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VIK: MAKING WINE HISTORY IN THE GOLDEN VALLEY

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I had the incredible pleasure and honour in 2010 to visit twice the new Chilean (South-American, world...) star **VIK winery** in Millahue, on the other side of Apalta. You can read about my **first visit** [here](#). The second time was different. My two colleagues and friends **Romain Batya** (Luxemburg) and **Roberto Gatti** (Italy) were accompanying me, curious to discover this huge and fascinating holistic wine project I told them about.



VIK, the golden place

Patrick Valette let your dreams happen

Patrick Valette is half Chilean half French. He started his wine career as viticulture manager at different classy Bordeaux châteaux, was then 14 years assistant manager and shareholder of the world-wide well-known **Château Pavie, Grand Cru Classé Saint-Emilion** (1984-1998), buyer and consultant to many vineyards in the world. To mention only the Chilean ones, among others, Santa Rita, Tamaya, Los Maquis, Terramater, Neyen, J. Bouchon, El Principal, Chocalan and ... **VIK**.



VIK 2010: Patrick Valette (left) & Romain Batya

Patrick is much more than viticulture and oenology specialist, much more than a consultant... He is a visionary trendsetter, not a simple dreamer, but the one that actually makes your dreams happen.

Not everyone might like his way of working, because he is seeing everything, the good and the bad things. He demands perfect attention and trust, mutual trust. This can lead to a big frontal collision with some haughtily macho Chilean *'dueños'* (owners) who wouldn't tolerate any contradiction or friction. But the ones who understand Patrick and trust him will never be disappointed.

Patrick is a kind of realistic genius, he listens, understands, observes, thinks, make plans and just realize your dream. No matter the scale of your company, from tiny one to huge, if he believes in your dream, he will let it happen.

So did he in **Neyen**, which is for me after **VIK** one of the most impressive projects I ever saw in Chile. He is doing it as well at **VIK**, and believe me, this is going to be a terrific project!



VIK... The view from the cabin lodge.

The first steps were all concerning the basic of this project: great wines do need perfect grapes, and at **VIK** everything is thought and done to produce simply the best Chilean wine ever made. And I do not have any single doubt about that. The whole project, the team with **Patrick Valette**, **Gonzague de Lambert**, **Cristian Vallejo** and **Pedro Veas**, all is meant to focus on the highest quality possible. The building of the winery will be starting soon and should be achieved in 2012. A high level luxury hotel and restaurant should be the next step after the winery, and could be ready to welcome the first visitors in 2012-2013.



The future winery (the roof, left on the picture, is taken off to see the inside)

VIK 2009

VIK 2009 is a blend of 65% carmenère and 35% cabernet sauvignon, vinified in 8000 liter tanks with natural yeast. The wine has been aged for 15 months in new French oak barrels from Seguin Moreau, Demptos and Sylvain. The wine sediments have been naturally removed by racking every three months. This also allowed the wine to breathe and get the necessary contact with oxygen.

What amazed me the most in both tastings of this wine, one from the barrel in April, the second one after the bottling in November 2010, is the elegance, freshness, round and well balanced character, while this wine is still at the very beginning of its life. Considering the very young age of the vineyards, it is really astonishing to feel (already now!) the fantastic concentration and complexity. No heavy old-fashioned so called New World blockbuster, but a real, perfectly balanced wine for the pleasure of a good meal. If I understood well what Patrick told us, this could be the most important secret of VIK... The use of the right clones on the right place with the right root-stocks (which is still quite unusual in Chile) gives a much better result in terms of natural water house holding, canopy management, fruit setting, maturation etc. The wine is simply delicious, lovely fruity and spicy, with soft tannins and very well integrated, elegant oak tones.



I know that as a responsible wine writer I should not push to any type of excessive alcohol consumption, which would be very wrong. But, in this case, I will just mention that the balance and freshness of this wine (even with more than 14% alc.) will never get boring. Every glass seems to invite you politely to enjoy another one, of course always with moderation, don't drink it without a good meal and decent good friends...

According to the vat samples tastings we did in November 2010, the new vintage should be even more complex, with more minerality and aromatic power, thanks to the input of new vineyards and the use of more varieties (cabernet franc, syrah). You won't be disappointed! The first official release of the 2009 vintage will start this year, but it will be soon sold out. You should better be quick for the 2010 vintage and contact the winery through their [WEBSITE](#).

