吉亚语言可以追溯到公元五世纪。如今，在格鲁吉亚卡特维利语里，“ywino”仍是葡萄酒的意思。格鲁吉亚人声称，葡萄酒的英文单词“wine”源自于“ywino”。

格鲁吉亚和亚美尼亚的高加索山脉庇护着帕特里克·E·麦戈文（《古代的葡萄酒：寻找葡萄栽培的起源》一书的作者）笔下描述的“可能是世界上最多民族、最多语言的地区”。

漫长历史

1991至2005年间，在格鲁吉亚东南边的卡特利省一个名叫德米尼斯的小城镇里，早期人类的化石被发现。这些化石是在欧洲被发现的最古老的化石，可追溯至大约180万年前。也就在这里，考古学家发现了公元前5世纪到6世纪的葡萄果核。

据麦戈文所说，用于酿制世界上99%的餐酒的酿酒葡萄源自于金牛山脉、高加索山脉以及扎格罗斯山脉。从新石器时代至铜器时代（公元前8000年~公元前3000年），最伟大的野生的和种植的葡萄遗迹集中地就在格鲁吉亚。

俄罗斯植物学家尼古拉·瓦维洛夫宣称，葡萄酒最早是在外高加索酿制的。外高加索就是当今的格鲁吉亚、亚美尼亚以及阿塞拜疆。格鲁吉亚农业大学的葡萄品