

Get your Grape on...with Victoria James

Vik- the best wine in South America?

The elevator quickly sped upwards to the 67th floor. Here in Columbus Circle, I was checking in on a project I had already fallen in love with a few years ago- a little wine produced in the Millahue valley.

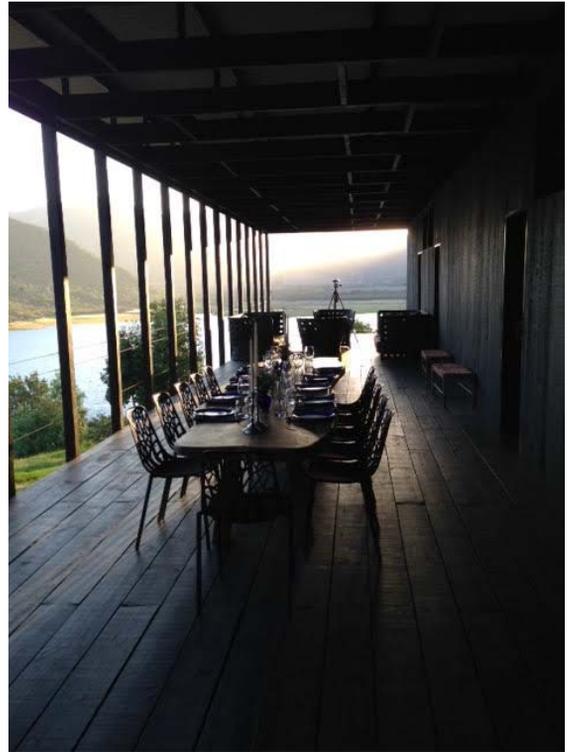
Vik is the brainchild of Alexander Vik, a Norwegian entrepreneur and his beautiful wife, Carrie. Together, they decided to make the best wine South America has ever seen. Luckily, they had all the right tools to play with. They spent months looking for the right spot in both Chile and Argentina. With a team of scientists they eventually landed in Millahue. Just over a nearby hill lies the infamous Clos Apalta, home to **Casa Lapostolle**, founded by Alexandra Marnier Lapostolle and her husband Cyril de Bournet in 1994. That's the Grand Marnier and Kappa pisco family. Tough competition and neighbors to have.

But the Vik's aren't worried. Instead of making an entire line of wines from the valley they instead focus on just one. When starting the project Carrie had hoped to plant some Semillon or Sauvignon Blanc, perhaps making a wine in the style of Bordeaux Blanc. **But when her oenology team told her it was possible but it wouldn't be the best... she of course, had no interest.**

During my visit, we took a ride through the massive swaths of vineyards they planted. Still a young winery, many of their vines are just babies. But these kids already have their future planned. They're getting into the best schools and will wear all the right clothes. Don't worry.



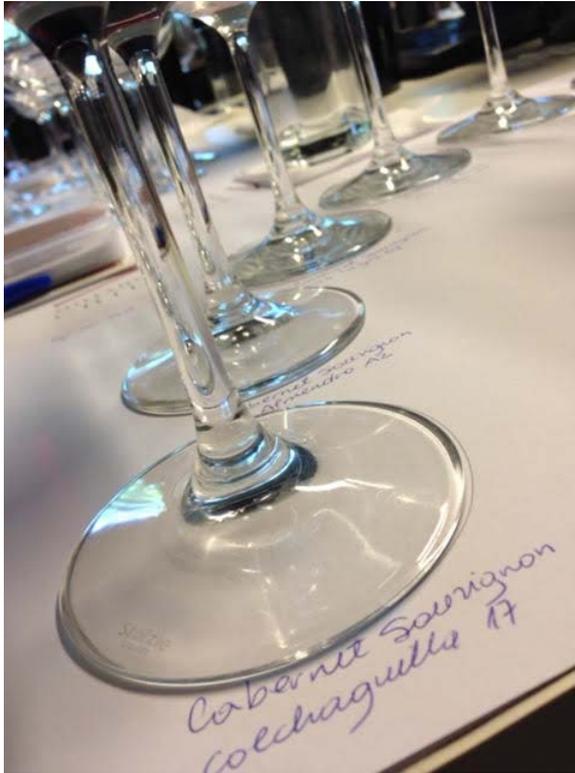
With varying soils- sand, clay, gravel and tuffeau, each grape is planted accordingly. About half of their plantings are **Cabernet Sauvignon followed by Carmenère, Syrah, Cab Franc and Merlot**. These grapes are all blended together in varying proportions (each year it changes, of course) to make the final iconic product.



If you visit the VIK website you notice they will describe their wine as “Holistic.” The family owns a few retreats and they know all about the power of healing and relaxation. The final powerful blend of VIK demonstrates these properties. Captivating, even in it’s youth, it is calming without being too complicated. Does it also hold healing powers?



When I visited the property in 2013, we sat down with **winemaker, Patrick Valette, whose family once owned Château Pavie in St.-Emilion and Gonzague de Lambert, who was raised at, and is owner and director of, Chilteau de Sale, in Pomerol.** This wine, although made in Chile undoubtedly is influenced heavily by Bordeaux. The infectious men behind the project let us taste 3 unblended Cabernet Sauvignons, 2 Carmenères and 1 Syrah, Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Valette explained that each were from grapes planted in various pockets of the Millahue valley. Truly, each one held a different terroir and flavor profile. At first, I was a bit skeptical- the vines were only a couple of years old. But after a few sips, I realized that this was a rather amateur thought. *They wouldn't have invited me, let me taste and tell me about the wine... if it wasn't ready. The whole process at VIK is an exact science.*



So here I was. On the 67th floor, overlooking half of Manhattan. Again with Gonzague de Lambert, Patrick Valette and now Carrie Vik- we tasted the 2011 VIK. I had tasted portions of it before, unblended. And now, a few years later, it has had some time to rest and think about what it wants to be when it grows up. Will it please it's parents and become the best? They have spared no expense, devoted years, searched the wine world for the greatest team, provided the vines with anything they could ever need, placed the wine in an artistically breathtaking winery, told everyone that this wine will grow up to become THE wine of South America....

Don't worry, Alexander and Carrie, your brainchild will make you proud.



Special thanks to all involved with the VIK experience including the winemaking team, Wines of Chile, the VIKs, Steve Olson and (Pictured above) Pete Bothwell, Julei Dalton, Patrick Valette, Fred Dex, Gordana Josovic and Chris BV.