

The Culture of Wine in Slovenia

Anew the vines have fruited, And borne us, my good friends sweet wine, ...

(F. Prešeren: A Toast, Mohorjeva založba. Celovec, Ljubljana, Dunaj, 2001. Translated by Tom M. S. Priestly in Henry R. Cooper, Jr.)

The exhibition, which is made up of museum objects, words, pictures, sounds and film footage, draws attention to the close connection, both past and present, between wine and almost every aspect of Slovene life. The multimedia part of the exhibition presents the material, social and spiritual aspects of the culture of wine in Slovene lands: the cycle of work in the vineyard through the four seasons, the production of wine, drinking vessels from Slovene museum collections, winegrowing areas, different traditional and contemporary wine-related customs and habits, and many other facets confirming that the culture of wine is present everywhere in Slovenia.

Wine is important to the Slovenes as a nation. In a symbolic sense, it has united us in A Toast, the poem written by Slovenia's greatest poet France Prešeren which glorifies the grapevine and its fruits as well as the Slovene nation. Part of it now forms the national anthem. Wine is becoming an important element of the Slovene cultural and economic heritage, as well as an increasingly important element of the nation's identity and of international awareness of the country and its attractiveness. The uniqueness of Slovenia as a country at the convergence point of European civilisations and of Mediterranean, Alpine and Pannonian cultures is also apparent in the fact that there is so much variety in such a small area and that so many winegrowing and winemaking traditions have been preserved, as well as superb aromas and flavours that can otherwise only be found in widely dispersed European winegrowing localities. Hence the view that, with respect to winegrowing, Slovenia is a Europe in miniature.

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