

Catena Zapata to sell top wines via Place de Bordeaux

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Bodega Catena Zapata in Argentina has said that two of its top wines will be represented across Europe and Asia by 10 Bordeaux merchant houses, marking the latest vote of confidence in the city's négociant system by non-French producers.

Catena Zapata said that flagship wines Nicolás Catena Zapata 2015 and Adrianna Vineyard 'Mundus Bacillus Terrae Malbec' 2015 would be sold in Europe and Asia through the Place de Bordeaux.

Specifically, the Argentinian winery said that it had signed a deal with a group of 10 négociants, although it did not name them.

The first wines were expected to be offered from Thursday 6 September, the winery said. The move is further evidence of the Place de Bordeaux becoming a distribution hub for fine wines from beyond the French city's surrounding area.

Dr Laura Catena, who manages Catena Zapata and is the fourth generation of the owning family, said, 'I have long admired the Bordeaux négociants' commitment to distributing the greatest wines of Bordeaux to collectors all over the world.

'Through our almost 20-year partnership with the Rothschild [Lafite] family in Argentina [via Bodega Caro], my father and I have developed a deep respect for the Bordelais vignerons.'

A spokesperson for Catena Zapata said that the estate anticipated selling around 50% of production of the two wines via the Place de Bordeaux.

A significant move

The estate said that it believed the deal also marked a significant moment for Malbec, given its history in south-west France. It is still one of the varieties permitted in a Bordeaux red blend; albeit it is seldom used and the 20th Century saw producers increasingly turn to Merlot and Cabernet Franc.

Nicolás Catena is credited with being one of the pioneers of Argentina's modern wine industry, in part due to work to revive Malbec's fortunes.

The Nicolás Catena Zapata wine, which debuted with the 1997 vintage, combines Cabernet Sauvignon and Malbec and involves 200 separate vinifications of individual vineyard rows, according to the estate.

Its 2015 vintage is made up of 83% Cabernet Sauvignon and 17% Malbec, according to technical information on Catena Zapata's website.

The Adrianna vineyard, which provides fruit for the Mundus Bacillus Terrae Malbec, was planted in 1992 and lies in the far west of Tupungato Alto at 1,500 metres above sea level. The wine is part of a focus on site-specific Malbec, as Alejandro Vigil, winemaking director at Bodega Catena Zapata, recently told Decanter magazine for a feature in its October 2018 issue.

Other non-French wines on Place de Bordeaux Earlier this year, Francis Ford Coppola announced that he had given distribution rights for his Inglenook Napa wines outside of North and Central America to three Bordeaux négociants.

Italy's Masseto, California's Opus One and Chile's Seña are also distributed via the Place. Decanter's Jane Anson examined a changing role for Bordeaux négociants in a column last year.



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