

THE WORLD'S MOST UNDERVALUED WINES: CHILEAN PINOT NOIR

November 24, 2015 By **Gabe Sasso**

Everyone wants a good deal. It doesn't matter what you're buying, we all like to save a buck. In the wine world there are several ways to save money and get a good bottle of wine. One in particular is to shop in categories that aren't as popular, well known or highly scored as some others. There are a multitude of reasons a particular category might not be as highly valued as it should be; too often it's simply public perception or consumer awareness. My goal here is to uncover those smoking gun classifications that are criminally underrated and report on them. If I do my job well, they'll eventually just be good wines at a fair price.

Chilean Pinot Noir is one of the most criminally undervalued wine categories on the planet. Quite frankly I can't believe it's still the secret that it is to so many wine lovers. Pinot Noir is one of the single most popular grapes in the world. A "truism" people like to throw around is that there is no such thing as a good deal in Pinot Noir. Well Chile puts the lie to that pretty easily. One of the things that sets Chile apart from other wine growing countries is the large number of different microclimates, elevations, soil types and such that exist. With more diversity in their terroir than most countries they have the ability to do well with a wide array of grapes. Another specific thing they have in their favor is some 3,000 miles of coast line. Pinot thrives in cooler climates and Chile has numerous vineyard sites that are tailor made for growing this notoriously difficult to master grape. Add to that the fact that most wine drinkers simply have yet to wrap their brain around great Pinot Noir coming from South America and you have a somewhat perfect storm of incredible values on terrific Pinot Noir loaded with varietal typicity.

As with any other category, not every offering is a winner. Likewise not every Pinot coming out of Chile is great or worth drinking, but many of them are. The price points vary too, but the common denominator in the selections worth seeking out is the relationship between the level of quality in the bottle and the price they're selling for. In every case below these exact wines would and could sell for much higher prices if more people realized how great Chilean Pinot can be, or if they were from an area somewhat better known for this grape. With all of this in mind, I recently tasted through an array of Chilean Pinot's looking for wines to help prove my theory. I present them here for your drinking (and money saving) pleasure.

RITUAL

Ritual 2014 Pinot Noir (\$20)

The fruit comes from Casablanca Valley, a cool area less than 30 kilometers from the ocean. It spent 12 months in French oak; 30% were new. One vintage after another I have been drinking this wine and always find it to be delicious, well made and an exceptional value; the 2014 is no exception. Ripe wild strawberry and a gentle hint of cola explode from the nose. The palate is studded with tons of fresh fruit flavors. Cherry, strawberry, light plum and a hint of red raspberry are all present. Earth, chicory, bits of thyme and light sour red fruits are all present on the long finish. You're going to have a hard time doing better for \$20 than this selection.

Chilean Pinot Noir is one of the most criminally undervalued wine categories on the planet. Quite frankly I can't believe it's still the secret that it is to so many wine lovers.

