

# 10 Delectable Chilean Wines To Sip

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Viu Manent Vineyards, Chile UNIVERSAL IMAGES GROUP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Chile is considered a New World wine region along with its neighbor Argentina, North America, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. Its most planted varieties include Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Carmenère, all native to France (considered part of the Old World), but the last of which is unique to Chile for its unlikely success story.

Carmenère, a bold and peppery red wine, is one of the varieties that was nearly lost during the European phylloxera outbreak in the mid 1800s. Though native to North America, the louse's notoriety traces back to the 1860s when an outbreak that began in a Rhone vineyard in the south of France spread across the continent.

[An article](#) from *Scientific Reports* outlines the extent of the damage: "Grape phylloxera appearance almost destroyed European viticulture, and it provoked the most radical switch in viticultural practices of the last two centuries, when grape growing changed from the use of own-rooted *V. vinifera* plants to their grafting onto partially-resistant American non-*vinifera* *Vitis* spp. or hybrids used as rootstocks."

During this time, Chile remained unscathed by the pest as a result of its isolated location. Today, strict agricultural import regulations contribute to Carmenère's ability to flourish throughout the country—and on original rootstock rather than the grafted method that most wineries have adopted since phylloxera.

Carmenère may be a signature of Chilean wine, but the long and narrow geography of the country permits ideal growing conditions for a variety of other grapes, including the aforementioned Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot as well as Syrah and Petit Verdot for red wine, and white varieties like Sauvignon Blanc and some pockets of Chardonnay.

There are six main wine regions in Chile—from north to south: Atacama, Coquimbo, Central Valley, South, Austral, Aconcagua—and 17 sub-regions. The most prominent growing regions for Sauvignon Blanc are to the west of Santiago in the Casablanca and Leyda Valley (Aconcagua region). The Central Valley, namely the Colchagua and Maipo sub-regions, are more prominent for their production of Chile's bold, spicy red wines. Further north, the Elqui Valley (in the Coquimbo region) is famed for producing all three of the country's dominant styles—Carmenère, Syrah and Sauvignon Blanc.

Chile's red wines are characteristically robust and spicy, yet with low tannins that permit a balanced and fruity palate. White wines are zesty—generally offering a fresh yet full body.

## 10 Chilean Wine Producers



Article by Kissa Castañeda, Contributor

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Below, discover 10 Chilean wine producers that are worth seeking out at your local wine shop.

### 5. Viu Manent El Incidente Carménère

Produced from a selection of Viu Manent's best vineyards, all within the Colchagua Valley, El Incidente is one of Viu Manent's four Icon labels. The red wine is a blend of majority Carmenère and Malbec (in 2020, 85 percent to 15 percent, respectively). The wine is undeniably intense with a distinct spice that's a powerful complement to a dish like duck confit.