

## **Africa and Southern Caucuses Tours - 2018**

### **1) 2018 East African Agribusiness Tour**

**Wayne Dredge (Convenor)**

The itinerary for 2018's African agribusiness tour is presently being finalised and will be circulated early in the new-year. The tour, which begins in Nairobi, will touch ground in Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Zambia to conclude at the most quintessential of African landmarks, Victoria Falls.

The highlights will include visits to some of Sub-Saharan Africa's fastest developing agricultural enterprises and most advanced research institutions. Presentations from global experts on food security, nutrition, conservation, future agricultural technology, product procurement and food manufacturing will be interspersed throughout the 24-day tour.

Places are still available and any people wishing to learn more are encouraged to contact Mr Jim Geltch before the final cut off for new participants on February 28<sup>th</sup>.

### **2) Proposed tour of the Southern Caucuses in 2018**

**Simon Appleby (Convenor)**

The South Caucasus, incorporating the lands between the Black and Caspian Seas (Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan) is the Cradle of Wine, with archeological remains of winemaking dating as far back as 8000 years ago. It is believed that wild grapevine varieties were first domesticated in this region, with over 600 autochthonous vine variteies in the two countries, and that pre-Christian civilisations had a deep connection with viticulture and winemaking as part of religious ritual. Armenia is the oldest surviving Christian nation on earth, with Georgia having converted soon afterwards in the 4th century, and the two countries offer a unique opportunity to experience ancient wine culture in a comfortable and friendly environment.



*Above: Winery Chateau in Southern Caucasus*

Nuffield Caucasus, a Georgian non-profit organisation, is the regional affiliate of Nuffield International and is promoting the Nuffield Farm Scholarship Programme in Georgia and Armenia to stimulate the professional development of the nascent agroindustries of the region. To assist funding Georgian and Armenian Scholars whose employers are not sufficiently financially resourced to underwrite their scholarships, we are running a two week Wine Heritage Tour of Georgia and Armenia in Summer 2018 to raise some funds and to expose Nuffield Scholars and their associates to the rich cultural heritage of these two fascinating countries.

The proposed itinerary will include:

**GEORGIA**

- Iberieli winery, Guria. Subtropical high rainfall region producing Chkhaveri in kvevri. Exports most production to Japan.
- Winery Khareba, Imereti. The largest commercial winery in Western Georgia, producing sparkling and still whites, and reds both Kvevri and western style.
- Visit to a Kvevri maker in Imereti; terracotta egg-shaped vessels buried underground, and used for vinification and storage of wine for the past 8000 years.
- Bagrationi 1882, Shida Kartli. The largest producer of sparkling wine in Georgia
- Chateau Mukhrani, Mtskheta-Mtianeti. Former home of a Georgian prince and the Romanov family, and a premium producer of cool climate reds and whites, including some rare varieties. Bordeaux winemaker.
- State Research Centre for Agriculture Ampelography collection, Jigura, Mtskheta-Mtianeti. 437 Georgian grapevine varieties in the collection.
- Shavnabada Monastery winery, Kvemo Kartli (outskirts of Tbilisi). Small scale kvevri winery, reds and whites.
- Sarajashvili Brandy Distillery, Tbilisi. Makers of Churchill's favourite brandy
- Manaveli winery, Manavi, Kakheti. Commercial-scale kvevri winery and distillery.
- Pheasant's Tears winery, Sighnaghi, Kakheti, American-owned kvevri winery
- Mukado Wines, Mukuzani, Kakheti, Owned by Australian winemaker Lado Uzunashvili. Western and kvevri wines, mostly Saperavi
- Telavi Wine Cellar, Telavi, Kakheti. One of the largest wineries in the country, Australian viticulturalists consult here.
- Lukasi, Tsinandali, Kakheti, small-scale premium western-style winery
- Schuchmann Wines, Kisiskhevi, Kakheti. German-owned winery exporting kvevri and western wines to Whole Foods chain in USA, and EU markets.
- Georgian Wine and Spirits, Telavi, Kakheti. Large scale French-owned winery, Bordeaux winemaker
- Alaverdi Monastery winery. 1007 year old winery, producing kvevri reds and whites.



*Above: Ancient village in Georgia*

## **ARMENIA**

- Armenia Wine, Aragatsotn. Large scale, newly built winery under German management with Bordeaux consultants. Dry reds and whites, native and European varieties, port-style wines and brandy.
- Karas estate, Armavir. Large scale newly built winery, owned by Argentinian-Armenian billionaire. 2000 Ha territory, 400 Ha under vine. Argentinian winemakers and viticulturalists. Dry reds and whites, native and European varieties.
- Armas estate, Aragatsotn. Owned by a US-based Armenian family, 400 Ha estate winery in stunning setting overlooking Mount Ararat. Mostly native varieties, Italian consulting winemakers and viticulturalists.
- Alluria winery, Armavir. Natural winemaker, producing charismatic wines from rare red grape varieties.
- Van Ardi winery, Aragatsotn. Small winery owned by American-Armenian family, producing quality wines from native reds and whites.
- Voskevaz Winery, Aragatsotn. Family-owned winery, European and native reds and whites. French winemaker. Some wines from century-old ungrafted bush vines.
- Semina Consulting, Yerevan. Contract vinification for many private clients, owned by Italian-trained Armenian winemaker. Also has own label, Keush sparkling wines.
- Maran winery, Yerevan. Owned by the pioneer of modern winemaking in Armenia, and the leading authority on grapevine varieties of the Armenian plateau, Avag Harutyunyan. produces reds and whites from native varieties from Areni. Also produces pomegranate wines and owns the Green Dragon distillery (eau de vie).
- Armenian ampelography collection, >300 native varieties.
- Ararat Brandy Distillery, owned by Pernod Ricard. Major distiller exporting to CIS.
- Old Bridge, Areni. Small scale artisan winery, native and Georgian reds.

- Areni Cave visit; the world's oldest winery, dated to 6200 years old, in pristine condition with scores of terracotta Karas containers and other relics in excellent condition.

There will be extensive involvement with the Georgian National Wine Agency, the Vine and Wine Foundation of Armenia (both state bodies), as well as the Georgian Wine Association, the Kakheti Wine Guild, the Georgian Wine Tourism Association and the Armenian Winemakers Association. We also will have some officials from the Australian Trade Commission as well as the Australian, French and Dutch Ambassadors to Georgia attending the tour, so high-level access to officials involved in substantial foreign investment projects will be part of the experience.



*Above: Vineyard in Georgia*

The participants would experience scenery and environments from lush subtropical rainforest, fertile valleys ringed by jagged mountains, ancient monasteries, the high Armenian plateau and the rugged semi-desert highlands of Vayots Dzor. Tbilisi is a charming mix of east and west, with mostly 19th century architecture and narrow cobblestone laneways, cafes, tea houses and mansions. Yerevan is a grand Soviet city made of pink volcanic rock, with broad treelined boulevards, parks and gardens.

Participants can expect memories to last a lifetime as they enjoy legendary Caucasus hospitality, extraordinary cuisine, and fabulous wines and brandies. The rich history of winemaking in this region will help participants put their own operations into perspective as part of an 8000-year old journey marrying art, science and culture. Sampling wines from unfamiliar varieties and vineyard inspections may stimulate participants to experiment with native Caucasian varieties in their own operations, and there will be many opportunities to interact with winemakers using the 8000-year old kvevri/karas methodology for those curious about the approach.

It is anticipated that the tour will involve seven days in Georgia and four days in Armenia in June/July 2018. More details to follow in the New Year.

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