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Excellent viticultural and gastronomical experience at historic Santa Rita Winery Test Drive: SsangYong Torres VINALU SPECIAL REPORTS VALLE DEL MAIPO / CHILE

VINALU SPECIAL REPORTS CHILE/Prestigious Valle del Maipo

by Liliane Turmes, Helen Latour & Good Friends



Santa Rita Hotel Casa Real Hotel Casa Real amidst a centennial park

Valle del Maipo, a region in central Chile, located South of Santiago at the feet of the Andes Mountains, is home to some of the oldest and most prestigious wineries of Chile, mainly dedicated to Cabernet Sauvignon. The mediterranean climate in Maipo valley and the alluvial, fertile soil, formed by the sediments of the waters coming from the Andes, play a key role in the high quality of its wines. Viñalu has the opportunity to visit, with the support and the professional organisation of ProChile, the Chilean Ministry of Exterior Relations, a few of the best producers in Maipo valley.

VISIT AT HISTORIC VIÑA SANTA RITA

Returning to Santa Rita some time after of our last visit, we are looking forward to meeting the manager Juan Vila for a technical visit and curious to get the latest viticultural and cultural news of the winery .

Santa Rita, founded in 1880 in Alto Jahuel, in the Maipo Valley, comprising also Viña Carmen in Chile and Doña Paula in Argentina, is one of the largest wine groups in South America with nearly 3000 ha planted in the most famous wine valleys in Chile, in Maipo, Apalta, Colchagua, Leyda, Limari, Casablanca and Maule; the wines are produced in Alto Jahuel at one of the country's oldest operational wineries. In this location are also the heritage buildings, classified historical monuments, as is the centennial park. The impressive 40 ha park, has been designed in 3 different styles in a structured French style with fountains, beautiful sculptures and lakes with black necked swans, in a romantic English style with abundant hydrangeas and roses and with a mediterranean part with fruit, almond and olive trees. And as Juan points out during our walking tour, Santa Rita is committed to preserve this outstanding place, founded by Domingo Fernandez Concha at the end of the 19th century as his summer residence, as it is considered part of the Chilean history. During our stay at the elegant Casa Real Hotel of Santa Rita, with a classic furniture and antique paintings, we enjoy a tasting on the terrace at sunset, with a view on the majestic trees in the park.



with a historical interior

bright suites

and with an elegant traditional restaurant



Wine selection for the tasting

A creamy Santa Rita Floresta Chardonnay 2022

A fresh Santa Rita Bougainville Petite Sirah 2021

THE TASTING OF COLECCIÓN DE ORIGEN

Santa Rita Floresta, 100% Chardonnay 2022 from Limari Valley, 12 months in French oak, 13%. The label Floresta, is inspired by the Doña Paula park.

Colour: straw yellow, brilliant in the glass

On the nose: pears, exotic fruits

On the palate: creamy, mineral, with the freshness of citrus fruits, presented with a canapé of smoked salmon and soft cheese

Santa Rita Bougainville, Petite Sirah 2021, from Alto Jahuel/Alto Maipo in 600m altitude, a small production on 2 ha, 18 months partly in used and new French oak. The label is inspired by the giant bougainvillea in front of 'Casa Real', one of the highest in Latin America.

Colour: violet

On the nose: fruity bouquet

On the palate: plums, red & black fruits, mediterranean herbs, complex with a long finish, matching with the tuna and avocado mousse finger food

Santa Rita Pewën, 100% Carmenère 2022 from Apalta Valley, from old vines planted in 1938, 18 months in French oak partly in used and new barrels. 13,50% The label is representing the araucaria native tree, the 'Pewën' in Mapuche language.

Colour: purple

On the nose: spicy, black pepper

On the palate: red currants with a light bitterness and freshness of yellow grapefruit, a good combination with a strong goat cheese and marmelade on toast

Santa Rita Floresta, 100% Cabernet Sauvignon 2021, 18 months in French oak, 13,50% Colour: ruby red

On the nose: freshness of citrus fruits, red currants

On the palate: plums, strawberries, chocolate, good structure, an elegant wine, a tasteful pairing with the saltiness of a local blue cheese and the serano ham appetizer

Santa Rita Triple C 2021, a blend with 50% Cabernet Sawignon, 42% Cabernet Franc and 8% Carmenère, 17 months in new French oak, 14%. The label is inspired by the sculpture 'La Primavera', part of the 'Four seasons' sculptures in the park; in 2019 rated one of the 100 bests in the world.

Colour: garnet red

On the nose: herbal, black cherries

On the palate: ripe black fruits, tannins well integrated, a harmonious, gastronomical wine. Excellent with an amuse-bouche of beef on mustard \mathfrak{S} sauce hollandaise.

The tasting is followed by a dinner, served in the chic dining room at Casa Real, starting with a Medalla Real Gran Reserva 2022 Chardonnay paired with the 'Ostiones gratinados en parmesana', small, tender scallops, refined with citrus, herbs and parmesan cheese and salmon, on lentils, braised in red wine and beurre blanc, combined with a fruity Medalla Real Gran Reserva Pinot Noir of Valle de Leyda.



Santa Rita Triple C 2021

VISIT AT VIÑA CARMEN

For the next day Juan has planned an early morning visit & tasting at the nearby Viña Carmen, part of the Santa Rita Estates. Viña Carmen one of the oldest wineries in Chile, has a significant role in Chilean winemaking, as French ampelographer Jean-Michel Boursiquot, an expert in the science of identification and classification of vines, rediscovered the grape varietal Carmenère in its Alto Maipo vineyards, believed to be extinct and brought it back as a kind of symbol of Chile. The wines at Viña Carmen, founded in 1859 by Christian Lanz and named after his wife, are considered of combining tradition and innovation with grapes from renowned terroirs.

We meet Ana Maria Cumsille, chief winemaker and Pablo Prieto winemaker for a tasting and a presentation of the winery. They explain us, that Viña Carmen D.O, is a project of cooperation of small producers with the technical experts of Carmen, with the objectiv of creating wines, showing the expression and the typicity of the different varietals in the most important valleys in Chile.



Horse carriage in the vineyards of Viña Carmen

Visit in the vineyards

THE TASTING

Viña Carmen D.O Apalta 'Quijada' 2021, 95% Semillón, 5% Sauvignon Blanc, in a traditional cultivation, from old vines planted in 1958 in Apalta, 10 months in concrete eggs & 3 years in the bottle

Colour: yellow, green

On the nose: floral, herbs, citrus fruits

On the palate: toast notes, yeasty, fresh, with a pleasant tension

Viña Carmen D.O. Maule, Matorral Chileno 2022, blend from Valle de Maule, 60% Grenache field blend, 30% Carignan, 10% Pais from old vines, in 5 years old used barrels for 18 months, dry farmed, 14%

Colour: violet, brilliant in the glass On the nose: plums, black berries

On the palate: complex, strong spicy concentration, freshness of pomelo, good structure, long aftertaste

Viña Carmen Delanz D.O. Apalta 2021, Estate Blend, 71% Carmenère, 15% Syrah, 9% Petit Verdot, 5% Cabernet Sauvignon, aging in used oak barrels for 18 months, 13,50% Colour: ruby red

On the nose: marzipan, red currants

On the palate: raspberries, red fruits, smokey notes, soft tannins, freshness of citrus fruits in the finish, elegant

Viña Carmen Delanz D.O. Maipo, Cabernet Sauvignon 2021, from Alto Jahuel /Maipo from 800 m altitude vineyards, 87% Cabernet Sauvignon, 6% Cabernet Franc, 5% Petit Verdot, 2 % Malbec

Colour: dark red

On the nose: tannins, black currants

On the palate: ripe tannins, balanced acidity, complex, black fruits, long persistance in the aftertaste, a gastronomical wine

Viña Carmen Florillon # 5 D.O. Apalta, 100% Semillion grapes, elaboration in small open barrels in controlled oxidation under a flor layer for 4 months, from 4 harvests, 2021, 2022, 2020 and 2019, 11,50%

Colour: brilliant golden

On the nose: raisins

On the palate: candied fruits, yellow plums, with a pleasant freshness, and a complex aromatic profil, an alluring wine.

ADDRESS: VIÑA CARMEN, Buin, Santiago Metropolitan Region



and tasting with winemakers Ana Maria Cumsille & Pablo Prieto

Viña Carmen Quijada Sémillion 2021



Viña Carmen Matoral Chileno 2022

Viña Carmen Delanz Cabernet Sauvignon 2021

Viña Carmen Florillón

LUNCH AT FAMOUS DOÑA PAULA RESTAURANT

On our return from Viña Carmen, Juan takes us for lunch in the traditional restaurant Doña Paula, amidst a garden with white roses and orange trees, where he received weeks ago Brigitte Macron, the wife of French president Emmanuel Macron, as he proudly tells us.

The restaurant, in a classic adobe house, opened in 1994, with a traditional fine Chilean gastronomy and serving the same menu as in the past, with the idea of putting the gastronomical identity in the focus. We share a plate with fine tuna, salmon tartare with celeri, delicate scallops and shrimps on avocado cream and a beef carpaccio with capers, served with a fresh Chardonnay of the Floresta line. The main dish, a tender slowly cooked beef with corn pastry and a delicious crème brûlée, the star of the desserts, are combined with a fruity Floresta Cabernet Sauvignon.

After this memorable visit, we continue our agenda with a tasting at Viños LOF.

ADDRESS : VIÑA SANTA RITA Cam. Padre Hurtado 0695 Alto Jahuel, Buin, Región Metropolitana



Flavorful tuna tartare with scallops & palta

Carpaccio of beef

served in the Doña Paula restaurant

MONTSECANO PINOT NOIR 2022

A 'Vino De Parcela' Las Dichas, D.O. Casablanca Valley/Chile, from vineyards near to the Pacific Ocean and to the Andes Mountains.

An organic wine, vinified with artisanal natural method.

Elaborated in concrete eggs for 18 months, alcohol by volume 12,8%.

With a garnet red colour in the glass, a complex bouquet of cherries, anis and mediterranean herbs, such as thyme and rosmary, with the palate highlighting the delicate notes of blackberries, raspberries and red currants, leading to a pleasant fruity freshness, with a good structure and a long persistance.

Montsecano is an alluring Pinot Noir, with a unique character, showing the connection to the land, expressing the terroir of Las Dichas and the philosophy of the winemaker.

Excellent, paired with gratinated oysters, fine Japanese cuisine, beef carpaccio with parmigiano, escalope viennoise with lemon, truffle infused mushroom risotto, creamy brie or mousse au chocolat.

Soon available in Luxembourg.

Only in gourmet restaurants.



Produced in a limited edition of 1932 bottles.

VISIT AT VIÑOS LOF

Carlos Gaete, the commercial manager welcomes us at Viños LOF in Maipo Valley in the fantastic nature at the foot of the Andes Mountains. Germán Lyon, winemaker at Viña Perez Cruz and his father in law & family founded the winery in 2005.

The production at 'human scale' as Carlos says , with a first vintage in 2012, with 900 bottles for the family only, was at that time more considered as a 'hobby'. Currently LOF produces 20000 bottles and the business is mainly concentrated on the domestic market, with Brazil as export country. The idea is to express the caracteristics of the terroir in using a natural and organic process. The grapes are handpicked, with an early picking, in order to have wines with low alcool and with a pleasant freshness.

LOF Rosado 2024, D.O. Valle del Maipo Andes, 100% Syrah,

'rosé de saignée', 12,50%

Colour: salmon, brilliant 'old rose' colour On the nose: floral

On the palate: herbal notes, red currants, yellow grapefruit with a juicy freshness in the finish

LOF Syrah 2021, D.O. Valle del Maipo Andes, elaboration and aging in concrete tanks, 13% Colour: deep ruby

On the nose: smokey notes, mineral and pepper notes

On the palate: good structure, harmonious, ripe black fruits, freshness, in a long finish

LOF Cabernet Sawignon 2021, D.O. Valle del Maipo Andes, elaborated and aging in concrete tanks, 12,50%

Colour: garnet red

On the nose: plums, red and black ripe fruits On the palate: well balanced, citrus fruits, quinces, mentholic notes at the end

ADDRESS: Viños LOF, Camino la aparición, parcela 59 Paine, 9540000 Region Metropolitana.



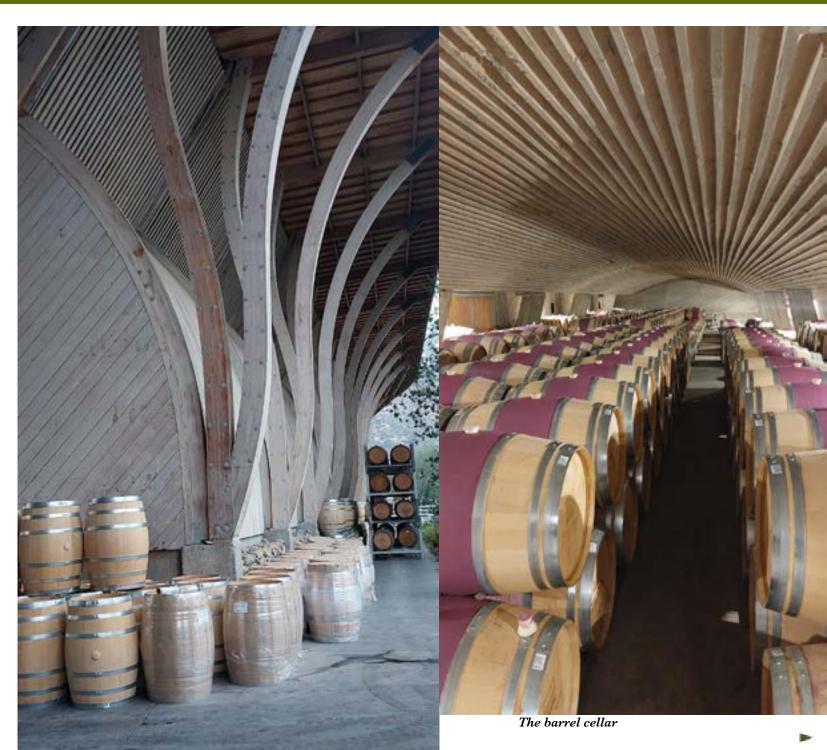
Viños LOF at the foot of the Andes Mountains Ready for the tasting

VISIT AT VIÑA PÉREZ CRUZ

In the 1960ies Pablo Pérez and Mariana Cruz acquired the Fundo Liguai, 40 km South of Santiago, in the Valle del Maipo, at the foot of the Andes Mountains, a terroir rich in minerals, with stony, clay soils, perfect for the production of fine red wines.

The first vines of Cabernet Sauvignon were planted in 1993 and the top designed bodega of Pérez Cruz was built in 2001 by famous Chilean architect José Cruz Ovalle. One year later Germán Lyon, the chief winemaker realized his first vintage at Pérez Cruz, with the philosophy of producing wines with a precise pureness and tension, expressing the terroir.

Architectural gem Viña Perez Cruz in Maipo



SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES, COMBINED WITH A PRECISE TECHNOLOGY OF DRONES

The 250 ha vineyards of Pérez Cruz, lying within the D.O.Maipo Andes, the 'Denominación de Origin' Maipo Andes, are cultivated with sustainable agricultural practices, combined with precise monitoring with drones. The technology and the information of the drones enable to know exactly what the plants need or when the grapes are at an optimal ripeness to be harvested in the different areas of the estate. After an intense work of 2 years of research on the terroir and on the respective micro-climates in each angle of the vineyards, in cartographing the property to get ultra precise results, the harvest is realized, depending on the technical information of the drones, obviously supervised, as is the whole producing process by the winemakers Germán Lyon and Joaquin Zapata.

THE TASTING

with Germán Lyon, Joaquin Zapata and Maria Paz, all 'crazy about the Cabernet Sauvignon'as they say...

Pérez Cruz Gran Reserva, D.O. Maipo/Andes, Cabernet Sauvignon 2022, 93% Cabernet Sauvignon, 2% Petit Verdot, 3% Carmenère, 1% Cabernet Franc, 1% Syrah, 12 months in used and new American oak, 14% Colour: deep red

On the nose: red berries

On the palate: soft tannins, red fruits, good structure

Pérez Cruz Gran Reserva, D.O. Maipo/Andes, Cabernet Sauvignon 2023, 12 months in American oak, 14%

Colour: brilliant purple

On the nose: black pepper, cassis

On the palate: toast, red currants, a young wine with a pleasant freshness

A toast to the tasting with Germán Lyon (on the right), Maria Paz and Joaquin Zapata



Pérez Cruz Piedra Seca 2022

Pérez Cruz Piedra Seca, D.O. Maipo Andes, Cabernet Sauvignon 2022, 92% Cabernet Sauvignon, 4% Petit Verdot, 4% Cabernet Franc from 40 ha vineyards, less irrigated & with lower yields, in new and used French oak 14 months, 14,50%

Colour: brilliant ruby red

On the nose: strawberries, plums

On the palate: strong tannins, black currants, well structured, long in the aftertaste

Pérez Cruz Pircas D.O. Maipo Andes, Cabernet Sauvignon 2021, from the best parcels, 18 months in new & used French oak, 10% in concrete egg, 14%

Colours: garnet red

On the nose: complex bouquet of black berries and herbs On the palate: ripe fruits, strong tannins combined with freshness, an elegant wine with a long aging potential

Pérez Cruz Pircas, D.O. Maipo Andes, Cabernet Sauvignon 2022, cold and dry vintage, aging in French oak for 16-18 months, 14,50 %

Colour: ruby red

On the nose: spices, cassis,

On the palate: ripe fruits, black berries, well structured

Pérez Cruz, D.O. Maipo Andes, Limited Edition, Carmenère 2023, a dry and warm vintage, 13,40% Colour: purple

On the nose: almond paste, ripe fruits

On the palate: intense ripe black fruits with a pleasant acidity

Pérez Cruz D.O. Maipo Andes, Liguai 2022, from Liguai estate, the top collection, a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Carmenère & Syrah, aging 18 months in new and used French oak 14,60%

Colour: brilliant ruby red

On the nose: cherries, herbal, spices

On the palate: strong tannic presence, harmonious, a

gastronomical wine.

ADDRESS: Viña Pérez Cruz, Fundo Liguai S/N Región Metropolitana



Pérez Cruz Pircas Cabernet Sauvignon 2022

Pérez Cruz Carmenere 2023

Pérez Cruz Liguai 2022

VISIT AT VIÑA HARAS DE PIRQUE

The winemaker and estate director Cecilia Gúzman waits for us on a sunny day for a technical visit and a tasting at Viña Haras de Pirque. As she explains, the name Haras de Pirque pays homage to the oldest thoroughbred stud farm in the country, founded in 1892 and having bred Hussonet, one of the best racing horses in Chilean history. And in admiration, Hussonet's name is put on the label of one of their most prestigious wines. The winery, built in the shape of a horseshoe, the labels and the decoration are also related to horses. And the famous race track is still surrounding the estate's vineyards.

In the early 2000ies Marchese Piero Antinori, a leading figure in the Tuscan wine world, producing wines since the 14th century, was captivated by this part of Maipo at the foot of the Andes Mountains and in 2017 he purchased the 100 ha estate, mainly planted with Cabernet Sauvignon for 60%, Syrah and Cabernet Franc.

In 2017 Haras de Pirque also started a 10 year replantation program to pull out old vines, with the focus on growing the best selection of healthy and 100% organic grapes. And as Cecilia says, especially the Piedmond hillside, we overlook from the terrace of the property, is highlighted for its fine wines. The chief winemaker 's idea is to produce elegant wines with freshness, well integrated tannins and quality orientated. And with these guidelines, the winery also incorporates precise cellar works and with gravity flow to better preserve, with the soft and natural flow the aromas of the grapes.

In the restaurant on the ground, which we



Viña Haras de Pirque

Entry in the shape of a horseshoe

could unfortunately not visit, because they celebrated a marriage at that time, they serve Chilean food of the season, paired with the corresponding wines of the estate. And to host their guests after events, Haras de Pirque has a cooperation with the nearby Majadas de Pirque hotel, which Viñalu will present soon.





Decoration related to horses in the restaurant

Jockey equipment in the bar

THE TASTING

Haras de Pirque Albaclara Sauvignon Blanc 2024, from Valle de Leyda, hand harvest, elaborated in stainless steel, 13% Colour: brilliant clear silver On the nose: green currants, mineral On the palate: yellow plums, herbal, light bitternotes of pomelo, a a lively wine

Haras de Pirque Chardonnay 2024, Valle de Casablanca, 6 months in used French barrels, hand harvest, 13% Colour: golden, with greenish reflections On the nose: mineral, floral On the palate: ripe tropical fruits, with a crisp freshness at the finish

Haras de Pirque Hussonet, Cabernet Sauvignon 2021, organic production from 750m altitude vineyards, mainly of Piedmont vineyards, in a cooler area, 12 months in used barrels, 14% Colour: brilliant purple

On the nose: mineral, herbal, mediterranean herbs, red berries

On the palate: black berries, freshness of red currants, well structured, long in the mouth

Haras de Pirque Galantas, the name of a racing horse, Gran Reserva 2021, Cabernet Franc from high altitude vineyards of 700 m, 14,50% Colour: garnet red & violet On the nose: herbal, and black berries, mentholic On the palate: marzipan, nuts, black berries, plums, complex with a pleasant freshness

Haras de Pirque Gran Reserva Ecràl, the name of a racing horse, Carménère 2021, 14,50% Colour: deep ruby red On the nose: plums, floral, On the palate: soft tannins, harmonious, ripe fruits with the freshness of citrus fruits, elegant



The barrel cellar

Table prepared for a tasting in the cellar

Winemaker Cecilia Gúzman

Haras de Pirque Albis 2021, a blend of 60% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Carmenère, the iconic wine of Haras de Pirque, named after Piero Antinori's eldest daughter Albeira, aging 18 months in new French oak, 14%. The design of the label is representing the union & partnership between two cultures of the Southern and Northern hemispheres, the new and the old world, where the golden ring stands for Italy and the copper circle for Chile.

Colour: brilliant deep garnet red
On the nose: bouquet of red and black berries &
cassis, white pepper

On the palate: strong tannic structure, complex with ripe fruits, sotto bosco, mentholic and long in the aftertaste.

ADDRESS: HARAS DE PIRQUE, Fundo La Rochuela, Camino Macul s/n Pirque



Haras de Pirque Chardonnay 2024 Valle de Casablanca

Haras de Pirque Albaclara Sauvignon Blanc 2024



Haras de Pirque Hussonet Cab. Sauv. 2021

Haras de Pirque Ecràl Carmenere Gran Reserva 2021

Haras de Pirque Iconic Albis blend 2021

SsangYong Torres:

Family SUV at a Bargain Price

At first, it sounds a little confusing: the South Korean brand SsangYong is being renamed KGM—but not all models at once, rather gradually, step by step. And so, the Torres is initially entering its home market under its original birth name before, at a later stage, falling under the new KGM label.





Positioned as a mid-size SUV with business-class flair at a budget price, the Torres aims to combine rugged off-road appeal with the refinement of the executive segment in international markets. The name "Torres" comes from Torres del Paine National Park in southern Chile, whose rugged and rocky hills symbolize the SUV's off-road capability. A first glance at the sturdy fellow underscores this robustness: a steeply upright front, large wheels, and a rear design with a hinted spare wheel recess suggest relentless use beyond paved roads. However, all-wheel drive is only available as an optional extra, and the suggested skid plate is more of a decorative feature. In reality, the Torres joins the long list of mostly front-wheel-drive "wannabe" SUVs that feel much more at home on the road. That's not necessarily a disadvantage though—on city streets and rural roads, the off-road look still brings benefits, whether in storage options or in the elevated seating position.

Once inside the neatly finished cabin, the rugged exterior transforms into a comfortable cruiser that doesn't shy away from a trip to the opera parking lot. The infotainment systems—featuring a 12.5-inch digital cockpit and a 9-inch touchscreen for the driver—offer classically straightforward operation. Numerous driver assistance systems are available, some as standard and others as optional depending on the version. Space-wise, the Torres qualifies as a family car and a comfortable travel companion, with a large boot almost one meter deep, numerous small-item storage compartments, and an impressive capacity of 703 liters.

Under the hood sits a traditional combustion engine—a 1.5-liter turbocharged direct-injection petrol unit producing 163 hp and 280 Nm of torque to the front wheels, paired with either a six-speed manual gearbox or a six-speed automatic. The top speed is 191 km/h, and fuel consumption is listed by the manufacturer (WLTP standard) at 7.9 liters per 100 km. A hybrid version of the Torres is also available.

We thank the Belux importer Astara for providing the vehicle. The SsangYong Torres can be ordered in four different trim levels; in the Bronze version, it is available from €35,284 (including VAT) at Autodis in Esch/Alzette and Mersch.

The SUV offers several driving modes—Normal, Sand, Mud, and Individual—along with an adjustable air suspension that adapts to driving speed.

This article has been originally written in German language.

Impressum

Based on an idea by Romain Batya



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