There are just three good things in the world: the three big wine regions of Slovenia!

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All roads lead to wine and chilling out!

“We eat and drink to live! But we don’t live to eat and drink!” That’s what the adage says, telling us that both wine and food are consequences of man’s economic endeavours, a form of social cohesion and a reflection of the immense variety of cultural creativity. That is why it is through wines and dishes that we can recognise life styles, ordinary days and holidays, the efforts of individuals, families and inhabitants of towns, villages and regions. Through this publication we invite you to discover the richness of all three wine-growing regions of Slovenia, which, with its hundreds of years of cultural entanglements, is building its modern recognisability at the junction of the European Alps, the Mediterranean and the Pannonian Plain. It is this very junction that also gives a special and recognisable character to all of our wines and cuisine. Our numerous, often quite boutique and extremely natural wines, include quite a few original or autochthonous specialties, which, along with other wines, can very quickly create unique experiences and relationships for you. Here the path from heart to soul is a very short one... That is exactly why we are offering you several wine routs, which will lead you through the wine-growing regions of Podravje, Posavje and Primorska... To good people and dishes and to noble wines!

Prof. Dr. Janez Bogataj
Official geographic appellations of the wine-growing regions, wine-growing districts and wine-growing subdistricts in Slovenia. For easier illustration, we have only presented some of these in the review.
Slovenia’s No.1 tourist attractions

Postojna Cave is a network of 20 kilometres of passages, galleries and chambers into which experienced guides have accompanied over 33 million visitors in the last 192 years. It is the largest cave in the ‘classic Karst’ and the most visited show cave in Europe. The most interesting tunnels were discovered in 1818 by Luka Čeč.

Just 10 kilometres from Postojna Cave stands one of the most picturesque wonders of human history: Predjama Castle. For more than 700 years it has perched proudly in its 123-metre cliff: powerful, defiant and impregnable — the perfect hideout for the bold, headstrong and rebellious knight Erazem of Predjama, a ‘robber baron’ who is the subject of a romantic and beautiful legend.
The vigour of the Pannonian Plain

The tang of the sea
Slovenia is a unique wine region in Europe: 
wine quality is marked by three climate bands.

It was like being struck by lightning. Years ago, when the Karst was not yet a major magnet for exploration tourism, but just a mysterious allusion from Trieste recreational enthusiasts, I got completely lost in my car and ended up in some village with a name that, although I could hardly pronounce it, my eyes recognised its exquisite melody: Dol pri Vogljah. There, in the Ravbar inn, where I strayed out of fear of having to endure some privation among the oaks, beeches and birches, I was struck by lightning. I dared to peek into the kitchen and saw things that I will never forget. Happy people, a happy sun and happy bubbling in the pots. The food was excellent, the Teran bitter, almost salty, very mineral, but a quite outstanding accompaniment to the roast lamb from the oven.

This is in fact the way in good regional Slovenian gastronomy: Every time it is like an embrace, ennobled with culinary and technical peculiarities. And the wine from this region is like a kiss, so ardently awaited after the loving embrace. Slovenia is divided into three large wine growing regions, which are in turn divided into smaller topographically demarcated areas. My journey begins in the south-west, in Primorska.

The Karst is marked by Čotar, Lisjak and Štoka – wine makers who cultivate a distinct love of the desolate, red earth, and who say self-confidently that they cellar the best wines in the world. Of course they realise that other regions and their wines are more popular, they have more advantages and nature has better endowed them, yet nevertheless the Karst wines show so much ‘personality, soft and sharp edges, evolved tannin and harmonious acid content, that they enjoy special status on the international scale. Whoever has not stopped in at the Karst restaurants Domačija Šajna and Šepulje, or Špacapan in the village of Komen, simply does not know what delights are offered by the so-called “dry” Karst.

Just a few kilometres from the high plateau of the Karst, roads lead from the medieval hill village of Štanjel into a valley that can boast abundant, God-given fertility: the Vipava Valley. At the foot of a mighty mountain, in winter the wind blows down its slopes, howls through the valley, crosses the Karst and at Trieste it rages off towards the Adriatic Sea: this is the Burja, the north wind of Trieste. The houses in the Vipava Valley seek shelter and huddle close to the slopes: Oh wind, spare us. The vines shake wildly, and the apricot, peach and apple trees bravely resist the tempest. It is as if the Burja is trying to blast from the vines and trees any hint of poor flavour and to leave only what makes the wines of this valley so famous: their fragrance. These are the wines such as Zelen, Pinot bianco, Pinot grigio and Chardonnay, cellared so masterfully by the wine makers Tilia, Batič or De Adami. In the fine Pikol restaurant, which is situated a few kilometres before Nova Gorica, these wines acquire a quite special significance, when you are served carpaccio of fresh-caught sea bass, since they become outstanding accompaniment to the food. Little restaurants such as Žeja draw guests from towns near and far.

The Vipava Valley, with its castles built by the Gorica counts as fortifications to defend against enemy tribes, is in
tourism terms still in its infancy, but it is already slowly winning over epicurean tourists. With the restaurant Pri Lojzetu in the famous Zemono manor house, Slovenia is showing what kind of culinary experiences are possible. You won’t stop in here just randomly, for this is a restaurant in which food and wine are glorified. Carlo Goldoni knew why he had chosen this as his favourite place. Via Nova Gorica you can get to the Goriška Brda, the hills of Gorica. Here you can witness the full abundance of Slovenia’s wine growing regions. Meri and Zlatko Mavrič were the first wine makers to make the bold step of not just serving guests wine. So the Belica inn at Medana became the first hotel in this famous wine growing area. Wine makers such as Klinec, Toreš, Šurek, Bužinel, Dolfo and others joined in, building facilities for agritourism. The Gorica hills are famous for their outstanding wine makers such as Kristančič, Simčič, Šurek, Klinec, Belica and Mavrič. The Bjana champagne house, and the Bagueri line of the great Goriška Brda cellar, are famous names. Many of the Gorica hills wine makers have taken to soft tourism, and if this continues, the region will have a long future for tourists who like to enjoy themselves. Restaurateurs are also relying on high-quality tourism. They are not offering large restaurants with tourist menus, but regional, local cuisine. The Marica restaurant in the village of Šmartno is the right place for this: local wines, Karst pršut ham, home-made salami and cheese from the Tolmin valleys. Pinot grigio (Grauburgunder), Rumena Rebula as the regional native variety, Pinot bianco, Chardonnay and red wines such as Refošk, Cabernet and Merlot make up the wines of Brda. High quality, and the alcohol content is high, too. It is similar to the sea at Koper, Piran and Portorož: tourism is pursued there in different dimensions. Including with wine. Vinag Koper has several hundred hectares of vineyards. But the Cabernet Sauvignon from their huge cellar is in my opinion one of the best in the country. This region is also becoming increasingly important for its production of olive oil. It has a special aroma and flavour. The predominant wines are gentle, light, pleasantly full-bodied red wines, while the main white wine is Malvasia – an excellent accompaniment to fish dishes. One wine estate with a very special drop of red is of course Šantomas near Koper. Podravje is the name of the wine growing region in the north of Slovenia that borders on Austrian Styria. The region has become famous because of Slovenske Gorice and the Štajerska (Slovenian Styria) region. The high-quality development of this region around Maribor 150 years ago can be credited to a large extent to the Archduke Johan. Mention should be made just of some of the more famous wine makers: Valdhuber, Protner, Gaube, das Gut Meranovo, Dveri-Pax, Hlebec, Kogl and Horvat.

This is home to the Kerner wine, a mixture of Trollinger and Riesling varieties, and also to Rizvanec, Muscat, Riesling and also Zelen, with its Austrian name of Rotgipfer. In addition to the red varieties of Merlot and Cabernet, those who love a good drop are delighted with the Modra Portugalka, Modra Frankinja and Šentlovrenka. The Podravje wine growing region covers the regions of Radgona-Kapela, Jeruzalem-Kog, Ljutomer-Ormož, Prekmurske Gorice and Haloze, where the vineyards stretch out right to the transition into the Pannonian Plain. Rural inns offer a very diverse gastronomic experience, serving up krvavica blood sausage, tunka
cured meat, roasts, stews, strong soups and bograč goulash as well as an exquisite, filling dessert called Gibanica. Wine makers such as Kuplen and Čurin, and the large wine cellars of Gornja Radgona or Jeruzalem-Ormož have made their mark on the quality production of wines. The Jeruzalem-Ormož cellar, with its Pinot gris, has garnered a number of international awards, while the Zlata Radgonska Penina sparkling wine ranks among the finest table brands in the entire country. Another special experience can be had in the catacombs of the large cellars in Maribor and Ptuj. The wine cellars, created in the Middle Ages, seem almost infinite. The Vračko wine house in Kungota, the Jeruzalem tavern and Ribic restaurant in Ptuj rank among the vintners that have long been able to offer consistent quality and a great range. A special feature of Slovenian wine making can be found in the third wine making region, called Posavje. This is the home of Istenič, who produces such high-quality sparkling wines that his name is known beyond Slovenia’s borders. The Bizeljsko Sremič subregion produces wines such as Pinot bleu, Modra Frankinja and the native variety, Rumeni Plavec. This climate band is also very well suited to Laški Riesling. The wine slopes of Bela Krajina are composed of light, loamy soil that is found south of Ljubljana and south of the Gorjanci mountains. The Šturm wine cellar in Metlika is probably the southernmost vineyard estate of this region. Its Sauvignon blanc ensures a treat for the senses. In this region you can find the elegant, romantic Hotel Otočec, which stands over water, and the Roman Kapušin inn at Gradec. And not far from Novo Mesto, the vineyards produce wine with a special name: Cviček. This Slovenian specialty thrives in the quite steep vineyards along the Sava and Krka rivers. Cviček is neither red nor white wine, but Rosé. As for pronunciation, just say “Tsvichek”! Given its distinct acidity, it can also be drunk without reservation by diabetics. This wine goes well with a substantial snack, bread and lard and greasy bacon.
Come and have a glass!
The wine-growing region of Podravje extends through the north-eastern part of Slovenia. The picturesque vine-covered hills are imbued with centuries-old links between their exquisite wines and the work days and holidays of their inhabitants, their economic efforts, family relationships and various forms of cultural activity. These wines are thus present throughout the life cycle of the local population and help to shape joy and, less so, sorrow, as well as work and entertainment, habits and socialising. Within the gamut of diverse and highly numerous forms and phenomena inspired by these excellent wines, there are three fundamental and recognisable features characteristic of the wine-growing region of Podravje. Firstly, there is the oldest living vine in Maribor at Lent on the Drava river, which has been producing fruit for well over four hundred years. Secondly, each year, the beginning of the ripening of the grapes and grape harvesting are announced by the sound of wind-operated rattles, locally known as klopotci. Their original home is the wine-growing region of Podravje, where they know of two different types of this device, one of whose purposes is to scare bothersome birds away so that they stop picking sweet grapes. And thirdly: The wine-growing region of Podravje is also a region of flour-based dishes, with numerous types of flat breads and skilfully braided breads. To the present day they have been a characteristic feature of festive meals at the end of work activities or during solemnities, such as church weddings, when the groom, bride and priest toast each other with St. John’s wine, or šentjanževec, at the very altar! The beginning of a life together, the beginning of a new generation... wine always accompanies people on these journeys of life!
Truth be told: 15 or 20 years ago the wine-growing region of Podravje played a leading role in Slovenia. Most vintners then began to rest on their laurels. Infatuated with their own undisputed natural resources and achievements, they all but forgot to keep track of what was going on in the world of wine-growing in Slovenia and abroad. Consequently, the wine-growers of Primorska, inspired by influences from neighbouring Italy, began to overtake them from all quarters. The awakening came a few years ago, and the wine-growers of Štajerska, as they cannot be called Podravci, are winning old positions firmly and steadily, which is good for all and for them in particular. It has been assumed for some time that Podravje boasts certain wine-growing positions that may be compared to the world’s best. This includes the Burgundy, which is on the same latitude. When several years ago English wine experts and advisors, most of them holding the prestigious title of MW (Master of Wine), arrived in Ormož and on some other wine-growing slopes, they agreed unanimously that north-eastern Slovenia had a wine-growing potential that has not yet been utilised. And when it is, it will be able to measure up to neighbouring Austria and faraway New Zealand, which today set standards for fresh white wines and for recognisable varieties of wines. The climate and soil in this part of Slovenia are perfectly suited to such wines. For now, there is enough red wine only for specimens, but varieties of the
more northern type, such as Pinot Noir, Modra Frankinja and Zweigelt, are gradually returning to the scene, although some wine-growers are successfully introducing the Mediterranean wines Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah. The atmosphere is warming up one way or another.

The wine-growing region of Podravje is now catching up at an ever faster pace. Before we go into details, we should first explain what Štajerska (Slovenian Styria) means within the wine-growing region of Podravje. This region once had seven wine-growing districts, but in 2006 six of these districts were combined into one under the joint name of “Wine-Growing District of Štajerska (Slovenian Styria)”. The former districts thus became subdistricts; however, since their size and significance have not changed, we have treated these subdistricts in this publication in the same way as other districts. Of the former seven districts, only the north-easternmost district of Prekmurje has retained its status. This amalgamation was carried out in order to increase recognisability and to improve wine marketing, as now different varieties from subdistricts may be combined in categories, which was not possible earlier. Suitable quantities, with, of course, adequate quality, are the precondition for penetrating markets, especially foreign markets.

And that is where the wine-growers from Štajerska, both large and small, are increasingly successful. Verus vinogradi (see the list under the Ljutomer-Ormož wine-growing subdistrict) is a new and small wine cellar owned by three enthusiastic friends. In October 2009 the famous wine critic Jancis Robinson recommended their 2008 Yellow Muscat in The Financial Times. Such recognition, coming from the pampered English-speaking wine world, carries some weight. In addition, a month later, the prestigious and influential London magazine Decanter placed Verus’s 2008 Šipon among the wines of the month, also an important sign of recognition. The wine was referred to under its Hungarian name Furmint, which is better known in the rest of the world. This is what Štajerska (Slovenian Styria) had been waiting for. It needed approval for Šipon. A question raised in recent years at the annual festival of Prlekija wines held in Jeruzalem manor in June, has been: which variety could represent Štajerska wines, or Štajerska terroir, as the word de jour is, as the most recognisable variety abroad? The wines that got mentioned, with more apprehension than not, included Sauvignon, Renski Riesling and some others, but why go no matter what where others are already making successful inroads? Šipon is the most Slovenian of all these wines – that is the message about Štajerska’s land, climate and people, which is what today’s wine world, saturated as it is with good things, seeks. Its communicativeness therefore also needs to be emphasised when it comes to other wine-growers, and not just those included in the lists.

Štajerska’s large wine cellars are also awakening. It is to be hoped that the sleeping beauty, the renowned Vinag wine cellar in the centre of Maribor (see the Maribor subdistrict), which still has 300 hectares of its own vineyards, will find itself on that path. Maribor is a place where the vines from Kalvarija, Mestni vrh, Piramida and Meljski hrib grows virtually into the city streets. The Ptuj cellar (Haloze subdistrict) and its young and ambitious oenologist, Bojan Kobal, set out a clear path several years ago: fresh and recognisable varieties and wines so pure that make you feel as if you were eating actual grapes, but full enough to leave a trace in the mouth. Štajerska wine, of course. They are also successful with richer and more mature wines, as well as with wine predicates. Their sweet Laški Riesling, 2008 Pullus, easily beat all its rivals at the largest U.S. wine competition in San Francisco in 2009, receiving the top Best of Show award, while brilliant awards from wine assessment events in Ljubljana, Gornja Radgona, Vienna, London and elsewhere are so numerous that they can hardly count them all any more. The large cellar Jeruzalem Ormož (Ljutomer-Ormož subdistrict), which has been joined by a smaller cellar from Ljutomer, does not want to lag behind and offers opportunities to a young oenologist with international experience. Mitja Herga will be able to show his experience from New Zealand and elsewhere at home. The same goes for Zlati Grič (Maribor subdistrict),
where one of the most sophisticated wine cellars in that part of central Europe was built in 2009 and was almost entirely hidden underground right in the middle of 70 hectares of its own vineyards, which are surrounded by a wonderful golf course at the base, while the top of the hill boasts a farm with apartments. A more beautiful place for wine tourism can hardly be imagined. Changes for the better, with a new image, different, more cosmopolitan thinking and new bottling capacity have also taken place in the Kapela wine cellar (see the Radgona-Kapela subdistrict), while Radgonske gorice (same subdistrict) has no plans to relinquish its leading position as a national producer of sparkling wines, making big strides in the still wines segment at the same time. Their first neighbour is Danilo Steyer, who, among other things, has an ampelographic garden with numerous domestic and foreign varieties, including forgotten ones, but advertises himself as the House of Dišeči Tramincc. He knows how to properly capture the sumptuousness of Tramincc in both barriqued dry wine and in attractive wine predicates. Young Jurij Brumec from Lipoglav near Loče, i.e. from the Maribor subdistrict (he is not on the list, therefore: jurij_vinum@hotmail.com), boasts similar achievements. His dry berry selection of 2006 Laški Riesling received the highest award, the regional trophy, of all Slovenian wines at Decanter 2009 in London.

If you love Sauvignon, you must go to Haloze right away. They also have wines other than Sauvignon, although Haloze Sauvignons, ranging from dry to sweet, are the best known. Haloze’s friendliness and hospitality are also well known. Whether you walk, ride a bicycle or drive a car, take your time in these sumptuous areas. Time is regarded differently there. Locals say that a person can never be in such haste to get somewhere not to be able to stop working and exchange a few words with a traveller. They will then gladly share a glass of wine with you, and if you are in the mood, you may sit down in the cool shade of a nearby tree. If they also offer you water, it is an even greater welcome than wine. Haloze has never lacked in this, although it did lack water. How-
ever, it now also has enough water, and you are rather more likely to accept wine. Nature in Haloze is quite intact. Other vineyards in Štajerska are making the same efforts. Srečko Šumenjak (Maribor subdistrict), an old hand among Decanter award recipients, is offering more and more wines from grapes produced in an environmentally friendly manner, while Aci Urbajs (Šmarje-Viršič subdistrict) is for now the only Slovenian wine-grower entitled to the Demeter brand, which is the highest and most demanding level of biodynamic farming.

The wine-growing area of Prekmurje is also awakening. The company Panvita made a good step by appointing Erich Krutzler as its chief oenologist in the new
In the heart of the Styrian wine-growing area Svečina and near the border with Austria, our family grows and cares for the finest wines. Wines are distinguished by freshness and fruitiness.

Come and visit us!

and modern Marof cellar in Mačkovci. Prior to his appointment, Krutzler gathered enough wine-growing and wine-producing experience in his native province of Gradiščansko (Burgenland). He got down to work in Prekmurje’s vineyards very seriously and studiously. He studied the soil and lie of the land, using this as the basis for conceiving three lines of wines, from simple ones from young vineyards to very serious wines from older vines and the best positions. This is how these things have to be dealt with, and recognition is already arriving from Decanter and elsewhere. Krutzler is definitely clearing new paths for Prekmurje’s wine-growing and as it appears, he is doing so with like-minded people, who are discovering the potential of local vineyards in their own right. Young Egon Krampač (he is not on the list, therefore: krampac.egon@siol.net) from Gornja Bistrica near Črnišovci was named a rising wine star at the central Slovenian wine festival in Ljubljana in November 2009, while the even younger Jasmina Passero from the Lipič-Passero estate (www.passero.si) from Tešanjovec near Moravske Toplice was named a promising young female vintner. So?
Goričko and Lendavske gorice are among the more beautiful wine-growing areas. The picturesque hills rub shoulders with Laški Riesling, Sauvignon, Chardonnay and Renski Riesling, as well as Zeleni Silvanec, Kerner, Yellow Muscat and Traminec. The area is characterised by dry wines with a varietal bouquet, with a predominance of sales of non-bottled wines.

GASTRONOMIC SPECIALTIES

**Bosman** – A richly decorated ceremonial bread, which was a compulsory gift to brides, newborns or godchildren. It is decorated with several lines of plaited dough and various dough ornaments and paper roses.

**Vrtanek** – A characteristic bread cake made from plaited dough and prepared at the conclusion of farming work (e.g. as a gift to haymakers) or at the time of various holidays. Today it is an important culinary element of receptions and feasts.

**Crackling cakes** – Crackling cakes, also known as "fónke", "fánke" or "fánkice", are today a widespread dish in Prekmurje, especially at various feasts, receptions and celebrations, due to their size and taste, which goes well with wine.

**Bujta repa** - Bujta repa is a culinary specialty closely related to the preparation of pork ("koline"), and is an obligatory part of a lunch or supper. Bujta (from the verb "ubiti" - "to kill") is a dish served when pork is prepared. It is cooked with turnips, parts of a pig’s head, neck and skin and brought to boil with millet gruel. Roux and spices are also added. This is a dish that can be eaten on its own, but it is more typical to have it as a side dish for sausages at the time pork is prepared for consumption (buckwheat and millet sausages and black pudding), roast meat or other meat dishes.
**Dödoli** - “Žganci” made from potatoes and strong white flour, dressed with lard, onions, cracklings and topped with sour cream, is an excellent dish on its own as well as a side dish for a meat course.

**Makovi kulinji** – Dough squares or scraps of dough boiled in salted water, dressed with sour cream and sprinkled with poppy seeds.

**Prekmurje kolute and Prekmurje ham** – The production of a whole range of traditional meat products resulting from pig slaughtering or kolute, has been preserved in Prekmurje. These include black pudding, sausages and stomachs. There are several types of black pudding, which differ from each other in their stuffing. In addition to buckwheat sausages, they also make white or millet porridge sausages and “black pudding” or blood sausages, which are stuffed with cooked lungs, meat, blood and spices. Special attention is paid to the drying and maturing of pork legs. Hundreds of years of experience in this type of pork conservation have resulted in the Prekmurje Ham brand, which has been classified as a protected foodstuff with geographic origin (appellation).

**Prekmurje bograč** – Prekmurje is the Slovenian region that was under Hungarian administration until 1919. That is why the local cuisine shows influences from the neighbouring country. These include bograč or bograč goulash, named after the vessel in which Hungarian shepherds cooked a meat stew. The present-day recipe for the preparation of bograč from three types of meat, potatoes, peppers, spices and mushrooms has been evolving since the 19th century. In Prekmurje, the tradition of preparing bograč in a small kettle is very much alive today, and a bograč making competition is held every year.

**Repni retaš** – The modern-day name for one of the most popular roulades with turnip stuffing, which once was and in a few places still is a typical Christmas dish.

**Prekmurje gibanica** – This is a top-quality, protected and probably most widely recognised Slovenian dessert made from short dough and phyllo dough, stuffed with poppy seeds, cottage cheese, walnuts and apples. This holiday dessert has its roots in the culture of pogacé, or flat breads, which is characteristic of the Pannonian part of Slovenia. Before sugar went into general use, it was sweetened with honey.
Radgona-Kapela wine-growing subdistrict

"The hills of Radgonsko-Kapelske gorice are the cradle of the original Radgona Ranina. The variety, which was discovered by Radgona’s wine-growers at the beginning of the 20th century, is excellent for predicate wines. The first “knight” of these vineyards is definitely Traminec, which wine cellar owners use to create a specific aromatic wine. The collection of top wine varieties also includes Renski and Laški Riesling, Sauvignon and Pinot Gris, with the blended Janževc wine being the specialty. Sun-pampered Janževc is so popular that every year it is stored in as many as two million bottles. Radgonsko-Kapelske gorice also boast the oldest known champagne cellar in Slovenia. Since as early as 1852 the golden Radgona sparkling wine (Zlata radgonska penina), whose sparkle has inspired legends, has been made there according to the classic champagne method."
**WINE-GROWERS AND VINTNERS**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Phone 1</th>
<th>Phone 2</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Website</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anton Belak</td>
<td>Paričjak 17a, 9252 Radenci</td>
<td>+386 (0)2 565 15 92</td>
<td>M: +386 (0)31 812 239</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danijela Borko</td>
<td>Črešnjevi 9, 9250 Gornja Radgona</td>
<td>+386 (0)2 561 13 79</td>
<td>M: +386 (0)41 730 093</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franc Kupljen</td>
<td>Okoslavci 2a, 9244 Sv. Jurij ob Ščavnici</td>
<td>+386 (0)2 568 90 73</td>
<td>M: +386 (0)41 685 178</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kupljen.franc@volja.net">kupljen.franc@volja.net</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.kupljen.si">www.kupljen.si</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jernej Frangež</td>
<td>Prežihova 10, 9250 Gornja Radgona</td>
<td>+386 (0)41 716 527</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:jernej.frangez@siol.net">jernej.frangez@siol.net</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milan Senekovič</td>
<td>Lomanoše 25, 9250 Gornja Radgona</td>
<td>+386 (0)2 561 19 62</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vina Steyer</td>
<td>Plitvica 10, 9253 Apače</td>
<td>+386 (0)2 569 14 66</td>
<td>M: +386 (0)41 768 026</td>
<td><a href="mailto:steyer.vina@siol.net">steyer.vina@siol.net</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.steyer.si">www.steyer.si</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vinogradništvo Kocuvan</td>
<td>Sovjak 30, 9244 Sv. Jurij ob Ščavnici</td>
<td>+386 (0)2 568 10 17</td>
<td>M: +386 (0)51 207 468</td>
<td><a href="mailto:info@avos.si">info@avos.si</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.avos.si">www.avos.si</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vinogradništvo Vladimir Kupljen</td>
<td>Okoslavci 6, 9244 Sv. Jurij Ob Ščavnici</td>
<td>+386 (0)2 568 90 73</td>
<td>M: +386 (0)41 685 178</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**GASTRONOMIC SPECIALTIES**

**Plum soup** – One of the countless milky soups with fresh or dried plums, is a filing and refreshing summer soup.

**Sireki** – In much the same way as in Prlekija, sireki are also made in the Slovenske gorice area. They are cone-shaped pieces of cottage cheese with salt, ground pepper and caraway, dried in an oven or in the sun. Spicy sireki is a tasty snack that goes well with bread and white whine.

**OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Phone 1</th>
<th>Phone 2</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Borko, Danijela Borko</td>
<td>Črešnjevci 9, 9250 Gornja Radgona</td>
<td>+386 (0)2 561 13 79</td>
<td>M: +386 (0)41 730 093</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firbas, Alojz Firbas</td>
<td>Cogetinci 60, 2236 Cerkvenjak</td>
<td>+386 (0)2 703 50 90</td>
<td>M: +386 (0)41 746 174</td>
<td><a href="mailto:firbas@siol.net">firbas@siol.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firbas, Alojz Firbas</td>
<td>Cogetinci 60, 2236 Cerkvenjak</td>
<td>+386 (0)2 703 50 90</td>
<td>M: +386 (0)41 746 174</td>
<td><a href="mailto:firbas@siol.net">firbas@siol.net</a></td>
</tr>
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<td>Firbas, Alojz Firbas</td>
<td>Cogetinci 60, 2236 Cerkvenjak</td>
<td>+386 (0)2 703 50 90</td>
<td>M: +386 (0)41 746 174</td>
<td><a href="mailto:firbas@siol.net">firbas@siol.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roškar</td>
<td>Lastomerci 25, 9250 Gornja Radgona</td>
<td>+386 (0)2 564 9575</td>
<td>E: kralj.roš<a href="mailto:kar@siol.net">kar@siol.net</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vinotoč Belak</td>
<td>Gregor Belak, Paričjak 17a, 9252 Radenci</td>
<td>+386 (0)2 670 00 30</td>
<td>M: +386 (0)41 655 356</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vinotoč Kupljen</td>
<td>Franc Kupljen, Okoslavci 2a, 9244 Sv. Jurij ob Ščavnici</td>
<td>+386 (0)2 568 90 73</td>
<td>M: +386 (0)41 685 178</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ljutomer-Ormož wine-growing subdistrict

Song of the Prlekija rattle

Ljutomersko-Ormoške gorice has so many different types of soil that wine-growers from around Jeruzalem can ensure ideal conditions for each variety. Železne Dveri is excellent for Šipon, Chardonnay, Laški Riesling and yellow Muscat. Slemenasti Slamnjak, with its vineyards facing southwest, is home to the world-renowned Laški Riesling. Rinčetova Graba, with a view extending to Austria and Hungary, is friendly to Muscat Ottonel, Laški Riesling and Chardonnay. Nunska Graba, with its cellar for matured wines, is famous for Sauvignon, Renski Riesling, Chardonnay and Šipon. Gresovščak, where once warning bonfires were burnt, is where the demanding and aromatic yellow Muscat is grown now, but Traminec and Pinot Gris also thrive here. Renski Riesling vines bask in the sun in Radomerščak, Pinot Gris vines are grown in Cerovec and Pinot Blanc vines in Svetinje, the best late vines of Renski Riesling are grown in Vinski vrh, while Strmec is known for the best late harvests of Laški Riesling. Ormož and its surroundings boast Traminec, Laški Riesling and Renski Riesling, Šipon and Sauvignon, Pinot Blanc and Chardonnay. Thanks
to the gentle sun, predicates – selected overripe grape clusters, selections of overly ripe grapes and ice wines – are also widespread. The delicate Muscat Ottonel grows in Litmerk and Kogel. In addition to the small wine cellars from Lahonščak to Šveto Tomaz, there is also a modern wine cellar in Ormož, which holds demanding white wines and sparkling wines.

GASTRONOMIC SPECIALTIES

**Prlekija tünka** – A protected, high-quality method of preservation, where the best parts of pork are preserved by first being salted, then baked and finally put in wooden pails and filled out with minced lard. The meat preserves its exceptional juiciness, aroma and colour. Visiting the Ljutomer-Ormož wine-growing district without tasting Prlekija tünka is tantamount to not visiting this wonderful wine-growing area called Prlekija at all.

**Prlekija murke** – A refreshing cold dish for the hottest days of summer, made from fresh cucumbers, sour milk, sour cream, spices and lard.

**Buckwheat pocket** – The dish, known locally as kropec, has a rounded flat bread form, which bears no reflection to its name. This tasty flat bread is made of a thin layer of buckwheat dough, topped with cottage cheese and sour cream.

**Prlekija gibáncia or gibanica** – An excellent flat sweet bread made from several layers of white phyllo dough and a cottage cheese filling, with the addition of eggs, sour cream and – more lately, since the bread has become a dessert – raisins.

OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATION

| Bogša | Viktorija Bogša | Litmerk 15b | 2270 Ormož | T: +386 (0)2 740 16 03 |
| Sonja Ozmec | | Seneči 83 | 2274 Velika Nedelja | T: +386 (0)2 740 16 03 |
| M: +386 (0)31 554 490 | ozmec.maja@siol.net | www.ozmecgam.com |
| Na koncu vasi | Suzana Kolbl | Cven 48c | 9240 Ljutomer | T: +386 (0)2 584 98 76 |
| M: +386 (0)41 340 589 | turizemnakmetiji@gmail.com | www.nakoncuvasi.si | www.turizemnakmetiji.si |
| Fank -Ozmec | Vili-Martin Ozmec | Slamnjak 33 | 9240 Ljutomer | T: +386 (0)2 849 666 |
| Stari hrast | Marijan Pihlar | Radomerje 3 | 9240 Ljutomer | T: +386 (0)2 584 98 80 |
| M: +386 (0)41 772 432 | info@starihast.com |
| Belec | Milan Belec | Železne Dveri 9 | 9240 Ljutomer | T: +386 (0)2 584 99 84 |
| Hlebec | Milan Hlebec | Kog 108 | 2276 Kog | T: +386 (0)2 713 70 60 |
| M: +386 (0)31 867 464 | +386 (0)41 689 229 |
| Puklavec | Frančišek Puklavec | Žasavci 21 | 2275 Miklavž pri Ormožu | M: +386 (0)41 916 343 |
| +386 (0)31 868 908 | puklavec@volja.net |
| Vino Krajnc | Lahonci 50 | 2259 Ivanjkovci | T: +386 (0)2 719 41 26 | M: +386 (0)41 635 471 |
| Vino Kupljen - Jeruzalem | Mihalovci 59 | 2259 Ivanjkovci | T: +386 (0)2 719 41 28 | M: +386 (0)41 635 471 |
| Vinska klet Miro | Jastrebc 36 | 2276 Kog | M: +386 (0)41 474 935 | miro.munda@email.si | www.slovino.com/mirovino |

WINE-GROWERS AND VINTNERS

Emil Trop
Lahonci 36a, 2259 Ivanjkovci
T: +386 (0)2 719 42 42

Jeruzalem Ormož
Kolodvorska 11, 2270 Ormož
T: +386 (0)2 741 57 00
info@jeruzalem-ormoz.si
www.jeruzalem-ormoz.si

Kogl
Velika Nedelja 23
2274 Velika Nedelja
T: +386 (0)2 713 60 60
info@kogl.net
www.kogl.net

PRA-VinO, Čurin-Prapotnik
Kog 14-15, 2276 Kog
T: +386 (0)2 713 60 60
M: +386 (0)41 329 429
www.pra-vino.si

Verus vinogradi
Hardek 34a, 2270 Ormož
T: +386 (0)2 741 54 40
info@verusvino.com
www.verusvino.com

Vino Krajnc
Lahonci 50
2259 Ivanjkovci
T: +386 (0)2 719 41 26
M: +386 (0)41 518 285
info@vinokrajnc.com
www.vinokrajnc.com

Vino Kupljen - Jeruzalem
Mihalovci 59, 2259 Ivanjkovci
T: +386 (0)2 719 41 28
M: +386 (0)41 635 471
kupljen@volja.net
www.vino-kupljen.com

Vinogradništvo Krainz
Ilovci 30, 9240 Ljutomer
M: +386 (0)51 424 587
vino.krainz@gmail.com
www.luttenberger.eu

Vinska hiša Püklavec
Zasavci 21, 2275 Miklavž pri Ormožu
M: +386 (0)41 916 343
puklavecv@volja.net

Vinska klet Miro
Jastrebc 36, 2276 Kog
M: +386 (0)41 474 935
miro.munda@email.si
www.slovino.com/mirovino
The vineyards of Slovenske gorice - Juršinski Vrh, with Otto Herbertstein’s cellar, all the way to Ptuj’s Mestni vrh and Završ, where until the end of the Second World War vinedressers cultivated vineyards owned by townspeople - are sights worth seeing in their own right. There the sun and rain nourish the vines of Laški Riesling, Renški Riesling, the autochthonous Šipon and Ranina, Zeleni Silvanec, Pinot Gris and Blanc, Yellow Muscat, Kerner, Traminec and other noble, especially, white varieties. Slovenske gorice also boasts excellent conditions for highest-quality predicate wines and wines that enrich the selection of matured wines – including the most famous wine kept in the Ptuj Cellar, where the oldest wines in Slovenia are also kept.
GASTRONOMIC SPECIALTIES

Kipjena gibanca or kvasenica – The numerous types of breads made from leavened dough include this flat bread from Slovenske gorice. It was once the main dish for peasants working in the fields or vineyards, and it is still most tasty immediately after it is baked, while it is still warm.

OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATION

Slaničevi
Milena Slanič
Žikarce 37
2242 Zg. Korena
T: +386 (0)2 682 73 31
M: +386 (0)31 728 941
prikapeli@siol.net

Pri Kapeli
Mojca Druzovič
Drbetinci 26
2255 Vitomarci
T: +386 (0)2 757 54 11
M: +386 (0)31 728 941

Družišče
Marta Druzovič
Drbetinci 47
2255 Vitomarci
T: +386 (0)2 757 93 36
M: +386 (0)41 730 835

WINE-GROWERS AND VINTNERS

Izletniško vinogradniška kmetija
Marjan Lovrec
Jiršovci 24, 2253 Destnik
T: +386 (0)2 753 31 11
M: +386 (0)31 619 549

Turistično vinogradniška kmetija
Pri Kapeli, Mojca in Marjan Druzovič
Drbetinci 26, 2255 Vitomarci
T: +386 (0)2 757 54 11
M: +386 (0)31 728 941
prikapeli@siol.net

Vinogradništvo Rebernišek
Andrej Rebernišek
Mestni vrh 42b, 2250 Ptuj
T: +386 (0)2 751 53 11
M: +386 (0)41 220 464

Vinogradništvo Šuman, Radovan Šuman
Zavrh 90a, 2232 Voličina
T: +386 (0)2 720 84 60
M: +386 (0)41 645 420

Vinogradništvo Vršič – Vina Bakus
Anica in Stanko Vršič
Zagorci 67a, 2256 Juršinci
T: +386 (0)2 758 13 51
M: +386 (0)51 605 805

Vinogradništvo in gostinstvo Slevec
Marija in Miroslav Slevec
Mala Nedelja 22, 9243 Mala Nedelja
T: +386 (0)2 586 10 03
M: +386 (0)41 346 662

Vinogradništvo in vinarstvo
Marko Toplak
Juršinci 21, 2256 Juršinci
T: +386 (0)2 758 00 51
M: +386 (0)31 659 557

Vinotoč in vinogradništvo RM
Sebastjan Rojs
Selce 13, 2232 Voličina
T: +386 (0)2 682 77 21
M: +386 (0)40 797 130
Maribor’s entire wine-growing subdistrict, which is among the largest in Slovenia, is dominated by Laški Riesling. Thanks to favourable natural conditions, this Laški Riesling can boast top quality and champion titles. The right soil and sunny aspects are especially suitable for Renski Riesling and Chardonnay at Kalvarija, Piramida, Malečnik, Vodole and Celestrina, Rulandec and Zeleni Silvanec at Meljski hrib and Yellow Muscat in Kamnica. Although white varieties of wine are still held in high regard here, the queen of wines is still from the 400-year-old coffee-black or velvet-black vine, which is honoured every year with ceremonial vine pruning and grape harvesting.
GASTRONOMIC SPECIALTIES

Štajerska sour soup – This soup, which was originally made during pig slaughters from legs, tail and ears and soured with wine, has become one of the most popular dishes eaten after sleepless, alcohol-filled nights. It also often rounds off wedding receptions and New Year’s parties.

Pohorje pisker – A typical meat and vegetable stew made of pork, beef and lamb, with the addition of buckwheat and mushrooms in season.

Olbič or Pohorje žganci – A type of mash made of potatoes and corn flour and dressed with cracklings.

Pohorje bunka – The most famous smoked meat product is Pohorje bunka. During the preparation of pork for consumption, salted whole parts of better-quality pork are stuffed into a pork stomach and beef intestines and slightly smoked and dried in the air. Pohorje bunka is an indispensable element of cured meats.

Štajerska boiled štruklji – Štruklji with a cottage cheese filling are boiled and served in water, i.e. in a soup dressed with cracklings or lard.

Pohorje omelette – This biscuit omelette, stuffed with cranberries and topped with sweet cream, is an example of the invention of heritage as it was first made at the Postmen’s Home on Pohorje in 1952.

OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATION

Dreisiebner
Ivan Dreisiebner
Špičnik 1
2201 Zg. Kungota
T: +386 (0)2 65 60 040
E: majda_dreisiebner@yahoo.com

Leber
Petra Leber
Podigrac 19
2201 Zg. Kungota
T: +386 (0)2 651 30 71

Gaufe
Viljem Gaube
Jareninska c. 51
2212 Šentilj
T: +386 (0)2 651 04 81

Lesjak
Marija Lesjak
Kozjak 28a
2215 Ceršak
T: +386 (0)2 647 27 41

Škrlec
Jožef Škrlec
Zg. Partinje 38
2223 Jurovski Dol
T: +386 (0)2 720 51 43

Pri Ratu
Magda Godec
Mariborska c. 9
2352 Selnica ob Darvi
T: +386 (0)2 674 05 03
M: +386 (0)31 320 310
www.pri-ratu.si

Protnjerjeva hiša Joannes
(Go to Wine-growers and Vintners)
Joannes
Gregor Protnjer
Vodole 34
2229 Malečnik

Bračko
Anton Bračko
Vodole 5
2000 Maribor
T: +386 (0)2 47 32 444

Dvoršak
Ljudmila Dvoršak
Trčova 246
2229 Malečnik
T: +386 (0)2 47 30 648

Valentan
Aljoša Valentan
Vodole 36
2229 Malečnik
M: +386 (0)31 352 462
Haloze wine-growing subdistrict

The steepest slopes and most excellent wines

Exquisitely varietal and harmonious wines simply thrive on the marly and limy soils of Haloze, where the Alpine and Pannonian climates meet. The excellent Renski Riesling is grown on Janški Vrh, as much as 461 metres above sea level. It also reigns supreme on Veliki Vrh. Yellow Muscat ripens in Goricko, Pinot Blanc and Chardonnay on Turški Vrh, Traminec on Majski Vrh, Sauvignon at Hrastovec, Laški Riesling for ice wine on Gorca... In addition to the excellent varietal wines, Haloze’s wine-growers are also proud of their Haložan medium dry blended wine, whose character is bestowed upon it by the Šipon, Laški Riesling and Sauvignon varieties.
GASTRONOMIC SPECIALTIES

Erpica or jerpica – Housewives use dough (kneaded flour with bran) left over from bread making to bake these tasty little flat breads, spread with cream and topped with cracklings. Nowadays they are an excellent warm bake at receptions and other social events.

Haloze gibanica or gobóntca - Haloze gibanica is only one of the numerous variants of pogača, which is characteristic of the culinary image of north-eastern and eastern Slovenia. Gibanica was the most widely used holiday pogača in what once was the impoverished region of Haloze. Its name suggests that it used to be made from phyllo dough, which was folded into several layers and filled with stuffing.

OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATION

Kozarčan, Franc Roškar
Pristava 28a
2282 Cirkulane
T: +386 (0)2 740 80 30
+386 (0)2 740 81 31
M: +386 (0)41 549 526
kozarcan@email.si
www.kozarcan.si

Korpič
Marija Korpič
Dravci 4
2284 Videm pri Ptuju
T: +386 (0)2 764 28 81
M: +386 (0)40 509 610
korpic@gmail.com
www.kmetija-korpic.net

Žurmanov breg
Pungarčič Robert
Drenovec 7
2283 Zavreč
T: +386 (0)2 761 06 41
M: +386 (0)41 604 264
pungarcic@siol.net

WINE-GROWERS AND VINTNERS

Kmetija Pintarjevi
Golc, Veliki Okič 1
2285 Zgornji Leskovec
T: +386 (0)2 763 06 71

Ptujska klet
Vinarski trg 1, 2250 Ptuj
T: +386 (0)2 787 98 10
info@ptujska-klet.si
www.pullus.si/prva

Skaza Magister Vini
Ulica Vide Alič 41, 2250 Ptuj
T: +386 (0)2 773 38 51

Turistična vinogradniška kmetija
Pungarčič
Drenovec 7, 2283 Zavreč
T: +386 (0)2 761 06 41

Vina Lubaj
Kajuhova 3
2325 Kidričevo
T: +386 (0)2 796 18 11

Vinarstvo AS – Arnečič
Gradišča 116b
2282 Cirkulane
T: +386 (0)2 761 58 61

Vinarstvo Janžekovič Turčan
Turški Vrh 65
2283 Zavreč
T: +386 (0)2 766 00 81

Vinarstvo Kramar Marjan
Majski Vrh 26a
2282 Cirkulane
T: +386 (0)31 553 115

Vinarstvo Plajnšek Franci
Kočice 54, 2287 Žetale
T: +386 (0)2 769 29 11
Šmarje-Virštanj wine-growing region

Wine and the oldest pharmacy

Widely known white and red wines, whose specific character is due to the lay of the hills, are made from the fruits of the noble wines of Laški Riesling, Sauvignon, Pinot Blanc, Chardonnay, Zeleni Silvanec, Renski Riesling, Ranina, Rizvanec, Žlahtnina, Kerner, Modra Frankinja, Pinot, Žametovka, Portugalka, Kraljevina and Šentlovrenka. Along with Virštanjčan, a nice white or red local wine which has been popular for a long time, more and more top quality wines are grown here, which reveal their true characteristics in combination with the abundance of local delicacies.
GASTRONOMIC SPECIALTIES

Korejevec - A vegetable stew, named after root crops. Only turnips and parsnips were used originally, while today it is made mainly with carrots and parsnips.

Cheese zafrk(n)jača – The culinary specialties of the Kozjansko region include a pogača locally known as zafrk(n)jača. Its name comes from the method of preparation of this savoury flat bread, filled with cottage cheese, placed on leavened dough in a baking dish. The parts of the dough which extend beyond the edges of the baking dish are rolled up (”zafrkneti” in Slovenian).

Kozjansko pockets (kozjanski kрапi or ajdov parjek) – Excellent as a main dish or side dish that goes together with sauces and meat dishes, they are pockets of buckwheat dough, filled with millet porridge and cottage cheese and dressed with cracklings and cream. An exceptional masterpiece!

Kozjanska mlinčevka – An exquisitely juicy and filling bread made of several layers of walnut and egg filling. This is an eminently festive dish, which can stand proudly alongside the best cakes.

Kozjansko bread potica – A special kind of potica, made by spreading layers of bread soaked in milk with warmed-up cream or whey. The whole is then wrapped into dough leaves and baked in a baking dish.

OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATION

Zdolšek
Milena Zdolšek
Okrog 16, 3232 Ponikva
T: +386 (0)3 748 22 50
www.zdolsek.si

Bisjak
Ida Bisjak
Orehovec 3
3253 Pristava
T: +386 (0)3 810 30 50
www.turisticna-bisjak.com

Velbana Gorica
Angela Toplišek
Gostinca 18
3261 Lesično
T: +386 (0)3 580 55 40
M: +386 (0)41 550 366
velbana.gorica@volja.net

Klet Trebče
Aleksander Šmalčič
Trebče 82a
3256 Bistrice ob Soči
T: +386 (0)3 580 40 65
M: +386 (0)31 282 600

Smoletova gorca
Milka Smole
Polžanska Vas 9
3240 Šmarje
T: +386 (0)3 582 42 70

Slemenšek
Olga Slemenšek
Razgor 16
3212 Vojnik
M: +386 (0)70 864 203

Arzenšek
Franja Bornšek
Stranice 10
3206 Stranice
T: +386 (0)3 576 24 00
M: +386 (0)41 763 644

Urska
Vilma Topolšek
Križevci 11a
3206 Stranice
T: +386 (0)3 759 04 10
E: tk.urska@siol.net
www.kmetija-urska.com

Jager
Stanislav Jager
Starža na Gori 7
3222 Dramlje
T: +386 (0)3 579 80 61

Gaćnikov hram
Anica Levart
Draža vas 33
3215 Loče
T: +386 (0)3 576 33 68

Vinotoc Cugmas
Marjan Cugmas
Dobrava 4a
3210 Slovenske Konjice
T: +386 (0)3 57 54 486
M: +386 (0)41 824 364
+386 (0)31 483 554

WINE-GROWERS AND VINTNERS

Aci Urbajs
Rifnik 44b, 3230 Šentjur
T: +386 (0)3 749 23 73
M: +386 (0)41 786 428

Amon Stanko in Greta
Olimje 24, 3254 Podčetrtek
T: +386 (0)3 818 24 82/83

Andrejka Štraus Kramer
Viršanž 3, 3254 Podčetrtek
M: +386 (0)51 351 216

Franc Namurš
Spodnje Tinsko 9, 3223 Loka Pri Žusmu
T: +386 (0)3 810 30 53

Franc Ogrizek
Zgornji Gabernik 13, 3241 Podplat
T: +386 (0)3 582 43 02

Ivan Mijošek
Zgornje Negonje 4b, 3250 Rogaška Slatina
M: +386 (0)41 386 510

Jani Vreže
Bobovo 6a, 3240 Šmarje pri Jelšah
M: +386 (0)41 731 671

Klet Imeno
Imeno 84, 3254 Podčetrtek
M: +386 (0)31 731 671

Klet Kregar
Cerovec pod Bočem 10
3250 Rogaška Slatina
M: +386 (0)41 600 333

Suzana Pečnik
Prelasko 9, 3255 Buče
M: +386 (0)31 607 427
February
Kurentovanje – is a Slovenian folk custom practised in pre-Lent celebrations for the purpose of driving winter away. It is marked by a dancing march of kurenti through the village in special clothing and with loud bell ringing. Ptuj

March
The Pruning of the Old Vine has developed into a highly popular event as part of the annual cycle of events dedicated to the Old Vine, culminating in festive grape harvesting. The pruning of the oldest vine in the world is a very important wine-growing and social event at Lent. It is also the time when the master of the Old Vine, the mayor of Maribor, bestows grafts on selected towns. Maribor

April
Holiday of wine and home-made dishes and wine evaluation Podgorc, Ormož

May
Fish and žganci in 101 ways Veržej

June – July
LENT festival
The Lent festival is an international multicultural festival that features more than 400 events for all tastes and generations over the course of more than 14 days. The festival venues offer concerts of classic, jazz, pop and world music, singer-songwriters’ evenings and chanson evenings, theatrical, puppet and dance performances, sports events, creative workshops for children, stand-up comedy, the Folkart folk festival, the Jazzlent festival and a street theatre festival. Maribor

August
The main dish is a special film programme intended for true film buffs, enthusiasts without prejudice and those who are prepared to venture out of the boundaries of good taste and morals. The festival features fantasy, horror, independent and cult films, which go beyond the established genre forms through the indispensable conceptual addition of wine, for which Prlekija is most famous, and we traditionally open up completely new horizons of culinary and cinematic enjoyment to all our guests. Ljutomer

September
Rafter’s christening
This tourist event, based on reinterpreted elements of the Drava river’s rafting heritage, attracts a multitude of visitors and renowned guests every year. Maribor

Harvesting of the oldest vine in the world – the ceremonial harvest of the 400-plus-year-old vine at Lent in downtown Maribor. Maribor
SELECTED RESTAURANTS

Gostilna Pec
Spodnja Selnica 1
2352 Selnica ob Dravi
T: +386 (0)2 674 03 56
gostilnapec@siol.net
www.gostilnapec.si

Gostilna Tramšek
Žerovinci 25b
2259 Ivanjkovci
T: +386 (0)2 719 41 09
marko.tramshek@siol.net

Gostilna Šiker
Cotar Breda s. p.
Močna 7, 2231 Pernica
T: +386 (0)2 7206 921
F: +386 (0)2 7206 921
siker@gostilnasiker-sp.si
www.gostilnasiker-sp.si

Gostilna Rajh
Bakovci pri Murski Sobota
Sobotka ulica 32
9000 Murska Sobota
T: +386 (0)2 543 09 87
M: +386 (0)3 705 007
www.rajh.net

Gostilna Franci
Zagrad 77, 3000 Celje
T: +386 (0)3 492 64 60

Gostilna Pri lipi
Helena Kresnik Pažek s. p.
Mariborska cesta 12
2366 Muta
T: +386 (0)2 876 86 90
F: +386 (0)2 876 86 98
M: +386 (0)41 722 091
info@prilipi.si
www.prilipi.si

Gostilna Tramšek
Žerovinci 25b
2259 Ivanjkovci
T: +386 (0)2 719 40 97
gostilna.tramshek@siol.net

Restavracija in vinoteka
Rožmarin
Gospotka ul. 8
2000 Maribor
T: +386 (0)2 33 43 180
rožmarin@rožmarin.si

Restavracija Pri treh ribnikih
Ribniška 9, 2000 Maribor
T: +386 (0)2 33 43 170
trije.ribniki@termemb.si
www.termemb.si

Gostilna in hotel Lovenjak
Polana 40
9000 Murska Sobota
T: +386 (0)2 525 21 53
F: +386 (0)2 525 21 57
gostilna.lovenjak@siol.net
www.gostilna-lovenjak.com

Wine-growing subdistrict of Šmarje-Virštanj
Šentjur tourist and information centre
Ulica skladateljev Ipavcev 17
3230 Šentjur
T: +386 (0)3 749 2523
M: +386 (0)41 660 091
F: +386 (0)3 747 1306
www.turizem-sentjur.com
tic@turizem-sentjur.com
Opening hours: Monday to Friday
9:00–16:00, (Wednesday until 17:00),
Saturday 9:00–13:00

Wine-growing subdistrict of Haloze
Halo d.o.o. – TIC Haloze
Cirkulane 56
2282 Cirkulane
T: +386 (0)2 795 3200
F: +386 (0)2 795 3203
www.halo.si
info@halo.si
Opening hours: Monday to Friday
8:00–16:00, Saturday 8:00–11:00

Wine-growing subdistrict of Maribor
Zavod za turizem Maribor
TIC Maribor
Partizanska cesta 6a
2000 Maribor
T: +386 (0)2 234 6611
F: +386 (0)2 234 6613
www.maribor-pohorje.si
tic@maribor.si
Opening hours: Monday to Friday
9:00–19:00, Saturday, Sunday and holi-
days 9:00–18:00

Wine-growing subdistrict of Srednje Slovenske gorice
Ptuj tourist and information centre
Slovenski trg 5
2250 Ptuj
T: +386 (0)2 779 6011
F: +386 (0)2 771 0175
www.ptuj-tourism.si
info@ptuj-tourism.si
Opening hours: Every day 9:00–20:00,
(closed on 1 January, 1 November and
25 December)

Wine-growing subdistrict of Ljutomer-Ormož
Jeruzalem tourist and information centre
Jeruzalem 8
2259 Ivanjkovci
T: +386 (0)2 719 45 45
e-mail: ticjeruzalem@gmail.com
www.jeruzalem.si
Opening hours: every day 10:00–18:00

Wine-growing subdistrict of Radgona-Kapela
Radenci Tourism and Sports Institute
Tourist office Radenci
Radgonska cesta 27
9252 Radenci
T: +386 (0)2 565 18 89
www.ztsradenci.si
info.radenci@siol.com
Opening hours: Monday to Friday
9:00–16:00, Saturday 9:00–14:00

Wine-growing subdistrict of Prekmurje
Tourist Association of Pomurje
Krajnčeva 12
9926 Moravske Toplice
T: +386 (0)2 534 8822 – Bestätigung:
Herr Damjan Jaklin
M: +386 (0)41 326 093
F: +386 (0)2 534 8823
info@pt-zveza.si
www.pt-zveza.si
Opening hours: Monday to Friday
7:00–15:00

Information centres
Three regions, many differences
The wine-growing region of Posavje was named after the central Slovenian river Sava, as the wine-growing districts extend to the left and right of the river in south-eastern Slovenia. These are the geographic areas of Dolenjska, Bela Krajina and Bizeljsko. The greatest specialty of this wine-growing region is most definitely the wine variety of cviček, a playful, ruby-red wine with low alcohol content, which is favoured by, among others, all those who like good meat dishes and cold meat products. Dolenjska is a picturesque, hilly region, cut through the middle by the meandering Krka river. Settlements were created at its bends centuries ago, as testified by well-known material evidence. Such a centre of Dolenjska is Novo Mesto, its artistic centre is in Kostanjevica, while living in Otočec castle on an island in the middle of the Krka river is an exceptional experience. Dolenjske, Šmarješke and Čateške Toplice spas are there to boost human physical and mental health in this part of Slovenia. Perhaps the most direct encounters with Dolenjska wines and dishes are provided by wine cellars known as zidanice, or “wine cottages”, in which one can also spend the night. A special “little region” is Bela Krajina, the border area with neighbouring Croatia, where the well-known Metliška Črnina and Belokranjec are made. The region has a hilly part and a flatland area with birch groves and exceptionally hospitable inhabitants. Bizeljsko lies on the left bank of the Sava river, and it is home to many excellent wines, including red and white Bizeljčan and red and white Sremičan. A specific feature of the region is its wine cellars dug into the ground and called repnice, which provide a unique way of experiencing the exquisite Bizeljsko wines.
Judging by their geographical position, wines from the Posavje wine growing region ought to be a mixture of wines from the Podravje region (north-eastern Slovenia) and the Primorska region (south-western Slovenia). But are they really? Making generalisations regarding wine and looking for a common denominator often does not end well, as it leaves out wine specifics which are so frequent on the Slovenian wine growing map. Therefore, in this - and in all other descriptions of each of the three Slovenian winegrowing regions – we will have a look both at their common and distinctive features.

The vicinity of the Pannonian Plain, which was covered by seawater in distant history, provides enough sunshine and warmth to the vineyards in the Bizeljsko Šremič wine growing region, which results in rich, full-bodied wines when everything goes well with the grape harvest. Still having doubts? How about visiting Janez Šekoranja on his Graben estate? (You will find his address on the list of ten recommended winegrowers and winemakers.) Although he holds a BSc in Chemistry, Šekoranja produces very natural wines. His wish is for his wines to reflect the nature, and to express what the soil and the sun have bestowed on them. His wine selection is very diverse, with dry whites predominating. They might have been sweeter had he harvested his grapes earlier; however, he prefers to harvest...
In this region, it’s like May all year the grapes when they are very ripe, even overripe. But have no fear, alcohol is not their predominant feature – the wines have a lovely bouquet and a wonderful aroma. However, his wine from Rumeni Plavec – an indigenous wine grape variety of the Bizeljsko Sremič wine growing region which traditionally produces a miserably acidic wine, often ending in 3rd class whites – is a veritable miracle. Despite its dryness, your taste buds will sing when you try Šekoranja’s version of this wine. From here, everything will run smoothly, possibly all the way to his Gamay wine, once served even in the White House in Washington.

In the Bizeljsko wine growing region, we find the biggest Slovenian family producer of sparkling wines. Janez Istenič (see the winemakers list for address) holds a BSc in Oenology. He said to himself over 40 years ago: “Why, these Bizeljsko rolling hills and Bizeljsko wines are not THAT much different from the ones in Champagne!” And so he began... Truth be told, he will not let you taste his first sparkling wine from 1968, named Barbara after his daughter who was born around grape harvesting that autumn. Well, he cannot, really – for a long time, only two bottles were left of it in his cellar. One bottle was solemnly opened upon the 35th anniversary of his wine production – and we all respectfully took our hats off to its sparkling, refreshing vivacity. Currently, approximately half a million bottles of sparkling wine are ageing in the Istenič wine cellar, but his desire is to reach a production of 1 million. Nothing special in the world of sparkling wines – but definitely new in Slovenian territory. However, don’t be fooled into thinking that the quality of his wines suffers because of quantity. Janez and his son Miha are very precise and consistent in their dealings with wine. They have a diverse selection of sparkling wines, from brut to demi-sec, so as to satisfy different tastes. Event the taste buds of ladies, who usually prefer sweeter and bubblier varieties.

Another renowned Slovenian producer of sparkling wines is Zdravko Mastnak (listed as the Mastnak wine cellar in the list), who lives in a completely different part of the wine growing region – his estate and a new, modern wine cellar lie in Krakovo nad Sevnico The ambition of his Valentina and Valvasor sparkling wines is to please the drinker rather than to start deep debates on the attributes of the Traditional Method of sparkling wine production. Valvasor, his second sparkling wine, was named after the famous Slovenian polymath and nobleman Baron Janez Vajkard Valvasor (1641-1693), Fellow of the England’s Royal Society, who travelled these regions and, among other things, documented the drinking and other habits of locals to present them in his seminal and lavish work The Glory of the Duchy of Carniola.

He crossed the Sava River and visited, as we are about to now, the Dolenjska wine growing region. With over 3,000 hectares of vineyards, this is one of the biggest wine growing regions in Slovenia, right after the Štajerska and the Vipava wine growing regions. However, there are very few winegrowers in the Dolenjska region who own more than five, ten or more hectares of vineyards. We are talking about a dynamic region of rolling hills, whose vineyards are on higher southern positions. The northern positions are covered with woods, and the plains give way to crop and livestock production. Nevertheless, this makes the Dolenjska region all the more interesting for the traveller, even the accidental one. Each vineyard, even those with only 200 or 300 vines, has its own vineyard cottage. If you find its owner in there, you won’t be able to pass without tasting some of his wine. There is an old and unwritten rule in the Dolenjska region that ‘no thirsty man shall pass your vineyard cottage’. Don’t hurt his pride and spoil everything by insisting on paying for the wine. If you see a cured salami hanging from the ceiling, and if the man brings some homemade bread, baked in the traditional baker’s oven, do not have any second thoughts. Few pleasures can match eating this homely fare and drinking a glass of Cviček wine with it. Ah, but let us not stop at a single glass – you may as well enjoy several! The alcohol content of this indigenous wine from the Dolenjska region, protected since 2000 with a spe-
Although we cannot think of the Dolenjska region and its people: vivacious, humorous, cheerful, fond of life, friendly and with a springy step. The Cviček Consortium has been active since 2004, uniting the biggest and most prominent producers of Cviček in their desire to firmly place Cviček on the map of quality and well-known wines. We listed some of these producers in our list, others can be found at www.konzorcijcvicek.com. Although we cannot think of the Dolenjska wine growing region without thinking of Cviček first, as this is the only region in the world where this wine is being produced, this is certainly not the only wine from the region that deserves our attention. Each last weekend in May, for more than four decades, Novo Mesto, the capital of the Dolenjska region, has hosted the Cviček Week in its main town square. Many people visit this entertainment event which takes place after more than a month of professional assessments of wines. In the last few years, more than a thousand wines (only from the Dolenjska region!) have been assessed. Judging by the number of wine samples, this has become the biggest wine assessment event in Slovenia. In addition to the Cviček wine grape variety, we find numerous other wine grape varieties which can be grown in the area: Chardonnay, Sauvignon, Laški rizling (Italian Riesling), Pinot Blanc and Pinot Gris, Cabernet Sauvignon, Modra Frankinja (Blue Franconian), Zweigelt, etc. Owing to these mass wine assessments, wines from the Dolenjska region have achieved in the last decade enviable quality, turning even a visit to a small vineyard cottage into a memorable experience with quality wine, served in the right glasses for it.

Let us cross the Gorjanci mountain ridge now, and visit the land of birch trees, fern and vineyards. Welcome to Bela Krajina, an idyllic, flat landscape with gentle, friendly people. Even the wines can be soft here, which is particularly appreciated with mature red wines. Though they are not the most prominent wines of the region, as they require years of ageing, you will find them in the Bela Krajina region nevertheless. At least from those winemakers on our list, but also from Plut of Drašiči, a place with many good winemakers. Opposite the Church of St. Peter in Drašiči, we find Soseska zidanica (www.belakrajina.si), a unique wine bank operating for more than 200 years in the middle of the village. In it, wine from more than 60 local winemakers is preserved in the common barrel. The person who borrows from it, i.e. drinks from it, must return wine with interest. In the past, its purpose was to collect money for the renovation of the village or common good, nowadays it keeps the tradition alive. This could hardly happen in Bela Krajina, where winemaking has been getting even more popular in the last two decades. This is good both for wine lovers and curious travellers. Not so long ago, people from the Štajerska region held the indisputable first place when it came to predicate wines, yet winemakers from Bela Krajina have been tagging closely behind (if not ahead at times). They started with predicate Laški Riesling (Italian Riesling), but these days you will have no trouble finding Traminec (Gewürtztraminer), Sauvignon, Beli Pinot (Pinot Blanc), Sivi Pinot (Pinot Gris), Chardonnay and Rumeni Muškat (Yellow Muscatel), their greatest pride between late and ice wine grape harvesting. For many years, Rumeni Muškat (Yellow Muscatel) was a forbidden wine grape variety in Bela Krajina, but owing to the stubborn Šturm family (see the winemakers list), this wine grape is now allowed to be grown in this region as well. Some time later, the same happened with the Traminec (Gewürtztraminer) wine grape variety. Wines from both wine grape varieties have shown excellent results both in Slovenia and abroad. Other types of wines too have received notable nods from the Decanter World Wine Awards, at international assessments in Ljubljana, Gornja Radgona and elsewhere, most frequently wines from Jožef Prus, Dolc, the Mavretič family and the Metlika Agricultural Cooperative (all are on the winemakers list). The persistent and diligent Jožef Prus has been taking on the ever more prominent winemaker’s role not only in Bela Krajina and Slovenia, but also internationally. In August 2009, he won so many Champion Awards for his wines that he and his son had both arms full. He also won the Winemaker of the Year title. Is it a coincidence that he simultaneously opened a new, modern and spacious wine cellar with an attractive wine tasting room? And yet, there are many more good winemakers in Bela Krajina. All the local winemakers gather each May at
the traditional event called ‘Vinska vigrad’ (Vineyard Spring), which for three days fills Metlika’s town squares. Some say this is the biggest, the nicest and the most peaceful public merrymaking in Slovenia. Once all the festivities are over, a police report is published publicly. Barely a scuffle, or not even that, has been reported. And why should things have been any different? In May, nature is so verdant and fresh, the vines start sprouting leaves... people are generally happy. In the evenings, tiny lights illuminate the houses lying on the rolling hills of Bela Krajina, and everything is so peaceful, so very Bela Krajina-like. Well, not only in May, of course!
Cviček is to the regions of Dolenjska what red and white Bizeljčan and Sremičan are to this area. In addition to these blended wines, a varietal Pinot Noir, Modra Frankinja, Zeleni Silvanec, Chardonnay, Laški Riesling, Sauvignon, Šipon, Renski Riesling and Pinot Blanc are maturing in wine cellars and Bizeljsko’s unique repnice. The hospitable wine-growers are proud of their late predicate harvests, wines made from selected overripe grape clusters, overripe berries and dry berry selections, as well as ice wines and sparkling wines.
GASTRONOMIC SPECIALTIES

**Corn prga or pršjača and pleteno srce** - Two bread products that bear testimony to the ceremonial role of grains and bread in this part of Slovenia. Corn prga or pršjača, in its simplicity, is proof of the mastery of local housewives. Its surface is divided into several squares, which tell you how it should be eaten, and this facilitates, in addition to providing welcome flavours, great socialising and communication. Pleteno srce (“woven heart”) is a traditional wedding bread originating from Artiče near Brežice. The product is full of symbolic wedding elements with plaited dough, birds, rings and flowers.

**Bizeljsko buckwheat bread** - Bizeljsko buckwheat bread is a salty or sweet type of baked štruklji made from buckwheat dough, filled with cottage cheese and cream. It is most savoury immediately after baking, while it’s still warm.

**Bizeljsko mlinčevka** - Bizeljsko mlinčevka is a very tasty and juicy tall bread, made from a filling of cottage cheese between thin layers of mlinci.

OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATION

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<td>Slavica Grobelnik</td>
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<td>8270 Krško</td>
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<td>8259 Bizeljsko</td>
</tr>
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<td>T: +386 (0)7 495 12 28</td>
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WINE-GROWERS AND VINTNERS

**Aleš Balon**
Drenovec 3, 8259 Bizeljsko
M: +386 (0)31 245 238

**Faan, Fabjančič Andrej**
Cesta prvih borcev 10, 8280 Brestanica
T: +386 (0)7 497 30 50

**Hiša trte in vina Kunej**
Cesta prvih borcev 40, 8280 Brestanica
T: +386 (0)7 497 33 30
M: +386 (0)41 435 442
www.kunej.com

**Istenič**
Stara vas 7, 8259 Bizeljsko
T: +386 (0)7 495 15 59
M: +386 (0)41 780 954
office@istenic.si
www.istenic.si

**Janez Cerjak**
Pesje 7, 8270 Krško
T: +386 (0)7 497 73 58
janez.cerjak@siol.net

**Keltis**
Vrhovnica 5, 8259 Bizeljsko
T: +386 (0)7 495 10 31
M: +386 (0)31 758 418

**Molipači**
Bizeljska cesta 33, 8259 Bizeljsko
T: +386 (0)7 495 10 31
M: +386 (0)31 758 418

**Turišča kmetija Klenovšek – Grobelnik**
Podvrh 39, 8292 Zabukovje
T: +386 (0)7 818 81 76
M: +386 (0)41 335 257
info@grobelnik.si, www.grobelnik.si

**Vino Graben**
Janez und Mihela Šekoranja
Kumrovška 6, 8259 Bizeljsko
T: +386 (0)7 495 10 59
M: +386 (0)30 611 010
+386 (0)30 611 011
sekoranja_janez@yahoo.com
www.vino-graben.com

**Vinska klet Mastnak**
Orešje 10, 8290 Sevnica
M: +386 (0)41 690 136
zdravko.mastnak@siol.net
www.vinamastnak.com
At one time Cviček contained several grape varieties, but today it is ennobled by a harmonious proportion of Žametovka, as the basis, Modra Frankinja and Kraljevina and other white varieties, ranging from Laški Riesling, Zeleni Silvanec and Yellow Plavec. The most famous Dolenjska dry wine has low alcohol content and is almost without residues of unfermented sugar. Many attribute medicinal properties to the fresh, sourish and highly drinkable Cviček. In addition to Dolenjska’s most popular wine child, many noble wines thrive on the low slopes, including Laški Riesling, Chardonnay, Sauvingnon, Kerner, Yellow Muscat, Pinot Noir and Modra Frankinja. White Dolenjska wine is popular along with varietal wines.
**GASTRONOMIC SPECIALTIES**

**Potancel or potanca** - Potancel or potanca is a thin, most often salty flat bread made from buckwheat dough with a cottage cheese filling. Dolenjska housewives serve it as a greeting to arriving guests or instead of bread together with meat dishes.

**Poprtnik** - An ancient type of ceremonial bread, which was and is still prepared around Christmas time throughout Slovenia. In the past it had to be on the table for all three Christmases and was richly decorated with dough ornaments. The custom of making decorated poprtniki is still widespread in Dolenjska.

**Bean štruklji** - All of Slovenia is familiar with štruklji,_radioli with different methods of preparation and different fillings. The most varied types of štruklji in Dolenjska are bean štruklji, which may be cooked or baked, a main dish or a side dish served with roasted meat or poultry.

**Matevž** - Matevž, also known in some places as "the bear" or "the potato’s grandfather" is a tasty, creamy puree-like side dish or main dish made from boiled potatoes and beans, originating from the first half of the 19th century. Originally, it was a dish of the poor communities, but it gradually assumed the role of a popular side dish or main dish in inns and restaurants.

**Roast goose or duck with mlinci and red cabbage** - A dish that is, so to speak, compulsory during the festivities of St. Martin, known as martinovanje. The holiday once represented the ceremonial conclusion of the harvest, while today we celebrate it primarily as the day of young wine or as the day when must converts to wine.

**OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATION**

**Pri Deželanu**  
Terezija Gorenc  
Hrastno 5  
8232 Šentrupert  
T: + 386 (0)7 304 00 25  
M: + 386 (0)31 402 302  
josko.gorenc@gmail.com

**Repovž**  
Jože Repovž  
Šentjanž 14  
8297 Šentjanž  
T: + 386 (0)7 818 56 61  
gtm.repovz@siol.net  
www.gostilna.repovz.si

**WINE-GROWERS AND VINTNERS**

**Jarkovič**  
Brod v Podbočju 18, 8312 Podbočje  
T: + 386 (0)7 497 70 13  
M: + 386 (0)31 396 313  
info@jarkovic.si, www.jupiterßen-frankfurt.com

**Kartuzija Pleterje**  
Drča 1, 8310 Šentjernej  
T: + 386 (0)7 308 12 25  
kartuzija.pleterje@chartreuse.info  
www.kartuzija-pleterje.si

**Klet Pirc**  
Ravni 3, 8270 Krško  
T: + 386 (0)7 491 31 08  
M: + 386 (0)41 521 881  
janez.pirc@siol.net, www.klet-pirc.si

**Klet Zajc**  
Arto 13a, 8293 Studenec  
T: + 386 (0)7 338 25 76  
M: + 386 (0)51 647 179  
info@zajc.si, www.cvicek.net

**Martinčič**  
Šmalčja vas 16, 8310 Šentjernej  
T: + 386 (0)7 308 12 82  
M: + 386 (0)31 306 053  
j.martincic@siol.net, www.martincic.si

**Vinarstvo Kerin**  
Straža pri Krškem 2, 8270 Krško  
T: + 386 (0)7 492 07 62  
M: + 386 (0)41 628 947  
lojze.kerin@vina-kerin.com  
www.vina-kerin.com

**Vinska klet Bajnof**  
Sevno 1, 8000 Novo mesto  
T: + 386 (0)7 307 56 33  
M: + 386 (0)41 358 176  
info@bajnof.si, www.bajnof.si

**Vinska klet Freligh**  
Šentrupert 35, 8232 Šentrupert  
T: + 386 (0)7 600 06 00  
+ 386 (0)7 600 06 06  
M: + 386 (0)41 666 045  
vinska.klet@freligh.si, www.freligh.si

**Vinska klet Jakše**  
Studenec 48, 8293 Studenec  
T: + 386 (0)7 818 91 95  
M: + 386 (0)31 339 763

**Vinska klet Krško**  
Rostoharjeva 88, 8270 Krško  
T: + 386 (0)7 488 25 00  
M: + 386 (0)41 690 142  
katarina.simoncic@kz-krsko.si  
www.kz-krsko.si

**GASTRONOMIC SPECIALTIES**

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Bean štruklji - All of Slovenia is familiar with štruklji, radioli with different methods of preparation and different fillings. The most varied types of štruklji in Dolenjska are bean štruklji, which may be cooked or baked, a main dish or a side dish served with roasted meat or poultry.

Matevž - Matevž, also known in some places as "the bear" or "the potato's grandfather" is a tasty, creamy puree-like side dish or main dish made from boiled potatoes and beans, originating from the first half of the 19th century. Originally, it was a dish of the poor communities, but it gradually assumed the role of a popular side dish or main dish in inns and restaurants.

Roast goose or duck with mlinci and red cabbage - A dish that is, so to speak, compulsory during the festivities of St. Martin, known as martinovanje. The holiday once represented the ceremonial conclusion of the harvest, while today we celebrate it primarily as the day of young wine or as the day when must converts to wine.
The people of Bela Krajina know that good wines are grown with the right vine in the right position. The warm oasis of the wine-growing region of Posavje allows excellent wines to be made in Bela Krajina from Chardonnay, Renski Riesling, Pinot Blanc and Gris, Želeni Silvanec, Yellow Muscat, Kraljevina, Kerner and other varieties. Traditionally, Bela Krajina is a region of quite unique red wines of the Modra Frankinja, Žametovka, Modra Portugalka, Šentlovrenka, Pinot Noir and Gamay varieties. The most famous Bela Krajina wine is the velvety Metliška Črnina made from the grapes of Modra Frankinja and Žametovka. A special experience is to taste the young Portugalka wine, which you can get only in Bela Krajina. Also popular is Bela Krajina Rose. The wine-growers of Bela Krajina were among the first in Slovenia to make ice wine from frozen Laški Riesling grapes.
GASTRONOMIC SPECIALTIES

Cereal jaglača or mastenica sausage and čmar - Two typical semi-durable products from pig slaughtering in Bela Krajina. The cereal sausage is filled with millet porridge and meat. Before it is consumed, it is smoked for up to three to five days, after which it is boiled with kohlrabi and potatoes, possibly also with carrots and potatoes, and less often with sour turnip. Čmar is a type of stuffed pork stomach.

Črnomelj filling or fuline - Locals call this compulsory Easter dish “nadef”. Intestines are stuffed with bread, pork, bacon and spices. This dish is also prepared at times of major activities in the fields and vineyards.

Bela Krajina pogača - In 2001 it was protected as a foodstuff with an indication of traditional reputation. It arose centuries ago on the basis of intercultural contacts with Uskoki, migrants from the Balkans, between the 15th and 16th centuries. The flat bread is sprinkled with salt and cumin, and cut slightly as a grid of squares before baking. This is both the bread’s ornament and the indication how it is to be eaten – by breaking off individual squares.

Bela Krajina povitica - Locals call it “povetica”. It is a salty bread made from phyllo dough with a filling of cottage cheese and cream, rolled into a spiral and baked. It is somewhat reminiscent of the Balkan burek.

Prosta povitica - This Bela Krajina flat bread is also trademarked. Its special feature is its egg filling, while its name “prosta” means that it has a simple egg filling.

OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATION

Ecel
Peter Malenšek
Maline pri Štrekljevcu 17
8333 Semič
T: + 386 (0)7 306 70 22

Bajuk
Nena Bajuk
Radovica 54a
8330 Metlika
T: + 386 (0)7 305 86 70
M: + 386 (0)41 365 054
vesna.bajuk@email.si

Ob izviru Krupe
Danijela Cerjanec
Krupa 9
8333 Semič
T: + 386 (0)7 306 80 12
M: + 386 (0)41 418 162
daniela.cerjanec@volja.net

Bahor
Zdravko Bahor
Tanca gora 88
8343 Dragutai
T: + 386 (0)7 354 04 07

Dragovan
Jožef Dragovan
Grabrovec 14
8330 Metlika
T: + 386 (0)7 30 50 110

Pri Martinovih
Milena Tomšec
Globočice 8
8262 Krška vas
T: + 386 (0)7 496 10 57
www.martinov.com

Pri Selakovih
Aleš Selak
Dobrava pri Škocjanu 32a
8275 Škocjan
T: + 386 (0)7 308 17 47
M: + 386 (0)40 837 389
sobe.selak@amis.net

Pr’ Martinovih
Žan, Marta Krhin
Gor. Gradišče 7
8310 Šentjernej
T: + 386 (0)7 307 13 94
M: + 386 (0)41 906 426

Šeruga
Slavko Šeruga
Sela pri Ratežu 15
8222 Otočec
T: + 386 (0)7 334 69 00
www.seruga.si

Vinotoč Colarič
Leopold Colarič
Jablance 17
8311 Kostanjica na Krki
T: + 386 (0)7 498 75 04
M: + 386 (0)41 322 900
tk.colaric@volja.net
www.posavje-turizem.com/turistica_ponudba/kmetija_colarič.htm

Vinotoč Jelenič
Marjan Jelenič
Jablance 10
8311 Kostanjica na Krki
T: + 386 (0)7 498 70 01
M: + 386 (0)41 568 441

WINE-GROWERS AND VINTNERS

Alois Hoznar
Ručetna vas 8, 8300 Črnomelj
T: + 386 (0)7 305 29 48
M: + 386 (0)41 215 862

Ivan Simončič
Črešnjevec 9, 8333 Semič
M: + 386 (0)41 655 509
agriodo@siol.net, www.semiskapenina.si

Jožef Prus
Krmavča 6, 8330 Metlika
T: + 386 (0)7 305 90 98
M: + 386 (0)41 690 112
+ 386 (0)41 333 240

Kmetijska zadruga Metlika
Cesta XV. brigade 2, 8330 Metlika
T: + 386 (0)7 363 70 00
info@kz-metlika.si, www.kz-metlika.si

Družina Mavretič
Lidija Mavretič
Drašiči 2 B, 8330 Metlika
T: + 386 (0)7 305 89 99
M: + 386 (0)41 632 470
vina.sturm@siol.net

Martin Pečarič
Čurile 7, 8330 Metlika
T: + 386 (0)7 305 90 16
M: + 386 (0)41 753 263
+ 386 (0)41 217 950

Otmar Šturm
Mestni trg 25, 8330 Metlika
T: + 386 (0)7 305 89 99
M: + 386 (0)41 688 956
vina.sturm@siol.net

Vinogradništvo Malnarič – Nampel
Vavpča vas 40, 8333 Semič
T: + 386 (0)7 306 72 06
M: + 386 (0)41 799 037
info@malnaric.si, www.malnaric.si

Vinogradništvo in vinarstvo Dolc
Drašiči 13, 8330 Metlika
T: + 386 (0)7 305 90 98
M: + 386 (0)41 788 938
+ 386 (0)40 620 524
dolc.1834@gmail.com
www.vinogradnistvo-dolc.si

Vizir
Lokve 10b, 8340 Črnomelj
T: + 386 (0)7 356 74 10
M: + 386 (0)41 788 945
www.vizir.si
May
Cviček Week – a number of different events celebrating Cviček, ‘the king of Dolenjska wines’. In addition to wine tastings and evaluations, the entertainment programme presents a good opportunity to learn about regional gastronomy and have fun with the locals. Novo mesto

June
Jurjevanje (celebrating St. George’s Day) in Bela Krajina is the oldest folklore festival in Slovenia, based on traditional spring celebrations. Various folklore events keep the traditional rituals alive. Črnomelj

July, August
Summer evenings in Novo Mesto – various evening cultural events Novo mesto

Information centres

Biseljsko Šremič wine growing region
Tourist Information centre Čatež ob Savi
Topliška cesta 35
8251 Čatež ob Savi
T: +386 (0)7 493 67 57
www.visitbrezice.com
tic-catez@zpt-brezice.si
Opening hours: Monday to Friday 9:00–17:00; Saturday 9:00–16:00; Sunday 9:00–14:00

Bela Krajina wine growing region
Tourist Information centre Metlika
Trg svobode 4
8330 Metlika
T: +386 (0)7 36 35 470
F: +386 (0)7 36 35 471
M: +386 40 454 019
www.metlika-turizem.si
tdvigred.metlika@siol.net
Opening hours: Monday to Friday 8:00–16:00, Saturday 9:00–12:00

Dolenjska wine growing region
Tourist Information centre Novo mesto
Glavni trg 6
8000 Novo mesto
T: +386 (0)7 393 9263
F: +386 (0)7 393 9265
www.novomesto.si
www.dolenjska.net
tic@novomesto.si
Opening hours: Monday to Friday 9:00–18:00, Saturday 9:00–14:00 (01.10.–31.05.); Monday to Friday 9:00–19:00, Saturday 9:00–16:00, Sunday 9:00–12:00 (01.06. – 30.09.)

November
Numerous St. Marin’s celebrations throughout the Slovenian wine growing regions
11 November, St. Martin’s Day, is a much loved celebration in Slovenia. Martinovo (Martinmas) marks the end of field work and the beginning of the harvesting period. Most importantly, St. Martin’s Day marks the day when the must traditionally turns to wine. Several traditional dishes are served for this celebration, e.g. roast goose, duck, turkey or chicken, braised cabbage and ‘mlinci’.
Throughout Slovenia

SELECTED RESTAURANTS

Gostilna in prenočišča Rakar
Gorenje Ponikve 8, 8210 Trebnje
T: +386 (0) 7 34 66 190
F: +386 (0) 7 34 66 191
gostilna.rakar@siol.net, www.rakar.si

Gostilna pri Kukdu
Trubarjeva cesta 31, 1315 Velike Lašče
T: +386 (0) 7 89 98 908
F: +386 (0) 7 88 91 30
M: +386 (0) 31 30 44 00
gostilna.kukelj@siol.net
www.priukukdu.com

Ostarija Debeluh
Trg Ignanciev 7, 8250 Brežice
T: +386 (0) 7 496 107 0
M: +386 (0) 41 634 830
info@osterija-debeluh.si, www.osterija-debeluh.si

Restavracija grad Otočec
Grajska cesta 2, 8222 Otočec
T: +386 (0) 7 38 48 706
jernej.jarc@terme-krka.si, www.terme-krka.si/si/otocec/kulinarika/

Gostilna Vovko
Ratež 48, 8210 Brežice
T: +386 (0) 7 30 85 603
M: +386 (0) 41 628 428
info@ostarija-debeluh.si, www.osterija-debeluh.si

Gostilna Kalin
Obrežje 6, 8261 Jesenice na Dolenjskem
T:  +386 (0) 7 495 71 91
+386 (0) 7 495 72 26
PROTECTED PRODUCTS

- Kranjska klobasa (Carniolan sausage)
- Bizeljsko buckwheat bread
- Bela Krajina pogača
- Bela Krajina povitica
- Prosta povitica
- Izida spelt
- Natural mineral water
- Dolenjski sadjevec (Dolenjska fruit schnapps)
Wine growing region of Primorska

One foot in a vineyard in the sea
The Primorska wine growing region is nowadays undoubtedly the leading wine growing region in Slovenia. By this we mean leading in all respects, since its tradition of producing extraordinary wines is in most cases accompanied by an equally impressive cuisine. The Primorska wine growing region stretches from Goriška Brda on its western side, to the Vipava Valley, Karst and Slovenian Istria on its southern side. A combination of the Mediterranean and Alpine climates has created the region’s unique conditions for growing red and white wine grape varieties. Of all the wine growing regions in Slovenia, Primorska has preserved the highest number of indigenous wine grape varieties. In the Karst, we find a variety of the Refošk wine grape (Peduncolo rosso) from which the famous Karst Teran wine is made, a full-bodied wine with a deep ruby colour. For centuries, Teran has been praised for its health-promoting characteristics (some legendary, some real) and was even prescribed therapeutically by medical doctors in the past. In Slovenian Istria, another type of wine is made from the same wine grape variety – Refošk. Nevertheless, these wine grapes grow close to the sea, on different soil and in a different climate. The sun-drenched vineyards and the proximity of the Adriatic Sea are also excellent for the production of Malvasia and some other types of wines. The Vipava Valley represents the furthest extent of the Mediterranean region, and a home to some exceptional indigenous wine grape varieties, such as Zelén, Pinela, Grganja and Klarnica; in Goriška Brda the same grape variety and wine are called Rebula. In addition to the indigenous wine grape varieties, several other well-known wine grape varieties are grown, namely Beli Pinot (Pinot Blanc), Sivi Pinot (Pinot Grigio), Chardonnay, Sauvignon, Sauvignonasse (also known as Tocai Friulano), Barbera, Modri Pinot (Pinot Bleu), Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Shiraz. Oh, lest we forget: in that inn around the corner, they serve excellent fresh sea fish!
“To your right, the Vipava River valley opens at your feet, with smiling valleys that are cultivated like gardens all the way to Gorizia. Due to its noble crops and delicious wines it has oft been called the ‘Paradise of Carniola,'” Matija Vertovec (1784–1851), the priest from Podnanos, romantically wrote in 1820 about the beauty of the Vipava Valley for his sermon at the Church of St. Geronimo on Mt Nanos. His writings, published in 1845 in Vinoreja (Wine growing), the first Slovenian book on wine growing and winemaking, are held in high regard even today by wine growers from the Vipava Valley and other regions. You will not find a winemaker, producing the indigenous wine grape variety Zelén in the Vipava Valley, who could not tell you what his fellow countryman Vertovec said about the grape. Both Vertovec and today’s winemakers believe this is a rare wine grape variety, which explains why the people of Vipava are so proud of it. It is theirs, an indigenous wine grape variety that does not grow anywhere else in the world. It comes as no surprise then that in 2003, all the main wine growers of the Zelén grape wine variety from the Upper Vipava Valley (although it is also grown in the Lower Vipava Valley) came together and established their own wine Consortium Zelén. As things are with consortiums, they often prescribe stricter rules than the official regulations, so wine made from the Zelén grape variety is now bottled in a special, consortium-protected bottle. This is a guarantee that
you have a genuine, first class Zelén wine in front of you, one that has passed all the required quality checks and received high grades at wine tastings. Moreover, scientific research has recently shown that the Zelén wine contains a high percentage of hydroxy-cinnamon acids which have anti-oxidant, therefore healing, effects on health. Connoisseurs have also noted aphrodisiac effects of the Zelén wine. In 2006, the Consortium included Pinela, another indigenous wine grape variety in the Vipava Valley, to its list. Vertovec sang the praises of this vine too, saying its “wine has become well-known and loved.” However, the first written record of Pinela goes back as far as 1280, when Otokar, the official historian of the Viennese Court, wrote about the wine grape variety in his book Rimana kronika. Pinela found its geographical home in Planina nad Ajdovščino, as it prefers higher positions with marl soil. Up there, the ardent wine grower Damjan Štokelj has in his own way sworn himself to Pinela (stokelj@gmail.com). Some time ago, on one of the Vipava Valley wine presentations at the Decanter World Wine Awards in London, Štokelj’s Pinela wine was praised by the legendary wine critic Steven Spurrier. He said “one can taste the terroir of the Vipava Valley in it.” Had he tried Klarnica wine, made from the third indigenous wine grape variety from the Vipava Valley, he would have undoubtedly said the same.

You can only taste it in two places: either by visiting Bogdan Makovec in Brje (mansus.makovec@siol.net) or the Arkade tourist farm in Črniče (www.arkade-cigoj.com).

A number of other wines from the Vipava Valley winemakers can be sampled in the Vipava wine cellar (www.vipavska-dolina.si) in the main square of the town. You cannot miss it. It would be more than a sin to miss out on the exquisite red and white wines from Goriška Brda, the most renowned wine growing region in Slovenia, which has been gaining increasing popularity on the world wine markets. The glory of this wine growing region has first and foremost been promoted by the charismatic winemaker Aleš Kristančič from the Movia estate (see the winemakers list), not only in Europe, but also in the United States of America, Asia and Russia. Kristančič has paved the way for other Slovenian winemakers and firmly placed Slovenian wines on the international wine chart. Furthermore, he keeps surprising us with his extraordinary novelties. One of them is the disgorged sparkling wine called ‘Puro’. The sediment of lees is intentionally left in the bottle, which contradicts the Traditional Champagne Method. The bottle must be stored upside down so that the lees collects in the neck, and it must be opened in a small vessel filled with water, where the yeast shoots out under pressure. His other wine surprise from recent times is Lunar, made from the Rebula (Ribolla Gialla) grape variety. The wine is left to ferment, age, and stabilize completely on its own without pressing the grapes.
After 7 months of natural vinification, only the free-flowing wine from the unpressed grapes is bottled without filtration and allowed to refine in the bottle before it is released. It is called Lunar because Aleš does little work with the wine, imitating the natural method of vinification which occurs in nature through the stages of the moon without the touch of man. In contrast, traditional winemakers, who wish to produce richer and more mature wines, mix the mixture of grape skins and lees. Marjan Simčič, his closest neighbour and another renowned winemaker (see the winemakers list), is no less busy. To his Classical line of dry, fresh wines, and Selekcija, a line of richer, more intense and mature wines, he added the prestigious wine label Opoka. In Briški dialect, ‘opoka’ means ‘marl’, so these wines are made from older grape varieties grown on specially selected positions that allow them to grow deep roots on soil enriched with salts of marl minerals. This adds a pronounced mineral aroma to the wines. Opoka has set new standards in this category of Slovenian wines, just as the wines from Ščurek (see the winemakers list) called Kontra and Up have. Kontra proves that white wine can be produced without undesired oxidation (a frequent mistake with such procedures) despite the extra long maceration. The second wine, Up, has to be enjoyed slowly – such a rich, exquisite Merlot wine should not be subjected to haste. The third winemaker of “the holy Brda four”, is Edi Simčič (see the winemakers list), who consistently swears by rich and mature wines. Then again, the name of one of his red wines, Kolos (Colossus), says it all. People say of Edi that if he was drawn by a caricaturist, he would stand in his vineyard with a scalpel and a pair of pincers in his hand. This is how precise he is with his wines. His son Alex has dutifully learned all the winemaking tips and tricks from his father. Mind you, there are many winemakers in the Brda region who would like to achieve what these four men have. Kabaj (see the win-
In the past, Teran was not deemed suitable for ageing, yet the Vinakras wine cellar (see the winemakers list) has proved that some vintages of Karst Teran do age well in oak barrels and retain their special characteristics for decades. This aged Teran is called Teranton; in the past, this name was used by karst locals for the very best Teran. The Karst wine growing region produces some white wines, too. These, too, are robust wines, yet palatable due to their vivacious acidity. Vitovska is perhaps the most indigenous wine grape variety, which has found its way back into the karst vineyards, also thanks to Čotar (see the winemakers list).

What Teran represents to the Karst, Refošk wine represents to the Slovenian Istria. Both are made from the same grape variety – the Refošk wine grape (Peduncolo rosso) – but it is known by a different name in the Karst. In Slovenian Istria, therefore, we only find Refošk. So much so, that the Slovenian Istrians claim it is only theirs. Why? Well, Refošk can talk to the farmers in a local inn, the fishermen at the sea, the businessman at business lunches in Ljubljana or anywhere else in Slovenia... Refošk can be charming with candle-lit dinners or receptions and it can bravely compete with other wines in culinary marathons, as the journalist Drago Medved once wrote. This is how things are with this rex fuscusom, the ‘king of dark red wines’ in Latin, which gives it its name. The Slovenian Istrians are also very fond of another wine, calling it Istrian Malvasia instead of just Malvasia. This wine can be both a seductive Mediterranean miss and a charming, mature madame. The times of cheap, excessively sulphurised and oxidized Malvasia wine are long gone. All three littoral municipalities organise each spring a festival, dedicated exclusively to Malvasia. The Consortium of Istrian wines takes care of the good name of both Malvasia and Refošk wine, while the third renowned Istrian wine, the intoxicatingly fragrant and sweet Rumeni muškat (Yellow Muscatel), needs no such protection as of yet. It is exceedingly hard to steal the crown from a muscatel wine in the category of sweet wines anyway...
Today, clonal varieties, Chardonnays, Sauvignons, Beli Pinot (Pinot Bianco), Sivi Pinot (Pinot Grigio) and various Cabernets grow on these extraordinary wine-growing terroirs. However, the “queen of indigenous wine grape varieties” is undoubtedly Rebula (Ribolla Gialla), which produces a light-bodied, refreshing and palatable wine. Next to it stand Pikolit, an elegant wine with a fruity bouquet, and Tokaj (Tocai Friulano is nowadays known as Sauvignonasse) with a wonderfully rich taste of almonds. Among the reds, Merlot is the most widespread and popular due to its moderate acidity and deep ruby colour.
GASTRONOMIC SPECIALTIES

Križnik bread - A kind of festive Easter bread from western Brda, made with superior quality 'potica' dough and with the addition of dried figs, steeped in schnapps or wine, hazelnuts, honey and cinnamon. It takes its name from the cross ('križ') cut into the top of the loaf.

Brda cherries - In addition to other fruits and vines, cherries are one of the key characteristics of the natural wealth of Brda. Cherry production has a rich tradition here, as Brda people have supplied them to large towns and tourist resorts.

Polenta - Although polenta is not an original dish of Goriška Brda, nor other parts of Mediterranean Slovenia, it remains an important component of the staple diet as a main course, and, even more so, as a warm or cold side dish with various meat and vegetable dishes.

Prtalje or cvrče - These omelettes, also called 'cvrče', include various fresh herbs, prosciutto and sausages. They demonstrate the local culinary creativity connected with crops harvested in the local natural environment.

Toči - Toči is an expression referring to the most diverse meat sauces and goulashes, into which people dipped ('točati') polenta or bread. It is a staple diet for breakfast or dinner and a real treasury of culinary improvisation.

Krodegini, šankanele and markandele - Three characteristic products of pig slaughtering on a farm - krodegini or kožarice, šankanele or blood sausages and markandele or pork intestine sausages.

Fuje - Rolls of bread, pre-soaked in a prosciutto soup and with flour, eggs, chives and onion added, wrapped into slices of prosciutto. The dish is also known as 'fulje' or 'punjáve'.

Šfojada - A 'potica' made of puff pastry and stuffed with diverse fillings such as walnuts, pine nuts and raisins.

Štruklji “wljkava” - Baked 'štruklji' made with unleavened dough, stuffed with sliced fried sausage or salami, olives and spices. The name of these 'štruklji' comes from the local dialect name for olives ('wljke'), which are an ingredient of the filling.

Pištunj - A thick puréed dish made of potatoes, green beans and pumpkin, dressed with cracklings or bacon. It can be served on its own or as a side dish.

Hubanca - A spirally wrapped 'potica' with a walnut and raisin filling.

Kuhnje - The dialect expression, 'kuhnja' is used in Goriška Brda for a whole range of the most diverse tasty meat, vegetable and pasta stews that are otherwise known as 'mineštra' (minestrone).

WINE-GROWERS AND VINTNERS

Bjana, Miran Sirk
Biljana 38, 5212 Dobrovo
M: +386 (0)41 711 760
bjana@siol.net

Constantini
Plešivo 32, 5212 Dobrovo v Brdih
T: +386 (0)5 359 95 77
constantini@siol.net, www.constantini.si

Dolfo, Marko Skočaj
Ceglo 3d, 5212 Dobrovo v Brdih
M: +386 (0)40 757 677
dolfo@volja.net

Edi Simčič
Vipolže 39a, 5212 Dobrovo
T: +386 (0)5 395 91 74
info@edisimcic.si, www.edisimcic.si

Erzetič
Višnjevik 25a, 5212 Dobrovo
T: +386 (0)5 395 94 60
erzetic.visnjevik@volja.net, erzetic.aleksij@siol.net, www.vina-erzetic.com

Jakončič
Kozana 5, 5212 Dobrovo
T: +386 (0)5 304 12 15
M: +386 (0)31 676 803
aljosa.jakoncic@siol.net

Kabaj Morel
Šlovrenc 4, 5212 Dobrovo
T: +386 (0)5 395 95 60
M: +386 (0)41 454 001
kabaj.morel@email.si, www.kabajmorel.si

Klinec
Medana 20, 5212 Dobrovo
T: +386 (0)5 304 50 92
klinec@siol.net, www.klinec.si

Marjan Simčič
Ceglo 3b, 5212 Dobrovo
T: +386 (0)5 395 92 00
info@simcic.si, www.simcic.si

Movia
Ceglo 38, 5212 Dobrovo
T: +386 (0)41 711 760
movia@siol.net, www.movia.si

Ščurek
Plešivo 32, 5212 Dobrovo v Brdih
T: +386 (0)5 304 50 21
M: +386 (0)41 625 842
scurek.stojan@siol.net, www.scurek.com

OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATION

Belica
Medana 32
5212 Dobrovo
T: +386 (0)5 30 42104
info@belica.net
www.belica.net

Breg, Mirela Peresin
Breg pri Golem Brdu 3
5212 Dobrovo
T: +386 (0)5 304 25 55
mirelaperesin@tiscali.it
www.turizembreg.com

Hiša Marica
Šmartno 33
5211 Kojsko
T: +386 (0)5 3041039
info@marica.si
www.marica.si

Štekar, Roman Štekar
Snežatno 31a
5211 Kojsko
T: +386 (0)5 304 62 10
M: +386 (0)41 44 47 66
info@kmetijastekar.si
www.kmetijastekar.si

Štanfel, Štefan Štanfel
Podsabotin 5
5211 Kojsko
T: +386 (0)5 304 62 52
M: +386 (0)31 680 297
stefan@stanfel.si
www.stanfel.si

Tomášič, Katja Tomášič
Hum 61b
5211 Kojsko
T: +386 (0)5 304 62 63
M: +386 (0)31 688 381
+386 (0)41 600 470

Ščurek
Plšivo 32, 5212 Dobrovo
T: +386 (0)5 304 50 21
M: +386 (0)41 625 842
scurek.stojan@siol.net, www.scurek.com

Vinska klet Goriška Brda
Zadružna cesta 9, 5215 Dobrovo
T: +386 (0)5 331 01 00
istok.mikulin@klet-brda.si
www.klet-brda.com
In addition to the well-known wine grape varieties which grow in the Primorska region, in the Vipava Valley we also find several indigenous grapes – the harmonious and refreshing Pinela with a delicate bouquet; the wonderfully rich, slightly acidic Klarnica from the sun-drenched vineyards; and Zelén, the sun-kissed “king of the Vipava Valley wines”, which local winemakers always offer towards the end of wine tastings as it is indeed a very special wine. With some luck, wine connoisseurs may come across Dišečka (in translation: fragrant), the oldest, 200-year-old wine grape variety from the Primorska region, which grows on Col (600m). The Dišečka vine bears grapes which produce only 30 litres of exquisite white wine per year. The Vipava winemakers are also renowned for the superb Sauvignon, Rebula (Ribolla Gialla), Laški rizling (Italian Riesling), Beli Pinot (Pinot Bianco), Chardonnay, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and other wine grape varieties.
GASTRONOMIC SPECIALTIES

**Vipava jota** - A local variant of the original Carnian dish. A sauerkraut stew with beans, potatoes, lard, flour, garlic and pepper. Some prefer to prepare it with pickled turnips, fresh cabbage, Savoy cabbage or beetroot leaves.

**Bean minestrone** - A thick soup made of cooked mashed and whole beans with polenta. Although this is just one of the several Slovenian minestrone varieties, this one is the most widespread.

**Šelinka** - Šelinka is minestrone-style soup made of celery and celeriac, vegetables, spices and leg of pork. It is served with polenta.

**Skuha (Barley Soup)** - A stew made of lentils or beans with spices, occasionally barley, and a spoonful of dry wine. Sausages and ham leftovers are also cooked in it.

**Vipava prosciutto** - A new brand of high-quality ‘pršut’ (prosciutto), made from the best pork produced in Slovenia.

**Nanos cheese** - This high-quality dairy product is based on the rich heritage of cattle farming and cheese making on the Nanos plateau, where cheese making was documented as early as the 16th century.

**Vipava štruklji (rolled dumplings)** - ‘Štruklji’ (rolled dumplings) are made from leavened dough, cooked in a cloth with fillings of walnuts, cottage cheese, raisins and sugar.

OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Phone Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Na Hribu, Petra Žorž</td>
<td>Slap 93, 5271 Vipava</td>
<td>T: +386 (0)5 364 57 08 +386 (0)5 364 55 45 M: +386 (0)31 724 810 <a href="mailto:tk.nahribu@gmail.com">tk.nahribu@gmail.com</a> <a href="mailto:tzorz93@volja.net">tzorz93@volja.net</a> <a href="http://www.nahribu-zorz.veha.net">www.nahribu-zorz.veha.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birsa, Birsa Oskar</td>
<td>Brje 18a, 5263 Dobravlje</td>
<td>T: +386 (0)5 368 81 13 M: +386 (0)31 742 437 <a href="http://www.kmetijabirs.com">www.kmetijabirs.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkade</td>
<td>Cigoj Jordan, Črnice 91</td>
<td>T: +386 (0)5 364 47 70 <a href="mailto:maja.cigoj@siol.net">maja.cigoj@siol.net</a> <a href="http://www.arakde-cigoj.com">www.arakde-cigoj.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pri Hrvacevih</td>
<td>Šempas 158, 5261 Šempas</td>
<td>T: +386 (0)5 308 86 59 +386 (0)5 307 87 09 M: +386 (0)51 304 609 <a href="mailto:tk.nahribu@gmail.com">tk.nahribu@gmail.com</a> <a href="mailto:tzorz93@volja.net">tzorz93@volja.net</a> <a href="http://www.nahribu-zorz.veha.net">www.nahribu-zorz.veha.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gregorič, Nevenka Gregorič</td>
<td>Zalošče 1, 5294 Dornberk</td>
<td>T: +386 (0)5 308 86 60 +386 (0)5 308 87 90 M: +386 (0)51 304 609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malovščevo</td>
<td>Milan Garbari, Vitovlje 68</td>
<td>5261 Šempas T: +386 (0)5 307 88 90 M: +386 (0)51 452 311 +386 (0)31 362 947 <a href="mailto:info@malovscevo.si">info@malovscevo.si</a> <a href="http://www.malovscevo.si">www.malovscevo.si</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Černigoj</td>
<td>Jože Černigoj, Lokavec 76b</td>
<td>5270 Ajdovščina M: +386 (0)40 217 192, +386 (0)40 239 189 <a href="mailto:kmetija.cernigio@gmail.com">kmetija.cernigio@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pri Minin</td>
<td>Marko Furlan, Branik 206</td>
<td>5295 Branik T: +386 (0)30 75 73 56 M: +386 (0)31 440 048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pri Lisjak</td>
<td>Hermina Lisjak, Sp. Branica 1a</td>
<td>5295 Branik T: +386 (0)30 71 92 M: +386 (0)40 300 592</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WINE-GROWERS AND VINTNERS

**Batič**
Šempas 130, 5261 Šempas
T: +386 (0)5 308 86 76
info@batic.si, www.batic.si

**Fornazarič**
Vogrsko 167, 5293 Volčja Draga
T: +386 (0)5 301 23 06
M: +386 (0)41 383 879
ivan.fornazaric@siol.net
www.kmetija-fornazaric.com

**Guerila**
Planina 111, 5270 Ajdovščina
T: +386 (0)5 365 90 00
M: +386 (0)41 383 879
ivan.fornazaric@siol.net
www.kmetija-fornazaric.com

**Krapež**
Vrhpolje 95, 5271 Vipava
T: +386 (0)5 368 71 10
M: +386 (0)40 219 500
vina.krapez@siol.net

**Pasji rep**
Orehovica 11a, 5272 Podnanos
T: +386 (0)5 366 91 19
M: +386 (0)41 745 020

**Saksida**
Zalošče 12a, 5294 Dornberk
T: +386 (0)5 301 78 53
M: +386 (0)41 208 345
info@vinosaksida.com
www.vinasaksida.com

**Sutor**
Podraga 30, 5272 Podnanos
M: +386 (0)41 363 272
primoz.lavrencic@p-ng.si
www.sutor.si

**Sveti Martin**
Brje 121 – Sveti Martin, 5263 Dobravlje
T: +386 (0)5 305 77 00
M: +386 (0)31 200 111

**Tilia**
Potoče 41, 5263 Dobravlje
T: +386 (0)5 364 66 84
M: +386 (0)31 399 748
tilia@lemut.net
www.tiliapremiumwines.com

**Vinska klet Vipava 1894**
Vinarska cesta 5, 5271 Vipava
T: +386 (0)5 367 12 00
M: +386 (0)41 644 517
www.vipava1894.si/vipava1894
Where the Karst ends, Teran ends, too

Teran, this highly prized and unique wine from the Karst region with a deep ruby colour, moderate alcohol content and health-promoting characteristics, was prescribed therapeutically by medical doctors in the 19th century to anemic and pregnant women – it was even sold in Trieste’s pharmacies! The rich and full-bodied red wine is very palatable and can be enjoyed with game, red meat and heavier dishes. Teran is the most perfect complement to the famous Karst prosciutto. In the Sežana karst region, Refošk (Refosco del Peduncolo Verde) or Teranovka grows on 560 hectares of vineyards and is considered the most important wine grape variety. The area enjoys a benign climate which helps ripen the grapes to the desired level for the production of the famed Teran. In addition, Rebula (Ribolla Gialla), Laški rizling (Italian Riesling), Malvasia, Beli pinot (Pinot Blanc), Sauvignon and Chardonnay are produced here.
GAstronomic Specialties

Karst-Jota - In the Karst, 'jota' is made from sour turnips or sauerkraut, but always includes potatoes. Sweet Karst 'jota' is a specialty and is made with mashed potato and beans with the addition of carrots, spices and a spoonful of vinegar.

Šelinka - Šelinka is minestron-style soup made of celery and celeriac, potatoes, rice, occasionally beans, and a spoonful of vinegar or dry wine.

Karst prosciutto – The centuries-old tradition of dry-curing pork, especially pork legs, in the Karst wind known as 'Burja' (Bora), has borne this top-quality product with protected designation of origin.

Karst pancetta - In the Karst region, meaty bacon is dry-cured to create a delicious pancetta, an important ingredient of Karst cold cuts and a key ingredient of certain dishes.

Karst zašinek - Shoulder of pork is dry-cured to create 'Karst zašinek', another essential ingredient in a typical Karst cold cuts platter.

Overnight Accommodation

Škerlj
Izidor Škerlj
Tomaj 53a
6221 Dutovlje
T: +386 (0)5 764 06 73
M: +386 (0)31 306 919
skerlj.tomaj@siol.net

Petelin-Durcik
Breda Durcik
Pliskovica 93
6221 Dutovlje
T: +386 (0)5 764 00 28
M: +386 (0)41 519 253
+386 (0)31 654 171
petelin.durcik@siol.net

Abram-Žerjal
Marta Žerjal
Sveto 69
6223 Komen
T: +386 (0)5 766 82 23
info@tk-abram.si

Budni
Darjo Spačal
Vojščica 61
5296 Kostanjevica na Krasu
T: +386 (0)5 30 80 405
M: +386 (0)31 649 938
dar@siol.net
www.budni-kras.com

Ostrouška Pelicon
Mateja Ostrouška
Coljava 5
6223 Komen
T: +386 (0)5 766 80 61
mateja.ostrouska@siol.net

Pri Tavčarjevih
Patricia Petrovič
Hruševica 44
6222 Štanjel
T: +386 (0)5 769 01 36
petrovic.p@volja.net

Vinakras Sežana
Sejmiška pot 1a, 6210 Sežana
T: +386 (0)5 751 34 44
vinakras@siol.net, www.vinakras.si

Vinska klet Colja
Coljava 10, 6223 Komen
T: +386 (0)5 766 80 95
M: +386 (0)31 492 363
+386 (0)31 622 100
info@coljawines.com, www.coljawines.com
The most important wine grape variety is Refošk (Refosco del Peduncolo Verde), whose grapes are macerated in open vats. A thick and dark, almost violet wine is a symbol of the lasting Istrian wine tradition which also boasts excellent whites. Istrian Malvasia from the Koper region has a richer taste than Malvasia wines from other regions. Rumeni muškat (Yellow Muscatel), one of the oldest vine varieties in the world, produces an extraordinary aromatic wine in this region. Other respected white grape varieties in the Koper region include Chardonnay and Sivi pinot (Pinot Gris), while red grape varieties include Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot.
GASTRONOMIC SPECIALTIES

Olive bread and fig bread - Examples of festively enriched bread made of white flour to which sliced or mashed olives or dried figs are added.

Istrian jota - Istrian „jota” is made with sauerkraut and beans, but is differentiated from the Karst „jota” in that it does not contain potatoes.

Fritaje or fralje - A typical spring egg omelette containing wild asparagus, pre-roasted with prosciutto or bacon, spring shoots of wild hops, bryony, butcher’s broom and clematis. In Pomjan above Koper, the largest Istrian asparagus fritaja is prepared each year on 30 April, with as many eggs as there are days in the current year.

Pasta - Home-made pasta used to be made only for major celebrations, weddings and other occasions. It is dressed with fried pancetta or eaten with goulash and other sauces.

Minestrones - Minestrones are everyday stews in Istria. The most widespread are „bobići” (corn) and „paštatafajoj” (pasta and beans), while „rižibizi” (rice), vegetable and barley minestrones, are also made.

Nákelda - Rolls made of stale bread soaked in chicken soup, eggs, grated ewe’s cheese, raisins, bacon and summer savory as the main spice.

Istrian štruklji - All kinds of „štruklji” (strudels) are made from highly elastic phyllo pastry in Istria. They have diverse fillings, e.g. cottage cheese, cheese, prosciutto, cracklings, spinach, walnuts, apples, potatoes and various herbs, and are mostly cooked, not baked.

White and red bakala (cod fish spread) - Bakala is probably the most popular dried and salted codfish product and was, in its white version, a typical Christmas Eve dish. The red „baka" la’ goes well with boiled potatoes, bread and polenta.

Fish in ‘šavor’ marinade - Šavor means a fish marinade in the local Primorska dialect. Marinating fish is a method that is especially suitable for smaller sea fish, e.g. anchovies, sardines, picarel and red mullets.

Calamari, sardines and anchovies - Calamari or squid are prepared in a number of ways. The most popular are grilled calamari, but they can also be stuffed or fried. Calamari risotto is another excellent dish.

Pedoči (mussels) - Pedoči (mussels) are, according to folk wisdom, at their best in July and August. They are prepared in a number of ways – very popular methods are mussels in ‘buzara’ sauce or pan-fried.

Fig loaf - An exceptional product made of dried ground figs, which are formed into a loaf with fig or grape juice and lightly rolled in flour. Such a loaf remains edible for a very long time. Cut into slices, it is enjoyed as a healthy natural dessert without added sugar or preservatives.

OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATION

Bordon, Boris Bordon
Dekani 63
6271 Dekani
T: +386 (0)5 658 22 60
M: +386 (0)41 721 228
+386 (0)40 609 899
kmetija.bordon@siol.net

Škrat
Srečko Markučič
Hrastovlje 49
6275 Črni Kal
T: +386 (0)5 659 24 60
M: +386 (0)41 768 763
turisticna.kmetija.shkrat@siol.net

WINE-GROWERS AND VINTNERS

Brič
Dekani 3a, 6271 Dekani
T: +386 (0)5 669 91 05
+386 (0)5 658 05 27
F: +386 (0)5 658 25 27
M: +386 (0)40 745 804
fprincess@siol.net, www.freetime.si/05/vino/6271_dekani/bric/bric.htm

Klet Mahnič
Dragonja 111, 6333 Sečovlje
T: (05) 672 23 00
M: +386 (041 642 851
+386 (0)31 715 866
mahing@siol.net

Korenika & Moškon
Korte 115c, 6310 Izola
T: +386 (0)5 642 00 30
+386 (0)5 642 10 49
M: +386 (0)41 607 819
mkorenika@siol.net

MonteMoro
Šmarska cesta 30, 6000 Koper
M: +386 (0)41 921 086
matjaz.babic@montemoro.si
www.montemoro.si

Pucer z Vrha
Nova vas 60a, 6333 Sečovlje
T: +386 (0)5 672 50 43
M: +386 (0)41 651 617

Rodica Truške
Truške 1c, 6273 Marezige
T: +386 (0)5 655 00 70
M: +386 (0)41 695 019
rodicam@volja.net, www.rodica.si

Rojac
Gažon 63a, 6274 Šmarje
T: +386 (0)5 656 94 20
M: +386 (0)41 794 770
www.rojac.eu

Santomas
Šmarje 10, 6274 Šmarje
T: +386 (0)5 639 26 51
M: +386 (0)41 728 724
santomas@monteko.si, www.santomas.si

Steras
Šared 43, 6310 Izola
T: +386 (0)5 642 00 85
F: +386 (0)5 642 00 85
M: +386 (0)41 788 173
info@steras.com
www.steras.com

Vinakoper
Šmarska cesta 1, 6000 Koper
T: +386 (0)5 663 01 00
hisa.refoska@vinakoper.si
www.vinakoper.si
Events

February
Wine Festival Šempas

March
Brštevska šparglijada (Festival of Asparagus Dishes) Brestovica bei Komen

April
Saltpans Feast celebrating St. George The Saltpans Feast traditionally takes place on the last weekend in April. A new season of salt-harvesting begins on St. George’s Day. Events include a salt-evening, salt-dinner, a trip to the Piran Fair and a visit to the Saltpans Museum, an afternoon in the spa (with salt and fango mud), St. George procession in Piran, a trip to the Saltpans, live music and more. Piran and the Sečovlje saltpans

Spring, Nature and Wine Medana, Brda
Festival of Flowers, Wine and Olive Oil Ankaran

April/May
Largest Istrian asparagus fritaja (made from Istrian wild asparagus and eggs) - cultural and ethnological programme. Pomjan

May
Rebula and Olive Oil Festival – wine and olive oil tastings Višnjevik (Goriška Brda)
Refošk Festival Marezige, Koper
Brda and Wine day of open wine cellars Šmartno, Brda

June
Traditional Olive Festival Dekani

July
Polenta Festival – traditional cooking of polenta, farmers’ fun and games, presentation of traditional customs and entertainment programme. Ozeljan

International Mediterranean Folklore Festival Koper, Izola, Piran
Erasmus’ Medieval Knight Tournament Erasmus’ Medieval Knight Tournament is based on records and illustrations from the 16th century, and offers visitors a glimpse into life in the Middle Ages. It is accompanied by a Medieval Feast with dishes prepared according to the original medieval recipes and served in a manner used 500 years ago. Postojna, Predjama

August
Teran and Pršut (Prosciutto) Festival – this is a big and popular event which represents an important promotion of the Karst; it is the main cultural and ethnographical event of the Karst wine growing region. The biggest attraction of the event is undoubtedly the procession of decorated farmers’ carts and the election of the Teran Queen. Dutovlje

‘Čompe Night’ – a culinary festival dedicated to jacket potatoes, called ‘čompe’ in the Bovec region. Bovec

September
‘Sweet Istria’ – festival promoting Istrian culinary specialties, as well as culinary and cultural traditions which are closely connected that the Istrian region. Koper

Tolminska Frika Festival – an interesting culinary event celebrating the preparation of ‘frika’, a gastronomic specialty made from potatoes and cheese, which originates in Posočje and neighbouring Alpine regions. Tolmin
PROTECTED PRODUCTS

- Tolminc cheese
- Nanos cheese
- Bovec cheese
- Extra virgin olive oil from the Slovenian Istria
- Piran salt
- Karst honey
- Karst prosciutto
- Brinjevec (Karst juniper brandy)
- Brkinski slivovec (Brkini slivovitz)

SELECTED RESTAURANTS

November

Numerous St. Martin’s celebrations throughout the Slovenian wine growing regions

11 November, St. Martin’s Day, is a much loved celebration in Slovenia. Martinovo (Martinmas) marks the end of field work and the beginning of the harvesting period. Most importantly, St. Martin’s Day marks the day when the must traditionally turns to wine. Several traditional dishes are served for this celebration, e.g. roast goose, duck, turkey or chicken, braised cabbage and ‘mlinci’.

Throughout Slovenia

Goriška Brda wine growing region
Tourist Information Centre Brda
Grajska cesta 10
5212 Dobrovo v Brdih
T: +386 (0)5 395 95 94
F: +386 (0)5 395 95 95
www.brda.si
tic@obcina-brda.si
Opening hours: Monday to Friday 9:00–16:00

Vipava Valley wine growing region
Tourist Information Centre Vipava
Glavni trg 1
5271 Vipava
T: +386 (0)5 368 70 41
F: +386 (0)5 368 70 41
www.vipavsko-dolina.si
tic.vipava@siol.net
Opening hours: 10:00–18:00, Saturday 9:00–14:00 (July, August, September every day 9:00–19:00)

Karst wine growing region
Tourist Information Centre Sežana
Partizanska cesta 63
6210 Sežana
T: +386 (0)5 731 01 28
M: +386 (0)41 796 245
www.kras-carso.com
tic.sezana@siol.net
Opening hours: Monday to Friday 8:00–16:00, Saturday 8:00–18:00, Sunday 9:00–14:00

Slovenian Istria wine growing region
Tourist Association Portorož
Obala 16
6320 Portorož–Portorose
T: +386 (0)5 674 82 60
F: +386 (0)5 674 82 61
www.portoroz.si
ticpo@portoroz.si
Opening hours: Monday to Saturday 9:00–17:00, Sunday 9:00–14:00, in summer months 9:00–21:00 every day
The following inns and restaurants were selected because they are renowned in Slovenia for their quality of service and cuisine. Some of them are members of the international gastronomic society Chaîne des Rôtisseurs.

How the winemakers were selected

If we take into consideration that Slovenia has more than 1,600 winemakers who bottle their own wines, it becomes clear that it is impossible to list all the wine cellars worth visiting when we have a list of ten or so winemakers available per wine growing region or sub-region. Therefore, we have decided to select and recommend some of the most prominent, breakthrough, innovative, extraordinary and representative winemakers. We believe you will have no trouble finding many other winemakers in this country. In fact, when you visit winemakers, most of them will gladly tell you about a nearby or even a more distant wine cellar worth visiting. In addition, all the wine growing regions are strewn with wine routes with clearly marked signs directing you to numerous wine cellars, as well as vineyard and tourist farms that are not presented in our list.
Hiša Marica is situated within the walls of the picturesque medieval village Šmartno. We offer home-made prosciutto other house specialties and top wines. There are four rustic rooms at your disposal. In our little shop you can purchase typical home-made products. Relive Šmartno and the region Brda with its authentic taste in an ambience preserved through centuries.
Wine and Tourism

BELICA

1898

Tradition that originates in the love of farming. Our best vineyards locations give the top quality wine. Taste the products from our wine country.

We are looking forward to your visit. Welcome!

Zlatko Mavrič, Medana 32, Goriška Brda, 5212 Dobrovo, Slovenija
tel: 00386 5 304 21 04 · fax: 00386 5 395 91 09
www.belica.net · info@belica.net
Rooms: non-stop · Restaurant: from Tuesday to Sunday, closed on Monday