

CHEVAL DES ANDES 2020

Press reviews

Robert Parker's Wine Advocate

"The 2020 Cheval des Andes was harvested from the last of February for the first time ever. It was Gabillet's second vintage at Cheval des Andes, and that year, he had to start without waiting for Pierre Olivier Clouet and Pierre Lurton from Cheval Blanc; when they arrived, they had finished picking the Malbec, which surprisingly was fresher in Las Compuertas (because of the higher percentage of clay?) than in Altamira (where the vines suffered more stress), saving the freshness. They now harvest using cold trucks (for the first time), and they also started earlier in the morning (six in the morning, impossible earlier in Mendoza...), which he reckons was very good for the precision of the wine. They used 40% 225-liter barrels, 40% 400-liter oak barrels and 20% 2,500-liter foudres, half of them new and with an élevage of 15 months on average, depending on the lots and varieties from 12 to 18 months. The final blend was 49% Cabernet Sauvignon, 29% Malbec and 2% Petit Verdot, which makes a comeback as it was not used since 2016. The key was to finish the fermentation of the Petit Verdot without skins, and that way, they have been able to use it in the blends of 2021, 2022 and 2023 in small but increasing percentages. This is slightly riper than 2019, with a little more alcohol (14.5%) and with very good structural tannins but saving the freshness, and it has the spicy side from the Petit Verdot (Gabillet talks about white pepper). The wine has the ultra sleek and polished texture and the elegance and the balance that is the signature here; the wine is very clean and precise. I see very good regularity across the three vintages I tasted next to each other—this 2020 and the 2018 and 2019. Overall, this is a triumph over the adverse conditions of the vintage. They produced their usual 100,000 bottles (since 2018), as they are renewing their vineyards and want to keep the volume stable. They produce this volume from the 36 productive hectares they have in Las Compuertas and Altamira. There are some more changes: in 2020, they went for a lighter bottle, weighing 100 grams less than the one they used in 2018 and 2019, but close to 300 grams less than the bottle from before. It's also a slimmer bottle, always thinking about the environment. They are very focused on agroecology, accelerating the regenerative viticulture and using cover crops; they have planted 1,900 trees in the last three years, creating small clusters of biodiversity for birds. They have transplanted some centenary olive trees and keep their sheep and lamas on the property. Very green-minded."

James Suckling

"Ripe, baked dark cherries with spices and some violets. Hints of graphite, cocoa powder, incense and black pepper. Dried rose petals. A slightly fuller Cheval des Andes with tense, silky tannins and a lingering, generous finish. Ripe, but still has lots of restraint and precision. 49% malbec, 49% cabernet sauvignon with a 2% petit verdot. 24% of the malbec comes from Altamira and all the rest of the fruit come from Las Compuertas."

Jancis Robinson

"49% Cabernet Sauvignon, 49% Malbec, 2% Petit Verdot. Harvest 28 February to 17 March. 2020 was a warm and dry vintage. Ageing in 225-litre barriques (40%), 400-litre barrels (40%) and 2,500-litre foudre (20%), 50% new oak, 85% French (remainder Austrian, Slovenian and German). pH 3.83. Bottled 10 February 2022. The riper, darker fruit on the nose denotes the hotter vintage in 2020. Though ripe, there is no sense of jamminess in the wine, a real improvement noticeable in recent years here. The palate too has the cashmere texture and vibrant acidity of a team working hard to shift from a thicker, riper style to one of balance and vibrancy. Cassis and dark cherry are met with notes of blood orange and violet. Chalky and deep, this should age well in bottle. (TP)"

Vinous

"The 2020 Cheval des Andes is a blend of 49% Cabernet Sauvignon, 49% Malbec and 2% Petit Verdot from Paraje Altamira in the Uco Valley and Las Compuertas in Luján de Cuyo. Aged in French oak barrels, it's purple in the glass with a garnet sheen. The nose reveals a well-judged approach to the warmth of 2020, featuring ripe plum, redcurrant, mint and hints of white pepper over a bed of bay leaf and cedar. It's dry and velvety on the palate, with rich, polished tannins that deliver a juicy, balanced mouthfeel. The balsamic notes and rich palate reflect the year's character, while the finish is dynamic and long-lasting."

Decanter

"This almost half-half Cabernet Sauvignon and Malbec with 2% Petit Verdot is rich and full in the mouth. Tannins are massy and filling, this has power and dominance with concentrated blackcurrant, plum and black cherry fruit. Highly spiced and sunkissed, this is intense and quite a force on the palate with liquorice, black pepper and tobacco tones and a flinty mineral aspect on the finish. The alcohol sticks out a touch, just lingering with heat at the end, but it has freshness and matches the altogether hefty frame and power from start to finish. Certainly a punchy and confident wine that's out to shine. 3.83pH. Ageing 22 months, 40% in 225l Bordeaux barrels, 40% in 400l barrels, 20% in 2,500l foudres (50% new). Winemaker Gérald Gabillet." -



Lambrecht

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