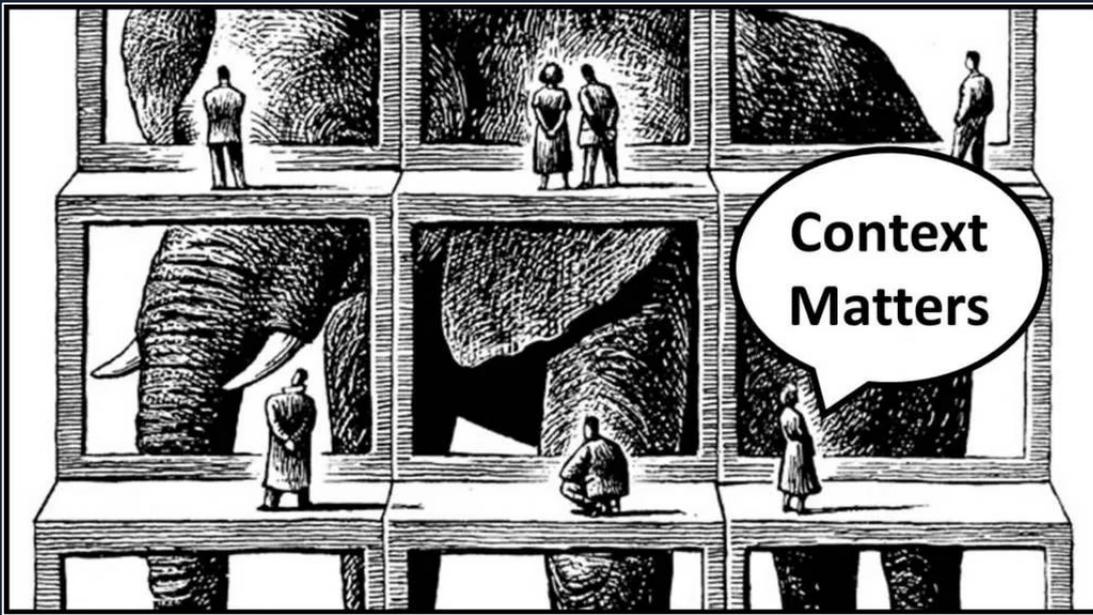




GEORGIA 101  
CONTEXT IN THE CRADLE OF WINE



# CONTEXT & WINE

## FOUR KEY ELEMENTS OF A FOUNDATIONAL UNDERSTANDING

1. ENVIRONMENT: GEOGRAPHY, TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY, CLIMATE, REGIONALITY
2. HISTORICITY: 'BIG-H' HISTORY - WHO/WHAT/WHERE/WHEN/WHY
3. CULTURE: 'SMALL-H' HISTORY - WINE'S PLACE IN THE CULTURE
4. PRACTICE: VITI/VINI TECHNIQUES, TECHNOLOGY & TRADITIONS



# THE GEORGIAN ENVIRONMENT

# WHERE IS GEORGIA, ANYWAY?

SHORT ANSWER: IT'S THE FULCRUM BETWEEN EASTERN EUROPE & WESTERN ASIA

## GEORGIA BORDERS...

RUSSIA TO THE NORTH,  
THE BLACK SEA TO THE WEST,  
TURKEY TO THE SOUTHWEST, AND  
ARMENIA & AZERBAIJAN TO THE SOUTHEAST.

THIS IS NOT THE QUIETEST NEIGHBORHOOD,  
GEOPOLITICALLY SPEAKING!

POPULATION: 3.7 MILLION SOULS  
AREA: 69,700KM<sup>2</sup>\*

\*A BIT BIGGER THAN W VIRGINIA, A BIT SMALLER THAN IRELAND



# THE LAND

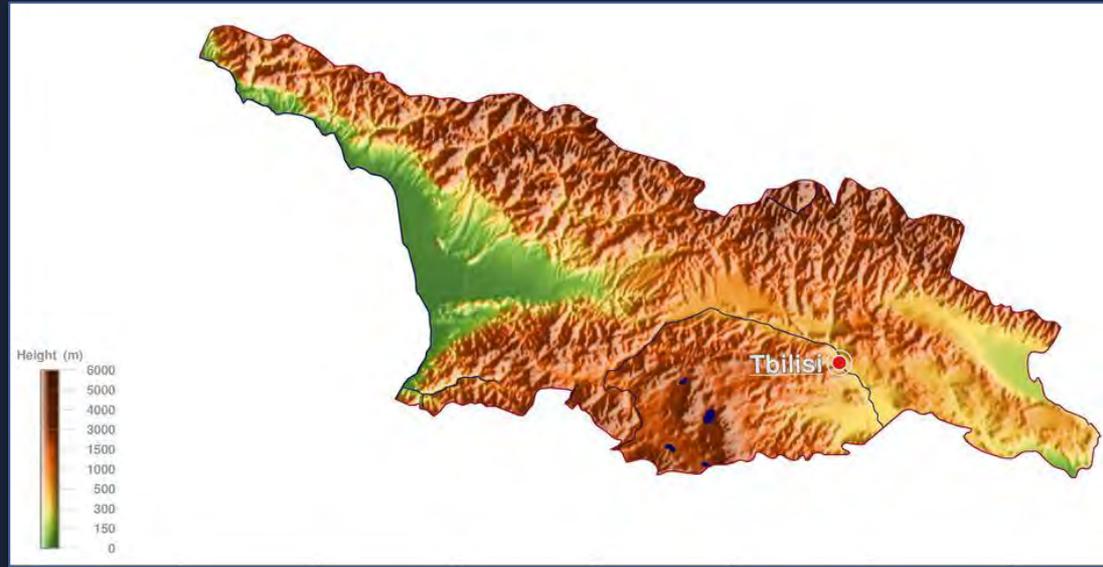
SO MANY MOUNTAINS!\*

GREATER CAUCASUS IN THE NORTH

LESSER CAUCASUS TO THE SOUTH

LIKHI RANGE IN THE CENTER

\* 85% OF GEORGIA'S LAND AREA  
IS MOUNTAINOUS!



SO MANY RIVERS!\*

MTKVARI THROUGH THE CENTER

ALAZANI & IORI IN THE EAST

RIONI IN THE WEST

\*THESE ARE JUST THE BIG 3;

THERE ARE LITERALLY 100S OF SMALLER  
TRIBUTARIES (AND RESULTANT MICROCLIMATES)

# SO MANY BIOMES!

FOR A SMALLISH COUNTRY, GEORGIA IS HOME TO A HUGE RANGE OF ENVIRONMENTS...



TEMPERATE RAINFORESTS  
(COLCHIC FOREST, SOUTHWEST)



ALPINE MEADOWS  
(TUSHETI, NORTHEAST)



GLACIERS  
(CHALADI GLACIER, NORTH)



DESERTS  
(GAREJA DESERT, SOUTH)



FERTILE RIVER VALLEYS  
(KAKHETI, SOUTHEAST)



GRASSLANDS  
(MARABDA, CENTRAL)



# THE DIRT & THE ROCKS

BAD NEWS FIRST: CONSISTENT, COMPREHENSIVE INFORMATION ON VINEYARD SOILS IS/HAS BEEN RARE.

SEVERAL CONTRIBUTING FACTORS:

1. LONG ADHERENCE TO OLD SOVIET (AND SOME COLLOQUIAL) NAMING CONVENTIONS;
2. A LEGACY OF UNEVEN DISTRIBUTION OF TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE;
3. SLOW ADOPTION OF SOIL ANALYSES;
4. UNIQUE HISTORICAL PATTERNS THAT DISCOURAGED SITE-SPECIFIC WINEMAKING;
5. AND, IN THE CONTEXT OF ALL THE ABOVE, A HIGHLY-VARIEGATED SOIL SET AND AN EQUALLY COMPLEX ARRAY OF GEOLOGICAL PRIMARY MATERIAL.



# THE DIRT & THE ROCKS PART II



## GOOD NEWS:

THE NUMBER OF GROWERS UNDERTAKING INTENSIVE SOIL ANALYSES IS GROWING RAPIDLY, AS IS THE AMOUNT OF SCHOLARLY RESEARCH ON THE SUBJECT.

IN GENERAL (AS MUCH AS GENERALIZING IS POSSIBLE, WHICH ISN'T VERY MUCH):

- SOILS IN THE WEST ARE HEAVIER CLAYS, WITH LOWER PH - OFTEN VOLCANIC PRIMARY MATERIAL
- MOVING EAST, PH RISES ALONG WITH LIMESTONE, ALLUVIUM, SAND





## THE CLIMATE

IN THE COASTAL AND WESTERN AREAS (ZONE #1), CLIMATE IS SUBTROPICAL:  
MODERATE TEMPERATURES -- THANKS, BLACK SEA! -- AND PLENTIFUL RAIN

MOVING INTO THE EAST (ZONE #2), CLIMATE BECOMES CONTINENTAL:  
HOT AND DRY...SOME AREAS HAVE 10% OR LESS OF THE RAINFALL SEEN IN THE WEST

IN THE HIGH MOUNTAINS (ZONES #3), CLIMATE IS TRULY ALPINE:  
VERY COLD WITH ABUNDANT SNOW, PARTICULARLY ALONG GREATER CAUCASUS RANGE TO NORTH

\*NB: PLENTY OF MICROCLIMATIC VARIATION WITHIN THE ABOVE, OFTEN RELATED TO TOPOGRAPHY



# SOME CLIMATE GENERALITIES

WARMER, DRYER

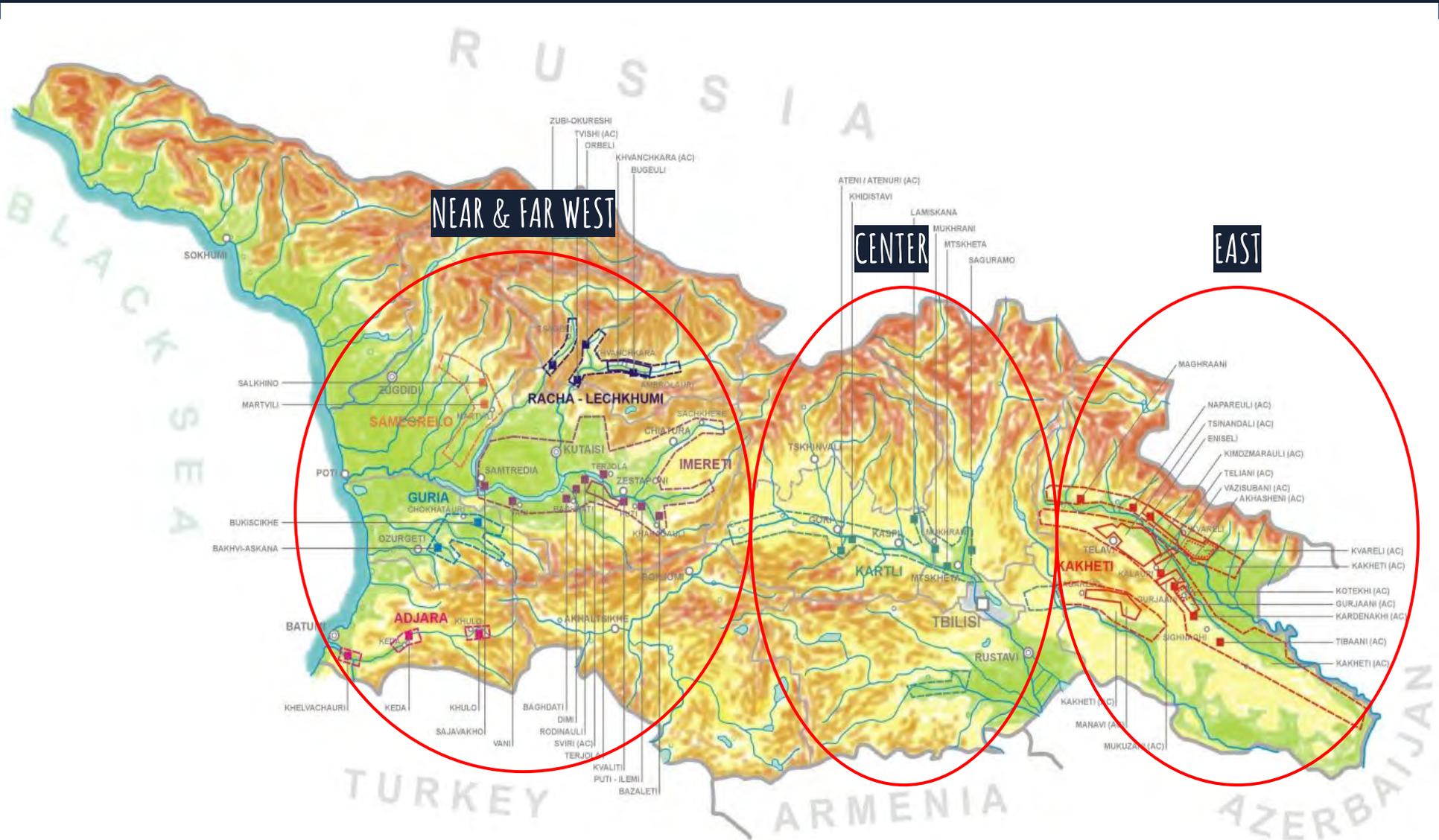


WARM SUBTROPICAL CLIMATE

CONTINENTAL CLIMATE



# GENERALIZING: THREE EASY PIECES



# THE WILD WEST, NEAR & FAR



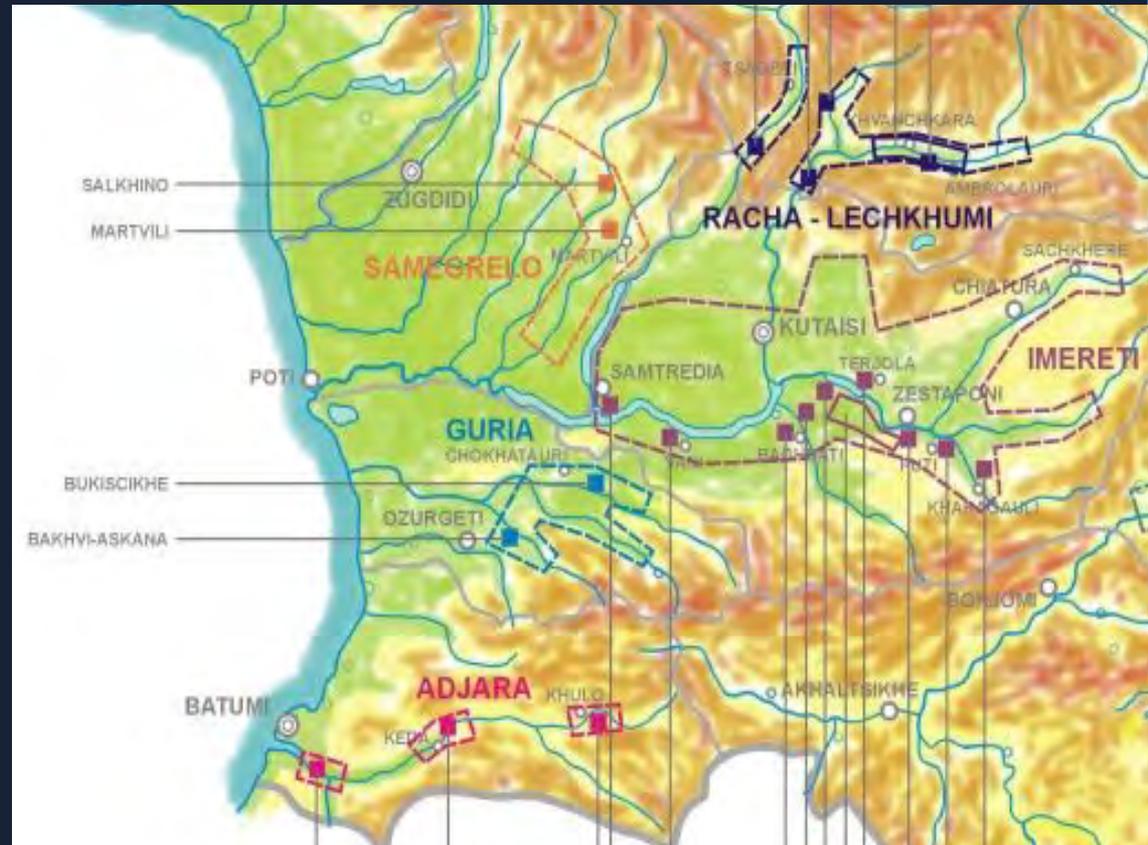
## KEY REGIONS

IMERETI, GURIA, SAMEGRELO,  
RACHA, LECHKHUMI, ADJARA

## IMPORTANT VARIETIES

**WHITE:** TSOLIKOURI, TSITSKA,  
KRAKHUNA, CHKHAVERI

**RED:** OTSKHANURI SAPERE,  
ALADASTURI, DZELSHAVI,  
OJALESHI



# IMERETI: A CLOSER LOOK

## KEY FACTS

- ONLY 15% OF PLANTED HECTARAGE
- MOUNTAINOUS, DENSELY-FORESTED
- 80-800M ELEVATION
- SUBTROPICAL CLIMATE
- EXTREMELY VARIED SOILS:  
HEAVY CLAYS THROUGHOUT,  
FERROUS RED SOILS IN THE WEST, MORE  
HUMUS-RICH 'FOREST' SOILS TO THE EAST
- SPICIER, VEG-DOMINANT FOOD
- TYPICALLY LIGHTER, FRESHER WINES



# THE CENTER: KARTLI

## KEY SUBDIVISIONS

KVEMO (LOWER) KARTLI

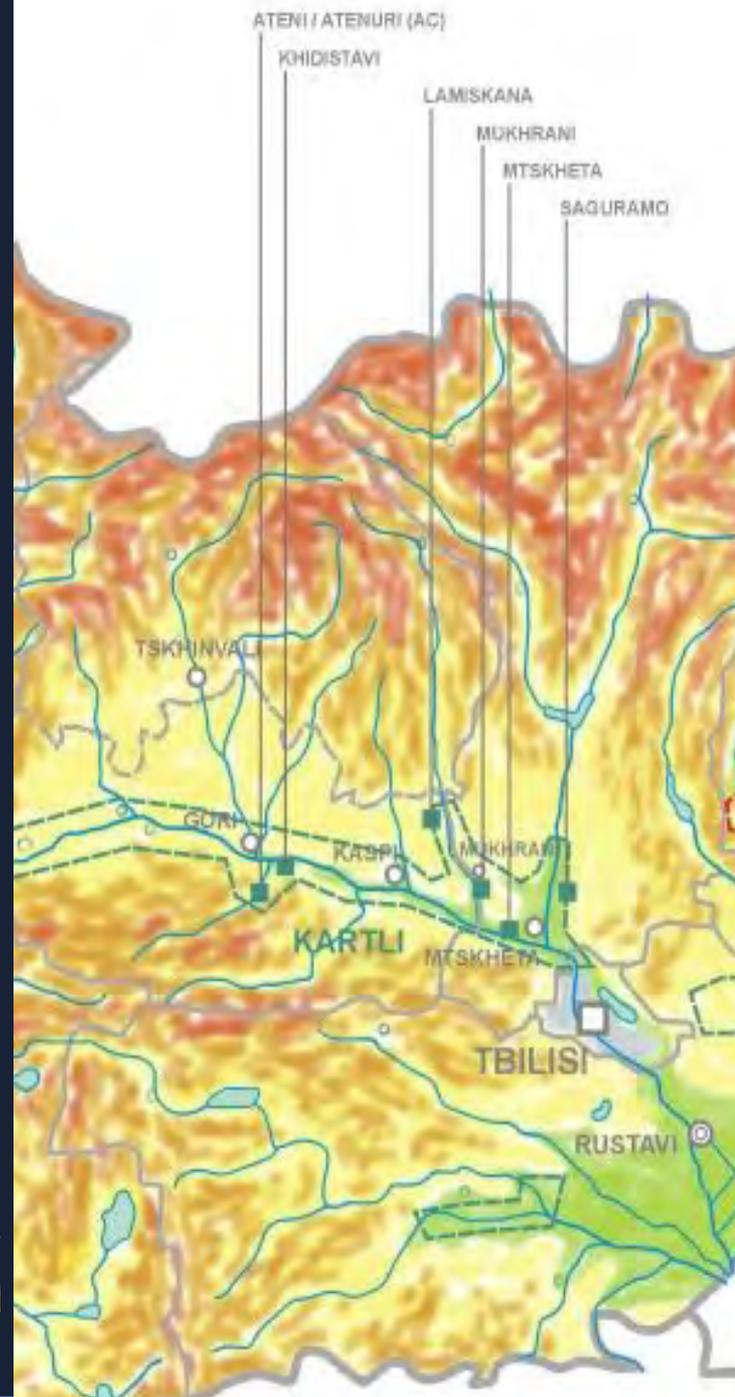
MTSKHETA-MTIANETI

SHIDA (UPPER) KARTLI

## IMPORTANT VARIETIES

**WHITE:** CHINURI, GORULI MTSVANE, TETRI,  
TSOLIKOURI, KRAKHUNA

**RED:** TAVKVERI, SHAVKAPITO, OJALESHI



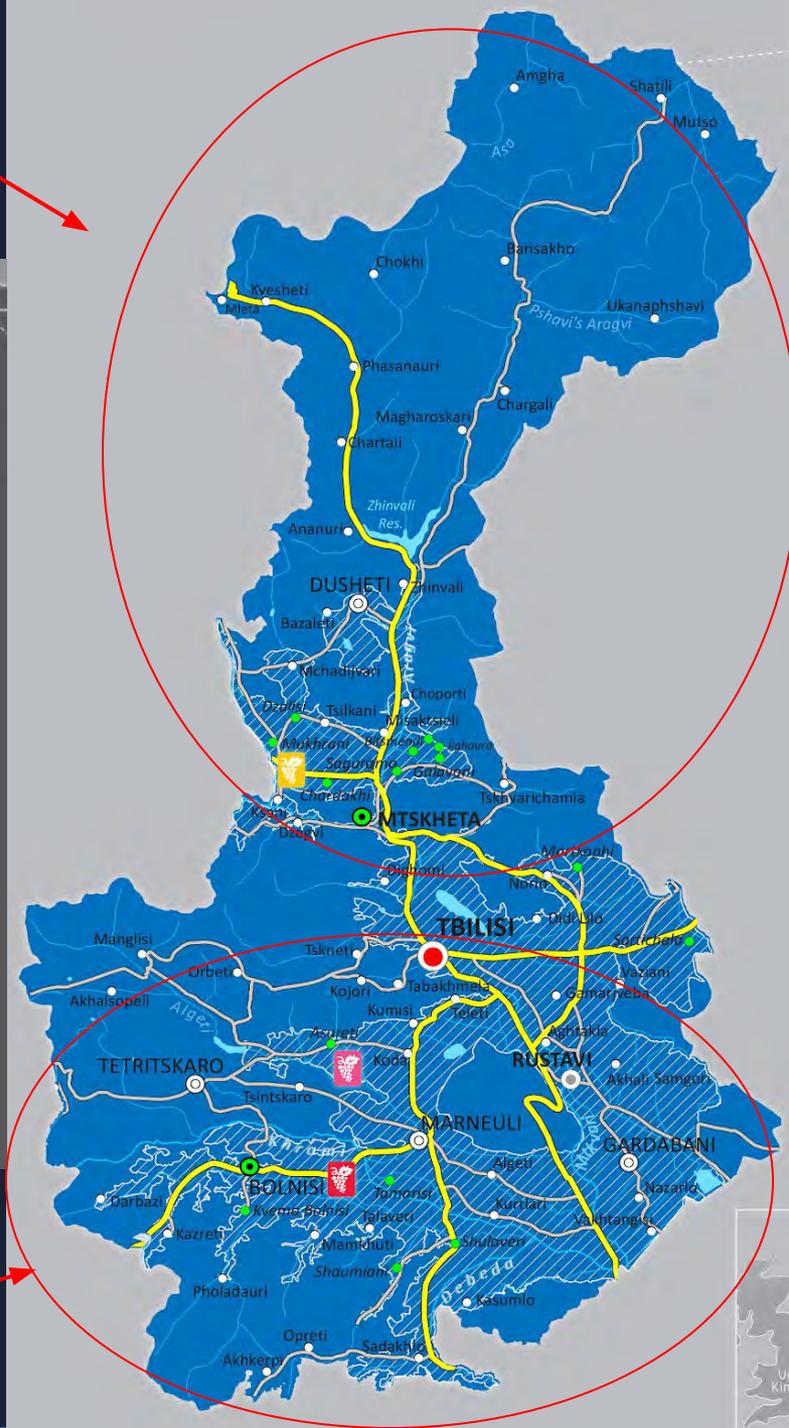
# KARTLI MAPS!

## MTSKHETA-MTIANETI



## SHIDA KARTLI

## KVEMO KARTLI



# KARTLI: A CLOSER LOOK

## KEY FACTS

- 7.4% OF GEORGIA'S TOTAL HECTARES UNDER VINE
- SPREAD OVER BASINS OF THE MTKVARI, KSANI AND LIAKHVI RIVERS
- 300-800M ELEVATION (FOR MOST VITI.)
- CONTINENTAL CLIMATE, GENERALLY VERY DRY
- VARIED SOILS
  - VOLCANIC CLAY WITH STONES IN SOUTH
  - LIGHTER AND LOAMIER IN MSKHETI,
  - WITH SOME LIMESTONE
  - MORE CALCAEROUS IN SHIDA
- MIX OF TRADITIONAL & INTERNATIONAL WINEMAKING STYLES



# THE EAST

## KEY REGIONS & SUBDIVISIONS

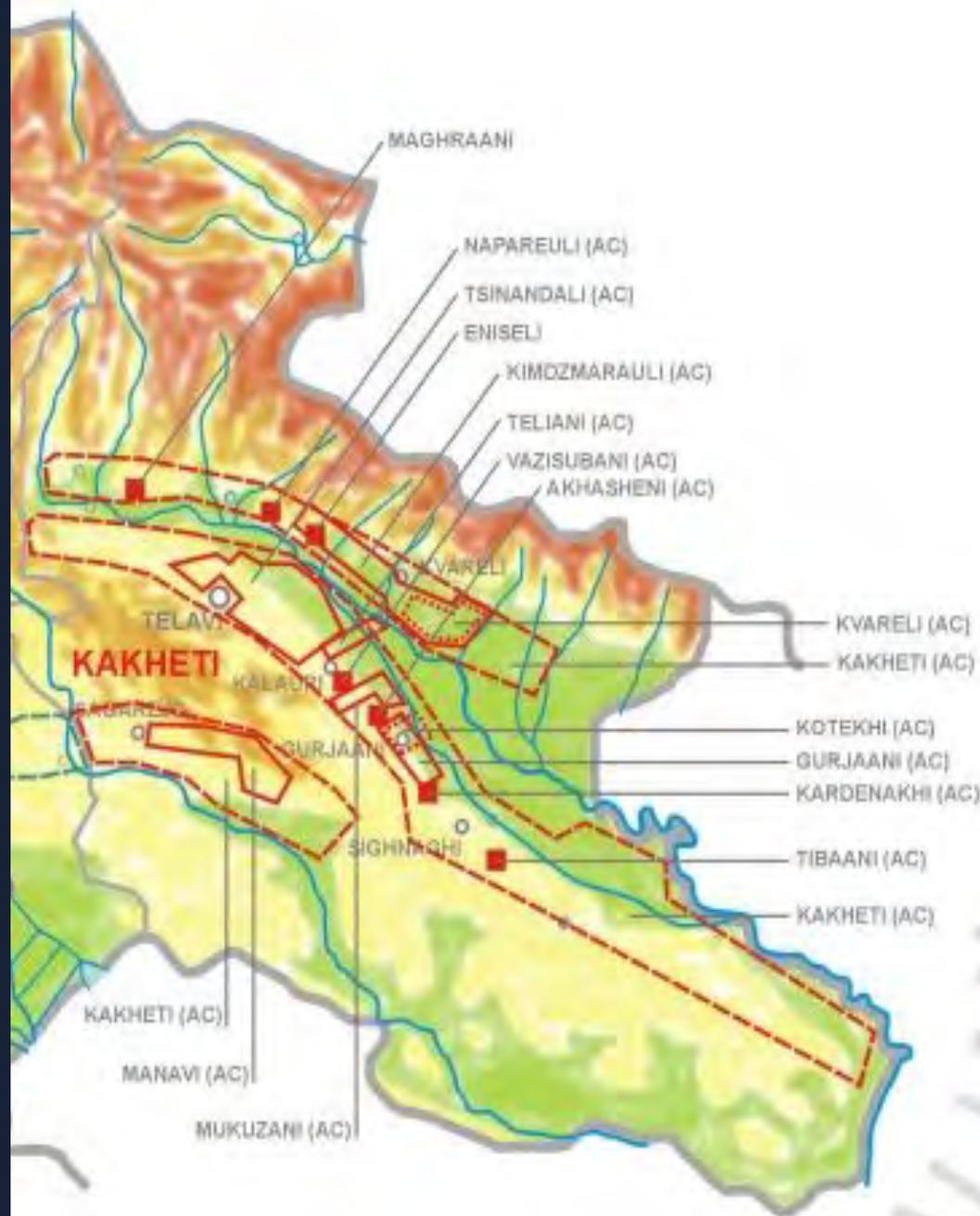
INNER KAKHETI, OUTER KAKHETI

## IMPORTANT VARIETIES

WHITE: RKATSITELI, MTSVANE,

KISI, KHIKHVI

RED: SAPERAVI



# KAKHETI: A CLOSER LOOK



## SUBZONES

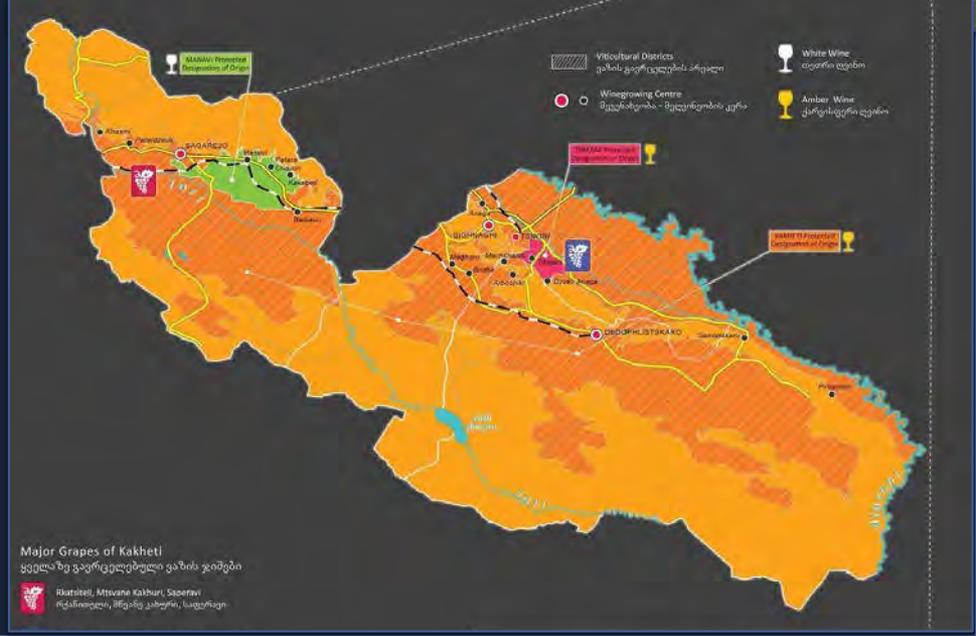
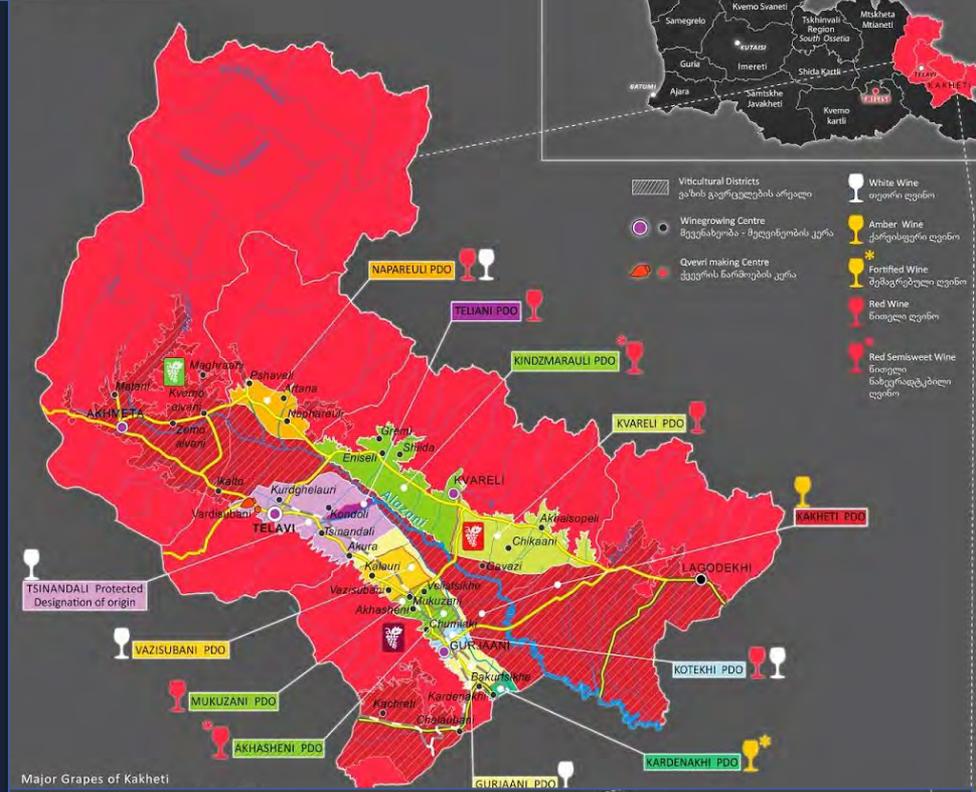
OUTER KAKHETI (IORI BASIN)

INNER KAKHETI (ALAZANI BASIN) - L&R BANKS

KIZIKI (SOUTHEAST)

## KEY ELEMENTS

- ALMOST 75% OF GEORGIA'S TOTAL VINEYARD PLANTINGS, 70% OF PRODUCTION & 15 OF 20 TOTAL PDOs
- LARGELY FERTILE RIVER BASINS (70-700M ELEV)
- CONTINENTAL/TRANSITIONAL CLIMATE INCREASINGLY DRY MOVING SOUTHEAST
- GENERAL ALLUVIAL CLAYS & LOAMY SOIL POCKETS OF LIMESTONE ON RT BANK SHALE & SLATE OUTCROPPINGS ON LT
- MEATY, RUSTIC FOOD - POWERFUL WINES
- KAKHETIAN METHOD





GEORGIAN

HISTORY

(WITH THE BIG-H)

# A BRIEF HISTORY OF EARLY GEORGIA

1200BCE RISE OF PROTO-GEORGIAN TRIBES

400BCE EARLY CITY-STATES (IBERIA, COLCHIS) ESTABLISHED

1100-1200CE GOLDEN AGE UNDER DAVID IV & TAMAR I

1200-1800CE DISINTIGRATION & PARTITION

CRUCIALLY:

GEORGIA ENDURED A NEAR-CONTINUOUS SERIES OF INVASIONS FROM THE 4TH CENTURY BCE THROUGH THE ARRIVAL OF THE RUSSIANS IN 1800CE.

MEDIANS > MACEDONIANS > ROMANS > PERSIANS >  
BYZANTINES > CALIPHATES > SELJUK TURKS > MONGOLS >  
OTTOMANS > SAFAVID PERSIANS > RUSSIANS > TOURISTS



# THE LAST (TUMULTUOUS) 200+ YEARS

1801 INTEGRATION INTO RUSSIAN EMPIRE

1922 INTEGRATION INTO USSR

1991 INDEPENDENCE

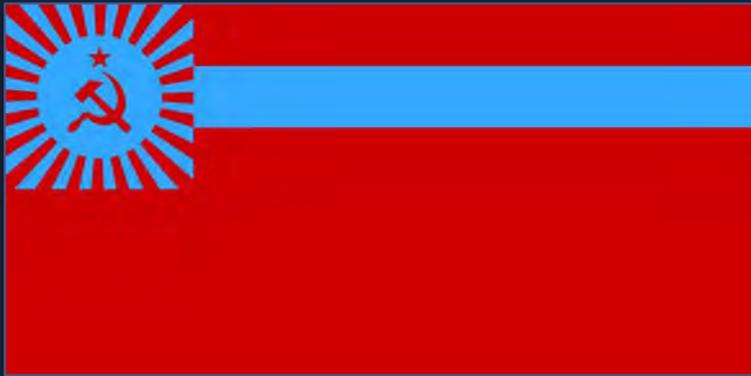
1992 CIVIL WAR & AFTERMATH

2006 RUSSIAN EMBARGO ON GEORGIAN WINE \*

2008 BORDER WAR IN S OSSETIA (WITH RUSSIA)



"ENTRANCE OF THE RUSSIAN TROOPS IN TIFLIS, 26 NOVEMBER 1799"  
BY FRANZ ROUBAUD (1886)



FLAG OF THE GEORGIAN SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLIC



MARCHERS IN TBILISI, 1991

\* EMBARGO LASTED UNTIL 2013 -- EIGHT YEARS IN WHICH GEORGIA LOST 90% OF ITS WINE EXPORT MARKETS



# FITTING WINE INTO BIG-H HISTORY



- 6000 BCE EARLIEST WINEMAKING
- 653 BCE INVASIONS BEGIN (AND CONTINUE FOR 2500 YEARS)
- LATE 1800S BEGINNING OF EUROPEAN INFLUENCE ON WINEMAKING
- 1921 CE VINEYARDS NATIONALIZED
- MID 1920S PHYLLOXERA & RE-PLANTING
- 1930S STALIN'S TERRORS
- 1990S PRIVATIZATION OF STATE PROP
- 2000S GROWTH OF ARTISANAL WINE
- 2007 IAGO'S FIRST EXPORTS TO E. U.
- 2010 FIRST NEW WINE FAIR
- 2017 FIRST ZERO COMPROMISE FEST



# GEORGIAN WINE CULTURE

THE SMALL-H HISTORY



# GEORGIA'S WINE APOCRYPHA

ORIGIN STORIES...THERE'S A PATTERN  
GOD'S SPECIAL STASH

ST NINO & THE GRAPEVINE CROSS

"OUR BLOOD IS WINE"

THE 8000 VINTAGE MYSTIQUE



# THE SUPRA: WINE & THE GEORGIAN CULTURE OF THE TABLE



## SOME BACKGROUND

PERSIAN ORIGINS - MEANS 'TABLECLOTH'

RELATIVELY RECENT CUSTOM AS A FORMALIZED  
CULTURAL EXPRESSION

## THREE PILLARS

HOSPITALITY, ABUNDANCE, TOASTING

## IMPORTANT SUPRA TERMS

GAUMARJOS!

TAMADA

KHANTSI

# WINE AS A MODALITY OF RESISTANCE



INVASIONS & OCCUPATIONS

(R)EVOLUTION & (RE)BIRTH



# VITICULTURE, VINIFICATION & OTHER PRACTICES OF GEORGIAN WINE



# GROWING GRAPES IN GEORGIA



# HISTORICAL CHALLENGES & RAPID DEVELOPMENTS

- FAMOUSLY DEEP AUTOCHTHONOUS AMPELOGRAPHIC POOL WITH MANY ENDANGERED VARIETIES
  - VIBRANT MOVEMENT UNDERWAY TO FIND, REPLANT AND REPROGATE
- LOSS OF MANY OLD HILLSIDE VINEYARDS IN THE 20TH CENTURY AS WINE INDUSTRY INDUSTRIALIZED
  - REPLANTING IS OCCURRING ALL OVER THE COUNTRY BUT OLD VINES ARE STILL RELATIVELY UNCOMMON
- VITICULTURAL TRAINING & GENERAL KNOWLEDGE OF BEST PRACTICES RAPIDLY EXPANDING



# TRADITIONAL WINEMAKING

RELIANCE ON AUTOCHTHONOUS VARIETIES

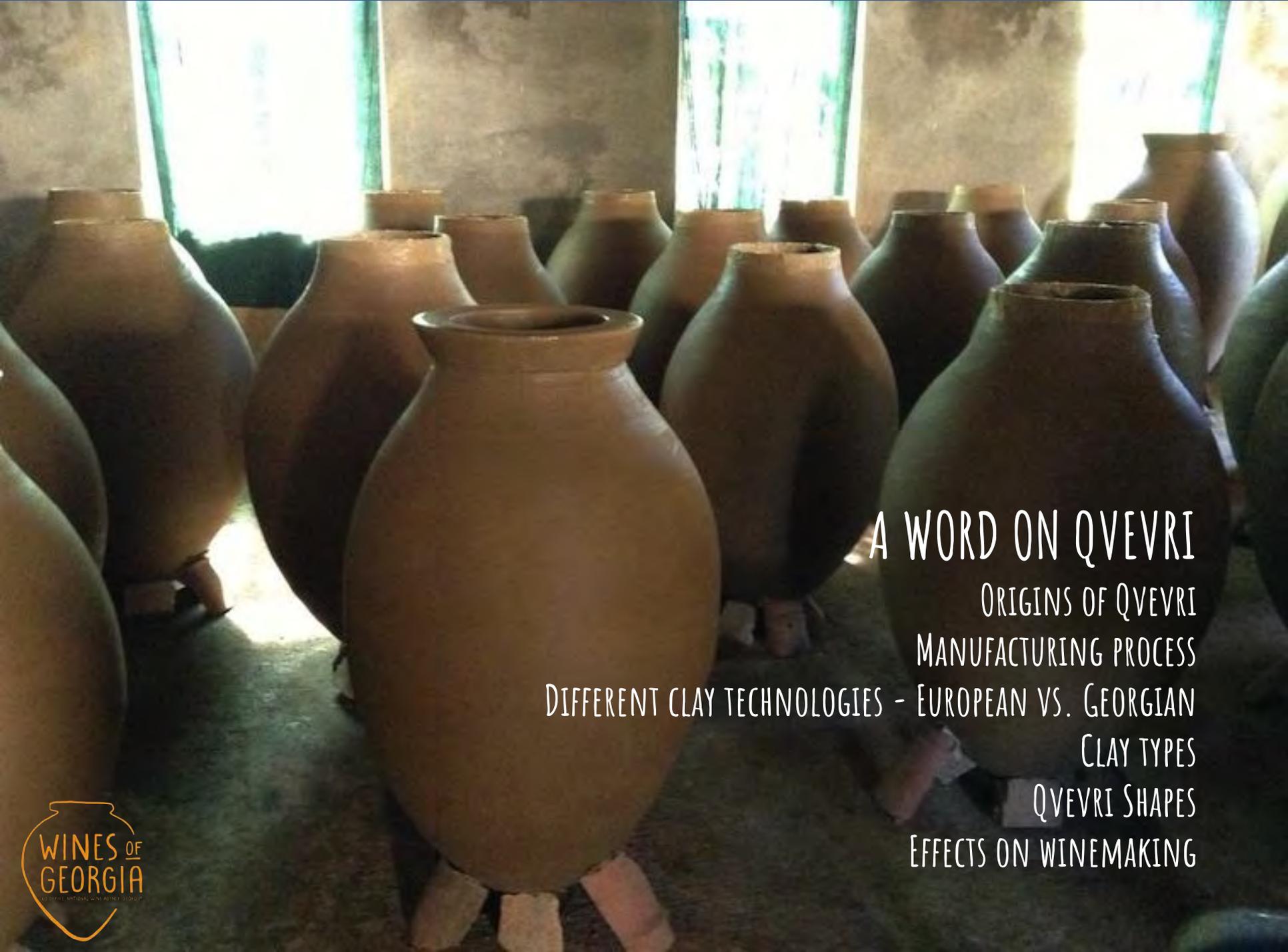
WIDESPREAD USE OF EXTENDED SKIN MACERATION

NEAR-EXCLUSIVE RELIANCE ON QVEVRI

LIMITED OR NO FILTRATION/FINING

LINK TO HISTORICAL GEORGIAN RELIANCE ON HOME WINEMAKING





## A WORD ON QVEVRI

ORIGINS OF QVEVRI

MANUFACTURING PROCESS

DIFFERENT CLAY TECHNOLOGIES - EUROPEAN VS. GEORGIAN

CLAY TYPES

QVEVRI SHAPES

EFFECTS ON WINEMAKING

# THE SOVIET LEGACY & THE INTERNATIONAL STYLE

USE OF STEEL, OAK FOR FERMENTATION & AGING  
USE OF CULTURED YEASTS AND TEMP. CONTROL  
RARE USE OF SKIN MACERATION FOR WHITES  
FINING/FILTRATION COMMON



# FLIGHT I: IMERETI

BAIA'S WINE

TSITSKA-TSOLIKOURI 2019

OBCHA, IMERETI

ARCHIL GUNIAVA

OTSKHANURI SAPERE-TSOLIKOURI 2018

KVALITI, IMERETI



# BAIA'S WINE

TSITSKA-TSOLIKOURI 2019

OBCHA, IMERETI

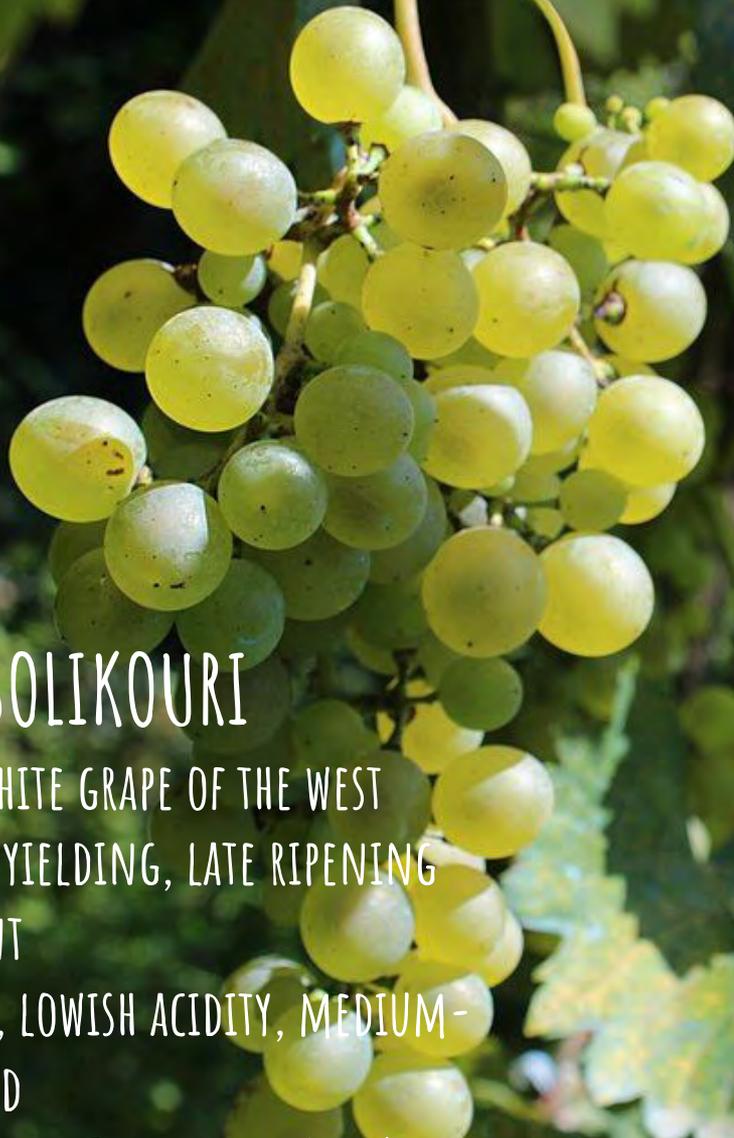
WINEMAKER: BAIA ABULADZE

2HA OF VINEYARDS AT 350M, FARMED ORGANICALLY SOME TSOLIKOURI FROM 65YO VINES  
MOSTLY CLAY SOILS WITH SAND AND GRAVEL

NATIVE YEASTS, STEEL TANK

30% SKINS FOR 3 MONTHS - RACKED OFF SKINS IN JANUARY





## A BIT ABOUT TSOLIKOURI

CORNERSTONE WHITE GRAPE OF THE WEST

RELATIVELY HIGH YIELDING, LATE RIPENING

DISEASE RESISTANT

YELLOW-FRUITED, LOWISH ACIDITY, MEDIUM-

TO FULL-BODIED

OFTEN BLENDED WITH TSITSKA AND/OR KRAKHUNA



# ARCHIL GUNIAVA

OTSKHANURI SAPERE-TSOLIKOURI 2018

KVALITI, IMERETI

WINEMAKER: ARCHIL GUNIAVA

- 1.5HA OF VINES, SOME OLD VINE AND OWN-ROOTED MATERIAL
- MOSTLY CLAY SOILS WITH INTERSPERSED SAND AND LOAM
- NATIVE YEASTS, QVEVRI ONLY
- TSOLIKOURI IS HARVESTED FIRST AND PRESSED AFTER SHORT MACERATION
- OTSKHANURI IS PRESSED INTO QVEVRI IN NOVEMBER WITH 15% CHACHA
- AGING IN QVEVRI, BOTTLED WITHOUT ADDED SULFITES.



## FLIGHT II: KARTLI

IAGO'S WINE

CHINURI 2019

CHARDAKI, KARTLI (MTSKHETI)

GOTSA FAMILY WINES

TAVKVERI 2017

VILLAGE KIKETI, KARTLI (KVEMO)



## BIT ABOUT CHINURI

MOST IMPORTANT GRAPE IN KARTLI

RELATIVELY HIGH YIELDING, LATE RIPENING

FORGIVING AND FROST RESISTANT

YELLOW-FRUITED WITH HERBAL BACKBONE

MODERATE ACIDITY, MEDIUM-BODIED



## IAGO'S WINE

CHINURI 2019

CHARDAKI, KARTLI (MTSKHETI)

WINEMAKER: IAGO BITARISHVILI

2HA OF VINEYARDS IN TWO PARCELS, YELLOW CLAY WITH LIMESTONE PEBBLES

ORGANIC - 60YO VINES IN THE MAIN VYD, DRY-FARMED, 600M

NATIVE YEASTS, MINIMAL SULFUR

100% SKINS AND STEMS FOR 6MO - RACKED IN SPRING, BOTTLED IN EARLY FALL

# GOTSA FAMILY WINES

TAVKVERI 2017

KIKETI, KARTLI (KVEMO)

WINEMAKER: BEKA GOTSADZE

4HA OF VINES, 14 VARIETIES

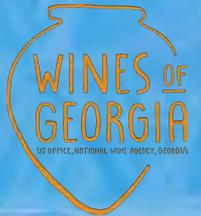
BIODYNAMIC

VINEYARD PLANTED ON LOAMY BASALT AT 1200M

NATIVE YEASTS, MINIMAL SULFUR

8HR SKIN MACERATION FOLLOWED BY 17-MONTH AGING IN QVEVRI





# FLIGHT III: KAKHETI

TCHOTIASHVILI (SATSNAKHELI)

KISI 2016

SANTIORE, KAKHETI

ARTANULI GVINO

SAPERAVI 2018

ARTANA, KAKHETI



TCHOTIASHVILI (SATSNAKHELI)

KISI 2016

SANIORE, KAKHETI (LEFT BANK)

WINEMAKER: KAKHA TCHOTIASHVILI

6HA OF VINES BUT EXPANDING - 41 DIFFERENT VARIETIES GROWN AS OF 2018  
HILLSIDE EXPOSURES AT 600-700M, CINNAMONIC SOILS  
ORGANIC VITICULTURE  
SEVEN MONTHS MACERATION WITH SKINS



## A BIT ABOUT SAPERAVI

MOST WIDELY-PLANTED RED GRAPE, ONE OF THE OLDEST CULTIVARS

MEANS 'DYED' - TEINTURIER VARIETY

HIGH ACID & HIGH TANNIN

FOUNDATION OF SEVERAL HISTORICALLY-IMPORTANT APPELLATION WINES



# ARTANULI GVINO SAPERAVI 2018

ARTANA, KAKHETI (LEFT BANK)

WINEMAKER: KAKHA BERTSHVILI

2HA OF VINES

BIODYNAMIC

STONY, ALLUVIAL SOILS

14-DAY MACERATION

9 MONTHS IN QVEVRI

MINIMAL SULFUR AT

BOTTLING





THEN

NIKITA & FIDEL - 1963



NOW

NEW WINE FESTIVAL - TBILISI 2018

WHY GEORGIA MATTERS!



## FOR MORE INFORMATION

- VISIT WINES OF GEORGIA'S HOMEPAGE: [WWW.WINESGEORGIA.COM](http://WWW.WINESGEORGIA.COM)

- READ ANY OF THESE BOOKS:

- ALICE FEIRING'S FOR THE LOVE OF WINE

- LISA GRANIK'S RECENTLY PUBLISHED THE WINES OF GEORGIA

- MIQUEL HUDIN'S GEORGIA: A GUIDE TO THE CRADLE OF WINE

- CARLA CAPALBO'S TASTING GEORGIA (ABOUT THE FOOD!)

MOST IMPORTANTLY: GO TO THE SOURCE! VISIT GEORGIA AS SOON AS IT'S SAFE TO DO SO!!!

CONTACT WINES OF GEORGIA AND LET THEM KNOW YOU'RE INTERESTED.

# THE RENAISSANCE IS HERE

- SINCE 2016, THE NUMBER OF REGISTERED COMMERCIAL WINERIES HAS MORE THAN DOUBLED
  - ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY FROM SMALL FAMILY WINERIES
  - 350 WINERIES ARE NOW REGISTERED TO EXPORT
- IN THE UNITED STATES, IMPORTS OF GEORGIAN WINE HAVE INCREASED NEARLY FOURFOLD SINCE 2012 (AVERAGING 30% INCREASES EACH YEAR)
  - MORE THAN 150 WINERIES ARE NOW AVAILABLE IN US MARKETS

2549