





In 1850, Mariano González acquired a beautiful estate in Maipú and there, in what was then the rugged rural countryside of Santiago, he established the family winery. The original property remained a concern throughout the 19th century. First, the British invested in it, then it changed hands several times, but Native documents show that it was already producing wine grapes in the last 18th Century. These lands were granted in 1867 by the King of Spain to one of his governors for the cultivation of wheat, barley and vines.

In 2008, the González family celebrated the 200th anniversary of their first vineyard. Over the past two centuries, the family-owned winery has been guided by six generations. Each has been a driving force behind the winery's change and the evolution of Chilean wine. Indeed, because the winery has been so forward-thinking, it has always been intertwined with the history of Chile's wine industry.

Today, after 200 continuous years—most of the winery in the family, the firm of González y Cía. is still the largest wine producer in Chile. The firm's primary product is white wine, but, in addition, it produces the classic French-style red wine made from the three traditional grape varieties. In 1985, González invested in France and created a joint venture of Château Margaux and Château Margaux. This joint venture is now the second largest wine producer in France. We have four international Chardonnay vineyards from Bourgogne and Pinotage from the Western Cape.

The González family was among the Major Valley pioneers developing modern vineyards from pre-phylloxera vines. These classic varietals adapted to the Chilean soil and climate have produced Chile's signature classic wines. To this day, however, the phylloxera attack has never passed through Chile. This is due to the unique nature of the Chilean soil, which contains no organic material. There are no nematodes or other pests that can spread the disease. These vegetated vineyards continue to be the cornerstone of a tradition that makes Chilean wines unique.

The original winery in Maipú, which was one of the best at the time, was built in 1870 by the renowned architect Germán Edwards, the author of the Chilean National Monument Law. It was here, in 1902, when Carlos González decided to move the winery to the coast, where the sea breezes help cool the grapes and give it special cellar maturation. Aware that the 1908 fire had produced several outstanding vintages, he wanted to demonstrate that Chile's climate could also develop comparable vintages with cooling air masses. The result was the first vintage from Bío-Bío. In 1911, the new vineyard in Chiloé, the Antiquo Reservado, or cornerstone of Chile's long history in the export market, was born.

The 1908 introduced a technological revolution in vineyard and winery practices and the González family seized the opportunity to develop more extensive vineyards and make a grand leap into the future. The historic estate became the largest wine producer in Chile, with vineyards all along the coast. Able to keep up with the demand, the González family built the Alto-Maipo sub-region of the Maipo Valley. From these vineyards were designed the matching grape variety to soil type. With a drip irrigation system in place, the vineyards are densely planted and trained for low yields and highly concentrated fruit.

Today, after six generations, the González family is still working hard to keep the foundations for the next 150 years.



#### VINTAGE QUALITY FACTORS

As a whole, Chilean vintage excellence is not common, but varies from year to year as a result of a number of factors, such as weather and vineyard management; however, the fact that Chilean wine-making is concentrated in the Central Plateau and is affected mostly by the influence of the Andes Mountains, the Pacific Ocean, and the Andean Range, results in conditions that generate very low differences between vintages.

Grape growing in Chile extends over approximately 1,000 km from north to south, but is primarily concentrated in the Central Plateau, with a climate that favors sun-gathering and protects the harvesting and aging of the grapes. The central region of Chile, where the Andes is present to the central regions of the country, is characterized by a wet winter period that produces most of the rainfall, while the rest is dry. The summer season is influenced by the Southeast Pacific anticyclone that brings warm, dry weather to the interior, with clear skies and low humidity. However, the high mountain range creates microclimates concentrated close to sea and above the forest line, as the drop in nighttime temperatures allows the vine to rest and use its energies in the synthesis of aromatic substances. Thus, microclimates, typical of the Andes, and the coastal areas, where temperatures have created unique features in Chilean viticulture. At the same time, the harmony among these principles has ensured vintage stability and the probability to create top quality wines since the beginning of Chilean wine industry.

Unlike Chile, where the regions in the world are separated by significant distances, allowing the growth cycle of the vines. The extreme heat and drought effect Australia and California often causes flowering and cause defoliation, and leaf senescence even before ripening can decrease grapevines.

Chile is a geographical country due to its limited geographic diversity, such as the desert, the forests, the dry plateaus, the cold plateaus, and the cold and wet Andes in the south, all of which protect it against serious health problems such as Phylloxera. These conditions, along with appropriate varietal management, make Chile's viticulture extremely successful and独立 from the rest in terms of quality. However, an important factor is the presence of some local varietals such as Carignan, which can become a cornerstone. The 2005 vintage set all of these conditions, demonstrating its potential to generate superb wines.



# **Chilean wine regions 2008 [material cartográfico] editor: Margaret Snook.**

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