



# WINE OF-THE-MONTH CLUB

January 2019

## Grape Wars

Chile vs. Argentina

*offering wines with real personality*

**South America** has become an invaluable source of great-value wine. But a wine lover's view of the continent is probably completely skewed by which side of the Atlantic we live on. To the British, South American wine comes from **Chile** - now producing not just well made **Cabernet**, **Merlot** and **Carmenère** but full throttle **Syrah**, surprisingly delicate **Pinot Noir**, some of the most interesting old-vine **Carignan** in the world. But in the US, Chile means cheap, and, however hard Chilean exporters try, few US wine drinkers are prepared to look to Chile for anything other than a bargain.

US wine drinkers, on the other hand, have fallen hook, line and sinker for **Malbec**, the emblematic red wine of **Argentina** and the fastest-growing varietal red in the US. That said, I would like to put in a special plea for Argentina's luscious but well-structured **Cabernet Sauvignon**, which is in danger of being overlooked in the current Malbec mania.

South America has actually been making wine since the 1500's. Back then, the wine was, well - crap. **Franciscan Monks** planted **Mission** grapes to make wine for religious purposes. The movement of viticulture traveled through Peru into Chile and eventually Mendoza, Argentina. It wasn't until the late 1800's when plantings of **Malbec**, **Cabernet** and **Carmenère** gave South America the leg-up it needed to make some exceptional wine. Today the South American wine industry is booming, and it's because the region has some very unique benefits. **Argentina is 5th in the world's wine production and Chile is 9th**, just ahead of Portugal.

**ARGENTINA:** South America's largest wine growing country is famous for Malbec, but they do much more than just that! Cabernet Sauvignon grows very well in the high-and-dry climate of Mendoza along with their champion white wine, **Torrontes**. Argentina's newer regions include **Patagonia**, which creates exceptional **Pinot Noir**. Bonarda is a stealthy red wine option that I think is going to make a big splash in the coming years. It's actually a surprise that we've missed it until now as it's Argentina's second most widely planted red grape! **For now the primary export market is Malbec, but their Cabernets easily compete with Napa.**

- **Malbec** - dense, layered black fruit (black plum, raspberry, black cherry, and olive) with savory notes of red pepper flakes and a dusty, cocoa powder-like finish.
- **Bonarda** - at first very fruity on the nose, with notes of black cherry, fresh blueberry, and plum. Then, they become more complex, giving off nuanced aromas of violets, 5-spice, allspice, and peonies. Finally, depending on whether or not the wine was oaked (though most aren't), they may have slight smoky notes of cigar box, sweet figs, and chocolate. On the palate, medium-body, juicy acidity, and a smooth, low-tannin finish.
- **Cabernet Sauvignon** - In Mendoza, the high altitude, sun soaked days and cold night air conspires to produce aromatic, intense yet finely tuned Cabernets that reveal purity and can age well. In Luján de Cuyo, the blackcurrant intensity is tempered by riper red fruits on rich, mouth-filling wines.

**CHILE:** Became the major wine producer for South America starting in the late 1600's after a major earthquake destroyed Peru's growing industry. Chilean wine is unique because it's the only major wine-producing country that **hasn't been hit by phylloxera**; an aphid-like louse that eats grapevine roots. The location of Chile's major wine region and capital are typical of a cool climate. The valleys along the coast collect cool air as it travels up the Andes. Chile produces peppery and earthy Cabernet in a style very similar to Bordeaux. The country champions Carmenère, which has flavors similar to Cabernet Franc.

- **Cabernet Sauvignon** - With a signature "**tart and fruity**" style, typical of a cool-climate wine, these wines are medium to full-bodied wines with moderate acidity and flavors of black currant, fresh berry, violets, chocolate and graphite.
- **Carmenère** - In the 1800's, grape cuttings were imported from Bordeaux that were **thought to be Merlot**. It wasn't until 1994 that Chilean Merlot was actually Carmenère. Savory, juicy and medium-bodied with an unmistakable red bell pepper note.
- **Pinot Noir** - Light-bodied and smooth with flavors of strawberry, raspberry, creamy vanilla, blood orange zest, and minerals.
- **Syrah** - The Central Valley produces a lean, peppery, elegant style in high altitude areas. International critics have raved due to its complex mineral notes, and **age-worthiness**.
- **Malbec** - Different than it's next-door neighbor, Argentina. Expect a much lighter and juicier style of Malbec. The wines are aromatic with notes of violet and peony, **perfect for a spring-into-summer wine**.
- **Carignan** - Produces delicious, fruit-forward red wines that sometimes have subtle, peppery, cured meat-like notes that are a fascinating find for savory dry wine lovers.

### 2018 VIÑEDOS MARCHIGÜE "ALTO TIERRUCA" PINOT NOIR RESERVA, CENTRAL VALLEY - CHILE \$9.99

100% PINOT NOIR and 14.0% ABV

In Chile there are a number of vineyards planting pinot noir in the **Central Valley**, that offer similar cool-climate growing conditions as those in Oregon and Burgundy. The regions of **San Antonio** and **Casablanca** are relatively small areas where vineyards are blessed with rocky soils and direct exposure to the cooling influences of the ocean. The color is lighter than most California pinots, but the bouquet is deep with red fruits, earth and even a forest floor quality. **Viñedos Marchigüe** is the newest addition to the **Errázuriz Ovale** family's portfolio. The family pride themselves on crafting wines produced from grapes grown in some of the most sought after land in Chile. Offering amazing value, this Pinot is a bright crimson color, elegantly structured with red fruit aromas and flavors. Three months oak ageing adds finesse and complexity with a silky smooth finish.

**FOOD PAIRING:** MATURE CHEESES, SWEET SALAMI, WILD MUSHROOM RISOTTO, PORK CASSOULET, ROAST CHICKEN w/GREEN OLIVES & TOMATOES, SEARED SALMON w/POMEGRANATE GLAZE, SEARED DUCK w/CHERRIES, LAMB SKEWERS w/ALMOND-MINT PESTO or COQ au VIN.

### 2016 LAPOSTOLLE "CUVÉE ALEXANDRE" CARMENÈRE, COLCHAGUA VALLEY - CHILE \$22.99

95% CARMENÈRE - 5% SYRAH and 14.5% ABV

BIODYNAMIC - ORGANIC / 95pts - James Suckling

Two decades ago, thousands of acres that the Chileans had long thought were Merlot were actually an obscure variety called Carmenère. Today, known for its deep color, plush tannins and unique, spicy aromas and flavors - Carmenère is poised to become Chile's second most planted red variety after Cabernet Sauvignon. Founded in 1994 by **Alexandra Marnier Lapostolle**, great-granddaughter of the creator of **Grand Marnier**, Casa Lapostolle is the standout architectural icon of Chilean wineries. The founders chose **Apalta in the Colchagua Valley** for its ideal climate and terroir for producing high quality red wines. On the nose, this wine is complex, with red and black fruits and spices such as red pepper, vanilla and dill. On the palate, it's wide with medium acidity and round tannins with dark berry fruit and sarsaparilla. A world-class wine using French winemaking philosophy and the superb terroir of Chile.

**FOOD PAIRINGS:** FRESH CHEVRE, EGGPLANT TERRINE, ARUGULA & TREVISANA SALAD, MEATLOAF w/GREEN BEAN CASSEROLE, BURGERS w/CHEDDAR & ONION RINGS, STUFFED PEPPERS, OLIVE CRUSTED LAMB w/BEAN STEW, SHEPHERDS PIE or SEARED SALMON w/WILTED SPINACH.

### 2013 FLECHAS DE LOS ANDES "GRAN MALBEC", UCO VALLEY - MENDOZA - ARGENTINA \$21.99

100% MALBEC and 15.0% ABV

SUSTAINABLE FARMING / 92pts - James Suckling / 92pts Robert Parker's Wine Advocate

**Mendoza** is home to 75% of the Argentina's vineyards and **Malbec** is the region's most celebrated grape. With some of the highest vineyards of all of Mendoza, the **Uco Valley** (or Valle de Uco) is known for producing wines with elegance and excellent aging potential. The winery was born from the partnership between **Baron Benjamin de Rothschild** and Lauren Dassault, as the result of their research of a great terroir at the foot of the Andes. Hand harvested, this bright ruby-red has classic aromas of blackberry, blueberry, licorice and bitter chocolate. Concentrated with dark berry flavors, licorice, spice and mineral notes. This juicy, dark wine boasts a full body and firm tannins.

**FOOD PAIRINGS:** FIGS STUFFED w/BLUE CHEESE, AGED CHEDDAR w/ SWEET SALUMI, SWEET POTATO GNOCCHI w/SAGE & CHESTNUTS, SLOPPY JOES, ROASTED DUCK BREAST w/ PECAN PURÉE, STEAK FRITES or BEEF TENDERLOIN w/BLACKBERRY DRESSING.

### 2013 VIÑA TARAPACÁ "GRAN RESERVA" CABERNET SAUVIGNON, MAIPO VALLEY - CHILE \$18.99

85% CABERNET SAUVIGNON - 10% MALBEC - 5% SYRAH and 14.4% ABV

92pts - James Suckling

The region of **Maipo** follows the Maipo river valleys to the south of Santiago out to the Pacific Ocean. The valley receives cooling winds from the ocean and has a much more Mediterranean climate. This region is famed for its full-bodied reds, which are reminiscent of Cabernet Sauvignon from Napa Valley, exhibiting notes of black currant, black cherry, fig, and baking spices. **Viña Tarapacá**, located in the town of **Isla de Maipo**, was founded in 1874 by Don Francisco de Rojas Salamanca was sold to Antonio Zavala in 1892. Shortly after Zavala and his wife Mercedes Ulloa divorced, and the winery was passed to her in the settlement - and renamed "**Viña Tarapacá EX Zavala**". Ouch! 1992 the company was acquired and began gearing its production towards the export market. The wine is a deep purple and beautifully perfumed, with notes of red fruits, plums, black pepper, rosemary and red roses. The palate is complex and precise with ripe cassis character, well-judged oak, floral notes and a savory streak. An elegant wine.

**FOOD PAIRINGS:** AGED HARD CHEESES, WILD RICE - FARRO & TANGERINE SALAD, SHORT RIBS w/SHIITAKES & POLENTA, LEG OF LAMB w/FENNEL & CARROTS, BEEF & SQUASH CHILI, CHICKEN w/PORT & FIGS or GRILLED SIRLOIN w/MUSHROOMS & BLUE CHEESE BUTTER.

### 2014 BODEGA LUIGI BOSCA CABERNET SAUVIGNON, LUJÁN de CUYO - MENDOZA - ARGENTINA \$ 21.99

100% CABERNET SAUVIGNON and 14.0% ABV

SUSTAINABLE - BIODYNAMIC FARMING

The most famous Cabernet Sauvignon producing regions in the world are located close to oceans or rivers, but in Argentina it is cultivated in arid mountain terroirs. 77% of the total in Argentina is found in Mendoza with **Maipú** and **Luján de Cuyo** being historical regions with older vines. In these two areas, the vineyards are located at between 700m and 950m, where there is a warm, dry climate that helps the Cabernet ripen and gives it an intense and voluptuous style with good body and structure. Established in 1901, Luigi Bosca is the oldest family owned and run winery in Argentina. Sourced from Bosca's east facing **El Paraiso** vineyard in Luján de Cuyo, these vines average 45 years and sit at elevation of 780 meters. The grapes are hand harvested, fermented in cool temperatures followed by 14 months aging in French oak. With aromas of red and black fruit, violets and chocolate the wine is fresh, fruity and velvety. Full-bodied and well structured, it is a wine with personality and an exquisite elegance.

**FOOD PAIRINGS:** CHARCUTERIE, ROASTED VEGETABLE TARTS, BIG BEEFY STEWS, ROSEMARY-PEPPER BEEF RIB ROAST w/PORCINI JUS, PAN-ROASTED VEAL CHOP w/ CABERNET PAN SAUCE, BLUE CHEESE BURGERS, SKIRT STEAK CHIMICHURRI or VEAL SHANK on POLENTA.

*This South American 4-pack Valued at \$86 - offered to our Members for \$75*