

Whitewater Valley Wine Society

Tasting Report: November 2019

Vina Ventisquero, Chile

**Presented by Janina Doyle, UK Brand Ambassador for
Vina Ventisquero**

Report by Barbara Jones

This month we welcomed Janina Doyle, who is Brand Ambassador for Vina Ventisquero in Chile. Young and enthusiastic, Janina runs her own wine podcasts and has her own You Tube channel "Eat Sleep Wine Repeat". Created in 1998, Vina Ventisquero is one of the top Chilean premium wineries, with vineyards in most of Chile's famous wine regions. They have the most northerly vineyards in the Atacama Desert where they are the only people making wine in the desert. They also have John Duval, ex Penfolds Grange Chief winemaker as one of their winemakers. Janina is WSET trained to Diploma level and represents Vina Ventisquero here in the UK.

Ventisquero is loosely translated as glacier in Chile. The Grey Series wines are named after a nearby glacier and come from single vineyard blocks. Some are in the Atacama Desert in the north, others are in the central region of Chile.

Our first wine of the tasting was a **Ventisquero Grey Sauvignon Blanc Huasco 2017** [12.5%, £15.50]. The Loncomilla vineyard is located in the northerly Atacama Desert, 23km from the Pacific Ocean. This very pale coloured wine was aged on the lees for 10 months and had citrus aromas, mixed with notes of green chilli. It was well balanced being fresh and round on the palate with high acidity and mineral notes.

Our only other white wine followed, a **Ventisquero Grey Chardonnay Casablanca 2016** [12.5%, £15.50]. Half the grapes are fermented in French oak barrels of which 10% is new. The wine is then aged on the lees for 10 months. This golden hued wine was elegant, fresh and complex with aromas of tropical fruit with notes of honey and vanilla. It was full bodied, well balanced with a refreshing acidity compared with some chardonnays.

The remaining wines were all red, starting with four from the Grey series. Our first was a blended wine – Garnacha/Carinena/Mataro 60/20/20%, a **Ventisquero Grey CGM Apalta Colchagua Valley 2017** [14%, £15.50] that had a very intense nose of fresh raspberries and blackcurrants. In the background there were earthy notes and a touch of black pepper. The expressive palate was that of a medium-bodied refreshing wine with fresh acidity; full of cherries in the mouth with soft tannins and a long finish.

Next we tasted a **Ventisquero Grey Pinot Noir Leyda 2017** [13%, £15.50]. This wine is aged in French oak barrels for 12 months and then kept in bottle for 6 months before release. It was full of red berry aromas and juicy black fruits were predominant on the palate. It was a well-balanced wine with high acidity and soft tannins.

We then moved on to a **Ventisquero Grey Carmenere 2016 Maipo Valley** [13.5%, £15.50], Carmenere now considered as a traditional Chilean grape variety. This wine had spent 18 months in French oak barrels [34% new] and an additional 8 months in bottle before release. It was full of aromas of blackberries and blueberries with notes of green peppers, spices and a hint of minerality. There was fruit intensity on the palate, velvety tannins and a good length – worthy of a Gold Medal at Mundus Vini 2015.

Our last wine from the Grey Series was a **Ventisquero Grey Cabernet Sauvignon 2014 Maipo Valley** [13.5, £15.50] that had been aged in French oak barrels for 18 months. On the nose this had aromas of raspberries and cassis alongside notes of black pepper and tobacco accompanied by a touch of earthiness. This was an elegant wine, smooth on the palate with soft tannins and a good length.

Our final two reds were from two different series of wines and both made by John Duval. Our first was a **Ventisquero Vertice Carmenere/Syrah 2015 Apalta Colchagua Valley** [14.5%, £23.25]. Grown on the best slopes of the valley this wine was full of vegetative aromas, wood, underbush and herbs. In the mouth there was blackberry, cassis, mocha and tobacco and a steely acidity, finishing with some oak. This wine should last till 2030.

Our evening ended with a **Ventisquero Pangea Syrah 2014 Apalta Colchagua Valley** [14.5%, £35.0] a wine that had spent 20 months in French oak barrels [50% new] followed by a further 18 months in bottle before release. This bold wine had complex aromas of blueberry and black pepper with mineral notes. It was a deep full-bodied wine with ripe tannins and great structure.

Our grateful thanks go to our ebullient presenter, Janina, bursting with information about Ventisquero vineyards and the interesting wines we tasted. A most enjoyable evening!