

## WINERY PROFILE: AMALAYA



A blend of Malbec, Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah and Tannat, Amalaya is an exquisite representation of the unique weather and soil conditions in Argentina’s Northern Calchaqui Valley that also honors the heritage of the indigenous Calchaqui people.

Donald Hess’s passion for making wines from grapes grown at higher elevations extends from Napa Valley’s Mount Veeder to Argentina. While on a trip to South America in the late 1990s, Hess was naturally intrigued with the potential of wine made from vineyards in the Calchaqui Valley’s Salta Province, which sits in the northwestern region of Argentina in the eastern foothills of the Andes mountain range at an altitude between 5,400 and 5,741 feet above sea level.

Amalaya is a terroir and red-fruit driven wine. The Salta region’s warm climate and moderate rainfall contribute to the wine’s floral aromas and white pepper characteristics. The high altitude provides a unique growing climate for the sustainably-farmed vineyard, providing intense sun in the day and cool nights that retain the acidity and concentrated fruit characteristics of the grapes.

The name Amalaya is rooted in the beliefs of the Calchaqui to keep the gods of nature happy and to strive for an equilibrium of forces to assure sustainability over time. The most worshiped goddess is “Pachamama,” or “Mother Earth,” who presides over planting and harvesting. The Calchaqui created many rituals and ceremonies to please Pachamama, and would ask the goddess for a miracle. This “hope for a miracle” is called “Amalaya” in the popular indigenous language and is symbolized by the holistic spiral. To respect Pachamama, the winemakers of Viñedos Amalaya de Cafayate treat all their vineyards sustainably.

In addition to Amalaya, Hess has a separate project in Salta Province producing wines under the Colomé label. Randle Johnson, winemaker for the Hess Family Estates’ Artezín brand, is also Director of Winemaking for Amalaya.