

Clos Santa Ana

Profile

Located 55 kilometers from the ocean coast, Clos Santa Ana is comfortably tucked away in the middle of the Colchagua Valley. Founded in 2003 by partners Roberto Ibarra García and Luiz Antonio de Gracia Allegretti and later joined by ex-sommelier Alessio Zenato, the 35 hectare project was born from a mutual love and respect of nature. From its inception, Clos Santa Ana functions primarily as a guest house for visitors drawn to the wild, lush nature of the land, live music, home cooked meals and Luiz's impressive personal art collection. Animal lovers also rejoice in the fact that the estate rescues abandoned dogs (currently 60 are living at the property but there have been periods of over a 100!) and they also have many free-roaming cats, peacocks, horses, donkeys, goats, sheep, chickens and geese.

But wine was always at the heart of Roberto and Luiz's plans...

Roberto is from Chile and currently resides in Lima as the Chilean ambassador to Peru. Luiz is Italian and Brazilian and came back to his Tuscan winemaking roots after 20 years of working as a contemporary artist. After searching all over Europe for a piece of land to start a communal project, Roberto found a 300 year old house surrounded by wild nature that the two felt would be perfect to start a viticultural project from scratch. The soils were rock hard from decades of rice cultivation, so from the offset the two hired Lydia and Claude Bourguignon, whom many regard as the most important soil technicians living today.

For over a decade, legumes were planted to re-stabilize the micro-organisms of the soil and bring it back to life. In 2012, Carménère, Cabernet Franc and Malbec were finally planted, with Chardonnay and Viognier added in 2016. Only 1.3 hectares are grown with no intention to expand; from the offset Luiz and Roberto wanted the wines to eschew modernity by only using ancient techniques. Having more land would make it impossible to work without any form of mechanization or modern winemaking equipment.

The first vintage of Clos Santa Ana was released in 2015 and supplemented by purchased organic grapes. 2019 will mark the first "100% estate" vintage to be produced and will be released in 2023. Each varietal is harvested and vinified individually in Clos Santa Ana's underground cellar, which is as old as the house itself. Very large, old Chilean oak vats and amphoras are used for the fermentations, with long aging (each varietal ages individually) taking place in old barrels of various sizes. An old manual press is used, all rackings are done manually, no SO₂ is added to the wine at any point and it is bottled unfiltered.

With our "old world" approach and mentality, it is quite rare to start working with an estate in its infancy like this. Even with younger producers we discover in Europe, they tend to have family land or manage to secure vines of a certain age. It will be very exciting to follow the evolution of this project over the years as the vines grow alongside Luiz, Roberto and Alessio's experience.