



PRESS RELEASE

## **Miguel Torres Chile celebrates 40 years of passion for Chilean viticulture**

**Organic farming, fair trade, and innovation based on respect for  
tradition are the winery's foundational pillars**

**One of its main contributions to Chilean viticulture is the recovery of  
ancestral varieties such as País and Carignan**

**Vilafranca del Penedès, November 7, 2019.** In 1979, the arrival of Familia Torres in the Curicó Valley helped revitalize Chilean viticulture, contributing important winemaking methods that were innovative at the time, reviving forgotten varieties, developing organic farming and projects with a focus on fair trade. In the 40 years since [Miguel Torres Chile](#) was founded, it has cemented itself as one of the benchmark wineries in this Andean country, distinguished as "2018 Winery of the Year" by the association Vinos de Chile. It has a team of over 200 employees and owns 400 hectares of vineyards spread over eight properties in the regions of Maule, Bío Bío, and Ñuble, producing around 10 types of wine and the pisco El Gobernador, sold in over 115 countries.

Miguel A. Torres, president of Familia Torres and a member of the family's fourth generation, was drawn to set out on this unique adventure in Chile thanks to advice from his good friend Alejandro Parot and the search for a new wine challenge. Although viticulture in Chile was not as developed then as it is today, Torres was able to see great potential in the remote Curicó Valley, with excellent climate and soil conditions for making high-quality wines.

After purchasing the first 100 hectares of the Santa Digna vineyard (Maquehua-Curicó), the initial objective was to bring in a technology that was at that time an innovation in the context of Chilean winemaking: stainless steel tanks and French oak barrels for aging the wines. These were used to make the first vintages of Santa Digna, Miguel Torres Chile's most famous line of wines, now certified as Fair Trade, which began to be exported in 1981.

### **Unique wines**

One of the most exciting chapters in Miguel Torres Chile's 40-year history has been the discovery of varieties condemned to oblivion and ancestral vines that yield unique wines. Miguel Torres Maczassek, Executive President of Miguel Torres Chile since late 2009 and a member of the family's fifth generation, describes Manso de Velasco – the Cabernet

Sauvignon vineyard with vines over 115 years old that produces the Chilean winery's first icon red – as “a survivor of the agricultural revolution”. In addition, the recovery of the País variety, used to make the sparkling rosé Estelado and La Causa País, has been another of the winery's significant contributions to Chilean vine growing. Its commitment to this historic variety has provided fundamental support to the work of thousands of farmers.

*“I remember those hidden, forgotten vines that were over 200 years old and didn't have a wine that would give them a voice. The vineyards were being worked and the wines sold at a loss to be blended with other wines. In Europe, however, old vines are a treasure and we believed we could give these vineyards value in Chile as well. It was an emotionally overwhelming project for us, but the País variety came back to life: Its vines tell us an old story of Chile that is still alive today,”* explains Torres.

Miguel Torres Chile's philosophy of recovering traditional varieties also includes the revival of Carignan, which offers a unique expression in the Maule Valley, with hundred-year-old vines. The VIGNO (Vignadores de Carignan) project was one of the most important innovations, introduced in 1996 with the first vintage of the red wine Cordillera Carignan. The winemaking project in the Itata Valley, on the other hand, is the source of La Causa, a collection of wines highlighting ancient varieties such as Moscatel and Cinsault, and at the same contributing to recovering Chilean wine history since this was the valley where vine growing started over 300 years ago.

Finally, another one of Familia Torres' great challenges in Chile has been finding slate soils similar to those in the Spanish region of Priorat. The project that began to take shape in 1995 with the acquisition of the Empedrado estate in Constitución, 180 kilometers south of Curicó, and the dream of a wine that seemed impossible finally materialized with the first vintage of Escaleras de Empedrado in 2012, the first Chilean Pinot Noir planted on slate terraces: *“Great wines are born from difficulties,”* maintains Miguel Torres Maczassek. *“In the end, nature rewards those who dare to push the boundaries.”*

### **Fair Trade**

During his time at the helm of Miguel Torres Chile from 2009 to 2012, Torres Maczassek – for whom Chile feels “like home” – defined the winery's future strategy by committing to sustainability, organic farming, and a focus on the top-end wines.

After the crisis following the 2010 earthquake, he decided to steer the winery toward Fair Trade, becoming one of the first to take this road and obtaining Fair Trade certification that same year. *“Terroir does not exist if someone does not look after it,”* he affirms. *“Under the Fair Trade banner, we seek close collaboration with the vine growers, a relationship that goes beyond just work and that is, at the end of the day, a shared way of life and of understanding the vineyard together.”*

### **Ecology and climate change**

Focused on its commitment to organic vine growing, all of the winery's vineyards have been certified organic since 2012, and it dedicates great effort to projects aimed at sustainability and recovering traditional varieties, working with small vine growers.

To cope with the challenge of climate change and contribute to mitigating its effects, Miguel Torres Chile is working to reduce the weight of its bottles, which have a significant impact on carbon footprint, and every year invests in renewable energies. In 2018 it also acquired a 5,000-hectare estate in Patagonia, “Fundo Los Cóndores,” used to plant trees to offset, through its own efforts, its CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

**Tourism and culinary experiences**

Miguel Torres Chile has also made a commitment to wine tourism and offers tours and experiences at its winery in Curicó to show off the richness of Chilean winemaking. More than 10,000 visitors – many of whom are Brazilian – come to Curicó every year to discover the winery and learn about the world of wine and the agricultural work that goes into it.

The winery also contributes to spreading wine culture through cuisine since food is what takes wine to new heights and allows it to be enjoyed even more. Accordingly, the Curicó winery site also features the restaurant Restaurante de Vinos Miguel Torres, while in Santiago there is La Bodeguita Miguel Torres, a restaurant dedicated to signature Chilean cuisine with wine as the focal point.

**Santa Digna Rosé, special 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition**

To celebrate its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Miguel Torres Chile has released a special edition of its Santa Digna Rosé onto the market – the wine with which the winery made its debut. The bottle features a unique design represented by Chile's national flower, the Chilean bellflower or *copihue*.

This is a way of celebrating the sense of belonging that Familia Torres feels in Chile: *"Making wines in Chile is a source of pride,"* says Miguel Torres Maczassek. *"Our mission, above all, is to protect these landscapes and their vineyards with a feeling of commitment and work that we celebrate at the end of each day and then renew the next day."*

Corporate video of Miguel Torres Chile

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9hedNqiJ9BA&feature=youtu.be>

**For further information:****Christoph Kammüller**

International Communications Director

Tel. +34 93 817 76 25 · Cell +34 678 19 60 83 · ckammuller@torres.es