

Argentina

Argentina has really been a great tasting experience. I had decided to taste wines from two different categories : medium and premium level.

Argentina is really coming on strong, and righteously so as they are producing many great wines. Rich and round Malbec has been the benchmark style of wine and I still find the greatest wines there to be Malbec, Malbec blends, or Cabernet-based blends.

These wine styles were the focal point of this tasting and I found a lot of marvelous ones. For me the best examples showed the ripeness and structure that one expects from sunny Argentina, but they retained a freshness and tannic structure that we normally find in Bordeaux. And of course, there were many interesting deviations from these styles as well.

I find the potential in Argentina very promising, and I can't wait to go back to taste a lot of wine and to eat a lot of the world's best steak.

ANDREAS LARSSON'S FOOD SUGGESTIONS :

These wines are made for less elaborated food, big meat dishes and of course other classical Argentinean favourites such as empanadas. Generally speaking these wines match well with red meat.

ARGENTINA

TOP PREMIUM MALBECS

2006 & 2007

EXCEPTIONAL WINES

2006 ACHAVAL FERRER FINCA MIRADOR - MALBEC - MENDOZA - Floral and dark fruity, complex and intense with layers of dark berries, violets and some smoky notes, the palate shows an immense concentration and density, good freshness and plenty of ripe tannins, very long persistence, an approaching complexity, great potential, needs some more time to open up.

2006 - TAPIZ BLACK TEARS - MALBEC - TUPUNGATO UCO VALLEY - Elegant nose, black fruity with some mineral notes and damp tobacco, the palate shows an immense concentration, layers of flavours, dark fruit with balanced but highly present tannins, good freshness and a very long finish, well-made with a big potential.

MY TOP PICKS

★ **2006 - BODEGAS Y VINEDOS O. FOURNIER - ALFA CRUX - MALBEC - LUJAN DE CUYO** - Dark fruity and floral nose, blackberry and blackcurrant, very concentrated and dense dark fruit on the palate, some oak in the background, finely tuned tannins, rich and full, yet balanced by a good freshness, really long finish, good potential, should gain a lot from further ageing.

★ **2006 - MELIPAL RESERVE - MALBEC - LUJAN DE CUYO** - Elegant and young nose that displays roasted coffee beans, dark berries, leather, very dense and structured on the palate, perfectly balanced tannins and a good dose of freshness, more Bordeaux-styled with a tannic presence and dense dark fruit, really good length, finely balanced with a good potential, already approachable but should of course gain from some further ageing.

★ **2006 - TERRAZAS DE LOS ANDES - AFINCADO MALBEC - VISTALBA** - Some creamy notes, dark fruit, a touch of new oak, the palate is very dense and full, excellent length

and crispy dark fruit, still a little unresolved, deserves its fair share of time, should open up nicely within the coming years.

★ **2006 - EL PORVENIR DE LOS ANDES - LABORUM - MALBEC - CAFAYATE** - Good purity on the nose, floral with dark fruit, minerals and tobacco, the palate is clean and concentrated, with a good structure, complex with a really long finish, elegant and balanced with crunchy dark fruit and plenty of layers on the aftertaste, excellent potential.

2006 - FOSTER LIMITED EDITION - MALBEC - LUJAN DE CUYO - Spicy and complex nose, wild dark fruit, spice box and tobacco, the palate is full with a silky structure, firm tannins, still needs some time, elegant dark fruit, good length, fine potential.

2006 - CARELLI MALBEC - LA CONSULTA - Quite closed on the nose, dark fruit, plums and some hints of oak, the palate is dense and young with a good notion of dark fresh fruit, good length and spiciness, still needs time to develop complexity, fine potential.

2006 - ANDELUNA GRAND RESERVE MALBEC - TUPUNGATO - Clean nose, dark berries, blackcurrant, some liquorice notes, full-bodied palate, spicy with dark dense fruit, still young, good structure and length, should get some more time and develop well, fine potential.

2006 - GRAN DANTE - MALBEC - LUJAN DE CUYO - Dense dark fruit, blackcurrant and some spicy notes, the palate is dense but not too broad, firm and structured, good length and spicy dark fruit, still young but with a good potential, for development, more Bordeaux-like structure.

2007 - VINA COBOS - BRAMARE MARCHIORI VINEYARD - MALBEC - LUJAN DE CUYO - New oak and dark plums on the nose, dense and concentrated palate, sweet fruit, spicy with balanced tannins, ripe and unctuous, with a fairly long finish.

2007 - ALPAMANTA RESERVA MALBEC - MENDOZA - Wild dark berries, some hints of truffle and smoke, very structured and concentrated palate, dark fruit, silky tannins and layers of complex flavours, very long finish, really good potential, should age very well.

I LIKED

★ **2006 - LA CHAMIZA - MARTIN ALSINA - MALBEC - LUJAN DE CUYO** - New oak and dark fruit on the nose, full-bodied on the palate, plummy dark fruit and some coffee bean flavours, bold and structures with a good length.

2007 - DON MIGUEL ESCORIHUELA GASCON - MALBEC - LUJAN DE CUYO - Very ripe nose, dark fruit, plums and tobacco, sweet palate with dark plums and spices, fairly soft tannins, good length, opulent and rich style.

PREMIUM & MEDIUM WINES PURE MALBEC 2006 & 2007

MY TOP PICKS

★ **2007 - BODEGA RUCA MALEN - KINIEN MALBEC - UCO VALLEY** - Dark and intense fruit on the nose, good complexity and structure on the palate, dense and chewy with finely integrated tannins, rich and mouth-filling with a long finish, well-balanced and fresh on the finish, complex with a good potential.

★ **2006 - LA CELIA HERITAGE - MALBEC - UCO VALLEY** - Elegant nose that displays wild berries, spices, leather and tobacco, the palate is full-bodied with layers of flavours, finely tuned tannins, fresh dark fruit and a long to very long persistence, well-made and balanced, good potential.

2006 - BELASCO DE BAQUEDANO - SWINTO - MALBEC - LUJAN DE CUYO - Dark fruity nose, black cherry, blackcurrant, some earthy notes and tobacco leaf, the palate has a good structure, rich and full with a long aftertaste, fine spiciness on the finish, good density, still young but with a fine potential.

2006 - CARINAE GRAN RESERVA - MALBEC - LUJAN DE CUYO - Intense nose, sweet fruit, wild berries, spices and a dose of complexity, dense and full-bodied, really rich and ripe palate but well-balanced, finely integrated tannins, dark fruit and some mocha flavours, long finish, still young and monolithic but will improve with age.

2006 - ALTA VISTA GRANDE RESERVE TERROIR SELECTION - MALBEC - MENDOZA - Plenty of dark fruit and some smoky notes, spices, leather and dark plum, rich and full on the palate, a good tannic backbone, balanced freshness and a long aftertaste, good density and potential, should go on well.

ARGENTINA - TOP PREMIUM MALBECS

2007 - SEPTIMA - LUJAN DE CUYO - Generous fruit on the nose, dark berries, plums and some leathery notes, structured and full-bodied, smooth tannins and a long persistence, nice spiciness and attractive dark fruit, potent, should gain from some further ageing.

2007 - FRANÇOIS LURTON - MALBEC RESERVA - UCO VALLEY - Some new oak and dark fruit on the nose, rich and full-bodied palate, some spicy notes, dark plums and smooth tannins, good length, balanced and enjoyable.

2007 - DOMAINE JEAN BOUSQUET MALBEC RESERVA - TUPUNGATO - Dark fruit, plummy notes, some herbs and spices, the palate has a good structure, finely tuned tannins, a good notion of freshness and rather long persistence, well-made.

2007 - FINCA EL ORIGEN - GRAN RESERVA MALBEC 2007 - UCO VALLEY - Plenty of dark fruit and some floral notes, rich palate, dark plummy fruit, blackcurrant and a generous spiciness, structured with smooth tannins and a long finish, well-made.

2007 - PASCUAL TOSO MALBEC RESERVA - MAIPU - The nose is young and displays some hints of oak, wild berries, and spices, a whiff of complexity the palate is smooth and fruity with rich dark fruit, well-balanced with smooth tannins, good length and potential.

2007 - DOMAINE VISTALBA - FABRE MONTMAYOU GRAN RESERVA MALBEC - LUJAN DE CUYO - Freshly crushed berries and spice box on the nose, some hints of tobacco as well, good structure on the palate, a firm backbone of tannins, fine spiciness and a long persistence.

2007 - ACHAVA FERRER - MALBEC - MENDOZA - Very sweet and ripe nose, dark plum and blackberry notes, structured and ripe palate, smooth tannins, really long finish, opulent and fruity.

2007 - TERRAZAS DE LOS ANDES RESERVA MALBEC - VISTALBA - Dark berries, a hint of new oak and spices, the palate is structured and full, good concentration and dark fruit, a generous backbone of firm tannins, keeps lingering for a good while, well-made, still young but with a fine potential.

ARGENTINA - TOP PREMIUM MALBECS

2006 - BODEGA CRUZ DE PIEDRA - UMBRALES DE LOS TIEMPOS - MALBEC - Inky dark fruit, tobacco and some hints of new oak, the palate is concentrated and dense, finely integrated tannins, good length, still on the young side, but nicely structured with a good length, potent.

2006 - MELIPAL - IKELLA - MALBEC - LUJAN DE CUYO - More on the dark fruity side, herbs and spices, rich and structured on the palate, finely integrated tannins, good notion of freshness that underlines the dark fruit, long persistence, potent.

2006 - LOS CLOP RESERVE - MALBEC - MAIPU - The nose offers freshly crushed berries, some spicy and tobacco notes, full-bodied palate, well-integrated tannins, smooth structure and a good length, nicely drinkable, yet with a good potential.

2006 - RUTINI WINES - MAPEMA - MALBEC - TUPUNGATO - Sweet red fruit and some herbal notes, fine structure, good notion of freshness and well-balanced tannins and a good length, rather elegant, can still develop with ageing.

2006 - AVE GRAN RISERVA - MALBEC - LUJAN DE CUYO - Dark plums, blackberry and some spicy notes, rich and full-bodied palate, a hint of oak in the background, good notion of freshness, crisp dark fruit, and a good length, well-made, still young and unresolved, age for some more time and it will develop a fine complexity.

2006 - LUIGI BOSCA DOC MALBEC SINGLE VINEYARD - LUJAN DE CUYO - Good purity on the nose, wild berries, some spicy notes and a hint of tobacco, the palate is pure, rich and fruity, still on the austere side with a good freshness and fine tannins, nice drinkability, medium to long persistence.

2006 - RUTINI - MALBEC - TUPUNGATO - Dark fruity nose, a lot of dark fruit, leather, tobacco, fairly elegant, the palate has a good structure, finely integrated tannins, good length, more Bordeaux-liked with balanced tannins and a long persistence.

I LIKED

★ **2007 - DOMAINE JEAN BOUSQUET MALBEC - TUPUNGATO** - Young and fruity on the nose, red currants, some spicy notes, quite Bordeaux-like, good grip on the palate, fine spiciness and a fairly long finish, well-made and drinkable.

★ **2007 - ESCORIHUELA - 1884 RESERVE - MALBEC - LUJAN DE CUYO** - Dark plums, blackcurrant, some earthy notes, good mouthfeel and silky structure, opulent with dark fruit and a fairly long persistence, soft tannins, already enjoyable.

★ **2007 - FINCA FLICHMAN - MISTERIO MALBEC - BARRANCAS** - Sweet red fruit and some herbal notes, good grip on the palate, juicy fruit, balanced freshness and a fine length, nice balance and drinkability.

★ **2007 - ERAL BRAVO - MALBEC - LUJAN DE CUYO** - Some new oak, blackcurrant and dark fruit, the palate is more on the firm side, young tannins, more Bordeaux-like, good length and potential, still needs some time.

★ **2006 - LAS PERDICES - MALBEC - LUJAN DE CUYO** - Sweet plummy fruit, herbal notes, the palate is offering sweet fruit and spices, medium-body and structured, fairly long finish, can still benefit from further ageing.

★ **2006 - LA CELIA RESERVA - MALBEC - UCO VALLEY** - Generous nose, dark fruit, leather and some tobacco notes, good structure on the palate, dark plummy fruit and spices, long persistence, finely integrated tannins, drinks well but could still be kept for some time.

★ **2007 - ALTA VISTA PREMIUM MALBEC - MENDOZA** - Rich nose displaying blackcurrant, blackberries and plums, the palate is rich and full, nicely integrated tannins, fairly long finish, still young but potent.

★ **2006 - FINCA AGOSTINO HNOS. - TELTECA ANTA - MALBEC - MAIPU** - Wild berries, spices and some earthy notes, a whiff of complexity, nice structure, a firm tannic backbone, good freshness and length, still on the young side, will develop well. Slightly more Bordeaux structure with a tannic presence.

★ **2006 - TRIVENTO GOLDEN RESERVE MALBEC - LUJAN DE CUYO** - The nose displays dark fruit, plums, blackcurrant and a hint of vanilla, the palate is rich and structured, good length and dark fruit, some spicy notes on the finish, fairly long persistence.

★ **2007 - SOPHENIA SYNTHESIS - MALBEC - TUPUNGATO** - Generous on the nose, dark fruit and some new oak, mouth-filling and structured, still young with present oak, good length, and a fine spiciness on the finish, needs some more time for sure.

★ **2007 - PASCUAL TOSO ALTA RESERVA MALBEC - BARRANCAS MAIPU** - Floral and dark fruity with some hints of spices and new oak, generous palate, rather full with dark berries and some leathery notes, quite long finish, needs some more time to develop complexity, good material.

★ **2006 - BELASCO DE BAQUEDANO - ARGENTOTTA - MALBEC - LUJAN DE CUYO** - A slight touch of oak and dark berries on the nose, the palate is still young and firm with well-balanced tannins, good length and overall balance, will benefit from some further ageing.

★ **2006 - TRAPICHE - FINCA LAS PALMAS - MALBEC - UCO VALLEY** - Some new oak present, dark berries and spices, young and tight on the palate, structured with a fairly long finish, well-made still young and closed, should go on well.

★ **2006 - BENEGAS ESTATE MALBEC - LUJAN DE CUYO** - Quite closed on the nose, more oak than fruit at present, the palate shows a good concentration and density, finely integrated tannins, good length, on the firm and closed side right now, but with some more time it will open up nicely, good material.

★ **2006 - ESCORIHUELA - LIMITED PRODUCTION - MALBEC - LUJAN DE CUYO** - Dark fruit, spices and some new oak, full-bodied with sweet fruit, slightly pronounced tannins at present, good length, needs some more time to integrate.

★ **2007 - ALPAMANTA ESTATE MALBEC - LUJAN DE CUYO** - Pure and fruity nose, some floral hints and freshly crushed berries, well-balanced with a good freshness and crunchy dark fruit, fairly long.

★ **2007 - MICHEL TORINO ESTATE - DON DAVID MALBEC - CAFAYATE VALLEY** - Dark berries and a touch of new oak on the nose, the palate shows a bright freshness and crisp dark fruit, good structure and length, still young with a fine potential.

2007 - PARTICULAR BIANCHI MALBEC - SAN RAFAEL - Dark plummy fruit and some new oak, sweet palate, moderate tannins and a medium to long finish.

2006 - BODEGAS Y VINEDOS SANTOS J. CARELLI - LATITUD 34 MALBEC - RIVADAVIA - Young and vivid, red cherries, some spicy notes, good structure and generous fruit, soft tannins and a medium length, drinks well now.

2006 - CLOS DE CHACRAS - MALBEC - UCO VALLEY - More on the red fruity side, some new oak and spices, medium-bodied, still fairly young with marked tannins, medium long, still needs some time.

2007 - MENDEL MALBEC - LUJAN DE CUYO - Ripe dark fruit, plums and some spicy notes, the palate is sweet with plummy fruit, very soft tannins, medium finish.

2007 - BELASCO DE BAQUEDANO - MONCAGUA - LUJAN DE CUYO - Sweet and ripe fruit on the nose, soft structured and generous, drinks well now with a medium length.

2007 - BODEGAS Y VINEDOS SANTOS J. CARELLI - CARLA CHIARO - LA CONSULTA - Dark fruit and some oaky notes, quite full-bodied, still young but vivid with a good spiciness on the finish.

2007 - MI TERRUNO UVAS MALBEC - MAIPU - Plummy and sweet fruit, round and fruity on the palate, soft tannins, fair length with some spicy notes.

2007 - BODEGA LAGARDE - ALTAS CUMBRES - LUJAN DE CUYO - Hints of freshly crushed berries, sweet and smooth on the palate, on the lighter side, medium long finish.

2007 - FINCA EL ORIGEN - RESERVA MALBEC - UCO VALLEY - Some dark fruits, plums and violet notes, generous palate with sweet fruit, some spicy and herbal notes, still young with present tannins, needs some more time.

2007 - NIETO SENETINER - RESERVA - MALBEC - LUJAN DE CUYO - Sweet plummy fruit and some spicy notes, round and smooth palate, generous fruit, moderate finish.

2007 - ZUCCARDI SERIE A - MALBEC - LUJAN DE CUYO - Generous fruit, sweet red berries, some spicy notes, medium-bodied and fruity, fine and smooth tannins, good drinkability, rich and warm finish.

ARGENTINA - TOP PREMIUM MALBECS

2007 - LAS PERDICES - MALBEC - LUJAN DE CUYO - Dark fruit, plums, blackberries, rich and full palate, still young with a lot of spices and marked tannins, fair length, should get some more ageing.

2007 - TRIVENTO RESERVE - MALBEC - MENDOZA - Dark fruit, blackcurrant, plums and some spicy notes, the palate shows a good structure, spicy and rich with a fairly good length, still on the young side, but well-made with attractive dark fruit.

2007 - MI TERRUNO RESERVE - MALBEC - LUJAN DE CUYO - Very oaky at present, nice fruit on the palate, should get around with some more time, fair structure and length, wait for the oak to settle.

2007 - BODEGAS SANTA ANA - LA MASCOTA MALBEC - MAIPU - Dark fruit, still a little bit closed on the nose, medium-bodied, with some herbal notes, medium length.

2007 - ZUCCARDI O MALBEC - LA CONSULTA - Generous sweet fruit, some vanilla and new oak, medium-bodied, more on the red fruity side, some spicy notes and a medium length.

2007 - LAGARDE DOC - MALBEC - LUJAN DE CUYO - Very ripe dark fruit, some herbal notes and a touch of oak, rich and unctuous palate, still young with present tannins and some oaky notes, needs some more time.

2007 - BODEGA CORVUS - ALA NEGRA - MALBEC - MAIPU - Red fruity, spicy and herbal nose, medium-bodied palate with a generous spiciness, medium length, well-balanced.

2007 - KAIKEN - MALBEC - FIRST ZONE - MENDOZA - A lot of vanilla and oak on the nose, dark fruity, rich and sweet palate, still young but well-structured, should get some more time for the oak to settle.

2007 - TRIVENTO COLECCION FINCAS SERIE MALBEC - MAIPU - Sweet wild berries, some spicy notes, good grip on the palate, young but smooth tannins, some herbal notes, generous fruit, good length.

2006 - LAGARDE - MALBEC - LUJAN DE CUYO - Dark fruit, hints of prunes, some herbal notes, rich palate, still on the tannic side, medium length, could still develop for some more time.

2006 - BELASCO DE BAQUEDANO - LLAMA - MALBEC - LUJAN DE CUYO - Sweet berries, tobacco and some spicy notes, medium-bodied palate, some herbal notes, medium long finish.

2006 - NORTON RESERVA - MALBEC - LUJAN DE CUYO - Sweet fruity and soft structured, fresh cherry and some spicy notes, mellow palate and a medium length.

2006 - NIETO SENETINER - DON NICANOR - MALBEC - LUJAN DE CUYO - Dark fruity with some leathery notes and vanilla, generous and round palate, smooth with a good length, nicely drinkable.

2006 - FAMILIA BIANCHI - MALBEC - SAN RAFAEL - Still young with some present oak on the nose, dry spices and sweet plummy fruit, some herbal notes and a medium length.

2006 - ZUCCARDI O MALBEC - LA CONSULTA - Rich, ripe and dark fruity, Plummy fruit and some spicy notes, medium long with smooth tannins, some herbal notes on the finish.

2006 - KAIKEN ULTRA - MALBEC - UCO VALLEY - Immensely oaked at present, roasted notes, plenty of dark fruit, nice structure on the palate, just too dominated by oak at present, give it some more time and let the oak settle.

2006 - MELIPAL - MALBEC - LUJAN DE CUYO - Dark fruit and some earthy notes on the nose, the palate is sweet with dark fruit and some oaky notes, slightly marked by the oak at present, would need some more time to let it settle, medium length.

2006 - ERAL BRAVO - MALBEC - LUJAN DE CUYO - Intense nose, some hints of new oak, dark cherries and plums, the palate is smooth and rich with sweet fruit, medium long finish, nicely drinkable now.

2006 - BODEGA CORVUS - ALA NEGRA - MALBEC - MAIPU - Some hints of new oak, dark fruit and spices, the palate is still young with present tannins, some herbal and green notes on the finish, medium length.

2007 - RUCA MALEN MALBEC - LUJAN DE CUYO - Dark and ripe fruit on the nose, blackberries, violets and spices, rich and full palate, soft tannins, good freshness, finishes a little short but shows good fruit and a smooth structure.

2007 - FAMILIA SCHROEDER - SAURUS MALBEC - PATAGONIA - Pure nose, dark fruit, a slight spiciness, well-balanced and generous palate, smooth tannins and dark fruit, medium length.

2007 - FAMILIA SCHROEDER - SAURUS BARREL FERMENTED MALBEC - PATAGONIA - Red cherries, leather and a whiff of new oak on the nose, good freshness on the palate, more red fruity character, generous and fairly long finish, still young, deserves some more time.

2007 - BODEGA DEL FIN DEL MUNDO-PATAGONIA - RESERVA MALBEC - SAN PATRICIO DEL CHANAR - Sweet nose of red fruit, medium-bodied with hints of cherries, spice and a good freshness, fairly long with young and firm tannins, would benefit from some further ageing.

2007 - LAS MORAS MALBEC RESERVA - PEDERNAL VALLEY - Wild berries, herbs and spices on the nose, generous and fruity palate with a good freshness, nice drinkability, fresh and fruity on the aftertaste.

2006 - PERNOD RICARD - GRAFFIGNA MALBEC RESERVE - PEDERNAL VALLEY - Spicy and dark fruity nose, balanced palate, fresh dark fruit, fairly long finish, drinks well already.

2006 - PERNOD RICARD - GRAFFIGNA MALBEC GRAN RESERVE - PEDERNAL VALLEY - Attractive and fruity with crushed berries, soft tannins and fine balance, nicely drinkable with a good freshness.

2007 - ETCHART CAFAYATE - MALBEC - VALLE DE CAFAYATE - Sweet red fruit on the nose, the palate is on the lighter side, nonetheless a pleasant, balanced and easy drinking wine.

2006 - LA PUERTA RESERVA MALBEC - FAMATINA VALLEY - Sweet red fruit, medium-bodied, pleasant and fruity, accessible.

TOP PREMIUM WINES BLENDS 2006 & 2007 MY TOP PICKS

2006 - ACHAVAL FERRER QUIMERA - TUPUNGATO - Fine spiciness, tobacco and dark berries on the nose, lightly smoky, the palate is dense and concentrated, good freshness

and a firm tannic backbone, dark berries and blackcurrant, really long finish, well-balanced, no heaviness or jammy fruit, great potential.

2006 - DOMAINE VISTALBA - FABRE MONTMAYOU GRAND VIN - LUJAN DE CUYO - Floral, mineral and pure nose, dark inky fruit, cherries and blackcurrant, full-bodied and structured palate, good freshness and a firm tannic backbone, still young with some oak presence but well-made and balanced, long persistence, good potential.

2006 - ERAL BRAVO "YBS" - LUJAN DE CUYO - Good complexity on the nose, wild berries, smoke and black truffle, very dense and chewy palate with ripe fruit and a backbone of finely tuned tannins, good length, well-made and potent.

2006 - MENDEL UNUS - LUJAN DE CUYO - Dark fruit, blackcurrant, spices and herbs on the nose, dense palate, good concentration, yet balanced with a good notion of freshness, the tannins are still young and present but well-balanced, long persistence, should definitely gain from further ageing.

2006 - LAS PERDICES TINAMU - LUJAN DE CUYO - Complex nose, some earthy notes, blackcurrant and dark plums, very structured with a firm tannic backbone, elegant fruit, really long persistence, still young but promising, should get some more years of ageing.

2006 - ANDELUNA GRAND RESERVE PASIONADO - TUPUNGATO - Dark fruit and some complex notes on the nose, fairly Bordeaux-like, dense structure on the palate, a fine backbone of firm tannins, dark fruit, spices and blackcurrant, long persistence, well-made and potent.

2007 - ERAL BRAVO "YBS" - AGRELO - Generous and spicy nose, dark berries, some complex notes, full-bodied and structured palate, well-integrated tannins, long aftertaste with plenty of layers, harmonious and well-made.

2007 - GRAN LORCA POETICO PETIT VERDOT - VISTA FLORES - Intense nose, good purity, really inky and dark fruit, blackcurrant, plums and black cherry, just a touch of oak in the background, dense and structured on the palate, finely integrated tannins and a long finish, good potential.

ARGENTINA - TOP PREMIUM WINES BLENDS

★ **2006 - VINA COBOS - BRAMARE MARCHIORI VINEYARD - CABERNET SAUVIGNON - LUJAN DE CUYO** - Nice complexity on the nose, blackcurrant, minerals and some hints of truffle, very dense and structured on the palate, finely polished tannins, good notion of freshness that backs up the dense and dark fruit, silky and really long aftertaste, Bordeaux-like albeit with an extra dimension of ripeness, well-made with a big potential.

2006 - BODEGA DEL FIN DEL MUNDO-PATAGONIA - SPECIAL BLEND - SAN PATRICIO DEL CHANAR - Fresh nose with some earthy notes, liquorice and wild berries, smooth and silky palate, wild fruit, good length and some complex notes, still needs more time, nice minerality on the finish.

2006 - MICHEL TORINO ESTATE - ALTIMUS - CAFAYATE - A complex spiciness and plenty of dark fruit on the nose, structured and dense palate, young tannins and a really long persistence, well-made, still young with a fine potential.

2005 - LA PUERTA GRAN RESERVA - FAMATINA VALLEY - Dark and dense fruit, good purity, full-bodied with finely tuned tannins, good length, still young should develop well.

2005 - ALTA VISTA ALTO - MALBEC - CABERNET SAUVIGNON - MENDOZA - Still very young and dense, smoky and meaty, slightly dominated by oak at present, big concentration and length, very potent but really young, should have a great future.

2005 - BODEGA LUIGI BOSCA / FAMILIA ARIZU - ICONO - MALBEC - CABERNET SAUVIGNON - LUJAN DE CUYO - Creamy and smoky on the nose, plenty of dark fruit, still rather young and closed on the nose, with some air it opens up and shows a nice complexity, the palate is really dense and thick, balanced by a firm tannic backbone, very long with a big potential.

2005 - DOMINIO DEL PLATA WINERY - SUSANA BALBO BRIOSO - CABERNET SAUVIGNON - MALBEC - LUJAN DE CUYO - Elegant and Bordeaux-like nose, fine spices, wild berries and dark plum, the palate is rich and dense, dark fruit backed up by nice and firm tannins, very good length, still young with a promising future, should age well for a long time.

2005 - ENZO BIANCHI - CABERNET SAUVIGNON - MALBEC - MERLOT - SAN RAFAEL - Elegant and Bordeaux-like nose, fine spices, wild berries and dark plum, the palate is rich and dense, dark fruit backed up by nice and firm tannins, very good length, still young with a promising future, should age well for a long time.

2004 - BODEGA MONTEVIEJO - LINDA FLOR - MALBEC - UCO VALLEY - dark fruity nose, blackcurrant and plums, rich and structured palate, good length, smoothly developed and finely drinkable right now.

I LIKED

★ **2006 - LA CELIA SUPREMO - UCO VALLEY** - Dark fruit and some floral notes, blackberries, spice and violets, the palate is still young and dense, good concentration and spicy dark fruit, long finish, still young with some more need for ageing.

★ **2006 - ANTUCURA - UCO VALLEY** - Generous sweet fruit, plums, herbs and leather, the palate has rich fruit, round and voluptuous, long finish, smooth and very drinkable.

2006 - TRAPICHE - ISCAY - MENDOZA - Dark plums, some smoky notes and spicy new oak, rich and full-bodied palate, good length and a rigid structure, slightly dominated by oak at present but should gain with some more ageing.

2006 - MAGDALENA TOSO - MAIPU - Dark and dense fruit, aromatic with some undertones of new oak, good concentration, still dominated by oak on the palate, good length, should get some more time to gain complexity.

2004 - BODEGA NORTON - PERDRIEL SINGLE VINEYARD BLEND - LUJAN DE CUYO - Rich and structured, still with some present oak, dark fruits, plums, blackcurrant and mocha on the palate, good length, still young, finely integrated tannins, should go on well.

2006 - SOPHENIA SYNTHESIS THE BLEND - TUPUNGATO - Sweet fruit on the nose, some herbal notes, rich and opulent palate with plenty of sweet fruit, soft tannins and a good length.

2006 - BENEGAS LYNCH MERITAGE - LUJAN DE CUYO - Slightly smoky, a hint of new oak and dark plummy fruit, rich palate, dark fruit and mocha flavours, spicy aftertaste, still on the young side.

PREMIUM & MEDIUM WINES BLENDS

2006 & 2007

MY TOP PICKS

2006 - FELIPE RUTINI ENCUENTRO - TUPUNGATO

- Nice complexity on the nose, dark fruit, cedar wood and tobacco, the palate is medium-bodied and elegant, nicely drinkable with refreshing tannins, good length and complexity, Bordeaux-like structure and a good potential.

2006 - DIAMANDES - UCO VALLEY - Some earthy notes, minerals, black fruit, blackcurrant and some oak on the nose, full-bodied, still young and monolithic but with a good structure and length, fine potential.

2006 - QUIETO - LUJAN DE CUYO - Red fruity nose, some earthy notes and hints of spices, the palate shows ripe fruit and a tannic backbone, good notion of freshness, long aftertaste, elegant and structured with a good potential.

2007 - CLOS DE LOS SIETE - MENDOZA - Fine purity on the nose, clean dark fruit, some mineral notes, dense and concentrated palate, packed with dark fruit, well-balanced tannins that adds structure and length, good persistence, fine potential.

2007 - ALPAMANTA ESTATE CABERNET SAUVIGNON - LUJAN DE CUYO - Bordeaux-like on the nose, blackcurrant, herbs and dark plums, the palate is well-balanced with a good freshness and firm tannins, dark and crunchy fruit, good length, nice drinkability and a refreshing aftertaste, good potential.

2006 - ANTUCURA - CALVULCURA - UCO VALLEY - Good complexity on the nose, some hints of truffle, dark berries, full-bodied and structured palate, refreshing and fine tannins, good persistence and a fine potential, excellent drinkability.

2006 - RUCA MALEN CABERNET SAUVIGNON

2006 - LUJAN DE CUYO - Dark berries, blackcurrant and herbs, some creamy notes, nice palate with dense dark fruit and refreshing tannins, good length.

2007 - BODEGA FAMILIA ZUCCARDI - SANTA JULIA MAGNA CORTE - AGRELO & LA CONSULTA & SANTA ROSA - Some complexity and spiciness on the nose, good density, full-bodied with ripe dark fruit, spicy aftertaste, fairly long, attractive and spicy with nice fruit.

2007 - CARINAE PRESTIGE - CRUZ DE PIEDRA - Dark and dense fruit, some new oak, still young on the palate, good density, ripe black fruit, smooth tannins and a long finish, should develop more complexity with age, good potential.

2006 - FRANÇOIS LURTON - FINCA ALCAYATA - UCO VALLEY - Excellent nose, generous dark fruit, spices, blackberries and some floral notes, the palate is rich and dense with black fruit, good freshness and perfectly integrated tannins, long, generous and spicy aftertaste, well-made, already drinkable but with a fine potential.

2006 - VINA COBOS - BRAMARE LUJAN DE CUYO - CABERNET SAUVIGNON - LUJAN DE CUYO - Freshly crushed berries, blackcurrant and some herbal notes on the nose, a touch of complexity as well, rich and warm palate, yet balanced with a long and pure aftertaste, pleasurable with generous fruit.

2007 - DOMINIO DEL PLATA WINERY - SUSANA BALBO VIRTUOSO (LATE HARVEST) - LUJAN DE CUYO - Dark and earthy nose, liquorice, dark berries and some tobacco notes, sweet and luscious palate, good length, not too sweet or heavy.

2005 - EL PORVENIR DE LOS ANDES - AMAUTA - MALBEC - CABERNET - CAFAYATE - Quite meaty and Rhone-like, with some smoky notes and a good spiciness, the palate is rich and full, good grip and silky tannins, long and spicy finish.

2005 - TAPIZ SELECCIÓN DE BARRICAS - UCO VALLEY - Clean dark fruit, nice chewy tannins, good concentration and density, keeps lingering for a good while, some spicy notes on the aftertaste, well-made and balanced with a complex aftertaste.

I LIKED

★ **2005 - GIMENEZ RIILI RESERVA - CABERNET SAUVIGNON - MERLOT - MALBEC - UCO VALLEY** - Some complex notes on the nose, dark fruit, spices and tobacco, the palate is full with fairly smooth tannins, nice development and drinkability.

ARGENTINA - PREMIUM & MEDIUM WINES BLENDS

★ **2006 - RUTINI - CABERNET SAUVIGNON - MALBEC - TUPUNGATO** - Wild berries and a light smokiness on the nose, rather full with sweet fruit and some complex notes, one gets a good notion of freshness on the finish, finely integrated tannins, medium to long finish.

★ **2007 - RUCA MALEN PETIT VERDOT - UCO VALLEY & LUJAN DE CUYO** - Dark fruity, spicy with hints of black cherry and blackcurrant, the palate is still young and firm, good density and fruit, should get some more ageing to soften, fine length.

★ **2006 - ANTUCURA - BARRANDICA - UCO VALLEY** - Nice nose that displays wild berries and some hints of black truffle, smooth palate with sweet fruit, soft tannins and a medium to long finish, well-made with a nice drinkability.

★ **2006 - BODEGAS SANTA ANA - UNANIME - UCO VALLEY** - Dark fruity and spicy nose, generous palate that offers ripe fruit, soft tannins and a good length, drinks well now but will benefit from further ageing.

★ **2007 - TRIVENTO AMADO SUR - LUJAN DE CUYO** - Red fruity, spicy, attractive fruit, rather full-bodied with crunchy fruit, fairly long, well-made.

★ **2007 - TANINO ARGENTINA - EL ROSAL RESERVE - CABERNET SAUVIGNON - LUJAN DE CUYO** - Dark fruit, blackcurrant and herbs on the nose, rich and full palate, ripe fruit, a good tannic backbone that backs up the sweet fruit, fairly long, nice drinkability.

2007 - FINCA FLICHMAN - EXPRESIONES MALBEC-CABERNET SAUVIGNON - TUPUNGATO - Sweet nose, strawberry fruit, medium-bodied palate, round and accessible, smooth tannins and a medium length.

2006 - FINCA FLICHMAN - PAISAJE DE TUPUNGATO - TUPUNGATO - Sweet fruit, slightly jammy, mouth filling and attractive sweet fruit, a hint of spiciness on the finish.

2006 - LAS PERDICES RESERVA DON JUAN - LUJAN DE CUYO - Opulent and sweet fruity, the fruit is more on the jammy side, some spicy oak and a medium to long finish, accessible and fruity.

2007 - DOMAINE JEAN BOUSQUET MERLOT RESERVA - TUPUNGATO - More red fruity nose, some spicy and herbal notes, generous palate, sweet fruit, medium long finish, drinks well today.

2005 - DONA PAULA SERIES SALIX VINEYARD - TANNAT - MALBEC - LUJAN DE CUYO - Slightly smoky and meaty nose, dark fruit, still fairly marked tannins, structured with a good length.

2007 - FINCA AGOSTINO HNOS. - TELTECA GRAN RESERVA - MAIPU - Lightly smoky with freshly crushed berries, some spicy and herbal notes, medium-bodied, still young with chewy tannins, medium to long finish.

2006 - NIETO SENETINER - DON NICANOR - LUJAN DE CUYO - Dark plums and chocolate on the nose, dense and dark fruity palate, well-balanced tannins, fairly long finish, good drinkability.

2006 - BODEGA BENEGAS - DON TIBURCIO - MAIPU - Sweet fruit, more on the jammy side, round and opulent fruit on the palate, some green notes and young tannins, moderate finish.

2006 - BODEGA BENEGAS - FINCA LIBERTAD BENEGAS ESTATE - LUJAN DE CUYO - Fairly elegant on the nose, dark berries, plums and blackcurrant, still young with present tannins and some new oak, good structure and a fairly long finish.

2007 - ALTA VISTA ATEMPORAL BLEND - MENDOZA - Dark berries, black pepper and spices on the nose, generous and full palate, smooth tannins, a lot of spiciness on the finish, some herbal notes.

2006 - BODEGAS Y VINEDOS O. FOURNIER - B. CRUX - LUJAN DE CUYO - Sweet dark fruit on the nose, plummy and sweet palate, rich and generous, soft tannins and a medium length, nicely drinkable with charming fruit.

2006 - LA CELIA ELITE - UCO VALLEY - Sweet nose of blackberries and plums, round and opulent palate with soft tannins, easy drinking and fruit driven.

2006 - SEPTIMA GRAN RESERVA - LUJAN DE CUYO - Dark chocolate, plums and some new oak, the palate is rich and concentrated, still fairly marked by oak, spicy and long finish, soft tannins and sweet fruit, should still deserve some more time.

2006 - MASSI TUPUNGATO - VIGNETI LA ARBOLEDA - CORBEC - TUPUNGATO & UCO VALLEY

- Some spicy liquorice notes and a plethora of dark ripe fruit, the palate is sweet and rich, fairly marked in alcohol, almost Port-like, opulent and nice if you like strength and sweetness but I doubt that this will age well.

2007 - CARINAE GRAN RESERVA - LUJAN DE CUYO

- Ripe dark fruit and a generous spiciness, soft and sweet palate, easy drinking with nice fruit and a fair length.

2008 - FINCA LA CHAMIZA POLO PROFESIONAL - CABERNET SAUVIGNON - MAIPU

- Generous and sweet nose, hints of black currants, round and fruity palate, some tannic structure and a medium length.

2006 - TANINO ARGENTINA - EL ROSAL CLASSIC - CABERNET SAUVIGNON - LUJAN DE CUYO

- Generous nose, good purity, dark fruit, blackcurrant and some herbal notes, good concentration on the palate, plenty of sweet and dark fruit, soft tannins, warm aftertaste.

2006 - ERAL BRAVO - CABERNET SAUVIGNON - LUJAN DE CUYO

- Creamy nose, blackcurrant, herbs and spices, some leathery notes, rich and full palate, sweet fruit, some herbal notes, round and unctuous with a medium long finish, drinks well now.

2006 - TRAPICHE - FINCA LAS PALMAS - CABERNET SAUVIGNON - MENDOZA

- New oak, vanilla and dark fruit, the palate is full, still dominated by new oak, some spicy notes, good structure, needs some more time, for the oak to settle.

2007 - BODEGA DEL FIN DEL MUNDO-PATAGONIA - NEWEN - SAN PATRICIO DEL CHANAR

- Freshly crushed berries, some new oak and spices, the palate is full with dark fruit and young, chewy tannins, some herbal notes on the finish, good freshness and a medium length.

2006 - BODEGA NON - MALMA RESERVA - PATAGONIA

- The nose is slightly marked by oak, dark fruity and rather full with a good freshness, still a little marked by oak, would need some more time, good concentration and fruit.

2006 - BODEGA DEL FIN DEL MUNDO-PATAGONIA - GRAN RESERVA - SAN PATRICIO DEL CHANAR

- Red fruity, some spicy notes, the palate is medium-bodied, still young and firm, fairly long, needs some more time.

2006 - FINCA LAS MORAS - LAS MORAS BLACK LABEL - CABERNET SAUVIGNON - CABERNET FRANC - ZONDA VALLEY

- Lean - Earthy and spicy notes, more red fruity, medium-bodied and fresh palate, generous and easy drinking.

2006 - MICHEL TORINO ESTATE - CICLOS MALBEC MERLOT - CAFAYATE

- Sweet and generous fruit on the nose, the palate is slightly lighter yet with a nice fruit and some spicy notes on the aftertaste, balanced and drinkable.