

Chilean Carmenère

It's a tricky grape to get right, but Chile's winemakers are the best-placed in the world to do so, says Peter Richards MW. And as research develops, the quality bar gets ever higher

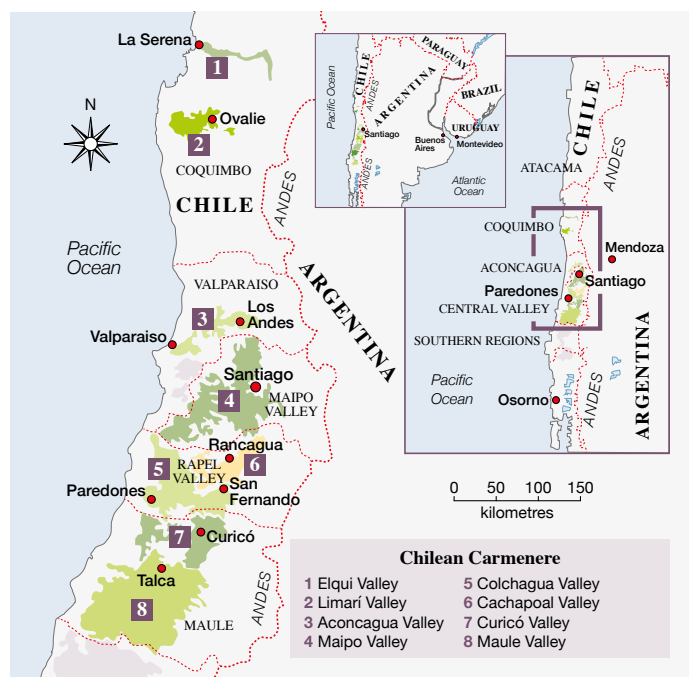
Whisper it, but Chilean Carmenère may be at risk of having its thunder stolen. Its modern moment in the limelight came in 1994, when French ampelographer Jean-Michel Boursiquot identified it in what was supposed to be a pure Merlot vineyard. Until that point it had largely flown under the radar while giving Chilean 'Merlot' its distinctive character. And then, suddenly, it was outed – and a new category of Chilean wine was created, one that has been developing ever since. The variety is now the fifth most widely planted in Chile.

The spotlight on the Chilean vineyard continues, however – and it seems there will be more such varieties emerging. Particularly in Chile's historic south, where a research project (as reported in *Decanter's* October issue) recently identified more than 60 'uncommon' grape varieties growing in Bío Bío, including 26 previously unrecorded elsewhere in the world. 'It's a tower of Babel on the shores of the Bío Bío!' memorably commented local grower Juan José Ledesma.

Exciting prospects

Not bad for a wine nation long renowned for its steady, mainstream image. In this sense, Carmenère's identification can be seen as a turning point – a moment when the country's winemakers began a gradual pivot towards the exigencies and identities of their own vineyards rather than the demands of the market.

Because Carmenère, of course, has few international precedents outside Chile. Sure, there's a fair bit knocking around in China and Italy, as well as odds and sods in North America, Argentina,



Australia and of course its historic home in Bordeaux and southwest France. (The variety is closely related to Cabernet Franc and was long prized in Bordeaux but fell out of favour after phylloxera.)

It's a rare international wine that majors on Carmenère and it boasts few centres of expertise, so Chile assumed this mantle by default. Ever since, it's made steady progress, with recent Chilean studies on terroir and clones yielding valuable data while the winemakers involved have felt their way with what is a tricky variety.

Carmenère is a late-season variety that needs warmth but not excessive heat, as well as soils that are well drained but not too fertile. If harvested unripe, Carmenère can be virulently green; if overripe, its acidity plummets and it swiftly loses its hallmark herbal, leafy character. High yields and careless winemaking can be catastrophic; rainy autumns or poor vintages can be calamitous.

No wonder De Martino winemaker Marcelo Retamal terms it 'the most difficult variety to make in Chile', which may be in need of 'a generational change to understand it properly'.

Such work continues apace – and deservedly so, because the glimpses of brilliance already afforded by the very best Carmenère (both solo and in blends) are tremendously exciting. The warm Rapel region (Colchagua and Cachapoal) remains Carmenère's centre of gravity in Chile, though the likes of Maipo, Curicó and Maule are all capable of making excellent examples. Expect the Carmenère map to expand further in future, as forward-thinking wine-growers push back frontiers in the mountains and coast as well as north and south. Thunder or not, the Carmenère narrative continues.

Peter Richards MW is an awarded wine writer, broadcaster and consultant. He is the DWWA Regional Chair for Chile

CHILEAN CARMENERE: KNOW YOUR VINTAGES

2018 Relatively cool, late season gave naturally fresher reds, though some late-season varieties like Carmenère struggled to ripen fully, hence variability.

2017 Heatwaves and wildfires beset one of the earliest, lowest-yielding vintages of modern times. Beware smoke taint, otherwise Carmenère coped okay.

2016 'Disastrous', said one winemaker, as torrential April rain hit a slow-maturing vintage – Carmenère was one of the worst-hit varieties (yet decent wines have been made).

2015 Warm weather gave generous styles, often very good, though some producers went OTT with ripeness and extraction.

2014 Carmenère was one of the high points after devastating spring frosts hit cooler areas, but the season ended benignly: concentrated yet precise wines.

CHILEAN CARMENERE: THE FACTS

Chilean vineyard 137,375ha
Chilean Carmenère vineyard 10,503ha
Carmenère as % of national vineyard 7.7%
Growth over 10 years (2006-2016) +47%
Growth over 5 years (2011-2016) +5%
Production in 2018 77.5m litres
Key regions Colchagua, Maule, Cachapoal, Curicó, Maipo
 Sources: Ministry of Agriculture, Origo

The verdict

Though there was some variability, this was a sound showing overall, with our judges enjoying some impressive quality at the top end, as Peter Richards MW reports

First, the context. This tasting comes hot on the heels of one of the most disappointing Chilean panel tastings of recent times (*Sauvignon Blanc, October 2018 issue*). With that precedent, these results are stellar. But perhaps it's more instructive to look at the last Carmenère tasting (*October 2017*) where the results were marginally better than here. In that light, this outcome was less encouraging.

So what's going on with Chilean Carmenère? In short, it's a mixed bag. One feeling that emerged from the 2017 tasting was cautious optimism: Carmenère was clearly evolving, but not quite reaching the top notes. Not much has changed. 'Carmenère's a work in progress,' commented Alistair Cooper MW. And Dirceu Vianna Junior MW remarked: 'There were some nice wines, and decent consistency, but there are better things in Chile: Pinot Noir for one.'

The headline numbers are solid but not stellar (see 'The scores', above right). Incidentally, the balance in 2017 was fairly similar, though four wines were Outstanding and 23 Highly Recommended out of 129.

One striking outcome this year was the re-emergence of Colchagua and Cachapoal (in particular, its Peumo sub-region) as quality hotspots for Carmenère – the 2017 tasting had

been headlined by the likes of Maipo and Maule. Rapel, which includes Colchagua and Cachapoal, is Carmenère's heartland in Chile but has suffered in recent times from excesses of ripeness, alcohol, extraction and oak. While it's fair to note that Rapel accounted for 64% of all wines submitted to this tasting, it's still heartening to see these areas producing wines of more poise, sophistication and character at the top end. Cooper noted how the best Peumo wines were 'beautiful, with a delightful tannin structure'.

In terms of vintages (see p131), 2016 performed better than expected at the top end. The best wines here were characterful and engaging – though it's also true to say that the lesser 2016s proved hollow and lacklustre. Some 2017s from the south showed signs of smoke taint from wildfires. Of late, Chile has suffered a run of challenging vintages, but on this evidence the best producers and sites can and do rise to the challenge.

Carmenère is often known as a blending variety and these styles worked well. 'In blends, the other variety seems to magnify its personality,' enthused Vianna. 'The most ambitious Carmenère works best in partnership with something else.' Cooper, meanwhile, was 'increasingly impressed by single-varietal Carmenère', but also noted

'Almost all of the top-scoring wines had some element of deft oak maturation'

the likes of Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Carignan as good blending partners.

Beyond blending, almost all of the top-scoring wines had some element of deft oak maturation. This works well for Carmenère, fleshing out the mid-palate and adding complexity – though care needs to be taken not to overdo things. Faulty bottles were too common for comfort, with oxidation and brettanomyces frequent issues, and the odd wine over-acidified, so these should all be areas of focus.

Excessive alcohol was the downfall of many wines, as was a lack of varietal character. Often these are the result of poor decisions in the vineyard, particularly regarding harvest timing. The best Carmenères are all about character and balance – but achieving this needs hard work in both the vineyard and winery. The work goes on.

THE SCORES

89 wines tasted
 Exceptional 0
 Outstanding 2
 Highly Recommended 11
 Recommended 51
 Commended 23
 Fair 1
 Poor 0
 Faulty 1

Entry criteria: producers and UK agents were invited to submit their latest-release Carmenère wines (85% minimum) priced at £10 and above in the UK

OUTSTANDING 95–97pts



Matetic Vineyards, Corralillo, Colchagua 2016

Decanter average score: 95/100pts Individual judges' scores: Alistair Cooper MW 94 Dirceu Vianna Junior MW 95 Peter Richards MW 95

£15.99 Banstead Vintners

With its name of Croatian origin, Matetic Vineyards is based in the Rosario Valley of San Antonio appellation, founded in 1999. This family winery is fully biodynamic and organic, respecting the terroir and land over its four estates and vineyards in San Antonio and Casablanca valleys, covering an impressive 160ha. The Corralillo range is named in recognition of a very old cellar in the local area. The fruit for this wine comes from Colchaguan soils, granitic in nature, mixed with clays, lime and organic matter. The wine has a small percentage of Syrah added and is aged in French oak barrels for 18 months.

Alistair Cooper MW Lifted balsamic notes with lovely sweet cassis and violets. Lovely pink grapefruit-style acidity with rounded tannins and a nice clovey, black pepper spice. This gives lovely pleasure at the moment. Drinking beautifully.

Dirceu Vianna Junior MW Elegant and restrained with aromas of dark fruits, grapefruit, pencil shavings, cedar, spice and black pepper. Intriguing, complex and pleasant spiciness on the finish.

Peter Richards MW Peppery, juicy, vaguely bloody aromas. Elegant lift to the finish. Touch of tobacco age. It's soft and savoury, elegantly drinkable and moreish. Well made in a mezzoforte accent. Nice blend too, with a bit of Syrah pepper and spice. Love this wine – so much enjoyment here. So drinkable.

Drink 2019-2021 Alcohol 14%



Viña La Rosa, La Rosa, Peumo, Cachapoal 2014 95 AC 95 DVJ 94 PR 95

N/A UK www.larosa.cl

Viña La Rosa boasts a long history with wine – mining entrepreneur Francisco Ossa bought the estate in 1824, making it one of the oldest wineries in Chile. It is located in the Peumo sub-region of the Cachapoal valley, and only uses estate-grown fruit. Today it is still run and owned by the Ossa family, who has recognised the potential for quality Carmenère in the Peumo region. Viña la Rosa's Carmenère is from fruit grown on the Viña Cerro vineyards, which contain colluvial soils of granitic origin. These soils are located close to the mountains and offer perfect drainage for the Carmenère grape.

AC Dried tobacco and fig with a big lick of alcohol. This is rounded, big and voluptuous. I love the freshness and greenness here, with soft velvety tannins and an iron earthy character. Finishes long, and with cracking acidity.

DVJ Opaque colour, youthful, good concentration of fruit – cassis, tobacco, ink – although a little firm. It has good tension and freshness. Needs time.

PR Toasty, roasted hazelnut aromas, with dried plum skins. Some elegant complexity from age, hint of tobacco and dried fruit. Plenty of wine, with a sturdy structure, firm acidity and lift on the finish. Cultured. A wine that still has a distance to go. Stylish, food-friendly. Not perfect, could have more varietal character – but in this context it does shine.

Drink 2019-2022 Alc 14%

THE JUDGES

Alistair Cooper MW



Following several years working for wineries in Chile and Argentina, Cooper moved back to the UK in 2006. A Master of Wine since 2017, he now consults, judges, educates and hosts

events in both the UK and Chile, also writing for publications including Decanter, Meininger's and Drinks International.

Peter Richards MW



Richards is an award-winning broadcaster and writer, with more than a decade on BBC1 television and four books including *The Wines of Chile* and his own *Chile Wine Brief*. He is the DWWA

Regional Chair for Chile and, together with his wife Susie Barrie MW, co-hosts the annual *Wine Festival Winchester*.

Dirceu Vianna Junior MW



Originally from Brazil, Vianna studied forest engineering and law, before moving to London, where he began to work in the wine trade in 1990. In 2008, he became the first South American

male to obtain the title of Master of Wine. He is now working as a wine writer, educator, technical consultant and competition judge.

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED 90–94pts



Echeverria, Limited Edition, Maipo 2016 92 AC 93 DVJ 90 PR 92

£25 Hallgarten Wines

Beautiful cassis and pencil shaving nose, followed by currants, spice, cassis, cedar and wet earth. On the palate it is well structured and harmonious, with lovely soft, fine-grained tannins. It's an unashamedly extrovert style, flaunting its sweet, creamy, oaky, ripe-fruited character. Drink 2019-2020 Alc 14%



Concha y Toro, Carmín de Peumo, Peumo, Cachapoal 2014 91 AC 93 DVJ 90 PR 91

£120 Concha y Toro

A soft palate that caresses the mouth; the acidity is fantastic and really shines through. It's youthful with good intensity of fruit, subtle notes of bell pepper and spice. The tannins are soft and well integrated, as is the oak. Tobacco and mulberry fruit on the finish. Still has a good life ahead. Drink 2019-2023 Alc 14.5%



Hacienda Araucano, Araucano Reserva, Colchagua 2017 91 AC 90 DVJ 92 PR 90

£10.89 Condor Wines, Great Grog

A wine full of personality with excellent notes of dark fruits, cedar, spices and roasted coffee. A refreshing style, well made and well put together: harmonious, excellent concentration of fruits, which are persistent and savoury on the finish. Drink 2019-2020 Alc 13% ➤

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED 90-94pts



Tarapacá, Gran Reserva, Maipo 2017 91 AC 92 DVJ 90 PR 92

£11.99 Enotria&Coe
Elegant, sleek, ripe dark fruit and a hint of wood smoke. It's seductive and youthful, a chocolate and cassis delight. There's pleasant fruit concentration with blueberry pie and spice. Cool and well made. There's lots of wine here. **Drink** 2019-2021 **Alc** 13.5%



TerraNoble, CA1, Colchagua Andes 2015 91 AC 92 DVJ 90 PR 90

£27-£28 Dronfield Wine World, General Wine & Liquor Co, Milestone Wines, Neill & Co, Pimlico Dozen, The Vineyard, Vintage Cellars, Whitebridge Wines
A minty bombshell initially that eases into an attractive, intense mix of herbs, sage and spice with charred meat, kirsch, and a finish of mocha. An extrovert wine that will appeal to many. **Drink** 2019-2021 **Alc** 14%



Viu Manent, El Incidente, Colchagua 2016 91 AC 90 DVJ 90 PR 93

£46.99 Louis Latour Agencies, Secret Bottle Shop
Herbal, roasted red pepper notes. Good spice and energy, nice focus. It's complex without being overly weighty. There is a lovely dense concentration to the fruit. It's ripe, with coconut and coca spice. A nice rich style!
Drink 2019-2023 **Alc** 14%



Château Los Boldos, Grande Réserve, Cachapoal Andes 2016 90 AC 89 DVJ 90 PR 91

POA Liberty Wines
Real Christmas spice, ginger, mace and clove on the nose which follows onto a succulent palate, with lovely underlying freshness. Good red fruit core at the heart of it all with a pleasant finish. **Drink** 2019-2022 **Alc** 14%

‘Cooper noted how the Peumo wines were “beautiful, with a delightful tannin structure”’



Errazuriz, Max Reserva, Aconcagua 2015 90 AC 90 DVJ 89 PR

£16.30 Dronfield Wine World, Ellie's Cellar, Hailsham Cellars, Hatch Mansfield, VINO Wines
Elegant, complex nose of roasted herbs, sweet blackberry and toasty smoky hints. Bags of spicy character on the palate. Still feels young. The finish is long and generous, with slight vegetal notes. **Drink** 2019-2021 **Alc** 14%



Koyle, Royale, Colchagua Alto 2016 90 AC 92 DVJ 90 PR 88

N/A UK www.koyle.cl
Ripe, juicy and exuberant. This wine is well structured and harmonious with overt dark fruit, tobacco spice, great concentration, nice freshness and a pleasant persistent finish. A lot of wine here to enjoy - needs some meat!
Drink 2019-2022 **Alc** 14%



TerraNoble, CA2, Colchagua Costa 2015 90 AC 90 DVJ 89 PR 90

£27-£28 Dronfield Wine World, General Wine & Liquor Co, Milestone Wines, Neill & Co, Pimlico Dozen, The Vineyard, Vintage Cellars, Whitebridge Wines
A lifted nose with some earth, balsamic and minty notes. The palate delivers, with cocoa and spice, fruitcake too. It's dense and quite attractive with a touch of bitterness.
Drink 2019-2021 **Alc** 14%



Undurraga, TH Terroir Hunter, Peumo, Cachapoal 2016 90 AC 92 DVJ 90 PR 89

£19.99-£24.99 Eurowines
A huge hedonistic nose, with spice, blueberry ripe dark fruits and pencil shavings. It's a really seductive palate with fine tannins that are really well integrated. There's a lovely zip to the finish which really lifts this wine into another gear. **Drink** 2019-2022 **Alc** 14%

RECOMMENDED 86-89pts

Wine	Score	AC	DVJ	PR	Tasting note	Alc	Drink	Price	Stockists
Echeverría, Gran Reserva, Curicó 2015	89	88	90	90	Attractive, high-toned minty aromas; earthy, savoury palate with succulent fruit and a touch of spice, meaty tones. Edgy but moreish, savoury, complex.	14%	2019	£10.35-£15	Exel, Hallgarten Wines
Estampa, Gold, Marchigüe 2015	89	90	88	88	Cola, cocoa and damson nose. Ticking all the boxes with lots to admire. Well-integrated oak but a heavy-hitting, alcohol-dominant finish.	14.5%	2019-2022	£22-£23.95	Bacchanalia, Harrogate Wines, Promotion Wine, Richardsons of Whitehaven, Sheridan Coopers, Waples Wines, Winedown
Viña Apaltagua, Envero Gran Reserva, Colchagua Apalta 2017	89	88	89	89	Deep and dense from the onset. Buckets of ripe dark fruits which harmonise the toasty, bacon nose. It's energetic, grounding and very persistent.	14%	2019-2021	£12.99	Anthony Byrne

RECOMMENDED (Continued) 86-89pts

Wine	Score	AC	DVJ	PR	Tasting note	Alc	Drink	Price	Stockists
Alto de Casablanca, Primus, Colchagua Apalta 2017	88	87	89	87	Sun-baked fruit giving promise and intrigue. Fresh herbs, attractive red and dark fruits, chocolate and spices. Great elegance and purity on the finish.	14%	2019-2020	£16	Matthew Clark
Arboleda, Aconcagua 2015	88	88	86	91	Sweet, ripe, brambly fruit dominates, complemented by a refreshing mint note lingering. It's dry and crisp, showing good acidity on its savoury finish.	14%	2019-2020	£16.95	Corney & Barrow
Concha y Toro, Terrunyo, Peumo, Cachapoal 2016	88	88	89	88	Baked earthy fruit, blueberry compote creamy character to start. A traditional style, showing subtlety, but nonetheless great vibrant elegance on the finish.	13%	2019-2021	£19.99	Concha y Toro
Los Vascos, Grande Reserva, Colchagua 2017	88	87	89	88	Candle wax and plum, roasted pepper. Restrained and elegant palate with good concentration and purity of fruit, finishing fresh, but with tension too.	14%	2019	£18.99	Darts Farm, Davis Bell McCraith, SH Jones, Slurp, Wapping Wines, Vinotopia
Luis Felipe Edwards, Family Selection Gran Res, Colchagua 2017	88	87	88	88	Violets, perfumed with dried herbs on the nose, followed by dark fruits and a loyalty to its aromas. An oxidative style, which adds to the wine's complexity.	14%	2019	N/A UK	www.lfewines.com
Oveja Negra, Single Vineyard, Maule 2017	88	89	88	86	This youthful, ripe and juicy example shows exuberant fruit on the nose and palate. It's light and elegant with a harmonious structure on the finish.	13.5%	2019	N/A UK	www.ovejaneagra.com
Perez Cruz, Limited Edition, Maipo Andes 2016	88	89	89	87	Toffee and milk chocolate! A great example, with serious dark fruit and hints of cedar and spice following through on the delicate palate. Very promising.	13.5%	2019-2020	£15.50-£17.99	Corking Wines, Exel, Great Wines Direct, Hallgarten Wines, Strictly Wine
San Pedro, 1865 Selected Vineyards, Maule 2017	88	88	88	87	It's creamy, steeped in kirsch in the mouth. The nose is subtle, but that evolves on the finish, where there's great fruit purity and attractive freshness.	14.5%	2019	N/A UK	www.sanpedro.cl
San Pedro, Tierras Moradas, Maule 2015	88	85	90	90	Classy, polished feel here. It's smoky, creamy oak following with tons of glossy dark fruit. Rich, smooth and spicy. Voluptuous and winning. Super impressive.	15%	2019	N/A UK	www.sanpedro.cl
Santa Ema, Amplus One, Peumo, Cachapoal 2017	88	89	87	89	An attractive fruit-laden nose: fig, dark chocolate and tobacco. It's dense and concentrated on the palate. Not for the faint-hearted!	14%	2019-2021	£18	Inverarity Morton
Santa Luz, Gran Reserva, Colchagua 2017	88	88	89	87	Smoky dark fruit, a bit inscrutable. Full of dark cherries, blackberries, touch of bell pepper and spices. Well-structured, sophisticated, fresh and persistent.	14%	2019	£10	House of Townend
Sol de Andes, Gran Reserva, Maule 2015	88	89	87	88	Bacon fat and toasty smoky oak. There's good dark fruit and dark chocolate on the palate which follow through to a touch of bitterness on the finish.	14%	2019	£14.96	Gerrard Seel
Casa Donoso, Sucesor Red, Maule 2015	88	85	88	92	A high-toned and expressive example. Complex and multi-layered with ripe and juicy fruit. It's intelligently put together.	13.5%	2019-2020	N/A UK	www.donosogroup.com
Viña Apaltagua, Zapallares Gran Res Selección Privada, Colchagua 2016	88	88	89	87	A nice blend of dark fruits, sweet spice and cigar box. It's a little sweet, but there is a dense concentration to the fruit that is so appealing.	14%	2019-2020	£14.95	Davy's
William Fèvre Chile, La Misión Reserva Especial, Maipo 2017	88	86	88	90	Dark fruit and hints of dried flowers. It's succulent, with bitter sweet damson fruit and a touch of spice. The finish is sophisticated and attractive.	14%	2019-2020	N/A UK	www.williamfevrechile.com
William Fèvre Chile, La Misión Gran Reserva, Maipo 2015	88	88	90	87	Complex. It's meaty and floral with red and black fruits on the nose and palate. There's spice too and some roasted herbs slowly emerge at the end.	14%	2019	N/A UK	www.williamfevrechile.com
Carmen, Winemaker's Black, Colchagua Apalta 2016	87	87	87	87	A youthful example with notes of dark fruit and pencil shavings, cedar. The finish is quite abrupt with a hint of bitterness.	13.5%	2019	£19.99	Santa Rita Estates
Casas del Toqui, Gran Toqui, Cachapoal 2015	87	85	88	87	Green pepper on the nose with cassis, blackberries, chocolate and spice following through. A zippy and upbeat example with great varietal definition.	14%	2019	£14.99	Frederic Robinson
Chono, Colchagua 2015	87	89	85	86	Bacon fat and spice, creamy mashed berry fruit and good fresh acidity to boot. A modest finish with a touch of menthol following through.	13%	2019-2020	£13.95	Ellis Wines
Concha y Toro, Casillero del Diablo Res Privada, Rapel 2017	87	86	85	90	Enticing notes of red pepper with raspberry and blackberry. A rich chocolatey palate complements the lovely freshness and line.	14%	2019-2020	N/A UK	www.conchaytoro.com
De Martino, Legado, Maipo 2017	87	87	87	87	High-toned aromatics with cassis, blackberry, dark chocolate and spices. Ripe damson and a touch of sour cream, with a persistent, refreshing finish.	13.5%	2019-2020	£13.95	Berry Bros & Rudd
Errazuriz, Aconcagua Alto, Aconcagua 2016	87	88	87	87	Herbaceous nose, spicy hedgerow, and a follow-through of bacon fat notes with ripe dark fruit. It's vibrant with fresh acidity to conclude.	14%	2019	£17.50-£21.95	Edencroft, Hatch Mansfield, Haslemere Wine Merchants, The Vinorium
Estampa, Gran Reserva, Marchigüe 2016	87	89	88	85	Intensity to the fruit with graphite, mineral and fine tannins. Has excellent vibrancy of fruits with a mouthwatering freshness and a persistent finish.	14%	2019-2021	£13	Seckford Agencies
Santa Carolina, Herencia, Peumo, Cachapoal 2010	87	85	85	90	Intriguing example of elegant tobacco and dark fruit. It seems very cultured with some age and positive development, however it's beginning to dry out.	15%	2019-2022	£65	Amazon UK, Ehrmanns
Santa Helena, Gran Reserva, Rapel 2017	87	89	85	86	Nice perfume, violets and red fruits with a good green pyrazine presence. Good balance here; the tannins are firm but round, and the fruit is good.	14%	2019-2020	N/A UK	www.santahelena.cl
Undurraga, Sibaris Gran Reserva, Colchagua 2016	87	88	87	86	An attractive nose of rich dark fruit and dark chocolate which controls the palate too, but is lifted up with a refreshing streak of acidity.	14%	2019-2020	£14.99	Eurowines
Valdivieso, Single Vineyard, Peumo, Cachapoal 2012	87	87	88	85	Seductive and inviting nose of dried herbs and leaves, and a lick of sweet dark fruit. There's good concentration, structure, and a pleasant savoury finish.	14.5%	2019	£16	Bibendum Wine

RECOMMENDED 86-89pts

Wine	Score	AC	DVJ	PR	Tasting note	Alc	Drink	Price	Stockists
Ventisquero, Grey Single Block, Maipo Costa 2017	87	86	88	87	A fresh, zingy and herbal example with generous fruit. Black dark fruits dominate; this would work well with food.	14%	2019	£15.99	Soho Wine Supply
Ventisquero, Queulat Single Vineyard, Maipo Costa 2016	87	89	85	86	Aromatics of perfumed violet transcending to red and black, tangy fruits on the palate. There's good freshness and some complexity on the finish.	13%	2019-2020	N/A UK	www.ventisquero.com
Veramonte, Reserva, Colchagua 2017	87	86	88	87	Inviting aromas of dark cherries, cassis and a hint of cedar. The palate is mineral in style with graphite and dark plush fruit.	14%	2019-2020	£10.99	Matthew Clark, Ocado
Viña Casa Silva, Microterroir de los Llingues, Colchagua 2012	87	86	88	86	Expressive and vibrant aromas of ripe blackberries, violets, cedar and dried herb. Ripe, juicy fruit showing good concentration and varietal expression.	14%	2019	£35	Jackson Nugent Vintners
Viña Chocalan, Origen Gran Reserva, Maipo 2017	87	88	88	84	A forward, expressive example with aromas of blackberry, cassis, bell pepper, a touch herbaceous too. It's quite attractive but lacks some freshness.	14%	2019-2020	£13.99	Dalziel & Vine
Viña La Rosa, La Capitana, Peumo, Cachapoal 2017	87	89	85	87	Prickly hedgerow aromatics give the wine an intriguing start. It has a smooth, elegantly knit palate with real concentration of fruit and a long, layered finish.	14%	2019-2020	N/A UK	www.larosa.cl
Viña Requiringua, Toro de Piedra Gran Reserva, Maule 2017	87	89	87	86	This has freshness, poise and direction. Slightly grassy from the onset, but this mellows down to ripe plum and juicy dark fruits. Very drinkable.	14%	2019-2020	£13.99	Condor Wines
Viña Sutil, Limited Release, Colchagua 2017	87	89	87	86	An attractive, sophisticated nose; aromas of dark fruits, cherries, plums and spice. Muscular style palate with an earthy character and focus.	14%	2019-2020	£16.99	Castelnaud Wine Agencies
Aresti, Trisquel Gran Reserva, Curicó 2017	86	86	86	87	This has a light and vibrant nose, dried herbs and savoury characters defining it. Very drinkable, gently moreish.	13%	2019-2020	£13.99	Copestick Murray
Carmen, Gran Reserva, Colchagua 2017	86	87	85	86	Dried herbs, cedar, spices and dark fruits follow on to raspberry and damson hints on the palate. Slightly bitter and drying on the finish.	14%	2019-2020	£11.99	Santa Rita Estates
Casa Donoso, Bicentenario Gran Reserva, Maule 2018	86	87	88	84	A smoky, meaty dark fruit start. The palate is creamy, with a touch of spice. There's exuberant, ripe, juicy fruit too. A consumer-friendly style.	13.5%	2019-2020	N/A UK	www.donosogroup.com
De Martino, Alto de Piedras, Maipo 2015	86	87	87	84	A grassy, creamy example of red strawberry coming through on the nose and mouth. Good concentration of fruit and tannin; pleasant, refreshing finish.	13%	2019	£20.99-£27.95	Berry Bros & Rudd, Waitrose
Emiliana, Signos de Origen, Colchagua 2016	86	85	87	87	Herbal, creamy, smoky. Juicy, bittersweet dark and red fruits. Needs food - intriguing, if not super-easygoing. Smooth and shows a bit of maturity.	14%	2019	£18.99	Boutinot, Highbury Vintners, Nickolls & Perks, Tiny's Tipple, WoodWinters
Korta, Barrel Selection Gran Reserva, Sagrada Familia 2016	86	89	85	85	Forward and expressive with good varietal character. It has a lovely cocoa element. Good acidity, a well-made wine.	14%	2019	N/A UK	www.korta.cl
Lapostolle, Grand Selection, Rapel 2015	86	85	86	87	Discreet, youthful with attractive notes of dark fruits, liquorice, pepper, pencil shavings and spice. Quite lean and has a touch of bitterness on the finish.	13.5%	2019-2020	£12.99	Hailsham Cellars, New Street Wine Shop, Oakham Wines
Las Mercedes, Singular, Maule 2016	86	86	88	84	Lively, crackling nose with mulberry and redcurrant and just a hint of pepper. It's harmonious and complex with beautiful savoury notes on the finish.	13.5%	2019	£18	Corkage, Grapevine, Secret Cellar, Starmore Boss, The Sampler
Morandé, One to One Estate Reserve, Maipo 2017	86	88	84	86	Slightly minty, meaty, vegetal hints; rosemary and medicinal too. It has firm tannins with a lovely streak of zippy acidity on the finish.	13.5%	2019-2021	£12.49	Gallachers Fine Wine, Hailsham Cellars, Vino Faversham
Terrapura, Single Vineyard, Colchagua 2017	86	88	84	87	Cola, kirsch and dried fruit on the nose. This follows a juicy, acidic palate showing attractive fruits, especially plum.	13.5%	2019-2020	POA	Lea & Sandeman
Viña La Playa, Tinga Rio Reserve, Colchagua 2016	86	85	86	87	Hints of roasted pepper, blackcurrant and dried flowers. Fairly souped-up in style, but a decent, juicy fresh-fruit core and an elegantly bittersweet finish.	14%	2019	N/A UK	www.cabernetcorp.com
Viña San Esteban, In Situ Gran Reserva, Aconcagua 2017	86	85	84	89	Nice touch of freshness and structure from the Cabernet. Round with a touch of creamy complexity from the oak, some cherry cola aromatics. Great value.	13.5%	2019-2020	£14	Delibo Wine Agencies
Viu Manent, Gran Reserva, Colchagua 2017	86	87	84	87	Grassy, red pepper hints plus redcurrant and plum. Fresh, crisp, touch of smokiness, bell pepper and spices. Fine, engaging, correct.	13.5%	2019	£12.99	Louis Latour Agencies

COMMENDED 83-85pts

■ Caliterra, Tributo Single Vineyard, Colchagua 2015 85, 14%, 2019, £13.30 Dalling & Co, Eynsham Cellars, Hatch Mansfield, Huntsbridge ■ Emiliana, Novas Gran Reserva, Colchagua 2016 85, 14.5%, 2019, £12.50 Ake & Humphris, Boutinot, Nickolls & Perks, Priory Wines, The Wine Factor ■ Falernia, Gran Reserva, Elqui 2015 85, 15%, 2019, £14.75 Great Western Wine ■ Hacienda Araucano, Alka, Colchagua 2015 85, 15%, 2019, £42-£60 Condor Wines, Georges Barbier of London, Vinos Latinos ■ Lapostolle, Cuvée Alexandre, Colchagua 2016 85, 15%, 2019-2020, £19.99 Abasto Wine, Hailsham Cellars, The Drink Shop ■ Montes, Alpha, Colchagua 2017 85, 14.5%, 2019, £14.99 Liberty Wines, Nickolls & Perks ■ Montes, Purple Angel, Colchagua 2016 85, 15%, 2019, £54.99 Liberty Wines, Nickolls & Perks ■ Santa Carolina, Reserva de Familia, Rapel 2015 85, 14.5%,

2019, £14.99 Amazon UK, Slurp ■ Santa Ema, Gran Reserva, Cachapoal 2017 85, 13.5%, 2019, £14.99 Inverarity Morton ■ San V, Chungará, Maule 2018 85, 13.5%, 2019, N/A UK www.donosogroup.com ■ Viña Casa Silva, Cuvée Colchagua Reserva, Colchagua 2018 85, 14%, 2019, POA Jackson Nugent Vintners ■ Viña La Playa, Axel, Colchagua 2015 85, 14%, 2019, N/A UK www.cabernetcorp.com ■ Viña San Esteban, In Situ Reserva, Aconcagua 2016 85, 13.5%, 2019-2020, £12.40 Christopher Piper ■ Casas del Bosque, Gran Reserva, Cachapoal 2017 84, 15%, 2019, POA Awini Barrat Siegel ■ Château Los Boldos, Tradition Réserve, Cachapoal Andes 2017 84, 13.5%, 2019, £9.40-£10.99 Exel, Liberty Wines ■ Odfjell, Armador, Central Valley 2017 84, 13.5%, 2019, £12 Carruthers & Kent ■ Santa Rita, Medalla Real, Colchagua 2016 84, 14%, 2019, £11.99 Bibendum Wine, Majestic ■ Sutil, Grand Reserve,

Colchagua 2015 84, 14%, 2019, £12.99 Castelnaud Wine Agencies ■ Valle Secreto, First Edition, Cachapoal Alto 2016 84, 14.5%, 2019, £14.95 EWGA ■ William Cole, Reserve, Colchagua 2017 84, 13.5%, 2019, £10 Amps ■ Casas del Toqui, Terroir Selection Gran Reserva, Cachapoal 2016 83, 14%, 2019, £14.99 Frederic Robinson ■ Co-op, Irresistible, Maipo 2017 83, 13.5%, 2019, £7 Co-op ■ Odfjell, Orzada, Maule 2017 83, 14%, 2019, £17 Carruthers & Kent

FAIR 76-82pts

■ Clos de Luz, Massal 1945, Rapel 2017 82

FAULTY

■ Tabalí, Micas, Cachapoal 2015 (oxidised)