vinetur

Chile’s Wine Makers Court Younger Drinkers

Maule Valley producers are turning to tourism, sustainability and social media as global demand weakens.

Wednesday, April 29, 2026



Chile’s wine industry is trying to win over younger drinkers as global consumption falls and producers in one of the country’s main wine regions say the market is changing faster than their business models.

In the Maule Valley, south of Santiago, winemakers are leaning on tourism, sustainability and social media to reach consumers who are less likely to drink wine than their parents did. The shift comes as Chilean producers face a broader slump in demand in major markets including China, Britain and the United States, according to industry officials.

“We are probably living through the worst crisis in the wine world in 100 years,” said Felipe Rivera, a 25-year-old sommelier in San Javier de Loncomilla. He said the problem is not only lower sales but also a lack of younger consumers entering the category. “My generation, generally speaking, does not drink wine, and that is a major challenge,” he said.

The pressure on Chile’s wine sector reflects a wider global trend. Julio Alonso of Wines of Chile, a promotional group, said consumption has been in “sustained decline” in several key markets. In the United States, a Gallup poll released in 2025 found that 50% of young adults said they drank alcohol, down from 59% in 2023 and below the 54% share for the general population. Many younger consumers now say they see moderate drinking as unhealthy.

In response, some Chilean growers are changing how they present wine. Instead of relying only on traditional tasting rooms, wineries in Maule are offering visitors a chance to prune vines, pick grapes and take part in harvest activities. The goal is to create a direct connection to the land and to show farming practices that emphasize ecology and sustainability.

Jose Luis Gomez Bastias, a winegrower in the valley, said younger visitors respond to that approach. “Young people are very interested in wineries that farm this way,” he said. “That is the future.”

Others are focusing on messaging around moderation and quality. Ricardo Grellet, a sommelier who created the “Yo Tomo Vino” campaign, said the industry needs to appeal to consumers who care about wellness and certified products. He argued that wines lacking character or craftsmanship will struggle to survive.

His campaign encourages people to slow down and treat wine as part of social life rather than excess consumption. “Switch off their phone and be people again,” he said.

Some younger Chileans say they are open to that message. Silvia Lobos, 24, a social media creator who has been following the campaign, said wine feels more connected to national identity than she had realized. “This is a world that, as a generation, we really do not know much about,” she said. “I’m realizing it is part of our identity as Chileans.”