

Morande Limited Edicion Malbec 1999

Tasting Notes: Its color is deep red ruby, with some purple hints and very bright. Its aromas evoke violets and black fruits like cherries. It also has some notes of chocolate, vanilla and toasted hazelnuts. The mouth is fresh, juicy and lingering, with notes of cloves and aromatic tea. It is a charming and tasty wine. Its black fruit tastes are very persistent and memorable. A jovial and elegant wine to keep for a long time.

Vineyard: The Malbec fruit is sourced from vineyards planted in 1935 in the Maipo Valley, near Santiago, the capital city. Gravel and laterite soils predominate in most of the best vineyards with some sandy loam soils in other areas. A range of canopy management strategies are employed to maximize sunlight exposure into the fruiting zone. The most favored technique is vertical shoot positioning which improves sunlight exposure, thereby enhancing fruit flavor development. Irrigation is used judiciously to maintain balanced vine growth and a steady rate of ripening.

Vinification: Fruit is harvested manually to ensure its arrival at the winery in good condition. The fruit is de-stemmed and crushed so that a high proportion of whole grapes are conveyed to the fermenter. The must is left to macerate for a day before seeding with a neutral strain of yeast. Early vigorous extraction is followed by a gentle pump-over regime as the fermentation proceeds. Malbec stays on skins for up to 28 days depending on the health and ripeness of the fruit. The wine is inoculated for malolactic fermentation at this stage. It is pressed and raked twice before going to barrel aging in French oak for about 10 months prior to bottling, unfiltered.

Valdeon - Spanish Blue Cheese made from Cow & Goat Milk

Valdeon is a blue cheese from Leon made in the Picos de Europa, just outside Asturias. Produced with cow's and goat milk, Valdeon is sought after because it is still characteristically wrapped in leaves and makes for an appealing display. Valdeon is a creamier, milder blue than DO Cabrales. It has an excellent sweetness and tang with a nice earthiness at the finish.

This Spanish blue cheese is often sold as Cabrales in the United States because its flavor is similar to that bold blue, but is slightly tamer. It, therefore, appeals to a wider range of palates. The cheese is made in the Castilla-Leon region of the northwestern Spain and is wrapped in chestnut leaves before being sent to market. The cheese has a very intense blue flavor, but is not as yellowed or as biting as true Cabrales.

