

# "WINERY 2026": Dionysian Procession and Over 200 Samples in the Battle for the "Golden Rhyton"

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Plovdiv is once again becoming the capital of wine with the approach of one of the most prestigious events in the sector – the International Exhibition for Viticulture and Winemaking "VINARIA 2026". This year's edition promises a rich program, starting with an attractive celebration for citizens and continuing with professional competitions and business forums.

**A Dionysian Procession Announces the Beginning**

The exhibition's atmosphere will take over Plovdiv even before the official start of Vinaria 2026. On the Day of Wine and Love – February 14th (Saturday), a Dionysian procession will pass through the city center. The celebration will begin at 11:30 AM from the small park next to the Roman Stadium.

The colorful parade will be led by kukeri from the villages of Kliment, Ivan Vazovo and Stoletovo, bagpipe players from the ensemble "Epoday" and dancers from the folklore ensemble "Thrace". The procession will proceed along "Alexander Battenberg" Street and Main Street to reach "Stefan Stambolov" Square. There, the organizers have prepared a special program and 100 liters of wine, provided by the "Yamantievi" winery.

### **The Battle for the "Golden Rhyton"**

Parallel to the festive mood, serious professional work is also underway. Nearly 200 samples of wine and spirits have been submitted for participation in the International Tasting Competition. This year, the regulations return to their roots, as only exhibitors at the forum are competing.

The tastings are held on February 11th and 12th in Palace 7 of the fairground. An international jury chaired by Dr. Dimitar Gaydarski, including oenologists, sommeliers, and merchants, evaluates the products according to strict criteria. Producers from Bulgaria, Italy, Greece, the Czech Republic, Ukraine, and Moldova are competing for the highest distinction in the industry – the "Golden Rhyton" statuette. Wine lovers will find at VINARIA 2026 first-class selections from renowned boutique wineries from the Black Sea region, the Danube Plain, Thrace, and Moesia. Terroir and classic series present the wealth of varieties from the sunny provinces of Apulia, Sicily, and Andalusia.

The winners will be announced at a ceremonial ceremony on February 18th (Wednesday) at 5:30 PM in the "Plovdiv" hall of the Congress Center.

### **What to Expect from the Exhibition?**

The main part of "VINARIA 2026" will be held from February 17th to 21st at the International Fair Plovdiv.

Visitors will be able to get acquainted with:

- **A Rich Wine List:** From premium selections of boutique wineries to products from large producers from Bulgaria and abroad (incl. Italy, France, Spain, New Zealand, etc.).
- **Innovations:** New collections of fruit wines and wine-based beverages, which are distinguished in a separate category of the competition.
- **Technology Zone:** Machinery for the wine and brewing industry, laboratory equipment, automation solutions, and packaging.

Within the accompanying program on February 18th in Palace 6, Hall 2 of the International Fair Plovdiv, the book by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Bogdan Mandzhukov "The Viticulture and Winemaking of Bulgaria. In Events, Figures, and Facts. From the End of the 20th Century to the Present Day" will also be presented, which traces the history of the industry and the development of the "VINARIA" exhibition itself.