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THE PLATINUM LIST

THE WORLD'S BEST HOTELS,
RESORTS, RESTAURANTS AND
TRAVEL EXPERIENCES



Vik Chile

Stunning design, natural splendor and exquisite wine create a transformative experience in Chile's golden Millahue Valley

WORDS ZOE BAILLARGEON

Clockwise: The hilltop Vik Chile hotel, designed by Marcelo Daglio; the Viña Vik winery; master suite; tasting room



Two hours south of Santiago in the fertile Millahue Valley, I arrive at Vik Chile's hilltop hotel to find a landscape lost in chilly winter fog. But as the morning progresses, soft golden light slowly unveils a narrow valley of colorful wetlands and glassy lagoons hemmed in by rolling, wooded hills, with vineyards patterning the lower slopes. Brilliant sunshine soon transforms the grey surroundings into a vibrant painting. The native Mapuche meaning of Millahue—"place of gold"—is immediately clear. And that golden light is responsible for much more than picturesque vistas: It's also a key component in creating the world-class silky red wines of Viña Vik, Vik Chile's accompanying

COURTESY OF VIK CHILE (4)



Architectural tours, cooking classes, Chilean rodeo exhibitions and vineyard picnics are among the resort's many diversions.

11,000-acre holistic vineyard, featuring a futuristic, eco-conscious winery.

"This terroir is very special for red wine," enologist Alejandra Vera explains during a tour and tasting of Vik's three signature blends, in which varying percentages of the vineyard's five grape varieties—cabernet sauvignon, syrah, merlot, cabernet franc and the quintessentially Chilean carmenère—are combined to utterly distinct but equally intriguing effect. "We don't make light wines here."

The first Chilean outpost of Vik Retreats—a collection of boutique resorts created by Norwegian billionaire Alexander Vik and his wife, Carrie—Vik Chile originated as a vineyard in 2006 before expanding in 2014

to include the Marcelo Daglio-designed hotel, notable for its crown of gleaming, rippled titanium gold. Each of the hotel's 22 rooms highlights a contemporary Chilean or international artist; my room, an homage to Chilean realist painter Alvaro Gabler, is a delight of trompe-l'oeil trickery. With so many different artists and styles featured, each room promises a singular experience.

Earlier this year, Vik Chile also launched Puro Vik: 19 glass-walled bungalows enclosed by trees for privacy and featuring cohesive aesthetic themes, terrace bathtubs and valley views. "The idea is to feel surrounded by nature on all sides," says Vik staff member Camila Matta.

While I could have been perfectly content to pass my stay soaking up the views with wine glass in hand, Vik provides plenty of diversions for fun and wellness, from hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding to taking a dip in the infinity pool or luxuriating in oenophile-oriented treatments at the deluxe Wine Spa. At the guest-exclusive Milla Milla restaurant, inventive menus of seasonal, locally grown fare are presented alongside generous pours of the three blends: Milla Cala, Vik and La Piu Belle.

Just as winemaking is an art, so is crafting the perfect vineyard retreat: It takes the right terra firma, the right weather, the right people and a passion for providing transformative experiences. I leave Vik Chile restored and eager to return. And despite the abundance of decadent wine provided, I didn't experience a single hangover—that's how good it is. vikchile.com

PL EXPERT

Anthony Lassman
Founder, Nota Bene Global
luxury travel service

"Our clients are looking for exceptional locations and unique settings enhanced by adventure and culture. People are so well-traveled today that they increasingly want to experience the rare and less-known. Bragging rights have something to do with this, as well. For example, when they have done Iceland, they want to add Greenland. People are also generally more into

experimenting with regional food, and there is definitely greater interest in wine. Vik Chile is a beautifully located property with a special fascination for wine lovers. We especially enjoy the latest top-level suites."