

The *New*



New Worlds

Changing weather and emerging fortunes are conspiring to create promising vineyards in wholly unexpected places.

Where will your next bombshell bottle come from?

Robb Report identifies the likeliest regions.

By TED LOOS

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he world of wine has always operated on its own schedule—greatness takes time. It generally requires many seasons for a vineyard to mature to the point at which the vines produce wine with serious aging potential. In the big picture, some European regions have spent a millennium or more refining the taste profiles of their bottlings.

But the combination of rapidly evolving technology, emerging international economies and the progressing effects of climate change has scrambled the traditional map and fast-forwarded the timeline. There's now good wine from Virginia, Israel and Brazil, but some countries we know and love—such as South Africa and Australia—have regions that may not be able to continue making the excellent wine we're used to because of heat, drought and fires.

Amid the chaos, happy surprises are in store in the coming years, as we'll discover on the following pages.

The Oeno Wine Resort in Valle de Guadalupe, a region of Mexico with many promising wineries

GONZALO GONZALEZ REVILLA



India

India has an ancient tradition of wine, but these days its production is a drop in the bucket: It's a beer-and-spirits kind of country and has been for centuries. So the production of premium wine is in its infancy. But thanks to some wealthy entrepreneurs, things are starting to happen.

Pharmaceutical tycoons Krishna Prasad and Uma Chigurupati—a married couple who make a significant percentage of the world's ibuprofen—established Krsma Estates in 2008 in Hampi Hills, a hot, dry inland area, which Prasad cheerfully concedes is “not a wine region.” But in his travels he stumbled upon a farmer who was growing wine grapes there and realized how good the conditions were. Krsma now produces three wines a year; its Cabernet Sauvignon is a fairly classic rendering of the grape, with beguiling cherry fruit, and has been commended at international wine competitions.

“A wine bar caught my fancy at 17,” says Prasad, who is based in Hyderabad. Later in life, after business success gave him the means to tackle new frontiers, he decided to make wine. “We traveled in Europe and the US, thought about retiring to Tuscany or France, but then we said, ‘Let’s make good wine in India.’” Now he’s making 5,000 cases a year and

notes that his “ego” dictated that the wine be exported to the States, too. “It’s a passion and a hobby for me,” he says, “not a business.”

The founder of Fratelli Vineyards’ Sette label, Kapil Sekhri—whose family established the industrial conglomerate Tinnu Group—has similar inspirations, especially Tuscany. But he’s taken a decidedly cooperative approach: He makes Fratelli’s wines in India, with grapes from the Maharashtra region not too far from Mumbai, but he does it in partnership with Tuscan winemakers Piero Masi and the Secci family. And the wines have been praised by the respected British critic Jancis Robinson.

Although those wines aren’t exported to the US yet—Sekhri says he’s working on it—he also partners with French-born, Napa-based winemaker and entrepreneur Jean-Charles Boisset to make three Indian wines under the J’noon label (the best is the white, a blend of Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc) that are available in the States. “We started at the top,” Sekhri says of his collaborations. And he sounds like other terroir-driven winemakers around the globe when he adds that he doesn’t want to produce common-tasting bottlings: “We’re letting the vineyards do the talking. Just wait and see.” **R**



J’noon and, top, workers at Fratelli Vineyards