

# the drinks business

## IN FOCUS: CHILE'S MOST PROFITABLE GRAPE

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While some producers in Chile are excited by the resurgence of native grapes, others insist that stalwarts like Cabernet Sauvignon should not be forgotten in the rush to herald the likes of País and Carignan, discovers *Phoebe French*.

### Changing perceptions



With wines starting at US\$50 a bottle, Viña Vik, based in the Millahue Valley in Colchagua province, is another winery already working on changing consumers' perceptions of Chilean wine.

CEO Gastón Williams recalls how the winery has been increasing the percentage of Cabernet Sauvignon in its flagship Vik red blend to achieve a “leaner and longer wine with more freshness and acidity to help with ageing and personality. Chile is about Cabernet Sauvignon and Carmenère and we need wineries to believe in the quality of these grapes and put them up there.”

He says: “It’s not only us, people are doing new things with these varieties – you don’t always have to work with a completely new variety, we can use what we already have.”

Williams says Vik has devised a number of new projects, one of which involves re-using old oak barrels. They are scraped down, re-toasted and used to barrel-vinify wines. The fire for toasting the barrels is made using wood from the Vik estate that has fallen from the tree. Williams adds that it is also a way for the producer to boost its sustainable credentials by reusing its materials.