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Chilean Wineries Court Young Drinkers

Producers in the Maule Valley are turning to tourism, sustainability and social media as wine consumption falls worldwide

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In Chile’s Maule Valley, where rows of vines stretch across one of the country’s best-known wine regions, growers are facing a problem that goes beyond weather, harvests or export prices. Wine consumption is falling in major markets around the world, and

Chilean producers say they are now trying to win over younger drinkers who are less likely to reach for a glass of wine at all.

The shift is forcing wineries to rethink how they sell themselves. Instead of relying only on traditional tastings and export campaigns, some producers are leaning into tourism, sustainability and social media in an effort to make wine feel more relevant to a generation that often drinks less alcohol and is more skeptical of old habits.

“We are probably living through the worst crisis in the wine world in 100 years,” said Felipe Rivera, a 25-year-old sommelier in Chile. “I honestly feel that the main reason is that there is no generational replacement among wine consumers. My generation, generally speaking, does not drink wine, and that is a major challenge.”

The slump is not limited to Chile. Julio Alonso of Wines of Chile, a promotional group for the industry, said demand has been weakening in key markets including China, the United Kingdom and the United States. In those countries, younger adults have been drinking less alcohol overall, a trend that has hit wine especially hard.

A 2025 Gallup poll in the United States found that 50% of young adults said they drink alcohol, down from 59% in 2023 and below the 54% share for the general population. Health concerns have played a role, as many younger consumers increasingly see even moderate drinking as something to avoid.

In response, some Chilean wineries are trying to turn visits into experiences rather than simple sales pitches. In the Maule Valley, growers are inviting visitors to take part in harvest activities such as pruning vines and crushing grapes by hand. The goal is to create a stronger connection between consumers and the land behind the bottle.

Jose Luis Gomez Bastias, a winegrower in the region, said visitors respond well when they can see how grapes are grown and how wineries manage their farms. He said his operation emphasizes ecological practices and believes that approach matters to younger consumers.

“Young people are very interested in wineries that farm this way,” Bastias said. “That is the future.”

Others are focusing on messaging. Ricardo Grellet, a sommelier who created the “Yo Tomo Vino” campaign, said the industry needs to stop thinking only about volume and start thinking about quality and identity. He said consumers today are paying more attention to wellness and certified products, and that wines lacking character may struggle to survive.

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

That message appears to be finding an audience among some younger Chileans who have little experience with wine culture but are beginning to see it differently. Silvia Lobos, 24, a social media creator who has been following the trend, said she had started to view wine as part of her national identity.

“This is a world that, as a generation, we really do not know much about,” Lobos said. “I’m realizing it is part of our identity as Chileans.”