Wine & Cheese by TCC's January 2011 Wine Club

To get your new year started off right, we bring you three selections this month instead of two! All three wines are from the Viña Calina Winery located in the foothills of the Maule Valley, Chile, along the rugged west coast of South America. Chile is a secluded viticultural area nestled among impressive natural barriers that create a narrow passage unlike any on earth - to the north, the Atacama, the most arid desert in the world; to the east, the Andes, the second highest mountains on the earth; to the west, the Pacific Ocean; and to the south, the Drake Sea and Antarctic ice caps. Viña Calina is situated on top of a gentle slope overlooking the northern Maule Valley, midway between the Andes and coastal mountains. The winery produces a collection of red Bordeaux varietals blended from the best vineyard sites in Chile. The winery's true inspiration is combining its Chilean ancestry with its old world European heritage. Viña Calina specializes in Carménère, Chile's signature varietal and a grape that was originally planted in the Médoc region in Bordeaux, France.

The history of Carménère is an interesting one. While originating in France, it is almost impossible to find Carménère there today, as a Phylloxera plague in 1867 nearly destroyed all the vineyards of Europe. The Carménère grapevines were hit particularly hard and for many years the grape was presumed extinct. When the vineyards were replanted, Carménère was extremely hard to find and more difficult to grow than other grape varieties common to Bordeaux. The region's damp, chilly spring weather prevented the vines' buds from flowering, the yields were lower than other varieties and the crops were rarely healthy. Consequently, wine growers chose not to replant the Carménère. However, in recent years the Carménère grape has been discovered in several vineyard sites outside of France. In Chile, growers unknowingly preserved the grape variety during the last 150 years. Cuttings of Carménère were imported by Chilean growers from Bordeaux during the 19th century, but inadvertently confused with Merlot vines. Thanks to Chile's minimal rainfall during the growing season, the Carménère thrived. During most of the 20th century, Carménère was processed together with Merlot grapes until 1994, when it was finally established correctly as Carménère. A similar situation occurred in Italy when, in the early 1990s, grapes in several regions thought to be Cabernet Franc were proven to be Carménère.

In the following pages, there is some information regarding your wine club selections. First, you'll find maps* showing the regions where the wines were produced. Next, you will see a description of each wine, some technical information on the wines and food pairing suggestions.

As always, your feedback is encouraged. Please call us or stop by with your comments regarding our selections.

The Gang at TCC

Wine & Cheese by TCC

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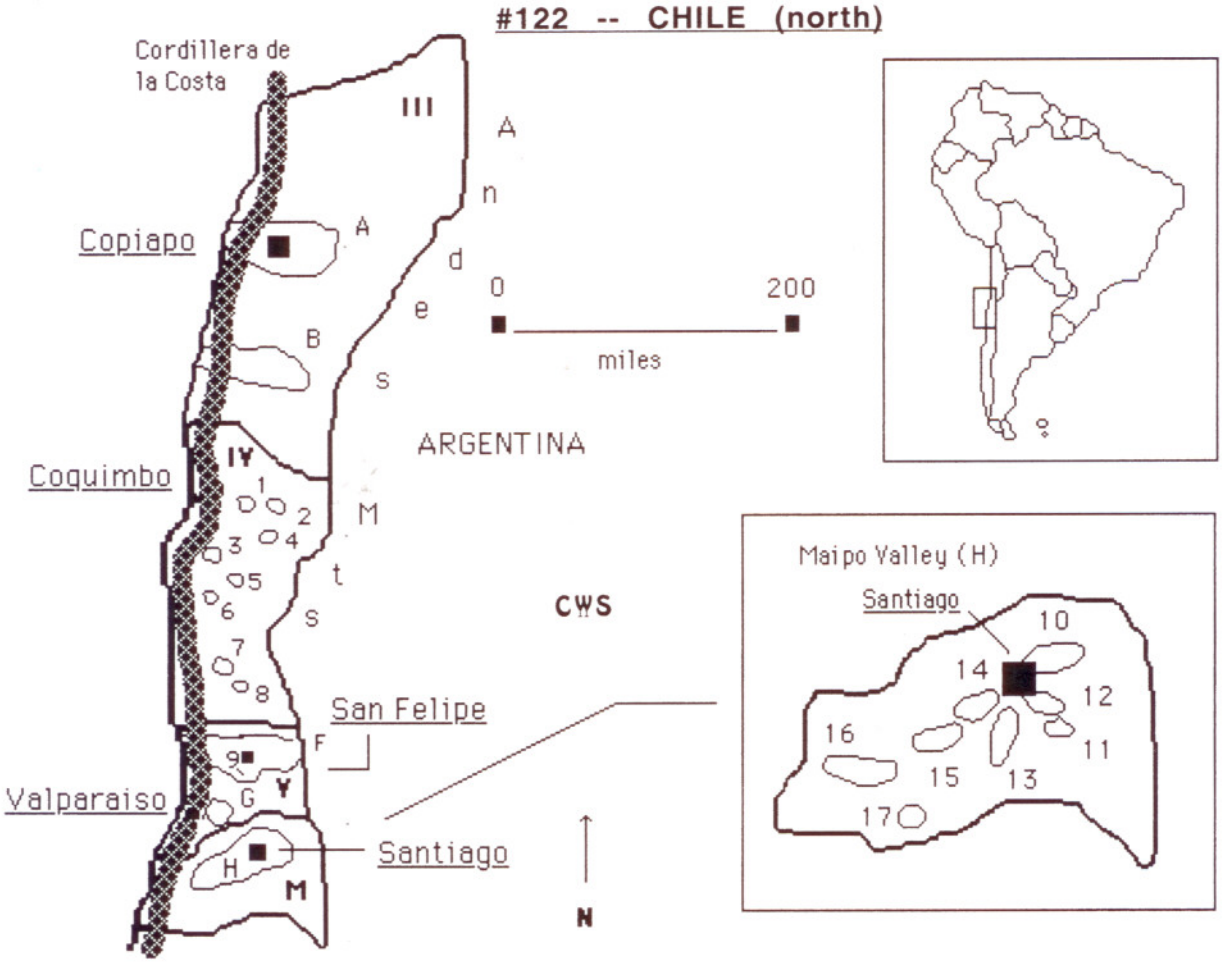
#122 -- CHILE (north)



VITICULTURAL REGIONS with Sub-Regions and with "Zones" and (Areas); (Roman numerals indicate national regions; "M" is the Region Metropolitana)

III) **Atacama** (contains 4.8% of the total vineyard: 92% for table grapes & 8% for Pisco). (**A**--Valley of Copiapo and **B**--Valley of Huasco;

IV) **Coquimbo** (contains 12.6% of the vineyards: 10% for wine, 43% for Pisco grapes & 47% for table grapes). **C**--Valley of Elqui w/1- (Vicuña), 2 - (Paiguano) & (La Serena: by Coquimbo); **D**--Valley of Limari w/ 3 - (Ovalle), 4 - (Monte Patria), 5 - (Punitaqui) & 6 - (Rio Hurtado) and **E**--Valley of Choapa w/7-(Salamanca) and 8-(Illapel);

V) **Aconcagua** (contains 10% of the vineyards: 71% table grapes and 29% for wines). **F**--Valley of Aconcagua w/ 9- (Panquehue), **G**--Valley of Casablanca & Valley de Leyda (San Antonio) just S. of Casablanca;

Central Valley

Metropolitana (12.8% of the vineyard land: 53% table grapes, 47% for wine). **H**--Maipo Valley w/ 10 - (Santiago), 11- (Pirque), 12 - (Puente Alto), 13 - (Buin), 14 - (Isla de Maipo), 15 - (Talagante), 16 - (Melpilla) & 17 - (Alhue).

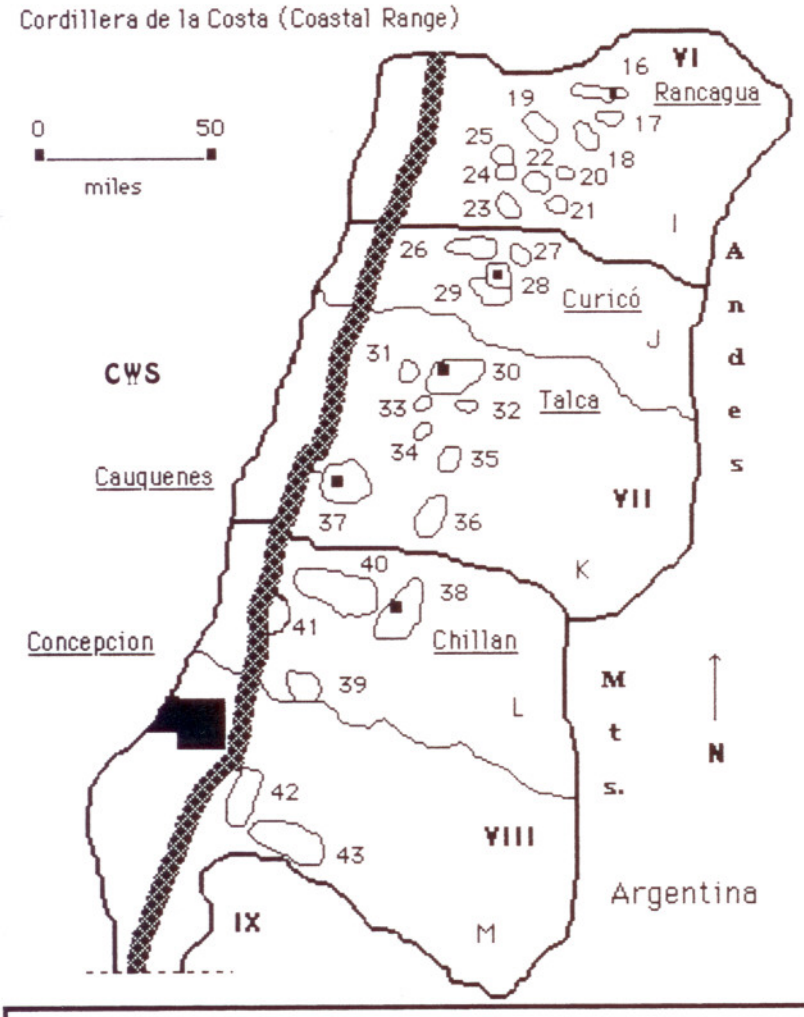
(see # 123 for rest of regions)

THE COUNTRY'S MAJOR GRAPE VARIETIES----- (2001 census: table or Pisco grapes in bold face)

Red-- Cabernet- Sauvignon: 94,460; Pais (aka Mission: 37,240); Merlot: 31,845; **Flame seedless**: 23,670; **Red Globe**: 13,440; Carmenère: 13,360; **Ribier**: 12,160; Tintoreras: 6,440; Syrah: 5,430; **Ruby seedless**: 4,115; **Red seedless**: 3,690; Pinot noir: 3,585; **Black seedless**: 2,920; **Red Crimson**: 2,875; Malbec/Cot: 2,310; Cabernet franc: 2,035; Carignane: 1,620; **Emperor**: 1,445 and Alicante Bouschet: 960.

White--**Thompson seedless**: 50,790; Chardonnay: 18,710; Sauvignon blanc:16,490- many estimate that about 20% of this is actually Sauvignon vert); Muscat of Alexandria: 19,145; **Moscatel blanca/rosada**: 7,350; Pedro Ximenez: 5,740; **Moscatel d'Austria** (aka Torontes Sanjuanino: 5,705); Sémillon: 4,600; Torontel: 4,575; **Superior seedless**: 3,175; **Perlette:** 1,085; Chasselas: 1,000 and White Riesling: 710.

#123 -- CHILE (South)



CHILE'S STATS: 2002

WINE PRODUCTION

172,893,000 gallons

2,200,000 tons

VINEYARD AREA: 2001

416,300 acres
(64% for wine use; 30% for table grapes and 6% for Pisco, a grappa-like spirit)

PER CAPITA

4 gallons

see map # 121 for Grape Variety Info.

VITICULTURAL REGIONS (with Sub-Regions, Zones and (Areas). Roman numerals correspond to national regional divisions.

Central Valley (cont' from # 111)

VI--(23.8% of the total vineyard area--26% table grapes & 74% wine grapes)
I--Valley of Rapel:
---- Valley of Cachapoal --- 16 - (Rancagua); 17 - (Requinos), 18 - (Rengo) & 19 - (Peumo);
----Valley of Colchagua --- 20 - (San Fernando), 21 - (Chimbarongo), 22 - (Nancagua), 23 - (Santa Cruz), 24 - (Palmilla), 25 - (Peralillo) and (Chépica: S of Chimbarongo), (Lolol: SW of Santa Cruz) & (Marchihue: N of Peralillo).

VII--(27.9% of the total vineyard area--99% wine grapes & 1% table grapes)
J-- Valley of Curicó:
----Valley of Teno --- 26 - (Rauco) & 27 - (Romeral).
----Valley of Lontué --- 28 - (Molina) & 29 - "Sagrada Familia".
K-Valley of Maule:
----Valley of El Claro --- 30 - (Talca), 31 - (Pencahue), 32 - (San Clemente) and (San Rafael: NE of Talca), (Pelarco: E of Talca) & (Maule: S of Talca).
----Valley of El Loncomilla --- 33 - (San Javier), 34 - (Villa Alegre), 35 - (Linares) & 36 - (Parral).
----El Tutuvén Valley --- 37 - (Cauquenes).

VIII) The South (8.1% of the total vineyard area--virtually all wine grapes).
L-Valley of Itata: ---w/ 38 - (Chillán), 39 - (Quillón), 40 - (Portezuelo) and 41 - (Coelemu).
M-Valley of Bio-Bio: (2% of the total vineyard area: all wine grapes) --- 42 - (Yumbel) & 43 - (Mulchén).

In addition, there are trace amounts of vineyards south of Bio-Bio (in the Araucania region: mostly Chardonnay).

Viña Calina
2009 Reserva Chardonnay

Type:	White
Varietal composition:	100% Chardonnay
Vineyard Location:	Casablanca (87%), Limari Valley (13%), Chile
Vintage:	2009
Country:	South America
Alcohol:	13.6%
Age-ability:	Drinks best within one year

Winemaking Philosophy and Vinification Details
The grapes for this wine were harvested between March and April. The fruit was hand sorted and bunches were then whole-cluster pressed. 60% of the juice was fermented in French and American oak barrels for seven months. 40% was fermented in stainless steel and 70% of the wine went through malolactic fermentation to bring out creamier note while preserving crispness and fruit character.

Tasting Notes
This fruit-driven Chardonnay has aromas of fresh citrus, peaches, melons, tropical fruit and hints of minerality. The wine is lush and crisp, with ripe white peach and melon fruit followed by hints of butter and light oak on the long finish.

Pairing Suggestions
A delicious match to brown butter seared scallops, chicken with a lemon cream sauce, our Grown Up Mac N' Cheese, Salmon Carpaccio and Saint Andre triple crème cheese.

For this month's cheese club selection, pair with Chimay Grand Classic. The tangy yet fruity and floral character of the cheese is a nice match to the citrus, tropical and buttery notes of the wine.

Viña Calina
2008 Reserva Merlot

Type:	Red
Varietal composition:	85% Merlot, 12% Cabernet Sauvignon, 2% Malbec, 1% Cabernet Franc
Vineyard Location:	El Maitén, Maule Valley, Chile
Vintage:	2008
Country:	South America
Alcohol:	13.5%
Age-ability:	Drink now or cellar for 3 years

Winemaking Philosophy and Vinification Details
2008 was an excellent year with mild autumn temperatures that allowed the grapes to hang for an extended period to achieve optimal ripeness. Harvest was done entirely by hand and based upon taste. After a three-day, cold soak to extract additional color and flavor, the juice was fermented and then transferred to a combination of French and American oak barrels for 10 months to add a rich texture and vanillin flavors.

Tasting Notes
A robust wine, it has red berries, plums, black and red cherries and cedar on the nose. The mid-palate is plump, lush and juicy with a dash of vanilla from the oak barrels followed by a long finish with mild tannins and balanced acidity.

Pairing Suggestions
Pair with your favorite hearty winter fare including duck confit, pate, our Port Braised Organic Figs, Roasted Chevre and sheep milk cheeses.

For this month's cheese club selection, pair with Chimay Grand Cru. The earthy richness and caramelized character of the cheese marries nicely with the juicy fruit and vanilla notes of the wine.

Viña Calina
2008 Reserva Carménère

Type:	Red
Varietal composition:	80% Carménère, 12% Merlot, 5% Syrah, 3% Cabernet Sauvignon
Vineyard Location:	El Maitén, Maule Valley, Chile
Vintage:	2008
Country:	South America
Alcohol:	13.5%
Age-ability:	Drinks best within one year

Winemaking Philosophy and Vinification Details
For some time, most winemakers have felt that Carménère requires a lot of warmth and sunlight to ripen. However, as a late-ripening grape, Viña Calina found that their best fruit is actually coming from slightly cooler locales with low vigor soils. They employ high quality, cool-climate farming techniques such as leaf pulling, shoot thinning, green dropping and extended hang time to create Carménère that is intense yet balanced. The harvesting and vinification details for this wine are similar to that of their Merlot process.

Tasting Notes
This wine has a dark and inky color with deep purple hues. Its aromas are intense with ripe berries, smoked bacon, sweet cotton candy and hints of vanilla. The aromas follow through to the palate with rich fruit, well integrated tannins and a long, elegant finish with spice and hints of oak.

Pairing Suggestions
From our experience, we have found that Carménère is one of the friendliest food pairing wines out there. Try it with everything from spicy Thai food to hearty grilled meats, to light seafood and your favorite cheeses or desserts.

For this month's cheese club selection, pair with both cheeses. You'll love how the wine travels seamlessly from the tangy yet fruity and floral character of the Chimay Grand Classic to the earthy richness and caramelized character of the Chimay Grand Cru.

Enjoy!