



We've got it Covered

ANOTHER INNOVATIVE VIÑA MONTES RESEARCH PROJECT THAT SEEKS TO MINIMIZE OUR WATER FOOTPRINT

Faithful to the winery's philosophy of sustainable management at every level of operations, the viticulturists and winemakers in Viña Montes's Research & Development team have spent more than a decade conducting studies and tests to find ways of reducing the winery's water footprint, and implementing the results to counteract climate change and its effect on water resources.

The winery recently invested more than US\$50,000 in a pilot plan

to put a protective cover over a 1.5-hectare block of Cabernet Sauvignon, planted in 2003, in the northern sector of our El Arcángel de Marchigüe Vineyard in the Colchagua Valley. The project came about after the R&D team began wondering about what effects covering the vineyards would have on grapes. There are no other winery projects of this kind in Chile, but there are agroindustry trials focusing on protecting table grapes, cherries, blueberries,

kiwis, and other fruits, and the results have been very positive. The fruit is protected against frost, wind, and rainfall, close to harvest time. And especially significant for Montes, covering reduces water loss and the amount of irrigation needed. Agroindustry case studies have demon-

strated a reduction in water consumption of as much as 20%.

The process consists of covering the vineyards with a low-density polyethylene film that is free of heavy metals. This

plastic has a useful life of 3–4 years, after which it is taken away by the supplier and recycled into chips used to make other plastic products. Drawing on agroindustry findings, we are looking to evaluate and determine what impact the covering of vineyards could have on water consumption and grape quality. The project began in November 2016, and we expect to have quantifiable results on the effects on water consumption in June 2017.

