

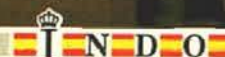
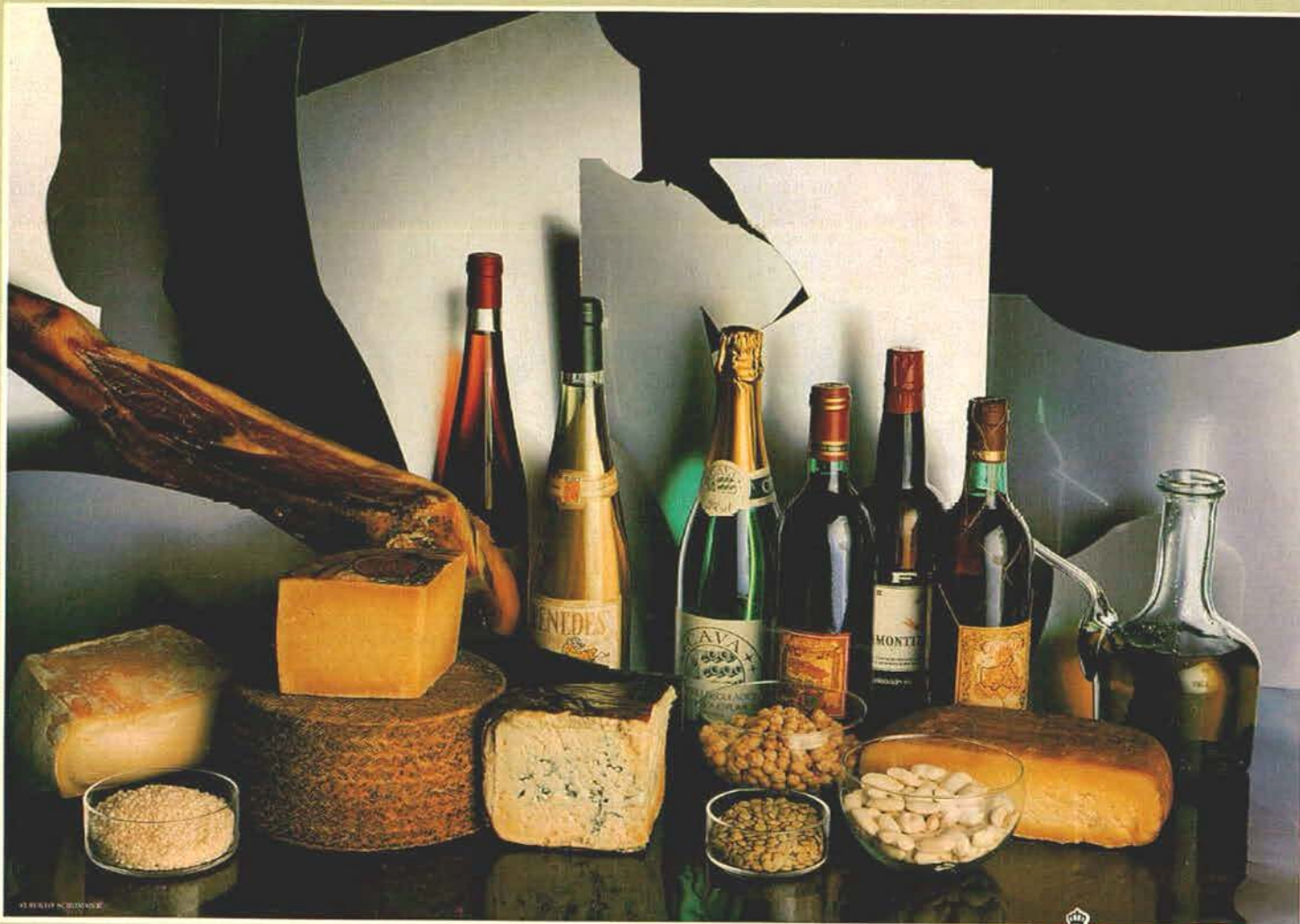
S P A I N

GOURMETOUR

FOOD, WINE & TRAVELS QUARTERLY MAGAZINE



THE IRRISTIBLE RISE OF CAVA
ALMERIA, CLIMATE A LA CARTE
A GARDEN OF EDEN: LANZAROTE



The **I N D O** Spanish National Institute for Denomination of Origin is responsible for ensuring the prestige of Spanish wines, oil, cheese and ham, as well as all other foodstuffs which have been deemed worthy of denomination of origin or specific denomination.

It is specially concerned with the production and quality standards of these products.

The **I N D O** is responsible, furthermore, for wine growing and wine making statistics in Spain and carries out research aimed at improving the wines covered by Denomination of Origin.

**PRESTIGE, QUALITY,
CONTROL AND RESEARCH:**



Contents

3rd quarter 1986

S P A I N GOURMETOUR

Travel, food, wine... a delightful combination which few of us can resist out of hand; a combination which gives us the perfect balance of culture and pleasure, contemplation and adventure. Some would claim that one can get as much pleasure from contemplating a work of art as from a glass of fine wine, from the personal discovery of an unforgettable landscape as from eating delicious food in good company. But let's not carry comparisons too far: why not simply enjoy as much as we can, within the bounds of possibility? The important thing is to choose well.

WINES	The irresistible rise of Cava.	26
	Valdevimbre and Los Oteros: The wines of the Paramo.	34
GASTRONOMY	Mesón de la Villa. The art of doing things properly.	46
TOURISM	A garden of Eden in the depths of hell: Lanzarote.	4
	Almería, Campos de Dalías: Climate a la carte.	14
	The Highlands of Cazorla: Ancient ballad for new-born river.	50
RECIPES	<i>FISH</i>	
	Brandade of salt cod	45
	<i>MEAT</i>	
	Marinated partridge	45
	Marinated turkey breasts	48
	Shepherdess' rabbit	48
	<i>VEGETABLES</i>	
	Potato purée with olive oil	45
	<i>DESSERT</i>	
	Melon	25
	Strawberry fritters	45
	Puffs	48
	Leche frita (fried milk)	48
	Dried fruit compote	48
ART	The still-lives of Goya	58

REPRODUCTION: No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without written permission.

COVER

Fotography by Fernando Briones

Director: Luis González Olivares. • Editor: Cathy Boirac. • Publisher: INFE, P.º de la Castellana, 14, 28046 Madrid. SPAIN.
• Material: Club de Gourmets S. A. & Ediciones de Gastronomía S. A. • Translation: Language Consultancy Services, Madrid.
• Design: Artime, Nebot & Capell. • Subscription: INFE, Departamento de Publicaciones, P.º de la Castellana, 14, 28046 Madrid.
SPAIN. • Circulation: INPROTOUR & INFE, Madrid. • Depósito legal: M-11-0021976. • Printed in Spain by Raycar, Matilde Hernández, 27, 28019 Madrid. SPAIN.





A GARDEN OF EDEN IN THE DEPTHS OF HELL

LANZAROTE

On the black island, in the sea of petrified lava, life seems to explode in beauty. José Martínez Peiró has written of his fascinating trip to this island, which although always open to all sorts of outside influences, has none the less preserved its own special character.

Photographs by Pablo Neustadt.

From the air, Lanzarote looks like a gigantic, dark grey, stoney patch floating on the sparkling, blue Atlantic. A raised platform of volcanos, where there seems scarcely a hope of finding any trace of life. From up there in the heights, it is hard to understand why the guide-books should insist on using the adjectives «fortunate» or «pleasant» for this most African, most desolate of the Canary Islands. Then, as the airplane gradually nears the earth, the spots of green can be made out against the dark background of the land, reducing the dramatic barrenness of the first impression.

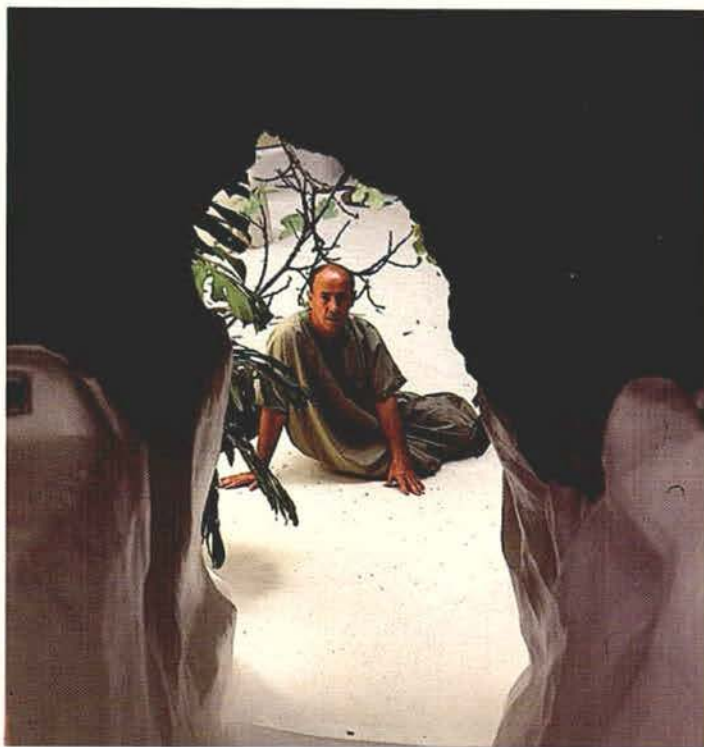
Mondays are change-over days in the Lanzarote tourist industry. Many tour groups are going away today, leaving their beds and their square metres of beach to new visitors, who will arrive during the afternoon from the rain clouds and urban views of Manchester, Stuttgart, Stockholm, etc.

They have hardly stepped onto *terra firma* when the airport porters rush up to them to offer them rooms, after a dire warning that they have arrived on the worst day of the week. When the passengers on flights from Madrid go to collect their baggage, there is still a crowd of people at the collection belt, who have just arrived from Copenhagen in a Boeing. In the next room, a line of sunburnt shoulders is patiently waiting for the loudspeakers to announce the embarkation of the plane to London. Behind them, they have seven days of holiday, with long, lazy hours in the sun, a camel trip around the mouth of the volcano, and a few dinners eaten to the accompaniment of local dance groups. On one of the walls of the lobby is an enormous mural by César Manrique, who must be the best-known Canarian artist both in and outside the archipelago. Those travellers who may not yet know him will certainly not be able to avoid knowing a large selection of his work by the time they leave, as they will see his work wherever they go on the island.

At three in the afternoon, Arrecife succumbs to lethargy under the sky now overcast by the heat. The sirocco, which the locals insist is not usual in this season, lifts up a cloud of dust which makes it impossible to get a clear view of the silhouette of the nearby mountains. At this time of day, the streets of the city centre are empty, as if the implacable sun had called

curfew. The pavements are deserted, except for two African-looking boys being watched carefully by a pair of Municipal Guards. They are trying (rather unsuccessfully) to sell a sample of tin trinkets in the cafés near the port, to which several locals have taken refuge from the sun in the company of friends. The only touch of animation comes from some groups of men on the jetty, who look as if they must be carrying their unemployment papers in their pockets.

They wait, sitting on the water's edge, opposite the blinding white facade of the seaside promenade, from which the town appears tiny in the distance. The town is guarded - almost smothered - by and excellent natural port, from which locals have



The uncertainty of this island contains all the beauty of the cosmos.

been able to keep an eye on what was until recently known as the Spanish Sahara.

Three and a half centuries earlier, Arrecife inherited the title of the island's capital from neighbouring Tegüise, because of its ideal location for overseas trade. It was already a well-known port and had been popular amongst European navigators from the times in which fleets from the Old Continent did not go about planting their flags in the first site they found. The city also had the Saint Gabriel fort, the only safe refuge for the population when they had to flee from the looting and plundering of the Berber pirates in the 17th century.

Today, the city is torn between the need to multiply its income from tourism and the fear of seeing itself turned into a ce-

ment jungle of hamburger joints. For the moment, fear is winning, and, except for a ten-storey hotel which stands out like a sore thumb in the most visible spot in town, the urban landscape still conserves the colonial air referred to in the guide-books.

The gravitational centre of Arrecife is around the meeting point of the street León y Castillo and the seaside promenade, which has different names at different points along its route. León y Castillo is surrounded by the commercial part of the city, and offers a varied range of places to visit: banks, jewellery shops, chemists, fashion boutiques and the old cafes which have survived the onslaught of commercialism. It is also the «bargain» street.

In Arrecife, one has to take a walk through the tropical gardens from the jetties of the old port and sit down in some *kiosko* to drink a cold beer and pick on a plate of squid. No self-respecting bar in Lanzarote would fail to offer this typical fare. It is as unavoidable as the fried fish in the taverns of Malaga or the tripe in old Madrid. Juan, the owner of this *kiosko*, has been preparing it in the same way for twenty years now.

«There's no secret to it,» he says. «First you beat the squid good and proper, so that they go soft. Then you wash them, chop them up and put them in a saucepan with vinegar, oil, garlic, onion and salt. You leave the cook, stirring them every now and then, so that they don't stick.»

The noise of the fashionable terrace bars wafts over from the other side of the street, where a crowd of young people grasp

their gin and tonics as they nod their heads compulsively to the latest beat. In the same area, concentrated within a radius of 100 metres, are the main restaurants of Arrecife. At about eight in the evening, establishments with cosmopolitan sounding names - Café Paris, Mexico, Taiwan, Tania, Abdón - open their doors to let in groups of retired Scandinavian tourists, honeymoon couples and executives from Las Palmas with the intention of firming up a real estate deal over an avocado and lobster salad.

Just glancing through the menus at these restaurants, one soon notices that the local cuisine is definitely fighting a losing battle with the dishes more in accordance with the eating habits of the European visitors. Where you used to be able to order



The sea has left its mark on the coasts of Lanzarote. And a welcome breeze blows off its waters, relieving the monotony of the hot, black lava.

sancocho de cherne (grouper fish stew) or fresh fish soup, you are now offered grilled fish and *Sopa Castellana* (Castilian garlic soup). Thin steaks with chips and roast chicken - not to mention hamburgers - have come to replace the Lanzarote goat stews and Canarian *pucheros* (stews), possibly for ever.

On the other side of the promenade, one has to pass over the *Puente de las Bolas*, built during the reign of Queen Isabel of Castille, in order to reach the castle of San Gabriel, a melancholy fortress of blackened stone, which looks as though it somehow missed its site and time. It is said that its walls have witnessed more than one meal of cats, donkeys, and even rats, during the cruel onslaughts to which the population was frequently subjected by the

African boats. Its stones and its cannons were always the ultimate saviour of the locals. Indeed, there are some who insist that the history of Lanzarote began from scratch several times over, on the basis of the few survivors from inside the fort.

The Castle of San José had better luck. A more solid building, it never experienced the heat of great battles. It is popularly nicknamed «Hunger Fort», perhaps in memory of the enormous sums of money eaten up by its construction at times of scarcity. Carlos III, the monarch who ordered its construction managed to rid Lanzarote of almost all its ills during his reign, except one... hunger.

As if trying to deny the popular saying, there is now a good restaurant in what used

to be the underground prisons of the fort, which overlooks the calm waters of the Los Mármoles port through a wide bay window. The building, which underwent extensive renovations, also directed by César Manrique, stars in all the brochures as the best preserved monument on the island. It also houses the International Museum of Modern Art.

From this vantage point, one can see the ferries arriving, connecting Lanzarote to the rest of the Archipelago and the Peninsula, and the luxury transatlantic cruisers which are touring the Canary Islands before making their way to the warm waters of the Caribbean. Los Mármoles is the port from which the Canaries export their onions and fish preserves. At the end of the point, a solitary patrol seems to watch



The last great eruptions of the Timanfaya volcano left more than a quarter of the island's surface covered with a blanket of petrified lava and scoria.

over the absolute calm which reigns in the cove, whilst a bit further, in the fishing port, more than 300 vessels are packed together, where they will remain moored until dusk, when they will set off to drop their nets along with the enormous Russian and Japanese industrial trawlers that come down regularly to these African fishing grounds.

The restaurant, along with the other facilities in the castle, form part of a chain of tourist centres created and administered by the Cabildo Insular (regional public authority), in an attempt to sponsor the natural, historical and cultural resources of Lanzarote, cooking amongst them. In the words of the restaurant chef, the cooking here is not especially different from that in the rest of the Canaries.

«It's difficult to talk of a Lanzarote cuisine as such. We eat the same as on the other islands, with the obvious differences in details, mainly due to the fact that we live in one of the islands with the poorest agriculture. Some time ago, I managed to get

together about fifteen recipes from Lanzarote. Then I began researching the recipes of Gran Canaria, Fuerteventura, La Gomera, Tenerife... and I discovered that several different parts of the Archipelago claimed all the dishes, except for three or four, as their own.»

Nowadays, local cooking, necessarily based on fish and the scanty agricultural produce from the semi-desert land of the island, is limited to family kitchens in the agricultural and fishing areas of Lanzarote. And the only special dishes in which the islanders can let their imagination run free, are based on imports to supplement those ingredients which the infertile soil refuses to render. The castle restaurant is an exception which proves the rule, and its menu includes a wide variety of traditional Canarian cooking: *potage canario* (thick soup), *sancocho* (stew), rockfish baked in salt crust, roast kid (in season), fresh fish soup, *bienmesabe* (an almond dessert), *frangollo* (another dessert, made of maize and milk), and others. And the

wine list, although modest, is more than sufficient, including two brands bottled in Lanzarote: «El Grifo» and «Mozaga», both with a high alcohol content, made from malvasia (like malmsey wine) and listán (an aromatic white grape).

Our trip now continues northwards, along the road from Arrecife to the Royal Town of Tegüise, and the serene landscapes of the farming region, Los Valles. Tegüise, named in memory of the heir of Guardafia (the last native king) was also the first city established in the Archipelago according to European urban characteristics, although scarcely any Europeans are to be found in its squares nowadays and it is now a shadow of its former greatness, isolated in the highlands of Lanzarote.

The churches of San Francisco and San Miguel, some palaces and several monasteries and convents remind us of this lost splendour from the times when it was the capital of the island and the centre of the movement to convert the indigenous Guanches to Christianity. Other spots, like



The farmers fight an ongoing battle against nature in order to cultivate tiny patches of green on this barren landscape, like mirages in a dramatic desert of ashes and destruction.

the Callejón de la Sangre (Blood Alley), site of the bloody massacre of women and children by Morato Arráez's expedition in the summer of 1586, keep the horrors of the past fresh in the minds of the town's inhabitants. The people also maintain a tradition of local dances, which are accompanied by the *timple* (which the locals call the 'little camel'), and is also the last stronghold of one of the traditional gastronomic dishes of Lanzarote: «*Viejo Tegui-se*» (Old Teguisse) specially fattened chickens («fed only on millet») cooked with the island's white onions, local wine, garlic, salt and pepper and served alongside the so-called 'wrinkled potatoes'. In ancient times, this dish was reserved for great banquets.

Nearly everyone here has at least one relation in America. At the end of the last century, all those who could, took the boat in the firm conviction that nothing across the blue ocean could be more hostile than what they were leaving behind. A couple of farmers, who the travellers have caught

at work, explain the reasons for the massive exodus, which brought about a significant drop in the island's population.

«If you're lucky here, it might rain three times in a year. Just in case, you have to plant a bit of everything. If the onions take properly, you can reckon that the harvest for everything else'll be good too. But us folks, we're happy with what we can get...»

In order to make the best of the few drops of rain which do fall, the farmers have to cover the fertile land with a blanket of black sand - which they often bring from far away - to prevent evaporation and keep in the moisture.

«Then, there's tourism - but we hardly ever go down to the coast. Anyway, that's for the young folks.»

He can't be more than forty, although hidden under his black hat, his face looks more like that of a fifty-year old. And she can't be more than thirty, but is hard at work, helping her husband to sow the maize and Canarian millet.

The winding road zigzags its way up to the plateau of Famara-Guatifay, the highest point in the island. Behind it, lies the valley of Haría, where the travellers are amazed by the sight of a genuine Algerian oasis in the centre of a crater formed by old volcanoes, worn down by erosion. In Haría, a sort of Biblical town made up of tiny white houses and palm groves, people rarely work the land after midday. The rest of the day goes by in a calm tranquility, only broken from time to time by the coaches driving up to the Mirador del Rio.

Here, at the southernmost point of Lanzarote, the landscape, now craggy cliffs, suddenly plumbs into a 500-metre deep drop, then softens before it reaches out to the sea in tiny tongues of sand. Ahead, are the so-called *Islas Menores* (Smaller Islands): La Graciosa - inhabited by a small fishing community -, La Alegranza and Montaña Clara. These make up the marine labyrinth in which Algerian boats once prepared their revenge and the rescue of

HOW TO GET THERE

By air: Iberia has direct flights to Arrecife from Madrid (5 or 6 each week, depending on the season), Malaga (weekly), Seville (2 each week), Las Palmas (daily), Tenerife (daily) and Fuerteventura (3 each week).

By sea: Transmediterránea has a weekly service from the mainland, embarking at Cadiz. Lanzarote is also linked by the same company's boats to Las Palmas (2 each week), and Puerto del Rosario (Fuerteventura) (2 each week). There are also small ferries which make the journey between Lanzarote Sur and Fuerteventura several times a day. Arrecife is a stop-over for several weekly mini-cruisers which Transmediterránea has between the Spanish Peninsula and the Canary Islands.

the African slaves captured by the Castilian conquerors. Today, the Mirador del Río has been visited by more than 30 coaches, laden down with tourists who have dutifully awaited their turn to click their insatiable cameras over the abyss.

After the Mirador, the same coaches, following what is known as the northern route, go towards Los Jameos del Agua, another tourist attraction from the Cabildo. There, visitors can buy souvenirs and walk in Indian file along the underground grottoes which, like all natural features in Lanzarote, were created by volcanic activity. Another of Nature's idiosyncracies, to which César Manrique has added his own personal touch to dream up a sort of paradise, inhabited by exuberant tropical flora and fauna, which also acts as a restaurant, where lavish parties can be organised.

After a buffet supper, with agreeable background music played by a small band, it is already getting into the small hours when we make the return journey to the coast, a few kilometers to the south of Arrecife.

Puerto del Carmen, which was known as La Tiñosa (The Stingy One) until a few years ago, is a small fishing community, some fifteen minutes from the capital, along a road sown with graffiti against the

Agenda

WHERE TO STAY:

Hotel rooms in Lanzarote are subject to high demand throughout almost the entire year. It is thus a good idea to book well in advance. There are no campsites on the island.

Arrecife: Arrecife Gran Hotel (****), Miramar (**).

Puerto del Carmen: Los Fariones (****), San Antonio (****).

Costa Teguise: Las Salinas (****). A Sheraton hotel, and one of the best in the Canary Islands.

WHERE TO EAT:

Arrecife: Castillo de San José (typical Canarian cooking, especially fish). El Almacén (in a cultural centre, with Canarian cooking). Abdón (fresh fish and seafood). Martín.

Parque Nacional de las Montañas del Fuego: El Diablo (Canarian cooking. Lunch only).

Mozaga: Restaurant next to the Monumento a la Fecundidad (good, honest local food).

Yaiza: La Era (set in a 17th-century country house).

Puerto del Carmen: This is the

biggest tourist centre in Lanzarote, and thus has the largest number of restaurants, etc. of all price ranges.

THE WEATHER

Average temperatures vary between 13-21 degrees Centigrade in the winter and 18-28 in the summer. Guaranteed sun throughout the year. Only 150-200 mm. rainfall *per annum*.

WHAT TO BUY:

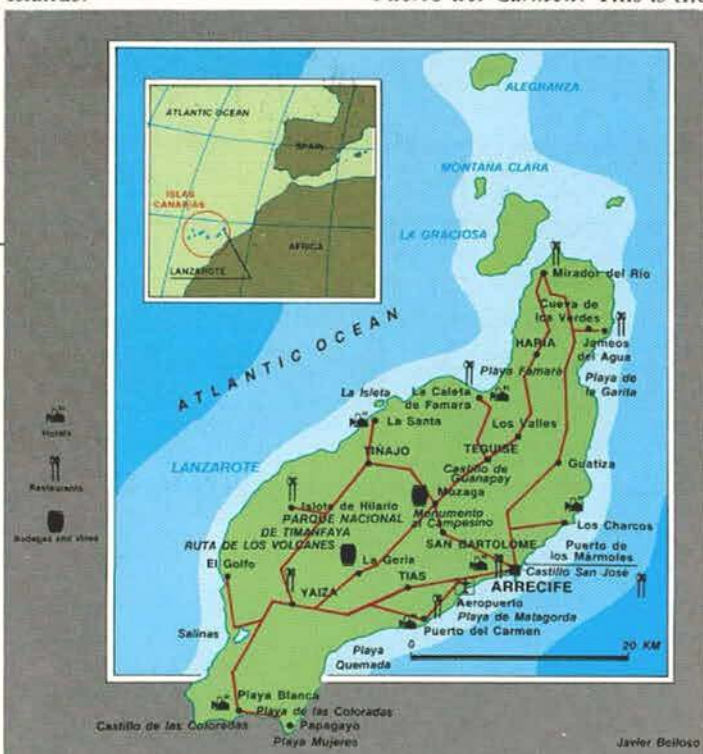
Like the rest of the archipelago, the island is a duty-free zone, where imported goods can be bought cheap. As can be imagined, Lanzarote has a more limited choice of products than Las Palmas or Tenerife, although there is still much variety.

hind the bars and shop counters - to cede the field to this court of European citizens whose healthy faces gaze blankly around them, their heads covered in white and blue caps.

The road is one long line of bars, pizzerias, souvenir shops and travel agencies which organise excursions to the volcano. The Lanzarote nightspots are also nestled amongst these with names such as «Banana Club», «Cuevas Blancas», «Beach Club» or «Wilson».

The modern, whitewashed developments continue along the road which comes to an end at Playa Blanca, at the southernmost point of the island, opposite the Fuerteventura coasts. Here, the groups of villas are spaced further apart, and leave room for an 'alternative' tourism of people who travel light, with a tent and provisions, and who prefer to lose themselves (after having lost their last vestiges of clothing) in the semi-wild beaches dotted along the coast from the Punta de la Pechiguera to the Punta del Papagayo. A solitary lighthouse stands on this latter point, its signals guiding sailors through the Strait of Bocayna.

This is where Jean de Bethencourt, the Norman who conquered Lanzarote for Castille, disembarked at the beginning of the



onslaught of tourism. One day, the property developers set their sights on the nearby beaches and bricks and mortar began to take the place of the prickly pears. Nowadays, the only remnants of the old fishing village are a few parapets on the jetty. The rest is a white housing development, where most of the foreign visitors to Lanzarote are accommodated.

About ten in the morning, every day of the year, the beaches fill up with tourists, who protect themselves from view amongst the stone blocks of the rubble from the road, large families who play at something like French bowls whilst hopeful windsurfers wait for a gust of wind.

The island population seems to have disappeared here - although still survives be-



Unique Formula makes Marqués de Cáceres Rioja wines a success with the experts.

– the facts in Red and White.

Take the expertise of Europe's best vineyards, add a love of Spain, plus the dedication to produce a Spanish wine comparable with the greatest in the world -the result- the superlative wines of Marqués de Cáceres. It all began twelve years ago when Henri Forner decided to return to Spain for the soil and cooler climate of the Rioja Alta, there to develop his wines from the finest grapes of the region.

Together with the most forward-looking of the local vineyard owners and a group of lovers of fine wine, he built a new bodega, installing the latest in temperature-controlled fermentation equipment, and finally aged the wine in barrels of French oak. The resulting fine wines are receiving critical acclaim from experts who know and love good wine.

Marqués de Cáceres Red gets top marks for its velvety softness, spicy varietal character and lingering finish.

Marqués de Cáceres White is bottled young to preserve its crisp, clean dryness.

Try these unique, remarkable wines, already appreciated all over the world, and see if you agree with the experts.

For further information please write to: **Marqués de Cáceres, Ctra. de Logroño, s/n., Cenicero (LA RIOJA) SPAIN.**



Rioja

BODEGAS MARTINEZ-BUJANDA

Tarragona, Terra Alta

BODEGAS PEDRO ROVIRA

Penedès

CAVAS ROGER GOULART

were already elaborating quality wines...

They are from now on, offering you high quality service

*The three above wineries,
plus a group of international services (GDS-CI)
are associated in the «consortium»
COMERCIO INTERNACIONAL DEL VINO (C.I.V.)*



ASK FOR CATALOG

Tel. 51
21-20111 33
Telex 97196 CIG E
08038 BARCELONA
SPAIN

15th century. First he defeated the Caudillo Guardafia, although not without the help of some traitors amongst the Caudillo's compatriots. Then, after putting down a rebellion against his lieutenant, Gadifer de la Salle, he ended up by enslaving most of the native population. From then on, the fort in which he lived - near here, but now disappeared - became the stronghold from which he carried out his conquest of the rest of the islands in the Archipelago.

The travellers have kept their visit to the Montañas del Fuego (Fire Mountains) for towards the end of their trip - a wise decision, for once one has seen the Timanfaya Park, the rest of the island seems to have shrunk. In order to get there, they follow the road through Geria and Yaiza. But first of all, they have to travel through Mozaga, the second biggest wine producing region in the island, and site of the Monument to Fertility, designed (once again) by Manrique. Here, there is a restaurant where anybody interested in knowing the roots of Lanzarote gastronomy just has to stop.

The vineyards of Geria, on the way to the volcanos, are along with the volcanos themselves, the most photographed landscapes in the island. Man's fight to win the ongoing battle against Nature has given rise to a genuine work of art: a vineyard of almost 1,500 hectares spreads out over a bed of *lapilli*, belched out by Timfaya some two and a half centuries earlier, where each vine shoot has to be grown at the bottom of a hole more than a metre deep and be protected against the Saharan winds by a stone wall. Hercules himself would have paled before the enormous task which these vines have entailed - although the happy end to the story of so much effort has been almost two million litres of Malmsey wine per year.

Arriving at Yaiza, at the foot of the Montañas de Fuego, the traveller can stop off again, to take a relaxing break in the oasis, under the shade of tall palm trees which rustle gently over the whitewashed terraces. In the village, the house where Pérez Galdós used to live during his long stays in Lanzarote, is still closed up. It is right by the church of Nuestra Señora del Remedio (Our Lady of the Remedy), which bore close witness to the violent eruption of Timanfaya, two hundred and fifty years ago, an event which appears on the parish records. In front of the tiny church, tourists stop their cars to photograph an American Ombu. The only tree of this kind in Lanzarote, except for one other example in Tegüise, this specific tree has the rare honour of starring in tourist guides.

The national park in the Montañas del Fuego is spread out over the land near the

western coast of the island, covering some 500 square kilometers. The region is deeply scarred by what experts consider to have been one of the biggest volcanic disasters in the history of mankind. The 1730 eruption, in which more than 30 volcanos were explosively active for six years, led to 11 villages being buried under the molten lava, and devastated more than a quarter of the island.

To get a fuller idea of the scope of this tragedy, one has to make one's way up to the Islote de Hilario, a tourist spot on the brim of a latent volcano. The sight is quite overwhelming: to the south and the west, the desert of black lava reaches down to the sea, forming craggy cliffs, broken here and there by beaches of dark sand. To the north, the *malpais* - the «bad country» of volcanic lava, puffed up with

air again within a few seconds, as a violent spurt of steam. The *parador* restaurant has been set up so that the kitchens actually use the natural heat of the mountain.

From the Islote, the road sets off on the Circuito de Los Volcanes (The Volcano Circuit), which tourists are allowed to drive along in their own cars, after long and arduous applications for the privilege. A small asphalt path winds amongst the labyrinth of craters and offers visitors a series of landscapes which could have been taken out of a science-fiction novel.

At the end of the tour, the group stops for a quick drop of refreshment in the cafeteria, before returning to their hotel. They look back at the amazingly lonely places they have seen, comparing them with the other side of the island which they had experienced beforehand, and try to



Nearly everyone has at least one relation in America.

steam holes - stretches out to near Tinajo, about 10 kilometers away. To the east, the ashes reach down to the valley of La Geria.

Before going on up to the islet, the tour groups stop at the foot of the Timanfaya, to climb up and down its black slopes in slow caravans of dromedaries. Then, at the doors of the *parador* (Spanish State-owned hotel), they all see yet another demonstration of the heat contained in the depths of the earth, as if they needed further evidence, there on top of a live volcano. Continuing their tour, they observe four employees of the Cabildo, who have repeated the ceremony an infinite number of times, pouring buckets of water into holes in the ground, which are thrown back up into the

find an explanation for this strange island, to understand the warm friendliness of the people who did not manage to emigrate in time and had to learn to love lands which never cease to threaten them with their potentially malicious power. They also remember what César Manrique told them the day before - that he had found in these seas of lava just that peace which he had set out to find in a long journey which took him to Madrid, Paris, London and New York.

All in all, the uncertainty of this island contains all the beauty of the cosmos. The ongoing dialectic of mankind's relationship with Nature has resulted in a noble fight, tinged with secure faith in eternity.



ALMERIA, CAMPOS DE DALIAS

CLIMATE A LA CARTE

West of the town of Almería, between the Gádor mountains and the Mediterranean, what was once a desert is now one big greenhouse which grows the vegetables that Europe needs. The area has changed radically, though the old Mediterranean ways still survive.

Text: Gabriel García Guardia
Photos: Antonio de Benito

After a few days in Almería, and the sight of so many acres of plastic and sand, statistics and trading figures, one could be forgiven for thinking that vegetables are among the things that man makes to measure. Certain men, that is. In this case, they are mostly «strangers», attracted by the likelihood of making money, to set up in business in this part of Spain. They began by installing their greenhouses around the then wretchedly poor village of El Ejido, on the outskirts of Dalías. Then they gradually extended on either side of the National Highway, reaching almost to the Mediterranean on the one hand and to the foothills of the Sierra Gádor on the other. Later, the tide of plastic and pipework was to invade the peaceful countryside of Tarambana and Balanegra, and spill over from La Mojone-



ra onto the very doorstep of the tourist-centres of Aguadulce and Roquetas choking the ancient cattle-track at Santa María del Aguila and El Parador.

By today, Campo de Dalías seems totally paved in plexiglass, propped up on supports of eucalyptus and carob. The translucent cubicles, uralite-roofed bays, makeshift warehouses and factories are densely packed. The scanty dust-settling showers which occasionally fall make no impression on the chalky carapace of this geological tortoise, stranded forever to the west of where the Phoenicians founded their mythical *Abdera*. No river meanders gently about these parts, nor flows under the half-moon bridges. The only clue that there was once water here comes from the occasional dry riverbed. Yet on the plain, there is barely a rectangle of unoccupied soil. The fields have been dressed in a soft,

rustling garment. The odd chink, a vent to let in a whiff of sea breeze, or a tear made by the east wind, tempt one to look inside. In there, everything is vibrantly alive. A thick green carpet, pinned down to the furrowed soil: raked ridges of aubergine plants, runner beans snaking up their canes, strings of solanacea decorated with tomato tufts or tremulous fronds of capsicum, clumps of cucumber. If a convenient person were to open one of the wobbly wire doors for you, a veritable chlorophyll jungle would flood your field of vision. Wherever you step, you involuntarily tread on a shoot which slowly straightens up again like a labourer with back-ache. Tiny insects will make their way into the soles of your shoes to hide among the fine sand left from the beach. But weeds and insects have no place in this vegetable world of Almería. The big «plant hygiene» companies

have it all under control. As you stroll about this botanical temple, beneath the grubby, yellowing canopy of polyethylene and polypropylene, an indefinable, and somehow religious, mood will come over you. It is wonderment. At the wonder of it all. At how clever man is.

Thousands of questions will rush to your lips as you gaze about, here and there, childishly trying to penetrate the mystery of growth, the secret of this vegetable luxury.

— What we offer in Almería, and it's something no-one else can offer, is fresh, cheap fruit and vegetables out of their normal season. In Germany, for example, if they want to eat peppers in January, they either buy from Almería or go without.

Vegetable experts have gathered in El Ejido de Dalías to pool their expertise. One might call it a new Babel, though this



Under a canopy of plastic, Europe dictates the size and density of its tomatoes; the sheen and colour of its aubergines; the texture of its peppers. Almería is the Common Market's winter larder.

time on the flat, under the constant, hazy gaze of the desert. It is they who supply the seeds - treated and prepared to the finest degree, selected and guaranteed - to the farmers of Almería. These farmers have borrowed up to the hilt and invested everything they and their families have, in greenhouses; they are plain, honest people with a taste for the new wine which comes down from the villages of the Alpujarra, and for the old ways of their forefathers. They understand nothing of polyploid genetic varieties, of balanced fertilisers, virus resistant hybrids or vegetable growth aids. But there are those who do, and they leave it to them. Business depends on them.



with no cracks, firm, all the same size and with thick skin. It wasn't difficult to manage that. It was tougher to get the right colour for lettuce, because the yellowish green that the seeds gave a few years ago looked fine at the greengrocer's or in sunlight, but looked distinctly washed-out under the neon lights of a hypermarket. So we had to intervene genetically to get a good green, which we call «Trocadero». It's much more successful with that sort of consumer.

— You see, our business is closely linked with gastronomy and of course, in a consumer society, marketing is vital. Take the pepper, for example. We can't offer the same pepper on the domestic and foreign markets. In Spain, we prefer them fine-fleshed, elongated, Italian or Andalusian-type, because they are used mainly for frying. But in Central Europe and the northern countries they eat them stuffed,

so we have to supply them with «Cordoba» or «Gedeón»-type peppers, with thick flesh which stands up well to baking, and plenty of cavity.

Then there are consumer habits:

— Let me explain. We can produce the seed for any product you like and with the characteristics you specify. Just at the moment we are selecting seeds which are not only perfectly adapted to cultivation in Almería but which also give the qualities the consumer wants. Remember, the consumer buys by sight, then forms his opinion after tasting. Let me give you an example. The consumer wants peppers very shiny,

One is constantly amazed by the wonders of science, and is never sure whether what an expert is saying is a commonplace in Almería or a quotation from Huxley. And the confusion increases still further when one compares the sophisticated world of aubergines named after artificial satellites and courgettes with code-names in Cobol, with the restricted world of Indalecio.

Indalecio is a labourer who works in the marshland. Oh, yes - Adra has its marshland, with little pools of fresh water fenced in with hurdles, crows playing hide-and-seek with the breeze, ducks occasio-

Agenda

HOW TO GET THERE

— The plane lands 8 km. east of Almería. There are regular flights from Madrid, Barcelona and some German cities. There is also a small plane which flies in from Melilla.

— Few passenger boats stop in the port of Almería and fewer still in Adra. Some of the Transmediterránea and Aucona ferries link with the Hispano-african town. The occasional cruise stops off unexpectedly at quays more accustomed to the red dust of iron ore than the tread of tourist sandals.

— The train, direct from Madrid, Barcelona and Granada travels with notorious slowness along old and curving tracks, yet to be electrified.

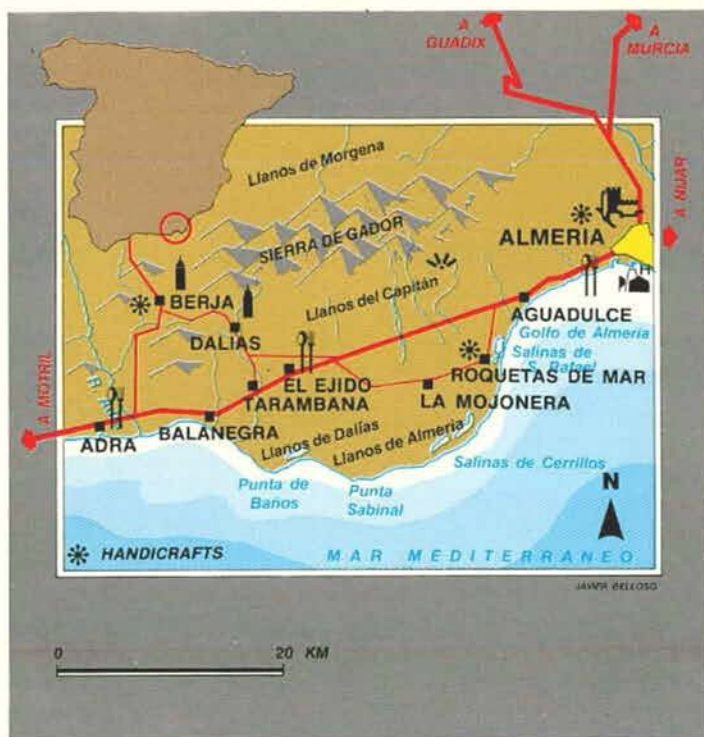
— Various companies provide daily transport by bus from Valencia, Barcelona, Cartagena, Málaga and Granada. Alsina-Graells is the company with the best links throughout the southeast of the province.

— The journey by car has improved since the levelling of certain sections of the Nacional 340, especially those which give access to the long stretch from Tarambana to Aguadulce. Starting off from central and northern Spain, some prefer to approach Almería by the Murcia road or the Jaén-Guadix road. Approaching from the west, it is best to go via Motril.

THINGS TO SEE AND USEFUL INFORMATION

— The provincial capital has various monuments of interest: the reconstructed Alcazaba; a heterogeneous cathedral with the tomb of the patron saint of lovers, among other less important figures.

— Naturalists would enjoy an excursion to the marshland of Adra to observe its interesting bird-life, or the point of Sabinal for its extraordinary ve-



getation of unquestionably North African provenance. The capital also has an exceptional reserve of Saharan wild-life.

— If you are interested solely in the extra-early produce of Almería and all that entails, do not forget to make an appointment in advance with:

— The Public Relations Department of *Tierras de Almería*. This is the company with the most advanced production system for hot-house produce. Their address is: El Ejido, Apt. 19. Tel: (951) 48 26 11.

— *COEXPHAL*: Almería's cooperative of producers and exporters of horticultural produce. Good data and information resources. Its offices are in Avda. Cabo de Gata, 2, 4º, Almería. Tel: (951) 23 65 66.

— *Sluis & Groot*: A delegation of Holland's most famous seed selectors. They have a wide range of catalogues and are constantly investigating experimental hot-houses which can be visited. They are at km. 87.9 on the Nacional 340, El Ejido. Tel: (951) 48 02 13.

— *Bruinsma, S.A.* Also

suppliers of and experimenters in seeds. Km 96.5 on the same road. Tel: (951) 34 00 08.

TO BUILD UP YOUR STRENGTH

If one is not too demanding, the Spanish custom of drinks and «tapas» can be practised quite satisfactorily in various little restaurants and *tabernas* in any of the villages round about. «La Isla» in Adra and «El Toboso» and «El Mulhacén» in El Ejido are not at all bad.

— In Aguadulce and Roquetas for reasonable food one hears «Los Valencianos» and «El Abuelo» mentioned.

— In the capital try the «Rincón de Juan Pedro», or the «Anfora», run by a bright young man who is doing rather well at Prolongación de G. Garbín, 3.

IF YOU ARE STAYING A FEW DAYS

— The Gran Hotel is the

most steeped in nostalgia for the days when Almería was a miniature Hollywood.

— From the 3-star category down, none stands out from the rest.

— In Adra there are two first-class and two third-class camping sites. In Aguadulce there is one first-class and in La Garrofa one second-class.

HANDICRAFTS AS A MEMENTO

— In Roquetas de Mar, the unusual craft of glass-engraving is practised. Juan Trulla Gumarra, at Carretera, 33, does exquisite engraving of wine-glasses and occasionally, to order, decorates vases, lamps, etc. The invasion of metal and synthetics has almost completely ousted from Andalucía the ancient craft of glass-making, known since the 13th century, according to the prolific commentaries and eulogies of Ibn Sa'id.

— In Berja, there are two of the best weavers of woolen blankets. They are Francisco Cabrero Arqueros, in Calle Rosal, 3, and José Cabrera Robles in San Tesifón, 14.

— The area's only potter is Gabriel Arqueros in Berja's Calle Tesifón, 18. Nevertheless, if you go to Níjar, not too far away, you will find a lovely selection of Almería pottery dishes, plates, basins, jugs, salad bowls, vases... all decorated with brightly coloured run glaze.

— Throughout the province, handicrafts are good and cheap. The marble of Macael and Olula is famous. Fabrics, slightly different from those of Granada, are made in the villages of the Alpujarra. In Aldoloboy they make objects out of gourds. In Mojácar, brass and copper, and in the capital, cleaned and assorted sea-shells, as well as some basket-weaving and guitar-making.



As night falls, the greenhouses of Dalías could be taken for pools left by the Mediterranean tide. To guess at its future, even the sociological aspect of taste, and employment in Europe have to be taken into account.

nally pecking at their mirror images, and patches of *terra firma*. The national highway managed to avoid it, and just the occasional path winds among the pools, to be trodden every year during the shooting season. Not long ago, Indalecio bought himself a few hectares in the marsh. He carried sand from the beach at El Lance de la Virgen and sowed a few seeds. Indalecio is Almerian through and through and looks askance at the plastic greenhouses. Indalecio prepares his own sowing beds and by the looks of it, is unlikely to make his fortune.

A few thousand yards away from his house, tomatoes for Europe are being made to measure: B-350 for Sweden and the Scandinavian countries because they like them small; DARIO F-150 for Britain for use in juice and sauce; NANCY GC-213 go down very well in Germany; ERLIOR GC-715 for France... His tomatoes split because of early rain and when he goes to town to sell them in the mornings, he gets next to nothing for them. Indalecio's hands are ingrained with the soil of Almería. Their veins bulge beneath



the skin like the purple roots of his aubergines. Indalecio doesn't know that the aubergines most in demand in Europe today are AGORA and AUB-967. They are preferred for their small seed-cavity to give dense, compact slices, and a stiff green calix, suggesting lushness and freshness; of course their colour is consistent, their shine extraordinary and their shape preferably elongated.

If Indalecio knew that ten minutes from his Almería small-holding there is a cooperative called «Tierras de Almería», which regulates by computer the amount of hydroponic solution each plant needs, ac-

ording to its variety, stage of growth, mean temperature and countless other factors...

If Indalecio knew that the international markets have specific requirements for watermelons and that it isn't difficult to satisfy them... The variety CRIMSON SWEET for example, grows vigorously, and its hybrid F-1 is highly resistant to Fusarium. Its flesh is smooth and sweet, without fibres. Its flesh colour is deep red. With a good potassium fertiliser, its sugar content can be got just right. The right supply of ni-

trogen gives the required diameter, and by balancing the phosphorus, the flesh can be made to melt in the mouth so that the consumer need not chew much.

If Indalecio knew that his desert-like home province occupies one of the leading places in Europe for the production and export of flowers, both cut and in pots...

If Indalecio only knew....

Many of his friends are working in horticultural cooperatives, hidden under the translucent sky of polythene which traps the rays of the sun god and speeds up the photosynthetic and hydroponic miracle. Over half have organised themselves into

BODEGAS

Chivite

Fundada en 1860

GRANDES VINOS



- First exporter of Navarra wines (A.O.C.)
- Primer exportador de vinos de Navarra



cooperatives and commercialise their produce almost as far as the point of sale. Before, they were simply growers of grapes and oranges. They now invest in greenhouses and reap lucrative harvests of vegetables. Many poor people became well off in a very short time. In ten to fifteen years they went from nothing to everything. Nevertheless, there isn't one decent restaurant, nowhere to go, no entertainment. They still live as they always have done. Many of them have ploughed all their profits back into the business.

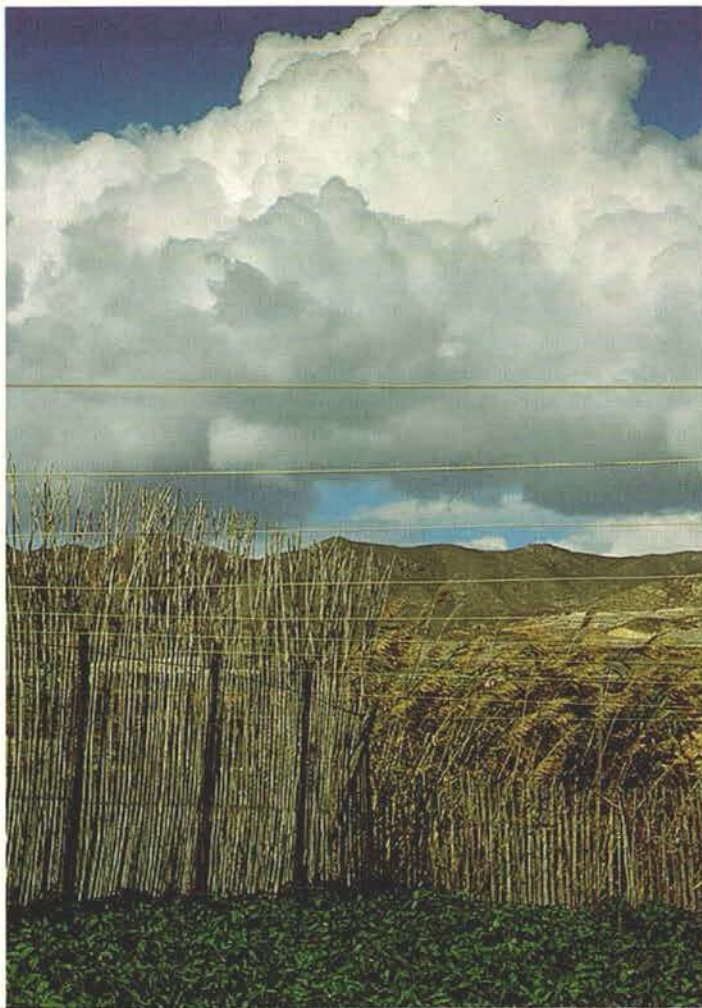
During the day, the Campo de Dalías greenhouses gleam away like precious stones or metals, hinting at their worth. All that Almerian sweat has been transformed into botanical protein, a honeycomb dripping sweetness which has attracted a buzzing swarm of plant-hirers, excavators, pipelayers, well-sinkers, plastics manufacturers, seed companies, fertiliser company reps, investment advisers, insurance agents, government delegates, storage middle-men, insulated-vehicle repairers, packagers, label printers, advertising men, product cataloguers, export inspectors, long-distance haulage companies...

The activity is tremendous. Thousands of hard-working ants patiently carry out the monotonous daily grind of tilling, hoeing, harvesting, uprooting, collecting, classifying, packaging, loading and unloading. Meanwhile, a few cicadas chirrup songs of praise to the gods of Commerce and Consumerism, firmly ensconced in their carpeted and hastily-decorated offices.

Outside, vast swirls of debris, tatters of plastic, are blowing about. One might think that the wind, jealous of the other elements, was trying to make its presence felt as if, tired of being held back by hurdles and net barricades, it was paying an evening visit. As day fades, a daily and mysterious Elijah's chariot seems to take to the heavens, spreading a wake of colour which reflects the oranges which grow down below. This is the time when, the day's work done, one has time to reflect on what is to become of Almería.

A halt has already been called on the further extension of greenhouses. No more wells are to be sunk. The economic experts

all agree that the best thing now is to increase yield rather than plant more. Many of these experts are from Coexphal, Almería's cooperative of producers and exporters. It is in their offices that calculations, investigations and predictions are made. They are also concerned about the future of Almería. Market research results, consumer demand, gastronomic preferences and fashions all have to be minutely analysed



As day fades, a daily and mysterious Elijah's chariot seems to take to heavens, spreading a wake of colour.

so that they can recommend which products to concentrate on and which to modify.

The race is on. The pepper is the undisputed leader and will continue to expand. Its production ceiling is not known. The winter tomato occupies second place. It will only stay there if it goes on being round, firm, thick-walled and with minimal liquid content. Juice tomatoes are grown on the Segura plantation. Some predict better results for tomatoes grown in Pulpí and Aguilas, where the water is harder. In third place comes the cucumber, self-fertilising, seedless and without

bitter parts. Then there is a cluster, led by the aubergine; the runner bean, the courgette, the melon and the lettuce. This last has an identity problem. From «Romana», «Trocadero», «Bratavia» and «Iceberg», the hybrid and variety which gives the best colour, fewest useless outer leaves and tough parts and which stands up best to oil and vinegar has to be found.

Trailing behind, a group of oddities is daringly aiming for a place among the leaders: broccoli, which needs feeding with borium and magnesium; brussels sprouts and Chinese cabbage which do well outside Spain; celery and even fennel, much used in Italian cooking.

The wind could blow in any direction in the future, helping or hindering the various contestants in this race. The winning post for the first leg of Spain's entry into the Common Market could be just around the next bend. The variables which affect sales of these products are countless and often uncontrollable. Even sociology has to be taken into account in this intricate maze.

For example, it seems that if female unemployment goes up over the next few years, housewives will have more time to go to the market for fresh vegetables. However, increased employment would mean a higher demand for pre-cooked, frozen and canned foods, an area in which Almería is not much involved at present.

As night falls on Dalías, its greenhouses could be taken for pools left behind by some long-turned Mediterranean tide... The blue shades of the long winter night give the same tone to the crumpled plastic as to the jagged stones of the

nearby sierra. A legion of glow-worms tries vainly to cast a little light on the scene. One's hearing becomes sharper and strains after unknown sounds. The gentle dew. A slight breeze, perhaps breathed by a mermaid who has slipped into the plantation to organise an evening dance. And when silence falls, one seems to be aware of the very earth beating, of the plants growing. It is something so ancient and mysterious that it thrills one deep within. This is the language we all spoke once upon a time and it reminds us of our links with the soil. It is the very essence that all living things have in common.



The world's
most civilized
aperitif.

La Ina
DOMEcq

DOMEcq

La Ina

Very Pale Dry Fine

SHERRY

SERVE COLD

PRODUCED AND BOTTLED BY PEDRO DOMEcq & C.
JAES DE LA FRONTERA — PRODUCE OF SPAIN

Pedro Domecq
ESTABLISHED IN 1850

For Spaniards, melon has long been the only way to round off a meal during the long, sweltering summer months. This exquisite fruit brings much-needed freshness to the hot middays of August. But it isn't only used as a dessert. Great chefs have left us a full legacy of varied menus based on melon. Here we have the history of this cucurbital, which hasn't always boasted such a good reputation. Luis Irizar has cooked some recipes.

THE REFRESHING TASTE OF SUMMER

The Ancient Romans grew melons, although not the size of today's fruit, since they were no bigger than an orange. It is, therefore, hardly surprising that the Emperor Claudius Albinus could eat ten of them for breakfast—even accompanied by an abundance of other dishes.

The Arabs grew melons in Spain during the Middle Ages, when they became a common dish for Spaniards, as is witnessed in various documents of the time: thus, Alfonso Chirino, the physician to King Juan II of Castille, and author of the *Menor daño de la Medicina* (The least damage of Medicine) in 1506, made passing reference to the melon, advising his readers to eat it as a dessert at breakfast, and recommending its pips for various therapeutical uses, such as, for example, in cases of tertian fever, and in certain chest conditions, as well as in gallstones, when the melon should be peeled and mixed with sugar.

Luis Lobera de Avila, doctor to Emperor Charles V was much more explicit in his *Banquete de Nobles Caballeros* (Banquet of Noble Knights). A long chapter of this book, published in 1530, was devoted

to the melon, of which he wrote: *«Two or three wedges of these melons can be eaten at the beginning of the meal, and some eat more, since in such things no set rule may be given, but rather each one unto his custom, depending on what his stomach may digest, according to whether he feel much or little heat therein. And one should not drink on top of this...»* He places great importance on the matter of drinking, and will only allow that *«if one must drink, then only few mouthfuls of wine, in accordance with what one has eaten, as if it were medicine...»*. This prescription is followed by more rules on hygiene and an endless list of therapeutical advice.

The melon was introduced from Italy into France by Charles VIII at the end of the 15th century. However, the French ceased to grow it for a long time, until it came into fashion again as an appetizer when Catherine de Medici arrived in the country - to the great satisfaction of Michel de Montaigne, who commented on the changes which Italian manners had brought about in French eating habits: *«I do not excessively enjoy salads nor fruit, excepting melons»*. The fruit was then still small, and brought from Italy, where the melons from Cantalupo were especially fa-

mous. Cantalupo was a Papal territory, to which these sweet-tasting melons had been imported from Armenia in the 15th century. In the 16th century, the French nicknamed them *pompon*, on the inspiration of the poet, Pierre de Ronsard, who grew them in his garden and sent them to King Charles IX.

There are numerous varieties of melon, but the most popular in Spain, according to the date on which they appear on the market, can be divided into the following three groups:

1.— The *early melons*, which come out in April, mostly coming from the Canary Islands. The first are *ogen melons* - small melons, which never weigh more than three quarters of a kilo. Round in shape, with a green skin, their flesh is light green and very sweet. They are soon followed by the classic *Cantaloupe melons*, mentioned above, of roughly the same size, but with a yellowish-green skin marked by dark-green lines running along its length, and a bright orange flesh, which has a highly aromatic flavour. This sort of melon is much used as an appetizer, and also in some extremely lavish desserts.

2.— After the early melons, in mid-June, the *reticulated melon* appears, com-



The melon is a member of the gourd family Cucurbitaceae, which also includes cucumbers, marrows, pumpkins and water melons. Its scientific name is *Cucumis melo*, and it is a trailing plant, whose thin stalks produce big, succulent fruits, with a fresh taste. The exact origin of the fruit is not known. Most experts believe that it comes from the hot countries of Asia, although some think that it originated in Africa, basing their argument on the existence of a wild cucurbit in Sudan, which produces fruits the size of a grapefruit and

could well be an ancestor of today's melon. Whatever the case, we know for sure that melons have been cultivated from ancient times, and have proof of this in the Louvre Museum, where there is an Alexandrian vase from the 1st century B.C. which is decorated with a cornucopia laden with fruits amongst which we can find some melons. The melon can also be seen in certain murals in ancient Egyptian tombs, which show how watermelons were grown in the times of the last Pharaohs.



EXPORT LEADER-Nº 1 IN USA

FREIXENET, S.A. - Plaza Estación, 1 - San Sadurni de Noya (Barcelona) España.

monly known in Spain as *escrito* (written), because of the network of small whitish lines which are etched into their skin. When they ripen fully, they are extraordinarily sweet and aromatic. Although the larger sizes used to be most popular, nowadays people tend to prefer medium-sized ones, with a diameter of about thirty centimetres. Shaped rather like a Rugby ball, they give off a pleasant perfume. They remain on the market until the beginning of July, when other varieties of equally high quality appear. Some of these are green-skinned, such as the *Pinsapo*, whilst others are yellow, like the so-called *Honeydew melon* with its distinctive honey flavour. Both these varieties have very solid flesh and are extremely sweet. They remain on the market until the end of September.

3.— Finally, in October, the most resistant melons become available. These are sold throughout the rest of the year, since if they are stored in the suitably dry, airy conditions, they can retain their texture and taste until March. In Spain, the most widely grown variety is that known as *Tendral* or *from Elche*, which is harvested in the Levante region. Its skin is slightly wrinkled with furrows, but is very thick, thus making it difficult to judge its degree of ripeness.

The melon forms a staple part of the Spanish diet, and for many years, from July to September it was the obligatory dessert for all social classes, however rich or poor, especially in the arid region in the centre of the peninsula, where the melon is grown without irrigation in places which have become famous along with their fruit - Villaconejos, Titulcia, Añover de Tajo. Every year, these dry, sun-scorched lands are the site of a natural miracle, as some faded flowers on apparently withered creepers suddenly throw forth voluminous, oval fruits, in an amazing variety of colours. Their hard skins hide a juicy flesh, which, when at the peak of maturity, is of unrivalled sweetness.

As wonderful as the dry-farmed melon may be, one should not forget the melons grown on irrigated lands in Murcia, Valencia, Alicante, the Canaries and other parts of Spain. However they are grown, year in and year out, these modest fruits from the temperate Spanish climate prove themselves more than worthy competitors of the

most exotic tropical fruits in their sweetness and aromatic flavour.

It is often said that the melon is well suited to the idiosyncratic character of the Spaniards, famed for their love of chance. Every time one cuts into a melon, one is taking a gamble, since it is never possible to fully predict its quality. This randomness is reflected by a wealth of Spanish proverbs, comparing the uncertain qualities of the melon to the uncertainty of love and the human heart. However, there are also several sayings which offer advice to the canny gamblers on how to pick a winner by weight, aroma and touch.

When the melon reaches optimum ripeness, it makes a delicious dessert without any other accompaniment. However, it is also an excellent appetizer, served with Serrano ham, according to the Italian custom of eating *melone con prosciutto*, which dates back to the lavish Florentine cuisine of the Renaissance. And it requires little effort of the imagination to make the most exciting desserts with such a versatile fruit. Below, we give a sample of some recipes created by great chefs over various centuries.

Melon marinated in port

Ingredients
2 melons (medium size)
Sugar: to taste
Port wine: to taste

Place the melons in the fridge from one day to the next.

Cut a slice from either end, so that they will later stand upright, then cut horizontally through the middle.

Scoop out the pips and fibres with a teaspoon, and place the melon-halves on the plates on which they are to be served, surrounded by crushed ice. The port and sugar should be served separately, so that each person can add them according to taste.

Melon purée

Ingredients
1 medium-sized melon
Sugar: to taste
White wine: 1 glass
Liqueur (anis, curaçao, etc.): 1 glass

Put the melon flesh through a sieve, then add sugar to taste, and mix with the white wine and the liqueur chosen. Chill the mixture, and serve in glasses, garnished with strawberries, raspberries or cherries.

Melon cocktail

Ingredients
1 ripe, medium-sized melon
Sugar: 50 gr.
Liqueur (as preferred): to taste

Cut the melon flesh into 2-centimetre cubes, then place these in a suitably sized receptacle. Sprinkle with sugar and chill in the refrigerator.

To serve: sprinkle with Marrasquino, Kirsch, Brandy, Sherry or Port, as preferred, then place in flat glass cocktail dishes.

Melon in anis

Ingredients
2 small, ripe melons
Anis: 2 teaspoons
Icing sugar: 4 teaspoons
Water: 8 teaspoons

Cut the melons in half, horizontally. Scoop out the pips and fibres with a spoon. In a glass, mix the anis, the sugar and the water and allow them to dissolve. Sprinkle the melons with the liquid, and chill in the refrigerator until ready to serve.

The unexpected mixture of these delicate flavours is irresistible. (Recipe by Alexandre Dumaine.)

Melon Surprise

Ingredients for six servings
6 melons (about the size of an orange)
Small strawberries: 250 gr.
Sugar: 100 gr.
Orange liqueur: 1 small glass.

Cut off the top of the melon by inserting the knife in a zigzag line, then scoop out small balls, keeping them as regular as possible in size.

Wash the skins and the 'lids' thoroughly, to remove all traces of pips and fibre. Place the melon balls, along with the strawberries, to marinate in the sugar and liqueur. After several hours, fill the hollow melon shells with the fruit salad and cover with the melon 'lids', then place in the refrigerator and serve chilled, but never frozen.

THE IRRESISTIBLE RISE OF CAVA

Bodegón: Antonio de Benito
Written by José Peñín

The word «Cava» is spreading like wildfire through Spain. It has entailed great hopes, but also great fears. Behind the word lies an entire world of artisan workers and all-powerful companies. It all began in Penedés, with a climate that was considered useless, and a lot of scepticism. Today, the experience is being absorbed by an ever-growing number of other regions.



CAVA

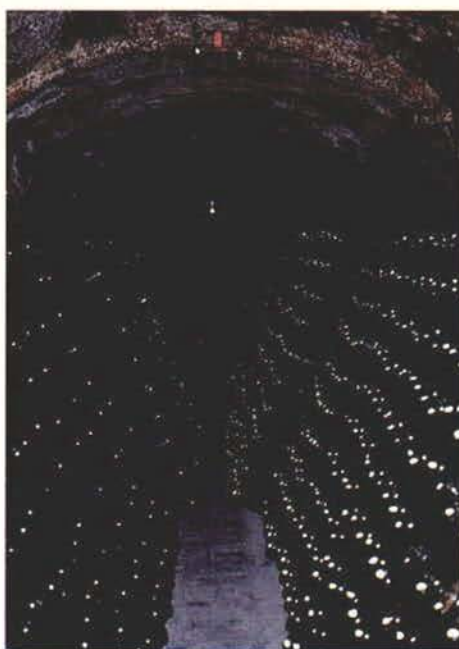


Over the last years, the Catalan sparkling wines industry has been building up its own image, living through an age of splendour.

Every Sunday, when the ten o'clock mass is over, the «seven sages of Greece of Sant Sadurní» meet in *Can Guineu* to discuss vinestocks and wines. It was from this blossoming *petite bourgeoisie*, that *Josep Raventós* came onto the scene, as the «father» of Cava. He appeared in the years of the export boom during the final third of the last century. At that time, the only advertisements to appear on the back pages of *Memoria Vinícola*, the wine-making magazine published by *Roig Armengol*, were for stockers and producers of red wines, with no more than the odd advertisement here and there for white wine for vermouths and... champagnes.

Much has changed in the Penedés region, and the original context of *sumoll* and *garnacha* vinestocks for thick red mixer-wines belongs to the distant past... Nowadays, the tightly packed rows of *macabeo*, *xarelo* and *parallada* vines pay their homage to a vision of the future which grew in the mind of the nineteenth-century *Raventós*. For it was he who, under than the odd advertisement here and there for white wine for vermouths and... champagnes.

Champañ catalá was the fruit of this vision, based on solid market sense and will - ings - ness to take a challenge. *Raventós* knew of the splendid results obtained by the French in perfecting their *méthode champenoise* with the work of *Maumené*, *Manceau* and *Sallerón*, in the first half of the eighteen hundreds.



Spanish sparkling wines had more promising fields than Penedés, at the limits of the growing area for vines similar to those of the *Marne*, such as *Leon*, *Burgos* or *Tierra Estella*. In these places, as in the *Champagne* region, a tradition of rural *pe-tillant* existed - of sparkling wines, based on slow and incomplete fermentations due to the harshness of the climate.

It does not matter that the historical date of 1872, when the first bottle of Catalan Cava was opened, has been overshadowed by the fact that, five years earlier, the *Duke de Victoria* had presented the

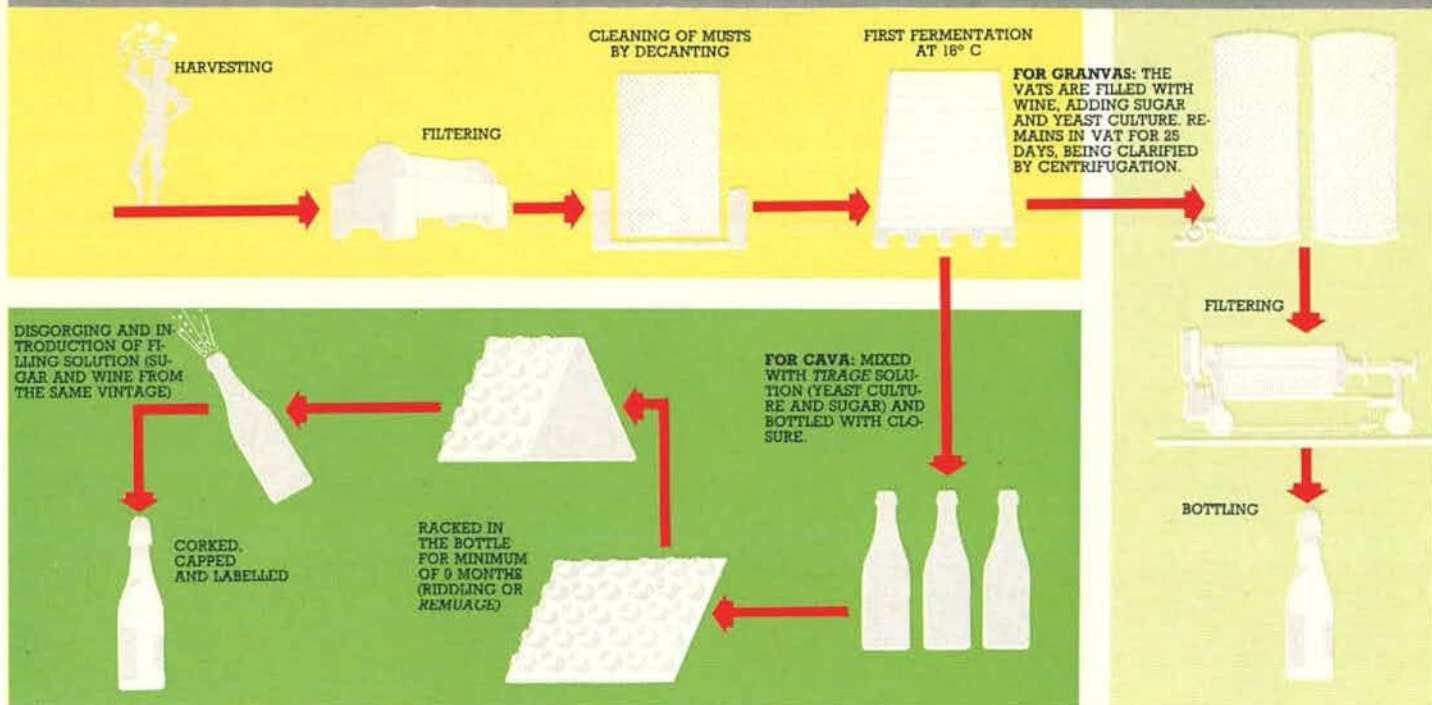
first sparkling wine made *a la façon champenoise* in *Madrid* or that that wine came from *Logroño*. Given the success, the reaction was not long in occurring: miles and miles of cellars were dug under the soils of *Sant Sadurní*. A new wine-growing frontier had been established.

From being the region which produced the roughest of rough red wines, it became the producer of exquisite white grapes. The highlands and foothills of *Penedés* were populated by beautiful clusters of *Montenec*, *Parallada* and *Macabeo* grapes, and the domain of the *xarelo* variety was extended, whilst the last *sumoll* and *garnacha* vines were limited to the lowlands near to the sea.

Cava exploded on to the market with a hearty pop. Over the last years, the Catalan sparkling wines industry has been building up its own image, living through an age of splendour. Its prosperity, which was first based on Christmastide consumption, backed up by commercial advertising campaigns, has been extended to sparkling wines as an aperitif, whilst *champañerías* (champagne bars) have been springing up, so that the excuse of confetti and solemn toasts is no longer needed for people to pop a cork or two...

There are no problems about the profit margin, either. Healthy, well-treated and fertilized vines with the highest production volumes in the country ensure a decent income. *Minifundio* -the small-farm system of other regions does not exist here, thanks to the ancient Catalan inheritance laws, by which estates were passed on in

HOW CAVAS AND GRANVAS ARE MADE



their entirety to the eldest male heir. Juan Esteve Nadal, a small wine-grower from Avinyonet, combines Cava with ceramics, in an evocative farm - the prototype of the family inheritance, with 25 hectares of vineyards. «We like art, and wine is like an art form. We're wonderfully cut off here and the peace is fundamental for our Cava, made without any hurry, almost like a hobby.»

The first wine harvests in the Spanish peninsula are those of Penedés, a month earlier than the rest. This is required by Cava, which obliges harvesters to scale the cutting of the vines in function of the variety. «The first grapes to be brought in are the Macabeo grapes,» Joan Juvé, a wine-producer from the company of Juvé Camps informs us. «In the first days of harvest, these reach 9 degrees, whereas the last grapes have 10. Then we start bringing in the Xarelo grapes, which start with 10 and finish with 11 degrees. And finally, the Paredada grapes, whose first bunches have 9 degrees, and whose last ones have 10. All in all, the average for the entire harvest is 10 degrees, and after adding the «tirage» yeasts and sugar, the wines undergo their second fermentation in the bottle, which puts up the proof by another one and a half degrees. So, that's how the bottle of Cava reaches 11.5 degrees by the time it's put onto the market.»

Another of the *Cavistas* who has ridden on the wave of commercial success is Cava Masachs, which from 3.000 cases sold three years ago, is now selling 70.000. «My success should be put down to the better

price:quality ratio on the market,» says José Masachs, affectionately nicknamed «the Chinaman» by his friends. «Let's not try to deceive ourselves - the prices of Cava, even if they are higher than those for other table wines, shouldn't reach certain levels. I'm incapable of adding a single peseta more to the gross margin.» Indeed, this young enterprising Cavista has extracted every market advantage he could get from his French-sounding brand, Louis de Vernier. With its impeccable, elegant labelling, it is making an enormous hit, especially in the Madrid shops and *champanerías*.

Recaredo sticks to the strict methods of modern wine-making. Josep Mata, the owner, is obsessed with hygiene. He has a line of small stainless steel tanks, and takes the best of modern techniques to produce a Cava as good as any used to be. The youngest of his sparkling wines is never less than four years old, sold with the '76 vintage, aged in wood. He entertains his guests with tales of his experiences as a football player with the Sabadell team, in the twenties. Josep Mata lets us taste a '73 vintage, splendidly fined, and even more harmonious than the younger wines. «Cava is developing very positively prior to the disgorging process. When people say that Cava don't age well and have to be drunk immediately,» he says, «we should understand them as meaning immediately after adding the filling solution that is, once they are put onto the market.»

The market is opening itself up increasingly to the *bruts*. According to Rexachs

Baques, Spanish consumers are showing less and less tendency to buy the sweet Cava, as they get to know more about wine. Thirty years ago, 80% of wines demanded by his customers were sweet Cava. Today, his last bastions are the *champanerías*, supermarkets and big chain stores.

THE THREE MUSKETEERS

The «big stars» amongst grapes are the *Macabeo*, *Xarelo* and *Paredada* varieties. Those with a preference for young Cava use *Macabeo* and *Paredada*. The first gives aroma and bulk, whilst the second gives fineness. When Cava of more than two years of age are being made, then the tradition of «the holy trinity» has to be respected. «The first thing you look for is the characteristic bouquet of the make. Then there are the factors which you can play around with - like the degrees of proof, and the acidity,» explains Josep María Pujó Busquet, an oenologist from Marqués de Monistrol, and one of the most up-and-coming figures in the Catalan wine industry. As Cava extends its frontiers, he declares that the drink itself defines the method. «If you add up all the variables which you could bring into play before getting the final product, you get an enormous number. You can see proof of this in the multitude of grape combinations, yeast cultures, varietal Cava, maceration, use of other varieties, etc.» Pujó just doesn't trust Cava made from one single grape variety. «Just using one variety is like painting a

picture with one single colour - unless it's a really sensational harvest.»

Two varieties are coming to dominate in the search for aromas and less extract: the reigning variety from Champagne and Burgundy, *Chardonnay*, which combines a special perfume with a glycerin-like texture. And at the same time, the farming of *Parellada* is on the rise. «Macabeo is what has been planted most in terms of quantity», says Ramón Viader, oenologist and owner of some important laboratories in Sant Sadurní. «But with the new technical advances, more value is being placed on aroma, and it pays off to plant more Parellada vines, which is what everyone is doing. The same thing's happening with this grape as happened with the *Chardonnay* - its enormous aromatic power is tiring, it saturates the taste buds.»

In general, there is no great faith in what the three varieties can offer by themselves. The Macabeo grape is too overpowering with little finesse; the Xarello grape, although better balanced, has too much body, whilst the Parellada gives a low grade. In the Rioja region, some dry Cava can be made with *Viura* stock. Wines with 20 grammes of sugar per litre at the most. The *bruts* are of little interest, and the *natures* even less so, since with their excessive body, which would overwhelm everything else, they have less finesse. In Valencia, near Requena, the Torre Oriá *bodega*, the pride of the Valencian Cava, is no more than Catalan wine, grown in the heart of the ancient kingdom of Valencia. Bordejé in the Borja region of Aragon, continues to be simply a curiosity for the visitor who expects to find the robust Aragonese musts. Only two cases, still at the experimental stage, have given better results than foreseen: the Chacolí (the *Ondarrubizuri* grape) of Txomin Echániz, and the *Airén* of Andrés Izquierdo in La Mancha; both fermented under the *méthode champenoise*. The first stands out for its aroma and the second for its low extract and fruity flavour. These advantages are very much in demand for Cava. *Albariño* and *Torrontes*, would also be excellent stock, due to their characteristics and high acidity.

However, stock grown in chalky and silicone-rich soils are the most suitable for aromatic wines. According to Bernard Bezin, a small wine grower and producer of Alsatian sparkling wines, the fruit of the *Chardonnay* and the *Pinot Noir* isn't the

be-all and end-all. «We use the same varieties as they do in Champagne, but our "cremants" are more similar to your Cava. It's possible that the aromatic element of these two grapes is important, but it's a fact that both in Burgundy and here, you get better still wines than sparkling wines, whilst in Champagne, it's the other way round.» Agustín Torelló, President of the Cofradía del Cava and manager of Segura Viudas, is convinced that the Penedés grapes could even be considered too good for making into Cava. Indeed, only the high technology of the Catalans, and their great experience in yeast cultures enable them to overcome their problems. Some of their tools, such as Freixenet automatic freezer and *disgorging* train, are domestic inventions which the great sparkling wine producers of Reims or Epernay are trying to adopt.



For the Spanish drinker, Cava is the refined image of genuine winetastings in dark bodegas - anything else is a pale imitation.

GRANVAS OR CAVA?

The adoption and search for aromatic varieties, along with the rise in consumption of young Cava, could get Cava into problems. L'Aixertell - a sparkling Granvás wine - is already in this market, with a process which scarcely takes more than twenty-five days, with zero handling and totally standardized quality. This makes it much less costly than Cava, although the installations needed for it entail higher initial investment. The German company, Henkel, got into the Spanish market at an early stage with its Granvás, through L'Aixertell. For the Spanish drinker, Cava is the refined image of genuine wine - tastings in dark bodegas; anything else is a

pale imitation. «There's no risk of Granvás capturing the market in the short run,» José Ferrer Sala, president and general manager of Freixenet states. «Cavas already cover a wide price range. Today, all the Cava process is highly mechanised.» The L'Aixertell technicians recognise that Cava's main advantage is the secondary aroma which blossoms in the liquid with the autolysis of the yeasts deposited in the bottle over a minimum of nine months. Proof of this is the adoption of aromatic stock, such as *Riesling*, *Sauvignon*, *Muscat*, etc., to make Granvás in Germany, South Africa, California or Italy. Pujol Busquet believes that in the future, Granvás will dominate in semiseco and dry sparkling wines, whilst the Bruts and Natures will be Cava.

In the battle to improve quality, the *Cavistas* with their own stock or the big names which buy their grapes will achieve success. Freixenet and Codorníu, despite the millions of kilos which they move, demand that the harvest be transported in cases of twenty-five kilos only, to stop the grape from bruising, with the resulting premature fermentation and off-flavours.

POP THE CORK - IT'S SUMMER!

Sparkling wines are being rid of the last vestiges of their old image - that of a ceremonial drink for special toasts. The Spanish tradition of only drinking their *Cava* at Christmas, New Year and weddings has given way to that of drinking, it as a straightforward aperitif, and even of using it to accompany a meal, a custom which is catching on bit by bit.

Thinking about it, it seems obvious: a bubbly drink, which is served chilled and which has a fine, fruity taste, with which few people can find fault, is, without doubt, the ideal refreshment for the summer. Knowing the delicacy of Cava, one cannot help but consider that its special flavour makes it just the right touch to freshen up the light, summer meals of salads, grilled meats and fish.

THE OLD AND THE NEW

What is not at all clear is the demarcation of the different Cava on the market. A young Cava is pale, limpid, with bubbles that are not as fine or rapid as older

The birth of cava

At the beginning of the second half of the 19th century, Upper Penedés was awash with vines, in which the *Sumoll* variety had the upper hand.

This was a natural response to the tradition which then existed, of drinking «vino negro» rough red wine, which was made by the peasants, for the peasants, and was not exactly pure. At that time, wine-growing Catalonia had become involved in mass production, and did not worry too much about the quality of its musts. A few years earlier, in 1778, free trade with America offered the great opportunity. The example came from Villafranca, which exported vast quantities not only of wine, but also of *aguardientes* (aquavit).

A large part of the banks of the Anoia, including the area of Sant Sadurni, was a cereal emporium. But now, the farmers began to change over from their traditional crops, and made room for vineyards, which offered them the chance to get easy and optimum profits.

As if this were not enough, the arrival of the railways - in 1865 - linked Penedés directly to the two most important ports in the region of the Mediterranean: Barcelona and Tarragona. As a result, export costs dropped, and the export trade became even more profitable.

The *rabassa morta* - the polemical agreement whereby the owner grants his tenant farmer rights to plant vines on the farm and cultivate them until they die, in exchange for a proportional part of the harvest was also a contributing factor in the substitution of vines, not only for endemic crops, but also for woods and areas whose owners had never expected to be able to put to agricultural use.

Meanwhile, another circumstance happened to add to the already-created prosperity:



A new image, breaking with the age-worn history of rough wines, started back in the 19th Century.

several French vineyards succumbed to the *Oidium tuckeri* epidemic, which hit them immediately before the onset of *Phylloxera*. These two disasters forced the French to boost their wine imports, preferably of Catalan wines.

However, if luck had been the cause of this momentary splendour, another stroke of luck - this time *bad* luck - hit this market which even the Catalans themselves found a bit too easy to be true. The bad luck took the form of *phylloxera*, which arrived in Spain and spread like wildfire through the vineyards, destroying stocks and paralysing exports. The most dramatic decadence took place in the wine world of Penedés, whilst, at the same time the *rabassaires* joined up in several resistance leagues, within a somewhat rarefied political atmosphere. But at the geographical heart of the problem, a small group of men, amongst whom were viticulture experts and precursors of better things to come - discussed what the right path would be for the Penedés wines. They paid much attention to the possibilities which *Vin de Perignon*, the sparkling *Champagne*, might offer for the banks of the Anoia and its surrounding area. Several names took their place in the history of wine at this moment - Joan Casanovas, Modest

Casanova, Manuel Raventos de Codorniu, Pere Rovira, Pere Raventos, Ragael Mir and Marc Mir. In one way or another, these men knew the wine-making techniques for these legendary sparkling wines of Champagne, and appreciated their economic importance, given the seal of quality which wines racked in caverns acquire almost immediately.

The outlook was becoming increasingly dramatic for the wine industry of Penedés at the end of the 19th century, when another Raventós, Josep Raventós i Fatjo, also involved in the above-mentioned group, took on the job. Not only did he travel to France to study the *méthode Champenoise*, but he also changed the traditional varieties he grew in his own vineyards, initiating the process which was to transform the entire area of Sant Sadurni, and of Penedés in general.

This is the first we know of how *Cava* came to be introduced in Catalonia. And I say Catalonia, because there are some who say that the first Spanish sparkling wines appeared in Seville, as if this were some sort of mythology, and at the same time, but without competing for the title of the first-at-the-post, in Blanes, Reus o Villanueva and La Geltrú.

Josep Raventós, after having

taken his unswerving decision, left Penedés to set up in Barcelona, where he experimented with the entire process using the French method. Later, he applied his experience to new white wines, which were already being elaborated in his lands, and proved that the formula was valid to create a new image which broke with the age-worn history of rough wines with their low quality and even more dubious future.

Almost 90 % of the red-wine varieties were substituted by white-wine grapes throughout the Penedés region. The *parallada*, the *macabeo* and the *zarrelo* formed the trinity for wine-growers, who, in them, had found the key to achieve the very best must from which to ferment sparkling wines. Very soon, Manuel Raventós y Domenech, Josep's son and the one to extend his experience, after his father marketed the first cases of *champagne catalán*, went to France to work in the Mercier cellars. These were one of the oldest in the Champagne region, and Manuel finally managed to uncover the last secrets which surrounded this prodigious wine.

This is the genuine story. Free trade with America, the advantages which were offered by the *rabassa morta* in its day, the arrival of the railways to the heart of Penedés, and the *oidium* and *phylloxera* were all determining factors which led to today's situation, in which the most important wine-growing regions in Catalonia, and in Spain as a whole, can look towards the future with optimism and a sense of security. Nowadays, one is looking back to the far-distant past when one recalls the rough red wines of Penedés, and the musts made from *sumoll* variety grapes which, from all accounts, were only good for the stills or for distant *coupages* at the time in which wine-growing Europe was so impoverished that no one dared demand quality.

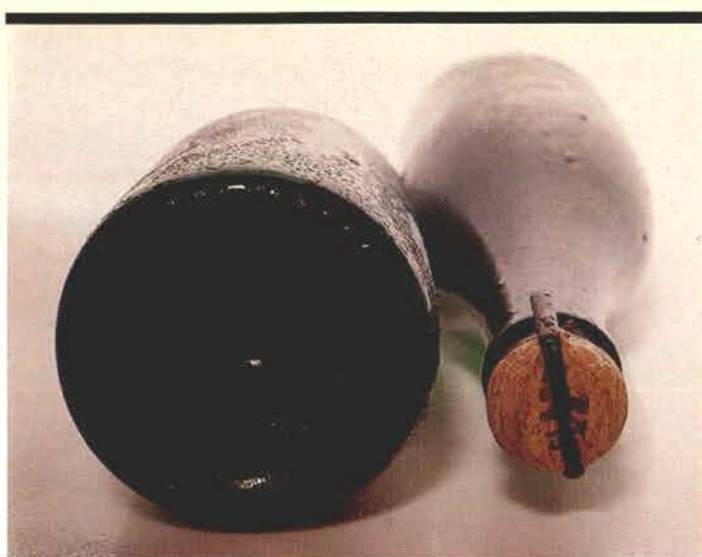
ones. An aged Cava is distinguished by its slow, tiny bubbles and its more amber colour. The fruity aroma, with a slightly yeasty tang and a sharp fizz on the tongue, is the mark of a young Cava, whilst connoisseurs will recognise the older Cavas by their sweeter aroma, with a stronger perfumed, slightly almond taste.

Young Cava, in general, is a sparkling wine which is sold nine months after bottling. As soon as the first fermentation process of the must is over, it is bottled, still cloudy, with its lees and just the right measure of additional yeasts and cane-sugar, so that the second fermentation takes place in the bottle, saturating the already-fermented must with carbon anhydride.

Young wine, or young Cava, is better for the summer, being less demanding, without any other additives, like old wine, walnuts and even aquavit, brandy, etc., which in many cases provide an unnecessary winy flavour, with a hint of oxidized wine, although at the same time these can give a certain zest to the drink which does not detract from its refreshing qualities. One should distinguish between the Cava with an old-wine filling solution and the genuinely old Cava which has spent a long time racked in bottles in the wine cellars (riddling period). Sparkling wine should be well fined, with little body and slight acidity. The oxidation gives the wine a feeling of greater liquid thickness.

It was mentioned that the most outstanding characteristic of young Cava is its pale colour and more zesty bubbles. The bubble should be small, although it is never as tiny as in an old Cava. The less time that is allowed to pass from the final bottling to its consumption, the higher the probability of noticing the secondary aromas produced by the fermentation (yeasts, sulphurous flavours, lees) and that the bubbles are larger. As the sparkling wine lies for longer in the cellar (the *cava* or cavern, from which it derives its name), the bubbles get smaller and the pressure drops, but the possibilities of oxidation also increase.

The only filling solution for a young Cava, provided that it is not a *nature* (or brut), should be white wine of the same



Rules for drinking Cava in the summer

1. *Dampen flute glasses with water, then chill in freezer.*
2. *Prepare an ice bucket with ice-cubes and water (a tray of ice from the freezer, topped up with cold water).*
3. *Remove the cork from the bottle without popping it, and tilting the bottle at a 75° angle so that the foam does not run over.*
4. *Serve the Cava in the flute glasses, filled up to 70%. (It is better to refill glasses with cold wine than to have the wine warm up, as it does very quickly in such small glasses).*
5. *Close the bottle with a cylindrical cork or with a hermetic seal, suitable for use on sparkling wines. With such a seal, the Cava can be stored for several days, provided that the bottle is not more than half empty.*

vintage, with well controlled sugar content. Examples of young Cava are: *Vallfornosa*, Brut grapa from *Parxet*, or *Llopart*, etc.

With an eye to a new image, as well as recalling old aesthetic standards, it is now becoming increasingly fashionable especially for young Cavas - to use grapa-type bottles without the typical champagne-style caps, in order to get away from the champagne image. The refreshing, almost artesian-like quality stamped on such bottles has successfully boosted consumption.

In comparison to champagne, Cava has more body and is perhaps less perfumed, thus being better suited to substitute a table wine.

Amongst old Cavas, the *Non Plus Ultra* by Codorniu is probably best known, whilst one of the most interesting is the old *Recaredo*, a Cava which tastes of oak. *Nadal reserva 1977*, is one of the most balanced amongst the old Cavas. It has cer-

tain traces of French origins, which can be observed, above all, in its fine bouquet.

Mas Via de Mestres is perhaps the most important of all these. It has some truly distinctive characteristics, which make this highly distinguished beverage the Spanish Dom Perignon - and also the most expensive of all Spanish sparkling wines.

It is said that sweet or medium dry (*semi seco*) Cava is for the uninitiated, whilst brut is for the connoisseurs. The reason for this is that sweet Cava bears the closest resemblance to fizzy soft drinks such as coca cola, lemonade, etc., whilst dry brut or *nature* Cava, is closer to the more bitter flavours which experts consider to be more powerful. Nowadays, *semisecco* is popular to accompany desserts, although a liqueur wine, with its more fortified flavour, would be preferable to the fizzy sweetness which contrasts on the palate with the acidity of the wine itself. Nor can one deny that the fizziness of the sweet or *semisecco* Cavas neutralizes the bitter and the sweet tastes, with the agreeable sensation on the palate, which is extremely stimulating. One should, however, remember that sweet or *semisecco* Cavas are made from less pure vine-stock, whose qualities are purposely disguised by the higher sugar content.

It is obvious that, given the characteristics of Catalan grapes, it is very risky to produce what is known as *nature* (or *brut sauvage* in France), i.e. brut without any sweetening dosage. It is only to be expected that a Cava without the slightest trace of sugar will reveal all the defects of the grape varieties themselves - which can be a drier aftertaste, or bitter tangs and body. It is also often heard said that «this Cava goes to my head». The feeling of heaviness, caused by the added sugar, brings about a certain organic imbalance, which is intensified by the fizziness and the alcohol content. Drinking brut or *natures* is healthier.

Even in Spain, no one has yet had the last word on Cava. Its history, which is comparatively short, enables one to hope that wine-making specialists will find in Penedés a worthy subject of research. Cava drinkers should raise their glasses to such possibilities...



This is a
bottle of
FAUSTINO
before Spain
Joined the
EEC...

... and this
is the
FAUSTINO
bottle after
Spain joined
the EEC.



**THERE'S NOTHING NEW ABOUT FAUSTINO
IN EUROPE, WE'VE BEEN THERE ALL THE TIME!**

We are among the leading exporters of Rioja RESERVAS and GRAN RESERVAS.
Bodegas Faustino Martínez. Oyón (Alava).

THE WINES OF THE PARAMO

Text: José Peñin
Photos: Félix Lorrio

Scientists say that the fringes of productive areas produce crops of exceptional quality. It is as if the propitious climate were offering a farewell gift before withdrawing its bounty. Valdevimbre and Los Oteros are just yards away from conditions where wine-growing would be impossible.

Phylloxera, which provided Rioja with just the impetus it needed to fulfil its great potential, spelt the beginning of the end for the wines of Castilla-León. By today, the districts of Valdevimbre and Los Oteros are practically the last survivors of that Golden Age when splendid vineyards covered the whole of El Páramo. But the wines of Villamañan where winegrowing was prolific even by seventeenth century standards (as mentioned by the romantic traveller Jauvin, *«Le Voyageur d'Europe»*), were more famous at that time than Valdevimbre's. These are the wines of the *Tierra de León*, which extends from where the rivers Esla and Bernesga meet, a few kilometres south of the provincial capital, over to the left of the Vega del Esla and, following the León to Benavente road, Los Oteros, and, to the right, Valdevimbre.

This winegrowing area's limits lie northwards, near the capital, the wines becoming less and less alcoholic until they reach just 9.º in San Andrés de Rabanedo. Here, in centuries gone by, the wine-sellers of León used to dose the local wine with more alcoholic ones from the south. This exemplifies nicely the effects of cultivating random varieties of vine regardless of whether or not they suit their place. Where wine stopped needing this streng-





UNDERGROUND-BODEGAS. They are an ingenious way of preventing rain-water from seeping into the *bodegas*, allowing it instead to rundown the steep sides of the earthen mounds.



Vine yards are generally orientated towards the midday sun and the vines are planted three metres equidistant from each other, and «belt» pruned.

thening treatment was where Valdevimbre and Los Oteros began.

The vast numbers of underground bodegas tunnelled into the ground like huge clay ant-hills give some idea of the scale of winegrowing here in earlier times. They are an ingenious way of preventing rain-water from seeping into the bodegas, allowing it instead to run down the steep sides of the earthen mounds. This technique is used not only in Valdevimbre and Los Oteros, but also in other nearby areas like La Bañeza, Benavente (in Zamora) and Valderas, on the border with Palencia. This ancient rural custom survives to this day since, curiously, it is still the only known way of producing the area's famous *vinos de aguja*, wines with an incipient bubble or *petillance*. Although La Bañeza is no longer a winegrowing town, wine-wri-



The claretes should be drunk the year after harvesting.

ters still include it when talking of *vinos de aguja*. The relative importance of La Bañeza is reflected in the fact that the first vines planted around here date only from the late eighteenth century. In La Bañeza, unlike Valdevimbre and Los Oteros, the cooperative system never caught on.

Though cooperatives have only kept production going at a token level, they are undoubtedly what has kept in going at all. They are blending and bottling bodegas which sell their output at low prices

in a last attempt to make Leon's wines pay their way.

The term «*vino de aguja*» means literally «needle wine», and describes the delightful prickling sensation which its slight *petillance* produces on the palate. These bubbles are formed by the giving off of carbon dioxide, produced by very slow fer-

Agenda

Production Area: The Valdevimbre and Los Oteros wine-growing area has 3,000 hectares under vine in the municipalities of Villamañán and Valdevimbre, principally the latter. Los Oteros, Valencia de Don Juan and Pajares de los Oteros are the most important centres of population.

Climate: Continental/Atlantic, with very harsh winters and short, hot summers. Luckily, the area is shielded from the influence of the Cordillera Cantábrica and its temperatures are slightly milder than around the provincial capital. Annual rainfall is 500 - 566 mm. and is very irregular.

Soils: There are two soil-types: the soil in the flat areas of Los Oteros and on the hillsides is light soil with excellent drainage, characteristically alluvial. This is where the best vineyards are. The other type is clayey and is found in the valleys, today given over to irrigated crops.

Vine Varieties: Whilst the predominant variety is *Prieto Picudo*, it is grown alongside others, most importantly *Mencía*, *Garnacha* and *Tempranillo*, all grafted on to *Rupestris de Lot*, not really the most appropriate root stock, given that it does not accelerate the ripening of the grapes. The most important white varieties are *Verdejo*, followed by *Jerez (Palomino)* and *Albillo*.

At these latitudes, vineyards are generally orientated towards the midday sun. The vines are planted three metres equidistant from each other in all directions, and «belt» pruned, that is with the trailing shoots of one vine being joined up with those of its neighbours.

Characteristics of the Area's Wines: The petillant *claretes*, their incipient bubble supplied by dissolved carbon dioxide which is produced by prolonged fermentation, both alcoholic and malolactic (a hard,

sharp acid, reminiscent of green apples, softened by one reminiscent of milk lactic), as well as that induced by the addition of whole bunches of *Prieto Picudo*, have an agreeable prickle and residual sugars give a pleasant taste nicely balanced by the acidity obtained at this altitude. These are good, harmonious wines, their colour slightly denser than ot-

her Castilian *claretes* since they take on extra colour from the whole bunches added during vinification; these are «medium-coloured» *claretes*.

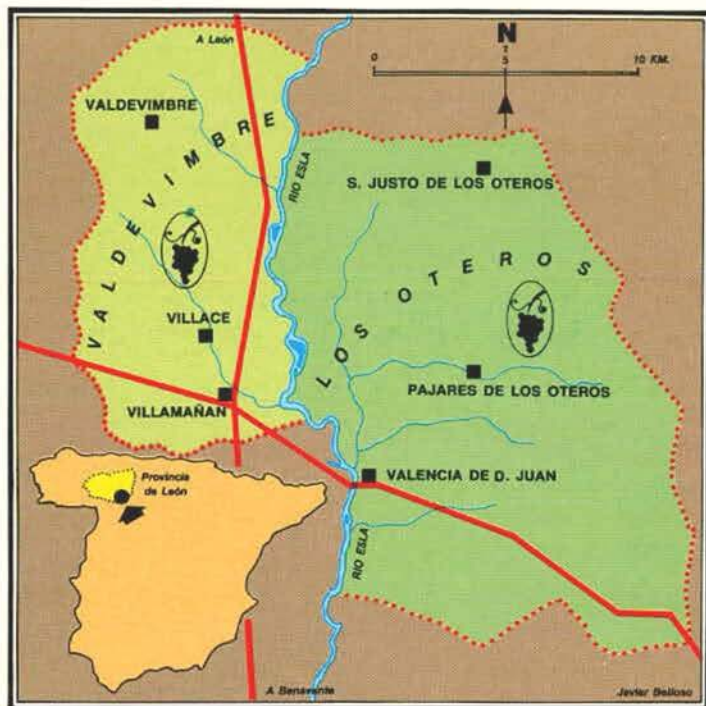
The *Mencía* and *Prieto Picudo* reds are an excellent ruby colour with purplish hues and are fresh and very aromatic. These are «Atlantic» reds which respond well to ageing. Their flavour is very fruity with a

slight earthy tang typical of their varieties, their pleasant acidity balancing the residual sugars which result from on-going fermentation.

Ideal Drinking Times: The *claretes* should be drunk the year after harvesting. The reds may be considered stable for a maximum of five years, given their rather precarious elaboration. With a more advanced technical and industrial approach, the reds, with a period of ageing in the cask, could keep for up to fifteen years. This is the case with VILE's reds, the only really valid point of reference.

Vino de aguja: The traditional method of elaboration in underground bodegas begins with the grapes being tipped in through a little window situated at outside ground level. The grapes fall vertically into the wine-press which is in the deepest part of the bodega, and there they are pressed. The must is collected in a container on a level lower than the press. From there, it is sent to large casks or tanks ranged along the length of the vault. If *clarete* is being made, the large casks or cement tanks are filled with the must already coloured by the pressing process, and the best and firmest bunches of *Prieto Picudo* are then added.

The alcoholic fermentation process is long because of the low temperature in the bodega and the time of year (the temperature during fermentation does not normally exceed 28°). The whole bunches occupy some 5 - 10% of the tank's volume, and intracellular fermentation occurs when the must ferments. This is a sort of osmotic process during which the must absorbs aroma, colour and bubbles. Later on, and with meticulous care, it is Racked off, being sure not to disturb the wine or the whole bunches resting on the bottom with the lees. Once removed, they will go for distillation.



BODEGAS

Bodega Cooperativa Los Oteros
Pajares de los Oteros (León).
Telf: (987) 75 01 11

VILE, S. A.
C/ La Vega, s/n.
Apartado de Correos 453. Armunia (León).
Tel: (987) 20 97 12; 20 98 00.

Destilerías Pedro Marcos.
Villamañán (León). Tel: (987) 76 70 10.

Cooperativa Comarcal de Valdevimbre.
C/ El Montico, s/n. Valdevimbre (León).
Tel: (009) 25. (This is the exchange number. Ask to be put through to the bodega).

mentation, a process which occurs for various reasons to do with the area's location. Firstly, fermentation occurs in autumn, when it is already cold here. Secondly, the underground bodegas are very cold and hardly vary in temperature between summer and winter. Similar conditions produce similar wines in the north of Italy, northern Yugoslavia and Champagne. There is evidence that the first Champagne wines were «vinos de aguja», pétillant wines, whose fermentation was halted by the winter cold to start up again in the spring. In Champagne and other regions of France, slow rural fermentation was the system which produced pétillant wines. It is an easy step to imagine that, should the temperature rise, they would keep the bubbles coming by adding whole bunches of grapes. Later on, in Champagne, Dom Perignon's idea was to sustain the petillance by adding sugar and yeasts to the wine in the bottle, thus bringing on a secondary fermentation.

Everything suggests that León's vineyards were planted as a result of the establishing of monasteries along Saint James of Compostella's pilgrimage route. They represent an extension of the wine-growing

The rural system of prolonged fermentation gives El Paramo's wines a certain similarity to the first Champagnes.

areas of Rioja, La Bureba and the high areas where the principal monasteries of the various religious orders marked out the route of the pilgrimage. Varieties like *Mencía* and *Prieto Picudo* have their nearest relatives in France; *Mencía* is very similar to *Cabernet Franc*.

These are short-cycle varieties, in some cases not allied to the most suitable rootstock for giving a growing-cycle more in keeping with the climate and soil. These are the only vine varieties which flourish at these altitudes of 750 to 860 metres in

the flat areas of El Páramo. The type of vine which grows in these conditions is the equivalent of what is to be found in La Mancha, at 900 or 950 metres, as opposed to Burgundy and Champagne's 300 metres. It is for these very reasons of climate that winegrowers opted for making *clarettes* and *rosés* since, in theory, the grapes are not given the chance to reach the intensity of colour required for reds. They have been given a boost in the last twenty years by the variety *Garnacha* which has spread through all the winegrowing regions of Spain. It is used here in particular for its high yield, though at the expense of colour.

In the past, this region's wines were made for local consumption. At present, the situation could best be described as a symbiosis between the gradually-disappearing bodegas and the cooperatives. The future rests with the likes of Pedro Marcos.

Espaliers or Low-Growing

Pedro Marcos is the owner of a distillery in Villamañan and is a great lover of wine and everything to do with it. He has the

THE AWARD WINNING WINES OF BODEGAS MONTECILLO

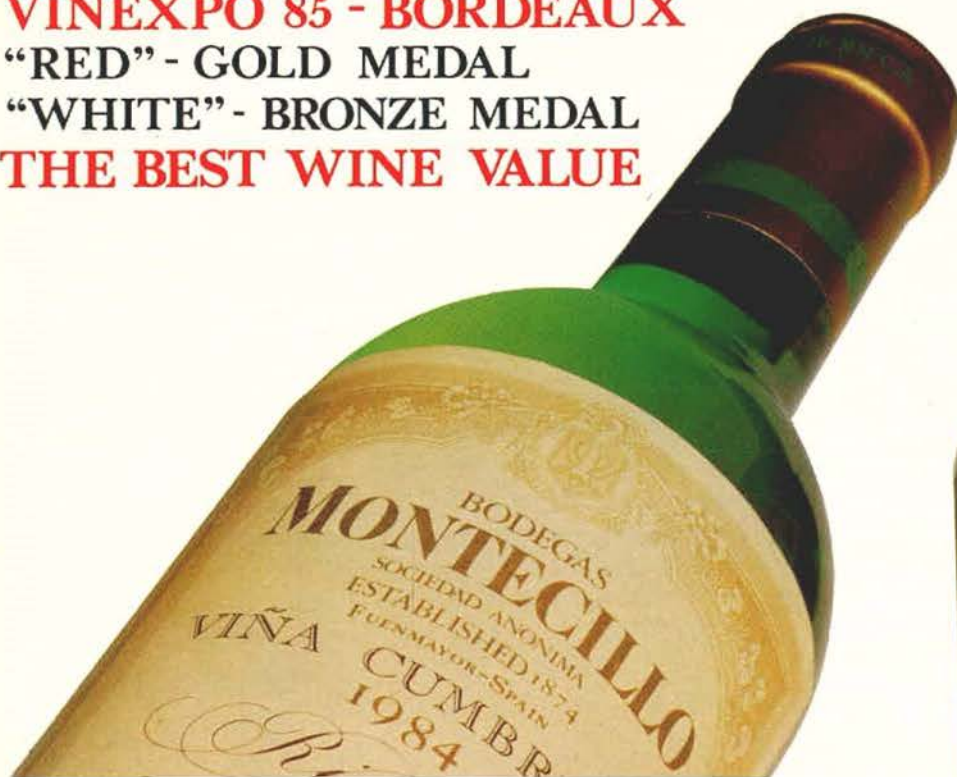
VINEXPO 85 - BORDEAUX

"RED" - GOLD MEDAL

"WHITE" - BRONZE MEDAL

THE BEST WINE VALUE

BODEGAS MONTECILLO, S. A.
Apartado 1
Fuenmayor
LA RIOJA. SPAIN



most up to-date and «rejuvenated» vineyards in the area and sees this modern approach as the best way of exploiting their full potential.

The most widely-used growing technique in the area is for the vines to trail along the ground. This method is traditionally held to protect them best from the harsh climate and to give the highest «strength» of grape, protecting them from the influence of León's massif. If the vines are grown upright they do not get the benefit of warmth from the soil and do not reach the necessary potential alcoholic strength.

That being said, however, Pedro Marcos' plantations, basically of *Tempranillo*, *Mencía* and *Prieto Picudo*, are grown using the espalier method. Unlike the other growers in the area, he believes that the disadvantages of the ground-hugging method outweigh its advantages. Though it does afford the grapes the benefit of ground heat, it is also true that the better tended they are, the better the layer of vegetation the vines produce and this blocks direct sunlight from the grapes; furthermore, after heavy rain, the vine rots from contact with the wet ground. Taking all this into account, he considers the perfect compromise to be to espalier the vines at 20, 30 or even 40 cm. from the ground.

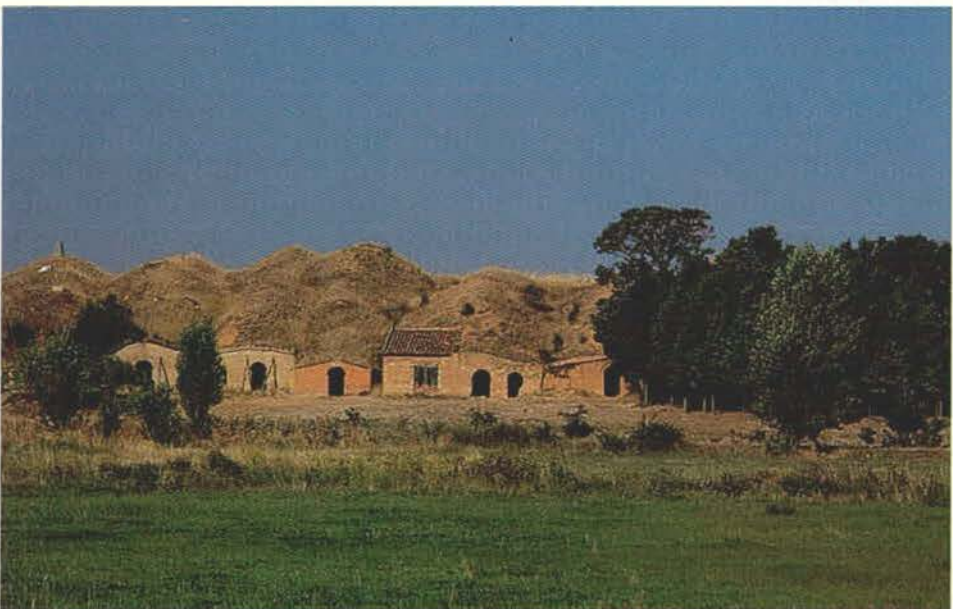
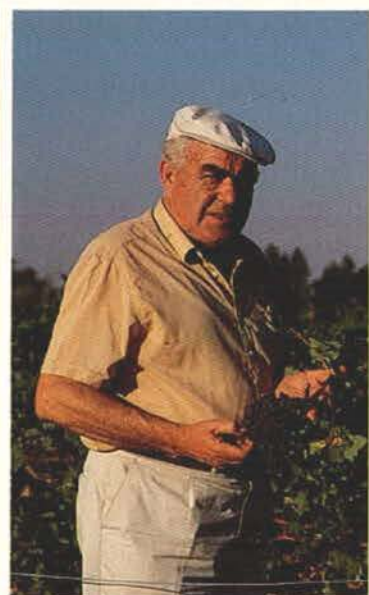
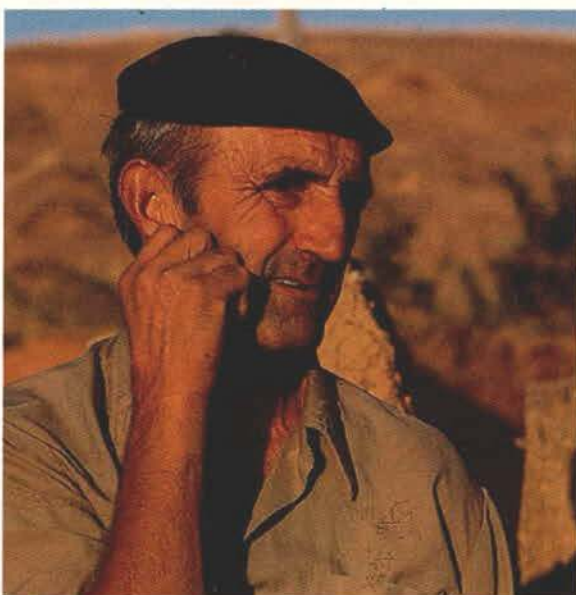
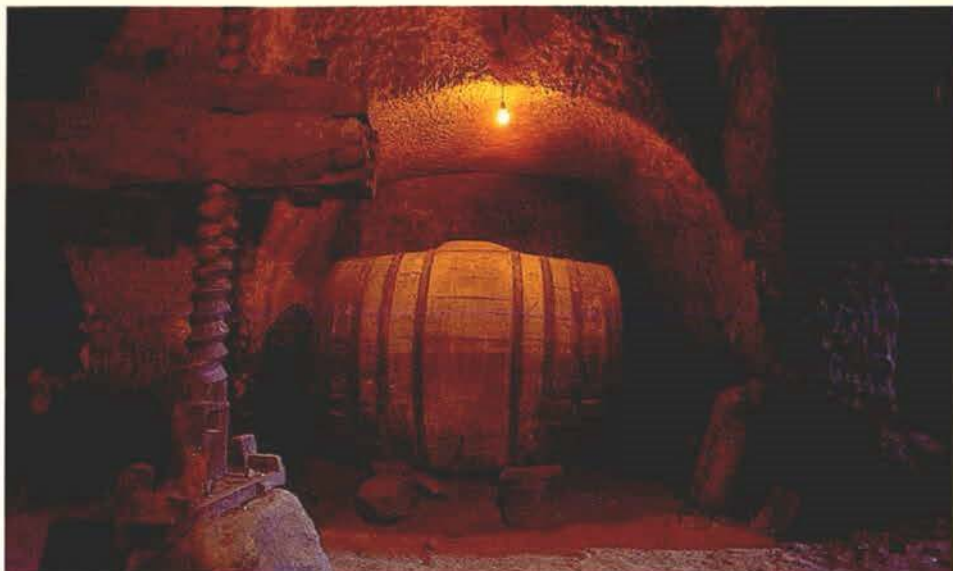
Reds Too

In terms of accrued reputation and experience, *claretes* win hands down over other types of wine in these parts. Climatic conditions and the cultivation methods used combine to make *clarete* the typical wine of the whole Duero basin. The experiments of Pedro Marcos and, on a larger industrial scale, VILE, have revealed that a León red can be very good indeed and bears more resemblance to the Loire's Chignons or Burgueil rather than a wine from Rioja or the Duero, to say nothing of Aragón and Toledo.

I tasted a red wine in Pedro Marcos' underground bodega which, despite a certain lack of technical advantage, was a lovely intense ruby colour with a slightly earthy, tannic flavour softened by the effect of *Mencía*, and with some hints of residual sugar yet to be broken down.

The popular *clarete*, except for hints of sediment in the flavour (difficult to avoid in the technical conditions under which winemakers work here) is similar to *claretes* from the rest of Castile, except for having rather more flavour and sweetness caused by the addition of whole bunches of grapes during elaboration.

This region's wines are of a type which mature in the cask without oxidising, as is



This region's wines are of a type which mature in the cask without oxidising, as is the case of the world's most famous wines from Bordeaux, Burgundy, Rioja and Ribera de Duero.



The term «vino de aguja» means literally «needle wine», and describes the delightful prickling sensation which its slight petillance produces on the palate.

the case of the world's most famous wines from Bordeaux, Burgundy, Rioja and Ribera de Duero. «I realise just how important and necessary aged wines are, and ours are ideal for this treatment», comments Pedro Marcos. «At present, I have a little bodega of about 200,000 - 225,000 litres, which was my father's. But to cope with the output of my venture, I'm about to build a new and bigger bodega. Mind you, I still think that smaller, underground cellars are best for keeping wine.»

And indeed, the cooperatives have not achieved in their *petillant* wines the degree of quality attained in the underground bodega, though it is also true that they have not been using the artisan method of adding bunches of grapes to keep fermentation going.

When one considers the insecure future which awaits *clarete* and *rosé* wines, it seems clear that the answer, if this wine-growing area is to survive, lies with reds. Pedro Marcos observes that the period of sun which this area gets is perfect, and though longer than in El Bierzo, does not affect alcoholic strength excessively because of the altitude. Furthermore, the pre-

The future of this winegrowing area lies in the red wines.

dominant soil-type is alluvial, «poor», but excellent for vine-growing.

This being an area which gets as much sun as Almería, its altitude speeds up the growing cycle and the grapes ripen slowly, so that the same degree of alcoholic strength is attained with more flavour and aroma. By mid-September, *Tempranillo* has reached 13.5°, *Prieto Picudo* and *Mencía* 11.5°, the maximum for these last two.

Prieto Picudo produces bunches so densely packed with grapes that they look like pine-cones. Pedro Marcos is of the opinion that making *claret*s and reds as well as the usual *rosé* poses no problem at all for this variety. With the right elaboration techniques, he believes that this grape can easily give enough colour for red wines.

Among the bodegas representative of this area is the Cooperativa de Valdevimbre. Although 90% of its output is of simple wines based on the area's widely-grown varieties, it also makes a *reserva* wine, matured in oak casks, elaborated using the artisan method used for *petillant* wines of adding bunches of grapes to the must.

The Pajares de Los Oteros cooperative is another important one which, although it does no bottling, produces wines very typical of the area. Perhaps the most representative of all is VILE, founded by a group of León wine veterans in Armunia, near the provincial capital. Thanks to the advanced technology it deploys, it has established itself as the area's only exporting bodega, selling an impressive number of cases to the well-known British chain of wine shops, Victoria Wines. It makes elegant, oak-aged wines, as well as simple wines for selling locally. Its aged wines are similar to Riojas, though the use of *Mencía* grapes gives them their own particular personality.

El Páramo wine is on the wane, its vines grapeless and choked by dry grass. There are few vineyards and just a few token wines are produced by nostalgic locals.



VINOS DE LOS HEREDEROS DEL
MARQUÉS DE RISCAL, S. A.

EL CIEGO (ALAVA)

OLIVE OIL

THE BASIS OF GOOD COOKING

Virgin olive oil is, and always has been, something more than just a raw material; it is part and parcel of Mediterranean civilisation and one of the staples of its diet. Indispensable as a medicinal unguent and a source of light, it came to be a symbol of peace, progress and wisdom.

But here I want to look at its role in cooking. This marvellous fresh fruit juice is highly characteristic of Mediterranean eating. It is ideal for use in food since it is the only oil obtained by mechanical pressing which needs no further processing before it can be eaten, as its natural flavour, aroma, vitamins and nutrients remain unchanged. It is well worth its slightly higher price, bearing in mind that it is extracted from the best ripe olives by a straightforward process of washing, decanting, spinning and filtering.

What is generally known as pure olive oil is, in fact, a mixture of refined and virgin olive oils, which normally has a higher degree of acidity.

The author of the oldest known cookery book, Apicius, gives a recipe in his *«De re*

coquinaria» for a succulent dish of chicken in oil, pointing out to his readers that it will «absorb water and oil of Spain in abundance».

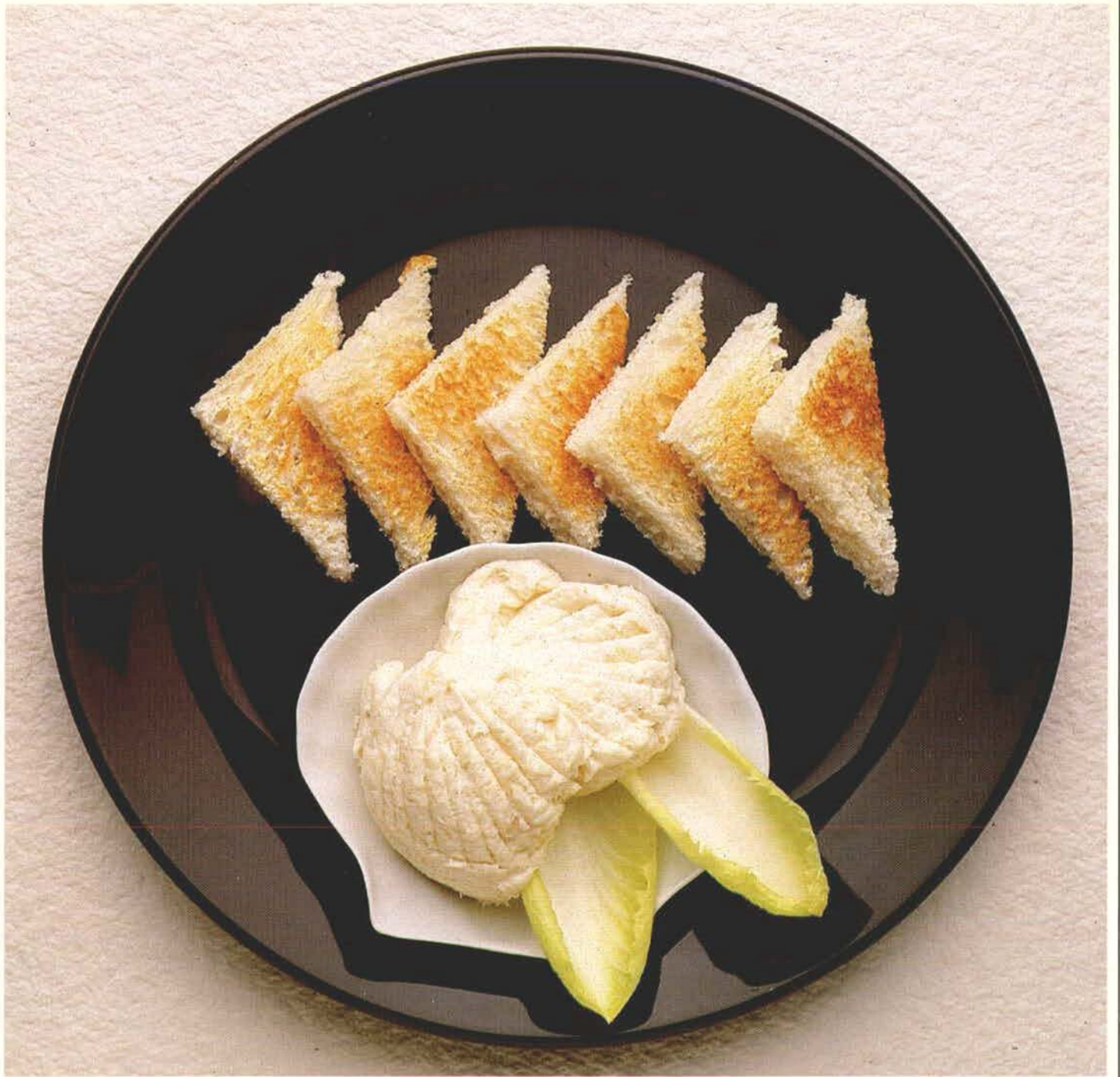
The best area of Spain for fried food is, undoubtedly, Andalusia. Having five coastal provinces, the Andalusians have mastered the art of frying - their fish are especially good. To fry well, you need to follow certain guidelines. Always fry in a deep pan with a heavy base which distributes the heat evenly, and with a capacity of double the amount of oil you are going to use. Always use a frying medium, like olive oil, which withstands high temperatures. One normally fries foods which are rich in albumen and starch (potatoes, eggs, batter, etc.) which give that lovely golden colour and crisp texture. Those foods which do not contain these ingredients (vegetables, fruit, fish and so on) have them added for frying, in the form of flour or batter. Remember that when frying very small fish, or indeed anything of small size, the oil should be very hot (180°). When you submerge them in the hot oil, a protective coating forms so that they do not absorb too much grease. It is impor-

tant, too, to fry a few at a time. The temperature drops too far if you put in a lot and the fish goes soggy rather than crisp from having absorbed too much oil. When frying bigger fish, though, you will need less oil at a lower temperature so that the inside cooks without the outside burning. Fritters, whatever their size, need a lot of oil but a relatively low temperature (160°) so that the batter cooks inside.

Meat needs a high heat for the first few minutes, both when roasting and frying, so that its juices are sealed in and not lost later in cooking.

If you haven't got a fryer with a thermostat or a thermometer, you can test the temperature of the oil by dropping in a small piece of bread. If it absorbs a lot of oil, it is not yet hot enough; if it sizzles then the oil is between 150° and 180°.

Warm salads are enjoying quite a vogue at present. They are a good way to start a meal - light, and somehow more welcoming than a cold starter. There are some golden rules to follow. The warm ingredient should be warm enough to stay warm after serving. The cold part should be at room rather than refrigerator temperature.



**Brandade
of
salt cod**



**Strawberry
fritters**

You should serve them on warmed plates and dress, as for other salads, with three parts oil to one part vinegar. Virgin olive oil is excellent for these warm salads, which allow its aroma and density to be appreciated. There is an infinite variety of possibilities, their success depending, as in cooking as a whole, on imagination, a light touch and common sense.

Vegetables and olive oil go very well together. Fried, stuffed vegetables are very popular dishes in the Levante area of Spain. A useful hint is to seal in the stuffing with fresh breadcrumbs moistened with egg-white.

A spring of parsley in your oil will cut down the smell of frying in the kitchen. If you are going to keep a bottle of oil for a long time, pop a cube of sugar into it; this will stop it from going rancid without changing the flavour. To remove the smell and taste from oil that has been used for fish, strain it through a fine sieve and add a few drops of lemon juice. You should not use the same oil more than five or six times; strain it each time after use to remove particles of food which would burn the next time you used it and spoil the flavour.

My last piece of advice is to try using olive oil for sponges and cakes in general: it gives very moist, light sponges, and good results overall.

All this is just to scratch the surface of what could be written about this excellent product. But I have space only to express my gratitude to Pallas Athenae, goddess of Wisdom and protectress of the city of Athens. Legend has it that among the many important things she did, was teaching the Athenians to grow and use olives.

Marinated partridge

Ingredients (For 4):
2 partridge
4 shallots
4 cloves garlic, unpeeled
1 stick celery
thyme
bay leaves
peppercorns
1½ dl. approx. sherry vinegar
1-1½ dl. pure olive oil
1-1½ dl. meat stock

Place the partridge, cleaned and whole, in a pan with the peeled shallots, the garlic, some bay leaves, the celery, a few sprigs of thyme and some peppercorns. Add vinegar until the partridge are half covered, then add the same quantities of olive oil and meat stock. Cover lightly and cook gently until tender. Leave to cool before serving.

Brandade of salt cod

Ingredients:
500 gr. good quality salt cod
250 ml. best quality pure olive oil
100 ml. milk
white pepper
juice of a lemon
70 - 80 gr. boiled potato

Soak the salt cod for 24 hours, changing the water three or four times during that period. Cut the cod into pieces of equal size, put them in a pan and cover with cold water. Bring to the boil, then remove the pan from the heat, leaving the cod to poach for about 15 minutes. Drain, then remove skin and bones. Heat 100 ml. of oil in a pan or earthenware casserole and add the cod, beating it vigorously with a wooden spoon until it becomes a creamy paste. Take the pan off the heat and, still beating, slowly add the rest of the oil and the milk. Mash the boiled potato and mix that in well, too. Season with white pepper and some salt if necessary, finally adding the lemon juice. If you have a food processor, this dish is even easier to prepare. After poaching and cleaning the fish, put it in the processor. Heat the oil and, with the machine running, add it along with the other ingredients in the order given above. Brandade is usually served hot, but I like it cold with hot toast.

Potato purée with olive oil

Ingredients (for 4):
1/2 kg. potatoes
1 dl. olive oil
1 dl. milk
salt and pepper

Peel the potatoes and boil them in salted water. Drain well, then mash them. Return them to the heat and stir in the olive oil and milk, allowing the mixture to boil for a moment. Check the seasoning.

Strawberry fritters (This recipe can be used for all kinds of fruit)

Ingredients:
125 gr. flour
salt
1 tablespoon pure olive oil
2 eggs
100 ml. milk
100 ml. beer
1 heaped teaspoon sugar
strawberries (not hulled)

Place the flour, a pinch of salt and the egg yolks in a bowl and mix. Slowly add the beer and milk, then straight away the olive oil. Mix well without beating. Leave to rest for 2 hours at room temperature. When you are ready to use the batter, whisk the egg whites until they form stiff peaks and stir them into the mixture. Heat the oil until very hot. Take a strawberry by the hull and dip it into the batter. Gently hold it half submerged in the oil for a second, then let go. Do this with all the strawberries. When they are golden, remove from the oil and put them to drain on kitchen paper. Sprinkle with icing sugar.

Seri is one of those people destined to succeed; she would have done well in whatever walk of life she had chosen. Today, she is a successful cook, though she did not start her working life among the pots and pans. When she was only eighteen, she already ran a dressmaking business, with twenty seamstresses working for her. This was quite something in the 1950's, and especially in Aranda de Duero which had not yet developed into the town of busy streets, avenues, plazas and skyscrapers that it is today. She even had customers in Madrid. But then, in 1954, she married Eugenio Herrero and changed couture for cuisine. Times were still hard then, and her husband needed her help. She had to abandon the skills she knew —tacking, backstitching, darts and hems—to master others about which she knew very little —frying, blanching, thickening, browning—but her skilful hands and her determination to do things properly were equally useful in her new field.

They started off by opening a bar called «Aquí te espero» («I wait for you here»), which offered aperitif and afternoon snacks not to be found elsewhere in Aranda, and which attracted a lot of custom. These were a preview of the style and variety of cooking that Seri shows today.

«It was just a bar, a long bar, where we served little snacks of what we serve today at table: crab, snails, scrambled eggs with various things, all sorts of little casseroles. A year and a half later, we had to take over the place next door as a dining room. Some people still ask me for «Aquí te espero» dishes!».

In 1970, they needed to expand still further and bought

MESON DE LA VILLA

The art of doing things properly



Seri and Eugenio. Last year, they prepared a few dinners in San Francisco.

the *Mesón de la Villa*, where they are today - a vast basement with a huge cellar, one of the many medieval ones which run under the town. Eugenio concentrates on the roasting and charcoal grilling side of things, and Seri on the pots and pans; he roasts lamb and grills chops whilst she deals with the wild mushrooms, vegetables, fish, marinades, sweetbreads and the sauces to go with these simple but delicious dishes.

«I try to improve something every day... to see if such and such a taste goes well with such and such a texture and see what the final dish would be like; then I make it straight away. You've got to keep experimenting in the kitchen... don't you think?... even with everyday things...»

Last year, someone suggested that they go to America to prepare a few dinners in San Francisco. They took nothing

with them but enthusiasm. They went a few days beforehand to get to know the produce and the kitchen equipment they had to work with. «What a success! They loved it! Of course, there were some Spanish people there explaining things to the others. It went down really well: courgette mould, scrambled eggs with green garlic shoots, marinated salad with watercress, wild mushrooms with sweetbreads, duck with prunes... Eugenio did a roast...»

What Seri doesn't realise is that what she did in San Francisco she had already done in her own Castilian town of Aranda, an area not known for luxury either historically or gastronomically. Seri revived and revitalised forgotten formulae, many of which now grace the menus of smart restaurants in the big cities.

Her mother, «la abuela» as they call her, is usually around,

sorting out little difficulties that no-one else has time for. Well, her daughter would, but she likes «la abuela» to feel useful.

Seri notices everything from her little kitchen beyond the dining room. And if she happens to overlook anything, then Eugenio sees to it, so everything runs smoothly.

At holiday times, the mesón suffers from overbooking. The whole place fills to bursting point —the parking-ground behind, the tables in the dining room, the tables in the bar— lots of people eating and lots waiting. Those are the times when everything runs out, including the patience of some of the customers and Eugenio's lamb and chops, the delicious black *morcilla* sausage, and the ribs, and the chorizos that a relation makes for them in Aranzo de Miel... and the baked pimentoes, the scrambled eggs, the vegetables, the grilled lambs' kidneys, the sweetbreads with wild mushrooms, and the free-range chicken with its dark, smooth, almost gelatinous flesh that seems to seal your lips together even after wiping them clean on your napkin to take a mouthful of good Ribera del Duero *clarete*.

«We breed them», explains Eugenio, arriving from the larder with a huge chicken in his hands. «We keep them in the garden and they eat everything maize, wheat, insects, worms... whatever they peck at. They run about among the bushes. If you don't castrate them, they can get to weigh about four kilos. They can give you quite a fright!»

They grow everything in their garden: garlic, onions, cabbages, lettuces, tomatoes, pimentoes, leeks, potatoes... which arrive at the mesón fresh from the ground. And you can tell.





Puffs and dried fruits compote.

Shepherdess' rabbit

Ingredients:

- 1 rabbit
- a little olive oil
- 1/2 onion
- 1 slice bread
- 4 cloves garlic
- parsley
- dash vinegar
- 1 glass red wine
- 1 pinch pepper
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 pinch sweet paprika

Clean the rabbit and cut it up. Put the oil in the pan and heat it, then fry the slice of bread. When golden, remove it and sprinkle with vinegar. Using the same oil, fry the onions until golden, then put in the rabbit pieces and brown them. Crush the garlic, the parsley, the pepper and the fried bread together until they form a paste, then add to the pan. Add the paprika, bay leaves and the wine, topping up with water to cover. Leave to cook over a gentle heat until the meat is just ready. Check the seasoning and serve with baked pimentoes.

Marinated turkey breasts

Ingredients:

- 1 kg. turkey breasts
- 1 l. olive oil
- 1/2 l. vinegar
- salt
- 6 cloves garlic
- 2 bay leaves

- 1 sprig thyme
- 20 gr. pepper
- 1/2 onion

Salt the turkey breasts and place them in a pan with the onion, garlic and herbs. Cover with the oil and vinegar and put on a lid. Cook over a slow heat for about 20 minutes. Serve cold, with watercress and pickled onions, pouring some of the sauce from the bottom over the meat.

Puffs

Ingredients:

- 1 coffee cup olive oil
- 1 coffee cup white wine
- 1 coffee cup aniseed liqueur
- juice and zest of 1 orange
- vanilla
- flour
- oil for frying

Put the first five ingredients into a bowl and mix in the flour a little at a time until you get a fine dough. Allow to rest for at least a quarter of an hour.

Roll out the dough into a very thin square, cut into diamond shapes, fold each in half



Marinated turkey breasts.



Shepherdess rabbit.

and fry in plenty of oil. Place on a serving dish and sprinkle with sugar just before serving.

Leche frita (fried milk)

Ingredients:

- 2 litres milk
- 200 gr. cornflour
- 300 gr. sugar
- 1/2 sherry-glass aniseed liqueur
- lemon peel
- 50 gr. butter
- 4 egg yolks
- cinnamon

Pour three-quarters of the milk into a saucepan. Add the sugar, lemon peel and butter and place on the heat. To the remaining milk, add the cornflour, egg yolks and aniseed, mixing well, then add the mixture to the saucepan. Stir well to prevent it from going lumpy and when it comes to the boil, remove from heat and pour it into a shallow dish until it forms a 1 cm. thick layer. Allow to cool and then cut it into slices. Dip them in flour and the remaining egg-whites and fry them. Serve cold or hot, with cinnamon or anise liqueur. You could also flambé the anise.

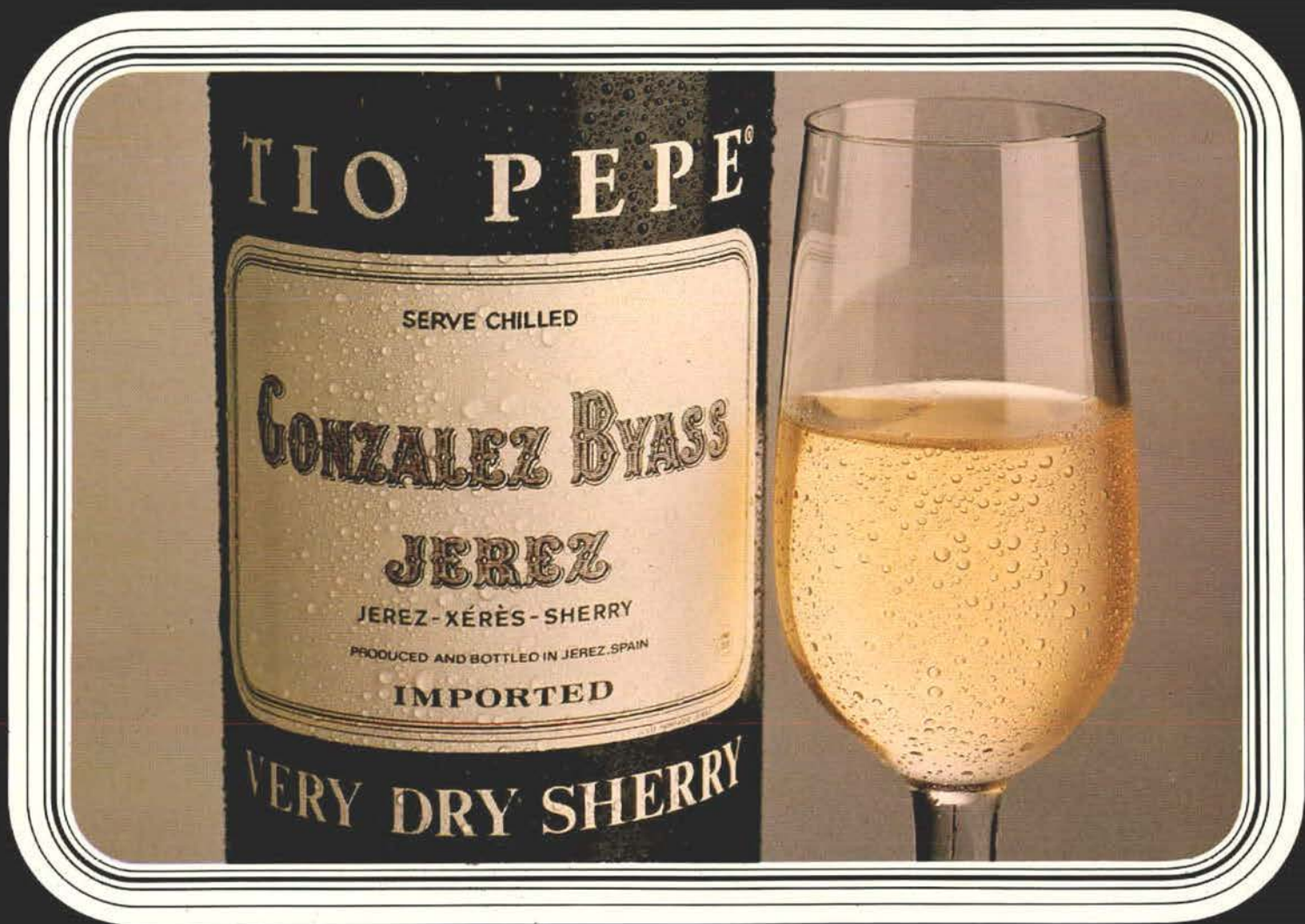
Dried fruit compote

Ingredients:

- 250 gr. dried apricots or peaches
- 250 gr. dried figs
- 250 gr. prunes
- 250 gr. raisins
- 250 gr. dates
- 1/2 stick cinnamon
- 300 gr. sugar
- 1 l. red wine
- 1/2 l. water
- 100 gr. pine kernels
- 1 glass sweet sherry

Place all the dried fruit in a pan except for the dates and pine kernels, then add the wine, sherry, water, sugar and cinnamon. Cook for 15 minutes, then add the dates and cook for 15 minutes more. Transfer to a serving dish and decorate with the pine kernels. If the syrup is too thin, reduce over a high heat for a few minutes, and pour over the fruit as you serve.

Chilled TIO PEPE



The natural aperitif.

GONZALEZ BYASS
SHERRY & BRANDY



The Highlands of Cazorla

Ancient ballad for new-born river



Text: Gabriel García Guardia
Photos: Antonio de Benito

Tres morillas me enamoran en Jaén: Aixa, Fátima y Marién. (I fell in love with three Moorish lasses of Jaen: Aixa, Fatima and Marien.) Where Andalusia becomes Castille and the seagulls fly far away. Where the horizons widen, so that the hills are combed with green stripes. Where the whitewash of the south is checkered with stone when the streets and small squares are laid. There we find Jaen. When Jaen becomes mountains and the mountains oases amongst the dry lowlands. When the river is almost a brook in which young fish play games with the leaping currents. When eagles soar over the pinewoods where the mountain goats gambol under the sombre shadows of the branches. There we find Cazorla. This village which has given its name to its highlands spills over a precipitous hillside. It has an ancient dispute with its neighbours, Burrenchel and La Iruela, as to who has the steepest slope. The oilmills are known as co-operatives. The shopkeepers who sell tins of food, hermetically sealed bowls and mountain packs to campers and mountain-climbers also earn a pretty penny or peseta. The bakery bakes some delicious bread. The women also buy their semolina there, for the *andrajos* (a dish prepared with cod, tomatoes and potatoes) and yeast for the *roscos de baño* (typical biscuits). The fountains are clean, well-watered ditches, even in the dog days of summer. The Moorish castle has a tower. And in this tower is a window. And in this window, the legend of a Christian who fell in love with a captive Moorish girl. The road which winds up to the highlands is a black snake which hides from view, twisting itself in, out and around the ancient trunks. Hidden in the greenery, it has seen many Christians and many Moors pass up and down its tortuous slopes.





Yo me subí a un pino verde, por ver si la divisaba. (*I climbed up a green pinetree, to see if I could catch a glimpse of her.*) The pinetrees, in noble mourning, grow in total chaos over lands of more than twelve thousand hectares. They seem to be in greedy competition to see the many-coloured dragonflies, to listen to the chirping of the crickets, to smell the sweet perfume of the lavender which grows at their feet, to feel the gentle breeze rustling through their foliage, to drink the water that flows down the slope in search of the river.

In the pinewoods of the Segura highlands, hanging from the tree trunks, one can still sometimes see some moss-covered flowerpots or rusty tins, which gradually fill with resin: the viscous tears of a gushing wound. The pines are full of generosity. They offer shade to the weary traveller, protection to the animals, and wood to men. The boars, closely followed by their young, root amidst the undergrowth in search of food. The birds, big and small, spend the day in the branches. Some, when night-time begins to fall, set off on their hunting expeditions for busy insects and shy mice. On the left bank of the river, before it rushes down the waterfall of Linajeros, is Vadillo. There, the railways have set up a lumbering centre and the Nature Institute ICONA has set up a school. This is why Vadillo is one of the most highly-populated areas in the highlands.

De los cuatro muleros, mamita mía, que van al río, el de la mula torda, mamita mía, es mi marío.

(*Of the four muleteers, dear mother mine, who go down to the river, the one with the grey mule, dear mother mine, is my beloved.*)

«The Guadalquivir river is born in the highlands of Cazorla, passes through Cordoba and Seville, from whence it is navigable until it flows out into the Atlantic...» One cannot help but recall the encyclopedias one read as a child. They are as evocative as Proust's renowned *madeleine*... A tablet (almost a tombstone - for this is a land of contrasts) tells us, in Spanish and Arabic, that this is the Ravine of the Springs (Cañada de las Fuentes), at more than three thousand one hundred metres and that it is the official source of

the Betis river. Beneath a thick wall of tidy stones flows a crystalline liquid which one day will reflect the famous silhouette of the Giralda. Other rivulets flow down from the foot of the Cabañas peak into these sparkling waters. The fireguard, who lives up there in the heights, shades his eyes from the sun's glare. On his chin is a white growth of many days. Some beans —his lunch— are simmering away in a tiny earthenware cookingpot. The aromatic steam which they give off, escapes through the hut's chimney into the infinite blue skies. «When I come from the village, I wake up at four. I leave my wife and take



the mule —grey mule— and we make our way up, step by step, with provisions for a fortnight. The engineer laughs at me and says I'm oldfashioned. He's only a lad. I started my military service in '37. I was in the war - in Teruel... a corporal.» He is obviously yearning for company to talk to. He can still remember Justo Cuadros («God rest his soul»), who always told the best hunting stories in all the highlands. And Maximo, whose nickname was «the Lame One of La Fresnadilla», a shepherd who did not want national hunting restrictions to be imposed. And the Golondrina («the Swallow»)... And many more.

**Debajo de la hoja de lechuga
Tengo a mi amante malo con calentura.**

(*Under the lettuce leaf, I have my lover sick with fever.*)

There is much to see in the highlands, but little to eat. A few shepherds live in the lowlands. The hillmen have built their own *cortijo* in the hollows of the valleys, which have been flattened by glacial movement. Next to the *cortijo* (farmhouse) is a tiny garden, in which the earth is bro-

ken by a wealth of vegetables. The farmers in Cazorla still go to the market every day to vend their lettuce and tomatoes. In Baeza, just before the highlands, they make an exceptional cold partridge dish, which is made with lettuce from the gardens on the riverbanks. This late vegetable crop from Cazorla provides a welcome refreshment in the sweltering heat of the Ubeda highland summer. People use the lettuce to make *pipirrana*, a local salad in which pieces of tunafish are mixed with bits of cucumber and sliced tomatoes, onions, and hard-boiled eggs. But the speciality of the highlands are the meat preserves. The *chorizos* (red pepper sausages) are so well known, that no further praise is necessary. «Well, you know, since they're mostly meat and not much fat, when you fry them, they go nice and crispy and are stiffer than a Flamenco singer's neck,» says a knowing shepherd, who is also an expert on the best food to take up to the mountains: Cold preserved meats, *guñapos* (a local dish), *olla gitana* (Gypsy stew)...

**No salgas, paloma, al campo,
Mira que soy cazador,
Y si te tiro y te mato,
Para mí será el dolor.**

(*Don't go out into the fields,
my dove, for I am a hunter,
And if I shoot you and kill you,*

I will be hurt more than you.)

There is a Parador (national hotel) in the highlands. Its lounges display framed photos of titled personages and foreigners, showing off the animals which they have hunted. Mainly, these are of big game, as the many partridges and pheasants they have shot over the years were not deemed worthy of being immortalised by a camera. The wild mushrooms of the area —*nís-calos* and *setas*— like the hunters, come out mainly during the hunting season. The local cook who invented pheasant with *setas* must have been some sort of genius. In the woods, protected from the sun, live Hispanic mountain goats, with their ever-mournful eyes, fallow deer, with all their frisky grace, *muflones*, a goatlike animal with twisted horns, and stags with a crown of bushy antlers. «Since they don't bleed when you kill them, you have to keep the meat in brine and vinegar so all the blood comes out and it loses its colour.» None of these animals will leave Cazorla. They wait stoically for the annual arrival of the gunmen. «You see, when they bring them in, we cut them up, and make chops of them, or joints which we cook in tomato, garlic and herbs... Or some people roast them



and serve them with chestnut purée...» The meat is sold in Bailen or Andujar. Mating season in autumn and hunting season in winter.

During the hunting season, the population drops —more than some conservationists would wish, but never as much as the hunters would like to boast of. But come autumn, the stags go down the hills, proudly exhibiting their antlers and lowing a mating call, which also serves to stake a claim over the other, less vociferous males— who do not always get the message. The hillsides are filled with the sounds of skulls cracking in head-on fights and hair-raising brays, a sound which has led the locals to name this season «the braying time». People come to see the mating spectacle, passing their binoculars around so that everybody can get a good view. Later, they will change their glasses for the sights on their guns...

Tres moricas tan garridas,
Iban a coger olivas,
Y hallábanlas cogidas en Jaén.

(Three such pretty little Moorish girls went to pick olives, and were picked themselves in Jaén.)

In no time at all, the green olives appear, asking for water. Then comes the hard work of knocking them off the trees and collecting them. Easter is hardly by

when the bruised fruit begin to come into the oilmill and to be pressed before the processing season. «If they're pressed too much, they turn out bad - I don't know how to put it... like the oil was bitter.» Jaen olive oil has always been widely acclaimed. «It's like this —the best thing here is fried eggs. And frying eggs, frying them well— that's harder than folks think. I put them in the boiling oil and take them out with a spoon. I let the oil go on heating up and then I put two or three spoon of boiling oil over the yolks. That way, I finish frying them on the plate, when the whites are already cold. Obviously it's all a matter of what oil you use. With a good olive oil, you get a real finger-licking mayonnaise, and not the one in the bottles which is like the cream that women rub on their faces.» The fried eggs are served in the *ventas* —humble bars/hostels. Weary huntsmen aren't picky— any seat will do to relieve tired bones and any covering will do to protect them from the incessant sun. A grubby servant, without much wits, comes to see what it'll be. On the «raelite» table, he plumps down a fifth-litre of local beer and a plate of well seasoned olives. Jaen olives.

Debajo de la hoja del perejil,
Tengo a mi amante malo y no puedo ir.

(Under the leaf of parsley, I have my lover ill and I can't go.)

In olden times, people enjoyed the chicken which they roasted in La Golondrina with mountain herbs and was famous for the flavour of the meat. Nowadays, the hens peck at the verges of the road which goes to Tranco. The hens look as if they are still tender, but their eggs aren't such deep yellow. «You can get whatever you want here. From fried eggs with "chorizo" to trout.» La Golondrina is famous for serving the best salmon trout. The hollow of the fish's stomachs are stuffed with fennel and parsley, along with a snippet of fried pork-scratchings. La Golondrina herself has sparkling, light-coloured eyes. Her children watch her carefully to see whether she is talking too much. She is full of memories of the many hunters who have been given food and bed in her establishment.

La luna es un pozo chico,
Las flores no valen nada.
Lo que valen son tus brazos
Cuando de noche me abrazan.

*(The moon is a tiny puddle, Flowers are worth nothing.
All that matters are your arms when they embrace me at night)*

The people get together in the Parador. Soon there will be venison on the menu and there will be much more of a rush to get meals served. Huntsmen and game

Saber vivir.

CARLOS I
Solera Especial
BRANDY
Pedro Domecq

CARLOS I



DOMECQ Cosecha de la Tierra

Clam

Agenda

HOW TO GET THERE:

The best way to get to Cazorla is on the N-322 road between Jaén and Albacete. From there, it is easy to pick up the IV radial road, thanks to the 38 km. of good road linking Bailén and Ubeda. To get onto the local roads in the highlands, one is usually recommended to take the Torreperogil road to Peal de Becerro and Cazorla, which later goes up into the mountains via La Iruela. One can also go in from the other side, from Puente de Génave to Orcera and Segura de la Sierra, to then follow the forest tracks, or twist around the acceptable road which follows the Guadalquivir river. An intermediate route, which goes through the other two, is the road from Villanueva del Arzobispo to the Tranco reservoir. Some people prefer the difficult, often tortuous, but always mind-blowing route from Baza, in the province of Granada, via Pozo Alcon or via Santiago de la Espada.

HOW TO AVOID LOSING YOURSELF OR ANYTHING ELSE:

At the road controls at the entrance to the National Hunting Reserve of the Cazorla and Segura Highlands, ask for a detailed map, in colour, with a list of excursions and places of interest. In Coto Rios, there is a reception centre with sketches and maps of the highlands. In

formation is given and souvenirs sold.

TO GET BACK SOME STRENGTH:

Before arriving, one can eat in Baeza: *Casa Juanito*, in Ubeda: *El Olivo*, *La Perdiz* or in the *Parador*.

Once in the highlands, the following are quite acceptable: *El Ciervo* (Burrunchel), *La Golondrina* (Coto Rios) and the *Parador* (Sacejo).

WHERE TO SLEEP

The Parador

Several houses offering beds are scattered throughout the

highlands, especially between Arroyo Frio and the Tranco de Beas.

TO BRING BACK A SOUVENIR FROM A REAL CRAFTSMAN

Apart from what you can get in any of the normal souvenir shops, we recommend you to pay a visit to a real craft workshop, if you have time and are interested.

Here are some:

In Baeza:

Jose Viedma Lara. Paseo de Jose Antonio, 14. Packsaddles and harnesses.

In Sabiote:

Pilar Navarrete Cavos, Calvo Sotelo, 54. Makes good knotted rugs and tapestries.

In Torreperogil:

Emilio Higuera Fernandez. Fuentecilla, 5. Basketmaker.

In Segura de la Sierra:

The Tabara pottery is in San Vicente, s/n.

In Villanueva del Arzobispo:

Jose Florencio Arroyo. Principe, s/n. A good coppersmith.

Pedro Antonio Gomez Sanchez. Mesones, 3. An excellent woodcarver.

In Ubeda:

Forjart, Bolero 47, and the Taller Santamaria, Jurado Gomez, 3. Metalwork - genuine craftsmanship.

Enrique Blanco Martinez. Jose Antonio, 47. Makes esparto rugs and carpets.

Antonio Garcia Viedma, Alferoz Rojas, 17. Leatherwork.

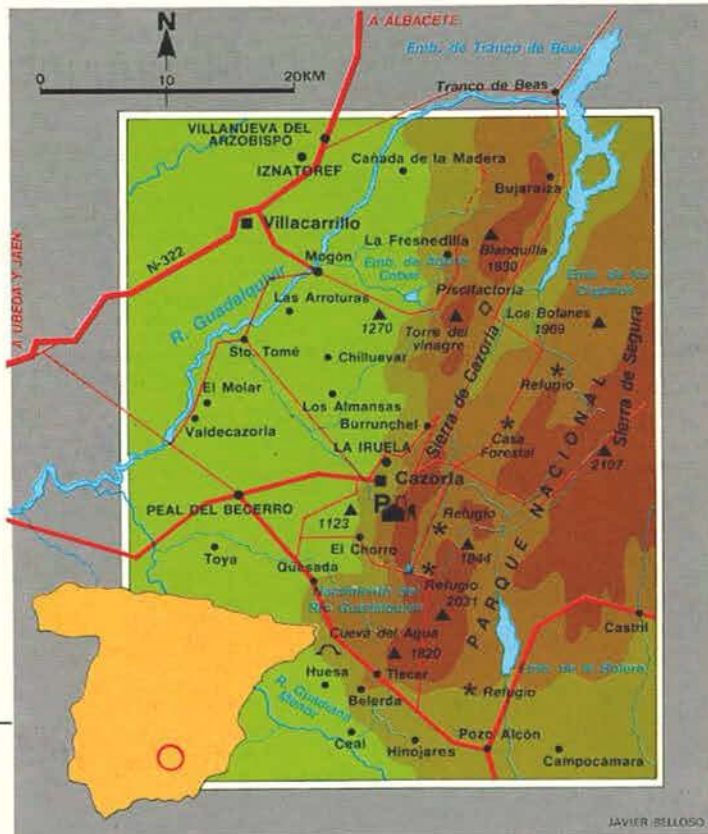
Ubeda ceramics are some of the most important in Spain. Of special interest are:

Tito (Pablo Martinez Padilla), Valencia, 44, with his excellent green glazes.

Millan (Juan Millan Cobo), Valencia, 80. Works exclusively in the *cuerda seca* tradition (old Arabic ceramic style).

Francisco Alameda Bello - at Valencia, 43 - and his relations, Miguel and Pedro Alameda Quesada in the Camino del Cementerio.

The Almarza brothers, at Valencia, 34. Also make good glazed and mat-finish pieces.



keepers will discuss their day, compare their kills and exaggerate them. Tomorrow will be another day. «What time do the gentlemen want me to call them?» In the depths of the lounge, a young couple is finishing off its third day of holiday. He is in the last year of his biology degree, and is fascinated by the flower *par excellence*

of Cazorla - the *Viola cazorlensis*. He has persuaded her to come for the mating season. But right now she is dreaming in the key of F. One day she will be a great soprano. She has taken a volume of works by Garcia Lorca from her *rucksack*. She felt obliged to bring it, since she was coming to the south, Lorca country. Although she

isn't quite sure whether this is Andalusia yet... The Borosa border is too similar to the Picos de Europa in the north of Spain. These pineforests remind her of Castilla. She opens the book at Old Popular Songs. Almost without meaning to, she begins to hum: *Tres morillas me enamoran en Jaén...*

CODORNIU



**EVERY SECOND OF EVERY DAY, SOMEWHERE IN THE WORLD,
TWELVE PERSONS ENJOY A GLASS OF CODORNIU.**

THE STILL - LIVES OF GOYA

During the seventeenth century, still-life painting in Spain became a highly skilled genre, taking as its models the simplest and humblest of objects and achieving amazing effects by playing with colour, line and especially light, using Mannerist techniques. These elements were used to admirable dramatic effect so that the objects stood out against their dark backgrounds. Examples of this type are to be found among the works of Zurbarán, Sánchez Cotán, Felipe Ramírez, Alejandro de Loarte, Van der Hamen and others.

The eighteenth century in Europe saw a change of attitude towards the still-life which, up until the early nineteenth century, came to be looked down on by the academicians as an inferior genre. No doubt, the world-changing events of the period 1790 to 1815 were instrumental in this shift, making the tranquility of the still-life seem barely relevant. Nevertheless, the foundation in Spain of the Academia de San Fernando in 1752 did a lot to «purify» taste and spread academic teaching and although it reflected the European tendency to consider flower and still-life painting of secondary interest, it did open its doors to painters in this genre, the most important of whom were Giacomo Nani, Mariano Nani, Luis Paret, José López Engruñados and the fabulous Luis Meléndez.

The romantic painters who followed them li-



Goya's still life Three Slices of Salmon, painted with the Impressionistic technique of a Monet.

ked to make their paintings allusively expressive, but Goya disdained all that and painted, motivated by a stark realism which seems to penetrate deep into the viewer's mind. Goya painted no still-lives until the last decade of his life, and when he did start to do so, he was clearly not harking back to the old tradition. His works are stripped of all artifice and decorative elements - even of harmony of composition. This gives his still-lives an immediate and life-like quality. It is as if they had been chosen at random and painted with a spontaneity which shows in a hitherto unprecedented approach, to be seen again later in the Impressionists. Thus

it could be said that Goya was the first painter of Impressionist still-lives.

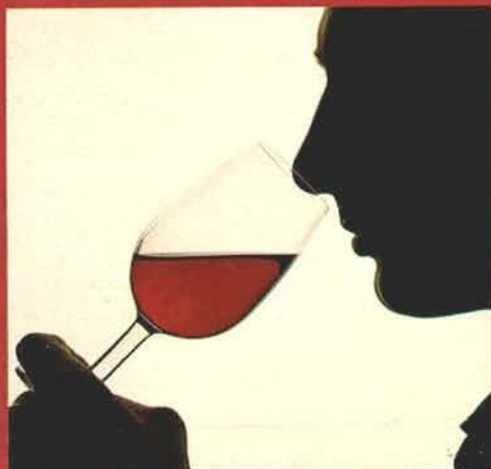
Goya, «the immortal Aragonese», painted few still-lives. Although there are twelve recorded works, only ten are catalogued today, distributed among various museums and private collections. There are two in the Prado: *Birds with a Basket* and *Turkey Resting on a Basket*, a work which shows the painter's masterly treatment of black. The Munich Art Gallery has *Still Life with Plucked Turkey*, an impressive work in which the pink flesh of the bird harmonises with the greenish grey of the fish in a frying pan which makes up the background. In the Louvre is the *Head and Ribs of Sheep*, which appear on the butcher's counter and from which the animal's sad eyes seem to fix the viewer with an inscrutable gaze. The Copenhagen Museum exhibits the *Head of a Young Bull*, its stripped bones startling all who see it. The Winterthur Reinhar has *Table with Bottles, Fruit, Bread, Sausage and Keg* making up a group and also *Three Slices of Salmon*, painted with such an impressionistic technique that it would not surprise one to learn that it was a Monet. A private collection in Zurich includes *Still-Life with Turkey*, another, in Paris, *Fish on the Beach*, featuring sea bream, and another in New York *Still-Life with Snipe* and *Still-Life with Hare*.

Manuel Martínez Llopis



A practical guide for wine professionals and all lovers of the

WINES OF SPAIN



**2.675 wines from bodegas,
cooperatives and bottlers, with
comments and prices**

PART ONE

- Methods of elaboration of the various types of wine (white, rosé, clarete, red, sparkling, fortified, etc.).
- Grape varieties grown in Spain.
- Wine labels and how to read them.
- Wine-tasting and tasting-sheets.
- A dictionary of wine language.
- Vintage chart.
- Wine festivals and fairs.
- Buying guide, with details of the best wine shops.

PART TWO

- 574 bodegas and 2,652 wines classified according to Autonomous Community.
- Tourist wine route of each area, with details of its restaurants, hotels, bars and bodegas.
- The 574 bodegas classified by Denomination of Origin, Specific Denomination, Provisional Denomination of Origin, Winegrowing Area, etc. The following information is given about each bodega featured: address, telephone number, telex number, year established, equipment used, source of grapes, by-products, market distribution of wines, visiting times, whether or not it sells directly to the public, a list of the wines produced and their characteristics. Brands exclusively for export are also mentioned. Each wine is described in terms of: year, grapes, alcoholic strength, type of bottle and price at the bodega. The best are indicated by the symbol of one or two wine-glasses.
- Full-colour fold-out map showing all the Denominations of Origin and Winegrowing Areas.

ORDER FORM

Forename _____ Surname _____

Address _____

Please send me _____ copy/copies, price £8 including airmail p. & p. for Europe, and US\$ 23 for the U.S.A. and the rest of the world, to be paid by*

- C.O.D.
- Postal Order No. _____
- Credit card
- American Express
- Visa No. _____

Expiry date _____

Signed _____

* Please tick the appropriate box.

CLUB DE GOURMETS (WINE GUIDE), Velayos, 4, bajo. 28035 Madrid, Spain. Tel.: (91) 209 10 42/42.



We have a country for sophisticated appetites.

Subtle. Simple. Overwhelming only in its variety. That's the cooking of Spain. In Galicia, for instance, where this picture was taken, our fishing fleets bring in hundreds of delicacies, many quite unique. You'll find vieiras, in the top left corner, noticeably different from ordinary scallops.

With such a wealth of fresh tastes, we don't really need sauces. Most of our seafood is poached, grilled, or with olive oil, paprika and garlic.

Which makes for a very pure cuisine - and not a fattening one.

So you'll feel perfectly justified in ordering one of the heavenly Galician desserts, like the almond-based Tarta de Santiago.

You must also try the Galician wine Albariño. With its tiny hint of bitterness, it's considered the most perfect accompaniment to seafood in the world.

Of course, you can find some Galician specialties in the other provinces of Spain. But these have their own regional specialties to tempt you, from gazpacho to roast lamb.

And you thought we only served paella.



Spain. Everything under the sun.