

magazine



A high elevation vineyard in Cafayate, Argentina. PHOTO: CRAIG PINHEY

I heart Torrontés and Tannat, the two Ts of Argentine wine



Craig Pinhey
good drink

Looking for a red wine for lovers, or a bedtime bubbly? I know Valentine's Day is tomorrow, but I want to talk about the two Ts of Argentine wine: Torrontés and Tannat.

I'm in Argentina at the moment courtesy of Wines of Argentina, visiting various wine regions and enjoying the great scenery, friendly people and tasty local food. I was here 10 years ago and loved the empanadas; that hasn't changed. These little pockets of goodness make a perfect snack with a cold glass of Torrontés.

What is Torrontés? It is a grape variety that is Argentina's own. There are actually three types, but the main one, Torrontés Riojano, is a cross of Muscat of Alexandria and the historic Mission grape. Mission was introduced to what is now California in the late 18th century by Franciscan missionaries, and spread south.

The Muscat contributions to the cross are the very floral and fruity, tropical aromas and flavours of Torrontés. We spent two days this week in Cafayate, in the northern part of Argentina, and a great area for Torrontés. The terroir here results in very aromatic wines, and they make them in a dry, fresh style, with good acidity. It is a great drink on a hot day. Further south in Mendoza you don't see as

much of the grape, and the Torrontés wines tend to be flabbier, less aromatic. Cafayate is a much smaller wine region, only making less than two per cent of the country's wines, but it is a good area for quality, value wines with good acidity.

We tried quite a few tasty versions in the short time we were there, including the small family winery El Porvenir's 2014 Laborum Single Vineyard, and the very large El Esteco's great value 2014 Amaro (which used to be sold here in Canada as Michel Torino) and 2014 Don David.

We also had a tasty Torrontés-Riesling blend from Amalaya, and a curious Amaro rosé made from Torrontés, with a bit of Malbec added. I'd love to see this dry, fresh, inexpensive rosé at the ANBL.

The last Torrontés we had was poured from a clay pitcher at a traditional empanada restaurant along the highway. I never saw the label, but it was quite tasty, and a good food match. If you haven't tried a Torrontés, give it a shot. It might be your new favourite white wine.

Now, on to Tannat. This grape, best known as a key black grape in the southern French appellations of Cahors and Madiran, is common in Uruguay, but has seen some growth in Argentina, including in Cafayate where it makes some really tasty red wines, with big tannins and a mineral edge that is not unlike printer's ink and leather, or maybe iron/rust.

The Tannat wines we had from El Porvenir were great, and could be sold here in New Brunswick in the \$20-25 range. I particularly liked their Absolut, which is not barrel-aged, so it really shows the flavours of this characterful grape. Tannat is also used as a blending component, as it contributes complexity. We noted that in the 2012 San Pedro Chateau de Yacochaya, a

15.5 per cent "power red" that is mainly Malbec, but also has some Cabernet Sauvignon and just a dash of Tannat, around one per cent. This is a premium Bordeaux-style red - France's famous Michel Rolland is the official winemaker - that would look great on the ANBL shelves. By the time all the mark-ups and taxes are applied, it would probably be around \$35-40.

Next week, I'll report on my Mendoza experience. In the meantime, enjoy Valentine's Day, and your champagne (or perhaps Cava, for budget lovers), but you might want to have a heart for an Argentina wine, too.

Wine of the week

Don David Torrontés, \$16.99 - This is a slightly fuller version that uses a small portion of oak aged wine, giving it complexity. While there, we were asked about screw caps versus cork, and we all suggested they should change this wine to screw cap. It's a fresh white, and doesn't benefit from aging under a cork. Try it with an Indian or Thai chicken or pork curry, or an Asian noodle bowl or stir-fry.

Upcoming events

- Saint John Red Cross Wine Fair - Feb. 21, 2015, redcross.ca
- Fredericton Craft Beer Festival - March 7, 2015, frederictoncraftbeerfestival.com
- Beer and whisky dinner at the Barrel's Head, Rothesay, March 11, 2015, see event info at my Facebook site: facebook.com/CraigPinheyFrogsPad
- Saint John Beer Fest - April 11, 2015, facebook.com/SaintJohnBeerFest

Cheers!

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Don David Torrontés

PHOTO: CRAIG PINHEY



Empanadas. PHOTO: CRAIG PINHEY

Holiday Mathis horoscopes

13.02.15

You believe in family and in sacrificing for love, and that's the reason for the beautiful event that happens in March. March also brings financial luck. April begins a study that will go on for many years. Practical wisdom will win over fancy titles in June, and you'll be promoted. Domestic upgrades are worth the cost. Capricorn and Virgo people adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 30, 1, 22, 37 and 18.

ARIES

(March 21 - April 19) Your work is shaping you in remarkable ways. It's as though the partition separating you from your work is becoming increasingly porous until you are one and the same.

TAURUS

(April 20 - May 20) For you, territory is about feeling connected. Foreign territory is where the connection is lost. The boundaries are fuzzy at best, and that's why it's important that you map them in your own way.

GEMINI

(May 21 - June 21) As dangerous as it is to climb Mt. Everest, hundreds of people do it every day. You have your own version of a dangerous quest you'd like to accomplish, and this is a fine time to sort out the details and make a plan.

CANCER

(June 22 - July 22) In this age of unmanned space missions, drones and the like, you wish you could send a robot to perform some of today's more tedious duties. Alas, your human touch will make all the difference to someone.

LEO

(July 23 - Aug. 22) The unfortunate consequences of carrying out bad instructions must always be weighed against the rival set of unfortunate consequences that come with questioning and challenging the one giving the orders.

VIRGO

(Aug. 23 - Sept. 22) Even though you are impressively persuasive when dealing with rational people, there are those who can't be reasoned with. It's pointless to try! Remain polite, keep your distance and ignore them.

LIBRA

(Sept. 23 - Oct. 23) Haven't you noticed that you often get the thing you were going for? Don't take this for granted! On the other hand, not getting what you want can be painful, but at least it helps you appreciate your successes.

SCORPIO

(Oct. 24 - Nov. 21) What if you believed that you are now who you most wanted to be and you knew exactly what you were doing when you decided upon it? How would that change your approach? Have confidence.

SAGITTARIUS

(Nov. 22 - Dec. 21) Love and happiness are the central point. If you're not getting enough of a chance to love, be loved and pursue happiness, it's time to rethink your lifestyle.

CAPRICORN

(Dec. 22 - Jan. 19) The rule is always to dress a step above your rank, and when you apply it, you'll be seen as someone who is going places. Such things matter today, and your execution will be flawless.

AQUARIUS

(Jan. 20 - Feb. 18) People seem more interested than they should be in your choices, but that doesn't give them the right to be nosy, bossy or controlling. Follow the old hippie maxim: "It's your thing. Do what you want to do."

PISCES

(Feb. 19 - March 20) People around you will be making decisions based on the emotional tone they want more of. When you embody that tone, you'll move them to take action, join your efforts or simply to love you.

Holiday Mathis

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Syndicated astrology columnist

New techniques can make pill swallowing easier



Dr. Anthony L. Komaroff
health

DEAR DOCTOR K: I have a hard time swallowing pills. Do you have any suggestions?

DEAR READER: Swallowing pills can be difficult and downright unpleasant. It causes many people to gag, vomit or choke. This can keep people from sticking to their medication routines.

A new study published in the *Annals of Family Medicine* may help. In the

article, researchers suggest two techniques to help people improve their ability to swallow pills. (I've put illustrations of both techniques on my website, AskDoctorK.com.)

THE POP-BOTTLE METHOD:

- Fill a plastic water or soda bottle with water.
- Put the tablet on your tongue and close your lips tightly around the bottle opening.
- Take a drink, keeping contact between the bottle and your lips and using a sucking motion to swallow the water and pill. Don't let air get into the bottle.

This method resulted in a 60 per cent improvement in swallowing over the usual method of taking a sip of water from a cup and trying to swallow. I'm not sure why this should work, but it clearly does.

THE LEAN-FORWARD METHOD:

- Put a capsule on your tongue.
- Take a sip of water but don't swallow.
- Tilt your chin toward your chest.
- Swallow the capsule and water while your head is bent.

This technique showed an improvement of 89 per cent over the usual method. Again, I'm not sure why this should work, but it does.

The people conducting this study also are not clear why these techniques work. They didn't really study what was happening in the mouth or esophagus (the swallowing tube that connects the mouth to the stomach). There are techniques for taking pictures of the swallowing muscles, but they weren't used.

It's also not clear whether people who have trouble swallowing pills have a mouth and throat that are somehow built differently. If so, that could be the cause of their trouble.

In other words, the study determined only if people felt it was easier for them to swallow pills, not why it might be easier with these two techniques. But what matters most is whether it's easier, not why.

Maybe you're not quite ready to try these methods. Or maybe you will try them and they won't work for you. If so, here are a few other tips that I have

suggested to my patients:

- Put a pill in applesauce or pudding. The texture can make it easier to swallow a whole pill.
- Grind a pill into a powder and add it to applesauce or pudding.
- Cut a pill with a pill splitter and swallow the smaller pieces one by one.

Make sure you ask your pharmacist if it's OK to cut or grind a medication. Certain medicines, particularly capsules, shouldn't be broken apart. It may also be possible to get your medicine in another form, such as a powder, cream or liquid. Don't hesitate to ask.

Finally, if your pill swallowing trouble is new, consider asking your doctor if you should have a swallowing evaluation. Difficulty swallowing can be caused by problems with nerves or muscles.

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