

The Marvels of Mendoza

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Though one's last day in Mendoza is perfect for a city tour and visit to Parque San Martín, our hosts suggested there was room for one more fantastic [meal](#), insisting on **Azafrán**, helmed by executive chef Pablo Ranea and his ace sommelier. A third of its space is dedicated to a carousel-like wine tasting room with over 300 labels, while the rest of it is adorned with vintage [Argentine](#) advertising posters and kitchen antiques.

Chef Ranea starts us off with his three best-selling salads with crusted goat cheese, baked brie and ahi tuna, paired with crisp Yauquen 2007 Rica Malen and Trumpeter Torrontes 2007, a sweet citrus-y honey white reminiscent of Vigonier. His delicately flaky empanadas with local chorizo and CV Catena 2005 Malbec followed that. The meal reaches a crescendo with his signature petit fillet surrounded with spinach, mushroom and local artisan cheese and better-than-basic tenderloin ("Lomo"). To send us off on a mountain high, the sommelier treats us to creamy, buttery Los Stradivarius de Bianchi 2003 L'Elisir D'Amore 2003 desert wine, symphonic with the house made elderberry ice cream and ginger sorbet, crème brûlée and dulce de leche flan.

Though Mendoza's food and wines benefit from indigenous soil, microclimates, mountain water and mild winters, what is most seductive is the way its food and wine destinations bring the real flavor of [Argentina](#) together, with the technical precision and artistry of a good tango.

For more information on Argentina, visit www.argentina.travel. LAN Chile Airlines (www.lan.com) offers multiple flights to Argentina via Los Angeles.