



## FEDELLOS do COUTO

### RIBEIRA SACRA

Dominated by a network of canyons carved by the Miño and Sil, Ribeira Sacra is a rugged and beautiful place to make wine. Fortunately these tortuously steep hillsides had already been largely terraced by the engineering-mad Romans. It may have been hard work to farm these slopes – in fact it still is – but agriculture and more importantly viticulture thrives in this area. As a boundary between the cool, rainy Atlantic coast and the hot, dry, interior of Spain, Ribeira Sacra is temperate with a fairly long growing season. The main threat to viticulture here is the storms that blow in from the Atlantic bringing plenty of rain and wind. A transitory zone as well, Ribeira Sacra is a mix of both warmer- and cooler-climate varieties: Mencía, Caiño, Merenzao (a.k.a Bastardo or Trousseau), Mouratón (aka Garnacha Tintorera), Godello, Albariño, Doña Blanca ...

But the terroir of Ribeira Sacra is not as ancient as you might think. What little flat land that may have once existed here was submerged with the damming of the Sil and Miño well over 40 years ago. During that time Spain was also witnessing a mass migration from rural areas into the cities, so in places like Ribeira Sacra, only the warmest and driest vineyards remained cultivated – those with southern and western exposures. As the valleys were transformed into lakes however the microclimate here gradually changed. Morning fogs became more common, nighttime temperatures increased and the amount of light reflecting off the water made the formerly “best” spots just a little too warm for the indigenous varieties of the region. Recently several young growers started looking to those long abandoned, unheralded and under-appreciated sites: north- or east-facing, randomly planted, difficult to farm and difficult to reach.

Fedellos do Couto is such a project. For generations the Taboada family has owned the Pazo do Couto, an ancient manor dating to the 12th century that over the centuries has produced a wide array of agricultural products on the decomposed granite and schist soils at the southern and eastern end of the Ribeira Sacra in the sub-zones of Ribeiras do Sil and Quiroga-Bibeí.





Luis Taboada, recognizing the value of his ancient, north- and east-facing vineyards, teamed up with viticulturalist Pablo Sol-davini, a proponent of organic farming, and winemakers Curro Bareño and Jesús Olivares to found Fedellos do Couto in 2011. Bareño and Olivares were most recently the talented team behind Ronsel do Sil, one of the most heralded estates in Ribeira Sacra but both began their career in the Sierra de Gredos where they were close friends and colleagues of Dani Landi, Fernando Garcia and Marc Isart. This association is obvious in their wines: elegant and nuanced but persistent and powerful.

The winemaking at Fedellos is minimalist: native co-fermentations, long, gentle macerations in tank or small fermentation bins with aging in a variety of neutral French oak barrels, mainly 500L demi-muids. Three wines are currently produced: Bastarda, Cortezada and Lomba dos Ares and a field blend of white varieties based primarily on Godello and Doña Blanca with smaller percentages of Albariño, Treixadura, Lado, & Torrontes.

After years of difficulty in getting their wines approved by the DO, Curro and Jesus have made the decision to withdraw their project from the zone. This will allow them to continue to fine tune their winemaking without fear of the forces of homogenization that characterize many regions in Spain. Within the Val do Bibei they are identifying additional sites that warrant single vineyard designation, and have launched a new project further upstream and closer to the headwaters of the Bibei - Macizo Ourenzan. Regardless of what is on the outside of the bottles, their dedication to site specific expression and minimalist winemaking guarantees that what is on the inside, are some of the most revealing and exciting wines in our portfolio.



## FACTS & FIGURES

### FOUNDED

2011

### PROPRIETOR

Luis Taboada

### WINEMAKER

Curro Barreño & Jesús Olivares

### SIZE

5.5 ha

### ELEVATION

350-750 meters above sea level

### SOILS

Granite, slate, schist, sand

### VINE AGE

15-75

### VARIETIES

Mencia, Merenzao, Caiño, Mouratón, Godello, Doña Blanca, Albariño, Treixadura, Lado, Torrontes

### FARMING

Practicing organic

### HARVEST

Manual

### CELLAR

Whole cluster, natural yeast co-fermentation in open-topped plastic and stainless steel tanks, pigeage, long, gentle macerations, aging in neutral French oak barrels mostly 500L demi-muids

## INDIGO WINE

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