

Bloomberg

Big and Boring No More! Chile's Having a World-Class Wine Revolution

Once the land of boring wine-by-the-glass reds, the country now rivals Napa, thanks to stylistic changes at iconic wineries—and some inventive moves by smaller upstarts.

Quick, what's your idea of Chilean wines? If you think they're all ho-hum bar-wine cabernets and cheap sauvignon blancs with no taste thrills, you're wrong. Since the mid 2000s, the country has been in serious experimentation mode, from grape to glass. The quality and diversity of its top wines has never been better.

That wasn't what I found a couple of decades ago on my first visit to this skinny, 2,600-mile-long country with great surfing along one of the world's longest coastlines. The few so-called "icon" cuvées I tasted, such as Sena, Clos Apalta, Almaviva, and the top wines from Montes, were marketed internationally as cutting-edge and surprising. But I found they were mostly over-hyped beefy cabernets created to show that Chile could make big deal wines.

New Icons



2013 VIK (\$150)

Founded in 2006 by a Norwegian entrepreneur, this ambitious winery in the Millahue Valley is a mix of cabernet sauvignon, carmenere, cabernet franc, and merlot. This vintage has more freshness and balance than earlier ones, as well as depth, power, and sophistication. It's like a seductive mix of Napa and Bordeaux.