

Weekly Asado



Wilson Center Argentina Project

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Chinese wine market: Still corked after all these years



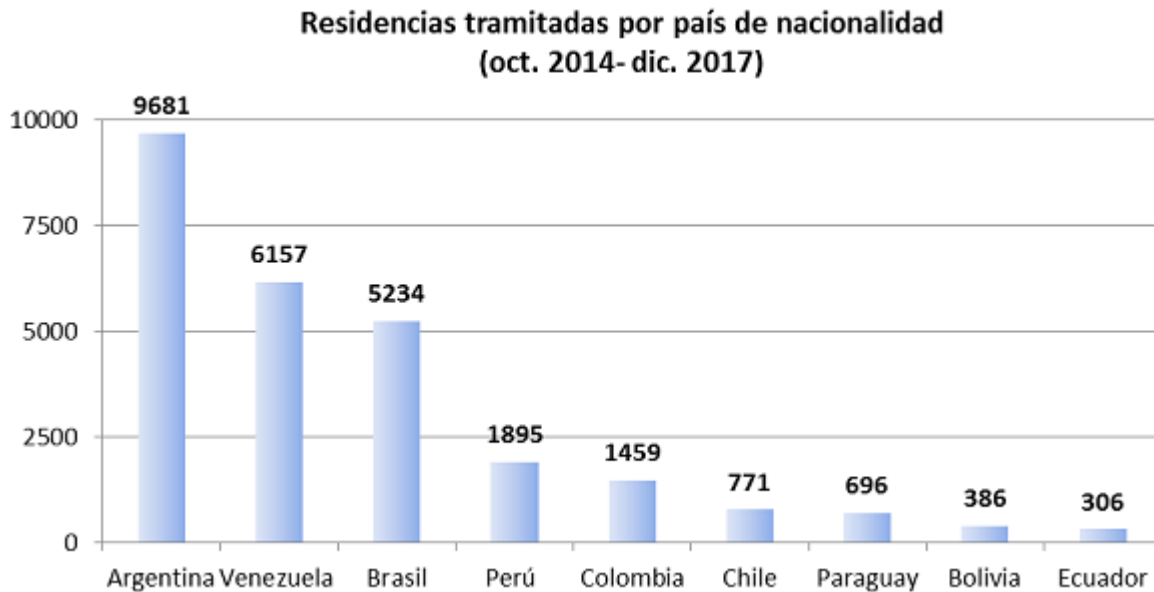
Argentina’s ranchers and slaughterhouses are dreaming of an export bonanza, following China’s recent [agreement](#) to allow imports of Argentine beef. But it is not clear how quickly producers will take advantage of the market access.

Sounds overly skeptical? Just look at Argentine vineyards. Wine sales to China are only \$22 million per year, according to ProMendoza. That puts Argentina behind France, Italy, Spain, Australia and even Chile, [Télam reports](#). The sales figures for China seem even smaller when considering the size of Argentina’s wine industry; last year, Argentina’s wine exports sold for \$810 million, according to the Observatorio Vitivinícola Argentino, down 1 percent from 2016. Mendoza alone exported \$748 million in wine in 2016, according to ProMendoza.

For now, despite no free trade agreement, the U.S. market is far more profitable for Argentina’s vintners than China’s. According to the latest report from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Argentine wine exports to the United States – 100 million liters in 2015, mainly from Mendoza and San Juan provinces – were valued at \$302 million.

Argentina has not ignored the Chinese market. In 2010, for example, Mendoza opened an export promotion office in Shanghai. There is now an Argentine wine store on TMall. And this year, 23 Argentine vineyards promoted their wine at the Interwine Beijing expo. But during a trip to Beijing for the expo, ProMendoza’s general manager, Fernando Urdaniz, said to better compete, Argentina would require a “*presencia constante y permanente, ya que los asiáticos valoran mucho las relaciones interpersonales, es decir conocer en forma directa con quién harán negocios.*” There are structural challenges, too, Mike Derham, of Novam Portam, told me. Chile, for example, sells its wine duty free in China. But “what is more important is getting it in front of Chinese consumers,” he said. “They’d benefit from taking a page from Chile’s playbook, with in-store samples, pairing menus and the like.”

Southbound: Venezuelan migrants pour into Uruguay

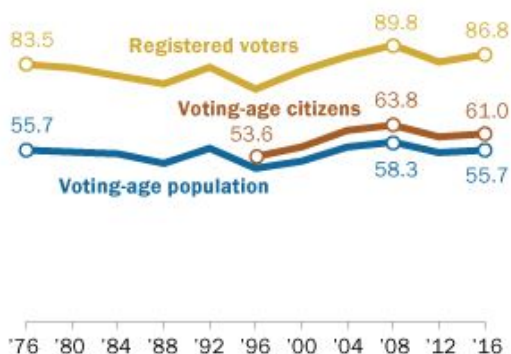


Though Uruguay has been diversifying its exports, it remains culturally intertwined with neighboring Argentina. That is why it was so surprising to see the latest data on requests for residency. Last year, Venezuelans were the *number-one petitioners* (3,248) in Uruguay, exceeding Argentines (2,184), according to the foreign ministry. That was a big change in a small period of time; in 2014 and 2015, for example, 45 percent of residency permits went to Argentines, compared to only 9 percent to Venezuelans.

80 percent of life: Voter turnout in the Southern Cone

Turnout in U.S. presidential elections

Votes cast as a share of ...



Source: Census Bureau (population estimates), House Clerk's office and Pew Research Center (vote totals).

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

A new Pew [analysis](#) highlights the relatively low voter turnout in the United States. In the 2016 election, for example, just 56 percent of the U.S. voting-age population participated. Pew points out that the U.S. performance was especially low compared to other members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. In Belgium, 87 percent of eligible voters show up for elections, and participation in Sweden and Denmark is also over 80 percent.

But the United States does not only lag behind the world's wealthiest countries in this important category. The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance – known as International IDEA – maintains a voter turnout [database](#), and comparisons between the United States and countries in South America are also unflattering. In Argentina, where voting is compulsory (and alcohol sales are banned on Election Day), turnout is astronomical; 81 percent of eligible Argentines voted in the last presidential election, in 2015. In Uruguay, turnout was even higher – 89 percent – in the 2014 presidential election.

In fairness, however, South American countries without compulsory voting – such as Chile – or with no serious enforcement – such as Paraguay – see relatively low voter turnout. In Chile's last presidential election, in December, fewer than half of eligible voters came out to the polls.

A horse is a horse: Swapping fútbol for polo



It seems like an odd time for a polo match. After all, the day before the 2018 World Cup final, most Argentines hope they’ll be deep in prayer in anticipation of Lionel Messi’s potentially final World Cup match. But Argentines are also serious about horses, and so the Argentine Embassy expects a crowd at the [inaugural](#) Argentina Heritage Polo Tournament, in Poolesville, Md., on July 14.

Polo, a British import, is a popular sport in Argentina, where polo horses are bred in the vast Pampas, and Argentine players [employed](#) by overseas clubs are known as “hired assassins.” The game is less popular in the United States, but the embassy and its co-sponsors – the Many Hats Institute and Summerhill Polo – have another draw: the tournament is raising money for the Garrahan pediatric hospital in Buenos Aires, and guests will enjoy an Argentine *asado* and live Argentine music.

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