



Excursion to the Shabo Vineyard

Shabo lies on the Dnistrovsky Liman (Dniester estuary). In 1822 a small group of emigrants from the Swiss Kanton Vaud founded the first Swiss colony here. Thanks to their knowledge of viticulture and wine production, alongside plenty of hard work and determination, they managed to establish a profitable enterprise at this place. Today you will find a state-of-the-art, privately owned winery at Shabo. On the initiative of the Swiss artist Hugo Schaer, the “Wine Culture Centre Shabo” was opened in 2009. This is an informative museum on wine-making in general and the exposition also traces the story of the original Swiss colonists who brought viticulture to the region.

Our 8-hour excursion to Shabo includes a visit to the wine factory and museum, an insight into the history and fate of the Swiss colonists in southern Ukraine and lunch at the restaurant located in one of the original Swiss-constructed buildings at the site.



“When in our beloved Switzerland, we Swiss like to believe that there is no better country; but this is a fallacy! There, we are simply harvesting the fruits of our labour, having expended much time and effort hitherto; but here, the weather is almost always fantastic, the land is fertile and easy to work and there is an abundance of livestock at favourable prices. There hasn’t been a bad winter here since 1812. In fact, there is hardly ever any snow and as early as March you can uncover and begin pruning the vines.”

This was written by the Swiss botanist and academic Louis Vincent Tardent in 1821, a colleague and friend of the renowned Swiss pedagogue Pestalozzi and a member of the Swiss Academy of Sciences. He was referring to a little piece of Southern Ukraine, Bessarabia, a territory that had not long been liberated from the Ottoman Empire and which the colonisers recognised as having enormous potential for the development of agriculture.

In 1822, having put together an expedition of 24 would-be colonists on 7 horses and 4 carts from the Swiss Kanton of Vaud, Louis Vincent Tardent travelled 2649 km with the two requisites for every pioneer: his weapon and his bi-



ble. Possessing, in his own words, “considerably more courage than monetary means”, he and his compatriots set up the first Swiss colony on the Northern Black Sea coast which came to be known as Shabo.

They successfully established viticulture in the region, which thrived right up until the onset of Soviet Power in the region in 1944.

Our excursion consists of a tour of the modern day “Wine Culture Centre Shabo”, the concept of Swiss-born artist Hugo Schaer. He personally devised many of the unique features of the production process here, linking centuries’ old tradition with modern production methods in this unique project.

The excursion will last approximately 8 hours and includes: a visit to the viticulture museum with an exposition on the history of the founding of the colony; lunch in the restaurant (situated in an original house of Swiss colonists) and a talk on the history and fate of the Swiss colonies in Southern Ukraine.