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Food & dining

SIPS

Chilean wines: more than cheap and cheerful

By Ellen Bhang | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT JUNE 24, 2016

Rodrigo Soto wants to update our notions about Chilean wine. "I'm happy to be an ambassador," he says, explaining that he is intent on delivering "a clear message" about a category that deserves a second look.

Soto, a native of Chile, is chief winemaker at Huneus Vintners, a company whose brands span both Chile and California. After spending nearly a decade working at wineries in the Golden State, including Benziger in Sonoma, Soto returned to Chile. He is uniquely positioned to tell the story of an evolving portfolio of wines. On a recent visit to Boston, he's eager to dispel the idea that Chilean pours are merely cheap and cheerful.

The slender country of Chile, stretching nearly 3,000 miles along South America's west coast, epitomizes geographic diversity. Soto talks about its volcanos, as well as the deserts in the north and fjords to the south.

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SEBASTIAN VERGARA

HUNEEUS VINTNERS
[THE WINES OF AGUSTIN HUNEEUS]

ions. Emerging from the political upheaval of the 1970s and grew by leaps and bounds, coming to be known for its value. Red wines suffered from unpleasant vegetal notes, while reds were often generalized to higher-priced pours.

that's saying 'It can be done,' " he says, referring to a mission he shares with colleagues to increase quality and raise the reputation of these bottles. One of his key undertakings is converting the company's Chilean vineyards to organic and biodynamic farming.

In cool-climate regions, the addition of stems and all-natural yeasts — adds body and a friendly acidity,

A 2014 sauvignon blanc with a floral character, has notes of nectarine, and a soft texture in the porous

"To be in the aromatic profile, greater

Soto is keen on changing minds. "I'm part of a group that's saying 'It can be done,' " he says, referring to a mission he shares with colleagues to increase quality and raise the reputation of these bottles. One of his key undertakings is converting the company's Chilean vineyards to organic and biodynamic farming.

Ritual Pinot Noir 2014 (around \$20) is at BRIX Wine Shop, Financial District, 617-542-2749; Whole Foods River Street, Cambridge, 617-876-6990. Ritual Sauvignon Blanc 2014 (around \$18) is at Giorgiana's, South End, 617-542-0101; Harvest Co-op Market, Cambridge, 617-661-1580.



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