



BONNER
PRIVATE WINE
PARTNERSHIP

A photograph of a high-altitude landscape. In the foreground, three guanacos (mountain sheep) stand on a rocky, sparsely vegetated slope. The background features a steep, rocky mountain slope under a clear blue sky. The overall scene is arid and mountainous.

Your Extreme Altitude
Argentine
Collection

from the Bonner
Private Wine Partnership

America's Most Unique Wine Club

Dedicated to searching the world for astounding
wines from little-known winemakers

Dear Member,

It's been almost two years since we launched the Bonner Private Wine Partnership with a single shipping container packed with wines from the foothills of the Andes mountains.

The stars of the show then were two malbecs from the extreme altitude Calchaquí Valley – our own Tacana (from the Bonner family ranch at Gualfin) and Sunal Ilógico (from an even higher vineyard at Luracatao several hours up the valley).

Today, we return to this vast frontier where, as the Wall Street Journal described it in 2019, “condors fly above giant cactuses...ancient rock formations vie for attention with Indian ruins...[and where they make] critically acclaimed wines that are largely unavailable outside of the country.”

Thus, you will find no Mendoza or Famatina in this collection, but extreme altitude wines only, ranging from over 6,000 ft. to almost 9,000 ft., and some of the most isolated vineyards in the world.

The isolation and limited production make imports from this area rare. That we know of, only two of these wines have ever been imported to the US before – the RD and the Amar y Vivir – and even then, in vanishingly small quantities. Yet, these wines are not unknown to the great critics. Several wines and winemakers on this list – despite never being available in the US before – have accrued multiple medals, awards, and 90+ point ratings from Robert Parker and Tim Atkins.

A couple things of note in our second visit to the Calchaquí:

First, cabernet sauvignon plays a bigger role alongside malbec in this collection. Argentine winemakers downplay their cab sauv for fear of being labeled Bordeaux pretenders. Yet, it makes perfect sense to plant cab sauv in Argentina. Malbec was, many years ago, a Bordeaux grape. You'll find it lends a delicious spice and smoothness to these extreme altitude malbecs.

Second, it is anyone's guess what the longevity of these wines will be.

Argentina has no culture of aging wines. And because these wines are so rarely found outside the Calchaquí Valley, there is little in the way of past experience to draw from. Our guess is that they should all bloom within six years. But keep a few bottles in your cellar and see what happens. With Argentina increasingly popping up among the best vintages and best vineyards in the world, and 2008 vintages of high altitude Catena going for \$598 a bottle, a small cellar of these wines could be a worthwhile investment.



In this box, you will find six bottles:

- ① Tacuil RD 2019
- ② Sunal Ilógico Criolla Chica 2018
- ③ Francisco Puga y Familia *L'Amitié* 2019
- ④ Piloto de Prueba 2020
- ⑤ Arca Yaco Amar y Vivir 2018
- ⑥ Atypico 2017

It feels good to be back.

To your health,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Will Bonner', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Will Bonner
Founder, Bonner Private Wine Partnership

A Quick Note on Wine Tasting

On the next few pages, we've included tasting notes. Here's a quick tip on how to approach them.

What makes a "wine expert" is not just his depth of knowledge – which anyone can achieve – but his sensitivity to taste and smell. A great wine expert will find a hundred little aromas that most ordinary noses will never be able to detect.

Now. If you don't pick up on the same flavors, does that mean you're doing it wrong?

No. Tasting is subjective. Pronounced flavors on my palate may present themselves as secondary or tertiary notes for you. Remember, wines are always evolving in the bottle. That hint of cherry from a few months ago might present itself differently now. So, if you detect a flavor or aroma you don't see on the tasting sheet, add it. See what your friends say. Better yet, if you have a tasting that differs markedly from what's written here, send us your notes. We'd love to compare them!

2019 Tacuil RD (Calchaquí Valley)



8,198 ft.

93 pts (Parker – 2015)

Malbec, Cabernet

If you've had a bottle of Tacana or Mayuco, then you know winemaker Raúl Dávalos and his bodega at Tacuil. With "RD" (named for his father, of whom it is said that he defended his land from socialist expropriators by welcoming unannounced visitors with a rifle), we add another stellar – yet rarely available – vintage to our collection.

If this is your first Dávalos wine, here's a summary:

Raúl's ancestor, Spanish general Don Nicolás Severo de Isasmendi, first arrived in the Calchaquí Valley during a series of frontier wars of byzantine complexity in their aims and belligerents. He founded what is now the oldest winery in Argentina, with French vines carried over the Andes by his daughter Ascensión.

Two hundred years later, in his isolated little valley, Raúl still hews to the old ways – wild yeast, organic grapes, unfiltered, unoaked.

This RD is enigmatic on the nose, but full bodied on the palate with classic Calchaquí berries and herbs.

Drink 2021 to 2027.



2018 Sunal Ilógico Criolla Chica (Calchaquí Valley)



8,858 ft.
100-year-old vines
Criolla Chica

Sometime around 1900, someone planted a few vines on a small Indian farmstead at the northern edge of the Calchaquí Valley.

If you've had Sunal Ilógico, then you've had malbec from Luracatao before. But this vintage is not a malbec but a *criolla*, with grapes from a different part of Luracatao known as Cuchi Pampa.

“Criolla” is a blanket term for various hybrids that evolved from Spanish grapes brought to the new world in the 1500s. The most famous criolla is the white wine grape torrontés. But the criolla we have here is a red grape. Nothing to do with torrontés at all. Its precise genetic makeup remains a mystery – a long-lost European varietal (like the carmenere discovered in Chile)?

Indeed, on the palate this criolla feels familiar – a lighter red with a nose of dates, dried roses, and spice; a “Beaujolais of the Andes” if you will. Serve chilled down to around 50 degrees.

Drink 2021 to 2025.



2019 Francisco Puga y Familia L'Amitié (Calchaquí/Tucumán)



Blend of Altitudes
Winemaker: Francisco
“Paco” Puga
Malbec, Cab franc,
Merlot

Notice the shape of this bottle of *L'Amitié* – a Burgundy. Winemaker Francisco “Paco” Puga began his career there back in 1999. Since then he has become one of Argentina’s top winemakers, known for his work at 90+ point wineries Amalaya and Colomé (the latter founded by the Dávalos family in the 1800s).

L'Amitié is Francisco’s personal wine from his own label. Already celebrated in the industry (the 2018 got a 94% from Decanter), *L'Amitié* takes grapes from four different locations in northern Argentina – from the high dry terroirs of the Calchaquí to the green lowlands of Tucumán (Argentina’s Scotland).

If you’ve had Puramun, you’ll find a similar love of craft in *L'Amitié* – a winemaker’s wine. With a fresh herby nose, followed by black fruit on the palate, and a long oaky finish, this wine is a love letter to Puga’s days working the misty vines of Burgundy. Note the camphor wood and smoke for the Calchaquí’s unmistakable fingerprint.

Drink 2021 to 2027.



2020 Piloto de Prueba (Cafayate)



Est. 5,500 to 6,000 ft.

**Unfiltered, Low
Intervention**

**Malbec, Cab sauv,
Tannat**

There's no old family vineyard behind this wine. No tradition dating back centuries. Piloto de Prueba is an upstart in the high altitude wine town of Cafayate.

To our knowledge, this 2020 is only the second vintage ever released. The name "piloto de prueba" translates to "test pilot." The project was supposed to be a mere experiment for wine grower Daniel Guillen and his friends. Today his is a label to watch closely.

Why all the buzz? Tannat. It's a grape from southwestern France typically found in Uruguay. Yet, word on the street is that it may just be "the next malbec." While malbec remains king in the Andes, the tannat in this 2020 vintage makes a compelling case: wrapping the malbec and cab sauv in a rich, dark chocolate. Open a bottle on a cold winter's evening and just try to escape this wine's warming embrace. There may be a longer aging potential here.

Drink 2020-2030.



2018 Arca Yaco Amar y Vivir (Calchaquí Valley)



6,889 ft.

Top 6% of Wines
in the World (Vivino
2016)

Malbec, Cab sauv

Founded in 1850, Bodega Etchart's *Arnaldo B.* wine has won no fewer than 52 medals, including Gold at the Mondial de Bruxelles. But recently, Matias Etchart, the latest in the dynasty, decided to try something else.

Arca Yaco is a small farm alongside a creek. There, in the shade of fig and walnut trees, Matias harvested malbec and cabernet sauvignon grapes. He named the resulting wine *Amar y Vivir* – a reference to an old bolero song sung by his uncle Arnaldo.

Like *L'Amitié*, *Amar y Vivir* is a personal statement – a memoir fermented and aged in oak. As opposed to the far more common 225 liter barrels, Matias chose 500 liter barrels, which soften the oak to a fleeting wisp, like a familiar scent tied to a memory we've long since lost.

With a nose of wet earth, black fruit and wood, followed by tobacco, licorice, and pepper on the palate, *Amar y Vivir* is a wine to remind us, even in these times, that life is to be lived. Decant for 40 minutes.

Drink 2021 to 2027.



2017 Atypico (Tolombón)



6,069 ft.

93 pts (Atkins - 2019)

Cabernet sauvignon

The famed Ruta 40 – essentially Argentina’s Route 66 – runs from the Bolivian border in the north, to the tip of Patagonia in the south. Along the way, it passes through parts of the Calchaqui including Cafayate, and a little further to the south, the town of Tolombón.

There, 10-year-old cabernet sauvignon vines struggle in a soil of sand and stone before an early harvest (the reflective heat from the stony soil matures the cab sauv grapes faster than usual), 4 days of cold maceration in stainless steel, and 18 months of aging in new barrels by Vicard of the Cognac region – the last of France’s great artisan *tonnelleries* (cooperages).

Both tree selection (for the barrels) and grape harvest were in alignment for the 2016 vintage. It was superb. Will this 2017 surpass it? With blueberry and black olive on the nose; balsamic, mint, and thyme on the palate; and a balanced mouthfeel with a long finish. Decant 20-30 mins.

Drink 2020 to 2027.





Our Mission

At the Bonner Private Wine Partnership, our mission is to bring you unique bottles from all over the world. We seek wines that are bursting with life and character – wines with an adventure in every bottle.

Your Next Quarterly Shipment

As you read this, we are already selecting and arranging to import wines for next quarter's shipment. We will be in touch to share what we've found with you when we get closer to the shipping date. Until then, enjoy your wine! (And let us know what you think!)

Problem with Your Shipment?

Please call our customer service, 9-5 Monday through Friday. We want everyone to get the most out of this club and these wines. So if there's a problem, we'll do our best to make it right.

...Can We Ask A Small Favor?

Can we “compare notes” with you on these wines?

Maybe you picked up on aromas that we didn't. Maybe you just fell in love with a particular bottle. Or maybe the exact opposite. Whatever the case, we want to hear from you. Because you're part of this. And we can only keep this mission going if you're onboard.

Shoot us an email at feedback@bonnerprivatewines.com