

NOVEMBER 1, 2005

# WINE ENTHUSIAST

M A G A Z I N E

## A Count Finds His Treasure

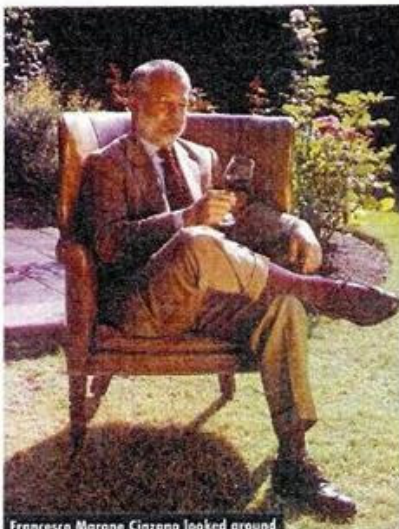
Caliboro Estate > Owner Francesco Marone Cinzano > Location Maule Valley > First vintage 2001 > [www.caliboro.com](http://www.caliboro.com)

More than a decade ago Count Francesco Marone Cinzano, owner of Col d'Orcia in Montalcino and an heir to the Cinzano vermouth empire, concluded that he wanted to expand his holdings outside of Tuscany. The only question was where. Thus he and his long-time wine consultant Maurizio Castelli set off on a treasure hunt of sorts, checking out potential joint ventures and solo projects in places like France, Spain, Portugal, even Eastern Europe. But they came up empty; nothing quite clicked.

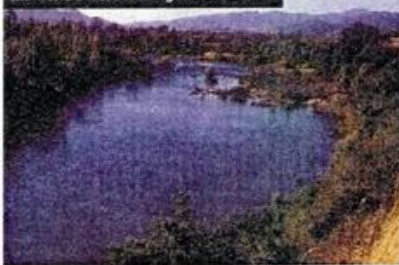
That was until the Count, by chance, was introduced to Mariano Fernández, then Chile's ambassador to Italy (and now the country's ambassador to England). "Mariano is a gourmet, a lover of wine, and he invited me to Chile to see his country. I fell in love with it," says Cinzano. "I was convinced to look closely at Chile."

And so, in 1994, he and Castelli embarked on a scouting trip to Chile, "and every area we looked at, Maurizio shook his head no," Cinzano recounted. "Finally, when we came to Maule, his head went up and down, and not side to side." That was the nod Cinzano needed to purchase 500 acres near the Perquilauquen River, a property he would christen Caliboro Estate.

Immediately after buying the land, Cinzano moved his family from Italy to Santiago so that he could oversee the planting of 125 acres of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc, grapes that would form the



Francesco Marone Cinzano looked around the world before settling in Maule.



foundation of a wine called Erasmo, named after a local elder who gave Cinzano invaluable encouragement with respect to building Caliboro.

Planting of the vines, which were imported from France and then quarantined for three years, began in 1997. Over the years Cinzano has also planted other European grapes, including Tempranillo, Mourvèdre and several Italian varieties. "To maintain a competitive advantage, I will stick with unique blends. There is no need for more Chilean varietal wines," Cinzano insists.

In 2001, an excellent vintage by Chilean standards, Cinzano and his winemaking team (Castelli, and native Chileans Augusto Reyes and Andres Sanchez) produced their first Erasmo, which was released earlier this year. Total production came in at 1,200 cases, but ultimately there is capacity to make as much as 10,000 cases a year. "The intent is to produce a high-end, traditional Bordeaux blend. The 2005, which is now in the cellar, is our best to date. Each year the vines get older, and each year the wine gets better," notes Cinzano, who recently moved back to Italy, now that his treasured Chilean estate is self-sufficient.

**88 Caliboro Estate 2001 Erasmo (Maule Valley); \$30.** Caliboro's first-ever release sports excellent aromatics. But like any serious red made from young grapes, it's not terribly concentrated. The mouthfeel is light, while the depth and texture are modest. Still, it offers a glimpse of what's to come, and the future looks bright. A blend of 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc.

## Chile's Emerging Superstars

