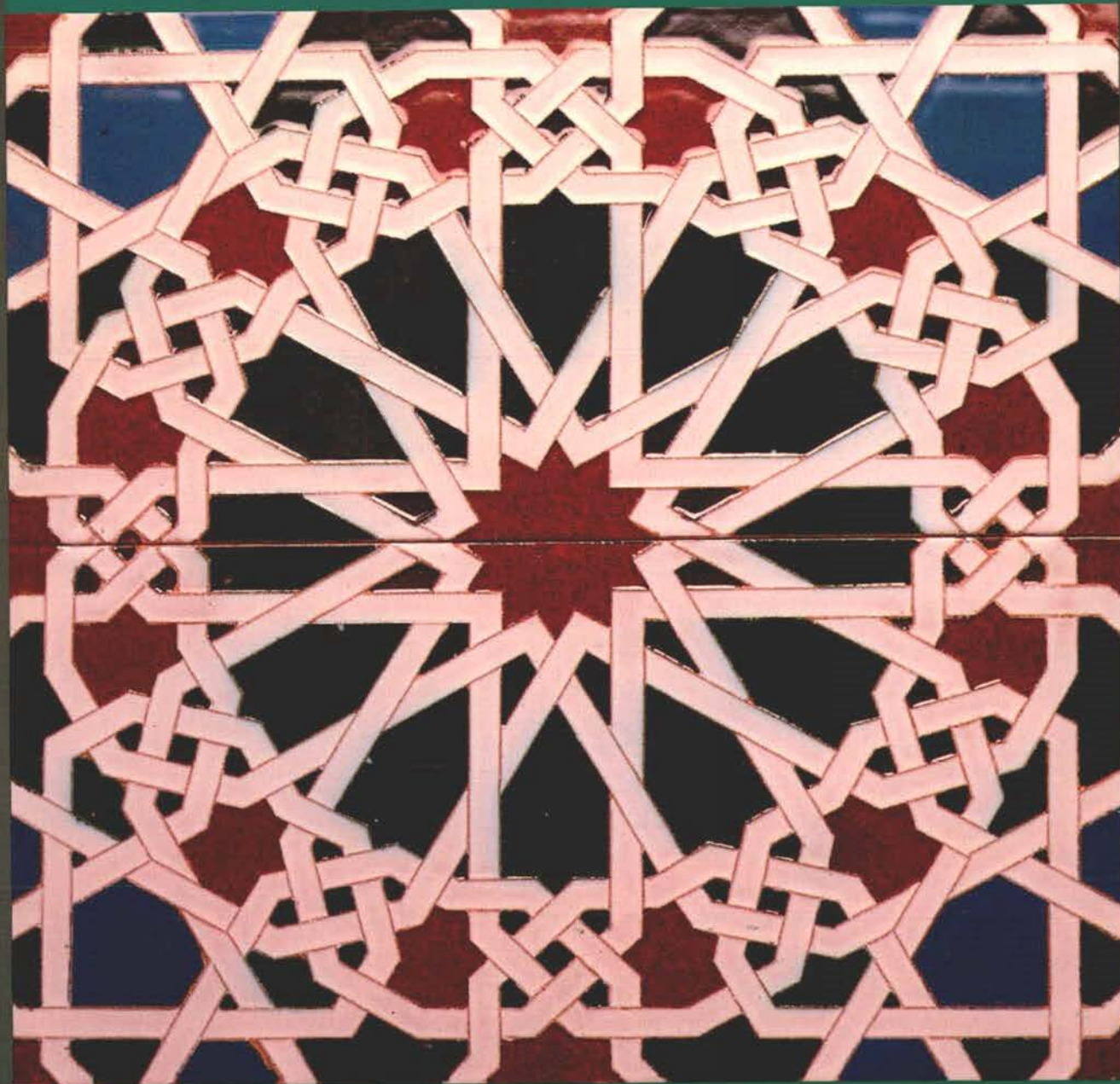


# S P A I N

# GOURMETOUR

FOOD, WINE & TRAVEL QUARTERLY MAGAZINE



No. 9-4<sup>th</sup> quarter 1987 - £ 1.40 - US \$2 - \$C 2.70

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# GRANADA

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# S P A I N GOURMETOUR

Everything is possible in *Granada*, announced a tourist slogan some time ago. Perhaps it exaggerated a little, or perhaps not; not if we examine all the great literature and imagery which the city has inspired throughout its long history. *Gustave Doré*, *Washington Irving*, *Gerald Brenan*, *Federico García Lorca*, at some point in their lives, they all shared the experience of a powerful passion for this city, whose enchantment stems from the symbiosis of different cultures.

The passage of time has provided *Granada* with new attractions, among which is the possibility of skiing on the nearby slopes of the *Sierra Nevada*. The visitor who journeys to Spain at this time of year, as well as being able to enjoy the snow, will have the opportunity to partake of the most traditional and savoured Christmas fare — *turrón*. At the hands of masterly *turrón*-makers, nuts, honey and sugar are confectioned into a rich nougat which is never absent from Spanish dinner tables at Christmas.

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COVER

Photography by Pablo Neustadt

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# THE ANDALUSIAN SCHOOL OF EQUESTRIAN ART HOME OF THE DANCING HORSES

Text: Guiomar Photos: Paz Ivisón and ASEA

*An imposing arena. White walls, white earth carefully raked over. Not a single hoofmark to be seen, the sand as smooth and clean as in a bull ring before the performance begins. Hundreds of eyes fixed on the arena. The silence is broken by Andalusian music and a voice announces: the show is about to begin. Applause. And the hooves of white horses — the Andalusian, Carthusian horses — churn up the surface ready to dance.*

**I**n May of 1973 the then Prince and Princess of Spain, *Don Juan Carlos* and *Doña Sofía*, went to Jerez during the Horse Fair to present the *Caballo de Oro* (Golden Horse) award to *Alvaro Domecq* of the Domecq family, famous for their wines and horses. Upon receiving the award, *Domecq* chose to substitute the traditional thank-you speech for a very special demonstration of horsemanship. It was so special in fact, that, encouraged by the Prince, *Don Alvaro* decided to create the Andalusian School of Equestrian Art, a school devoted to the classical Spanish art of dressage. Jerez, the home of these spectacular horses, was chosen as the ideal location for the School. Up until that time the only known school of Spanish equitation was far off in Vienna.

Surrounded by attractive gardens, the riding school stands next to a



small, French-style palace designed by the architect, *Garnier* (the Paris Opera House and the Casino in Montecarlo are also among his creations). The riding school has an audience capacity of about fifteen hundred and can stable up to about fifty horses. Its typical Andalusian architecture stands out against the "different" beauty of the palace next door.

## THE SHOW

What an enthralling spectacle! Gleaming horses and their riders step into the arena to display the art of mutual understanding between man and animal, the art of classical dressage, so elegant and majestic. Here there is no question of inventing a movement;



*These horses will give their obedience to anyone who knows how to manage them; however, they feel a special inclination, —friendly and almost human— towards their trainer.*

what matters is not imagination nor extravagance but rather perfection! Dressage, where the horses dance in time to music, consists of any movement natural to the horse and is carried out under the horseman's guiding hand so as to achieve a perfect execution. The horse is not asked to do anything he cannot do instinctively. The horseman only trains him to recreate his natural movements such as the walk, the trot, the canter, the pirouette at the walk, the pirouette at the canter, the gaits, the half-passes, the caprioles, the levades,... an infinity of movements which the horse learns to perform slowly and rhythmically at the horseman's orders. Training is completed when the horse performs the combination of each figure just at the right moment.

At present the school's show includes eleven events. There is a show every Thursday, and although it doesn't include all eleven events, it is still just as spectacular. Some events like the one

where the horsemen, dressed in the traditional short-jacketed suits, carry *señoritas* dressed like gypsy girls on the rumps of the stallions are reserved for foreign exhibitions or special galas. In another event, the art of breaking-in «cowboy style» is demonstrated by *Alvaro Domecq Jr.*, who performs alone in the arena with only his beautiful mare *Jaleo* and with all eyes fixed upon him. Events like these cut across the distance separating the performers and their public. Let the music and the show go on and on!

#### **DEDICATION AND OBEDIENCE**

What we all applaud, however, is only the final outcome of the daily dedication of man and horse, a training of sometimes over two hours a day for five years. A colt is first handed over to its trainer around the age of three before it can even carry a saddle on its back. From that time on, a close bond develops between man and animal. It is said that a horse never really reaches his maximum potential because absolute perfection is the goal, and of course, such a goal is unattainable!

Today there are forty horses and ten professional horseman at the school. Large numbers of pupils train daily and aspire to become as good as their teachers so as to one day either carry on at the school or become directors or trainers at other schools. These pupils not only have to learn how to ride but also how to master a horse and control it a will.

#### **FROM PUPIL TO HORSEMAN**

Each horseman at the school takes care of his horse plus the other horses ridden by aspiring horseman and other pupils. Many youngsters are eager to turn their hobby into a profession, but this is not always possible since the number of pupils accepted is limited by the number of horses available. Even so, the number is growing and just a short time ago eight new colts were added to the stables. In order to be accepted as a pupil, one has to be at least fourteen years old, have a genuine interest in and enthusiasm for horses, and have a sense of discipline and order. These are qualities essential to a professional horseman. There is no doubt it is an exciting career, but it is also a very arduous one. It is interesting to note that the training of pupil

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and colt run parallel. When the animal is first being broken in by the horseman, the pupil is at work learning his first techniques. Years later when the horse is fully trained, the former pupil who rides on its back will be a professional himself.

### THE HORSE

It is said that once out of the spotlight, the horses enjoy the comforts of a five-star hotel! Back in their stables away from the sand arena, they receive only the finest care—a reward well earned by their noble performance. One could compare the horse's activity to that of an athlete: an arduous training first to acquire and then to maintain the perfection required by classical dressage. Some people upon seeing the horses for the first time think they look too stocky or even overweight (perhaps they think these horses lead an easy life!). What they are actually seeing is pure muscle developed and



*The horse is not asked to do anything he cannot do by instinct. The horseman only trains him to recreate his natural movements such as the walk.*

strengthened in daily workouts over the years. These horses will give their obedience to anyone who knows how to manage them; however, they feel a special inclination, —friendly and almost human— towards their trainer. And thus, man and horse come to a perfect understanding.

### FOR THE ENTHUSIASTS

But all of this takes long, hard work: the horse requires at least five years training and the rider even more. When they are both finally considered professionals, they must still work to keep up their skills! Horse enthusiasts have it a little easier: for those who consider the horse their friend but not their future, the Andalusian School of Equestrian Art organises one-month-long summer courses in Jerez. Mornings are devoted to equitation while afternoons are left open so that participants have a chance to see some of the area's many sights.



TORRES  
Fontana  
GRAND HOUSE

TORRES  
Miguel Torres  
GRAND HOUSE

TORRES  
Gran Torres  
LIQUOR  
GRAND HOUSE

TORRES  
Solera Seleccion  
Imperial Brandy  
GRAND HOUSE

TORRES  
Gran Reserva  
Imperial Brandy  
GRAND HOUSE

# SUN-DRENCHED WINES

Text: James Ainsworth  
Photos: Club de Gourmets

*Mention Montilla wine and inevitably someone will compare it with sherry from nearby Jerez. But although they have some characteristics in common — like the solera ageing system — each of them has its own distinctive personality. Montilla's are inland wines. There the grapes bask in the intense heat of the Andalusian sun without the cooling effect of sea breezes. When pressed, they give wines which, in all their varieties — pale dry, medium dry, pale cream and cream — are guaranteed to produce a glow of pleasure.*

**L**ocals call it «The Village», although to anybody else *Montilla* is a town, smack in the middle of rural *Andalucía*, surrounded by enough gently rolling hills to show how it came by its name.

*Seville*, sixty miles to the west, and *Granada*, almost as far to the south-east, have acted like magnets, attracting population and tourists alike. *Córdoba*, thirty miles away to the north across the *Guadajoz* river, pulls too, and to the south beyond *Antequera* lies *Málaga* and the *Costa del Sol*.

In the midst of all this spectacular Andalusian dazzle, *Montilla* ticks away to the quieter, regular rhythm of the seasons, its pace determined by what grows in the fields. Where there are no vines, there are olives. And where there are no olives, there are vines.

Hidden between the old houses (some carefully restored) and shops that line the narrow main street, or else boldly claiming a corner, sometimes tucked



down a duck and dive alley, or plonked in a square, are *Montilla*'s jewels, the irresistible *tapas* bars. They are less crowded than those of *Seville*'s busy quarters. The tiny ones invite a quick standing stop, the more commodious call for a leisurely loll against the counter, a few provide a seat for the serious snacker.

## MONTILLA AND TAPAS

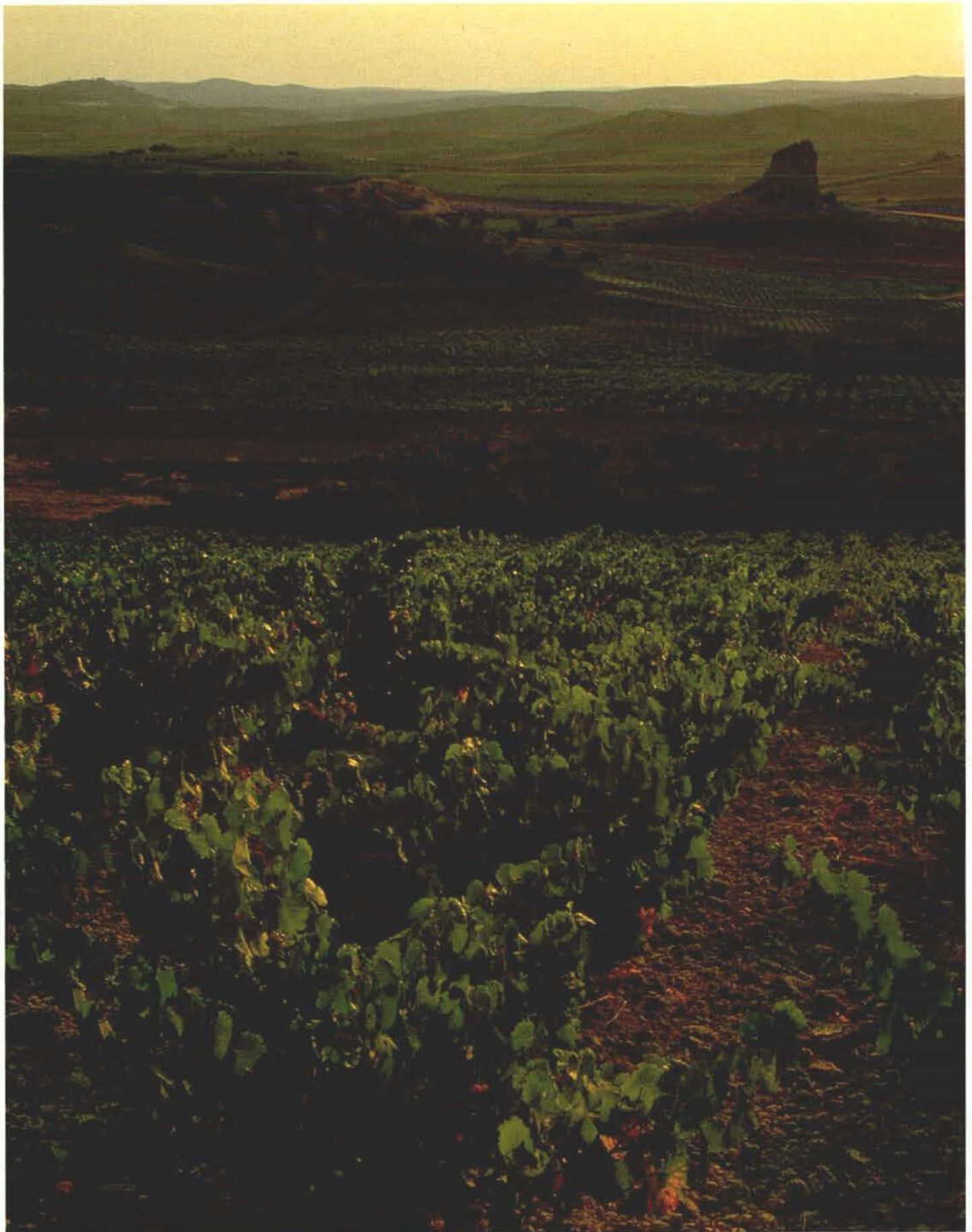
Why more towns, or indeed more countries, don't adopt *tapas* as a way of

life is a mystery, although the freshness of a glass of chilled *Montilla*, made in one of the *bodegas* (wine cellars) not a hundred yards away, certainly adds an edge to the pleasure. The *Montillanos* themselves contribute much of the character, making these public nibbling places an informal extension of their own homes.

The simple original *tapas* idea — a hunk of bread parked on top of the glass to keep out dust and flies, later topped with an olive or

slice of ham as the wine began to work on the salivary glands — has been elaborated into a splendid array of bite-sized *raciones* (portions).

The variety can be bewildering. Grilled swordfish, cold sausage, cold tongue with garlic mayonnaise, mini-kebabs, anchovy on toast, cheese, nuts, balls, brains, *tortilla*, marinated eel, squid salad, small pieces of cod deep fried or grilled, or a thin sliver of *mojama* (dried tuna fish). Every bar is different, which



*IN THE MIDST* of all the spectacular Andalucian dazzle, Montilla ticks away to the quieter, regular rhythm of the seasons, its peace determined by what grows in the fields.



makes it necessary to visit several to taste across the range, but what they have in common is a price that puts a bill for the traditional curly English sandwich, with hot water and tea bag, firmly in perspective. Two can eat and drink impressively for around £5.

Pale dry *Montilla* and conversation are the natural accompaniments, and given the first, the second is never far behind. There is always a bottle opened and chilled, with no danger that it may have hung around for days—they are usually polished off in minutes—but there are half and quarter bottles for the pernickety. In the bar you ask for a pale dry which in *Montilla* is a very light and white wine, excellent as an aperitif with or without *tapas* or with lighter dishes at the main meal.

#### MONTILLA AND SHERRY

Sherry, made near the Atlantic coast, reaches a natural alcoholic strength of around 12 per cent and is then fortified by adding grape alcohol up to its final strength, somewhere between 15 and 18 per cent depending on style. *Montilla* is inland, where the hot Andalusian sun produces more sugar in the grapes; this in turn makes a higher alcoholic strength, so *Montilla* wines' natural strength is already around 15 per cent without needing any fortification.

In this state the wines are known as pale dry, medium dry, pale cream or cream *Montillas*, and this is how they are exported. But the lower strength wines are the real delight of *Montilla*. The dry has all the attractive yeasty

*The enormous tinajas in which the wine ferments are descended from the ancient Roman amphorae.*

freshness imparted by the covering of *flor* that it develops in the *bodega*; the coppery golden mediums and creams are nutty, mouthfilling, and long on flavour. What makes them all distinctively different from the stronger versions is their appealing lightness: in this respect they have the sort of balance that sends *Burgundy* devotees into raptures.

Another feature of *Montilla* is to be seen in the *bodegas*. The enormous *Ali Baba* jars or *tinajas* in which the wine ferments are directly descended from the ancient Roman amphorae. They have exchanged the pointed base, which used to be stuck in sand to keep it upright, for a rounded one; and they now contain not just a few litres but a few thousand. But they are still open only at the top, which makes for a laborious emptying and cleaning process, and they pose a problem for today's much more rigorous winemakers.

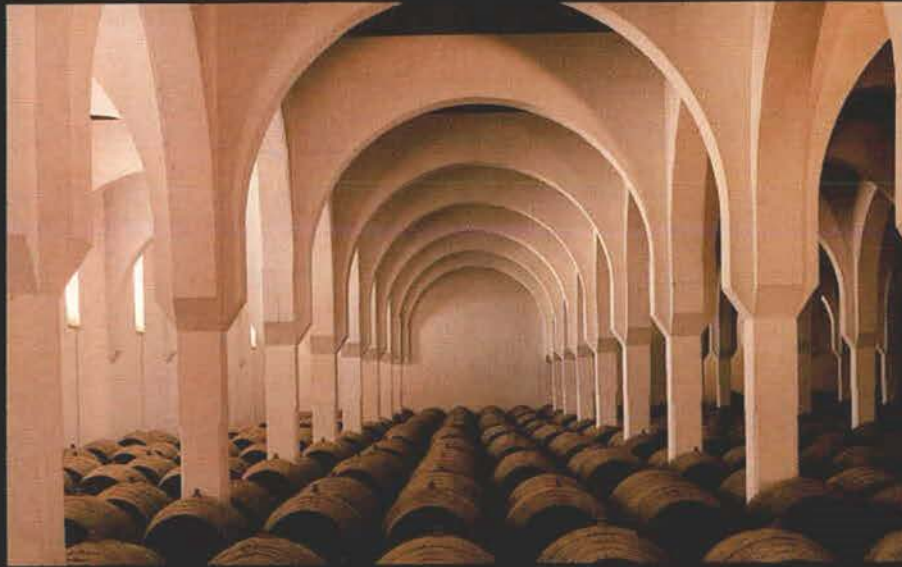
In former times the entire fermentation would have taken place inside them, and indeed still does in some *bodegas*. In order to retain some control over the temperature—if it gets too high it will spoil the delicate aroma and taste of the wine, and eventually stop altogether—bunches of grapes were tossed in every few days. This way the first and most vigorous part of

the fermentation, which generated most of the heat, was spread out over a few weeks, and each new batch of grapes helped to cool the rest down.

Increasingly, stability is achieved in tanks of stainless steel, where the tumultuous start is kept cool by trickling cold water down the outside, or circulating it in a serpent-like coil inside. But the young wine-to-be is still transferred to the traditional *tinajas* for the gentler completion of its fermentation, and an impressive sight it is from the wooden catwalks to see them bubbling quietly, lids ajar. It is also destined to become a rarer sight, since these giant earthenware containers are no longer being produced.

#### A GOOD PUPIL

When the turmoil finally subsides, the liquid officially becomes wine; and the kindergarten or primary school stage is over. The transfer to barrels signals the star of secondary school, which, as we all know, is dominated by examinations: some are good at science, some at languages, some are even expelled. All *Montilla* divides into two major groups: the lighter, dry wines, and the darker or medium dry types. Those which are selected by the headmaster to progress in the pale dry stream will study in only partially full casks, thus allowing the growth of an unusual film of whitish-yellow yeast on the surface. It develops best in contact with air (hence the space in the barrel) and forms a barrier between it and the wine. It is this *flor* which, through a process of very slow and



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**Carbonell**

# Montilla

**Characteristics of the region.** The area of land under cultivation is more than 21,000 hectares, the most important localities in the region being *Montilla*, *Moriles*, *Puente Genil*, *Monturque*, *Lucena* and *Cabra*.

There is one major area under cultivation in the municipalities of *Montilla* and *Moriles*, which comprises towns and villages such as *Aguilar*, *Lucena*, *Cabra*, *Doña Mencía* and *Puente Genil*, among others.

The area which produces the highest quality wine extends across *Moriles Alto* and *Sierra de Montilla*, where the soils with the highest lime content in the region are to be found.

All these municipalities are in the southernmost part of the province of *Córdoba*.

**The climate.** A markedly Mediterranean climate predominates, although as the region is at a height of between 300 and 600 metres it also has something of a continental climate which causes a relative change in temperature from daytime to night-time. Rainfall is concentrated in the months of November, April and May and the annual rainfall varies from between 380 mm and 796 mm, falling mainly over *Doña Mencía* and *Lucena*.



**The soils.** There are two classes: the white soils and those of a reddish colour. The former, the *alberos*, which are excellent for the cultivation of vines, are very rich in limestone, which, together with their great depth, provide very high water retention capacity.

The reddish soils are to be found in the western parts of the denomination as well as in the flat land in the centre, the *ruedos*. Their characteristic colour is a result of the abundance of iron which they contain.

**The vines.** More than 82 per cent of the vine are *Pedro Ximénez*, and the remainder are *airén*, *baladí* and *Jaén*, etc.

The characteristics of the *Pedro Ximénez* vine, planted mainly in the years from 1961-65, are its extensive foliage and upright appearance.

**Characteristics of the wines.** The table wines are pale, transparent, with a certain rustic aroma and slightly sweet flavour. The dry have more body. On entering the mouth their low acidity is reflected by the smooth sensation which contrasts with the salty bitterness of their maturation under a film of whitish-yellow yeast (the *flor*). Their alcohol content is between 14.5 and 16 degrees.

The yellowish brown colour of old gold is the distinct sign of a Cordoban *amontillado*, the result of the oxidizing process used in its maturation. Its flavour is reminiscent of hazelnuts. These wines are smooth, with body and slightly aged. Alcohol content: from 16 to 18 degrees.

The medium dry is a wine the colour of mahogany, very full with body. It is dry,

with just a pleasant hint of sweetness and strong aroma having aged in a such a way as to be very agreeable to the palate.

The *Pedro Ximénez* (cream) is a sweet wine, the product of the *mistela* of almost raisin grapes with an intense, opaque colour, very fruity aroma and flavour and velvety touch on the palate reminiscent of raisins and winecasks. Above all it is mellow almost to the point of saturation and very dense.

**Serving the wines.** The table wines should be served cold, but because of their limited aromatic strength a temperature of less than 10° is not recommended. The *Montilla* pale dry should be served at a temperature of between 7° and 8°, the *amontillados* between 12° and 15°, and finally the medium dry and cream between 16° and 20°.

**Storage of the wines.** The table wines should be drunk within a period of 1 to 1 1/2 years and the optimum time for the *Montilla* pale dry is similar. The storage period for the *amontillados*, *Pedro Ximénez* and the medium dry is practically unlimited, always remembering that they should be stored at a temperature of not more than 20°-22°.



gentle oxidation, gives pale dry styles their indelible stamp of personality. Casks of fuller-bodied medium dry are filled to the top so that *flor* does not develop.

The classes in this school are known as *criaderas*, and the developing wine moves gradually through them, the younger being added to the older in small stages, taking on their character along the way. The final class is the *solera*, from which is drawn the wine that will be bottled and go out to find work in the bars of *Montilla*, Manchester or Michigan. But some stays on for

further education; the *solera* of one system becomes the initial *criadera* of another, as the process is repeated at a higher level. Some even goes to university; as pale dry gets older and the effect of *flor* decreases, it begins to develop some of the depth of a medium dry, and becomes an *amontillado*.

To wring the last ounce from the analogy, there are some who study all their lives. We call them professors. A very tiny amount of wine will just go on maturing in an old and dusty barrel, not of any commercial value, but kept more out of curiosity. Every now and

then a little may be wheeled out to lend its weighty presence to a prestigious blend.

I never cease to be impressed by how quickly we can consume something that has taken years to produce, but despite its elaborate ageing, *Montilla* has yet one more great attraction for me as a drinker. Thanks partly to its 15 per cent strength —midway between table wine and sherry— it escapes the higher duty band imposed on fortified wines, making it one of the best value wines money can buy.

Some village.

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## TURRON

# THE SWEET TASTE OF CHRISTMAS

Text: José Carlos Capel

Photos: ICEX, Sobremesa and Club de Gourmets

*It tastes of honey, nuts and aromatic oils, and is a magically evocative blend of colour, flavour and aroma. Along with marzipan, turrón is Spain's great sweetmeat, traditionally eaten at Christmastime.*

**T**urrón comes in a variety of types: *duro* (hard), *blando* (soft), or combined with ingredients like marzipan, glacé fruit, egg yolk, syrup, and even chocolate. Many of these are rather new-fangled inventions, however,



and do not qualify as *turrón* in the strict sense of the word. Only the two subtly flavoured classics — *Alicante* and *Jijona* — are the true descendants of ancient Arabic and Jewish confectionery.

Like most traditional Spanish sweets, the origins of genuine *turrón* are somewhat controversial. Very different areas of Spain claim to have invented this centuries-old delicacy, and its pedigree gets lost somewhere in the mists of philology and history. Although in Mediterranean Spain nuts and honey

had probably been eaten for a long time, it seems that *turrón* only first appeared in the peninsula as the period of Islamic domination was drawing to a close (14-15 century).

Two relatively modern legends lay Catalonia's claim to the invention of

*turrón*. The first places its origins in the year 1703, when *Barcelona* was beset by the plague. According to writer *Gabriel Miró* in his *Book of Sigüenza*, the city authorities offered a reward for the invention of a foodstuff which was both nourishing and long-lasting. It was won by *Pablo Turrons*, a spice-dealer and confectioner, who came up with something resembling "a block of granite" made of honey, hazels and pinenuts.

The second legend also credits *Pablo Turrons* with inventing *turrón*, but this







MANUFACTURERS OF TURRON (SPANISH NOUGAT) AND MARZIPAN



# El Almendro

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PLANELLES**

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66025 MOPLA-E

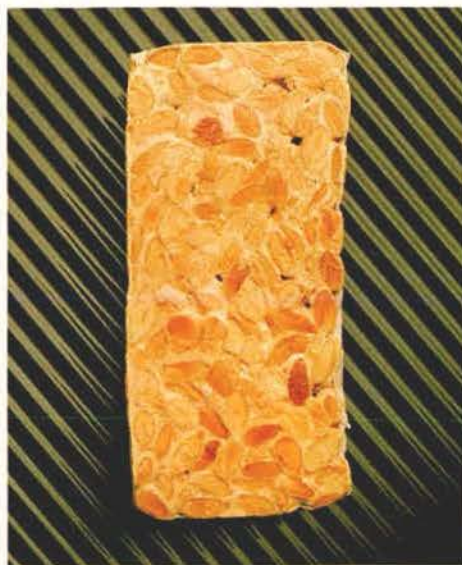
version sets the date eleven years later to 1714 when the Catalan capital was besieged by the armies of Philip V, the first of the Bourbon monarchs. As the legend goes, *Turrons* created his nutritious, easily-stored and long-lasting confection out of the only ingredients still plentiful in the city — almonds and honey!

What is the origin of the word *turrón*? Specialists in the field do not agree on any one answer. Linguist *Joan Corominas* suggests that it derives from the Spanish word *tierra* (earth) given the appearance of the compressed mixture of nuts and honey. He also offers as a possible source the Catalan word *torro*, which also means “earth”.

### UNCERTAIN ORIGINS

But perhaps *turrón* is not a Catalan invention at all.

Another possible explanation is the *Alicante* theory.

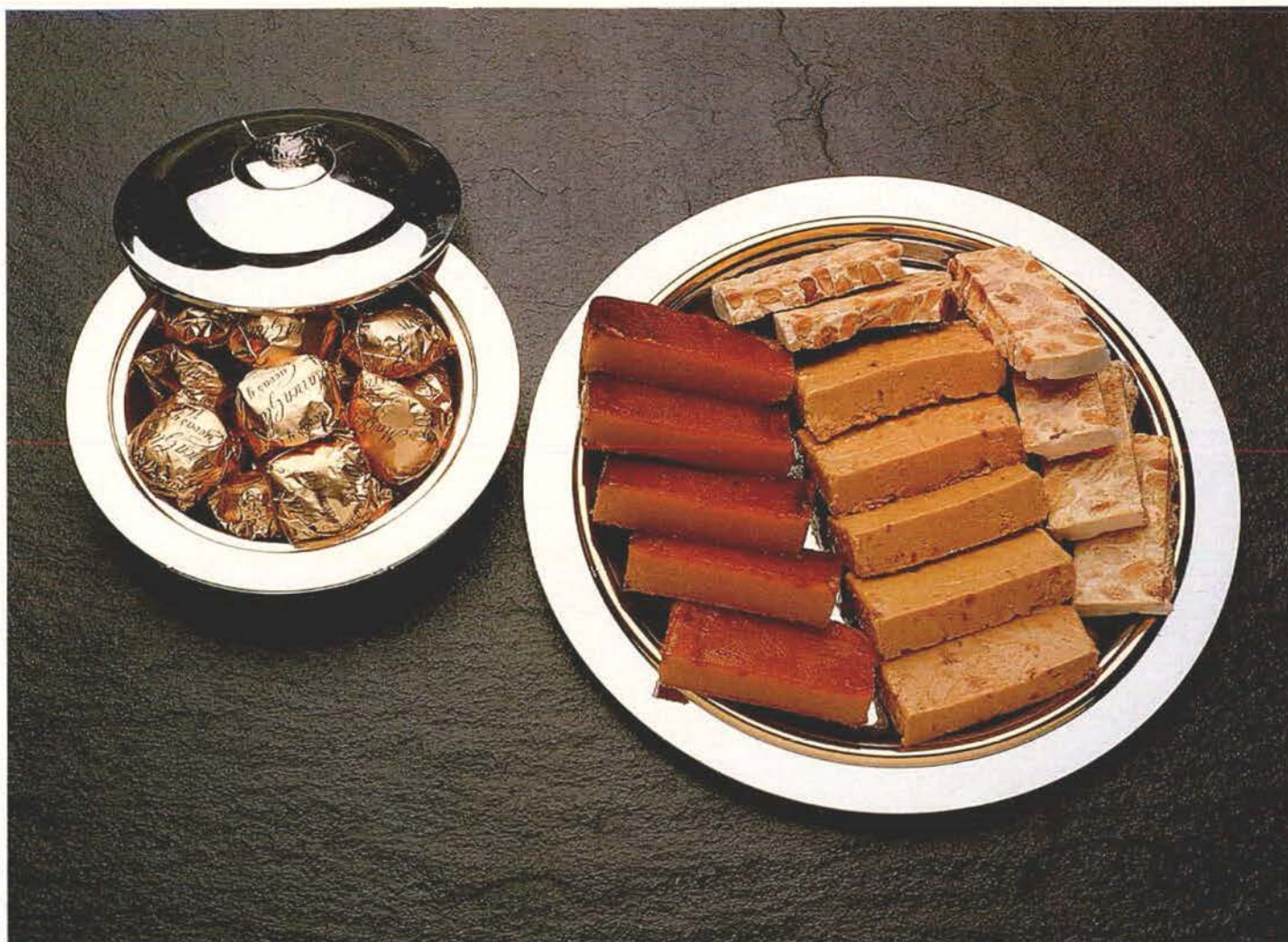


*Like most traditional Spanish sweets, the origins of genuine turrón are somewhat controversial.*

Evidence seems to suggest that *turrón* developed from early Arab sweet-meats like *Cuenca's alajú*, made of honey, figs and almonds, or like Andalusia's *alfajor*, made of nuts, honey, and spices (descendants of these sweetmeats are still made in these same localities today).

Certainly, by the time of the Christian Reconquest, *turrón* was known by name and was being manufactured on a small scale in the honey and almond producing areas of eastern Spain.

Documentary references to *turrón* considerably predate the folk legends described above. The 14C Catalan manuscript *Llibre de Sent Sovi*, one of Europe's earliest cookery books, makes reference to *torrons* alongside *nogat*, clearly the French *nougat* so similar to Spanish *turrón*. The Catalan sweetmeats recipe book *Confits, Llibre de totes les maneres de confits*, also dating from the 14th century, features a recipe for *torrons* made from toasted hazelnuts and



*The best silver trays are brought out to serve the turrón along with the many other traditional Christmas sweets.*

Saber vivir.



Clarin

CARLOS I



DOMEcq Cosecha de la Tierra

honey. *Joan Amades*, in his compilation of Catalan customs *Costumari Català*, quotes an official edict of the *Grenollers* local council of 1418 which declared itinerant *turrón* vendors subject to local taxes.

By the early Middle Ages, *turrón* had become a traditional Christmas sweetmeat in Catalonia.

From the 16th century on, literary and documentary references link *turrón* to southeastern Spain, first to *Alicante* and later to *Jijona*, the capital of *turrón* production today. Spain's Golden Age authors such as *Lope de Vega* and *Tirso de Molina* make reference to *turrón*-making in the town of *Alicante*. A decree issued by Viceroy *Moncada* in 1528 refers to the *Alicante* councilmen's custom of presenting *turrón* and fig cake to important town visitors. Later in 1595, a letter from Philip II instructs the *Alicante* councilmen to reduce expenditure on such gifts.

One possible explanation for the emergence of *Alicante* as an important *turrón* producer is that a large number of Catalans resettled there after James The Conqueror reclaimed the area from the Moors in the 13th century. It is only natural that they would continue to apply their confectionery skills.

#### THE MADRID CODE OF PRACTICE

*Madrid* was also an important producer of *turrón* from the 16C on. So important, indeed, that by 1622 the capital's Confectioners Guild had drawn up an official code of practice to govern the delicate art of making *turrón* and other sweets.

The code controlled the quality of *turrón* and all other sweets, jams and preserves made in *Madrid* and specified that they should be made with only the finest ingredients. The regulations were so precise as to the ingredients and the quantities to be used that they could almost count as a collection of recipes. Quality controls were strictly enforced and any *turrón* sold in *Madrid* had to meet the required standards before being stamped with a seal of approval, a privilege granted to the guild by Charles II in 1686. Any confectioner infringing these regulations ran the risk of having his product confiscated and possibly being fined up to 50 ducats for the first offence or double for the second.

The *Madrid* code did not prohibit the sale of the *turrón* made elsewhere in

Spain, but it did stipulate that such trade be carried on exclusively in the public grocers' shops in *Madrid's Plaza Mayor*, where goods were routinely inspected by the relevant authorities. In those cases where *turrón* and other sweets were illegally supplied to shops and taverns or where itinerant vendors sold their wares outside the specified areas, the regulations were rigorously enforced: the goods were confiscated and distributed in prisons, hospitals, and workhouses.

At that time in *Madrid*, *turrón* was traditionally offered for sale during the weeks before and after Christmas.



*Today, just as it was 200 years ago, the process is supervised by the master turroneros.*

#### A MOVEABLE FEAST

Itinerant vendors played an important role in the history of *turrón*. Until quite recently, they used to travel to all corners of Spain and even beyond to sell their wares at Christmastime.

Throughout the 19C, groups of emigrants from eastern Spain established themselves as *turrón* vendors in Algiers, Rabat, Casablanca and Fez. Some returned to Spain periodically while others became firmly established, prosperous tradesmen.

Itinerant vendors were at their most active in the late 19C, and there are many anecdotes about them. *Fernando Galiana's* collection of anecdotes, *Anecdotario Jijonenco*, includes several about *turrón* merchants. One example was *Quico Viña*, a 19C native of *Jijona*. While on his way to the Vatican to sell *turrón* to the Papal Court, he ran into

Garibaldi's military blockade of Rome and so had to settle for selling his wares less profitably to the troops. Another anecdote recounts how a vendor who customarily sold *turrón* on *Barcelona's Ramblas* heroically sailed off to Australia aboard a clipper with his bags full of goods to sell when he got there. Yet another travelled to Morocco to sell his *turrón* and ended up selling his wife as well!

Enterprising *turrón* makers from *Jijona* established themselves in distant parts of the globe traditionally linked with Spain, like Havana, Montevideo, Buenos Aires and California, and in some cases the businesses survive to this day.

#### TRADITIONAL METHODS

*Jijona* has over thirty *turrón* factories as well as a group of travelling salesmen who, in the traditional spirit, scatter throughout Spain in early December every year to sell their Christmas wares.

The big names — *El Almendro*, *El Lobo*, *La Fama*, *Antiu-Xixona*, *La Jijonenca*, *25, Tecló*, 1880 — share production with lesser known ones and account for 80% of the business conducted in this part of *Alicante*.

Strictly speaking, there are only three classic types of *turrón*: *Alicante's duro*, (hard), *Jijona's blando* (soft), and *Guirlache* (a mixture of almonds and crystallised caramel). Variants like *Cádiz turrón* or those combined with ingredients like egg yolks, coconut, fruit and so on are actually sophisticated versions of *marzipan*.

The classic *duro* type, a mixture of almonds and honey, is sometimes also known as *Imperial* named for the competition held in the early 19th century during Ferdinand VII's reign, in which confectioners from all over Spain and her empire took part.

It is interesting to note how the traditional artisanal approach to *turrón*-making still survives today. The manufacturing process is almost entirely manual, except for the packaging stage.

Today, just as it was 200 years ago, the process is supervised by master *turroneros* who test and taste time and time again until the ingredients have been mixed to just the right point to produce a perfect flavour.

Top quality almonds are impeccably shelled, peeled, and then gently toasted



before being loaded into large baskets and taken to the mixer. Meanwhile, expert craftsmen are preparing the honey—actually a mixture of sugars and natural honey—which is then poured into containers rather like kettle-drums.

The almonds are then added and the mixture is cooked gently at a constant temperature while the master *turroneiros* stir it continuously with long wooden paddles until it reaches what they recognise as the optimum point.

The mixture is then poured into rectangular moulds where, as it cools, it settles into a compact block. It is then simply cut up and packed ready for sale.

*Jijona's blando* version goes through an extra stage after cooking. Once it has cooled and solidified, the block of *turrón* is ground up until it forms a thick paste due to the oil given off by the almonds. The paste is then rolled out and placed in a kettle-drum container where, at a temperature of 70 °C, it is beaten for two hours until it reaches a perfectly smooth consistency. The final blending is done by the “finishers” who stir the mixture by hand using wooden paddles.

The paste is then placed in metal moulds where it cools and dries before being sliced and vacuum-packed. It is then ready for sale all over the world. And so, there is essentially very little difference in how *turrón* is made today from how it was made according to the regulations set forth by the *Madrid's Confectioners Guild* in 1622.

*Jijona's* small *Turrón* Museum has on display drawings of expert almond-shellers at work as well as grindstones, *turrón* cutters and various other tools of the trade.

Although modern tools have laid older ones aside, the artisanal tradition and spirit are still very much alive, and today's *turrón* remains worthy of its long history.



## TURRON, MARZIPAN AND OTHER CHRISTMAS TREATS

Although Christmas celebrations in Spain incorporate many different traditions, *turrón* is certainly the most widespread in gastronomic terms.

Customs vary from region to region: some hold their big celebration on Christmas Eve and others on Christmas Day. Turkey, sea bream, roast lamb, shellfish, and even red cabbage are traditional Christmas fare in different parts of Spain. However, whatever the region, *turrón* invariably makes an appearance at the end of the meal.

The best silver trays are brought out to serve the *turrón* along with the

many other traditional Christmas sweets like marzipan, sugared almonds, crystallised fruits and curious marzipan *anguilas*, eel-like coils around an egg yolk center. A sweet almond soup made from milk and almond paste is sometimes also served.

As well as rounding off lunch or dinner, *turrón* is often served when family and friends come to call, as they so often do at Christmastime. On these occasions a sweet wine is served with the *turrón*, and for some this is when *turrón* is at its best!

But the best-loved tradition involving *turrón* marks the end of the Christ-



mas season. According to Christian tradition, the Three Wise Men, bearing their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh, reached Bethlehem on January 6th. In Spain, this is the day when children get their presents, delivered by the Three Kings who make their way silently into the house down chimneys and over balconies at dead of night on the 5th. As a gesture of gratitude, children set out a tray for the Kings to sustain them on their long journey. It is filled with *turrón*, sugared almonds, three glasses of sweet wine and, last but not least, a bundle of straw for the camels. The next morning —what excitement!— the glasses are empty and just a few crumbs of *turrón* and sprigs of straw remain.

*The classic duro type, a mixture of almonds and honey, is sometimes also known as imperial, after a competition in which confectioners from Spain and her empire took part.*

### *Hard Alicante turrón*

This is the formula established by the Confectioners Guild in 1622 for making hard *turrón* in large quantities.

“To make the so-called *turrón* of *Alicante*, melt two *arrobas*\* of honey and pass it through a sieve. In a large vessel over a fire stir the honey until it has the consistency of a thick syrup and remove from the fire. Beat the honey until it whitens, then add twenty eight egg-whites, beaten stiff. Beat the mixture for six or seven hours until the honey crumbles between the teeth. Then add three *arrobas* of well-toasted almonds, peeled and white, and stir into the said honey and pour into the moulds. It must be white and firm, and must not get damp nor spoil.”

\* 1 *arroba* = 25 lbs. or 11.5 kg.

### *Sweet almond soup*

200 g almond paste in chunks;  
1 litre milk;  
1/4 litre water;  
1 teaspoon cornflour;  
Sugar to taste (about 5 table-  
spoons).

Heat the milk and water together, then add the sugar and the almond paste. Allow to melt, then cook for a further 5 minutes. Mix the cornflour with a little water in a cup and then add to the soup, stirring continuously for 4-5 minutes. Serve. The soup should be quite thin.

### *Jijona turrón*

100 g pale hard honey;  
250 g toasted almonds (or  
150 g almonds and 10 g  
hazelnuts);  
2 egg whites;  
1/2 kg sugar.

Grind the almonds in a blender, then crush them into a paste using a pestle and mortar. Mix in the two egg whites.

Put the honey and sugar into a saucepan to heat. When the mixture reaches boiling point, add the paste and stir continuously for 10 minutes. Spread the mixture on a tray lined with wafer paper. Top with more wafer paper or rice paper and place a weight evenly on top. Allow to dry for a least a week.

### *Guirlache*

100 g sugar;  
100 g untoasted almonds;  
1/2 teaspoon vinegar or  
lemon juice;  
Oil for greasing.

Chop the almonds as coarsely or finely as you like—they can even be left whole. Lightly oil a marble slab.

Put the sugar in a saucepan with the vinegar or lemon juice and heat until it melts, stirring occasionally with a wire whisk. As soon as it starts to caramelize, add the almonds all at once and mix in well. When the mixture has turned a nice golden brown, spread it on the marble slab. Roll it out with an oiled rolling pin and cut into strips 1/2 cm by 4 cm. The rolling and cutting process has to be done quickly since the mixture hardens almost immediately.

SILVERSMITHS

# REVIVING A LOST ART

Text: Sonia Ortega  
Photos: Félix Llorio

*They still use the same tools that their fellow craftsmen used centuries ago. To see them at work, one would think that the Industrial Revolution had never happened. Each piece they produce is unique: a work of art whose principal ingredients are silver, patience and the combined skills of craftsmen armed with such simple equipment as a hammer and a chisel. Silversmiths are a rare breed, but, fortunately, they can still be found.*

**F**rom the outside the house looks like any other in *Madrid's* Old Quarter; the occasional tapping sound coming from a balcony window is the only clue that this building houses a silversmith's workshop where seventeen craftsmen are busy plying their trade. Curiously enough, this modest workshop was set up under the patronage of *Carrera & Carrera*, a major Spanish jewellery company noted for its modern approach to business and design.

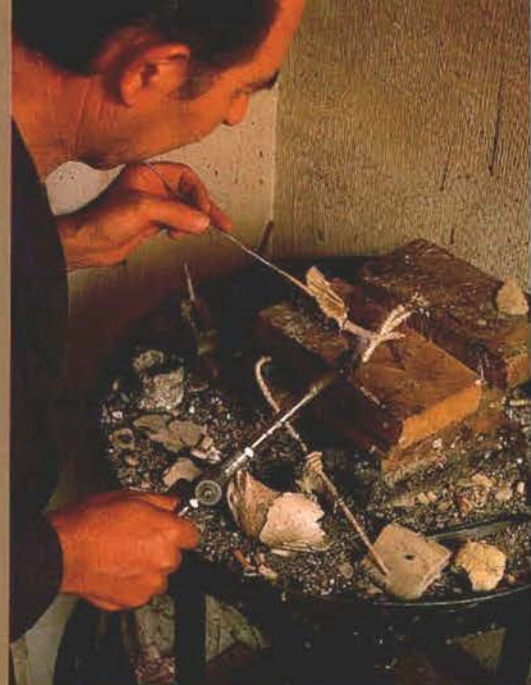
The company directors, members of a family with over a century in the jewellery business, felt the need to revive the silversmith's art, which had once flourished in Spain. A search was mounted for hammerers, chisellers, and other craftsmen in the trade; however, this proved to be no easy task. For example, whilst at the turn of the century there were over 300 chisellers in

*Madrid* alone, today there are only twenty in the whole of Spain. At last, the enterprise was set up with one hammerer, one sculptor, and two chisellers.

Encouraged by the workshop's commercial success both in Spain and abroad, more craftsmen gradually joined the team. And so, what started off as a nostalgic whim has developed into a thriving silversmith's workshop, retaining something of the character and atmosphere of a family concern without the complications that kinship sometimes engenders.

## A LONG PROCESS

Each member of the workshop has his own role to play in the different stages of production. The first stage is the design, which reflects the final product down to its most intri-





cate detail. The next step is modelling, done either by the «lost wax method» or by hammering. In the «lost wax method», which had previously fallen into almost total disuse due to the extended use of moulds, the initial design is built up with drops of hot wax and is then sculpted into the detailed shape subsequently to be cast in silver. The second method of modelling is more widely known. Here, the master craftsman skilfully wielding his hammer gives shape to a sheet of silver. It seems barely possible that the smooth sheet can be coaxed into elaborate concave and convex shapes without cracking or even breaking altogether. This, of course, is precisely where the craftsman's skill lies.

The various parts forged by the master craftsman then pass through the hands of the solderer, who joins them together to form the final piece. For example, a hammerer working on the figure of a cockerel hammers out the body and wings separately, and the solderer later joins them together. This is perhaps less artistic work, but equally important for all that. The piece then goes to the chiseller, who, using a hammer and a chisel, adds the fine details and finishing touches. Sometimes, a chiseller will produce small pieces like bracelets and necklaces with a lot of intricate detail entirely by himself.

#### RECOVERING LOST FORMULAE

Once the piece is formed, it has to be polished, burnished, and subjected to a secret chemical process. The 'secret' na-



*Little by little, the silversmith's craft, once a firmly rooted tradition in Spain, is being saved from disappearing into the past.*

ture of these formulae, and the tradition of handing them down from father to son have meant that some have been lost for ever. Thanks to research, this workshop was able to recover past formulae for achieving a matt finish. Gloss is sometimes an undesirable feature, especially in sculpture. Gold, for example, is considered unsuitable for sculpting since its brilliance prevents the features from showing up. This is not so true of silver, and still less so of bronze.

Although traditional craftsmanship reigns supreme, new ideas also have their place in this workshop. Traditional designs have been adapted to incorporate new materials such as minerals. The idea is at once simple and complex. A piece of mineral such as calcite, for example, is studied at length until it seems to suggest a form. What to the untrained eye may look like a chunk of rock will suggest to the craftsman the sturdy trunk of a horse or the sinuous

pose of a dancer. Silver is used as a complement to the mineral, and the final figure seems to have emerged so naturally from its materials that even the layman feels he could have spotted it right from the start!

#### ARTISTIC LICENCE

It may seem barely credible in these days of mass-production that three thousand man-hours could go into the making of one single piece. Less credible still when you learn that the vast majority of the pieces made here are uncommissioned. These craftsmen work to the dictates of inspiration and imagination. Foolhardy? Well yes, but the results always seem to seduce someone. Even the most ambitious pieces find a buyer. A prime example was a large fountain featuring a figure of Seneca and standing 1.40 meters high. Eighty kilograms of silver and considerable quantities of malachite and other semi-precious stones went into making this minor monument — all without a particular customer in mind! But its quality spoke for itself and it was eventually bought by New York's *Waldorf Astoria* hotel, where it occupied pride of place in one of the lounges. The hotel subsequently sold it for three times its original price. Other works have found their way to museums in America and Europe, or have been bought by foundations and large corporations. *Ferrari*, for example, bought a silver reproduction of its famous model *Testa Rossa*.

So, little by little, the silversmith's craft, once a firmly rooted tradition in Spain, is being saved from disappearing into the past.



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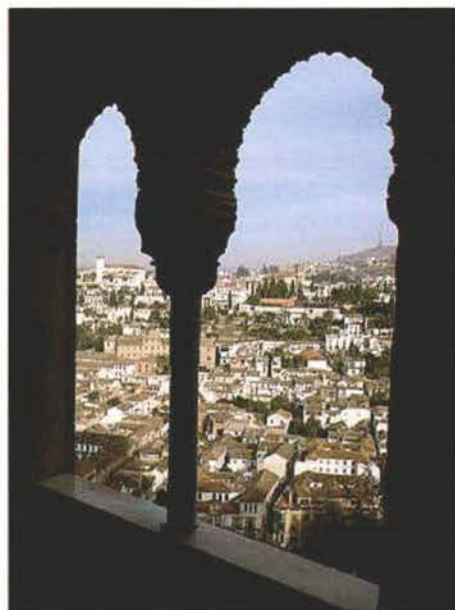
G R A N A D A

# A UNIVERSAL GEM

Text: Sonia Ortega  
Photos: INPROTUR

A few kilometres outside *Granada*, on the road leading south towards the coast, there comes a point at which the city, surrounded by its fertile plains and outlined against the snowy slopes of the *Sierra Nevada*, is visible in all its grandeur for the last time. Immediately afterwards the road begins to descend and this panorama disappears from the horizon. It is the spot which is known as «*el suspiro del moro*» («the sigh of the Moor»). According to tradition it was here that *Boabdil el Chico*, the last Moorish King of Granada, wept with sadness as he saw his beloved city for the last time after being expelled by the Catholic Monarchs, Ferdinand and Isabella, in 1492.

Five centuries later, all the refined and sensual splendour of the Hispano-Arab culture continues to be reflected in the *Alhambra* and the gardens of the *Generalife* while a multitude of «Christian» monuments have further enriched a city which invariably continues to cause a sigh of melancholy from those who must abandon it... and one of admiration from those who are visiting.



*From the Alhambra, there is a great view of the Albaycin and one can spend many happy hours contemplating their beauty.*



*A large number of the houses and old palaces of the Albaycín are built upon the remains of Moorish buildings, some of which were mezquitas.*

**G**ranada, like Rome, was raised upon seven hills at the confluence of the *Darro* and *Genil* rivers, and today it has extended onto the magnificent plains which surround it.

There are various legends which all attribute mythical origins to the city. According to one, *Granada* is associated with Noah and its name derives from that of his daughter, Grana. Other legendary versions link it with *Granada*, the daughter of Hercules, and it has also been stated, without any documentary evidence, that *Granada* owes its foundation to the Hebrews who came to Spain with Nebuchadnezzar.

In fact, it seems to be historically certain that it was the *Turdulos*, one of the most civilised Iberian tribes, who founded the city. A reference to this city is found as early as the 5th century B.C. when Hecatus of Milet mentions it using the name *Elibyrga*. At that time coins were minted in the city with the Iberian name of *Iberir*.

After the conquest of the original

Iberian settlement by the Romans, it seems that the Iberians continued to mint coins which were called *Eliver*. The Roman conquerors settled mainly in the part which is known today as the *Albaycín* and the *Alcazaba*, where traces of their presence still remain.

At a later date, *Granada* came under the domination of the Visigoths, retaining the civil and ecclesiastical grandeur which it had acquired under Roman rule. The Visigoths built walls around the city, laying the foundations for the future *Alcazaba* which would later be utilised by the Arabs for their fortifications. *Granada* continued to be a provincial capital under the Visigoths and it came to hold considerable military significance.

Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that it was under Arab rule that the city reached the height of its splendour. Crossing over into Spain from North Africa in 711 A.D., an Arab army conquered *Iliberis*. Its Jewish population took the part of the Muslims. Two years later, when the Visigothic

Christians rebelled, *Abdelali* finally subjugated the city and all the lands of *Iliberis* (the Arabs pronounced this *Líbira* or *Ilbira*, a name which the Spanish later converted to *Elvira*).

Although the capital of the region was not initially *Granada*, it became established there over a long period and the name of *Ilbira* was substituted by that of *Garnata*, a quarter inhabited mainly by Jews. A period then began in which *Granada* took on a growing military role, becoming the key objective in the constant struggles between the Mozarabs —Christians who were living in Muslim Spain— and Arabs. It was a turbulent period which came to an end with the peace imposed by *Abderraman III*. Then, at the beginning of the 11th century *Granada* became an independent kingdom.

## THE NAZARI SPLENDOUR

Pushed back by the Christian kings' extensive advances into southern



*Palm trees and cypresses swaying over roof tops are an unmistakable sign of the cármenes, with their well-kept, and usually terraced, gardens.*

Spain, Muslims gathered in the city of *Granada*, the capital of the Moorish kingdom under the *Nazari* dynasty. By the 13th century, it had become one of the richest and most populous cities in Europe. Ruled for two and a half centuries (13th-15th) by the *Nazari* dynasty, *Granada* underwent one of the quickest and most admirable evolutions in history. Twenty monarchs governed the kingdom during that period of time and their greatest desire was to create a city such that none other could ever compare with it.

Thus, the architectural marvel of the *Alhambra*, the poetical gardens of the *Generalife* and a whole series of artistic monuments which make Moorish *Granada* an extraordinarily beautiful and fascinating city were constructed. Some historians have perceived in this exceptional enclave the final twilight glow of a resplendent Middle Ages.

Isolated from the rest of Islam, the survival of the refined autoctonous culture of this kingdom seems to be explained as much by its geographical

*Ruled for two and a half centuries (13th-15th) by the Nazari dynasty, Granada underwent one of the quickest and most admirable evolutions in history.*

position and the skill of its diplomacy as by the depleted strength of the Christians kings who, by that time, lacked a contingent of colonists sufficient to repopulate any reconquered provinces.

The ambition of the Catholic Monarchs to create a modern, unified State and, more specifically, the religious intransigence of Isabella of Castille would finally lead to the fall of *Granada* and, consequently, to the disappearance of Hispano-Arab civilisation. The expulsion of *Boabdil*, the last King of *Granada*, is a milestone of history which will be tinged forever with an air of nostalgia.

For some years Ferdinand and Isabella established their Court in *Granada*, endowing it with an archbishopric and chancery and a structure similar to that of the Castillian cities of that period. The Emperor Charles V, who founded the University of *Granada* in 1526, also spent time in the city on several occasions.

#### PRESENT-DAY GRANADA

What remains of all that splendour? *Granada* today has preserved a large part of its Moorish legacy, which was further enriched by later constructions, and maintains a pronounced vitality in all aspects of culture, commerce, etc.

The old and the new, though closely interwoven, remain clearly differentiated and it is not difficult to lose oneself in the labyrinthine streets of the *Albaycin* or the *Realejo*, with the sensation of experiencing another age.

Any time of year is a good time to visit *Granada* because although the summer is quite hot, it is compensated

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Granada, like Rome, was raised upon seven hills; on the one named Sabika the Alhambra and Generalife were built.

by nights full of fragrance and enchantment; the winters are cold, but a view of the *Alhambra* dark against the snowy backdrop of the *Sierra Nevada* makes one forget the chill air. However, perhaps the spring and the autumn are the most pleasant times of year.

Here, more than anywhere, is the place to follow your instinct and wander wherever it takes you. *Granada*, with some 250,000 inhabitants, is a city in which it is still pleasant to walk around and the historic parts are within easy walking distance. In fact, a car can be more of a hindrance than a help as many of the streets are exclusively pedestrian and some old quarters such as the *Albaycín* were not exactly designed to take cars! The street *San Juan de los Reyes* boasts the curious title of «the narrowest street in the world down which cars can pass» as the taxi-drivers will proudly tell you. But for those who are not going in search of famous tight squeezes, it is more practical to go on foot!

Whatever direction you choose, you are sure to find places and monuments in your path demanding an almost obligatory visit and foremost amongst them is, of course, the *Alhambra*.

### THE RED CASTLE

The *Darro* river, as it flows through *Granada*, passes between two hills; on one bank is the *Albaycín* and on the

other the *Sabika*, where the *Alhambra* and the *Generalife* were built. The hillside is composed of red clay and for that reason the Muslims chose the name «Alhambra» which means «Red Castle».

The *Alhambra* is enclosed by ramparts of just over two kilometres in circumference, forming a somewhat irregular perimeter. Gardens and woods cover the hillside and are irrigated by the abundant water which flows down from the *Sierra Nevada* into a system of channels, an irrigation technique which the Arabs developed to perfection.

In its early stages the *Alhambra* was of great military importance by virtue of its exceptional strategic position. *Mohammed ben Alamar*, the founder of the Kingdom of *Granada*, decided to establish his residence there in the 13th century, and construction work was begun on the part known today as the *Alcazaba*.

The majority of the buildings of the *Alhambra* which have survived to this day were the work of *Abul Hachach Yusuf I* (1333-1353) and his son, *Mohammed V* (1352-1391). Almost none of what was built by later Moorish kings has survived. The Catholic Monarchs commissioned the restoration of the decorations in the palaces, and later the kings of the Austrian dynasty continued to show concern for the conservation of the *Alhambra*.

In the 18th century the *Alhambra* fell into complete abandonment. Suffering damage by Napoleonic troops in the 19th century, it continued to be neglected until 1870 when it was declared a National Monument. Thanks to the interest aroused by the Romantic movement, salvage work was undertaken which has proved definitive to the *Alhambra's* survival. Today, it is justly considered one of the marvels of universal architecture even though it is not made on any of the more «noble» materials such as stone or marble, but almost exclusively of brick, plaster and rubblework.

The interior of the *Alhambra* is divided into three parts: the *Alcazaba*, at the western extreme, which was the military citadel; the Royal Palace, located on the central part of the hill, the residence of the Arab sovereigns; and the *Alhambra Alta*, on the eastern side, assigned to dignitaries of the Moorish Court, officials and other persons of lower rank.

The *Puerta de la Justicia* (Gate of Justice) is the main entrance to the *Alhambra*. An Arabic inscription over the gate's great horseshoe-shaped arch marks the date 749 after the hegira, which is equivalent to the year 1348 of the Christian era. On entering through this gate one comes to the *Alcazaba* fort, whose towers still stand. The most important of these is the *Torre de la Vela* (Vigil Tower), thus named be-



*Here is the place to follow your instinct and wander wherever it takes you. Granada is a city in which it is still pleasant to walk around.*

cause it kept watch over the sleeping city, sounding the alarm in moments of danger and controlling the irrigation of the plain by its chimes during the night. Over the entrance to the tower, engraved in marble, is a poem which has become very famous:

*«Dale limosna, mujer  
que no hay en la vida nada  
como la pena de ser ciego  
en Granada.»*

(Give him alms, woman, / for there is nothing in life / so sad as to be blind in Granada.) This refers to the blind beggars who, in earlier times, used to beg for alms around this doorway. From the *Torre de la Vela*, there is a splendid panorama of the old and new parts of the city, the mountains, the *Generalife* and the *Alhambra* itself.

## LIGHT, WATER AND GEOMETRY

From this point on, the solid, warlike appearance of the buildings gives

way to the more airy architecture of the residential part. In this area, the layout and shapes of the rooms and patios are closely related to a particular way of life and vision of the world. Moorish architects followed a system of placing rectangular living quarters around a central patio. In the *Alhambra*, these nuclei, each forming a complete dwelling, are called «cuartos». For example, the famous *cuarto de Comares* is made up of the patio, in the centre of which there is a pool flanked by two murtle hedges, and the halls, porticos and galleries surrounding it.

Everything to be found here has been designed to meet human needs in all their manifestations. The magnificence of the throne room (*Comares Tower*) lives up to its function: the colossal ceiling of polychromated wood with figures of stars represents the firmament, the *ajimeces* (windows of twin arches separated by a slim column) give a glimpse of the far horizon and just a step away in the *Patio de los Arrayanes* (Patio of the Myrtles), the still waters of the pond reflect the maj-

esty of the tower. Nature is enclosed in a geometric framework which serves to enhance even more the beauty of the light, the water and the skyline.

The *Patio de los Leones* (Patio of the Lions) and its adjoining rooms made up the private apartments of the king. Here, the scale is intimate and precious. Reproductions of the *Patio de los Leones* are probably the best known of all the views of the *Alhambra*. The patio, with its fountain in the centre, is considered as an image of Paradise with the four rivers which spring from the four cardinal points flowing through it, as in the descriptions of the Koran.

The Hall of the Two Sisters, the Hall of the *Abencerrajes*, and the Hall of the Kings offer the most delicate ornamental motifs both on the walls and the ceilings and it can only be recommended that visitors take all the time they need to fully appreciate their beauty.

The exquisite *Mirador de Lindaraja* (*Lindaraja balcony*) is a kind of corner alcove from where the Sultana of Granada used to look out, as implied by its name «l-ain-dar-aix» which means «eyes of the Sultana». Its windows used to open onto a fine view of the valley of the *Darro* and the *Albaycín* before the Emperor Charles V ordered his apartments and a cypress garden built, which today have a strong air of romanticism. It was here in these rooms that the American writer and historian, *Washington Irving*, lived for several months in 1832 while he was writing his marvellous «Tales of the Alhambra» in which he recounted numerous tales and legends set in the Muslim period.

From the *Torre del Peinador*, one has a great view of the *Albaycín* with the *Darro* river far below: the maze of its streets, the towers of its churches and convents, and the *cármenes*. When looking out from the *Albaycín* back towards the *Alhambra*, one might be tempted to compare the two views, but this is impossible since each is unique and it is no exaggeration to say that one can spend many happy hours contemplating their beauty.

Separate from the palace, though still within the walls, were some other buildings which served as the residence of the courtiers and other servants. Most of these buildings have disappeared and their ruins have been converted into gardens, divided into those of the *Partial* and the *Secano*. At the far end stands the *Generalife*.

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*The Albaycín is, above all, a maze of winding alleyways in which there are little vantage points hidden away to be discovered by the visitor.*

The *Generalife* was a royal retreat embellished with structures and gardens designed for rest and served as the kings' summer residence. Here, the Arab taste for enclosed gardens, broken perspectives and intimate spaces, which characterise all *Nazari* architecture, finds full expression. Plants and trees and water fill a single space which, in spring, seems like a veritable earthly paradise.

Leaving the *Sabika* hill behind, there are still three other parts of the city dating from the *Nazari* period to be seen: the *Albaycín*, the precincts of the cathedral, and the quarter which extends from the *Elvira* Gate to the *Fajalanza* Gate.

## THE ALBAYCIN

This is the old Moorish quarter; its name derives from the fact that, in 1227, it was populated by the Moors driven out of the city of *Baeza* when the latter was conquered by Christian troops. It was one of richest, most densely populated quarters of Muslim *Granada* and even today it has re-

tained its original structure almost intact with houses in the typical Moorish style.

To visit the *Albaycín*, it is a good idea to approach it by making one's way up the *Carrera del Darro*. Along this avenue

*In the caves of the Sacromonte —to one side of the Albaycín— which, in earlier times were occupied by gypsies, it is possible to attend a zambra.*



there is a bath from the 11th century, known as the *Bañuelo*, which is among the best preserved and is worth a visit. From then on, the *Albaycín* is, above all, a maze of winding alleyways in which there are little vantage points hidden away to be discovered by the visitor. Palm trees and cypresses swaying over roof tops are an unmistakable sign of the *cármenes*, which are relics of the Moorish tradition. The *cármenes* are houses with a large kitchen plot and well-kept, usually terraced gardens situated on the hillsides of the city. Their green leaves and fragrant flowers lend a note of colour wherever they are found.

There are still some genuine Morisco dwellings on *Horno de Oro* street and up the slopes of *Victoria* and *el Chapiz*, and a large number of the churches and old palaces of this quarter are built upon the remains of Moorish buildings, the majority of which were *mezquitas*.

When one visits the *Albaycín* it is customary to go from bar to bar tasting their *tapas*. This custom is called *el tapeo*, and any one of the

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many tascas, tabernas, or bars tucked away on side streets is ready to indulge its customers! The most popular are *Pañero* and *Aliatar* in *Aliatar Square*; *Yunque* and *Lara* in *San Miguel Bajo*; *Torcuato* and *Parranda* in *Las Cuatro Esquinas*; and *Mancha China* in *Santa Isabel*.

The clear, fresh water constantly flowing from the street fountains is one of the delightful rewards awaiting those who toil up to visit the *Albaycín*. The most famous fountain spots are *San Nicolás*, *El Abad* and *Aliatar*.

## THE PRECINCTS OF THE CATHEDRAL

In the vicinity of the cathedral (which occupies the same site as the vanished High Mosque) there are many magnificent examples of *Nazari* civil architecture, such as the *Corral del Carbón* (Charcoal Yard). This enclosure, which is in an excellent state of preservation, was the old Muslim *Albóndiga*, serving as both a depot for merchandise and an inn for Moorish drivers and merchants. It was built at the beginning of the 14th century and from 1531 onwards it was known as the *Corral del Carbón* because it was used as accommodation for the charcoal dealers. It is now the setting for a handicrafts market.

Close by, on the other side of the *Avenida de los Reyes Católicos*—which used to be one of the main thoroughfares of the *medina*—are the remains of the *Madraza*, the Arab University. Built in 1349, it was one of the most beautiful buildings of Moorish *Granada* and the most famous scholars of *Granada* and the Maghreb used to teach there.

Also close to the cathedral are the *zacatín*, the *alcaicería*, and the *Plaza de Bibarrambla*. The *alcaicería*, a maze of narrow streets, used to be the ancient and prosperous Muslim silk market, which was of great importance in *Granada*. Today it is a centre for small shops selling *Granadan* handicrafts.

The *zacatín* and the *Bibarrambla Square* used to be the major Arab commercial zone, and today they still retain their commercial atmosphere, as much of the business in *Granada* is conducted in the vicinity. In the *Plaza de Bibarrambla*, the bars and cafés put tables and chairs out

in the sunshine, where they share the Square with flower-vendors. It is a pleasure to sit there and relax after a hard day's sightseeing, and one should try the hot chocolate with newly fried *tejerings*, made from a doughnut-like batter of flour and water. Or perhaps a prickly pear, ready prepared and de-thorned, is more appealing to the palate!

To discover the third nucleus of mediaeval remains, one should walk

## CHRISTIAN GRANADA

As a result of the historical significance of *Granada*—the prized possession representative of the expulsion of the Arabs from Spain—it attracted the attention of its conquerors the Catholic Monarchs and their successors who continued its enrichment with valuable works of art.

The Christian monuments occupy a place of the first order among Spanish artistic treasures and reflect the importance of *Granada* in the political, cultural and religious life of the country.

The Royal Chapel, joined on to the cathedral, was built by *Enrique Egas* to house the tombs of the Catholic Monarchs, whose remains have rested there since 1521. The transept of the chapel is closed off by a magnificent wrought iron screen, worked and painted by the master *Bartolomé*. In the sacristy there are various treasures of the period on exhibition, including the sword of King Ferdinand, the crown and sceptre of Queen Isabel, and a collection of priceless Flemish panels, as well as one by *Botticelli*.

The Cathedral, designed by *Diego de Siloé* (1528), is one of the most outstanding creations of the Renaissance. The harmony of its proportions and architectural forms are striking, particularly in the *Capilla Mayor*. The main facade is one of the masterpieces of *Alonso Cano*. Very close to the Cathedral is the *Casa de los Tiros*, which houses the Art Museum of *Granada* and a Tourist Information Bureau.

Another religious building which merits a visit is the Monastery of *San Jerónimo*, one of the most important monuments in *Granada*. The first stone of the church was officially laid on November 5th, 1519, and although it began as a construction in the Gothic style, it became one of the most beautiful examples of the Spanish Renaissance, executed by the same architect who designed the cathedral, *Diego de Siloé*. Its two magnificent cloisters have just been restored. The Church of *San Juan de Dios*, which is near the Monastery, is a perfect example of baroque architecture in *Granada*, and lastly, in our far from exhaustive list, we find the *Monasterio de la Cartuja* (Carthusian Monastery), whose sacristy has been called «the Christian *Alhambra*» owing to its rich ornamentation.

One monument which has always caused controversy is the Palace of Charles V, situated within the walls of



JAVIER BELLOSO

from the *Plaza Nueva* (at the lower end of the *Carrera del Darro*) along the *Calle de Elvira* to the gate of the same name. This street was another main artery of the old *medina*, and N.º 6, the *Bodega Castañeda*, may prove interesting to the visitor for its long tradition in and wide variety of wines. Another structure of historical interest in this sector is the *Daralborra* or Queen's House, a small palace dating from the middle of the 15th century where the mother of *Boabdil* lived and which is now part of the Convent of *Santa Isabel*.



*In the Generalife, the Arab taste for enclosed gardens finds full expression, and the Christian monuments occupy a place of the first order among Spanish artistic treasures.*

the *Alhambra*. For some—in spite of its undeniable beauty—it is an intruder which clashes violently with the style of the *Alhambra* in an apparent attempt to eclipse it in magnificence. But controversy aside, it has undisputed architectural value. Considered to be the most beautiful work of the Italian Renaissance in Spain, it was designed by the Toledan architect and painter *Pedro Machuca*, who had studied under *Michelangelo* in Italy.

The palace is a majestic, square, stone edifice with a large round courtyard, 30 m. in diameter, which occupies the central part of the building and is surrounded by a portico of 32 Doric columns. The *Museo de Bellas Artes* (the Museum of Fine Arts), in which one can study the evolution of the pictorial arts in *Granada*, occupies the palace's upper floor while in another section we find the *Museo Arqueológico Hispano-Musulmán* (the Museum of Hispano-Arab Archeology) where remains found during excavation of the *Alhambra*, as well as other objects of great interest, are exhibited.

#### A LIVELY CITY

*Granada* is not lacking in other kinds of attractions to interest the visitor. By virtue of its exceptional geographical location, one can choose between skiing on the magnificent pistes of the *Sol y*

*Nieve* resort in the *Sierra Nevada* or bathing in the Mediterranean, as both of these options are scarcely an hour's drive away from the capital. A chance to visit the *Alpujarras*, located on the southern slopes of the *Sierra Nevada*, should not be missed either. It is a beautiful region characterised by its own folklore, architecture and customs, etc., as a result of its long isolation.

As a university city—the third in Spain—*Granada* has a busy cultural life,

*The geometric designs of the ancient Arabic tiles have a strong influence in all the handicraft production of Granada.*



augmented by the vitality which a large student population always provides. Since 1952, a yearly International Music and Dance Festival takes place near the end of June.

The festival, which has been visited by many of the great ballet companies and the famous names of contemporary music, is held in the gardens of the *Generalife*, which provides an incomparable setting for the performances!

Some weeks before this event, the regionally and locally traditional fiesta *Cruz de Mayo* (the Crosses of May) is celebrated on May 3rd. This fiesta commemorates spring and the worship of nature, and all the streets and squares of *Granada* are decorated with crosses richly garlanded with spring flowers.

*Corpus Cristi*, which is celebrated on a Thursday in June depending each year on the exact date of Easter, was established as a major fiesta by the Catholic Monarchs as soon as they had conquered the city. A great civic procession files through the streets and various festivals are held, among which that of the *cante flamenco*, the oldest in Andalusia, is the most important.

However, it is not necessary to go to *Granada* at fiesta time in order to find a lively atmosphere. All quarters of this city at any time of day—except during the siesta on hot summer days—are busy and animat-



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ed, especially in the environs of the university and the student quarter. Young people tend to congregate between the streets *Pedro Antonio de Alarcón* and *Martínez de la Rosa* —in the modern part of the city— where bars and other establishments of all types crowd in upon each other, only closing their doors to customers in the early hours of the morning, especially at weekends.

In the caves of the *Sacromonte* —to one side of the *Albaycín*— which in earlier times were occupied by gypsies, it is possible to attend a *zambra*. The *zambra* (*samra* in Arabic) used to be a spontaneous fiesta which lasted all night and in which singing and dancing were the focal point. This tradition was passed down through the gypsies, who turned it into a public performance which became a 'must' on the visitor's list of sights to see. Although today it has lost some of its popularity, there are still a number of places which offer their *zambra*.

#### GASTRONOMY

*Granada* has a lot to offer with regard to its cuisine. Not for nothing is it surrounded by a fertile plain with the sea only a short distance away. Its diverse climates and customs have lent themselves to the creation of a wide repertoire of dishes. The hams of *Trevélez* are

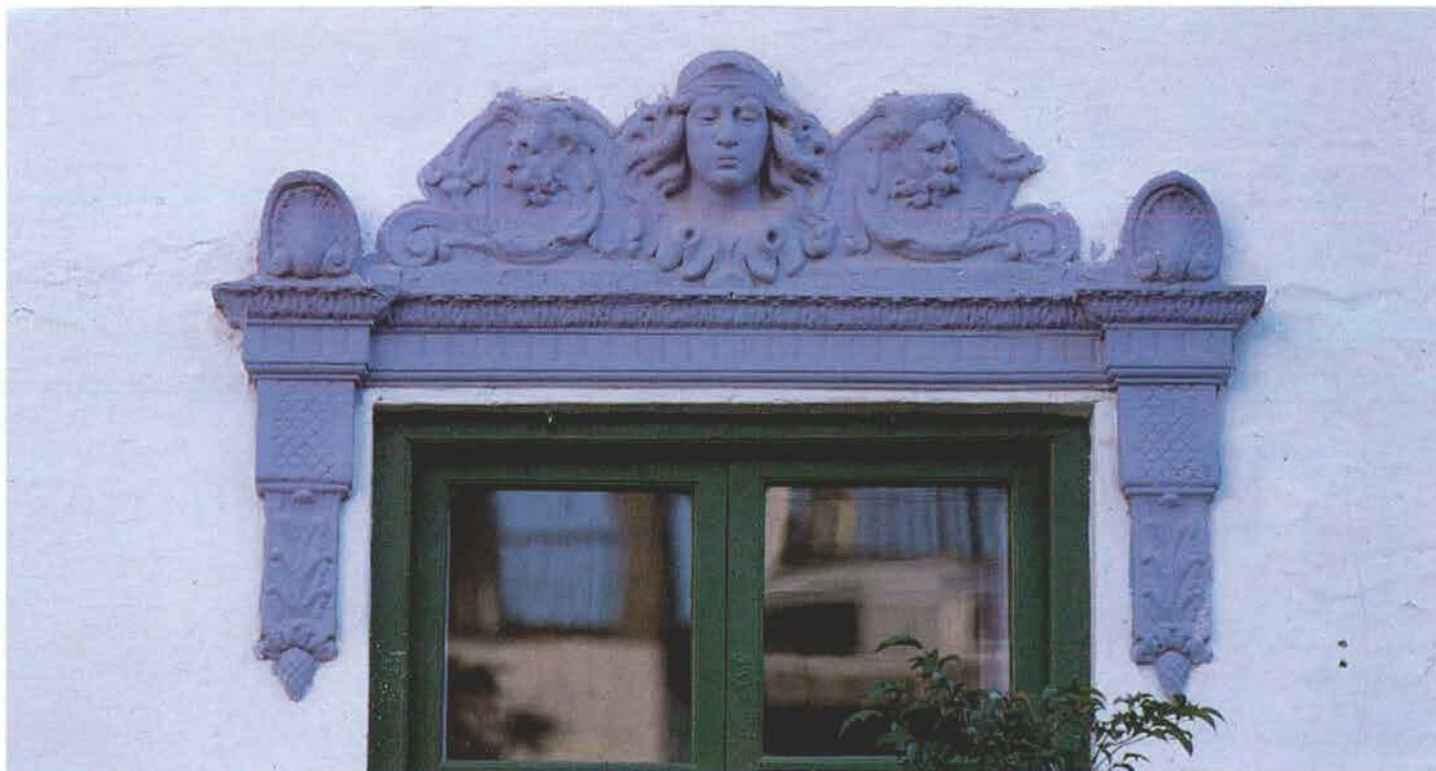


*Most of the buildings of the Alhambra which served as the residence of the courtiers and other servants have disappeared and their ruins are now beautiful gardens.*

cured in the snows of the sierra, while almond sweets are produced on the coast in the old morisco tradition. On the beaches of *Motril* and *Almuñécar* we find the popular *moragas* of sardines or *espetones* (skewers) of anchovies —a kind of open air barbecue in which the fish are speared whole onto skewers shoved into the sand over hot embers, and left to bake.

On the plains, a popular dish is the refreshing white garlic soup with a base of ground almonds; in the *Alpujarras*, it is chicken with tomato and the typical *migas*. In the capital two popular dishes delight the visitor. The first is *habas a la granadina* (*Granada* style beans) which includes ham from *Trevélez* and the *ramillete albaicínero*, a bouquet garni from the sierra of the *Albaycín* which contains bayleaves, mint and parsley. This and the Catalonian recipes for beans are considered the best Spanish recipes for this legume.

The second dish is the *Tortilla de Sacromonte*, an omelette for special occasions which required considerable preparation. It contains fried brains, sweetbreads, potatoes, red peppers and peas, all very finely chopped and sautéed before adding the eggs. Traditionally, it is a dish prepared by the gypsies of the famous *Sacromonte* caves, from whence its name.



*As a result of its historical significance, Granada attracted the attention of its conquerors the Catholic Monarchs who continued its enrichment.*

The exquisite sweets made by the nuns in the many convents of *Granada* deserve a special mention. The most famous are the honeyed fruits of the *Comendadoras de Santiago*, the sponge cakes of the Convent of *La Magdalena* and the seventeen different kinds of candies prepared by the Convent of *San Bernardo* at Christmas time.

*Granada* is a paradise for fruit lovers, especially as regards tropical fruits. The excellent climate of the coastal areas has allowed the commercial cultivation of tropical fruit, especially in *Motril* and *Almuñécar*, and it is now possible to find such exotic fruit as *chirimoyas* (custard apples), mangoes, *nísperos* and avocados almost all year round.

### HANDICRAFTS

As is logical, there is a strong Muslim influence in all the handicraft production of *Granada*. This is doubtless most obvious in the glazed earthenware known as *Fajalauza* because the potters of long ago used to work in the quarter of the city close to the gate of that name. In the decoration of this earthenware, geometric designs of clearly Islamic origin are combined with the typical pomegranate (called «*granada*» in Spanish) and with the shapes of different birds. Potters use red and grey clays, which are then glazed. Depending on the type of decoration, three different types of pottery can be found: the most common has a white background with a minimum of decoration in blue; the *repintada* is more richly decorated with shades of blue and green also on a white background; and the *cuerda seca* is the most profusely decorated with metallic hues.

The artisan leatherwork is of a very high quality, particularly as regards bookbinding. As for woven fabrics, the rugs of the *Alpujarras* are justifiably the most famous, combining the geometric designs typical of the Arabs with the shapes of lilies, crowns, eagles and lions, etc., which were more to renaissance taste. The rugs are woven from white and brightly coloured dyed wools.

Woodwork in *Granada* is very fine, as seen in the marquetry and inlaid work called *taracea* used in the making of boxes, table tops, mirror frames and many other articles. The technique consists of inlaying tiny pieces of ivory, bone, mother of pearl and different kinds of wood on a wooden base to create geometric designs of an astonishing complexity.



*The Parador is built in typical alpine style with roofs of slate and thick walls of wood give a feeling of comfort.*

# THE HEIGHTS OF COMFORT

## THE PARADOR OF SIERRA NEVADA

Text: Sonia Ortega

Photos: Club de Gourmets and ATE

*At almost 3,500 m, the towering peaks of Mulhacén and Veleta, covered with almost perpetual snows, are only fifty kilometres as the crow flies from the Mediterranean coast. At the foot of the southern face of the sierra are tropical fruit trees producing one harvest after another as if the cold had never existed. On the northerly slopes, overlooking the city of Granada, is the ski resort Sol y Nieve where the slopes stay open for skiing until May. And nearby, exceptionally well-situated, is the Parador of Sierra Nevada.*

**T**he road which leads from Granada to the Sierra Nevada winds ever upwards, twisting and turning as it climbs through terraces of olive trees and almond groves. Higher up these are replaced by steep gullies and ravines, stark against a backcloth of small, white villages, like *Güejar Sierra*, where strings of colourful red peppers are hung out to dry from the windows and balconies. There are spectacular views from the gully of *Canales* and, a little higher up, from that of *Las Víboras*, with the *Genil* river flowing smoothly on between its banks of poplar trees.

The road, which leads right up to the foot of the *Veleta* (3,428 m), is said to be the highest road in Europe and shortly before reaching the end of it, one comes to the *Parador de Sierra Nevada*, perched like an eyrie at 2,500 m.

The *Parador* is built in typical alpine style with roofs of slate and thick walls of stone. Inside, the walls lined with wood give the feeling of comfort characteristic of an alpine dwelling. The large windows offer an impressive panorama of the mountains, and in the spacious dining-room one can sample the tasty cuisine of *Granada*: from the traditional *Tortilla de Sacromonte* (Sacromonte omelette) to the famous *Piononos de Santa Fe* —as well as the extensive breakfast

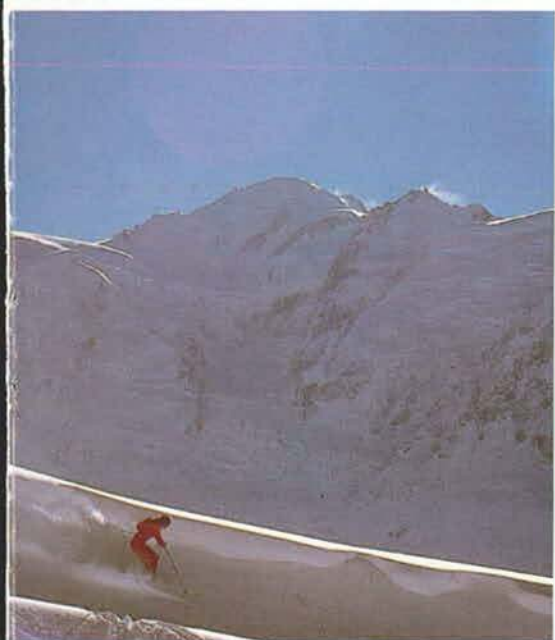
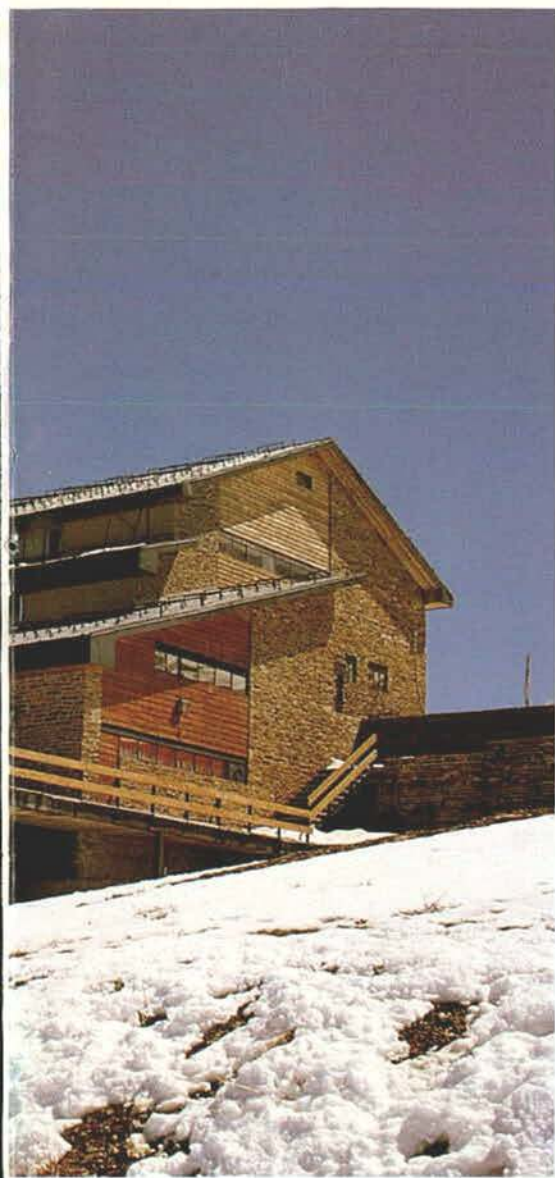


buffets which are a hallmark of the paradors.

As a mark of hospitality, all the paradors invite their luncheon guests to an aperitif of one of the local wines, when they are available. As *Granada* is not noted for its wine production, the *Sierra Nevada* offers a high quality medium dry *Malaga* wine which is ideal for whetting the appetite, which will then be appeased by a well-chosen, though not extensive menu.

### SKIING IN THE SUNSHINE

The *Parador* is open all year round, except for a month from mid-October



thick walls of stone. Inside, the walls lined with wood give the feeling of comfort characteristic of an alpine dwelling.

to mid-November, and although the ski resort *Sol y Nieve* offers a variety of different entertainments, it is, of course, the skiing which ranks number one.

It is no coincidence that the resort is called *Sol y Nieve* (Sun and Snow), because it is the southernmost resort in Europe and the sun shines on an average of 250 days every year. Towards the end of the season, in about May, skiers have exchanged their warm winter outfits for light summer wear which, on occasion, is almost reduced to a swimming suit: and in that same costume, in less than two hours, they can be sunbathing on the warm beaches of the *Costa del Sol*. All in all, an outstanding example of Spain's marvellous climate.

The centre of the ski resort is situated in *Pradollano*, at a height of some 2,100 m, where a large number of hotels, restaurants, bars and shops, etc. are to be found. It is also where one takes the cable

car which goes to the top of the *Veleta* or to *Borreguiles* where the majority of the skilifts depart for the top of the slopes. These have something to offer for everyone, from the beginner to the experienced skier, and a variety of bars and restaurants at the foot of the lifts allow one to take a break and relax for a while during a strenuous day's skiing; those who prefer to be less active can sit out in the sun and contemplate the magnificent scenery. An added attraction is the general animation and cosmopolitan atmosphere in the resort as *Sol y Nieve* attracts skiers from many countries, including Scandinavians who make their way south to find the sun which is usually denied them in their own countries at that time of year.

*Sol y Nieve* has been constantly improving its facilities ever since it was first opened. New slopes and ski-lifts have reduced congestion and the City Council of *Granada* has officially applied to hold the World Alpine Skiing Championships there in either 1991 or

1993, which would provide a tremendous boost for the resort.

When the skiing day comes to an end in the late afternoon, the après-ski begins, and the atmosphere becomes even more lively than on the slopes. Bars, restaurants and discotheques fill up with suntanned skiers and the fun continues as long as they are still awake to enjoy themselves. Christmas and above all New Year's Eve are the times when the revelry goes on all night and overlaps with the opening of the ski-lifts the following morning. In the *Parador* there

*Nevada* is considered a National Park, and its flora and fauna, under special protection, justify the long journey. The height and isolation of this mountainous massif have created a unique flora with more than forty autochthonous species: among them, the *manzanilla real* or *manzanilla de Sierra Nevada*—a type of camomile (*Artemisa granatensis*)—which was on the verge of extinction due to over-picking to make infusions.

For bird watchers, it is possible to spot some birds of prey which still nest in this reserve, such as the majestic golden eagle and the great owl, two zoological treasures of Spanish fauna. There are also reports of the presence of the goshawk and the peregrine falcon.

For those who prefer hunting, they might apply for a special licence to go into the reserve. The main piece for big game hunters is the wild goat and for small ones, the red partridge.



### *The intrinsic charm and interest of the Sierra Nevada continues to attract many visitors, even when the snow has finally disappeared from the slopes.*

is a *fiesta*, with orchestra included and the guests continue dancing till the early hours.

#### WHEN THE SNOW HAS DISAPPEARED

The intrinsic charm and interest of the *Sierra Nevada* continues to attract many visitors, even when the snow has finally disappeared from the slopes. For the last four or five years, a group of Swedish naturalists, dedicated to studying the flora peculiar to the region, have appeared punctually at the *Parador* with the arrival of autumn. The *Sierra*

#### THE SURROUNDING AREA

From the *Parador*, the road is asphalted as far as the *Veleta* pass at a height of 3,200 m, where one finds the chapel of the Virgin of the Snows, patroness of the *Sierra Nevada*. On the 15th. August, her feast day, a large crowd of mountaineers and excursionists gather there to make a pilgrimage to the peak.

As this surfaced road, open only in the summer, crosses over to the southern slopes, it becomes a cart track which leads down into *Capileira*, the doorway to the *Alpujarras* region descending from the peaks. For many centuries the mountains have provided a barrier against the spread of external influences and as a result this area has a special identity of its own. The British writer, *Gerald Brenan*, in his book entitled *South from Granada* draws a wonderful portrait of the villages in the *Alpujarras*, which merit an article all to themselves.

# Recipes

## *Moraga Granadina*

*Serves 5-6:*

1 kg. sliced hake;  
1 onion;  
4 cloves of garlic;  
25 g. pine Kernels;  
150 g. clams;  
2 spoonfuls chopped parsley;  
Small glass of white wine with Spanish D.O.;  
Olive oil and salt.

Arrange the fish in a ovenproof dish. Chop up all the ingredients and spread over the fish. Pour over some olive oil. Put the dish into the oven. When the fish is almost done, sprinkle with the white wine and leave to bake a little longer until the wine has reduced.

This dish can also be prepared with sardines or other kinds of fish.

## *Kid stew*

*Serves 5-6:*

1 kg. chopped Kid's meat;  
50 g. dried red peppers;

50 g. garlic;  
1 chili;  
1 bayleaf;  
1 sprig of thyme;  
A slice of bread;  
1 litre of white wine with Spanish D.O.;  
Olive oil and salt.

Toss the Kid's meat, the garlic, chili and herbs in a little oil for half-an-hour. Add the litre of white wine and allow to cook for about another 20 minutes, depending on how tender the meat is. Soak the bread and the peppers in 2 dl. of water. When they are soft, add to the casserole and leave to cook for another ten minutes, or until the meat is absolutely tender.

## *Royal Motril Tart*

*Makes about 10 individual tartlets:*

*Pastry:*

200 g. flour;  
50 g. sugar;  
50 g. butter;  
1 egg;  
Zest of the rind of 1 lemon.

*The meringue:*

3 egg whites;

150 g. sugar;  
50 g. icing sugar;

*The filling:*

200 g. almonds;  
100 g. sugar;  
5 egg yolks;  
2 egg whites;  
2 dl. custard;  
Grated rind of 1 lemon;  
Squirt of olive oil.

Make the pastry by mixing together all the ingredients, and line the individual cases.

Blanch the almonds and mix with the sugar and grated lemon rind. Add the egg yolks, the lightly beaten whites, the oil and the custard. Fill the cases with this mixture and bake in a low oven for 20 minutes. Remove from the cases and cover with the meringue.

To make the meringue, heat 150 g. sugar until it caramelizes to the point at which, lifting it on a skimmer and blowing gently, bubbles form through the holes. While the sugar is still hot, mix the stiffly beaten egg whites and 50 g. of icing sugar. Cover the tartlets and return to a very low oven until the meringue has set.

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## TREASURES IN A

# NUTSHELL

Photos: ICEX

*Hiding the secret of their flavour behind the hard exterior of a nutshell has been no protection for these small seeds. Man discovered their nutritional qualities a very long time ago and did not hesitate to include them in his diet - raw or prepared in a thousand different ways.*

*The climate and soils of the Mediterranean basin are particularly well-suited to nut-bearing trees like pine, hazel, almond, walnut, and chestnut trees, which, as a result, produce very high quality nuts; this is especially true in Spain.*

**T**here are few natural products so widely appreciated and consumed across the five continents as nuts. Although they are cultivated in many countries, the nuts grown in Spain have exceptional organoleptic qualities due to the particular geoclimatic conditions present in Spain. The nuts produced in Spain stand out not only for their quality, which is recognized worldwide, but also for their quantity. Spain is the world's major producer of the royal pine nut, the second major producer of almonds and the third of both hazelnuts and chestnuts.

So, it is hardly surprising that the consumption of nuts has a long history in this country and is closely associated with both fiestas and folklore. For example, nut-based sweets or other dishes are almost always a part of fiesta celebrations, es-



pecially those occurring in autumn and winter. Also, we find, perhaps adding a little music to the occasion, the typically Spanish castanets, an instrument whose name derives from the Spanish word for chestnuts, *castañas*.

But in spite of this apparently healthy outlook for the nut, everything is in its favour. One of its main drawbacks is the fluctuating nature of its harvest. Adverse meteorological conditions, such as a year with little rainfall, can have a far greater effect on a nut harvest than on other types of crops, and as a result, the nuts—almonds and pine nuts in particular—must sometimes be sold at very high prices.

On other occasions it is the action of mankin which is detrimental to their development.

Forest fires which have been deliberately set off have destroyed thousands of hectares of pine trees covering







## The Masachs family secret

When José Masachs decided to start making a methode champenoise wine of his own he could have had no idea what he was starting.

True, his family had been growing and supplying grapes to some of the largest producers of such wines for generations. Also true that his vineyard was right at the centre of the region in which it is generally agreed that the finest of these wines are grown.

Nevertheless, for nearly 40 years Señor Masachs was content to produce small quantities of a top quality cava wine which more than satisfied the discerning palates of his family, a few friends and a gradually widening circle of admirers as the fame of his wine spread throughout the region of Penedès.

Then, in 1977, José's grandsons, Josep and Juan took over the business and the decision

was taken to develop sales of a range of cava wines, first throughout Spain and then to other countries in Europe and overseas.

The Masachs family secret was out. And the following year, when Josep decided to produce a slightly lighter wine made from grapes grown, as he puts it, 'on the other side of the hill, where the summer sunshine is less fierce' Cava Louis de Vernier was born.



José Masachs

*Cava  
Louis de Vernier*



Spain's mountainsides. Chesnut and walnut trees have been felled indiscriminately for their wood.

Fortunately, however, little by little these affected areas are being repopulated, and improved methods of cultivation are being introduced so as to assure plentiful growth of such treasured nuts.

### THE HERALD OF SPRING

As February advances, while the countryside is still submerged in its winter lethargy, the buds of almond trees suddenly burst open into a profusion of pink and white flowers, announcing that spring is only just around the corner. Then, after this spectacular beginning, eight long months must pass by as the fruits of these flowers slowly ripen.

The almond tree, a member of the rosaceous family, probably originated in an area between the Aegean sea and the Pamir plateau. Marco Polo, in tales of his travels, reported seeing wild almonds growing on the plains of Turkestan while other sources suggest that the almond tree originated China and Japan.

The cultivation of almonds was known to the Hebrews many centuries before the coming of Christ; the Phoe-

*The almond tree, a member of the rosaceous family, probably originated in an area between the Aegean sea and the Pamir plateau.*



*The Royal Pine Nut tree is also known in Spain as the piñonero.*

nicians brought the knowledge of this tree and its fruits to the West.

The almond, like many other plants and trees, has its own charming legend, which tells how the almond tree spread its veil of flowers over the lifeless body of one of King Mida's daughters who had died of sorrow from the death of her beloved husband.

The properties of almonds have been known since ancient times. In the first century A.D., the Greek doctor Dioscorides described the medicinal properties of some six hundred plants in his treatise *De Materia Médica* (this later became the basic, universal text for pharmacology until the seventeenth century). In it, he indicates that «to take five or six bitter almonds before a meal would prevent intoxication». That is to say that almost two thousand years ago a scholar had already discovered how well almonds go with an aperitif... and, indeed, the custom of serving toasted or salted almonds with alcohol before a meal is extremely widespread, obviously because they offer some protection from the dangers of drinking on an empty stomach.

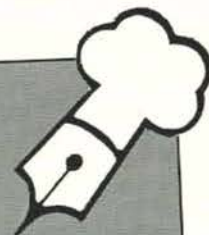
Beyond its popularity as an appetizer, the almond plays a far wider role in other aspects of gastronomy. The regional cuisine in some parts of Spain, such as Catalonia, carry its distinctive hallmark. Cookbooks as early as the fifteenth century included recipes for many dishes and sauces in which almonds were an important ingredient.

The importance of the almond to Spanish cooking and to the economy can perhaps be appreciated by the fact that the land area presently devoted to

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almond production is comparable to that devoted to orange production. This makes Spain the second largest almond producer in the world (70,000 metric tons in 1985). Inland regions such as *Aragón* and *Extremadura* and almost all the provinces along the Mediterranean coast devote large areas of land to almond growing. *Alicante* and *Mallorca*, the two major producers, offer a magnificent sight in early spring when acres upon acres of almond blossoms come into flower.

Spanish almonds are internationally considered the best on the market owing to their high oil content, which makes them milder and juicier.

Either bitter or sweet, the almond comes into its own in confectionery and cake-making. In Spain, regional delicacies with an almond base are to be found in almost all parts of the peninsula from the *Tarta de Santiago* of *Galicia* to the *Turrónes* (a kind of nougat) of *Alicante*, without forgetting the marzipans of *Toledo*, the *almendras garrapiñadas* (a kind of sugar-coated almond) of *Alcalá* or the nationally popular *buesos de santo* (saint's bones), a sweet traditionally eaten on November 1st, All Saints' Day.

Although the economic importance of the almond tree is basically focused on nut consumption, it does have a variety of other uses: the woody shells, as well as providing a good fuel, can be macerated in a vintage white wine base to obtain a type of brandy. Bitter almond oil is used as a condiment and sweet almond oil, rich in vitamin E, has dermatological and medicinal applications. Finally, almond milk is an excellent antitoxin as well as a healthy dietetic complement.

It is no wonder that the almond is the most popular and most widely consumed nut.

### THE SPANISH ROYAL PINE KERNEL

Among the hundreds of species belonging to the *Pinus* family, less than a dozen produce an edible nut. This figure is even lower if one wants an optimum quality nut in size, colour, texture, flavour and aroma. Without a doubt, the species which best fulfills these requirements is the Royal Pine Nut tree, also known in Spain as the *piñonero*, whose scientific name is *Pinus pinea* L. The fruit of this tree is the royal pine kernel—a designation exclusively used to refer to the Spanish

pine kernel, thus distinguishing it from others.

Archaeological discoveries seem to suggest that pine nuts formed a part of man's diet both in Europe and in America as early as the Mesolithic Age some 12,000 years ago. In Egypt, unshelled kernels as well as pine cones have been found in a number of the pharaohs' tombs. As the Royal Pine tree does not form part of Egyptian flora, it is reasonable to suppose that in ancient Egypt pine kernels were imported from Syria, the Lebanon, and Greece. The Greeks consecrated the pine kernel to the god Neptune and the



*Spanish almonds are internationally considered the best on the market owing to their high oil content, which makes them juicier.*

Romans also held it in high esteem. Among the ruins of Pompeii (79 A.D.), many remains of pine kernels have been found, and we know that in the time of Pliny it was common to eat pine kernels which had been preserved in honey. From the excavations of some the *castrum* in Britain we have learned that the Roman legions which conquered Britian carried unshelled pine kernels and chestnut flour in their rations.

Today, the royal pine kernel is the most expensive of the nut family. Of all the agricultural products on the

market, it comes second only to saffron and truffles in price, and this situation is unlikely to change for at least the next few decades since the royal pine nut tree is a species characterised by a low yield (only 38 kg. of pine kernels are obtained for each metric ton of pine cones). In Spain the annual cone harvest, the highest in the world, is approximately 2,000 metric tons. This gives some idea of the scarcity of this valuable nut.

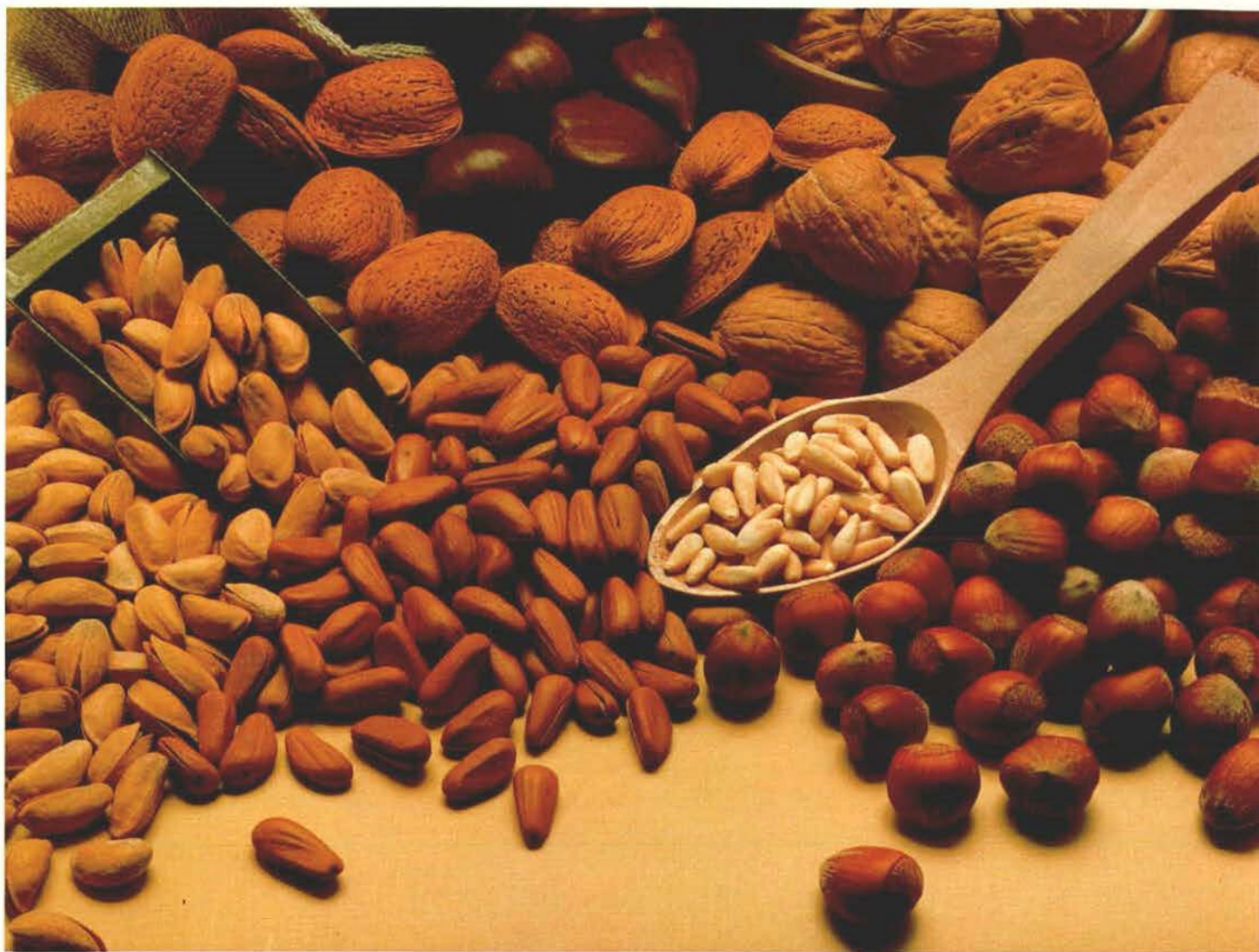
Another reason for this scarcity is the difficulty in collecting the cones. The majority of the Royal Pines grow on steep slopes which are not easily accessible, thus preventing any sort of mechanized harvesting.

Royal pine kernels are gathered between November and March. Pine trees are particularly sensitive to a prolonged absence of humidity. The pine cones grow and ripen at the tops of the trees and at the ends of the strongest branches, either singly or in twos, for three years. Although some trees produce more than one hundred cones a year, the average number is far lower.

The curious silhouette of this tree, shaped like an enormous umbrella, can be seen all over Spain but the best areas for the Royal Pines are the provinces of *Valladolid* in Castille, and the province of *Huelva* in the western part of Andalusia. Catalonia, *Extremadura* and *La Mancha* also produce pine kernels but not in such large quantities. Unfortunately, summer forest fires, which in recent years have been occurring with alarming frequency, have become another factor in the ever increasing price of the final product.

Once the pine cones have been gathered, the traditional process for extracting the kernels is to leave the cones in small heaps so that, during the spring and summer, the sun will cause them to open and release their seeds. This is known as *despiñado* and occurs in the months of July and August. Then the pine kernels are peeled and the skin removed.

The royal pine kernel is rich in starch and oil and has many applications in the confectionery and catering industries. In spite of its high price, the lack of a possible substitute means that it continues to be used in many traditional Spanish desserts, such as *panellets*, *empiñonados* (a biscuit with pine nut filling) or the sugared pine kernels served with *turrónes* at Christmas.

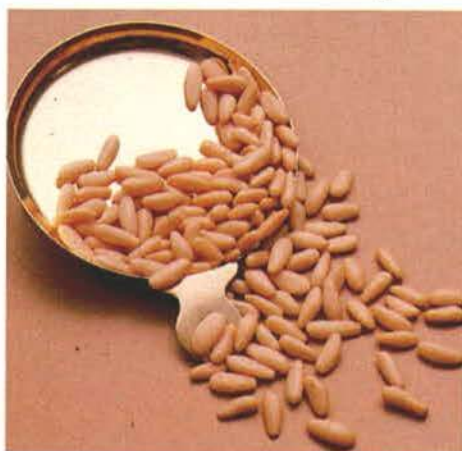


## HAZELNUTS

Like almonds and pine nuts, Spanish hazelnuts are of superior quality, with a high oil content which improves their flavour and allows for better storage. Although its production is less important than that of the almond and the area under cultivation is very small, with the province of *Tarragona* as the leading producer, Spain continues to be among the major European growers.

As with most varieties, the hazelnut has been cultivated since time immemorial. It originated in Asia Minor and was introduced into other lands by the Greeks. In ancient times it was known as the *nuez pónica*, a clear allusion to the Turkish region of the Hellespont. According to a Christian legend, this tree, which grows two to five metres high, could neither be struck by lightning nor give shelter to reptiles because its branches had once given shelter to the Virgin Mary during a heavy storm.

*As the hazelnut is oleaginous, it is also used to produce oils for consumption and domestic use and to add a delicate scent to soap.*



*The Greeks consecrated the pine kernel to the god Neptune.*

The small, round hazel or cobnut, can be eaten raw but is more commonly fried or toasted and served, like the almond, with an aperitif or other alcoholic drink. It too is used principally in the confectionery industry, particularly for making *turrone*s and chocolates. Recipes for flans, sweets and ice creams also frequently call for hazelnuts.

As the hazelnut is oleaginous, it is also used to produce oils for consumption and domestic use, and to add a delicate scent to soap and cosmetic preparations. Hazel wood is valued for making hoops, cages and other similar articles which require its great flexibility.

## THE SWEET WALNUT

The word «nut» applies in a generic sense to all those fruits which have their seeds enclosed in a hard shell. But in Spain—as in many other countries—this word is also used to refer to the fruit of the walnut tree. This tree

# el lobo

NOUGATS, MARZIPANS & ICE-CREAM FLAVOR

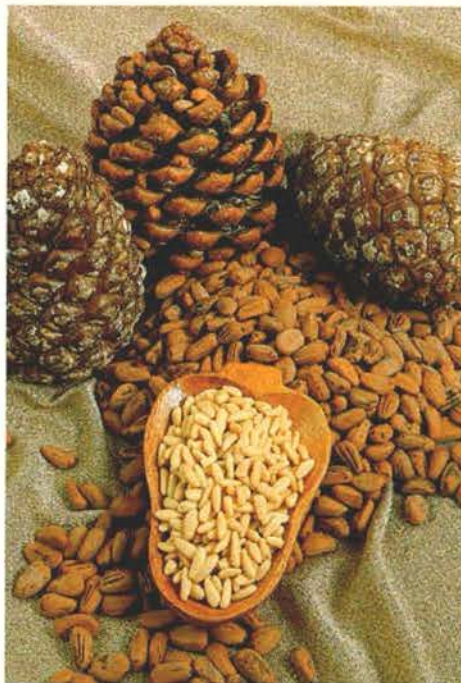


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—which can grow to a great height and breadth, with a trunk which may measure up to 4 metres in circumference— is considered in the East as the «tree of dreams». A certain soporific power is attributed to its aromatic shade and, true or otherwise, it has certainly been demonstrated that after a long period beneath a walnut tree, one emerges somewhat dazed.

There are two hypotheses as to its origin. The first situates this in Europe, from where it spread out but later vanished after the last glaciation, surviving only in Central and Western Asia, from where it once again spread out in all directions with the movement of different peoples. The second hypothesis simply supposes that the walnut is native to Central and Eastern Asia, growing naturally in countries with a warm climate. Based on Biblical testimonies referring to the gardens of King Solomon, it is thought that walnut cultivation must have begun in Persia.

The spread of the walnut in Europe is attributed to the Romans whose legions brought the plant to the lands bordering the Rhine and to Spain. Years later, Spanish settlers carried the



*The spread of the walnut in Europe is attributed to the Romans whose legions brought the plant to the lands bordering the Rhine.*

walnut to America, where it became most prolific in California.

According to an Spanish saying:

*«Por los santos Justo y Pastor  
entra la nuez en sabor y la mocita en amor.»*

(On the day of Saints *Justo* and *Pastor* (August 6th) the walnut finds its flavour and the young girl her first love), but, in fact, the month for walnuts is October. Around this time the walnuts, in their woody shells, are beginning to fall from the trees. The previous spring had seen an abundance of new green leaves sprout and grow (these leaves have astrigent properties). As the walnuts ripen, their fleshy outer shell is first green and fragrant and later begins to blacken and crack unevenly. This shell, when toasted, gives the famous varnish known as *nogalina*, and the same shell, left to macerate in brandy, produces a licor which was much appreciated in ancient times as a digestive and a sedative for stomach pains. The bark and the thickest part of the root of the walnut tree are used for toothpastes as they leave teeth white.

Within the shell is to be found the walnut, with its two woody valves ridged with tiny veins, separated inside




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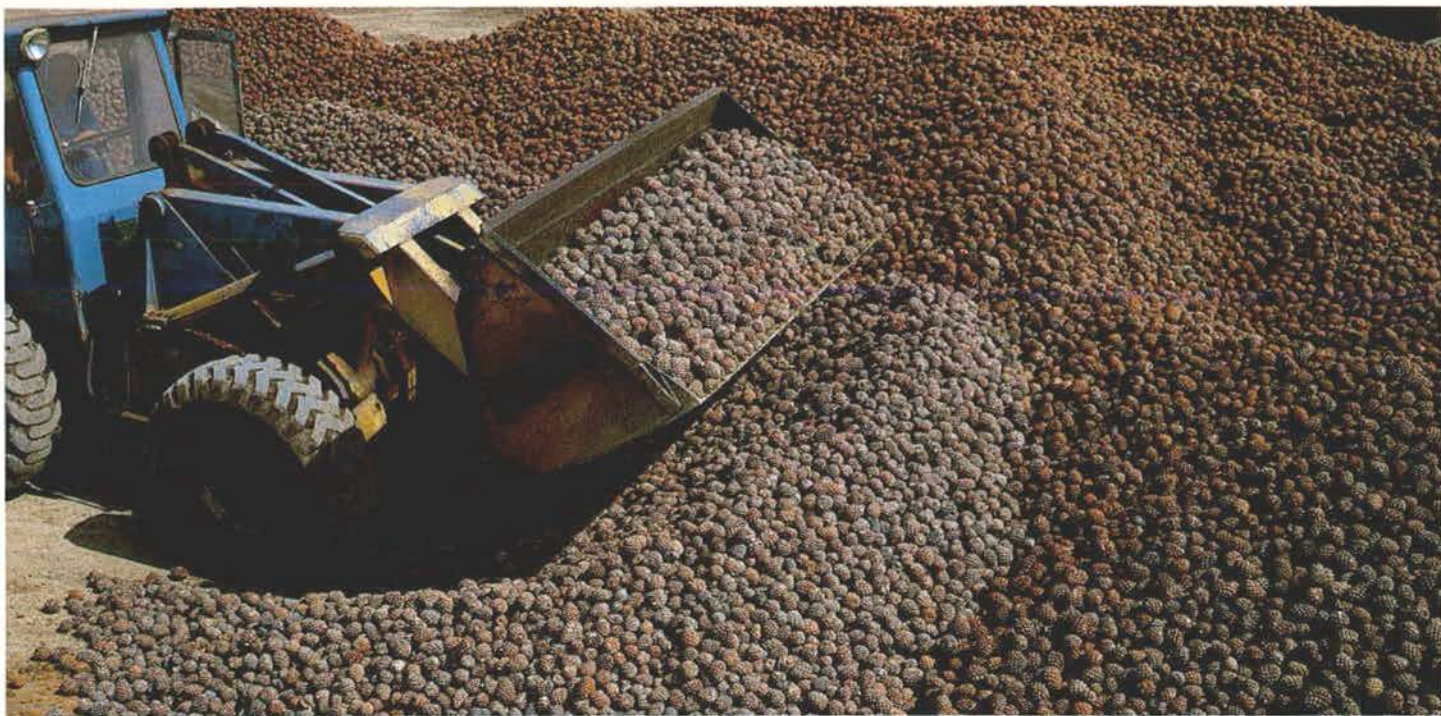


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*Archaeological discoveries seem to suggest that pine nuts formed a part of man's diet both in Europe and in America.*

by fragile partitions into the four lobules of the seed, like a tiny brain. The walnut has a characteristic sweet flavour which is different from the sugary taste of other nuts and lingers on the palate for some minutes after swallowing. As food, walnuts offer a more complete nourishment than cheese but they should not be eaten in excess as their high protein content makes them somewhat difficult to digest. One kilo of walnuts contains 6,770 calories, so they have become part of the sportsman's normal diet, particularly among those who go in for climbing or mountaineering and need a high calorie intake to keep them going.

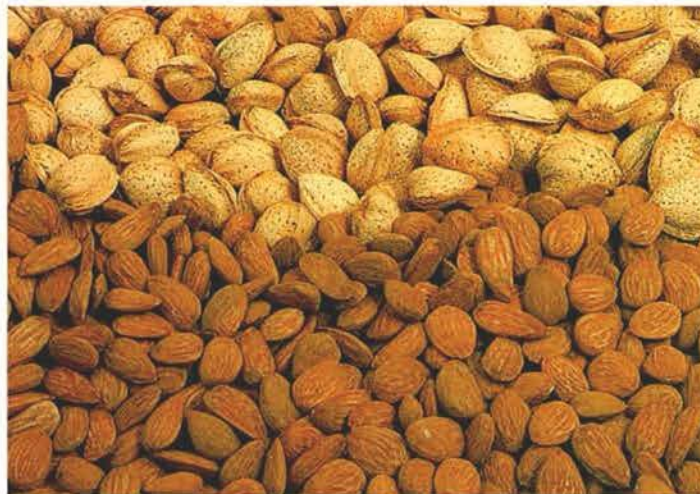
Until recently walnut production in Spain was quite limited and there were even fears that it would disappear altogether as the high price being paid for walnut wood was causing the indiscriminate felling of trees. However, at the present time there is a tendency towards promoting walnut production through rational, controlled cultivation. There has been heavy investment in *Extremadura* and *Catalonia* using top quality nursery-grown trees, and it

is hoped that, with the application of advanced techniques of cultivation, it will one day be possible to achieve the levels of production of earlier times.

#### THE HUMBLE CHESTNUT

Like the hazelnut, once known as the *nuez pónica*, it is possible that the

*Chestnuts are an excellent dietetic substitute for other less recommended starches owing to their balanced proportion of fats and starches.*



chestnut also originates from the Turkish region of the Hellespont, where there is a place called *Kastana* (*castaña* meaning chestnut in Spanish). The chestnut is one of man's oldest foods and has played its part in the history of European man and Western Christian civilisation.

Both Isaiah and Homer make references to the chestnut, and in the Celtic religion it is believed to have been worshipped by the druids. In *Galicia* it is a nut related to witches and it is said that to carry a chestnut in one's pocket will keep away the *meigas* (Galician witches).

The chestnut was the «life support» tree of the pre-Roman tribes in the Iberian peninsula. They ate roasted chestnuts and made flour from dried chestnuts, *pilongas*, to see them through the year. The Roman legionaries subsisted on *bullote*, a type of bread made from dried, kneaded chestnut flour. By the sixteenth century, with the arrival of potatoes and corn from the New World, chestnuts became less important as part of the average peasant's staple diet.

The Spanish gastronomic calendar has established All

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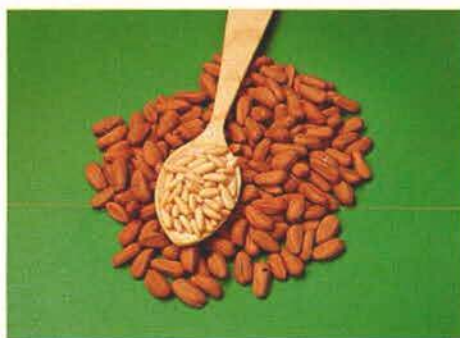


*Nut-based sweets are almost always a part of fiesta celebrations, especially those occurring in autumn and winter.*

Saints' Day —November 1st.— as the beginning of the chestnut season. As November advances, the squares and street corners of Spanish cities are dotted with the annual traditional chestnut stands, whose warm smell of roasting chestnuts is a sure sign that winter is on its way.

Chestnut trees grow in the damp regions of Spain where the lime content of the soil is not too high. Many place names related to the words *castañar* and *castaño* can be found throughout the Spanish peninsula.

Chestnuts are an excellent dietetic substitute for other less recommended starches owing to their balanced proportion of starches and fats, as well as their agreeable flavour and texture. They are also an invaluable source of vitamins and are best when eaten or cooked within days of falling from the tree. Their generous sugar content makes them pleasant to eat raw or lightly roasted. Chestnuts also play a large part in international gastronomy. Perhaps they are most famous in a European style cuisine which prepares them as a purée to accompany meat



*It is believed that the origins of the marrons glacés may be in the fruits preserved in honey by the Greeks.*

and particularly game like turkey, wild boar and partridge.

Even so, there can be no question that chestnuts reach the heights of their culinary expression in confectionery: for example, *marrons glacés*, as delicious as they are difficult to prepare! It is believed that the origins of the *marrons glacés* may be in the fruits preserved in honey by the Greeks: they used to put figs in amphoras full

of honey which, by a slow process of osmosis, impregnated the fruit and gave it more flavour as well as preserving it better. The Romans continued this tradition and it spread throughout the empire.

Subsequently, the technique of preserving fruit was passed down in mediaeval monasteries which served as storehouses of knowledge and sometimes as the home of a good cuisine! But it was to be in the refined France of the Bourbons that the *marrons glacés* came to be as we know them today. During that period, etiquette required that one use delicate, agate tongs in order to properly eat this sweet.

The main ingredient required for the successful preparation of *marrón glacés* is patience. First the chestnuts must be peeled —unless they are bought frozen and ready peeled— and then cooked without breaking, and finally the syrup must be allowed to concentrate. But the result is always well worth the effort. The humble, woody chestnut has become a delicious creamy dessert!



*Cold almond soup  
with garlic*

24 almonds;  
Olive oil;  
A slice of dry bread;  
A small bunch of green grapes,  
preferably *moscatel*;  
3 or 4 cloves of garlic;  
Salt;  
Vinegar.

Blanch the shelled almonds in boiling water. Soak the dry bread and allow to drain. Put the almonds in a mortar with the cloves of garlic, peeled and chopped, and some salt. Crush the ingredients and mash together, adding the bread, to make a smooth paste. Continue mixing the paste and blend in the olive oil very slowly as if preparing a mayonnaise. Finally add the vinegar and continue stirring for a few more minutes.

Pour the paste into a bowl and dilute with cold water to taste. Wash the grapes and remove the pips before adding to the soup. Serve with thin slices of toast.

*Chard with pine nuts  
and raisins*

Serves 4  
1 1/2 kg chard;  
2 medium onions;  
2 tomatoes;  
3 cloves of garlic;  
1/2 glass of olive oil;  
100 g pine nuts;  
100 g raisins;  
4 slices of toast/fried bread;  
Salt;  
Pepper.

Wash the chard and cook in salted boiling water. Drain and slice finely. Chop the tomatoes, onions and garlic and fry lightly together until soft. Sauté the chard in this mixture, adding the pine nuts and raisins. Add a cup of water and season to taste. Let cook for a few minutes longer. Serve in a deep dish accompanied by the toast or fried bread.

*Chestnuts a la extremeña*

Serves 6  
1 kg fresh chestnuts;  
100 g honey;  
150 g rice uncooked;  
50 g fried breadcrumbs;  
30 g pine nuts;

Aniseed;  
Cinnamon stick.

Remove the outer shell of the chestnuts, leaving the inner one so that they remain whole. Boil the chestnuts in water, adding the honey, the rice, the aniseed and the cinnamon stick. Crush the peeled pine nuts, mix them with the breadcrumbs, and add a little of the liquid from the chestnuts. Stir well and add to the chestnuts in order to thicken the juices a little. Boil again and serve when the chestnuts are soft.

*Chestnut purée*

To serve with meat  
1/2 kg chestnuts;  
1 stock cube;  
1 clove of garlic;  
Salt, pepper and milk.

# Recipes

Remove the outer shell of the chestnuts and cook in boiling water until they are almost soft. Drain, peel off the inner shell and boil again in 1/2 litre of water with the stock cube and the clove of garlic. Leave to cook until completely soft. Put the chestnuts and stock through a blender and add the salt, pepper and a spoonful of milk.

### *Stuffed turkey a la catalana*

*Serves 4*

1 turkey;  
Butter;  
Slices of bacon to cover the turkey breast.

*For the stuffing:*

150 g sausage meat;  
50 g fatty bacon;  
2 apples;  
300 g chestnuts;  
100 g prunes;  
100 g pine nuts;  
Olive oil;  
Sage;  
Rosemary;  
Breadcrumbs;  
Milk;  
Salt and pepper.

Peel the chestnuts, removing both the outer and inner shells, and cook in boiling water until they are soft. Soften the prunes in boiling water and de-stone. Clean the turkey. Chop up the turkey liver and giblets with the bacon and sausages. Soften the breadcrumbs in milk, strain and add to the stuffing mixture together with the apples, peeled, cored and sliced, the prunes, chestnuts, a little butter, salt, pepper and a sprinkling of sage and rosemary.

Mix the stuffing well and stuff the turkey. Cover the turkey breast with the slices of bacon, truss the bird with twine and place in a roasting dish with plenty of olive oil. Put in the oven and when it has heated through, season with salt. While it is roasting, baste regularly with the juices and turn around from time to time. Depending on the weight of the turkey it will need to cook for three hours or more.

### *Tarta de Santiago*

*Serves 4*

200 g blanched almonds;  
100 g butter;

6 spoonfuls sugar;  
6 eggs;  
Ground cinnamon;  
Grated rind of 1 lemon.

Blend the butter with 4 spoonfuls of sugar and the cinnamon and beat well. Beat the eggs separately with the grated lemon rind until frothy. Grind the almonds finely and mix everything together, reserving some of the ground almond to cover the tart. Pour the mixture into a round mould of 20 cm in diameter and bake in a preheated medium oven for 25 to 30 minutes. Remove from the oven, mix the remaining almonds with two spoonfuls of sugar and cover the tart. Return to the oven briefly until a golden crust forms.

### *Walnut and coffee mousse*

200 g brown sugar;  
200 g ground walnuts;  
6 eggs separated;  
100 g cream;  
Cup of strong, black coffee;  
Chantilly;

*To decorate:*

Lemon slices or strawberries.

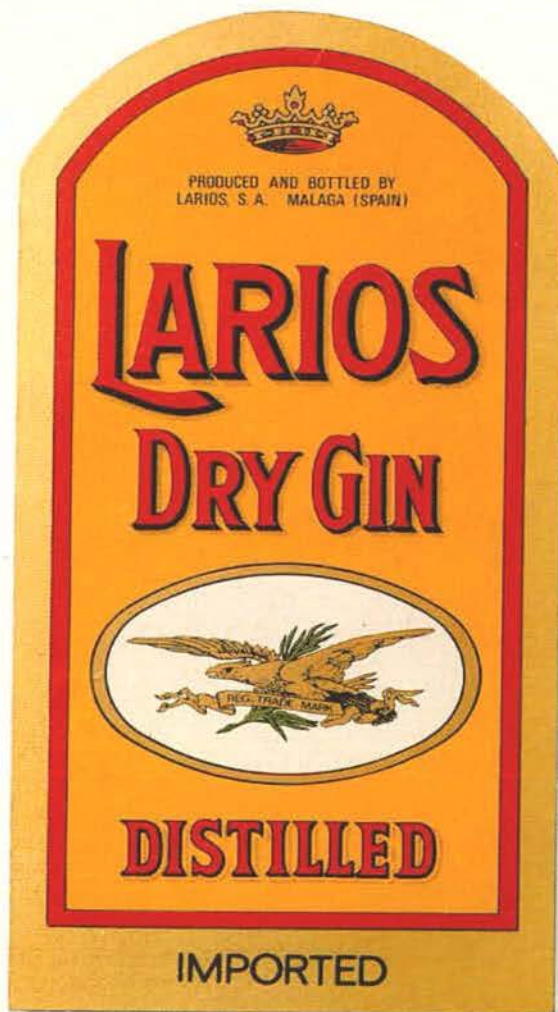
Beat the sugar with the egg yolks to a creamy froth. Add the ground walnuts and a small cup of strong, black coffee. Beat together and add the cream. Whisk the egg whites until stiff and blend into the mousse. Serve in glasses decorated with Chantilly and large pieces of chopped walnuts. Add a little colour with a strawberry or slice of lemon.

### *Marrons glacés*

1 kg of large, fresh chestnuts;  
100 g butter;  
100 g sugar;  
2 small glasses of rum;  
100 g whipped cream.


Remove the outer shell of the chestnuts and boil for a few minutes so that the inner shell peels more easily. Then cook in boiling water until almost tender and drain well. To finish the cooking process, place in a large saucepan and cover with melted butter and sugar. Stir well, taking care not to break the chestnuts. When cooked, pour rum over them and set alight. They can be served cold with whipped cream.

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## WINES OF NAVARRA

# LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Text: Tony Lord  
Photos: Félix Lorrío

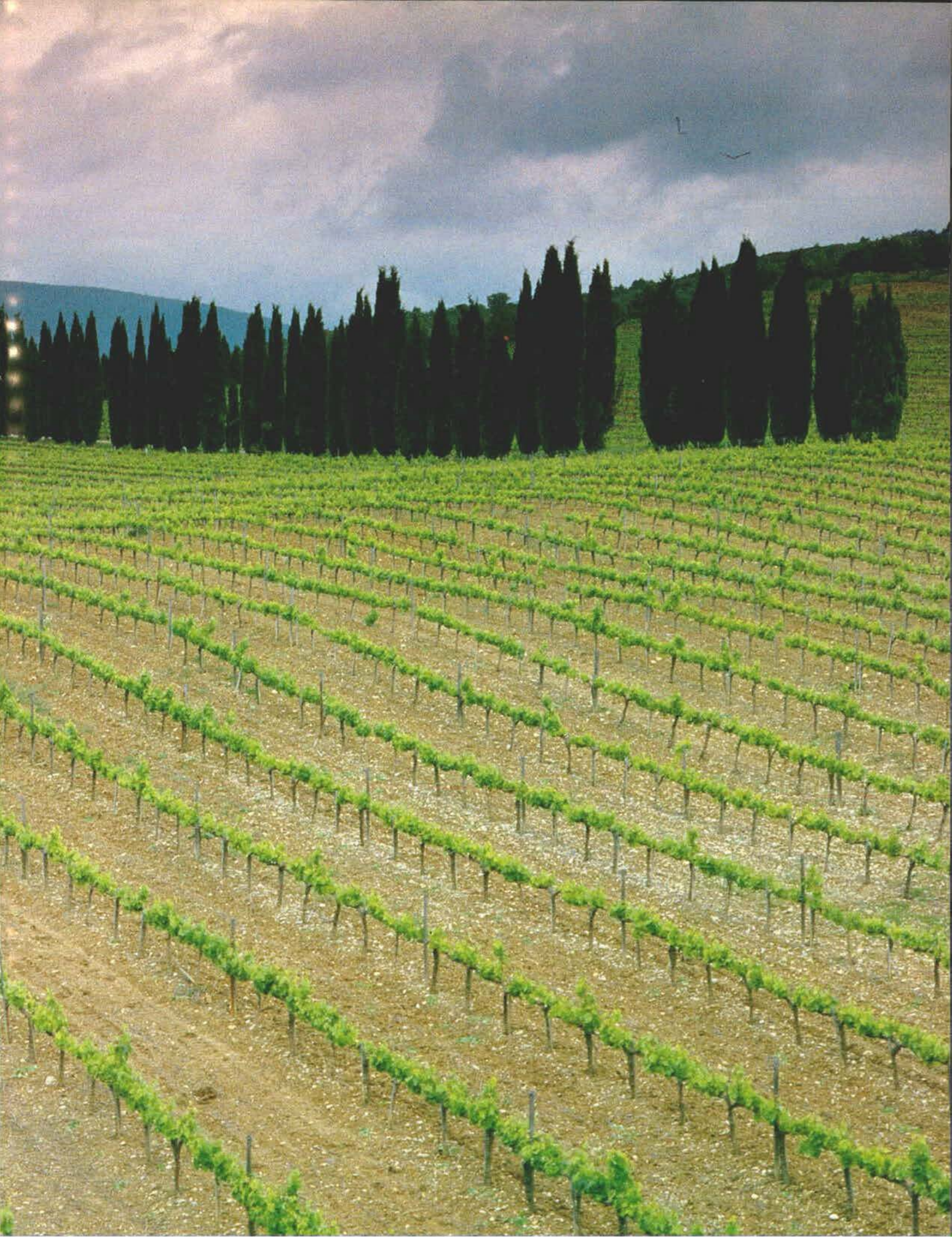
*Grapes have been grown for centuries in the vineyards of Navarra in northern Spain, almost in the foothills of the Pyrenees. Nevertheless, this little winegrowing region, famous for its rosés and witness through the ages of pilgrims following the route to Santiago de Compostela, has by no means remained entrenched in the past. New grape varieties and the adoption of modern technology have combined to produce wines with a great future.*

**T**he capital of the once formidable Kingdom of Navarra, famed for the valour of its knights, Pamplona has its charming old quarter, imposing Gothic cathedral, and an unusual style of architecture that seems more French than Spanish.

Its wealth is largely based on agriculture. From the rather damp alpine foothills of the Pyrenees to the semi-arid south, flattish with mesetas carved by erosion, ochre coloured soils and a Mediterranean climate, the Navarran farm-

ers produce a variety of crops. The northern pastures for livestock and forests for timber give way to fields of cereals, fruit orchards, vegetable gardens including the highly regarded local asparagus, and vineyards.

Navarrans have been making wine since Roman times. Catherine the Great of Russia preferred its red wine, and so too did the pilgrims travelling the famous trail, *El Camino*, to Santiago de Compostela. Local legend has it that so much wine was produced that the builders of the church in Mendigorria used it



# El descubrimiento de NAVARRA

## Discovering the wines of NAVARRA



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*Ask a wine drinker what Navarran wine he has enjoyed and the answer will probably be a rosé. This is the style of wine Navarra is known for.*

instead of water, which was in short supply, to mix their mortar.

Today, *Navarra* does not produce quite so much wine. In volume terms it is one of the smaller Spanish denominations, but in terms of wine development it is one of the most important areas of Spain.

The first moves to denomination were begun in 1933, but the regulation was not published until 1967, and did not come into force until 1975. Now it covers 24,000 hectares of vines, with another 3,000 hectares within the region but coming under the *Rioja* banner.

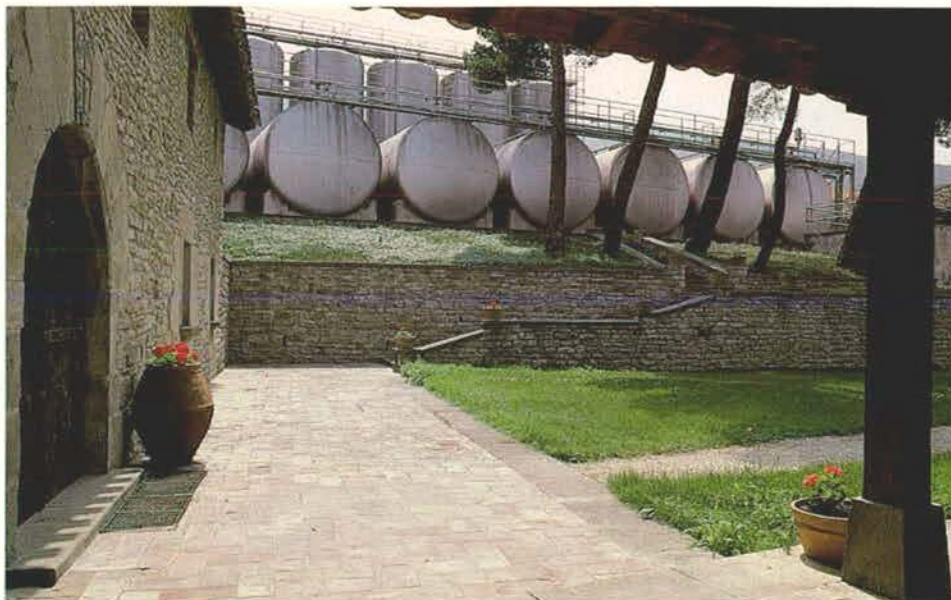
#### MICROCLIMATES AND SUB-ZONES

Five sub-zones have been created, reflecting the variety of microclimates within *Navarra*: the *Baja Montaña* in the Pyrenean foothills of the north-east, *Valdizarbe* in the central north, south of *Pamplona*, *Tierra Estella* to the north west, *Ribera Alta*, west of the charming little town of *Olite* with its fairytale castle, and *Ribera Baja* to the south, straddling the river *Ebro*.

The cool, rainy *Baja Montaña* is particularly suited to producing rosé wines and fresh young red wines, the somewhat drier *Valdizarbe* is good for aged reds, and *Tierra Estella* for reds, whites and rosés. All three have chalky soils, and between them yield about two-fifths of the total Navarran production.

*Ribera Alta* is the largest producing area, yielding aged reds, firm white wines, and deeper rosés. The warm, dry *Ribera Baja* is good for full-bodied red wines, with plenty of alcohol and colour, and a little sweet white wine from the *Moscatel* grape variety. These two regions have sandy, stoney and limestone soils.

The dominant grape variety is the red *Garnacha*, the *grenache* of the *Rhône Valley*, and four-fifths of it is used to make *rosado* or *rosé* wines. However the local *Consejo* has stopped further plantings of *Garnacha* in favour of the better quality *Tempranillo*, particularly in the cooler ar-



*In volume terms Navarra is one of the smaller Spanish denominations, but in terms of wine development it is one the most important.*

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*What makes Navarra so interesting and exciting as a wine region is the work being done on the development and evolution of both existing and new wines.*

eas. Two other red varieties, *Mazuelo* and *Graciano*, are also permitted. The preferred white grape is *Viura*, but the *Malvasia* of *Rioja* and *Moscatel de Grano Menudo* (for sweet wines) are also allowed.

A Land Reform Act, introduced in 1932, created a mass of a new landowners in *Navarra*, and for many of them grapes were the main cash crop. Few had vinification skills or the money to buy equipment to make wine, so co-operatives sprang up the length and breadth of *Navarra*. Today about 92 percent of all wine is made in those co-operatives, though it is a handful of very

*Rosés from Ribera Baja should be drunk in the first year, whilst those from Valdizarbe could keep for two.*

good private bodegas that wave the export flag.

#### ROSES... AND MORE

Ask a wine drinker what Navarran wine he has enjoyed and the answer will probably be a *rosé*. This is the style of wine *Navarra* is known for. They range from bone dry wines, very similar to

those from *Provence* across the *Pyrenees*, but quite different from the lightly sweet *rosés* of France's *Loire Valley*, to softer, fruitier wines. They have a characteristic savoury touch at the finish, with mouth-watering freshness.

The white wines are dry, crisp, fresh and very clean. Those made only from *Viura* can display a slight waxiness. Some bodegas make a softer, fruitier style, and occasionally a Navarran white will have an earthiness from too much skin contact.

The Navarran reds come in two styles: the fresh, young and gulpable unaged wines, and the deeper, richer and



# SEÑORIO DE SARRIA

NAVARRA - ESPAÑA



## THE PINNACLE OF QUALITY IN NAVARRA

Information and enquiries to:

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*It will take time and money to develop the radical ideas coming from EVENA. Such evolution will come through the private bodegas.*

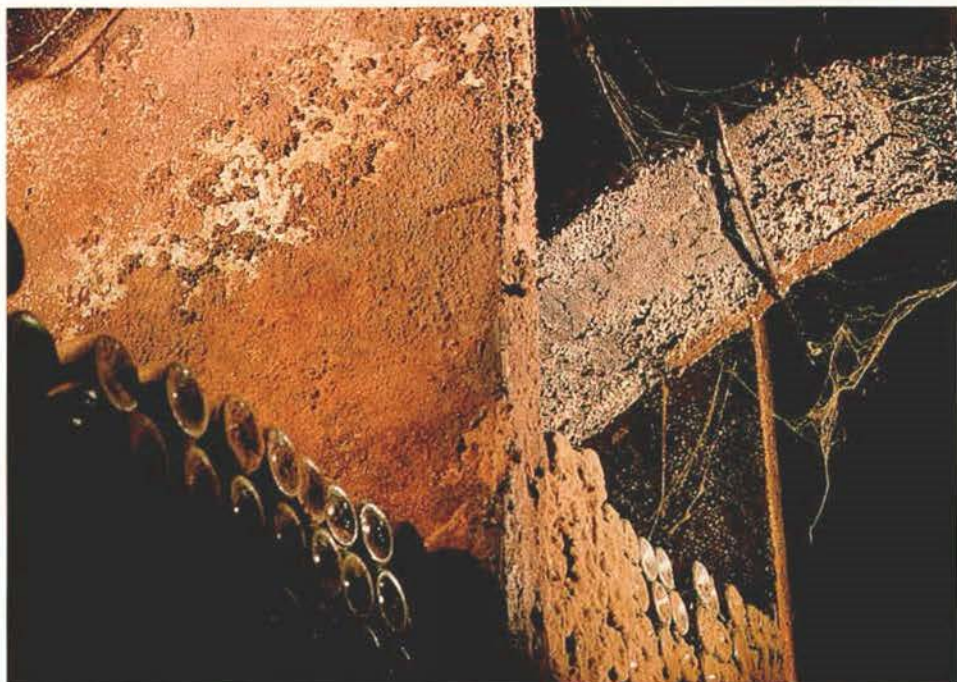
firmer aged (*crianza*) reds, *Crianza*, *Reserva* and *Gran Reserva*. The latter show more diversity in style, based on the different grape proportions used, and the type and length of time spent in oak. A wine dominated by *Tempranillo* will be drier, deeper and with a distinct savoury tang at the finish. A *Garnacha* dominated wine will show more sweetness, an almost port-like character that is not unobjectionable.

The finest *Gran Reservas* show a different style, bigger, drier, firmer, with a spicy, peppery character from the oak, and a smooth suppleness. They will keep for many years, and have some affinity with a decent, mature claret.

#### **EVOLUTION AND NEW WINES**

What makes *Navarra* so interesting and exciting as a wine region is the work being done on the development and evolution of both existing and new wines. Traditionally in Spain the general philosophy has been to concentrate on getting the very best out of existing, native varieties, as exemplified by the *Rioja*. The development of imported, noble varieties in *Penedès* has been widely discussed, but even there many traditionalists still stick with the varieties of their forefathers.

In *Navarra* there exists the possibility of sweeping changes in wine styles, and the possibility is being thoroughly explored. In 1982, with regional government part funding and support, a viticultural and winemaking research Estation was set up, now fully under the wing of the regional government. The *Estación de Viticultura y Enología de Navarra*, *EVENA*, is the most advanced station of its kind in Spain. Bases in *Olite*, it has a string of sub-stations throughout *Navarra* constantly monitoring weather patterns, soil types, viral and pest threats. It can tell the farmer what weather he can generally expect at any time of the year, what varieties are best suited to his soils, even when he should watch for certain insects that can harm his grapes.



*The Navarran reds come in two styles: the fresh, young wines, and the deeper and firmer aged reds, Crianza, Reserva and Gran Reserva.*

# Agenda

**Production area:** Its 24,000 hectares of vineyards lie in the northern border areas of *Tierra Estella*, *Valdizarbe* and *Baja Montaña*, and in *Ribera Alta* and *Ribera Baja* in the south. These last-mentioned are the most productive, with the municipalities of *Corella* and *Olite* being the most densely-planted.

**Climate:** Atlantic influence with adequate rainfall predominates in the northern region, whilst the Mediterranean influence in the two *Riberas* causes a slight shortage of water, especially in *Ribera Baja*.

**Soil:** The soil is generally calcareous in areas away from the river basins and alluvial in riverside areas, which is where most of the vineyards lie.

**Vines:** According to the 1981 census, 90% of the vines are *Garnacha Tinta*, followed by *Monastrell*, *Viura* and *Tempranillo*.

**Wines:** The northern

area produces mainly light reds and rosés which are brilliant, fresh, with nice acidity and 11-12.5° of alcohol. In *Ribera Alta*, the wine is a degree higher in alcohol and a little lower in acidity and its colour is more intense. In *Ribera Baja*, these characteristics are further accentuated and the wines are vigorous and full-bodied. However, these features are not evident in commercially labelled wines since they blend wines from all over the officially regulated area.

**Serving temperature and gastronomy:**

Wines from both the north and south should be drunk at a temperature not exceeding 15°, except for aged wines which may be drunk a couple of degrees warmer. They are a good accompaniment to stews, roast meat and game and to cured cows'- or ewes'-milk cheese.

**When to drink them:** Since the *Garnacha* variety is so predominant in this area, it is not advisable to keep these wines for longer than five years. *Rosés* from *Ribera Baja* should be drunk in the first year, whilst those from *Valdizarbe* could keep for two.

**How to get there and where to find out more:** The best route is to head for *Soria* and from there to *Agreda*. The area with most bodegas embraces *Cascante*, *Murcanta* and *Cintruénigo*. For further information about the wines of *Navarra*, contact *EVENSA* in *Olite*, Tel.: (48) 74 02 91.



However it is the research being done on 35 "foreign" grape varieties that is of most significance. *EVENA* has experimental vineyards evaluating other native Spanish varieties like the *Parellada* and *Xarel-lo* of *Penedés*, the *Airen* of *La Mancha* and the *Verdejo* of *Rueda*, and imported varieties including the *Cabernet Sauvignon*, *Chardonnay*, *Pinot Noir*, *Gamay*, *Syrah*, *Chenin Blanc* and *Gewurztraminer* of France, the *Sangiovese* of Tuscany, and *Barbera* of Piedmont, the *Rhine Riesling* of Germany, and the *Thompson Seedless* and *Ruby Cabernet* of California. They are vinified and evolved in a brand new, hi-tech winery in an old alcohol factory on the outskirts of *Olite*.

## PRESENT AND FUTURE

Already the results are starting to come through. *Cabernet Sauvignon*, probably the world's most widely travelled grape, has proved itself and has been authorised, and is being used in some red wines. *Merlot* has tentative approval, the beautiful private *finca* (farm) of *Señorio de Sarriá* has quite extensive plantings of *Chardonnay* and *Pinot Noir*, and elsewhere *Gamay* and *Ugni Blanc* are being commercially grown.

*In Navarra there exists the possibility of sweeping changes in wine styles, and the possibility is being thoroughly explored.*

*In 1982, a viticultural and winemaking research Station was set up.*

The world will not be seeing a Navarran *Chardonnay* or Navarran *Cabernet* just yet. Rather these varieties new to the province will be used to give added complexity and character to existing wines, and they will be all the better for it.

*EVENA* is also helping to fine tune the winemaking practices in the region

through research into various fermentation techniques, which wines like oak, which oak is best for the different varieties, and for how long, and a host of other possible improvements. They have even demonstrated, to me at least, that a wine with a great future would be a *Tempranillo* aged in small French oak *barricas*. They have made a beautiful demonstration wine from this variety.

It will take time and money to develop the radical ideas coming from *EVENA*. Such evolution will come, is already coming, through the private bodegas. If *Navarra* has one handicap, it is that there are so few of them. Cooperatives, by their very nature, are more conservative when it comes to change, and in *Navarra* they dominate the wine industry.

The private producers too are largely responsible for the bottled wines seen outside the province, and again it is a pity there are so few of them. However anyone who has tasted a wine from *Chivite*, *Señorio de Sarriá*, *Ochoa*, *Vinícola Navarra*, *Irache* or the semi-governmental *Agramont* has tasted a wine that simultaneously displays *Navarra's* past, present and future.

# Leader in Navarra wines



*Julian Chivite*  
The oldest bodegas of Navarra



**T**he restaurant *Zalacáin*, in *Madrid*, has prepared a luxury Christmas menu for us. *Jesús Oyarbide*, the owner-manager wished the menu to be exquisite, but not over-sophisticated, lending itself to preparation in the home without any great difficulty. The philosophy behind the creation of these dishes has been—in the words of their creator *Oyarbide*— that of «following the Spanish tradition for these celebrations while at the same time bringing in ideas of nouvelle cuisine». So, we have modern variations on the classical theme of Christmas.

«I wanted to bake the traditional sea bream, but mellow the flavour with a sauce containing a little garlic, not very much because any flavouring in excess can ruin a dish. I have included a soup, something traditionally served on

# ZALACAIN

## *Top of the table at Christmas*

Text and photos: *Sobremesa*

*The top staff at Zalacáin, the restaurant which has prepared a special Christmas menu for us. From left to right, Antonio Ruiz, barman; José Jiménez Blas, maître d'hôtel; Benjamín Urdiain, head chef; Jesús Oyarbide, owner and manager; Liberto Campillo, first maître d'hôtel; Agustín González Díez, first chef; and Custodio L. Zamorra, sommelier.*

*Christmas Eve. Shellfish or chicken soup is customary, but as I wanted to make something very light and mild, I have suggested a partridge consome.»*

For years, *Zalacáin* has been the most highly rated Spanish restaurant and it holds a number of prizes,

among which are two of the National Gastronomy Awards: one for «The Restaurant with the Best Cuisine», and the other, for «Best Sommelier» awarded to wine steward Custodio L. Zamorra. And in the kitchen, we find chef Benjamín

*Urdiain*, named «Best Chef 1981».

The history of *Zalacáin* has its origins far from *Madrid*, in the *Puerto de Echegarate*, where, in 1958, *Jesús Oyarbide* and *Consuelo Apalategui* opened a restaurant which was called the *Príncipe de Viana* and which soon became *de rigueur* for businessmen visiting the Basque Country or France. That locale served as a testing ground where *Jesús* and *Consuelo* could begin to put into practice some of the ideas they had about the catering business.

In 1962 they opened a new *Príncipe de Viana* restaurant in *Madrid*, and later in 1973 these initial efforts finally culminated in the opening of the restaurant *Zalacáin*. The name evokes the protagonist of the novel *Zalacáin, el Aventurero*



*(Zalacáin, the Adventurer)* written by Pío Baroja, a Basque writer, belonging to the Spanish Generation of '98 whose centenary was celebrated that same year. *Zalacáin* was the result of various small miracles: a locale obtained under excellent economic conditions, the help of the banker Alfonso Escámez, who gave very generous support to the couple... but, more than that, what counted was their tenacity, the clarity of their objectives and the efforts of a team of professionals.

In the words of Oyarbide —*«Zalacáin is the result of teamwork in which all the parts fit together perfectly. There are more than sixty of us working here, backed up by a computer. Our work is the result of a first class team, full of enthusiasm. Without this collective effort it would not have been possible.»*



***For years, Zalacáin has been the most highly rated Spanish restaurant and it holds a number of prizes.***

The fame of *Zalacáin* spread shortly after it opened its doors. Towards the end of the seventies, its prestige among businessmen, famous personalities and gourmets was assured. In a little less than six years, it had taken its place among the best res-

taurants in the country. Jesús Oyarbide believes that the most important thing is prestige and that *«prestige is won by doing things well, with great care and honesty»*.

From the very beginning, Oyarbide was quite clear that he wanted a cuisine which

allowed room for experiment, and today the gastronomic experts argue over whether *Zalacáin* is the most classical cuisines. Oyarbide believes —though belying his affirmation with a sceptical smile— that it is *«the most nouvelle of the classical»*, because although he incorporates new variations, his starting point has always been a traditional theme. He adds that *«it possesses a sense of classical balance, but flirts with very light sauces, and a method adjusted to the new style»*.

The perfection of a dish is in the finish. When Freddy Girardet, the famous Swiss chef visited Spain, Oyarbide was able to surprise him with two dishes of a more than Spartan, positively Iberian simplicity: *lubina* (a saltwater fish) with chard *mousse*, and baby lamb chops with Spanish truffles.

«Of course, the lamb was from Aranda», adds Jesús as he tells this story (Aranda, in the province of Burgos, being one of the best lamb producing zones in Spain).

And of course, the lamb that he buys is expensive. «Obviously, when you charge high prices it is because you are offering the highest quality. It is the question of ethics again.» With that concept of «a job well done», it is not easy to find an unoccupied table in Zalacain these days, particularly if one should decide to go on the spur of the moment at two o'clock in the afternoon. «Unfortunately for the client, though luckily for me, it someone should think of coming to eat here at about that time, I must warn them that they are very unlikely to find a table.» Jesús Oyarbide recommends to all his clients that they reserve their table beforehand: «It doesn't matter at all if they call to cancel the table half-and-hour before the meal.»



**Zalacain, the most nouvelle of the classical cuisines.**

Both foreign and Spanish wines fill the Zalacain wine cellar, containing some 22,000 bottles. However, as the owner explains, he prefers to serve Spanish wines, «it's very simple: you can eat extremely well, have an apéritif and a Spanish reserve wine, liqueur and coffee and still pay a reasonable price for it.»

Until a few years ago, credit cards were not admitted in Zalacain. Recently, Jesús Oyarbide has felt obliged to accept the most important ones. Before this, however, any client—even if he were foreign—counting on his credit card and arriving without cash, would be told not to worry, just to settle up on his return home. And there was never a single bill left unpaid! No doubt Oyarbide would say that this is just further proof that all his clients leave well satisfied...

When the owner of Zalacain is speaking, he exudes an air of serenity—a serenity which seems to have imbued the whole project from the very start. «When we opened this restaurant, in spite of the fact that we already had considerable experience, I knew that it was going to take a long time. I was determined to create a great restaurant, and I was confident that I was going to succeed! I

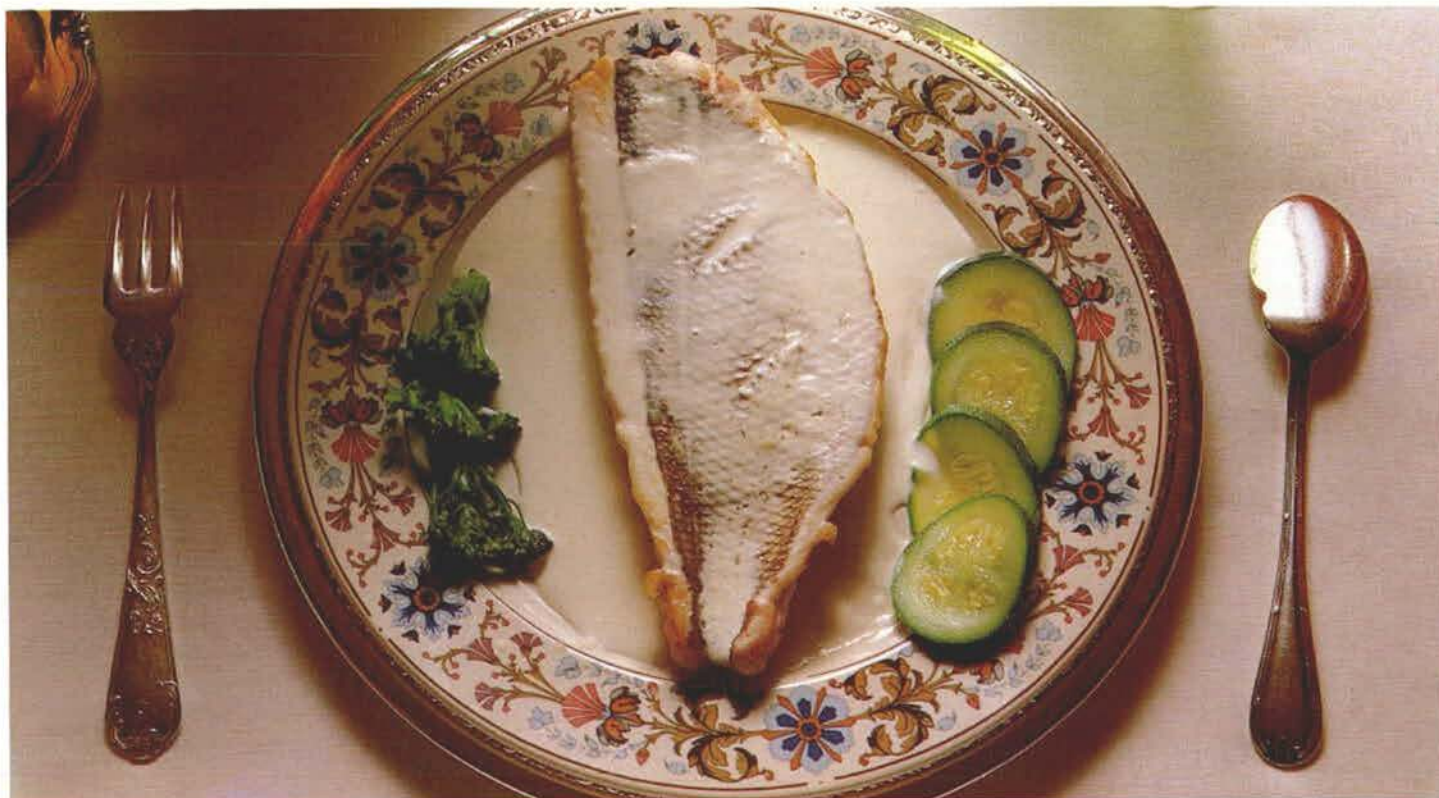
wouldn't say the best in Spain, but certainly a very good one.

To the people working with me, I used to say, «This is going to take a long time. Remember that before we get where we want to be, ten years will have gone by», and that is how it has been. Today we are beginning to reach the goals we set for ourselves». But then perfection is only something which exists in man's imagination, an ideal to be sought after all one's life. Gone are the days when Oyarbide scarcely experimented at all or when he used the cuisine of Escoffier as his guide, in a country which looked askance at any innovations. Today, supported by the skills of his head chef, Benjamin Urdiain—an irreplaceable asset—he has succeeded in imposing his own style: serene, innovative and classical... a style which is internationally renowned. Not for nothing does the Michelin guide give him the third star listing!

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*The traditional sea bream, but with a garlic and Rueda wine sauce.*

### *Partridge consomme*

*For six people:*

3 partridges;  
1/2 kg of veal;  
3 litres water;  
50 g chick peas;  
50 g spinach;  
3 leeks;  
2 carrots;  
1 small onion;  
3 egg yolks;  
1 dessertspoon *Fino* sherry;  
Salt and pepper.

For ease of preparation, this consomme is made in a pressure cooker.

Place the partridges, veal, chick peas, 1 leek, 1 carrot, the onion, 6 black peppercorns and 2 1/2 l of water in the pressure cooker. Close the cooker and let cook for 1 hour 15 minutes.

Pass the stock through a strainer.

In a separate pan place the sliced green parts of the other 2 leeks, 1 carrot and the 3 egg yolks with a little water, and add the partridge stock.

Put the pan to boil over a low heat for 1 hour and pass through a very fine strainer.

Cook the spinach for 2 minutes. Wash in cold water and drain well. Put it into a cloth and extract the green juice of



the spinach. Add just a few drops of this liquid to the consomme so that it turns a light emerald green. Adjust the seasoning and, before serving, add the spoonful of sherry.

### *Sea bream with garlic and white wine sauce*

*For six people:*

3 sea bream of approx. 1 kg each;  
50 g garlic;  
1/2 dl *Rueda* wine;  
1/2 dl sea bream stock;  
3 dl olive oil;

1/4 l cream;  
salt and white pepper.

First remove the scales from the sea bream and clean well, then remove the heads and bones. Split the fish in half lengthwise and put aside.

Make 1 1/2 dl of stock with the heads and bones. Heat the cloves of unpeeled garlic in 1/2 dl of oil. Add the white wine and the bream stock and cook to reduce by one half. Add the cream and boil for 7 minutes. Put through a blender and then pass through a very fine strainer. Adjust the season-

ing and put aside. Season the bream halves, place on a tray with 2 1/2 dl of oil and bake in the oven for 12 minutes or until done. Put the bream on a serving dish and cover them with the creamy garlic sauce. The dish can be decorated with broccoli and slices of courgette.

### *Fruit compote for Christmas Eve*

*For six people:*

3 pears;  
3 apples;  
12 dried figs;  
12 dried apricots;  
18 green grapes;  
300 g sugar;  
1/2 l water;  
1/2 l red wine.

Halve the pears, place in a pan and cook in the red wine and 100 g of sugar.

Halve the apples and place in another pan with the figs and the dried apricots, add the water and the rest of the sugar, cook and just before they are all done, add the grapes to heat them up a little. Divide the various fruits out onto individual plates with the syrup and serve. This compote can be eaten warm or cold.

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# The Adoration of the Magi

**T**he Adoration of the Magi is one of the few religious paintings by *Velázquez*. Painted when he was only 18 years old, it reveals his early technical mastery. The overall sobriety and simplicity of this painting give us a glimpse of what would one day distinguish *Velázquez* from his contemporaries.

The adoration of the three Kings was certainly not a new theme; it had often been depicted by *Velázquez's* predecessors. However, their treatment was usually characterized by a heightened dramatism reflecting wealth and religious glory through ornate detail. In *Velázquez's* treatment we witness the desacralization of this theme: here, the young painter, influenced by the progressive ideas of his day, shuns idealized and stylized conceptions, moving away from the established canons of beauty and towards a realistic representation of everyday life. We can imagine the expression of



Photo: © Prado Museum. Madrid

surprise on the faces of those who offered up their prayers under the gaze of this Holy Family whose once divine attributes are now replaced by the realistic hands and faces of ordinary people (some art historians claim that *Velázquez* used his own family as models). Even the halos around the Virgin Mary's and Christ Child's heads—the ultimate sign of their divinity—are

toned down and diffused.

Within the canvas, the royal capes and the Christ Child's robes are like still lifes in themselves with their coarse texture and plastic treatment. *Velázquez*, who later chose children as one of his favorite subjects, gives the Christ Child a Spanish likeness but, at the same time, a static otherworldliness. The formal precision and the long elegant brush strokes

evident in this portrayal of the Christ Child reveal the real subject matter of *Velázquez's* paintings: painting itself.

## Short Biography

*Diego Rodríguez de Silva y Velázquez* was born in Seville in 1599 and died in Madrid in 1660. He began to paint following the realism of the Seville school. At 18 he won an award which took him to Madrid where he would later become the personal friend and portraitist of King Phillip IV. In addition to being Court painter, he was chief supervisor of the Royal living quarters, overseeing the King's accommodations both at home and away. *Velázquez's* pictorial style rapidly developed into his own personal conception of painting as reflected in long brush strokes, lack of volume, flat figures, and a new treatment of space. The French impressionists' later discovery of these values would lead the way to the modern concept of painting.

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# Everything on the rocks.

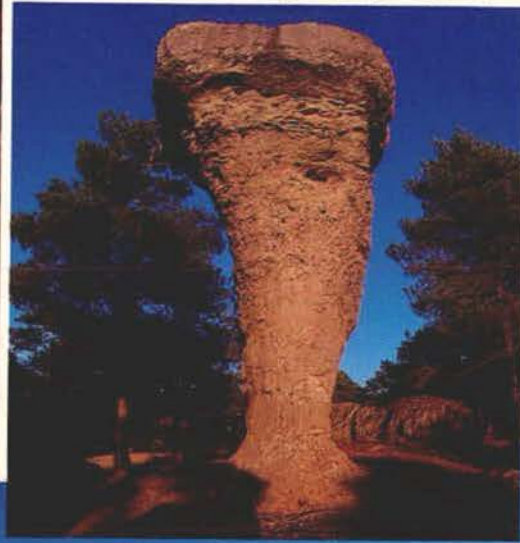
The civilization has long gone, but the stones, remain (Mérida).



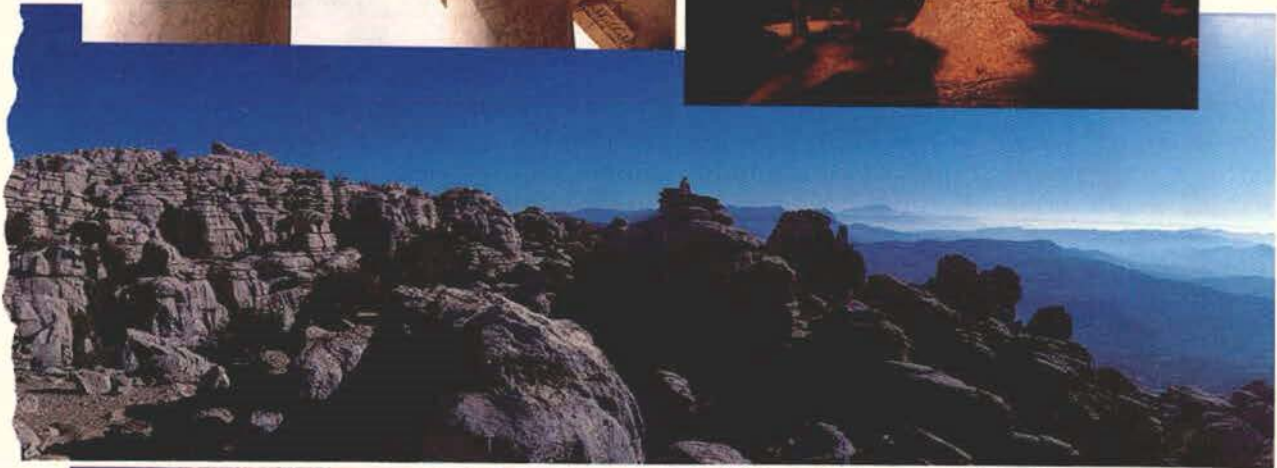
The superb natural gallery of Spain's imposing and unique countryside (Barcelona).



The silent witness still stands (Cuenca).



An enigma in stone. Does our art mirror nature, or is it the other way round? (Antequera).



In Spain, beauty isn't restricted simply to beaches and forests (Madrid).



Our history is carved in stone, throughout the land. Medieval castles, Moorish palaces and Roman temples stand in silent witness to the passing of time. And the spirit of ages is preserved in their stone walls.

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And in the arid beauty of our sun baked landscape you can see the hand of nature at work, shaping an imposing and unique countryside.

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Two thousand years of history are preserved in these stones (Segovia).



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