

Schuchmann Wines Georgia - 10 Years of Growth



Founded on German investment, Schuchmann Wines Georgia began as a winemaking company but has now expanded into wine tourism, hotels, the agricultural sector, gastronomy and wellness.

At the 2017 Georgian Times Media Holding and GORBI Business Awards Schuchmann Wines Georgia was the winner in the following categories: Best Georgian brand abroad, Development of a traditional field, New export market leader and National trademark - Quality mark. Its General Director Nutsa Abramishvili also won a journalists' award for "Mrs. Charm, visual image, business and public reputation".

As **Nutsa Abramishvili** says, the company has grown significantly over the last 10 years.

"2017 was very exciting. Many important events took place in the sectors in which Schuchmann Wines operates. We began operations in the gastronomy and tourism sectors. The Georgian traditional and modern cuisine which can be tasted at our Karvasla wine bar and restaurant in Old Tbilisi, which use avant-garde molecular forms, is very exciting and innovative.

"We also succeeded in wellness. Our wine spa, staffed with high class wine therapists, is an exclusive and outstanding concept. The procedures of our wine spa, and the indigenous raw materials we use, make this a very interesting product for our guests in Kakheti. We are going to expand in this direction".

What important changes have taken place in the Georgian wine market recently?

Georgian wine is establishing itself on export markets, but the most important event of 2017 was the presentation of Georgian wine at the Wine Civilization Museum in Bordeaux, France, where Georgian wine, agriculture, history and culture were given a prominent place. The country was presented for a very long time, meaning international customers got acquainted with Georgia and

the country now occupies a distinguished position in the global wine market.

Schuchmann Wines Georgia was also successful in international competitions. We participated in numerous contests last year and conducted marketing campaigns for foreign markets with our foreign partners. We promote Georgian wine as a whole through ourselves, as every step we take helps the country's development, attracting tourists, investors and incomes. 2017 was very rich in terms of marketing and awareness raising for Georgia and Georgian wine, and we broke the record in wine sales.

What do you consider to be the company's greatest success?

It is worth mentioning that we have achieved success in market diversification. We have completely substituted the Russian market with the Chinese one, despite the political and financial risks we had always faced there. It is not reasonable to be dependent on post-Soviet countries, so the substitution of Russia is one of our most important successes.

We export our products to more than 35 countries, and will continue developing this portfolio. During 2017 we achieved 1.5 million sales, of which only 15% were made in Georgia. Sales increase by at least 10% annually. We mostly occupy the prestigious and corporate segments of the Georgian market, and are export-oriented because the local market is small. Nonetheless,



less, we have a distribution line which supplies supermarkets and wine stores in Tbilisi and Batumi with our products.

Gaining an ISO:22 000 quality certificate was also one of the most important events of 2017. Our company is oriented on quality all the time. We have our own vineyards, and quality control is performed both in the vineyards themselves and the winemaking process. Most importantly, Schuchmann is already a widely known brand on the foreign market, and this is the merit and accomplishment of each person employed by the company.

What does quality mean for you?

I believe that Georgian wine, and the Georgian values and traditions which we introduce to every guest, will bring additional success to our country and be a contribution to the development of the tourism and wine industry. This is why the focus on quality is of paramount importance. It is simultaneously a highly responsible and individual thing.

Schuchmann Wines Georgia constantly pampers its customers. What are going to offer your customers this year?

Our chateau hosts important meetings. 90% of our guests are foreigners; when they hear our German name they have confidence in us, so we introduce new services and flavours on the strength of this. We create something which makes people happy, based on flavours and feelings.

We are going to produce balsamic vinegar this year. This is a very good product, and will be included in the list of Georgian products we produce for our guests.

How do you assess agricultural policy in our country?

Positively. The existence of state projects, implemented by the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development and Ministry of Agriculture, are very important for the development of companies operating in the agro sector. These projects include "Produce in Georgia", and all those which foster the development of agriculture and tourism. Oftentimes business does not have the opportunity to obtain affordable agro credit, and these projects help the development of business through the provision of cheap financial resources. I would underline the state's great support to the agro sector, its marketing activities and its commitment to the independence of the wine sector, in particular, the removal of subsidies, vineyard insurance etc. Winemaking is a national activity, and following this route will yield great results in the near term.