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# Exploring South America

- Long history (since 1500s) of ups and downs in wine production, but quality winemaking and viticulture in Chile and Argentina really took off in the 1980s
- Lots of influence from US and Europe, especially since “flying winemakers” can travel there to work in their off-season (southern hemisphere = opposite seasons, which is why you’ll also see their vintages always released first on the market)
- Andes mountains separate Chile and Argentina; many of the best vineyards are situated in foothills at altitude or close to the coast
- Still discovering best vineyards and varieties to plant in each
- Chile has never been affected by phylloxera, due to its isolation between the Andes and the Pacific

## 1) Colomé Torrontés '11 – Calchaquí Valley, Argentina

- Torrontés is a highly aromatic white unique to Argentina; it’s a crossing between Muscat of Alexandria and Criolla Chica
- Torrontés is grown in the Salta region and the Calchaquí Valley
- This is a desert with the highest altitude vines in the world: 2,300-3,100 meters
- High altitude means hotter days but also colder nights and a long growing season
- Colomé has been around since 1831; today is owned by Donald Hess (of Napa Valley’s Hess Selections)

## 2) Viña Undurraga T.H. Sauvignon Blanc '11 – Leyda, Chile

- Leyda is a small, newish appellation within San Antonio Denomination of Origin (DO), which is within the larger Aconcagua DO
- Leyda is less than 10 miles from the coast, which means there’s a cooling maritime influence—great for maintaining acidity and crisp structure in Sauvignon Blanc
- Undurraga was established in 1885 by Don Francisco Undurraga, who brought cuttings over from France and Germany; it was the first winery in Chile to export its wines in 1903
- T.H. stands for “Terroir Hunter”; it’s a project under the Undurraga brand, seeking to explore new and better areas for vines and origin-specific winemaking in Chile
- A portion of this wine is fermented in cement eggs, which circulates the lees and gives a creamier texture; the rest was fermented in stainless steel

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### 3) Luca G Lot Chardonnay '10 – Tupungato, Argentina

- Tupungato is a district, or sub-appellation within the Uco Valley Indicación Geográfica (IG), which is within the much larger Mendoza region
- G Lot is the name of the vineyard in Tupungato; elevation here is about 1,450 meters
- Luca is a label from Laura Catena, whose family owns Catena Zapata, one of Argentina's larger, top-quality producers (she's also a doctor, author and mother!)
- This sees about 30% new oak barrels and 70% used oak barrels

### 4) Koyle Royale Carmenère '09 – Colchagua, Chile

- Carmenère is a "lost" Bordeaux grape; made its way to Chile, where it's gained fame
- Colchagua is a DO within the larger Rapel DO, which is within the Central Valley region
- Colchagua is warm but receives cool air flow from both the Pacific and Andes
- Koyle is another arm of the larger Undurraga house; they practice biodynamic viticulture and focus on the terroir of Colchagua
- Carmenère is known for signature green herbal and pepper notes, though this achieves more ripeness and is aged in French oak barrels, making for a richer style

### 5) Añoro Malbec '09 – Mendoza, Argentina

- Malbec is another "traditional" Bordeaux grape; made its way to Argentina and has gained immense fame and popularity for its bold fruit with soft tannins
- Mendoza is broken up into five general sub-regions, then further broken down into nearly 40 IGs and sub-IGs; if it says only "Mendoza" it can come from anywhere
- This is made by Master Sommelier Ken Fredrickson in a classic Mendoza style
- This is aged in 30% new and 70% used French oak barrels

### 6) Michel Torino Don David Tannat Reserve '10 – Calchaquí Valley, Argentina

- Tannat is a grape native to Southwest France; made its way to South America and is becoming popular in Uruguay, Brazil and Argentina
- The name "tannat" may come from its dark color (local French dialect for "colored like tan") or its highly tannic nature
- Don David is the reserve label of Michel Torino; named for its founder, David Michel
- Vineyards are at high altitude in Calchaquí, around 1,800 meters