



## THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED

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A decade later, Evans, along with Argentine partner Pablo Giménez Riili, runs Vines of Mendoza, a multifaceted operation based in the Tupungato section of the Uco Valley.

It offers private vineyard and winemaking opportunities, a high-end resort, a cutting-edge restaurant (Siete Fuegos, by renowned chef Francis Mallmann) and more.

"I came to Argentina after working four consecutive presidential campaigns, from [Bill] Clinton through John Kerry," says Evans. "I needed a break. After a few days in Buenos Aires, I came to Mendoza to see the Andes and taste wine. From the start, the synergy and good fortune were magical."

Evans met Riili by chance at a casual wine tasting in a Mendoza bookstore. The meeting would change his life.

"If I hadn't [met Riili], I most likely would have had a good time for a week or two and went home," Evans says, "But within a day of meeting him, we were driving the back roads of Mendoza together and discussing ways of going into business.

"I went to an asado at his family's house, and even got to taste with important wine guys like Carmelo Patti and Santiago Achaval. Add in some late-night drinking, and Pablo and I decided to form Vines."

Today, Vines of Mendoza has 750 acres of vineyards, about 70% planted to Malbec. With 135 private owners, Evans says that he, winemaker Pablo Martorell and Santiago Achaval, Vines' consultant, are making 500,000 bottles a year.

That figure comprises over 300 different wines, including Recuerdo, Vines' 25,000-case commercial label.

"Down deep, I always wanted to own a small vineyard and make wine," Evans says. "But this goes beyond what I ever had considered. We are giving people a shot at having the same amazing experience I had when I first came here.

"It's an incredibly complex business to run, but how many people drop everything and are now making wine in a place like this?"

—Michael Schachner