



ATAMISQUE, Tupungato, Argentina

Argentina has a growing reputation for producing outstanding wines, which led our buyer Greg to make his first visit to the country to find out more – and the quality of the new varietal and blended wines he tasted surpassed his expectations. While Malbec has led the way, firmly placing Argentina on the wine map, winemakers are now discovering that aromatic Cabernet Franc thrives in Argentina's sunny, altitudinous plateaus, with warm days and cool nights producing grapes with concentration and bright acidity. Even more exciting, sophisticated blends of Cabernet Franc and Malbec demonstrate that Argentina is capable of producing truly exceptional wines with finesse and structure which are far more than the sum of their parts.



Bodega Atamisque

Atamisque is a single estate, situated at the head of the Uco Valley, in the elevated sub-region of Tupungato. This is one of the most exciting areas in the vast Mendoza region and this winery was the stand out of Greg's visit with its creative and innovative outlook and phenomenal wines. The history of the property stretches back to Jesuit settlers who established the Estancia (farm) San José in the mid-17th century. A small village developed around it and the original Estancia Atamisque was built. Now owned by John Du Monceau, whose grandfather was a winemaker in Burgundy, John brought two Frenchmen, Jean-Edouard de Rochebouet to manage the operation and Philippe Caraguet as winemaker. The Gallic influence has brought a focus on vineyard management, terroir and complexity, bringing Old World elegance to ripe New World fruit flavours.

That this approach works is shown by the success of their wines. The 2012 vintage of the 'Serbal' Assemblage, blending Cabernet Franc with Merlot and Malbec, was awarded 95/100 'Outstanding' last year in Decanter and sold out almost instantly. On tasting the follow-on 2013 vintage, Greg decided we had to get some – along with the single varietal Cabernet Franc. So we are delighted to introduce both the 'Serbal' Cabernet Franc and the Assemblage Cabernet Franc blend. These two great discoveries show why Cabernet Franc is going to be the next big thing from Argentina. The styles are different, but these are superb wines with introductory savings of up to 10% a bottle during May and June.

'Serbal' Cabernet Franc 2014, Tupungato, Valle del Uco 14% SL44555 £ 13.95 – Now Just £12.95



This is the second release of Atamisque's unoaked Cabernet Franc, from seven-year-old vines planted high up in the Tupungato region. The grapes go through two selection phases – first of the grape clusters, and then the individual berries - to ensure that only the ripest and healthiest go into the wine. The grapes then have a long cold maceration phase (six days), emphasising the intensity of the fresh fruit flavours. Winemaker Philippe Caraguet is looking for a style similar to a ripe vintage of Loire Cabernet d'Anjou, especially Saint-Nicolas-de-Bourgueil. The result is a wine that combines fantastic structure and concentration with elegance, poise and purity of fruit. Intense ruby in colour with purple glints. Attractive aromas of sweet, ripe red fruits with a herbaceous hint behind the fruit. Notes of wild strawberry, red pepper and graphite on the nicely rounded palate, with structured, elegant tannins and a touch of exotic spice on the long finish. Drink now to 2018+

'Serbal' Assemblage 2013, Tupungato, Valle del Uco 14% SL44446 £15.50 - Now Just £13.95



Tupungato enjoyed increased spring rains in 2013 followed by cooler temperatures throughout summer and into autumn. The conditions ensured healthy vines which have given a good crop with relatively high natural acidity and low sugar levels. The resulting grapes were harvested around a week later than usual, and this longer hang-time has given ripe rounded tannins and fresh lifted aromatics with balanced alcohol. This excellent unoaked blend of Cabernet Franc, Merlot and Malbec has refined aromas of brooding damson and wild strawberry fruit with notes of pencil lead, raspberry, black pepper and violets. The fruit is less effusive than in the Cabernet Franc, with a softer, savoury, spicy character and increased complexity. The palate is well-defined with ripe tannins and vibrant acidity supporting the pure and vivid fruit. Very enjoyable now, this has the structure to cellar well for a decade or more. Drink 2015-2025.