



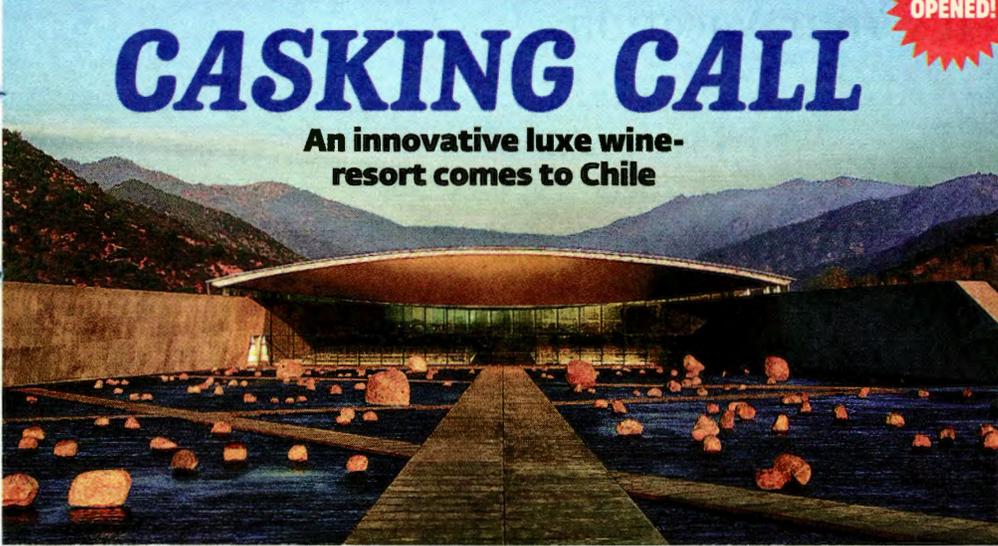
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CASKING CALL

An innovative luxe wine-resort comes to Chile

JUST OPENED!



GRAPE ESCAPE: The views at Chile's VIK winery (left) and boutique hotel (above) are as good as the pours.

the hotel stands in high relief against the green valley — resembling a Frank Gehry Guggenheim that dropped out of the sky.

Rooms have a sort of playful extravagance, like the one decorated with blue Portuguese painted tiles that depict the Vik family and colleagues in various scenes of bacchanalia.

But the artwork in the hotel can't compete with the views, especially from the Olympic-size slate pool overlooking the sawtooth peaks of a gorge.

By **ROCKY CASALE**

THE drive from Santiago to parts of Chile's southern wine region is not exactly straightforward. At times you will crawl through traffic on the Pan American Highway, then veer onto two-lane roads that link up villages with vineyards, and then into a web of unmarked

dirt tracks. With luck, or an experienced guide, you might wind up at VIK (*vik*), one of Chile's most talked about holistic wineries, set in the clandestine Apalta Valley. Before 2006, when Alexander and Carrie Vik found and purchased more than 10,000 acres of land here, the valley was quite a different picture. "It was hard to imagine a

vineyard; here were some small, poorly kept orchards and the rest was high grassland, brush, forests, canyons and mountains," says Mr. Vik. Still, the conditions were favorable for producing great red wines — the hills' blunt exposures to the sun, the coastal breezes that cool the valley — and the Viks set about planting Cabernet Sauvignon, Carménère, Syrah, Cabernet Franc and Merlot grape varieties. By 2009, the couple's hard work had paid off when they produced 12,000 bottles of their first VIK vintage. According to VIK's chief oenologist, Patrik Vallete, who previously led some of France's most respected wine houses, he expects the 2014

vintage to be somewhere in the ballpark of 90,000 bottles. On Nov. 1 the Vik family opened Viña Vik (from \$1,200; *vikhotels.com*), a 22-room, all-inclusive hotel on a bluff overlooking their vineyards. Crowned with an enormous wavy silver roof,

VIK Retreats(3)