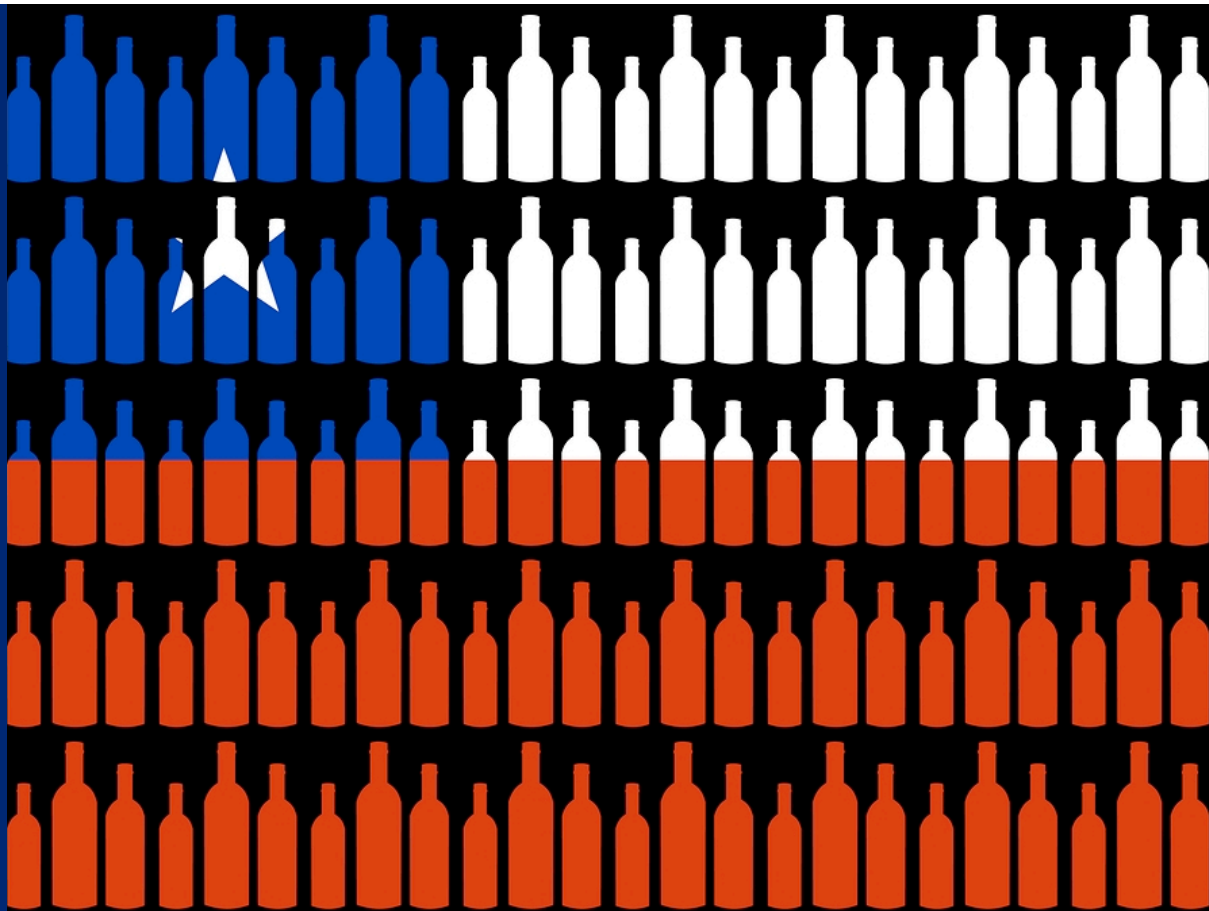


# CHILI AND CHILE

October 8, 2011

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## History of Wine Making in Chile from [winesofchile.org](http://winesofchile.org)

### The Grapes of Mass

In the mid 1500's winemaking begins in Chile with the arrival of Spanish missionaries. With them they brought the País, pah-ces, (known as "Mission" in California), for celebrating the church sacraments. País proved to be especially resilient. To this day one finds many hectares, head pruned in the Spanish style in the hills of the Maule Valley.

The style of wine centuries ago would obviously have little to do with wines of today, but interestingly the custom of winemaking spread so quickly south some 500 kms with Francisco de Carabantes to Concepción by 1850 and north 400 kms to Copiapó with Francisco de Aguirre soon after. Today these areas in fact

delimit the modern appellation system : the Bío Bío Valley in the south and the Limarí Valley in the north.

### Gay's first . . .

It was in the 1830's when naturalist and scientist: Claudio Gay brought the first *vitis vinifera* to Chile. Some 60 varieties were brought from France to the Quinta Normal--part of the nascent University of Chile.

In the 1850's, industrialists of the booming Chilean economy like Silvestre Ochagavía would begin to introduce French vines commercially, initially in the Maipo Valley. Several of Chile's more traditional vineyards began here and continue to produce wine here today.

Some of these areas are now becoming part of a growing capital city: Santiago.

The introduction of Cabernet, Cot / Malbec, Carmenère (at that time one of the principal grapes of the right bank in Bordeaux) Pinot Noir, Sauvignon Blanc, Semillón, Riesling, and others would now begin in earnest, principally fuelled by the those with large fortunes who were traveling to and sending their children for schooling in Europe. With the vines came European experts (principally French owing to the relatively recent independence from Spain) to tend the vines, make wines, and to build veritable palaces and design the gardens around them. The trans-Atlantic trade of vines and plants was heightened in part due to

the European fascination with the exotic plant species of Chile—which they in turn began introducing in Europe. It is important to note that this period occurs just prior to when Phylloxera began to wreak havoc in North America and Europe. This, the greatest of all vineyard pests would never arrive on Chile's shores and the plantings of this epoch would enjoy their own private evolution for the better part of a century before in the 1980's technologies and modern clones would again be imported.

During the time of phylloxera in Europe many in the industry lost their livelihood and a significant brain drain resulted toward the few parts of the world where the vid was not affected. Thus before the Chilean industry would be secluded from the world wine business during two world wars and political policies less than appropriate for the industry, it would first enjoy a veritable injection of old world know-how and expertise.

#### **Untenable Intervention**

The early twentieth century is a story of seclusion and distance from the world for Chile. Despite its turn-of-the-century success in wine, two world wars and decades of state protectionism forced the country down a solitary path that technologically isolated it from the world for nearly 50 years. The mid-20th century Agrarian Land Reform took its toll on Chile's wine industry, and the country's relative isolation from the increasingly globalized, trade-oriented world essentially kept Chile out of the wine trade for decades more. The country reversed its closed-door policies in 1980's, effectively giving rise to the next wave in the history of Chilean winemaking.

#### **Musts for Modern Times**

The part of Chilean wine history that most affects today's consumer has taken place since the 1970's, when complicated and restrictive domestic policies were repealed and political interventionism was relaxed or eliminated. The law that restricted the wineries was repealed in 1974. >From 1980, the legal liberalization and the country's economic opening kicked off a revolution in the wine industry. Again we must credit Spanish influence (a Spaniard more correctly), Miguel Torres, with the introduction of

modern technologies and stainless steel tanks that helped initiate this change. The Chilean wine industry outfitted itself with modern machinery and equipment, improved its planting and irrigation technology, incorporated stainless steel tanks and French oak barrels and began to utilize better quality corks and bottles.

Between 1982 and 1983 production reached its peak, coinciding with a significant reduction in domestic consumption. Both factors provoked a crisis of proportions, with a fall in prices and vineyards being replaced with other fruit crops. At the same time, the historic trend of family-owned wineries was replaced by economic groups and corporations, which included international participation, effectively modernizing the business. In the 1990s, Chilean wines consolidated their presence in the international wine business. Today they are exported to 90 countries on 5 continents. Exports to Europe, the United States and particularly to Asia have grown strongly each year, and today register a total of more than US\$600 million (2002).

#### **TONIGHT'S SELECTIONS**

##### **2010 Veramonte Sauvignon Blanc**

Happy Harry's \$10.79

##### **2007 Cono Sur Chardonnay**

Happy Harry's \$10.79, 99 Bottles \$12.99

##### **2009 Cono Sur Chardonnay**

Happy Harry's \$10.79

##### **2010 Casa Lapostolle Chardonnay**

Happy Harry's \$12.59

##### **2010 Cono Sur Pinot Noir**

Happy Harry's \$10.79

##### **2009 Santa Rita 120 Carmenere**

Happy Harry's \$8.09

##### **2008 Cono Sur Range Carmenere**

Happy Harry's \$10.79

##### **2009 Nativa Terra Reserve**

##### **Carmenere**

Bridgeview \$9.99

##### **2010 Casillero del Diablo Malbec**

Happy Harry's \$9.89

##### **2008 Santa Rita Reserve Cabernet**

Bridgeview \$10.98

##### **2009 Cono Sur Cabernet**

##### **Sauvignon/Carmenere**

99 Bottles \$13.99

##### **2009 Casa Lapostolle Cabernet**

##### **Sauvignon**

Happy Harry's \$12.59

##### **2005 Montes Alpha Cabernet**

##### **Sauvignon**

Happy Harry's \$24.99