

Moldova: Europe's Next Hot Wine Destination

More commonly than not, when Moldova is mentioned, not many people have a lot of knowledge about this small East European country that welcomed only 9,000 visitors in the year 2011. However, the fortunes of this small country are about to change courtesy of its sunshine, forest soils and rainfall that are perfect for growing wine grapes. Furthermore, recent events are propelling this country to what in the short future will be a highly revered destination for wine lovers' in Europe.



A recent legalization of wine production in small amounts and some of the stalwart vineyards in Moldova that include Purcari, Milestii Mici and Cricova, without a doubt have the booster rockets for wine production in this region igniting.

A good place to start learning about the development of the wine industry in this country is Carpe Diem which is located in the capital of Chisinau. Here you will find experts that are more than willing to give you a taste from old refineries like Cricova and Purcari to those of the new ones like Mezalimpe, Etcetera and Equinox.

Cricova Wine Tunnels are among the most exhilarating wine places in the world that you can ever visit. This is not only because of the delicious wine but mainly because of the tunnels and caves that store the wine. The wine cellars in Cricova are housed in 15th century limestone caves that have a cumulative length of 74 miles. As if that is not enough, to get here, one has to leave their car about 280 feet below ground and walk the rest of the distance. However, the collection of bottles that date as back as to the early 1900s housed in the moodily lit and opulent cave complex are every bit worth the trouble.



The most notable wine in this region is the Kdrinskoie–sparkling. It is sparkling red wine that is dark and made from the stocks of cabernet sauvignon which helps the wine attain a very rich velvety texture and cherry and blackcurrant taste.

30 minutes north of Cricova is another wine haven in the town of Orhei known as **Chateau Vartely**. This part of the country is better known for its climate that is highly suitable for white grapes and it is also better known for the indigenous Feteasca Alba production from the adjacent vineyards. Arcadie Fosnea is the chief wine maker in this region and even though it is described closer to Chardonnay, the wine is more refreshing and less oaky. The bottle is also utterly satisfying as many have witnessed.

2 hours south east of Chisinau is another great region that is endowed with a temperate climate and conditions that are remarkable for grapes like the world award-winning wine decantor merlot and chardonnay that are made by a newcomer in the industry known as Et Cetera. However, the region is better known for the rara neagra indigenous grape that is famed for producing dark, richly acidic and fruity red wines that have been used widely by Purcari who also produced Queen Victoria's favorite wine known as the Negru de Purcari.



There is a variety of small and outstanding producers in this region. Unfortunately these do not offer on-site tasting. Nevertheless, to get a more profound and comprehensive experience of the Moldovan wine, you can rush down there during the first week of October when the region's wine festival is taking place.

Even with the inexpensive and outstanding wine industry that is gradually becoming a force to reckon with, it may take quite a while before the number of international arrivals starts to rise. Meanwhile people travelling here could enjoy the great wine, the budget friendly eating and drinking and also help to pass the word around.

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