



Tim's Wine Market

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By J.P. Donnelly-Davis

When it comes to winemaking in Argentina the story is often one sided; full-bodied Malbecs from high elevation, warm climate vineyard sites. To the credit of the producers, over the past two decades these are the wines lauded by critics and the market buys them up. However, far to the south of Mendoza, in the region of Patagonia, one can find a very different movement taking shape. Argentina's southern provinces are characterized by cooler temperatures and vineyards planted at much lower altitudes. This allows the producers to craft wines that are very different from those from Mendoza. This month, we will look at two great examples, from the same winery, that show a more elegant side of the wines of Argentina.

Wapisa is a new project, as of the 2017 vintage, owned by Patricia Ortiz, a nephrologist with a passion for wine. She is well known for her other wineries in Mendoza, Tapiz and Zolo, where she has racked up big scores for her powerful reds. She came to Patagonia to craft wines in this cooler climate and show the effects of this utterly unique terroir. Unlike many others who have begun wine projects in Patagonia in the regions interior, Patricia is the only one to have planted her vineyards close to the coast. In fact, Wapisa means "whale" in the indigenous Yamanas language of the people of Tierra del Fuego, and she chose the name because they often swim offshore of her vines.

There are distinct advantages to producing wine in coastal Patagonia, including limestone soils, cool maritime breezes, and sunshine without the intense heat of the inland provinces. The mouth of the Rio Negro River provides plenty of water, an essential resource that can be scarce in many Argentina growing regions. In addition, the cool, dry climate prevents problems such as over-ripeness and fungal disease, which reduces the need for chemical intervention in the winery. The entire operation is designed to be as environmentally friendly as possible, and under Patricia's guidance has become an important member of several maritime conservation initiatives.

As far as viticulture is concerned, the winery's technical consultant is none other than the legendary Jean-Claude Berrouet, who spent 4 decades as the head winemaker for Chateau Petrus in Bordeaux, and guided Napa's Dominus Estate onto the market, producing the first 20 vintages of their Bordeaux-style blend starting in 1983. Though officially retired from winemaking, Jean-Claude still consults for a number of wineries in the New World which produce Bordeaux varieties, and his lower-intervention style meshes well with that of head winemaker Fabian Valenzuela. Together, the two have been dedicated to producing Bordeaux-style wines in Patagonia since 2017.

2020 Wapisa Malbec - \$29

Their Malbec sourced entirely from the winery's estate vineyard, Finca Los Acantilados, and is an example of how this variety performs in a cool-climate. This one is rich like a New World example but also shares a savory, structure commonly found in Old World examples from Malbec's ancestral home in Cahors, France. Grown at low altitudes a mere 15 miles from the Atlantic Ocean, the fruit used in this Malbec is picked early to ensure natural acidity and, in most vintages, to keep the alcohol level under 14%. After harvest, Jean-Claude and Fabian eschew many of the "modern" methods used in Argentine winemaking, preferring a more nuanced, Old World-inspired approach.

In keeping with this theme, the fruit is fermented in stainless steel tanks without the use of temperature control, which allows natural malolactic conversion to occur. Once dry, the wine is racked to gently used oak barrels for 8 months before bottling. When you open this wine, you will want to decant for at least half an hour. In addition, this wine benefits from being served at cellar temperature, about 60 degrees Fahrenheit. On the palate, notes of fresh blackberry, dried blueberry, black olive, and rosemary stems make this an ideal food pairing wine. Drink now through 2026 with duck confit, beef Burgundy, or seared ribeye steaks.

2019 Wapisa Cabernet Sauvignon - \$29

Also sourced exclusively from Finca Los Acantilados, this wine is deeply in touch with its Bordeaux roots, a testament to Jean-Claude's extensive winemaking experience in the region. Harvested early to ensure that the Cabernet Sauvignon retains all of its natural acidity, this wine ferments in stainless steel, similar to the Malbec, and completes malolactic

conversion. The 8 months it spends in barrel are for maturation purposes, rather than to mask any flaws or imbue the wine with flavors of toasted oak. The resulting wine is elegant, drier, and higher in natural acidity than many New World examples of this variety.

When you open this wine, similar to the Malbec described above, you will want to decant for at least half an hour and serve at cellar temperature, around 60 degrees Fahrenheit. On the palate, notes of blackcurrant preserve, dried tamarind, preserved orange peel, and milk chocolate set this wine apart from its contemporaries and allows for a wide variety of food pairings. Drink now through 2026 with steak fajitas, pasta carbonara, or grilled chicken with garlic and rosemary.

Stuffed Pork Loin

If there is one thing I can say about visiting Mendoza, aside from how great the wines are, it is that you eat a lot of meat. What struck me was how many ways they crafted different dishes, including their stuffed pork loins. Normally I find this cut to be too dry, but stuffing it eliminates the problem and makes every bite a delight. This is a dish that is typically prepared for celebrations, and it makes a lot, so plan on sharing with good friends and family. - **Tim Varan**

Chimichurri

3 c parsley, lightly packed

1/3 c oregano leaves, fresh

7 cloves of garlic, peeled

1½ tsp ground cumin

1½ tsp ground ginger

¾ tsp red pepper flakes

¼ c red wine vinegar

¾ c extra virgin olive oil

kosher salt and pepper to taste

Roast

1 tbsp ground cumin

1 tbsp ground ginger

2 tsp light brown sugar

kosher salt and pepper

4 lb boneless center cut pork loin

6 oz capicola, thinly sliced

½ c green olives, pitted and chopped

1½ c roasted red peppers, drained and chopped into 1 inch pieces

⅓ c panko bread crumbs

3 hard cooked eggs, peeled, cut in half

1½ tbsp extra virgin olive oil

To prepare the **chimichurri**, in a food processor, combine the parsley, oregano, garlic, cumin, coriander, pepper flakes, ½ teaspoon each salt and black pepper. Process until finely chopped, 30 to 45 seconds. Scrape the bowl, add the vinegar and oil, then process until as smooth as possible, 45 to 60 seconds. Measure ¼ cup of the chimichurri into a small bowl and set aside; transfer the remainder to a serving bowl; cover and refrigerate until ready to serve.

Heat the oven to 350°F with a rack in the lower-middle position. Line a rimmed baking sheet with extra-wide foil and a fit with a wire rack. To prepare the roast, in a small bowl, stir together the cumin, coriander, brown sugar, 1½ teaspoons each salt and pepper. Set aside.

Cut eight 24-inch lengths of kitchen twine. Place the roast fat side down on a cutting board, perpendicular to the counter's edge. With a sharp boning or carving knife, cut along the length of the roast, down its center, stopping about ½ inch from the bottom. Starting at the base of the cut and with the knife blade held as parallel as possible to the cutting board, slice along the length of the roast, unrolling the meat with your free hand as you go. Continue cutting and unrolling the meat until the half is a flat, fairly even surface ½ to ¾ inch thick. Rotate the roast 180° and repeat with the second side. If there are areas that are slightly too thick, use a meat mallet to pound those areas to the same thickness.

Season the pork on both sides with the spice mixture. Place the meat fat side down and with a short side nearest you. Spread the reserved ¼ cup chimichurri evenly on the meat. Shingle on the capicola slices, covering the entire surface, then sprinkle evenly with

the olives. Lay the red peppers on top covering the entire surface. Sprinkle evenly with the panko. Place the egg halves cut sides down in a row about 3 inches from the bottom edge. Lift the bottom edge over the eggs and continue rolling the meat into a tight cylinder. Position the cylinder seam side down and tie at even intervals with the twine, then snip off excess twine. If any bits of filling fall out, simply tuck them back in. Brush the roast on all sides with the oil.

Transfer roast fat side up to the prepared baking sheet. Bake until the top is nicely browned and center of the roast reaches 135°F, 1½ to 2 hours. Let rest on the wire rack for 30 to 60 minutes. Remove the chimichurri from the refrigerator about 30 minutes before serving. Cut the roast into ½-inch-thick slices, removing the twine as you go. Arrange the slices on a platter, sprinkle with salt and serve with chimichurri.