Wine tourism in the Russian Federation

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The total area of vineyards in Russia amounts to 90 thousand hectares.

More than 500 farms are engaged in grape production.

More than 250 grape varieties, including about 60 aboriginal (autochthonous) ones, are used for wine production.

There were produced 32 million dekaliters of still wines, 12.8 million dekaliters of sparkling wines and 8.5 million dekaliters of grape brandies. Part of them was produced of imported wine materials.

In the year 2015, the following classifications were legislated for the Russian wines:

- «Wine production with protected geographical indication» (12 zones)
- «Wine production with protected appellation of origin» (9 zones)

The total volume of these wines was a little over 2 million bottles.
Within the framework of the event, the international conference «Development of tourism in Russia. Reality and prospects» was held. The business programme of the forum was participated by about 200 persons from different regions of Russia, as well as from France, Germany, Iceland, Indonesia, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain. Several thousand residents of the Krasnodar region and tourists became the guests of the festival.

International forum-festival «#Four waters» in Abrau Durso (Krasnodar region) 2015. With the support of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the Russian Federal Agency for Tourism (Rostourism)
- The total number of tourists who took enogastronomical tours in Krasnodar region, including degustations, following the results of the year 2017, was about 288 thousand people. In Krasnodar region, there are more than 20 tours and excursion routes, providing the visits to the vineyards, lections and degustations. About 40 farms and wine-making enterprises offer to use their spaces for organizing wedding ceremonies and celebrating solemn dates.

Jancis Robinson, wine writer, London

«I was surprised how recognisable the Russian realia appeared to me - the look of Krasnodar, the villages, vineyards and much of the cellars I inspected. But let me tell you one very vivid impression of mine: it is the exposition of the Taman Archaeological Museum. You know, I have been travelling a lot, so I cannot help retaining good impressions of the people, countries and wines I am meeting. But the 26 centuries of Taman history (including that of the ancient Greek winemaking) have become a zest of my trip. I could not imagine that your region has had such rich history and culture!»
The share of the Wine Tourism Centre accounts for about 90% of all wine tourists of the Krasnodar region. In addition to degustations in the cellars of the Russian Wine House, a gastronomic school, a sailing club, concerts, festivals and the annual Russian winemakers' summit are provided for tourists. There are several restaurants and hotels on the territory of the complex.
Another example that characterizes the approaches to the development of wine tourism in Krasnodar region is the activity of the family enterprise «Nikolaev and Sons». In addition to the wines from the Lefkadia Valley, tourists and trade networks are offered with cheeses, vegetables, fruits, honey and high-oleic sunflower-seed oil of local production, which have European bio-conformity certificates. Also at the territory of the complex there are a museum, a restaurant and a hotel.
Russian wineries are distinguished by the desire to attract as many wine tourists as possible. For example, one of the largest Russian wineries of Krasnodar region «Fanagoria» organize not only group tours, but also individual ones. The complex includes gastronomic restaurant and a hotel. The company also makes promo video of their wine tours.
The Don river gave the name to the region «Donskoy». It is a center of the Cossacks and Cossack culture. The first winemakers appeared here in the 7th century. Tsimlyansk wines are mentioned in the Russian chronicles of the 15th century. It is a birthplace of many autochthonous Russian varieties of grapes, such as Krasnostop Zolotovsky, Tsimlyansky, Sibirkovy, Plechistik ... In the Rostov region, they have a tour «Wine Roads of the Don», which includes three tourist routes, lasting from one to three days.
The region provides 10 wine excursions and the «Stavropol wine road». Old wineries and modern «garage» wineries welcome the tourists. The wine road starts with the museum exposition «History of viticulture and winemaking of the Stavropol region». The wine road has many surprises, for example, a visit to one of the private wineries of the Museum of a Russian samovar with 257 exhibits or an ethnic wine tour to Molokan Christians or «Nekrasov» Cossacks who left the Don in the early 17th century, and have come back from Turkey only a little over 50 years ago.
In 2017, during the International Cultural Forum in St. Petersburg, a Memorandum on the establishment of the «Iter-Vitis-Russia» programme was signed between the Iter Vitis European Federation, which is a part of the Council of Europe, and the Union of Winegrowers and Winemakers of Russia. Its purpose is cooperation in promoting the cultural heritage of the Russian wine regions, creating an extensive network of wine and gastronomic cultural routes, taking into account the rich European experience.

The most important factor in the development of wine tourism is also the closer cooperation of the Union of Winegrowers and Winemakers of Russia, the Federation of Restaurateurs and Hoteliers of Russia, the Russian National Culinary Association and the International Center of Wine and Gastronomy. We consider wine tourism as an important component of a more general category - gastronomy tourism.
For many countries in the world, not only «wine tourism» in its pure form, but also the tourism associated with other alcohol beverages is relevant. I have not met a single established term in English language to reflect it yet, and perhaps this is worth thinking about. If the visits to factories producing cognac can still be related to «wine tourism» on the basis of raw materials, then what to say about visiting breweries, distilleries, factories producing vodka or fruit liqueurs? We should take into account the fact that they are as attractive for tourists as wineries.
Thank you for your attention!