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Salentein Malbec 2004 Valle de Uco

publication date: 20 jun 06  

I was asked to speak at last Friday's Barcelona Wine Festival on the Challenge of the New World. As is always the case in my experience at these events, this generally comes down to a wine tasting with a few words either side of the wines. The point I made strongly to the audience, many of whom were Spanish wine producers, was that they should be aware that New World wine producers are just as obsessive as they are just as dedicated to produce better wine with every vintage.

FYI the wines were:

Villa Maria Sauvignon Blanc, Graham Vineyard 2003 Marlborough, New Zealand
Marimar Torres Pinot Noir, Don Miguel Vineyard 2001 Russian River Valley, California
Felton Road Pinot Noir, Black 3 2004 Central Otago, New Zealand
Salentein Malbec 2004 Valle de Uco, Argentina
Altair 2002 Cachapoal, Chile
Zondernaam 2002 Stellenbosch, South Africa
Opus One 2000 Napa Valley, California
Penfolds Grange 1998 South Australia

A couple of other notable Argentine MALBECS

to have come my way recently are from **Mendel** and **Antis** from Andean Wineries. **Mendel** is a joint venture between the Argentine Sielecki family and **Roberto de la Mota**, the celebrated winemaker who is responsible for LVMH's Terrazas de los Andes and Cheval des Andes which involves Pierre Lurton of Ch Cheval Blanc. **Mendel Unus 2004 Mendoza** is a very sophisticated, delicious blend of 70 per cent up to 80 year-old **Malbec** vines and **Cabernet Sauvignon** – even if the proposed selling price when it is launched in September of over £25 a bottle seems pretty steep to me. While there are 1,600 cases of **Unus**, there are 2,500 cases of **Mendel Malbec 2004 Mendoza** which presumably helps bring the price down to about £14 a bottle. The wine is definitely finer than most, almost transparent which is quite an achievement for wine made somewhere this hot. These wines are not yet available commercially but the **Unus** is certainly of interest.

Antis Malbec 2003 Mendoza is less distinctive, if beautifully packaged. It looks as though it is worth more than the £7-odd asked for it in the UK by the likes of The Wine Press of Carlisle and Hedley Wright of Bishop's Stortford. This is the rich and velvety rendition of Argentine Malbec – much better for a barbecue or cold weather than for sipping in hot, humid conditions. According to [winesearcher.com](#) it's available in a wide range of countries. The Vineyard of Virginia in the US apparently asks a mere \$9.99 for it.

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