

star selections



2006 Cocodrilo Cabernet Sauvignon (\$17) California winemaker Paul Hobbs founded his Argentine winery in 1991, and makes impressive wines in both the United States and Argentina, among them this black tea-scented Cabernet.



2004 Nómade Malbec (\$20) Tomás Achával, the former president of Argentina's Chandon Winery, sources grapes from top vineyards for his Nómade wines. This peppery Malbec comes from a 75-year-old Mendoza vineyard.



2004 Carmen Carmenère Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve (\$14) Carmen was the first Chilean winery to identify the obscure French variety Carmenère in its vineyards, a discovery leading to wines like this elegant, tobacco-scented red.



2006 EQ Sauvignon Blanc (\$17) Founded in 1999, the Matetic family's winery soon attracted critical praise for its organically grown wines made under the EQ label—like the melony EQ Sauvignon Blanc, one of the best in Chile.

2004 Luigi Bosca Reserva Malbec (\$18) Dry, cold winters in the Luján de Cuyo subregion of Mendoza give this berry-rich Malbec a tense, racy structure that keeps it from becoming too rich and dense, while a year in French oak adds savory spice notes. The winery, which was founded in 1901, is still entirely family-owned.

2005 BenMarco Malbec (\$20) A small percentage of Bonarda gives this juicy, luscious Malbec a perfumey, floral note. It's made by Pedro Marchevsky, who may be the most respected viticulturist in Argentina. Marchevsky named his winery for his father, Marcos, who first taught him how to plant grapevines.

Chile

2006 Casa Julia Sauvignon Blanc (\$9) Winemaker Pablo Morande spent two decades as technical director for Chilean giant Concha y Toro before leaving to help found Casa Julia, a reliable source for high-quality, affordable wines. This lively white has bright lemon-lime notes and a tangy finish.

2006 Oops Carmenère Rosé (\$12) Despite its silly name, this lightly fruity rosé—with a hint of Carmenère's characteristic spiciness—is very appealing. It's made from grapes grown on the banks of the Lontué River.

2006 Cono Sur Visión Gewürztraminer (\$14) Gewürztraminer is a relatively unknown grape in Chile, but that may well change if wines like this dry, fresh, lychee-scented white from Cono Sur are indicative of what this Alsace variety can be when planted in the right place.

2005 Apaltagua Envero (\$15) The Tutunjian family specializes in Carmenère, employing one of Chile's best

winemakers, Alvaro Espinoza, to create expressive, potent bottlings like this one. Produced from 50-year-old vines, it provides exotic herbal aromas and spicy, dark-berry fruit.

2006 Kingston Family Vineyards Tobiano Pinot Noir (\$20) American vintner Courtney Kingston's great-grandfather headed to Chile to find gold. He never did, but five generations later, Kingston—along with her brother Tim and father, Michael—decided to plant vineyards on the family ranch there. Now, with American winemaker Byron Kosuge, she's producing some of Chile's best Pinots, like this one, which has ripe black raspberry notes and a satiny texture.

2004 Viña Santa Ema Amplus One (\$20) This polished, black-fruit-rich red, an unusual but delicious blend of Carmenère, Syrah and Carignane, comes from a Maipo Valley winery established in 1956 by the son of an Italian immigrant. Its invitingly plush texture makes it hard to resist.