

THE WINE LOVERS' GUIDE TO SOUTH AMERICA

ARGENTINA • CHILE • BRAZIL • URUGUAY



URUGUAY

SOUTH REGION

- 1. COLONIA:** Across the Rio de la Plata from Buenos Aires, it's the westernmost growing region in Uruguay.
- 2. SAN JOSÉ:** Known for its wine and beaches along the Rio de la Plata, the city is home to beautiful architecture and the arts.
- 3. MONTEVIDEO:** It may be short on vineyards and dense with people, but the region that includes its namesake capital is a must-visit.
- 4. CANELONES:** Sixty percent of the country's wines are produced in this sprawling region.
- 5. MALDONADO:** Home of Punta del Este, a jetset seaside resort. Garzón is the top-and-seaside wine zone.

URUGUAY'S TOP VARIETIES

TANNAT
 Introduced by 19th-century Basque settlers, it offers strong, supple tannins and aromas of dark fruits, tobacco and saddle leather. Old-vine Tannat may come from century-old plantings. Newer clones are often blended with Bordeaux varieties or Pinot Noir.

ALBARIÑO
 This transplant from Spain's Galicia region is a grape to watch for in Uruguay. Grown mostly in Garzón and Canelones, this aromatic white variety is made into both lean, citrus-focused wines and a more complex, leesy style.

CABERNET SAUVIGNON
 Rich tannins and flavors of black cherry, cassis, violet, baking spices and pencil lead lend themselves to varietal or blended bottlings of this classic French grape. It's often blended with other Bordeaux grapes or with Tannat.

CHARDONNAY
 Flavors of tropical fruit and green apple abound in one of Uruguay's most popular white varieties. Made in stainless steel, it shows a light, fruity style. Oaked renditions have barrel-induced aromas of caramel, butter and toasted bread.

SHIRAZ/SYRAH
 Versions called "Shiraz" usually lean toward the bold New World style, while those labeled "Syrah" trend more toward French elegance. Either way, look for flavors of blackberry, spice and ground pepper, bottled on its own or blended with Tannat, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot.

Known for the swank beach resort of Punta del Este and the cosmopolitan vibe of its capital, Montevideo, Uruguay is the No. 4 wine-producing country in South America by volume.

It's bordered to the north by Brazil, to the west by the Uruguay River and Argentina, to the southwest by the Rio de la Plata and to the southeast by the Atlantic Ocean.

Uruguay's first vines were most likely brought from Buenos Aires by Spanish colonists, but the end of the 19th century saw a new wave of immigrants from Italy and Spain, especially from the Basque region in northern Spain.

The newcomers carried over vines and rootstock from their respective countries and began making wine in the New World. In addition to familiar varieties, they also brought Tannat, a grape from Madiran in southwestern France.

In the past 20 years, many vineyards have been replanted. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Albariño and more now grow alongside 100-year-old Tannat vines.

These newer vines are just beginning to hit their stride, which makes it an exciting time to explore the wines of Uruguay. The *departamentos* that are most important for winemaking in Uruguay are Canelones, Colonia, Montevideo and Maldonado.

—Mike DeSimone & Jeff Jensen

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