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To infinity and beyond: Situated two hours from Santiago, the hotel has compelling poolside views offset by a natural lake

Perched above a network of vines that feed the Vik winery, the property overlooks rolling hills and a glistening lake in the valley below.

So far, so standard, in a wine-hotel kind of way, but it soon becomes clear that this destination is anything but standard.

The hotel's huge titanium roof is designed to look like a giant gold ring, an effect which is almost blinding when it reflects the glimmering Chilean sun.

But the aesthetic is not gaudy or bling; we are in Chile's Millahue valley, which means 'Place of Gold' in the native Mapuche language, and legend has it that there's a hidden goldmine somewhere beneath the vines.



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Place of Gold: Overlooking the Millahue valley, the hotel's titanium roof glistens in the evening sun



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Sanctuary: Shogun suite has Japanese paper-panel blinds rather than curtains and Tatami-style reed mats

But back to the hotel, which continues to surprise beyond its dazzling roof.

Each of the 22 bedrooms has been individually designed by different artists (mostly South American), each of whom was given free rein to treat their allotted room as a blank canvas.

Take the chic Hermès room with its bathroom covered in photos of super-sized models fresh out of a fashion shoot, or the Shogun room a few doors down which is all paper-panel blinds and Tatami-style Japanese mats.

The huge range of styles means that no two rooms are remotely similar, but they are uniformly comfortable; after all, this is a hotel that will set you back £518 a night, per person.



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Eclectic: Room H is designed by Ricardo Irarrazabal and influenced by Hermès with horses overlooking the bed and Hermès boxes used as light fittings



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Creative splash: The bathroom of the Hermès room is adorned with life-size photos of models, as well as an image of the owners, Alexander and Carrie Vik

Eclectic is an understatement – across the corridor from Hermès you'll find a 12 foot mural depicting my friend the hobo keeping guard with a shopping trolley full of junk.

Never has the line between hotel and art gallery been flirted with so intimately.

For the more sombre guest, the Louis Louis room is decked out with Napoleonic scenes of a wintry, war-torn Europe, with dead soldiers and horses scattered around a burnt-out farmhouse – a bit of a contrast to the idyllic green vines and sun-soaked Chilean skies outside.



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Child's play: A table filled with multi-coloured cotton reels is contrasted with cowhide chairs (left). The Color suite's bathroom tiles resemble lego (right)



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Epic vista: VIK's contemporary architecture has been designed to complement the rolling Chilean landscape

Staying at the hotel is akin to sleeping in the Serpentine Galleries – in fact, the sunken winery below the hotel was designed by Smiljan Radic, the Chilean architect who built London's Serpentine Pavilion.

Everywhere you look exceptional features arrest your gaze: the bedside tables in the Redondo room, for example, take the form of women down on hands and knees, and would fit well in the Tate Modern.

The crushed oil drums in the corner might suit a refinery, if they hadn't been designed by one of Chile's best known artists. And they certainly stand out in a hotel.

“ *Never has the line between hotel and art gallery been flirted with so intimately.* ”

The temptation (should your bank balance stretch this far) would be to book 22 nights and to work your way through the smorgasbord of styles, documenting your dreams as you go.



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Surreal welcome: The winery features a concrete walkway sprawling across a water feature accented by galvanized iron and boulders

Peeking into the rooms provides a continuous salvo on the senses. Psychedelic paintings line the walls and otherworldly furniture adorns the lounges.

In one room, hyper realist paintings of Brigitte Bardot, Sophia Loren and Marilyn Monroe look down from Hollywood scenes.

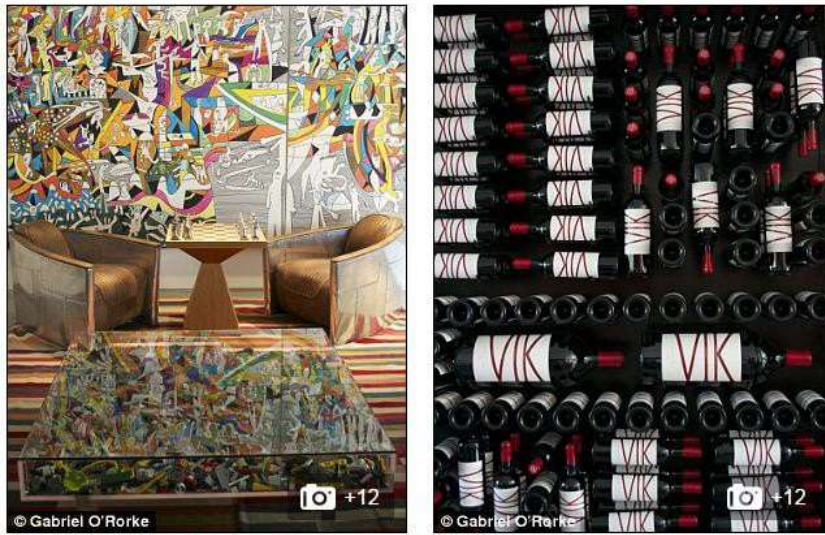
In a nod to the team behind Vik, one bathroom displays a bucolic wine harvest, the revellers enjoying grapes, music, and of course Vik wine. Look closely and you'll spot the owner and his wife, as well as the chief wine maker.

After a tour of the hotel, you will have definitely earned a glass of the good stuff.



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Beyond the vines: VIK's abundant and endless vineyards span 11,000 acres



Vine art: Vibrant illustrations decorate the games room (left). VIK wine bottles line the dining area walls (right)

So, who is the brains behind this magnificent menagerie? The Norwegian entrepreneur Alexander Vik.

This is his first venture into the Chilean hotel scene, but he has three hotels in Uruguay of a similarly arty ilk.

The main difference with Viña Vik is the winery itself, a massive warehouse sunken beneath the vines like an art-house nuclear bunker. Huge metal vats line the underground lair whilst hundreds of French barrels of maturing wine are stacked elegantly at one end.

It took 6,000 soil samples to make sure this was the perfect spot, and the wine makers keep a watchful eye on proceedings, tasting the wine every 10 days to check its progress.

Vik's aim? To produce Chile's best wine within 10 years, but clearly without sacrificing an ounce of style along the way.



Pool days: Guest can take a dip in the pool with the lake, hills and vines stretching into the horizon

From the titanium roof to the bathroom in a room called Vicky Money where every surface is covered in Euro cent coins, clearly Mr Vik was not shy in splashing the cash, figuratively or literally, on his new hotel.

As for Chile's wine scene, the last few decades have seen plenty of pretty bodegas popping up all over the wine country. Yet there's nothing out there quite like Viña Vik. This is not a hotel you'll forget in a hurry.

TRAVEL FACTS

A night's stay at one of Viña Vik Hotel's 22 suites starts from £518 per person, per night, taxes included. Rates include buffet breakfast, lunch with soft drinks, and dinner with a glass of VIK wine, and a winery tour. There are also options to go horse riding, paint balling and in a hot air balloon. For more information visit www.vinavik.com.