

In their own words:

Fernando Mora MW & Bodegas Frontonio

It has been a short but intense wine career for Fernando, born in Zaragoza in 1982. He successfully passed the MW entry exam without knowing what he was letting himself into –he was invited to join the MW programme before knowing he had passed the WSET Diploma. In November 2015 Fernando found himself attending a seminar in Austria together with other MW candidates. He was upset: “I was one of the worst students, my English was just average, people were capable of writing good tasting notes, but I wasn’t.” Nevertheless, Fernando passed the first year assessment “by the skin of my teeth”. The second year, he studied like a maniac. “At the beginning I used to take pictures of my classmates’ tasting notes; after some time, I noticed things had changed when people asked to take pictures of mine,” he recalls.

His passion for wine is relatively new. An engineer working in the wind industry, Mora did his first tasting at Rioja’s Museum of Wine Culture in 2008. “I decided there and then to become a winemaker.” The beginnings were quite rough and ready, almost hilarious. Fernando bought grapes from an Ainzón-based acquaintance from his MBA studies and used a kit bought on the Internet to make his first fermentation in his home’s bathtub. He used plain ice to control temperature and aged the wine in a small storage room.

By 2010 he and two more partners were running a more serious project in Valdejalón, arguably one of the least well-known regions in Aragón. Three years later, Mora took a bold step when he left his job bent on turning his hobby into his profession. After painstaking work, a good deal of stubbornness and learning from mistakes, Frontonio emerges now as one of the most refreshing wine ventures in Aragón both in terms of recovering old vines and driving Garnacha’s renaissance in the area.

Three friends in their 30s are behind Frontonio: Fernando Mora MW, oenologist Mario López and international business lawyer Francisco Latasa from Zaragoza. Lacking a DO status, Valdejalón is arguably the least well-known wine region in Aragón. Located at the centre of a triangle formed by Campo de Borja, Cariñena and Calatayud appellations, it comprises the area around the river Jalón. The wines are sold under the 'vino de la tierra' designation, the equivalent to the new European PGI (Protected Geographic Indication). No wonder it takes lots of effort to recover old vines of Garnacha in an area where wine production had almost been lost.

The winery is named after Saint Frontonio, the patron saint of the village. Legend has it that he was beheaded by the Romans and his head thrown in the river Ebro, yet it appeared upstream. Going against the current fitted in well with the three partners’ project, hence the name. They grow 55 hectares of vines and purchase some grapes from local old farmers. Some of the vineyards are found at over 400m of altitude in the vicinity of Épila, on the left bank of the river Jalón, where clay-limestone soils prevail; the Premier and Grand Crus are further west, planted at 600-1000m on red slate soils and limestone. In all cases, irrigation is not used in this area and vineyards are untrellised, gobelet.

Contact: Hannah Van Susteren, Head of Marketing, for further information on Bodegas Frontonio and Bancroft Wines.

T +44 (0) 20 7232 5479 M +44 (0) 7714 850 130 E hvansusteren@bancroftwines.com