



Europe Wine Wonders: The Most Unexpected Places to Sip and Savor

Description

“I believe that the responsibility of the winemaker is to take that fruit and get it into the bottle as the most natural and purest expression of that vineyard, of the grape varietal or blend, and of the vintage.”

Robert M. Parker, Jr., Founder of the Wine Advocate



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We welcome Guest Author Armughan Zaigham, who will share some of the world's lesser-known wine regions. We have not been to several of these countries, and with our love of wine, this might just be the inspiration we need!

There are a number of diverse regions in Europe where wine growing is prominent. Whether it is red wine, white wine, or something unique like Cognac, one thing is sure: European wine won't disappoint you.

While regions like Tuscany, Rioja, and Bordeaux are some of the first names that come to mind when appreciating European vineyards, true wine pundits know well that there are many other places with sprawling acres of grape vines that are being recognized for their rich flavor and tastings.

So the next time you plan to go on a wine-tasting tour, expand your mind past the usual Bordeaux and Tuscany and delve instead into a whole new world of these lesser-known and underrated wine destinations that promise something for every palate.

Croatia

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When it comes to emerging wine destinations, it is hard to look beyond Istria, Croatia, a peninsula that reaches out into the Adriatic Sea and shares its borders with Slovenia.

The region's Mediterranean climate is perfect for growing grapes and viticulture in Istria dates back to the 6th century BC when wine was introduced into the area by the Greeks.

Vineyards can be found all over the peninsula, scattered between the pretty towns and coastal villages. This region is best explored by a cruise, and many ships [cruising to different destinations](#) in Croatia offer wine experiences and wine-tasting tours.

Slovakia



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Not many people may be aware of the long wine tradition of Slovakia, which dates back to medieval times. Though not well known internationally, the local wine enjoys a healthy reputation within Slovakia and neighboring countries as well.

The Little Carpathians Wine Region is the most popular among the six wine regions in Slovakia is a short excursion from the capital, Bratislava. There are numerous families-

owned wine cellars here where one can sample local wines and learn about their production process.

The ideal time to visit this region is twice a year in May and November during the Wine Cellars Open Day, when you will get an opportunity to try and savor from over a hundred different wine varieties.

Georgia

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With more than 8000 years of winemaking tradition behind it, Georgia is fast becoming a reputed winemaking region in Europe, especially for its popular natural and low-intervention varieties.

Winemaking in Georgia revolves around wines made in Qvevri, a rotund clay vessel that is buried underground during the entire fermentation process for temperature control. This is more popular in the [wine country of Georgia – Kakheti](#), even though winemaking is a tradition in almost all parts.

Amber wines that use grape skin, seeds, stems, and all are also synonymous with the country, as are the semi-sweet Khvanchkara wines. Cellars welcome guests for casual tastings and tours, while the more prominent wineries encourage more formal degustations.

Armenia



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Armenia, just like neighboring Georgia, is also an old wine-producing nation with production centers at Areni, home to ancient wine-producing practices dating back to 4000 BC.

While under the Soviet Union, quantity was given priority over quality; today, the Areni family winemakers are boosting the industry by adopting innovative methods, such as the use of wine cubes and floating a number of tasting rooms where one can sample different varieties of fine Armenian wine.

Also, the bulk of the Kangun and Voskehat grape cultivation is done in the Armavir province for making both wine and brandy and is, therefore, an excellent spot to explore on a wine-tasting tour.

Switzerland



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Swiss wine is so good that you will rarely find it in stores outside of the country, and that is because the locals like to keep it to themselves. As a result, wine tourism in Switzerland is a burgeoning industry with nearly 15,000 hectares of land under vineyards in the warmer south and west regions.

The regions of Geneva, Vaud, Valais, Ticino, Three Lakes, and the German-speaking region Switzerland has a long history of winemaking that goes back to the Roman era. From the UNESCO World Heritage-listed vineyards above Montreux to Saillon, the smallest of its kind in the world.

Only 1% of the wine produced in the country is allowed to be exported; therefore, it is no wonder that wine tourism is fast gaining popularity, including wine tastings and tours to encourage the connoisseurs of fine wine to linger longer.

Spain

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The lesser-known El Bierzo region is located in northwest Spain. It is known for producing high-quality red wine made from the Godello and Mencía grape varieties. The reason for the unique flavor of the wine produced here is the high mountainous terrain and varying soil types. Some of the top wineries, like Bodegas Estefanía, welcome visitors to tour their vineyards and sample their products.

Besides the wine, the El Bierzo region is a place of stunning natural beauty full of charming villages and rich heritage. This makes it an excellent destination for wine tasting in off-beat wine regions and explore new places of cultural and historical significance.

Greece



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One region of Greece which wine connoisseurs often overlook is Mantinia, a picturesque region on the Peloponnese peninsula in favor of the better-known wine

producing islands of Crete and Santorini.

However, if you desire to sample some lesser-known but highly regarded Greek wines, Mantinia has a rich history of winemaking and offers visitors an opportunity to do so.

The popular white grape variety known as Moschofilero has a rich floral and citrus flavor and the [best wine is produced](#) in the heart of this region, where visitors can enjoy wine-tasting experiences, as well as food and wine pairings.

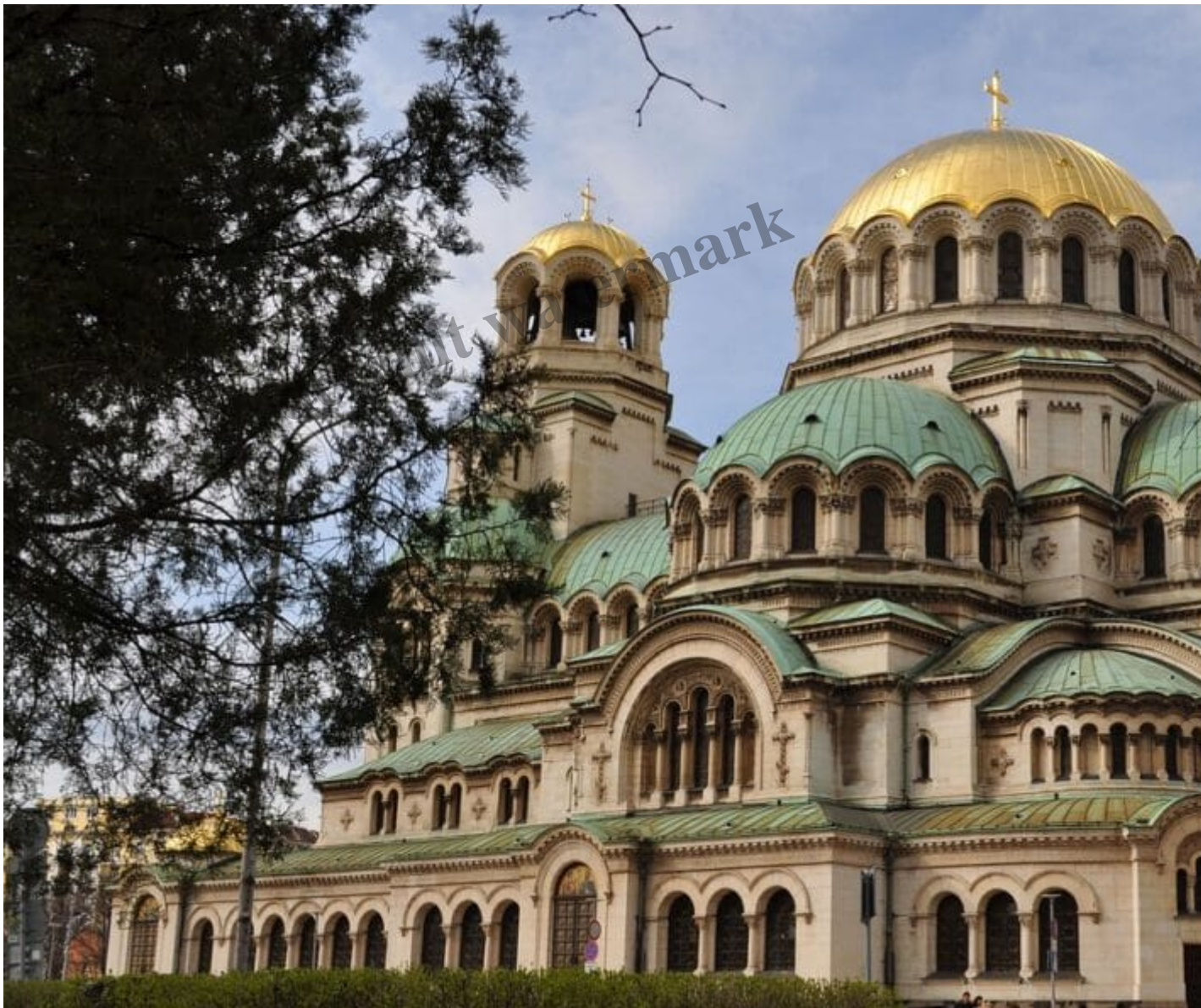
Hungary



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Another excellent destination for wine enthusiasts eager to explore a lesser-known wine region is Eger, a historic city in northern Hungary. Famous for its Egri Bikaver or “Bull’s Blood” is a red wine made from several varieties of grapes, like Furrmint and Egri Leanya. Visitors are welcome to explore the various vineyards surrounding Eger and are offered an opportunity to taste the local wines made in the different wineries in the region, which incidentally date back to the 13th century and are the oldest in the country.

Bulgaria



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A relatively unknown wine-producing region in southern Bulgaria is the Thracian Valley, famous for its red wines, which are produced from different grape varieties such as Rubina and Mavrud. Moreover, the vineyards in the area are located in picturesque places surrounded by high

mountains that enjoy a climate and fertile soil favorable for growing quality grapes. The wine cellars of the region's top wineries attract a sizeable number of visitors for wine tasting and also wine and food pairing. Some leading names include Domaine Boyar and Yustina.

The wine history of the region also makes for exciting reading. The Thracians were known for their love of food and wine; hence, their winemaking skills are apparent even today. The quality wines of the region are gradually gaining recognition on the international stage because of their unique flavor.

Moldova



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Surprisingly, Moldova produces a vast amount of wine and even exports it to countries like Japan, China, Germany, and Ukraine, but the quality only improved after 2013, when exports to Russia restarted.

While Moldova produces a wide variety of international names like Sauvignon and Merlot, their local unique varieties like Rara Neagra and Feteasca Alba are the ones that are making waves in Moldova and can only be found there. So make sure you add it to your underrated wine-touring itinerary to Europe the next time you are there.

There are extensive underground cellars in Cordu, near the capital city of Chisinau, where some

of the major producers are located, with the largest wine cellar in the world being at Cricova, known as the underground wine city.

Since the other regions are further up, it is best to stay in Chisinau and take a guided tour to take you to Cordu. Keep an eye on brands like Cricova's Viorica and Salcuta's Pinot Gris.

Denmark



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Talking of wine, few people would think about wine production and wine tourism in Denmark, as the

Nordic region has always been considered an underrated wine destination in Europe. In fact, this is the only region that can grow the fast-growing variety of Solaris grapes, which can withstand the cold night temperatures.

That said, the Rosnaes Peninsula in Denmark is a sizeable winemaking region on the west coast of Zealand, apart from smaller vineyards on Samsøe island and the east coast of Jutland. These regions have a more extended summer and more sunny days, while the soil is especially suited for grape production.

Moreover, the sediments of sand left from the receding glaciers millions of years ago and the moderate temperature around the season and fjords of the coastal region, quality grapes have been produced to make wine literally flow in Denmark.

The easiest way to sip and sample Danish wine is to make a base in Copenhagen and drive to the large wineries in Dyrehøj on the Rosnaes Peninsula. While you are sure to like all the labels, look out, especially for Sauvignier Gris and Ros.

Nyhavn, Denmark, is a must-visit when in Denmark. [Check out our article on Nyhavn for more information.](#)

Reflection

As we traverse the hidden corners of Europe's wine landscape, it becomes clear that true oenophiles can find treasures well beyond the famous vineyards of Bordeaux and Tuscany. From the sun-kissed hills of Croatia's Istria to the ancient cellars of Armenia, each destination offers a unique tapestry of flavors and traditions that enrich the overall experience of wine tasting. Exploring these lesser-known regions not only broadens your palate but also deepens your appreciation for the intricate history and culture that influence each bottle.

In a world where wine tourism often gravitates towards the well-trodden paths, venturing into these underrated destinations invites discovery and adventure. Each sip carries a story—whether it's the ancient winemaking methods in Georgia or the innovative techniques emerging from Denmark. So, the next time you plan your wine journey, consider stepping off the beaten path to embrace the unexpected. You might just find your new favorite wine and a deeper connection to the vibrant traditions that make European viticulture so extraordinary.



Author Bio

We wish to thank Armughan Zaigham for his kind contribution to our blog. You can find him on his Instagram site, [Wander With Arm](#). He will take you on a journey to satiate your wanderlust! Explore hidden gems, savor local flavors, and dive into the vibrant cultures around the globe. See the magic that happens when you follow the compass of curiosity.

Are you traveling to any of these amazing destinations? Check out accommodation prices during your research process

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