



## Malbec

**Synonym:** Agreste, Auxerrois, Bouyssales, Cagors, Cahors, Coq Rouge, Cos, Côt, Cots, Estrangey, Lutkens, Malbeck, Malbec, Mancin, Nuar de Pressac, Pied de Perdrix, Pressac, Prunelat, Quercy

**Commonly mistaken for:** Abouriou, Bouchalès, Canari Noir, Menoir, Négrette, Prunélard

**Origin:** French variety, likely native to the Cahors area in south-west France. While some nineteenth century commentators claimed it hailed from Bordeaux, it appears to have arrived in the eighteenth century, where it was referred to as a foreigner or stranger with the name 'Estrangey'. First planted by a doctor Lutkens, the variety was also known by his surname. It remains widely planted in south-west France, in the Loire and Italy. It has also found a new home in Argentina.

**Agronomic and environmental aspects:** It prefers low-vigour sites, with a good percentage of clay and rich in calcium carbonate. Medium-wide training system is required, with cane pruning, but leaving only a few buds per shoot. In fertile sites a low vigour rootstock (101-14, 3309, Schwarzmann, 41B) is advised. Mid-ripening; if picked before ripe, it can be herbaceous and tannins will be rustic.

**Diseases, pests and disorders:** The variety is prone to coulure: in dry seasons, growers can expect a productive harvest but in cooler, wetter springs, it is prone to hen and chicken and the berries sometimes fall before reaching maturity. Sensitive to downy mildew; medium-low resistance to botrytis and powdery mildew.

### Description:

Growing Tip:	wide open to fully open, with a good density of erect hairs, of whitish green colour, with reddish edges.
Leaf:	of large dimensions, orbicular, entire or 3-lobed. Has an open U-V shaped petiolar sinus, the superior lateral sinuses (if there are) are like an open V, while the inferior are absent. The profile is U-shaped and blistered with revolute lobes.
Bunch:	medium-large, of pyramidal form, winged, with a medium density of berries.
Berry:	medium-large, round with a strong and thick skin of blue-black colour, covered by bloom.
Vegetation Growth Habit:	semi-erect
Vigour:	medium-high
Average bunch weight:	medium-high
Average Bunches per shoot:	2 or 3

### Growth Stages:

Time of budburst:	early
Time of flowering:	early
Time of veraison:	early
Time of harvest:	medium-early

### Wine characteristics:

A rich, full-bodied wine, often with impenetrable colour and high level of structured tannins. Argentine examples show high level of fragrance including blue and black fruit and floral characters. Well suited to barrel maturation.

**Australian Experience:**

Malbec has been cultivated in Australia for a very long time, mostly utilised in blends. The older clones were generally seen as having good perfume and prettiness but not so complex or intense. These MAT clones were selected from the vineyards of Catena in Mendoza and show amazing colour and flavour intensity. They are categorised in clone number by productivity, with 1 being most productive and 6 being extremely low, essentially unviable in yield. At Chalmers we have been making a poly clonal wine from a mix of these clones since 2011 and we have found that while earlier on we favoured clones 3 and 4 because of a balance of yield and grape composition aspects, we later discovered that in flavour and wine quality all the clones from 1-4 are great performers. We found that in some seasons MAT 1 & 2 were the preferred clones at flavour tasting where other years it was 3 or 4. In the end a mix of clones 1-4 is the preferred option in our opinion for a planting to produce consistent quality Malbec, which also helps to buffer against the temperamental nature of the variety where fertility/yield can fluctuate wildly from season to season.

**Available Clones:****Malbec MAT 1**

- Selected in Argentina, by Matura Group (Italy).
- Highest in yield of the MAT clones with a slightly stumpier bunch.

**Malbec MAT 2**

- Selected in Argentina, by Matura Group (Italy).
- Also higher in yield than MAT 3-6 but similar to MAT 1

**Malbec MAT 3**

- Selected in Argentina, by Matura Group (Italy).
- Slightly smaller bunches and berries than other MAT clones
- Medium productivity

**Malbec MAT 4**

- Selected in Argentina, by Matura Group (Italy).
- Medium productivity



#### Malbec MAT 5

- Selected in Argentina, by Matura Group (Italy).
- Low yield and can have fertility issues



#### Malbec MAT 6

- Selected in Argentina, by Matura Group (Italy).
- Extreme low yield, unviable in most seasons
- Persistent fertility issues

### Maturity Data Clonal Comparison: Chalmers Heathcote Vineyard

	14/3/17	17/3/17	25/3/17	28/3/17	31/3/17	4/4/17
<b>Malbec MAT 1</b>						
Baume	12.4	12.1	12.8	12.6	13.3	13.2
pH	3.56	3.61	3.86	3.81	3.74	3.94
TA	5.5	5.4	4.4	4.3	4.2	4.1
<b>Malbec MAT 2</b>						
Baume	12.4	12.1	12.5	12.6	13.4	13.4
pH	3.53	3.58	3.7	3.77	3.66	3.81
TA	5.6	6.0	4.2	4.4	4.5	4.4
<b>Malbec MAT 3</b>						
Baume	11.2	12.0	12.2	12.7	12.6	13.0
pH	3.48	3.57	3.75	3.75	3.65	3.91
TA	5.8	5.3	4.2	4.2	4.7	4.3
<b>Malbec MAT 4</b>						
Baume	10.8	11.6	12.2	12.1	12.69	13.0
pH	3.46	3.58	3.67	3.71	3.56	3.85
TA	5.9	6.0	4.7	4.5	3.45	4.3
<b>Malbec MAT 5</b>						
Baume	11.4	12.9	12.6	13.0	13.4	13.4
pH	3.56	3.47	3.65	3.68	3.54	3.76
TA	7.2	6.7	5.5	5.3	5.1	4.9
<b>Malbec MAT 6</b>						
Baume	12.4	13.0	12.6	13.4	13.4	13.4
pH	3.4	3.48	3.68	3.59	3.59	3.75
TA	8.6	7.8	6.2	5.5	5.5	5.4