

Julio Rivera Anzoátegui

Nicaragua

Farm(s):	La Luz
Region:	Matagalpa
Country:	Nicaragua
Association:	Sajonia Estate
Altitude:	900-1350 masl
Varieties:	Parainema, Caturra, Marsellesa, Catimor, Maragogype Geisha
Process:	Washed, Natural, Honey, Anaerobic

La Luz is located 15 km outside of the city of Matagalpa, Nicaragua's fourth largest city located in the department of the same name. The farm is owned and run by Julio Rivera Anzoátegui and his wife Julissa de Rivera and is part of Rianza Coffee Group, a collection of three farms owned by Julio, which also includes La Esperanza and La Maravilla, and the wet mill Huriva Benefico. La Luz is a member of the *Las Fincas Collection*, a project established by Sajonia Estate in Matagalpa. The *Las Fincas Collection* was established in 2018. The initiative focuses on providing technical advice in post-harvest management, whilst supporting the entire processing chain at farm level to generate and maintain quality coffee production. Sajonia have recently invested in drying and processing facilities at their site in Matagalpa, such as outdoor raised beds, tiered raised beds within netted shade greenhouses and pop-up patios, to create the space and potential for high quality coffee processing. They can accept either cherry or parchment coffee from neighbouring farms for processing and can employ different fermentations such as carbonic or anaerobic maceration, individualising microlots from producers and creating more diversity and quality in output.

Julio Rivera Anzoátegui was born into a coffee family. Both his parents, Julio Rivera and Margarita Anzoátegui, were from families that had been coffee growers for almost a century before they met. When they married, they brought together a long-shared tradition and passion for coffee. Hacienda La Luz was founded by Julio's grandfather, Alejandro Rivera, in 1934 and has passed down through four generations in the family to Julio. The Rianza Coffee Group's collection of farms are all inherited through the Anzoátegui and Rivera family 15 years ago and are currently run by Julio, his mother Margarita and his wife Julissa.

La Luz is situated in a privileged location within the Cerro Apante forest reserve, one of the 78 reserves that are under official protection in the country and an area perfectly situated for growing high quality coffee. The natural forest environment provides a unique microclimate on the farm and the diverse flora surrounding the coffee creates strength and stability in healthy coffee production. Like many farms in Nicaragua much of La Luz is left as natural forest, in-keeping with the family's desire to preserve the local environment, which also aids in retaining water, biodiversity and the humid microclimate.

All farms in the Rianza Coffee Group are certified by the Rain Forest Alliance, Café Practices and AAA Nespresso. This structure enables Julio to maintain the environmental and social responsibility established by his family many years ago. For over 40 years the farm has catered to the local community by founding a school for the education of both children of workers and the nearby village who had no previous access to education, which was built alongside housing that could accommodate workers. On the farms there are 40 permanent workers and up to 200 during peak harvest. Pickers are paid 50 córdobas for each *lata*, which is a local measurement volume of 10" x 10" x 12.5" that equates to around 20 litres, or 14kg of cherry, of Specialty coffee harvested. Workers are paid every 15 days, in accordance to local labour laws, and have free additional access to housing, education for their children and basic services such as electricity, water and three meals per day. Permanent workers are also provided with a small plot of land which they can use to grow subsistence crops for food or extra income. Currently there are 5 families with around 55 individuals living on-site in La Luz's accommodation throughout the year and 25 students attending the primary school. Julissa de Rivera shares Julio's social beliefs and is part of the leaders of the Nicaraguan chapter of the International Women's Coffee Alliance (IWCA-Nicaragua) with the aim of helping and empowering all women within the Nicaraguan coffee chain. Julio and Julissa also recognise the importance of maintaining environmental sustainability on the farm, protecting fauna and flora exercising a belief in sustainable farming methods and environmental protection.

The farm itself is 380 manzanas in size, which equates to around 265 hectares. Within the farm 185 manzanas are engaged with coffee production and 183 preserved as native forest. Coffee is grown within the natural forest

environment which provides good shade for the crops. Intercropping of additional plants such as bananas, legumes and Espadillo helps to fix nitrogen into the soil whilst providing additional protection from the sun and wind. As the climate does get humid around Matagalpa shade trees are maintained to ensure a rough 60% of coverage throughout the year, which enables coffee to mature slowly and develop more complex, desirable flavours. The farm has loamy clay soils, an average rainfall on the farm is 1800mm and a mild temperature of around 22°C.

Julio is gradually introducing new varieties in La Luz. Traditionally the farm cultivates Parainema, Caturra, Marsellesa and Catimor varieties, which grow at 3500-4000 trees per hectare. Newly introduced varieties include Castillo, Maragogype and Geisha which are young and still at developmental stages. Throughout the farm individual varieties are grown, picked and processed separately to ensure lot traceability and transparency throughout the whole production process. During harvest, which typically begins in November and lasts until early February, coffee is hand-picked with the ideal maturation selected for the best quality with Specialty lots picked first thing, stopping at midday to ensure cherries are freshly processed, and conventional lots harvested in the afternoon.

Once picked coffee is delivered to the neighbouring Benefico Huriva wet mill, named after Julio's brother Hugo Rivera. Here coffee is washed, floated and, if Wet or Honey-Processed, milled to separate the parchment from the cherry. Wet-processed coffee is typically fermented in the dry method for 25-36 hours, depending on ambient temperature and humidity, before being washed again and sorted. Once post-harvest processing has been complete coffee is then delivered to the group's dry mill, next door to Sajonia Estate in nearby Matagalpa, for drying on raised beds. Julio uses the post-harvest infrastructure at Sajonia Estate to engage with new and experimental processing methods for his coffees. Sajonia Estate can accept cherries or parchment coffee and can apply different fermentation techniques, such as carbonic and anaerobic maceration, as well as drying approaches on patios, raised beds and greenhouses, to best achieve

