

## Wine Forum Report February 2022

If our last single-country wine session (Portugal, in October) saw us tasting nearly 30 grape varieties, our February visit to Chile produced the opposite end of the spectrum: six wines each from a single (different) grape. This perhaps reflects the simple approach of the Chilean wine industry whose focus seems to be on middle range wines at reasonable prices. There were few surprises but the four whites were at worst quite drinkable. Other countries may be reducing their strength of wines, but Chilean wine under 12.5% seems hard to come by – even white wine. As with Portugal, Majestic were again running an offer (25% off) this month which certainly provided good value for our tasting.

Our first white wine was a **Medalla Real Gran Reserva 2020 Chardonnay** (13%; £7.99). This came from the Limari Valley, one of the country's northernmost wine producing valleys. Despite the producers' claim of 'aromas of fresh fruits and citrus with dried fruits and nuts', most members were not impressed ('little after-taste', 'don't like it at all' were two comments). Fortunately wine number two, the **Mud House 2021 Sauvignon Blanc** (12.5%; £6.99), although cheaper, found much more favour. The producers are famous for their excellent New Zealand Sauvignons, and recently extended their operations into Chile. This self-proclaimed 'zesty wine, rich in intensity' went down a treat and, at the sale price, was a real bargain. Next from the Aconcagua Valley came an **Emiliana Elemental 2020 Viognier** (14%; £8.99); here was a wine with a good kick, and which elicited favourable comments ('strongly mineral flavour, but with a hint of sweetness'; 'yes, I like that'), although it was generally agreed that the Mud House was better. Finally (for the whites) we tried a **J Bouchon Block Series 2019 Semillon** (13.5%; £14.99) which came with a barrage of tributes ('silky texture and crisp finish'; 'exotic flavours of citrus' etc.). The first member to taste this simply said 'hideous'; others were more positive, but it would be fair to say that a majority were not over-impressed with this rather pricey Maule Valley wine.

We concluded with two reds: our **Errazuriz Estate Reserva 2020 Merlot** (13.5%; £8.99) was a typical middle-of-the road Merlot; unexceptionable but perfectly drinkable. From the central Curico Valley, the 'ageing in French and American barrels' was barely noticeable and it perhaps lacked the description 'full-bodied' claimed by the label. The Southern Bio-Bio Valley's **Indomita Gran Reserva 2020 Pinot Noir** (14%; £9.99) was appreciated by the 'red brigade' within the group. Here the label's 'nicely pronounced fruit' and 'smooth velvet taste' seemed more justified; worth giving a try, certainly.

Our March meeting will be on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> at 2.00. The topic is still to be decided. Anyone requiring further details should contact Tim Meacham.