



## 2014 HARVEST REPORT

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The 2014 season began in September 2013 with long and intense polar frosts that affected a large part of the national territory. Casablanca, for example, received 17 frosts that month, three of which with temperatures below  $-5^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $23^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) and even  $-8.8^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $16^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) and lasting for more than 10 hours.

Once the threat of frosts had passed, both budbreak and flowering took place within historically normal timeframes in September and October. The spring presented cloudy and sunny days, which led to a normal fruit set in the central zone of the Colchagua Valley. The bunches were approximately 15% smaller due to the frosts. Fruit set for Cabernet Sauvignon and Carmenere was lower than normal in the valley's coastal zone.

The last rain fell in August 2013, which resulted in reaching the water stress threshold in shallow soils in late November and in deeper soils in December, a full month earlier than in the previous year. December temperatures were in line with those of a normal year, which allowed for the recovery of growth rates and vineyard development.

Veraison occurred in mid-January, in accordance with historic periods.

In the Colchagua, Casablanca, and Leyda Valleys, the early months of 2014 saw elevated maximum temperatures, with many days above  $33^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $91^{\circ}\text{F}$ ). The influence of the highest temperatures observed caused the grapes to ripen earlier in the season. This obligated us to be highly vigilant in order to harvest at the precise moment, which was at least two weeks earlier than normal in the white varieties and Pinot Noir.

The coastal zone of the Colchagua Valley received its first low-intensity rainfall (6–9 mm in the interior and 16.3 mm in the coastal zone) in the month of March. No rain fell in the Leyda and Casablanca Valleys, and therefore the levels of ground and river water remained lower than normal and close to their historic minimums.

We began harvesting out white grapes quite early in the season, beginning with our Sauvignon Blanc from Leyda from the third week of February versus mid March of previous harvests. The onset of harvest in the Casablanca Valley ranged from normal to late, depending on the zone, possibly as a consequence of the spring frosts.

We observed decreases in yields of white varieties in the vicinity of 30% in Sauvignon Blanc and 50% in Chardonnay. Yields of red grapes at our Apalta and Marchigüe properties fell 20% in Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% in Syrah, 60% in Merlot, 25% in Carmenere, and 48% in Malbec.

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The 2014 vintage had lower yields and smaller, lighter berries (0.7 gr instead of 1 gr). The grapes were highly concentrated with good natural acidity, and the reds also showed excellent phenolic ripening.

The wines obtained to date are intense, concentrated, and very well structured with good aromatic purity and acidity. The white fermentations were very good this year, with good levels of nitrogen. It was important to work the lees, which resulted in wines with tremendous volume on the palate. Today we have very characteristic lots from each zone. The Sauvignon Blanc from Zapallar shows fresh fruit aromas, plenty of passion fruit, and potent minerality. The wines from Casablanca have riper fruit aromas, and Leyda presents characteristics of pineapple, tomato leaf, and green chili.

The red wines are showing very good, lively color, well-balanced acidity, and alcohol levels that are not very elevated. All of this is the result of the decreased production due to the frosts as well as a dry farming policy of reduced irrigation in search of better concentration in the wines and an optimization of water use.

Aurelio Montes  
August 2014

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