

ALTAİR | Red Blend 2016

The elusive Altaïr is one of the brightest stars in the sky. Especially visible in Chile during August and September, this seasonal attraction is well worth waiting for. It reminds us that the vines are waking up ready to put forth shoots.

Altaïr inspires us to create something memorable; a blend representing the characteristics of this unique valley, where the soil in our vineyards in Cachapoal Andes was formed as a result of millions of volcanic eruptions and violent earthquakes that shook the mountain and caused the rocks to tumble down towards the valley.

Altaïr: the brightest star in the Andes.

D.O: Cachapoal Valley - Andes

VARIETY: 78% Cabernet Sauvignon - 13% Cabernet Franc - 9% Syrah

YIELD PER HECTARE: 5-6 tons/ha.

SOIL

The soils in the vineyards in the Andes area of Cachapoal where Altaïr comes from are diverse because of the area's different geological and geomorphological origins.

Volcanic soils containing fractured yellow basalt, with minerals mixed with sand and clay, with good permeability. These soils contribute minerality and structure to both the Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc grapes.



Significant deposits of alluvial gravel ranging from irregular and medium-sized through to fine gravel with sand. We use these soils for Cabernet Sauvignon and they lend the wines structure, elegance, volume and smoothness.



Finally, we have decomposed volcanic soils in clay for the Syrah, which contribute fresh fruit and a structure that gives length to the wine.





CLIMATE

Spring 2015 was affected by the “El Niño” phenomenon, which caused the temperatures in the Pacific Ocean to rise. This phenomenon increased the rainfall in spring from an average of 15mm in the last 4 years to 110mm between October and November, which had a direct effect on the spread of fungal diseases like powdery mildew. It was also the coldest spring in many years, delaying budding, flowering and veraison by around 2 weeks. The other phenomenon that affected this vintage was the abundant rainfall during April - far more than has fallen in recent years - which meant that we suddenly had a very early harvest. This resulted in very fresh wines. Furthermore there was significant millanderage in the Petit Verdot and the Carmenère and to a lesser extent in the Cabernet Sauvignon, which meant lower volumes but more concentrated grapes.

VINIFICATION

The Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Syrah grapes were manually harvested into 10kg bins. The grapes were selected three times:

in the vineyard during the harvest, at the reception table and after destemming. The harvest was protected throughout with carbonic snow to avoid oxidation, the loss of aromas and unpleasant flavours. Then the grapes were macerated for 6 days to gently extract polyphenols, enhancing the colour and aromas. The alcoholic fermentation took place with selected yeasts in stainless steel tanks for 8 days at a controlled temperature no higher than 28°C. During the fermentation, there were 8-10 short pump-overs per day (depending on the variety) in order to gently extract tannins and anthocyanins. Once the alcoholic fermentation was complete, the wines were macerated for 15-20 days (decided by daily tasting) in order to refine and enhance the balance of the wine. Then the wine was racked off and settled before being racked into barrels. The ageing took place in 225-litre French oak barrels for 16 months, 50% of them new and 50% second use. The levels of toast and types of wood were adapted to each variety and terroir. The malolactic fermentation took place spontaneously in the barrels. Finally, Altaïr 2016 was bottled on 9 March 2018 and was bottle-aged for at least a year before being released onto the market.

TASTING NOTES

Appearance: deep ruby.

Nose: intense aromas of fresh red fruit like cherries, intermingled with a subtle note of oak that is perfectly integrated in the wine.

Palate: good acidity with a concentrated palate that achieves a good balance between the alcohol level, sweetness and tannins. Smooth texture and a long finish.

CHEMICAL ANALYSIS

Alcohol: 14.9%

Total Acidity (C₄H₆O₆): 5.27 g/L

pH: 3.59

Residual Sugar: 1.97 g/L