

Zekun Shuai, November 28, 2023

TOP 100 WINES OF ARGENTINA 2023



(...) The 2021 was another benchmark vintage for Catena Zapata's Adrianna vineyard in Gualtallary, with a consistent yield of fine wines.

(...) There were also plenty of outstanding red wines from Argentina's 2020 vintage, particularly those originating from the cooler, extremely high-altitude vineyards of the **Uco Valley**. Some wines that incorporated a higher percentage of cabernet franc also stood out in a year characterized by its richness with darker, sweeter fruit. 2020 had an abnormally warm and dry summer, and coupled with the unpredictable circumstances surrounding Covid-19 quarantine policies, the harvest in Mendoza was exceptionally early. Estate manager and winemaker Philippe Rolet of **Bodegas Caro** noted that it was the earliest vintage they had seen in the past 50 years.



The stunning vineyards of Catena Zapata.

The [Matias Riccitelli Malbec Cabernet Franc Mendoza Riccitelli & Father 2020](#) (No. 4) and [Catena Zapata Mendoza Nicolas Catena Zapata 2020](#) (No. 12) both excelled in combining malbec and cabernets.

The **Catena Zapata 2020** has a 25 percent proportion of cabernet franc from Paraje Altamira, which gives it a more refreshing quality. The 54 percent cabernet sauvignon and 21 percent malbec in the wine lend class and fleshiness but without sweetness.

The [Zuccardi Malbec Valle de Uco Paraje Altamira Finca Canal Uco 2020](#) (No. 5), [Viña Cobos Malbec Los Arboles Valle de Uco Chañares Estate 2020](#) (No. 7) and [Susana Balbo Wines Malbec Valle de Uco Gualtallary Nosotros Single Vineyard Nómade 2020](#) (No. 13) are among the top malbecs we tasted from 2020. They do not exhibit the heat that one might expect from this warm vintage. Instead, their complexity lies within their restrained ripeness. (...)



– Zekun Shuai, Senior Editor

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ZUCCARDI MALBEC VALLE DE UCO PARAJE ALTAMIRA FINCA CANAL UCO 2020

Pristine and fresh but also complex and deep. Tile, wild herbs and lots of blueberries and flowers on the nose. The ultra-fine, immaculate tannins are fully dissolved on the full-bodied palate. A great malbec that is so smooth on the palate. Super polished but intellectual. A baby now. Drink from 2026.

99 pts

12

CATENA ZAPATA MENDOZA NICOLAS CATENA ZAPATA 2020

Cassis, tobacco, wet stones, iron and baking spices to the nose, showing class, restraint and complexity. Medium- to full-bodied on the palate with super fine tannins. Dry, super elegant and silky with a lengthy, polished finish. Really Bordeaux-like. Juicy and long. 54% cabernet sauvignon from Gualtallary, 25% cabernet franc from Altamira and 21% malbec from both areas. The highest portion of cabernet franc this year helped retain its nervy freshness! This is classy and beautiful. Harvested on March 12th and 13th. Drink or hold.

98 pts

17

CHEVAL DES ANDES MENDOZA 2020

Ripe, baked dark cherries with spices and some violets. Hints of graphite, cocoa powder, incense and black pepper. Dried rose petals. A slightly fuller Cheval des Andes with tense, silky tannins and a lingering, generous finish. Ripe, but still has lots of restraint and precision. 49% malbec, 49% cabernet sauvignon with a 2% petit verdot. 24% of the malbec comes from Altamira and all the rest of the fruit come from Las Compuertas. Drink or hold.

97 pts

28

CATENA ZAPATA MALBEC MENDOZA ADRIANNA VINEYARD MUNDUS BACILLUS TERRAE 2021

A complex yet super discreet nose with hints of wet stone, wet earth, peppercorn and graphite to the red and blue fruits. An elegant expression but this has an intense mid-palate with tight but silky tannins. Long, complex and soft-spoken. Nothing conspicuous here. Impeccable interplay between concentration and purity. Will age really well. Drinkable now but better from 2025.

99 pts