

Catena Zapata's 'Angélica – Cocina Maestra' Creates a New 'Wine First' Menu Trend

Michelin Stars and a Place Among the World's 18 Best Vineyard Restaurants Honor the Team's Culinary Excellence and Commitment to Sustainability

MENDOZA, ARGENTINA, September 4, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [Catena Zapata](#) family marks a new milestone: its 'Wine First' restaurant, Angélica Cocina Maestra, has been recognized by the [Michelin Guide](#) with red and green stars for its culinary excellence and its commitment to sustainability.

Facing the Catena Zapata pyramid-shaped winery, the restaurant was highlighted by the Michelin Guide this

year for putting wine at the center of the dining experience. In Laura Catena's words, "our 'Angélica – Cocina Maestra' restaurant's 'Wine First' concept means that the wine is the main course, and the seasonal ingredients are the pairing. Not the other way around." The 'Wine First'

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pairing approach can include food pairings that are either complementary or contrasting to some aromatic or gustatory aspects of the wine. The focus is to pair the dishes to the wines with all locally-sourced ingredients, largely harvested from the one-hectare organic garden that surrounds the restaurant. The garden is planted with unmodified native seeds and ingredients (such as Andean potatoes), Mediterranean fruits, herbs and olive trees. All the vegetable waste is used, water recycled, and carbon footprint offset; the dishes and plates are made from recycled glass, wood and local stones.



Angélica - Cocina Maestra recognized with Michelin Guide red and green stars

* Complementary Approach: Food and wine can feel like extensions of each other in body, acidity, aromas, or texture. For example, a regional pairing is proposed for Malbec Argentino with

'Beef', where the intensity of flavor of the meat dish perfectly complements the Malbec's concentration and its fruity and violets aromas.

* Contrasting Approach: Food is designed to amplify, challenge, or elevate certain wine characteristics (i.e. fat vs. acidity, sweet vs. salt, soft vs. texture). For example, Saint Felicien Nature and 'Snacks'. A dish that enhances the freshness, acidity, and fruity aromas of the sparkling wine through a selection of freshly harvested products with different flavors, and diverse cooking and preparation techniques.

The Creative Process

The “wine chefs”—Nicolás Catena Zapata, Laura Catena and Alejandro Vigil (Catena Zapata chief winemaker of 25 years who also owns a Michelin-starred restaurant at his home, Casa Vigil)—gather in tastings that last several days, and even months, to choose the wine lineup to which the menu later adapts. “The duo of chefs at the helm, Josefina Diana and Juan Manuel Feijoo, boldly showcase their 'Wine First' concept, where every aspect of their cooking revolves around

wine, and not the other way round. They invite guests on a personalized tour through the winery and a glass of vermouth in the distillery room before they seat you at a table, where the focus is on an exclusive and creatively inspired tasting menu which evolves in various stages or courses and is centered on the full DNA of Mendoza” the Michelin Guide states.

One of the most iconic menu options is the ‘montaña rusa - roller coaster’, in which one can alternate whites and reds, and go back and forth between fattier foods and lighter foods to complement the wines:

- D.V. Catena Nature - Snacks
- D.V. Catena Cabernet Sauvignon Nicasia - Liliaceae Tubers
- D.V. Catena Chardonnay Chardonnay - Trout Carrot
- D.V. Catena Tinto Histórico - Seso Spinach Chicken



Angélica Cocina Maestra creates 'Wine First' menu trend



Interior tables at Angélica Cocina Maestra

- D.V. Catena Syrah Syrah - Eggplant Peanut
- D.V. Catena Cabernet Sauvignon La Pirámide - Garden
- D.V. Catena Blanco Histórico - Rabbit - Fennel
- Saint Felicien Rosé G.S.M. - Beetroot Sweetbread
- D.V. Catena Adrianna Malbec - Sweet Potato Beef
- Saint Felicien Semillon Doux - Milk Walnuts

According to the Michelin Guide, “Angélica Cocina Maestra, named after Nicolás Catena Zapata's mother, represents a modern return to the flavors of Mendoza. The dining room, as imposing as the rest of the building, is located within the Catena Zapata winery in Agrelo (Luján de Cuyo), famous as much for the quality of its wines as for its design.” The restaurant is named after family matriarch Angélica Zapata, a devoted school headmistress who believed in education as a universal right.

With an eclectic wine menu, on-premises sourced seasonal cuisine, and Mendocinean roots, this restaurant pays tribute to family legacy and Argentinean terroir. In addition, it has been recently listed by Michelin Guide among the 18 Best Vineyard Restaurants in the World (1).

Bookings can be made online at: <https://angelica.meitre.com/>

(1) Michelin Guide, “18 of the Best Vineyard Restaurants in the World for an Immersive Escape”, published August 6, 2025. Available here: <https://guide.michelin.com/en/article/travel/world-best-vineyard-restaurants-immersive-escape>.

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