

Don Santos Etcheverry founded Castillo Viejo in 1927. Initially, he had to purchase grapes from his neighbors and only produced very limited quantities. Then in 1963, Don Santos's son, Horacio, took the control of the business and bought 370 acres of land in the region of Villa Rodríguez, in the province of San José. There he planted 220 acres of vineyards with the idea of only making table wine. At the same time, he developed the winery and the cellar and expanded the commercialization to all of Uruguay, reaching a production of 2 million liters of wine.

In 1982, the third generation of the Etcheverry family, Edgardo, Ana and Alejandro, took over and they still lead the business today. They made many trips to Europe, particularly to France, to learn innovative vineyard and cellar management techniques.

In 1986, they started planting Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Merlot, Tannat, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc and adopted the more modern 'Open Lyra' trellis system, which consists in two trellises forming an open V. This allows maximum aeration and sunlight exposure of the clusters, yielding superior maturation.

During the 1990s the innovation process moved to the winery and the cellar, and it involved heavy investments in equipment, personnel and intensive training.

During the early 90s the brand Catamayor ('great tasting' in Spanish) was successfully launched in the UK and in most foreign markets, showing the potential of the Tannat and Cabernet Franc grapes in Uruguay, their uniqueness and perfect adaptation to the coastal climate and soil of the San José region. Nowadays Catamayor can be found in Brazil, USA, Canada, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, Germany, Belgium, UK and Switzerland.

In the late 90s, experimentation with different aging wooden barrels started and it resulted in the brands Catamayor Reserve and Vieja Parcela.

Domestic and international success followed along with the recognition of Castillo Viejo as 'Uruguay's leading exporter of fine wines.' (Source: Dirección Nacional de Aduanas, National Direction of Customs, 2007).

In 2005, the limited production El Preciado was released and it quickly became the new symbol of the winery. El Preciado means 'The Precious One' and it was the name of Spanish galleon sunk by pirates in 1792, while sailing on the Rio de la Plata River. Only part of its rich cargo of gold and silver has been recovered and its mystique symbolizes the uniqueness and mystery of Uruguayan wines.

Welcome to Castillo Viejo: a new world in wines.

