

## 2025 2-Pack #3: Malbec!

**\$49 for the Pair** (regularly \$35 & \$25 respectively)

Like Shiraz to Australia or Pinotage to South Africa, Malbec today is THE grape of Argentina—but it wasn't always that way. First planted in Argentina in 1853, it took over a hundred years for the grape to achieve its contemporary celebrity status. By the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century it was widely planted throughout Mendoza—Argentina's primary winegrowing region—but it mostly featured in blends. In fact, through the 1980s, the trend was to rip up Malbec vines as they were considered too expensive for the bulk volume market that demanded high yielding, easy farming vines. In the early 1990s, though, realizing the potential for Malbec on Mendoza's alluvial soils, some winemakers began investing in infrastructure, changing the ways in which they farmed to focus on quality over quantity. By reducing irrigation to increase concentration, for example, and erecting netting around the vines to protect against the region's frequent hail storms, winemakers were able to considerably increase the quality of the wine they were producing. Despite these significant investments, the wines were still arriving on shelves in the US at under \$10 per bottle; and the full, soft and fruity styles were perfectly attuned to the popular palate at the time. Argentina never looked back.

Fast forward 30 years: Malbec's place in Argentina's viticulture has evolved past the high extract, high oak, high scoring wines that put it on the map. Winemakers have spent the last two decades seeking cooler pockets of Mendoza—farther south and higher up—where it takes longer for the grapes to reach ripeness. The Uco Valley, in the foothills of the Andes in the southwest of Mendoza, has become a favorite. At relatively high altitude (3-4,000 feet above sea level) it has abundant sunshine and a notable diurnal temperature swing (anywhere from 30-50 degrees difference between day and night), allowing the grapes to develop sugar and phenolic ripeness while retaining extraordinary natural acidity. Within the Uco Valley, the Los Chacayes geographical region was established in 2017. Now considered "grand cru" terroir in Mendoza, Los Chacayes altitudes range from 3-4,500 feet above sea level, and soils are varied: predominately alluvial, but we find granite, sand, clay and volcanic rock, too.



### **SuperUco 'Calcáreo--Rio de los Chacayes' Malbec 2020** (\$35 regularly)

The Michelini brothers planted and built their biodynamic winery in Los Chacayes in 2012 with the intent to showcase three unique calcareous soil types from some of the most highly regarded subregions of the Uco Valley. The dodecahedron shaped winery consists of egg-shaped concrete amphoras, *foudres*, barrels, and concrete eggs; the two hectare farm is planted in concentric circles so that the vines have 360 degrees of exposure to the sun. The 'Calcáreo Rio de los Chacayes' Malbec is made from hand-harvested fruit from a single vineyard planted at about 4500 feet above sea level to river rock and chalky sand. The grapes are fermented with native yeast in 3000L amphora for 30 days and then aged in barrel for about a year, resulting in a fresh and bright expression of Malbec that shows lots of dark berry fruit.

### **Corazon del Sol Malbec I.G. Los Chacayes 2020** (\$25 regularly)

In 2008, Dr. Madaiah Revana partnered with winemaker Santiago Achaval to found Corazon del Sol in the heart of what would later become the Los Chacayes region. Produced from their estate vineyard, planted along an ancient riverbed from massale selection cuttings from 100 year old Malbec vineyards in Agrelo and Perdriel, the wine is fermented in whole clusters from native yeasts. It is aged 12 months in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> use French oak barrels before release, highlighting a more luscious expression of red fruit.