



BIMBACHE

John Stone

El Hierro is off the beaten path. It is the smallest and least visited of the Canary Islands and while it boasts some of the best hiking around, many of its accommodations are humble and more rustic compared to the resorts of its better-known neighbors. El Hierro also happens to be the youngest of the Canaries, a very spry 100 million years old, made evident by its chiseled and rough-hewn topography. Only 167 hectares of vines remain on El Hierro, yet despite this fact, it boasts the greatest genetic and clonal diversity of vines in all of the Canaries. For these reasons Rayco Fernández, one of the founding members of Puro Rofé in Lanzarote was drawn to El Hierro convinced that this little known islands had a bright future.

Bimbache was created in 2018 with a meager 5 hectares of vineyards spread among the three municipalities of El Hierro: Valverde, Frontera, and El Pinar. The Island is roughly triangular in shape with a crescent-shaped escarpment running from the northeast to the west. This cliff faces the prevailing tradewinds ensuring plenty of moisture reaches the vines in Frontera in the north and Valverde in the northeast while blocking El Pinar in the south from receiving much moisture at all. Average rainfall in the northern part of the Island is 70cm while the south only sees 15cm in an average year.

As with the rest of the Canaries, this is largely a maritime and volcanic terroir but due to its location just off the coast of Africa it is protected from excessive heat by the ocean and a semi-permanent high-pressure system known as the Azores High. Before the Spanish settled these islands in the 15th century, they were largely forested. As a result, there is a fair amount of organic material in the soils with volcanic sands mixing with clays. The uplifting which created the Canaries brought the ancient seabed above sea level so you can also find limestone bedrock mixed with volcanic.

From a single, sixty-year-old vineyard named Piedra Juan situated on sandy, volcanic soils in the municipality of La Frontera, John Stone is a steep site with dramatic views of the crescent-shaped El Golfo. Planted with Vijariego Blanco (better known in the Canaries as Diego) and Listán Blanco, this site bears the full brunt of the nearly constant trade winds. This site is harvested by hand, fermentation begins by natural yeasts in tank and finishes in French oak barrels leaving a small space at the top for the development of a thin layer of flor.

ORIGIN

Spain

APPELLATION

El Hierro

SOIL

Volcanic sand

AGE OF VINES

60

ELEVATION

700 meters

VARIETIES

Diego, Listán Blanco

FARMING

Practicing organic

FERMENTATION

Hand harvested, natural yeast fermentation beginning in tank and completed in French oak barrels

AGING

10 months in barrel under a layer of flor

ACCOLADES

92 – 2019 John Stone – Wine Advocate

