|Tatrab<u>is</u>|

TRAVEL TO THE LAND OF WINE - MOLDOVA

DAY 1

Day 1: Arrival day

Chisinau

On arrival at Chisinau International Airport, you will be transferred to your accommodation in Chisinau. After settling in, you can have a walk through downtown and explore the city centre on your own.

DAY 2

Day 2: Wine tasting at Pivintele din Branesti and Cricova wineries

Chisinau - Branesti - Trebujeni - Orheiul Vechi - Cricova - Chisinau

The day will begin with the **city tour of Chisinau** which is the main administrative, scientific and cultural centre of Moldova. During the tour, you will discover pieces of history and culture of the city such as the Nativity of Christ Cathedral, the Bell Tower, the Arch of Triumph, the Monument of Stephen the Great, etc.

The day will continue at **Pivnitele din Branesti winery** where you will enjoy an excursion and wine tasting. The Stone Age Complex of Pivnitele din Branesti winery is situated in an old limestone mine at a depth of 60 meters. Thanks to the absence of internet and mobile communications guests can escape from civilization and city noise.

You will have lunch at a local guesthouse in Trebujeni village.

After lunch, you will set off on a time travel to Orheiul Vechi (Old Orhei) to see a natural amphitheater revealing a territory which was first inhabited 40 000 years ago. The **Cultural**, **Natural and Landscape Reserve Orheiul Vechi** includes a series of historical and cultural monuments as well as natural landscapes in the gorge of the Raut River. Ancient fortifications, cave monasteries, monks and hermits – here you can follow the history of this region. The originality of Orheiul Vechi landscape is due to the gorge of the Raut River, dug under the form of a canyon in the limestone layers of the former Sarmatian Sea, about 14 million years ago.

You will continue your journey to **Cricova winery** – the only wine enterprise that was awarded the highest state prize "The Order of the Republic" and has been declared by law a national cultural heritage. During the excursion at Cricova winery in the tourist train, at a depth of 80 m, you will

discover the wonders of this place. Cricova underground galleries are formed by over seventy streets covering an area of nearly 120 km, each bearing Bacchic names: Sauvignon, Cabernet, Cahors, etc. The jewel of the underground treasure is the National Collection, including over 600 types of wine totaling about 1 million bottles. Here you will admire the oldest bottle of wine - "Jewish Easter Wine", dating from 1902, discover the tastes of Cricova wines.

After discovering Cricova wines you will enjoy dinner at a local restaurant in Chisinau.

HIGHLIGHTS: Chisinau city, Pivnitele din Branesti winery, Cultural, Natural and Landscape Reserve Orheiul Vechi, Cricova winery,

DAY 3

Day 3: Asconi family winery and Castel Mimi winery - architectural masterpiece in the world of wine

Chisinau - Puhoi - Bulboaca - Chisinau

In the morning you will have an excursion at **Alexander Pushkin Museum**, an important cultural monument in Chisinau. The great Russian poet A.S. Puskin was sent into exile to Moldova for a period of 3 years (1820 – 1823). While staying here, the poet gifted the world of literature the immortal poems like, "To Ovid", "The faithful Greek woman does not cry", "Eugene Onegin", "The Queen of Spades" and others.

You will continue the day at **Asconi winery** founded in 1994 and located in Puhoi village. The winery achieved a lot due to modern wine making technologies. Nowadays at Asconi estate European varieties are grown, but special attention is paid to indigenous varieties such as Rara Neagra, Feteasca, etc. One of the features of Asconi winery is that they pick up the grapes mechanically at night when the grapes are still cold. During the excursion, wine tasting and lunch at the winery you will be able to discover the wonders of this place.

Next stop will be in Bulboaca village at **Castel Mimi winery** - a destination of interest unique in Moldova. Castel Mimi is currently listed among the most beautiful architectural masterpieces in the world of wine. The story of the castle begins at the end of 1893, when Constantin Mimi, the last governor of Bessarabia, plants the first grape vines on the place that would become legend over the years. Here, you will an excursion and taste Castel Mimi wines.

In the evening, you will have dinner at a local restaurant in Chisinau.

HIGHLIGHTS: Alexander Pushkin Museum, Asconi winery, Castel Mimi winery,

DAY 4

Day 4: Visit in the South-east region of Moldova and discovery of Et Cetera and Château Purcari wineries

Chisinau - Crocmaz - Purcari - Chisinau

In the morning, you will visit **Et Cetera family winery** and take part in the excursion and wine tasting carried out by the owner of the winery who will inform you about the methods of wine production and maturation. At Et Cetera winery, you will enjoy a lunch prepared from products of the region and Crocmaz village.

After lunch, the trip will continue to **Château Purcari winery** in Purcari village. If you are a wine enthusiast or just love to be in beautiful, pristine surroundings and listening the songs of birds, Purcari estate is definitely the place you need to visit. The old mansion's galleries feature great collections of Purcari wines, some bottles dating back to 1948. The winery is famous all over the world due to the legendary wine "Negru de Purcari" - the elixir that in 1878 was highly appreciated on the international arena by being awarded the gold medal at Paris World Exhibition. In the tasting room, decorated in royal style, you will have the opportunity to taste Purcari wines, which has been the choice of some of the world's most recognized dignitaries.

In the evening, you will have dinner at a local restaurant in Chisinau.

HIGHLIGHTS: Et Cetera winery, Château Purcari winery,

DAY 5

Day 5: Discovery of Gagauzia

Chisinau - Besalma - Vulcanesti - Comrat - Chisinau

The day will begin by travelling to Gagauzia where you will visit the **National Gagauz Museum of History and Ethnography "D. Cara-Ciobanu"** in Besalma village. The museum presents the history, culture and everyday life of the Gagauz people from ancient times until nowadays. One of the personalities of this small nation was the writer D. Cara-Ciobanu, who spent his life promoting this culture. He founded this museum, which features more than 6,000 exhibits, including works by famous writers, poets and famous artists in Gagauzia. One of the most valuable item in the museum is the collection of original films produced during the Gagauz colonization of the steppe of Bugeac.

Next, you will travel to **Karagani winery** - a family winery with a specific emphasis on the Gagauz origins of the Cerven family, who owns the company. Located in Vulcanesti, in the southern part of Moldova, this small family enterprise is engaged in grape cultivation and wine production. Karagani wines are produced by original technology from selected grapes of European and national varieties, grown on its own vineyards. On this land, you will discover the tastes of Karagani wines and the specificity of Gagauz cuisine, while tasting Gagauz dishes.

Later, you will travel to **Comrat** where you will enjoy a **city tour**. Comrat is the capital of the autonomous region of Gagauzia, located in southwest Moldova. This is a very interesting territory since the majority of its habitants are Gagauzians. These are the only representatives of Turkic origin that affiliated with the Eastern Orthodox Church. Gagauzians migrated from Bulgaria

together with ethnic Bulgarians and settled in Moldova in 19th century. You will see such attractions as the Cathedral of St John the Baptist, Museum of Gagauz Culture, Gagauz Art Gallery, Gagauz National University and Alley of Gagauz Glory.

You will continue your trip to **Vinuri de Comrat winery**, which is the oldest winery of southern Moldova. Here you will discover the tastes of Vinuri de Comrat wines and the specificity of Gagauz cuisine, while tasting Gagauz dishes during dinner. For over 100 years the winemakers of Comrat are preserving and transmitting from generation to generation the classical traditions of making fresh and naturally elegant wines based on the unique winemaking technology characteristic for the south of Moldova. Vinuri de Comrat is a modern complex processing 4 thousands tones of wine and spirits using the closed-loop cycle, including production and processing of grape, production and bottling of dry, semi-sweet, desert, selected and vintage wine, production of wine spirit. Its portfolio lists more than 50 collections of wine, however, it is very famous for the Cahors wine.

HIGHLIGHTS: National Gagauz Museum of History and Ethnography "D. Cara-Ciobanu", Karagani winery, Comrat city, Vinuri de Comrat winery,

DAY 6

Day 6: Time travel in Tiraspol - Back in the USSR

Chisinau - Tiraspol - Chisinau

In the morning, you will set off on a time travel in Transnistria. While in Tiraspol, you will discover a real treasure – **Aquatir Sturgeon Complex**, one of the largest hatcheries in Europe. The complex is equipped with the latest technologies and the fish can reach the size of a man. You will get the chance to taste one of the most expensive culinary delights – caviar.

In the afternoon, you will have lunch at a restaurant in Tiraspol.

After lunch, you will visit **Kvint wine and brandy factory** where harmony, refinement and tradition underlie the oldest and most genuine spirits. Here you will be acquainted with the taste of 5 types of aged brandy including Victoria (25 years old) and Jubilee (30 years old).

In the evening, you will have dinner at a local restaurant in Chisinau.

HIGHLIGHTS: Aquatir Sturgeon Complex, Kvint wine and brandy factory,

DAY 7

Day 7: Departure day

Chisinau

On departure day, you will be transferred from the hotel to Chisinau International Airport. If your flight is in the afternoon, you will have the option to explore Chisinau for a while on your own in the



morning and buy some souvenirs.