

Grape Bio: Malbec

Color: Red - inky dark in hue, Malbec leaves behind a vibrant stain on the glass

Aromas: Medium - depending on the terroir, aromas include dark berries, plum, violets, chocolate and baking spices

Feel: Argentinean Malbec is soft, with a plush texture and ripe tannins. The wines tend to have juicy fruit notes and a rich, lingering finish.

Whereabouts: Argentina. The Mendoza region has become ground zero for Malbec production. It is a thin-skinned grape with large berries, needing lots of sunlight and heat to reach full maturity – perfect for the high-altitude sun in Argentina. Malbec can also be found in France (especially Cahors, Bordeaux) and Chile.

Quantity: Approaching 100,000 acres in Argentina

Style: The Malbec grape is a thin-skinned grape and needs more sun and heat than Cabernet Sauvignon or Merlot to mature. Style can vary based on the vineyard location and the management of the vineyard – from deep, structured wines to fruit-driven styles that are easy to drink within a year.

History: Malbec is one of the six grapes allowed in the blend of red Bordeaux wine. However, after the disastrous 1956 frosts, Malbec plantings and winemaking has dwindled in France (other than in Cahors).

Malbec was one of a number of vines introduced into Argentina in 1868 by Miguel Pouget, a Frenchman who had been hired to help improve the country's wines. Argentine Malbec has smaller grapes and tighter bunches than the type grown in Cahors.

By 1950, Malbec was the most-planted variety in Argentina (120,000 acres). In the 70's and 80's, Argentines demanded lower priced wine (think jug wine) and Malbec fell out of favor. Now, with many new consumers discovering Malbec (i.e. Americans), Malbec has once again found its mojo.

Aliases: **Auxerrois** or **Côt Noir** in Cahors, called **Malbec** in Bordeaux, and **Pressac** in other places. The Oxford Companion to Wine lists some 400 synonyms for Malbec so it must have been planted widely at some point.



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