TRAVEL TO MOLDOVA - LAND OF WINE

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 Chateau Vartely and Cricova wineries

Chisinau – Orhei – Orheiul Vechi – Cricova – Chisinau

The day will begin with **Chateau Vartely Winery** - the first winery in Moldova that focused on Terroir, for white wines**,** where you will enjoy an excursion and wine tasting.

You will continue the day at **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 have a **Traditional Moldovan lunch** at the local guesthouse in Butuceni village. Here you will experience local specialties, as “zeama”, “mamaliga”, and “scrob”, along with traditional pastry and a glass of wine.

After lunch, you will set off on a time travel to **Cricova Underground Wine Galleries** – 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 be transferred to Chisinau and have free time in the city.

HIGHLIGHTS: Château Vartely winery, Orheiul Vechi - a 40 thousand years-old natural amphitheater, Cricova Underground Wine Galleries,

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 a **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.

You will continue the day at **Asconi winery** - a family winery founded in 1994, located not far from the capital, in Puhoi village. The wines they produce are from European grape varieties – Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Cabernet-Sauvignon, Malbec as well as local varieties such as Feteasca Alba and Feteasca Neagra. In 2020, Asconi received
the Grand Gold Medal at the biggest profile competition in Asia - Asia Wine Trophy 2020 for the wine "Cabernet Sauvignon". 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 **Mimi Castle winery** - 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 be transferred to Chisinau and have free time for dinner.

HIGHLIGHTS: Chisinau city, 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 be transferred to Chisinau and have free time for dinner.

HIGHLIGHTS: Et Cetera winery, Château Purcari winery,

DAY 5

Day 5: Discovery of Gagauzia

Chisinau – Causeni – Comrat – Chisinau

The day will begin by travelling to Gagauzia where you will visit the **"Assumption of the Virgin Mary" Church** - the only church in Moldova with wall frescos and candidate to UNESCO heritage. Its actual shape dates from the reconstruction made between 1763 and 1767. Its interior is rich in wall painted frescos of the specific style of the late
Romanian Hurez school.

Next, you will travel to **Gogu winery** - is a small family business, developed by winemaker Ilie Gogu and his wife Svetlana. The winery confirmed its quality by obtaining 16 gold medals won at prestigious international competitions. Here you will enjoy an excursion, lunch and wine tasting carried out by the owner of the winery.

Later, you will travel to **Comrat**. 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: "Assumption of the Virgin Mary" Church from Causeni, Gogu winery, 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 local restaurant in Tiraspol.

After lunch, you will visit **Kvint Cognac 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 a **"Blind Dinner"** at the Wine Bar. This is a sensory dinner with blindfolded wine tasting, during that you will taste 5 types of wine with 5 dishes. Your task will be to guess the individual types of wine and the ingredients from which the food is prepared. It is not an easy task.

HIGHLIGHTS: Aquatir Sturgeon Farm, Tiraspol city, 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.