

Frontonio 2018 El Casetero Macabeo (Valdejalón)

WineWise Code	SBF-CAB18
Country	Spain
Region	Valdejalón
Subregion	Aragón
Color	White
Closure	Natural Cork
Annual cases produced	2200
Varieties	100% Macabeo
Fermentation vessel	Stainless Steel
Fermentation duration	15 days
Malolactic	No
Vineyard Name	Balsa y Selva
Soil Type(s)	Clay, stony and ferrous
Vineyard Aspect	Northeast
Vine age (years)	20
Vine Yields hl/ha	10
Farming practices	Organic
Vine Training Notes	Bush vines
Grape Picking	Hand-harvested

Notes from the producer:

Frontonio is named after Saint Frontonio, the patrón saint of Épila, a town in Valdejalón, North-East Spain, where it is produced. Legend has it that Saint Frontonio was beheaded by the Romans. His body was buried in a cemetery and his head was thrown into the River Ebro near Zaragoza. Miraculously, his head was later found going upstream along the banks of the River Jalón in Épila. Likewise, this limited production of “micro” wine is the result of rowing against the stream. It is also something of a miracle. It comes from a humble garage where it is made by Fernando Mora MW, Francisco Latasa and Mario López without any fuss.

WineWise Notes:

We have become just crazy for the Macabeo grape, valuing its limey twang and remarkable structure. Frontonio predictably ace this “entry level” version, offering a worthy counterpart both to their Valdejalón version below and Viña Ijalba’s lovely Génoli rendition from Rioja. You can’t have too much Macabeo!

We get blind solicitations from wineries literally every day, but this one caught our eye immediately, because it was penned by none other than Maria José López de Heredia. She said, “if there is one person in the wine world that I could recommend it is Fernando Mora, because he gives me hope for the future of the world of wine in Spain.” In his own words, this is what Fernando does : “recovering old vineyards in Valdejalón area in the north east part of Spain. Producing single vineyards garnachas from old vines up to 98 years old. Something we are very proud to do.” With his two partners, Mario López and Daniel Latasa, they style themselves the “Garage Winery”, that being a literal description of the facility in which they craft their wines. Oh, and Fernando just became a Master of Wine, earning special distinction for his treatise on the Garnacha in Campo de Borja.

The little-known region of Valdejalón, centered around their village of Épila on the banks of the River Jalón, nestles north of Calatayud. The climate is Mediterranean, with significant diurnal temperature changes and low rainfall. The vineyards lie at altitudes between 350 and 700 meters, and benefit from loose soil structure with significant limestone content. Many of the best vineyards are also conspicuously schistous. The team’s preference is for north-facing slopes, rich in stones, and planted to old vines. In their masterly hands, they give rise to Grenache wines (red AND white) of a purity and intensity we rarely see, at a price ridiculously fair, which have already been acclaimed by reviewers everywhere. One of the most remarkable aspects of this story is that Frontonio is quite literally the only producer making wines under the Valdejalón imprimatur. It is a tribute to Fernando’s intuition, particularly, that he could divine the remarkable potential of this area, whose results are, to our subjective judgment, consistently superior to anything else in Aragon.

