

Tomas Achaval, MBA '88
CEO and Founder
Nömada Wines and Vineyards



What did it take for Tomas Achaval to become one of the world's leading winemakers? A passion for wine. An entrepreneurial spirit. And an Olin MBA degree.

Achaval began his career as an industrial engineer. After he graduated from Olin in 1988, he worked for Monsanto and became head of the NutraSweet Company's consumer business in Argentina, Chile, Uruguay and Paraguay.

"As an engineer, I had a square-box, black-and-white way of thinking. The MBA Program gave me more colors to work with and the courage to jump out of the box. I also developed strong friendships at Olin, and relationships are important in business."

In 1994, Achaval was named president and CEO of Bodegas Chandon, a subsidiary of Moët Hennessy/LVMH Group. With \$120 million in annual sales and 520 employees, it was the largest and most prestigious winery in his native Argentina. Achaval left Chandon in 2000 to run Telefé, Argentina's top television network.

Achaval founded Nömada Wines and Vineyards, what he refers to as his "life's work," in 2003. The Argentinean winery specializes in unique super-premium wines made from grapes grown in the Andes Mountains.

Achaval's vineyards produce about 15,000 cases of Syrah and Malbec varietals annually under the names of Nömada and 7 Lunas. "In our first year of sales, we're running out of product," he says. "But it's a good problem to have." The company's revenues are expected to exceed \$500,000 this year. Nömada wines retail in the United States for \$27 to \$44 per bottle.

Achaval started shipping his wines to key markets in the United States, Hong Kong, China and northern Europe. He is planning to develop related business opportunities in the Andean region, such as eno-tourism and media sectors – starting with a "posada," or small house, that will be built on a historic farm. Achaval says guests will be able ride horses across the Andes to Chile.

That's a business idea worth toasting.

"I had a square-box, black-and-white way of thinking. The MBA Program gave me more colors to work with and the courage to jump out of the box."

BY SUSAN KERTH