

are lighter in body and more forward. Not an easy vintage across the rest of Hungary, which was very wet during the harvest, although early whites came in before the rain really set in and were the most acceptable of a generally disappointing crop. It was also a challenging vintage in Bulgaria, where the grapes did not ripen fully. In Romania, an extended drought resulted in very tannic, high-acid reds and small quantities.

1997

Vintage rating: 78

(Reds: 75–80, Whites: 70–80, Sweet: 70–90)

It was a very late season in Tokaj, with very little rain in September and hardly any development of botrytis, although pockets of *aszú* berries developed later in the season, and these were of outstanding quality (similar to 1993). Elsewhere in Hungary, it was an early harvest with very good to excellent results for both reds and whites. In Romania, the reds turned out well, with good sugar accumulation and fully ripe tannins, although they are very short on quantity. Some good quality in Bulgaria.

Grapevine

- **Hungary** assembled a committee of winemakers to start on developing a national wine strategy in 2003. Although it has already been criticized for lacking an overseas perspective, the committee is expected to reduce the number of wine regions from the current 22 to just 10.

- **Turkey's wine production** in 2002 went up to 48.5 million litres, and the industry now comprises of 31 companies, with six that are still state-owned and control 40 per cent of the volume. Turkish ex-pats in Germany are the most important export market, taking nearly a third of exports.

- **Chris Cameron of Peppertree** in the Hunter Valley, Australia, plans to plant vines on the Gallipoli peninsula in Turkey overlooking Anzac Cove. His first wine will be a three-country white blend probably called PAX, made from wines from Australia, New Zealand, and Turkey, and due for release on Anzac Day 2004.

- **Bulgaria's wine lake** is drying up thanks to renewed sales to Russia and Poland. A new law has been passed requiring all wine producers to register, even if vinifying for home consumption only (which apparently accounts for as much as 60 per cent of all wine output).

- **Reports from Hungary and Moldova** indicate that Italian companies have been buying up Pinot Gris in bulk, both as juice and wine, after the poor harvest in northern Italy.

- **Rumours are rife** that more Pinot Noir is produced in Romania than the official area of 1,750 hectares could possibly yield. Carl Reh subjects the Pinot Noir it purchases to anthocyanin testing, and claims to be 95 per cent confident that it is the real thing.

- **Fraudulent Georgian wine** continues to be major problem in both the former Soviet Union and the USA.

GREATEST WINE PRODUCERS

Tokaji

- 1 Szepsy
- 2 Királyudvar
- 3 Domaine de Disznókő
- 4 Royal Tokaji Wine Company
- 5 Oremus

Other wines

- 1 Attila Gere (Hungary)
- 2 Château Belá (Slovakia)
- 3 Edi Simčič (Slovenia)
- 4 Kupljen (whites only, Slovenia)
- 5 Movia (Slovenia)

FASTEST-IMPROVING PRODUCERS

- 1 Carl Reh Winery (Romania)
- 2 Prahova Wine Cellars (reds only, Romania)
- 3 Cricova-Acorex (Moldova)
- 4 Vinterra International (Romania)
- 5 Recas (Romania)
- 6 Budai Winery (Hungary)
- 7 Blueridge Winery (Bulgaria)
- 8 Domaine Boyar (Bulgaria)
- 9 Svischtov (Bulgaria)
- 10 SERVE (Romania)

NEW UP-AND-COMING PRODUCERS

- 1 Château Belá (Slovakia)
- 2 Tilia (Slovenia)
- 3 Sutor (Slovenia)
- 4 Batapaati (Hungary)
- 5 Crown Estates (dry whites only, Hungary)
- 6 Jeruzalem Ormőz (Slovenia)
- 7 Vinska Klet Goriska Brda (Slovenia)
- 8 Chateau Vincent (Hungary)
- 9 Keo (Cyprus)
- 10 Sodap (Cyprus)

BEST-VALUE PRODUCERS

- 1 Prahova Wine Cellars (reds only, Romania)
- 2 Vinarium Szekszárdi (Hungary)
- 3 Budai Winery (Hungary)
- 4 Hilltop Neszmély Winery (Hungary)
- 5 Carl Reh Winery (Romania)
- 6 Nagyréde Winery (Hungary)
- 7 Gyöngyös Estate (Hungary)
- 8 Chapel Hill (Balaton-Boglar Winery, Hungary)
- 9 Domaine Boyar (Schumen Winery, Bulgaria)
- 10 Binderer St Ursula (Macedonia)

GREATEST-QUALITY WINES

Tokaji

- 1 **Tokaji Aszú 6 Puttonyos 1999** Szepsy (9,000 forints)
- 2 **Tokaji Cuvée 2000** Szepsy (11,900 forints)
- 3 **Royal Tokaji Aszú Essencia 1995** Royal Tokaji Wine Company (42,000 forints)
- 4 **Tokaji Cuvée 1999** Királyudvar (9,500 forints)
- 5 **Tokaji Aszú 6 Puttonyos 1999** Domaine de Disznókő (not released, estimated 9,000 forints)

Other wines

- 1 **Villány Cabernet Sauvignon Barrique 1999** Attila Gere (Hungary, 3,575 forints)
- 2 **Château Belá Riesling 2001** Egon Müller (Slovakia, 520 koruny)
- 3 **Extract of Styria 2000** Kupljen (Slovenia, 1,500 SIT)
- 4 **Duet Riserva 1999** Edi Simčič (Slovenia, 5,750 SIT)
- 5 **Merlot 1999** Tilia (Slovenia, 2,000 SIT)