



A Wine of Uruguay that compliments Indian Flavours

Description

As the President Wineglitz India â?? The Wine Club, I recently got an opportunity to interact with **H.E. Mr Alberto A. Guani**, the Ambassador of Uruguay to India. It was a great honour for me to receive a bottle of Uruguay Wine from His Excellency during the meeting.



Back home I unwrapped it. It was a **Bodega Bouza Merlot Tannat**. I showed this beautiful and elegant wine bottle to my better half and we instantly planned a nice home tasting of this Uruguay wine paired with some quintessential Indian cuisines.

Uruguay

Uruguay is a small South American country located between Argentina and Brazil on the Atlantic coast. It is home to around 3.38 million people (as of 2025) with Montevideo as the capital city.

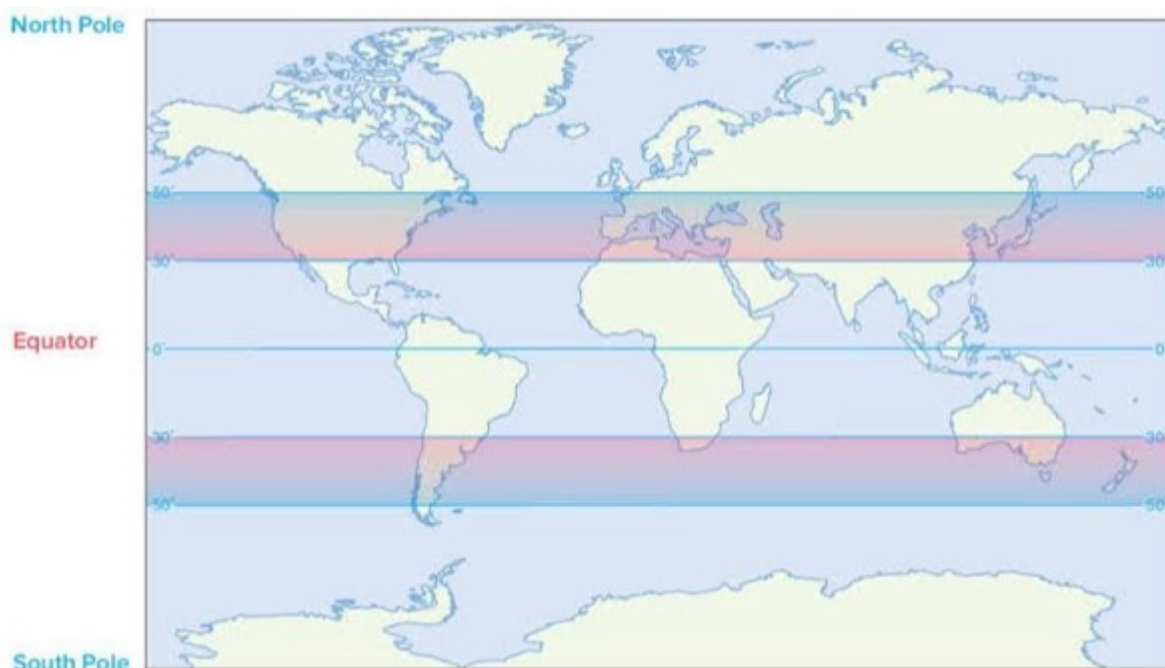


Image by DevianArt

“Other countries have their history. Uruguay has its football.” — Ondino Viera

This famous quote by the legendary coach perfectly describes Uruguay’s national passion for the game. However, just like football the **people of Uruguay are equally passionate about their wines**, the history of which goes back to more than 150 years.

Viticultural Sweet Spot



Premier wine belts in N and S Hemisphere. Image credit ?? Rooe Junior Yaniv

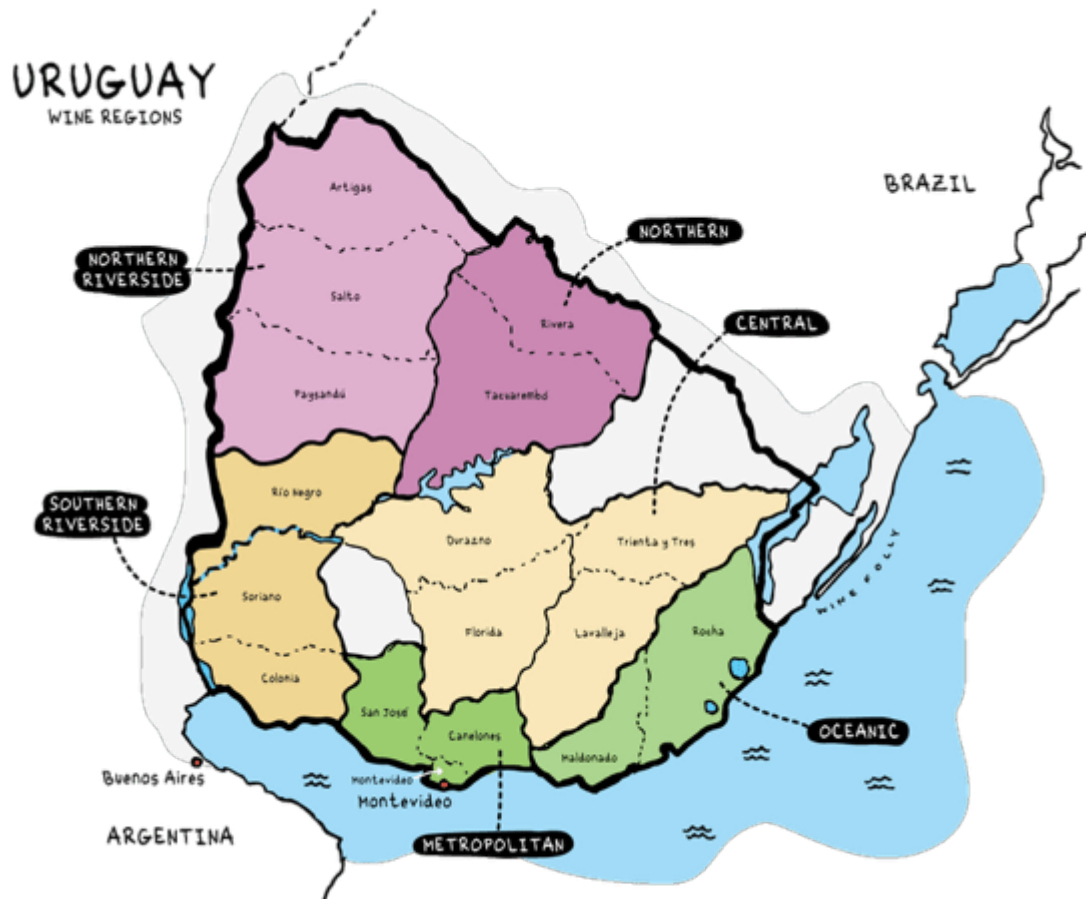
During the course of the interaction with the Hon. Amb, I learned that Uruguay lies right within the southern hemisphere's prominent wine belt (**30° to 35° South** latitudes) just like some of best wine zones in Chile, Argentina, South Africa, and Australia, which puts it within the proverbial *viticultural* sweet spot.

Trivia : This southern hemisphere wine belt mirrors the similar one in the northern hemisphere, as seen in the image above.

Bodega Bouza Winery

Talking about the wine, as the name suggests it is a blend of Merlot and Tannat and is produced by the **Bodega Bouza Winery** the origin of which dates back to 1942. The old estate was bought by the Bouza family in the year 2000 and renovated it to the modern standards by the then owners **Juan and Elisa Bouza**.

While its main estate is in **Montevideo** ?? the capital of Uruguay, the winery also has five more estate vineyards in the nearby departments of **Canelones and Maldonado**. These wine regions enjoy the moderating climatic effect from the nearby **Rio de la Plata** which is a vast funnel shaped **estuary** formed by the confluence of the Paran  and Uruguay rivers, just before entering the Atlantic Ocean.



Uruguay wine regions. Image courtesy : Wine Folly

The Ocean also provides the requisite coolness in the vineyards resulting in a significant difference in day and night temperatures. Together these climatic effects create conditions which are beneficial for viticulture thereby giving exceptional wines like the **Bodega Bouza Merlot Tannat** we opened today.

Thoughtful Viticulture



The wine house practices a thoughtful viticulture. Their winemaker **Eduardo Boido** has lowered the level of fruit wires in the estate vineyards (this adds some warmth) and has placed stones to along the vine rows (this also reflects warmth into the canopy).

National Institute of Viticulture (INAVI)

Hon. Amb. also made a mention as to how **INAVI**, which is the regulatory authority for the wine industry in Uruguay, is doing a stellar work in monitoring and overseeing the wine production to ensure strict adherence to quality and safety standards.

In 1993 INAVI established the **Vino de Calidad Preferente (VCP)** wine classification which stipulated that VCP wines need to be made from **Vitis Vinefera** grapes and also laid down other viticulture regulations. This quality designation marked a turning point that led to a renaissance in Uruguayâ??s winemaking and elevated the Wines of Uruguay to be counted amongst the worldâ??s best wines today.

Mercosur Free Trade Association

Hon. Amb. made a mention about the Mercosur â?? a major South American trade bloc. When this trade body started to take shape in the late 1980s, Uruguay took steps to increase the quality of its wines and stepped up its marketing efforts, in order to effectively compete with neighbouring wine producing countries. This proved as a catalyst towards further improvements in quality standards and

cost effectiveness of Uruguay wines.

Tasting of Bodega Bouza 2023 with Indian Kebab and Tikka

Bodega Bouza 2023 is a blend of **Merlot** (60%) and **Tannat** (40%), where Merlot provides the suppleness and softness to the wine and the Tannat with its high tannins provides the structural backbone to the blend.

High alcohol level a major concern

While planning to pair this wine with Indian food, one of the major concern was its high alcohol level which stood at 15.5 % Abv. Alcohol activates the heat receptors on the palate which accentuates the heat and make the food feel much more spicier than it is.

Pairing Mantra

Over the years I have formulated a **mantra or a suggested technique** to pair spicy Indian food with wines of Europe / Americas, which is to prepare the food with **selective Indian spices** (i.e. to choose the desired spices amongst the plethora of options) followed by an **intelligent cooking style** (like slow cooking over an extended time etc).

The Cuisine Selection

Keeping in view the flavour profile of the wine we decided to pair it with two different Indian tapas which represent the proverbial soul of Indian culinary culture. These were : **Mutton Galouti Kebab** and the **Smoky Chicken Tikka**, both of which were cooked by my better half.

Pairing with Mutton Galaoti Kebab

Made with boneless mutton mince meat, cooked with cashew paste, Bengal gram and *selected soft spices*, the Galaoti Kebab proved to be a perfect pair with this wine.



Trivia : In 18th century there was a nawab (noble) in India who lost all his teeth due to old age but still refused to give up on his favourite kebabs. To overcome this his royal chef came up with the Galouti kebab, which was so soft that it melted straight into the mouth.

Pairing with Smoky Chicken Tikka



The fruit forward Bouza Merlot-Tannat blend with a medium body and a moderate acidity complemented the smoky and tangy character of chicken tikka and proved to be a delectable pair.

Uruguay Wine with Indian Food : a Delectable Pair

Both the Galaoti Kebab and the Chicken Tikka proved to be an excellent pair with the Bodega Bouza 2023, unleashing a symphony of pleasant flavours on the palate. This experimental and experiential tasting brought home the fact that the ***Wines of Uruguay can go very well with the India Food.***

So that was all about my experience of tasting my first wine from Uruguay, hope you loved reading it as much I enjoyed writing about it. Cheers !!

Mukul Manku President Winegiltz India - The Wine Club