

HOME > REPORTS

GREAT VALUE WINES: ARGENTINE PINOT NOIR UNDER \$40

Wednesday, March 31, 2021



11 Tasting Notes



Our Wine of the Year for 2020, the Chacra Pinot Noir Patagonia Treinta y Dos 2018, was a powerful statement for Patagonia's pinot noir, putting Argentina's ability with this grape right in the spotlight. While many leading producers have recalibrated their work with the country's signature grape, malbec, making more refined, precise renditions as well as adding immense drinkability, grapes like pinot noir and chardonnay have also made significant progress in terms of quality. And luckily, these improvements have not been accompanied by large hikes in price; value remains intrinsic to Argentine wines.

Patagonia, the distant, southernmost wine region of South America in the desert, now makes some of the finest and most poised pinot noirs of the country. This takes place in minuscule vineyards assisted by a long growing seasons that are extended by warm days and cool nights. While Piero Incisa of Chacra made a superb wine out of his old and biodynamically farmed Treinta y Dos vineyard planted in 1932 (it was rated 100 points last year), his "Sin Azufre," meaning 'without sulfur', is a natural wine with fruit sourced from a specific parcel in the Cincuenta y Cinco vineyard (the name means 'fifty-five' and refers to the vine plantings in 1955). It is an incredible deal for those who go for an intellectual appreciation of a lively, drinkable pinot noir. It's fresh, pure, focused, and engaging, but also restrained, almost a little aloof and detached, which makes it even more thought-provoking. Schroeder, Manos Negros and Wapisa on the Atlantic coast in San Javier also make top value pinot noirs from Patagonia. Malbec, chardonnay, chenin blanc, semillon and even trousseau are also very promising in Rio Negro, many of them coming from very old vines.

While pinot noir traveled far to the south of Argentina, it settled in the country's wine hub of Mendoza, which is home to around 74% of Argentine pinot noir. Here this finicky grape is likely to become a little fruitier and more drinkable with a depth of red and blackberry fruit and undergrowth complexity that extends to a plump and juicy palate.



The style is a true reflection of Mendoza's high altitude and intense sunshine, giving pinot a broader spectrum of fruit and an exuberant mouthfeel that is offset by its succulent, high acidity. This also explains why these wines are so appealingly open and mouth-watering in their youth. Winemaking innovations in Mendoza have assured that the best pinot noir isn't subdued by prominent oak or extraction, and the top players always know how to make fruity yet serious, complex and nuanced renditions of this elegant grape.

There are many outstanding producers worthy of a special mention in Mendoza. Dr. Laura Catena's Luca Pinot Noir Mendoza G Lot and the terroir-specific Domaine Nico show how some of the best pinot in Uco Valley's vineyards are blessed with a true sense of place while also demonstrating balance, restraint, and deliberation. So does Matias Riccitelli, who makes impressive pinot with indigenous yeast from the calcareous Gualtallary terroir, besides his well-regarded malbec and cabernet franc blend under Riccitelli & Father labeling. His semillon from Patagonia is also one of the best we know made from old vines in Rio Negro. Larger producers like Salentein and Trapiche also make agreeable and affordable pinot noirs.

The following 11 bottles under \$40 (some wines are not yet released so prices may vary) that we've tasted recently give a glimpse of pinot's promising future from the elevated vineyards in Mendoza to far-off Patagonia east of Andes.

-Zekun Shuai, associate editor

GREAT VALUE ARGENTINE PINOT NOIR FOR LESS THAN \$40 PER BOTTLE

Chacra Pinot Noir Patagonia Sin Azufre 2019 – JS96

Available at Zachys.com: \$29.99

Available at K&LWines.com: \$36.99

Luca Pinot Noir Mendoza G Lot 2018 – JS94

Available at Vivino: \$34.99

Familia Schroeder Pinot Noir Patagonia Alpataco 2019 – JS93

US Price: \$12

Chacra Pinot Noir Patagonia Barda 2019 – JS93

Available at Zachys.com: \$23.99

Available at Vivino: \$28.99

Salentein Pinot Noir Valle de Uco Reserva 2019 – JS93

Previous US Price: \$19 (Available soon)

Domaine Nico Pinot Noir Valle de Uco Soeur et Freres Grand Père 2018 – JS93

Available at Wine.com: \$29.99

Available at Vivino: \$31.61

Matias Riccitelli Pinot Noir Valle de Uco 2019 – JS93

Previous International Price: \$28 (Available soon)

Trapiche Pinot Noir Mendoza Gran Medalla 2018 – JS93

Previous International Price: \$21 (Available soon)

Wapisa Pinot Noir Rio Negro San Javier 2019 – JS93

Previous US Price: \$21 (Available soon)

Manos Negras Pinot Noir Rio Negro Artesano 2018 – JS92

International Price: \$16



Bodega Atamisque Pinot Noir Tupungato Valle de Uco Catalpa 2019 – JS92

Previous International Price: \$16 (Available soon)

SHARE ON: [f](#) [t](#) [in](#) [✉](#)FIND IN REPORT: SORT BY: [👁](#) | Expand Tasting Notes

Showing 1 to 11 of 11 notes

CHACRA PINOT NOIR PATAGONIA SIN AZUFRE 2019 ^**Country****Argentina****Region****Patagonia****Vintage****2019****Score****96****CHECK PRICE**

This no-sulfur wine is extremely precise and floral with violets and poppies, as well as the purple fruit. Medium body. Chewy tannins that are slightly austere, yet fresh. Drink and enjoy.

[Enlarge Tasting Note](#)SHARE ON: [f](#) [t](#) [in](#) [✉](#)LUCA PINOT NOIR MENDOZA G LOT 2018 ▼CHACRA PINOT NOIR PATAGONIA BARDA 2019 ^**Country****Argentina****Region****Patagonia****Vintage****2019****Score****93****CHECK PRICE**

I love the forest-fruit, must and wet-earth character here. Perfumed. Medium body, very fine round tannins and intense, crushed stones. Hints of cedar and hazelnuts. Crunchy. Always an exciting pinot noir from Argentina. Drink or hold.

[Enlarge Tasting Note](#)SHARE ON: [f](#) [t](#) [in](#) [✉](#)DOMAINE NICO PINOT NOIR VALLE DE UCO SOEUR ET FRERES GRAND PÈRE 2018 ⬆FAMILIA SCHROEDER PINOT NOIR PATAGONIA ALPATACO 2019 ▼MATIAS RICCITELLI PINOT NOIR VALLE DE UCO 2019 ▼