



THE
ATHENÆUM
PALL MALL LONDON

Wine Committee Dinner
Wine, feast and song: an
evening of Georgian wines,
food and singing

Wednesday 29th March 2023, 7pm

Speaker: Sarah Abbott MW

Chairman: Professor James Crabbe



MENU AND DINNER WINES

NV Nino, Kartli



Chvishtari ჭვიშტარი

*Crispy corn bread with a tangy cheese filling, and tkemali (sour plum) sauce.
A recipe from Svaneti.*

2015 Rkatsiteli, Chateau Svanidze, Kakheti

2017 Château Mukhrani Qvevri, Kartli



Badrijani ბადრიჯანი

*Aubergine rolls stuffed with walnut paste, with pomegranate.
A staple of the Georgian table.*

2019 Glekhuri Qvevri Kisi, Teliani Valley, Kakheti

2020 Orgo Rkatsiteli, Dakishvili Famili Cellar, Kakheti



Shkmeruli შქმერული

Chicken, fried then simmered in a garlic and sour cream sauce. From Racha.

Served with sautéed Jersey royals and dill, and ajika spiced cauliflower

2016 Qvevri Otskhanuri Sapere, Vachnadziani, Imereti

2019 Qvevri Saperavi, Ivane Nareklshvili, Kakheti

2017 Saperavi (barel aged), Lukasi Winery, Kakheti



Medoki მედოქი

Honey cake. The Georgian version uses fresh instead of sour cream and their renowned local honey. Served with caramel cream and dark chocolate.

2019 Kvanchkara, Badagoni Winery, Racha

Chacha, double distilled, Shumi winery, Kakheti



Coffee



NV Nino, Ori Marani, Kartli

Ori means “two” in Georgian. Owners Bastien Warskotte and Nino Gvantseladze named their young winery in honour of the two wine cultures that created it. Bastien is from a family of vine-growers in Champagne. A graduate of the enological university in Dijon, he worked as a winemaker in Bordeaux, Provence, Australia, South Africa, and Canada. Nino met Bastien on a post-graduate course. Fluent in four languages, she has a master’s in strategic management and is, of course, Georgian. Her family, like so many in Georgia, have always maintained some interest in vines and winemaking. The couple married and settled in Georgia and established their winery in a breezy, beautiful spot in Kartli in 2016. Bastien’s approach to winemaking combines Champenois technique with Georgian tradition. He specialises in traditional method sparkling wine but makes the base wine in Qvevri. The couple are committed to sustainable agriculture and low intervention winemaking, but these are pure, precise wines. Indigenous Georgian varieties are used and grapes are sourced from organically grown vineyards in Kartli and Imereti.

Nino is a Non-Vintage sparkling wine made using the traditional method.

Bastien created a "reserve perpetuelle", on founding Ori Marani. This ongoing reserve wine has always been kept in Qvevri.

Tsitka, Chinuri and Goruli Mstvane and a maximum of 15% reserve wine make up Nino’s final blend.

Technical information:

Terroirs: Rupoti (Imereti), Lamiskana (Kartli)

Winemaking: 70% old French oak barrels / 30% Qvevri

Wild yeasts, no fining, no filtration

Tirage: May 2020

15 months on lees minimum | Residual Sugar Brut 8g/L

Alcohol : 12,7 % | Ph : 3,2 | TA : 5,2 g/l | SO2 total : 17 mg/l

2 2015 Rkatsiteli, Chateau Svanidze, Kakheti

The Svanidze family is descended from kings; in Georgia this is famous name with political and aristocratic clout. George Svanidze is an adviser to the Georgian government on investment and development and pioneered the cultivation of high-quality olives and olive oil. He has developed the family estate, Château Svandize, as a leading producer of premium Georgian wine. The family are also involved in travel and tourism, and the Château is frequented by the notables of Georgian political and cultural society. The wines are excellent and made using contemporary methods in their modern winery.

This is a dry Rkatsiteli fermented in stainless steel. Its concentration and succulent minerality show what is possible when this variety is treated with respect and aspiration.



George Svanidze
Owner of Château Svanidze



Svanidze vineyards with restored chateau and Caucasus mountains in the distance

3

2017 Château Mukhrani Qvevri, Kartli

This 19th century Château looks like a little bit of Bordeaux has been teleported to breezy Kartli. Created in the 1870s by Prince Ivane Mukhranbationi, Mukhrani was a pioneering producer of fine Georgian wine with an international market and reputation. The estate fell on hard times in the early 20th century, with vineyards neglected and the château derelict. From 2002, a staggeringly ambitious project has restored the vineyards, gardens and chateau.

Hugely respected winemaker, Patrick Honnef, has led the conversion of their 40 hectares to certified organic production and is making characterful wines that combine the vitality of native Georgian grapes with contemporary polish. Honnef is captivated by the potential and resurgence of contemporary Georgian wine. Honnef has reduced the use of selected aromatic yeast in favour of indigenous or neutral strains. He has introduced a “Marani” (qvevri cellar) to the state of the art modern winery. This delicate Qvevri wine is consistent with the lighter, aromatic character of Kartli.

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2019 Glekhuri Qvevri Kisi, Teliani Valley, Kakheti

Kisi is one of Georgia's finest autochthonous grape varieties. Plantings decreased during the soviet era because of Kisi's relatively small yield, and susceptibility to fungal diseases. But when cultivated with care, Kisi is responsible for some of Georgia's greatest amber wines, prized for their precise aromatics, and illuminating freshness. Plantings of Kisi are increasing as producers prioritise quality potential.

Glekhuri means 'Peasant', but without the implied sneer. Rather it is 'one who works the land'. This Qvevri wine is made by Teliani, one of Georgia's largest wine producers who have been one of the leaders in restoring qvevri culture to mainstream Georgian winemaking.

Grapes for this wine are grown in the Akhmeta district in southwest Kakheti. The soils are of stony clay. Whole bunches are fermented in Qvevri for 6 months and bottled without fining, and after light filtration.

5

2020 Orgo Rkatsiteli, Dakishvili Family Cellars, Kakheti

Giorgi (Gogi) Dakishvili is one of the most admired and influential figures in Georgian wine. A skilled enologist and 4th generation winemaker, Gogij makes his own wine from the family vineyards in Shalauri and advises several of Georgia's large wineries. Gogi works with his wife Ilona, who is also an enologist. (Their son, Temuri, is also a noted winemaker and consultant in his own right.)

This estate-grown and bottled wine is a benchmark for high quality qvevri wine. Gogi has a high proportion of old vines (which are not plentiful in Georgia) and cultivates vineyards sustainably. Rkatsiteli is hand harvested and fermented in qvevri with natural yeasts and daily punch-downs. Following alcoholic fermentation, the wine ages on skins for up to 6 months. It is bottled unfinned and unfiltered with minimal sulphur dioxide.

Orgo is the name of the circular lid (typically of slate or wood) used to seal the qvevri during ageing.

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2016 Qvevri Otskhanuri Sapere, Vachnadziani, Imereti

Vachnadziani was established in 1953 and is one of the oldest wineries in Georgia. In the last two decades winery and vineyards have been rejuvenated thanks to significant investment. The company owns 1,000 hectares of vineyard, in the Kakheti region in eastern Georgia and the Imereti, Racha and Lechkhumi regions in western Georgia, Vachnadziani cultivates 25 vine varieties - the majority of which are indigenous. Experienced winemaker and CEO Vlad Kublashvili leads this dynamic and quality focused estate.

The vineyard for this wine is at an altitude of 220 metres, on limestone soils. The vineyard is planted on slightly inclined slopes and terraces facing north-west and west. Cover grass is planted between the vines to reduce weeds; the soil is mulched and treated with organic mineral fertilisers.

Otskhanuri Sapere is one of Georgia's oldest grape varieties and means 'Otskhana's colourful' which refers to its home village, and the deep ruby of its wines.

This wine is produced in medium-sized (950 litre) qvevri. Fermentation of destemmed berries took place in qvevri for one week, after which the wine was racked off the skins into fresh qvevri and then aged for five months.



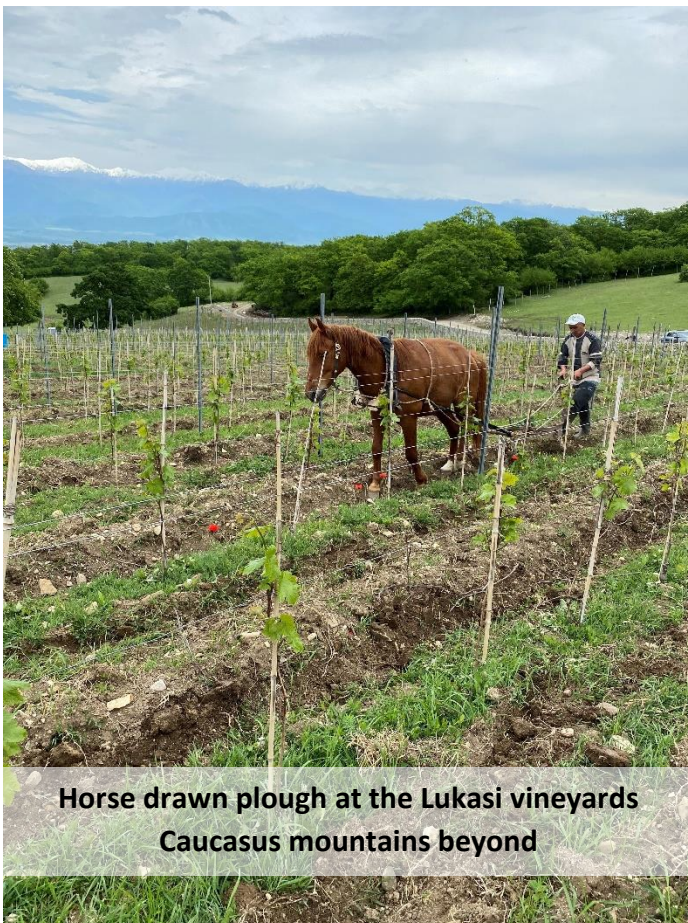
The Marani at Vachnadziani

7 2019 Qvevri Saperavi, Ivane Nareklishvili, Kakheti

Ivane is a third-generation winemaker and highly experienced enologist. He worked for several years as a senior winemaker in leading Georgian wineries and moved to Italy to pursue his masters in enology. In Italy he worked with the renowned consultant Donato Lanati of Enosis. In 2015 he was able to realise his deepest wish and founded his own winery, 'The Qvevri Wine Cellar', with three hectares of vineyards in the town of Gurjaani. Ivane is a quiet but determined craftsman and perfectionist, a real winemaker's winemaker. He makes only qvevri wine and brings his technical understanding to this ancient technology. All his wines made with minimal intervention, using native yeasts, but he has an eye for purity and quality above all else.

Saperavi is the foremost red grape of Georgia and is thought to be an ancient variety. There are several different clones according to sub region. It gives deep, fresh, and vital wine. Here the unoaked qvevri method showcases Saperavi's vibrant colour and naturally sumptuous texture.

8 2017 Saperavi (barrel aged), Lukasi Winery, Kakheti



Horse drawn plough at the Lukasi vineyards
Caucasus mountains beyond

Lukasi is a small estate officially started in 2011 by husband and wife, Mamuka Dolidze and Keti Gersamia. They began by harvesting fruit from a small personal vineyard of Mamuka's family. Their Saperavi is grown in the district of Papari, renowned for producing intense, deep wine. (Papari means 'horse's mane' and evokes the rippling profile of the mountains that shelter this warm, dry terroir.) Grapes

are grown without fertilisers or pesticides and their aim is to produce small quantities of top-quality wine. Their apparently rapid success in Georgia reflected their 'unofficial' production for many years, in which they produced wine without a label for their friends and family.

Their first official release was in 2014. Their beautiful and idiosyncratic label design reflects this highly personal involvement.

Top winemaker, and friend, Zura Goletiani has been on board since 2014. In recent years they have expanded their range to include rare varieties from other parts of Georgia.

This Saperavi is fermented in stainless steel and aged in French barrique for 12-18 months. The 2017 is just getting going and hints at the incredible potential of this noble and variety.

9 2019 Kvanchkara, Badagoni Winery, Racha

Kvanchkara was Georgia's first 'famous' wine, and was the creation of Prince Dimitri Ivanese dze Kipiani in the golden times of the 1800s. This nobleman from Racha was a member of the liberal elite and championed Georgian culture and wine production. He created this velvety but vibrant red from Aleksandrouli and Mujuretuli grape varieties grown, and hand picked, on Racha's steep slopes and high terraces. Kvanchkara has the dubious fame of being Stalin's favourite wine; its creator was exiled and murdered by the Russian Imperial authorities in 1886. Kipiani was made a saint of the Georgian orthodox church in 2007.

Once one of Georgia's most counterfeited wines, Kvanchkara's contemporary quality, and reputation, has been restored by tough checks against adulteration. (The village goes into a kind of lock-

down during harvest, so that external grapes cannot be brought in and passed off.)

With 38g/l of residual sugar, this is a luscious wine, but the balance is the thing. Acidity is a freshening 6 g/l and alcohol is just 11%. The tender texture and floral perfume make this a graceful, high-toned wine.

Sarah Abbott MW – March 2023



Old qevri with vineyard beyond

Maspindzeli Choir



Maspindzeli is a choir devoted to singing songs from the ancient polyphonic tradition of Georgia. It is led by Bernard Burns.

The choir came about in 1999 in response to the growing interest in Georgian singing, which only became widely known in the west following Georgian independence in 1991, thanks to the work of leading Georgian teachers such as Joseph Jordania and the late Edisher Garakanidze. The choir has studied with visiting Georgian teachers and choirs and has made a specific point of studying authentic styles of singing from various regions of Georgia.

It was originally formed by Helen Chadwick, following Edisher's tragic death in a car crash in 1998, in order to raise money to support his son Gigi Garakanidze.

"Maspindzeli" means "host" in Georgian and the choir has often sung for the London Georgian community, and has six times accepted an invitation to Georgia as part of the biennial Polyphonic Symposium at the Tbilisi Conservatory of Music.

The choir has performed at the Wigmore Hall, St John's Smith Square and the chapel of Trinity College, Cambridge. It has featured on BBC Radio 3's The Choir, has sung live on BBC Radio 4's Broadcasting House, and has featured on Georgian television several times.

wonderfully gritty — John L Walters, The Guardian.

On the face of it, the choir is a nonsense - a Georgian choir with only one Georgian person in it. But the sound is wonderful - raw, gutsy, committed, folk-like but sophisticated. A must.

— Orlando Gough, Artangel.

Shut your eyes and these really are Georgian voices, with the female soloists finding exactly the right hard, bare sound, just as they do in Tbilisi. — Michael Church, The Independent.

www.maspindzeli.org.uk



with special thanks to, the Maspindzeli Choir:

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Jenny Barrett

Bernard Burns Esq

Geoff Burton Esq

Tim Davies Esq

Polly Hunt

Joan Lindeman

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Tessa Watt

Annalie Wilson

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