



# La Cumbre

SYRAH  
2008

**Appellation:** Valle de Aconcagua  
**Composition:** 97% Syrah  
 3% Petit Verdot  
**Alcohol:** 14.5% v/v  
**pH:** 3.40  
**Total Acidity:** 5.99 g/l (tartaric acid)  
**Residual Sugar:** 2.91 g/l



## VINEYARD

The grapes for this wine were selected from the best lots of Syrah from our Don Maximiano, Max II, and Max V vineyards in the interior of the Valle de Aconcagua. This year we also included 15% of grapes from our Aconcagua Costa property, Manzanar, and 9% from Max VI in the intermediate sector of the valley. Don Maximiano and the Max vineyards had a long, dry season with moderately warm summer days cooled by evening breezes that enter the valley from the Pacific Ocean. The Don Maximiano vineyard is planted at a density of 10,000 plants per hectare. Like the Syrah in Côtes du Rhone, the vines are head trained, which reduces the yield per plant and produces very concentrated wines with good structure. The Max II vineyards were planted in 1992 on hillsides with loam soil of colluvial origin and a northern exposure. The soil composition includes up to 70% stones in some sectors, which lowers the plant vigour and provides excellent drainage. This is extremely favourable for growing Syrah. The Max V and VI vineyards are vertically positioned on deep, rocky loam to sandy-loam soils with excellent drainage, which results in medium to low plant vigour. Our Manzanar vineyard was planted in 2005 on a 1,047-hectare property with hills that rise 330 to nearly 1,000 ft above sea level. At just 7.5 miles from the Pacific Ocean, the estate has cool-climate characteristics and was therefore primarily planted to Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, and Pinot Noir. It also produces very interesting Syrah with tremendous aromatic intensity, an abundance of red fruit, and floral and spice notes as well as high acidity that lends the wine freshness and nerve.

Altitude  
 Don Maximiano : Hills averaging 590 m / 1,935 ft asl  
 Max II : 580 m / 1,900 ft asl  
 Max V : 600 m / 1,970 ft asl  
 Max VI : 430 m / 1,410 ft asl  
 Manzanar : Hills averaging 200 / 655 ft asl

**Climate:** Don Maximiano & Max Vineyards: Mediterranean with a long dry season and rainfall concentrated in the winter. Manzanar, Aconcagua Costa: Rainfall is limited to the winter months. Summer days are moderately warm with morning fog and cool afternoon breezes.

**Soils:** Don Maximiano: Granitic and thin  
 Max II: Thin and of colluvial origin, loam to sandy-loam texture and 30–40% stones.  
 Max V: Deep and of alluvial origin with 50% stones.  
 Max VI: Sandy-loam texture with low vigour potential.  
 Manzanar: Thin layer of loam over a layer of clay and rocks.

## HARVEST NOTES

Harvest Dates: April 17 through May 8

Temperature analyses of the 2007–2008 season show that the Valle de Aconcagua had a rather cold spring in comparison with historic averages—the average monthly temperatures were lower than those of the previous season, there was a higher accumulation of cold hours, and there were more winter frosts. Soil moisture levels were also significantly lower than in previous years due to the low levels of winter rainfall; the season's scant 92 mm (3.6 in) was 60% lower than the historic average. As a result, the heat summation during the early months of the season (October–December) was clearly lower than the historic average. From January onward, however, temperatures rose in the interior and intermediate sectors of the valley and reached 34°C (93°F) on some days before returning to the historic average from February through April. Aconcagua Costa had high temperatures of 30°C (86°F) in

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January and February although the average temperature during the growing season (December–April) did not exceed 16.3°C (61.3°F). As a result, its final heat summation was 1,331 degree-days, while the rest of the valley averaged approximately 1,600 degree-days. In order to minimize the effects of the high temperatures, the vineyards were managed with open canopies, non-restrictive irrigation, and fruit loads moderated to ensure healthy grapes with good acidity, freshness, and intensity.

## VINIFICATION

The grapes were hand picked into 12-kg (26-lb) boxes, transported to the winery, and carefully inspected on a double selection table in order to eliminate any extraneous plant matter, such as leaves or stalks and to protect the fruit character of the wine. The grapes were then destemmed, crushed, and deposited into stainless steel tanks. 65% of the must underwent a pre-fermentation cold soak prior to inoculation with selected yeasts and fermented at temperatures that fluctuate between 26° and 30°C (79°–86°F). Once the fermentation was complete, the new wine remained on its skins for a post-fermentation maceration at 20°C (68°F) for 20–25 days, depending on the development of each individual lot. The final blend was aged for 20 months in new French oak barrels. Clarification and tartaric stabilization took place naturally during this time.

## WINEMAKER'S NOTES

This vintage presents a slight stylistic change in our La Cumbre Syrah because for the first time it includes fruit from our Max VI and Aconcagua Costa vineyards, which has a livelier profile that is more mineral and aromatic, a bit spicier and more floral, with a fresher palate due to the higher acidity levels. It shows a beautiful violet colour, and an impressive nose with aromas of red fruit such as cranberries, raspberries, and cherries, all accompanied by light notes of black pepper, caramel, cloves, and violets. On the palate, the flavours echo the nose and offers up plenty of red and black fruit, black pepper, sweet spices, delicate toasted notes, and a bit of cedar along with elegant structure, fine tannins, and plenty of nerve that allude to its excellent potential for aging in the bottle.