

# Russia's Largest Wine Producer Expanded Its Territory by 40%

By [The Moscow Times](#)

May 28, 2015



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Russian winemaker Ariant has expanded its domestic vineyards holdings from 6,000 to 8,500 hectares, newspaper RBC reported Wednesday, as Russia seeks to revitalize its long-neglected wine industry.

Ariant's extra 2,500 hectares is located in the Krasnodar region of southern Russia, where the majority of Russia's wine production is concentrated, according to Ariant's press officer Roman Griбанov, RBC reported.

The wine company hopes to profit from increased tourism from Russia to the peninsula of Crimea, which is connected by ferry link to Krasnodar, said company co-owner Alexander Aristov. While many Russians currently fly to Crimea, a multibillion-dollar bridge planned to open by 2018 will likely prove a boon to the region.

Russian Agriculture Minister Alexander Tkachev recently said Russia would begin supporting the development of new vineyards and construction of modern wineries, as the devaluation of the ruble makes high-quality Russian more cost competitive, news agency Interfax reported Wednesday.

The state of the Russian wine industry is currently very undeveloped thanks to decades of neglect. Lack of government support following the collapse of the Soviet Union has resulted in a steep reduction of winemaking land and a sharp decline in wine production.

Russia currently has 86,500 hectares of vineyards, RBC reported, citing state statistics service Rosstat. Top wine-producing countries such as France typically have hundreds of thousands of hectares of vineyards.

"In order to provide the country with wine that is 90 percent produced from domestic grapes, Russia needs [an additional] 350 thousand hectares," RBC quoted Peter Romanishin, CEO of Fanagoria, one of the largest Russian producers of wine, as saying.

Last year Russia's government announced plans to double Russia's winemaking territory by 2020, according to a government statement.

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