BRAND STORY



RHESUS

THRACIAN VALLEY WINE

ESTATE WINE FROM BULGARIA'S THRACIAN VALLEY · SINCE 1996

Named for the Thracian king of Homer's Iliad, whose people made wine in this same valley 3,000 years ago.

Today it comes from one family's biodynamic estate in the village of Smilets, founded in 1996. The flagship grape is Mavrud, an ancient Bulgarian variety almost no one in the US has tasted, grown on vines around 30 years old and harvested by hand at low yields. A discovery wine with a real story, priced for everyday shelves, and already in the US: duty-paid in Miami and ready to ship.



THE NAME

A KING
of Thrace

Rhesus was a king of Thrace, and his story is told in Homer's Iliad, one of the oldest works of Western literature. In the tenth year of the Trojan War, he marched south with his army to help defend Troy. Homer describes him in shining golden armor, riding a chariot worked in gold and silver, drawn by horses whiter than snow and swifter than the wind.

Later Greek writers added a prophecy: if Rhesus's horses ever drank from the river of Troy and grazed on its plains, the city could never fall. The Greeks learned of his arrival, and that same night Odysseus and Diomedes crept into the Thracian camp. They killed the sleeping king and drove off his famous horses before they could ever touch Trojan grass or water.

Rhesus never fought a battle at Troy, yet he became a legend in his homeland. Across Bulgaria, archaeologists have found hundreds of stone reliefs of a heroic Thracian horseman, and some historians link this figure to Rhesus. We named our wine after him: a king of this land, remembered for his courage, his loyalty and his white horses, and a reminder that the people of our valley have been part of the world's great stories for 3,000 years.

"Horses whiter than snow and swifter than the wind."



THE LAND

THE THRACIAN *Valley*

The Thracian Valley is one of the oldest wine regions in the world. It stretches across southern Bulgaria between two mountain ranges: the Balkan Mountains to the north, which block the cold winds, and the Rhodopes to the south. The Maritsa River runs through it toward the Aegean Sea, carrying a mild Mediterranean influence inland. Hot summers and long, dry autumns let red grapes ripen fully and slowly.

The ancient Thracians who lived here were famous across the Greek world for their wine. Homer, Herodotus and other ancient writers describe them; Orpheus, the legendary poet, was said to be one of them. They worshipped Dionysus, the god of wine, and in the Rhodope mountains archaeologists have found a sanctuary where priests poured wine on a sacred altar to read the future.

The Thracians drank from vessels of gold. One of the most famous finds, the Panagyurishte Treasure, is a set of gold drinking horns and wine vessels from the 4th–3rd century BC, discovered in 1949 near our village of Smilets.

“Our vines grow in the same soil those golden cups once held wine from.”



THE GRAPE

MAVRUD

Mavrud is a native Bulgarian grape grown almost nowhere else in the world. It is one of the oldest varieties in the country, rooted in the Thracian Valley around Plovdiv and Asenovgrad.

Legend gives the grape its name. In the 9th century, Khan Krum ordered every vineyard in Bulgaria torn out, believing wine made his people weak. One vine was hidden and survived. When a lion escaped and terrorized the town, a young man named Mavrud, who had drunk wine from that vine, faced the beast alone and killed it. Krum asked where the young man found such courage. His mother brought the khan a cup of the wine, and Krum lifted his ban, ordered the vineyards replanted and named the grape after the young hero.

Mavrud ripens late, with small, thick-skinned berries. That gives a deep, almost black color, firm tannins and flavors of dark fruit, spice and earth. It ages well and pairs naturally with grilled and roasted meats.

THE FAMILY

THE KOSTOV'S
estate

The Kostov Family founded the estate in 1996 in the village of Smilets. It is still family owned and run, three decades on. The family farms biodynamically, harvests by hand from vines around 30 years old, and keeps yields low (about 48 hL/ha) for concentration.





THE SEAL

RUMELIA

on every cork

Every cork bears the word "Rumelia," and it carries a story of a divided nation.

In 1878, the Russo-Turkish War ended nearly 500 years of Ottoman rule over Bulgaria. The first peace treaty drew a large, whole Bulgaria. Within months, the great powers redrew it at the Congress of Berlin and split the nation in two. The north became the self-governing Principality of Bulgaria. The south, including the Thracian Valley where our vineyards grow, became Eastern Rumelia, a province governed from Plovdiv under the authority of the Ottoman Sultan.

Families, villages and vineyards were cut off from their own country. For seven years the people of Eastern Rumelia kept their language, schools and faith, and organized quietly for the day they could rejoin their brothers and sisters to the north. On September 6, 1885, they rose in Plovdiv and declared unification, without a single shot fired against the governor. Weeks later, Bulgaria had to defend the union in war with Serbia, and won. September 6 is still celebrated as Unification Day.

"We put Rumelia on every cork to honor the people of our valley: their courage, their patience, and their persistence in fighting to make Bulgaria whole."

THE WINES

THREE
estate reds



SELECT BLEND

MAVRUD · MERLOT · SYRAH

The lead wine and the best introduction to the estate: Mavrud's dark spice rounded out by Merlot and Syrah.



MAVRUD

100% MAVRUD

The discovery wine. Bulgaria's native grape: deep color, firm tannins, dark fruit, spice and earth.



MERLOT

100% MERLOT

The familiar entry point, grown in the warm Thracian sun from estate fruit.

WHY CARRY RHESUS

FOR DISTRIBUTORS
and retailers

A story in one breath. A Homeric king, 3,000 years of Thracian wine, one family since 1996.

Farming buyers ask about. Biodynamic, hand-harvested, ~30-year-old vines, low yields.

Fully compliant. TTB importer permits and approved COLAs for all three labels.

A grape nobody else has. Mavrud gives a shelf and wine-list point of difference with no direct competition.

No import wait. Stock is landed, duty-paid, in a temperature-controlled Miami warehouse.

Support for the account. Samples, in-store tastings and wine dinners on request.

RHESUS
THRACIAN VALLEY WINE

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SAMPLES AVAILABLE FOR QUALIFIED BUYERS