

Your Calchaquí Valley Collection

from the Bonner
Private Wine Partnership



BONNER
PRIVATE WINE
PARTNERSHIP



America's Most Unique Wine Club

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

...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 on board.

Shoot us an email at feedback@bonnerprivatewines.com

Dear Member,

The first time we brought winemaker Julien Miquel up to the Calchaquí Valley with us, he reported a sensation of awe almost resembling fear. The vast, alien landscapes. The thin blue sky. The miles of dry desert plains, flanked by jagged peaks. The Calchaquí is a place where the individual can lose his sense of place, at least until he has a stiff drink.

This collection is, even for Calchaquí aficionados, a step out of our comfort zones. You'll notice only two single varietal malbecs. The winemakers of the Calchaquí are testing the valley's frontiers.

Raúl Dávalos (the reclusive winemaker behind Tacana, RD, Mayuco, and many others) is experimenting with an 80-year-old plot of an indigenous grape called "criolla chica" (no one's quite sure where it comes from) and a new style dubbed "Beaujolais of the Andes."

Meanwhile, winemaker Claudio Maza is intent on finding wine grapes in places no wine grape should grow, like the bottom of a dry ravine that has seen its share of bloodshed and disaster over the past 500 years.

Agustín Lanús is back, too, this time armed with cabernet franc, a peppery grape originally from the Basque country. Cab franc has a lighter body and is not commonly a single varietal wine. It's also a b*tch to grow. Yet, in the high desert, where the extreme nighttime chill prevents it from becoming too fruity, cab franc finds its edge... like that of a razor-sharp dagger.

And that's just the beginning of what this Calchaquí collection has in store for you.



In this box, you will find six bottles:

- ① Valle Arriba La Criollita 2020
- ② Sierra Lima Alfa Blend de Malbec 2020
- ③ Mugrón Winemakers' Blend 2020
- ④ El Viticultor Cabernet Sauvignon 2021
- ⑤ Bad Brothers Facón Selection Cabernet Franc 2020
- ⑥ Inimaginable 2020

Welcome back to the valleys of the Calchaquí.

Salud,

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!

2020 Valle Arriba La Criollita



6,561 ft.

Avg. Vine Age:
80 years

Criolla Chica

Criolla is a descendent of the mission grapes originally brought to Argentina by the Spanish in the 16th century. Over the centuries abandoned plots went feral and spun off hybrids innumerable. Thus criolla has become a catch-all term for “we don’t know what it is or who planted it but it’s been here longer than we have.”

Much criolla, charitably, is just good enough for communion wine and little else.

An exception is red criolla, specifically criolla chica aka the “Beaujolais of the Andes.” La Criollita is Raúl Dávalos’ take on the style under his Valle Arriba label (same label as the extreme altitude trio of El Cateño, El Seclanteño, and El Pucareño, for long time members). The nose is a cherry tree in bloom. In the mouth, the wine shifts towards the earth with an unexpected minerality (a product of the lime and granite soil?). Only 3,000 bottles made.

Drink now or cellar till 2028.



2020 Sierra Lima Alfa Blend de Malbec



7,874 ft. to 8,530 ft.

**Organic (Not
Certified)**

Malbec

In the trendiest restaurants of Buenos Aires, reports Diego, this is the wine everyone asks for. The winemaker is none other than Francisco “Pancho” Morelli Rubio, Raúl Dávalos’ cousin. The two collaborated on the first vintage of Doña Ascensión (we imported the 2019 for Partnership members last year).

Back in 2014 Pancho started his own project, Sierra Lima Alfa (sierra, lima, and alfa being the call sign for the Salta airport, SLA). Pancho is all about balance. For this 2019 vintage, he chose two extreme altitude vineyards of exceptional quality (Pucará and Molinos). He then fermented in stainless steel (unlike oak, it doesn’t impart flavor). Interestingly, he also kept contact between grape juice and skins to a bare minimum, which may be why Sierra Lima Alfa really does feel balanced in a way that most extreme altitude wines don’t (we’ll leave the debate over the merits of “balance” to you). Others seem to agree. 93 points (Atkin). 94 points (Descorchados).

Drink now or cellar up to 2029.



2020 Mugerón Winemakers' Blend



7,454 ft.

Big Aging Potential

**Malbec, Tannat,
Cabernet Sauvignon,
Petit Verdot**

In 2020, winemaker Francisco “Paco” Puga’s use of the Burgundy bottle shape caught our eye, Bordeaux bottles being the norm in the Calchaquí. We wound up sourcing wines from him (*L’Amitié* and its reserve, *Robusto*) for our last two Calchaquí collections.

Paco’s love, other than Burgundy, is blending terroirs. In *Mugerón* he raises the stakes considerably, blending not just different terroirs, but different winemakers. Here, Paco has mixed his juice with that of three friends, Mariano Adamo, Claudio Maza, and Rafael Domingo.

Think of it like a battle of winemaking happening right on your palate as each winemaker tries to outdo the other. Find black fruit, spice, and desert herbs in the nose. Great structure in the mouth.

This wine is just starting to peak but will probably reach its apogee between 2025 and 2038.



2021 El Viticultor Cabernet Sauvignon



5,900 ft.
Low Intervention
Cabernet
Sauvignon

New year, new version of El Viticultor. Last year we sourced a malbec-cab blend. This year we take the single vineyard cab sauv for a spin. We had tried to source the latter last year too, but Daniel's style of winemaking doesn't lend itself to massive quantity. Lesson learned. This year we placed the order way in advance.

Daniel is of the "wine is made in the vineyard, not the bodega" school. The vineyard in question sits on a bed of basalt and sand at the Finca Rio Seco, just to the south of Cafayate, along Argentina's Ruta 40 (their highway 66). He personally manages the plot, and at harvest time his family comes to help pick the grapes.

In this 2021, the pyrazines (red and black peppers) lead. But be patient. There's lush dark fruit and cocoa on its way. (Plus a bit of leather in the nose?)

Drink now or cellar up to 2033.



2020 Bad Brothers Facón Selection Cabernet Franc



5,577 ft.

15 Months
French Oak

Cabernet Franc

Don't let the name "Bad Brothers" throw you. This is, indeed, an Argentine wine. The winemaker is extreme altitude master Agustín Lanús (of Sunal, among others). "Facón" refers to the large knife, also called a *cuchillo*, carried by Argentina's legendary cowboy, the gaucho. As he wandered the high plains, often alone, the gaucho had little in life to truly count on. The exceptions were his horse, his poncho, and his facón. It was no six gun, perhaps, but in the right hands a facón was no less feared. Charles Darwin apparently saw a good amount of blood let by the facón during his voyage on the Beagle, later writing: "many quarrels arose, which from the general manner of fighting with the knife often proved fatal."

All this to say that Agustín's Facón 2020 has a lot to live up to. And that's probably why he chose cab franc, a dagger of a grape if ever there were one.

Drink now or cellar till 2033. Only 4,000 bottles made.



2020 Inimaginable



6,561 ft.
Big Aging Potential
Malbec

This bottle came to us on a tip from another winemaker. It's Claudio Maza's second wine in this collection (he is one of the four winemakers for Mugerón).

Claudio loves a challenge: terroirs so inhospitable that planting wine grapes there should be "unimaginable." As you can imagine, the Calchaquí has plenty of contenders for that title. Claudio found his own plot of hell in a small canyon to the south of Cafayate. Even by Calchaquí standards, the place is snakebit. Four early Spanish attempts to build missions there ended in disaster at the hands of local tribes. The Jesuits briefly succeeded in the 1600s, only to see their mission destroyed in the Calchaquí Wars.

Though at the lower end of the extreme altitude spectrum, that high altitude malbec "plum" note still sings loud and clear, accompanied here by fresh herbs. Intense in the mouth yet fresh and with a slightly toasted taste (from the oak).

Drink now or cellar up to 2030.





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 at 1-844-733-5249. 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.



Love tasting new wines? Have thoughts about flavor notes and styles? Become a wine tester for us and receive special offers & exclusive wines... in exchange for your tasting expertise! **Sign up at:** www.bonnerprivatewines.com/wine-testing