



How Catena, Known for Putting Argentine Malbec on the Map, Now Leads the \$19+ Chardonnay Imported Category

MENDOZA, ARGENTINA, September 4, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- When Nicolás Catena started his Malbec revolution in the 1990s in Argentina, his winery primarily produced white wines, with over 50% of the Catena family's production dedicated to white and rosé wines. Even today, as the world looks to Argentina as the global standard for high-quality Malbec, Chardonnay remains a quiet but powerful growth category for Catena. The winery is the #2 exporter of Chardonnay-based fine wines (\$19+ retail) to the United States, according to Nielsen 2025 data¹. Its footprint is growing, even as U.S. imports of Chardonnay-based wines from France, the category leader, are in decline.

A Heritage Built on Chardonnay

It was Chardonnay, not Malbec, that opened the door for Argentine wine to the world. Managing Director Laura Catena recalls, "In the late 1980s, my father hired Paul Hobbs, an American with an impressive pedigree in Chardonnay winemaking. Paul was taken by the Chardonnay from the clay soils of our La Pirámide vineyard in Agrelo. We had a lot to learn back then, but progress was quick because the terroir was there, and within 10 years we were selling the first Catena Chardonnay. My mother, Elena, traveled all over the USA and Europe presenting the Catena Chardonnay 1991. She challenged the skeptics with blind tastings against any wine from California or France, and according to her, our wine always won. The Catena Chardonnay earned us our first 90-point rating in *Wine Spectator*, and subsequently, we were invited to the New York Wine Experience, an event where *Wine Spectator* magazine invites the best wineries in the world to pour their wines. In 1995, we became the first Argentine winery to be invited."

Uco Valley Climate

Catena's Chardonnay success is rooted in high-altitude vineyards in the Uco Valley, where cool climates and limestone-rich soils create crisp, floral wines with distinctive minerality. "I still love high-altitude Chardonnay the most," says Laura Catena. "It's crisp, floral, and slightly creamy from the sun and stony calcareous soils, and it has the capacity to age—

¹Total US XAOC + Liquor, 750 ml, Latest 52 weeks ending 8/2/25.

something that often surprises those who don't realize our mountain vineyards are in what is classified as a cool climate."

The winery's Chardonnay portfolio is broad, varied, and exciting for lovers of high-quality Chardonnay. It includes the well-known Catena High Mountain Vines Chardonnay and Catena Alta Chardonnay, the Buenos Aires luxury icon Angelica Zapata Chardonnay, and the highly allocated, single-vineyard ADRIANNA White Stones and White Bones. Just as Catena once revolutionized Malbec, the winery is now proving that its high-altitude Chardonnays have found their place among the world's finest.

Beyond Chardonnay

Exports of Argentine white wines grew significantly between 2019 and 2025, and it's not all Chardonnay. While Argentine Chardonnay exports are up 40% over this period, export growth of white blends has been more than double that figure, with an 89% increase over the same period.

Semillon and Chenin Blanc have grown the most, starting from a small base. These grape varieties, widely planted in Mendoza, are traditionally blended together. Catena has a popular Semillon and Chenin blend called Catena Appellation White Clay, with widespread global distribution.

Torrontés is Argentina's native white variety, born of a cross between Moscatel de Alejandría and Criolla Chica. It is floral with a touch of bitterness. Beautiful examples related to the Catena family include the collectible El Enemigo Torrontés and the everyday drinking Tilia Torrontés.

Catena wines are available nationwide online at [wine.com](https://www.wine.com) and in retail stores like Total Wine and More and Wally's.

About Catena Bodega y Viñedos

Ever since 1902, when Italian immigrant to Argentina, Nicola Catena, planted his first Malbec in Mendoza, the Catenas have pioneered Argentine wine: from resurrecting the ancient Malbec grape, to preserving ancient biodiverse plant selections, to planting vineyards at high altitudes where no one had dared to plant before. The visionary work of Nicolás Catena Zapata set a new standard for quality and demonstrated Argentina's potential to produce grand cru level wines. This legacy continues under the leadership of his children and grandchildren. Voted the #1 World's Most Admired Wine Brand in 2025 by Drinks International, Catena and the family's iconic Bodega Catena Zapata make wines

that stand proudly with the best in the world. For more information about Catena Bodega y Viñedos, please visit www.catenawines.com.

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