Cheval des Andes

A captivating expression of Mendoza's high-altitude terroir, Cheval des Andes 2020 marries Malbec, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Petit Verdot into a wine of power, finesse, and remarkable longevity.

CHEVAL des ANDES
CHEVAL BLANC & TERRAZAS DE LOS ANDES

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Cheval des Andes 2020

Mendoza, Argentina

Region and Vineyards

Cheval des Andes is crafted in Mendoza, Argentina's most prestigious wine region, where vineyards stretch along the foothills of the Andes at altitudes ranging between 1,000 and 1,200 meters. The estate works with two primary vineyard sites: Las Compuertas in Luján de Cuyo, home to old-vine Malbec, and Paraje Altamira in the Uco Valley, renowned for its stony, calcareous soils that impart distinctive freshness and minerality.

The 2020 growing season was unusually warm and dry, with prolonged heat waves between November and February. Despite these conditions, the vineyards achieved excellent health, allowing for the earliest harvest in the estate's history, from 28 February to 17 March. The high elevation mitigated the heat, preserving acidity and balance. These contrasting sites and conditions contribute to the wine's **rich structure, freshness, and depth**, encapsulating both the power of Mendoza sunshine and the precision of its cool nights.

Winemaking

Cheval des Andes 2020 is a blend of Malbec, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Petit Verdot, reflecting both tradition and innovation. Grapes were hand-harvested and transported in 20 kg boxes before meticulous manual sorting. Each parcel followed the principle of "one parcel, one tank," vinified separately in small-capacity vessels (30-80 hl), ensuring precision and respect for terroir.

Aging was carried out with minimal intervention to retain purity of fruit. The élevage lasted 22 months in a carefully balanced oak regime: 40% in 225-litre Bordeaux barrels, 40% in 400-litre barrels, and 20% in 2,500-litre foudres, with 50% new oak. The majority of barrels were French, complemented by Austrian, Slovenian, and German oak to bring subtle aromatic complexity. The result is a wine with **powerful tannins, layered fruit, and seamless integration of oak**, destined for long aging.

Alcohol :14,50 %

Composition: 49% Cabernet Sauvignon, 49% Malbec, 2% Petit Verdot

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Tasting Notes

- **Color**: Deep, intense, and velvety red with a vibrant, shiny hue.
- **Aroma**: Generous nose of ripe cherries, cassis, and plums, lifted by violet, black pepper, and subtle spice.
- **Palate**: Full-bodied and rich, with refined yet powerful tannins. Red and black fruits dominate, framed by spice, mineral accents, and a long, elegant finish with freshness that defies the warmth of the vintage.

Did you know?

Cheval des Andes is often described as the "**Grand Cru of the Andes**," a title earned from its unique heritage: a collaboration between **Château Cheval Blanc in Bordeaux** and **Terrazas de los Andes in Mendoza**. Since 2003, it has been the **first Argentinian wine distributed via La Place de Bordeaux**, placing it among the world's most elite wines.

Wine Pairing Ideas

- **Dry-aged ribeye steak**: The wine's tannic backbone and spice harmonize with the richness of marbled beef.
- **Roast lamb with rosemary**: Herbal notes and succulent texture match the wine's structure and freshness.
- **Wild mushroom risotto**: Earthy umami flavors echo the wine's mineral and savory complexity.
- **Aged hard cheeses (Comté, Manchego)**: Their nutty, salty depth pairs seamlessly with the wine's ripe fruit and oak integration.

Robert Parker (RP) : 98 Points (2020)

The 2020 Cheval des Andes was harvested from the last of February for the first time ever. It was Gabillet's second vintage at Cheval des Andes, and that year, he had to start without waiting for Pierre Olivier Clouet and Pierre Lurton from Cheval Blanc; when they arrived, they had finished picking the Malbec, which surprisingly was fresher in Las Compuertas (because of the higher percentage of clay?) than in Altamira (where the vines suffered more stress), saving the freshness. They now harvest using cold trucks (for the first time), and they also started earlier in the morning (six in the morning, impossible earlier in Mendoza...), which he reckons was very good for the precision of the wine. They used 40% 225-liter barrels, 40% 400-liter oak barrels and 20% 2,500-liter foudres, half of them new and with an élevage of 15 months on average, depending on the lots and varieties from 12 to 18 months. The final blend was 49% Cabernet Sauvignon, 49% Malbec and 2% Petit Verdot, which makes a comeback, as it had not been used since 2016. The key was to finish the fermentation of the Petit Verdot without skins, and that way, they have been able to use it in the blends of 2021, 2022 and 2023 in small but increasing percentages.

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James Suckling (JS) : 97 Points (2020)

Ripe, baked dark cherries with spices and some violets. Hints of graphite, cocoa powder, incense and black pepper. Dried rose petals. A slightly fuller Cheval des Andes with tense, silky tannins and a lingering, generous finish. Ripe, but still has lots of restraint and precision. 49% malbec, 49% cabernet sauvignon with a 2% petit verdot. 24% of the malbec comes from Altamira and all the rest of the fruit come from Las Compuertas. Drink or hold.

Jeb Dunnuck (JD) : 95 Points (2020)

This almost half-half Cabernet Sauvignon and Malbec with 2% Petit Verdot is rich and full in the mouth. Tannins are massy and filling, this has power and dominance with concentrated blackcurrant, plum and black cherry fruit. Highly spiced and sunkissed, this is intense and quite a force on the palate with liquorice, black pepper and tobacco tones and a flinty mineral aspect on the finish. The alcohol sticks out a touch, just lingering with heat at the end, but it has freshness and matches the altogether hefty frame and power from start to finish. Certainly a punchy and confident wine that's out to shine. 3.83pH. Ageing 22 months, 40% in 225l Bordeaux barrels, 405 in 400l barrels, 20% in 2,500l foudres (50% new). Winemaker Gérald Gabillet.