

Susana Balbo.



SUSANA BALBO

Mother, first female winemaker of Argentina, entrepreneur, exemplary businesswoman, tireless promoter of women's rights.

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With a career of over 40 years, Susana Balbo is **the most renowned female winemaker of Argentina**. A pioneer in Argentinian wine exports and an ambassador of our viticulture to the world, she has become a symbol and a key figure in both the Argentina and the world wine scene.

HER CAREER

Susana studied enology at university and graduated cum laude in 1981, becoming **the first female winemaker in Argentina**. The wine industry in Mendoza, her hometown, was mainly dominated by men, and finding a job as a winemaker was not easy. Nevertheless, her courage and determination took her to Cafayate, a small, traditionalist town in Salta, in northwestern Argentina, to take over the Sucesión Michel Torino winery operations, a highly challenging task for a young professional woman at a time when the wine industry in that area was hardly developed.

During her time in Salta, Susana played a key role to transform the concept and improve the quality of table wines, especially Torrontés, which is today Argentina's flagship white variety. As an expert producer of this variety, Susana is known worldwide as **"the Queen of Torrontés"**, and her wines are the best examples of the potential this grape and true benchmarks of the variety.

After nine years in Salta, Susana came back to Mendoza in 1990 and the following year she started **a consulting business** for wineries in the area. In

1998, Susana was hired by Nicolás Catena to help with the design and direction of the new winery in Agrelo, Catena Zapata Winery, one of the most important and modern architectural works in the Argentine wine industry. The building was finished in April 2001, and after that, Susana became the Exports Director for the Catena Group until she left the company in 2002.

Susana's **innovative spirit** pushes her to continuously develop wines of unique character and quality. This has become the hallmark of her work, and has gained her recognition not only in her homeland but also in the entire world. In fact, she was the first Argentine female winemaker to be hired as a consultant by European wineries.

Her cutting-edge character and essence have earned her many national and international awards and accolades. In 2008, for example, the **BEM Bordeaux Management School** appointed her as **mentor** for their wine MBA program. In 2012, she was the only Argentinian listed in British magazine **The Drinks Business's "50 Most Powerful Women in the Wine World"**, and, in 2015, that same magazine named her **"Woman of the year."** In addition, in 2020 she was named **"Winemaking Legend"** by the world-respected, British wine journalist and Master of Wine **Tim Atkin**, and in 2022 she was distinguished with **the International Wine Challenge (IWC) Lifetime Achievement Award** due to her due to her vast trajectory and contributions to the wine industry.



HER ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSET

In 1999, after some years working as a consultant both in Argentina and abroad, she decided to start **her own business**: Susana Balbo –formerly called Dominio del Plata–, a winery located in Agrelo, Luján de Cuyo.

Since then, she has been making outstanding wines, on a par with a select group of wine producers in Argentina, mainly produced for foreign markets and conceived to compete with the best wines in the world. The company's quick growth, a hard-working team, the investment in technology and infrastructure, and the international recognition of Susana's wines have allowed the winery to be in over 40 markets, making it one of the best-known wineries from Argentina.

In 2022, Susana decided to enter the world of wellness and high-end hospitality alongside her daughter Ana. Together, they opened **Susana Balbo Unique Stays**, a luxury boutique hotel where they also offer an innovative proposal of "air safaris" that allows guests to visit some of Argentina's most emblematic places (such as Cafayate, Patagonia or the Ibera wetlands) on board of the first amphibious plane of Latin America.

Her success as a businesswoman has also earned Susana many distinctions. In 1997, **the Argentine Association of Business Women** named her **Entrepreneur of the Year**. In 2003, she was proclaimed **Endeavor Entrepreneur**, and, in 2006, she was named **High Impact Entrepreneur** by **Endeavor Global**. In 2011, she was nominated for the **Ernst & Young Emerging Businessperson** award. Two years later, in 2013, Susana was recognized by Galicia Bank as the **Best Winery Executive** in their Agricultural Excellence Awards and, in 2019, she was awarded the **BRAVO Lifetime Achievement Award** during the **Council of the Americas BRAVO Business Awards**.

HER ROLE IN THE WINE WORLD

Susana Balbo is one of the most transcending figures of the wine industry, not only in Argentina, but also worldwide. Her colleagues elected her **President of Wines of Argentina** -the institution that promotes the Argentine wine brand and image around the world- for three terms: 2006-2008, 2008-2010 and 2014-2016. It was during this time that Argentine wine exports made history, having double-digit growth, which led our country to stand out on the world wine map.

As a pioneer, an ambassador and a tireless traveler, Susana has represented Argentine wine throughout

the world. In this role, she has proven to be an **influential leader** in this new era in which Argentina became a relevant wine-producer country, after having completely depended on the domestic market wine consumption and commercialization for decades.

HER SOCIAL COMMITMENT

Susana Balbo is a woman of a strong convictions and ideas. Being aware of the hardships that women face in the business world, she has been a founding member of the Argentine branch of the **International Women's Forum** and, since 2009, she has been a member of **Vital Voices**, an NGO that identifies, trains and empowers emerging female leaders.

Susana firmly believes that, in order to change something, you need to get involved. That is why, in 2015, she decided to offer her experience and knowledge as an entrepreneur to the common good, and accepted a proposal to join the political party named PRO. She ran as a candidate of the political alliance Cambiemos for the 2015 General Elections and was elected **National Congresswoman** representing the province of Mendoza.

In her role as a congresswoman, she served as Vice President of the Commission for Small & Medium Businesses, an important project implemented by president Mauricio Macri's new government to create new jobs.

In 2017, President Macri appointed Susana chair of the **Women's 20 (W20)**, an international working group of the G20 dedicated to women's empowerment. In 2018, Susana transitioned from her role in Congress to focus full time on her work with the W20. In 2019, she presented her team's recommendations for the G20 Summit in Buenos Aires, and continued to work with the W20 during the group's leadership transition to Japan. Since then and until 2021, as former chair of the W20, she remained involved in later actions of both the W20 and the **G20 EMPOWER**, the G20 alliance for the empowerment and progress of women's economic representation.

Additionally, Susana has also become the first female **Goodwill Ambassador of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)**, a position through which she promotes development, inclusion and empowerment with a focus on issues related to gender and rural youth.