



Achaval-Ferrer

2007 & 2008 Vintage – En primeur

Does Argentina have a fine wine dimension? That's a good question. I think I'd answer 'yes', and largely because of the amazing wines of Achaval-Ferrer, which, for me, is Argentina's most impressive producer.

Jamie Goode, March 2008 (wineanorak.com)

Achaval-Ferrer was the brainchild of a group of friends who came together with one clearly articulated ambition; to produce world class wine in Argentina. They wanted to create wines which would offer exceptional quality whilst remaining faithful to their origins. The Team pursued its goal passionately from the outset, their philosophy echoing the ideals of all of our leading producers – fundamental to the finished wine is the vineyard. The importance of this is too often belittled by emphasis on winemaking skills alone. Not here, although the world-renowned Italian winemaker, Roberto Cipresso, is undoubtedly a phenomenal asset.

The choice of vineyards was therefore key to the success of the Achaval-Ferrer dream. Located very high in Argentina's Mendoza province, (at between 730 metres and 1100 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 which, in turn, make for great structure and complexity in the wine.

Over the past few years, Achaval-Ferrer has built up something of a 'cult' status. A journalist recently described the wines as being not just the best from Argentina but, arguably, the best from the whole of South America. True or not, this year we are extremely pleased to be able add one more wine to the range of single vineyard *Fincas* – Bella Vista. The first two vintages produced ('05 and '06) were ruined by hail, so this is the first time it is available. Made from 100 year old, pre-phylloxera vines, this is a truly sensational single-vineyard wine.

Alison Buchanan
Associate Director, Buying
November 2009



The wines from Achaval-Ferrer are neither fined nor filtered.

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 always impossible. We usually offer a 'spread' (e.g. 14 - 16) which relates to the potential to achieve a higher mark. A 'plus' adds further to that potential.
- A score is a summary only. The devil is in the detail, so please focus on the tasting notes.

2008 Vintage Notes

Achaval-Ferrer's view of vintage reports is that since vintages follow a very clear and regular pattern in their exceptionally dry, bright, high altitude vineyards, only exceptions are worth noting. The only exception in 2008 was a very rare bout of rain at the common harvest time – but they pick early at Achaval-Ferrer. Their grapes were already safely ensconced in the cellars by the time the rain started and, if the Malbec is anything to go by, 2008 is another in a run of successful and ever improving vintages.

Malbec 2008

Corney & Barrow Score 18 to 19

This is a very fine ambassador for Malbec which proves that quality and elegance are undeniably possible, from what was considered more of a 'workhorse' grape. Roberto Cipresso (winemaker) is a perfectionist. He respects extraction but also wants to make wines to be enjoyed. This is nonetheless a complex wine, owing much to higher altitudes but also to the quality of the sun – an often overlooked aspect of *terroir*. This is a Malbec which punches well above its weight. Both the nose and palate present spiced red and black fruit, combining innate power with a lightness of touch and a bright vivacity.

Recommended drinking from 2009 to 2016 plus

£122/case of 12, in bond UK

2007 Vintage Notes

This has simply been described as a normal year – “as good as it always is, near perfect.”

Quimera 2007

Corney & Barrow Score 17 plus to 18 plus

Quimera, meaning “the search for perfection”, is a blend, the name of which evokes the idea behind the wine – a wine where the whole is so much greater than the some of its parts. This is a blend of 38% old vine Malbec, 24% Merlot, 24% old vine Cabernet Sauvignon and 14% Cabernet Franc from 3 different sites at between 750 and 1100m above sea level. Yields are a mere 18 hl per ha. Quimera seems to get better year on year, and this is no exception.

Deeply coloured, this is an intense jet-plum in colour. The nose is spiced, rich and complex with cherries, berried fruit, scorched earth and refreshing wild herbs vying for dominance. The palate is supple, warming and seductive, accessible and generous with a high-toned minerality complementing over all opulence. Precise and focussed, this is really impressive.

Recommended drinking from late 2010 to 2020 plus

£110/case of 6, in bond UK

Finca Altamira 2007

Awarded 5 stars (outstanding) in Decanter's Argentina 2009 Supplement

Corney & Barrow Score 18 to 19

The 5.5ha Altamira vineyard sits at 1050m above sea level, in the La Consulta region of the Uco Valley, Mendoza. Un-grafted vines of over 80 years are naturally low-yielding at 12 hl per ha. Just 728 cases were produced in 2007, aged for 15 months in 100% new French oak.

This is an opaque plum in colour, with a bright, firm, cherry rim. The nose presents stunningly fresh aromatics, vibrant and enticing with effusive red fruits to the fore, complemented by herbal nuances and hints of violet. The palate has a wonderful purity, fragranced throughout, innate richness supported by a powerful, background structure. Silk-textured, this offers multi-layered complexity with fruit combined with hints of tobacco, spice, cocoa and delicate savoury notes, complemented by crushed stone minerals. This Altamira is indubitably a powerful wine – yet it is sublimely elegant and of the three single finca wines is the most lifted, fragrant and elegant. Again, very impressive.

Recommended drinking from 2010 to 2020 plus

£250/case of 6, in bond UK

Finca Mirador 2007

Corney & Barrow Score 18 to 18 plus

Mirador is a 6 ha parcel of old, un-grafted Malbec, situated at 700m 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. 1000 cases 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 rim. The nose and palate present a wonderful array of summer berries, violet-scented, with heady, background hints of exotic spice. Mirador is somewhat tantalising in balancing very concentrated, dark fruit with consummate elegance and incredible purity. Impeccably pitched, the tannins here

are beautifully integrated. The lower altitude and heavier, clay dominant soils of Finca Mirador produces a bigger, broader, more powerful wine and this 2007 is no exception.

Recommended drinking from 2010 to 2020 plus

£250/case of 6, in bond UK

Finca Bella Vista 2007 - NEW

This wine was listed in the top 3 at the Argentina's Superstar Wines tasting in London (April 2009, the Gaucho restaurant)

Corney & Barrow Score 18 plus to 19

As with all of the Fincas, the Achaval-Ferrer aim for Bella Vista is to be faithful to a very special piece of land. Finca Bella Vista is 5 ha in size, situated in Perdriel, on the south bank of the Mendoza river, at 980 meters above sea level, enjoying cooler nights. Yields are just 14 hl/ha from old vines planted in 1910 – about 1/3 of a bottle per vine. Just 753 cases were produced, aged in 100% new French oak for 15 months.

Deeply-coloured, a lustrous plum-cherry, this is immediately attractive. The nose presents heady, decadent, sweet old vine fruit, concentrated, intense and brooding. Despite obvious muscle, the aromatics on both nose and palate are very feminine, floral and heady, with a spiced backdrop. The fruit is luscious, succulent and ripe, supported effortlessly by well-rounded, beautifully-integrated tannins. There is power here but the gravel soils and high altitude give elegance and amazing balance to the wine.

Recommended drinking from 2010 to 2020 plus

£250/case of 6, in bond UK

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Or 01875 321 921 (**Edinburgh**)