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Casablanca grows up

Eduardo Brethauer charts the rise of Casablanca in Chile, which is navigating a quality revolution alongside water and labour shortages.

Nobody really knows why Casablanca is called Casablanca. The most plausible theory speaks of a large white house that watched over the lazy ruminations of dairy cows. While the house no longer exists, Casablanca is today recognised as a classic wine region. It's a valley with almost 6,000 hectares of fine vines, recognised as the first coastal or cool climate D.O. in Chile. It's also a tourist magnet and its port of Valparaíso is one of the 10 Great Wine Capitals of the world.

The relationship between the vineyards and the different terroirs of Casablanca has been deepened with the incorporation of organic and biodynamic practices.

Emiliana is one of the organic pioneers and is now probably the largest organic vineyard in the world, with more than 1,200 certified hectares, which are mainly in Casablanca and Colchagua. It is also the case with Viñedos Veramonte, today controlled by the Spanish group **González Byass**, which is now exclusively governed by organic precepts.

VERAMONTE

"We believe in the expression of our soils. They nourish our vineyards, give them character and make them unique. Organic work contributes to their recovery and enrichment, it strengthens the roots, which today have more depth and therefore absorb more nutrients. That is why we speak of living soils," said Sofía Araya, head winemaker of **Viñedos Veramonte**. "We believe in minimal intervention and use native yeasts. This gives us elegant wines, where fruit is the protagonist. Without a doubt, they are kinder and fresher wines."