

Catena Zapata

Catena Alta Malbec 2023 unites historic family selections from Mendoza's finest high-altitude sites, delivering violet perfume, dark berry richness, mineral precision and fine tannins in a polished, energetic red of remarkable poise.

CATENA ZAPATA
SINCE 1902

96 vinous



Alcohol :13,60 %

Composition: 100% Malbec

Catena Alta Malbec 2023

Mendoza, Argentina

Region and Vineyards

Catena Alta Malbec 2023 brings together selected **historic rows across Luján de Cuyo and the Uco Valley** from five estate parcels. Elevations rise from 920 metres at Angélica in Maipú to 1,450 metres at Adrianna in Tupungato, with La Pirámide in Agrelo, Nicasia in Paraje Altamira and Angélica Sur in San Carlos completing the mosaic. The altitude range helps preserve freshness while building aromatic intensity and textural depth.

Each parcel contributes a distinct soil profile: stony alluvial loamy clay at Angélica, clay and stones at La Pirámide, alluvium at Nicasia, and combinations of sandy loam, gravel and limestone at Angélica Sur and Adrianna. Mendoza's abundant light, elevation and pronounced site differences frame a nuanced expression of Malbec. In 2023, spring frost and low yields were followed by a relatively dry, slightly warmer season and an earlier harvest, contributing **freshness and mineral tension** alongside refined structure.

Winemaking

Made entirely from Malbec, Catena Alta begins with proprietary **Catena Cuttings selected through the family's vineyard research** and grown in chosen historic rows. Harvest timing is tailored to each parcel, allowing fruit from the five sites to be picked according to its own ripening pattern. The lots remain separate through vinification so that their individual character can be retained.

Whole berries are handled gently and fermented in small lots with native yeasts. The wine completes full malolactic fermentation, then matures in **French oak of varying previous uses**, integrating spice and texture without obscuring the fruit. Bringing the parcels together creates a layered expression: darker fruit and breadth are balanced by floral lift, vivid acidity, fine tannins and mineral definition. The result is a polished, age-worthy Malbec that combines depth with the energetic profile of the 2023 season.

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Tasting Notes

- **Color:** Deep ruby-purple with vivid violet reflections.
- **Aroma:** Fragrant violets rise above cassis, blackberry and plum, followed by licorice, fine herbs, black pepper, vanilla and a subtle leathery nuance.
- **Palate:** Juicy dark and red fruits are carried by vivid acidity and sleek, finely grained tannins. Mineral definition and restrained oak bring tension and complexity, leading to a silky, energetic and sustained finish.

Did You Know?

Catena Alta is not conceived as a single-vineyard wine. It is a meticulous assembly of historic rows from elevations separated by more than 500 metres. The estate's proprietary **Catena Cuttings** connect this cuvée to the family's long-running study of how Malbec responds to Mendoza's diverse high-altitude terroirs.

Wine Pairing Ideas

- **Herb-crusted rack of lamb:** The wine's dark fruit and fine tannins complement the lamb's richness, while its herbal and peppery notes echo the savoury crust.
- **Chargrilled rib-eye steak:** Generous fruit and polished structure meet the intensity of grilled beef, with vivid acidity refreshing the palate.
- **Wild mushroom and thyme risotto:** Earthy mushrooms draw out the wine's mineral, leathery and herbal nuances, while the creamy texture softens its tannins.
- **Aged Manchego:** The cheese's nutty, savoury depth pairs naturally with the Malbec's concentrated fruit, subtle oak and sustained finish.

96 vinous

Vinous (Antonio Galloni) (VN) : 96 Points (2023)

The 2023 Malbec Alta blends grapes from Luján de Cuyo and the Uco Valley. Harvested in one of the most challenging vintages for Luján de Cuyo, marked by late frost that reduces yields and a hot summer that accelerates ripening, it opens with plum, a balsamic edge, subtle background oak and a delicate floral lift. The palate is juicy and lightly grippy, with the slightly angular contour shared by several 2023 reds, yet it carries notable energy and forward drive. Crucially, there is no greenness here; instead, the wine feels alive and dynamic, pulsing with freshness and momentum despite the year's difficulties.

94 James Suckling

James Suckling (JS) : 94 Points (2023)

A fresh, bright and floral nose, showing fine herbs and a touch of peppery spices to the red and blue fruit. Textured and medium- to full-bodied with sleek but tense tannins and a long yet inconspicuous finish. Drink or hold.

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Robert Parker (RP) : 93 Points (2023)

The 2023 Alta Malbec is a focused snapshot of modern Argentine Malbec, sourced from Catena's vineyards spanning Maipú, Luján de Cuyo and Uco Valley. It leads with a lush, savory bouquet supported by vibrant red- and black-fruit aromas, followed by a seamless palate that straddles textural breadth and tensile focus. It concludes with a harmonious, layered and mineral-tinged finish.