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Chile's new cool regions triumph

24 Jan 2011 by Jancis Robinson

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Last week's announcement of the results of the 8th Annual Wines of Chile Awards, the so-called 'Bicentennial Edition', got rather submerged by all those Burgundy 2009 tastings notes, I'm afraid, but I hope it is better later than never to announce that **Tabalí Reserva Especial Syrah 2008 Limarí Valley** was voted Best in Show and that probably the winery with the best overall performance across the board was the ever-reliable **Viña Leyda**, whose wines can offer such great value. Some of the winners are shown here.

Viña Leyda won a total of five out of the 18 trophies awarded, with **Viña Leyda, Garuma Sauvignon Blanc 2010 Leyda Valley** winning joint best Sauvignon Blanc and Best Value White. The Best Value Red trophy went to **Viña Mayu, Elki Syrah 2008 Elqui Valley**.

In a change from their previous policy of recruiting judges from a single country, this year the organisers invited an international panel of 13 judges from nine of their major export markets: Oz Clarke and Steven Spurrier from the UK; Josh Greene, Josh Reynolds and Michael Shachner from the US; Shari Mogk-Edwards and François Primeau from Canada; Jorge Lucki from Brazil; Andreas Larsson from Sweden; Jeannie Cho Lee from Hong Kong; Kyoungja 'Corinne' Eom from Korea; Tomoko Ebisawa from Japan; and Chile's own Master Sommelier, Héctor Vergara. Over three days the judges tasted more than 620 wines from 110 wineries and awarded a (surely rather generous?) total of 369 medals and 18 trophies. Of the medals, 41 were golds, 131 silver and 197 bronze.

It is notable that all three top wines come from the country's emerging cool-climate regions.

Chile's wine industry has come up with a strategy for this decade, setting itself the goal of becoming the New World's most important producer of sustainable and diverse premium wines, increasing exports of bottled wine to a value of US\$3 billion by the year 2020. Sustainability is an important element of the Plan 2020 (as of course it is in New Zealand and South Africa, not to mention California - where are you on this, Australia?).

As part of this commitment, the 8th Annual Wines of Chile Awards was deliberately 100% carbon neutral. To offset the associated carbon emissions (Jeannie Cho Lee's flight alone took something like 32 hours), Wines of Chile will be donating 300 fruit trees to establish a park, or 'green lung', in one of Santiago's poorer neighbourhoods.

The winners of this year's Annual Wines of Chile Awards are:

Best in Show Trophy

Viña Tabalí Reserva Especial Syrah 2008 Limarí Valley

Sparkling Trophy

Viña Valdivieso Extra Brut Rosé Sparkling Wine Curicó Valley

Sauvignon Blanc Trophy - joint winners

Viña Leyda, Single Vineyard Garuma Sauvignon Blanc 2010 Leyda Valley
Viña Casas del Bosque, Pequeñas Producciones Sauvignon Blanc 2010 Casablanca Valley

Chardonnay Trophy

Viña Cono Sur, 20 Barrels Limited Edition Chardonnay 2009 Casablanca Valley

Other Whites Trophy

Viña Leyda, Single Vineyard Neblina Riesling 2009 Leyda Valley

White Blends Trophy

Viñedos Emiliana, Winemaker's Selection Chardonnay/Viognier/Marsanne 2009 Casablanca Valley

Rosé Trophy

Viña Leyda, Single Vineyard Loica Pinot Noir Rosé 2009 Leyda Valley

Pinot Noir Trophy

Viña Leyda, Lot 21 Pinot Noir 2009 Leyda Valley

Merlot Trophy

Viña Cono Sur, 20 Barrels Limited Edition Merlot 2009 Colchagua Valley

Syrah Trophy

Viña Tabalí, Reserva Especial Syrah 2008 Limarí Valley

Carmenère Trophy

Viña De Martino, Alto de Piedras Single Vineyard 2009 Maipo Valley

Other Reds Trophy

Viña De Martino, Limávida Single Vineyard 2007 Maule Valley

Red Blends Trophy

Viña J Bouchon, Mingre 2008 Maule Valley

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Cabernet Sauvignon Trophy

Viña Haras de Pirque, Elegance Cabernet Sauvignon 2007 Maipo Valley

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Late Harvest Trophy

Viña Valdivieso, Eclat Botrytis Semillon 2007 Curicó Valley (one of my [Surefire sweet and/or strong wines](#) last month)

Best Value Red Trophy

Viña Mayu, Elki Syrah 2008 Elqui Valley

Best Value White Trophy

Viña Leyda, Single Vineyard Garuma Sauvignon Blanc 2010 Leyda Valley

Many of these wines are yet to find their way to export markets but I strongly advise you to keep checking their availability on [wine-searcher.com](#). Many of them should be great buys.

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