



# CARMEN

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## CHILE

### **Viña Carmen Celebrates the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Rediscovery of Carmenère**

*Bordeaux's lost varietal was re-discovered at Chilean winery Viña Carmen in 1994*

**Santiago, Chile (November, 2009)** – On November 24<sup>th</sup>, Viña Carmen will host a historic celebration to mark the anniversary of the rediscovery of the Carmenère grape variety at its vineyards in Chile. This will be an extremely significant event for the Chilean wine industry and for Viña Carmen. On that day fifteen years ago, Carmenère, the long lost grape of Bordeaux, was re-identified at Viña Carmen by Jean Michel Boursiquot, French Ampelographer from Montpellier; a discovery that changed the face of Chilean winemaking forever.

Carmenère, considered part of the original six red grapes of Bordeaux and once known as Grande Vidure, was widely planted in France in the mid-Nineteenth Century, especially in the Médoc. In 1860 phylloxera decimated all viticultural areas worldwide with the exception of Chile, protected by its natural boundaries, and the variety gradually disappeared from Europe.

When Viña Carmen, the oldest winery in Chile was founded in 1850, Carmenère was among the red varieties imported from France. It remained hidden among Merlot vineyards for over a century because since its arrival to Chile, the vine was planted with Merlot and therefore thought to be a late clone of Merlot. It was not until 1994 that Carmenère was rediscovered in the Carmen vineyards.

"Viña Carmen is very proud to commemorate the fifteenth anniversary of the rediscovery of Carmenère in our vineyards," stated Eulogio Pérez Cotapos, Managing Director, Viña Carmen. "We feel very fortunate that Carmen gave back this variety, not only to Chile but to the entire world. That is why we are celebrating this event on November 24<sup>th</sup>."

"I am very proud to be a part of this celebration of viticultural history" explained Jean-Michel Boursiquot. "I never imagined that we were going to rediscover one of the most important grapes of the Médoc in the south corner of the world," he continued.

Viña Carmen's Chief Winemaker, Stefano Gandolini Ambrosoli added, "Carmenère really allows me as a winemaker to express the winery's style through blending with other grapes or single varietal bottling. Using innovative techniques and modern equipment at Viña Carmen, we strive to produce wines with a sense of place, from the best and most diverse Chilean terroir."

In Chile, more Carmenère is being grown than ever before. According to Wines of Chile, almost 18,000 acres are now planted with Carmenère vines. Imported to the US by Avenú Brands, Viña Carmen produces several Carménère wines and blends, including the 2007 Classic Carmenère (\$10), 2006 Reserve Carmenère/Cabernet Sauvignon (\$20), and the 2005 Wine Maker's Reserve Red (\$44), a Bordeaux style blend.

#### **About Viña Carmen**

Viña Carmen, the oldest winery in Chile, was founded in 1850 by Christian Lanz who named the winery in honor of his beloved wife, Carmen. Today, Viña Carmen is one of the most important wineries from Chile recognized for its quality and a long history of innovation and success. Viña Carmen owns 1,626 acres of carefully selected vineyards in the most prestigious growing areas of Chile divided between the Maipo, Rapel, Casablanca and Curicó Valleys. Each vineyard site was specifically chosen for the exceptional quality of grapes it produces. The winery and main vineyards are located in Alto Maipo, 21 miles south of Chile's capital, Santiago.

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