



## **Wine production, an indicator of democracy prospects**

*Wine production is more than just an agricultural product with financial, technical and commercial implications; it can also measure levels of coexistence and democracy prospects.*



It is as if the fruits of the vine spread in times of peace, optimism and cultural exchange, and shrink in periods of pessimism and instability. Take South African wine: The industry experienced tremendous growth after the end of the apartheid era. Ditto the wines of Chile and Argentina which have thrived and helped erase the dark images of the military juntas.

At its height, the peaceful Phoenicians exported the idea of wine throughout the Mediterranean to Greece, Rome (from where wine made inroad to the rest of Europe) Carthage and the Iberian peninsula.



And after the Greeks and Romans (who built the temple of Bacchus in Baalbek in homage to Lebanon's Phoenician heritage), Christ, the most famous winemaker in history preached peace and universal brotherhood!

Recently, wine in Lebanon has experienced a tremendous renaissance. When we started Massaya in 1998, there were only four wine producers. Today our number exceeds 60. So how can we explain the contradiction between the growth of Lebanese wine and the turmoil we have simultaneously faced?



From the Lebanese perspective, despite appearances, the last 30 years have seen a regional desire to integrate into the global community.

Just look at what the UAE has done and what Saudi Arabia is doing. The obsolete business model based on the windfall of oil revenues is fading away and more sustainable economies are emerging. Economic growth and prosperity require stability and peace. Regardless of its outcome, the spring revolution confirmed people's desire to sustain prosperity and freedom.



The rise of Lebanese wine has been irresistible. Despite political assassinations, the war of 2006, the tensions of 2008, the wars against Islamic terrorism, the port explosion 2020, the war of 2024, the Syrian regime collapse, the miracle of wine expansion has continued, attesting to a structural optimism and an unparalleled spirit of coexistence.

Lebanon's winemakers believe the appetite for war will surely dissipate and concord will follow and are preparing for that day. They are expanding plantations, convinced that the dynamic of peace will finally prevail. It is just a matter of time.



**Happy End of Year everyone!**

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