

RIBERA^{DEL} CUARZO

Wine Growers since 1883



RÍO NEGRO

PATAGONIA

ARGENTINA



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Wine Growers since 1883



*Creating unique wines in Patagonia
Pioneer in winegrowing at the foot of the "barda".
Small family run winery*



OUR HISTORY

We have our roots in Patagonia and in winemaking stretching back over 150 years. Stemming from two very different origins, Bodega del Cuarzo seems to be the synthesis of those two powerful forces.

On my grandmothers side Melchor Concha y Toro started his winery in 1883, only a few years after, in 1875, Jose Menendez had started his wool producing and shipping company in far away Patagonia. Stories of how these two individuals worked hard to create their ventures intertwine in dinner conversations over generations.

I have come to believe that the coincidence of these two pioneers, having thousands of miles apart but almost at the same time successfully developed their companies, was the mysterious merging force that lead to the creation of **Bodega del Cuarzo**.

Patagonia was the place where we spent the summers of my childhood and where I had travelled many times in my youth. **It was always a place where I truly found myself at home.** Amidst the wind flat topped hills, the enormous open spaces and the gigantic mountains where distances are dwarfed only by an infinite sky the idea of setting up a winery little by little started to materialize.



THE 2000'S

My career in wines started when, as a very young person, **I joined the winery of Doctor Nicolas Catena and at his side discovered the fascinating world of wine which has become my life.** I learned from him every detail of how to cultivate the best grapes, how to produce the best wines and above all how to never ever relinquish in the pursuit of excellence.

From the distribution of wines the next logical step for our company was to find a unique place to create a new winery. **A place where we could produce something truly exceptional. Almost by magical coincidence the pieces of the puzzle fell into place.**



VALLE AZUL, PATAGONIA

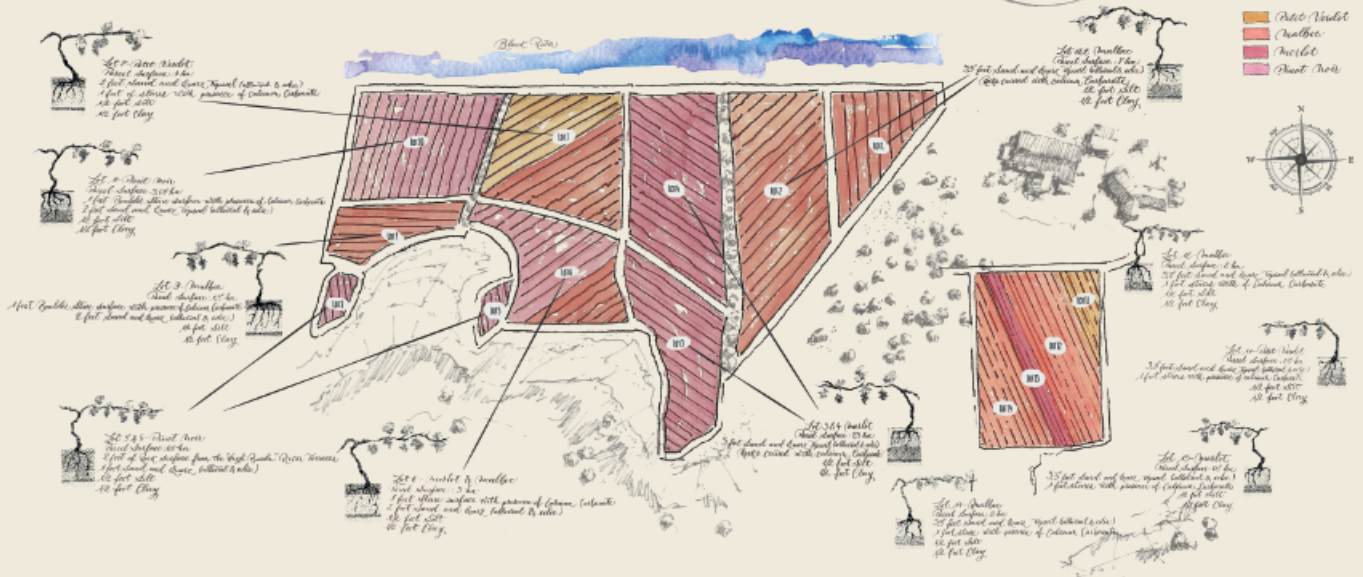
The story of this winery started in 2004, when Italian countess Noemi Marone Cinzano discovered this far away land, planted a five hectares vineyard at the foot of the barda (a specific Patagonian landscape, a kind of cliff or hill made of a dark grain of volcanic rock, with plenty of quartz, carbonate calcium and calcareous) and began producing wine in a Burgundy style - the winery built right by the vineyard with small concrete open top pools for craft production, employing *pisage*.

When I first tasted the 2008 vintage, I knew Noemi **had found a real terroir**. During ten years I explored all other nearby places in Patagonia where to produce an equal taste. I finally concluded the conditions in Valle Azul were perfect.

An extraordinary coincidence brought me together with the Countess and we finally came to an agreement through which we could manage the land and **the winery for a very long period of time and thus invest in a larger and better operation to produce an exceptional wine**.



Araucana Vineyard - 32 ha



THE VINEYARD

We are currently undergoing our 6th harvest. We have already planted twenty-two additional hectares at the foot of the barda and foresee reaching up to forty.

Forty hectares of a land that continues and enhances the legacy of that self-same bottle from 2008, which reaffirmed our conviction that a life long project would again begin in Patagonia.



IN THE VINEYARD UNIQUE TERROIR

Simply to say that Araucana is a unique vineyard doesn't do it justice.

Located in Ribera del Cuarzo, no other vineyard in Patagonia is located so close to the Barda or in such isolation.

The soils of Araucana are mainly aeolic, formed over eons by wind erosion. The volcanic ash and high potassium content make for a crucial, and very unusual chemical make-up.

The Barda river terrace is another point of difference. The texture of the surface is created by the presence of quartz mixed with calcium carbonate, a combination known locally as Indian cement, which erodes into the soil and breaks up to share its exceptional character with our grapes.



IN THE VINEYARD

Maintaining traditional working methods helps us to keep in touch with the land, a connection that defines us as farmers. At the estate, we also raise Criollo horses, the famous Argentine breed. In addition to using tractors and other machinery that improve the efficiency of certain tasks, working with animals is a way of respecting and caring for nature in all our interventions, always working towards producing the best possible flavor.

Horses also provide manure, which goes into the compost we use at the vineyard: it is added to organic waste from the wine barrels and vats and everything consumed at the house. This is the fertilizer for the fruits and vegetables we grow for ourselves, our gardens and, of course, our vineyard.

But horses are also a way of life: living with horses slows things down, allowing us perspective and to connect with nature, to go through life in a more relaxed and profound way.



IN THE VINEYARD

Araucana is planted using the traditional high cordon-method with two meter gaps between the rows and a meter between each plant resulting in a density of 5000 plants per hectare. Currently, the majority are Malbec but there are also some Petit Verdot, Merlot and recently added, Pinot Noir vines.

Our philosophy consists in trying to encourage the plants to regulate themselves throughout the process, to intervene as little as possible and to provide support so that they can make decisions themselves, as it were. We simply guide them toward their best possible expression and quality. That is why we have opted for traditional vine management methods such as Guyot pruning with canes and renewal spurs.

The harvest is also carried out manually, in several waves because some subsectors within the five hectares need to be harvested at different times depending on the variety and the ripening cycle of the grapes.



WINEMAKING

Winemaking is done in small open-top vats, all carried out painstakingly by hand. During this stage we continue to keep intervention to a minimum, trying to encourage spontaneous fermentation and always respecting the terroir. We barely add any sulfites in the traditional way to preserve the wines from oxidation and protect their microbiology. We take our lead from the vineyard; it tells us when the best time to harvest is for maximum expression.

Each of the vats in which we carry out the fermentation is filled with two thousand kilos of grapes and **they are handled traditionally**: manual pressing, deslestage, mainly with the Malbec, and very gentle pumping-over at the end.



Once the wines are finished, they are aged in barrels. Only twenty or thirty percent of the barrels we use are new, the rest are reused so as not to overload the wine with oak. Once the twelve to fourteen months aging period is over, it's time to make the blends and here our decisions are made by the barrel: **every barrel is a world unto itself and we taste the expression of each, deciding which line its contents will suit best.**



VITICULTURIST AND WINEMAKER ERNESTO BAJDA

- 15 years working closely with Felipe and committed to studying Argentine, and more specifically, Patagonian terroir.

- Recognized by **The Drink Business** as one of the **top 100 winemakers in the world**, and best for Malbec.



WATER

The Countess had planted the vineyard in the highest part of the Barda river terrace, an unexplored area where no one had ever considered such an enterprise: it meant having to pump water up from the river at enormous expense. Until then, **vineyards in the Rio Negro valley had been located on the shores of the river**, from which water was channeled through a system of canals and sluices; flood irrigation, the economic method.

However, the Countess decided to plant up high in the belief that the effort would pay off. Before even considering the cost, she set about building a pump system to bring the water a couple of miles up the slope. Once it was built, she could finally start work on the vineyard in the hopes that soon renewable energy would be available to afford the costs. It was very much worth the risk.

Some time later, a local man talked to us about water. This kind man, Facundo Catriel, said plenty of water could be found at the foot of the barda. Although it seemed unfeasible, we set out to drill a few wells. Water came rumbling and bubbling up to the surface. These wells today produce around 200,000 liters per hour, thus reducing our costs significantly. We listen to nature and to special people. **Today, Ribera del Cuarzo works through a virtuous cycle of respect for the environment, the reward being a wine that never ceases to amaze us.**



RIVER

The Rio Negro is the largest in Patagonia. The Limay and Neuquén Rivers swell with water and minerals from mountain snowmelt before flowing into the center and east of the country and eventually coming together to form the Rio Negro.

The Rio Negro flows into the sea in the south of the Province of Buenos Aires, in a small town called El Cóndor. It flows between two large Barda ridges, one to the north and the other to the south, which developed over millions of years. In 1860, Estanislao Ceballos described them as river terraces, and they make their own invaluable contribution of calcium carbonate, stone, quartz, and ash. Today, the river runs through the middle of the valley, between the two terraces.

Black River





HOUSE

Last but not least, **the house next to the winery has become a home to our family.** Patagonian in style with inviting architecture and a small garden with a view of the valley that leads down to the river, the house is where we rest after work and where we gather as a family to enjoy holidays. It's also where we plan, analyze and make crucial decisions.



Felipe José Menéndez

“I was drawn to **Ribera del Cuarzo as a winegrower**, attracted by the region’s distinctive climate, biodiversity and geology, but also by my strong family ties to Patagonia. And it was the right decision. Ribera del Cuarzo has become the setting for my life-long quest to make the best wines, a journey that never ends. Today, it has expanded to include a group of small local wineries that focus on quality rather than quantity: our dream is to create a place where families can establish and prosper making wine thanks to all of our hard work and the **unique natural characteristics of the Rio Negro Valley.**”