

RED ROGUES
FALL 2008



THIS QUARTER'S FOCUS: THANKSGIVING DINNER

Wine enthusiasts everywhere are always looking for their next new type of wine that will challenge the palates of oenophiles. In recent years, Merlot was the hot varietal, followed by a keen interest in Syrah. Then along came the movie, "Sideways" which promoted a massive curiosity in Pinot Noir. Now it seems like everywhere you turn, someone is talking about the greatness of Malbec.

This quarter's Red Rogues selections are 3 beautiful Malbecs from Argentina: Bodega Noemia de Patagonia, A Lisa; Bodega y Estancia Colomé; and Bodega Luigi Bosca.

Malbec is a grape that was largely forgotten in France and in Argentina until the mid 1990's. The grape is one of 5 grapes that can make up the blend of Bordeaux, and it is also the main grape of Cahors in Southwestern France. Malbec, due to its thin skin, can be quite susceptible to mildew, rot and frostbite, so the cool, damp growing conditions in France do not make for ideal circumstances. In fact, in 1956 France lost 75% of its Malbec crop due to frost.

Michel Pouget, a French agricultural engineer, introduced this principal grape to Argentina in the late 1860's. The significance of this date is that the clones that he carried from France to Argentina were pre-phyloxera clones, and the soil conditions, sandy and alluvial, are nearly perfect for avoiding phyloxera along with the arid and hot climates.

Since the growing conditions in Argentina, especially Mendoza, can be arid and hot, it seems a natural area for the Malbec grape to flourish. Previous to the 1990's, many Argentine grape growers had preferred quantity over quality, and initiated a 'vine pull' program in the 1980's - pulling out old, low yielding vines to plant new ones in order to get higher yields. Currently in Mendoza, there are only 61,776 acres of Malbec planted, while in the 1980's there were more than 123,552 acres planted to Malbec.

It's almost unbelievable to think that Argentina is the 5th largest wine producer in the world, and yet, the first time that any of the Argentine wines gained any international attention at all was as recently as 1995. The primary reasons for the change are the economy in Argentina, which stabilized in the 1990's, and wine producers and investors invested in much-needed cellar equipment along with human expertise in dealing with growing grapes at such high altitudes. Another noticeable change for the Argentines was to realize that once they achieved quality in their wines, there became the important economic role of exporting the wines.

Now that the quality has become the prime focus of many Argentine producers, we have chosen these three to introduce to you.

Some of the most common descriptors of Malbec are: Raspberry, dark cherry, anise, vanilla, plums, allspice, cloves, cinnamon, rich, juicy, gamey.

Five Reasons PlumpJack Loves Malbec!

1. Perfect wines with meat.
2. Still affordable.
3. It's a new and exciting adventure.
4. Juicy wines are food versatile.
5. They don't have to be aged to taste good!

2007 Bodega Noemia de Patagonia, A Lisa \$23.99

Proprietor: Countess Noemi Marone Cinzana

Wine maker: Hans Vinding-Diers

Varietal blend: 90% Malbec 10% Merlot

Appellation: Rio Negro Valley, Patagonia

Vineyards: All vineyards are at least 50 years-old and organically farmed with biodynamic practices.

Vinification: Grapes manually harvested and manually picked and de-stemmed, natural yeast fermentation, with malolactic fermentation

Aging: 10 months in barrique, gravity flow, and blended just before bottling

Alcohol: 14.5%

Production: 2,500 cases

Flavor profile: Dark, ruby fruit, with bright, raspberry tones, accompanied by rich smoke and hints of metal near the finish. Light medium-bodied. Nice tannins without overpowering.

Food pairings: Huevos Rancheros with Pico de Gallo, Jerked Chicken.

Aging potential: 2-4 years

Interesting fact: The winery estate is 620 miles South of Buenos Aires, 280 miles east of the Andes, 310 miles west of the Atlantic, and 1,240 miles from Tierra del Fuego—located in a desert. The two rivers, the Neuquen and the Limay, provide the microclimate and the irrigation for the Rio Negro.

2006 Bodega y Estancia Colomé \$27.99

Proprietor: The Hess Group

Wine maker: Randle Johnson

Varietal blend: 85% Malbec, 8% Tannat, 7% Cabernet Sauvignon

Appellation: Lerma Valley, Province de Salta, Northwestern Argentina

Vineyards: Many vines are 90-150 years old, and the vineyards are 5,500-8,500 feet above sea level.

Vinification: Grapes are hand-harvested and hand-sorted, delivered to winery in 25 lb. boxes. Fermentations are slower due to less oxygen at high altitudes. Extended maceration and malolactic fermentation occurred—using 50% barrel fermentation and 50% tank fermentation.

Aging: 15 months in French oak—30% new barrels.

Alcohol: 14.9%

Production: 1,000 cases

Flavor profile: Pleasantly sweet, oaky nose, with brilliant, purple hues. Spices, such as cloves, licorice, black pepper, and hints of allspice explode in this medium-bodied with an enormous mouth feel. Plenty of black fruit flavor ending with a long finish.

Food Pairings: Braised Short-Ribs with Wine, Venison, or Duck

Aging potential: 2-5 years

Interesting fact: This is a biodynamic and sustainably-farmed estate winery. The vineyards are thought to be the highest vineyards in the world.

2005 Bodega Luigi Bosca \$28.99

Proprietor: The Arizu Family

Wine maker: Saturnino Arizu with assistance from Raul, Alberto, Roberto, Estela, and Alicia Arizu

Varietal blend: 100% Malbec

Appellation: Luján de Cuyo, Eastern Mendoza

Vineyards: Located at 3,169 feet above sea level

Vinification: Grapes are hand-harvested with extended maceration. They are fermented in stainless steel tanks, and aged in French oak barrels.

Aging: 14 months in French barrels and 1 year in bottle

Alcohol: 14.5%

Production: 9,000 cases

Flavor profile: Intense deep ruby, purple color, black cherry, with aromas of mature violets. Some mocha and blackberry flavors combine with notes of perfume. Medium-to-full bodied with soft tannins, the wine is somewhat spicy, both elegant and mysterious at the same time.

Food Pairings: Hard Cheeses such as Pecorino or Asiago, Grilled Beef or Roasted Pork Shoulder.

Aging potential: 3-8 years

Interesting fact: Luján de Cuyo was the first Denominación de Origen Controlada (DOC) in Argentina, which was established in 1989. The original estate winery was established in 1890. Fact #2: The winery is biodynamic.