

Orangewood Wines

Small Wineries, Great Wines

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Introduction

While we do not guarantee to get a newsletter out every month, we do our best. This one squeaks in under the wire. Leslie flew to Argentina and came back energised by what is happening there. I stayed in Arizona, packed away my sweaters and poured glasses of Naranja for Laurie and myself.

Visit to Mendoza, Argentina

Portfolio Notes - by Leslie Zellmer

I had a once in a lifetime opportunity to visit Mendoza earlier this month with our long time South American importing partner, Copa Fina. Because Argentina is south of the equator it was autumn time (think November). Leaves were changing color and vines were about to take a long nap. The temperatures were much like an Arizona winter, but sure felt colder than that.



We were hosted by three wineries: Bueyes, Siete Finchas and Mosso. We spent time visiting vineyard sites and winery facilities and learning firsthand what, how and why they do what they do. I left there with a full belly, much inspiration for the future of Mendoza, newfound friends and memories to last my lifetime.

My biggest take away was the inherent clean farming practices that are afforded to this region due to its unique climactic conditions. This Andean wine growing region is a dry, desert climate. There is not much in the way of pests to deal with, they don't battle mold and fungus, so there is no need for chemical sprays, making the vineyards organic. (However, many choose not to get certified because the cost is not worth the return.)

The extreme heat in summer is met with cool nights, allowing for longer hang time and beautifully developed fruit. That said, acidity is something that often needs managing. This is accomplished by harvesting some earlier bunches with

higher acid levels and blending the fully ripe, developed fruit to get the best of both worlds.

Mendoza is the poster child for managing scarce water successfully. The melt water comes down the Andes and through a series of basins, canals and acequias (ditches) and gets fed to vineyards and literally every corner of the city. They can be seen along every street, in front of every home and winery. Watch where you step! I wondered how many folks, high on Malbec, have tumbled into one of these. No casualties on this trip!

There was also a noticeable shift from the old guard to the new. There are trends toward natural wines, ancestral methods and using grape varieties that are lesser known but have been growing there for centuries. The future of Mendoza is exciting and I look forward to sharing it with you!

The Rambler

Summer is not quite here yet. I mean in terms of things that we do differently when it is hotter. We have stopped opening the windows overnight, as it is still too hot at bedtime. We don't even open them for a couple of hours in the morning, as it is not cool enough to make it worthwhile. We have not yet made the switch from preferring the second shower because the hot water made it across the house to preferring the first shower to take advantage of the coolness of the water that has been in the pipes under the house. One indicator that we used to use was the switch to Rosé wine. When May or 100F arrived (whichever was sooner) we'd be looking around for a glass of Rosé. Not any more! Rosé is in the fridge and on menus all year round. Rosé, made from different varietals, will pair well with lots of lighter fare. Our favorite pairing is poolside with Lucy, our Black Lab.

The rambler rambles on...

Cheers,

Richard and Laurie
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