

Three fine pinot noirs from Chile and Argentina

World class, best value and decidedly elegant wines from a fickle grape variety

By **David Williams** JAN. 22, 2017

Errázuriz Aconcagua Costa Pinot Noir, Chile 2015 (£14.99, Noel Young

Wines) It's taken him a while. But Errázuriz winemaker Francisco Baettig may finally have cracked the code when it comes to making world-class pinot noir in a country, Chile, that has tended to settle for good-enough with this fickle grape variety. The solution lay in the combination of soil and climate in a vineyard Baettig helped develop for Eduardo Chadwick at the western end of the Aconcagua Valley on the Pacific coast. Baettig's own light-touch winemaking skill has also played its part. The nervy purity of Las Pizarras Pinot Noir 2014 (£69.50) makes it comfortably the best Chilean pinot I've yet tasted, but the more affordable sister wine from the same estate may well be the best value.

Boya Pinot Noir, Leyda Valley, Chile 2015 (£11.99, Majestic)

If Las Pizarras takes us into fine wine prices as well as quality (Baettig says he has the promise of a case a year written into his contract), Chile hasn't given up on its traditional strength of providing satisfyingly simple wines on a tighter budget. Errázuriz does just that with the succulent Taste the Difference Aconcagua Pinot Noir it makes for Sainsbury's (£7), while Marks & Spencer has the pretty, floral Tierra y Hombre Pinot Noir 2016 (£7.50) and the bright red berry and bergamot of Secano Estate Pinot Noir 2015 (£9.50). Even better, and squeezing in under a tenner a bottle if you buy it as part of a case of six, Majestic's Boya is vibrant, fresh and distinctive.

Bodega Chacra Barda Pinot Noir, Patagonia, Argentina 2014 (£18.95,

Lea & Sandeman) Argentina hasn't quite the range of pinot producers you find in Chile, but it does have a serious rival to Errázuriz for the best pinot estate in South America. The estate in question – Bodega Chacra – is in deepest Patagonia. Like so many

good Argentine things, there's an Italian influence: Chacra was started by Piero Incisa della Rocchetta, the grandson of the creator of the great Tuscan red, Sassicaia, and with winemaker Hans Vinding-Diers, he's settled on a decidedly elegant house style in his three pinots, with the subtle smoke, potpourri and silk of Barda, the place to begin.
