

WINE

Cathal McBride: How Chile's exciting new crop could finally rescue its reputation

A fresh breed of Chilean winemakers are helping to shake off the perception that the South American country produces insipid offerings

Perhaps there is something about getting older that aligns us to being more empathetic, and receptive to re-engaging with long-held views that require dismantling. It's for this very reason that I wanted this week to challenge enduring perceptions about Chilean wines, specifically the negativity around them that I imagine is not uncommon.

It may be a view that is justifiable in some ways. The vast majority of Chile's wines are mass-produced by a few large winemaking juggernauts, in a mechanically repetitive factory cycle of uninspiring, insipid drabness. They are overproduced and lacking in complexity: we've all been at that party at 2am, after the premium wines have been consumed and your better sense to go home has all but disappeared, when that bottle is wheeled out on a respirator.

But humour aside, this reputation is an unfair one, as evidenced by my deep dive into the country's best, which offered incredible results.



Viu Manent 'La Capilla' Cabernet Sauvignon Single Vineyard, Chile, 2018 (ABV 14 per cent), 93

From the Colchagua Valley, this single vineyard cabernet has an enrapturing nose with pure fruit of cassis, ripe plum, cherries, along with flecks of green pepper and cedar. The palate is juicy and luscious where rich, concentrated dark berry fruit underpin this wine. There is also a lightness and freshness present in a well-rounded structure with good length, robust tannins and a spicy finish. Perfect with BBQ meats.

Available from Redmonds of Ranelagh (redmonds.ie) and Baggot Street Wines (baggotstreetwines.com), €34.99