



BY APPOINTMENT TO
HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN
WINE MERCHANTS
CORNEY & BARROW LIMITED
LONDON



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HRH THE PRINCE OF WALES
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LONDON

CORNEY & BARROW

INDEPENDENT WINE MERCHANTS

Established 1780

ACHAVAL FERRER, ARGENTINA

2009/2010 VINTAGE EN PRIMEUR



EXCLUSIVE TO CORNEY & BARROW IN THE UK



Achaval Ferrer, in Mendoza, Argentina

ACHAVAL FERRER

ORIGINS

The Achaval Ferrer company was initially the brainchild of two wine enthusiasts, Santiago Achaval and Manuel Ferrer who, eager for a change from the industrial rat race, set their sights on producing world class wine in Argentina, wines which would offer exceptional quality whilst remaining faithful to their origins.

This was an exceptionally ambitious goal, not least because few people in 1998 would have considered Argentina as anything but a volume workhorse but, early on, Santiago and Manuel, along with celebrated winemaker Roberto Cipresso, recognised their point of difference. Old vines and restricted production would be, and indeed are, key to Achaval Ferrer's iconic style.

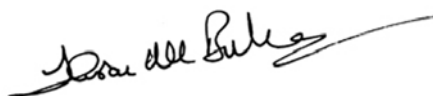
The team, un-phased by the task ahead, pursued their goal passionately undaunted, their philosophy echoing the ideals of so many of our principals, in that here, the vineyard is fundamental. The importance of what happens at vineyard level has become something of a Corney & Barrow mantra, yet it is too-often belittled by emphasis on winemaking skills alone – not at Achaval Ferrer. That said however, including Italian agronomist and winemaker Roberto Cipresso in the partnership was a significant and an inspired coup.

VINEYARDS

The choice of vineyards was fundamental to the ultimate success of the Achaval Ferrer dream. Located very high in Argentina's Mendoza province, at between 730 metres and 1,100 metres above sea level, warm, sunny days and cool nights prolong the ripening season. This, allied to poor alluvial soils and low rainfall, sets the scene for the production of concentrated, mature grapes. These, in turn, make for impressive structure and complexity in the finished wines.

Over the past few years, Achaval Ferrer has developed something of a cult status internationally, winning a plethora of awards – richly deserved. Their ambitions have been refined over the years as other, rather polished, modern wines have entered the market. Pursuit of excellence is just one element but undeniably is also a primary goal.

There are now five wines in total, each with very individual personalities. They transcend what we would ordinarily expect of Argentinean wines, offering a wonderful balance of opulence, accessibility and classicism. These are a force to be reckoned with in any arena – truly outstanding.



Alison Buchanan
Associate Director, Buying
September 2011

“For many, Achaval-Ferrer make the best Malbec wines in Argentina...”

JOHN STIMPFIG, THE FINANCIAL TIMES,
17TH JUNE 2011

2010 VINTAGE NOTES

In 2010 there were two major factors which had an effect on the vintage, a cool spring which led to poor fruit set and therefore diminished quantities (rather sad) and, a rather grey, grizzly spell pre-harvest which slowed sugar development. The latter actually turned out to be rather happier news, helping the overall balance.

We ought also to acknowledge the elephant in the room as we recall the devastating Chilean earthquake of the 27th February. In fact, the team at Achaval Ferrer experienced no damage but the winery rode up and down on a sizeable wave and we must imagine the consequent psychological effects, especially as colleagues at the other side of the mountain fared less well. Achaval Ferrer, undeterred, produced exemplary wines.

True, earthquake notwithstanding, 2010 was a little bizarre in that the phenolic ripeness of tannins preceded sugar levels being high enough but that merely delayed the start of harvest. Picking began later than normal, starting the 11th March, with the resulting wines achieving really lovely balance and avoiding overly high alcohol levels.

Malbec 2010

Corney & Barrow Score 18–19

In the rest of the Achaval Ferrer portfolio, Malbec is either a conduit to the expression of *terroir* or proves its worth as a complementary element in a blend. Here the aspiration is specific and ambitious – the goal set at producing a standard bearing 100% varietal which celebrates the grape itself in a pure, unadulterated form. This is a perennial favourite amongst the Corney & Barrow team and an outstanding ambassador, placing both Malbec and Argentina firmly on the world wine map. The grapes are sourced from three distinct sites, under the direction of the Achaval viticultural team. A variety of altitudes, vine age, vine density and aspect adds considerable complexity. Promiscuous younger vines of 13 years have their exuberance restrained by rigorous pruning whilst naturally low-yielding, sedate old vines of 66 and 86 years add intensity and depth. Malbec is commonly regarded as a workhorse grape, but here, strict vineyard discipline allows Roberto Cipresso free rein to forge a wine which will turn heads, with its balance of richness and intricacy, yet will make people smile.

The 2010 is a deep almost opaque, jet-plum ruby, with an iridescent pale purple rim. The nose is alluring, sweet and inviting, rich in candied red and black fruit, violet scented with a heady dash of pepper. The floral aromatics become more obvious on the palate, complementing innate power and adding lifted tones to otherwise savoury opulence. There is lovely control throughout and optimal balance, the palate generous through to a bright, upbeat, delicately citrus refreshed finish.

Recommended drinking from late 2011–2019+

£115/case of 12, in bond UK

£39/case of 2 Magnums, in bond UK

“This was another great vintage in sunny, weather blessed Mendoza. As the years go by and we gain experience, I never cease to be amazed by how small the vintage variations are, relative to the rest of the winemaking world. Each vintage has its own defining moments with its own character and personality.”

SANTIAGO ACHAVAL, PRESIDENT AND CO-FOUNDER,
AUGUST 2011

2009 VINTAGE

2009 VINTAGE NOTES

Mendoza enjoyed a really fine growing season for the 2009 vintage, with the exception of some vineyards which had hail damage. A moderately warm spring in October and November of 2008 made for rapid fruit set, achieved by the end of November. The speed and success of this stage in the growing period sets the scene for even ripening later in the year. Summer was hot and dry with temperatures slightly higher than average but evenly so, with no sudden peaks of excessive heat. *Véraison*, when the grapes take on colour, was rapid and very even as predicted by the start of the growth cycle. A green harvest, as ever, served to reduce the crop, intensifying the remaining fruit. The weather leading up to harvest was exceptionally dry, with no rain at all in February. After more than a month of drought, the inch of rain which fell on the 3rd March was extremely welcome and picking began on the 5th March.

Quimera 2009

Corney & Barrow Score 18

Quimera, meaning “the search for perfection”, is a blend, the name of which evokes the idea behind the wine – the pursuit of a perfect wine, perhaps the unattainable, where the finished wine is so much greater than the sum of its parts. The 2009 vintage is a blend of 40% old vine Malbec from Medrano and Luján de Cuyo, 22% Merlot, from Tupungato, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon from Medrano and Tupungato, 14% Cabernet Franc from Tupungato and 4% Petit Verdot. These three different sites vary in altitude, between 750 and 1,100 metres above sea level. Yields were a mere 18 hl – a scant kilo per vine. This painfully low yield is to a great degree responsible for the quality and certainly the intensity of the finished wine. First Growth clarets regularly produce over 40 hl/ha. 4811 cases of twelve bottles were made of the Quimera 2010. The wine was fermented in small tanks before blending and undergoing malolactic fermentation and maturation in wood, 40% new 60% one year old, for fourteen months.

Deeply coloured, plum-purple with a tight, bright rim, this offers sweet, candied blueberry and cherries on the nose, vibrant and aromatic. The palate is richly textured, unctuous yet focussed, supported by passive though substantial, fruit-coated tannins. Dark, brooding fruit prevails throughout though with an obvious minerality which adds drive and a sense of direction, lifting the palate throughout a protracted, linear finish. This is possibly the most integrated Quimera we have tasted - a beautiful wine of impeccable balance.

Recommended drinking from 2014–2024+

£95/case of 6, in bond UK

£70/case of 2 Magnums, in bond UK

A VIEW FROM THE SALES FLOOR:

Exuberant Argentine Malbec may seem an anomaly in the Corney & Barrow line-up, but when you understand Achaval Ferrer’s philosophy and – more importantly – taste the wines, their inclusion makes perfect sense. Indeed, there is little hesitation here in the office when anything from a weekday steak wine to something that will embarrass decent Bordeaux is required.

The range is small but innovative and really shows off the Malbec grape. The Malbec 2010 can stand proud amongst its bigger brothers. Precocious and charming with deep black fruit, spicy nuances and a taut finish reminiscent of dark chocolate. The Quimera strives to be a ‘perfect’ blend of Bordeaux varieties and it wasn’t far off perfection in 2009. Sitting at the top of the tree, the ‘Finca’ single

vineyard Malbecs demonstrate the intriguing variation between the Mirador, Bella Vista and Altamira vineyards. For me, the Mirador is the pick, for representing exactly what the winery stands for – new world restraint – and promising a long, interesting life ahead.

Although it’s possible – and tempting – to drink the Quimera and Fincas now, they will repay cellaring just like the finest old world wines. My advice? Secure yourself plenty of the Malbec 2010 to tide you over until the others are ready to come out of the cellar. If that’s too long to wait, we still have limited quantities of the stellar 2007 and 2008 vintages available too.

James Ireland, Sales Executive, Private Sales

TO ORDER, PLEASE USE THE FORM PROVIDED OR CALL 020 7265 2430 (LONDON) OR 01875 321 921 (EDINBURGH)



These wines are released en primeur. Delivery dates to be confirmed. All prices are quoted in bond UK

THE FINCAS

The Fincas are the product of Achaval's third concept. The Achaval Ferrer straight Malbec has been identified as the best possible ambassador for the grape, calling on varied origins to add different nuances and complexity. Quimera has a different role, all about striving for perfection through the creation of a utopian blend. The Fincas, here, are in a class apart, centred upon the wines being faithful to a specific place, translating their individual *terroir* and all coming from different altitudes. One element within the concept of *terroir* is unique here; altitudes, aspects and specific plots notwithstanding, the soils of all three Fincas are essentially the same – alluvial silt, stones and clay. A very clear point of difference in this arid quasi desert is 'imported *terroir*' – the varied geologies is the Andes which provide the irrigation water. The water and the varied rocks through which it passes plays a crucial role – largely unarticulated in the differences in style between all the three Fincas. They have recently been out on tour, being tasted and assessed by our London, North of England and Scottish teams. On each occasion individual tasters favoured, rather stridently, one or other wine – with no clear front-runners emerging – small wonder. They are all world class wines and although each shows individuality and personality the buying team's scores here are very similar. Please note that the Fincas are better decanted at least one hour before serving.

Finca Mirador 2009

Corney & Barrow Score 18–18+

Mirador is a 6 ha parcel of over 70-year-old, un-grafted Malbec, situated at 700 metres above sea level in Medrano, Mendoza. In common with the other single vineyard wines yields are very low, with three vines required to produce just one bottle of wine – around 14 hl/ha. 823 cases of 12 were produced in total, aged for 15 months in 100% new French oak.

This is a deep jet-plum in colour with a firm, bright, pink rim. The nose and palate offer bright, sweet, ripe focussed fruit. Red fruit, vanilla and a delicate hint of stone fruit are reminiscent of peach melba, richly textured with lovely purity, laced with violets and punctuated by refined minerals. Significant tannins are fruit-coated and barely perceptible – very beautiful, lovely wine.

Recommended drinking from 2014–2024+

£240/case of 6, in bond UK

£180/case of 2 Magnums, in bond UK

Finca Altamira 2009

Corney & Barrow Score 18–19

This was the first vineyard to capture Roberto Cipresso's imagination, discovered after sourcing 2500 kilometres of this vast country. Neglected, semi-abandoned and hideously overgrown, the imagination required was indeed considerable, but how well it paid off. The 5.5 ha Altamira vineyard sits at 1,050 metres above sea level, in the La Consulta region of the Uco Valley, 50 miles south of Mendoza. Ungrafted vines of over 80 years are naturally low yielding, producing just 12 hl per ha in 2009, 3 vines required for one bottle of wine. 1178 cases of 12 were produced, aged for 15 months in 100% new French oak. This is an opaque plum in colour, with a bright, firm, fuchsia rim. The nose presents really attractive, rich fruit, complemented by hints of vanilla and refreshed by delicate notes of stone fruit. The palate is opulent and silk-textured, offering similar aromatics, lifted ripe red fruit and hints of citrus, all finessed by a pronounced, well-defined minerality. Finca Altamira 2009 balances innate richness with finesse and elegance.

Recommended drinking from 2015–2025+

£240/case of 6, in bond UK

£180/case of 2 Magnums, in bond UK

Finca Bella Vista 2009

Corney & Barrow Score 18+

This is 5 ha in size, in the heart of the Malbec region, in Perdriel, on the south bank of the Mendoza river, at 980 metres above sea level, where the vines enjoy cooler nights. Yields are just 14 hl/ha from old vines planted in 1910 – about 1/3 of a bottle per vine. 1197 cases of 12 were produced, aged in 100% new French oak for 15 months.

Deeply coloured, lustrous jet-plum, with a tight, bright fuchsia rim, this immediately exudes a rather luxuriant feel. The nose is rather subdued initially, just hinting at blueberry and cherry compote and sultry spice, refreshed by violets. The palate is dense, tight-knit initially, but gradually opens up, becoming opulent, creamy and ripe. Significant tannins are coated in plump seductive fruit, all the while driven by a defined linear minerality. As with the other single Fincas, this ultimately rather defies gravity. Its innate power and masculinity are clear yet it manages to dance, refreshed by invigorating top notes – very fine.

Recommended drinking from 2015–2025+

£240/case of 6, in bond UK

£180/case of 2 Magnums, in bond UK

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CORNEY & BARROW TASTING GUIDE

Our tasting notes provide full details but, at your request, we have also introduced a clear and simple marking system.

We hope these guidelines assist you in your selection.

14–16 A very good to excellent wine

16–18 An excellent to outstanding wine

18–20 An outstanding to legendary wine

- *Wines are judged within their peer group,*
- *A definitive score of a young wine is almost impossible. We usually offer a spread (e.g. 14–16) which relates to a potential to achieve a higher mark. A '+' adds further to that potential.*
- *A score is a summary only. The devil is in the detail, so please focus on the tasting notes.*

Achaval Ferrer Vineyards

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