

UNA CONOCIDA REVISTA PARA BEBIDAS “SPIRITZ” PUBLICÓ UN ARTÍCULO ESCRITO POR EL AGREGADO AGRÍCOLA EN LA CUAL DESTACÓ LA HISTORIA DEL PISCO CHILENO, SU VARIEDAD, CALIDAD Y LA ESTABLE POSICIÓN QUE HA ADQUIRIDO EN EL MERCADO INTERNACIONAL



Famous for its Pisco brandy and Cabernet Sauvignon grapes, Chile sought to deepen its trade ties with India at a conference in Mumbai and Delhi in late October. A narrow strip of land running between the Andes and the Pacific Ocean to its east and west, Chile has steadily risen up the premier league of wine-making nations with its range of fine aromatic wines.

At the Chile-India Expanded Agreement: Opportunities for Bilateral, Economic, Trade and Investment Relations, a delegation of about 20 entrepreneurs and government officials from the South American nation explored new avenues for business and growth with their Indian counterparts.

'The delegation was not just from the wine sector but from the oats, walnuts and fruit industry in general,' said Jaime Gonzalez, Counsellor for Agricultural Affairs (Agricultural Attache), Embassy of Chile who was a part of the delegation. 'We wished to improve our awareness of the benefits accruing from the latest round of the Preferential Trade Agreement.'

Despite a challenging tax environment, Chilean wines have wowed Indians. Their sales might not have grown dramatically, 'largely because of the tariffs,' but they have carved a stable niche for themselves. 'If we could agree on how to lower the tax barriers then our wines would be far more affordable to Indian customers,' says Gonzalez. 'The custom duties are currently 150%.'

For Chile, India is a major export market for its farming produce, particularly frozen foods. 'Our Kiwi and walnut exports to India have risen by 500% this year. We export steady volumes of apples, grapes and cherries too to India. Now, we are looking at seafood like mussels and salmon.'

However, despite concerted efforts by its embassy, Chile's emblematic Pisco, the yellow-to-amber coloured brandy, has not made a mark in India. This is partly because the internationally celebrated brandy is still relatively obscure in India and the market is yet to develop a taste for it.

'It's definitely a challenge. But we remain keen on seeing Pisco do well in the Indian market. It's a high quality product and there is clearly a niche market for it here. We will first develop a palate for Pisco in all its variations like the Pisco Sour, Pisco Punch and El Capitán and then bring it on.'

Describing his role in promoting bilateral trade between Chile and India, particularly in wines,

Gonzalez says that, 'the demand for Chilean port is increasing in India,' but he is not involved in directly promoting the business. 'We play the role of facilitators, taking care of the impediments that may be hindering trade between the two nations, in discussion with India. We address the technical dynamics of trade and try and make the process as smooth and easy as we can. We don't do promotions; that is the domain of ProChile.'

ProChile is an institution of the Chilean Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which promotes exports of products and services, assists with identification of foreign investment opportunities and promotes tourism. Says Gonzalez: 'We facilitate trade from a technical standpoint, helping businesses comply with regulations and negotiate any other roadblock.'



chronicles report wine making and spirit crafting in northern Chile in the middle of the 16th century. The same old chronicles tell us how the production was exported to other places in South America.

Another worth mentioning important milestone in Pisco history happened in 1931, when through decree 181, the Chilean government established a controlled appellation of origin to distinguish Pisco from common firewater and defined the zones and conditions for the use of the name "Pisco". This was the birth of the very first appellation of origin in Latin America.

PRIVILEGED CONDITIONS

The clearest skies in the southern hemisphere, the high Los Andes mountain range, pure and pristine water, topped with more than 300 days of sunshine a year and high differences of temperatures between day and night make up the perfect recipe to produce a fine and aromatic spirit, called Pisco.

The arid conditions of Northern Chile, temperatures and sunshine provide ideal conditions for high concentration of sugar in fruit; the influence of the ocean adds a touch of freshness and the varieties used, primarily muscat grapes, contributes with a plethora of aromas and flavors which characterize this spirit.

INSPIRATION, THE SOUL OF CRAFTING

Imagine the clear nights in northern Chile, where the stars of our galaxy the *via lactea*, familiarly known as the *milky way*, shine at their best, creating a scene of overwhelming beauty; the stillness of the desert, where the sounds of silence can be heard; the chant of the water, streaming downwards from the Andes. They certainly create a perfect scenario for inspiration and mysticism, no wonder that this place is the cradle of many poets, and people there fondly remember one who stood out, the Nobel Prize awarded Chilean poet Gabriela Mistral.

Put together the technical factors like soil and climate with the suitable mental and spiritual attitude sourcing from the mystic Northern Chile and you will come up with the perfect atmosphere to sleek the skills of artisans. When making Pisco, the essence is distillation and the art of the crafter is to find the very heart of the spirit, to preserve it at its best and present to the consumer the true soul of the grape: its own heart.

The distiller's inseparable companion is the still. The still is the artifact which transforms wine into spirit and its relation with the distiller is one of pure passion. In Chile they are called *alambiques* and from old times they are made out of copper. Connoisseurs say that this is the most important and key component in crafting Pisco and hence, the quality



Distillation preserves the essence of grapes

MISSION TRADE



of the still is crucial to obtain the final product.

Inspiration and imagination also pave the road to creativity and that's how slight differences in the process of making Pisco developed in different styles. Nowadays, basically you can group the different piscos in two major styles; the young and aged ones. The young piscos aim to offer the pure untouched essence of the grape, where you will find nothing else but the fruity refreshing and aromatic spirit. This style is perfect for fresh cocktails or to drink alone, nevertheless it is impossible to avoid mentioning the most popular Chilean highball: Pisco; refreshing, easy drinking and above all, popular. The other style, the aged one, while preserving the essence of Pisco, which is grape, adds more complexity to the spirit, with hints of spices, vanilla and a slightly toasted sensation; ideal for an after dinner drink, digestive and full of flavor.

AN OLD INDUSTRY WITH NEW IDEAS

The ancient tradition is in permanent renewal process, undertaking new challenges and adapting to new trends and scenarios in today's world.

In the words of Claudio Escobar, Head of the Pisco Producers Association, "Step by step, Chilean Pisco is finding its way to a steady international position. This is a big challenge to our industry and in the last 10 years, we have doubled our exportations, highlighting those trend marking markets, like for instance New York, the UK, Germany and Argentina. Variety and quality are the pillars in this strategy, which has yielded important international recognitions such as the award of the San Francisco World Competition and the ensuing verdict: "best white spirit of the world". Consequently, we firmly believe in this pathway and in the forthcoming mid and long term achievements in the international arena, focusing on the attributes of this Chilean flagship: Pisco".

Mother Nature conferred special and unique features which concur in northern Chile: optimal climatic conditions, the clearest skies, pristine water and an ideal atmosphere for inspiration and meditation. They all contribute to end up with a spirit which reflects them all; the aromas of muscat grapes, spiked with hints of mysticism and poetry, essential and prevalent in the areas designated to produce Pisco. 🍷