ABSTRACT

Motivation for Choosing this Topic

Ukraine possesses one of the oldest viticultural traditions in Europe, yet surprisingly little literature exists on the subject of Ukrainian wine and winemaking. During the preparation of this thesis, I discovered that only a very limited number of books specifically address the ukrainian wine terroir, soils, wine business and historical development of Ukrainian wine. As a result, much of the information presented in this research had to be gathered from a wide range of sources, including archives, research institutions, industry reports, personal interviews with winemakers, and discussions with professors, researchers and other wine professionals.

As a Ukrainian wine professional, sommelier and winery director, I have observed first-hand the significant transformation of the country's wine sector over recent years. At the same time, I became increasingly aware of the lack of comprehensive academic research available in English and, in many cases, even in Ukrainian. This motivated me to investigate the historical foundations, regional diversity, contemporary challenges and future opportunities of Ukrainian winemaking.

The topic was chosen because of its personal and professional relevance and a desire to contribute to the documentation and understanding of a wine-producing country that remains underrepresented in international wine literature despite its long history and growing importance within the European wine landscape.

Problem / Objective

The objective of this thesis was to analyse the contemporary Ukrainian wine industry and identify the key factors influencing its development. The research sought to examine the historical, geographical, climatic, legislative and economic foundations of modern Ukrainian winemaking and to evaluate the industry's future prospects.

Particular attention was given to the following questions:

• How have historical events influenced the development of modern Ukrainian winemaking?

• What role do climate, geography and terroir play in shaping the country's wine regions?

• Which grape varieties, viticultural practices and winemaking approaches characterise contemporary Ukrainian wine production?

• What challenges currently limit the growth of the industry?

• How might the new wine legislation introduced in 2026 contribute to future development and integration with European wine standards?

Methodology

One of the main difficulties encountered during this research was the lack of available literature on Ukrainian wine and winemaking. Unlike many established wine-producing countries, Ukraine has very few books dedicated specifically to its wine history, regions and contemporary industry. As a result, information for this thesis had to be collected from a variety of sources.

The research is based on historical publications, academic papers, legislative documents, industry reports and statistical data. Additional information was gathered from materials provided by research institutions, including the Geology Institute, as well as through personal communication with winemakers, professors and other wine professionals.

The thesis also draws on the my own professional experience working as a sommelier and winery director in Ukraine. By combining historical sources, contemporary industry data and insights from professionals working in the sector, the research aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of Ukrainian winemaking and its future development.

Content

The thesis begins with an overview of the history of winemaking in Ukraine, tracing the development of viticulture from the earliest archaeological evidence through Russian Empire and the Soviet period. Understanding this history is important in explaining the structure of the modern wine industry and many of the challenges it faces today.

The next section examines Ukraine's wine regions, their climates, soils and growing conditions. Despite often being perceived as a single wine-producing area, Ukraine is home to a wide range of terroirs and climatic influences, resulting in significant diversity of wine styles across the country.

The thesis also explores the grape varieties grown in Ukraine, including both international and local varieties, as well as current viticultural and winemaking practices. Particular attention is given to quality-focused producers, technological developments and the increasing interest in expressing regional identity through wine.

A separate chapter is dedicated to the new Ukrainian wine legislation introduced in 2026. The study analyses its objectives and potential impact on quality standards, geographical indications and the future integration of Ukraine into the European wine framework.

Finally, the thesis discusses the main challenges facing the industry today, including low domestic wine consumption, limited state support, labour shortages and the consequences of ongoing geopolitical instability. It also considers possible responses and opportunities for future development.

Conclusion

The research concludes that Ukrainian winemaking is currently experiencing a period of significant transformation. Despite numerous economic, demographic and geopolitical challenges, the industry possesses considerable strengths.

The introduction of updated wine legislation and the development of geographical indications represent important steps towards greater transparency, quality assurance and international competitiveness.

The findings suggest that Ukraine has the potential to establish itself as a distinctive and respected wine-producing country within the international wine community. Future success will depend on the industry's ability to communicate regional identity, maintain consistent quality standards and continue adapting to changing economic, environmental and market conditions.