

THE HISTORY OF CARMENÈRE

The revival of the lost variety

Carmenère, originally from the Médoc region in Bordeaux, was known as the sixth noble blending grape and was one of the most widely planted varieties in the early 19TH Century. In 1870, French vineyards were attacked by phylloxera, a tiny insect that affects the vine root and leaves, extinguishing it from all the French and European vineyards.

When Bordeaux was eventually replanted with vines, many growers chose not to plant Carmenère, which is difficult to grow and prone to disease in the region's damp climate conditions and instead, focused on the easier-to-grow varieties like Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon.

Chile & Carmenère: Re-discovering the grape

In the 1850's, years before the arrival of phylloxera in Europe, Chilean wine producers brought Carmenère among other red varieties such as Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Merlot and Cabernet Franc. For years the variety was in Chilean vineyards, giving very special characteristics in particular to the award winning "Chilean Merlot".

Today the grape is rarely found in France or anywhere else, but it thrives in the ideal climate that Chile offers. With more than 10.732 hectares (26,518 acres) planted in the Central Valley, Chile is the world's most important Carmenère wine producer, both as a single varietal wine as well as a component of a blend.

Carmenère was rediscovered in Chile in 1994 by the French ampelographer Jean-Michel Boursiquot, who saw that some Merlot vines took much longer to mature. He carried out some research and realized that among the vines was the long lost Bordeaux Carmenère variety.



MontGras romance with Carmenère

In 1994, as soon as it was rediscovered, MontGras decided to take a risk and innovate with Carmenère, becoming one of the first wineries to work this unique variety that is now renowned all around the world.

Today, MontGras is a leading Chilean winery that offers premium wines of great value and is a major reference of this variety with its award-winning Reserva Carmenère, of which it exports more than 50,000 cases worldwide.

MontGras Reserva Carmenère is distinguished by its very deep purple red colour and beautiful peppery aromas. In its flavour you can find chocolate, red fruits, berries and appealing spices. Medium bodied, it is very easy to drink and it accompanies an array of foods such as red meats, sweet and sour dishes, curry, rice and pasta dishes, chicken and even fish such as tuna and salmon.

For Santiago Margozzini, MontGras Winemaker and expert in this variety, "Carmenère expresses its spicy features as a subtle, distinctive and charming component that makes it unique. It also shows incredible colour, volume and a roundness which are the reasons why this variety is universally liked and in such high demand from every major international market."

