

DELAWARE - AN OLD GRAPE VARIETY – REDISCOVERED

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Delaware is a hybrid grape variety of American origin. It was first grown in Delaware City, Ohio, but it is said to originate in New Jersey. It is widely cultivated in the Midwest and North - East of the USA, especially in the New York state. In Delaware, we can find a much smaller surface. Delaware is also widely grown in Japan, where it's used for light table wine. In Japan, as well as in South Korea it's also sold for direct consumption as table grapes. This variety was first discovered in Frenchtown, at the border of New Jersey and Pennsylvania states, which are separated by the Delaware river. Afterwards the vines have spread to all over the world under the name of "Delaware", from the city's name. The DNA analysis, made in 2015 in USA, has determined that Delaware is an interbreeding between (*V. aestivalis* x *V. labrusca*) with *Vitis vinifera* [2, p. 9]. It probably reached Romania and Moldova somewhere in the post-phylloxera period. In the Republic of Moldova this variety is found scattered in a few areas within Calarasi and Ungheni districts (Cula Valley), its local name being Dolivar. During the research within the project "Education for national cultural revitalization through traditional technologies for processing various heritages in the Republic of Moldova, in the context of multiculturalism and European integration", the variety was localized in the CODRU wine region. Afterwards we proceeded to the monitoring and detailed research phase of the terroir and the variety. It was very interesting to observe the artisanal ancient technique of winemaking, while also experimenting with modern oenological technologies. A unique experience which encompassed the full spectrum research, as well as managing the winemaking processes from Dolivar grapes, while using performant processing equipment. The grape skin has a dark pink color, so Dolivar looks like a red wine grape variety, however it is habitually used for making white and rose wines. It is a "slipskin" variety, meaning its skin is easily removed from the pulp. Therefore, during pressing, the juice gets minimal color pigment. Delaware can be transformed in a wide variety of wine styles, most famous being Ice Wine and Sparkling Wine. In the vineyard, it ripens faster than Concord; the variety to which is often compared. In the Republic of Moldova territory, this variety ripens after Pinot gris and Traminer. We have gathered a certain amount of Dolivar grapes from existing vineyards. The grapes were harvested on 14th of September 2022, at a sugar level of 25%. First, the grapes were cooled outside during the night at a temperature of +6 C°. In the morning of 15th of September, the grapes were crushed; the must temperature being + 8 C°. After crushing, the must was macerated for 2 days, and the yeast was added on the 3rd day and left to ferment for one more day. On the 4th day we separated the juice from the pulp and skins. The amount of clear juice was 50% from the total amount of crushed grapes. The juice was left to ferment in the cellar at a temperature of + 14 C°. The wine evolution is under strict supervision. We will continue to monitor the fermentation process and appreciate the organoleptic properties of the Dolivar Wine. As we want to deepen our scientific research, we are connecting with experts from the field, in order to eventually obtain a DNA analysis of the Dolivar variety from Cula Valley. We would like to compare the DNA of the local variety to the american one in order to detect differences and/or similarities of Delaware variations. The alliance of modern and traditional technologies brings added value and offers new dimensions to the revival and perpetuation of the national cultural heritage. As the winemaking tradition is a deeply rooted compound of national patrimony.

Keywords: Dolivar, ravac, wine region, terroir, wine.

References:

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