

# Chilean Pinot Noir

A new breed of passionate winemakers across the country is determined to capture the beauty of this fickle grape variety. Peter Richards MW reports on progress

FORGET THE SPACE race, the quest for the Holy Grail and the search for the Higgs-Boson. There is a mission more compelling and altogether more delicious than all of these. It's the pursuit of Pinot perfection in Chile.

Pinot Noir is elusive. Fickle in the vineyard, flighty in the glass, it can be crushingly disappointing or breathtakingly good. Right now in Chile there is a band of passionate winemakers dedicated to making great Pinot from many sites. There could and should be more, but most admit Chile is not there with Pinot yet. Some excellent wines? Undoubtedly. Great-value Pinot in a global context? Absolutely. But great Pinot, the kind that quickens the blood like no other wine? Not yet. They're working on it.

The problem is partly one of history. Unlike, say, Syrah, Pinot Noir has been around for a while in Chile. (For example, Cono Sur's Pinot plantations in Chimbarongo date back to 1968, when the Mir family brought in a clone from UC Davis.) But much of this was used for sparkling wine, and many of the vines were not in the right sites to make high-quality reds in the Burgundian mould. Poor planting and plant virus have also been a problem.

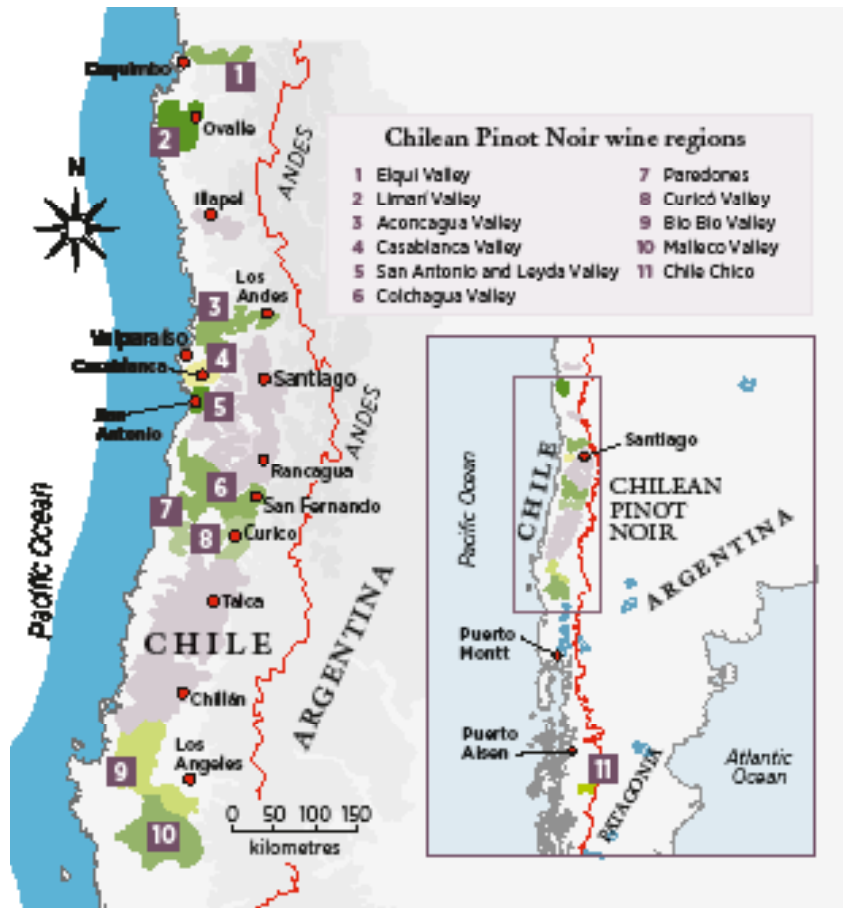
## Patience pays off

Forward-looking producers have homed in on a micro-terroir scale, introducing French clones on site-specific rootstocks in cool, cloudy areas over granite, slate and clay. But Pinot Noir demands patience – vine age can make all the difference. And Pinot is a recent science in Chile (see *growth rates in Fact Box*). Even Cono Sur's Adolfo Hurtado dates his proper Pinot debut to 1999 when he started working with Burgundian consultant Martin Prieur. Progress is painstaking and slow. As Hurtado concedes, fine tuning makes the difference – and takes time.

But things are looking up. New plantings in the south (Bio-Bío, Malleco, even as far as Chile Chico) and the coast (Aconcagua Costa, San Antonio, Limarí, Casablanca and Paredones) hint at the dizzying potential for diversity in Chilean Pinot. A new generation of winemakers is adopting what might be termed a Burgundian mindset, as expounded by consultant Alberto Antonini (see *interview, p46*) when he says: 'Great wine is about emotion. I believe more in the Burgundian concept – that, at a very high level, uniqueness is more important than perfection.'

Chilean Pinot is a story in the telling. The established regional characters in the narrative are Casablanca, whose best Pinots tend to come from the cool westerly hillsides, and San Antonio/Leyda, which makes everything from muscular to graceful styles, always with juicy natural acidity. Areas to watch include coastal Limarí – where Tabalí's cool limestone Talinay vineyard looks promising – and Aconcagua Costa, where Errázuriz winemaker Francisco Baettig is now crafting super-elegant Pinots with the help of Burgundian consultant Louis-Michel Liger-Belair. The south – including Bio-Bío, Malleco and beyond – has exciting potential, if properly handled.

As for buying, find an inspired producer or two and stick with them. There are an increasing number, some featured in the following pages. Cool vintages (eg 2010, 2011) work best – the warmer 2012 and 2009 proved more variable. Each year brings more experience and vine age.



## Chilean Pinot: know your vintages

**2012** Brutally hot vintage; mixed results but some very good wines.

**2011** Long, dry vintage, some top-notch wines.

**2010** The 'quake' vintage: cool, dry, well-balanced wines.

**2009** Warm year gave ripe, concentrated styles.

**2008** Middling sort of year, quite warm, early drinking.

**2007** Warm, dry, long, some very good reds.

## Chilean Pinot Noir: the facts

**Chile national wine vineyard area** 125,946 hectares (ha)  
**Pinot Noir in Chile** 3,729ha  
**Pinot Noir as % of total Chilean wine vineyard** 3%  
**Growth in Chile's Pinot Noir vineyard since 2006** (1,382ha) 170%

**Growth in Chile's Pinot Noir vineyard since 1997** (411ha) 800%  
**Key Pinot Noir wine regions in Chile** Casablanca (918ha), San Antonio (640ha), Bio-Bío & Malleco (432ha), Curicó (416ha), Colchagua (408ha)

*Peter Richards MW is the Decanter World Wine Awards Regional Chair for Chile*

## The results

A work in progress, said our tasters, who were excited by the evolution towards a more refined style, and the promise of even greater things as winemakers fine tune their practices. Amy Wislocki reports

PINOT NOIR TAPS into an area which, at the moment, is much under scrutiny – the issue of elegance and drinkability as opposed to brawn, heft, ripeness and oak,' said Peter Richards MW. 'The whole "less is more" philosophy is rapidly gaining traction in Chile and is brought to its greatest conclusion in Pinot. So it's a barometer for how Chile is getting on – and my conclusion is a that it's solid performance, but more can be done.'

This seemed to be the overriding sentiment among the panel. 'Good Pinot Noir should elicit an emotional response,' continued Richards, 'and while this was a solid performance, it perhaps lacked the thrills I was hoping for.'

'Part of it is that Pinot is site specific,' commented Isa Bal MS. 'Chile has done a great job with Cabernet and Merlot, but you can make something great with these varieties across a large area. With Pinot, it has to be in the right place, and it may take time for producers to pin down the best Pinot sites, get the vineyards up and running and produce results. We tasted some very good wines, but they are nowhere near the full potential of what Chile can offer.'

'I'd like to see more complexity, but that will come with time,' said Dirceu Vianna Jr MW confidently, adding that

*'These wines are nowhere near the full potential of what Chile can offer'* Isa Bal MS

the prices of many of these wines would be a major draw for wine lovers. 'These wines are consistently high quality, and represent extremely good value in the context of New World Pinot Noir.'

The tasters agreed that New Zealand was further ahead on the learning curve, and certainly in terms of regional identity, but Richards predicted that 'Chile will in time challenge New Zealand, both in terms of diversity and in terms of cool-climate winemaking'. He added: 'What Chile does really well at the moment is make consumer friendly, affordable and easy-drinking Pinot that's food friendly, good enough for connoisseurs but at the same time offers great bang for their buck.'

Winemaking styles elicited largely positive comments, with tasters encouraging producers to perhaps lay off the oak even more, and be willing to take even more risks in

## The scores

103 wines tasted

1  
Outstanding

12  
Highly recommended

44  
Recommended

41  
Fair

3  
Poor

2  
Faulty

## The tasters' verdicts

### Isa Bal MS



*Bal MS has been the head sommelier at Heston Blumenthal's three Michelin-starred restaurant The Fat Duck for the past eight years. Earlier this year he represented Turkey in the Best Sommelier of the World competition in Tokyo, and he was previously named Best Sommelier of Europe 2008.*

#### Bal's verdict

'I was excited to have the opportunity to taste more than 100 Pinot Noirs from Chile.

'Chilean producers know to play to their strengths with other varieties, such as Cabernet and Carmenere. I feel that every winemaker who is confident in what they are making wants to try their hand at Pinot Noir. The increase that we are witnessing in the number of Pinot Noir offerings from Chile is telling us in a way that the Chilean wine industry is now mature and confident, and looking for new challenges.

'Pinot Noir is certainly a grape variety that can present that challenge to the Chilean wine industry. Overall, on this tasting, the wines showed a distinctive Chilean character in the glass. They were generally fruit-driven, with soft tannins, some a bit more complex than others, but generally for drinking within the first five to six years.

'However, Pinot Noir will need time and patience to find its perfect form in Chile. In terms of regions, I was most impressed with Casablanca, while for me the jury is still out on San Antonio. Bio-Bio showed some regional character that may become more distinctive in time. Finally, it's worth mentioning that the price range of the wines that we tasted makes the wines an attractive buy compared with Pinots from other countries.'

### Peter Richards MW



*Richards is a Master of Wine and one of the UK's youngest award-winning writers and broadcasters. TV and radio credits include Saturday Kitchen (BBC), The Food Programme (BBC Radio 4) and Taste (Sky One). Richards writes regularly about Chilean wines; his book The Wines of Chile was shortlisted for the André Simon Award.*

#### Richards' verdict

'Pinot Noir is the high-wire act of the wine world. The margin between success and

failure is minimal in scale yet dramatic in effect. In this tasting we saw Chile maintain a creditably stable footing but, being critical, the performance could have had more aplomb, more verve and more grace.

'It's fantastic to see winemakers focus on elegance and balance in Pinot over power and concentration. As the mantra goes, less is more – but, in order to do less, you need to know more. Great Pinot needs winemakers who are unafraid to take risks, push boundaries and dedicate their life's work to fine-tuning a fickle variety. More disciples are needed in this arduous task.

'Many wines lacked harmony and persistence – perhaps a sign of young vines. All too often I wrote 'shame!' after a promising start (the tricky 2012 vintage didn't help). Some richer styles were just too overdone – harvested too late to be balanced (hot and alcoholic) – while some leaner styles were simply under-cooked. Back to the drawing board for both.

'On the positive side, there is less misuse of oak and extraction, and the wines showed diversity and an increasing accent on refreshment. San Antonio/Leyda, Casablanca, Aconcagua Costa, Limarí and the south all showed good quality. The potential is there. Time for Chile to capitalise.'

harvesting earlier to get greater freshness. 'Oak was a little heavy handed in cases, but largely well handled,' observed Vianna Jr. 'Alcohol was high in many cases though, and that relates to my main concern, which is acidity levels, which were mostly on the low side.'

'There could be lovely, bright, juicy fruit,' he continued, 'but the acidity would be so level that the overall effect was cloying. This also impacts on longevity – I wouldn't want to keep most of these wines for more than seven years.'

Regarding vintages, 2012 performed better than expected – it was a tricky vintage that 'reduced the parameters of what winemakers could do,' said Richards. 'Those who made good wines in 2012 should be congratulated, as there were some great results.'

Regionality doesn't yet shine through as much as it could. 'It's still early days,' said Richards, 'with vine age and winemaker choices playing a big part.' That said, Casablanca garnered much praise, described by Vianna Jr as his 'highlight'. 'It surprised me with its diversity and high quality,' agreed Bal, who had expected Leyda or wider San Antonio to hog the limelight.

Bio-Bio is also exciting, said Richards, with a regional style that highlights gingery, minty, red fruits. 'There aren't many winemakers there yet, but you get earthy, texturally grown up, elegant and grainy wines.'

**Entry criteria:**  
Producers and UK agents were invited to submit latest-release Pinot Noirs (maximum of three wines per producer) from these regions:  
Aconcagua Costa, Bio-Bio, Leyda, Casablanca, Limarí, Malleco, Paredones and San Antonio

## Outstanding 18.5–20pts (95–100pts)



### Viña Ventisquero, Grey, Leyda Valley 2011

Decanter average score: 18.5/20pts (95/100pts)  
Individual judges' scores: Isa Bal MS 18.5 Peter Richards MW 18.5 Dirceu Vianna Jr MW 18.5

£10.56–£14.99 Buttfield, City Beverage Co, Fine & Rare, Fine Wine Co, Great Horkesley Wines, Henderson Wines, Lamorbey Wines, Nickolls & Perks

This brilliant wine represents the confluence of a good coastal site, an excellent vintage and a confident winemaker. The secret to making this Pinot, says Felipe Tosso, was 'the least intervention possible'. Ventisquero's Pinot vines at Las Terrazas, a south-facing slope over decomposed granite in Leyda just 7km from the cooling Pacific, are relatively young. But this herb-scented, tangy and elegantly textured wine is sensitively made. The 2011 vintage was long, dry and cool, ideal for this kind of zippy, vital style.

Isa Bal MS Vegetal, earthy aromas follow on to a palate with soft tannins, refreshing acidity and a long finish. The fruit is really rich, with the game flavours adding a secondary layer and really increasing the complexity.

Peter Richards MW Smoky, vegetal, earthy red fruits. Zippy, tangy, lean and direct. Real accent on freshness. A different register for Chilean Pinot.

Dirceu Vianna Junior MW Seductive notes of blackberry jam, wet earth and black cherries. Ripe, juicy and concentrated. Silky, smooth, savoury.

Drink 2013–2020 Alcohol 13%

## Highly Recommended 17–18.25pts (90–94pts)



### Morandé, Reserva, Casablanca Valley 2011 17.5 (91) IB 18.5 PR 18 DVJ 16

£10–£12 Amps Fine Wines, Field & Fawcett, Fine Wine Sellers, Waples Wines, Whitebridge Wines, Woods Wines Buckets of ripe fruit, especially blackberries and raspberries, as well as sweet spices, wet earth, floral notes and dark chocolate. Sappy, grippy, great energy and focus, this is proper Pinot. Scented, tense and vibrant, it has purity and poise. Bravo. Drink 2013–2020 Alc 14.5%



### Artifice, Platinum, Casablanca Valley 2010 17.25 (90+) IB 16.5 PR 16.5 DVJ 19 N/A UK www.artifice.cl

Aromas are intense with notes of blueberries, leather, wet earth and sweet spices. On the palate it has very good fruit structure, ripe tannins, fruit and refreshing acidity with a faint hint of bitterness. Drink 2013–2020 Alc 13.5% ➤

### Dirceu Vianna Jr MW



*In 2008, Vianna Jr became the first South American male Master of Wine, winning the Viña Errázuriz Award for Excellence in the Business of Wine. He is currently wine director at UK merchant Coe Vintners, and is a wine educator, technical consultant, freelance writer and wine judge.*

#### Vianna Jr's verdict

'As a category, Chilean Pinot displayed a great degree of consistency across

the board. It is safe to recommend these to consumers who are looking for wines that are fruit-forward, fun, approachable now and easy to enjoy. The wines combined excellent varietal character with the beautiful purity of fruit that is often associated with Chile. Judging by the results of this tasting, Chile is a reliable place to go to for good-value Pinot Noir.

'Stylistically the wines are exuberant, fruit-forward with attractive juicy fruit, soft tannins and destined for short- to medium-term enjoyment, not for long-term cellaring. Burgundy lookalikes they are not, nor should they try to emulate Burgundy. However, producers looking to raise their game would do well to incorporate some savoury notes, strive for more complexity and seek wines with more freshness. The latter is vitally important for the category as a whole.

'The tasting also served to highlight a few shadows of regionality. It will certainly take time for these shadows to be transformed into more recognisable regional styles, but some areas, such as Bio-Bio, are starting to show a distinctiveness that can only add to Chile's diversity.'



Highly Recommended (continued) 17-18.25pts (90-94pts)



**Errazuriz, Wild Ferment, Aconcagua Costa 2012** 17.25 (90+) IB 18 PR 17 DVJ 16.5

£21.50-£24 Harrods, Cheers Wine Merchants, Stone Vine & Sun  
Elegant, sappy, red-fruit perfume. Youthful with notes of dark cherries, blackberries, dark chocolate and cinnamon. Zippy, tangy, direct. Lovely, juicy, sexy and succulent. Fruit-driven and generous with a dynamic finish.  
**Drink 2013-2020 Alc 13.5%**



**Santa Alicia, Reserva, Bío-Bío Valley 2012** 17.25 (90+) IB 17 PR 17 DVJ 17.5

£7.49 Myliko  
Aromas are restrained with notes of cranberries, red cherries and wet earth, as well as a hint of leafiness. Palate is ripe, rich with black cherry and a hint of sweet liquorice. Very appealing indeed. Not the finished article but a nice, savoury style, self-contained and persistent.  
**Drink 2013-2019 Alc 13.5%**



**Viña Casablanca, Cefiro, Casablanca Valley 2012** 17.25 (90+) IB 18.5 PR 16 DVJ 17

£8.99-£10.50 Exel Wines, James Nicholson, Source Wines  
Notes of dark cherries, beetroot and currants. Not the most aromatic but a gorgeous, succulent flavour profile. Ripe, intense and harmonious, with soft, tannic texture, layered fruit and savoury-spice flavours. **Drink 2013-2020 Alc 14%**



**Laroche, Viña Laroche, Casablanca Valley 2012** 17 (90) IB 16 PR 18 DVJ 17

£11.99 Aske Wine, Butlers Wine Cellar, Carruthers & Kent, The Cave, Champion Wines, Dalling & Co, The Drink Shop, Fine Wine Co, Pallant of Arundel, Satchells, Shaftesbury Wines  
Sophisticated, with aromas of blackberries, raspberries, wild strawberries. Palate full of fruit and silky tannins. **Drink 2013-2020 Alc 14.5%**



**Morrisons, The Best, Casablanca Valley 2012** 17 (90) IB 18 PR 17 DVJ 16

£7.99 Morrisons, Morrisons Cellar  
Inviting aromas of blackberries, raspberries and a hint of leather. Earthy, savoury. Inviting. Understated. Beautifully textured and really exciting. Silky with supreme balance, a beautiful feel and great potential. **Drink 2013-2018 Alc 13.5%**



**Tabali, Reserva Especial, Limarí Valley 2012** 17 (90) IB 17.5 PR 16 DVJ 17.5

£10.75-£12.99 Cheers Wine Merchants, Old Bridge Wine Shop, Stone Vine & Sun, Swig, Wine Warehouse, WoodWinters  
Aromas restrained with notes of ripe blueberries and blackberry jam. Lovely, savoury finish, with fine, tight tannins and a touch of spice. Alluring and foodie. Could do with a little less alcohol but an exciting prospect. **Drink 2013-2020 Alc 13.5%**



**Tabali, Talinay, Limarí Valley 2011** 17 (90) IB 16.5 PR 16.5 DVJ 18

£15.99-£16.99 Harrods, Majestic, Swig, WoodWinters  
Dry leaves, raspberry and strawberry fruit. Ripe, juicy and easy to drink with beautiful notes of dark chocolate and sweet spices adding to its complexity. Succulent, satisfying stuff. **Drink 2013-2018 Alc 13.5%**



**Terranoble, Kaykun, Casablanca Valley 2010** 17 (90) IB 16.5 PR 16.5 DVJ 18

£21-£24 The Vineyard (Dorking), Vintage Cellars, Whitebridge Wines  
Blackberry jam, wet earth and black cherries on the nose. Ripe, juicy with good concentration. Smoky, dried and fresh fruit. Toasty hints. This is juicy, cogent, fluid and refreshing with some lovely elements. **Drink 2013-2020 Alc 13.5%**



**Valdivieso, Single Vineyard, Leyda Valley 2010** 17 (90) IB 17 PR 17 DVJ 17

£15.49 Bibendum  
Beautifully silky texture, excellent concentration of fruit and a persistent finish. It's hard not to love this kind of big-boned style - tons of fun. A spicy, heart-warming finish. Purists would cite its excess flab; hedonists will love its voluptuous curves. **Drink 2013-2018 Alc 14%**



**Viña Leyda, Reserva, Leyda Valley 2011** 17 (90) IB 17.5 PR 17.5 DVJ 16

£10.95-£11.99 Aged in Oak, Carruthers & Kent, Great Western Wine, Swig  
Gingery, resinous hints on the nose with aromas of bacon fat, red fruits, roasted peas, blackberry and undergrowth. Freshness and lift, with this invigorating, food-friendly wine, delivered in an earthy, lean style. **Drink 2013-2019 Alc 14.5%**

*'Some areas are beginning to show a distinctiveness that can only add to Chile's diversity'*

Dirceu Vianna Jr MW

Recommended 15-16.75pts (83-89pts)

Wine	Score	IB	PR	DVJ	Tasting note	Alc	Drink	Price	Stockists
Viña Leyda, Single Vineyard Las Brisas, Leyda Valley 2011	16.75 (89)	17	16.5	16.5	Expressive with intense notes of dark cherries, blackberries, raspberries and a hint of leather and wet earth. Spicy on the finish, but cogent and rewarding.	14%	2013-2018	£13.50-£14.99	Carruthers & Kent, Great Western Wine, Swig
Villard, Expresión Reserve, Casablanca Valley 2012	16.5 (88)	17	16	16.5	Strawberry, cherry and mulberry aromas with a hint of vanilla. Succulent, plush texture, very fine. Lovely mid-palate harmony; silky and graceful.	13.5%	2013-2018	N/A UK	www.villard.cl
Artifice, Argentum, Casablanca Valley 2012	16.25 (87)	16.5	16	16	Quite subtle with notes of wet earth, dark fruits and a hint of dark chocolate. Good tension and grip on the palate. Nice juice despite a slightly hollow finish.	13.5%	2013-2018	N/A UK	www.artifice.cl
Montes, Outer Limits, Aconcagua Costa 2011	16.25 (87)	16	17	15.5	Good Pinot Noir aromas of ripe dark cherries, raspberries and chocolate. Plenty of juicy fruit - this isn't complex but fun and easy-going.	14.5%	2013-2018	£18.99	Waples Wines
Raiken, Casablanca Valley 2010	16.25 (87)	16	16	17	Classy and inviting with dark fruits, currants, earthy and gamey notes. A generous, muscular style. Nice to age but the oak dominates it slightly now.	13.5%	2013-2020	N/A UK	+56 226 301 511
Sainsbury's, Taste the Difference, Casablanca Valley 2012	16.25 (87)	16.5	14.5	18	Restrained and attractive, with aromas of black cherries, brambly fruit and raisins. Hangs together well, but needs less alcohol and left to be really good.	14%	2013-2020	£7.99	Sainsbury's
Undurraga, TH, Leyda Valley 2011	16.25 (87)	17	16	15.5	Creamy, toffeed red fruits with malty notes. Juicy, tangy, lifted and cleansing, with expressive and attractive fruit on the palate displaying excellent purity.	13.5%	2013-2019	£15.99	Majestic
Arboleda, Aconcagua Costa 2012	16 (86)	16.5	15.5	16	Gently perfumed with forward notes of currants, red cherries and raspberries. Young, exuberant and invigorating. Needs time to soften but exciting stuff.	13.5%	2013-2020	£20	Good Wine Shop, Leamington Wine Co, Loki Wines, Troubadour Wines, The Wine Library
Maycas del Limarí, Reserva Especial, Limarí Valley 2012	16 (86)	15	16	17	Notes of dark cherries, wet earth and dark chocolate showing nice complexity. Soft, well-structured, ripe fruit flavours. Rich and savoury with a long finish.	14%	2013-2020	£11.95	The Wine Society
Morandé, Gran Reserva, Casablanca Valley 2010	16 (86)	15.5	17	15.5	Smoky, sappy roasted fruit. Ripe juicy fruit combine with elegant savoury notes and sweet spices. Nice elements and elegant maturation but a bit hot.	14.5%	2013-2018	£12-£14	Field & Fawcett, Fine Wine Sellers, Whitebridge Wines, Woods Wines
Tierra Alta, Reserva, Casablanca Valley 2012	16 (86)	16.5	15	16.5	Subtle aromas include notes of blackberries, dark chocolate and sweet spices. Fruity, ripe and juicy on the palate, appetising and a long, refreshing finish.	13.5%	2013-2020	£14.50	Peter Watts
William Fèvre Chile, Little Quino, Traiguén, Malleco Valley 2012	16 (86)	18.5	14.5	15	Strikes a more rustic, earthy, feral note than many Pinots here. A leaner, food-friendly style with fine-grained tannic finesse, persistence, focus and drive.	12.5%	2013-2020	N/A UK	www.williamfevre.cl
Anakena, Tama Vineyard Selection, Leyda Valley 2012	15.75 (85+)	15.5	16	15.5	Attractive aromas of candied fruits, raspberries and red cherries. A bit lightweight but this is very pleasant, drinkable, foodie Pinot.	13.5%	2013-2018	£9.99	Majestic
Cono Sur, Ocio, Casablanca Valley 2010	15.75 (85+)	15	15	17	Intense and attractive notes of blackberries, dark chocolate, ginger biscuit, mint and leather. Concentrated juicy fruit, a little astringent.	14.5%	2013-2017	£31-£35	Hedonism, Roberson, The Wine Society
Errazuriz, Estate Series, Aconcagua Costa 2012	15.75 (85+)	16	16	15.5	Herbal summer berry and dark fruit, with leafy hints. Decent savoury stylings. Voluptuous and succulent. Fruit-forward and expressive with a pleasant finish.	13.5%	2013-2019	£10.49-£10.99	Bin 21, Majestic, Partridges, Wine Rack
Matetic, Corralillo, San Antonio Valley 2011	15.75 (85+)	16	16	15	Ripe, red berry fruits and some cherry and vegetal aromas. Soft, ripe tannins, fruity with sweet spices. A well-made wine that just lacks a bit of complexity.	14%	2013-2019	£15.99	Armit
Viña Ventisquero, Heru, Casablanca Valley 2010	15.75 (85+)	16	14.5	16.5	Gently perfumed with notes of dark cherries, blackberries, undergrowth and leather. Ripe, juicy and succulent if a little flabby.	14%	2013-2019	£22.99-£23.95	Widely available via UK agent PLB
Cantus, Reserva, Casablanca Valley 2011	15.5 (85)	14.5	16	16	Jammy, dark fruit. Gently grainy. Easy-going style with herbal touches to the raspberries and red cherries. Fine.	13%	2013-2018	£8.99-£9.99	Find Wine, Hangingditch, Portland Wines, R&H Wines
Indomita, Duette, Casablanca Valley 2012	15.5 (85)	15.5	17	14	Classy, perfumed nose includes notes of blackberries, raspberries and sweet spices. Good juicy fruit, if a bit short and stodgy. A decent effort, if unexciting.	14%	2013-2018	£10.99	Cambridge Wine Merchants, Cellar Twelve, Connolly's Wine Merchants, Highbury Vintners, Oxford Wine Co
Kingston Family Vineyards, Tobiano, Casablanca Valley 2011	15.5 (85)	16.5	14.5	15.5	Sappy, nettle cherry and redcurrant. Ripe, juicy and showing good concentration of fruit. Refined structure, pleasant fruit and moderate length.	14%	2013-2018	£19 (2010)	Marks & Spencer
Matetic, EQ, Casablanca Valley 2011	15.5 (85)	15	15	16.5	Moderately intense with toast, touch of smoke, touch of meatiness, and creamy dark fruit. Juicy fruit with clean finish.	14%	2013-2018	£19.99	Armit
Montsecano, Casablanca Valley 2012	15.5 (85)	16	14	16.5	Aromas are intense and include notes of blackberries, leather and fruit cake. Some really nice grip and freshness, but lacks cohesion and is a bit overdone.	13.5%	2013-2018	£28	Berry Bros & Rudd
Tierra Alta, Reserva Especial, Casablanca Valley 2012	15.5 (85)	14.5	15.5	16.5	Subtle aromas include notes of blackberries, dark chocolate and sweet spices. Palate is rich and ripe with refreshing cranberry and cherry fruit.	13.5%	2013-2019	£14.50	Peter Watts
Viña Leyda, Lot 21, Leyda Valley 2011	15.5 (85)	16.5	15	15	Candle wax, dark and red fruit. Spicy notes, vigorous style. Intense dark fruit combined with savoury notes on the palate and a pleasant finish.	14%	2013-2017	£23.50	Carruthers & Kent, Great Western Wine
Casa Marin, Cartagena, San Antonio Valley 2011	15.25 (84)	14.5	14.5	17	Dry leaves, smoke, dark fruit, earthy and meaty aromas. Fresh and bright palate with red fruits and hints of reduction.	14%	2013-2020	£13.99	Alfred the Grape
Casas del Toqui, Terroir Selection, Gran Reserva, Casablanca Valley 2011	15.25 (84)	14	15	16.5	Attractive and gently perfumed with aromas of red cherries, roses and plums. Rich, fruity, soft and silky tannins, medium length.	14%	2013-2018	N/A UK	www.casasdeltoqui.cl
Errazuriz, Wild Ferment, Casablanca Valley 2012	15.25 (84)	15.5	15.5	14.5	Notes of blackberries, liquorice and a hint of wild herbs are apparent on the nose. Some nice elements, decent oak, but lacks soul and follow-through.	13.5%	2013-2020	£13.99	Majestic, Booths
La Playa, Block Selection, Limarí Valley 2012	15.25 (84)	16	14	15.5	Aromas are expressive and typical of Pinot. Summer fruits with resinous hints. Nice juicy acidity and some serious grainy tannin here.	14%	2013-2019	£9.90	Ellis of Richmond
Morandé, Pionero, Casablanca Valley 2012	15.25 (84)	15	15	15.5	Restrained, with notes of dark cherries, blackberries and raspberries. Zippy feel, good accent on freshness. Harmonious and silky with a refreshing finish.	14%	2013-2018	£8-£10	Amps, Field & Fawcett, The Naked Grape, Planet of the Grapes, Waples Wines, Whitebridge Wines, The Wine Chambers
Quintay, Grand Reserve, Casablanca Valley 2012	15.25 (84)	14.5	14.5	16.5	Graceful and restrained aromas of red cherries and sweet spices. Palate is ripe with soft tannins, rich juicy fruit and good length. Not without appeal.	14%	2013-2018	£9.49	Ocado
Santa Alicia, Reserva, Casablanca Valley 2012	15.25 (84)	14.5	15	16	Lifted bouquet of raspberries, strawberries and a hint of herbs and vegetal notes. Similar vegetal notes on the palate. Refreshing and good depth of fruit.	13.5%	2013-2018	£7.49	Myliko
Terranoble, Reserva Terroir, Casablanca Valley 2012	15.25 (84)	16.5	14.5	15	Subdued aromas include dark fruits, cedar and sweet spices. Spicy, stodgy, pressed dark fruit. Quite rewarding, succulent, grippy and focused.	13.5%	2013-2018	£12.50	The Vineyard (Dorking), Vintage Cellars, Whitebridge Wines
Terranoble, Reserva, Casablanca Valley 2012	15.25 (84)	15.5	14	16.5	Aromas are restrained with notes of dark cherries, cedar, wet earth and eucalyptus. Not the most complex but very moreish in its zippy style.	13.5%	2013-2020	£9.50-£9.99	The Vineyard (Dorking), Vintage Cellars, Whitebridge Wines
Ventolera, Leyda Valley 2011	15.25 (84)	16	15.5	14	Creamy, malty plum and redcurrant. Intense and pretty full-on, lots of oak here. Good concentration of fruit, silky texture and moderate length.	14%	2013-2018	£17.49	Hallgarten Drutt
Villard, Grand Vin Le Pinot Noir, Casablanca Valley 2010	15.25 (84)	14.5	15.5	16	Restrained and elegant with notes of dark fruits, currants and sweet spices. Cherry, cranberry fruit on the palate with vegetal touches.	14.5%	2013-2019	N/A UK	www.villard.cl



## Recommended (continued) 15–16.75pts (83–89pts)

Wine	Score	IB	PR	DVJ	Tasting note	Alc	Drink	Price	Stockists
Carmen, Reserva, Leyda Valley 2012	15 (83)	14.5	15.5	15	Attractive, youthful and vibrant aromas of dark cherries, plums, chocolate and a hint of undergrowth. Pure, expressive fruit but tiring slightly.	13.5%	2013–2018	£9.49	Hallgarten Druitt
Cono Sur, 20 Barrels Limited Edition, Casablanca Valley 2011	15 (83)	14	15	16	Subtle aromas include blackberries, wet earth and liquorice. Ripe red fruits with some spice and moderate length.	14%	2013–2018	£19.99	Villeneuve Wines
Luis Felipe Edwards, Family Selection Gran Reserva, Leyda Valley 2012	15 (83)	14.5	15	15.5	Displays good intensity of fruit including raspberries, liquorice and sweet spices. Good concentration, ripe and juicy but needs more acidity.	13%	2013–2018	N/A UK	www.lfewines.com
Maycas del Limarí, Reserva, Limarí Valley 2012	15 (83)	16	14.5	14.5	Soft and ripe, touch of animal aromas, black cherry and charred wood. Coffee and dark chocolate. Layered and intense but a bit hot on the finish.	14%	2013–2017	£9.99	The Wine Society
Montes, Montes Alpha, Casablanca Valley 2011	15 (83)	14	15.5	15.5	Black cherry, damson, bramble fruit and red cherry notes on the nose. Decent presence and concentration but lacks grace and scent.	14.5%	2013–2018	£12.25–£13.99	Widely available via UK agent PLB
Tabali, Reserva, Limarí Valley 2012	15 (83)	14	14	17	The nose is a little closed showing notes of guava, blackberries and a hint of dustiness. Some cherry fruit and vegetal notes.	13.5%	2013–2018	£9.99	Majestic
Viña dos Andes, Porta, Bio-Bio Valley 2012	15 (83)	14	16	15	Elegant aromas of red fruits of the forest combine with a herbal note. Elegant, vibrant, with refreshing acidity and fine-grained tannins.	13.5%	2013–2020	N/A UK	www.dosandeswines.com
Viña Falernia, Reserva, Elqui Valley 2012	15 (83)	15.5	15.5	14	Elegantly pale. Malty, smoky, savoury aromas. Dry, balancing acidity, silky texture and smooth finish. Spicy, engaging and savoury, but lacks core focus.	14%	2013–2018	POA	Enotria
Viña Mar, Reserva, Casablanca Valley 2012	15 (83)	14	16	15	Focused and expressive, including notes of wild strawberries, dark cherries and raspberries. Soft black cherry, with a little warmth on the finish.	14%	2013–2018	£10.45	Corney & Barrow

### Fair 13–14.75pts (76–82pts)

■ Anakena, Enco, Leyda Valley 2012 14.75 (82) ■ Apaltaga, Colección, San Antonio Valley 2012 14.75 (82) ■ Emiliana, Novas, Casablanca Valley 2012 14.75 (82) ■ Luis Felipe Edwards, Marea, Leyda Valley 2011 14.75 (82) ■ Montes, Limited Selection, Casablanca Valley 2011 14.75 (82) ■ Tacora, Reserva, Limarí Valley 2012 14.75 (82) ■ Terramater, Vineyard Reserve, Leyda Valley 2012 14.75 (82) ■ Undurraga, Sibaris, Reserva Especial, Leyda Valley 2012 14.75 (82) ■ Undurraga, T H, Casablanca Valley 2010 14.75 (82) ■ Veramonte, Ritual, Casablanca Valley 2012 14.75 (82) ■ Viña dos Andes, LLA LLA, Bio-Bio Valley 2012 14.75 (82) ■ Anakena, Ona, Leyda Valley 2012 14.5 (81) ■ Casas del Bosque, Reserva, Casablanca Valley 2011 14.5 (81) ■ Sol de Andes, Reserva Especial, Casablanca Valley 2012 14.5 (81) ■ Vistamar, Sepia, Casablanca Valley 2012 14.5 (81) ■ Aroma, Winemaker's Selection, Bio-Bio Valley 2011 14.25 (80+) ■ Casa Marin, Lo Abarca Hills Vineyard, San Antonio Valley 2012 14.25 (80+) ■ La Playa, Sol y

Sombra, Limarí Valley 2012 14.25 (80+) ■ Laroche, Viña Laroche, El Chaparro, Casablanca Valley 2012 14.25 (80+) ■ Loma Larga, Casablanca Valley 2010 14.25 (80+) ■ Montsecano, Il Refugio, Casablanca Valley 2012 14.25 (80+) ■ Santa Carolina, Reserva, Casablanca Valley 2012 14.25 (80+) ■ Ventolera, Litoral, Leyda Valley 2011 14.25 (80+) ■ Viu Manent, Secret de Viu Manent, Casablanca Valley 2011 14.25 (80+) ■ Bodega Volcanes de Chile, Tectonia, Bio-Bio Valley 2011 14 (80) ■ Lapostolle, Cuvée Alexandre, Casablanca Valley 2011 14 (80) ■ Sol de Andes, Reserva, Casablanca Valley 2012 14 (80) ■ Echeverría, Reserva, Casablanca Valley 2011 13.75 (79) ■ Emiliana, Signos de Origen, Casablanca Valley 2012 13.75 (79) ■ The Co-operative, Santa Helena, Casablanca Valley 2012 13.75 (79) ■ Valdivieso, Reserva, Casablanca Valley 2011 13.75 (79) ■ Viña Casablanca, Nimbus, Casablanca Valley 2010 13.75 (79) ■ Vina Ventisquero, Reserva, Casablanca Valley 2012 13.75 (79) ■ Aroma, Barrel Selection, Casablanca Valley 2010 13.5 (78) ■ Veramonte, Reserva, Casablanca Valley

2011 13.5 (78) ■ Viña dos Andes, Veranda, Bio-Bio Valley 2012 13.5 (78) ■ Viña Tarapacá, Gran Reserva, Leyda Valley 2012 13.5 (78) ■ Attilio & Mochi, Tunquen, Casablanca Valley 2011 13.25 (77) ■ Garces Silva, Amayna, Leyda Valley 2011 13.25 (77) ■ Kingston Family Vineyards, Alazan, Casablanca Valley 2011 13.25 (77) ■ Millaman, Estate Reserve, Leyda Valley 2012 13.25 (77)

### Poor 11–12.75pts (70–75+pts)

■ Cono Sur, Single Vineyard, San Antonio Valley 2011 12.75 (75+) ■ Quintay, Clava, Casablanca Valley 2012 12.75 (75+) ■ Casas del Bosque, Gran Reserva, Casablanca Valley 2010 12 (73)

### Faulty wines

■ William Fèvre Chile, Quino, Traiguén, Malleco Valley 2012 (oxidised) ■ Casa Silva, Cool Coast, Paredones, Colchagua 2011 (corked)

For full UK stockist details, see p88

## Expert summary: Peter Richards MW

This tasting may not have given us fireworks, but Pinot lovers will surely take heart from the consistency, diversity and value for money offered right across the board



Peter Richards MW is the Decanter World Wine Awards Regional Chair for Chile

WITH PINOT, THERE is no room to hide – yet these results represent a creditable performance for a variety that is supposedly a work in progress in Chile. One Outstanding, 12 Highly Recommended and 44 Recommended from just over 100 samples is a good showing. There weren't fireworks, but there was a consistency of quality and value that should bring a smile to the face of all Pinot lovers.

Casablanca featured heavily in the top gongs, perhaps unsurprisingly for a region that accounted for more than half of the entries and represents the lion's share of Chile's Pinot plantings. Of equal interest is the excellent performance of Leyda and the notable diversity of origins within the Highly Recommended category – with Aconcagua Costa, Bio-Bio and Limarí all featuring.

The scorching 2012 vintage was not the easiest for Pinot. The fact that more than half of the entries were from 2012 further validates the positive aspect of these results. It also helps explain why, given the predominance of 2012s in the tasting, less than half of the top 13 were from 2012.

It's also worth dwelling on Chile's value credentials. Good Pinot does not come cheap. Yet a swift glance at the top results demonstrates that these are, at best, modestly priced in the global context, with some absolute steals. The 'outstanding' wine sells at £14.99, with this level

probably representing a rough or slightly upish average for the tasting. And these wines were judged with no price context, so cheap wines that did well are all the more commendable, such as the Santa Alicia Reserva Bio-Bio 2012 and Morrisons' The Best Casablanca 2012 (£7.99).

Among the brands, the performance of Viña Leyda deserves highlighting, with point scores of 17 (for the Reserva 2011), 16.75 (Las Brisas 2011) and 15.5 (Lot 21 2011). Artifice is an exciting new name, while Tabali's fine work shines the spotlight on the potential of Limarí.

The potential for Chilean Pinot is clear, both in terms of diversity and quality. As regards the former, some tasters preferred a richer structure, some a leaner style – the fact that the overall results are positive indicates both can work. In terms of quality (and value), the bar is set high. All that's needed now is for more wines to populate the pulse-quickenings realms of the upper-result echelons. **D**

*'This represents a creditable performance for what is a work in progress in Chile'*

### My top three

#### Isa Bal MS

■ **Artifice, Platinum, Casablanca Valley 2010** This is made in a big, New World style. Oak is a little powerful on the nose, but well judged. There are smoky, toasty aromas, and on the palate a solid fruit structure, ripe tannins and refreshing acidity. A hint of bitterness adds to the complexity. **16.5/20 (88/100) Drink** 2013–2020

■ **Tabali, Talinay, Limarí Valley 2011** A very fruity wine on the nose displaying strawberry raspberry fruit, with hints of dry leaves. Soft on the palate with ripe, silky tannins. **16.5 (88) Drink** 2013–2018

■ **Vina Ventisquero, Grey, Leyda Valley 2011** Very well-made, confident wine, with earthy, vegetal and gamey aromas. It has silky-soft tannins, refreshing acidity and a lingering finish. Really rich, fruity style and the gamey flavour gives it nice complexity. **18.5 (95) Drink** 2013–2020

### My top three

#### Peter Richards MW

■ **Montsecano, Il Refugio, Casablanca Valley 2012** I fell in love with the scents of violets and wild blackberry in this biodynamic wine made by Alsatian André Ostertag and Chilean Julio Donoso. It's distinctive and elegantly textured. Not for everyone, perhaps, but it worked for me. **18/20 (93/100) Drink** 2013–2018

■ **William Fèvre Chile, Little Quino, Traiguén, Malleco Valley 2012** Another edgy Pinot with a rustic, earthy, sappy style. Lovely, invigorating focus, really food-friendly. Risky and thrilling. It's great to see this Maipo-based producer diversifying. **14.5 (81) Drink** 2013–2020

■ **Santa Alicia, Reserva, Bio-Bio Valley 2012** Along with Morrison's The Best Casablanca 2012, this was my standout value wine. Elegant and self-contained, not trying too hard but gently succulent and refreshing. **17 (90) Drink** 2013–2019

### My top three

#### Dirceu Vianna Jr MW

■ **Viña Ventisquero, Grey, Leyda Valley 2011** A rising star, Alejandro Galaz captures the seductive personality of Pinot from an amazing single block a stone's throw from the Pacific. It has excellent concentration underpinned by silky tannins, and a beautiful texture leading to a lively, long finish. **18.5/20 (95/100) Drink** 2013–2020

■ **Viña Leyda, Reserva, Leyda Valley 2011** Viña Leyda was a pioneer in this valley and its progressive vision, combined with continuous dedication, is certainly bearing fruit. This exquisite Pinot displays inviting notes of dark cherries, blackberries, forest floor and dark chocolate. **16 (86) Drink** 2013–2019

■ **Laroche, Viña Laroche, Casablanca Valley 2012** This combines Chilean purity of fruit with a touch of French flair and the result is a pure, elegant and sophisticated Pinot Noir. It is youthful, fruit-forward and expressive on the nose and palate, with an attractive savoury undertone on the finish. **17 (90) Drink** 2013–2020

NB: the tasters' top wines are not necessarily their top-scoring, rather those which, on learning the wines' identity, they feel are the most notable given their provenance, price or other factors

## DECANTER PROMOTION

## Decanter Recommended Chilean Pinot Noir



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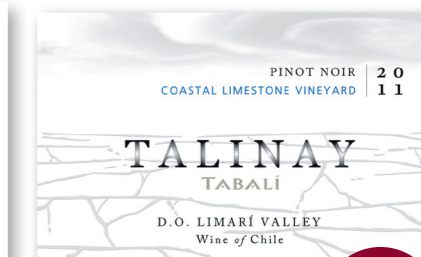
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