

The best of Chile and Argentina

WELCOME BACK wine lovers. I trust you had a great summer and sipped some decent vino.

While most of you were enjoying the wonderful weather here in Ontario, I was busy gallivanting around the wine world in pursuit of the grape. One of my trips took me down to Chile and Argentina to judge the Catad'Or Grand Hyatt Wine Awards in Santiago, and the Hyatt Wine Awards in Mendoza.

Sixteen well-known and respected wine journalists from around the world gathered in Santiago (July 7-9) and Mendoza (July 11-13) to judge some 792 wines (446 in Chile and 346 in Argentina). We were joined by several local journalists in each country. The wines were all tasted blind except for the vintage and style.

Even though I have been tasting Chilean and Argentinean wines regularly since I judged these competitions last, I couldn't help notice that the overall quality has gone up. Both countries really seem to have come to grips with locating the best vineyard sites for planting specific grape varieties so that they yield optimum fruit. This, along with better clonal selection, has, in my opinion, made the biggest difference.

Since I spent more than half of July 'down under', I had plenty of opportunity to visit many vineyards and estates to see and taste, first hand, this advancement.

In Chile, Sauvignon Blanc, Cabernet Sauvignon and their quintessential red, Carmenere rule. Their blended wines,

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especially the reds, are far superior to what they used to be. A new wine growing area northwest of Santiago, only 14 km. from the Pacific, by the name of the Leyda Valley, is proving to be a great microclimate for Sauvignon Blanc and other varietals that thrive in cooler climates.

Argentina has picked up steam with its claim to fame, Malbec. Beautifully poised and structured samples are emerging everywhere, as are delightful Torrontes. Cabernet Sauvignon and blended reds have improved drastically.

Although it was winter down south of the equator and a particularly cold one at that, numerous "hot" wines received Grand Gold Medals in both competitions (12 in Chile/10 in Argentina). Here's the cream of the crop of all the wines judged. If you can find them, you're in for a tasty treat.

**GIFT CERTIFICATES
are always available**

**Private and Corporate Tastings
available upon request**

Chile:

2005 Estampa Reserva Syrah-Cabernet Sauvignon-Merlot, 2005 Arboleda Carmenere, 2005 Caliterra Tribute Carmenere, 2004 Santa Amalia Sanama Reserva Carmenere, 2006 Ravanal Carmenere, 2005 Miguel Torres Santa Digna Cabernet Sauvignon, 2005 Tutunjian Pacifico Sur Carmenere/Cabernet Sauvignon, 2005 Valdivieso Reserva Merlot, 2004 Botalcura El Delirio Cabernet Sauvignon, 2006 Hacienda Araucano Gran Araucano Chardonnay, 2005 Falernia Reserva Carmenerere-Syrah, 2007 William Cole Mirador Selection Sauvignon Blanc.

Argentina

2005 El Porvenir de los Andes Laborum Malbec, 2003 Bodega Norton Pedriel Centenario, 2003 Bodega Lagarde Henry Cabernet Sauvignon, 2005 Cellarworld Argentina Casa Puel Solares, 2005 Bodega Catena Zapata D.V. Catena, 2005 Familia Blanco Mairena, 2005 Bodega Trapiche Broquel, 2005 Bodega Lagarde Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon, 2003 Bodega y Viñedos Renacer, 1995 Casa Vinicola Reyter Chateau L'Hermitage Pinot Noir (sparkling wine).

Catch Doc's weekly Wine Features on 97.3 FM, EZ Rock radio every Wednesday at approximately 5:15 pm or by clicking the link on his Home page or following the link on the radio's site any time (ezrock.com). Copies of his book are for sale at the Beach Metro office.