

Why Carmenère is Chile's next Great Red Wine Grape



Maybe you've heard great things about the Chilean Carmenère grape or maybe you've just heard of it. But do you know what it is and why it's poised to become the most important grape in Chile?

What is it? Carmenère was once a heavily planted grape in the Bordeaux region of France. But in Bordeaux's climate, the grape didn't ripen regularly, so much of it was not replanted after the phylloxera outbreak of the 1880s. For nearly a century, Carmenère was lost to viticultural history.

In the early 1990s, during the height of an international Merlot craze, winemakers discovered that many of the Chilean vines they had called Merlot were actually Carmenère. Once vintners recognized their error, they changed their farming techniques to play to the strengths of this "lost Bordeaux" variety by letting the grapes hang longer on the vines. (Carmenère grapes are among the last grapes to ripen). Upon reaching maturity, Carmenère grapes create a velvety, rich wine that is distinctly Chilean.

The Carmenère grape thrives in Chile because of the country's long growing season, which produces beautifully ripe fruit every year. Chile's vineyards are also incredibly disease resistant, making it one of the few wine-producing regions in the world to use *self-rooted* rather than grafted vines.

What makes it great? Carmenère may be Chile's greatest agricultural success story, and it is poised to be the country's definitive varietal for a variety of reasons:

- It's distinctive: Carmenère makes a velvety smooth wine with less tannins than Cabernet Sauvignon.
- Chile produces the majority of the world's Carmenère. (In Chile today, more than 15,000 vineyard acres are devoted to Carmenère.)
- Many artisan producers are dedicating themselves to making Carmenère Chile's most recognizable varietal.
- Americans are increasingly interested in trying new varietals.

Global Vineyard imports the following Carmenère or Carmenère blends: *Apaltaqua* Carmenère Reserva, Envero Carmenère and Grial Carmenère; *Antiyal*; *Maquis Lien*, *Calcu*; and *Kuyen*.



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