

Wine & Wanderlust



MALMAISON GM RICHARD LOCKSTONE'S TRIP TO SEE CHILEAN WINEMAKERS ENDED UP BEING A MAGICAL 'MEMORY BOX' TRIP WITH HIS FATHER ACROSS THIS FASCINATING SOUTH AMERICAN COUNTRY. HE TELLS US ABOUT HIS TRIP OF A LIFETIME...

WORDS AND PICTURES RICHARD LOCKSTONE

Even before getting the opportunity to explore the truly magical viticultural playground that is Chile, I always knew that it had more to offer in the world of wines than simply 'cheap plonk', but I simply hadn't had the opportunity to try the best of what this country had to offer. This was soon to be rectified when I heard that I had the chance to head to Chile on a one week wine trip, a reward for a sommelier competition that I'd taken part in last year.

TRAVEL NOTES

WWW.THESINGULAR.COM
WWW.VINAVIK.COM

I headed off in January thoroughly looking forward to the holiday and was soon blown away by what a wonderful country Chile is and how amazing many of their wines truly are. Our first stop was the Singular Hotel in central Santiago. A small, boutique hotel, it delivered five star culture as well as finish. It is a total gem, even in this downtown Mecca of style. After a night in the blissfully comfortable bed, we were off on our first day of wine



an overnight stay in Santa Rita, an old Spanish colonial building where clearly wealth was plentiful, so much so the owner had build a beautiful church next to the family home as a gift for his fiancé. Kind of makes it hard for the rest of the single population to compete with I thought! The second afternoon we arrived at VIK, a winery near San Fernando. VIK is a new winery established in 2006 and one that none of us had really heard of before but it was unforgettable. The wine maker, Patrick Valette, kindly took the whole afternoon driving us around the vineyards and showing us around the outstanding, award winning winery. Our accommodation, the VIK hotel, was the most sublime hotel I believe I have ever been to. No expense has been spared and it featured a titanium roof, an infinity pool overlooking the vineyards and estate and 22 individual bedrooms which had each been personally designed by artists from around the world. As you would expect the restaurant quality, both in terms of the food and service, were out of this world. If I were to recommend anywhere in Chile, it would be the Hotel VIK, a show stopping masterpiece! After leaving this gem of a place, we felt that it couldn't be topped and for sheer wow

tastings; Almavida, a first class, prestigious wine, a tour and tasting with the dedicated and passionate wine maker. Then onto our first lunch, at Concha y Toro; a 14 course tasting menu with 16 wines. It was at this point I realised the trip was going to be more of a wine marathon rather than simply a tasting tour. The journey over the next few days very much continued in this fashion, amazing and beautiful vineyards, producing some lovely wines, and all very different. Our second night was

factor and elegance it wasn't. However, the next afternoon we visited Koyle, a family owned and run winery, From the moment we arrived we could tell that this was a labour of love. After a long walk around the land we got to taste the wines and they were sensational. Our evening continued with fabulous Koyle hospitality back at the family home for a BBQ and lots more wines. After the grandeur of the day and evening before, this simple but lovely visit was perfect. Throughout the tour we continued to experience great hospitality and savoured beautiful wines at every turn with many memorable highlights. On our last day we were extremely well hosted at Errazuriz, a pioneer in the Chilean wine world. Here a tour and tasting, followed by a lovely yet simply paired lunch finished the 'wine trip' off perfectly. I felt that to fly all the way to Chile for one week was almost

criminal so I extended for a second week, where I was joined by my father. Together we toured the south of the country, an area known as the 'Lake District', and roamed into northern Patagonia. We spent the week driving from one place to the next, having to stop to take photos at more or less every bend in the road as the views and scenery were simply breathtaking. Our week was filled with walking in the beautiful diverse landscape from forests to national parks dotted with waterfalls and even a recently active volcano. It was a fantastic week which gave my kidneys a well-earned rest from the previous week of wine consumption. My two week trip to Chile was a truly inspirational trip and will definitely stand out as one of the best holidays of my life. It's a truly magical place to visit and if you don't get the chance, at least try the wines, they are as beautiful as the country itself.

TASTING NOTES

HERE ARE RICHARD'S TOP RECOMMENDATIONS FROM HIS TRIP.

VALUE KOYLE, SAUVIGNON BLANC
WWW.THEWINESOCIETY.COM

MID RANGE COYAM, EMILIANO, WWW.BOUTINOT.COM
SPLURGE VIK, WWW.HENNINGSWINE.CO.UK