

Tikves Winery

Raising a glass to Macedonia for a brighter future!

Long regarded as one of the best investment destinations in Europe, Macedonia stands 17th in the world in the World Bank's Doing Business 2020 rankings. This places it ahead of countries including Canada, Germany, and Japan. Macedonia's strong performance is due to years of painstaking reform of the business environment, and allows it to leverage its position at the heart of South-Eastern Europe, with easy access to the EU market, as well as fast-growing emerging economies in Africa and Asia. Macedonia's excellent investment climate is thus particularly beneficial to export-oriented companies, including the growing wine industry. The country produces around 120 million litres of wine a year.

At the forefront of the wine industry is Tikves, a winery founded in 1885 in the wine-growing region of the same name, which is revitalising the regional wine scene and re-establishing Macedonia's reputation as a leading wine-producing country. "It is the quality of our product that makes us competitive," says Svetozar Janevski, president of the management board of Tikves Winery, who took over the company in 2003 through his investment company M6. "We have invested over €40m in modernization of the production since 2003, and have been diversifying our output."

Tikves wines have won more wine competition awards than any other South-East European winery, gathering on average 70 prestigious awards per year. All of them have been evaluated with more than 85 points and some with more than 95. It is the only winery from SEE region, with ten wines given 90 or more points by influential wine critic Robert Parker. As such, the company is leading the revolution of winemaking in the Western Balkans, and putting the "made in Macedonia" brand firmly on the global map, leading the way as an ambassador for quality products from the country. The winery is rare in the region that has the capacity to produce wide range of quality wines from economy to premium and artisanal wines. Its premium wines are produced under a separate brand Tikves Châteaux and Domaines, which includes Bela Voda, Barovo and Lepovo - three Macedonian terroirs and Château De Gourdon in Rhone valley in France, which is one of Janevski's newest investments.

The Tikves brand is already well-established in the countries in the region since historically it was the leading producer of wine. However, it also has a growing reputation globally, which Janevski is keen



Svetozar Janevski
President - Tikves Winery

to leverage to expand across the world through partnerships with distributors. The company will also benefit from its knowledge and scientific approach, which give it a competitive edge on the international market.

"We are present in more than 25 countries in the world, like USA, European countries, but we have to find other markets to grow," he says. "We have the capacity to double our production. We have young employees that know the language of the business and are focused on improving every aspect of the work and society."

Due to their quality and the technology applied in the production process, Tikves wines can be considered as one of the rare wines in the world focused in consumer's health (with lowest possible sulphur usage),

appealing to modern tastes, and the breadth of its range caters to a wide range of budgets and palates. Having led the way in the region's wine renaissance, Tikves is focused on strengthening the country's brand and to drive up quality. "We are the biggest player on the market, and as such, we are obliged to move the industry forward. The new frontier will be quality standardisation. We will be at the forefront of all the challenges in helping the country build the image of a super quality wine producer says Janevski. "Macedonia has a variety of terroir spread across the country. We have to promote it as a wine-producing country. We have been making wines since Roman times, but in order to have the place that we deserve in the wine world, we need to introduce new Geographical Indication (GI) system in the country. It's a long-term joint effort of all stakeholders."

Janevski also hopes that it will strengthen the image of producing quality products for other sectors to follow, especially food producers. A growing reputation for quality produce/food can be built on the progress the country has made in the past years to attract and build quality businesses.

"We need to promote how supportive Macedonia is of investors coming to this region," says Janevski. "We don't need investors just to come; we want them to be our partners. Therefore, we should ask them what they want to achieve, and adapt the enabling business climate adequately. In times of crisis, when we are seeing the rise of economic decoupling, we want to offer an olive branch."