

Fetească Neagră



The original territory of the grape variety, whose name means "black maiden", was the old principality of Moldavia. This historical region now forms the majority of the Republic of Moldova as well as the bordering eastern Romanian region also named Moldova, with two smaller parts now belonging to Ukraine. Indigenous to this region and with around 3000 year old wine making tradition, the native variety has almost disappeared during the times of Ottoman Empire. And just after it started to recover it suffered another drawback during the Soviet era when it got completely wiped out from its Moldovan homeland. Nowadays the biggest grower and producer of Feteasca Neagra wines is Romania. Nevertheless, Moldovan producers such as Cricova, Equinox, Et Cetera, Purcari and Chateau Vartely began replanting the variety in the late 2000s.

Feteasca Neagra is not commercially planted outside of Eastern Europe, although a modern trend toward more obscure grape varieties may see this change in coming years, especially as the grape is considered to be of some quality. The old grape variety is an attractive prospect to winegrowers, as it is resistant to both cold temperatures and drought conditions. It ripens late and has thick skins, leading to wines with an excellent concentration of anthocyanins, giving good pigment to the wines. It is usually produced as a varietal wine, although in the past it was often blended with Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot to give it more body and weight.

However, Feteasca Neagra is not an easy grape to grow. Because of its high vigour it requires a lot of work in the vineyard. For this reason, when pruning the vines, a large number of buds are left and despite all the effort, the yields and the quality of the grapes are inconsistent. Deciding the optimum harvest time is even a bigger challenge than for other red grape varieties, because it is prone to accumulate too much sugar before it reaches phenolic ripeness. This is one of the reasons why in the past so many semi and sweet wines were produced. More often than not, bunches don't mature uniformly, so they require a special attention at harvest.



Winemaking is not that easy either. Due to the natural tendency to accumulate high level of sugar, it is unlikely to find wines with alcohol below 14% abv; most are rather close to 15%. Balancing this is a difficult target, the moderate level of acidity, tannins and flavour concentration does not help too much. The usual solution is to use new oak, taking care of not over doing it and finding just the right balance.

Feteasca Neagra grapes produce dry, semi-dry or sweet wines, with a deep red colour with ruby shades, and a black currant flavour, which becomes richer and smoother with aging. Depending of the wine-making techniques the wines get various flavors and fine tannins, good acidity, medium to full body and often more than 13,5% alcohol. It is typical to have aromas of plums, blackberries, and blueberries along with dark cherries, black pepper, chocolate and coffee flavors, and for the aged wines vanilla, toast and skin nuances. Feteasca Neagra can produce exceptional rosé wines as well.

“One of the prime examples of Feteasca Neagra is one that has been carefully selected for our private label in its homeland and produced by Cricova.



*While having a glass of **Visible[in]Visible** you might find it of an almost Italian character, with red plum, dark cherries, fresh acidity and ripe but firm tannins. The wine has been aged in the oak barrels for an optimum length of time to achieve that intriguing spicy note at the finish. As any young wine it requires at least an hour of airing for the most enjoyable experience of vibrant fruitiness and velvety tannins.*

***Visible[in]Visible** Feteasca Neagra is bold, it has got a deep colour, but is very approachable on the palate which makes it very unique and instantly very appealing.”*

— **Laurynas Karmalavicius**
INVISIBLE WINES, Brand owner

