

Wines of Chile  
The natural choice

Wines of Chile USA

# Men's Journal

LIVE THE INTERESTING LIFE

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## Red Hot Chileans

WITH ITS VARIED CLIMATE AND ORGANIC FARMING, CHILE MAKES SOME OF THE BOLDEST AND BEST-PRICED RED WINES TODAY.

If you drink top-tier wine, you probably spend most of your dollars in three countries — France, Italy, and the U.S. But if big, bold reds or elegant pinot noirs are your aim, now's the time to add Chile to that list.

Chile has a long, varied wine history. In the 16th century, Spanish conquistadors blanketed the land west of the Andes with the pais grape, which they used to make Communion wine. Most American drinkers became familiar with Chile's nonsacramental offerings in the 1990s, when bottles of cheap, easy-drinking cabernet and sauvignon blanc flooded our liquor stores. In the past decade Chile has pushed carménère, an obscure French grape that many winemakers had mistaken for merlot (oops). Today the country continues to pump out value-priced bottles, but it's also producing opulent red blends and pinots that

improve with each vintage. "For years, quantity trumped quality," says sommelier Anthony Giglio. "But now Chilean winemakers have figured out that Americans aren't looking for just easy-to-drink wines — they want high-quality values as well."

In some ways, Chile is leading the pack: Many of its grapes are organically grown (whether or not the label says so), and loads of wineries are adopting fair-trade practices. Better yet, an abundance of biodiverse land and cheap labor allow it to out-value its American and European counterparts across the price spectrum. Top American and European winemakers — including Robert Mondavi, Spain's Miguel Torres, and France's Château Mouton Rothschild — know this and have been pouring money into Chilean projects for years. If you are burned out on Bordeaux or have broken from the California cabernet cult,

Chile's new crop of pedigreed wines can deliver a welcome new taste.

If big, muscular reds aren't your drink, "pinot noir is the new darling," says Giglio. In the past decade winemakers have been planting pinot along the cool coast and, increasingly, north and south of Santiago.

Whether or not carménère becomes as popular as malbec (the signature of easterly neighbor Argentina), Chile is poised to become South America's answer to California: a slip of coastal land where many grapes can thrive and winemakers can compete with the best in the world. —NICK FAUCHALD

### SIX PICKS FROM CHILE



**1. 2008 CHATEAU LOS BOLDOS GRAND CRU (\$50)** Chile's take on a Bordeaux blend with distinctly South American spice.

**2. 2008 COND SUR OCIO PINOT NOIR (\$65)** Better than a lot of more expensive California pinots.

**3. 2009 ERRAZURIZ SINGLE VINEYARD CARMÉNÈRE (\$21)** From one of the oldest wineries in Chile, a carménère rich with dark fruit and black pepper.

**4. 2008 SANTA RITA MEDALLA REAL CARMÉNÈRE (\$20)** An excellent introduction to the carménère grape.

**5. 2008 MAYCAS DEL LIMARI RESERVA ESPECIAL SYRAH (\$22)** A ripe, fruity Rhône-style red from the up-and-coming Limari region.

**6. 2007 ALMAVIVA (\$60)** Help from France's Château Mouton Rothschild makes this bold blend a worthy splurge.

### DRINKS