



The International Wine Review

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Report #60 Chile's Premium Wine Revolution

Introduction



Tabali's Limarí Vineyard

Over the past 15 years, Chile has emerged as a top producer of high quality, premium and super-premium wines. We called attention to the dramatic transformations accounting for this in our previous report *The Chilean Wine Revolution* in 2010. Today, Chile continues to make great strides in producing high quality wines, driven in part by a growing number of innovative producers and creative winemakers seeking out the best terroir in locations as diverse as Chile's geography. In this report, we explore Chile's exciting progress in its ongoing wine revolution.

In what follows, we build on our previous report where we looked in considerable detail at the geography, climate, viticulture and winemaking of Chile. The current report focuses on new developments in Chile. We begin by looking at where Chile grows the best grapes and the many new exciting experiments to grow grapes in extreme terroir from the Atacama to Patagonia and in areas cooled

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by the Pacific's Humboldt Current as well as those cooled by the winds coming off the high Andes. We identify who are the winemakers behind the quality improvements in Chilean wine, especially, the new generation of young Chileans with broad international winemaking experience and the many women who now lead winemaking operations.

We then look at the innovations and improvements being made with almost all of Chile's most important varieties, and we give our reviews and tasting notes of many of the wines. We focus special attention on the resurgence of Carignan, the continuing search for the holy grail of

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Pinot Noir, the incredible success of Sauvignon Blanc, and the promising future for other varieties like Riesling and Grenache, and the revival of old vine Pais and Moscatel. We also take a close look at Cabernet Sauvignon, Chile's most important grape. Chile has over 15 percent of the world's plantings of Cabernet Sauvignon, the globe's most widely planted grape variety.

Finally, we examine the phenomenal success Chile has had in the global wine market. The continued growth in plantings, wine production and exports is impressive, especially considering the global competition the country faces from both New and Old World producers. Improvements in the vineyard and in winemaking undoubtedly contribute to Chile's phenomenal success in the global wine market. Since the year 2000, Chile has increased its share of global winegrape production from 2.0 to 3.4 percent while raising its share of global wine exports from 4.4 to 7.2 percent. This growth has made Chile the 6th largest wine producer in the world. The expanding market in China, and the world's unquenching thirst for red wine undoubtedly play a role in explaining this incredible growth, but it's also influenced by the rising quality of Chile's wines.

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