



Hedonist's Gazette

Embassy of Argentina May 2011 Jay Miller

The setting was impressive, a splendid old building filled with antiques. The occasion was Roberto de la Mota's first trip outside of Argentina after a terrible accident in which he lost the use of his legs. Also present was Annabelle Sielecki, owner of Mendel and wife of the Ambassador. Senor de la Mota was the original winemaker at Cheval des Andes, the Argentina outpost of Cheval Blanc and now winemaker/partner in Mendel in Mendoza.

Malbec is what Mendoza is all about so it's easy to overlook Mendel's superb white wine. The **2009 Semillon** received some barrel fermentation. Smooth textured, fragrant, and with the oak nicely integrated, it paired nicely with the Calamari and Octopus salad.

Argentina does lamb well but I would have died for a grilled Argentina free-range ribeye to accompany the Mendel reds. The **2008 Unus** is deep purple, mouth-filling, ripe, and rich. The **2007 Unus** strikes me as a bit more structured and lengthy but not as extracted and layered as the **2006 Unus**. The **2005 Unus** is displaying a bit more elegance as well as impeccable balance. The **2004 Unus** displays the greatest minerality and plenty of spice. These are all youthful wines that will easily enjoy lifelines of over 20 years. The scores next to the wines are what I gave them in formal reviews published in The Wine Advocate. On this evening, my scores for all of the wines were higher, a clear demonstration of the effects of context, terrific company and a splendid setting.

It was great to see Roberto de la Mota in such fine spirits. I look forward to visiting the Bodega in September, 2011. As for Annabelle Sielecki, she too is back in Argentina since her husband received a promotion to a very high position in the government.

I would also be remiss in not giving the chef sufficient credit for a beautifully prepared dinner. It all came together very nicely on this evening.

Embassy of Argentina, 1600 New Hampshire Ave, NW, Washington, DC 20009

Food:

Calamari and Octopus Salad
Anchovies and Green Peppers over a Chess Board
Lamb a la Patagonia
Assortment of Argentinean desserts

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VINTAGE	WINE	RATING
2009	Mendel Semillon	90
2008	Mendel Unus	92
2007	Mendel Unus	94
2006	Mendel Unus	93
2005	Mendel Unus	94
2004	Mendel Unus	NR

Note to Readers about the Hedonist's Gazette

The abbreviated, spontaneous, and visceral tasting notes and numerical ratings in this section should not be confused with professional, structured tasting notes from specific peer group tastings or cellar tastings. The Hedonist's Gazette notes emerge from casual get-togethers, with the food and company every bit as important as the wines. I do not consider these tasting comments as accurate or as pure in a professional sense, but they are part of a wine's overall record. In short, focus, so critical in a professional tasting without food or other distractions, is clearly on a different level in such "fun gatherings." —Robert M. Parker, Jr.