

## New Georgians

2 Dec 2009 by Jancis Robinson

Since I wrote so extensively about [Russian wine](#) recently, it seems only fair to give a bit of space (not nearly enough, admittedly) to the wine made in the spectacular scenery of its adversary Georgia. Last May we published news of [Georgia forced to reform the wine market](#), which set the scene for some new developments in this cradle of viticulture. A few months later I had a chance to taste the first set of wines released by Schuchmann's new Georgian venture and was quite impressed by some of them.

I was subsequently contacted by Chris Bowling, who has started up The [Georgian Wine Society](#), an outfit specialising in importing wines from Georgia into the UK. He also managed to field a white wine that knocked my socks off. Oddly enough, the Saperavi seemed a little more muted. But perhaps my expectations were too high?



### SCHUCHMANN

#### WHITES

##### **Schuchmann Rkatsiteli 2008 Georgia** 15 Drink 2009-10

From the indigenous Rkatsiteli grape. Pale straw. Leafy nose and rather heavy on the palate. Lots of body here. It's (just ) clean enough but not racy. Hot finish. Tastes more than 12.5% alcohol.

##### **Vinoterra, Kakhetia Rkatsiteli 2005 Georgia** 14.5 Drink 2007-09

I tasted this wine in Vancouver (it had been bought in Los Angeles). A love or loathe wine like the one below but this time more loathed than loved by me. Pale tawny - pretty fresh nose, some appleskin aroma and then it just went dead and dried out on the palate. We waited (hours!) for it to spring into life but to no avail. An 'interesting' amphora experiment but not a successful one.

##### **Vinoterra, Kakhetia Kisi 2006 Georgia** 17.5 Drink 2009-12

From Kisiskevi village in Telavi region. Aged in the *kveri* clay urns that are characteristic of Georgia and which give it a slightly rusty look. Then barriques. Really interesting! Reminds me powerfully of Friuli's and Slovenia's wilder shores - in a good way. Touch of appleskin on the nose, then a hint of very milky coffee. This wine has a real beginning, middle and end. Density. So fascinating and long. This wine is a love or loathe, more than practically any wine I have come across. Relatively low acid. SO much flavour in here! 12.5%

#### REDS

##### **Schuchmann Cabernet Sauvignon 2008 Georgia** 15.5 Drink 2009

Bright crimson. Cool and clean and simple. Very frank. This would probably chill reasonably well. Fades pretty fast though... 12.5%

##### **Schuchmann Saperavi 2008 Georgia** 16 Drink 2009-13

Made from Georgia's signature grape variety. Deep crimson. Confident and fresh and assertive on the nose. Mouthfilling and smooth and reminds me of Mencía. Fresh yet round. Pure and punchy. Super clean. The fruit just about manages to distract from those tannins... held up well in a open bottle. 12.5%

##### **Schuchmann Saperavi 2005 Georgia** 16.5 Drink 2006-09

The colour hardly seems to have aged although the fruit is a tad softer than the 2008 version. Damsons. Punchy. Masses of acid but not aggressively so. 12.5%

##### **Vinoterra, Kakhetia Saperavi 2005 Georgia** 16 Drink 2008-10

Naughty heavy bottle. The oak is a bit too obvious on the nose. This tastes as though someone is trying too hard. The depth of colour is certainly impressive. Sweet and overlaid with 'modern red winemaking', so it's quite difficult to see Saperavi's strong character, alas. 13%

### GEORGIAN WINE SOCIETY

#### WHITES

##### **Teliani Valley Tsolikouri 2007 Racha- Lechkumi** 17 Drink 2009-12

Tsolikouri grapes, which seem to have interesting laurel leaf aromas. Real class and great balance and interest. Long. Quite chewy and long. Really impressive. White burgundy bottle, and a wine with a real beginning, middle and end. Great smooth texture. 13%

##### **Tbilvino, Special Reserve 2005 Tsinandali, Georgia** 15.5 Drink 2010-11

Rkatsiteli and Mtsvane grapes. Aged in oak for nine months. Very slightly stale honey nose - because of the oak rather than fruit, I suspect. Chewy end, a bit astringent. Pretty tart. It has character certainly! 12%

#### REDS

##### **Tbilvino, Special Reserve Saperavi 2003 Kakheti, Georgia** 15.5 Drink 2006-09

Saperavi, Georgia's national red grape. Aged in oak for 12 months. Firm colour, a little sour, a bit of oak influence but not desperately lively or exciting. I wonder whether it is a little too old? Lacks real punch in the middle. 12.5%

##### **Tbilvino, Special Reserve 2003 Mukuzani, Kakheti, Georgia** 16 Drink 2007-11

Saperavi grapes. Aged in oak for 20 months. Polished and quite fiery - something chestnutty about this and it seems to have more energy than the Saperavi. Quite a bit of fine tannin but very appetising. 12.5%

##### **Teliani Valley 2005 Napareuli** 16.5 Drink 2008-12

Saperavi grapes. Mid crimson. Sweet, 'bloody', polished, damson fruit flavours. A little more New World- like and sweet than most. An easy drink with a firm spine and strong personality. A good introduction to Saperavi? 13%

#### SWEET WINE

##### **Marani 2005 Khvanchkara** 14.5 Drink 2007-09

Made of Aleksandrouli and Mujuretul grapes. Sweet and sour but not very sweet. Very astringent and a bit hollow with residual sugar of 35-45 g/l. 11%