

Wines Across the Andes

Wines from Chile and Argentina

Introduction

It is always difficult to compare one country's wines with another but on this occasion we have two neighbouring countries that lie either side of a major range of mountains. They were both colonised by a European power and have developed a wine industry from European know how to both hold a high place in modern conceptions of fine wine. We have kept clear of comparing one grape with the same one in the other country because they have their own specialities. On purpose we have picked wines which figure well their medium range, and are similarly priced wines of good quality.

A comparison of Climates

Chile

Chile has what you might call a perfect climate for vine growing. Enclosed by a desert in the North, the Antarctic in the South, the Andes range of mountains in the East and the Pacific Ocean in the West. This is what has probably protected it from the phylloxera bug. Being 3000 miles deep by about 200 miles across there are many perfect climates for Viticulture. The centre of the country for about 600 miles is a moderate belt for the best climates. Soils vary considerably but have the Andes watershed to provide adequate moisture. Rivers also provide valuable micro climates. It has one rare grape, the Carmenere.

Argentina

Argentina has a different climate to Chile in that it is sheltered somewhat by the Andes mountain range. There are very successful high ranges that provide exceptional wines. There are some grapes grown here that are unusual in other parts of the world, namely the Torrontes and Malbec. Mendoza the largest area, has high temperatures during the day and cool nights. Soils again are varied due to it's proximity to the Andes but some say it has the same soil all over.



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Comparing Wines from Chile and Argentina

Wines	Chile	Argentina
1	Miguel Torres Cordillera Brut 100% Pinot Noir. Central Valley. Methode Traditionelle	13% alc. Aged for at least 10 months on lees. Yeasty nose and flowers. Good as an aperitif , salt crisps and fish
2	Carmen Chardonnay Reserva, Casablanca	13.5% alc. Watermelon and pear. Oak ageing, balanced acidity. Good with light cheese, pasta, fish and shellfish
3	Echeverria Merlot Reserva Valle Central. Curico Valley. Malolactic and skin maceration	13.5% alc. Aromas of Strawberries and blackberries, pepper and dried fruits. Good with pasta, soft cheese
4	Perez Cruz Cabernet Sauvignon Reserva. Maipo Alto. French and American oak for 12 months	13.5% alc. Intense blackcurrant, and eucalyptus. Smooth velvet tannins. Good with roast beef and sausage casseroles
		<p>Donna Paula Sauvignon Blanc NV Brut Mendoza Cuvee Close</p> <p>12.5% alc. Cool Fermentation in stainless steel, grapefruit, mint and peach. Aperitif, salt crisps and fish</p> <p>Andeluna Chardonnay Mendoza Unoaked</p> <p>12.5% alc. Lime, white peach and apple. Good with chicken , seafood and pasta</p> <p>Andeluna Merlot Mendoza. Oak for 6 months</p> <p>14.5% alc. Black cherry, blackcurrant, good with roasted meats and moussaka</p> <p>Chakana Estate Cabernet Sauvignon. Mendoza Lujan de Cuyo. 70% in oak</p> <p>14.5% alc. Blueberry, minty, spicy plum and blackberry. Good with most meat and cheese dishes.</p>

