# Q & A with
## Santiago Mayorga Winemaker, NIETO SENETINER

*WINEMAKER SANTIAGO MAYORGA WAS RECENTLY NAMED ONE OF THE "NOW GENERATION" OF NEW ARGENTINE WINEMAKERS – one of the best and brightest who is realizing a vision of quality in the most storied vineyards of Mendoza.*

**How did you get started in winemaking?**

Growing up my family had a small farm with vineyards. My father was an agro-engineer, and he encouraged me to pursue winemaking studies at the Universidad de Mendoza. I graduated in my early 20s and developed a passion for my profession early on. I started working alongside my father to dig deeper into the industry, traveling as far as South Africa to see what my peers were doing. Winemaker Roberto de la Mota became my mentor in 2004; we worked together until 2013, when I was invited to join Nieto Senetiner to develop their high-end wines. After almost ten years of being completely hands-on at a small company the timing was ideal to pursue new professional opportunities such as working with new varieties, terroirs, winery equipment and benefitting from a bigger team with access to R&D. It's been an amazing opportunity to shape new projects at a historic winery with resources to really chase innovation.

**Tell about where you source your grapes – and viticultural strategies?**

We have different levels of Nieto wines, which gives us the opportunity to communicate real range with our winemaking. The idea behind our wines is to show the typicity of the variety, without being over-pretentious. Harvest for us is critical. I work with a group of agronomical engineers working the vineyard and manage the vines, and really believe in yield management and tools such as Dyostem to manage ripeness. Without high quality grapes you can't have great wines. We manage peaks in ripeness to balance aromatic intensity with mouthfeel.

**Have you changed your approach to Nieto Malbec since taking over as head winemaker?**

We have made a big change – we're looking for more complexity from our Malbec and it comes through in the intensity of color and flavor profile. Nieto Malbec is an entry-level wine – it's also the most popular wine we make. It's not about pretension, but it's not simple either. My goal is to over-deliver on quality and find the typicity of Malbec. After all, we are the land of Malbec! I find that harvesting at the right time is critical for quality, as is controlling yields, canopy management and selective irrigation. Our Malbec preserves freshness but also has a rich mouthfeel, which we work hard to balance out.

**Nieto was the first to plant Bonarda in Mendoza – what can you tell us about it?**

Bonarda is the second most planted red variety in Argentina. It has a long history in Argentina, and despite our Italian ancestry the strain which thrives in Mendoza is of French origin, the Corbeau Noir from the Savoie. It grows very well in warmer areas, in the east of Mendoza. Nieto started to build a real Bonarda reputation in 2000 with success in Agrelo, Lujan de Cuyo; at the time we were making higher-end wines with good acidity that were lovely to drink. The color is quite intense with a red fruit profile, similar to strawberries and red cherries. In the mouth has a nice herbal taste, reminiscent of celery. Bonarda is not as well-known in Argentina for 100% varietal wines; traditionally it's used for blends, but we've enjoyed great success with our entry-level Nieto Bonarda which has great fruit and color.

**What does Nieto Senetiner mean to you?**

We're a young winemaking and viticultural team with a real passion for what we do. What we want to show is consistency in quality, and a high quality-to-price relation, and we get there by focusing on innovation and studying trends. Malbec is important, and we're working on micro-vinification techniques to isolate special terroirs, but we're also excited about Bonarda and being at the forefront of new trends such as Petit Verdot. I work with a group of very talented agro-engineers and winemakers and we all believe that innovation and research is the way forward.

# About NIETO SENETINER

## History

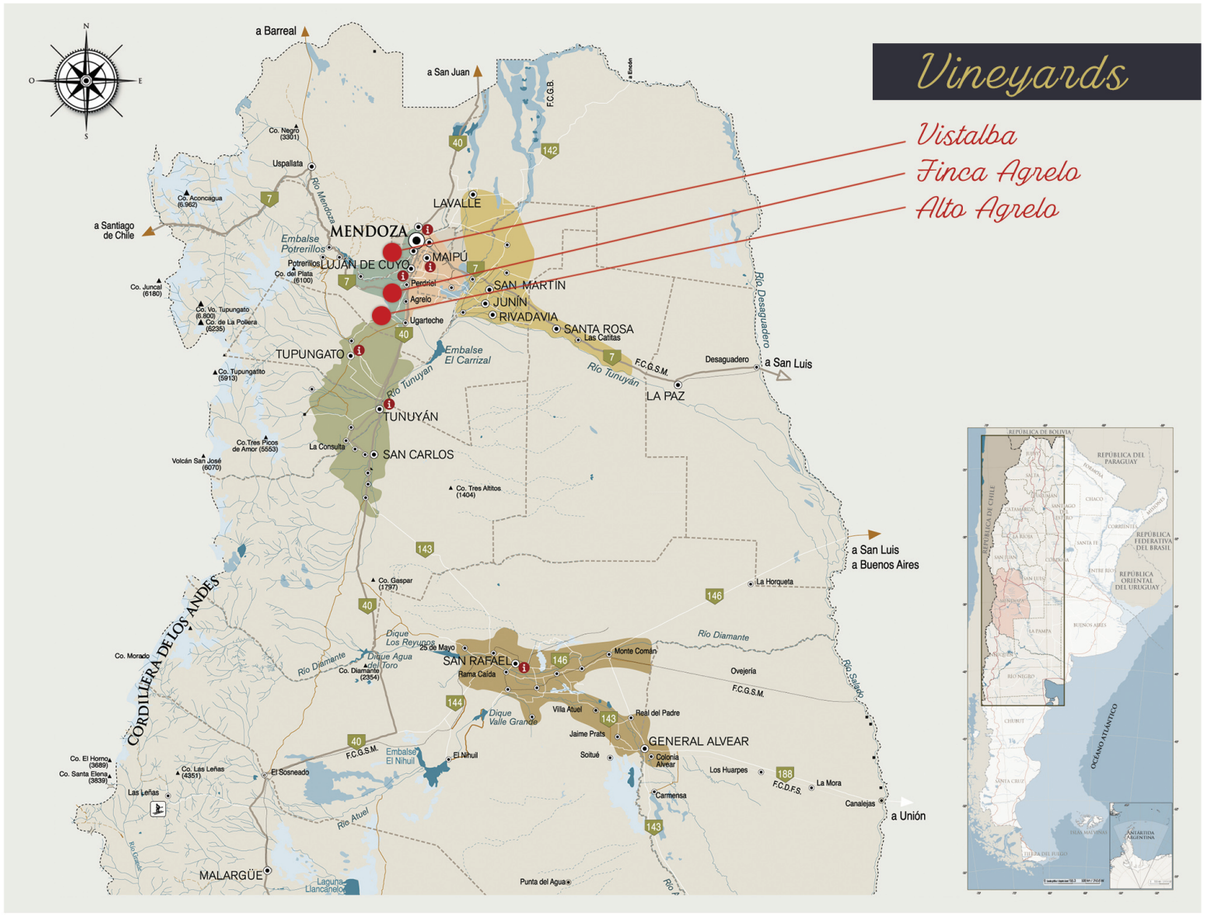
Nieto Senetiner traces its story through the years of Mendoza's winemaking history, representing a perfect blend of tradition and today. Founded in 1888, the first wave of Italian immigrants to the area built the classic, colonially-styled winery in Vistalba, then and now the premier growing area of Lujan de Cuyo. Ownership passed down through several prominent Mendoza families until the mid-1960s, when Don Nicanor Nieto joined forces with his son-in-law Adriano Senetiner to purchase the historic "Villa Blanca" winery in Vistalba, as well as legacy vineyards in Agrelo and Alto Agrelo, renaming the new venture Nieto Senetiner to honor their families. In 1998, Molinos Rio de la Plata, Argentina's most prominent food and beverage company, acquired Nieto Senetiner, providing the stability to build for the future while retaining a true Argentine identity which spans over 125 years.

The historic Nieto Senetiner winery in Vistalba recalls Mendoza's storied wine culture. The winery has preserved the traditional cane roof and "galerias," or curved arches, which were once common to the area. Priceless, century-old vines are planted on their own root stock. Home to a very innovative wine facility, the graceful lines of the past are commemorated on every label of Nieto Senetiner.

## Vineyards & Winemaking

### La Primera Zona: Lujan de Cuyo

Lujan de Cuyo is known as la primera zona, the first region in Argentina recognized for its quality winemaking. Characterized by a long ripening cycle, Lujan de Cuyo was also the first place for immigrants to plant vineyards, some of which are now well over a century old. Nieto Senetiner manages 700 acres of estate vineyards in three distinct growing areas of Lujan de Cuyo, encompassing 100 acres planted in 1900 at the historic estate at Vistalba; 400 acres in Agrelo first planted in 1974; and the youngest vineyard, 200 acres planted in 2006 in Alto Agrelo. Soils range from sandy-loam to clay and limestone with pronounced stone deposits from the Andes, with altitude spanning 3,117 feet at Vistalba to 3,445 feet in Agrelo and 3,773 feet in Alto Agrelo. In all, the estate vines provide distinct cultivation sites that are particularly suited to estate-grown Malbec and Bonarda.



# The Wines of Nieto Senetiner

## Nieto Senetiner

This entry-level range consistently ranks among the most popular wines from Argentina, over-delivering on quality.

### Nieto Senetiner Malbec **$12.99**

100% Malbec sourced entirely from Lujan de Cuyo. A balance of freshness and complexity, the aromatics show a bright, youthful character of violets and strawberries, followed by smooth tannins that are velvety, soft and juicy. Depending on the vintage about 50-80% of the wine ages 6 to 8 months in French oak to create a richer mouthfeel, with well-integrated acidity for a very persistent finish.

### Nieto Senetiner Bonarda **$12.99**

Nieto Senetiner was the first winery in Argentina to realize the potential of estate-grown Bonarda, now the second most planted red variety. 100% sourced from a 50-acre estate vineyard in Lujan de Cuyo, the wine shows a red fruit profile of strawberries and red cherries followed by fresh, herbal notes on the palate.

## Don Nicanor

Named in honor of the founder of Nieto Senetiner, the Don Nicanor range was first produced in 1998 to offer a higher-end range of Malbec wines and are a focus of winemaker Santiago Mayorga's reserve program. The Don Nicanor range is assembled at the historic facility in Vistalba, using the original 8,000-liter concrete fermentation tanks installed over a century ago.

### Don Nicanor Malbec **$18.99**

Hand-harvested from 100% Malbec, this wine is a blend of two valleys, sourced from distinct sites in Uco Valley and Lujan de Cuyo. Yields average 30% less than the norm, a signal of quality selection. Different fermentation systems for distinct vineyards – including small tanks for more purity extraction versus larger tanks to extract freshness – result in lovely, balanced wines. The wine spends 12 months in mainly 2nd and 3rd year oak, and shows beautiful layers of plum and spice, with gentle notes of cedar and wild mint.

### Don Nicanor Barrel Select **$24.99**

Hand-harvested from 100% Malbec in Uco Valley, the wine is selected from the best barrel lots in every harvest. Deep red in color with hints of violet, the wine shows attractive aromas of raspberries, red currants and blackberries balanced with floral notes such as violets, and some minerality and spices. The wine is well-structured with a moderate acidity and a long, persistent finish.

## Winemaker Santiago Mayorga

### Chasing Innovation

Named one of Argentina's top "**now generation**" winemakers by Wine Enthusiast, Winemaker Santiago Mayorga pursues a tiered approach to winemaking, producing a range of styles that aim to over-deliver on quality while showcasing varietal typicity. His innovative approach starts with critical attention during the harvest to pick at exactly the right time. Low yields, canopy management, and tight control of irrigation systems help achieve the best grape quality. The viticultural team has perfected the French Dyostem technique to determine optimal ripeness and harvest potential of the berries, allowing Mayorga to selectively harvest some fruit as early as mid-March to showcase its purity and bright acidity, then balance it out with more mature grapes. The addition of later harvested grapes lends more structured tannins. This progressive style with equal parts freshness and complexity, results in wines with fruit character, balanced by well-integrated oak and acidity for drinkability and pleasure.