

# Fine Wines of Chile

6 June 2015

by Ormond Smith

An excellent turnout of members and guests congregated chez James & Heather Sheerin for our “**Fine Wines of Chile**” Tasting and to use colloquial Invernessian “it was a crackeen’ night, right enuff!”

With a glass of **Undurraga Rose** in hand (made from Pinot Noir and dry, light and fresh with lime, grapefruit and stone fruit flavours and elegant bubbles), Connetable Nicol welcomed everyone and outlined the tasting, with no less than eleven wines to enjoy! Now, that’s what I call a Tasting!!



The opening wines were all white, commencing with a **2014 Veramonte Sauvignon Blanc Reserva** from the Casablanca Valley, fermented entirely in stainless steel with gooseberry and cut grass aromas, fresh and acidic on the palate.....very drinkable and an easy lead in to what was to follow. The **2013 Errazuriz Single Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc** from Aconcagua Costa (only 9 miles from the Pacific Ocean) demonstrated a

“nervy” acidity and mineral flavours blended with citrus fruits, green chilli peppers and passion fruits (well, that’s what the tasting notes said!), but for the writer, it didn’t quite hit the spot. Changing grape varieties, whilst enjoying some very moreish and tasty “amuse-bouche”, a selection of Empanadas (small pastries containing pork, beef and cheese...but not altogether!), the third white was a Chardonnay, a **2011 Veramonte Reserva**, and like the opening wine, from the Casablanca Valley. On the nose, enticing aromas of ripe peach and pineapple, crisp and acidic on the palate with flav-



ours of tropical fruits with soft notes of oak, this wine showed a touch of complexity and this was followed by a **2012 Errazuriz Chardonnay Wild Ferment**, again from Casablanca Valley, barrel fermented on the grape skins, followed by nine months ‘sur lie’ on the yeast sediment – a wine showing great complexity with a wonderful buttery character.....real individuality!



Moving on, as they say, wine number five took us onto the reds and boy oh boy, were we in for a treat! Opening with a **2013 Veramonte Merlot Reserva**

(Casablanca Valley), this wine came across as rich and chocolaty with exotic touches of eucalyptus and tobacco on the palate, giving a toasty edge and a smooth, rounded finish. Impressed? More was to come! From the same vineyard, a **2011 Pinot Noir Reserva** certainly “hit the spot”, the cool temperatures of the Casablanca Valley allowing for a long, steady ripening period for this notoriously difficult grape, the cherry and strawberry palate giving way to a rich, velvety finish. Wine number 7 was a **2012 Errazuriz Pinot Noir Wild Ferment**, also from Casablanca Valley, where top quality grapes are selected from the La Escultura estate and fermented using the natural grape yeasts. Matured in French oak barrels for nine months, the wine has red berry fruits on the nose with a complex palate and finish and has the potential to further develop with age.



Nicol had promised us a tasting of fine Chilean wines (emphasis on fine!) and after the splendid start to the Tasting, things only got better and better! The **2013 Veramonte Cabernet Sauvignon Reserva** from Colchagua Valley in Maipo Province was deeply coloured



with rich blackcurrant flavours, the grapes being selected from low yielding vines and aged for eight months in French and American oak barrels. A deliciously smooth and satisfying wine, with aromas of ripe red fruit and black pepper and a palate of cassis flavours with hints of spice and a long, velvety finish. The ninth wine on the list (and yes.....we were still standing!) was a **2012 Errazuriz Cabernet Sauvignon**

**Founders Reserve** from the Don Maximiano Estate in the Aconcagua Valley. Only grapes from the finest and oldest plots within this estate are picked for this wine, a wine of intense power and concentration (rich red berry fruits, tinged with spiciness and framed in a vibrant acidity) which will continue to mature for many years. Full bodied with fine and firm tannins and a lingering, most satisfying aftertaste.....wow! The penultimate wine, another from the Colchagua Valley, was a **Veramonte Carmenere Reserva 2013**. An elegant fusion of soft plum, fig and rosemary notes on the nose culminate in ripe red and black berry fruits on a medium bodied palate with a spicy finish. About 20% of the grapes used in production come from 120 year old vines, adding a certain richness to the palate. The closing red, from the same producer, was a **2012 Veramonte Primus**, a super premium wine based on Carmenere with additions of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot in the subtle blend. Using only premium quality fruit, the



wine is aged for 12 months in a combination of French and American oak barrels. The finished wine has superb concentration, mouth filling flavours of blackberry and cherry mingling with the spicy oak and a most satisfying, rich aftertaste.....what a climax to the tasting!!

Perhaps a real telling point to emerge was the costs of such quality. Similar wines of such quality would attract retail bottle prices probably in the £10 to £20 bracket whereas the Chilean wines were between £7 and £12.....really outstanding value given the stature of the wines! The exception was the Errazuriz Founders Reserve which retails for over £50 a bottle, although the Goustevin were able to purchase at a most competitive price.....but what a wine!



Heather, daughter Jeni and Caroline Thomson had produced a meal from Chilean recipes and the food really found favour with the members and guests. I daresay that none of us had experienced Chilean food before but given the way the plates were cleared, it was evident that the repast had “hit the spot”! The dish was Ajiaco, a beef and chilli stew, accompanied with Chilean Kidney Beans, Pastel de Choclo (corn cakes) with a selection of dips and an Avocado & Celery salad.

A hearty vote of thanks, Ladies, for a most imaginative and satisfying culinary experience! And to the Connetable for acquiring such a range of tantalising wines!

The evening concluded with a cheese board before we trundled homeward, memories of a splendid Chilean vinicultural experience very much in mind. What a night!!

