

# Wine & Spirits

Special Issue 25th Anniversary Buying Guide. Winter 2011

## Catena Zapata Mendoza



**Founded:** 1902  
**Winemaker:** Alejandro Vigil  
**Viticulturist:** Luis Reginato  
**Acres owned:** 1502  
**Annual production:** N/A  
**Estate grown:** 100%  
**Owner:** The Catena family  
**Known for:** Distinctive and satisfying single-vineyard malbecs.  
**Importer:** Winebow, NY  
**Website:** catenawines.com

Nicolás Catena is one of the principal figures today in Argentina wine, the force that's made malbec Argentina's defining wine. His family has played an important role in Argentina's wine history since they arrived in the late 1800s from Italy: It was his grandfather, Don Nicola Catena, who planted the first malbec vines in 1902, and his father, Domingo, who built the winery into one of the country's most important producers in the 1950s. When Nicolás took over in the late '80s, he first focused on cabernet – influenced perhaps by the years that he lived in California – but soon changed allegiance to malbec, his grandfather's passion. Catena's team, led by Alejandro Vigil, has explored the grape more thoroughly than any other winery, with a series of single vineyard wines that have been among our favorite Argentine malbecs since they were introduced in 2004. Two of these particularly stood out in our tastings this year: The 2007 Adrianna and the '07 Nicasia.

Adrianna comes from one of the highest vineyards in the Uco Valley. In 2007, it produced a wine that defies the warmth of the vintage with its crisp, firmly acidic

red fruit. In combination with the grape's deeper, riper fig and dried fruit flavours, the wine feels tense and substantial, the freshness keeping it lively through a long finish.

Nicasia is also in the Uco Valley, but the vineyard is about 1,500 feet lower and offers a very different expression of the variety. The 2007 reflects the warmth of its region, La Consulta, in its decadent ripeness, the roundness of its tannins and the depth of its licorice, mocha and dried fruit notes.

The two vineyards also inform Argentine, blended wine fruit from Catena's other principal malbec vineyard, Angélica. The 2007 has the sweet scent of fresh blackberries, its tannin powerfully structured, as sinewy as the muscles of a long-distance runner. It's another face of the grape, one of a wealth of expressions that Catena has helped uncover.



### TOP-SCORING WINES

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| 94 | 2007 Mendoza Gualtallary Adrianna Malbec \$120 (02/11) |
| 92 | 2007 Mendoza Altamira Nicasia Malbec \$120 (02/11)     |
| 92 | 2007 Mendoza Malbec Argentino Malbec \$120 (02/11)     |