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## Just Quality Wine

### Cono Sur produces quality wine that is great value

Posted November 17th, 2010  
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For some, it might be easy to dismiss Cono Sur as just another novelty-named producer of value-priced wine.

But with impressive results at both national and international competitions, you can't help but take notice of the bicycle-loving Chilean producer.

At the [Wine Access 2010 International Value Wine Awards](#), Cono Sur wines scooped up five awards, including a Category Champion for their 90-point 2009 Organic Chardonnay. They also nabbed four spots on the Killer Values list — more than any other producer.

### Commitment to quality

Founded in 1993, the winery's motto is "No family trees, no dusty bottles, just quality wine." In their basic, varietal range of wines — also known as the "Bicycle" range for the two-wheeler printed on the label — this quality comes at around \$10-\$12 in many Canadian markets. Their organic line has retail prices hovering around \$15.

"We aim to always deliver higher value than what our consumers feel they are paying for, and in that sense we intend to 'over-deliver' in all our product lines," says José Luis Lavin, Cono Sur's export manager for Chile and North America.

Lavin says that Cono Sur has tried to keep prices stable over the long-term, an effort aided by investment in their vineyards.

Many of the grapes used in production of their wines are owned by Cono Sur. This renders the winery less susceptible to fluctuations in the price of grapes and giving them increased control over agricultural costs.

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## Green thumbs

Growing its own grapes also means that Cono Sur can make a commitment to environmental practices in its vineyards. More than 300 ha of Cono Sur vineyards are certified organic and a sustainable integrated vineyard management system has been in place since 1998.

Green practices tie in with another philosophy highly valued by the Cono Sur team: innovation.

“For us, innovation means always looking for new trends for varieties, valleys, packaging, etc, which will generate excitement and permanent renovation,” Lavin writes.

## Location, location

And although the name sounds like a pun on “connoisseur,” that wasn’t the intention.

In an interview with Anthony Gismondi on “The Best of Food and Wine,” Lavin and Hurtado explain that “cono sur” is Spanish for “southern cone,” a name that used to describe the southernmost region of South America, comprising Chile, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay.

The location hasn’t lent only a name to Cono Sur. Conditions in Chile are ideal for growing, with a good climate, isolation from pests, and enough diversity in the valleys that varietals can be planted to soil that will allow them to show their best.

“Chile has been considered even by the French as the winemaking paradise,” Lavin says.



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