Catena Zapata

From Tupungato 's coolest pockets, this Chardonnay captures Andes light and diurnal tension–stone-etched fruit, discreet lees richness, and length that speaks of elevation more than opulence.

CATENA ZAPATA
SINCE 1902

Alcohol :13,50 %

Composition: 100% Chardonnay

Catena Alta Chardonnay 2023

Mendoza, Argentina

Region and Vineyards

The **Uco Valley** rises in the Andean foothills southwest of Mendoza city, its vineyards stretching from about 850 to well over 1,500 metres. Elevation brings cooler temperatures and wide diurnal swings, slowing sugar accumulation and preserving acidity while intense sunlight ensures full flavour ripeness—a combination that has made the valley a magnet for ambitious producers and premium white wines such as Chardonnay.

Within Uco's **Tupungato** department, Gualtallary is increasingly prized for its calcareous, alluvial soils and altitude, yielding wines of tension, mineral definition and aromatic purity. Catena Alta Chardonnay draws primarily on **Adrianna Vineyard** (Lot 1) at 1,450 m (4,757 ft) in Gualtallary—gravelly, limestone-laced topsoils that give the wine its flinty, saline spine—supplemented by the nearby **Domingo Vineyard** (Lot 7) in Villa Bastías at 1,120 m (3,675 ft), where loamy alluvial topsoil over limestone and a surface carpet of gravel contribute white-stone fruit and balance. Both sites sit within minutes of each other, allowing a seamless high-altitude blend that speaks clearly of place.

Winemaking

The 2023 is **100% Chardonnay** from historic rows. Whole clusters were gently pressed; fermentation occurred **100% in 500-L French oak** with native yeasts at low temperatures over 12-24 days. Lees were stirred on a low bâtonnage regime to build mid-palate texture without heaviness. To preserve cut and freshness, **30% of the wine did not undergo malolactic fermentation**. Maturation followed for **10-14 months in French oak** of first, second and third use, **on the lees**, to integrate oak nuances and refine the wine's mineral core.

Catena's Alta bottlings are assembled from meticulously mapped "historic rows," parcels identified over decades for superior complexity and site expression. The wines are traditionally **unfined and unfiltered**, and while approachable early, they are built to develop further complexity with several years in bottle. Technical metrics for 2023—**13.5% alc., pH 3.3, TA 6.55 g/L**—underscore the style's precision.

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Tasting Notes

- **Color:** Pale straw with green glints; excellent clarity and viscosity.
- **Aroma:** Lemon zest, white peach and crisp pear, layered with crushed limestone, subtle jasmine, fresh pastry and a whisper of almond.
- **Palate:** Medium-plus body, vivid acidity and a silken lees texture; citrus and stone-fruit core framed by discreet oak spice, flinty salinity and a long, mouth-watering, mineral finish.

Did you know?

Adrianna—planted by Nicolás Catena to push Mendoza higher and cooler—is often described as **one of the most studied vineyards in the world**, mapped metre by metre by the Catena Institute of Wine. Its nearly 5,000-ft elevation helped redefine Argentina's potential for world-class Chardonnay.

Wine Pairing Ideas

- **Seared scallops with lemon-brown butter:** Sweetness and delicate richness echo the wine's peach-citrus core; acidity and saline cut refresh the palate.
- **Roast chicken with tarragon and jus:** Herbal lift and pan juices match the lees-derived texture and measured oak.
- **Trout almondine:** Nutty beurre meunière mirrors subtle oak tones; bright acidity counters the butter.
- **Sushi nigiri (hamachi, tai):** Clean, cool-fruited profile and mineral snap complement pristine, lightly fatty fish.

92

Robert Parker (RP) : 92 Points (2023)

The 2023 Alta Chardonnay is primarily composed of grapes from Gualtallary's Adrianna Vineyard, supplemented with additions from the Domingo Vineyard in Villa Bastias. This vintage includes some botrytized fruit, contributing to its exotic, ginger-inflected nose accented by an elegantly creamy backdrop. The palate is seamless and supple, combining a honeyed richness with stony clarity that runs through the focused finish.

94 vinous

Vinous (Antonio Galloni) (VN) : 94 Points (2022)

The 2022 Chardonnay Alta Historic Rows originates from Gualtallary and Villa Bastías, Uco Valley vineyards. It was aged up to 14 months in a combination of new and used barrels. Yellow in hue with a golden sheen. The floral nose presents appealing green apple, cedar, and nut aromas with hints of fennel and quince in the background. On the palate, it has a creamy, chalky texture and tart acidity resulting in a taut, refreshing mouthfeel. A well-crafted Chardonnay that sums up the advantages of high-altitude vineyards.

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Catena Alta Chardonnay 2023

James Suckling (JS) : 94 Points (2022)

Pie crust, smoked pineapple, lemon curd and zesty citrus on the palate. Medium-bodied, showing fresh, creamy fruit and a lengthy finish. Drink or hold.