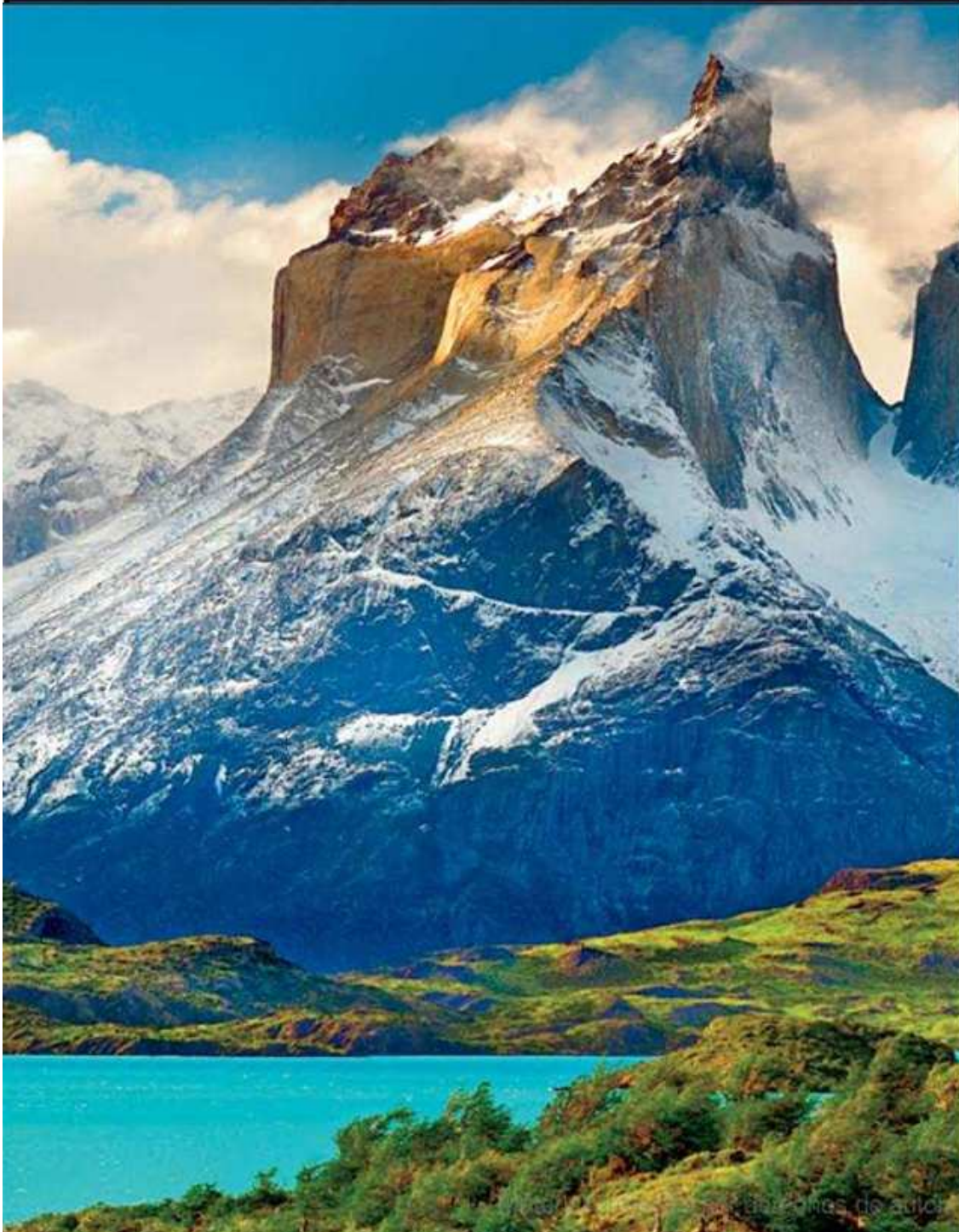


Frommer's  
**Chile**  
& Easter Island



**Frommer's Chile and Easter Island**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> Edition**

By Nicholas Gill, Christie Pashby, Kristina Schreck

## Cachapoal Valley


This valley was for years grouped together with the Colchagua Valley, but split when differences between the two valleys' climate and topography became too distinct to ignore. The Alto Cachapoal near the Andes produces world-class cabernet sauvignon with a freshness and natural elegance derived from its alluvial, infertile soils and cool breezes. To the west, carmenère has thrived, achieving a perfect maturity. Other grapes that are producing interesting results are viognier, syrah, merlot, and cabernet franc. In addition to wine, the Cachapoal Valley is home to a couple of interesting attractions such as Sewell, a UNESCO Heritage site and abandoned mining town; Teniente, the deepest copper mine in the world; and an old-world spa modeled after Vichy. The drive from Ruta 5 (Panamericana) up to Termas de Cauquenes along the "Copper Highway" offers utterly spectacular views of the Andes.

**Altair ★★★** Situated in the foothills of the Andes in Alto Cachapoal, Altair is a joint venture between Viña San Pedro and France's Château Dassault, launched in 2001 to craft a uniquely Chilean grand cru. The winery itself is understated yet majestic, made of natural stone culled from the surrounding area, and their "quincho" (pavilion) and tasting room boast a 360-degree view of the patchwork valley below and the hills. This is a top-tier winery in the Cachapoal Valley and has produced some of this valley's finest varietals; both their Altair and Sideral cabernet blends are elegant yet powerful. All Altair wines have been rated over 90 points by *Wine Advocate*. The winery's basic tour, including a visit to the vineyard and a tasting of their Altair wines, costs C\$18,000. A far more unique tour is the winery's Terroir & Cosmos night tour on horseback, which follows a triangular path inspired by the constellations Altair, Deneb, and Vega; the cost is C\$36,000 and the tour is only available during a full moon at 8pm. Daytime horseback rides cost C\$32,000 and are available at 10:30am and 3pm. A full-day tour with a horseback ride and a BBQ lunch is C\$72,000 per person and is available daily from 9am to 6pm.

Fundo Toihue, Requinoa. ☎21477-5555.[www.altairwines.com](http://www.altairwines.com). Reservations required. Tours daily at 10am, noon, 3, and 5pm. From the Panamericana, exit at Requinoa and head left until you reach a dead-end intersection; turn right and follow the road until Camino a Pimpinela, turn left and continue 10km (6 miles).

**Anakena ★★** Launched in 1999 by two school friends, Anakena features vines that are scattered around four different wine valleys, but their flagship winery is here in Cachapoal and it is their largest, offering lovely views of the Andes. The winery produces 400,000 cases a year, and is known for producing good value wines such as the excellent but low-cost viognier and pinot noir; their premium ONA line is well regarded. Anakena is committed to the environment more so than most wineries and a tour explains the importance of creating fine wines in an environmentally sensitive manner. One-hour tours here include a walk through their vineyard to a lookout point to sample a sauvignon blanc, followed by a visit to the bodega and winemaking facilities and another tasting in their shop; the cost is C\$8,000 for reserve wines, and C\$12,000 with premium wines. Better yet, book a tour with a 1-hour horseback ride included for C\$27,900 per person; or book ahead for a cheese picnic that includes a bottle of wine (C\$24,000 for two with a picnic and tour). Visitors may also drop in and simply taste Anakena's wines for C\$4,000 to C\$9,000 depending on the caliber of wine.

Camino Pimpinela s/n, Requinoa. ☎72/954203.[www.anakenawines.cl](http://www.anakenawines.cl). Reservations required for tours, Mon–Sat 10:30am, noon, 3, and 4:30pm, and Sun and holidays 10:30am and noon. Boutique de Vino daily 10am–8:30pm. For directions, see Altair above; the winery is next door.

**Viña VIK ★★★**  When Norwegian businessman Alexander Vik set out to indulge in viticulture with his own 10,500-acre winery in 2006, he didn't aim to make the best wine in Chile, rather the best wine in the world—a feat he very well might accomplish when the 2010 varietal matures and hits the market in 2012. This is one of the most unique wineries a traveler to Chile can experience; it gives visitors a chance to see a winery that seems to get everything right even though it's just starting out. A mind-boggling amount of investment has been made here: Its winemakers grafted phylloxera-resistant roots to Chilean vines and spent several years testing syrah, merlot, cabernet franc, and cabernet sauvignon varieties in the valley's distinct microclimates, searching for foolproof growing conditions that will eventually be blended into an icon wine. VIK strives to produce "Holistic Wine" in which technology, know-how, environmental sensitivity, solid social practices, and advanced science merge to create fabulous wine. The property is also set in one of the loveliest valleys in Chile's Central Valley, untouched by development and magical in nature, with bountiful bird life and flitting butterflies, drooping willow trees alongside country lanes, and locals who get to and fro on slow bicycle rides. Wine tours here are C\$30,875 per person, but the tour is private and led by a supremely knowledgeable enologist, followed by a sample of their first wine, a 2009. They also offer a lunch with wine in their lodge for C\$57,000 per person; both tours and lunch must be booked in advance.

Road to Millahue s/n. ☎2/248-2218.[www.vik.cl](http://www.vik.cl). Tours C\$30,875 per person, and by appointment only.