

# 2015 Danieli Mukuzani

## Kakheti, Georgia

**D**anieli Winery is the passion project of Olaf Malver Ph.D. and Eka Tchvritidze. Olaf is a Danish born Chemist, Eka a legendary Tushetian horse racer and trainer. Danieli “the Dane” is the baptismal name given to Olaf before he and Eka were married in an Orthodox monastery. Avid outdoor adventurers (Olaf is also the Chief Exploratory Officer at Natural Habitat Adventures), Danieli is their greatest adventure yet. Still in the early chapters of the project, their ambitions are to establish a world class estate based on Georgia’s noble grape varieties. Once complete, the estate will include accommodations, a commercial kitchen for hosting Supra (feast) and unparalleled access to the rich local environment by foot or horseback. A place for families to share a life changing travel experience, but also a place of intensive wine study and experimentation. Vineyard Manager Bedzina Mekvevrishvili lives in the village of Magraani where for more than 50 years his family has grown Kisi, Rkatsiteli and Saperavi grapes. He and his loyal local vineyard workers have been employed by the Danieli winery since 2011 when the first vines were planted. Winemaker Giorgi Babunidze hails from a traditional winemaking family from Telavi and is one of the new cadre of young Georgian winemakers trained abroad and with a knowledge of modern winemaking practices.

### VINEYARDS

The location they chose for their vineyards and winery is near the Alaverdi Monastery where they got married. The name of the nearby village Argoichki means “no hail.” Hail can be devastating in other parts of Kakheti in the late Spring, early Summer but Argoichki is in a parallel dead-end side valley, which creates a no hail zone. This terroir is famous for the Kisi grape variety, which is enjoying a resurgence after nearly disappearing during the country’s Communist period. Currently the estate has a total of 17 hectares planted, 10 hectares to Kisi, the remainder to Rkatsiteli, Mtsvane and Saperavi. The soil has some clay, sand and humus. Kisi is susceptible to mildew so by growing the lower trellis 30- 40 cm higher than usual, the breeze common to the area dries the lower parts of the plant. The Mukuzani vineyard is a 3.5 hectare site planted to Saperavi outside the village of Velistsikhe. The soil is composed of calcareous clay. All the vineyards are farmed without pesticides or herbicides, only a little copper and SO<sub>4</sub>. Eventually the goal is to expand the vineyards to a total of 30 hectares and find the right combination of grape and terroir.

### WINE MAKING

The winemaking has introduced modern techniques, many of which are not yet applied in Georgia — either due to a lack of desire to innovate, lack of capital or supporting markets for lesser known grape varieties. Olaf draws on his background in chemistry to inform the movements in the cellar.



While Georgia has an unparalleled wine history, there is also much that has been lost and must be re-learned. Only through persistent controlled experiment can this process be accelerated. Whatever the wine or variety the intention in the cellar is always to bring the character of the variety to the fore in a polished and stylish way. Currently most of the wine is produced in temperature controlled stainless steel with cultured neutral yeast. Whites do not go through malolactic fermentation but reds do. They are also beginning to work with qvevri and the early results are promising.

### NOTES & PAIRINGS

The Mukuzani vineyard is a 3.5 hectare site planted to Saperavi outside the village of Velistsikhe. Grapes were hand harvested the 12th of September and vinified in Stainless steel. It macerated with the skins for 2 weeks, was briefly oak aged and then bottled a year after harvest. This is a typical if not elevated example of this noble grape in its prime terroir. Dark and velvety with generous aromas of ripe blackberries and baking spices, a cool freshness on the palate is followed by a persistent mineral finish.

### ANALYTICS & PRONUNCIATION

PRODUCER: Danieli  
APPELLATION: Kakheti  
VINTAGE: 2015  
GRAPE COMPOSITION: 100% Saperavi  
CLIMATE: Moderate continental  
MACERATION & AGING: vinified in Stainless steel  
ALCOHOL: 12.8%  
RESIDUAL SUGAR: 2.75 g/l  
ACIDITY: 6.3 g/l



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