

Making Wine for the People's Taste: The Emergence of the Argentine Wine Industry, 1885–1915

Steve Stein

Volume 33, Number 2, 2023

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1108199ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1108199ar>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

The Canadian Historical Association / La Société historique du Canada

ISSN

0847-4478 (print)

1712-6274 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this article

Stein, S. (2023). Making Wine for the People's Taste: The Emergence of the Argentine Wine Industry, 1885–1915. *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association / Revue de la Société historique du Canada*, 33(2), 89–113.
<https://doi.org/10.7202/1108199ar>

Article abstract

It is common to use the adjective infant when referring to the early development of any industry. For the Argentine wine industry, adulthood came shockingly fast. Take-off began in 1885 with completion of the rail connection between the province of Mendoza, the major production area, and Buenos Aires, the primary consumer market. Between 1901 and 1915 alone, production rose 90.4 percent, permitting what had been an artisan industry to become the fifth-largest wine producer in the world. The major component for the emergence of the wine industry was the enormous wave of largely Mediterranean immigrants who arrived in the country. This article explores the various factors that explain Argentina's explosive wine industry growth. They include entrepreneurial decision-making, the importation and adaptation of technology, the role of a supportive national state, and most importantly, the impact that immigrant consumers' wine culture and expectations had on the formation of what would subsequently be a century-long model of winemaking in Argentina.

Making Wine for the People's Taste: The Emergence of the Argentine Wine Industry, 1885–1915

STEVE STEIN

Abstract

It is common to use the adjective infant when referring to the early development of any industry. For the Argentine wine industry, adulthood came shockingly fast. Take-off began in 1885 with completion of the rail connection between the province of Mendoza, the major production area, and Buenos Aires, the primary consumer market. Between 1901 and 1915 alone, production rose 90.4 percent, permitting what had been an artisan industry to become the fifth-largest wine producer in the world. The major component for the emergence of the wine industry was the enormous wave of largely Mediterranean immigrants who arrived in the country. This article explores the various factors that explain Argentina's explosive wine industry growth. They include entrepreneurial decision-making, the importation and adaptation of technology, the role of a supportive national state, and most importantly, the impact that immigrant consumers' wine culture and expectations had on the formation of what would subsequently be a century-long model of winemaking in Argentina.

Résumé

Il est devenu monnaie courante d'utiliser l'adjectif « naissants » pour désigner les débuts d'une industrie. L'industrie vinicole argentine a atteint l'âge adulte particulièrement vite. L'envol a débuté en 1885 avec l'achèvement de la liaison ferroviaire entre la province de Mendoza, la principale zone de production, et Buenos Aires, le principal marché de consommation. Entre 1901 et 1915, la production a augmenté de 90,4 %, permettant à ce qui était une industrie artisanale de devenir le cinquième producteur de vin au monde. La principale composante de l'émergence de l'industrie du vin a été l'énorme vague d'immigration, en grande partie méditerranéenne, qui a déferlé sur le pays. Cet article explore les différents facteurs qui expliquent la croissance explosive de l'industrie vinicole argentine dont : la prise de décision entrepreneuriale, l'importation et l'adaptation de la technologie, le rôle d'un État national favorable et, surtout, l'impact que la culture du vin et les attentes des consommateurs immigrés ont eu sur la formation de ce qui allait devenir un modèle de vinification centenaire en Argentine.

Until recently, Argentina had been on the “periphery” of the world’s wine scene. Yet as far back as the first decade of the twentieth century the country boasted the planet’s largest winery. In the space of only thirty years from its inception in the 1880s, the Argentine wine industry grew from a small number of artisan producers to the fifth largest globally. Rapidly expanding demand and supportive state policies made wine a wholly domestic product, largely unknown outside of the country until over one hundred years after industry take-off.

In the past two decades, Argentine wine has become well recognized globally. At the same time, scholars principally from Argentina began to produce a valuable body of work on the industry. Concentrated at the Universidad Nacional de Cuyo in Mendoza, they have written groundbreaking studies on the role of immigrants in the initial period of growth and their technological and entrepreneurial innovations that led to the transition of wine in Argentina from an artisanal practice to a massive industry.¹

All these studies referenced the poor quality of the wine being made in Argentina during these early years, a detail amplified in the writings of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century observers and wine industry publications that were not loath to using terms like “dull,” “rough,” and “moldy.” Focusing on wine quality during the period, this article explains how the demands of the country’s largely Mediterranean immigrant consumers for a low-cost, abundant beverage played a major role in shaping those winery strategies that led to a model of mass-produced, low-quality wine, a model that continued to dominate Argentine production for the next century.

The year was 1906, and Argentina’s fledgling wine industry was at full gallop, just two and half decades since its first steps. The industry’s official publication enthusiastically marked its progress:

From the tranquil crafting of the first wine came the seed of a great and vigorous industry which today displays a total vision not only of prosperity, but of splendour and astonishment in the fertile region of the Andes, covered now by waves of magnificent verdure, opulent in sap, with an enormous extension of rich vines, whose overwhelming fruits, squeezed in great factories where enormous vats everywhere exhibit their swollen bellies, letting free the precious juice, the dark blood of the vines pouring out in an unstoppable flow of riches and health.²

MAKING WINE FOR THE PEOPLE'S TASTE: THE EMERGENCE
OF THE ARGENTINE WINE INDUSTRY, 1885–1915

By the 1880s, observers had recognized that several regions of the country, particularly the province of Mendoza at the foot of the Andes, possessed superlative conditions for the production of wine. One of these was agronomist Aaron Pavlovsky. Recruited from France by the Argentine government to establish the first national school of agriculture, he highlighted the region's attributes shortly after his arrival in 1893:

Eight months with no rain producing a dryness that explains the near absence of grapevine maladies...with a wealth of water. This is a country of irrigation. The rivers of these provinces are formed by the waters that flow from the Cordillera. In addition to humidity, they provide...the best fertilizer to the vines...And filoxera has not made its appearance."³

Taking advantage of these attributes, over the next three decades, the Argentine wine industry grew quickly from infancy to adulthood, whether measured by vineyard growth (from 1,500 hectares in 1873 to 44,700 in 1910), number of wineries (334 in 1884 to 1,394 in 1914), or perhaps most revealing, production, which expanded annually by 11 to 17 percent during these years.

Climate aside, what factors contributed to the explosive development of the Argentine wine industry? And what kind of wine was made? Key components of both industry expansion and winemaking included unanimously widely accepted production and commercialization strategies, technological assets and limitations, and the promotional role of the Argentine state. Most important, however, was wine entrepreneurs' understanding of the makeup and the preferences of the country's consumer market. This article explores how these variables influenced the size, pace, and content of industry growth. It explains how together they encouraged the production of the poor quality wine that would become the industry mainstay for the next one hundred years.

For Argentina, a key component for the emergence of the wine industry was an enormous wave of largely Mediterranean immigrants; between 1880 and 1910, more than 3.2 million people arrived in Argentina. As has been common with migrant flows, factors of attraction as well as expulsion were involved. On the pull side, the country's 1853 constitution, from its preamble to several of its specific articles, boldly promoted European immigration by promising justice, peace, well-being, and liberty to anyone who wished to settle in Argentina,

assuring potential arrivals that they could enter the country freely and enjoy all rights of citizenship. The document was clear about the rationale for this policy: these immigrants would work the land, improve industries, and teach the population arts and sciences. Some twenty years later, the government sweetened the appeal to immigrants by offering free transportation to anywhere in the country the immigrants chose to live, temporary lodging upon arrival, and help with finding a job. These were attractive incentives to Europeans who felt pushed out of regions suffering from economic and political instability as the nineteenth century was drawing to a close.

Massive immigration had a transformative effect on all aspects of Argentina's emerging wine economy. The majority of immigrants came from Italy and Spain, countries with well-established wine traditions. The flood of people from southern Europe prompted a nearly 300 percent jump in wine consumption in the three decades following the birth of the industry. Before the major influx that began in the 1870s, wine was consumed at an annual per capita average of 23 litres. By 1910, consumption had risen to 62 litres as foreigners grew to 29 percent of Argentina's population. Among the country's wine drinkers, Italians were reported to have consumed 101 litres per year, followed by Spaniards at 90 litres. This made wine the country's third most important consumer product after bread and meat, accounting for 8.7 percent of average family food and drink expenditures.⁴



Figure 5.1. El Vasquito Barrel Label, circa 1910. Provided to the author by Bodegas López.

A barrel label that clearly sought to identify their wine with the origins of immigrant consumers was Bodegas López's El Vasquito (The Little Basque). The label focuses on a male figure in Basque regional dress. As men made up the majority of the initial waves of immigrants, the choice to depict a man would appear quite deliberate. His comfortable, straightforward pose helps assure consumers that the wine was genuine and pure as he appeared to be. It is no coincidence that the red and white of the label and of the drinker's outfit are the traditional colours of the Basque region. And as the man is pictured with the traditional leather *bota* (wineskin) of his homeland, the message is clear: by drinking this wine, immigrants in Argentina could recreate the life of their native land. The label also subtly identifies the immigrant's adopted country. Placing El Vasquito within a blue circle and on a background of a blue sky with white clouds, Bodegas López surrounded him with the colours of the Argentine flag, reproducing the nationalist discourse of the period. So, the man on the label, like the many immigrants who made up the consumer market, was firmly situated in his new country, but he could still have a foot in his homeland by drinking these wines that referred, visually at least, to his geographical and cultural origins. Ironically, the people and places portrayed on this and similar labels targeting immigrants did not necessarily correspond to the birthplaces of the wineries' owners. True, Bodegas López was founded by a Spanish immigrant, but the family did not originate in the Basque region; rather, they came from Andalucía.

Despite the wish to have the new arrivals populate all of the country's "virgin lands," the largest number of them remained in Buenos Aires, making it the country's major population centre and concomitantly its largest wine market. These immigrants were key to the capital's expansion from 177,000 to 1.2 million inhabitants between 1869 and 1910. Already by 1895, 40 percent of those inhabitants were foreign born, a proportion that rose to 50 percent in 1910. Initially, the city's thirsty immigrants were not drinking the local product. While wine had been produced at the foot of the Andes in Mendoza since the mid-sixteenth century, the one to two months of transport on the backs of mules meant excessively high costs, and worse, most was ruined on the way. As a result, European wines, largely from France and Spain — to serve the country's new arrivals as well as established elites — predominated, making Argentina the world's third-largest importer through the 1880s, representing over 10 percent of the country's total imports.⁵

Mendoza's wine prospects changed radically in 1885 when the Buenos Aires and Pacific Railway, a British-owned company with a concession from the Argentine government, opened to provide a connection between the country's most important wine production area and its primary consumer market. Local and national elites were clearly aware of the importance of the new rail link to the capital. Five years before the completion of construction, Argentina's president, Julio Argentino Roca, telegraphed, "Tell the Mendocinos that they need to hurry up, plant and cultivate their vines so that the arrival of the railroad does not find them unprepared."⁶ At the official opening of the new railroad, which would reduce shipping time to two or three days, President Roca travelled to the city where he enthusiastically described Mendoza as "a vast cornucopia of fruit suspended from the Andean peaks." Two years later, in less flowery but equally enthusiastic terms, prominent Mendoza politician and future governor Emilio Civit, guaranteed his peers that "the future of Mendoza is assured to be brilliant and anyone who can save a single peso of his income or obtain a peso of credit (should invest) with total confidence and faith in what is to come." Mendocinos clearly heeded the call: within three decades of the arrival of the first train, 76 percent of all production in the region was wine-related.⁷

It was indeed the presence of those trains that spurred the transformation of Argentine wine production from artisanal to industrial. They not only made rapid shipment eastward to the capital viable but also carried both the human and material resources that were vital to the industry's explosive growth westward to Mendoza. Clearly necessary for that expansion was a labour force of sufficient size and hopefully with at least some experience in grape growing and winemaking. So, with the railroad's imminent arrival, in 1884, Mendoza legislators passed a law that authorized payments to recruiting agents in Europe for each immigrant. The qualities sought were morality and good health, experience in grape growing and winemaking, and preferably families who would share the tasks together. It was the hope of the province's new governor in 1884 that these immigrants would "introduce desire, muscles and ideas into Mendoza's society."⁸

To southern European peasants living in unsure political times and for the limited proportion of those from wine regions who saw grand swaths of their vines drying up due to the severe phylloxera epidemic that decimated vineyards throughout the Mediterranean, these recruiters held out the promise of rapid economic progress on large

tracts of unexploited land. Two decades earlier, Mendoza's immigrants were largely Chilean in origin and accounted for only 9 percent of the population. With the growth of the wine industry, by 1914, immigrants rose to 37 percent of the province's population. By far, the two largest groups were Spaniards (47 percent) and Italians (32.4 percent). The great majority of the new immigrants dedicated themselves to the production of grapes and wine, and they quickly rose to a position of dominance throughout the industry.⁹

By the 1870s, Mendoza's traditional landed elite had perceived the promise of wine for the region, and they came to recognize that European immigrants were best able to realize that promise in its making and sale. As one member of Mendoza's government predicted in 1884: "With...the European immigrants that the locomotive brings to our front door, shortly we will partake in material riches." The developments of the next decades would confirm that prophecy.¹⁰

Recognizing early on critical shortcomings in local knowledge of both vineyard and winery management, Mendoza's elites initially attracted several French experts to advise on appropriate modes of vine cultivation. After take-off in 1885, agronomists and oenologists from France, Italy, and Spain who had trained in Europe's top wine schools, including Bordeaux and Conegliano, helped orient the growth of the industry. And it was authors born in Europe that penned the great majority of the technical articles in the *Boletín del Centro Viti-Vinícola Nacional*, the wine association's periodical publication. Management of major wineries also fell to foreign experts, principally French and Italian. Of the seven largest establishments, an Argentine was in charge of only one. Most notable was the fact that by 1900 immigrants already made up 50 percent of winery owners, rising to 79 percent only three years later. Similarly, the number of immigrant grape producers also grew; they owned less than 25 percent of vineyards in 1895, ascending to over 50 percent by 1914. Through relatives and friends in Buenos Aires, these European winery owners were able to build networks that united production with distribution and sales in the principal consumer markets.¹¹

Just as the European presence in Argentina was the cornerstone of wine production and consumption, Mediterranean traditions that treated wine as a necessary part of the daily diet were central to the form it took. For the largely poor, male Italian and Spanish immigrants of peasant background, quality and taste were not fundamental to the meanings of wine. Rather, the red wine that they mostly drank

was seen principally as a source of calories or a healthy substitute for the nonpotable water of their rural homelands. Their wine culture quickly became a determining factor in the strategy of the country's producers.

How that wine culture influenced production was made clear in the internal communications of the region's third-largest winery, Bodegas Arizu. For Arizu, the typical consumer was a person with "no taste," a view shared by the industry at large. As one contemporary critic remarked, the goal was "ordinary wines 'for the workers'... They think about hardy throats, not palates." And for those palates, typically a litre per day was considered indispensable. In this context, production was clearly driven by a simple calculus: lower price, more produced, more drunk, higher profits.¹²

The resulting beverage? French traveller and wine expert Jules Huret chronicled his experience with Mendoza wine: "I remember, in my visit to one of the principal wineries in the region, I wanted to try the wine that I saw flow in torrents like a river of water. I moistened my lips with the liquid they offered me, and I couldn't help my expression of disgust. It was really bad."¹³ His view coincided with those of contemporary critics who were quite specific in their assessments, describing the wines variously as "thick," "dull," "cloudy," "rough," "bittersweet," "cooked and moldy," "inconsistent," lacking "distinctiveness" and characterized by an "elevated alcohol content," "low acidity," "low tannins," "aromas of anise, vinegar and tar," and "disagreeable smells and tastes of dirt."¹⁴

While these wines certainly did not exhibit characteristics that would have pleased more discriminating palates, their thickness, cloudiness, and deep colour nevertheless may very well have been appreciated by cost-conscious consumers and producers, as it made them perfect the so-called process of "correction," "straightening out," "baptism" — in other words, their dilution with water, a process that habitually doubled the actual wine produced.¹⁵ Without admitting the possibility of watering at wineries, a major industry publication laid the blame on retailers: "Between the consumer and the producer we have the sellers who in general, not content with making a reasonable profit, convert one barrel into a barrel and a half."¹⁶ Mendoza's daily newspaper had a different explanation, blaming the consumers: "These people want only wines heavily loaded with colour...and alcohol, although they lack taste and aroma, so they can be cut...this reveals their ABORTION."¹⁷ A less critical commentary appearing in

that same newspaper read: “Every day we need fewer grapes to make (more) wine.”¹⁸

Producers, retailers, customers: everyone was a winner with wines that could stand a greater injection of water than more refined products. As the rapidly growing domestic demand for strong cheap wines often outstripped supply, wineries saw that adding water to heavy, alcoholic products would enable them to, in the words of one contemporary critic, “make *lots of* wine and above all *quickly*.”¹⁹ For wholesale distributors and retail outlets, topping off the barrels received from Mendoza was a particularly effective way to increase profits.

In this context, it is important to note that by the early twentieth century, the same Malbec that has come to be Argentina’s emblem of quality in the twenty-first century had become the country’s most widely planted varietal, amounting to 80 percent of all vines, exactly because its strong colour components helped a watered-down beverage still appear as wine. And for the price-driven consumer whose wine experience defined the drink as a daily staple, the norm of adding water made it a good fit for families who typically could afford to spend less than 3 percent of their budget on its purchase.²⁰

As southern Mediterranean immigrants came to dominate Mendoza’s industry and its principal consumer markets of Buenos Aires and other large urban areas, machinery made in Italy, France, and Spain became increasingly ubiquitous in the country’s large wineries. As early as the mid-1880s, imported technology included filters, manual pumps, and grape presses. And particularly after 1895, there was a decisive upsurge in the amount and assortment of winemaking tools as prominent wineries added the most up-to-date grape crushers, hydraulic presses, and pasteurizers from abroad, all destined to convert grapes into wine and ship to the consumer markets in the shortest time possible. In the view of French wine expert Jules Huret, their impressive facilities more than rivalled some of Europe’s best. In addition to assuring rapid and massive production, the grandest establishments were able to show all that their “sistemas modernísimos” made them as up to date as any of their European counterparts.²¹

Over the course of the first three decades of industry growth, two major trends emerged: an rapid increase in the number of wineries and the concentration of overall production in a small number of enormous establishments. Large, well-equipped wineries, designed to meet the booming demand for wine quickly eclipsed the numerous tiny producers that had arisen at the beginning but were unable to

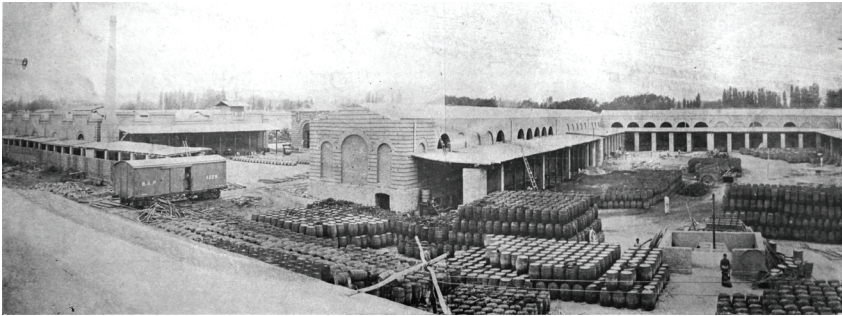


Figure 5.2. Establecimiento Viti-Vinicola de D. Domingo Tomba, circa 1910. Source: Centro Viti-Vinicola Nacional, *La viti-vinicultura en 1910* (Buenos Aires: 1911), 38.

meet that demand. Two years after the arrival of the first train, Mendoza had 420 wineries. At the end of the 1880s, only two wineries were considered “important measured by the quantity of wine they produced.” By 1914, that the total number of wineries had increased to nearly 1,400. Overall, small establishments continued to prevail, accounting for 86 percent of the total. But unable to keep up with market demand, they made only small quantities of wine, accounting for just 13 percent of the total production. Medium-sized and large wineries made the rest. The three largest firms, dubbed “wine factories,” accounted for nearly 22 percent of all wine produced.²²

The combination of modern machinery and high demand led one of these factories, Bodega Tomba, to become considered the largest winery in the world. It was the first establishment to make extensive use of machinery and storage vats imported from Europe. Its vineyards covered over one thousand hectares from which grapes arrived at the winery on its 182 wagons pulled by 1,180 mules, ninety horses, and 110 oxen. When this system became unable to transport the growing volume of harvests, the firm constructed rail lines to link vineyards to winery. At the end of the first decade of the century, Tomba was apparently only one of several Mendoza producers that on a single day made as much wine as the most important winery of Spain made in a year. The contrast with Spain, and by extension with the rest of the Old World, where small wineries were the norm, suggests that Argentina may indeed have been the global originator of this class of wine factories.²³

The 1910 barrel label of Viñedos y Bodegas La Rural (Figure 5.3), founded by the Italian immigrant Rutini family, represents a true testimonial to being modern and efficient. It is filled with the symbols of



Figure 5.3. Bodegas y Viñedos La Rural Barrel Label, circa 1910. Source: Provided to the author by Bodega La Rural.

mass production: imposing factory buildings at its centre; a prominent stack belching smoke; workers carting barrels across the yard. The depiction of an uncluttered winery, with only two workers, together with reproductions of the two sides of a gold medal awarded to La Rural by the Argentine Industrial Union at the 1910 Centennial Industrial Exposition matched the widely espoused industrial ideology of the period that touted labour-saving machines as capable of efficiently providing abundance for a better and happier life. Reflecting the drive for modernization current throughout Latin America, La Rural's barrel label highlighted the priorities of modernization for the Argentine wine industry: outfit installations with up-to-date equipment capable of achieving standardized and volume production. At the same time, the firm explicitly communicated messages that fit well with the concerns of Argentina as a nation: *trabajo y perseverancia* (work and perseverance).

An added benefit of the grandest establishments with the most impressive technological innovations was the ability to exhibit their wealth and progress. While prominent observer Pedro Arata deemed the considerable expenditure on imported equipment “an enormous waste” manufacturing “the worst results of badly made wine,” at the same time, he had to admit that “anyone who has visited the wineries of Mendoza will admire the luxury of the wine containers and sumptuousness of the buildings...Money, lots of money has been spent to store it in these containers that cost like gold, that are gold in terms of

their value.” According to contemporary observers, the primary motivation of the building of enormous wineries and the purchase of modern equipment, which the Winery Association itself labelled “*tecnicismo especulativo*,” was in fact to enable the creation of those “oceans of wine” in facilities that represented “speed, quantity and novelty.”²⁴

Wood containers for fermentation and storage represent a particularly interesting example of this adoption of technologies and their limitations in terms of wine quality. Early on, many wineries processed their grapes in tubs made of poplar and pine that imparted less than ideal flavours to the must. Later, several of the largest and wealthiest wineries introduced enormous European and American oak vats dedicated to short-term storage. At the time, these vats were regarded as relatively cost-effective; however, given their size and consequently their negligible impact on wine aromas and flavours, they were rarely used to age wines. In fact, it was only in 1929 that a solitary winery applied for a loan to purchase wood barrels for “aging.” Even then, the request was not prompted by a desire to improve quality through barrel age; rather, it was driven by the need to store existing stocks in the face of rapidly declining demand for wine at the beginning of the Great Depression.²⁵

While winemakers in early twentieth-century Argentina had a degree of choice over the technology they used, they had less flexibility when it came to employing “appropriate” human resources, particularly in the grape fields. Nearly all vineyard workers were southern European immigrants, largely from rural Italy and Spain, for whom



Figure 5.4. Grape Harvest, circa 1905. Source: Archive Bodega Escorihuela Gascón.

MAKING WINE FOR THE PEOPLE'S TASTE: THE EMERGENCE
OF THE ARGENTINE WINE INDUSTRY, 1885–1915

the thriving agricultural sector of Mendoza acted as a magnet. Some had worked with vines in their European homelands, but the comparatively abundant yields in Argentina meant that their traditional planting, pruning, and harvesting techniques were scarcely applicable for their new environment. The National Agriculture Department called the group as a whole “*ad hoc* field workers, inexperienced and ignorant.”²⁶ This had particularly grievous consequences during the harvest. According to Pedro Arata:

Women, children and men are employed at harvest time... although such people, of all ages and categories, cannot cut bunches of grapes appropriately without mixing in leaves, vine shoots and dirt, etc., and without ruining the plants themselves. The harvester, as is natural, wants to harvest the largest possible quantity and therefore does his work carelessly... This means that even the best grapes reach the fermentation tanks in terrible condition.

Indeed, given the concern for harvesting the maximum weight, perhaps the inclusion of stems and leaves in the baskets was more deliberate than accidental.²⁷



Figure 5.5. Grape Harvest, circa 1905. Archive Bodega Escorihuela Gascón.

These harvest practices reflected the largely conflicting structural relationship between vineyards and wineries. From the inception of the industry through the late twentieth century, most wineries had no direct control over the production of the grapes used for their wines. Typically, they purchased grapes from growers (*viñateros*), who generally possessed small plots, little working capital, and, like those wineries that did have their own vineyards, relied for day-to-day care of vineyards and for planting and harvesting on still another group of workers called *contratistas*, who were paid on a piecemeal basis to tend the vines. For every link in the chain, quantity — not quality — was the top priority. For growers and *contratistas* it meant obtaining the largest number of grapes through heavy irrigation before harvest and minimal pruning, producing fruit that could be harvested early and sold quickly before beginning to deteriorate on the vines. For their part, wineries sought to pay the lowest possible price. The result: a large proportion of unripened grapes ended up in the mix.²⁸

But placing all the blame on the field workers represents only part of the story. Vineyard and winery owners had few incentives for improved vineyard practices. In the words of the industry's publication: "In our wine growing provinces, the vines have been treated like cows on ranches. After spending huge sums planting them, the only attention they receive is some pruning which happens late, badly or never, inconsistent flood irrigation, and immediately livestock is brought to eat the little grass that has come up." In sum, in the vineyard as well as in the winery, quality was largely absent from the equation.²⁹

During this whole process, the industry had a key ally: the Argentine state, at both the national and provincial levels. Government support responded to numerous concerns. Besides keeping immigrant workers happy with a secure supply of cheap wine without having to rely on the unpredictability of imports, a growing local economy benefited Mendoza's elites and ensured the stability of a part of the country that bordered on neighbouring Chile. As a member of the local political elite remarked early on in 1887, "To govern in Mendoza is to plant vines."³⁰

Some two decades later Emilio Civit, then governor of the province of Mendoza, confirmed the basic features of the government's relationship to the industry using terms such as "protect," "defend," "stimulate," and "take care of." Once construction began on a rail link to the capital, the provincial government enacted a series of measures to promote the emergence of wine production in the decade preceding

the arrival of the first train. These included tax exemptions and the offer of credit for new vineyard plantings. Most important were laws promulgated by the national government that imposed high tariff barriers on imported wines, designed to discourage foreign competition. Civit himself had insisted early on that the government use import duties to “close domestic markets completely” to imported wines. And his suggestion, seconded by the industry as a whole, was taken seriously; duties on imported wine increased from 40 up to 125 percent in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Remember, previously Argentina had been the world’s third-largest importer of wines for the country’s enormous and growing southern European immigrant population. With the tariff bubble in place, imports progressively disappeared from the rapidly growing wine sector, dropping to 1 percent of wine consumed in 1918. Argentina’s industry leaders increasingly saw themselves, as Pedro Arata noted, to be “dueños del mercado” [owners of the market]...confident of even greater protection in the future,” establishing models of production that would last a century.³¹

Contemporary expert A. N. Galante’s summary of the early development of the industry succinctly summarized the situation: “Given the form and goals of grape production, it was easy to have wine making established as a manufacturing activity and with almost assured success.” While the uniformly poor quality of their wines precluded any pretensions of competing internationally, as long as Argentina’s wine factories could manufacture at capacity for what was perceived as a continually expanding captive domestic market, they had no clear-cut incentive to alter their practices or their standards.³²

Even in this context, there were institutions and individuals that assiduously attempted to promote the production of good and even excellent wines from the earliest stages of the industry. Ironically, one of these was the same state whose policies played such an important role in the development of a quantity-oriented model. Decades before the massification of the Argentine wine industry, in 1853, the intellectual Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, a future president and a wine lover, recounted his embarrassment when he opened a bottle from his homeland on one of his visits to Europe. “At a weak moment the idea came to me of offering a bottle of San Juan wine. They acted as if I had tried to poison them, the best of our wines cutting such a poor figure alongside of those of Oporto, Bordeaux, Burgundy, etc.”³³ An exasperated Sarmiento persuaded French wine expert Michel Aimé Pouget to travel to Argentina from Chile to take charge of the *Escuela*

Vitivinicola Nacional (National Viticultural School) in Mendoza. Pouget crossed the Andes, bringing with him not only winemaking knowledge, but most importantly French grape stock grown in Chile that would quickly replace the existing vines of *uva criolla* that then covered the country's vineyards. Introduced to the New World by Spanish missionaries from the Canary Islands, the *criolla* variety was dubbed "a high-yielding, very rustic crop...that produces an alcoholic wine of a yellowish-pink colour and with a disagreeable smell and taste."³⁴ As a result of the state-supported efforts of Pouget and others, nearly all *uva criolla* vines, that as late as 1885 still accounted for 99 percent of all grapes planted, were pulled up to make way for Malbec, Cabernet Sauvignon, Semillon, and other French varietals. By 1900, of the 21,500 hectares planted with vines, only 3,150 *uva criollas* remained.³⁵

In the early years, the most notable champion for the development of an industry focusing on high quality was Tiburcio Benegas, who sought to make his Trapiche Winery an establishment where winemaking was an art as well as a business. The only nonimmigrant owner and manager of a major winery in the region, Benegas was a close friend of Argentina's President Roca and Mendoza's Governor Civit. All three had been influenced by Sarmiento's aspirations for an Argentine wine that could match Europe's. Using France as his model, he worked at improving grape quality and producing first-rate wines. He formulated "recipes" for what he called "Suitable Varieties," including "Imitation Bordeaux Wine" and "Imitation Burgundy Wine." His imitation Bordeaux consisted of 75 percent Malbec, 25 percent Cabernet Sauvignon, another kind of Cabernet (probably Cabernet Franc), plus some White Semillon. Imitation Burgundy comprised 25 percent Grey Pinot Noir, 25 percent Gamay, 50 percent Romano and Tressot, and a touch of Pinot Blanc or Gamay Blanc.³⁶

Some contemporary observers lauded the ability of Benegas, together with a small group of quality pioneers, to "compete favourably with good Bordeaux wines." But more compelling are the winery records that show the preference for massive production of *vinos comunes* in a system that worked at 100 percent capacity and achieved economies of scale. The records highlight the significantly higher profit margins of those wines as compared to the minimal production of *vinos finos*, made perhaps for family and friends. As compelling were the cases of semi-spoiled wines that habitually fetched higher prices at wholesale than "very good examples."³⁷

A fascinating example of how producing cheap, coarse wines dominated wineries' approach was their rejection of the Cabernet Sauvignon varietal. The pages of the winery owners' publication reproduce these remarks of visiting French expert D. S. Simois:

Of all the grape varieties that have been planted in Mendoza, undoubtedly Cabernet has produced the best... Nevertheless...the industry, unable to fully supply the local market, pays scant attention to wines' quality. Cabernet produces little, very little...Undoubtedly, it cannot match the fertility of Malbec and there remains no price difference between the distinct French varietals.³⁸

The wine industry's centennial album went even further: "Heavy wines, high in colour, called 'thick,' and with lots of foam, if possible, are fetching much higher prices than others, with better taste and higher quality." Making better wine with better grapes was simply a money-losing option for the contemporary wine industry.³⁹

Oenologist A. N. Galanti's claim summarized well the industry's early years:

The growth of viticulture was so rapid and absorbed such an enormous amount of real capital that oenology had no way to keep pace...So it is important to state and repeat this truth: the causes of these imperfections originate as much in the makers as in the sellers of wine...The preoccupation of all is to produce this precious liquid in great quantity, and indeed this is the sole intent of the great majority... Given the form and goals of grape production, it was easy to have wine making established as a manufacturing activity and with almost certain success.

Or in the succinct conclusion of Pedro Arata, "We've made lots of wine, very quickly and very badly."⁴⁰

While Galanti and Arata could be faulted for being confirmed critics, in 1910 the very leaders of the industry came to a similar conclusion in pages of their elegant album designed, ironically, to commemorate the industry's prodigious successes: "For the enormous wineries...pressured by the demand of the market, it is difficult if not impossible to attain good, reliable wines given that avalanche of fruit they mash up."⁴¹

When all was said and done, the quality concerns of a few dedicated producers were drowned by largely mediocre wine for an

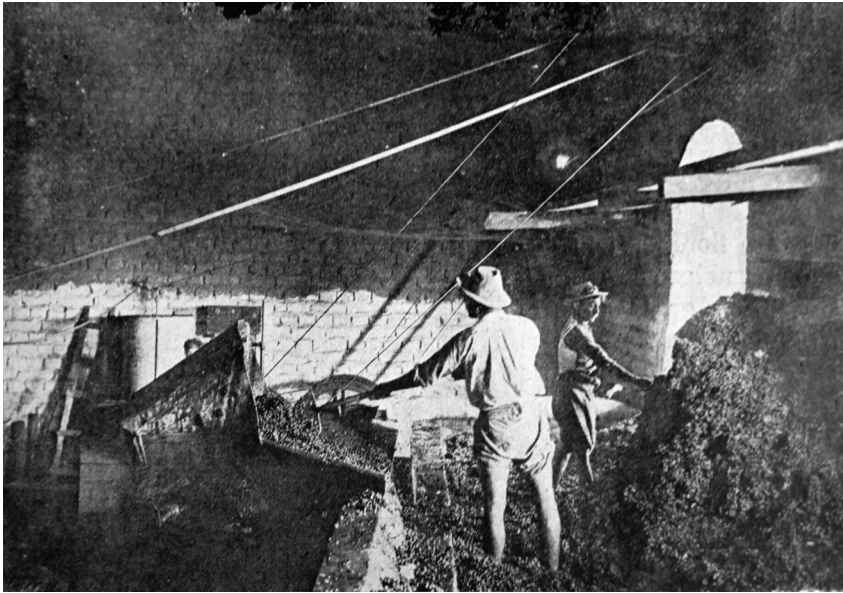


Figure 5.6. In The Winery, circa 1915. Source: Archive Bodega Escorihuela Gascón.

expanding mass of consumers who demanded nothing more than a minimally palatable, abundant, low-priced, and easily diluted product. In a context in which quality distinctions seemed to have had little or no importance, some of those winemakers who risked the time and money to produce quality wines suffered financially as a result. Clearly, in early twentieth-century Argentina, the most modern and best-equipped wine factories were not those that made the finest wines but those that produced the greatest amount of wine at the least possible cost. It is not surprising that by the end of the initial period of industry development, Argentina's grape to wine yields were twice those of Chile, their closest competitor.⁴²

A final note on the germinal role that wine consumers played in the formation of Argentina's industrial wine model. The very development that appeared most quality-driven was the shift from *uva criolla* to French varietals. Yet that shift was ultimately necessary to satisfy a market less concerned with quality than with having a familiar product that was red in colour; and that wine could not be made with *uva criolla*. So farsighted winemakers, with the few exceptions of Benegas and the like, were not trying to reproduce Bordeaux but rather Languedoc, Spain, and Italy, whose wines their immigrant customers were accustomed to.

MAKING WINE FOR THE PEOPLE'S TASTE: THE EMERGENCE
OF THE ARGENTINE WINE INDUSTRY, 1885–1915



Figure 5.7. In The Winery, circa 1915. Source: Archive Bodega Escorihuela Gascón.

This model for Argentine wine production lasted for over a century, fed by producers' confidence in a perpetually growing domestic market. It was only in the 1980s, when a steep decline in consumption threatened the very existence of many wineries, that a small number of pioneers for the first-time stressed quality to attract international clients as the key to successful survival. Led by this group, the industry underwent a true quality revolution in following decades. Malbec has been at the centre of that revolution. The same varietal that from the beginning of the twentieth century was the backbone of highly coloured wines mass produced for a domestic market would become the emblematic varietal of Argentina's twenty-first century quality-driven rise in international consumption and acclaim.

STEVE STEIN is Emeritus Professor of History at the University of Miami. Over the past two decades, he has been engaged in a multifaceted project on the history of the Argentine wine industry, publishing a book and a broad variety of articles. He has also taught wine classes at the University of Miami and a variety of other sites in South Florida.

STEVE STEIN est professeur émérite d'histoire à l'Université de Miami. Au cours des deux dernières décennies, il s'est engagé dans un projet à multiples facettes sur l'histoire de l'industrie vinicole argentine, publiant un livre et une grande variété d'articles. Il a également donné des cours sur le vin à l'Université de Miami et dans divers autres endroits du sud de la Floride.

Endnotes

- 1 Leading researchers on Argentina's wine history with particularly valuable studies include Ana Maria Mateu, *Los reyes del vino: Los Arizu y el esplendor de la Mendoza vitivinícola* (Mendoza, Argentina: Ediunc, 2022); Rodolfo Richard-Jorba, *Empresarios ricos, trabajadores pobres: Vitivinicultura y desarrollo capitalista en Mendoza: 1850–1918* (Rosario, Argentina: Prohistoria Ediciones, 2010); and Patricia Barrio, *Hacer vino: Empresarios vitivinícolas y Estado en Mendoza, 1900–1912* (Rosario, Argentina: Prohistoria Ediciones, 2010).
- 2 "La industria del vino en la tierra de la vid," *Boletín del Centro Viti-Vinícola Nacional*, 31 July 1906, 565. All translations by the author.
- 3 Aaron Pavlovsky, *La industria vitivinícola nacional. Conferencia dada en los salones de el Ateneo el 29 de setiembre de 1894* (Buenos Aires: Imprenta de Pablo E. Coni e Hijos, 1894), 10–11.
- 4 Steve Stein and Ana Maria Mateu, "Argentina," in *Wine Globalization: A New Comparative History*, ed. Kym Anderson and Vicente Pinilla (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 292–93; Alejandro E. Bunge, *Informe sobre el problema vitivinícola* (Buenos Aires: Sociedad Vitivinícola de Mendoza, 1929), 14 and 128. The 3.4 percent of immigrants from France also added to Argentina's wine-drinking market.
- 5 José Francisco Martín, *Estado y empresas, relaciones inestables: Políticas estatales y conformación de una burguesía regional* (Mendoza, Argentina: Ediunc, 1992), 63, 64, 255, 258–9; Alberto Coria López and Lidia Fortín de Iñones, "La acción del Estado y el boom vitivinícola," *Jornadas de Viticultura y Enología de Tierra de Barros*, no. 16 (May 1994); James A. Baer, "Buenos Aires: Housing Reform and the Decline of the Liberal State in Argentina," in *Cities of Hope: People Protests and Progress in Urbanizing Latin America*, ed. Ronn F. Pineo and James A. Baer (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2001), 129.
- 6 Roca Telegram to Joaquín Villanueva, 26 October 1880, in Felipe Pigna, *Al gran pueblo argentino salud. Una historia del vino, bebida nacional* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Planeta, 2013), 117.
- 7 The Roca statement is from Joan Ellen Supplee, "Provincial Elites and the Economic Transformation of Mendoza, Argentina, 1880–1914"

MAKING WINE FOR THE PEOPLE'S TASTE: THE EMERGENCE
OF THE ARGENTINE WINE INDUSTRY, 1885–1915

- (PhD diss., University of Texas, 1988), 274. For Civit's observation, see Emilio Civit, *Los viñedos de Francia y los de Mendoza: Importante carta del Dr. Emilio Civit al Sr. Tiburcio Benegas* (Mendoza, Argentina: Tip. Los Andes 1887), 29.
- 8 Ian Mount, *The Vineyard at the End of the World* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2011), 54.
- 9 Pablo Lacoste, *El vino del inmigrante: Los inmigrantes y la industria vitivinícola argentina* (Mendoza, Argentina: Consejo Empresario Mendocino, 2003), 39. Other immigrants recorded included Chileans, 6.3 percent, and French, 3.1 percent.
- 10 Dr. Pedro Serpa, quoted in Richard-Jorba, *Empresarios ricos*, 109.
- 11 The diverse impacts of immigrants on the early wine industry are described in Barrio, *Hacer vino*; William Fleming, "Regional Development and Transportation in Argentina: Mendoza and the Gran Oeste Argentino Railroad, 1885–1914" (PhD diss., Indiana University, 1976), 125; and Lacoste, *El vino del inmigrante*. Rodolfo Richard-Jorba and Eduardo Pérez Romagnoli present the data on immigrant managers in "El proceso de modernización de la bodega mendocina (1860-1915)," *CICOLOS*, no.7 (1994): 136–40. Similarly, from the beginning of the promotion of grape and wine production, Mendoza's provincial government recognized that irrigation was an absolute necessity, as the region is a virtual desert; hence the attraction of European experts to plan and build canals and set up distribution protocols.
- 12 Ana María Mateu, "Estudio y análisis de la modalidad empresarial vitivinícola de los Arizu en Mendoza" (PhD diss., Universidad Nacional de Cuyo, Mendoza, 2009), 157; Rafael Trianes, "Tres estudios sobre la cuestión vinícola," *Eco, publicación mensual* (Buenos Aires: 1935), 26–27; Francisco Trianes, "*La viña bajo la tormenta* (Buenos Aires: Librería y Editorial El Ateneo, 1938), 140; *Album argentino: Provincia de Mendoza, su vida, su trabajo, su progreso = Province of Mendoza, her life, her work, her progress = Province de Mendoza, sa vie, son travail, son progrès*. ([Buenos Aires]: 1910).
- 13 Jules Huret, *La Argentina. Del Plata a la Cordillera de los Andes* (Paris: E/ Fasquelle, 1913), 239.
- 14 Pedro Arata, *Investigación vinícola: Informes presentados al Ministro de Agricultura por la Comisión Nacional* (Buenos Aires: Talleres de Publicaciones de la Oficina Meteorológica Argentina 1903), 90, 136, 200; P. D. Cazenave in Arata et al., *Investigación complementaria de 1904: Trabajos presentados al Ministro de Agricultura* (Buenos Aires: Imprenta de M. Biedma e Hijo, 1904), 172; A. N. Galanti, *La industria vitivinícola Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Centro Viti-Vinícola de Mendoza, 1900), 94 and 97; Centro Viti-Vinícola Nacional, *La viti-vinicultura en 1910* (Buenos Aires: E.A. Coll é hijos, 1911), 18; and Ana María Mateu, "Los

- Vinos de Arizu: El encuentro entre la oferta y la demanda” *Jornadas de Historia Económica*, no. 21 (2008): 9.
- 15 Santiago E. Bottaro, “*La industria vitivinícola entre nosotros*” (Thesis, Universidad de Buenos Aires, 1917); A .N. Galanti, *Estudio crítico sobre la cuestión vitivinícola; Estudios y pronósticos de otros tiempos* (Buenos Aires: Talleres Gráficos de Juan Perrotti, 1915), 40; and Arata, *Investigación vinícola*, 7, 142.
 - 16 Another winery technique involved topping off containers of spoiled wine with newly fermented juice in order to “refresh” or “consecrate” them. The winery association’s centennial album estimated in 1910 that 75 percent of all wine consumed was either “adulterated” or “artificial, fifteen percent was totally falsified, in other words, not wine at all.” Centro Vitivinícola Nacional, *La viti-vinicultura en 1910*, 24.
 - 17 From a 1899 article in the Mendoza newspaper *Los Andes*, quoted in Rodolfo A. Richard-Jorba, *Poder, economía y espacio en Mendoza 1850-1900* (Mendoza, Argentina: Universidad Nacional de Cuyo, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, 1998), 278–9.
 - 18 From a 1903 article in *Los Andes*, quoted in Patricia Barrio de Villanueva, “En busca del vino genuino. Origen y consecuencias de la Ley Nacional de Vinos de 1904,” *Mundo agrario* 8 no.15 (2007): 4.
 - 19 Galanti, *La industria vitivinícola Argentina*, 43.
 - 20 Juan B. Bellagamba, *Problemas de la industria vitivinícola salarios y precios* (Buenos Aires: n.d.), 12. In addition to colour considerations, Malbec was prized as the highest yielding French varietal. See Galanti, *Estudio crítico*, 33. The Malbec varietal came from the Bordeaux region of France, used in small quantities in Bordeaux blends along with Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot and Petite Verdot. Only in the sub-region of Cahors was it the principal component of local red wines, which continues to be the case.
 - 21 Huret, *La Argentina. Del Plata a la Cordillera de los Andes*, 232–3. “Sistemas modernísimas” coined by A. N. Galanti, *La industria vitivinícola argentina* (Buenos Aires: 1900), 26–27 and 96–97. Arata, *Investigación vinícola*, 202 and 236; Richard-Jorba and Pérez Romagnoli, “Proceso de modernización,” 127; and Richard-Jorba, *Empresarios ricos*, especially 102. As demand for locally produced wine grew, from the 1890s, vineyards also modernized with the adoption of Bordeaux-style *Guyot* vine trellising. See Richard-Jorba, *Empresarios ricos*, 118.
 - 22 Richard-Jorba and Pérez Romagnoli, “Proceso de modernización” 121; and Martin, *Estado y empresas*, especially 267. The difficulty to obtain capital for the purchase of needed machinery constituted an important limitation on their growth. See Richard-Jorba, *Empresarios ricos*, 104.
 - 23 On the proportional changes between small and large wineries, see Eduardo L. Pérez Romagnoli and Rodolfo A. Richard-Jorba, “Una aproximación a la historia de la industria vitivinícola argentina,” *Revista de Historia Económica*, 19 (2000): 11–24.

- imación a la geografía del vino en Mendoza: Distribución y difusión de las bodegas en los comienzos de la etapa industrial, 1880-1910,” *Revista de estudios regionales*, no.2 (1994): 157–66; and Richard-Jorba, *Empresarios ricos*, 25. A particular problem faced by the smaller wineries was the lack of access to financing for mass production equipment. On Bodega Tomba, see *Establecimiento y propiedades viti-vinícolas de Domingo Tomba* (n.p., 1910); Centro Vitivinícola Nacional, *La viti-vinicultura en 1910* (Buenos Aires: 1911), 38–44; and Fernando Vidal Buzzi, *Vino y pasión: La familia Benegas y el vino argentino* (Buenos Aires: El Ateneo, 2002), 136.
- 24 Centro Viti-Vinícola Nacional, *La viti-vinicultura en 1910*, 17. See also Liliana Girini, “Arquitectura, industria y progreso. Las bodegas vitivinícolas de Mendoza en el Centenario” (PhD diss., Universidad de Mendoza, 2003), 2:232.
- 25 Antonio Manuel Favaro, “Financiación bancaria de la industria vitivinícola” (PhD diss., Universidad de Buenos Aires, 1967). Interestingly enough, the Depression-related decline in consumption prompted a 1930 decree providing government support to wineries to “age” their product; the decree was annulled in 1933 after economic conditions had improved. Argentina, Junta Reguladora de Vinos, *Recopilación de leyes, decretos y disposiciones sobre la industria vitivinícola: 1888–1938* (Buenos Aires: 1938).
- 26 Quoted by Florencia Rodríguez Vázquez, “Estado y modernización vitivinícola en Mendoza (Argentina): el aporte de los técnicos extranjeros. 1800-1900,” *Territorios del vino* 2, no. 3 (2008): 7. See also James Simpson, *Creating Wine: The Emergence of a World Industry, 1840–1914* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011), 247.
- 27 Arata, *Investigación vinícola*, 106. See also Ana María Mateu, “Mendoza, entre el orden y el progreso 1880–1918,” in *Mendoza a través de su historia*, ed. Arturo Roig, Pablo Lacoste and M. Satlati (Mendoza, Argentina: Caviar Bleu, 2003); Rodolfo Richard Jorba, “Cambios tecnológicos y transformaciones económico-espaciales en la vitivinicultura de la Provincia de Mendoza (Argentina), 1870-2000,” *Scripta Nova, Revista electrónica de geografía y ciencias sociales*, no. 69 (August 1, 2000) 3; Juan Baillet Masse, *Informe sobre el estado de las clases obreras argentinas* (La Plata, Argentina: Ministerio de Trabajo de la Provincia de Buenos Aires, 2010), 885.
- 28 Galanti, *La industria vitivinícola argentina*, 29–30; Galanti, *Estudio Crítico*, 53; and Arata, *Investigación vinícola*, 7 and 16. See also Baillet Masse, *Informe*, 881–2; Benito Marianetti, *El racimo y su aventura*. (Buenos Aires, Editorial Platino, 1965), 91–103; and Supplee, “Provincial Elites,” 272. It appears that the reliance on *contratistas* stood in stark contrast to the Old-World norm of small vineyards and wineries often owned and worked by the same family.

- 29 R.L. Beltramin, "Accidentes climatéricos y enfermedades de la vid," *Boletín del Centro Viti-Vinícola Nacional*, 3 September 1905, 308.
- 30 Julio Aguirre quoted in Richard-Jorba, *Poder, economía y espacio*, 268.
- 31 Civit quoted in Mateu, "Mendoza, entre el orden y el progreso," 2. Arata, *Investigación vinícola*, 5 and 252. On the state's erection of tariff barriers, see Alejandro Fernández, "Los importadores españoles, el comercio de vinos y las transformaciones de mercado entre 1880 y 1930, in *El vino y sus revoluciones: Una antología histórica sobre el desarrollo de la industria vitivinícola argentina*, ed. Ana María Mateu and Steve Stein (Mendoza, Argentina: Ediunc, 2007), 129–39; Ana María Mateu, "Estado y vitivinicultura. Las políticas públicas de la transición. Mendoza. 1870–1900," in *Actas de las jornadas sobre elites, cuestión regional y estado nacional argentina y América Latina, siglo XIX y primeras décadas del XX*, ed. Daniel Campo and Marta Bonaudo (Tucumán, Argentina: Universidad Nacional de Tucumán, 2002), 15–16; and Rodolfo Richard-Jorba, "Conformación espacial de la viticultura en la Provincia de Mendoza Y Estructura de las Explotaciones, 1881–1900," *Revista de Estudios Regionales, Mendoza*, no. 10 (1992): 149. The relatively high prices of imported wine throughout the period, along with the supply and quality problems that accompanied the Phylloxera epidemic in European vineyards, further supported Mendoza's rise to dominance in the production and sale of wine. See A. N. Jorge Balan, "Una cuestión regional en la Argentina: burguesías provinciales y el mercado nacional en el desarrollo agroexportador," *Desarrollo económico* 18, no. 69 (1978): 35.
- 32 A. N. Galanti, *La industria vitivinícola argentina*, 94.
- 33 Quoted by Nancy Hanaway, "Wine Country: The Vineyard as National Space in Nineteenth Century Argentina," in *Alcohol in Latin America: A Social and Cultural History*, ed. Gretchen Pierce and Aurea Toxqui (Tucson: University Arizona Press, 2014), 89.
- 34 Arata, *Investigación vinícola*, 122, also 5 and 185. See also Supplee, "Provincial Elites," 275–78.
- 35 Mateu, "De productores a comerciantes," 13; Supplee, "Provincial Elites," 275.
- 36 Vidal Buzzi, *Vino y pasión*, 60. See also Patricia Barrio de Villanueva, "Tiburcio Benegas: vicisitudes de un hombre de negocios entre 1890 y 1908," in *Actas de las Primeras Jornadas de Historia y Literatura del Sur Mendocino* (Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, UNCuyo, Instituto Spaientia e Instituto de Educación Superior del Atuel, October 2003).
- 37 Mateu, "De productores a comerciantes"; Ana María Mateu, "Los caminos de construcción del cooperativismo vitivinícola en Mendoza. Argentina (1900–1920)," *Jornadas de cooperativismo y asociacionismo agropecuario y pesquero en Europa y América Latina, siglos XIX y XX*, September, 2001, 4; Rodolfo Richard-Jorba, "Inserción de la élite en el modelo

MAKING WINE FOR THE PEOPLE'S TASTE: THE EMERGENCE
OF THE ARGENTINE WINE INDUSTRY, 1885–1915

- socioeconómico vitivinícola de Mendoza, 1881–1900*,” *Revista de Estudios Regionales*, no. 12 (1994): 172–3; Buzzi, *Vino y pasión*.
- 38 D. S. Somois, “Sobre poda del Cabernet Sauvignon,” *Boletín del Centro Viti-Vinícola Nacional*, 31 July 1906, 596.
- 39 Centro Viti-Vinícola Nacional, *La viti-vinicultura en 1910*, 18. Julio A. Paso substantiated this view, although in softer tones: “Decent, good wines fetched the same prices as bad wines.” Arata, *Investigación vinícola*, 254.
- 40 Galanti, *La industria vitivinícola argentina*, 26, 94, and 120; Arata, *Investigación vinícola*, 202. These views were likely influenced by perceptions of the very industry leaders contained in statements like that contained in the Wine Association’s official publication: “The amount of wine manufactured...is not even half of that needed to cover domestic consumption.” *Boletín del Centro Viti-Vinícola Nacional*, 31 December 1905, 878. The records referred to pertain to Mendoza’s Arizu winery, the region’s third-largest wine factory. See Mateu, “Los Vinos de Arizu.” The same mass production strategy of the early industry was pursued by neighbouring factories Tomba and Giol. By 1910, these three accounted for 80 percent of the wine produced. See Mateu, “Estudio y análisis de la modalidad empresarial vitivinícola de los Arizu en Mendoza”; Ana Maria Mateu, “La vitivinicultura mendocina: una opción dura y no demorada en la periferia de la periferia? (1870–1920),” *Jornadas de Historia Económica*, no. 18 (2002): 12–16; and Richard-Jorba, *Cambios tecnológicos*, 4–5.
- 41 Centro Viti-Vinícola Nacional, *La viti-vinicultura en 1910*, 64.
- 42 Simpson, *Creating Wine*, 245.