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White Labs Adds WLP546 Marañón Canyon Wild Cacao Yeast to Vault Offerings

The company teamed up with Marañón Chocolate to isolate one-of-a-kind yeast from rare cacao bean

SAN DIEGO (February 5, 2019) – [White Labs](#) has teamed up with [Marañón Chocolate](#) to isolate and produce a unique yeast from a rare cacao variety—Pure Nacional—that was once thought to be extinct in Peru. The strain, WLP546 Marañón Canyon Wild Cacao, has now been released to customers for brewing beer.

The coveted cacao bean was rediscovered in late 2007 by Dan Pearson and Brian Horsley, founders of Marañón Chocolate, while sourcing tropical fruits in the remote Marañón Canyon of Northern Peru. Not knowing what they stumbled upon, the pair sent the cacao tree leaves to the USDA Genetics Laboratory. USDA confirmed it was the same variety that had once dominated the chocolate market, but vanished in 1916 when diseases struck and killed the trees that grew these cacao beans.

Then, in 2015 and 2016, El Niño weather systems hit Peru, impacting the wild yeast responsible for the beans renowned characteristic flavor. To preserve the wild microflora, Pearson reached out to Kara Taylor, technical laboratory manager at White Labs, to see if the international yeast company could capture the wild yeast from fermenting beans. They succeeded.

“After they successfully isolated the wild cacao yeast, our next thought was ‘can you make beer with it?’” said Pearson. “So I asked Kara if she thought it was possible, and she told us that the odds of isolating and stabilizing a wild yeast were very slim, but that they would try, and fortunately for us, they did!”

“I was skeptical that we would find a wild yeast on the cacao that had the capabilities to ferment beer,” noted Taylor. “We love to find yeast in unique places, but it’s unusual to find yeast that will ferment maltose while tasting and smelling good. In this case, we found a unique strain that creates a farmhouse type aroma and flavor profile.”

On top of isolating and propagating this cacao yeast, White Labs also brewed a test batch of beer which captured the esteemed fruit, floral and spicy flavors that the chocolate is known for producing. White Labs found that WLP546 Marañón Canyon Wild Cacao produces fruity, phenolic, and wild-like characteristics that make it an ideal choice for farmhouse and saison-style beers.

WLP546 Marañón Canyon Wild Cacao is being released through the [White Labs Vault](#), making it available for professionals to order year-round. Homebrewers can pre-order the strain through [The Vault for Homebrewers](#).

QUICK FACTS

- **Name:** WLP546 Marañón Canyon Wild Cacao
- **Style Recommendation:** Farmhouse/Saison
- **Alcohol Tolerance:** Medium (5-10%)
- **Attenuation:** 65-70%
- **Flocculation:** Low
- **Optimum Fermentation Temp:** 65-75°F (18-24°C)
- **Strain Description:** This yeast was isolated from the thought to be extinct Pure Nacional variety of cacao. In 2007, this rare variety with white beans was rediscovered in the remote Marañón River Canyon in Peru. The fruity, phenolic, and wild-like characteristics of this strain make it an ideal choice for farmhouse and saison-style beers.

For more information, visit whitelabs.com/yeastbank.

About White Labs

White Labs Inc. is an international company headquartered in San Diego that provides pure liquid yeast, fermentation products, services, analysis and education to professionals and enthusiasts alike. Continually raising the bar in the art of fermentation, White Labs stretches the limits of science to set new standards in purity and freshness. From the industry's first pitchable liquid yeast to a complete revolution in the way it's propagated and packaged, the White Labs innovative spirit is tireless. For more information on White Labs and its various products and services, please visit whitelabs.com.

About Marañón Chocolate

Dan Pearson and Brian Horsley began doing business in Peru in 2002, supplying repair parts to the mining industry. This led to supplying tropical fruits to remote mining locations. After accidentally discovering USDA verified Pure Nacional cacao in late 2007, they formed [Marañón Chocolate](#). Their chocolate products and cacao beans for artisan chocolate makers are now enjoyed worldwide.

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