

Extended Tasting Notes and Food Pairings

CARMENERE from Viña Santa Monica

One of the six original Bordeaux varieties of grapes, Carménère is currently grown almost exclusively in Chile after the Phylloxera infestation wiped out the vines in France in the 1870's. This grape thrives in the soil and climate of the central valley regions of Chile and has been cultivated there for almost 200 years.

This particular Carménère hails from the Rapel Valley region in central Chile, and comes in both an oaked (aged in French barrels) and an un-oaked (stainless steel) style.

Carménère is a very dark red wine – some would say that it is more black than red. It is often used in blends with Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon to help provide a deeper color and fuller taste, but it is terrific on its own as it is presented by Viña Santa Monica.

Aromas

The most dominant aroma from the first sniff is that of dark spicy red fruits, reminiscent of cherries, red currants, raspberries, and blackberries. Nuances of bittersweet chocolate, black pepper, tar, tobacco and leather are just underneath the surface, as well as subtle fragrances of green peppers and herbs. You may also detect a bit of smoke.

Taste

Intense flavors of ripe, spicy red fruits dominate the palate, along with black currants and blackberries, but with a soft, velvety texture due to the mild tannins. As the wine sits in your mouth, the rich flavors of bittersweet chocolate, tobacco and soft tar begin to shine through, perhaps with a hint of licorice, black pepper or light smoke. The long, pleasant finish lingers with tastes of dark fruit and leather.

Food Pairings

Because of its medium tannins and the wide range of flavors it offers, Carménère is a versatile wine that pairs well with foods of all types. Depending on the dishes and their preparation, Carménère can be an adventurous alternative to Merlot, Zinfandel, Syrah, Chianti, Tempranillo and Malbec. Our specific food pairing recommendations are:

Country / Cuisine	Recommended foods to pair with Carménère
American	Ribs, rack of lamb with rosemary, grilled beef or pork tenderloin, hearty beef or lamb stews, stuffed green peppers, steak au poivre, prime rib, angus burgers, pot roast with carrots and potatoes
Spanish / Mexican	Heavy tapas, beef burritos and tacos, paella, chorizo, roasted pig
Asian / Indian	Beef teriyaki, lamb curry, tandoori chicken
Italian	Pastas with red meat sauce, sweet and spicy Italian pork sausages (especially those with fennel, red pepper and oregano), pizza, salami and other cold cut meats, cheese-filled ravioli or tortellini, chicken cacciatore, dishes with eggplant and tomatoes
French	Roast duck, ratatouille, beef bourguignon, goose liver pâté, coq au vin