



Parróne Cabernet Sauvignon-Syrah

Colchagua Valley, Chile

Our Cabernet-Syrah blend displays aromas of ripe red fruits and blueberries with hints of vanilla and toast. Its lush mouthfeel is complemented by round tannins, spice and oak. Enjoy with grilled meats, pasta with red sauce or strong cheeses. Drink now until 2010.

—Winemaker Alphonse DeRose

Technical Data

Appellation: Colchagua Valley

Varietal content: 50% cabernet sauvignon, 50% syrah

Yield: 2.5–4 tons per acre

Finished alcohol: 14.7%

pH: 3.63

Total acid: 5.1g/L

Total production: 500 cases

Vineyards

Unknown to most North Americans, the Colchagua Valley in central Chile has been producing wine grapes since the late 1800s. Its Mediterranean climate, moderate precipitation and well-drained soils create ideal conditions for growing exceptional wine grapes. Temperatures range from the mid-80s to the low-90s with an overnight drop of only 20 degrees for much of the growing season. The region sees sporadic afternoon breezes and very little fog. Consequently, vines benefit from extended hours of sunlight with western exposure.



Fruit was harvested from four different vineyards in the Colchagua Valley. Located near the town of San Miguel, all are managed with non-till farming and minimal irrigation.

Cabernet sauvignon grapes were grown at three estates owned by Bodega El Huique that lie on the western slope of the Andes Mountains at 1,120 feet of elevation. The vineyards benefit from the cool conditions of their close proximity to the Tinguiririca River.

In the late 1970s, vines were planted on their own roots in a range of soils, the majority being a deep, sandy clay-loam. To best utilize the fertile soil, vines are trained on a broadly spaced overhead trellis system with grape clusters located about six feet above ground. Two or three cordons extend outward with the fruit hanging below the canopy. This approach offers excellent cooling properties and good acid retention.

The Talhuen Estate provided the syrah. This property is situated 40 miles from the Pacific Ocean at 1,100 feet above sea level on the western slope of the Andes Mountains.

In 2000, syrah clones 99 and 300 were planted on their own roots in a range of soils, the majority being a deep, sandy clay-loam. Vines are trained in the vertical shoot position on bilateral cordons to best utilize the semi-fertile soil. Rows are arranged in a north-south configuration with 5'x7' spacing.

Fermentation

Fruit was destemmed and cold soaked for 10 days in coated concrete tanks. Temperatures were allowed to rise, fermentations started on native yeasts, and tanks were pumped over three times daily. The wines were fermented dry in 15 days while secondary fermentations began without help. After five-to-seven days of extended maceration, the wines were pressed, blended and then transferred to small oak barrels (20% new, 90% French, 10% American) for three rackings and 18 months of aging. The finished wine was lightly filtered before bottling and aged for two months prior to release.