

## Francesco Marone Cinzano, Erasmo

I remember my first meeting with Marone Cinzano: there I was, deep in the heart of the rustic agricultural heartlands of Maule, when from nowhere appeared this urbane Italian count, clutching a bottle of red and dressed impeccably for dinner.

Marone Cinzano owns Col d'Orcia in Tuscany. In the early 1990s he was looking to diversify and came to Chile, rejecting better known regions in favour of the rolling alluvial plains of western Maule, noting the good sunlight, dry winds and just enough rainfall to allow dry farming. 'A typical Mediterranean climate,' he says.

He planted classic Bordeaux varieties with the aim of making one top-class red: Erasmo. Made for the first time in 2001, Cinzano describes the style as, 'a Bordeaux blend from Chile with an Italian twist.'

Though Erasmo is by no means highly priced, it has all the hallmarks of an icon wine in the making. So is it difficult to sell such a wine from Maule, a region often associated with low-grade wine?

'Not at all,' he replied. 'I stress it's from Maule, as I'm a firm believer in its potential. It was chosen by the Jesuits in the 16th century as the best place for wine. It has both history and potential.'