

WINE TO BE Cono Sur Of

To eliminate pesticides and reduce their carbon footprint Cono Sur use geese, garlic and flowers to replace harmful chemicals in their battle with pests.



When Cono Sur launched their blogger wine and food matching competition, little did they know what a delicious battle it would be, writes *Ross Golden-Bannon*

In June of this year, Irish food bloggers, alongside bloggers from across Europe, were challenged to create recipes to pair with the Chilean wine producer Cono Sur's range of stylish wines. Following a public vote, the top three recipes from each country went on to round two where renowned chef Christopher Carpentier prepared each semi-finalists' dish. Carpentier is the chef on Chile's MasterChef show so if they were nervous before, they had every right to be doubly nervous as he selected one finalist from each participating country. Billy and Clare Lyons' scallops and bacon dish paired with Cono Sur Single Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc topped the Irish entries and went on to Paris for the finals in November.

The cook-off took place at L'Atelier Beaubourg, near Centre Georges Pompidou, where Billy and Clare were up against some tough competition from Sweden and Finland. All were fortified by a little Cono Sur Sparkling Rosé but there was no hiding the hunger for victory

beneath the camaraderie. At the final crunch, Billy and Clare were pipped at the post by Finland's Tuliset Lohitacot. All the finalist dishes are available to view at www.bloggercompetition.conosur.com

Judges Adolfo Hurtado, chief winemaker and general manager of Cono Sur, and chef Christopher Carpentier were particularly taken by the Irish entry's simple but elegant flavours and the ideal match it made with the Cono Sur Single Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc.

However, the winning Finnish entry of complex Mexican sweet and savoury notes was too well matched with the fragrant Cono Sur Bicicleta Riesling to be ignored. While Tuliset Lohitacot claims the prize of a trip to the Chilean vineyard, Billy and Clare were gracious in defeat, though they said they'd be back next year for another bite. They also found great consolation in the celebratory private dinner on a boat on the Seine and were spotted toasting life with Cono Sur's Ocio Pinot Noir, which happens to be Billy's favourite.

Christopher Carpentier and Clare Lyons



Billy and Clare Lyons



The finalists at work



Billy & Clare Lyons' scallops and bacon

Serves 4

12 streaky bacon rashers
12 scallops
Seafood Butter by IASC

- 1 Gently fry the rashers until lightly coloured. Make sure they are still soft and supple.
- 2 When cooked, wrap the rashers around the scallops, securing with cocktail sticks.
- 3 Brush exposed ends of the scallops with melted Seafood Butter.
- 4 Pop in the oven at 190°C/gas mark 5, for 10 to 15 minutes, depending on size of scallops.
- 5 Serve with heritage tomato salad with extra virgin olive oil and basil.

WHAT'S SEAFOOD BUTTER?

iASC Irish Shellfish Butter is a combination of dried Irish mussels, brown crabmeat and dulce seaweed with pure Irish butter, which creates an umami flavoured butter.

CONO SUR SINGLE VINEYARD SAUVIGNON BLANC

Ideal with salads and light main courses well as seafood. This tittle made for a magic match with scallops, bacon and umami Seafood Butter. It's a fresh wine with delicious acidity from the Casablanca Valley, part of the El Centinela Estate, famed for its red clay soil with high water retention properties which gives this Cono Sur Single Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc a more aromatic expression.



KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR

The Cono Sur Bicicleta Pinot Noir is a classic combination of cherry, raspberry, plum and strawberry along with some subtle smoky hints. On the palate the sweet fruit notes are balanced by elegant tannins give it a fresh yet mouth-filling texture. This is a truly food friendly wine working well with grilled poultry, seafood and milder fish. It will stand up well to a robust pesto sauce, a weekday mushroom pizza as well as a smart range of sushi.



Adolfo Hurtado



IT ALL STARTS AT THE END OF THE WORLD

Some people view Chile as a place at the end of the world but for chief winemaker, Adolfo Hurtado, this is where it all starts. As a Chilean winemaker, he is blessed with some of nature's most formidable barriers to pollution. The wine growing regions are surrounded by the Andes in the east; the Pacific Ocean to the west; the world's driest desert to the north, the Atacama; and to the south you'll find ancient glaciers. Combined with this there is sunshine of which we Irish may only dream, as well as significant daily temperature variations, of which we have some knowledge. The weather tends to be dry during the ripening season and the water is pure. Within this natural happenstance, there is an exciting diversity of terroir so Cono Sur has a presence in all of Chile's most renowned wine growing regions.

Sustainable growth

Cono Sur's desire to reduce their carbon footprint has gone beyond what others in the sector are doing. There is the more obvious and committed organic and sustainable management of their vineyards but this is also matched by a great commitment to alternative ways of managing pests and replacing chemicals. They have created self-regulated eco-systems made up of animals like geese and insects, all of which work together to create a more natural way of farming. Combined with their great wine-making knowledge, it is this commitment to the many different terroir eco-systems which helps create such a varied and exciting stable of wines.