

TECHNICAL FILE

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Geographical indication to be registered: Сунгурларска гроздова ракия/Гроздова ракия от Сунгурларе/Sungurlarska grozdova rakya/Grozdova rakya from Sungurlare

Category of the spirit drink: Wine spirit

Description of the spirit drink:

'Sungurlarska grozdova rakya' is a wine spirit having a minimum alcoholic strength of 40 % vol. which:

- has been obtained by single or double distillation at less than 65 % vol. of wine obtained from grapes, where a maximum of 75 litres of wine can be obtained from 100 kg of grapes, and
- is compliant, in terms of content and organoleptic properties, with the production requirements for wine spirits.

Physical, chemical and/or organoleptic characteristics:

- A clear liquid, free of sediment and floating particles. In terms of colour, it may range from a clear colourless liquid to one having a pale yellow to amber colour resulting from maturing in oak barrels. The aroma and taste are pleasant and distinctive, with fine notes and a pure aroma of grapes: a rich muscat flavour with a warm sweetness and a smooth taste, a savoury finish with an aftertaste.
- Alcoholic strength of at least 40 % vol.; a maximum methanol content of 40 grams per hectolitre of 100 % vol. alcohol; a minimum volatile substances content of 300 grams per hectolitre of 100 % vol. alcohol.

'Sungurlarska grozdova rakya' is served chilled as an aperitif with traditional Bulgarian salads and cheeses such as Shopska salad, kyopolou, lyutenitsa, white brined cheese, etc. It can also be served as a digestif.

— Specific characteristics (compared to other spirit drinks in the same category)

The wine distillate for 'Sungurlarska grozdova rakya' is produced from wines which are prepared specifically for distillation and made from the aromatic grape variety Cherven Misket, which is unique to Bulgaria and typical of the Sungurlare Valley, and from the world-famous variety Muscat Ottonel. No fixed proportions have been established for combining the two varieties; the combination is dependent on the aromatic components of the varieties from the relevant harvest.

Distillation takes place in a continuous NM-3000 type distillation system until an alcoholic strength of 65 % vol. is reached. This is a Bulgarian system for distilling wines in a continuous flow. The operating principle is described in the *Technological Instructions for Production Activities in the Wine-Making Industry* issued in 1984 by the Wine Industry Institute of the state-owned enterprise (DSO) Vinprom. This type of system has a number design, technical and operational advantages which have been tested over time.

It produces a high-quality, colourless distillate with a distinctive aroma and a soft and harmonious flavour.

When stored in stainless steel vessels, 'Sungurlarska grozdova rakya' is colourless, with a fine misket aroma complemented by the delicate aroma of muscat and violets which is also evident in the flavour. When matured in barrels, the drink can be a pale yellow to amber in colour, depending on the maturation time. Its soft and balanced taste with misket notes is evident when drinking. The mild and delicate aroma flows into the flavour, with a subtle finesse in the finish. The flavour has a superb combination of fruit and smoothness.

'Sungurlarska grozdova rakya is placed on the market in the following varieties:

- **'Sungurlarska grozdova rakya'**. It has a pale, straw colour resulting from maturing in barrels. It has the typical, characteristic aroma and taste of a wine spirit, with a piquant finish and aftertaste. It goes well with more substantial salads containing yogurt, boiled eggs, cheeses fried in batter, hot, spicy salads and relishes, salads with mayonnaise and with spicy soups.
- **'Sungurlarska grozdova rakya', special**. This drink is colourless. It has fine notes with a mellow start and a pronounced pure aroma of grapes. The taste exhibits a soft attack, an alcoholic sweetness, an elegant structure, a good length, a full finish and a smooth, fruity aftertaste. A flavourful wine spirit, particularly when served with seasonal salads and pickles traditional in Bulgarian cuisine, it is also a good complement to fine food. It can also be served as a digestif.
- **'Sungurlarska grozdova rakya', matured**. This drink has an amber colour. The aroma is soft to start, with a pleasant fruitiness in the trail of an elegant barrique maturity. It has a rich flavour, a good structure, a warm sweetness and an appetizing finish. The drink is suitable for serving with many different salads, particularly those including white brined cheese, yellow cheese and green olives, as well as various starters based on lyutenitsa or kyopolou and flavoured with seasonal allium vegetables such as spring onions, onions, leeks or garlic, and with goats' cheese or white cheese from sheep's milk. It goes very well with spicy hot soups and other food.

Geographical area concerned

The geographical area in which 'Grozdova rakya from Sungurlare' is made is located in south-eastern Bulgaria, at the foot of the southern slope of the eastern part of the Balkan Mountains and comprises the eponymous Sungurlare Valley. The area includes the municipalities of Sungurlare, Karnobat and Kotel.

The average elevation of the area is 200 m above sea-level. The climate is transitional continental. It typically has mild winters, early and cool springs, moderately hot summers and warm and long autumns. The average annual precipitation is 577 mm. Soils are predominantly cinnamonic forest soils.

The vineyards producing the grapes for making 'Grozdova rakya from Sungurlare' are located in the following localities:

- in the municipality of Sungurlare: Sungurlare and the villages of Slavyantsi, Lozarevo, Esen, Grozden, Valchin, Kosten, Chernitsa, Chubra, Klimash, Podvis, Lozitsa and Prilep;
- in the municipality of Karnobat: the villages of Nevestini and Ognen;
- in the municipality of Kotel: the villages of Mokren and Padarevo.

The total area planted with fruiting vines is 3 146 hectares.

Method for obtaining the spirit drink

The grapes are harvested by hand by carefully selecting bunches that are fully ripened and intact and sorting them into plastic vessels. They are then transported in containers of an appropriate design and volume. The grapes are then graded in terms of mass, general appearance, variety and sugar content, on the basis of an average sample.

After the grapes are received, they are processed by destemming, crushing and draining into stainless steel wine-making vats. They are then fermented using the following method:

- The drained must is cooled in a heat exchanger and kept for 24 hours at a temperature of +10 °C for racking;
- The clear must is fermented at a controlled temperature of 15 to 17 °C and dry, cultured yeasts are added. Alcoholic fermentation takes place in fermentation vessels and secondary fermentation is carried out in insulated tanks. The resulting wine is then separated and distilled.

Method of distillation:

- Distillation takes place in NM-3000 type continuous distillation systems with an output of 1.5 m³/hour and includes fractioning and removal of all substances that could cause harm to human health. The resultant distillate is colourless, with a distinctive aroma and a soft and harmonious flavour.

Method of storage:

- The distillate obtained is stored for at least 12 months in stainless steel vessels. If the drink is matured, the distillate is kept for at least 6 months in 225-litre barrels.

Processing method:

- The distillate is blended with demineralised drinking water before undergoing cold processing at a temperature of -18 °C in freezing chambers where it is stored for 3 to 5 days. If necessary, it undergoes further processing in accordance with permitted supplementary methods for the production of spirit drinks. The batches intended for bottling are approved by the producer's in-house tasting committee and the Regional Wine-Tasting Committee (RDK). Once ready, the drink is stored in appropriate vessels and is bottled; there are no restrictions on bottling the drink outside the geographical area in which it is produced.

Link with the geographical environment or origin

The Sungurlare Valley is part of the Rose Valley (Sub-Balkan) vineyard region. The area is semi-mountainous, hilly, with an elevation ranging from 180 to 220 m above sea level. Most of the precipitation falls during the vegetative period. The proximity of the Black Sea has a strong influence on the area's microclimate, making winters in the valley milder, autumns longer and warmer, springs cooler, and summers less hot. The air has a constant humidity level throughout the year. The Balkan Mountains also have a significant influence on the climate in that they form a barrier to cold air masses from the north.

A distinctive feature of the soil cover is the presence of lessivated cinnamonic forest soils. Cinnamonic soils with various degrees of profile differentiation account for approximately 70 % of the total area. Leached cinnamonic forest soils, which are also widespread in the area, also exhibit a certain, albeit lesser, profile differentiation and in that sense can be seen as a transition between leached cinnamonic forest soils and lessivated cinnamonic forest soils.

Within the mix of cinnamonic soils in the Sungurlare area, there are certain soil differences resulting from the formation of cinnamonic soil and the typical profile for

leached or lessivated cinnamonic forest soils is not evident. Examples include cinnamonic meadow soils, all the transitional stages between cinnamonic forest soils and vertisols, the cinnamonic forest soils with high humus content found on the valley floor and the shallow soils that are either underdeveloped or have significantly shorter profiles due to erosion. Those different soils have a limited suitability for viticulture. This is due to a variety of factors stemming from soil profile characteristics, degrees of drainage or landscape features.

There is a minor area of alluvial and alluvial meadow soils. Existing vineyards occupy areas with well-drained soils suitable for the cultivation of grape vines. Deluvial soils may be included in vineyards, provided the soil profile strength and degree of cultivation are not preclusive to viticulture.

The area's location and microclimate combined with its suitable soil cover provide good conditions for cultivating aromatic white grape varieties with predominantly fruity aromas. All these factors have contributed to the development of viticulture and winemaking in the valley, making them the main livelihood of the local population over many years.

Archaeological finds in the area and historical writings bear evidence that viticulture and winemaking have been practiced in the Sungurlare Valley since ancient times. After the Liberation of Bulgaria from Turkish domination (in 1878), the area planted with vineyards expanded, production increased and wines and wine spirits became part of trade in the area.

Winemaking saw a particular boost after the First World War, and after 1929 the local cooperatives built wineries in almost every village in the area. Since then, winemaking and the production of wine spirits have become an economic mainstay in the area of Sungurlare. Their success is due to the combination of tradition and modern technology.

Over time, the Sungurlare Valley has developed its own local cultivar of the Bulgarian grape variety Cherven Misket. It is part of the Black Sea environmental-geographical group. There is approximately 1 115 hectares of this variety in the area. The grape bunch is medium in size (15.3 to 9.3 cm) and has the shape of a truncated cone; it may have one or two wings and vary in density from semi-compact to compact. The berry is very small (14.0 to 14.2 mm), almost spherical, and in compact clusters it tends to be deformed. It separates from the pedicel easily. The skin is medium in thickness, tough, pinkish red with a tinge of purple, coated in bloom, and speckled with dark spots. The berry is juicy, sweet and tasty, with a pleasant Misket aroma. The average mass of the berry is 1.96 to 2.82 g, and the average mass of a bunch in the Sungurlare area is 229 to 239 g.

The Cherven Misket variety is late ripening, with the grapes ripening in late September or early October. With proper care, this variety produces 10 000 to 12 000 kg of grapes per hectare. In terms of mechanical composition, it is a typical wine grape variety. It usually returns a sugar content of 18 to 21 % with a titratable acidity of 5.4 to 6.0 grams per litre.

The distillate obtained from the Cherven Misket variety has the pronounced Misket aroma which is so distinctive of 'Sungurlarska grozdova rakya'.

Muscat Ottonel is an early ripening wine grape variety. It is harvested in late August, when the aromas are at their strongest. It has an average growth, average bud fruitfulness and average yield. Yields range from 8 000 to 12 000 kg per hectare. It thrives on hilly terrain and soils typical of the Sungurlare Valley. It is relatively resistant to drought, cold and grey mould. The grape bunch is small (61 to 105 g), with a shape varying from a truncated cone to compact. The berries are medium in size, spherical,

greenish yellow, sometimes with rusty spots. The skin is thin and tough. The flesh is juicy, palatable, with a strong Muscat taste. When ripe for picking, the grapes have a sugar content of 24 % and titratable acidity of 5.1 to 8 grams per litre.

The distillate obtained from the Muscat Ottonel variety has quite an intense aroma with a floral character, reminiscent of violets and rose-scented geranium, a significant intensity and a moderate freshness. It gives 'Sungurlarska grozdova rakya' its characteristic aroma of Muscat and violets which also lingers into the flavour.

The grapes are processed using modern methods and equipment and the wines are distilled after organoleptic assessment.

These two aromatic varieties impart the distinctive character of the wines, which are delicate with a pleasant and fine Misket and Muscat aroma and possess a moderate freshness due to low titratable acidity. This is subsequently retained in the distillate used to produce 'Sungurlarska grozdova rakya' by means of temperature-controlled fermentation, which does not involve any prior processing, except for decanting.

The production of 'Sungurlarska grozdova rakya' has the following specific characteristics which provide evidence of its traditional production methods and its popularity:

- 'Sungurlarska grozdova rakya' was approved by Sectoral Standard ON 1875856-83 of 10 October 1983 of the National Agrarian Industry Association.
- The batches were approved by the Central Wine Tasting Committee (TsDK) of DSO Vinprom Sofia (Report No 27 of 29 March 1985 approving the bottling of 20 and 62 tonnes of rakia made from grapes harvested in 1982 and 1984, respectively).
- 'Sungurlarska grozdova rakya' has received numerous awards at the international viticulture and winemaking exhibition Vinaria held annually in Plovdiv, Bulgaria, as well as other international competitions (a silver medal in San Francisco, USA, 1997).
- 'Sungurlarska grozdova rakya' has been made for approximately 30 years and since its release onto the market in 1985 (see *Лозарство и винарство* (Vine Growing and Winemaking) Magazine, Issue No 3/1985), millions of bottles have been sold.

SALES OF SUNGURLARSKA GROZDOVA RAKYA

From 1 January 2002 to 31 December 2012

Year	Sales in 0.70 cl glass bottles	Sales in litres
2002	157 023	109 916
2003	148 289	103 802
2004	165 487	115 841
2005	172 165	120 516
2006	170 536	119 375
2007	174 424	122 097
2008	146 768	102 738
2009	96 199	67 339
2010	87 964	61 575
2011	82 102	57 471
2012	75 546	52 882

Over time, the high-quality 'Sungurlarska grozdova rakya' has become popular both domestically and internationally and is currently exported to a number of markets in Europe, Asia and the USA. In Bulgaria, it can be purchased in large food retailers and specialist wine and spirits stores.

'Sungurlarska grozdova rakya' is in demand in high-end restaurants and has a regular place on their wine lists. The drink has maintained a consistently high quality over the years and with its distinctive label design, which has remained unchanged over time, it is considered to be one of the top brands on the market.

European Union or national/regional provisions

Specific provisions relating to the definition, description, labelling and presentation of 'Sungurlarska grozdova rakya' wine spirit are laid down in the Wine and Spirit Drinks Act (ZVSN) published State Gazette No 45/2012.

According to Article 123 of the ZVSN, grape rakia ('grozdova rakya') is defined as:

- wine spirit having a minimum alcoholic strength of 40 % vol. which has been obtained by single or double distillation at less than 65 % vol. of wine obtained from grapes, where a maximum of 75 litres of wine can be obtained from 100 kg of grapes;
- containing a quantity of volatile substances equal to or exceeding 125 grams per hectolitre of 100 % vol. alcohol;
- having a maximum methanol content of 200 grams per hectolitre of 100 % vol. alcohol;
- having specific organoleptic properties.

By virtue of this definition and its physico-chemical properties, the term 'grozdova rakya' fully corresponds to the definition of a wine spirit given in point 4 of Annex II 'Spirit drinks, Categories of spirit drinks' to Regulation (EC) No 110/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 January 2008 on the definition, description, presentation, labelling and the protection of geographical indications of spirit drinks.

The national procedure for approving spirit drinks with a geographical indication is set out in Section VII, Production of spirit drinks with a geographical indication, of Chapter Nine, Spirit Drinks, of the ZVSN. The geographical indication 'Sungurlarska grozdova rakya' was approved by Order No T-RD-27-17 of the Minister for the Economy and Energy of 27 November 2013. The document has been published on the Ministry of the Economy and Energy's website at:

<http://www.mi.government.bg/bg/library/zapoved-za-utvarjdavane-na-vinena-destilatna-spirtna-napitka-grozdova-rakiya-s-geografsko-ukazanie-s-59-c28-m361-1.html>

Pursuant to Article 131(6) of the ZVSN, a 'grozdova rakya' wine spirit may be placed on the market only if accompanied by a copy of the batch test report issued by an accredited laboratory and a copy of a certificate of authenticity issued by the Regional Vine and Wine Chamber (RLVK).

Within the meaning of Articles 5(1)(2) and 6(3) of the Wine and Spirit Drinks Act (ZVSN), Regional Vine and Wine Chambers (RLVKs) are professional organisations of producers, processors and traders of vine and wine products and spirit drinks that are legal persons established pursuant to a decision of the General Assembly of the National Vine and Wine Chamber, and such decisions must state their registered office and territorial jurisdiction.

RLVKs elect members of the Regional Wine-Tasting Committees (RDKs) and issue certificates of authenticity for wine spirit drinks, grape marc spirit drinks and brandy.

The procedure for issuing a certificate of authenticity is as follows:

Producers of any wine spirits obtained in Bulgaria, including those with a geographical indication, submit an application to the RLVK, accompanied by a sample from the relevant batch and a copy of the test report for the tests carried out on that batch at an accredited laboratory. The RDK of the RLVK draws up an organoleptic assessment of the wine spirit batch, stating that, in terms of its organoleptic and physical and chemical properties, the drink under assessment corresponds to its category and may be bottled and placed on the market. The RDK includes technical experts engaged in the production of wines and spirit drinks in the area concerned. This ensures that they are not only familiar with the products being produced in that area but are also actively involved in monitoring their quality before they are placed on the market.

Applicant

— Member State, third country or legal/natural person: **Bulgaria, Ministry of the Economy**

— Full address (street number and name, town/city and postal code, country): **ul. Slavyanska 8, 1052 Sofia, Bulgaria**

— Legal status (in the case of legal persons):

Supplement to the geographical indication

Specific labelling rules

Under the Wine and Spirit Drinks Act, when labelling spirit drinks produced in Bulgaria and intended for the Bulgarian market, the following details must be provided in Bulgarian:

1. the commercial name of the spirit drink;
2. the nominal volume;
3. the 'e' mark, certifying that the quantity of the drink corresponds exactly to that indicated on the label;
4. the actual alcoholic strength of the drink;
5. the number and/or date of the batch, preceded by the letter 'L';
6. the number of the technical specification for the drink;
7. the name (trade name) and registered office of the producer;
8. the name (trade name) and registered office of the bottling company, if the drink has been bottled or decanted into containers with a capacity of up to 60 litres;
9. the producer's registration certificate number;

When labelling a spirit drink, the following optional information may be provided:

1. the name of the geographical area in which the drink was produced;
2. the name of the fruit or fruits or name of the raw material from which the drink was produced;
4. the recommended use of the drink;
5. medals and awards received;
6. the maturing and ageing methods used;
7. the method of production;
8. the number of distillations;
9. information about the history of the drink and the producer;

10. information about persons involved in marketing the drink.

A geographical indication may be added after the commercial name of a spirit drink if the production phase, from the harvesting of the raw materials to when the spirit drink acquires its specific or final characteristics and properties, takes place in the specified geographical area.