



All in all we can declare ourselves happy with the 2017 vintage, after a 2016 that was arguably 50% short in quantities of fine varieties in Argentina. In 2017 the climate transition from “El Niño” to “La Niña” pushed temperatures creating heat waves during most of January. Following our belief in **early harvest** we started picking up Malbec grapes for our Clasico in Lujan de Cuyo on **February the 15th**, while last year the same grapes were picked the first week of March!!!

On February the 22nd we began picking up the Bonarda grapes also in our Lujan de Cuyo estate. The harvest timing in this estate was almost perfect. The weather was very favorable, unaffected by hail storms or frosting. Only one rainy day made us postpone the harvest to the following day. The yields for Bonarda were lower in volume but the grapes were healthy and showing optimal quality.

In the Uco Valley the Malbec harvest began on February the 24th (Yes! **We started picking up grapes in the Uco Valley in February!!**). We began working in Gualtallary, on soils with less water retention capacity, to move on to Altamira and other selected sites. The weather on the Uco Valley was also good for harvesting, with sunny, warm days and very little rain. The grapes turned out to be very healthy as well.



Low yields were again a feature of this harvest; therefore we are expecting the 2017 to be 30% smaller in terms of volume compared to a standard harvest in Mendoza. Coming from the 50% drop in volume we had in the 2016 harvest, this is almost good news!

Yields were lowered by spring frosting that affected the budbreak, along with strong dry-hot winds caused loss of potential fruit during the berry set, as fewer flowers developed and the resulting bunches were lighter and smaller.

Being among the first producers to finish the harvest, we can say that the low yields in the entire Mendoza area naturally improved the quality of the grapes, which are more concentrated and flavourful. 2017 will be very likely a collectors vintage, scarce and of the **highest quality**.



As harvest starts, we joke and say that we are entering the **Roman Arena Games**, with threats and surprises materializing out of the blue, always unexpected and always new. Frost, hail, theft, trucks that tumble on dirt roads, grapes that disappear in transit, anything can happen in this crazy time of the year. A time of high energy, excitement and adrenaline, as the work of one full year comes to completion in a matter of just a few days... a few days that will decide the scorecard of the whole team for that year, a scorecard that will stay with us for many years, as we release the different wines from the vintage. This year the price of Malbec grapes went crazy, doubling in US\$ term from last year, sometimes almost tripling. This is how crazy Mendoza harvest can get, like playing a casino game, where the weather pressure and the pricing pressure can come all at once, and you can be winner or loser with just one decision. **We finished the 2017 Harvest on March the 23rd**, when many of the wineries in the area are just beginning. Fortunately this year the Team of Ants can say that we came out alive and stronger from this Roman Arena called Harvest 2017.