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Mendoza Pushes Deeper Into U.S. Wine Market Amid Global Slowdown

Provincial agencies and wineries are focusing on distribution, scale and regional strategies in the United States.

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Mendoza is strengthening its strategy to expand wine sales in the United States at a time when global consumption is declining, competition is increasing and profit margins are tightening for wineries. Through Fundación ProMendoza, the province is promoting

a joint effort between the public sector and business associations to help mainly small and medium-sized wineries enter and remain in foreign markets that require scale, commercial contacts and distribution capacity.

Javier Rojas, a representative of ProMendoza, said in an interview with Infocampo during Vinexpo America 2026 that the goal is no longer only to showcase the quality of Mendoza wine, but also to solve how it reaches the final consumer. "Sending the wine is not enough. You have to understand how the market works and work with the people who are out there selling every day," he said. The comment reflects one of the main challenges for Argentine wineries in the United States, where producers must operate through importers, distributors and licensed retailers.

That structure, known as the Three Tier System, can be a major barrier for small and mid-sized wineries that lack sufficient volume or commercial networks. According to Rojas, ProMendoza is trying to act as a bridge so those companies can take part in business meetings, trade fairs and buyer events that would otherwise be difficult to access. The focus is on wineries that may produce only a few pallets and need support to make the international leap without taking on unaffordable costs.

The organization is also trying to prevent common strategic mistakes. Rojas said many wineries believe they need to cover the entire U.S. market from the beginning, when a more effective approach is often to focus on specific regions and expand gradually. He cited Florida, a state with an economy comparable in size to Italy's, as an example of how the U.S. contains very different markets with concrete opportunities for companies that choose carefully where to start.

At the same time, ProMendoza is promoting other business lines that help sustain the wine industry in a more difficult environment for bottled wine. One of them is bulk wine, a less visible segment that remains critical for many wineries seeking liquidity. Rojas described it as "financial oxygen" for companies that need to move inventory and maintain operations as domestic and international consumption weakens.

As part of that strategy, Mendoza will host a new edition of Explorer from June 8 to 10 together with Vinexposium, focused on international bulk wine buyers from regions including Eastern Europe, Africa and the Middle East. The objective is to open new

commercial channels and find demand in nontraditional markets. Private label wines are also growing, with large retail chains selling wines under their own brands. For many medium-sized wineries, that model offers a way to increase scale and improve use of installed capacity without abandoning their flagship labels.

Rojas also said the international expansion of Argentine wine no longer depends only on technical quality. It also requires storytelling, identity and a clear message about origin, terroir and wine culture. In that regard, he said Mendoza wine has a story capable of connecting with global consumers looking for products with a sense of place and traceability.

The provincial strategy is supported by a mixed structure that brings together the Mendoza government with private entities such as the Mendoza Stock Exchange, the Economic Federation of Mendoza and the Industrial Union of Mendoza. According to ProMendoza, that framework helps maintain international promotion policies beyond political changes and provides continuity to an export agenda centered on one of the province's main productive sectors.

In a global environment shaped by unstable trade negotiations and geopolitical tensions, Mendoza is trying to use wine as a tool for international positioning and also as a driver for sectors linked to gastronomy, hospitality, logistics and tourism. "We had two options: stay worried or go out and look for buyers," Rojas said at the end of the interview.