



PURO ROFE LANZAROTE

Lanzarote is the easternmost of the Canary Islands, situated just 100km from the continent of Africa. The warmest and driest part of the Canaries, it receives a scant 6 inches of rainfall in an average year. Subjected to nearly constant winds blowing off the Sahara desert, known locally as alicios, this would be a challenging place to grow vines even if they were not planted on a vast and volatile volcanic fissure. The lunar landscape of Lanzarote was largely formed with an eruption that lasted from 1730 to 1736 which covered 200 square km of the islands with up to 3 meters of ash and lapilli. Viewed from space, the most notable features of the islands are a series of calderas that pockmark Lanzarote and a large black desert that dominates the northwestern part of the island – Los Volcanes National Park.

The volcanic devastation of the 18th century proved to be a boon for viticulture. Adapted to harsh conditions varieties like Listán Blanco and Negro, Negramoll, Malvasía and Diego were replanted on Lanzarote starting shortly after the eruption. To overcome the twin obstacles of the alicios and the meters of dry, free draining volcanic lapilli, farmers in Lanzarote developed a unique practice of viticulture – the iconic hoyos of Lanzarote. Hoyos are hand-dug depressions, sometime up to two meters deep with a single vine planted in the bottom. The depth of the hoyos allows the vine to access the moisture present several meters below the surface of the volcanic top-soil while also protecting it from the alicios. The most exposed hoyos are also partially surrounded by walls, abrigos, to add an extra layer of protection from the constant winds. Combined, these two features have become the indelible visual image of grape-growing in Lanzarote. No matter from what elevation you view the islands, the overwhelming impression is that it is a landscape of craters – natural and man-made.



FACTS & FIGURES

FOUNDED

2018

PROPRIETOR

Rayco Fernandez, Rafael (Chicho) Mota, Vicente Torres, Ascension Robaina & Pedro Umpiérrez

WINEMAKER

Carmelo Peña

SIZE

8 ha

ELEVATION

200-325 meters above sea level

SOILS

Clay limestone, red clay, sand, gravel, granite, mica

VINE AGE

100+

VARIETIES

Malvasía, Diego, Listán Blanco, Listán Negro, Negramoll

FARMING

Practicing organic

HARVEST

Manual

CELLAR

Whole cluster, natural yeast fermentation in concrete or stainless steel tanks after crushing by foot in stone lagars, aged in concrete vats, neutral French oak barrels or amphorae

The raw materials of Lanzarote – the stark beauty, unique viticulture, indigenous and ancient vines has been on the mind of Rayco Fernandez for many years. A wine exporter based in Gran Canaria, Rayco had waited patiently for over a decade for the potential of Lanzarote to be discovered. From his interest in the island and the people he met there, Puro Rofé was created. While Rayco was the impetus for its creation, Puro Rofé, is a collaboration among local, like-minded grape growers Rafael (Chicho) Mota, Vicente Torres, Ascension Robaina and Pedro Umpiérrez. They tend vineyards surrounding Los Volcanes in the villages of La Geria, Tinajo, Masdache and Testeyna and all practice organic farming. The enologist at Puro Rofé is Carmelo Peña, a native of Gran Canaria who learned his trade there and in the Douro with Dirk Niepoort. Puro Rofé is based in La Geria at Chicho Mota's small, museum-like bodega which preserves many of the traditional features of wine-making on Lanzarote – lagars, basket presses, and concrete vats which are now supplemented with clay amphorae as well.

The initial release will be a white and a red made from a diversity of vineyards sites and varieties with plans over time to offer unique expressions based on site. To facilitate this they harvest and ferment each site independently to better understand its unique characteristics. There is no grand plan in place, just an openness to explore the full potential of Lanzarote. This is the Lanzarote that Rayco and we have been looking for.

