



## OUR STORY

### Georgia: The Homeland of Wine

The country of Georgia is now considered the birthplace of wine as recently unearthed wine making artifacts are more than 8,000 years old — these are the oldest wine making remains in the world! And culturally speaking, specific regions within Georgia such as Kakheti, Kartli, Imereti, Racha-Lechkhumi, Svaneti and Abkhazia are famous wine making places; legends and recorded history document centuries of continual wine making. Vessels discovered in the Anaklia region have proven Georgians were making wine in the Neolithic era in a manner that would be familiar even today..

Vino culture has been connected with the spread of Christianity in Georgia as well: St. Nino tied vine branches with her own hair to show the cross and preach Christianity to Georgians in the fourth century — to this day the top bar of the Georgian cross is slightly bent as a wine branch was the first time Georgian's witnessed the cross. There are about 450 unique vine varieties in Georgia and most of these would not be familiar to western palettes. Unfortunately, during the Soviet period when winemakers focused on massive production, some rare varieties that needed special care were abandoned and are now mostly extinct.

After the fall of communism in Georgia, many winemakers in the country started a retrospective of wine grapes and wine making techniques that had made Georgia so unique in the winemaking world to begin with.

In 2013, a couple of maverick Georgian winemakers such as Baia Abuladze and her sister Gvantsa started to rediscover the rarest species of wine grapes in Western Georgia and to focus on bio wine making techniques. The re-discovery process continues until today: Baia Abuladze, together with her winemaking family, stands among those Georgian winemakers who work to identify and classify local vine varieties.



### 3-Generational Tradition

Baia's wine comes from Imereti — one of the famous winemaking regions of Georgia, from the small village Obcha. Untypical of Georgian masculine culture of winemaking, a young woman Baia Abuladze decided to bring the three-generational small family winemaking tradition to the next level and create an eponymous label of bottled wine.

Baia and her younger siblings — Gvantsa (Sister) and Giorgi (Brother) were born and raised in Obcha in a friendly, traditional family of winemakers. They spent a happy childhood watching how parents and grandparents were involved in the diverse winemaking processes. Children were also allowed to arrange their own small farm with vineyards, greens, household animals and plantations, and spent their free time exploring the wonders of nature. At that time, the Abuladze family traditionally produced wine using Imeretian technology — the maceration process (soaking the juice of the grape with the skins and sometimes also the stems) was shorter and only 5-10% of grape skin was used during fermentation in Qvevri.

After graduating from college, Baia moved to the capital city of Tbilisi to continue her studies, however she did not find the intense urban life interesting and so after agronomical university she returned to her small town of Obcha where she has been actively promoting the wines of Imereti and growing her family winery.

### The New Life of the Winery

In 2015, the Abuladze's family business participated in the local agricultural startup competition and won the grant of GEL 5000 (about \$2,000 USD at the time) to buy a used wine bottling machine to increase production and quality. At the same time, Baia officially established the new wine company and the label Baia's Wine was born. Accompanied by her younger siblings, she totally remodelled the production structure and focused on the organic winemaking techniques. The family's attitude towards each step of winemaking changed: the maceration process increased up to 3 months, each Qvevri was treated individually — more time was aligned for degustation to decide whether the liquid is ready for the further treatment; and the decision about what percent of the grape skin is used during fermentation and aging was given priority.

Next came a new chapter for wines from Imereti. They studied each of their varieties and their terroir. Their first organic wine — a white dry Tsolikouri was bottled in 2015. Soon afterwards, the women-empowered family business became one of the first organic wine producers in Bagdati Municipality.

### Constant Development

Despite the family's winemaking experience, the first steps for Baia and her siblings were not easy: Baia's passion was to create a sustainable vineyard and to learn everything possible about a wine making process that reflected nature's own process. Within that mission, her younger sister Gvantsa travelled to Mosel, Germany, as an intern to one of the best biodynamic wineries to obtain knowledge and a deep dive into the magic process of making organic wine.

The grant that Baia won allowed for the family to bottle a higher standard wine, but she could not afford to buy a car to deliver those first bottles to Tbilisi. With her siblings' help, she was able to carry them by train and deliver to each distribution channel by Tbilisi public transport. Amazingly, those bottles turned into a massive success: restaurants and wine bars ordered more bottles immediately and customers gave great feedback. Soon afterwards, the family business became part of the Georgian Farmers' Association, which, in its turn, brought publicity in popular TV shows, as well as print media.

Publicity and fame brought up another challenge: restaurants ordered more quantities while the young entrepreneurs found it quite hard to manage large-scale production from bottling to delivery in a timely manner. In parallel with running business, all of them had their university studies ongoing and parents were not familiar with Tbilisi streets to deliver the bottles to the partners' establishments. The young trio accelerated their production by organizing equipment: they gathered and washed the old family pitchers that had been long forgotten and were able to harvest enough grapes for about 8,000 bottles. Business continued to grow. As the younger generation of the winemakers were more focused on innovative organic techniques, the siblings decided they needed to expand their knowledge again in the agricultural field. Giorgi decided to study enology and Gvantsa was enrolled in the master of agronomy at Georgian Agricultural University.

A few years after starting with white wines, the trio offered red wine from Otskhanusi Sapere and Aladasturi grapes. Today, they produce wines from Imeretian vine varieties such as Tsolikouri, Tsitska, Krakhuna, Aladasturi, Otskhanuri Sapere. Each grape cluster is chosen carefully only from the Abuladze's Obcha vineyards. The grape crushing, fermentation and aging is all done by the trio in the family cellar, to proudly offer the highest-quality organic Georgian wine to the world.



### About Obcha Village

The village Obcha boasts a unique microclimate for growing grapes. The location is unique — sitting in the eastern part of the Sairme Mountains which gives a slightly higher angle for the rays of the sun and a greater solar intensity. At 324 meters of altitude, the land offers an ideal location for growing premium wine grapes: The well-balanced geography, micro-climate and well-drained soil come together to create the perfect environment for Bais's exquisitely handcrafted wines. The heavy cold air collected between the high peaks during the night drains off the heights, much like water, joining cold moist air, creating a double cooling effect. The cool nighttime temperatures are critical in developing high quality grapes. The alluvial soil, with clay, gravel, sand and limestone has another significant influence on wine quality. The limestone offers good drainage in the wet years, retaining much needed moisture in the dry vintages, while adding various mineral elements to the soils, which transfer to the gorgeous grapes.

## CONTACT

### DIRECTIONS



#### ADDRESS

Baia's Wine  
1000, Meore Obcha, Bagdati, Georgia

#### TEL:

+995 599 682 822

### We'd Love to Hear from you

SEND