

ON THE GRAPEVINE...



FAIRTRADE PROJECT NEWS

JULY 2022

LA RIOJANA INAUGURATES CONSTRUCTION OF LOS PIONEROS HEALTH CENTRE

On 30th June 2022, the day of La Rioja's 82nd anniversary, a crowd of over 500 people, including co-operative growers', workers, local dignitaries, and special guests, gathered to witness and celebrate the completion of Los Pioneros – Roberto Mantovani Health Centre, situated on the outskirts of Tilimuqui, whose construction was funded by the Fairtrade Social Premium generated by sales of La Rioja's Fairtrade certified wines.

The new health centre, named after the world's first ever co-operative, the Rochdale Pioneers, as well as in remembrance of the recently deceased Roberto Mantovani, La Rioja's General Manager for 35 years, spans 800 m² and will offer much needed medical care to mothers and children living in the local region.

Among those in attendance at the inauguration was La Rioja's President Mario Gonzalez who explained how the co-operative provides work for over 2000 families, which in turn allows them



La Rioja co-operative members, their families and special guests gathered outside the health centre



Bjorn Wittmark, Director of Giertz Vinimport, Sweden

to support the local economy and build community projects such as the health centre.

Also present at the inauguration was Bjorn Wittmark, Director of Giertz Vinimport – a member of the Viva Wine Group, Sweden, who commented "We feel very proud to be part of this Fairtrade



Mario Gonzalez, President of La Rioja Co-operative

journey together with La Rioja and The Co-op, UK."

Representing and speaking on behalf of the Argentine government, Juan Carlos Vergara, Health Minister for La Rioja province, remarked "building a medical centre like this is very relevant to our health

care system because it helps strengthen the primary level of care for the people who most need it, providing accessibility and equity.”

In addition to the inauguration of the health centre, La Riojana commemorated its 82nd birthday with the unveiling of three different murals, including one above the front entrance of the health centre, one on the winery's oldest tank and the last one on La Riojana's bottling plant. The three murals were painted by the ONG Pinta Argentina, a foundation that works with wineries, and have been painted to represent the history and identity of the co-operative over the past 82 years.

The inauguration of the health centre on 30th June 2022 represented the completion of the main building works. Once the health centre has been fully equipped and furnished and is ready to welcome its first patients, which is expected to be early 2024, there will be a full opening ceremony to celebrate this incredible Fairtrade funded project.



Bjorn Wittmark (right) and Mario Gonzalez (left) cut the ribbon to inaugurate the completion of the main building works



Newly painted mural on La Riojana's bottling plant



Interior shot of a corridor in the newly completed health centre



Newly painted mural on La Riojana's 60 year old wine tank

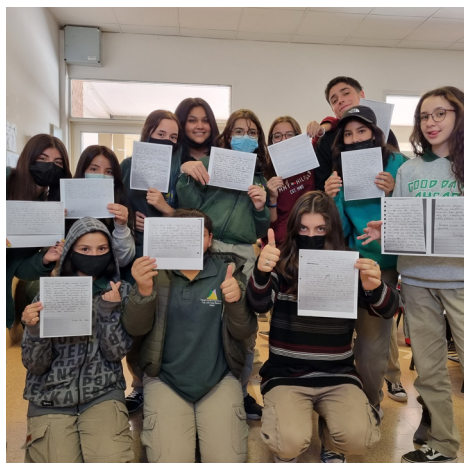
SCHOOL PROJECT BRINGS PUPILS LIVING IN ARGENTINA AND ENGLAND CLOSER TOGETHER

Twelve years on from opening its doors for the first time, secondary school pupils studying at the Fairtrade-funded Colegio Nacional Agrotecnico in Tilimuqui have become involved in a school exchange program with The Co-op Academy Swinton, located in Greater Manchester.

As part of an inspiring initiative to link up similar aged children from two sides of the world, the exchange program is allowing pupils to apply what they are learning in lessons to a real-world context, as well as introduce them to the cultural similarities and differences between the UK and Argentina.

A total of 94 pupils in Years 1, 2, 3 and 4 at CONAG have joined the program, establishing links with equivalent year groups 8, 9 & 10 at The Co-op Academy in Manchester.

The program involves individual pupils writing letters to their peers in the other country.



Year 2 Tilimuqui pupils receiving letters from Manchester

Emma Brocklehurst, Director of Learning: Communications at The Co-op Academy Swinton commented on the moment the letters written by the Year 2 students in Tilimuqui were given out in her Spanish lesson "The buzz and excitement in the classroom was fantastic and really bolstered enthusiasm in our pupils. I wish I could have bottled the atmosphere in the room."

VICTORY FOR LA RIOJANA AT THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE WINE AWARDS 2022



La Rioja was delighted to win The Story Behind The Label award for the production of the best short film at The People's Choice Wine Awards 2022, held at the Stoller Hall, Manchester on 25th April 2022.

La Rioja's winning film had been shortlisted along with two other short films, all three of which were shown and voted for live by the audience on the evening of the awards. La Rioja's film won by a sound victory, receiving over 70% of the votes.

The People's Choice Wine Awards, now in its fifth year, is a wine competition unlike any other, where the judging process involves everyday wine drinkers with a knowledge of wine and professional wine trade judges.

In addition to entering wines, each entrant was given the opportunity to enter The Story Behind the Label video challenge, where producers are invited to make a very short film, maximum two minutes in length, that really brings their story to life.

The Story Behind the Label award, sponsored by The Buyer, was presented by the evening's hosts Ameila Singer and Richard Siddle to Sarah Singer from the Fairtrade Foundation, who kindly accepted the award on La Rioja's behalf.

Please [click here](#) to watch the award-winning film.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=oPVFU8YMuTE



Sarah Singer, Fairtrade Foundation UK, collecting the Award

ORGANIC SUCCESS FOR SOLOMBRA WINES IN GERMANY



La Rioja was delighted to win two Gold medals for its wines at the Wine System's 15th Organic Wine Award International, which was held in May 2022, in Frasdorf, Germany.

La Rioja's winning wines were Bio Solombra Cabernet Sauvignon / Bonarda 2021 (91 points) and Bio Solombra Malbec 2021 (90 points) and were judged alongside 543 organic wines from 19 countries by 28 professional wine tasters from different European countries during the second week of May.

SILVER MEDAL FOR CO-OP FAIRTRADE BONARDA-MALBEC

La Riojana is thrilled to have won a series of awards for its wines in this year's IWC and DWWA competitions, including a Silver Medal for the red dual varietal it produces for the UK's largest Fairtrade retailer, The Co-op.

Decanter World Wine Awards 2022, the results for which were announced 8th June 2022, awarded the Co-op Fairtrade Bonarda-Malbec 2021 a Silver Medal and 92 points. The wine itself, which was among the 18,244 wines judged at the competition, was described by the DWWA as "Floral and fragrant with red fruit, herb and olive aromatics, and the palate is laced with inky, dark fruit."



The Co-op Bonarda-Malbec 2021 is one of La Riojana's top sellers and currently retails for under £6 a bottle, which makes it a great value for money Fairtrade wine. The same wine also won a Bronze Medal at the International Wine Challenge 2022.

In addition to this, Decanter World Wine Awards 2022 and the International Wine Challenge 2022 both awarded Bronze Medals to La Riojana's Co-op Irresistible Fairtrade Organic Malbec 2020; Co-op Fairtrade Merlot 2021; Tilimuqui Fairtrade Organic Malbec 2021 and Ecologica Fairtrade Organic Shiraz-Malbec 2021.

DWWA gave further Bronze Medals to Ecologica Fairtrade Organic Torrontés-Chardonnay 2021 (89 points); Co-op Fairtrade Shiraz Rosé 2021 (87 points); Co-op Fairtrade Torrontés-Chardonnay 2021 (86 points); Co-op Fairtrade Pinot Grigio 2021 (86 points) and Co-op Fairtrade Cabernet Sauvignon 2021 (86 points).

WALTER CAROL VISITS THE FAIRTRADE FOUNDATION, LONDON

La Riojana's Export Director Walter Carol paid a visit to The Fairtrade Foundation offices on 1st June 2022. It was Walter's first time at the Foundation's offices situated near Shadwell, East London. It was also one of Walter's first trips to the UK since COVID restrictions have lifted, allowing international travel once again.



During Walter's visit he spoke to 40 members of the Fairtrade Foundation team about the history of La Riojana, its involvement in Fairtrade, the importance of Fairtrade to its members and to its workers, and gave great detail on the enormous success of the Fairtrade projects which have been implemented during the past decade in La Riojana's local communities.

Walter also shared La Riojana's video which won The Story Behind The Label award at The People's Choice Wine Awards during his office visit.

The working lunch / webinar allowed attendees to join Walter's talk either in person or remotely, and after the talk everyone who attended was invited to enjoy a glass of Co-op Fairtrade wine which went down very well.

Ed Robinson, Fairtrade wine buyer for The Co-op, also sent a personal message to the webinar, thanking Walter for all his hard work, explaining that The Co-op has worked with La Riojana since 1999 and that they "have always appreciated what is possibly an ideal mix of great products, realistic prices and stunning social projects".

Q & A WITH LA RIOJANA'S GROWER JUAN RODOLFO ROJAS

Q. Tell us a little bit about yourself.

I am 74 years old, I live in Anguinán, a village located just over 6 kilometres from La Rioja's main winery in Chilecito. I own two hectares and started out by growing just Cereza grapes but more recently I have begun to grow Syrah due to the co-operative's need to produce fine wines.

Q. When did you become a member of La Rioja co-operative?

In June 2010. My father Julián Antonio Rojas was a member of the co-operative before me.

Q. Do you get help on your farm?

Yes, my 34-year-old son Javier Rojas helps me, specifically with the irrigation and the pruning. Javier also lives with me, as well as my grandson César Rojas.



Juan Rojas, La Rioja co-operative member and grower

Q. Are you organically certified?

Yes.

Q. What are the benefits of being a member of the co-operative?

The main benefit for me is knowing where I am going to deliver my grapes each year and being paid monthly. As a smaller member, I am able to benefit from things such as the tractors which were bought by La Rioja and they lend to us

to use at a cheaper cost. We also receive deliveries of organic fertilizer and anti-hail insurance as co-operative members.

Q. How do you feel about La Rioja's involvement in Fairtrade?

I feel proud to be a member when I see that they are building a school and a health centre. Although these two places are in Tilimuqui, they are institutions that every village and community in the local area will be able to benefit from.



Juan Rojas (right) and his son Javier Rojas (left)