

THE RENEE TEAM presents

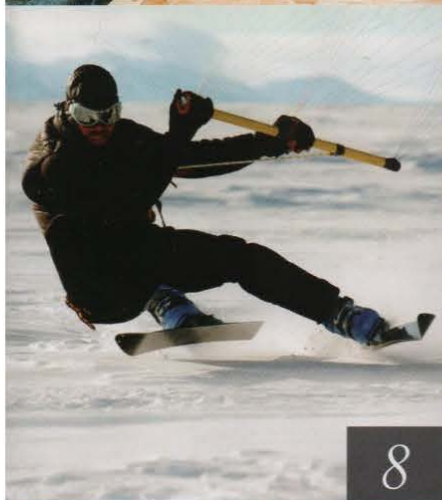
# The High End™

Insights Into Extraordinary Living

Discovering  
the World's  
Best Wine

Luxurious  
City Living  
Reinvented





# The High End™

Volume 6, Number 4

## 2 TREASURES

### Blurred Lines

Functional design or sculptural art?

## 4 DESIGN

### The Box Within A Box

Designer James Blakeley is practical.

## 8 PASSPORT

### Luxury in the White Desert

Exploring Antarctica with comforts.

## 13 FOCUS

### From Boardrooms to Beds & Baths

Office spaces become high-end homes.

## 17 DRINK

### 'Never Met a Malbec I Didn't Like'

Wine and travel in Argentina.

## 20 FOOD

### Cutting Edge

The American steakhouse evolves.

## 24 FASHION

### Stride in Style

On trend with the latest designer boots.

## 26 DETAILS

### What Was Old Is New Again

Restoring the past with Paris Ceramics.

## 28 STYLE

### Sheer Luxury

See-through watches show off.

## 30 Q&A

### Destined to Design

Interior designer Erinn Valencich.

**PUBLISHER** Richard A. Goodwin

**EDITOR IN CHIEF** Kathleen Carlin-Russell

**MANAGING EDITOR** Mark Moffa

**CONTRIBUTORS** Sarah Binder . Roger Grody

Camilla McLaughlin . Samantha Myers . Kirsten Niper

Kelly Potts . Stacey Staum

**ART DIRECTOR** Jonathan Bayley

**PRODUCTION COORDINATOR** Amanda Dos Santos

**EDITORIAL OFFICE** 877.688.1110 / 609.688.1110

Fax: 609.688.0201 / krussell@uniquehomes.com

327 Wall St., Princeton, NJ 08540

## ADVERTISING

*The High End is published by Unique Homes Luxury Media.*

*If you would like to use The High End in your marketing plans, contact one of our sales representatives:*

Bruce Griscti, Director of Sales  
888.928.9020 / bgriscti@uniquehomes.com

Nick Antonicello, 310.574.1907  
nantonicello@uniquehomes.com

Steven Easley, 877.688.1110, Ext. 300  
seasley@uniquehomes.com

Kimberly Quevedo, 609.688.0013  
kquevedo@uniquehomes.com

Copyright 2016 © duPont Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or part without permission is prohibited. THE HIGH END is trademark owned by duPont Publishing, Inc. UNIQUE HOMES is a registered trademark of © duPont Publishing, Inc. PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

For more information on The High End, please contact us at 877.688.1110, Ext. 220. The High End is for entertainment purposes only. This magazine is not intended to solicit other brokers' listings. If you are currently working with or in contract with another broker, please disregard this information.

COVER PHOTO: ©ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/JIM KRUGER



# 'I've Never Met a Malbec I Didn't Like'

A retired publisher turned photographer and world-traveler — and now author — literally wrote the book on wine and travel in Argentina.

Kirsten Niper

**T**he first in a series of coffee-table books on wine regions of the world, *Exploring Wine Regions: A Culinary, Agricultural and Interesting Journey Through Argentina*, began as a feature story.

"I love to travel. I've been publishing a travel magazine for 20 years, and I've retired," says Michael C. Higgins, PhD. "I thought I would go to Argentina to find why I hadn't met a Malbec I didn't like. So, for five weeks I traveled around. And then went back for another five weeks. And I had way too much for a feature story, and too little for a book. So I went for a third time for three weeks."

The culmination of his travels is a comprehensive list of not only the wineries and vineyards he visited and their offerings, but also sightseeing options and delicious restaurants. "I'm giving you the inside track. You can take my book, go to Argentina, never have a glass of wine, and have an amazing experience," he states. "But, the best way to learn about wine is to drink it."

And the best way to drink wine is by going straight to the source, and thoroughly immersing yourself in it. "I fell in love with the culture, food, the landscapes and the whole environment."

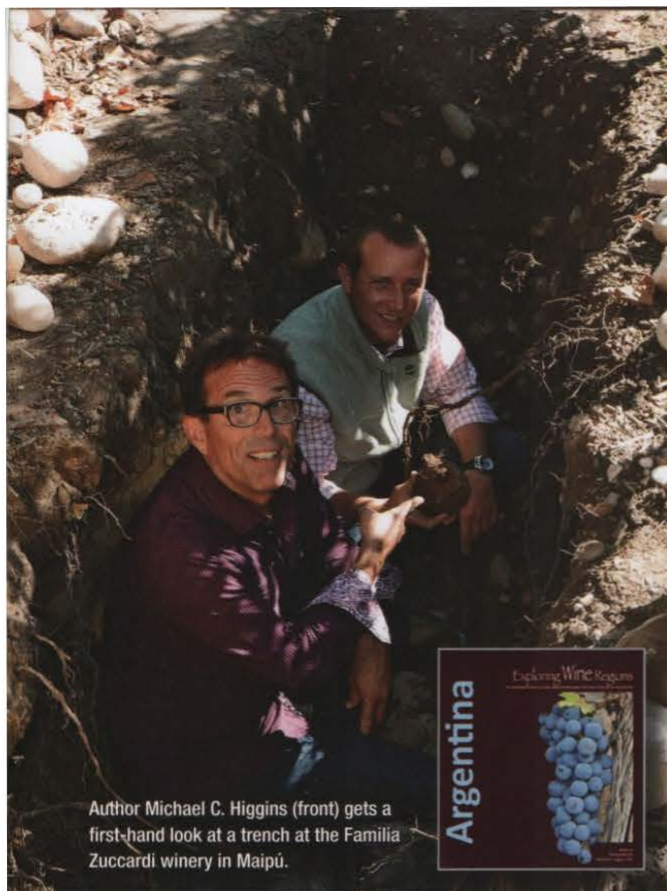
"When some people go wine tasting, they visit four or five wineries a day. I sit in one. I get to know the winemaker, the agronomist, the people making the wine and walk the property. I find taking in the whole experience is amazing," Higgins explains.

Higgins experienced many "behind the scenes" things throughout his travels, learning how the Argentinian wine industry is continually evolving.

In the Uco Valley, southwest of Mendoza at the foot of the Andes Mountains, the elevation (3,000 to 5,000 feet), mixture of soils, extreme temperature ranges, air quality, fresh







Author Michael C. Higgins (front) gets a first-hand look at a trench at the Familia Zuccardi winery in Maipú.



In downtown Mendoza, Higgins enjoyed private dining at Azafrán.

water from the snow melt, and the extremely long growing season have created a special micro-climate that is very attractive to wine-makers. There are three different sub-regions, with three separate sources of water that contribute to each area's unique wines.

Sebastián Zuccardi, grandson of the founder of Familia Zuccardi winery in Maipú, began working in Altamira in 2007 and studied the soils, rich in limestone. This led to the creation of five super-premium labels for Zuccardi wines. At this location, Higgins got to see firsthand how it's decided where to plant the grapes.

"I'm in the vineyard, and they're digging like 500 trenches in the middle of the vineyard, about 15 feet long, 2-to-3-feet wide and 4-feet deep. What they wanted was to see what was under the ground. Malbec loves limestone, and when they were digging, you could see all the minerals," shares Higgins.

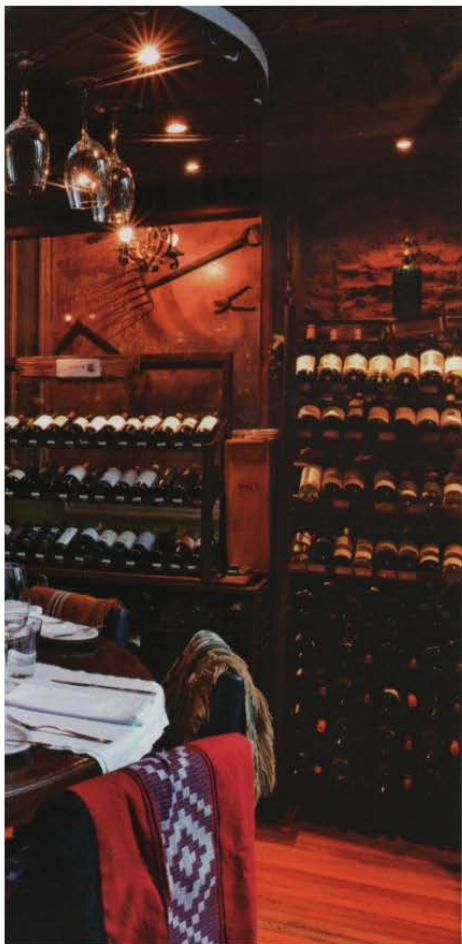
In Patagonia, whose cooler climate produces Pinot Noir, Sauvignon Blanc, Merlot and, of course, Malbec, Higgins saw the revitalization of the wine industry. "There used to be 260 wineries in the region 100 years ago, but in recent years only one was left. Now, there are 20-plus wineries using ancient vines and propagating new vines to produce high-quality wines," Higgins explains.

In Northwestern Argentina, near Salta, the single tallest grape vine in the world, a Pinot Noir, stands at 10,206 feet above sea level. This grape vine is another experiment that Higgins saw firsthand. "The wineries in the Calchaquí Valley start at about 6,500 to 8,500 feet above sea level, and some at 9,000 feet. They're pushing the limits," he says.



Luján de Cuyo is considered the best place in the world for growing Malbec, and was Argentina's first designated appellation for the purposes of wine production.



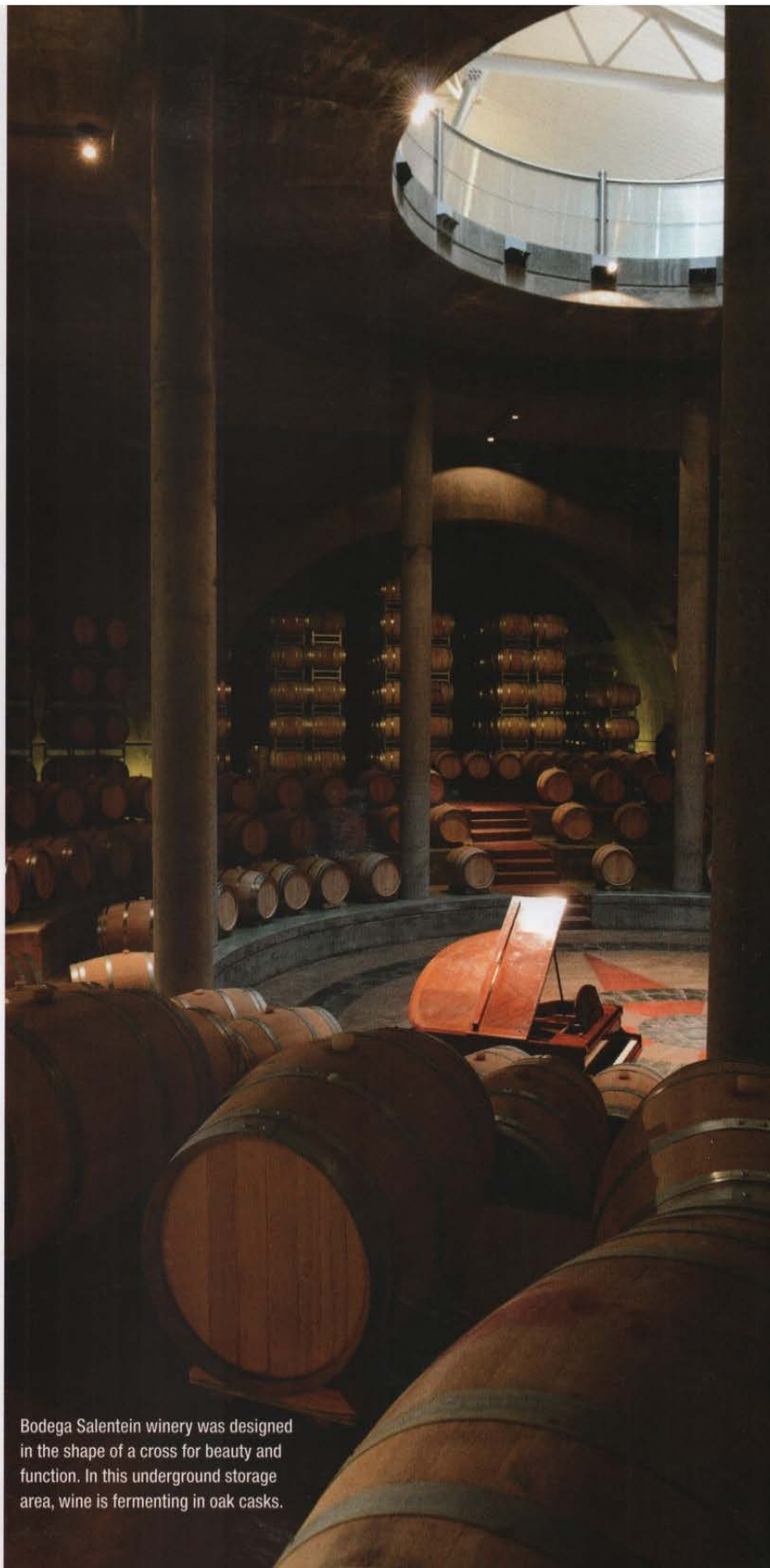


At Altura Máxima, an experiment to see which vines will grow best in the high-altitude environment is underway. It is led by Ing. Agr. Rafael Racedo Aragón, who has established a biodynamic farming environment that he believes will influence a crop's ability to establish itself. Already planted are 86 acres of Malbec, Pinot Noir, Merlot, Syrah, Torrontés, Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay. The combination of a soil high in phosphorus and exposure to the sun is expected to yield a crop with concentrated aromas, polyphenols and flavors.

So, has Higgins really never met a Malbec he didn't like? Short answer, no. "Malbec is big, like a Cabernet, but at the same time it's fruity like a Pinot Noir. I think there's a real magic to wine," he shares.

"It's a testament to Argentina that after 13 weeks, I haven't even begun. I knew a lot about [wine] before I went, but now I'm a different person. I know more about Argentine wine than Californian wines, and I live in California!" Higgins exclaims.

California, incidentally, is the next region to be covered by Higgins in his *Exploring Wine Regions* series.



Bodega Salentein winery was designed in the shape of a cross for beauty and function. In this underground storage area, wine is fermenting in oak casks.