



## THE VINES OF MENDOZA

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Have you ever thought about owning your own brand of wine? Michael Evans has and believe me he's not alone. Michael, an American entrepreneur and former political consultant, is founder and president of The Vines of Mendoza, situated in the heart of Argentina's wine region. Michael was so moved by the beauty there during a vacation in 2004, that he decided to move to South America and pursue his dream. He soon met his partner Pablo Gimenez Riili, a Mendoza native and third generation wine maker and together they raised enough money (along with family, friends and other investors) to purchase over 900 acres of land at the base of the Andes in the heart of the Uco Valley, where the company was officially founded in 2005. They then hired renowned viticulturist and sommelier Santiago Achával, who has been recognized as one of the world's leaders in winemaking.



The idea behind this enterprise is to offer wine enthusiasts, aficionados and investors alike the chance to purchase their own private estate vineyard and be involved in the production of their own brand, producing between 2,000-4,000 bottles per acre per year. Owners can choose their level of involvement in their vineyard, from 'soil selection to bottling. One of the obvious selling points (besides, perhaps fulfilling a fantasy of having your own signature brand of wine and vineyard in sun-soaked, gorgeous Mendoza to prove it) is that the cost is a quarter of what it would cost to own a vineyard in Napa Valley. The vineyards range in size from 3 to 10 acres and are offered at \$60,000 (US – 2011) per acre compared to an average \$250,000 per acre in California's Napa Valley. The Vines of Mendoza also offers turnkey management and can oversee and care for your vineyard to the degree you choose.

Currently, The Vines of Mendoza has 83 owners from around the world, mostly from North America, Europe and Brazil. In fact, 80% of the estates are owned by 'hobbyists pursuing their dream' while the other 20% are producing wine for commercial purchase, with several high-end restaurateurs as owners (such as Wolfgang Puck, for example). The rarely available wines are also made available through the company's own in-house wine shop, The Acequia Wine Club, and a sophisticated tasting room called The Vines Bar and Vinoteca in Mendoza's city center.



Mendoza, which is home to more than 800 wineries, is now exporting an additional 25% more wine each year, and is widely-known globally not only as an important wine destination but also as a burgeoning hub for a growing number of high end, designed-oriented boutique hotels. Along those lines, The Vines of Mendoza has plans for a distinctive resort and spa on the premises to be designed by a prestigious Argentine architectural firm, Bormida Yanzon.

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Espejo 567, Mendoza, Argentina | U.S. Phone: (707) 320-2699