

Hot Chile

Surprising news from one of the world's biggest exporters.



The Globetrotting Wine Guy

Chile is hot! I spent a week traversing some of the top vineyards and wineries in Chile last December with a group of operators and hospitality industry press (someone had to do it), and I returned with what's happening wine-wise way down south.

What's happening is more of the same great values in the economy-premium wine sector as well as the building of an evermore respected ultra-premium wine category, pioneered by some of the top Chilean wineries. If that is not enough to satisfy your curiosity, try this: Chile has been quietly developing a serious organic viticulture industry.

Chile continues to show steady year-to-date export sales increases that cannot be ignored. Since Chile exports virtually all its premium wine, wineries have no choice but to produce consistently better value than most of their competitors to earn the growth. But, if you ask many of the leading Chilean wineries what's happening, they answer with deserved pride: "Our ultra-premium (nearing star status) cult wines."

The most popular ultra-premiums include *Don Melchor* 1999 from Concha Y Toro, *Don Maximiano Founder's Reserve* by Errazuriz, *Clos Apalta* from La Postolle, *Montes Alpha M* by Montes, *Primus* by Veramonte, *Casa Real Cabernet Sauvignon* from Santa Rita, *Doña Bernarda* by Luis Felipe Edwards, *Don and Caballo Loco* from Valdivieso, *Cabo de Hornos Cabernet Sauvignon*, and *Haras Elegance Cabernet Sauvignon* by Haras de Pirque.

What's next you ask? Why the world's most impressive, organic viticulture industry, of course. You see, Chile does not need to spray its vines for phylloxera. The country benefits from its natural borders, the Andes Mountains to the east, the Pacific Ocean to the west, and hundreds of miles of fertile valleys from north to south. This is an excellent place to go organic.

So if you are looking for great values in base tier wines, ultra-premiums, or organic premiums, one of the best places in the world to shop is spelled "Chile" and it means "Superior value at every price."

Fred Tibbitts, president Fred Tibbitts & Associates, is the foremost wine by the glass consultant for chain hotels and restaurants in the world.

PARTNERS IN SUCCESS GRACIOUS HOSPITALITY

Don't let Chile's old world hospitality fool you. Yes, their Carmenère vines outlive Bordeaux. And their geographic advantages keep grapes free from modern pesticides. Okay, even their retail prices seem like bargains from another era. But make no mistake, this is a sophisticated viticulture, growing an ambitious export business.

Just note the recent ProChile tour led by our own Fred Tibbitts, bringing hotel leaders and press together with Chilean wineries. For George Vizer, VP F&B Hyatt Hotels, it was a first-time onsite meeting with successful partner Veramonte. "We sell a tremendous amount of Veramonte," says Vizer, "huge amounts—tens of thousands of cases. It's very, very good wine, and a truly impressive system. We visited the whole spectrum [of wineries], from the smallest boutiques to the largest, and Veramonte was the most impressive winery we visited." Hyatt sells Veramonte wines in every property, carrying five different varieties including the premium brand, Primus.

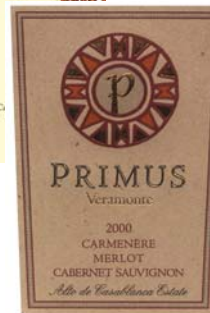
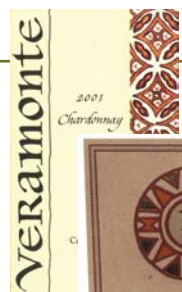
Hotel F&B Executive Publisher Jeanne Bischoff was also taken with Veramonte's wines, "Veramonte may have served the single best wine of the trip—the *Veramonte 2002 Pinot Noir*." Vizer agrees, "We're anxiously awaiting the Pinot Noir, their first in only small quantities this year." Of course the note that lingers longest turns out to be that warm hospitality, or as Vizer remarked, "It was a heart-warming feeling to have such a great partnership." —JPB



Veramonte's estate is on a corner of the Casablanca Valley, protected from frost by the bowl, and as much as four to five degrees warmer than the rest of the valley. It benefits from a higher location with last sun exposure.

SPOTLIGHT CASABLANCA

When you talk about the climate of Chile, you're talking about a span from desert to Antarctic, but the Casablanca Valley rests comfortably in an enviable oasis, compared in ringing tones to Napa Valley. "We were the first major entrant into Casablanca," says Agustin Francisco Huneus, president of Veramonte, "We now have over 1,000 acres planted in Casablanca, making a couple hundred thousand cases a year." His father, Agustin Huneus, has been a forerunner in



UNDER THE COVERS



Beverage Biz Is Show Biz

Dave Steadman

Spirited Living, 38 Broadway, Greenlawn, NY 11740. 192 pages. \$36.00

"I'm not in the drink business. I'm in the entertainment business," says Jeff Ruby of the Waterfront. Built on an Ohio River barge and inspired by Al Pacino's movie *Scarface*, he may sell more drinks than any place in greater Cincinnati. Dave Steadman, who agrees with Ruby, spent a year talking to real people in real bars who share that philosophy learning how they do it well—and profitably. *Beverage Biz Is Show Biz! How to Increase Your Restaurant's Bottom Line* provides specific concepts from operators, bartenders, sommeliers, servers, customers, suppliers, wine writers, and restaurant reviewers. There are many ways to exceed customers' expectations, and these ideas may stimulate your creativity. In a clear engaging style presented in a readable format, the first eight chapters offer a blueprint for success followed by 38 chapters that tap into marketing strategies of successful restaurateurs along with advice from industry pundits.