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## AFICIONADO TRAVEL



## The hot new wine countries

BY MELISSA BIGGS BRADLEY

**FRANCE, TUSCANY,** Napa and New Zealand are familiar to wine lovers, but the lesser-known destinations that are finally attracting their attention—thanks in part to lovely new boutique hotels—are Argentina, Uruguay and Chile. All have wine-growing areas with the special attributes that make grape-growing regions so appealing (great climates, striking landscapes and food that enhances their wines). Now visitors can make a circuit of chic hotels, charming local restaurants and tasting rooms. Argentina's Mendoza valley, the most established South American terroir, has 1,500 wineries in the shadow of the Andes. Its best country retreats, such as Cavas Wine Lodge and Entre Cielos, overlook vineyards and feature stellar restaurants. Even the emerging Uca Valley, an hour and a half south of Mendoza, is home to the luxury Vines Resort and Spa, a romantic spot that invites the guests staying in its 22 villas to join winemaker workshops.



In Uruguay, the Four Seasons Carmelo, on the Río de la Plata, sits in the heart of wine country, where days can be spent by the pool, on the golf course or at family-owned vineyards. But the property that has the whole wine world buzzing is in Chile. Viña Vik, two hours south

of Santiago, was founded with the lofty aim of making the continent's best wine. In 2004 the owners hired a top Bordeaux vintner and geologists to find the ideal soil and climate; today they produce \$100 bottles of red. They recently opened a sleek hotel in the middle of the vineyard. Activities include horseback riding, mountain biking and trekking, but guests may just savor the design, the food, the wine. @

MELISSA BIGGS BRADLEY is founder of the travel site [indagare.com](http://indagare.com).

**IT'S NOT** every hotel that gets you up close and personal with the Andes. But at Chile's Viña Vik, the monumental mountains are everywhere you look—from the suite (above) to the hotel pool (left).

PHOTOS: VIK RETREATS

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