

acequia wine club

The best boutique wines from Argentina



WELCOME TO OUR WINE CLUB



It was almost a year ago that we spent a long weekend in Mendoza to see the sights, and taste some wine... and never left! We instantly fell for its unique beauty, the warmth of the people – and especially its tradition of boutique winemaking.

Mendoza is tucked away in the foothills of the Andes, in a corner of the world few people have seen. All of that is about to change. More and more multimillion-dollar wineries dot the landscape. New roads, hotels and restaurants pop up every week. Even though tourism is increasing (up 35% in the last year), at most wineries you can taste wine with the winemakers themselves, drawing sips straight from barrels and tanks.

The first Argentine we met in Mendoza was Pablo Gimenez, an ex-lawyer whose family has been making wine here for generations. Pablo has spent

much of his time over the past year teaching us about winemaking, farming and the particulars of doing business in Argentina – not to mention educating us on the finer points of Argentine asado (barbecue). He's become our brother, and the Gimenez family has become our partner. We couldn't have asked for better roots from which to grow our business.

With this shipment, we are proudly launching our first foray into the wine business: the Acequia Wine Club, named for the ancient acequias (canals) built by the Incas to carry snowmelt from the Andes to irrigate the desert valleys of Mendoza. Just as the Incas used acequias to channel pure mountain water to what would eventually become some of the finest vineyards in the world, we are serving as the conduit to bring the best in Argentine wines to you.

Each month, we'll deliver boutique wines from Mendoza that are nearly impossible to find in the States – like the Carmelo Patti and the Teymente in this shipment. We'll send unique varietals from small production wineries – including Malbec, Tempranillo and Torrontés, along with Argentine versions of traditional varietals like Cabernet, Merlot, Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. Over time, we'll help you fill your cellar with wines that are sure to elicit our favorite question: "where did you find this great wine?"

In February we'll launch our Custom Winemaking experience, which will give you the opportunity to work hands-on with an oenologist, and make a barrel of wine tailored to your exact taste and specifications (see page 3). And in late 2007, we'll open our resort – a five-star fantasy winemaking retreat and spa. It's going to be a fun and busy couple of years – thank you for joining us!

Many of you that receive this shipment are friends and family who have believed in us from the beginning and invested your time, energy, and money in our endeavor. We're grateful for your efforts, faith, and help in supporting us in our mission to bring you the very best in boutique winemaking from Argentina.

Salud!

Michael & Dave
December 2005



CUSTOM WINE: CALLING ALL WOULD-BE WINEMAKERS

Starting in February, 2006, all you aspiring winemakers can come to Mendoza to craft your own Malbec, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Syrah, Tempranillo or blend. We will give you unlimited access to our experienced winemakers and millions of dollars of infrastructure, technology and equipment to create a wine that's customized to your taste -- and shipped with personalized labels that we help you design. This is an unforgettable experience that allows you to get knee-deep in the process of winemaking. We will offer two programs:

COSECHERO

You will be involved in the entire winemaking process, from harvesting the grapes and selecting

the clusters that go into the barrel to making decisions about oak and fermentation. At every stage, you'll receive personal guidance and detailed explanations from our expert winemakers, and after aging we'll ship you 25 cases (300 bottles) of your signature wine.

GRAN ASSEMBLAGE

Come to Mendoza anytime of the year and spend four days with our winemakers, who will help you identify your style and preferences by guiding you through tasting of dozens of wines. Then work in the lab to create your custom blend from our wide range of varietals already in tanks and barrels. You'll design a personalized label and work with our professional chef to generate delicious recipes for

food pairings specifically tailored to your taste. After aging, we'll bottle your wine and send 25 cases to your home.

Both the Cosechero and Gran Assemblage programs are available to individuals, couples or groups.

We're already filling up for the March 2006 harvest. Reserve your space early at:

www.acequiawineclub.com/customwine



Surprise your friends and family with ARGENTINE WINES FOR THE HOLIDAYS

HOLIDAY BOX

For \$40 (plus shipping), we will send a personalized note with a bottle of the 2000 Carmelo Patti Cabernet Sauvignon and a bottle of the 2003 Taymente Malbec

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

Give the gift that keeps on giving – an annual subscription to the Acequia Wine Club. Each month they will receive 2-3 virtually impossible to find, limited production wines from Argentina. \$40/month, \$480/year. 20% discount for prepaid orders before January 1, 2006 only \$384

Order online at www.acequiawineclub.com/gifts or call 877-638-8502

WINEMAKER PROFILE: CARMELO PATTI



Carmelo Patti came to Argentina on a boat from Sicily when he was a year old and started working the vineyards shortly thereafter. Since becoming an enologist in 1971, he's overseen wine production at several major wineries, including the Bodega Nieto Senetiner. In 1998, he launched his own label at the El Lagar winery in Luján de Cuyo, Mendoza. One of the most respected winemakers in Argentina, he dedicates himself to the small-scale production of award-winning Malbec, Cabernet Sauvignon, and his signature Gran Assemblage blend—and he insists on guiding all tours of his bodega himself.

I became an enologist through years of practice. I harvested grapes until I was 18, made friends with the truck drivers, went into the bodegas, liked it, and decided to study winemaking. I learned everything through experience.

I decided to start my own winery because I worked in bodegas where, especially during inflationary periods, people wanted to reduce costs – and they lowered the quality of their product. This is impossible for me. You can reduce costs in other areas, but never in the quality of a product that people are going to consume.

“THE BEST PART OF WINEMAKING IS WHEN I SEE THE GRAPES AND THINK ABOUT WHAT A GREAT WINE THEY’RE GOING TO PRODUCE”

Seeing that fantastic fruit, I know I have to do it justice in the wine making process.

My style is to create wines that are easy to drink, delicious, balanced, and don’t need any additives: it’s the grape made into wine.

The best Argentine wine I’ve ever had was a Lagarde Malbec that was fabulous in 1992. I also have fond memories of a Cabernet I made at Perez Cuestas (now known as Nieto Senetiner) that won a prize in France. I still have five bottles left.

The development of wine tourism in Mendoza has been really good for wineries. We’re learning. I love when tour guides bring people who know a lot about wine because it’s a challenge. I prefer to talk to people who have some knowledge, because they appreciate what I do.

What distinguishes Argentine wines from the rest of the world is that our wines are easy to drink when they’re young, because the grapes ripen so well here. The tannins are soft and the fruit is excellent. I’ve had people from abroad tell me they would never drink a French wine from 2005, but they try our 2005 vintages and cannot believe how drinkable they are.

MENDOZA TRAVELOGUE: AN AMERICAN IN ARGENTINA'S WINE WONDERLAND

I’ve had more than my share of food and wine bliss in this lifetime: tasting port in Vila Nova de Gaia, Portugal, drinking Barolo with white truffles in Piedmont, Italy, feasting on tapas and Rioja in Spain’s Basque country, and, most recently, over-indulging in dazzling Argentine Malbecs and steak in the foothills of the eastern Andes.

After 10 months of freelance food writing in Buenos Aires (a city that’s undergoing a gastronomic renaissance fueled by wines emerging from Mendoza), I finally traveled to the heart of Argentina’s wine country.

A full day tour of several wineries in Mendoza’s central valley proved that the wine and wine-makers in this region are as extraordinary as the scenery.

The pleasure-seeking started at 10:30 a.m. in Lujan de Cuyo, considered by many to be the birthplace of fine wine making in Argentina. At Ruca Malen, Mariela, my knowledgeable guide walked me through

the vineyards to show me the grapes, the irrigation channels, and the de-stemming machine, teaching me about the entire process of wine making from grape to bottle. To finish off the tour, I tasted fruity Malbecs on a second-story terrace with a stunning view of the Andes.

From Ruca Malen, I drove in search of Carmelo Patti, a legendary winemaker who runs a bodega by the same name. Carmelo himself rushed to greet me, leading me straight to the fermentation section of his winery. Opening the door to a 60 year old cement vat, he pulled out a hose and squirted wine into my glass, ‘2004 Cabernet. he said, ‘It’s not ready yet, but you can sense the wine it will become.’ Carmelo is a traditionalist and won’t release the 2004 until at least 2008.

Carmelo then showed me the cellar where he’s currently aging his 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon and Malbec in French oak barrels. Removing fist-sized corks from tops of the barrels, he filled my glass with what appeared to be a fancy turkey baster.

I had never tasted wine straight from the barrel. Again, the wines were young, but delicious.

Last stop, Carlos Pulenta: a multi-million dollar stone and steel winery on the outskirts of Lujan de Cuyo. After gawking at the 45,000 liter fermentation tanks and the aging room with its hundreds of French oak barrels, I sampled the winery’s Malbec rosé and Tomero, a blend of 6 red varietals. I decided to splurge on a bottle of the winery’s Corte A (a Malbec/Cabernet/Bonarda blend). Like Carmelo Patti’s Cabernets and Malbecs, the Corte A is the work of an artist – albeit an artist working in a radically different style and setting.

Watching the sun set behind the Andes, I finished off the last of the Corte A, marveling at the diversity of the wines and wineries I’d experienced in a single day -- walking through vineyards, chatting with winemakers, sipping from barrels, and learning about the latest in artisanal and of state-of-the-art wine making. Why I had waited so long to go to Mendoza?

Layne Mosler, a native Californian, is a member of Slow Food International who writes for the Snail and Resto & Catering magazine in Buenos Aires.

TASTING NOTES

CABERNET SAUVIGNON



CARMELO PATTI - Cabernet Sauvignon 2000

REGION: Perdriel and Luján de Cuyo, Mendoza

VARIETAL COMPOSITION: 100% Cabernet Sauvignon

WINEMAKING: Hydraulic basket press, fermentation with selected yeasts in cement/epoxy tanks, at varying temperatures and lengths of time; malolactic fermentation; staggered aging in French oak barrels of up to 6 uses; bottle aged at least 12 months before release.

TASTING NOTES: A pure, fruit forward wine that reveals its terroir. Notes of hay and ripe red and black fruits on the nose. This wine possesses an earthy, cherry-infused palate with a smooth, persistent finish – and has none of the greenness sometimes found in Cabernet Sauvignon.

FOOD PAIRING GUIDE: Ideal with foods that complement its rustic qualities and stand up to its powerful fruit: country stew, roast lamb, or sharp blue cheeses.

DRINKING GUIDE: Outstanding now, this wine will only improve with time. Try it in 10 years -- if you can wait that long!



BODEGAS Y VIÑEDOS HUARPE "TAYMENTE" - Malbec 2003

REGION: Barrancas, Maipú, Mendoza

VARIETAL COMPOSITION: 100% Malbec

WINEMAKING: Fermentation with selected yeasts in stainless steel tanks for 2-3 weeks; malolactic fermentation in oak barrels; 6-8 months in new American and French oak barrels; bottle aged 6-8 months before release.

TASTING NOTES: Intense violet color and aromas of ripe plums with hints of chocolate and vanilla. This is a full bodied wine with cherry, violet, and mocha notes on the palate. A long finish is rounded out by the balanced use of new oak. Polished but not overly so. Traditional Malbec through and through.

FOOD PAIRING GUIDE: Excellent with roasted meats, simply prepared steaks, game, and medium to sharp hard cheeses.

DRINKING GUIDE: Although perfectly drinkable now, this wine could also be aged for 2-3 years.

BEEF SKEWERS WITH CHIMICHURRI SAUCE

An exemplary Malbec calls for an emblematic dish: grilled beef with chimichurri is an Argentine classic that brings out the best in the full-bodied Taymente. Serve these skewers with grilled corn on the cob, roasted butternut squash, and greens dressed with olive oil and sherry vinegar.

INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat the grill. Place garlic cloves, salt, and olive oil in a blender or food processor and blend until garlic is finely minced. Add remaining chimichurri ingredients (parsley, ground pepper, chili flakes, oregano leaves, shallot or onion, sherry or red wine vinegar, and lemon juice) and pulse until well chopped but not pureed. Divide the sauce in half.

Lightly coat the meat with olive oil, divide it evenly between 4 skewers, and place it on the grill over medium heat. Baste the meat periodically with half of the chimichurri sauce and cook until it reaches the desired degree of doneness. Serve with remaining chimichurri sauce.

STEAK:

*1 pound filet mignon, cut into 1 inch cubes
Olive oil (about 1-2 tablespoons)*

CHIMICHURRI SAUCE:

*6 garlic cloves
1 teaspoon salt
¼ cup olive oil
1 bunch fresh flat-leaf parsley
½ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
½ teaspoon red chili flakes
2 tablespoons fresh oregano leaves
2 tablespoons shallot or onion
3 tablespoons sherry or red wine vinegar
3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice*