

## **Anne Hampton**

While all of the "exceptional fruit" sites were fascinating, I was most intrigued by Zolo Winery in Lujan de Cuyo, Mendoza. The combination of high altitude and lack of annual rainfall make producing a consistent and quality crop from year to year nothing short of remarkable. We focused on two different vineyards, El Jarillal and Finca Las Llamas, which are managed differently to produce the different crops. One of the most impressive things about their vineyard management is the dedication to quality, despite the extra time and effort required. For example, both the red vineyard, El Jarillal, and the white, Finca Las Llamas, are farmed using the Vertical Shoot Positional system, which typically produces a lower yield, which also takes longer to produce, but allows for more of the much-needed sunlight to reach, and therefore ripen, the grapes. In addition, Miss Galeano relayed to us that the Sauvignon Blanc vineyards are picked on three separate dates. While this labor-intensive method is used in some parts of the world with late-ripening varieties to ensure ripeness in all grapes, the winemaker at Zolo employs this method for another reason as well. The first pass (least ripe grapes) give the final product its green notes, as well as Sauvignon Blanc's signature acidity, the second pass (riper berries) the weight in the body of the wine, while the third and final pass (the ripest fruit) add tropical fruits and a touch of sweetness. While this time-consuming (and also costly) method may seem tedious, it pays off in the form of wines that are both beautiful and multi-dimensional. Zolo also employs biodynamic practices, showing their long-term dedication to the planet, as well as their products, which also appears to be a growing trend around the globe, and I believe will continue for the foreseeable future! In addition to their commitment to biodynamic farming, the wines are produced in a way that is both Vegan and Gluten-Free, which not only emphasizes their ongoing commitment to the planet, but also recognizes global health concerns. This is even more impressive to me in light of the fact that red meat, specifically beef, is a major staple in the Argentinian diet.