

EUROPEAN
WINE
TREASURES

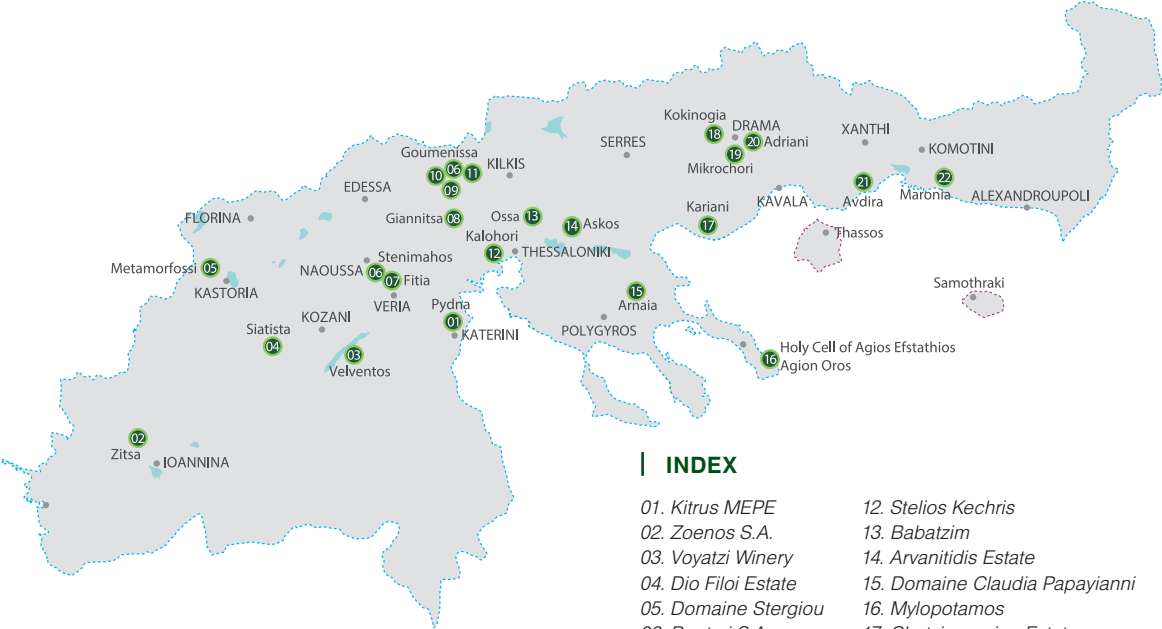


T A S T E O F K N O W L E D G E

Wines of North Greece



NORTH GREECE
ONE OF THE MOST PRIVILEGED
& DYNAMIC VINE-GROWING
REGIONS IN THE COUNTRY



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North Greece is one of the most privileged and dynamic vine-growing regions in the country. It is a large area which extends from the Ionian Sea in the West to the River Evros in the East, and from the northern borders of the country with Albania, FYROM and Bulgaria down to Mount Olympus in Central Greece. The history and tradition of vine-growing and wine in this region have their roots in ancient times. On Olympus, the mythical mountain, the Gods enjoyed drinking Nectar, far from the eyes of mortals. According to mythology, on the lush green slopes of Mount Vermion, in Naoussa, lived Semele, mother of Dionysus – the god of vine and wine



– who roamed around the foothills of Mount Pangeon in Drama. In the incredible mosaic floor of an ancient villa at Pella, the god Dionysus is depicted riding on a panther. Furthermore, Odysseus got the Cyclops Polyphemus drunk on smooth, fragrant wine from Maronia in Thrace.

The company Wines of North Greece, with its prominent winery members, operates in this region, with its thousand-year vine and wine tradition. Small family-run wineries, modern units equipped with the latest technology, as well as some of the largest winemaking companies in the country are located here, producing their wines and inviting us to discover them. And if every glass of wine tells a story about the place and the people who created it, North Greece and its people have many pleasant surprises in store for us.

Wines of North Greece PROFILE

The *Wines of North Greece* Association was created in 1993 in Thessaloniki. Its goal is to support the viticultural and vinicultural traditions of northern Greece while giving local and foreign visitors the opportunity to enjoy our unique brand of hospitality.

A total of 33 wineries have joined forces and agreed upon a set of common objectives.

- Boosting the image of the wines of the northern Greek vineyards while promoting them at home and abroad.
- Offering visitors a complete wine tourism experience in the vineyards and around the beautiful countryside of Northern Greece.
- Supporting Greece's cultural heritage by featuring grape growing and wine-making as well as local cultural activities.
- Creating a general set of rules governing the relationships between growers, wine-makers and wine merchants, with the goal of optimising cooperation between the members, reaching out to consumers while improving the quality of both our products and services.

Local authorities, cultural organisations, local enterprises and other associations



are actively involved in the activities related to the above objectives. These activities include creating signage for tourists, creating folklore museums focused on the Greek viticultural tradition, winemaking and local gastronomy, publishing books and organizing cultural events. Finally, all these activities are organised in conjunction with local festivals while incorporating local history, customs and traditions.

The Wines of North Greece plan to undertake the following projects and activities:

■ Wine Roads of Northern Greece

The WINE ROADS OF NORTHERN GREECE, one of the signature activities of the *Wines of North Greece*, is an alternative tourism initiative quite unlike anything else in the country and an innovative way for any visitor, Greek or foreign, to discover wineries of northern Greece that are open to visitors while having the opportunity to explore the lush vine-growing areas of this part of Greece and experience a host of local cultural activities.

The network of the *Wine Roads of Northern Greece* has grown to include select hotels, restaurants, local producers and companies that provide nature and outdoor activities, in order to create a framework for the support of Greek cultural and gastronomic traditions.

With a host of informative and entertaining events, the *Wine Roads of Northern Greece* continue to play a leading role in support of wine, a key element in Greek cultural traditions since ancient times. Visitors to the vineyards in Northern Greece can experience a total of 8 different routes, beginning in Mt Olympus, home of the ancient Greek gods, continuing north to the Aegean playground of Halkidiki, the Dionysian heartland of Mt Pangaio and ending at the far north eastern region of Thrace.

The Wine Routes of the Wine Roads of Northern Greece

- The Wine Route of the Olympian Gods
- The Wine Route of Epirus
- The Wine Route of the Lakes
- The Wine Route of Naoussa
- The Wine Route of Pella & Goumenissa



- The Wine Route of Thessaloniki
- The Wine Route of Halkidiki
- The Wine Route of Dionysus

A total of 36 wineries maintain an open door policy to visitors all year long for wine-tastings, excursions to the wineries and vineyards, local happenings and events.

■ Organising an annual international wine competition, the **Thessaloniki International Wine Competition**, unique in Greece, with the goal of presenting and promoting quality international wines to professionals and the general public.

Every March, during the Competition, which is organized under the auspices of the **O.I.V. (International Organization of Vine and Wine)**, well known foreign and Greek wine professionals (oenologists, sommeliers and journalists) taste and judge wines from Greece and abroad for the three days of the competition.

The winners of the competition receive their awards at the annual Gala awards ceremony, while the public is given the opportunity to taste the award-winning wines at a wine tasting event every year after the end of the competition.

The ‘**Thessaloniki International Wine Competition**’ is constantly growing as the amount of participating wine producers increases every year. The quality of the samples submitted improves each year as well, providing strong evidence that this competition has become a major institution for Greek wine. In addition, the medals of the competition are universally acknowledged by professionals and consumers both in Greece and abroad.

■ **Organizing gastronomic and cultural events and conferences** with the goal of familiarizing Greek and foreign visitors with our rich wine and gastronomic traditions and culture in association with select dining venues, interdisciplinary meetings and cultural activities.

The established wine tasting event ‘**VorOina**’ (VorOina = a tasting of wines from the vineyards of Northern Greece, Vor-Oina=BopOivά, from Boppάς, Vorras=north, and Oivά=Oina from oinos=οίνος=wine) takes place in Athens, Thessaloniki and other Greek cities annually and is an excellent opportunity for professionals and the general public to taste the current vintage releases of the association’s producers.

Open Doors at the wineries of ‘**Wine Roads of Northern Greece**’: Every year the winemakers and members of the wine tourism network “Wine Roads of Northern Greece” welcome wine lovers to their wineries in a festive mood during the second weekend of May.

Visitors enjoy guided tours, get the chance to taste exceptional wines and the opportunity to purchase rare vintages at special prices while enjoying the many happenings and events during these days.

■ **Providing education** for people interested in wine-related occupations, such as restaurant ownership, hoteliers, waiters, special wine guides, etc.

■ **Participating in and collaborating** with international societies and organizations with similar objectives. The development of this type of cooperation in wine tourism rein-



forces the positive results of our activities as well as aiding the local regional economy.

- Participating in international trade fairs in Greece and abroad.

The vine-growing region of North Greece

Large open plains crossed by rivers and semi-mountainous areas with low, gentle hills. Tall mountains and enclosed plateaus kept cool by the breeze from large and small lakes. In the background lies the lacy coastline, surrounded by the Aegean and Ionian Seas.

The topography of North Greece is complex and interesting, with a varied natural environment. The gentle Mediterranean climate, with mild winters and sunny summers, and the ideal soil composition contribute to the creation of many micro-regions with specific ecosystems. This is particularly beneficial for vine-growing, and for the production of many different types of wine with character and particularity. Indigenous grape varieties, as well as cosmopolitan ones that have been well acclimatized to the region, enjoy the attention of experienced vintners in the vineyards of Northern Greece. There are approximately 300 native Greek grape varieties. They are a valuable asset for the unique character of Greek wines. Many of these can be found in the North Greek vineyards. Xinomavro, the finest red grape variety in North Greece, is grown here, and dominates the composition of PDO wines from Naoussa, Amynteo, Goumenissa and Rapsani, being closely identified with these regions. Xinomavro wines have a multidimensional and distinct character. They can be distinguished by their deep red colour and characteristic aroma of red fruits which, after aging in oak barrels, develops into a rich bouquet of spices with typical notes of tomato. This also softens the tannins that give the wine its good structure and richness. They are wines with excellent ageing potential. Other Greek red grape varieties in the vineyards of North Greece are Negoska, Krasato, Stavroto, Moschomavro, Limnio, Mavroudi and Vlachiko. The main indigenous white grape varieties grown in the region are Debina, Roditis, Athiri, Assyrtiko and Malagouzia. Alongside the Greek grape varieties grow some very well acclimatized cosmopolitan varieties such as Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Gewürztraminer, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Syrah, Grenache Rouge and other, rarer varieties. Topography, soil,



climate, varieties: All the necessary ingredients to create a great wine coexist harmoniously in North Greece. The vintners and wine-producers of the region make use of the tradition, their experience and skills to develop dynamically. Their produce, the Wines of North Greece, are Protected Designation of Origin and Protected Geographical Indication wines with identity and character, which honour their place of origin as they travel around the world.

PDO Vine-Growing Regions in North Greece

In accordance with European Union regulations, the term Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) on a label means that the wine comes from a legally-defined vine-growing area with a specific name, is produced from the varieties which are indicated by the legislation for that area, is vinified using the area's traditional technique and has specific organoleptic characteristics.

Wines with the indication PDO have typicity and character, that indicate the area from which they originate. There are 6 PDO regions in North Greece. The PDO region Rapsani lies on the foothills of Mount Olympus. The rich red PDO Rapsani wine is made from the grape varieties Xinomavro, Krasato and Stavroto. The PDO region Zitsa is in Epirus. Two types of the fragrant PDO Zitsa wine are produced from the white grape variety Debina, a still and a semi-sparkling one. The PDO region Amynteo lies in Amynteo, around Lake Vegoritida. The noble red grape variety Xinomavro is grown here, and the wines produced are PDO Amynteo still rosé and red, as well as the only sparkling rosé in Greece with the PDO indication. The PDO region Naoussa lies around the town of Naoussa on the foothills of Mount Vermion. This is an area dominated by Xinomavro, which gives the red PDO Naoussa wine its characteristic rich aroma in two types – dry and semi-sweet. The PDO region Goumenissa extends around the foothills of Mount Paiko, around the town of Goumenissa. The gentle and elegant PDO Goumenissa wine is produced from the Xinomavro and Negoska red grape varieties. The PDO region Slopes of Meliton is located in Halkidiki, on the slopes of Mount Meliton on the Sithonia peninsula. The red PDO Slopes of Meliton wine is produced from the varieties Limnio, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. The white PDO Slopes of Meliton wine is produced from the varieties Assyrtiko, Roditis and Athiri.



PGI Wines in North Greece

The category of Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) refers to wines with a special indication of geographical origin made from specific varieties. The indication of geographical origin can relate either to an entire geographical region – which, in the case of North Greece, are Epirus, Macedonia and Thrace – or to smaller areas.

The wine producers of the company Wines of North Greece produce wines with different PGIs, depending on the area where each of them is located. Most of them produce wines with labels from the three major geographical regions: white, rosé and red PGI Epirus; white, rosé and red PGI Macedonia; and white, rosé and red PGI Thrace.

Along with these three regional PGI wines, the wineries of North Greece also release wines with the following PGI indications:

PGI Krania	PGI Epanomi
PGI Pieria	PGI Slopes of Vertiskos
PGI Metsovo	PGI Thessaloniki
PGI Ioannina	PGI Sithonia
PGI Velventos	PGI Agio Oros
PGI Florina	PGI Halkidiki
PGI Kastoria	PGI Pangeo
PGI Siatista	PGI Drama
PGI Imathia	PGI Slopes of Paiko
PGI Pella	PGI Ismarikos
PGI Nea Mesimvria	PGI Avdira.

For any further information, please visit our web sites: www.winesofnorthgreece.gr & www.wineroads.gr, or send an email to info@wineroads.gr

Wines of Bulgaria

BULGARIAN WINE
A LIVING TRADITION WITH
GLORIOUS PAST AND
A PROSPEROUS FUTURE



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Wine has always been and will always remain an important industry for Bulgaria. Historically the wine trade has been part of the national culture and today it is a key element in projecting a positive image of Bulgaria.

It is not by chance that we, Bulgarians, tell a story about the origins of our lands. When God created the world, He had completely forgotten about Bulgaria. So the only thing He could do then was to shake out over these lands what was left of the contents of his already empty sack. Thus, although completely forgotten at first, we were then generously bestowed a fascinating diversity of spectacular



scenery - plains and valleys huddled between mountain ridge, rivers with lush flat banks, hills sloping down to the Black Sea Coast, and wonderful vines which found in these lands the unique conditions to thrive and yield light-bodied, deep-flavoured grapes of superb quality.

According to some authors, both ancient and modern, the Dionysus cult had its origin in the lands of Ancient Thrace, where wine was considered sacred and its use was intended for conversation with the gods. This historical assertion puts Bulgarian viticulture and oenology at the heart of the ancient development of grape and wine culture. The oenological tradition, has continued without interruption for millennia, and has contributed enormously to the country's contemporary attitude to wine making. It appears that the cultivation of some of the oldest native grape varieties - such as Misket, Dimyat, Gamza, Mavrud and Shiroka Melnishka loza - date back to Thracian times.

Bulgaria has moderate climate with a warm summer and a relatively cold winter. The average total temperature required for the growth of grapevines ranges between 3,500°C and 3,700°C. The soils are diverse and varied - there are acidic (cinnamonic) soils, grey forest soils, rich zonal humus and carbonate soils, fertile black-earth soils (known as chernozems), alluvial and mountain meadow soils, including both deep and shallow sandy soils, and others. They are all exceptionally favourable for vine growing, for the proper ripening of grapes, and the production of quality white and red wines.

According to the soil and the climatic conditions as well as the grape varieties, four major vine and wine regions can be defined in the country: DANUBE PLAIN REGION (Northern Bulgaria), BLACK SEA REGION (Eastern Bulgaria) THRACIAN LOWLANDS REGION (Southern Bulgaria), and STROUMA VALLEY REGION (South-western Bulgaria).

The present European influenced processes has led to Bulgarian wine restoring the manufacture practices for production of authentic wines that can proudly trace their origins.

There are two main viticulture and oenology regions for production of PGI wines - Thracian Lowlands and the Danube Plain, and 55 areas for the manufacture of PDO



wines that are produced according the highest quality control standards to guarantee a quality product.

PDO Strouma Valley	PDO Targovishte	PDO Nova Zagora
PDO South Black Sea coast	PDO Varna	PDO Haskovo
PDO Black Sea Region	PDO Evxinograd	PDO Ivailovgrad
PDO Vidin	PDO Pomorie	PDO Lyubimets
PDO Novo Selo	PDO Sungurlare	PDO Stambolovo
PDO Pleven	PDO Slavyantsi	PDO Sakar
PDO Lozitsa	PDO Karnobat	PDO Sandanski
PDO Varbitsa	PDO Septemvri	PDO Melnik
PDO Lovech	PDO Plovdiv	PDO Harsovo
PDO Russe	PDO Asenovgrad	PDO Lom
PDO Lyakovets	PDO Karlovo	PDO Montana
PDO Svishtov	PDO Hissarya	PDO Vratsa
PDO Suhindol	PDO Perushtitsa	PDO Pazardzhik
PDO Pavlikeni	PDO Brestnik	PDO Dragoevo
PDO Shumen	PDO Yambol	PDO Shoumen
PDO Novi Pazar	PDO Stara Zagora	PDO Varna
PDO Veliki Preslav	PDO Oryahovitsa	PDO Bolyarovo
PDO Khan Kroum	PDO Sliven	
PDO Dragoevo	PDO Shivachevo	

PGI Danubian Plain

The vine plants in this region for the production of wine with protected geographical indication (PGI) Danubian Plain are located in the Danubian Plain in Northern Bulgaria. It is situated between the Danube River on the north, the foothills of the Balkan Mountains on the south, the Timok River on the west and the Black Sea on the east. The altitude for the most part of the Plain is between 100 and 250 m, reaching in some parts 300-400 m. The temperate continental climate with dry, hot summers, the lowland terrain with plains, hills and plateaus. the chernozemic (black) soils and gray forest soils formed on loess, as well as the traditions maintained and developed in the region determine the peculiarities and characteristics of the wines produced.

I Varietal structure

White: Sauvignon Blanc, Muscat Ottonel, Chardonnay, Traminer, Dimyat, Misket red, Rhine Riesling, Tamyanka, Pinot Gris, Ugni Blanc, Riesling Italian, Rkatziteli, Aligoté, Viognier, Furmint, Harsh Lavelyu, Sungurlare Misket, Varna Muscat, Misket Markov, Silvaner, Müller Tyurgao, Muscat Kailashki, Chenille Blanc, Roussanne, Colombard, etc. White wines have a complex aroma with predominating citrus fruit and nuances of herbs, fresh grass and wild flowers. The taste is fresh, with balanced acid, harmonious, with a long-lasting aftertaste.

Red: Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot, Pinot Noir, Gamay Noir, Pamid, Bouquet, Syrah, Rubin, Cinsaut, Evmolpia, Grenache, Hebros, Alicante Bouschet,



Grand Noir Gamza, Carmenere, Petit Verdot, Malbec, Grenache, etc. The aroma of rosé is characterized with red forest fruit and stone fruit. The taste is ethereal, rounded, with appetizing highlights of blackberry and ripe cherry. The finish is warm, slightly tart, with a definite freshness. The aroma of the red wines combines black and red forest fruit, plums, spices, vanilla and nuts. The taste is characterized with soft tannins, balanced, juicy, with a fruity freshness.

PGI Thracian Lowlands

The vine varieties in the region for production of wines with PGI Thracian Lowlands are located in South Bulgaria. It is situated between the Balkan Mountains on the north, Black Sea on the east and the border with Greek on the south. The altitude where the plants are grown is between 100 and 500 m. The terrain is flat and hilly. The transitional continental climate is mild and warm, with Black Sea and Mediterranean influence, the favorable soils, mainly cinnamon forest (Chromic Luvisols) and the developed traditions - the human factor - create conditions for the production of wines with specific characteristics. They are very extractive and alcohol-rich. In terms of taste, the quantity of noble tannins is predominant.

I Varietal Structure

White: Muscat Ottonel, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Dimyat, Traminer, Misket Red, Riesling Rhine, Tamyanka, Pinot Gris, Ugni Blanc, Italian Riesling, Misket Vratsa, Rkatziteli, Misket Varna, Bulgarian Riesling, Aligoté, Viognier, Semion, Silvaner, etc. The white wines have a vivid, deep golden colour with greenish reflections. The aroma is intensive, multi-layered, it develops in the glass and acquires a sweetness combined with flowery nuances. The taste is full-bodied, balanced, and harmonic, with a distinct fruity nature.

Red: Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot, Mavroud, Pinot Noir, Gamay Noir, Broad leaved vine, Pamid, Bouquet Shevka, Syrah, Rubin Evmolpia, Melnik 1300, Melnik 82 Grenache, Plovdiv Malaga, Cinsaut, Alicante Bouschet, Petit Verdot, etc. The rosé has an elegant aroma of red forest fruit with accents of wild strawberry and



cherry. The body has an intense fruity aroma; it is complex, juicy, with a pleasant freshness and aftertaste.

The red wines have a vivid, sparkling, deep ruby colour with garnet reflections. The aroma has characteristic strong fruity nuances of red and black fruit – sweet and sour cherry, blackberry, plum with discreet accents of red peppers, spices and chocolate. A full-bodied taste with well-balanced tannins, a ripe roundness and mildness, juicy, fruity, elegant finish.

The National Vine and Wine Chamber

The National Vine and Wine Chamber (NVWC) in Bulgaria is a non-governmental association of the professionals engaged in vine-growing and wine-making in Bulgaria. It was established in February 2000 as the successor of the Association of producers and merchants of wine and spirits, founded in 1991. The mission of the Chamber is to defend and promote the professional interests of its members as well as to guarantee and promote the quality, authenticity, and origin of wines.

The NVWC and the 6 regional chambers (Trakia RVWC, based in the town of Plovdiv; Mizia RVWC, based in the town of Pleven; Southeast Thracian RVWC, based in the town of Sliven; Black Sea RVWC, based in the town of Varna; Southern Black Sea RVWC, based in the town of Bourgas, Pirin RVWC, based in Damyanitsa village) are non-governmental organizations summoned to promote further the development and competitiveness of Bulgarian vine and wine industry. They are also authorized to issue a certificate of origin to quality wines as well as a certificate of authenticity to grapes varieties. The chambers set up tasting committees to carry out the mandatory organoleptic analyses.

National Vine and Wine Chamber is an organizer and co-organizer of important national and international events:

- International Viticulture and Enology Fair VINARIA in Plovdiv, since 1992. The exhibition, which is held every year in April attracts both wine producing companies



and those engaged in production and distribution of machines, equipment and auxiliary materials for viticulture and enology from all over the world. International Wine and Spirits Competition VINARIA is the main event in the support program of the fair. Every year more and more wines from all over the world compete for the prestige prize Golden Rhyton which only 6 wines from all participated are awarded.

■ SALON DE VIN in Sofia, since 2001. The exhibition, held every year in November, is aimed at the biggest national wine market – Sofia. SALON DE VIN enjoys the interest of an increasing number of Bulgarian and foreign wine producers who annually participate in the exhibition, demonstrating their premieres and traditional products. The competition for the Golden medals of InterExpo Centre and a Consumer contest are the main events in the support program.

■ DEFILE OF YOUNG WINE in Plovdiv, since 2009. This is a celebration of the new vintage of Bulgarian wine every last weekend of November in the Old Town of Plovdiv. Tasting, contests, lectures – all these aim at enlarging the wine culture of the consumers and demonstrating the quality of Bulgarian wine.

■ BULGARIAN WINE WEEKEND, since 2013. Trade tasting and master classes for experts – each year for a different wine market.

■ BALKAN RAKIYA FEST, since 2013. Exhibition and tasting of the traditional drink rakiya.

■ Presentations and tastings of Bulgarian wines in the country and all over the world.

■ Wine tours for professional, connoisseurs and wine lovers.

Bulgaria offers unique destinations for wine tourism. The traditions of winemaking can be evidenced by the fact that 90% of the vessels discovered during archaeological excavations here are related to wine. Together with the tasting of the high quality wines there are lot of historic sites dating back thousands of years. There are a unique museums of grape growing and winemaking which demonstrate the long history of wine in Bulgarian lands.



Professional education and master classes in viticulture and enology are organized in the Educational Centre of NVWC in Sofia. Official certificates are issued by the Ministry of Education and Science in Bulgaria.

Bulgarian wines participate every year in a lot of prestigious wine contests such as Decanter World Wine Competition, Concours Mondial de Bruxelles, International Wine and Spirits Competition in London, etc. and win the highest awards.

NVWC issues scientific viticulture and enology journal – LOZARSVO & VINARSTVO, est. 1911, and marketing magazine BGWine, est. 2012. NVWC is a co-editor of the catalogue WINE & SPIRITS IN BULGARIA.

The NVWC defines the strategies for the development of vine-growing and wine-making and implements the policies in the vine and wine industry. The associated community of Bulgarian grape growers and wine makers is summoned to restore the reputation of Bulgarian wine by ensuring its competitiveness. By employing their expertise, emphasizing the advantages of the favourable geographical factors, and continuing the deep-rooted ancient tradition, the Bulgarian society of vintners demonstrates and confirms the strong assets of Bulgarian wines.

NATIONAL VINE AND WINE CHAMBER

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