



# CHILEAN WINES



Traditionally, Chilean wines have been rated on the low end of the scale. They were thin in complexity and, quite frankly, rejected by most American consumers. That was five years ago. Due to recent influence and investments by some French, Italian and American wine makers, production techniques and styles have improved dramatically, putting the Chilean wine industry on par with many of the world's serious wine producing areas. They now are competitive and, in some cases, better than similarly priced wines from Australia and the United States. An interesting development is that Chilean wine producers now offer vintage wines in the \$50.00 dollar category, but their strength is still in the area of wines priced at or below \$20.00.

Chile is separated from Argentina by the Andes Mountains on the east and flows into the Pacific Ocean on the west. The

best area for growing grapes is the Central Valley, comprised of several districts: Rapel, Curico, Maule and Maipo (the most famous). Warm, sunny days similar to the Mediterranean climate, and snow melting from the Andes Mountains that provide irrigation, create an ideal location in which to produce wines that are high quality and can be reasonably priced.

The United States has now become the number one importer of Chilean wines. So what's created the turnaround in popularity in the U.S.? Other than price (which is increasing every year), it's largely due to their focus on producing wines that are high on our consumption list, and good quality continues to drive sales.

How good are they? Fifteen percent (15%) of the 2001 vintage Cabernets received a rating of 90 points or better from Wine Spectator. Many others, including some

Syrachs, rated in the 86 to 90 point categories. Not bad for a winemaking country that five years ago struggled to reach a rating of 80!

Just a word about the wine laws in Chile, as it is important for you to understand how controls over production are enforced. As in the United States, and unlike France, there is no strict system of laws regulating grape growing and wine-making. However, since 1995, there are laws in effect that govern viticulture and labeling. Simply translated, this means that at least 75% of the wine must come from grapes grown in the region where the winery is located. Also, 75% of the wine must be composed of the grape named (i.e.; Cabernet Sauvignon), and if a vintage year is specified, 75% of the wine must be from that vintage. At last, Chile has moved into the modern era of wine-making.

Take a look at the following wines for a great Chilean wine experience:

**Casa Lapostolle 2003 Cuvée Alexandre Apalta Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon**  
French barrel aged, a classic expression of a Cabernet Sauvignon. Coffee & chocolate flavors with a ripe berry nose; smooth lasting finish. Will go well with red meat and mushroom sauce.

**Terrunyo- Concha y Toro Sauvignon Blanc (2003) D.O. Casablanca Valley**  
This 100% Sauvignon Blanc was hand-harvested and aged six months in stainless tanks. Further aging occurred for two months in the bottle. The ocean breezes influenced the grapes, promoting slow ripening and strong flavors. Pale greenish in color, it has a fresh taste with good acidity.

And for a real treat, if you need one for that special occasion, try Concha Y Toro Cabernet Sauvignon Puente Alto Don Melchor. This is a great wine and one of the first Chilean wines to reach "classic" rating. It has a really long finish and

aromas of black currents with a noticeable chocolate flavor, common in a great Cabernet.

Chilean wines also of note: Casa Lapostolle Cuvee Alexandre, Apalta Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (2003), Concha y Toro Don Melchor Cabernet Sauvignon (1997), Terrunyo Sauvignon Blanc (2003) D.O. Casablanca Valley.

Most of these wines will pair well with our Southwestern foods. Next issue we will take a look at wines created in our local area, Texas.

#### West Texas Goes Zin

I recently had the pleasure of sitting with Vic Poulos in the uniquely designed barrel tasting room at the Zin Valle Winery. Vic shared with me the history of their journey from an idea to the reality of creating Zin Valle.

In 1999, they bought a former horse ranch near El Paso from Juan Gabriel. So far, so good. Vic soon discovered that the soil was mostly clay, which was not suitable for growing grapes. All was not lost. Vic decided to turn the property into a beach by covering the planting area with sand 42 inches deep. This did the trick, as grape vines need soil that allows water to seep into the roots. Then, in 2000, he planted his first vines. The rest is history! Zin Valle has become one of the "best in the west", producing seven wines ranging from a sparkling wine to a very acceptable Zinfandel. Zin Valle appropriately named their wines "Rising Star". Some have already won silver and bronze medals, just five years into production.

As I listened intently, we barrel tasted the 2004 Zinfandel currently being aged in French oak. It has a wonderful nose with hints of blackberry and a myriad of fruit. It is peppery in the finish and will be quite enjoyable when released. I also sampled the Malvasia Bianca, a wine that will do very well in this area. The sweetness of this Italian varietal and its low acidity will pair well with both Italian and Mexican cuisine, or a dessert such as chocolate cake, tiramisu, or flan.

Next up for Zin Valle is a move to the use of new Hungarian oak barrels for aging, which will bring a different flavor to the wine compared to French or American oak — yet another way that Zin Valle is striving to distinguish itself.

The winery is located at 7315 Highway 28 in Anthony, Texas. The tasting room is open to the public Friday thru Monday from noon to five. You can preview their wines on their web site: [www.zinvalle.com](http://www.zinvalle.com). They can also be reached by calling (915) 877-4544.

# TEXAS DECLARES WAR ON NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

IT'S TIME FOR TEXAS WINES TO GET SOME RESPECT. WHILE WE WON'T ARGUE THE MERITS OF A QUICK WEEKEND JAUNT TO CALIFORNIA, WE CAN'T AGREE THAT IT'S THE ONLY WAY TO GET A WINE COUNTRY EXPERIENCE. COME VISIT US ON OLD RT.28 AND WE'LL BE HAPPY TO PUT OUR WINES WHERE YOUR MOUTHS ARE.



Zin Valle Vineyards  
Texas

*A sip of Texas, A taste of Culture.*

*For more information, find your way to our website at [www.zinvalle.com](http://www.zinvalle.com).*

NEW MEXICO  
FARM  
&  
RANCH  
HERITAGE  
MUSEUM

PRESENTS

**COWBOY DAYS**

October 15 & 16, 2005

SATURDAY 10am-5pm Cowboy Film Festival

SUNDAY 9am-5pm  
Family Activities Including:  
Chuck Wagon Breakfast  
Cowboy Music and Poetry  
Children's Games & Crafts  
Ranch Life Demonstrations  
Stagecoach Rides

4100 Dripping Springs Road • Las Cruces, NM 88001 • 505-522-4100

CALL OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR A FULL SCHEDULE [www.frhm.org](http://www.frhm.org)

