



Chilean wines

and the post-holiday budget

Chile's diverse climate delivers wide range of impressive choices

It's after the holidays and you're looking at your empty, moth-eaten wallet, wondering where it all went. Then it hits you:

the last-minute shopping binges that ended a month of spend, spend, spend: the parties, the kids, the grandkids, the mailman, the neighbours. And it's about to get worse when those Visa and MasterCard bills bust down the door for what's left of your soul from the month-long rampage of "charge it."

You need a drink, but what can you afford? I'm here to help with some simple, money-saving wine advice. When I realize the financial cupboard is close to being liquidated, my go-to place is Chile.

Chile has something for everybody. Dig Sauvignon Blanc? Chilean winemakers can either mimic the New Zealand style to a tee or create their own style bringing tropical fruit into the mix.

Chardonnay? You bet – from the mimicry of California's big oak-caramel-butter bombs to those with lighter oak and better acidity, Chile can pull off both and not even



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break a sweat.

Pinot Noir seems like a tough one, but not for Chile – there is a Pinot Noir renaissance happening that shows

they can not only make Pinot with big fruit flavours, but also delicate, almost Burgundian-style Pinots that rival – and yes can mimic – the masters of France. OK, maybe they aren't quite there yet, but they certainly do seem to be trying.

Then, of course, we have the big reds, which have always been a staple of Chile: Cabernets, Syrahs, Merlots, Carmenere and hefty red blends, and at prices that are more than fair.

You probably noticed the word "mimic" (or a derivation thereof) in my descriptions. That's because Chile is the great copycat of the wine world.

But they also produce their own styles – it just depends on what you're looking for. That's because Chile has one of the greatest and most diverse climates for winemaking in the world, a virtual viticultural paradise. This long, thin country (measuring 4,270

Stemmler's
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CHEF SCOTTY
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Coq Au Vin

Serves 4 People (30 min prep / 2 hrs total cook time)

(Ingredients)

- 1 Pkg Stemmler's Dry Cured Bacon *(cut into a dice)*
- 4 each Chicken Legs and Thighs *(bone in)*
- 3 Tbsp Olive Oil
- 12-15 Pearl Onions *(Blanched and Peeled)*
- 5 Cloves Garlic *(minced)*
- 2 Cup Chopped Mushrooms *(Cremini, Shiitake, Oyster)*
- 2 Whole Carrots *(Diced or Sliced)*
- 1 Cup White Wine or Local Sparkling Apple Cranberry Cider
- 1/2 Cup Cornstarch
- 1/2 Cup Water
- 1/2 Cup Stemmler's Smokin Good Sauce
- 2 Sprigs Fresh Rosemary
- 6 Sprigs Fresh Thyme
- 2 Cups Chicken Stock
- 2 Bay Leaves
- Salt & Pepper plus some of your Favourite Seasoning

Instructions:

1. Blanch the pearl onions for 5 minutes. Cut the ends off and slide the onion easily from the skin. Set aside. Heat Olive Oil in pan and add Bacon. As it starts to crisp add the onions so they sear off and get browned. Add the garlic for 1 min then empty everything from the pan to a bowl for later. Season the chicken then sear all sides off in the leftover oil from the bacon. Once its golden brown remove it from the pan and place into a separate roasting pan.
2. In the same pan, add the mushrooms, let them cook down 5 min then add the carrots, bay leaves and fresh herbs. Deglaze the hot pan with the wine or cider. Cook another 5 minutes. Pour in the stock and Smokin Sauce then let simmer for 10 more minutes. Place this on top of the chicken in the roasting pan. Add the bacon mixture and make sure the chicken is totally covered with all the ingredients and liquid. Cover with a lid or some foil and place in a 350F oven
3. Remove from the oven after braising for about 90 minutes, then let rest for a few minutes. Take all the chicken out and let sit under foil for a few more minutes. After skimming the fat from the top of the sauce, make a slurry (with the cornstarch and the water) then add it to the liquid and veg mix. Take out the bay leaves. Once it simmers for a couple minutes, it will thicken and cook out, then it will be ready to serve.
4. While your chicken has been braising, you can take the time to prep your favorite starch and vegetable. I personally like roasted potatoes. Once everything is ready, lay everything out on the plate, ladle some of the sauce mixture over it and get ready to enjoy a wonderful meal.

For more information on Chef Scott Yates please visit : chefscottcooks.com

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kilometres in length but averaging only 177 km in width) is home to some 70 different grapes (74 per cent red and 26 per cent white). The most common is Cabernet Sauvignon.

They are learning to grow grapes not just in the central (read: hot) regions – which would be considered their classic regions – but also north and south, in the cooler regions, where they are planting Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay and Pinot Noir to take full advantage of the diurnal temperature swings (heat during the day and cool nights).

They are also learning about location planting east to west, close to the coast of the Pacific to take advantage of the salty sea breezes and air, and up the mountain ranges to take advantage of the higher altitudes. Chile is re-learning its own country to great success.

If you remember the days of weedy green Merlots from Chile and that's why you stay away, it's time to re-discover this country's wines. They are here to impress and they are probably less expensive than you think. And if you don't remember the bad days of Chilean wine, you are among the lucky ones who have only known Chile during the good times, which just keep getting better. Finally, if you have never strayed into the Chilean section of the local liquor store, what can I say – you are really missing out.

So come with me as we look around the LCBO shelves for some great values to tide you over till the money isn't so tight. But I have a feeling that after you try what Chile is bringing to the table these days, you might just stick around a little bit longer.

Carmen 2012 Gran Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon (\$16.95 - #358309) – A single vineyard Cabernet that's very Chilean in style with its hit of mint followed by



blackberry and black cherry. It's right where Chilean Cab should be at a price that's affordable.

Casas del Bosque 2016 Sauvignon Blanc Reserva (\$14.95 - #974717) – This one's more New Zealand in style than even a New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc, full of grapefruit, gooseberry and grassy notes with bracing acidity and a hint of tropical fruit sweetness.

Casas del Toqui 2013 Terroir Selection Gran Reserva Pinot Noir (\$19.95 - #443499) – Red and black fruit with hints of coffee and white smoke on the long finish – plus the gritty tannins show some longevity for cellaring an extra three to five years.

Emiliana 2015 Signos de Origen La Vinilla White Blend (\$19.95 - #63909) – A white blend of four different grapes: Chardonnay, Viognier, Marsanne and Roussanne, the same grapes that go into Rhone Valley white wines in France. Here you'll find floral and tropical fruit notes along with some buttery vanilla – probably the reason for the “misspelling”

in the name.


Montes 2013 Alpha Cabernet Sauvignon (\$19.95 - #322586) – The bang for your buck here is amazing: lovely plum, black cherry, mocha, spice and white smoke – and that's just the aromas. Flavours take this to a whole new level. Buy it, drink it or store it. It's good for five to seven years.

Perez Cruz 2014 Cabernet Sauvignon Reserva (\$14.95 - #694208) – Something simple and easy-drinking with sweet blackberry, cassis, chocolate and minty notes. This could become your everyday favourite; call it your house wine when you buy it by the case.

Santa Carolina 2014 Reserva da Familia Cabernet Sauvignon (\$18.95 - #408658) – Silky smooth Cabernet full of mocha mint, red cherry, strawberry, plum and white pepper – plus the bottle can be repurposed as a door stop.

Viña Tarapacá 2015 Gran Reserva Pinot Noir (\$17.95 - #404210) – The 2013 version is still in the LCBO system, but the 2015 should arrive later in 2017 – look for it: raspberry, earthy, smoky with spiced-cranberry and good acidity. For real Pinot Noir lovers.

Santa Ema 2016 Reserva Sauvignon Blanc (\$15.95 - #443507) – It might be winter, but this wine is summer in a glass with tropical fruit aromas and grassiness. The palate is sweet fruited but not sweet (as in sugary): plenty of peach, guava and citrus.

Concha y Toro 2014 Winemakers Lot Carmenere (\$17.95 - #30957) – There's no looking at Chile without taking a peek at the much talked about Carmenere. It is a most confusing grape, but when made correctly it can be a beauty: blueberry, cocoa, black raspberry and blackberry all make an appearance here. They're not all like this, but the good ones are: and this is a good one. 

Michael Pinkus is an award-winning wine writer and past president of the Wine Writers' Circle of Canada. Follow him on Twitter at @thegrapeguy.