

GOLD MEDAL WINE CLUB

Taste the Adventure!

Baja California, Mexico





**A RISING STAR ON THE
INTERNATIONAL WINE STAGE, THE
VALLE DE GUADALUPE OF BAJA
CALIFORNIA, MEXICO IS A FAST-GROWING
WINE MECCA PROMISING TO SATISFY
THE MOST DISCERNING AFICIONADOS.**



It might be a tad hard to fathom, but five hundred years ago, Mexico was an important wine-growing and producing country. It was the Spanish conquistadores who developed the notion that certain high-altitude areas of Mexico were ideal for European grape cultivation. Conquistador Hernan Cortez demanded the planting of thousands of acres and with the Catholic missionaries utilizing this production at mass services.

A century later, the Spanish crown began fearing Mexico's wine dominance and banned its production. Only Spanish missionaries carried on the cultivation of grapevines and brought the first cuttings to California and its mission colonies.

Today's modern Mexican wine industry is considered a frontier of wine with origins as recent as the late 1970's. Numerous varieties are planted and the country now boasts of almost eight thousand acres under vine. The vast majority of wine production (upwards of 85%) occurs in the Mexican State of Baja California, just south of Tijuana and clustered around the City of Ensenada. At last count, there more than 150 wineries operating throughout the Baja California growing area that benefit from the existing Mediterranean climate, the always present Pacific morning fog, and a favorable topography that resembles several parts of Central and Northern California.

The Valle de Guadalupe is the principal growing region in Baja California and many scribes have christened it "the Napa Valley" of Mexico. A large number of small boutique wines have risen of late and have found commercial success both in the local markets and in some export markets.

Other established growing areas include Sonora, located across the Gulf of California from Baja, and its two sub regions, Hermosillo and Caborca, where Mexican brandy is produced.

The Laguna Region straddles the Mexican states of Durango and Coahuila, and a prized growing area, the Valle de Parras, is found in the latter. The Valle de Parras is home to the oldest



winery in North America, Casa Madero, which was founded in 1597 and still exists today.

Central Mexico also boasts of some high-altitude vineyards in Zacatecas, Aguascalientes, Guanajuato and Queretaro, but most of these grapes are used in the production of brandy.

Mexican wine is exported to 38 countries at this time, but is not always easily found.

At the 2016 Vinalies Internationales held in Paris, some 3,441 wines were entered, of which only 30% received medals. Mexican wineries participated in the event and entered 19 wines, with six receiving high awards. This was considered something of a coup in international wine circles.

While Mexican wines are still a rarity in the United States, sage restaurants and wine stores have begun offering a selection of Mexican wines to their customers. We are delighted to offer our *International Wine Club* members a first look at these amazing wines.

REGION SPOTLIGHT: BAJA CALIFORNIA, VALLE DE GUADALUPE

In terms of quality of wines produced, Baja California is unquestionably Mexico's top wine producing area. It features an impressive Ruta de Vina (wine route) in the Valle de Guadalupe, Mexico's best individual growing area that is home to more than 100 wineries. The area is relatively young with most wineries some 30 years old or younger. The area was originally settled by Russian immigrants, many of whom left the area during World War II and headed north to lucrative wartime jobs in California and never returned.

Elevation is the key here, with most vineyards resting above the 1,000-foot level. The area is dry, with mostly clay and calcareous soils, and benefits from the Mediterranean Climate provided by the Pacific Ocean. Excellent morning fogs abound here, similar to those found along the California Coastline that aid the growth of the vines, particularly red varietals.

There is little pretense here and the setting is similar to the Napa Valley of the



1950's and 60's. A number of excellent restaurants offer sophisticated food combinations (sometimes called Baja Med Cuisine) at incredibly low prices compared to their North American counterparts. Its main village is called Francisco Zarco and it is in close proximity to the larger Ensenada City, and is just two hours south of San Diego, California.

A large number of varietals are produced in the Valle de Guadalupe, including Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Mourvedre, Nebbiolo, Syrah, Tempranillo and others. Many wineries utilize organic or biodynamic farming that further enhances their fruit and wines.



WINE REGIONS OF MEXICO

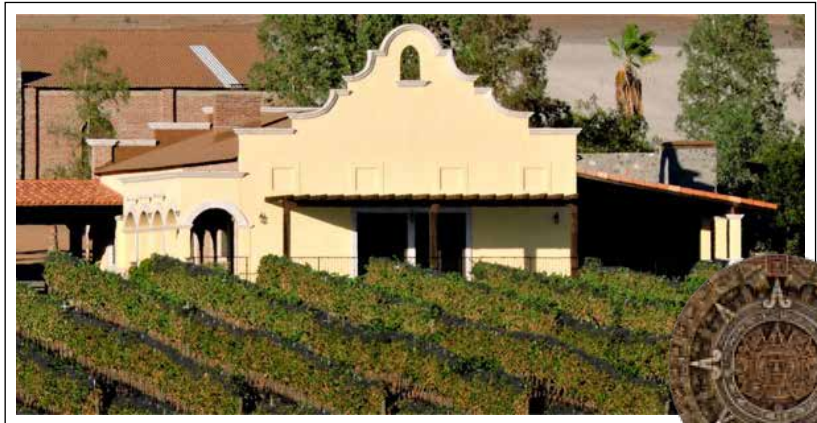
There are three areas in Mexico where wine grapes are currently grown: The North area includes Baja California and Sonora, the La Laguna area encompasses Coahuila and Durango, and the Central area consists of Zacatecas, Aguascalientes and Queretaro. Most of these regions have a fairly warm climate, which tends to make Mexican wines spicy, full-bodied, and ripe. Many may know that the 30th parallel (above and below the equator) is considered the theoretical boundary of successful grape growing, so it might be a surprise that a region so close to the tropics can grow grapes at all. Fortunately, the region is arid and vineyards are located at high altitudes, which provides cooler air and an increased diurnal shift (warmer days and colder nights).

Most of the country's wine is made in Baja California, specifically within the Valle de Guadalupe, and this Valley owes its success largely to its geographic anomaly: the Baja peninsula has a semi-desert climate, but Ensenada's region has a cold marine current, which helps to produce a Mediterranean-style climate (ideal for growing wine grapes). With its warm summer days and cool nights, and mild winters, this valley produces fine Mexican wines with a style of their own.



Mexico: Fun Facts!

- Modern Mexicans are a unique blend of many ancient civilizations, including the Olmec, Zapotec, Toltec, Maya, Aztec, Inca, African, French, and Spanish.
- Mexico is located in the 'Ring of Fire,' one of the Earth's most violent earthquake and volcano zones.
- Mexico introduced chocolate, corn, and chilies to the world.
- The first vineyards in North America were planted in Mexico, in the 1530's.
- Mexican pyramids are different from the Egyptian pyramids. While Egyptian pyramids are smooth sided and tend to taper to a point, the Mexican pyramids are usually step pyramids. Their sides resemble huge staircases that lead to a temple at the top. Moreover, Egyptian pyramids were places used to lay the dead, while the Mexican pyramids were built for Gods or as military installations for defense purposes.
- Winemaking in Mexico began with the arrival of the Spanish in the 16th Century; they brought with them vine cuttings from Europe.
- Baja California produces 90% of Mexico's wine in the Valle de Guadalupe, the "Napa Valley" of the Mexican wine industry.
- The largest pyramid in the world is the Great Pyramid of Cholula in Mexico. It is also the largest monument ever constructed in the world. Chichen Itza, a pyramid that was once part of the Mayan Empire, was named one of the Seven Wonders of the World in 2007.
- Mexico is the largest silver producer in the world.
- The Day of the Dead (Día de los Muertos) is widely celebrated in Mexico. This traditional celebration is made to honor, celebrate, respect and remember deceased family members.
- Bull-fighting is a 500 year-old traditional Mexican sport played in a bullring. Plaza de Toros Mexico, situated in Mexico City, is the largest bullring in the world.



Photos, top to bottom, left to right:

- The red grape varieties of France and Spain thrive in Baja California's ideal Mediterranean climate.
- Camillo Magoni, owner of Bodegas Magoni, walks through his vineyard in the Valle de Guadalupe.
- Fruit is hand-sorted at Vinícola Solar Fortún to ensure only the highest quality grapes make it into the winery's award-winning blends.
- The quaint hacienda-style Vinícola Solar Fortún winery is filled with old world charm, but the wines are modern and cutting edge, with some of the most unique blends found in Baja California.
- Bodega Roganto is nestled in the San Jacinto Valley (one of the five valleys in the Valle de Guadalupe) and produces a range of grape varieties including Cabernet Sauvignon, Tempranillo, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Nebbiolo, Grenache, and Mourvedre.

THE FLAG OF MEXICO



Established in 1968, the Mexican flag is full of national symbolism. The flag consists of three vertical bands in green, white, and red, with the Mexican Coat of Arms in the center of the white band. The green band represents hope, the white

band represents unity, and the red band represents the blood of the national heroes. Mexico's Coat of Arms symbolizes the Aztec heritage and, according to legend, recounts the way the Aztecs chose the location for their capital city, Tenochtitlan (where Mexico City stands today). According to the legend, the Gods had advised the Aztecs to settle in a place where they found an eagle on a prickly pear cactus eating a serpent. The Aztecs saw this mythical sight in a place that was quite inhospitable - a swampy area in the center of three lakes, but this is where they settled and build the great city of Tenochtitlan. This image is now the Mexican Coat of Arms and it is proudly displayed on the flag.



Add it to your shipment of wines for just **\$39.00!**

Taste the Adventure!

Our unique "Adventure Package" takes you beyond the wines to experience delectable selections of imported gourmet treats from the featured country. We take the time to search out regional delights to pair with the wines. All products are exclusive imports that represent the wine region along with the local culture.



FEATURED MEXICAN WINERIES

Three boutique family wineries earn impressive international recognition and help bring stardom to modern Mexico's hottest wine growing region:
The Guadalupe Valley of Baja California.

BODEGA ROGANTO

Begun as a hobby back in 1987, Bodega Roganto began commercial operation in 2001. It is located in the San Jacinto Valley (one of the five valleys in the Valle de Guadalupe), and currently consists of about 60 acres that are home to several varietals including Tempranillo, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Merlot. Bodega Roganto also buys grapes from neighboring farmers located within the Valle de Guadalupe. From the initial 125 cases, the winery has grown to around 20,000 cases (quite a large production for a Mexican winery) and plans to expand its production as its markets dictate. The winery utilizes new barrels of Russian, French, Hungarian and American origin that provide a wide mixture of woods for its blends of varietal wines.

Bodega Roganto is owned by two old friends, Rogelio Sanchez del Palacio and Antonio Luis Escalante, and the name *Roganto* is a combination of their first names. The wines of Bodega Roganto have won high acclaim (both nationally and internationally) and are considered among the top tier of Mexican wines.



Winemaker: Antonio Escalante

Winemaker Antonio Escalante originally studied agricultural engineering at Instituto Tecnológico de Monterrey and later became a noted well-drilling expert. He is co-owner of Bodega Roganto and handles the winemaking chores with help from Dr. Enrique Ferro Salazar, the celebrated enologist and winemaking consultant. Escalante began as a home winemaker in 1987 and is active in the Confradio del Vino, an organization that

brings together restaurants and wineries to celebrate Mexican food/wine pairings.

VINÍCOLA SOLAR FORTÚN

Founded by Dr. Jose Alberto Lopez in 2007. Vinícola Solar Fortún is a family winery with Santiago Lopez (Jose's son) serving as winemaker. Dr. Lopez was an astronomer/physicist by profession with a PhD in astrophysics, hence the name *Solar Fortún*. Located in a hidden valley in Francisco Zarco, the winery utilizes certified bench-grafted rootstock from Napa Valley (French Mercier Nursery) that is particularly well suited to growing both Rhône and Bordeaux varietals.



Vinícola Solar Fortún has gained instant recognition with its competitive wines and can be found on the wine lists of a number of top international restaurants. Vinícola Solar

Fortún currently produces around 1,500 cases each year, making it one of Mexico's top boutique wineries. Most of its wines are blends of French varietals as is the case with a number of Mexican wineries.

Winemaker: Santiago Lopez

Santiago Lopez is the son of Vinícola Solar Fortún owner Alberto Lopez. He studied engineering at Penn State University and holds a winemaking certificate from UC Davis that has furthered his winemaking skills. He is also a gifted athlete and was a member of five Mexican international gymnastic teams. As a winemaker, Santiago Lopez is something of an individualist regarding the blending of certain varietals. For instance, one of his wines is a blend of Mourvedre, Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, and Petite Verdot. "Europeans would ask," he recently explained, "why would you do that? It's wrong. Then they taste it and say, 'Oh, maybe not so wrong. At this point, we can take risks with our blends.'"

BODEGAS MAGONI

Bodegas Magoni is a family owned winery located in the heart of Baja's Guadalupe Valley and is operated by the Magoni family's second generation. Bodegas Magoni, which was established over 15 years ago, began producing wine exclusively from grapes grown in their own vineyards for family and close friends.



Today, all Bodegas Magoni wines continue to be produced from grapes harvested from its vineyards, in order to care and ensure its unique quality. In 2013, after more than 15 years producing high quality wines for mostly private consumption, the Magoni family decided to offer their first line of wines to the public, *Casa Magoni*. The Magoni vineyards include both classic and commercial varieties of grapes that have found a suitable home in which to develop their unique characteristics in Baja's Guadalupe Valley. In addition to these varieties, there is an experimental field which cultivates more than 70 different grape varieties from around the world, and produce wines from the varieties that have best adapted to and evolved in our lands.

Winemaker: Camillo Magoni

Camillo Magoni was born in Morbegno, Italy, which borders with the Swiss city of Engadina. He studied and received his Enology and Viticulture degree from the prestigious Scuola Enologica Di Alba, located in Italy's Piedmont wine region in 1962. After working in the renowned Nino Negri de Chiuro winery located in Valtellina (a valley in the Lombardy region of northern Italy), he decided to accept an invitation from Angelo Cetto, to leave Italy and come to Baja California, Mexico to become a member of his winery's winemaking team. He has dedicated over 40 years to cultivate the Guadalupe Valley and its neighboring valleys.



The International Wine Club features exclusively imported hard-to-find wines of the world strictly for members of the Gold Medal Wine Club.



1-800-266-8888

www.goldmedalwineclub.com

**INTERNATIONAL
WINE CLUB**

**Hard to Find!
Only 500 Cases Produced**



SOLAR FORTÚN 2017 'O POSITIVO' RED BLEND

Valle de Guadalupe, Baja California, Mexico

A blend of 50% Cabernet Sauvignon and 50% Syrah, the Solar Fortún 2017 'O Positivo' is a full-bodied powerhouse wine that shows wonderful balance between intensity, freshness, and fruitiness. Interestingly, all of the vines at the Solar Fortún estate were grown from cuttings from Napa Valley (French Mercier Nursery) and speak to the high level of grape quality at this Baja California winery. Deep violet in color, this wine blends notes of black cherry, spices, vanilla, plum, and cocoa on a rich, full body with soft, well-structured tannins. The finish is long, smooth, and persistent. Solar Fortún recommends pairing the 2017 'O Positivo' Red Blend with semi-sweet mole with chicken or steak cuts. Aged 12 months in oak.

**You Save 13% to 22%
off Winery Retail Price**

Winery Retail Price \$40.00/btl.	2+ btls.	6+ btls.	12+ btls.
2 & 3 Btl. Members:	\$35.00	\$33.33	\$32.50
4+ Btl. Members:	\$35.00	\$32.50	\$31.25

**Gold Medal
Special Selection**



ROGANTO 2017 PICCOLO VINO TINTO DE LA CASA

Valle de Guadalupe, Baja California, Mexico

A blend of 34% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, 25% Tempranillo, and 11% Cabernet Franc, the Roganto 2017 Piccolo Vino Tinto de la Casa was made in honor of Francisco Maria Piccolo, an Italian missionary who was chiefly responsible for introducing vines and olives in the region of Baja California. Father Piccolo worked intensely on the missions of Santa Rosalia de Mulege and San Francisco Javier de Vigge-Biamundo. This wine blends together French and Spanish varietals, which is very typical of wines produced in Baja California - it is very uncommon outside this region however. The 2016 Piccolo offers fruity aromas and flavors, with notes of blackcurrant dominating the palate. Notes of French and American oak (from the barrel aging) and another layer of complexity to the flavors and a soft tannin structure that lingers on the finish. Aged 12 months in oak.

**You Save 14% to 28%
off Winery Retail Price**

Winery Retail Price \$28.00/btl.	2+ btls.	6+ btls.	12+ btls.
2 & 3 Btl. Members:	\$24.00	\$22.33	\$21.50
4+ Btl. Members:	\$24.00	\$21.50	\$20.25

**Hard to Find!
Only 375 Cases Produced**



CASA MAGONI 2018 SAUVIGNON BLANC

Valle de Guadalupe, Baja California, Mexico

Sauvignon Blanc is one of the most widely planted wine grapes in the world and is well adapted to the coastal valleys of Baja California. The Magoni Sauvignon Blanc vineyard is 18 years old, planted in a sandy-loam soil, at the base of the Manaz hill that dominates the property. To maintain the freshness and varietal aromas the wine was fermented in stainless steel for 4 months. Pale yellow color and fresh aromas, intense with characteristic green apple notes. Crisp, fresh, firm acidity, with notes of mint, and characteristic green notes. Try pairing with crab cakes or Arugula salad with scallops. 100% Sauvignon Blanc.

**You Save 14% to 31%
off Winery Retail Price**

Winery Retail Price \$22.00/btl.	2+ btls.	6+ btls.	12+ btls.
2 & 3 Btl. Members:	\$19.00	\$17.33	\$16.50
4+ Btl. Members:	\$19.00	\$16.50	\$15.25

Reorder online: www.goldmedalwineclub.com
Reorder toll free: 1-800-266-8888

*Effective per bottle prices after **Membership Rewards** discount is applied at checkout. Shipping and tax (if applicable) not included in prices shown. **Membership Rewards** does not apply to Sale or Special Wines.