Catena Zapata

First produced in 2011, River is bottled in tiny quantities, a micro-parcel expression within Catena's most studied estate vineyard. Production hovers around 4,800 bottles .

CATENA ZAPATA
SINCE 1902

99

Adrianna Vineyard River Malbec 2022

Mendoza, Argentina

Region and Vineyards

Perched in the Andean foothills southwest of Mendoza city, the **Uco Valley** is defined by high elevation, arid conditions, abundant sunshine, and wide diurnal swings. These factors slow sugar accumulation, preserve natural acidity, and concentrate aroma while allowing full phenolic ripeness—key to the finesse and tension seen in the best high-altitude Malbec. Within Uco, **Tupungato**'s **Gualtallary** sub-zone has emerged as a beacon for stony, limestone-influenced soils and piercing, aromatic styles.

The **Adrianna Vineyard** (planted 1992) sits near 1,450 m and is parcelled by soil mapping to isolate distinctive terroirs. River is a narrow strip along an **ancient riverbed**, its oval white stones **limestone**-dusted, providing excellent drainage and temperature moderation. The site's extreme light and cool nights yield concentrated fruit, floral lift, and refined tannins. Farming is meticulous and research-driven; Adrianna is often called one of the world's most studied vineyards, with extensive biodiversity initiatives and long-term climate-soil work led by the Catena Institute.

Winemaking

River is **100% Malbec**. Grapes undergo an **extensive cold maceration** (typically 5-10 days at <10 °C) with **60-80% whole clusters** to enhance perfume and retain freshness. Primary fermentation runs roughly **12-22 days** with wild yeasts, followed by a total maceration of around **10-15 days**. Extraction is gentle to preserve aromatic clarity and the parcel's mineral signature. Full malolactic fermentation follows naturally.

Élevage lasts **18-21 months** in seasoned **French oak** (including **2,200 L foudres** >10 years old) to frame, not mask, fruit and terroir. Lots are kept separate by parcel before a final, small-volume blend. Bottling precedes additional bottle rest for composure. Typical annual output is about **4,800 bottles**, underscoring its micro-parcel status within Adrianna.

Alcohol :13,60 %

Composition: 100% Malbec

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Tasting Notes

- **Color:** Deep ruby-purple with blue-violet hues; youthful saturation and lively rim.
- **Aroma:** Violets, black cherry and blueberry, hints of blackberry leaf, graphite, cracked pepper, and a cool stony accent reminiscent of wet river stones.
- **Palate:** Medium-plus body with taut, vertical acidity; ultra-fine, long-chained tannins; concentrated dark fruit framed by floral lift and saline-mineral drive; finishes lengthy, pure, and impeccably balanced.

Did you know?

Adrianna is described as **one of the most studied vineyards in the world**. The Catena Institute has published dozens of peer-reviewed papers on its ecology; **44 nesting boxes** support native birds and **39%** of the land remains in virgin state—an unusual biodiversity commitment in elite viticulture.

Wine Pairing Ideas

- **Patagonian lamb with herbs:** savory depth and char resonate with the wine's dark fruit and fine tannins; acidity refreshes the palate.
- **Beef tenderloin with chimichurri:** bright herbs and spice mirror floral lift and mineral tension while the cut's tenderness suits the silky texture.
- **Mushroom and truffle risotto:** umami and cream echo Malbec's richness; stony salinity and acidity keep the finish precise.
- **Cocoa-rubbed duck breast:** subtle cacao and berry tones dovetail with the wine's blue-black fruit and gentle spice.

99

Robert Parker (RP) : 99 Points (2022)

The 2022 Adrianna Vineyard Malbec River squarely occupies the most ethereal, lifted and weightless expression of Malbec in the Catena Zapata roster. It opens with a floral, lively and open-knit bouquet that hints at the stony, mineral-tinged tension to follow on the palate. In the mouth, it displays a taut, spry and gently succulent texture that is deceptively rich and powerful despite its nimble nature, releasing into a persistent, long and unwaveringly focused finish. This is a perfect counterpoint to the more robust Malbec Mundus Bacillus Terrae bottling and will appeal to readers seeking nuance and minerality above all else.

98 vinous

Vinous (Antonio Galloni) (VN) : 98 Points (2022)

The 2022 Malbec Adrianna Vineyard River was aged for up to 21 months in French oak barrels. This was sourced from a terroir-driven plot, planted in 1992 in Gualtallary, Tupungato, on an old riverbed. The aromas reveal blackberry and ripe plum, with hints of grass, cherry, arugula, lavender and sage, complemented by black tea and herbal tension. This raw Malbec features chalky intensity and a fine, compact expression. It is well-defined and exhibits a reductive character, making it quite intriguing. This vert very? seductive and long-lasting high-elevation Malbec evokes the elegance of a Pinot Not. Noir?

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Adrianna Vineyard River Malbec 2022

Tim Atkin (TA) : 97 Points (2022)

As its name suggests, this unblended, high-altitude Gualtallary Malbec hails from a parcel planted on an old river bed, rich in alluvial stones covered in white calcium carbonate. Entirely foudre aged to allow the terroir to express itself, this is a scented, refined, whole bunch-fermented red of considerable precision and complexity. Glossy tannins, blackberry and fennel flavours, a touch of tangerine and understated oak combine wonderfully on the palate here.

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