

# *Don Maximiano*

## *Founder's Reserve 1996*

COMPOSITION:	85% Cabernet Sauvignon 15% Cabernet Franc
APPELLATION:	Aconcagua Valley
VINEYARD SOURCE:	Don Maximiano Estate
ALCOHOL:	13.1% by vol.
PH:	3.73
TOTAL ACIDITY:	6.07 g/l (tartaric acid)
RESIDUAL SUGAR:	1.84 g/l



### *Vintage Notes*

The overall weather pattern in the 1996 growing season was somewhat cooler than normal, with peak temperatures registering 5° Celsius lower than in 1995. Two days of rain at the end of March brought some concern for the Aconcagua Valley Cabernet Sauvignon, which had not yet been harvested. But the weather quickly turned dry after the rains, so the fruit was not affected by mold. In fact, the rain may have been beneficial in that the humidity allowed the vines to work more effectively to ripen the fruit. We did not pick for three days after the rains, and the fruit displayed ideal ripeness at harvesting.

### *Vineyard*

Sector II of the Don Maximiano Vineyard is planted on gravelly, sandy soils on a northeast-facing 5° slope, which rises gently to 20° in the upper blocks. The vineyard has recently been converted to drip irrigation, and all vineyard practices are aimed at achieving the highest quality possible. The mesoclimate has warm to hot summer mornings with sporadic fog and is cooled by afternoon coastal breezes. The high diurnal temperature difference of the Don Maximiano Estate slows ripening and helps create intensity of flavours and concentration.

### *Winemaking*

The grapes underwent whole-berry fermentation at 28–30° Celsius, followed by 21 days of maceration. The individual lots were aged separately in French oak barrels for 16 months. The lots were then blended and returned to barrel for an additional two months of ageing, with 15% of the final blend in new barrels to freshen the oak aromatics. The wine was bottled in January 1998 and celled until its release. It received light pad filtration at bottling.

### *Winemaker's Comments*

The 1996 vintage displays more herbal characters than previous vintages, probably due to the cooler growing season. The Bordeaux-style wine has rich berry fruit and vanilla oak, with an intriguing mushroom note. Ripe tannins give the wine length on the mouth. As it ages in the bottle, the wine is developing mint characters. It should continue to improve in the bottle for up to 15 years.