

Tasting Monterey

A WINE ENTHUSIAST'S QUARTERLY JOURNEY THROUGH MONTEREY'S WINE COUNTRY

COMING EVENTS

Every Fridays Wine Bar

A Taste of Monterey
Cannery Row
5:00pm-8:00pm*
Join us every Friday evening from 5pm to 8pm. Start your weekend off with a relaxing view, live music, great food and a glass of Monterey's finest.



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Sun-Wed 11am-7pm
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*No new tastings after 6:00pm

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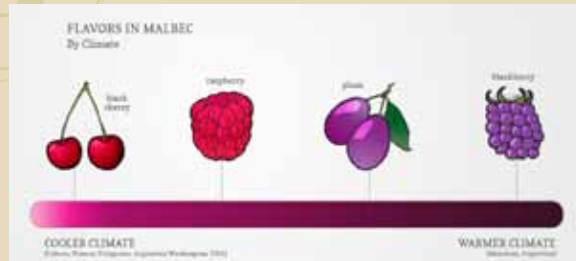
THE Allure OF Malbec

Non-traditional varietal wines are kind of in these days...as you've probably noticed. Shelves are stocked with not just Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Pinot Noir, or red blends, but with varietals many people are not so familiar with. This includes varietals such as Mourvedre, Tempranillo, Cabernet Franc, Grenache, and...Malbec.

In its homeland of France, one would never see Malbec as a varietal wine. Sacrebleu! Quelle horreur of a thought! But here in California (including Monterey County) and Argentina, Malbec varietal wines are more than proving themselves. In fact, whereas just a few years ago Malbec was a lesser known varietal, it is quickly growing in popularity and now stands amongst its Bordeaux brothers of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot.

Malbec's fruit is thin-skinned, robust in tannins, colored inky dark, sun-loving, and fragile to grow...quite a combination in the viticultural world. Wines produced from Malbec are dark and rich with boldly purple hues. Malbec wines typically have intense aromas of dark berries, cherries, and plums.

As for the grape's origins, a popularly held belief is that the Malbec grape originated in the northern Burgundy region of France and that it was originally named Côt. However, the grape found its traditional home southwest of Burgundy in the Bordeaux region, where it is commonly blended primarily with famed Bordeaux red varietals Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, and with lesser-known Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot, or Carmenère.



wines—70% minimum. Cahors' Malbecs are often blended with Merlot or Tannat in order to round out the region's infamously robust wines.

Malbec continues to be grown and blended into succulent Bordeaux blends, however less so as in decades past. But Malbec was not content to rest in Europe and like a curious traveler the grape made its way across the Atlantic and landed in both North and South American vineyards.

Argentina has arguably become Malbec's truest home (no disrespect to la France!). The grape literally thrives there and it's quite possible that the grape found its favorite terroir in Argentina. While Malbec has lost fame and acreage in France in the last fifty years, it has experienced the opposite in Argentina, where it is the most widely-planted red grape varietal and has become something of a national grape.

Closer to home, Malbec is gaining in popularity in California's wine growing regions, Monterey included.

Continued Inside



RESERVE WINE SELECTIONS

GALANTE - 2010 *Malbec*



Winery: The Galante Family has a long history in the Monterey area. Owner Jack Galante's great grandfather, J.F. Devendorf, was the founder of the town of Carmel. He later built the Pine Inn and the prestigious Highlands Inn. In 1969, Jack's parents purchased a 700-acre cattle ranch in rustic Carmel Valley. While still maintaining a working cattle ranch, the Galantes, in 1983, began growing premium grapes on their property, specializing in Cabernet Sauvignon.

Vineyard: Galante Vineyards is located in the coastal mountains of Monterey County. Their 700-acre property ranges from 700 feet to 2200 feet above sea level. Their Pinot Noir, Petite Sirah and Sauvignon Blanc vineyards, located at 1800 feet, make them one of the highest vineyards in Monterey County.

Grapes grown on their south-facing slopes produce wines of exceptional body and character. Several factors influence the quality of the grapes grown at Galante vineyards. Due to the extreme daily temperature variations in the Carmel Valley Appellation that can vary 50 to 60 degrees daily, the growing season is very long with harvest normally occurring in late October. This long "hang time" causes the grapes to ripen slowly, intensifying their rich berry flavors. They also thin the crop to an average of two tons per acre providing a low yield of very high quality grapes. They do not use pesticides or herbicides in the vineyards and only irrigate when needed. These methods, and others, combine to produce the highest quality grapes

Tasting Notes: In the Old West, ACE HIGH meant "first class" or "respected" and was used to signify a winning hand. We believe all of these apply to this Malbec with a lovely bouquet of boysenberry and violet and a flavor profile of spicy plum and blackberry. A rich and juicy wine with moderate tannins.

Galante
2010 Malbec

Alcohol
13.4%

AVA
Carmel Valley

Cases Produced
214

Composition
100% Malbec

Aging Potential
8-9 years

SILVESTRI - 2011 *Bella Sandra Chardonnay*



Winemaking: The Silvestri Vineyards Chardonnays are pressed and put into stainless steel tanks. It is then racked to French oak barrels to begin primary fermentation (sugar to alcohol) which takes place over a 3-4 week period. After primary fermentation is complete the wine is then inoculated to begin the malolactic fermentation process. This process gives the wine a buttery, creamy character. The wine is then stirred every 10 days for several months to increase mouthfeel and then barrel aged for approximately 10 months before bottling.

The Bella Sandra Chardonnay is taken a step further by selecting the fruit from a specific block in the vineyard containing the Robert Young clone. It is barrel selected and fermented in up to ½ new and ½ one year old French oak barrels.

Vineyard: Silvestri Vineyards is located approximately 15 miles from the Pacific Ocean in Carmel Valley. This location is the key element in the terroir of this unique site. During the growing season the cool marine influence on one side and the much warmer inland mountains on the other side subject this spot to daily afternoon winds bringing dramatic temperature drops even on the sunniest days. The tight constriction of the valley at this point creates even greater wind velocities here. The vineyards are on benchlands and hillsides several hundred feet above the valley floor further exposing them to the marine onshore flow. Only cooler climate varietals can be expected to ripen here.

Tasting Notes: A rich yet delicate style with a creamy texture. The aromas open with honey, green apple and a slight hint of vanilla. Ripe pear flavor in the mouth followed by a sense of butter and oak balanced with a refreshing acidity in the finish.

Silvestri

2011 Bella Sandra
Chardonnay

Alcohol
13.5%

AVA
Carmel Valley

Cases Produced
1310

Composition
100% Chardonnay

Aging Potential
5-7 years

CIMA COLLINA - 2007 *Reserve Pinot Noir*



Vineyard: This small bottling of Pinot Noir is from Cima Collina's Estate vineyard 700 feet above sea level and 14 miles from the ocean in Carmel Valley. The grapes that come from this vineyard are generally of small size and are much darker and richer than most Pinot Noir fruit, and it is attributed to the soil, clonal selections, and climate. The soil is known locally as "chalk rock" which is a mineral-rich shale. This soil reluctantly surrenders its nutrients, making the vines struggle, thus producing a flavorful, interesting wine. This vineyard is managed sustainably in the Carmel River watershed and is located only a few hundred from the boundary of the lower Carmel Valley AVA.

Winemaking: The grapes were harvested by hand. At the winery, the grapes were gently destemmed, then they were fermented in open top tanks and punched down gently. The wines were drained and pressed then aged in French oak, 40% new, for 11 months. The wine is unfinned and unfiltered. It is a blend of fruit from all of the blocks in the vineyard and is a powerful, dark, rich wine with aromas and flavors of plums, tobacco, leather, earth, smoke and spice. It will benefit from bottle aging, and it will do well in the cellar for at least the next 10 years. We recommend giving this wine some air after opening, or decanting it.

Tasting Notes: A highly versatile, bold, food friendly wine that can be paired enjoyably with mushroom pâté, prime rib, rack of lamb, or venison stew.

Cima Collina
2007 Hilltop Ranch
Pinot Noir

Alcohol
13.7%

AVA
Santa Lucia Highlands

Cases Produced
233

Composition
100% Pinot Noir

Aging Potential
6-10 years

Cover Article Continued



Since 1995, the acreage of planted Malbec grapes throughout the state has increased by an estimated 800%!

The Malbec grape remains largely used as a blending grape. It is globally popular as an addition to Bordeaux-style blends with its color, body, and depth; but the grape has seen a resurgence in recent years for its use as a single-varietal wine and continues to catch the attention of wine-makers and wine-drinkers alike. For instance, our showcased "Ace High" Malbec from Galante Vine-

yards is sure to awaken your palate. It also proves that Carmel Valley presents the proper terroir to pull it off (which is not actually the most surprising, as we've known some of our best wineries have been sourcing other outstanding Bordeaux reds from this AVA.)

Enjoying a nice glass of Malbec on its own may not be the preference for some, as it can be overwhelming to tender palates. If so, hold off until you have a hearty meal in front of you to complement your bold glass of Malbec. The French are renowned for their intrinsic ability to pair wine with an appropriate corresponding dish; the Argentines have their own noble traditions with regards to their "nationalized" grape. Order a steak in Buenos Aires and a glass of red wine, and it will assuredly be a glass of dark Malbec that is poured for you. Whether you choose to pair it with food, or enjoy it on its own, we hope you enjoy this Monterey County Malbec!

RECIPE

Chocolate Candy Cane Cookies

Ingredients

Cookies

1 3/4 cups	all purpose flour
1/2 cup	unsweetened cocoa powder
1/4 teaspoon	salt
1 cup	sugar
3/4 cup	unsalted butter, room temperature
1 large	egg

Filling

1 cup	plus 2 tablespoons powdered sugar
3/4 cup	unsalted butter, room temperature
3/4 teaspoon	peppermint extract
2 drops (or more)	red food coloring
1/2 cup	crushed candy canes or hard peppermint candies



Directions

Cookies - Whisk flour, cocoa, and salt in medium bowl to blend. Using electric mixer, beat sugar and butter in large bowl until well blended. Beat in egg. Add dry ingredients; beat until blended. Refrigerate dough 1 hour.

Preheat oven to 350°F. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper. Scoop out dough by level tablespoonfuls, then roll into smooth balls. Place balls on prepared baking sheets, spacing about 2 inches apart. Using bottom of glass or hands, flatten each ball to 2-inches round (edges will crack). Bake until cookies no longer look wet and small indentation appears when tops of cookies are lightly touched with fingers, about 11 minutes (do not overbake or cookies will become too crisp). Cool on sheet 5 minutes. Transfer chocolate cookies to racks and cool completely.

Filling - Using electric mixer, beat powdered sugar and butter in medium bowl until well blended. Add peppermint extract and 2 drops food coloring. Beat until light pink and well blended, adding more food coloring by dropfuls if darker pink color is desired. Spread 2 generous teaspoons filling evenly over flat side of 1 cookie to edges; top with another cookie, flat side down, pressing gently to adhere. Repeat with remaining cookies and peppermint filling.

Place crushed candy canes on plate. Roll edges of cookie sandwiches in crushed candies (candies will adhere to filling). (Cookie sandwiches can be made ahead. Store in single layer in airtight container at room temperature up to 3 days or freeze up to 2 weeks.)

CHEESE Varietals



GARROTXA

Pronunciation: gar-ROHT-cha

Definition: Garrotxa is a traditional goat's milk cheese produced in the Garrotxa area of Catalonia in Northern Spain. It was almost extinct when some young cheesemakers revived it in 1981. Since then it has become a popular cheese among artisanal cheesemakers.

Garrotxa is a semi-hard, aged or young cheese with a soft paste and a moist, creamy, yet almost flaky, texture. It is covered by a velvety grey mold coating that lends it a woody aroma, although it is best not eaten with the cheese. The flavour is reminiscent of damp earth underlined by slightly nutty & herbal essences. Its milky, delicate taste is not at all typical of a goat's cheese. Garrotxa pairs well with crusty country bread, nuts and is best served with white wines such as a Catalonian Priorat, Pinot Gris, Verdejo, or Chardonnay.



THE Monterey Grapevine

O-N-L-I-N-E

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PLEASE SEND QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS TO:

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