

SUSIE & PETER
CHILE
WINES
OF THE YEAR

2025
MASTERS OF WINE

Introduction

Welcome to our Chile Wines of the Year 2025!

After our first Wines of the Year in 2024, we couldn't wait to assemble another exciting line-up of Chilean wines for you.

You'll no doubt recognise some familiar names in this year's mix. But there are also plenty of producers who are new in the 2025 line-up. And not just new producers but new wine styles too, from fizz to fortified.

We've also added a vintage round-up and a current perspective section to this report, to help you navigate the wines and provide some richer contextual background.

We hope you enjoy this report and associated podcast. There's so much to get excited about in Chilean wine right now. Consider this your invitation to explore.

So what's this Chile Wines of the Year thing all about?

As we explained in last year's report and podcast, this project was born out of frustration.

Whenever we visit Chile, the wine selection we taste is diverse, eclectic and intriguing. It's a wine scene that is evolving fast, with thrilling results.

But in shops and restaurants outside Chile (our main point of reference being the UK), all too often the Chilean range is limited and uninspiring.

Cheap and cheerful Sauvignon or Cabernet? Tick. The odd Carmenere or Chardonnay? Perhaps.

No wonder the new-wave Carignan, País and Semillon wines struggle to cut through in the braver outlets that list them.

As a result, we wanted to find a way to showcase the diversity and excitement in Chilean wine. To remind us why Chile is worth our time and attention. To get us thinking: why are we not drinking more of this stuff?!

How does it all work?

We taste a lot of Chilean wines and visit the country regularly – most recently, in March 2025. So we started by assembling a rough hitlist of wineries and commercially available wines we thought would be interesting to taste.

With support from Wines of Chile, nearly 200 bottles of wine were assembled, which we tasted in June 2025.

From that line-up, we chose the best, most exciting wines to feature as our Chile Wines of the Year. Those are the wines that appear in this report.

What does it mean to be a Wine of the Year?

It means they're special. They're worth buying and enjoying. Without exception, these are wines we commend to you.

The selection process is rigorous, as you'd expect from two Masters of Wine with different tastes and perspectives but equally high standards.

Every Wine of the Year is tasted repeatedly, from multiple bottles, and we deliberate over each and every one of them.

In short, they all come with our seal of approval.

Just how good are these wines?

Very. We don't put an artificial cap on the number of wines that can be Wines of the Year – but within our selection, quality is paramount.

To put this into more objective terms, in our tasting, we score all wines out of 100. (As we would in a competition – with 86-89 roughly equating to a bronze medal, 90-94 a silver medal, and 95+ a gold medal.)

A wine has to have a consensus score of minimum 93 to be a Wine of the Year. That's a high bar. So we're talking the crème de la crème here.

How important are the scores?

As important as you want them to be.

We're not big fans of scores. They give the impression of an absolute judgement, a mathematical certainty that's replicable and definitive. That's just not true.

Taste is inherently subjective, and there is no such thing as a conclusive score for something that will mean different things to different people, as well as change over time in the bottle.

That said, scores can be helpful, as long as they're used in the right way.

The scores here are intended as a quick-reference guide to our consensus view on the wines. Think of them as a user-friendly indication that helps communicate our considered opinion on where a wine sits not just in the context of the Chilean wine hierarchy but also in the broader context of global wine quality.

But the scores are not just about us. They're about you, too.

Ultimately, we'd love these scores to act as an invitation for you to explore Chilean wine more widely. It would be great if they could initiate a discussion or thought-process that you might not otherwise have had. (And no, we don't always expect you to agree with us.)

The one thing we don't want our scores to do is hinder you from forming your own views on any given wine or producer. That's entirely your call.

What's our personal preference profile?

This is worth mentioning, for context.

We tend to favour wines that are refreshing and balanced. Wines that work well with food. Wines that have savoury appeal rather than just simplistic flavours of sweet fruit or creamy oak.

We like wines that pique our interest, that stimulate debate, that speak of where they come from. Wine is the thing that motivates us professionally and excites us personally. We don't have room in our lives for boring wines. We like wines that keep us coming back for another glass.

How did it go last year?

When we launched our Chile Wines of the Year last year (2024), we really didn't know what to expect. As it happened, we couldn't have been more delighted with how it turned out.

The report was warmly received and the associated pod went out to more than 90 countries and charted in the top 1% of global podcast episodes (*Listen Notes*).

The activity garnered a fair bit of engagement and coverage, and not just across social media. It was covered in *The Telegraph*, with Victoria Moore writing: 'Their selection includes some gorgeous wines.' Jancis Robinson MW wrote it up for *The Financial Times* and her eponymous website, writing: 'It was wonderful to be presented with proof of the dynamism currently evident in Chile's vineyards and cellars.'

The trade tasting event and sold-out masterclass were at full capacity, with one winery flying a representative in just to deliver their wines on time, and several wineries picking up new listings on UK shelves as a result. Hopefully we will start to see better availability of these wonderful wines in the future...

About this report

This report sits alongside the Chile Wines of the Year 2025 episode on our Wine Blast podcast. (You can find this on all major audio platforms, from Apple Podcasts to Spotify, YouTube and beyond.)

On that podcast, we hear intriguing opinions and insights from some of the star winemakers in the Chilean wine firmament. We also throw our own tuppence into the pot, giving an overview on the current Chilean wine scene and our take on the key trends.

What we can't do on the podcast is list all our Wines of the Year. That's where this report comes in.

Here, you can find details of all the top awards, plus a comprehensive listing of all producers and wines both alphabetically and by score.

The body of the report is made up of tasting notes for every one of our Chile Wines of the Year 2025. We've tried to keep it readable and engaging rather than one long list of fruit salad descriptors and arcane wine lingo.

The tasting notes are arranged by style and variety. So sparkling wine comes first. Then it's whites, broken down by varietal category, starting with Chardonnay then Sauvignon Blanc then Others. Then we have our one (outstanding) rosé.

Then it's reds, starting with Cabernet Sauvignon and blends followed by Carmenere (and blends), Syrah (and blends), Carignan (and blends), Pinot Noir, País (and blends) and Others.

We finish, appropriately if somewhat surprisingly, with a fortified wine.

Within each section, wines are ordered by descending score (ie most exciting wines first). When scores are the same, listing is in alphabetical order.

The Award Winners

The final stage of our tasting is always the most intriguing – deciding on the top awards.

Yes, we crunch the numbers and some things fall neatly into place. But other times we have to go through a protracted (let's be honest: heated) discussion before we can make a final call.

Either way, these are our top award winners from our Chile Wines of the Year 2025:

Best Producer	Casa Marin
Best Winemaker	François Massoc
Top Red Wine	Santa Rita Casa Real Cabernet Sauvignon 2022
Top White Wine	Bouchon Granito Semillon 2023
Top Rosé Wine	Echeverría No Es Pituko Rosé País 2023
Top Sparkling Wine	Tabalí Tatié Traditional Method Brut NV
Best Value White	Errázuriz Gran Reserva Chardonnay 2023
Best Value Red	Mayu Gran Reserva Pinot Noir Titón Vineyard 2023
White Discovery	Montes Outer Limits Albariño 2024
Red Discovery	Carter Mollenhauer Viñedo Truquilemu Carignan 2022
White Innovation	Massoc Frères Adorable Vino Fortificado Blanco
Red Innovation	VIK A Cabernet Nouveau 2024

This is a quite brilliant line-up of producers, winemakers and wines. With some great stories attached.

Casa Marin consistently produces wines of exceptional quality and inimitable character. They have made a virtue out of adversity in their cool-climate, steeply sloping coastal vineyards where frost, drought and pests are perennial threats. Their whites are electric; their reds are gloriously eclectic (and this isn't to touch on their sparkling, or rosé).

Their 2015 Syrah in this report is a thing of utter beauty. Pricey cool-climate Chilean Syrah is not an easy sell – hence why Casa Marin have recently taken out some of their Syrah plantings. (And this isn't an isolated story in Chile, either.)

But for those of us who love elegant, perfumed, ageworthy, savoury reds, this is a tragedy. How can we help keep these precious vines in the ground?

It's simple: supporting, buying and drinking wines like these. If we don't use it, we risk losing it.

Talking of precious vines, François Massoc does heroic work all over Chile, but most notably in the deep south of Chilean wine country.

What we look for when deciding on our Winemaker of the Year is not just winemaking excellence. It's more than that. We look for someone who blazes their own trail, is collaborative, sets an example for others to follow and pushes back the boundaries of what's possible in Chilean wine. They are standard bearers leading Chile into a bright new future.

Massoc makes cultured whites and reds from across the country in his Aristos project. He also crafts expressive wines as part of his Massoc Frères brand. He terms his winery in Itata an, 'atelier' (workshop) where he makes wines for many other brands and retains a strong focus on sustainability, education and social impact.

This is a man with his fingers in a lot of very delicious pies, a true champion of the Chilean wine cause, and a veritable winemaking superstar. Despite intense competition, he's a worthy winner.

As for the individual wine awards, they speak for themselves in the tasting notes that follow. But there are a couple of points to make.

Firstly – fizz. It's a mystery to us why Chileans remain so reticent to champion their sparkling wines. Yes, to make good sparkling takes time, experience and expertise. But Chile has an abundance of places and people capable of making world-class fizz.

From what we've been tasting, these wines more than deserve to be on wine lovers' radars. From characterful pet nats to complex traditional-method sparklers, these days you can find seriously good Chilean fizz all over the country. Often at excellent prices. And yet the Chileans themselves don't seem keen to push their sparkling wines. One export manager said that, in putting champagne alongside Chilean fizz, 'We've lost the war before the battle has even begun.'

We beg to differ. Try the Tatié (made, intriguingly, in collaboration with a Champagne house) or any of the sparkling wines listed here, and see what you think. And there are many more to be discovered.

Regarding the whites, it's exciting to see the Semillon renaissance gaining traction. This is a historic white variety in Chile, long forgotten but now being revived with real creativity, including in inventive blends. And talking of diversity, we're now starting to see excellent quality from a growing range of white varieties (strict quarantine laws in Chile make it hard to diversify plantings quickly). To have an Albariño as White Discovery speaks volumes.

Our Top Rosé is a natural wine. It won't be for everyone – but we love it. By repute, Chileans are a conservative bunch, not given to risky winemaking. But one of the most exciting trends in recent years has been the emergence of winemakers unafraid of challenging accepted norms and pushing into more natural wine territory, often in the south of the country. So, whether the wines are to your taste or not, we heartily endorse this trend.

Talking of innovation, it seems like every time we go to Chile, we discover new and exciting things. One recent novelty was a Cachapoal Cabernet made in the style of a Beaujolais Nouveau (VIK's Cabernet Nouveau). Deliciously refreshing. François Massoc's fortified Itata Moscatel we first tasted a while ago but still – it's a sign that Chile always has the capacity to surprise and delight.

A current perspective

We've said our piece about fizz, natural wines, Semillon and more (as above). But one thing we noticed when we visited Chile earlier this year was the struggle.

Times are hard. Wine sales are slowing across the globe, and Chile is right at the coal face. It's particularly tough if you're trying to premiumise, as Chile has been doing for the last two decades (to get away from the 'cheap and cheerful' label that has stuck for so long) at a time when people are spending less. As one producer told us: 'There's a big frustration in Chile right now. We've got better wines than ever – but we can't sell them.'

The result? Vineyards are disappearing. We heard similar stories all over: vines being grubbed up to weather this storm. One reputable producer in Casablanca has reduced their vineyard by nearly half (though this is partly to do with ongoing water shortages, it must be said). Another extensive coastal vineyard in a reputable area has reduced its hectareage by 10% to plant almonds and avocados.

Does this spell imminent doom for Chilean wine?

We'd argue not. Such ups and downs are part and parcel of farming. Of course, wine is a longer-term business than most agricultural crops - but occasional rationalisations are not necessarily a bad thing. Lean business times focus the mind on what works best, with poorer performing assets being trimmed.

What it does mean is that Chilean wine needs all the support it can get, to ensure the good stuff survives. And there are many ways to do that.

One success story from recent years, for example, has been VIGNO - the producer association aimed at promoting old-vine Maule Carignan. Producers came together under a shared brand name, with an agreed set of basic production parameters (minimum 65% Carignan from 30+ year-old dry-farmed vines etc). If this sounds like an old-world appellation, it is.

The results have been remarkable. Tasting with the VIGNO growers in 2025, they related how 15 years ago prices paid for Carignan grapes were a pittance. As a result of their initiative, Carignan now has one of the highest average trade selling prices for any Chilean variety.

And this isn't just about profitability - it's also about the social impact. Vines which otherwise might have been grubbed up have been kept in the ground, and vine growers have a more secure long-term future.

'For the first time in Chile, we put the land ahead of the brand,' comments VIGNO founder-member Andres Sanchez of Gillmore. 'The power of collaboration has meant we can rescue our wine heritage and the culture around it. We're changing the rural economy - kids can take over a viable business. You can't put a price on that: it's real.'

Now they're repeating the exercise with 'Almaule' (focused on old-vine, dry-farmed País). And a sparkling wine association called Cencellada is emerging too.

So could grower associations or proto-appellations provide hope for Chile's premium-minded producers? Viña Leyda winemaker Viviana Navarrete thinks regulations can help. 'We should be more like VIGNO here in Leyda,' she asserts. 'We know Pinot Noir and Sauvignon Blanc work best in Leyda. In the end, you have to focus on what you do best, like Burgundy.'

It's interesting that these movements are happening alongside a more general trend for Chile's winemakers to experiment, innovate and generally be more creative and less conservative than they have been in generations.

One wonders how it will all develop. At the very least, it makes for compelling viewing. The struggle goes on - but the drama continues to play out.

Vintage Summary

Reliable and regularly updated vintage summaries are hard to find on Chile. So we thought we'd plug the gap.

Please bear in mind that Chile's vineyards spread over an increasingly wide and climatically diverse area. That means local conditions may vary from the bigger-picture summary. If this is the case, we've tried to include that information in the individual tasting notes.

The 2025 vintage

Overall 2025 vintage summary: A game of two halves. Hot, dry conditions meant harvest started early, then rain and cooler conditions changed the feel for later-harvest Central Valley reds. Lower yields than normal (in some cases, 40% less). Likely to be heterogenous.

The north: Things warmed up after a coolish start to the summer. An early harvest but nothing excessive. Early signs are encouraging.

Central Valley: Very warm conditions meant an earlier start to harvest, which slowed later on as rains and cooler temperatures affected some areas. Bodes well for late-season reds.

Coastal vineyards: A good to excellent vintage, not too warm, a slightly earlier harvest than the norm.

The south: Good to excellent vintage: warm but not too hot, then a cooler rainier end to autumn meant an extended harvest. Should make for fresh, ageworthy styles.

Previous vintages

2024: A long game. After a rainy winter, this was a cooler growing season for most, with low yields and later harvest dates. Wine styles are often fresher, with lower natural alcohols. Coastal regions weren't quite so cool – while in Limarí, warm temperatures and drought conditions meant an early vintage.

2023: Cooler coastal areas and the far north performed best in this very hot, fast-ripening year. Forest fires in the south. Low yields due to ongoing drought.

2022: An excellent vintage, comparable to 2018. Moderate temperatures and dry conditions gave top-notch wines across the board, from crisply defined whites to complex reds.

2021: A cooler, wetter year but some decent quality in long-season reds and top whites.

2020: The 'fast and furious' Covid vintage. Hot dry conditions meant low yields and, for many, the earliest harvest in recent memory. Cooler coastal and southerly areas fared better.

2019: A mixed bag. Heat spikes and drought conditions affected areas in different ways. Some wines show excellent intensity, others are fading.

2018: Top vintage. Elegant reds and expressive whites were the result of moderate conditions with decent yields. Some dilution at the cheaper end.

2017: Hot vintage, rich wines. Some smoke taint from forest fires especially in southern areas.

2016: A massive mid-season rainfall event meant dilution in many wines.

2015: Warm vintage, riper styles.

A final word

This report isn't intended to be a definitive guide to Chilean wine. But it does contain plenty of insight, opinion and fact – about regions, grape varieties, winemaking approaches, winemakers and more, all woven into the body of the tasting notes.

Please do also check out the associated podcast episode to hear from the winemakers and more about our take on the current Chilean wine scene.

We've tried our level best to ensure every detail in this report is accurate. Inevitably, though, we're going to get some details wrong. Apologies if this is the case. Do get in touch if you spot anything that needs correcting via contact@susieandpeter.com.

We'd like to thank Wines of Chile. Particularly, Anita Jackson in the UK and, in Chile, Angélica Valenzuela, Belén Navarro and Carmen Orellana.

Thanks also to all the producers who've supported this initiative, which we very much appreciate. Thanks also to Sensible Wine Services for their logistical assistance.

Here's to Chile, to its brilliant winemakers, and to the future!

'As Masters of Wine they are members of the world's oenological elite, yet as friendly wine advisors, Susie & Peter are nothing short of national treasures.'

Foodepedia

About the authors

Susie Barrie and Peter Richards are Masters of Wine who happen to be married to each other. It's a strange old household, with a constant soundtrack of clinking bottles and glasses.

As award-winning TV and radio presenters, event hosts, columnists, podcasters and authors, the pair are renowned for their enthusiastic, thoughtful and articulate style, having been described as, 'Legends: best in the business,' and, 'What a double act: two stars making a killer constellation.' Their global smash-hit podcast Wine Blast has been termed, 'A complete tonic for the heart, mind and soul,' and won the 67 Pall Mall Global Wine Communicators Award for audio in 2024.

Susie & Peter have been regular visitors to Chile for 25 years and taste the country's wines extensively. Peter used to live and work there, speaks the language, has written two books and his Master of Wine dissertation on Chilean wines, and has been called, 'the most knowledgeable foreign expert on Chilean wines,' (*Capital*) and, 'the world's leading commentator on Chilean wine' (*The Drinks Business*).

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Sparkling



Tabalí Tatié Traditional Method Brut NV, Talinay – Limarí (11.5%)

94 points – TOP SPARKLING WINE

There is no doubt whatsoever in our minds that Chile has the potential to make world-class sparkling wines. But, perhaps more than any other wine style, expertise and experience is needed to craft great fizz. Particularly traditional method (ie champagne-style) sparkling, where the small details make a big difference. So it makes total sense that Limarí-based Tabalí would team up with Champagne Thiénot to make some special bubbles from their coastal Chardonnay and Pinot Noir in Talinay (Limarí). This non-vintage blend is classically proportioned, with elegant brioche and red apple character, fine insistent bubbles and fresh acidity. On the technical front, this wine is 60% Chardonnay, 40% Pinot Noir, a blend of different vintages, aged on the lees for 30 months and bottled with a final dosage (residual sugar) of 6.5 g/l. It's not the most complex but it is classy – liquid proof that Chile can do this fizz thing, and in some style too.



Casa Silva Fervor de Lago Ranco 2018, Futrono – Osorno (12%)

93 points

Casa Silva is known for many things. The rodeo ring and polo pitch at its majestic Colchagua headquarters. Its vintage car collection. The atmospheric hotel with four-poster beds like you've travelled back in time to a grand 19th-century manor house. On the wine-front, Carmenere has been a big focus; more recently, coastal Colchagua vineyards have yielded some fine Sauvignon (see below for more on both of these). But one of the many other strings to this producer's bow is sparkling wine – and this one is the pick of the bunch. The vines in the Silva family's southerly property on the shores of Lago Ranco give a natural vibrancy and freshness to the fruit that make an ideal base wine for sparkling. This blend of equal parts Chardonnay and Pinot Noir (winemaker Mario Geisse is a stickler for classical proportions) was aged on the lees for four years and has a modest dosage (residual sugar) of 5 g/l. The wine is expressive, full of bright apple fruit and smoky, creamy, bready complexity. The acidity is vibrant, with the fruit and autolytic (yeasty, bready, patisserie) characters lending a lovely succulence to the palate profile.



Ribera Pellín Brut Nature 2021, Osorno (12%)

93 points

Osorno is deep south in Chilean wine terms, but it's an area that is steadily building a very solid wine reputation (see the Casa Silva wine above, for example). Ribera Pellín is a small-scale project that's been going longer than most – more than 20 years now, on the terraces of the river Pilmaiquén in San Pablo. It's the kind of producer that adds much-needed colour and individuality to the Chilean wine scene. These are not wines for the faint-hearted – they are natural, borderline rustic in feel, but in this context they can work well. This 2021 vintage is 75% Pinot Noir, 25% Chardonnay and has a dosage (residual sugar) of 3 g/l. The aromatics show bready, bruised apple notes. The palate is dry but not overly so, with a vigorous mousse and a mouth-coating texture. It's a bit crazy – but if that's your thing, dive in.

Whites

Chardonnay



Pandolfi Price Los Patricios Chardonnay 2021, Itata (14%)

96 points

So you love great Chardonnay? No doubt the likes of Burgundy, coastal USA, Australia and New Zealand are on your shopping list (if you're anything like us). But, come on, it's high time to add cool-climate Chile to the list. And this beautifully chiselled, profoundly savoury, wonderfully complex Chardonnay is one superlative reason why. It's grown in the historic southerly Itata Valley, on an atmospheric family-run estate by the banks of the River Larqui. These are good people. This is a special place – prime vine territory. And they make good wines – but none better than this Chardonnay, back on form in a cooler vintage that has tempered some of the excesses of previous years. It shows lavish aromas of roasted nuts, fresh curry leaf, red apples and struck-match flintiness. The palate is broad and complex, with tangy acidity underpinning a rich and spicy flavour profile. It's made by Chardonnay virtuoso François Massoc, barrel fermented and long lees-aged. You could call it, 'Chilean Chassagne.' But at this price (roughly £25 in the UK), it's way better value than most white Burgundy at this level. So we'll ask again: you love great Chardonnay?



Baettig Selección de Parcelas Los Primos Chardonnay 2022, Traiguén – Malleco (13.5%)

94 points

The south of Chile is shaping up to be an excellent source of elegant Chardonnay, with Traiguén one of its quality hotspots. It's telling that highly experienced winemaker Francisco Baettig would choose this place as the base for his solo adventure after leaving Errázuriz, where he made outstanding wines for many years. Together with his business partner Carlos de Carlos, Baettig planted the first Chardonnay and Pinot Noir vines in 2013, in the same region to which his Swiss great-grandparents had emigrated in the late 19th century. (The vineyard is called Viñedo Los Suizos.) The partners' self-stated aim is to make, 'exciting wines that are connected to the land where they are made, where the cold weather, the rain, the volcanic rock is reflected in fine, pure and austere wines.' And that's just what you get in this cultured Chardonnay: built around a tense appley acidity and finely-etched mineral core is a pronounced savoury, bready, leesy richness that gives a palate profile with wonderful intensity and a gently saline finish. This was a slightly cooler vintage than the average and the wine spent 13 months in French oak barrels (37% new), with 20% of the wine aged without sulfur addition. It all makes for a very cogent and stylish Chardonnay.



Ventisquero Tara White Wine 1 Chardonnay 2023, Atacama (13%)

94 points

Southern Chile may well have a bright future ahead with Chardonnay, but that doesn't mean we should overlook the north. It's further towards the Equator, hence warmer – but in cooler sites, on the right soils and in the right hands, Chardonnay can shine. And if we're talking special places and good hands, then Tara is right on the money. These are pioneering vines planted in Atacama Desert territory – extreme territory for winemaking. Extremely arid conditions and bright sun are tempered, though, by cooling coastal winds and the regular morning camanchaca fog. The project is a, 'democratic' one, in which various winemakers from Ventisquero's talented team collaborate to make wines with a sense of playfulness and risqué character, which are particularly welcome within not just the context of this winery but the wider Chilean wine scene in general. The 2021 made it into last year's listing and this one seems clearer (ie less hazy) and generally brighter, with upbeat fruity aromatics (peach, apricot, bruised red apple). The palate is refreshing and fleshy, with a wonderful leesy, mealy texture and flavour, and a gently spicy, saline finish. Wild yeast; minimal sulfur; aged for 18 months half in concrete egg, half in untoasted French oak fudres; bottled without clarification or filtration.



Aristos Baronesa d'A Chardonnay 2021, Limarí (14%)

93 points – BEST WINEMAKER

Talking of northern Chilean outposts with a knack for making quality Chardonnay, coastal Limarí has been attracting top Chilean winemakers like moths to a flame. The bright sunlight gives exuberant character to the wines, while the calcium-rich soils and cooling coastal influence enhance freshness and minerality. Aristos is a project run by outstanding Chilean winemaker François Massoc – a man who crafts beautiful Chardonnay (his Duquesa d'A Chardonnay 2016 was last year's Top White Wine). He's not afraid of imbuing his Chardonnays with richness and complexity – and that, together with Limarí's natural exuberance, means it's no surprise this wine is positively voluptuous in its gloriously creamy, toasty, roasted apple character. It's not the zingiest Chardonnay out there – it definitely errs on the luscious side – but it is grounded and balanced in this context. Ultimately, it comes across as self-assured and classy, with some evident bottle age (and barrel age: it's matured for 24 months in French oak).



Caliterra Tributo Chardonnay 2022, Casablanca (13%)

93 points

This was another prime candidate for Best Value White. Grown using regenerative viticulture practices in the coastal Casablanca region, there's no shortage of bright peach and ripe apple freshness here. The wine was aged for nine months in used French oak barrels, which gives a gentle roundness and creamy texture to the flavour profile. Very harmonious and quaffable. Susie wrote: 'Just what you want from coastal Chilean Chardonnay at this level.'



Cata Terroirs Chardonnay Barrica 2022, Chillán Viejo – Itata (13.8%)

93 points

Eduardo Strechar is the winemaker behind Cata Terroirs, a project that sources wines from various origins (including Brazil). This Chardonnay is from Chillán Viejo in Itata and matured in French oak barrels for 18 months. It's no shrinking violet, with a bold nutty, creamy, toasty aromatic profile. Similar flavours continue onto the palate, where a streak of lemony acidity brings it all together. The oak is front and centre but it has lovely fruit vibrancy too. As Peter wrote: 'Different and rewarding for it!'





Cono Sur 20 Barrels Chardonnay 2023, Casablanca (13.5%)

93 points

From last year's Best Producer comes this generous, satisfying Chardonnay in a range (20 Barrels) that consistently over-delivers for its price point. Particularly in the whites. This Chardonnay is sourced from the Centinela and Quebrada Seca vineyards in Casablanca. Some 90% of the wine is aged in French oak barrels for nine months, with the remaining 10% blended back from concrete eggs for freshness and to stop the oak dominating. There's a ripeness to the fruit (melon/peach) and a buttery character that flirts with excess – but the vibrant, juicy acidity brings everything back into line.



Errázuriz Gran Reserva Chardonnay 2023, Aconcagua (13%)

93 points – BEST VALUE WHITE

After picking up the Best Value Red for its Aconcagua Pinot Noir last year, now Errázuriz repeats the trick – but with its Chardonnay. At a time when decent Chardonnay is notably hard to find at a reasonable price point, this kind of wine restores your faith in vinous affordability. This is quality fruit, hand-picked and oak-aged, for heaven's sake – and you can find it in the UK for under a tenner. With its elegant blanched nut and red apple aromas, and a succulent, refreshing, easy-drinking palate profile with savoury toasty inflections, it's a steal. If you're buying ropey Bourgogne for three times the price, you're a mug.



Santa Ema Amplus Chardonnay 2024, Leyda (13.5%)

93 points

As the name suggests, this wine represents the ampler side of Chardonnay. The fruit spectrum is definitely on the riper, almost tropical side (think: quince, rich melon, pineapple). The 10-month barrel ageing is also very evident in the toasty, clotted cream, butterscotch characters. What saves it is the mouth-watering acidity and faint salinity on the finish. One for the hedonists and lovers of old-school Chilean Chardonnay.



Veramonte Ritual Chardonnay 2023, Casablanca (13.5%)

93 points

The 2023 vintage was a warmer one for Veramonte so their Chardonnay, unusually, was harvested first. The vineyards – which encompass not just Casablanca but also Apalta and Colchagua more widely – are run along organic and biodynamic principles. The wines tend to offer decent value and this one's no exception. It's not a Chardonnay that majors on freshness and vibrancy; instead it delivers elegant nutty flavours and a gently creamy texture.

Sauvignon Blanc



Casa Marin Cipreses Sauvignon Blanc 2024, Lo Abarca – San Antonio (13.5%)

97 points – BEST PRODUCER

Last year's Best Winemaker becomes this year's Best Producer. Casa Marin really is something special – a producer totally dedicated to showcasing its coastal terroir with wines of refinement and seemingly effortless class. Take this Sauvignon. It's outstanding. How so? It's the almost magical way this wine weaves vibrancy, fruit, freshness, leafiness, complexity and minerality together in a way that is utterly seamless and ridiculously sophisticated. The pink grapefruit and green pepper speak of San Antonio; the invigorating acidity and saline finish speak of Lo Abarca. It's like a melodious and familiar voice speaking with crispness and clarity through the chilly morning fog. So what's the secret to making such a wonderful wine? Winemaker Felipe Marin points to the maturing mix of clones on the steep hillside plantings, and also his technique of different harvest timings. 'Knowing the vineyard is key,' he muses, 'and that only comes with time and experience.' There's a small amount (30%) of old oak in the blend, though you'd never know it. Bravura Sauvignon.



Aquitania SOLdeSOL Sauvignon Blanc 2024, Traiguén – Malleco (12%)

95 points

This is a step up from the 2023 that featured in last year's report. It's immediately expressive and engaging, with aromas of ripe passion fruit and baked gooseberries, together with hints of nettle and blackcurrant leaf. In the mouth it's intense and mouth-watering, with flavours of roasted green pepper and hints of smoked nuts. Midweight but complex, great with food. Southerly Traiguén may have made its name with Chardonnay but Sauvignon can also show class here, as this wine proves. (The vines were first planted in 2009 after Chardonnay and Pinot proved their mettle in the area, and there's a subtle touch of oak in the winemaking.)



Viña Leyda Lot 4 Sauvignon Blanc 2024, Leyda (13%)

95 points

'Sauvignon Blanc is the star here,' affirms Viña Leyda winemaker Viviana Navarrete as we gaze out over their undulating coastal vineyards, the sea breeze ruffling our hair. It's a bold assertion (and she adds that Pinot Noir is also out-performing for them in Leyda) but one born out of a great deal of studies into soil, climate, plants and winemaking. In fact, Navarrete would like to see such things drawn up into laws mandating varieties, yields and styles on a region-by-region basis in Chile – but that's another discussion (see the introduction for more on that). Coming back to Leyda Sauvignon, and this particular wine – it's a gem. The idea behind it was: Viña Leyda is a pioneer in the region and a specialist in Sauvignon Blanc, so why not make a top Sauvignon? This is sourced from an individual 'polygon' in the El Maitén vineyard, exclusively planted to the 317 clone from Sancerre. The wine is made in a mix of (mainly) stainless steel with elements from untoasted fudre, concrete eggs and 400-litre French oak barrels. Intriguingly, this was the first year Navarrete experimented with using some stems in this Sauvignon (8%) as well as a touch of skin contact, all with the aim of imbuing the wine with more texture and grip on the palate. The result is spectacular – evocative aromatics of pea pod, grapefruit and woodsmoke lead into a fleshy yet citric palate with a mineral undertow and elegant saline finish. Complex, impressive – and hugely drinkable. Next-level Leyda Sauvignon.



Casa Silva Cool Coast Sauvignon Blanc 2024, Paredones – Colchagua Costa (13.5%)

94 points

For those who like their Sauvignon tense, linear and all about the purity – this one's for you. The aromas are in the pea pod, whitecurrant and green pepper spectrum. There's a hint of paprika and gooseberry too. The palate is tangy and midweight – refreshing and very drinkable. A piercing and invigorating style sourced from Casa Silva's vineyards in coastal Colchagua, and a consistently solid performer.



Garcés Silva Amayna Cordon Huinca Sauvignon Blanc 2024, Leyda (14%)

94 points

Huinca is the name of the place – it means, 'white man'. The 'Cordon' refers to the range of hills behind the Garcés Silva winery. We stood atop this steep hillside looking out over the Leyda region towards the nearby ocean with winemaker Diego Rivera and viticulturist Ignacio Casali. It's a special place, and the team are eliciting wines of complexity and elegance from the site. They identified this block as particularly high quality, planted to clones 317 and 242 on their own roots, and giving a wine of notable purity and complexity. The wine doesn't see any oak but is kept for six months on its fine lees in concrete to build roundness and texture. This 2024 is limpid and crystalline, with flavours of green apple, pea shoots and citrus fruit. There's a honeyed succulence to the palate profile that beautifully offsets the taut, mineral freshness. A modern Chilean classic. (Oh, and if you fancy going less classical with Garcés Silva's Sauvignon, try their bonkers Solera Sauvignon, made from a blend of seven different vintages aged in oak, some of which have developed a film of flor yeast like Fino sherry: gloriously nuts.)



Matetic EQ Coastal Sauvignon Blanc 2024, Casablanca (13.5%)

94 points

Winemaker Julio Bastías is doing outstanding work at Matetic. We were really impressed by this, which is the kind of wine that grows on you the more you taste it – always a good sign. It's grown in their biodynamically farmed Valle Hermoso vineyard on gentle hillsides 12 kms from the ocean. Around a third of the juice fermented in concrete amphorae, and another third in French oak barrels – the rest was in stainless steel. The result is a zippy, mouth-watering, mineral-infused profile with nettley, citric characters and a saline finish. Sophisticated in an endearingly understated way.



Echeverría No Es Pituko Orange Sauvignon Blanc 2024, Curicó (12.5%)

93 points

Recent years have proved challenging at the traditional family Echeverría winery. But then Roberto Echeverría spotted an opportunity for lighter, more natural wines sold with zany labels and a cheeky anti-establishment feel. ('No Es Pituko' means 'Definitely Not Posh' – strapline: 'Cloudy, with a chance of sediments.') The markets loved it, so now half the total production is sold under the No Es Pituko brand – it was an inspired masterstroke, in other words, with which Roberto had saved the family business. And it's not just a cynical commercial ploy, either – these wines are devilishly good. This Curicó Sauvignon is fermented with ambient yeast and kept on its skins for 60 days, bottled unfiltered with no added sulfites. The result is an amber-hued wine that's gently hazy in the glass. The aromas are heady and arresting, with notes of bruised apple, fresh ginger and farmhouse cider. The palate has a discreet tannic grip and layered flavours incorporating bready, rich fruit and spicy notes. A very well-made orange-style Sauvignon. And something a bit edgy and different for the Chilean wine scene.

Other Whites



Bouchon Granito Semillon 2023, Maule (13.5%)

97 points – TOP WHITE WINE

Semillon is having a moment in Chile – and rightly so. For long it's been an unsung journeyman lurking in the shadows of Chile's white wine vineyard. Travelling round the country back in the day, a few growers were proud of it – but not many. And the wines? Generally sound but unexciting. Fast forward twenty-odd years and now the atmosphere is ripe for reinventing historic varieties, often from old vines. Winemakers are more thoughtful and inventive about how to express these varieties and their terroirs. The result is a Semillon renaissance – and Bouchon has long been at the forefront of this movement, particularly with this wine. Grown on decomposed granite soils in Bouchon's Batuco estate in Maule, the grapes are vertical pressed (whole bunch) and are aged half in French oak barrels and half in larger oak fudres for 14 months. This wine was made under the old regime (Undurraga acquired Bouchon's brands in mid-2024) and it leaps out of the glass just how you'd want it to: brimming with flinty, smoky, toasty citrus and grilled pine nut aromas. The palate has lovely rich lemon curd fruit with impressive intensity and complexity. It's serious, savoury and engaging oaked white, marrying all the freshness you'd expect of Semillon with intriguing complexity and layers of flavour. Bravo.



Carmen DO Florillón #7 NV, Apalta – Colchagua (12%)

95 points

If we're talking about Semillon's reinvention in Chile, it's important to discuss diversity. Semillon can be made in many different styles, and this is part of what makes its modern renaissance in Chile so exciting. This unique, arresting style is admittedly something of an outlier in the Chilean Semillon context, but it's part of a broader trend that is turning wine lovers like us onto the charms of this grape in this country. The DO range by Carmen is a collaboration between the winery and grape growers. In this case, Juan Quijada's family vineyard was planted in 1958 in Apalta. The grapes are whole-cluster pressed and racked to old French oak barrels, which are only filled three-quarters full. This allows a veil of 'flor' yeast to form, imbuing the wine with striking sherry-like aromas of bruised apple and fresh nuts. The palate has Semillon's typical vibrancy and freshness and the finish is full of saline nutty yeasty characters. Fabulous, freaky, funky stuff.



Von Siebenthal RíoMístico Viognier 2021, Aconcagua (14.7%)

95 points

Opulent. Luscious. Hedonistic. Get the picture?! This is a wine for people who like a lot of oomph in their white wines. It's the only white made from Von Siebenthal's vineyards. And, given this is a producer known for making richer styles of reds in the warm area of Panquehue (Aconcagua)...well, you get the picture. This Viognier was aged for 11 months in new French oak barrels. And this is definitely the rounder, richer side of Viognier. Lavish aromas of honeysuckle, apricot and baked peach. The palate is succulent and mouth-coating, with a powerful ginger spice finish. Full-bodied, lowish acid style, tons of creamy oak and opulent exotic fruit.



Ana María Cumsille Altos de Guarilhue Semillon 2023, Itata (13%)

94 points

Ariel Sandoval grows his vines in Guarilhue Alto, in western Itata, 20 kms from the ocean. His Semillon vines are 100 years old, dry-farmed bush vines (as the local tradition dictates). The decomposed granite soils and old vines give naturally low yields of intensely-flavoured fruit, which experienced winemaker Ana María Cumsille partially ferments on the skins, then matures for 12 months 80% in local old clay vessels and 20% in used barrels. The resulting wine has a beautiful old gold hue with pale amber hints. Aromatics include dried orange peel, warm earth and green tea. There's definitely a (welcome) tannic grip on the palate from the skilful use of skins, which lends the wine structure alongside the crisp acidity and fresh fruit. There's also an engaging nutty, gently oxidative kick on the finish. A wine that's not afraid to show a few rough edges, and is all the better for them.



Casa Marin Miramar Riesling 2024, Lo Abarca – San Antonio (12%)

94 points – BEST PRODUCER

Following on from the delicious 2022 that featured in last year's Chile Wines of the Year, this version is more youthful and still coalescing – but nonetheless a beautiful wine. There's a well-integrated touch of residual sugar here (12 g/l) which gives a welcome succulence and roundness to the palate. But the high acidity and fresh green flavours ensure this is fundamentally a dry, mineral, invigorating white built for the long-term. It's really well made, with expressive aromatics of green apple, dried limes and grapefruit. A perennial favourite from this outstanding producer – albeit not an easy sell, given Riesling is far from a consumer favourite and Chile isn't particularly known for it anyway. But Felipe Marin says they've built up something of a following for their pure, ageworthy style of Riesling – with restaurants also supporting the cause by seeing its potential as a food wine. Proof that Chile can build categories with time, hard work – and outstanding quality wines (of course).



Masintín Blanco de Itata 2022, Itata (13%)

94 points

Masintín is an intriguing project set up by four wine-loving friends who met in 2017 on a trip through Chile. The idea is to produce small-scale wines that express the many different Chilean terroirs. As they say, 'hidden treasures can be found amongst the many bush-vine plots that scatter the valleys of this amazing country.' And this is one of those gems: winemaker Diego Urra has blended Moscatel with 31% Semillon from bush vines growing on granitic soils. This kind of blend (historic within Itata) can work brilliantly well, so it's something to look out for when you're buying Chilean whites. When done well, it seems to draw the best out of both varieties: Semillon's lime-scented freshness and creamy roundness together with Moscatel's pithy fruit and aromatic lift. There's a slightly natural feel to it, to give it a bit of extra intrigue, but it's far from funky. A very stylish semi-aromatic white with tons of freshness, a long finish and just the right amount of exoticism.



Montes Outer Limits Albariño 2024, Zapallar – Aconcagua Costa (12.5%)

94 points – WHITE DISCOVERY

Tasting an early iteration of Montes' Outer Limits Albariño back in 2020, the verdict was, 'Needs more freshness – though has potential!' Winemaker Aurelio Montes Jr agreed, saying he wanted, 'a more crispy finish'. That one was from the warmer Marchihue region. This one, from cooler coastal Zapallar (around 7 kms from the chilly Pacific Ocean) has all the crispy, crunchy character you want from Albariño – together with a pleasantly peachy, herb-tinged succulence. So the potential has been realised – and the Montes team deserve congratulations for pushing back the boundaries of Chilean wine once again. Hence the award for White Discovery – no doubt we'll be seeing more quality Chilean Albariño in due course, given how popular this variety is becoming with wine drinkers around the world. And clearly Chile can do it well in a refreshing but balanced style, with an elegantly saline finish.





De Martino Single Vineyard La Blanca Semillon 2022, Maipo (12.5%)

93 points

In Sebastián and Marco de Martino's grandfather's time, half the vineyard in Isla de Maipo was planted to white wine, including Semillon. But then times changed and Maipo became 95% red. 'But there is diversity within Maipo and Isla de Maipo is cooler, we can ripen while retaining acidity,' asserts Sebastián, who points to Semillon being successful in Bordeaux alongside reds. 'This is a white wine for grown-ups; the idea is to focus on mouthfeel.' The brothers have been replanting Semillon on the estate ('it's a key white for us'), and this wine comes from vines growing near the river, matured for 14 months in 2,500-litre oak fudres. Marco adds that 2022 was a, 'fantastic' vintage for whites and reds in Isla de Maipo and, 'this was the first harvest we found the style we wanted.' That style shows toasty, nutty, smoked lime rind aromas with a hint of lanolin. On the palate it's complex, marrying a lovely ripe citrus freshness with a buttered toast richness. A wonderfully poised, characterful white – and another intriguing iteration of Chilean Semillon.



Estampa DelViento Riesling 2023, Paredones – Colchagua (12%)

93 points

Since its founding in 2001, Estampa has retained a restlessly innovative edge to its winemaking aspirations. This zesty, dry, expressive Riesling is testament to some skilful winemaking and sound viticultural work. Riesling can do well in coastal sites, including Paredones in western Colchagua. This one shows lime cordial, elderflower and green apple rind aromas. The palate is tangy, refreshing and well balanced. It's zesty with a touch of creamy succulence – and excellent value.



Estampa Inspiración Greco 2022, Colchagua (12.5%)

93 points

This wine was a real contender for White Discovery. It's quite simply delicious, classic Greco – but grown in Marchihue rather than southern Italy. Truth is, Estampa's innovative drive has seen it make wine from all kinds of wonderful Italian grape varieties that have been brought to Colchagua as part of a special project. These varieties include the likes of Nebbiolo, Sangiovese, Aglianico and Montepulciano for reds – and Greco, Fiano and Vermentino for whites. This wine is testament to the validity of this brave vision – and the value of patience. It shows bold aromatics of stone fruit, peach and blanched nuts. The palate is fleshy and structured, with elegant savoury herbal tones. Lovely balance and a certain waxy character too, with a hint of orange pith on the finish. Classy.



Los Vascos Primo Semillon 2023, Apalta – Colchagua (14%)

93 points

Another delicious Chilean Semillon, this time made by the team at Los Vascos in Colchagua. There's a pleasant symmetry to this wine, given Los Vascos is owned by DBR Lafite, a firm rooted in Bordeaux, where Semillon is one of the star white varieties. This version, though, is grown in an old 1930 vineyard in Apalta. The majority of the blend is made in concrete eggs, but part of the juice is matured in barrels for added complexity. The result is a relatively generous style but still with classic Semillon characters – from the toasty, buttery, lanolin aromatics to the citric acidity and phenolic crunch.



Santa Rita Floresta Field Blend Blanco 2023, Apalta – Colchagua (12.5%)

93 points

It's not often you can enjoy a skin-contact blend of Semillon, Sauvignon Vert, Moscatel, Torontel and Corinto made from a vineyard first planted in the 1940s. Much less one as delicious as this. 'It's a white wine we make like a red,' says its creator, Teresita Ovalle. The juice and skins go into open-top barrels in the vertical position for alcoholic fermentation with wild yeast. Then the wine is transferred to concrete eggs for 10 months. 'We're honouring our traditional method of winemaking,' affirms Ovalle. 'We wanted to rescue our heritage – this was being lost into big blends before, it was such a shame.' And good thing she did: the result is unique, with elegant aromas of fresh grapes and apples and notes of fresh bread, ginger and all-spice. On the palate it has discreet tannins, apricot fruit and an almost stoney, mineral density. The long finish has a touch of bruised apple and spice. Different. Savoury. Serious.



Viña Mujeres de Itata La Chamana Orange Moscatel de Alejandría 2022, Itata (13%)

93 points

After their País/Cinsault blend featured in last year's report, this time it's the orange Moscatel from Viña Mujeres that features. This small-scale producer is based in the Ránquil area of the Ñuble region in southern Itata, where María Loreto Alarcón has revived her father's vineyard to excellent effect. The Moscatel is a small one-hectare plot and the grapes are foot-trodden in plastic bins before the juice ferments with the skins. The resultant wine is pale amber in hue with heady orange blossom, stewed grape and kumquat aromas. The palate is dry and well structured, with notes of orange peel and ginger, and a touch of tannin. Nicely done.

Rosé



Echeverría No Es Pituko Rosé País 2023, Maule (13%)

94 points – TOP ROSÉ WINE



We defy you not to feel your heart warmed and your taste buds titillated by this fabulous and fun wine. In order for this to happen, you do have to open your mind a bit, because this is definitely at the rustic and funky end of the spectrum. But it marries two exciting currents in modern Chilean winemaking. Firstly, a willingness to champion Chile's wine heritage (here, in the form of the long-derided País grape variety). And secondly, the courage for Chilean winemakers to let their hair down a bit and go beyond the squeaky clean, cookie-cutter modern wine styles that can just be, well, a bit boring. This rosé is anything but tedious. The fruit is sourced from dry-grown vineyards in the Secano Interior area of Maule. According to Roberto Echeverría, País works well for rosé because it's naturally low in colour but with good acidity and just the right amount of tannin. In the glass, it's cloudy with aromas of wild strawberries, kumquat and ginger. On the palate, it's crisp but with heady floral tones and a fairly wild oxidative kick (think: ginger biscuit and bruised apple) on the finish. Peter's note read: 'It's like a cross between farmhouse cider, Vin Jaune, sherry and Rioja rosado. Wild and dangerously moreish!' Go on, we dare you: dive in.

Reds

Cabernet Sauvignon + Blends



Santa Rita Casa Real Cabernet Sauvignon 2022, Alto Jahuel – Maipo (14%)

98 points – TOP RED WINE

This new Casa Real release is a thing of beauty. Having been lucky enough to taste Casa Real back to its very first vintage in 1989, this is a wine that harks back to that sense of fluidity, freshness and aromatic lift. Winemaker Sebastián Labbé told us during a more recent Casa Real vertical that he aims to make, 'very classic Cabernet, mixing elegance and precision, inspired by the great wines of the Medoc.' He works with French consultants including Eric Boissenot and uses fruit from the Carneros Viejo and Población blocks that have always outperformed within the Alto Jahuel estate nestled against the Andean foothills. The Andean influence moderates the climate, while the deep loamy, stoney soils are well drained, all of which suits Cabernet down to the ground. The 2022 vintage is another key element in the quality matrix – a cooler year, the coldest since 2012, giving a naturally fresher, more elegant style of wine. This, together with Labbé's aspirations for elegance, has given a Cabernet with wonderful line and length, superb tannic finesse and a capacity to age and develop in style. There's a lightness of touch here, a certain understatement that could easily be mistaken for lack of concentration or depth. But that would be to misread an unshowy wine that is reserved in its youth but with much to give. Spend time with it, and aromas of red and black fruit, woodsmoke, warm gravel and foliage emerge. On the palate, it shows fresh acidity, juicy fruit, fine tannin and a long, refined finish. It's superbly judged. And may even age better than the 1989.



Errázuriz Don Maximiano Founder's Reserve 2022, Aconcagua (13.5%)

97 points

After the stellar performance of the 2021 Don Max (Top Red Wine from last year's report), this 2022 vintage has put in a similarly outstanding performance. One of the most appealing aspects to Don Max is its perfume – something too many Chilean Cabernet blends fail to deliver. But this blend of 63% Cabernet Sauvignon, 17% Malbec, 11% Petit Verdot and 9% Carmenere has scents of rich dark fruit, red plums, fresh tobacco, woodsmoke and roasted herbs. It's a sophisticated, nuanced bouquet that bodes well as the wine develops in bottle over time. The palate is fine-textured with velvety, well integrated tannins and a multi-layered flavour profile. A beautifully complete, very accomplished Cabernet blend.



Andes Plateau Cota 500 Cabernet Sauvignon 2023, Cachapoal (14%)

95 points

Felipe Uribe makes his wine in his garage. Visiting his place in San Fernando earlier this year, we greeted each other, then walked across his front yard and into his...winery. OK so the buildings are slightly bigger than your average garage, but you get the picture: winemaking on a humble, human scale. He sat down in front of his neat concrete eggs and oak fudres, and said: 'Where better than your house to make wine? I'm passionate, this is my life, I live in a beautiful place, so why not?!' Uribe was at William Fèvre Chile and when he left in 2012, teamed up with his siblings to start his own project, beginning with just 3,000 bottles. His wines come from different terroirs but all in the eastern, Andean side of the country. This pure Cabernet was grown to the east of Rancagua and was harvested early to promote freshness, then aged in older oak for 10 months. The wine itself has more character and intrigue than your average Chilean Cabernet, with floral, herbal, ginger and dried meat characters framing the ripe dark berry fruit. The tannins are fine, sinewy and assertive, without being aggressive. It's far from being the most polished Cabernet but it's the better for it. It has character and intrigue. Much like Felipe Uribe himself.



Cousiño Macul Lota 2021, Maipo (14%)

95 points

In last year's report we described Cousiño Macul as retaining, 'something of a defiantly old-school air', and if you want proof of that then look no further than this wine. It's like a taste of Chilean Alto Maipo Cabernet from years past, before the bulldozers put paid to the vines and installed houses and shopping malls in their place. But a few brave vineyards have held their ground against the concrete onslaught, for example Cousiño's Macul estate, originally planted by Don Luis Cousiño in the 1860s using pre-phylloxera French vine material. Yields are naturally low and the juice is aged for 18 months in oak barrels, the final blend being 80% Cabernet 20% Merlot. A distinctive eucalypt note adds to the figgy, dried berry and tobacco aromas. The palate is full-bodied and rich, with a spicy finish, but fresh acidity and firm structuring tannins to balance it all. A traditional style, and showing a fair bit of maturity already, but impressive.



El Principal Andetelmo 2022, Maipo Andes (14.5%)

95 points

Gazing out over the sizeable El Principal estate in Pirque, it's hard not to be impressed by the scale and scope of the work that's been done over the years here. The wine project was launched in 1993 when the local Fontaine family teamed up with Jean Paul Valette, former owner of St Emilion Premier Grand Cru Classé Château Pavie. 'Now he knew a good alluvial Cabernet terroir,' quips winemaker Marco Puyo, who took over in 2020 after the Said Handal family assumed full ownership of the estate in 2018. So yes: plenty of work, and gradual changes. 'I prefer to talk about evolution,' says Puyo. 'People like the style of these wines so don't want it to change, but I'm keen to pick a bit earlier and use a little less oak, to promote elegance.' One notable change has been to revert this wine to pure Cabernet made from the oldest (1993) vines, and it spends nearly two years in French oak barrels. It's a mighty wine. Aromatics are expansive, ranging from eucalypt to figs, ripe plums, cassia syrup, ginger and roasted red pepper. The palate shows rich juicy dark fruit, fleshy and dense but with enough freshness to lift and sustain the finish. Tannins are fine, integrated and firm – bordering on rugged. It's a bigger-boned style and works well in this context.



Viu Manent Cuvée Infinito 2022, Colchagua (14%)

95 points

'Everyone calls this wine Viu 8,' grumbles winemaker Patricio Celedón as we taste. 'But it's not an 8! It's the infinity symbol.' We never did get to the bottom of why this is the 'infinite' cuvée – we were too busy tasting. But it certainly has a very long finish, and it's also made from Cabernet and Malbec vines on the winery's San Carlos estate that are over 100 years old (with a bit of Cabernet Franc), so maybe that has something to do with it. This is also a wine that needs time... It's dense and wild and intense. The Malbec marks it aromatically, with hints of dried flowers, blue fruit and fresh ink. The palate is svelte but concentrated, with ultra-fine tannin and a dry, silky finish. Best lay this down for a while to get the best out of it. Oh, and be sure to call it the right name.



Andes Plateau AP 2022, Pirque – Maipo (13.4%)

94 points

This is Felipe Uribe's top wine, a blend of mostly Cabernet Sauvignon with equal parts Cabernet Franc and Merlot grown in the Pirque sub-region of Alto Maipo. 'If you put your heart and soul into Cabernet,' expounds Uribe, 'it pays you back and more.' Uribe knows this area well, having worked round the corner at William Fèvre Chile, and with this wine you get the sense of a winemaker who knows his art and craft so well, he's not afraid to have a bit of fun and walk on the wild side. There's a heady floral, meaty side to the black fruit aromas that raises an initial eyebrow. Then the tannins are pretty grippy and the acidity notably fresh, giving a vibrant, lifted finish. It's definitely not your standard Pirque Cabernet blend but you can't help but warm to its vibrancy and exotic, almost rustic edge.



El Principal Memorias 2023, Maipo Andes (14.5%)

94 points

Where Andetelmo is pure Cabernet, this Memorias is a blend based around Cabernet but incorporating Petit Verdot and Cabernet Franc. Winemaker Marco Puyo has evolved the style in recent years. It used to be a blend of 4-5 varieties but he's homed in on these three. He's particularly excited about the Cabernet Franc, which grows on hillside sites and is one of the earliest varieties they pick, giving good acidity, red fruit and a touch of spice. There are definite similarities with the Andetelmo (eucalypt aromas, rich dense style, firm tannins) but this Memorias does have a freshness, crunch and lift to it that's very appealing. Still a richer style in the global context, but an interesting counterpart to its bigger brother. (It's also about a third of the price of the Andetelmo.)



Don Melchor Cabernet Sauvignon 2022, Puente Alto – Maipo (15%)

94 points

Last year they made 240 different wines at Don Melchor. So how come they only end up with one? It's all about having blending options. (Plus, it's a fairly extensive vineyard, covering 125 hectares in total.) They've also been making experimental lots from their sundial vineyard to study the precise effects of vine row orientation and planting density on wine quality (turns out the best orientation isn't north-south, nor east-west, but EES-WWN). And, to be up-to-date, they've also just launched (after 35 years of having just one wine) a new single-parcel wine from this 2022 vintage – called DM/01, with 'fantastic red fruit expression and balance', according to winemaker Enrique Tirado. But the level of detail gives you an idea of the meticulous (some might say obsessive) focus at this operation. The blend in this 2022 is similar to the 2021 that appeared in last year's report, but incorporates 1% Petit Verdot to go alongside the 1% Merlot and 3% Cabernet Franc to complement the backbone of Cabernet Sauvignon. The result is an explosion of rich dark fruit, lavishly oaked, tempered somewhat by the gravelly tannin and earthy undertones.



Miguel Torres Manso de Velasco Cabernet Sauvignon 2020, Curicó (13.5%)

94 points

Given the impressive range of wines that Miguel Torres Chile makes these days, it's fair to say that winemaker Eduardo Jordán keeps himself busy. But catching up with him in situ in early 2025, he was as buzzy and enthused as ever, even excitedly confiding news of a 'secret guerrilla' wine project that would be new for the portfolio in the future. Manso de Velasco, by contrast, is one of the more traditional wines in the range – but it's good to see the focus isn't just on the exciting new things, because this is a wine that has been steadily improving lately. It's made from old Cabernet vines in Curicó, some dating back more than 115 years. In the past, it has sometimes lapsed into excess, but this 2020 vintage is structured and fresh, with a lovely roasted leaf lift and a very moreish finish. It's a little stern in temperament now but this should soften with further time in bottle – its savoury, earthy character a nod to the land and people that made it. One for the thinking drinkers out there.



Morandé El Cabernet de Ránquil La Capilla 2020, Itata (13%)

94 points

Shifting the dial on Chilean Cabernet Sauvignon is not an easy business. Just that one variety covers a whopping 28% of the entire Chilean wine vineyard. In the past, there has tended to be a certain dull homogeneity to a lot of Chilean Cab – but now that's starting to change, in part due to projects like this. Morandé head winemaker Ricardo Baettig is the curious type, so when he came across a very old (120 years +) Cabernet vineyard in Ránquil, Itata, he knew he could make something special. And, more importantly, different. He says his duty is to interpret these grapes, 'in the purest manner possible,' in order to share the vineyard's, 'honest singularity.' This was the first vintage he made – and it's immediately obvious when tasting that this is a wine that speaks a different idiom to other Chilean Cabs. It has a lightness and lift to it, a freshness like an early morning walk through a damp mountain forest. Flavours of red and black fruit, and a touch of wild mint feature as the wine flows easily across the palate, punctuated by fine but delicate tannins. It's a midweight style that's very easy in its own skin. A ballet dancer in a world of body builders.



VIK A Cabernet Nouveau 2024, Cachapoal (12.5%)

94 points – RED INNOVATION

Some wines just make you smile. This is one of those. VIK has never been afraid to do things differently – and this wine is liquid proof of that bold creative drive. In short, it's a Cabernet in the style of Beaujolais Nouveau. And why the hell not?! Chile has too much Cab on its hands. And the world loves a lower alcohol, smashable red these days – which is precisely what this is. It's not made exactly like Beaujolais Nouveau (there's no carbonic maceration, for example). But certain blocks of Cabernet were carefully chosen, the fruit from which underwent a quick fermentation that was drained off the skins mid-way through, after 4-5 days, hence minimal extraction of tannins. The result is a pale ruby red brimming with fresh cherry, stemmy, floral aromas and a juicy, crunchy, eminently gluggable flavour profile. It's innovative, it's different – and it's fun. Like a puppy dog in wine form. Serve it lightly chilled and enjoy.





Aquitania Lazuli Cabernet Sauvignon 2021, Peñalolén – Maipo (14.5%)

93 points

Aquitania has a vineyard in the south of Chile (Malleco) but its main HQ is perched in the low foothills of the Andean pre-cordillera in Peñalolén. This was one of the original wine hotspots in Chile in the aftermath of the conquistadores and their like bringing vines to South America. These days, it's effectively a suburb of the capital Santiago – standing in the gently sloping vineyards, on a good day you get a panoramic view of the sprawling city, while snow-capped hills lurk behind you. Those hills generate cooling breezes that suit a long-cycle variety like Cabernet, and this (Aquitania's top bottling) is a classic expression of the place. Aromas include rich cassis fruit, eucalyptus oil, dried herbs, figs and a touch of tobacco. The palate is full-bodied and generous but with fine, drying tannins. A classic Alto Maipo Cab from the old school, lots of wine here, one to drink with hearty food.



Aristos Duque d'A 2017, Cachapoal (14.5%)

93 points – BEST WINEMAKER

François Massoc is not a winemaker who shies away from bold statements in his wines. And it's always a treat to be able to taste a mature Chilean Cabernet that was designed to age. This fruit was sourced from a vineyard at 1,000 metres above sea level on alluvial terraces in the eastern Cachapoal hills. It's mostly Cabernet Sauvignon with 5% Merlot, aged in French oak barrels for 24 months. Creamy dried fruit and tobacco aromas lead into a voluptuous palate profile with luscious texture, rich fruit and firm drying tannins. Fleshy but grounded, with warming spice on the finish. A very impressive style, probably one to drink up soon.



Carmen Gold Cabernet Sauvignon 2022, Alto Jahuel – Maipo (13.5%)

93 points

'We work to find the balance between concentration and elegance,' commented head winemaker Ana María Cumsille when we tasted this wine together in situ earlier this year. 'It's the most difficult thing when you make a top red wine, finding that fine line.' But that's exactly what this dense, gravelly but lifted red does – balancing intensity with refinement in a most engaging way. The wine is mostly Cabernet Sauvignon with 6% Cabernet Franc; the team work assiduously to imbue the wine with freshness to complement the natural richness. It's aged for 24 months in French oak barrels (40% new) and shows notes of ripe blackcurrant, figs and roasted red pepper. The palate is firm and structured, with sinewy tannin and a savoury, elegant finish. Will benefit from bottle age.



De Martino Cuvée 2022, Isla de Maipo (13%)

93 points

'This,' smiles Marco de Martino, 'is the best red we can make in Maipo.' His brother Sebastián adds, 'This wine represents our idea of finesse.' For some time now, the brothers have been working to prioritise freshness and elegance in their wines, carrying out soil and climate studies, and working on canopy management and other techniques to be able to harvest earlier and fine-tune the winemaking. At their Isla de Maipo HQ (the Santa Inés vineyard) they first launched La Cancha Cabernet – and from that work emerged three blocks that ultimately became Cuvée, the first vintage of which was 2020. The 2022 vintage was a slightly cooler year, enabling the team to deliver on Sebastián's aim to make, 'wines that energise you, not tire you.' And energy is exactly what you get in the glass: from the bright fruit and lifted floral, peppery aromatics to the juicy, tangy, perfumed, midweight palate profile. It's a positively invigorating style of Maipo Cab that dares to be different. It will be fascinating to see how this wine develops in bottle too.



Santa Ema Catalina 2021, Pirque – Maipo (14%)

93 points

This blend of mostly Cabernet Sauvignon with 20% Carmenere and 8% Cabernet Franc packs in a fair bit of wine for the price (around £35 in the UK). The Pavone family have Italian roots but have been making wine in Chile for some time now, this one is grown in Pirque in Maipo Alto and you get all that sense of rich ripe fruit, minty lift and firm structure typical of this area. There's a fair whack of new oak in the winemaking and that's front and centre in the finished wine too – with creamy, coconut aromas and textures. The tannin is fine and chalky, offsetting the fruitcake flavours. It's old school but enjoyable.



Tres Mosqueteros Ícono Cabernet Sauvignon 2022, Maule (14%)

93 points

Questionable nomenclature aside (calling a wine 'icon' can make for challenging expectation management), this is a wine that certainly packs a punch. The 'three musketeers' are from the Correa Lisoni family, with vineyards across Rapel and Maule. Rich plum, dark chocolate and menthol notes characterise the nose. The palate is quite chunky and muscular, with hints of dried meat, woodsmoke and jammy fruit. Complex and powerful.



VIK Milla Cala 2021, Cachapoal (14%)

93 points

Where VIK's Cabernet Nouveau inhabits the lighter end of the Cabernet spectrum, this Milla Cala is the polar opposite. It's a blend of 66% Cabernet Sauvignon, 23% Carmenere, 7% Syrah and 4% Merlot that is bold and dense, with tons of rich dark fruit and smoky aromas. The palate shows notable freshness and lift to sustain the sturdy body, dense tannins and spicy finish.

Carmenere + Blends



TerraNoble CA2 Carmenere Costa 2022, Lolol – Colchagua Costa (14.5%)

96 points

What a delicious Carmenere. TerraNoble, and winemaker Marcelo García, have proved themselves dab hands with this variety in recent years. They make a fair few wines either majoring on or incorporating Carmenere in their portfolio, but it's the CA1 and CA2 duo where the variety really shines. CA1 is from the eastern part of the Colchagua Valley (Los Lingues) whereas this CA2 is from Lolol in the western, more coastal part of the region, and is a slightly fresher, more lifted style. García is increasingly harvesting earlier and using less oak in the wines, to allow the terroir to shine through. He also uses 8-10% stems to give, 'more electricity and nerve' to the wines. The 2022 was a slightly cooler vintage and the wine shows attractive leafy notes as well as ripe red pepper and plum fruit. The palate is juicy and upbeat, with plenty of tannin. No shortage of concentration and layered complexity here, but it's also refreshing and savoury and moreish, with a long length. Seriously impressive. Good value, too.



Casa Silva S7 Carmenere 2023, Colchagua Andes (14%)

95 points

Perusing the Carmenere garden in Casa Silva's Los Lingues vineyard is quite the education. It's a research vineyard incorporating 72 different phenotypes of Carmenere – though further study has revealed these relate only to two (possibly three) different clones. It's a reminder of the significant research Casa Silva has put into Carmenere, which has led to fine-tuning in both the vineyard and winery over the years to maximise quality. Los Lingues has emerged as a top-performing site, the cool Andean breezes ensuring long ripening, and block selections within the large 300-hectare vineyard allowing plenty of room for blending material. This wine is made from the best part of the S7 block, aged for 12 months in French oak barrels (with 20% in stainless steel to retain freshness). It combines dark fruit and meaty intensity with a peppery, juicy, leafy lift. There's a slight resinous tinge and smoky note too. Structured and long – but also fun, and hard not to like.



Emiliana 57 Rocas 2021, Colchagua (14%)

95 points

Sustainability is at the heart of Emiliana's mission and in 2023 it celebrated 25 years of organic viticulture. This after reaching the major milestone in 2021 of a million cases of organic wine sold worldwide. (Over the years it has also received B Corp, regenerative organic and FairTrade accreditations.) So quite some track record – meanwhile, this 57 Rocas Carmenere is a relative newcomer to the portfolio, launched in 2022 with the 2019 vintage. It's grown in their (home) Los Robles estate in Colchagua and matured for 15 months mainly in concrete eggs, with 8% in new French barrels. The result is an appealing varietal Carmenere with impressive weight and definition. Beyond the firm fine tannin and succulent dark fruit, there are savoury, meaty, leafy, earthy and woody nuances. It's a full-bodied expression of Carmenere but one that retains enough freshness and aromatic intrigue to render it really rather yummy.



Concha y Toro Terrunyo Carmenere 2023, Peumo – Cachapoal (14.5%)

94 points

The team at Concha y Toro have been doing excellent work of late on their Carmeneres (and Cabernets), working to increase freshness and varietal typicity. Peumo is a relatively warm site with deep soils in central Cachapoal and 2023 was a warmer vintage, but this perennial favourite still delivers freshness and herbal, leafy varietal character. The fruit is vibrant and fresh, damsons and plums to the fore, with red pepper hints. A wonderfully balanced and juicy red that incorporates 5% Maipo Cabernet and was aged for nine months in French oak barrels (60% new).



Caliterra Pétreo Carmenere 2023, Colchagua (13.5%)

93 points

'Perfect pizza wine,' was Peter's note. And that's not to be pejorative – Peter likes his pizza. What it refers to is the way this wine marries lovely upbeat freshness (red pepper, fresh plum and damson fruit) with savoury appeal (roasted green pepper, bay leaf). It also alludes to the excellent value on offer here, despite the fact the wine was aged for 18 months in (used) French oak barrels. A really rewarding and faithfully varietal, fresh expression of Carmenere. Very easy-drinking and superb value for money.



Casa Bauzá Atrevido 2022, Valle Central (14%)

93 points

An intriguing blend – and quite the wine. It brings together fruit from three different regions: Cachapoal, Colchagua and Maule. (A few producers do this in Chile, maybe not enough, because different regional fruit profiles can be entirely complementary.) The blend is 43% Carmenere (Cachapoal), 28% Syrah (Colchagua), 15% Carignan (Maule) and 14% Cabernet Franc (Colchagua). Phew. It's matured for 18 months in a mixture of French oak barrels, larger format oak fudres and inert Flexicubes. It's a rich, dense, dark style with vibrant dark fruit and a layered, intense flavour profile. Long, complex and with an engaging peppery undertone. Something a bit different.



Concha y Toro Carmín de Peumo 2023, Peumo – Cachapoal (14%)

93 points

Where Concha y Toro's Terrunyo Carmenere (see above) is sourced from Block 27 in Peumo, this Carmín is made from older vines in Block 32. In the early days, Concha head winemaker Marcelo Papa admits Carmín was, 'a super ripe, super oaky bomb of a wine'. But then they decided to change tack and work for freshness – harvesting earlier, using softer extractions, less oak. They're also now starting to use stems, for extra freshness and crunch on the palate. 'Stems are a useful tool we never imagined using before, but it's opened doors we never thought possible,' says Papa. It's still a deep, brooding style but it gradually opens up with intriguing grassy, red pepper, soy, damson and warm forest aromas. There's a creamy oak character, sure (it spends 13 months in 75% new French oak barrels). But the blend adds nuance (there's 45% Cab Sav, 4% Cab Franc and 4% Petit Verdot in the mix). And ultimately it's an impressive, showy Carmenere that will appeal to hedonists and Carmenere fans alike.



Valdivieso Caballo Loco Grand Cru Apalta 2023, Apalta – Colchagua (14.5%)

93 points

The Caballo Loco stable has proved fecund over the years. It's grown from the first multi-vintage red blend in 1994 to now incorporate individual varietal-led single-region wines (such as this) and even a white and sparkling edition. This 'Grand Cru Apalta' is made up of 70% Carmenere and 30% Cabernet Sauvignon, matured for two years in French oak barrels. It's a creamy, friendly, big bouncy style of red (as is typical of this range) – but also one that retains red fruit freshness and red pepper varietal Carmenere character.



Viu Manent El Incidente Gran Carmenere 2022, Colchagua (14%)

93 points

The label sports an intriguing picture of a hot air balloon careering over vineyards, and refers to a real-life incident involving owner José Miguel Viu and some friends. We don't want to issue any spoilers here, though. So turning to the wine, it incorporates Carmenere grown on hillsides in the El Olivar vineyard and old-vine Malbec from Cunaco. Winemaker Patricio Celedón reckons this 2022 vintage is the best version of this wine he's ever made, better even than the 2021 which appeared in last year's report. The blend does indeed work well, marrying the earthy red pepper tones of Carmenere with the dark fruit florality and stern graphite density of Malbec. It's rich but savoury, with a firm structure and long finish. One for wine adventurers.



Von Siebenthal Orocoipo Carmenere 2023, Aconcagua (14.5%)

93 points

Another blockbuster red from the Aconcagua winery founded by Swiss lawyer Mauro von Siebenthal. It's 100% Carmenere grown in Panquehue, aged for 18 months in oak barrels (30% new). It's very much at the riper end of the Carmenere spectrum, with luscious dark fruit flavours complemented by creamy oak, vanilla and dark coffee hints. It's heady, with firm tannins and a touch of eucalypt, but also grounded.

Syrah + Blends



Casa Marin Miramar Syrah 2015, Lo Abarca – San Antonio (13%)

98 points – BEST PRODUCER



This wine is a plea in liquid form. It is, quite simply, sensational Syrah. It came within a whisker of beating Casa Real to the Top Red award this year. Its refined perfume features notes of black pepper, olives, gunflint and fresh blackberries. The palate profile is so elegant and refreshing, with wonderful crunchy fruit, savoury layers and a vibrant finish. It's beautifully mature, with hints of tobacco leaf and dried meat creeping in, but it's in no way fading. It manages that rare feat for a red wine of marrying dizzying complexity with a wonderful lightness of touch. And yet it's really not very expensive for what it is. So what's going on here? Well, we went to chat with Felipe and Mariluz Marin and stood in their Syrah vineyard with them. 'The only variety we struggle to sell is our Syrah,' sighs Felipe. 'It's a very different style from most other New World Shiraz, it's hard to get ripe then needs time in barrel and bottle. We started to have a backlog of stock...' Long story short, they used to have 5 hectares of Syrah, now they only have 1.5 ha. This 2015 is their current vintage on sale. Before we left, we extracted a promise from them to not give up on Syrah. Our side of the bargain was to champion this absurdly under-appreciated wine. So there you have it: buy this stunning Syrah, please! It's delicious. We may risk losing one of the gems of global Syrah if this wine continues to remain as under-appreciated as it currently is.



Matetic EQ Cool Climate Syrah 2021, San Antonio (14%)

97 points

This is cool-climate Syrah on steroids. What do we Syrah-lovers want from a cool climate expression? We want olives. We want dried meat. We want violets. We want black pepper. We want savoury intensity in almost carnal glory. (Well, some of us do.) And that's exactly what you get here. Matetic's EQ Syrah can be almost too much sometimes but 2021 was cooler and cloudier, meaning fresher acidity and less heft in the final wine. What this bottle doesn't scrimp on, though, are those classic peppery, floral, blue and black fruit flavours. It's bold and savoury, with a succulent and spicy palate presence. Biodynamically farmed and aged for 18 months in French oak barrels.



Garcés Silva Amayna Côte d'Mar 2022, Leyda (14%)

96 points

Imagine you're a well-respected Chilean winery struggling to sell your cool-climate Syrah, despite the fact it's delicious. What do you do? Well, in Garcés Silva's case, you don't sell it as Syrah. You tweak the blend, adding in a touch (5%) of Viognier to the Syrah ferment, and a dollop (10%) of Garnacha to the final blend. And you come up with a fancy name: Côte d'Mar. As if Côte Rôtie had come to the Chilean seaside... And that's pretty much what this wine tastes like. It's positively wild in the glass, bursting with violet florality, black pepper, meaty, tapenade and dark berry aromas. The palate is elegantly bittersweet, shot through with savoury peppery notes and hints of bacon fat. It's a profoundly gastronomic wine, with ultra-fine grippy tannin and a long finish. We'll leave the last words to winemaker Diego Rivera. 'People love this wine but won't buy it because it's 'Syrah'. It happens too often so we wanted to shift people's expectations. It's one of the best wines we make here. Give Syrah a chance.'



Garage Wine Co. Lot 108 Truquilemu Syrah 2019, Empedrado - Maule (13%)

95 points

When it comes to Chilean wine, Garage is a producer worth seeking out. And not just because their wines are delicious and rewarding (which they have a cheerful tendency to be). It's because of the intangible value they add to the Chilean wine scene. The Garage people are fierce protectors of, and bold advocates for, Chile's precious wine heritage. They strive to build communities where parochial rivalries prevail. They take the time to study, to learn, to listen and to apply these lessons. Most of all, they tell stories – through wines and words. All we have to do is pay attention. Like with this wine – a vibrant, complex, elegantly midweight Syrah from the coolish Truquilemu area in western Maule. It shows evolving aromas of dried fruit, tobacco, black pepper and sweet spices. The acidity is tangy, the flavours savoury as well as fruity, the finish elegantly bittersweet. So you wonder: Syrah from coastal Maule isn't that common, but this is a really interesting style, so what's the story? Turns out this Syrah was top-grafted onto old (150 years +) País vine roots. There's just a bit of it across the creek from where Garage grow their Carignan. 'It's hard to imagine someone having the patience to plant a red vineyard in this part of Empedrado so long ago,' writes Garage partner Derek Mossman Knapp. 'It is very cool here. It must have taken forever for these vineyards to come into their own. Good thing someone had patience all those years ago...'



Cata Terroirs Gran Cata Syrah 2022, Itata (14.2%)

94 points

One of the great beauties of Chilean Syrah is that it has a winning knack of popping up in all sorts of weird and wonderful places. And, when it does, it has an amenable tendency to make a style of wine that's just very slightly different to all the other weird and wonderful places it grows. Now, that may put people off, because they don't necessarily know what to expect. We'd say it's a sign that Syrah is well suited to Chile (and vice versa) and the diversity is part of the beauty. This wine, from Chillán Viejo in Itata, is full of raspberry and blueberry fruit, with hints of wildflowers and fresh herbs. It has a flinty, mineral undertow to the palate and vibrant fruit expression. Maybe just a hint of dried meat in the mix. Serious stuff. Different and good!



Clos du Lican 2022, Apalta - Colchagua (15%)

94 points

Clos du Lican is a new project from Alexandra Marnier Lapostolle and Cyril de Bournet, the husband-and-wife team behind Casa Lapostolle. In 2004 the couple bought a vineyard just five kilometres away from their Clos Apalta HQ to work on a side-project. It was a labour of love developing this vineyard surrounded by hills – Alexandra's father Jacques visited from France at one point and declared it would take a miracle to pull it off. But now the 15-odd hectares are planted mainly to Syrah though with bits of Viognier, Mourvèdre, Grenache and Cabernet Sauvignon. And the wine? From initial impressions, this 100% Syrah comes across as a bit of a bruiser. Intensely creamy, rich fruited aromas give pause before the palate delivers more freshness and svelte tannins than might be expected. Sure, it's a lavish and generous expression (you'd define it as Shiraz rather than Syrah) but with more nuance than you might at first expect.



Casas del Bosque Pequeñas Syrah 2023, Casablanca Costa (14%)

93 points

Casas del Bosque is located in Las Dichas, western Casablanca, where the cooling coastal influence is keenly felt. They've done a fine line in cool-climate Syrah for a while now – but that doesn't mean it's easy to sell. 'It's pretty difficult to sell Syrah,' concedes winemaker Alberto Guolo. So what's the best way to persuade people to buy it, we ask? 'Just get people tasting it,' he smiles. And this is the crazy thing: cool-climate Chilean Syrah is delicious. It's just that the category is still struggling to establish itself. Meantime, the wines are relative bargains... This 2023 vintage is vibrant and peppery, with juicy blackberry flavours and a wonderful poise and balance on the palate. Lip-smackingly good.



Luis Felipe Edwards LFE900 Single Vineyard 2020, Colchagua (14.5%)

93 points

This wine doesn't take any prisoners. Right from the off, it's brooding and intense, with tons of raisined dark fruit and creamy tones. There's maturity here too – this is a five-year-old wine after all – with notes of tobacco, cacao, coffee and woodsmoke. The tannins are still firm and solid, offset by the rich fruit and sweet spice. It's full-on – but if that's your bag, tuck in. The blend is 69% Shiraz, 16% Petite Syrah, 13% Cabernet Sauvignon, 1% Mourvèdre and 1% Carmenere. It was grown on the Puquillay hill in central Colchagua and 2020 was a very warm vintage. The wine was aged for 24 months in French and American oak barrels, 60% new. So yes: a gutsy wine from start to finish.

Carignan + Blends



Carmen VIGNO 2023, Melozal – Maule (14%)

95 points

VIGNO is an outstanding initiative whereby a group of producers come together under a shared banner to promote old-vine, dry-farmed Carignan from Maule. It's worked wonders (see intro for more on this). Carmen is a relatively recent addition to the group but this is a superb wine made from 60-year-old bush-trained vines in the Melozal area. The issue with old-vine Carignan is that it can sometimes just be too intense – too tannic, too acidic, too much of everything. The challenge is taming it. 'The key is to pick early and be careful with the extraction, aiming for infusion, and only using old barrels,' says winemaker Ana María Cumsille. The result could be described as new-wave VIGNO: with all the floral, meaty, flinty, earthy wildness you'd expect from expressive Maule Carignan, but a sleek, juicy, svelte palate profile with compact tannin and a lovely bittersweet finish.



Carter Mollenhauer Ciénaga de Name Carignan 2023, Maule (13.5%)

95 points

With the 2022 vintage of this wine having won Red Discovery in last year's report, this 2023 version is similarly impressive. (In fact, we liked Carter Mollenhauer's wines so much this year they were very much in contention for the Best Winemaker award.) Ciénaga de Name is sourced from a coolish part of the Cauquenes region: ungrafted, dry-farmed bush vines, cultivated organically and ploughed by horse. The 2023 vintage was warm but winemaking was gentle and the result is a juicy, refreshing red with aromas of blackberry, pot pourri and dried meat. It has a slightly wild, rustic feel to it that adds to rather than detracts from the charm.



Carter Mollenhauer Viñedo Truquilemu Carignan 2022, Maule (13%)

95 points – RED DISCOVERY

Another 100% Maule Carignan from Carter Mollenhauer; another delicious wine. This one, though, is sourced from Truquilemu, which is cooler than the Ciénaga de Name vineyard because the coastal hills are lower in this area, meaning the cooling influence of the Pacific is more pervasive. As a result, this fruit is harvested some seven weeks after Ciénaga de Name, and you get these floral, lifted, tangy characters in the wine that are genuinely delightful. As with the Ciénaga de Name, there's a definite wildness and rusticity here that's part of the charm, and boy does it all come together. This is a wine that sings – with wonderful vibrancy and individuality. The tannins are compact, fine-textured and svelte. Such a cool wine (in all senses of the word).



Odfjell Orzada Carignan 2022, Maule (14%)

94 points

Although based in Maipo, Odfjell has done a great job for many years now of crafting expressive, intense Carignans from Maule. This 2022 Orzada is no exception – a muscular, brooding style with ferruginous dark berry fruit and flinty, herbal characters. The palate is firm and sinewy with hints of eucalypt and no shortage of energy.





Ana María Cumsille Lomas Coloradas Cariñena 2023, Itata (13.5%)

93 points

Chilean Carignan isn't just about Maule. Here in Ránquil (Itata), Ana María Cumsille works with 80-year-old bush vines on gentle granitic slopes to give a wine that's chock full of black cherry, ginger and eucalypt character. Plenty of concentration and potency on the palate, with a spicy finish. Lovely energy and freshness.



VIGNO by Dagaz 2022, Maule (14.5%)

93 points

Dagaz is the personal project of experienced winemaker Marco Puyo. He makes wines from Colchagua to Itata but this is his VIGNO wine from Sauzal in Maule, sourced from bush vines planted in 1900. The wine was matured for 18 months in old, used French barrels. Aromas are on the riper side, with baked plum, almond and blueberry hints. The palate is rich, rounded and spicy, with firm tannins framing the flavours and a bittersweet acidity marking the finish. One to chill slightly and serve with hearty food.

Pinot Noir



Cono Sur Ocio Pinot Noir 2021, San Antonio (14%)

95 points

If you visit Cono Sur's HQ in Chimbarongo, there are plenty of things to do. You can bicycle serenely round the vineyards. You can meet the friendly geese, who are used as natural pest control in the vineyards. And you can pop into the 'Ocio' cellar, part of the winemaking facilities that have been hived off just for this top Pinot Noir project, and which incorporates a darkened temple space with a large-format bottle of Ocio dramatically spotlighted in the centre. It's pure theatre, but it reminds you how important Pinot Noir is to Cono Sur – it's one of their historic specialities and one of their biggest selling varieties (rare for any Chilean winery, let alone one that sells millions of cases per year). They've benefited from the advice of Burgundian Martin Prieur for many years now but they continue to evolve – for example, last year's Ocio (2020) that scored highly in this report was sourced from Casablanca. This year they made the big call to make the wine from nearby San Antonio instead. How come? Many reasons – but prime among them quality. They felt the San Antonio vineyards, planted around 20 years ago, were finally hitting their stride (they always used to incorporate a bit of San Antonio fruit anyway). As for whether the big move has paid off – well, here we are. Complex and refined aromas of ripe summer berry fruit are complemented by notes of sweet spice, rosemary, roasted nuts and woodsmoke. The palate has Ocio's trademark richness but also superb grounding, with fresh acidity, ultra-fine tannin and a nuanced, lingering finish. Replete but not overdone. A bold Pinot – classy, complex and refined. The evolution continues.



Baettig Vino de Viñedo Los Parientes Pinot Noir 2023, Traiguén – Malleco (13.5%)

94 points

A warmer vintage in Traiguén encouraged Francisco Baettig to pick earlier than normal to retain freshness. He then used 15% whole cluster in the fermentation before maturing the wine for eight months in French oak barrels (8% new). This level of detail is typical of the man, one of Chile's most experienced and intuitive winemakers, who after many years working for others is now finally flexing his full creative potential with this project. He makes a mean Chardonnay (see above) but the Pinot is very exciting too. Baettig manages to conjure a particular, almost haunting scent from his best Malleco Pinots that few others achieve. This one shows distinctive aromas of dark berry fruit, pot pourri, wildflowers and warm earth. If you're referencing Burgundy, it's pure Côte de Nuits. Then the palate is juicy, smoky and tense. There's a definite smokiness running throughout the wine, and you can taste the herbal flavour and grippy texture of the stems (no bad thing). In summary: a very classy Pinot, complex and refreshing. And these wines will continue to improve as the vines age too.



Mayu Gran Reserva Pinot Noir Titón Single Vineyard 2023, Elqui (14%)

94 points – BEST VALUE RED

It's always exciting when a Pinot Noir can land a Best Value award. At around £14 in the UK, this is a hugely characterful, somewhat wild style of Pinot Noir – but one which charms you with its sappy, gamey, peppery red fruits and elegantly bittersweet finish. Some Pinot can verge on blandness – this one is anything but. That's partly down to where it grows and who makes it. Giorgio Flessati is a genial Italian with a megawatt smile and an ebullient character. He's been overseeing winemaking here at the Falernia/Mayu operation in Elqui for many years now, consistently coaxing character and beauty from the wines, aided by the bright sunlight and refreshing mountain air in this steep-sided northern valley. This Titón vineyard in Elqui has been a reliable source of outstanding wines, most notably Syrah, and this Pinot almost has shades of Syrah's peppery, meaty allure. Something a bit different, and definitely good value.



TerraNoble Algarrobo Pinot Noir 2024, Casablanca (12.5%)

94 points

As well as doing great things with Carmenere (see above), TerraNoble winemaker Marcelo García is doing excellent work with Pinot Noir. He's keen, for example, to release a new top Pinot made from the impressive GA04 'Vosne Romanée' clone, whose small, intensely flavoured berries we tasted off the vine in Casablanca. That will be one to look out for. Meantime, this elegant, youthful number is made from clones 777 and Guillaume in the same cool Las Dichas vineyard, and matured in a mix of French oak barrels, untoasted fudres and concrete eggs. The nose shows brambly fruit with an earthy, sappy complexity to it. The palate is full of red berry fruit and leafy flavours, with an elegantly bittersweet finish. A cultured style that would work well with food. Good value, too.



Garcés Silva Amayna Pinot Noir 2023, Leyda (13.5%)

93 points

A fairly assertive, brooding style of Pinot Noir from Garcés Silva that's a blend of three different blocks (and three different clones) on their Leyda property, matured for 12 months in oak. Charry, sappy, berry fruit aromas with hints of rosehip and gunflint. The palate is grippy and structured, with layered fruit and spice flavours and a powerful finish. A bold, savoury style that should develop extra nuance in bottle.





Miguel Torres Escaleras de Empedrado Pinot Noir 2021, Empedrado – Maule (13.5%)

93 points

Talk to Miguel Torres winemaker Eduardo Jordán about the challenges they've encountered developing their Empedrado vineyard, and a shadow will pass across his cheerful face. From forest fires destroying vines (2017) to devastating frost events (2020), rabbits eating vines, entire crops lost to birds (2011), soil erosion on steep slate slopes and lack of water in this isolated outpost, this western Maule site is not for the faint-hearted viticulturist. 'But it's always the most extreme sites that make the best wine,' asserts Eduardo, as his grin returns. Good thing the Torres family back him to the hilt on this project, which must have tested anyone's patience – and a good barometer of their fluctuating fortunes is this Pinot Noir. A vertical tasting back to 2013 on a recent visit was illuminating – this is a wine that's gone from underpowered and austere to finally, with this 2021 vintage, hitting form. Eduardo has been on trips to Germany (Ahr) and New Zealand (Central Otago) to see how slate marks Pinot Noir (these wines are typically powerful early on so need time to evolve). He's adjusted the canopy management and vineyard sourcing, he's using more stems in the ferment – and the result is a nuanced and insistent style that majors more on palate presence than aroma (at least, at this stage). On the nose it shows baked floral and red berry aromas, with a hint of stemmy complexity. In the mouth you get fine structuring tannin with wonderful wild herb, fresh berry and floral characters. There's a certain cool minerality (austerity) on the finish but it sits well within the wine. An ageworthy, refined style that's a different register from other Chilean Pinots. One to watch in the future too.

País + blends



Carter Mollenhauer Lonquén Arriba Vino de Parcela 2023, Pachagua – Itata (12.7%)

95 points

Yet more high scores from Carter Mollenhauer, this hugely impressive southern Chile producer that makes wines with individuality and verve. As well as doing a fine line in Carignan (see above), they make outstanding País, a variety they take very seriously (unlike many other Chilean winemakers historically). Lonquén Arriba is the name they've given to the best part of their País parcel in Pachagua (Itata), a small one-hectare plot near to the Lonquén river. It's farmed by 85-year-old Jerman Urrutia and the vines are thought to have been first planted around 1800 (yes, that's 220+ years ago...) The 2023 vintage was warm but these venerable dry-farmed bush vines were harvested early and gave intense, fresh fruit. The wine itself has a sense of wildness and individual character, with earthy meaty floral red berry aromas and a grippy, juicy palate profile. It's not without rough edges but makes for a glorious accompaniment to a meal and high spirits.



Malvoa Gran País 2021, San Rosendo – Bío Bío (14.5%)

95 points

If the País grape variety could speak, it would tell eye-opening stories from the arrival of the first Europeans (conquistadores at their head) some five hundred years ago to the trials and tribulations of modern wine-growing in southern Chile. Some of these vines have seen quite a bit of history – not least the vines that go into making this remarkable wine. According to the archives, in the early 17th century a Spaniard named Esteban Pérez donated a site called 'Melboa' to the Jesuit order. In 2014, the Quevedo Santos family acquired the property on the north bank of the Bío Bío river and discovered an ancient vineyard covering just two hectares and overgrown with weeds and bushes. This 2021 was the first vintage of Gran País – a name that alludes to the lofty ambitions at play here. No messing around: this wine was aged for two years in new French oak barrels (virtually unheard of for País). It's four years old, the alcohol is high for País...will this work?! Well, blow us down but it does. Intriguing aromas of forest floor, wild red fruit and baked plum, with a touch of tobacco maturity. Complex and refined aromatics for País – almost more reminiscent of Pinot Noir. The palate is serious and structured, with tense tannin and layered flavours of fruit and dried herb. 'Really pretty joyous,' wrote Susie. Peter's conclusion: 'Serious stuff!'



Carter Mollenhauer Aurora de Itata País 2024, Itata (12.6%)

94 points

Another spectacular Itata País from Carter Mollenhauer (see above). This one is sourced not only from the ancient Pachagua vineyard but also nearby Trehuaco. What's more, 2024 was a notably cool, long vintage, harvested three weeks later than in 2023, and represents, in Edgard Carter's words, 'the best of Carter Mollenhauer's ten years.' Grapes were foot-trodden and then the juice aged for five months in old French oak barrels, before maturing a further four months in concrete vats. Earthy plum, wildflower and sour cherry aromas. Hints of leather and dried meat emerge in the glass. Fine, elegantly drying tannins on the palate. It cries out for a plate of charcuterie and fun company. Lovely density at its core and an appealing rustic edge.



Bouchon País Salvaje Tinto 2023, Maule (13%)

93 points

Wine as nature intended. Google the name and check out the harvest photo. You'll see people climbing perilously up ladders resting against trees – because these special vines have been left to grow as wild vines do, climbers that they are. Hence the name ('Salvaje' means, 'wild'.) It's a wonderful project, with the hard-won grapes vinified with ambient yeast and whole bunches, and kept in concrete rather than oak for purity. Elegant floral, leafy, red berry aromas lead into a gently grippy, cherry-flavoured palate with a hint of bay leaf and wild mint on the finish. A lovely wine – and a great story.



Masintín País 2022, Maule (13.5%)

93 points

Masintín's country-wide search for 'hidden treasures' among the vines has unearthed this ungrafted bush-vine vineyard in Truquilemu originally planted in 1950 and farmed by one Waldo Orellana. The grapes were hand harvested, destemmed and after fermentation were matured for 12 months mostly in concrete tank but also 10% in French oak barrel. The final blend is 85% País with equal parts Cinsault and Carignan. The wine definitely has a feral, rustic edge to it – gamey, animal aromas mingle with wild berries and roasted herbs. The tannins are compact and grippy. There's lots of wine here, even if it is a little funky.



Massoc Frères Grand País 2021, Itata (14.5%)

93 points – BEST WINEMAKER

Another ambitious País – and what a glorious thing that is for Chile. Finally this ancestral variety is being taken seriously! As winemaker François Massoc says, 'This vintage represents a new chapter in our exploration of what this variety can achieve when treated with the same respect and ambition as the great wines of the world.' To clarify what he means by that, he adds: 'País remains Chile's answer to Pinot Noir, capable of transporting us to the elegance of great Burgundy wines, while celebrating an identity deeply rooted in Chile's viticultural heritage.' No mincing words there – and perhaps it's no surprise given the wine is sourced from horse-ploughed 150-year-old vines in Guarilhue. Massoc ages the wine for two years in French oak barrels and the result is as serious and ambitious as all these words suggest. The aromatics show richer fruit than normal with País, including damson, ginger and plum, with hints of wild mint and sweet spices from the oak. The palate is denser, more tannic and structured than most País, with an engaging touch of flavour development and tannin resolution from the age. A serious, layered, complex País that more than justifies its maker's ambition.

Other Reds



Ana María Cumsille El Litre Cinsault 2023, Guarilhue Alto – Itata (13%)

94 points

Ana María Cumsille is good at moonlighting. In her day job she's head winemaker for Carmen, and doing an excellent job there (see above). In a parallel initiative, she hunts down small plots of special vines to make wines under her own label – and these are wines we would unhesitatingly recommend across the whole range. (She also, tellingly, makes a point of crediting the farmers who lovingly tend these vines on her wine labels.) This bush-vine Guarilhue Cinsault is farmed by Charles Rodríguez and was fermented in old clay jars with ambient yeast before ageing for 12 months in old barrels. It's positively joyous (just as you want Cinsault to be), bursting with vibrant wild strawberry aromatics and a touch of wet clay and sun-baked herbs. The palate is juicy, crunchy and smashable, with refreshing acidity and an elegantly bittersweet finish. Lively, fun, easy-going red.



Echeverría No Es Pituko Cabernet Franc 2023, Maule (13.5%)

94 points

Back to the funky, fun, no-frills world of No Es Pituko – and a delightful Cab Franc to enjoy. So what will the anti-establishment crew cook up when it comes to Cabernet Franc? The wild-yeast fermentation plus no stabilisation, fining or added sulfites make for a gently hazy appearance and a pretty funky aromatic spectrum. Heady floral and herbal notes combine with red cherry fruit. The palate shows vibrant fruit, grippy tannin and a savoury dimension that cries out to be paired with food (probably in a natural wine bar). Good to see a refreshingly different take on Cab Franc. Where most Chilean reds zig, this one zags.



Matetic Corralillo Garnacha 2023, Casablanca (13.5%)

94 points

This elegant, expressive Garnacha is even better than the delicious 2022 we featured in last year's report. The vines grow on the highest part of a granite slope in the Santo Tomás vineyard, which is officially in Casablanca, rather than San Antonio, where Matetic is based. Around 50% whole clusters were incorporated into the ferment for extra perfume and tannic grip, after which the wine was matured for 14 months in used French oak barrels. It shows lovely ripe red berry fruit with hints of rosemary and warm earth. The tannins are grippy and well integrated; the finish is savoury, tense and long. A very elegant expression of Chilean Grenache.



Miguel Torres Los Inquietos 01 2021, Maule (13.5%)

94 points

The idea behind this new Los Inquietos label from Miguel Torres Chile is to showcase the old vines in Chile. This one's an old high-density, dry-farmed field blend planted in 1945 on granite soils with around 80% Malbec but then other bits and bobs including Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Romano. Winemaker Eduardo Jordán matures the blend for 18 months in used German oak fudres and the result shows aromas of wild blackberry fruit with herbal, graphite, meaty subtexts. What's lovely here is the purity of fruit and understated style, with moderate alcohol and a lifted, mouth-watering finish. There's a slight wildness and grippy rusticity to the tannin that's engaging. It's a fresher, more gastronomic expression of Malbec that's eminently drinkable and really very appealing.



Undurraga Red Field Blend 2022, Maule (14%)

94 points

Another Malbec-dominant field blend, though this time from Coronel del Maule, close to the border between Cauquenes and Itata. This vineyard also incorporates a bit of Carignan, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cinsault and País, which make it into the final blend. The vines are over 60 years old, having been grafted onto old País roots and cultivated as dry-farmed bush vines. This one's a darker, richer expression of a Malbec field blend, with plenty of black-fruit intensity and floral, black pepper hints in the mix. It's engaging, with a lovely smooth fluidity across the palate, and an elegant, savoury, bittersweet finish. It would benefit from a bit more age too.



VIK STONEVIK 2024, Cachapoal (14%)

94 points

By its own billing, Stonevik is, 'the ultimate natural wine.' A bit of explanation is necessary here. VIK winemaker Cristián Vallejo was wondering how to do something unique, and got to thinking how winemaking is a fundamentally natural process right up until the wine goes into a winery and is henceforth imprisoned in a man-made environment. What if the circle could be squared by making the wine in a more natural environment instead? Many people might have left that thought there but this is Cristián Vallejo, and this is VIK. So they went to the top of the tallest hill on the estate, at 800 metres above sea level, in the middle of an oak forest, and half-submerged 14 large (500-litre) clay amphorae in which to mature the wine. There's talk of special energy and natural forest vibrations and circular winemaking – just don't ask how they clean them. (Long story short: it's a faff.) The first vintage of Stonevik was 2023 and it's a Cabernet Franc-based blend – the first iteration was a little too rich and burly to our tastes, but this second vintage from a cooler year (incorporating 21% Cabernet Sauvignon and 5% Carmenere) is a different beast. It's aromatic, with floral, herbal, warm earth and dark fruit tones. The palate shows lovely fine, elegantly drying tannin together with vibrant fresh fruit. The idea is to age the wine only eight months in the amphorae and to major on Cabernet Franc in order to make, 'a wine of the year'. It's an intriguing concept. As for what the unique ageing lends the wine? It's anyone's guess. But the result is a pretty tasty drop.



La Roncière Idahue Estate Cabernet Franc 2023, Licantén – Curicó (14%)

93 points

This is a wine that comes to life on the palate. It's grown in La Roncière's ground-breaking Idahue estate in coastal Curicó. Here, the winery mounted a highly ambitious plan in 2012 to establish a cooler-climate vineyard for classic reds – and it's paid off in spectacular fashion. Winemaker Juan Muñoz prioritises elegance over power, and it shows in this deft blend of mainly Cabernet Franc with 8% Cabernet Sauvignon and 7% Syrah. The creamy, leafy, dark fruit aromas are merely the prelude to an intense palate profile, bursting with vibrant crunchy dark berry fruit and waves of ultra-fine tannin. It could perhaps have a touch more Cab Franc lift but this is a poised, structured, refreshing red that will develop well in bottle.



Las Veletas Grandes Ensamblajes Mediterráneo 2023, San Javier de Loncomilla – Maule (13.5%)

93 points

Las Veletas is an intriguing winery set up by businessman Raúl Dell’Oro, who teamed up with winemaker Rafael Tirado in Alquihue, San Javier. On the property, the vineyards range from some very old and beautiful País to terraces bulldozed out of a steep hillside overlooking the winery and planted (somewhat incongruously) to Cabernet Franc. Their País featured in last year’s report but this year it’s the turn of this Mediterranean-style blend of 60% Grenache with 35% Mourvèdre and 5% Carignan, aged for 12 months in used barrels. It does seem that this site could be well suited to this kind of blend, and here it delivers rich jammy fruit with hints of sausage meat and black pepper, very much in the Côtes du Rhône idiom. Very drinkable and decent value too.



Maquis Franco 2021, Colchagua (13.8%)

93 points

Right from the start, Maquis has done a very good job of treading a fine line between elegance and intensity in its carefully sculpted reds. This Cabernet Franc (with 9% Cabernet Sauvignon) is a case in point. The vineyard lies between two rivers, which usher in cooling winds to temper the warm Colchagua climate. The 2021 vintage was cooler than normal in this site and the wine was matured for 18 months in French oak barrels. Smoky dark fruit emerges from the glass together with an inviting edge of roasted herbs and dried meat. The tannins are firm and grippy, the overall feel fairly muscular and earthy, and the finish is lifted and tense. Will benefit from more time in the bottle.



Santa Rita Floresta Cabernet Franc 2023, Alto Jahuel – Maipo (13.5%)

93 points

We first tried this classy Cab Franc over lunch in Alto Jahuel – and re-tasting it for this selection proved our hunch that this is a really impressive wine. Floresta winemaker Teresita Ovalle explains that, while Santa Rita used to source this wine from Pumanque in Colchagua, now they prefer the fruit from their Alto Jahuel site in Maipo for its consistency and elegant floral aromas and fresh acidity. This 2023 vintage was the first wine to make the change (albeit with 5% Pumanque fruit), and it’s matured half in large oak fudres and half in used barrels for 14 months. The aromas show notes of roasted red pepper, woodsmoke and dark berry fruit. Firm tannins, fresh acidity and a certain gravelly, earthy Alto Maipo character on the finish. Bold and intense but well made.



Viu Manent Viu 1 2022, Colchagua (14%)

93 points

‘This is our heritage,’ muses winemaker Patricio Celedón as we taste this wine at Viu Manent’s winemaking HQ in central Colchagua. He’s talking about the old-vine Malbec, first established in the 1870s, that makes up the core of this wine (there’s also 13% Cabernet Sauvignon and 2% Petit Verdot). ‘This fruit used to be sold off – but when we realised its potential, we changed that,’ he smiles. And no wonder. This is some wine. Complex, brooding aromatics incorporate notes of rich dark fruit, damsons and hints of iron filings. The palate is firm and sturdily structured but not overdone – the tannins are assertive but fine, the flavours layered and the finish savoury and well proportioned. Will benefit from age in the bottle.

Sweet & Fortified



Massoc Frères Adorable Vino Fortificado Blanco NV, Itata (18%)

94 points – WHITE INNOVATION

A few years ago, Peter hosted a tasting in one of London's smartest clubs. The idea was to hold a fun show-down between the club's Franco-centric (read: ultra-traditional) wine list and some upstart Chilean wines of his choosing. Etiquette demanded port would be served. But what Chilean wine to pair it against? As luck would have it, Peter had just heard of a pioneering new wine made by the ever-curious François Massoc – a fortified wine in the style of port made in southern Chile. Despite some hiccups in customs, the wine made it over to London. With bated breath, Peter watched the two fortified wines being served blind. Which version would the (ultra-traditional) diners prefer? You guessed it – they overwhelmingly favoured the Chilean bottle, which is the red version of this wine. Massoc describes this wine in the following terms: 'Sweet wine made from old-vine Itata Moscatel grapes fortified with our finest brandy and matured for three years in French oak barrels.' And yes, he does make his own brandy (told you he was curious). This is ground-breaking stuff for Chile. It shifts the dial once again on the realms of possibility in this beautiful country. It shines pale amber in the glass, emanating aromas of raisined fruit, baked grapes, barley sugar and fresh acacia honey. The palate is gloriously rich and sweet but with fresh, balancing acidity underneath. It finishes with a peacock's tail flourish, throwing off nutty oxidative hints and flavours of fruitcake and a salted caramel lick. A wondrous thing! One for a cheese platter or a savoury terrine. Fabulous, daring, skilfully crafted and a joy to experience.

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