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Chilean Winery Cono Sur Sees Rising Pinot Noir Demand in Asia

Expansion targets South Korea, China, Japan, and Taiwan as consumers show growing interest in premium and organic wines

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Viña Cono Sur, one of Chile’s leading wine producers, is expanding its focus on Asian markets as demand for Pinot Noir continues to rise in the region. The winery is targeting countries such as South Korea, China, Japan, and Taiwan, where interest in this grape variety has grown steadily over recent years.

Pinot Noir is known for being a challenging grape to cultivate. It is sensitive to environmental factors like sun exposure, frost, and disease. Successful production requires careful attention to soil selection, irrigation, harvesting times, and winemaking techniques. Despite these challenges, Pinot Noir remains one of the most widely planted grape varieties worldwide. It is used in a range of wines, from sparkling whites to still reds.

Chile offers favorable conditions for growing Pinot Noir. The country's vineyards benefit from abundant sunlight and the cooling effects of the Humboldt Current from the Pacific Ocean. These factors help maintain the grape's natural acidity and enhance its fruit flavors. Viña Cono Sur has made Pinot Noir a central part of its portfolio. The winery was the first in Chile to export ultra-premium Pinot Noir and introduced Ocio, considered the country's first icon Pinot Noir.

Recent data from IWSR shows that Pinot Noir ranks among the top five most recognized red grape varieties in Japan, South Korea, and China. In South Korea, consumer interest has increased notably. Between 2019 and 2024, the percentage of South Korean consumers who reported drinking Pinot Noir rose from 15% to 20%. This trend is reflected in Cono Sur's sales figures.

María Urzúa, senior brand manager for Cono Sur, reported that their Pinot Noir portfolio has experienced solid growth across all product ranges compared to last year. These include Bicicleta, Organic, Single Vineyard, and 20 Barrels lines. The 20 Barrels Pinot Noir is currently the best-selling ultra-premium expression for Cono Sur in Japan. Bicicleta and 20 Barrels are also performing strongly throughout the region.

In Japan specifically, there is increasing demand for organic wines. Urzúa noted that Cono Sur's Organic Pinot Noir has gained significant traction as more consumers seek sustainable and environmentally friendly options.

Looking ahead, Cono Sur is preparing to expand further into Taiwan. Urzúa described Taiwan as a promising market where consumers are showing greater openness to fresh and versatile wines like Pinot Noir. The company expects Taiwan to become an important part of its export strategy in the near future.

Viña Cono Sur’s efforts reflect a broader trend among Chilean wine producers seeking new opportunities in Asia. As awareness and appreciation for Pinot Noir grow across these markets, Chilean wineries are positioning themselves to meet changing consumer preferences with a focus on quality and sustainability.