

Georgian Wine Comeback a Matter of Days

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The Federal Consumer Protection Service is looking to allow imports of some Georgian wines and brandies in the next few days, its chief Gennady Onishchenko said Tuesday.

"These products have been registered, and tests show they comply with our requirements," he said, Interfax reported.

According to Onishchenko, the pending entry of 22 types of Georgian alcoholic beverages into a state register will open the door for their imports. The products will be 17 wine brands and five brandies, he said.

Work is ongoing to give the go-ahead to mineral water from the country, he added.

The Federal Consumer Protection Service is about to authorize wine and brandy imports after it sent inspectors to examine quality standards at several Georgian companies in the industry

in February and March.

A second round of inspections, with visits to 37 companies in Georgia, may begin on April 1, Onishchenko said.

The head of Georgia's National Wine Agency, Levan Davitashvili, said wine brands such as Khvanchkara and Kindzmarauli will be among the first to return to the Russian market.

Russia banned the import of beverages from Georgia in 2006 on concerns over quality and counterfeiting, delivering a huge blow to that the Caucasian country's wine industry. The measure came as bilateral ties were descending into a deep freeze.

About 80 percent of Georgian wine, or 52 million bottles worth \$80 million in 2005, went for consumption in Russia. Georgia is reluctant to rely heavily on the Russian market again, and the National Wine Agency forecast that sales here will not exceed 10 million bottles a year.

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