

Leon Dormido single vineyard

And sometimes, if you are lucky, after a long day of walking you can end up having a rest and a glass of wine in one of those marvellous really old vineyards of Rioja Alta, right where the forest blends with the vines. Like this one of Mendiguerra, planted in 1931 in the town of Briones with Tempranillo, Graciano, Mazuelo and Garnacha vines.

The land in Mendiguerra has to be worked by hand, since there were no tractors back in the 1930's and vines were planted so horses could make their way through the plants to pull the plough. No pesticides nor herbicides are applied, and fennel, thyme and lavender grow among the vines. The harvest is also made by hand, and the grapes are taken in small crates (so the grains do not crush) to the winery, where all the bunches are selected in a sorting table. We make sure that only the healthy, ripe fruit goes into the fermenting tanks. The must ferments at a controlled temperature in stainless-steel with its own autochthonous yeast. We do not pre-macerate, and we don't post-macerate neither: we really want for the wine to keep all the subtle aromas that would be forever lost otherwise.

When the yeasts are done, we rack the wine into French oak barrels where the malolactic fermentation takes place. It is a long period of time with frequent batonages when the wine gets wider and polished. We don't use 100% brand new barrels since we do not want the oak to overtake the fruit. One third is new, one third is one year-old and another third is two years-old. That is how we find balance. Before the next harvest, when the wine has been in oak for almost one year, we clarify it with the white of fresh eggs and we bottle it, unfiltered. If you open a bottle you still can smell the wild plants that grow in Mendiguerra.



Intense, dark terracotta red colour.

Black fruits aromas (blackberries, blueberries), liquorices, granite, cacao and coffee.

On the palate the fruit explodes and the oak plays the tamer role. Blackberries marmalade along with coffee, leather, laurel... all surrounded by an outstanding acidity and a mineral, balsamic background.