

COLLIN'S COLUMN

A hint at what to expect from South America

by Collin Williams



South America is quite possibly the most popular category within the wine world today. In relative terms, if South America's wines were stocks they would resemble Apple or Google – they keep giving and giving and constantly exceeding expectations.

As buyers, it is quite common for us to have 10 appointments a week where our vendors present new products to bring into the Spec's chain. Recently, however, due to the popularity of the trends in the marketplace, 9 out of 10 of these meetings usually revolve

around another new Malbec from Argentina or new product line from Chile. While these meetings can be exhausting for us, what you as a customer of Spec's should realize is that there are some very exciting opportunities to find great wine from South America right now.

Due to our strict standards to select only the best wines in the world to offer to our customers, we are able to filter through the endless meetings and presentations and hone-in on the newest, greatest representations of wine cultures available. We start by comparing the standard wines within a category (like South America) and then build upon the selections to create one that is arguably the best in the United States – albeit the world!

Also, through this constant research and development phase of the business, we are able to operate on the cutting edge of new ideas and trends within each wine category. To us, this is the exciting part of the wine-buying aspect as we can essentially be the first/only retailer with the hottest new wines in the world!

The following list is an example of some of the latest additions to our South American wine category as well as a few old favorites. Enjoy.

Los Vascos Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve 2008 (Colchagua Valley, Chile) - \$14.54

Tradition meets innovation with the Los Vascos winery. After control was handed to the famous Barons de Rothschild (Lafite) of Bordeaux, a revolution of premium wine production began in Chile. Viewed as ambitious pioneers in the quest to produce phenomenal wines, Barons de Rothschild used their long standing traditional methods of winemaking combined with their unbelievable resources to highlight the true sense of terroir in Chile. The Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon shows the influence of Old World Bordeaux refinement and elegance while adhering to Chile's unique terroir which provide interesting flavors and complexity to the wine.



Morande Edicion Limitada Carignan 2006 (Lonconilla Valley, Chile) - \$19.99

The Morande Winery has devoted its core principles to restoring quality, premium wines to Chile through innovative vineyard management practices and outstanding work in the winery. This wine is an extremely rare, extremely limited selection from Chile. Very little Carignan is grown in Chile and yields are minuscule. However, Morande has managed to transform this 35 barrel production into a work of art. Manually harvested, from the small, un-irrigated vineyard Santa Elena de Loncomilla, the 2006 Carignan is truly a wine to behold as witness into the future of Chile's fine wine production.

Vistalba Corte B 2006 (Mendoza, Argentina) - \$16.61

Grapes for this wine are grown at 980 meters above sea level hugging the mountains. It is said that the more a grape vine struggles the better the fruit that will be produced. This is certainly the case here. Harsh alluvial soils comprised of boulders force the vine to dig deep in search of water. The result is a wine that is produced with incredible complexity and a true of Argentina terroir. The blend of 70% Malbec and 30% Cabernet Sauvignon was all hand harvested, adding to the quality control and prestige.

Benegas Sangiovese 2007 (Mendoza, Argentina) - \$18.89

The family behind Vina Benegas is making waves in the wine world with their remarkable devotion to innovative practices and creative thinking. As a family with decades of winemaking experience, Tiburcio and son Pedro have brought a new interest to Argentina by using many grape varietals that were unheard of in the Argentine wine industry. The 2007 Sangiovese is one of those wines in really calling attention to the incredible stylistic capability that the country offers. As a traditional Italian grape varietal, Sangiovese has garnered its own prestige in South America through pioneers like the Benegas winery.

Durigutti Reserva Malbec 2007 (Lujan de Cuyo Mendoza, Argentina) - \$19.94

The Durigutti brothers establish their prowess of high quality winemaking yet again, with the 2007 Reserve. Sourced from two of the finest vineyard sites in Argentina to grow Malbec. La Consulta produces Malbec grapes that are rich in silky tannin structure and Agrelo contributes grapes that inhibit a well defined skin pigment adding to the color and aromas in the wine. This wine is a perfect assembly of prestigious winemaking and outstanding sourcing of fruit.

Vistalba Corte A 2006 (Mendoza, Argentina) - \$49.98

Something must be said about the benefits of low production, intense vineyard management techniques, and high quality grapes being produced. As the vine struggles to produce fruit the result is lower yield and higher quality flavors within each berry. This wine, made of 90% Malbec and 10% Cabernet Sauvignon, is one of the finest examples of Malbec in Argentina. The Pulenta family has been making strides in high quality/low production wines for years and this is one of their finest examples to date! ❖



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