

TRITONO

In 2003, New York restaurateur Joe Bastianich, Argentine winemaker Matias Mayol and California vintner Steve Clifton came together to create *Tritono*. Indeed, the label is aptly named: the three men bring to this Malbec their respective winemaking experiences and traditions, as well as a common love of food, wine and music. The result is the perfect harmony of fruit and spice, and a symphony of flavors that makes the palate sing!

The Wine

The 2004 vintage in Mendoza saw several factors that naturally limited grape production. A cold spring season limited fruit set, and was followed by a generally warm and dry summer with occasional hail showers that further reduced yields. Fortunately, a heat spike in March ensured perfect fruit and tannin ripeness in the grape clusters that survived earlier weather trials, and the lower production bestowed great berry intensity.

Half of the grapes were fermented in open-top puncheons, where they were punched down by hand three times a day for 28 days to ensure great tannin extraction. The other half of the grapes fermented in tank, with daily gentle pump-overs for 32 days to bring forth more of the fruit aromas and flavors.

The new wines were combined and then aged in French oak barrels (20% new) for 18 months before being bottled with no fining or filtration. The bottled wine was then aged a further 18 months before release.

Intense perfumed notes of lavender oil and violets mingle with earthy notes of morel mushrooms and forest floor. Deep flavors of plum, dried black cherries and currant provide a base for soft, lilting herbal spice seasonings. Softened by 18 months in bottle, this wine is drinking well now and will continue to improve for five to seven years.

The Name

A **tritono** (or tritone) is a musical interval of three whole tones and is the gap between two notes played in succession or simultaneously. In medieval and renaissance music, the interval was seen as dissonant and false, so was banned in music theory. Some writers called it "Diabolus in Musica" probably because it is devilishly difficult to teach singers not to sing it, rather than any work of the Devil, but the "Devil's Interval" is now often found in music where it gives a sense of tension and intrigue.



Examples include the opening of Black Sabbath's "Black Sabbath" and the two-note introduction to Hendrix' "Purple Haze". Most of the songs in "West Side Story" are underpinned with tritones, and the theme for TV's The Simpsons uses a tritone in "The Sim-" choral.

The Label

When local artist Bernudez learned of *Tritono*, he immediately created the devilish musical image used on the label.

The Vineyards

The Malbec grapes for *Tritono* come from two very different Mayol estate vineyards: Finca Montuiri and Finca Pircas.

Finca Montuiri is situated in the historic Lujan de Cuyo region, the very first Malbec DOC in Argentina. Located in the province of Mendoza in Western Argentina, this region sits nestled in the foothills of the Andes Mountains. At about a 3,000 feet elevation, the vines are 80 years old, self-rooted and use traditional flood irrigation.

Finca Pircas is in the Vista Flores region at a 4,300 feet elevation. The vines are planted using modern viticultural techniques; select rootstocks and clones, drip irrigation, etc.

The Team

The Tritono team brings together Joe Bastianich, Matias Mayol and Steve Clifton.

Joe Bastianich Since those long-ago days of red-checkered tablecloths and fiasco Chianti, Joe has been a part of an Italian wine and food "revolution," much of it ignited by his mother, Lidia Matticchio Bastianich of Felidia, and has since been fueled by Joe in an ever-expanding array of projects: restaurants, a retail shop, a winery in Italy, books and much more. Joe ventured into his ancestral Friuli-Venezia Giulia to create the acclaimed wine estate, Azienda Agricola Bastianich and into Maremma, Tuscany where he established the wine estate La Mozza.

Matias Mayol Matias and his family own the vineyards and produce wine as *Famial Mayol* – a passionate, family-run company with estate vineyards and a state-of-the-art winery in Mendoza, Argentina. "Our wines bear our name, a unique identity. It's our way of reflecting the passion for our land through the cultivation of its fruits; a tradition we have inherited from both our European and Incan ancestors." The idea for TriTono first germinated when Matias met Joe in Mendoza while Joe was sourcing high-quality Malbecs. He then worked for six weeks at the Bastianich winery in Friuli before being introduced to Steve Clifton by Joe in 2003, when the triumvirate was formed.

Steve Clifton Steve has two wine labels in Santa Barbara, California wine country. With his partner, Greg Brewer, Steve crafts *Brewer – Clifton* Chardonnay and Pinot Noir wines from select single vineyards throughout the Sta. Rita Hills appellation. *Palmina* is a passion project of Steve and his wife Chrystal wherein they produce a range of Italian varietal wines from Santa Barbara County grapes. The Palmina label is "a Californian celebration of the rich, wonderful lifestyle and attitude toward food, wine, friends and family that exists in Italy". Additionally, Steve is the director of winemaking at *Ash Hollow*, a winery in Walla Walla, Washington.