

The Leva Foundation

-a Roma success story in Bulgaria

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Cover: Marijka (to the right) and her cousin Slavena, come from the village of Chubra near Slavyantsi in Bulgaria.

Leva Foundation supported them in kindergarten and they have received scholarships for their studies.

Marijka and Slavena are also part of the dance group that Leva Foundation supports in various ways.

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Chapter 1. The Leva Foundation

The Leva Foundation was formed by Vinex Slavyantsi, their Swedish partner Giertz Vinimport and a representative of the Roma community in 2008. The need for social change and economic support to marginalized groups was then and still is a big issue in Bulgaria. Vinex Slavyantsi had for a long time had the desire to do something to change the status quo in the region and to help its development with “wisdom, patience and positive thinking for the future”. In Sweden Fairtrade wines had been popular for many years and now the idea to do something similar in Bulgaria came up. The Leva Foundation was born.

Björn Wittmark from the Swedish wine importer Giertz Vinimport went to Bulgaria in the late 90s to look for wine for the Swedish market. After working with a couple of different Bulgarian wineries he was eventually introduced to Vinex Slavyantsi in 2000. Their cooperation was a success and a considerable amount of wine has since then been exported to Sweden. In 2003 the first wine under the brand name LEVA was produced and that is the beginning of the LEVA story.



A couple of years later, Mr Zhekov's son Georgi Zhekov had returned to Bulgaria after studying in Austria and now he had started to work for the winery. During a visit to the winery in 2007 Björn Wittmark and Georgi Zhekov discussed strategies and new projects. Björn was familiar with selling Fairtrade wines in Sweden and the United Kingdom and he had seen the positive effects to the local communities. He could see that economic and social needs were as big in Bulgaria as in Argentina and Chile. Georgi Zhekov was also well aware of the big problems and challenges in Bulgaria. It was hard finding workers for the vineyards and the wineries as a great many Bulgarians had moved to cities and to other EU countries. The main part of the people left in the region was Roma and their situation was often very difficult. Georgi Zhekov thought it would be possible to do something for the Roma people. He respected the Roma people and their lifestyle and regarded them as fellow Bulgarians.

It was important to involve the Roma community from the beginning and Doctor Biser Atanasov who is Roma and well respected in the community was invited to take part in discussions how to improve the situation for the Roma people in the surrounding villages. These three people formed the Leva Foundation.

Georgi Zhekov organised all the paperwork, Giertz Vinimport contributed with € 25,000 as seed money and Dr Atanasov was in contact with the local community.

It was decided to focus on the children of the Roma families and to start with the needs of the smaller children. Emphasis was put on education, learning the language, culture and short holiday trips. Most of the children had never been outside this region and had never been to the Black Sea, despite the closeness to it.

The Leva Foundation now supports three kindergartens and a school. (see chapters 5 and 6).



The first step was to make the parents leave their children at kindergarten during the day so that they themselves could work. One of the kindergartens in the village of Slavyantsi was about to close down as there were too few children. The Leva Foundation offered to pay two thirds of the fees and that small amount of money saved the kindergarten and it also gave a number of positive side effects. Vinex Slavyantsi contributed financially by letting Georgi Zhekov use some of his working hours in order to work with the Leva Foundation. This has been invaluable for the project and one of the reasons for its survival and success.

It was also a wish that the Leva Foundation should support some students from the Roma community to study viticulture and train to become viticulturists or winemakers. Now, after ten years, some students are pursuing those careers.

After a few years it was clear that if the Leva Foundation and Vinex Slavyantsi were to gain full recognition for their work, they needed to be certified by a third party. That is why the winery turned to the Fair for Life initiative to apply for a social and fair trade certification. (see chapter 2). After an audit Vinex Slavyantsi was certified Fair for Life for its social work via the Leva Foundation and also for other improvements for its employees and some environmental projects. Through the Fair for Life certification the Leva Foundation achieved its quality status.

In Sweden wines produced by Vinex Slavyantsi are now marked as an "ethical choice" when sold in Systembolaget, the government-owned retail shops for alcohol. Being ethically certified has also opened up opportunities for Vinex Slavyantsi in other markets around the world and LEVA has won tenders for ethical wines (in competition with wines from South Africa, Chile and Argentina) in both Canada and Norway.

The LEVA Foundation is funded by the sales of LEVA wines. From the start the sales in Sweden was the sole financial contribution but now money also comes from other markets such as Canada, Belgium and Norway. Over the last five years approximately € 330,000 have been received by the Leva Foundation. As sales of LEVA wines are growing the financial contribution each year will increase to approximately € 115,000.

Projects and administration are run by Vinex Slavyantsi and Georgi Zhekov. All expenses are well documented and money is allocated to different sectors of the organisation. It could be anything from €5 for a monthly kindergarten fee for one family, or money for a tractor to the school. (see chapters 3 and 6). It has altogether not been easy for the Leva Foundation to reach this point. The owners of Vinex Slavyantsi have been criticised for their work with the Roma community and there has also been some unrest among employees. But on the whole the Leva Foundation project has been a great success. It has changed attitudes, improved the lives of many people and has created opportunities for young people to see a future in their home region.



Chapter 2. Fair for Life

Fair for Life – A social & fair trade certification.

LEVA Foundation is Fair for Life Certified. That includes all Social Responsibility standards with fair working conditions, environmental performance and community relations, but focuses additionally on fair trade relationships, fair prices and direct support of marginalised groups by means of a Fair Trade Development Fund. Fair for Life Fair Trade means long-term and trusting cooperation between partners, transparent price setting negotiations and prices, including a Fair Trade Premium, that allow for social development of the concerned communities. A Fair Trade Policy defines the beneficiaries of Fair Trade and confirms the social commitment of the production company.

It also confirms that workers enjoy fair and safe working conditions covering all key labour aspects from core ILO (International Labour Organization) workers rights to good employment conditions. It also evaluates the operator's overall environmental performance and its role and impact in the local community. Fair for Life Certification confirms that a company is committed to act as a responsible employer and promoter of sustainable practices and that producer groups have transparent internal structures with fair relations to producers.

One major change at Vinex Slavyantsi due to the Fair for Life Certification is that all workers, including all vineyard works, now are permanently employed by the winery. Minimum wages have been introduced and the winery is also undertaking different environmental projects as a part of the Fair for Life Certification.



Chapter 3. Vinex Slavyantsi

Vinex Slavyantsi is situated in the Thracian Valley, which is a wine producing region in Bulgaria. The owner of the winery is Zheko Zhekov, who runs the business together with his son, Georgi Zhekov.

Wine production in the region goes back to Roman times. Vinex Slavyantsi dates back to 1878, privately owned or by cooperatives. 1944 was a turning point when the communists came into power in Bulgaria and nationalisation of all industries started. Vinex Slavyantsi was nationalised in 1952.

The state was now the sole owner of the whole process but production was separated into vineyards, i.e. production of grapes, and wineries, i.e. producing the wine. This was a big mistake, according to Mr Zhekov, as the wineries lost control of the entire chain of production from the grapes to the final product. The quality of the wine produced in Bulgaria and at Vinex Slavyantsi deteriorated.

During communism wine was mainly sold to Eastern European countries and the Soviet Union. Despite all difficulties Vinex Slavyantsi survived these years. The next phase in the development of the winery is the period after 1989-1990, the fall of the communist state and the transition from communism to democracy. The wine industry had to look for other markets to sell their wines and the process of denationalization started. Managers or workers at the wineries were now given the offer to buy wine producing companies

Zheko Zhekov worked at Vinex Slavyantsi in 1990 and he was able to get a loan to buy the winery and some vineyards. He understood that if the winery would survive he had to change the system of divided production and improve the quality of the grapes. That is why Vinex Slavyantsi started growing their own grapes in 1995. Vinex Slavyantsi consists of vineyards covering 700 ha and three wineries and numerous types of grapes are grown. Of their wine production 55 % is made up of white wine and 45% of red and rosé.





The company also produces a smaller amount of rakia, sparkling wines and aromatized wines.

More workers from the region were needed when Vinex Slavyantsi started to grow their own grapes. Working at a winery with a lot of vineyards demands workers with special skills and the problem was to find these people. The company also needed workers working permanently, not only seasonal workers.



The period after the fall of communism caused new problems. Factories were closed and there were problems within education and health care. There was confusion about social responsibility. Many aspects of society were neglected as officials in charge lacked the appropriate education and skills.

Vinex Slavyantsi wants workers with the skills needed for wine production employed on a regular basis. Working on a permanent contract gives the worker security, a monthly income. It is a win-win situation as it also gives the company skilled workers.

To a great extent work on the vineyards is still manual, but the company tries to mechanize work where it is possible and some harvesting for example is done by machines. Vinex Slavyantsi tries to implement innovations in the vineyards, but there is still a great potential to improve production.



The establishment of the Leva Foundation (see chapter 1) meant a great deal to the workers of Vinex Slavyantsi, as it gives their children the chance of getting an education. Furthermore, they can participate in cultural and sports activities. It also means improved health support for employees.

The Zhekovs realized that education is the key to the future and from the very beginning they supported the children of their employees, who are mainly from the Roma community.

All children and families benefit from the financial support to the kindergartens and the school. With Georgi Zhekov and the Leva Foundation (see chapter 5) the heads of the kindergartens discuss their needs, for instance that they need new furniture, or things that are not paid by the municipality. The principal of the school in Sungurlare also has regular contact with Georgi Zhekov and the Leva Foundation. (see chapter 6)

The Leva Foundation gives monthly scholarships to children from families with the lowest income and the Foundation supports additional health care not covered by social security for their employees.

Vinex Slavyantsi and the Leva Foundation want to continue working closely with the Roma community. Of their employees 90 % of those working in the vineyards and 30 % of those in the wineries are ethnic Roma. Thus education is important at all levels. Vinex Slavyantsi wants to invest in new technical equipment and here skilled staff is required. As the company invests in new machinery in both vineyards and wineries, a very important goal is to increase the income and salaries of their employees so they will not leave the region. That is why employees are given an annual pay rise.



Chapter 4. Biser Atanasov

The third part in forming the Leva Foundation is Biser Atanasov, a local doctor. He is an ethnic Romani and his role in the Foundation is as an adviser mainly giving advice and suggestions on how to meet the Roma culture. Both he and his wife, Zvezdelina Mihaleva, are Roma and Biser Atanasov knows the problems of the Roma people and has ideas on how they could be solved.

He works at the medical clinic in the town of Sungurlare, not far from Vinex Slavyantsi. His patients are from the town and surrounding villages and many of the employees at Vinex Slavyantsi are among his patients.

Biser Atanasov claims that a lot can be done to secure the future of the Roma people in the region and in all of Bulgaria.

The most important thing is education. It is also important that Roma people get permanent jobs with wages which are sufficient to live on. The integration of the Roma people in Bulgarian society is divided into two parts. The first is for the country to make an effort to integrate the Roma people. However, there exists a great deal of antigypsyism in Bulgaria. There are also some political parties that encourage this discrimination and it is very important that the government takes measures against it. It is not acceptable that members of the Roma community cannot send their children to school and that Roma people are refused employment other than hazardous and dirty jobs.

The other part is that the Roma people themselves must take more responsibility for their work and families.



Chapter 5. The Kindergartens

The Leva Foundation supports three kindergartens. They are situated in the town of Sungurlare and the villages of Slavyantsi and Chubra.



Katja Rusenova is the head of the largest of the three, the one in Sungurlare. It has 118 children who are divided into several groups located in two buildings. They are surrounded by a large, pleasant garden for the children to play in. Here 21 people work, all but the driver are women. Education and socialization are the main goals of the team at this kindergarten. The children come from three ethnic groups: Bulgarian, Roma and Turkish. Most of the Roma children do not speak a single word of Bulgarian when they start kindergarten. The Turkish children are not from Turkey, but from a Roma minority with roots in Bulgaria from the Ottoman Empire. These children speak a mixture of Romany and Turkish. That is why the first goal at this kindergarten is to teach everybody to speak Bulgarian. If the children learn how to speak the language they will have a better chance to do well at school and in the long run to find a job.



With 40 children, the kindergarten in Chubra is smaller. The head Zlatka Zheliazkova also works as a teacher. The staff consists of eight women, four teachers and four service women.

Chubra is the most integrated village in the region priding itself on having no crime, no vandalizing of houses, but instead there are numerous renovated houses. Among these is the House of Culture, where there for example are dancing groups, teaching young people traditional Bulgarian dances.

The main goal of the kindergarten in Chubra to get every child in the village to come to the kindergarten has now been achieved. The children, between three and six years of age, are all Roma. They already speak Bulgarian when they start kindergarten as all families in Chubra speak Bulgarian at home. Most of their parents work at Vinex Slavyantsi or at other wineries in the area. Some parents are working abroad and their children live with their grandparents.





Cenka Foteva is the head and one of the teachers at the kindergarten in Slavyantsi. Here, 42 children are registered and they are all ethnic Roma. Just like in Sungurlare the main goal is to integrate the children and teach them to speak Bulgarian. Integration, education and socialization are the key words. Education means to prepare the children for school and being able to speak Bulgarian and this gives them a better chance to manage schoolwork.

The kindergarten in Slavyantsi was the first to receive financial support from the Leva Foundation as it was on the verge of closing down. The reason was that the children's fathers had moved abroad to work and the remaining mothers could not afford the fee (see chapter 1).





The Leva Foundation bears the costs for these kindergartens not covered by the government or the municipalities. Staff salaries are paid by the government, whereas municipalities pay costs for electricity and some basic needs. Parents pay a monthly fee of 30 leva, which is approximately €15, covering the cost of the children's meals. The Leva Foundation pays two thirds of the fees for all children at the three kindergartens. The heads have regular meetings with Georgi Zhekov to discuss additional needs of the kindergarten. There are many examples of investments. For example, the kindergarten in Sungurlare had two air conditioning systems installed in the sleeping room, the kindergarten in Chubra has got new furniture, for example beds, and toys and other playing tools. In Slavyantsi the Leva Foundation has paid for renovating the whole kindergarten, equipped it with furniture, toys and educational tools.

The daily routines are the same at the three kindergartens. From seven to seven thirty in the morning the children arrive. Four meals a day are served and there are two or three lessons per day. The length of the lessons depends on the age of the children. After lunch the children sleep for a couple of hours and the time between meals, lessons and sleep is for playing. There is also a lot of singing, dancing and teaching of Bulgarian traditions.



Chapter 6. The School in Sungurlare

The school in Sungurlare is called Christo Botev, named after a poet and freedom fighter during the Ottoman Empire. Nikolaj Rusev, the principal, has worked as a teacher of physics, chemistry and IT for 34 years and for 27 years as principal of Christo Botev.

The school is a comprehensive school and has 704 students grade one to twelve. 85 % of the students are ethnic Roma. The students are from Sungurlare and from all the villages in the region. The school consists of two separate buildings but has the same administration and the same principal. Some 50 children are sons and daughters of Vinex Slavyantsi employees, all Roma. School is mandatory up to grade ten.

The Leva Foundation's commitment to the school is extensive. For instance, scholarships are awarded, school books and additional school tools are supplied and the foundation organizes excursions to historic places and finally financial aid is given to 12th year students for their graduation party. The Leva Foundation finances all books for grade eight to twelve. The books are usually used for four or five years.

The Christo Botev school has a programme for training tractor drivers. Now, in 2019, the purchase of a new tractor has been scheduled. The Leva Foundation has signed a contract to pay €5,000 and the Ministry of Education will pay the remaining sum, €35,000. The school also offers classes in wine making/production and is planning to start a forestry class. Furthermore, there is a project to cooperate with a French school on classes in winemaking. There are also plans to renovate the sports facilities on the school ground and to build a new garden, which will be paid for by the Ministry of Education.

Principal Nikolaj Rusev sees problem in today's Bulgaria. Some Roma families do not send their children to school and they do not see education as an important thing. Some marry far too early, sometimes as early as at the age of 14. However, during the communist years the situation was different as the Roma people had to send their children to school and adults had to work. It led to further integration and Roma had to speak Bulgarian and to learn how to read and write.





During the period of democracy a generation was lost, which means that grandparents are more integrated than parents. There is a government programme implying that the municipalities should visit Roma families and encourage them to send their children to school. In Sungurlare, for instance, almost every Roma family send their children to school.

Sungurlare municipality is a quiet area with almost no crime at all. The school is working closely with the police and existing crimes are mainly petty crimes like problems within families or between clans; every village has two or three clans.

The Leva Foundation also supports three kindergartens in the region (see chapter 5) and when the children start school they go to the Christo Botev in Sungurlare. The principal Rusev sees a clear difference between children who come from the kindergartens and those who do not. For example, they speak Bulgarian when they start school, they are much better prepared for school and they learn more in class. The school offers extra-curricular classes to those who do not speak Bulgarian at the government's expense.

The Christo Butev school works actively to try to involve all parents in the project of sending their children to school and Nikolaj Rusev believes it is vital for their future lives. He also finds it easier to communicate with the grandparents.

The school in Sungurlare is very important, being the only school in the region and also offering upper secondary programmes and special training for vineyard workers and winery workers. Many of the students get work in the vineyards in the region and so do students from the tractor drivers programme. Some students also go on to university.

The work of The Leva Foundation has not gone unnoticed in the nearby regions and a big company in the town of Karnobat has started to work along the same lines, seeing the good results of cooperation, trying similar methods and the same procedures for scholarships, all in order to encourage people to stay and work in the region. This is important as Bulgaria is a country that has lost a fifth of its population since the country became a member of the EU.

Chapter 7. Workers at Vinex Slavyantsi

Numerous workers with different skills are needed for work at the vineyards. Vinex Slavyantsi has employed a viticulturalist, who plays an important role in running the vineyards. The viticulturalist needs to have an overall view of the work in the vineyards and he works together with the winemaker deciding when it is the right time to harvest the grapes.

Vasil Baichev Kovachev is 27 years old. He is an ethnic Romani and he was born in Chubra where he was at kindergarten and then he went to school in Sungurlare. He left school in 2011 and afterwards he worked as a tractor driver at Vinex Slavyantsi. In 2012 he and Mr Zhekov signed a contract: Vasil would start his studies at university to become a viticulturalist and Mr Zhekov would pay for his studies, i.e. university fees and a monthly payment for Vasil's daily needs.

Vasil would never have been able to study at this level without the help of Vinex Slavyantsi and consequently he is very grateful. A few exams remain before graduation. Meanwhile he is back at the vineyard working as an intern with the viticulturalist. His plans are to get a degree and continue working at Vinex Slavyantsi as a viticulturalist because he wants to stay in the region with his wife and two children.





There are 19 tractors at Vinex Slavyantsi and the tractor drivers mainly work in the vineyards. Andrey Stilyanov used to work as a vineyard worker before he became a tractor driver three years ago and Christo Sashev has worked as a tractor driver for five years. They are ethnic Roma and both are permanently employed

Their work in the vineyards starts in spring. Tractor drivers prepare the soil, spray the vines, cut the grass and during the harvest they transport the grapes to the wineries. During winter they help repairing wooden trellises that hold up the grapevines.

Andrey and Christo took the special programme for tractor drivers at school. They left school after grade twelve. They do not regret their choice of work and they both like their jobs and working at Vinex Slavyantsi.



At Vinex Slavyantsi 90 % of the vineyard workers are Roma. Most of them live in nearby villages and several of them have been working in the vineyards for many years.

One of them is Radka Iordanova. She has worked at Vinex Slavyantsi for fifteen years, all the time in the vineyards. She likes to work outdoors and she enjoys the fresh air. Her tasks are pruning, binding, green work (canopy management) and harvesting.

Radka lives in Chubra with her husband Angel Iordanov, who works at another vineyard, and three children.

Radka and Angel have five children but two are married and have families of their own. The children who still live at home, Stefan, aged 14, Yurka, aged 16 and Vasil, aged 18 all go to school in Sungurlare and they get support from the Leva Foundation. The scholarships are money to support the children and it means that they can buy additional school tools and breakfast in the mornings. Yurka also attends a dancing group and the Leva Foundation pays for special equipment for her dancing.

Radka wants to go on working for Vinex Slavyantsi and she hopes her children will get their own houses and that she and her husband will be able to help them.





Mehmed Ismail is an ethnic Romani and was born in Sungurlare. As a young man he went to Greece and worked there for seven years, picking olives. It was seasonal work, giving good money during a short period of time. He returned to his native country and started working for Vinex Slavyantsi in 2006. His parents are vineyard workers as well, so he knew what working in a vineyard would entail, being outdoors and meeting a lot of people, which suits him well.

Another reason why he likes his job is because it is a permanent job. The wages are good and he gets extra help from Vinex Slavyantsi because he recently became a widower when his wife Stefka died. He has three children to care for and the two eldest, Silvia aged 13 and Todor aged 10, go to the school in Sungurlare and are supported by the Leva Foundation. The children know that the financial support is for them and they can decide what to do with the money. They buy clothes and extra food during the school days. The third child Antonio is still a little baby and both Mehmed's mother and his sister-in-law help taking care of him while Mehmed is at work. He works in the winery and his tasks are bottling and preparing pallets. In the future he might go back to working in the vineyards but keeping his job and taking care of his three children are his top priorities.





Rumiana Nikolova was born in the town of Karnobat and when she moved to the region of Sungurlare there were not so many jobs to choose from. She had no prior experience of working in a vineyard but after nine years in the fields she thinks she knows everything about working in the vineyard. The season starts with pruning the vines, binding and green work. After harvesting there is renovation and construction work of the trellises and then the season starts all over again with pruning.

Rumiana has two 16-year-old twin daughters, Stefania and Christin. The two girls have three years left at school and they get scholarships from the Leva Foundation. They can spend the money as they like, very often on clothes. The girls are very good at school and one of them wants to be a winemaker and in that case the Leva Foundation will pay for her education. The other girl wants to be a nurse.

Rumiana and her husband, Ivan Nikolov, are both ethnic Roma. They live in the village of Slavyantsi and both work at Vinex Slavyantsi. They are employed with permanent working contracts. They bought a house in Slavyantsi in 2010 and when they wanted to renovate the house the bank gave them the loan for this just because they could show their working contracts.

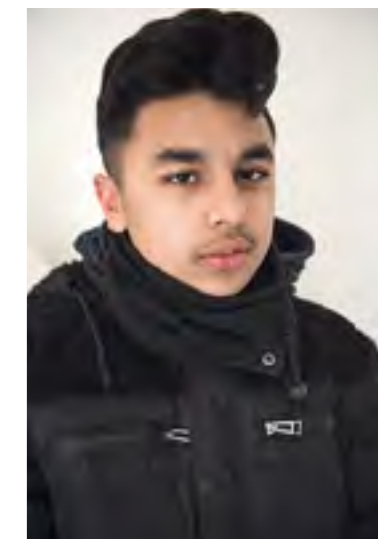




Christo Stefanov used to work for another vineyard in the region but moved to Vinex Slavyantsi in 2016 because of better pay, regular work and a salary. He is a very skilled worker and had 12 years of experience before he came to Vinex Slavyantsi and he is an expert on pruning. During the harvest season he works at the winery with machinery and in the middle of December he is back in the vineyards.

Christo and his wife Nedka, who works at another winery, have two children, Ivan aged 14 and Nona aged 12. They go to the school in Sungurlare and get scholarships from the Leva Foundation. They both do well at school and have good grades. They also use the extra money for clothes and food during the school day. The girl, Nona, is active in the dancing group at the House of Culture and the Leva Foundation paid for the special clothes for her dancing classes.

The family lives in an old Bulgarian house in the village of Slavyantsi. They have renovated their house and there are just a few things left to do. Christo wants to stay in the region and go on working for Vinex Slavyantsi.



Güldjan and Erol Hassan were born in Bulgaria, but are not of Roma descent but of Turkish. They met 19 years ago when they both started working for Vinex Slavyantsi and later got married. Erol had been in the army and Güldjan, who left school after grade 8 had worked on the small family farm producing tobacco.

They are permanently employed at Vinex Slavyantsi and they both work in the vineyards with pruning, binding, green work and harvesting. They live in Karnobat and they have a son, Mustafa, aged 12. The school in Karnobat is not sponsored by the Leva Foundation but since Mustafa is the son of Vinex Slavyantsi employees, the Leva Foundation financially supports his schooling. Mustafa has extremely good grades and he wants to become an engineer. If he continues his studies at university he will keep getting support from the Leva Foundation. If he would like to work for Vinex Slavyantsi in the future, he will get all his costs covered, an arrangement his parents are very pleased with.







There is a very strong historical tradition of growing wine in the region.

The year starts with a feast to celebrate the wine. Everybody gathers and dances to traditional Bulgarian music. The wine farmer of the previous year is chosen and is taken to a vineyard in a traditional cart while everyone else walks. On the way to the fields, the pipes are filled with wine instead of water. The priest blesses the next harvest with bread and holy water. Wine from the previous year is poured on the first vine to be pruned.

In kindergartens, children imitate the old traditions in their games while school children make paintings with motifs from wine growing.



















When the vines have lost all their leaves it is time to prune the vines. This very important work demands both skill and experience. Considering that Vinex Slavyantsi's vineyards cover 700 ha, it is a tough job finish pruning.







When autumn comes it is time to harvest. The white grapes are the first to ripen. Harvest time is a very busy time because the grapes have to be harvested exactly when they are ripe to give the best wine quality. The viticulturalist and the winemaker are the ones to decide when the time for harvesting is ripe. It is the busiest time of the year, but also the best time. Everybody who takes part in the harvesting has worked hard with other tasks on the vineyards. A good harvest means a secure future for everybody working on the vineyard. That is why working with the harvest creates a special spirit of community, a sense of belonging.















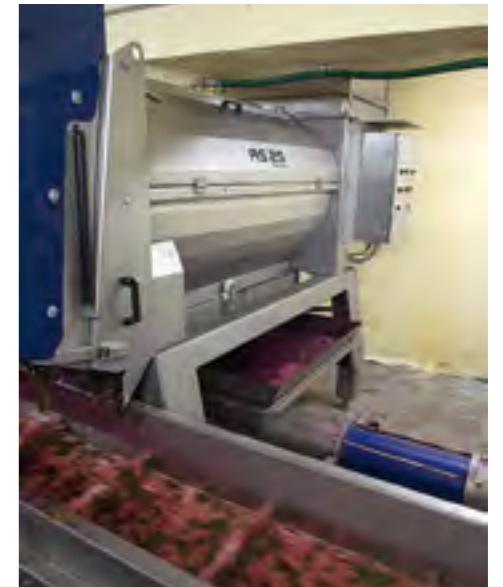












The winemaker, Angel Bozhikov, can confirm that the grapes being pressed to juice have the perfect ripeness to give optimal wine quality after maturation in stainless steel vessels and in oak barrels in the cool cellar.



Неражисни согобе

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The wine boxes are equipped with handles in the winery before being delivered to different destinations around the world. The bottles of rakia are inspected a last time before delivery.















When the grapes are harvested and the stainless steel vessels are filled with the grape juice, Vinex Slavyantsi throws a party for all their workers. Everybody eats, drinks and dances until dawn.







