



PRESS KIT

SALENTEIN, HEART AND SOUL OF THE UCO VALLEY

Bodegas Salentein is the heart and soul of the Uco Valley—a magnificent project that has captured the imagination of the Argentine people and wine lovers from around the world. Home to Portillo, Killka, and Salentein wines, Bodegas Salentein has created a new vision of quality and character for this remarkable region. The company honors and promotes the culture and people of the Uco Valley while making wines that find success throughout the world.

In the Uco Valley Salentein farms more than 800 hectares of premium vineyards on an undulating estate of nearly 2,000 hectares in total, and turns those grapes into great wine with Argentina's leading winemaker, the legendary Jose Galante.

The Uco Valley is clearly the future for Argentine wine. Its high elevation and stony alluvial soils create the perfect conditions for world-class wines. For twenty years Salentein has led the way in the Uco Valley, with a unique combination of estates that range over twenty-two miles and five different micro climates. Here Salentein is making a lasting commitment to the people, environment, and future of Argentina and the Uco Valley, creating great wines while generating hope and opportunities for the people who live here.

Mendoza

Salentein lies in the province of Mendoza, the most important winegrowing region of Argentina, with some 150,000 vineyard hectares (370,500 acres) and more than 900 wineries. Salentein is a leader in cultivating global awareness of the emerging premium wineries of Argentina. A new vision of quality—with plantings of classical varietals, preservation of old vines, application of European artistry, and advanced technology—is yielding world-class wines in the Uco Valley, the crown jewel of Mendoza.

Fincas

The Salentein estate consists of 2,000 hectares (4,942 acres), 700 hectares (1,730 acres) of which are planted to grapes in three estate "fincas." The fincas, which are cultivated at a range of elevations among the highest in the world, are irrigated with pure mountain run-off. The region's thermal amplitude ranges as much as 16 C (29 F) from daytime highs to nighttime lows resulting in lower pH in the grape, higher acidity, more color in the wine, and greater ageability. All these characteristics are ideal to grow the premium grapes needed to craft classic wines.

Bodega

The magnificent bodega, designed for both form and function in the shape of a cross, allows for customized gentle handling of the grapes, reducing the distance wine needs to be moved between winemaking steps. Each of the wings is a small winery with two levels—a ground level that houses stainless steel tanks and French wooden vats for fermentation and storage, and an underground level for aging wine in oak casks. The two levels allow wine to flow from the tanks to the barrels by a traditional gravity transfer system. The four wings converge in a circular central chamber, which resembles an amphitheater and was inspired by ancient classical temples.

Beyond the functionality, the shape and materials of the bodega also honor the religious roots of the valley. Jesuit missionaries settled there in the 16th century and cultivated some of the first vineyards in the region. Ancient Andean Indians, whose offerings to the goddess of fertility and life were presented in holes dug in the earth, inspired the bodega's subterranean levels for aging wine.

Bodegas Salentein won the prestigious 2002 Prism International Commercial Award of Merit. Presented annually to a single building by the international stone industry, this award celebrates the use of natural stone materials in commercial buildings.

Killka

Named for an Andean word meaning "opening" or "portal," Salentein's KILLKA cultural center is indeed a gateway to the world of wine and art. A truly innovative artistic and cultural complex adjacent to Bodegas Salentein, KILLKA features two art exhibition rooms—one for a permanent collection and one for temporary exhibits; a state-of-the-art conference and event room; a wine shop; a restaurant; a posada or guesthouse and a chapel crafted with ancestral techniques.

As recognition for the diversity and quality of its cultural activities Museo killka won the world gold medal 2009 for Argentina in the "art and culture" category of the Best of Wine Tourism competition organized by the Great Wine Capitals network.

Posada Salentein

Posada Salentein is the clear leader in wine tourism and a true pioneer as the first winery hotel in the Uco Valley. The Posada is a welcome oasis that combines the traditional architecture of Mendoza's rural farms with world class comfort. Facilities include rooms, suites, a small conference center, and a top flight restaurant where our chefs offer regional fare emphasizing local flavors. In 2011 Posada Salentein was named the Regional Winner in Accommodation by the Great Wine Capital's Best of Wine Tourism Awards

Wines

The wines of Bodegas Salentein are well-structured and elegant, characterized for its deep color and rich and complex aromas and flavors. All wines are aged in French oak barrels.

Our **Salentein Gran VU Blend** icon wine expresses the terroir of the Valle de Uco (Uco Valley), offering a unique blend of Malbec and Cabernet Sauvignon. This limited edition wine characterises the philosophy of our winemaker José Galante, who has developed some of the best wines to come out of Argentina. Together with the entrepreneurial and visionary spirit of our founder Myndert Pon, this wine celebrates Bodegas Salentein's role as the pioneer winery in the Uco Valley.

Salentein Primus (Salentein **Primum** in the U.S.): The icon varietal wine of Bodegas Salentein, Primus is made with the finest grapes from our own vineyards in Valle de Uco, perfectly capturing our blessed terroir. It is made from grapes harvested from individual selected plots at different elevations in the Uco Valley.

Varietals: Malbec, Merlot, Pinot Noir and Chardonnay.

Salentein Single Vineyard: These wines express our deep knowledge of Uco Valley terroir, based on two decades of hands on living and farming here. Each wine comes from a single selected plot, which over the years has produced wines with great personality and varietal expression. Unique wines of a special place.

Varietals: Malbec, Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and a Late Harvest Sauvignon Blanc

Salentein Numina: A proprietary wine that expresses the spirit of the vineyards where Bodegas Salentein first settled in Valle de Uco, blended from the best Malbec, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot grapes from small selected plots of our oldest estate.

Salentein Reserve: Varietal wines from our vineyards located between 3200 and 5000 feet, where stony soils, high thermal amplitude, excellent sun exposure and the pure waters of the Andes give us the ideal conditions to produce wines that are the ultimate expression of Uco Valley.

Varietals: Malbec, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Pinot Noir, Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay.

Wines by Bodegas Salentein

Bodegas Salentein's philosophy is to make top quality wines full of the fresh fruit flavors and aromas that come from the high altitude of the Uco Valley. These are innovative wines that stand out for their bright fruit, and deep colors and their easy accessibility

Brands

Killka

Killka is the cultural, artistic and gastronomic center of Bodegas Salentein, which has become a major destination for wine and art lovers from around the world. The wines combine the inspiration of the winemaker with the creativity of the artists represented in Killka's art collection.

Varietals: Malbec, Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay

Portillo

Portillo wines take their name from the historic mountain pass linking the Andes to the Uco Valley used by the legendary hero General San Martin as he liberated Latin America as well as by scientist Charles Darwin when he studied the theory of evolution. Today Portillo is the gateway to the fascinating wines of Bodegas Salentein.

Varietals: Malbec, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Pinot Noir, Rosé Malbec, Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay.

Winemaking Team

Chief Winemaker Bodegas Salentein: José Galante

Wine Consultant Bodegas Salentein: Paul Hobbs

Winemaker Wines By Bodegas Salentein: Gustavo Bauzá

Salentein Agronomist/Vineyard Manager: Gustavo Soto

Visitor Information

Bodegas Salentein (Winery)

Route 89 Km 14 Los Arboles, Tunuyán, Mendoza, Argentina

Telephone: +54 (2622) 429-000

Fax: +54 (2622) 429-000

Commercial Offices in Buenos Aires

Vedia 3892 – 3rd Floor

C1430DAL, Buenos Aires, ARGENTINA

Telephone: +54 (11) 4131-1100

Fax: +54 (11) 4131-1199

Email: info@bodegasalentein.com

Website: www.bodegasalentein.com

IMPORTER IN THE US: PALM BAY INTERNATIONAL

48 Harbor Park Dr., Port Washington, NY 11050

www.palmbay.com

PR Manager: Matias Bauzá Moreno – mbauza@mp-wines.com

PR contact in the US: Balzac – PWagner@balzac.com

1. MENDOZA AND THE VALLE DE UCO

Mendoza is the most important winegrowing region of Argentina. The province, which produces about 70 percent of Argentina's winegrapes, encompasses 150,000 hectares (370,500 acres) of vineyards and is home to more than 900 wineries, among them a number of world-class wineries.

Known in Spanish as *la tierra del sol y del buen vino*, or the land of sun and good wine, Mendoza lies 1,100 kilometers (683 miles) west of the capital Buenos Aires, near the border with Chile. Dominating the landscape are the Andes, climbing steeply into the sky on the western horizon. Snow covered all year, this cordillera reaches more than 6,100 meters (20,000 feet) in elevation and includes Mt. Aconcagua, the tallest peak in the western hemisphere. In addition to providing a spectacular backdrop to the local vineyards, these mountains govern the climate for the valleys below, provide abundant snowmelt water, and at their base, descend in gentle steps to give footing to some of the highest elevation vineyards in the world.

While Mendoza remains a desert today, parts of the area were turned into an oasis 700 years ago by the ingenious diversion of mountain-fed rivers through irrigation canals. Designed by the Incas, these canals were expanded over the centuries by the indigenous Huarpe Indians. Today, as proof of the old French saying that great wines are grown near great rivers, most vineyards in Mendoza spread across the valleys and rise into the foothills never far from the region's snowmelt streams. Prominent grape varieties include: malbec, merlot, cabernet sauvignon, syrah, pinot noir, bonarda, tempranillo, chardonnay, sauvignon blanc, chenin blanc and torrontés.

Climate and Soil

Unlike the Mediterranean climate of coastal France and California, with its warm summers, rainy winters and marine fog incursions, Mendoza has a continental climate that reflects its distance from any ocean and the lack of a maritime influence. It is warmer in the summer, cooler in the winter, and sunnier and dryer all year round, with an annual average of 320 sunny days. The Andes block the moist Pacific air from reaching the region, resulting in low rainfall totals that average just about 200 millimeters (eight inches) yearly. Humidity is low and the air is bone-dry and pure, allowing grapes to thrive.

While water in the region is scarce, some cultivated areas, such as the fincas of Salentein, are blessed with mountain run-off and extensive irrigation channels and reservoirs. Summers are temperate to warm. During the growing season, daily temperatures range as much as 16 C (29 F) from daytime highs to nighttime lows. This broad temperature amplitude is significant: research has shown that a thermal amplitude greater than 15 C (27 F) and no more than 25 C (45 F) can result in the production of more tannins and more layers of cells in the skin of red grapes, which in turn produces wine with more color and aroma.

Topsoil throughout the province is diverse in type and depth, but generally reflective of the original Huarpe name for the area, Cuyo, which means "sandy." Soils are alluvial and lie on a gravel bed with good permeability and drainage. They have low levels of organic matter and lack fertility. Grapes are grown at elevations from 460 to 1,700 meters (1,500 to 5,577 feet).

Brief History

Mendoza was founded in 1561 by the Spanish captain Pedro del Castillo. The conquistadores found wild American grapevines already growing in the province and used by the Huarpe for celebrations and natural dyes.

In this same era, the Spaniards introduced the first grapevine stocks of *Vitis vinifera* to several regions in Argentina by four different routes, the most important being importation from the Chilean colonies. The early grape growers in Mendoza were Jesuit missionaries making wine for Holy Mass. By the 18th century, these growers were cultivating a native variety that was a forerunner of Argentina's criolla chica, which like California's mission grape, became a mainstay of the country for the next 300 years.

In the early 19th century, during the movement for the Latin American liberation, Mendoza achieved renown as the site where General San Martín gathered his army and launched his successful campaign. Following Argentine independence in 1816, European immigrants began to arrive in Mendoza, bringing with them new grape varieties and winemaking skills.

In 1853, the French agriculturist Michel Aimé Pouget founded the Quinta Normal de Agricultura (Agricultural Training School) in Mendoza, which introduced noble varieties and French viticulture methods. Completion of the railway from Buenos Aires in 1884, transformed the province, bringing a second wave of immigrants from eastern ports and delivering an increasingly distinguished wine to the capital. From 1882 to 1892, total vineyard land in Mendoza increased fivefold, from 1,700 hectares to 9,300 hectares (4,200 acres to 23,000 acres).

In the 20th century, winemaking in Mendoza grew as immigrant families acquired land and established bodegas, or wineries, which endured through successive generations. During this time the primary market was domestic. In the 1990s, however, a new trend emerged, as some wineries began to refine their viticulture practices for export. Changes have included increased planting of classic European varieties more suited to the Argentine terroir, decreased yields, advanced equipment and technology, strict adherence to winemaking techniques and consultation with international enological experts.

Regions

Travelers who tour Mendoza from north to south, driving along Route 40 (a freeway that extends throughout the country), will cover its five wine regions, which are subdivided into many sub-regions and climates:

- 1) North:** Las Heras and Lavalle.
- 2) East:** San Martín, Junín, Rivadavia, Santa Rosa and La Paz.
- 3) Center:** Godoy Cruz, Guaymallén, Luján de Cuyo and Maipú.
- 4) Uco Valley:** Tupungato, Tunuyán and San Carlos.
- 5) South:** San Rafael and General Alvear.

Some of the newest and most promising plantings can be found in the Uco Valley, which lies in the Andean piedmont, southwest of the town of Mendoza, at elevations of 820 to 1,700 meters (2,700 to 5,600 feet). Uco Valley includes the departments of Tunuyán, Tupungato and San Carlos.

Valle de Uco

The fincas of Salentein are located in the upper reaches of the Uco Valley. At elevations of 1,050 to 1,700 meters (3,445 to 5,577 feet), these vineyards perch above comparable high-mountain vineyards in Chile and Australia. Their lofty site offers a number of advantages, including pure water from melting snowcaps and cooler nighttime temperatures that allow longer hang-time and result in a better balance of sugars and acidity in the fruit.

Indicación Geográfica

In recent years, growers in Mendoza have started a movement to establish an appellation system known as Indicación Geográfica (IG), or Geographic Appellation. This system does not denote a quality classification like the French Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée. Instead, like the North American AVA system, the Argentine IG identifies a specific geographical winegrowing area with a distinctive terroir, and its designation on a wine label indicates that grapes used in the wine were grown in that area.

2. LAND, HISTORY, CULTURE AND WINEMAKING OF ARGENTINA.

Argentina is the world's fifth largest wine producer. The nation has 210,000 vineyard hectares (518,700 acres) and 1,200 wineries. The winegrowing regions are blessed with an ideal climate and soils for viticulture. With a long, proud history of winegrowing, the country has entered a new era. In the past 15 years, premium winemakers in Argentina have transformed the leading wineries with new plantings, application of European methods and advanced technology—all of which are beginning to yield unique world-class wines.

Land

Argentina is a vast expansive space of more than 2.6 million square kilometers (a million square miles). It is the eighth largest country in the world and the largest of all Spanish-speaking countries. Its total area is four times greater than Texas and five times greater than France. Stretching more than 4,000 kilometers (2,500 miles) from the Tropic of Capricorn to the edges of Antarctica, Argentina also has a diversity of landscapes—from prairies and deserts to mountains and jungles.

In the south lies Patagonia, an arid, sparsely populated region that is home to oil and natural gas fields, and Glaciar Perito Moreno—one of the world's largest glaciers. Along the western frontier with Chile, the snow-covered Andes form a steep, narrow spine, with elevations of more than 6,100 meters (20,000 feet). Grasslands, called the pampas, cover the broad middle of the country and provide grazing for cattle herds. On the northern border is a region called the Gran Chaco, where scrub forests alternate with grassy savannah and flood plains; the Puna, a desert area that borders Bolivia; and Iguazú Falls, among the largest in the world, where Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina meet.

History

Argentina was first discovered by the Old World in the early 16th century, when a succession of navigators—including Fernando Magallanes and Sebastián Caboto—attempted to explore the eastern shores only to be driven away by hostile natives. It was not until mid-century that Spanish conquistadores and Jesuit missionaries began to found small towns in the western foothills at Santiago del Estero, San Miguel de Tucumán and Mendoza. Over the next 250 years, Spanish towns grew in Argentina, first in the interior and later on the coast.

In the early 1800s, as the Spanish empire collapsed, Argentina joined other Latin American countries in rebellion. The hero of independence was a former Spanish army officer named José de San Martín, who led an irregular army of gauchos in liberation of western Argentina and then marched them in a daring raid over the Andes to surprise and defeat the Spanish in Chile. Argentina was declared an independent republic in 1816.

The 19th century brought several waves of European immigration from Italy, Spain, Portugal and France. From 1850 to 1900, the population doubled. The Italian immigration was so great that today more than half of Argentines trace their roots to Italy. Many of the new immigrants settled in Buenos Aires, which by the early 1900s had become the largest city in South America.

In the 20th century, Argentina experienced periods of great prosperity, as well as times of economic turmoil and political unrest. Through these changes it has maintained its unique character—a blending of European influences and Latin American style.

National Traditions

Gaicho.

The gauchos were rugged horsemen who raised cattle on the pampas in the 18th and 19th centuries. Historically, most were poor mestizos—of mixed Spanish and indigenous blood. Like the North American cowboy, they lived a fiercely independent life with few possessions. Gauchos were known for drinking a herb infusion tea called yerba mate; for hunting with a weapon called boleadoras—three

leather-wrapped stones attached to the ends of a rope; and for fighting with a special knife called a *facón*. Their numbers declined in the late 19th century as they were hired as ranch hands and assimilated into the mainstream culture. Today, while *gauchos* may still be found, the mythical *gaucho* also survives as a national symbol of the idealized lone warrior, who is independent, brave, loyal and generous.

Tango.

The tango is the best-known Argentine art form. The dance is said to have originated in the late 19th century in port city bordellos. There, immigrant men waiting their turns with prostitutes, danced with one another in a style of exaggerated body movements and intricate footwork. The immigrants, called *compadritos*, adapted the *candombe* of African slaves and mixed it with the Spanish *milonga* and Italian *tarantella*. As it evolved, the tango became a complicated pattern of dashes, slides, stops and dips, with the man and woman in perfect coordination, their movements mirroring an expression of stylized passion. The dance is closely associated with the tango song, which has bittersweet lyrics and is accompanied by a *bandoneón*, or button accordion. The great Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges once observed that the tango lyric is the country's true poetry. The songs reflect the melancholy and fatalism of the poor *compadrito*, tormented by unrequited love and lost youth. "The tango," wrote one Argentine composer, "is a sad thought that is danced."

Traditional Foods

The Argentine diet is dominated by the country's plentiful supply of beef, which may be grilled, broiled, fried or boiled and is eaten one or more times a day. One of the surviving national traditions is that of the *asado*, or barbecue, which is traditionally an occasion for the entire family. *Empanadas* are the snack food of Argentina--small turnovers filled with meat, cheese or vegetables—and often eaten throughout the day. *Locro* is a typical stew from the Northeast with Incan roots. Its ingredients include white corn, beans, red sausage, pumpkin and scallion. *Dulce de leche* is a national obsession--a soft caramel spread on crackers or bread or used as a stuffing in pastry or cookies.

Malbec

Malbec is the distinctive Argentine wine. The grape was first grown in Burgundy and made famous in Cahors, in the southwest of France, where it was called *cot*. Later, malbec became one of the five main varieties grown in Bordeaux. Brought to Argentina in the 1850s, malbec was known as "La Uva Francesa." Over the next 150 years, malbec flourished in Argentina, becoming the most widely grown premium variety in the country, with more than 16,000 hectares (40,000 acres). In the dry climate of the western foothills, growers were able to avoid the disease-related and fruit-set problems of the European variety. Until the 1990s, malbec was used in jug blends and taken for granted by many fine winemakers. But today its potential for great premium wines recognized throughout the wine-loving world, Argentine malbec is dark-violet in color, with rich and complex flavors. At its best, as it is grown in Mendoza, it is a sensational, mouth-filling wine. In the Uco Valley at 1,200 meters (3,937 feet) this variety has found the perfect conditions for creating world-class wines.

Winemaking Today

The primary winemaking regions are in the west, north and south of the country, in the provinces of Mendoza, San Juan, La Rioja, Salta, Río Negro and Neuquen. While for most of the 20th century, wine production was designed for domestic consumption, in the 1990s, the top premium wineries such as Salentein focused their viticulture and winemaking practices to create high-quality wines for export. This trend has included increased planting of classic European varieties, decreased yields, use of advanced equipment, strict adherence to winemaking techniques and consultation with international experts.

Spanish Expressions.

Barricas: Barrels
Mosto: Grape juice, must
Bodega: Winery
Poda: Pruning

Botella: Bottle
Prensa: Wine press
Corcho: Cork
Racimo: Grape cluster
Cosecha: Harvest, vintage
Raleo: Thinning
Cuba: Large fermentation vat
Riego: Irrigation
Degustación: Tasting
Uva: Grape berry
Deshoje: Leafing
Varietal: Varietal
Envero: Bud break
Vendimia: Time of grape harvest
Estancia: Ranch
Vid: Vine
Finca: Farm, Estate
Vino: Wine

Measurements.

1 hectare = 2.47 acres
1 meter = 3.28 feet
1 kilometer = 1,000 meters, or about 0.62 miles
1 liter = 0.26 gallons
1 hectoliter = 100 liters

Regional Organization.

Province: The country's largest geographical boundary. Argentina has 23 provinces.
Department: Areas within a province.
District: Divisions of a department.

3. SALENTEIN HIGH-QUALITY AND SUSTAINABLE WINEGROWING

The vision of Salentein is to make world-class Argentine wines, while respecting the community and environment of the Uco Valley—the people, culture, and natural world from which our wines are created. In the Uco Valley Salentein farms more than 1700 acres of premium vineyards on an undulating estate of nearly 5,000 acres in total, and turns those grapes into great wine with Argentina’s leading winemaker, the legendary Jose Galante. Here Salentein has made a lasting commitment to the people, environment, and future of Argentina and the Uco Valley, creating great wines while generating hope and opportunities for the people of the Uco Valley.

Bodegas Salentein is committed to respecting the natural environment. This approach includes:

- First Argentine winery to be carbon footprint certified from grape to consumer for its wine Portillo Malbec
- ISO 14001: 2004 (Environmental Management System) certified in December 2011
- Water treatment programs recycle all water used in the production processes.
- Maximum water conservation through drip irrigation in 100% of the vineyards.
- Energy consumption reduction through efficiency plans and education--ongoing research into renewable energy sources such as solar and hydroelectric power.
- Sustainable viticulture and agricultural techniques, striving for natural balance in the ecosystem.
- Avoidance of pesticides and minimal use of herbicides.
- Use of native flora as cover crops.
- Preservation of more than 120 acres of native desert habitat.
- All organic matter produced from vineyard and wine production activities is returned to the land as natural fertilizers.
- A recycling program for waste materials from the production process.
- The use of recycled materials in wine bottles and packaging.

Salentein’s company culture is founded on respect —respect among the employees toward the company, one another and the world. Employees eat communally in a dining hall, senior managers side by side with field workers. The grounds are kept spotless as a sign of respect toward the workplace. Salentein shows respect for its local community in many ways, including encouraging employees to volunteer in neighboring public schools.

At Salentein, cultural investments and quality winemaking are pursued with a long-term perspective for the sustainability of the land and its people. One of Salentein’s most significant contributions to the Uco Valley community has been the creation of KILLKA, an expansive cultural center celebrating nature, local Andean culture, Argentine wine and art. At the entrance of KILLKA stands the Chapel of Gratitude, built both as a place for the community to gather and as a destination for rest and reflection to be enjoyed by visitors and locals alike. KILLKA is the first cultural complex of its kind to share the beautiful simplicity of the Cuyo region’s art, architecture and traditions with the world.

4. BODEGAS SALENTEIN A CATHEDRAL OF WINE

Bodegas Salentein fuses an inventive functional design with a deeply moving presence and beauty. Unlike any winery in the world, the structure of the bodega allows for customized gentle handling of grapes. In a deeper sense, the shape and materials of the bodega are a spiritual expression—a cathedral of wine—that honors the history and culture of this Argentine valley.

The bodega is designed in the shape of a cross. Each of the wings is a small winery measuring about 18 x 20 meters (60 x 66 feet). These small wineries have two levels, a ground level that houses stainless steel tanks and French wooden vats for fermentation and storage, and an underground level—eight meters (26 feet) below ground—for aging wine in French oak casks. The four wings converge in a circular central chamber, which resembles an ancient amphitheater. The central chamber is 11 meters (36 feet) in diameter and 18 meters (60 feet) high, with a circular opening above that allows subtle light to penetrate into the subterranean cellar.

Gentle handling of the fruit is the guiding principle behind the building shape and the two levels. Grapes arrive in small boxes to the receiving area, where they are hand-sorted before going to the destemmer. After a gentle destemming, the whole berries are hand-sorted again, before the fruit is sent to tanks for fermentation without pumping. The two levels allow wine to flow from the tanks to the barrels in the cellar below by a simple, traditional gravity transfer system. This avoids pumping, which can agitate the wine and break up the seeds, causing phenolic bitterness in the wine. The shape of the cross also reduces the distance wine needs to be moved, which avoids unnecessary oxidation.

On the ground level, the stainless steel tanks and French oak vats have a total capacity of 1.8 million liters (660,000 gallons). Salentein is using stainless steel tanks that are lower and wider in design than traditional tanks. These tanks increase the ratio of skin to juice contact resulting in greater color and complexity in the wine. The tanks also contain automatic controls for inert nitrogen, which provide pressure to avoid oxidation in the fermenting wine and helps preserve its distinctive aromas and flavors.

The underground cellars are naturally maintained at a constant 12 C (53.5 F) and 80 percent humidity. Wine is aged in small (225-liter) French oak casks. The cellar capacity is 5,000 barrels. A low-speed bottling line, with a 2,500 bottles-per-hour capacity, further protects the wine from oxidation.

The subterranean stone floor of the cellar is a striking feature. Viewed from the ground level above, the floor of the central chamber reveals an important formal symbolic design. The design is based on a modern compass. The points are oriented toward the cardinal points as a means of orienting this winery within the larger world. Natural stone from the Cuyo Region was used, including yellow quartzite sandstone, green chlorite type schist, and red limolite sandstone.

This underground level is also home to the Salentein tasting room, a serene spot for enjoying a glass of classic Argentine Malbec, silky Pinot Noir or crisp Sauvignon Blanc. The room features a ceiling that has been hand-painted using colors ground from natural stone by the women of the local village. This use of local stone honors the Incas, whose empire once extended to this valley and whose own temples were built in tribute to the great mountains. Visitors enter the tasting room through an unadorned hall, the simplicity of which is as mystical as it is beautiful. Once inside, tables made of solid Argentine travertine marble provide guests with a welcome place to gather and taste current vintages and library wines.

Beyond functionality, the winery's cross shape reflects the religious roots of the Valle de Uco. Jesuit missionaries, who settled there in the 16th century, cultivated some of the first vineyards in the region. The convergence of the four naves in the central chamber of the winery was inspired by the design of ancient classical temples. The light that streams in from the center point of the cross through a circular opening reflects the importance of sunlight for the cultivation of wine. Drawing inspiration from ancient Andean Indians whose offerings to the goddess of fertility and life were presented in holes dug in the earth, Bodegas Salentein was built with subterranean levels for aging wine. They are a symbolic offering to the life-giving snow-capped Andes that irrigate the vineyards.

The winery is located at an altitude of 1,200 meters (3,937 feet), close to the vineyards. The landscaping, adjacent to the winery and amid the cultivated vineyards, preserved more than 49 hectares (120 acres) of native desert habitat. The western horizon is dominated by the nearby snow-covered Andes, which rise

more than 6,100 meters (20,000 feet).

The Argentine architectural firm of Bormida & Yanzón designed and built Bodegas Salentein in 1998-1999. The firm specializes in winery design, and has built or re-designed other prominent Argentine wineries. Bodegas Salentein won the prestigious 2002 Prism International Commercial Award of Merit. This award, celebrating the use of natural stone materials in commercial buildings, is presented annually to a single building by the international stone industry.

4.1 JOSÉ GALANTE, CHIEF WINEMAKER AT BODEGAS SALENTAIN

In many ways, José Galante is the father of modern winemaking in Argentina. His inquisitive mind, intense focus on quality, and willingness to share what he has learned with his colleagues has made him an invaluable part of Argentina's world class winemaking evolution.

Galante was born and raised in Mendoza, Argentina's preeminent and most widely recognized wine growing region. He learned his trade from his father and grandfather who were both grape-growers and winemakers. As a child he shared wine and conversation around the table from an early age, over the food his grandmother prepared for Sunday dinners. He attended the Enology School at the Universidad Juan Agustin Maza (UJAM). Here, he was fortunate to study under Francisco Oreglia, the author of the first books to focus specifically on winemaking in Argentina.

Before joining Bodegas Salentein as chief winemaker in 2010, Galante led the Catena Zapata Group for more than thirty years and worked with numerous international wine consultants. In the 1990s he went to the United States to join Paul Hobbs, now a consultant for Salentein, at the Simi Winery for a short time. "This was a revelation for me," says Galante. "The unrelenting focus on quality, on making a New World wine that would challenge the very best of the Old World, inspired me to do the same in Argentina." To achieve that goal, he would later travel to Spain and France to study those countries' winemaking techniques and apply them to the Argentine terroir.

Those studies, and a comprehensive understanding of Argentina's wine regions, led him to join Salentein so that he could make wine with the remarkable fruit the winery grows in the Uco Valley. "Wine is a product of both terroir and of people," says Galante. "At Salentein I have both vineyards that are among the best in the world, and a company and staff that are fully focused on supportive of our goal of making the best wines in Argentina. We grow not only wonderful grapes, but we are also growing a culture of great wine."

Galante's winemaking philosophy is to "fully preserve the full spectrum of fruit aromas and flavors through a smooth, gentle winemaking process and leading-edge technology." He believes oak should be present in a wine but without destroying the character of the varietal or the terroir. The end result is, as he puts it, "aromatic, highly concentrated wines, with fine tannin texture, a smooth and silky feel and a lingering finish--wines that truly reflect the very essence of the Valle de Uco."

Married with three children, Galante likes adventure, believing everything new he tries in life will influence the way he approaches winemaking. He insists that a keen sense of observation, patience and creativity are characteristics every good enologist should have. He loves to spend time with friends and family and to travel, especially in Patagonia, Argentina. A few years ago, he discovered golf and now plays at every opportunity—enjoying the mental and physical challenges of the game. But most of all, Jose Galante is passionate about his profession. He has helped transform the Argentine wine.

5. WINES BY BODEGAS SALENTAIN

Wines by Bodegas Salentein capture our philosophy of making top quality wines in a modern and innovative style, in line with the world's major markets. With deep, bright colors and soft tannins, these fruit-driven wines are the quintessential expression of youth and freshness, endowed with charm and character that make them a great choice for drinking on any occasion.

Respect for nature is a fundamental value in this winemaking philosophy. The winery has a team of professionals committed to the terroir, who pursue high-quality wines that stand out for their intense fruit aromas.

The winery is unique in its design. Harmonically blending with its surroundings, the winery was built with the local stone from the sedimentary layers of the mountain valley where it is located, in order to preserve the natural integrity of the Andean landscape.

The building is cemented with the natural inclination of the valley, to create a gravity flow winery. This natural system replaces the wine pumping, thus preventing the grape seeds from breaking and the development of phenolic bitterness, while reducing oxidation risk.

The winery has three levels – starting from the ground level, the second level lies five meters underground, and the third level lies ten meters underground. The first level is where grapes are received and selected, the second level is devoted to fermentation, and the third level is for storage / stabilization. Gentle handling of the fruit was the driving principle behind the layout and levels of the building.

Additionally, the winery is equipped with high technology stainless steel tanks, leading-edge mechanical destemmers, a premier cooling system to keep the wine at low temperatures, and first-rate pneumatic presses, to ensure the highest quality of winemaking.

5.1 GUSTAVO BAUZÁ, WINES BY BODEGAS SALENTEIN WINEMAKER

For Gustavo Bauzá, being an oenologist is both a sense of achievement and a way of life. Making truly unique and unforgettable wines that instill a feeling of delight and pleasure is what inspired him to become an “artist”.

He studied in his hometown of Mendoza, and chose to focus enology when he was only thirteen years old. He graduated from Liceo Agrícola y Enológico Domingo F. Sarmiento and went on to complete his degree in Oenology & Industrial Fruit Horticulture from the Don Bosco faculty at Juan Agustín Maza University, and has recently finished his MBA (Wine) at the same institution.

Today, as the winemaker responsible for the young ranges of Bodegas Salentein (Portillo and Killka), his goal is to make the most of each lot of premium grapes that the estate delivers to the winery.

“At Salentein, the doors are wide open to your imagination. Having freedom to create a wine, with the best Argentine grapes available, and the winery’s state-of-the-art technology, helps me make the wines I wish when I start tasting the grapes in the vineyards,” says Gustavo.

For Bauzá, any time is a good time to drink wine, you only need to find someone to share it with. In his opinion, wine, as well as food, conveys the essence of a community’s culture and identity, around which meetings and pleasant moments unfold. “If I weren’t a winemaker, I would be a chef,” he says. “But not a French chef. The best food comes from the heart. I would serve my mother’s chicken in white wine, my grandmother’s consommé, my father’s tiramisú, and my Aunt Elsa’s fabulous dessert.” While cooking is what keeps him grounded, Bauzá also enjoys fishing the rivers of Argentina. “It’s fascinating,” he says. “Like winemaking, you have to learn to work with nature, learn from nature, to be successful.”

Despite his love of local cuisine, he always finds opportunities to taste wines from different countries and new varieties, to keep abreast of new styles and techniques emerging around the world. He is tireless, challenging, avant-garde, a researcher, always open to change, innovative, and even restless. “Sometimes winemaking can be a bit like alchemy, blending grapes or wines from different winemaking techniques or production areas to create something truly memorable.”

Today, as a winemaker for Bodegas Salentein, achieving the full potential of the grapes is his greatest challenge with each harvest. “It is wonderful to see one of my wines being enjoyed, marveling others by combining art and technology in winemaking,” he says.

6. ESPACIO SALENTEIN

Embraced by the sun and the cordillera winds, Espacio Salentein comprises two thousand hectares (4,942 acres) surrounded by striking Andean landscape. It hosts two wineries, a cultural center, a chapel and a Posada or guest house. Espacio Salentein also includes 50 hectares (124 acres) of natural landscape planted to native vegetation. Landscaping emphasizes the cultivation of native plants, grasses and bushes that are symbolic to Mendoza. When visitors arrive at this special place, it is a moment remembered for a lifetime.

Bodegas Salentein

Nestled at the foot of the soaring Andes Mountains, Salentein enjoys an inspired perspective of Argentine winegrowing that honors the land, its beauty and abundance. Its winery, uniquely designed in the shape of a cross, is an artistic, spiritual and functional expression of gratitude. The concept of Bodegas Salentein's design was to create a sanctuary in the heart of the land at the foot of the Andes where wine can reach its full expression and maturity.

Wines by Bodegas Salentein

The bodega was built of the earth and in harmony with its natural surroundings. Designed to blend seamlessly and respectfully with its environment, the winery was constructed using an innovative Cyclopean masonry technique that employed local stones found in the thick sedimentary layers of the mountain valley.

Killka

A cultural center and a gateway to the world of wine and art, Killka houses a collection of Argentine works from the second half of the 20th century created by renowned artists, representatives of the intermediate generation and an eclectic mix of young artists. In addition to the selection of Argentine artists there is a core of Dutch paintings from the 19th and 20th centuries. At the back of the patio there is a meeting hall, where visitors can gather to start winery tours. The restaurant, also located here, invites visitors to enjoy an extensive menu that celebrates the specialties of Argentina's Cuyo and Patagonia regions in a gourmet style. A wine bar, gift shop, a state-of-the-art conference and event room and an auditorium for films, complete the experience.

The Chapel

Respect for tradition blended with modern technology—that is central to the mission of Salentein. This marriage is clear in the Salentein chapel, which is made of thick blocks of pressed earth (adobe). At the entrance to the chapel, stone is transformed to art. Water runs from two handcrafted stone sculptures. While water for baptismal purposes is common in many churches, this water symbolizes the pure Andean snowmelt that has baptized the desert and given life to the vines.

Posada Salentein

This small, exclusive lodge is surrounded by the fincas of Salentein. A warm and friendly staff welcomes visitors to this naturally beautiful destination at the foot of the Andes mountain range. Some of the activities enjoyed by guests of Posada Salentein include visiting Bodegas Salentein, Killka and the Chapel, mountain biking, trekking through the vineyards, horseback riding in Finca San Pablo, enjoying the swimming pool and visiting area wineries. Posada Salentein is located just 100 kilometers (62 miles) from the city of Mendoza, which can be reached by frequent daily flights leaving from Buenos Aires.

7. FINCAS OF SALENTEIN

The fincas of Salentein perch on high plateaus at the foot of the ancient, snow-covered Andes. The region lies in the Argentine province of Mendoza, in an area known as the Valle de Uco. The site—with its high elevation, alluvial soils, sunny days and cool nights—offers an ideal micro-climate for winegrowing and exceptional conditions for developing premium malbec grapes.

The total land area of the properties is 2,000 hectares (4,942 acres), with 700 hectares (1,730 acres) planted to grapes. The fincas include many diverse elevations and soils, creating varying conditions for the ripening of different varieties. The ages of plantings range from two to 36 years old. Varieties are approximately 70 percent red, 30 percent white (specific varieties are listed below).

Three Fincas

- **El Oasis.** At 1,050-1,200 meters (3,445-3,937 feet), this finca was the first Salentein estate and it has the oldest vines, which are more than 30 years old. The soil is alluvial with sand, lime and a small proportion of clay over a subsoil of gravel, pebble stones and sand. It has the longest growing season and the lowest relative humidity. Varieties grown include malbec, cabernet sauvignon, syrah, cabernet franc, petit verdot, pinot noir, chardonnay and sauvignon blanc. Cordon trellising with spurs is used in all three fincas.

- **La Pampa.** The middle finca lies at 1,200-1,300 meters (3,937-4,265 feet). The key natural feature here is the alluvial soil, which reaches depths of 30 to 41 centimeters (12 to 16 inches). The soil contains sand and lime with less clay and many stones, causing roots to grow deep in search of water. Varieties include malbec, merlot, pinot noir, chardonnay and sauvignon blanc.

- **San Pablo.** The highest finca sits at 1,700 meters (5,577 feet). The vineyard has a viticultural history dating back to the 17th century, when it was part of an estancia, or ranch, called De Arriba, owned by the Society of Jesus. It has the coldest climate of the three and it rains more and has more relative humidity. The soils are alluvial with sand, lime and a small proportion of clay, over subsoil of rock and less pebble stones.

Plantings are predominantly short-cycle varieties, pinot noir, pinot meunier, chardonnay, sauvignon blanc and gewürztraminer.

Elevation

The average elevation of all three fincas is 1,200 meters (3,937 feet). At 1,700 meters (5,577 feet), Finca San Pablo is one of the highest-elevation vineyards in the Mendoza province and among the highest in the world. Several advantages result: The mountain run-off is pure. This water purity—together with other factors such as the amount of water applied and the timing of its application—produces lower pH levels in the grapes. The cooler nighttime temperatures allow longer hang-time for fruit, and result in a better balance of sugars and acidity. Salentein is conducting ongoing experiments with high-elevation plantings of pinot noir, sauvignon blanc and chardonnay.

Climate

The climate of the fincas is generally dry and sunny year round. Annual rainfall levels are low, averaging about (200 millimeters) eight inches, with rain falling mainly in the summer and snow falling an average of three times a year in the winter. The dry climate means that grapes do not need to be treated for moisture-related diseases or insects. Temperatures are mild to cold. During the growing season, daily temperatures range as much as 16 C (29 F) from daytime highs to nighttime lows. This broad temperature amplitude is significant: research has shown that a thermal amplitude greater than 15 C (27 F) and no more than 25 C (45 F) can result in the production of more tannins and more layers of cells in the skin of red grapes, which in turn produces wine with more color and aroma.

Irrigating with Mineral Water

Salentein's fincas are drip irrigated with pure water from melting snowcaps in the Andes, taken either directly from the streams or from the aquifer below the vineyards. This produces lower pH in the grape, higher acidity, more color in the wine and greater ageability. One testament to the purity of this water is that a local mineral water company, Eco de Los Andes, uses the same aquifer as a source for its bottled mineral water.

As Salentein's pure mountain water supply runs down the mountain, it collects minerals along the way. These minerals are beneficial to healthy plant growth. Magnesium, for example, aids photosynthesis in the vines. But because its vineyards are located at high altitudes near the water source, the snowmelt has not had the opportunity to become overly rich in minerals. Water exceedingly high in minerals would produce grapes with high pH levels, which would affect the aging of wine. For Salentein, the distance from a pure mountain water source is ideal.

Soil

The soils in the three fincas vary from one another, but are generally sandy with lime and small proportions of clay, alluvial soils on a bed of pebbles. This composition provides good permeability and drainage, which allows Salentein to better manage vine vigor and grape quality through controlled irrigation. Soils also have a low level of organic matter and lack fertility. Soil conservation methods are practiced, and indigenous cover crops are grown to maintain the native ecosystem.

High-Elevation Vineyards

At 1,700 meters (5,577 feet), Salentein's finca San Pablo is among the highest elevation vineyards in the world. A number of vineyards elsewhere in Argentina, as well as North America and South Africa, are located as high as 2,133 meters (7,000 feet). The high altitude offers benefits. Intense sunlight at higher elevations means the grapes are exposed to more ultraviolet rays, which mature the fruit completely and build natural sugars. In the cool mountain nights, the grapes also retain acids, which are important to premium winemaking.

Climatic conditions, such as thermal amplitude, at these high altitudes cause grape skins to thicken, thus increasing the presence of tannins. Winemaker must consider the additional tannins in the winemaking process. With malbec grown at higher altitudes, he lowers the temperature of fermentation and maceration and reduces the punch-down of the cap by 50 percent, as compared with malbec grown at lower altitudes. For example, the temperature during fermentation and maceration for fruit at 1,150 meters (3,773 feet) is 22 C to 24 C (72 F to 75 F). But when fruit from the comparatively lower altitude is fermented and macerated, greater extraction is desired, so the temperature is kept at between 26 C and 28 C (79 F and 82 F). Because of the fruitier character of grapes grown at lower altitudes, two pump-overs and two punch-downs are typically performed for maximum extraction. With the highest altitude wines, only one pump-over and one punch-down are required.

The longer growing season typical of high altitude vineyards also impacts color and aroma. There are two ways to measure color: intensity and tone. In higher altitudes, wines tend to go to black or violet tones and there is a great clarity of color. The deeper color is the result of thicker grape skins. Color is present in the cells of the grapes, so the more cells the greater the color. Aroma is another characteristic influenced by altitude. As aroma comes from the grape skin, the thicker the skin the greater the aroma.

7.1 GUSTAVO SOTO, AGRONOMIST

Like any good vineyard manager, Gustavo Soto regularly scans the horizon. In the Uco Valley, growing quality fruit is more than a job—it's a way of life. "It was at the university, when I was studying viticulture, that I began to realize what the Uco Valley really was," says Soto. "I was born here, but I had to see it with eyes from outside to appreciate how wonderful it is."

Soto was born and raised just a short distance from the vineyards in Tunuyán. He attended university in Mendoza, and worked as an agricultural extension agent for Argentina's National Institute of Agricultural Technology Research. Prior to joining Salentein, he served as an agricultural advisor and consultant for other local vineyard estates.

Soto, who initiated Salentein's heightened focus on fruit quality, oversees rigorous vineyard management practices, including crop thinning, control of vine vigor, canopy management and use of low-yield clones. "At Salentein, we understand the importance of small yields," said Soto. "We are growing grapes for the highest quality of each cluster and berry."

Soto tends to Salentein's three estates, which cover 2000 hectares (4,942 acres) with 700 hectares (1,730 acres) planted with vines. All of Salentein's grapes come from these estate vineyards and Soto controls every aspect of vineyard management, from irrigation to crop thinning. "It is difficult for people in this country to thin grapes and lose part of a food crop. That goes against their instincts. But we are helping them learn, especially as we show them the result in the wine." While the average crop yield in Argentina is about 20 tons per hectare (about eight tons per acre), Salentein aims for seven tons (about 2.8 tons per acre).

In a region with scarce rain, Salentein relies on irrigation, drawing from its pure and abundant Andean water supply. "Managing irrigation is the main tool to control vine vigor and grape quality," said Soto. Drip irrigation supplements annual rainfall for an average total of about 17.5 inches (44.5 centimeters). But he lives with a health respect for Mother Nature. "We can farm with great expertise and care, but Nature will always have the last word," says Soto.

"Everything is related and connected," observed Soto. "If you grow vines with less vigor, there is less shade inside the canopy. This allows more air and light, which improves the conditions for bunch development. We need to grow just enough vine to feed each cluster of grapes." Shoots are grown to about 90 centimeters (three feet), allowing approximately 12 to 15 leaves per cluster.

For Soto, who believes that "good wine is born in the vineyard," environmental preservation is essential to wine quality. He manages vineyard practices to preserve the environment, growing flora as a cover crop to maintain the native ecosystem and control vine vigor.

"In this valley, we have unique conditions for growing premium grapes and other fruits—elevation, temperatures, good soil and maybe the best water in Argentina," asserted Soto. "My job is to be sure that we do everything we can to let these conditions create the most distinctive premium grapes."

"When people drink our wine, I want them to be surprised—to wonder what it is about this land, where I have lived all my life- that made such a great wine. And I want my children and grandchildren to be able to say the same thing."