

WINE REVIEWS

February 3, 2009 Issue

ARGENTINA

Red:

Finca Decero, Agrelo (Mendoza, Argentina) "Amano" 2006 (\$50, Vintus): The 2006 vintage was the first release for Finca Decero and it's either beginner's luck or great talent. After tasting their fabulous 2006 Cabernet (reviewed previously) and with Paul Hobbs as consultant, I suspect it's the latter. This, their flagship wine, is a blend of primarily Malbec (60%), Cabernet Sauvignon (35%) and Petit Verdot and is a selection of their best barrels. The Malbec adds richness and pluminess to the minerality and chocolate elements imparted by Cabernet and rounds out the wine nicely. The Petit Verdot adds a bit more uumph to this already powerful wine. Remarkably suave now, you could open it tonight and enjoy it with a leg of lamb or pan-sautéed steak. **92 Michael Apstein** Feb 3, 2009

Diseño, Mendoza (Argentina) Malbec 2007 (\$13): The grapes for this tasty 100% Malbec come from Uco Valley at the base of the Andes foothills. The final blend was aged predominately in French oak. The color is a brilliant garnet, while the forward aromas show floral and cranberry notes. Cedar, ripe berry and spicy French oak flavors lead to a medium balanced finish. The soft and fruity finish, at 13.8% alcohol, has good structure and length. Diseño is a new mark for me, but based on the quality of this wine and its admirable price, the future for Diseño looks good. **89 Gerald D. Boyd** Feb 3, 2009



White:

Andeluna, Tupungato (Mendoza, Argentina) Chardonnay "Winemaker's Reserve" 2006 (\$13, San Francisco Wine Exchange): A fantastic Chardonnay bargain, this medium-weight rendition offers rich fruit flavors, enhanced by just the right amount of oak, and excellent balance. It does not have earthy or mineral-tinged complexity, but those vibrant fruit flavors seem intricately layered, making each sip intellectually interesting as well as hedonistically delicious. Many American Chardonnays that cost two or three times as much cannot match it. **90 Paul Lukacs** Feb 3, 2009

AUSTRALIA

South Australia:

White:

Peter Lehmann, Eden Valley (South Australia, Australia) Riesling 2008 (\$16, The Hess Collection): A sheer delight to sip, whether on its own or paired with light to medium-weight dishes, this bright Riesling dazzles the senses. It offers bright citrus (especially lime) flavors with echoes of tropical fruit and steely undertones, and is wonderfully balanced with not so much acid as to seem tart, but not so little as to be sappy. I would guess that it will become more nuanced with time in bottle, but the wine is so delicious now that I'd also be hard pressed to wait to find out. **91 Paul Lukacs** Feb 3, 2009

FRANCE

Bordeaux:

Red:

Chateau Brane-Cantenac, Margaux (Bordeaux, France) 2005 (\$110, Diageo Chateau and Estate Wines):