

# ABSOLUTELY ARGENTINA

Two grapes have emerged as being distinctly Argentina. The torrontes grape and the malbec grape. Our AWS Tasting of Argentinian wines will focus on these.

**Torrontes** is a white wine grape that produces fresh, fruity and aromatic wines. DNA testing has established that it is related to the malvasia grapes that originated in the Eastern Mediterranean. While it is not known exactly how the grape came to Argentina, it is suggested that Spanish colonists or missionaries carried it there as far back as the 16th century.

More is known about the **Malbec** grape. In 1868, a French agronomist Michel Puget introduced the Malbec grape, along with cabernet sauvignon and merlot, to Argentina from cuttings from Bordeaux. It is the dominant grape of the Cahors region of Southwest France where it is often referred to as auxerrois or cot noir. Wines from Cahors must contain at least 70% malbec. It was largely grown in Bordeaux until frost killed about 75% of the vines in 1956. It is still used in Bordeaux blends today.

Malbec is a dark, large, thin-skinned grape that grows in large, loose bunches. While it needs ample sunlight and heat, it can do well at relatively high altitudes. It does best in well-irrigated and well-drained soils. It is susceptible to rot in cool and wet conditions, and to frost. Malbecs are not typically made for long aging (often around 5 years), although some Cahors wines, with heavy tannins, can age much longer.

Malbec wines are distinctly dark (intense purple-violet) and can be powerful. Most often used as a blending grape but it has reached its pinnacle as a varietal in Argentina where it produces softer tannins than in France. While, Malbec grows just about anywhere a good red varietal grows, in Argentina and the slopes of the Andes, Malbec has found a home where it can be king. Argentine Malbecs typically have aromas and tastes of dark fruits, such as blackberry, boysenberry, dark cherries, and plum, along with chocolate, coffee, licorice/anise, vanilla, spices, and other favor notes.

Until the late 1990's, Argentina exported less than 10% of the wines it produced, and those wines were very hard to find in the US. In a relatively short time—about a decade or less—Argentina has emerged as a recognized producer of high quality wines at very good prices. Malbec has now become the signature wine of the country.

## RED RIVER VALLEY AWS WINE TASTING

Saturday, 14 March 2009



## THE WINES



### 2006 TRAPICHE TORRONTÉS

Wine Enthusiast: Varietally floral, with spice, tropical fruit and citrus on the nose. Clean and wispy on the palate, with touches of lemon extract, banana and pineapple. A zesty, easy white wine; best as an apéritif. Score: 86.

**Varietal** Torrontés

**Price** 7.99



### 2008 PIRCAS NEGRAS TORRONTÉS

Certified organic, this wine demonstrates exotic flowers, papaya, avocado and cream. This refreshing off dry wine shows zesty lemony qualities as well.

**Varietal** Torrontés

**Price** 9.49



### 2007 TRAPICHE MALBEC

Dark fruit with bramble berries and very ripe fruit. Hints of blackberries, a touch of truffles and some noticeable alcohol heat show up on the palate.

**Varietal** Malbec

**Price** 7.99



### 2005 TRAPICHE BROQUEL MALBEC

Dark and rich, this wine displays hints of lavender, basil, cedar and oak to accompany the dark cherries and blackberries. It is slightly velvety with chocolate undertones.

**Varietal** Malbec

**Price** 16.99



### 2007 LAYER CAKE MALBEC

Dark and dense color. Aromas are black fruit, anise and chocolate undertones. Flavors are blackberry, plum, berries, currants and cassis and white pepper spice.

**Varietal** 100% Malbec

**Price** 16.99

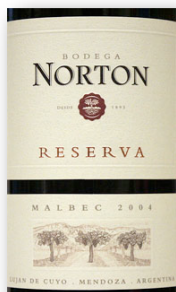


### 2006 CONQUISTA RESERVE MALBEC

Dense flavors of dark plum and chocolate, layered with toasted oak and a velvety finish that lingers and lingers

**Varietal** Malbec

**Price** 16.99



### 2005 NORTON RESERVA MALBEC

Brilliant ruby color. Eucalyptus and anise nose with a hint of cherry and tobacco.

**Varietal** Malbec

**Price** 18.49



### 2006 COLOMÉ MALBEC

WS 92Pts - #38 on Wine Spectator's Top 100 Wines of 2008. Crushed plum and boysenberry aromas followed by a very lush textured palate of warm figs and currant paste backed by mouthwatering hints of mesquite, mineral and Turkish coffee.

**Varietal** Malbec

**Price** 27.99

