

S P A I N

GOURMETOUR

FOOD, WINE & TRAVEL QUARTERLY MAGAZINE



A THOUSAND AND ONE GRAINS OF RICE

RIBERA DEL DUERO WINES. ANOTHER LITTLE GEM?
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P*aella*, perhaps the best known of all Spanish dishes, has come a long way from its humble, rural beginnings. Today it is served in restaurants around the world although it might not always be at its best. In some cases, what restaurants call *paella* actually has little to do with the real thing. Perhaps at the root of this confusion is the fact that there is not just one right way to make *paella*. The description of *paella* found in the *Larousse Gastronomique* suggests that it is a dish for lovers of rich foods and can only be prepared in relatively large quantities. Anyone who has enjoyed a delicious *paella* for two in one of Valencia's speciality restaurants knows there is nothing further from the truth. Spanish rice cuisine, however, does not stop at *paella*. Regional rice recipes abound, especially in Levante along Spain's eastern coast, where for centuries rice fields have been producing some of the best-tasting rice in the world.

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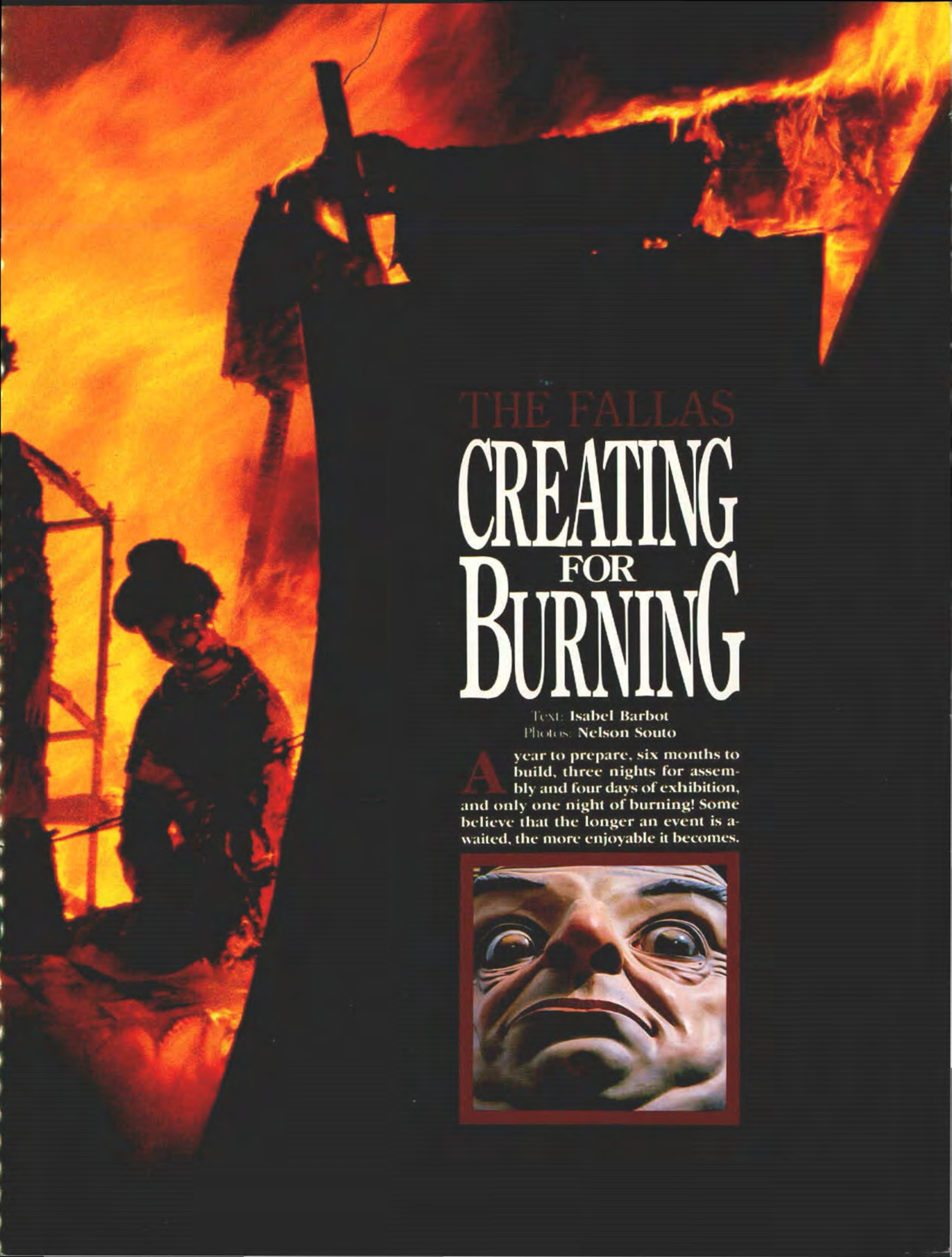
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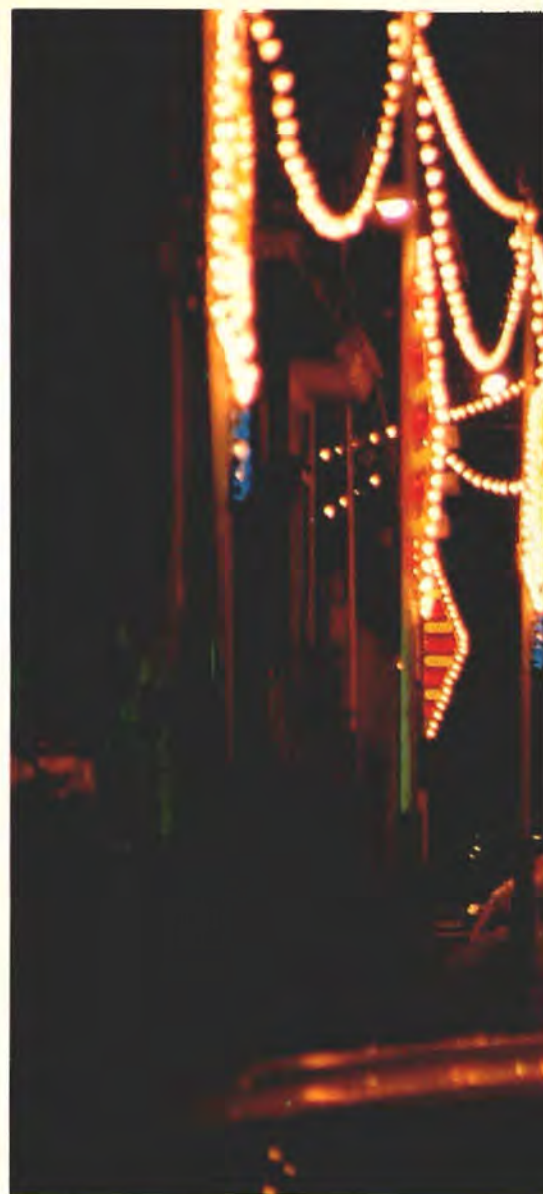


THE FALLAS CREATING FOR BURNING

Text: Isabel Barbot
Photos: Nelson Souto

A year to prepare, six months to build, three nights for assembly and four days of exhibition, and only one night of burning! Some believe that the longer an event is awaited, the more enjoyable it becomes.





The ninot, a papier-mâché effigy, appeared in the 17th century when the neighbours, wanting to have some fun, recruited the help of a carpenter.

Over 244 million Pesetas are dedicated to the construction of 362 fallas in Valencia, not counting the smaller ones and the 335 set up in other towns. They all went up in smoke on March 19th of last year. Astronomical sums, delirious multiplying of the fallas which enter the final competition in categories defined according to the budget allowed: special section, cost 4,000,000 Ptas.; first section, cost 2,600,000 Ptas.; second section, cost, 1,500,000 Ptas.; third section, cost 750,000 Ptas. 200 artists, 600 painters and carpenters, 1,500 workers and apprentices participate in artistic creation, positively knowing that it will all end up in cinders.

Why take the trouble? The most logical answer will be tradition. It all started in a very simple and spontaneous manner. Bonfires appeared as children's games, they

The ninot, which at the start of the century was rather lifelike, with cloth suits, real hair and wax face, has become a cartoon.

were the amusement of carpenters apprentices who would burn useless leftovers from the workshop on the eve of the day of their patron saint, Saint Joseph, which the guild celebrates since 1497. This date coincided with the beginning of the spring which, in Valencia, from ancient times had been celebrated lighting fires and burning dummies to keel away the fears and dem-

ons of the wintertime. This custom of lighting fires at the start of spring was not exclusive of the carpenters, but their guild was the most important. The work falla comes from the word for torch in the Valencian-Mozarabic lexicon of the 13th cent.

The ninot, a papier-mâché effigy, appeared in the 17th century when the neighbours, wanting to have some fun, recruited the help of a carpenter and a painter and planted a falla during the night, thinking of who they were going to ridicule, that is, who the ninot would symbolize. In general, it was someone from the neighborhood, while the local poet was in charge of explaining clearly the private affairs of the neighbours. Criticism and satire in the falla thus played a moralizing and cleansing role.



The falla commissions order the fallas. The artists whose projects have been chosen set to work. A year will elapse until the process is completed.

THE POLITICAL FALLA. Local mocking easily took a step forward into national and government scoffing. Public criticism has always been a very easy way to let the people air their grievances, and since then *fallas* have thrived on the cost of living, the public administration, and customs and manners, both national and international. The *ninot* survived through the changes, but a large central figure became popular, and the *ninot*, increasingly smaller, was relegated to a place almost exclusively at the base of the construction. Still, it was all set up in one night.

In 1927, the Mayor of Valencia decided to promote the *Fallas* so as to make this Valencian custom known throughout Spain and America. He granted the first awards to the *fallas*, the first trains brought hundreds of visitors, and the ships started coming in from America.

The complex work of constructing a falla requires sculpting, modeling, engineering, carpentry, painting, humorist and cartoonist abilities.

Fallas, stimulated by rivalry between quarters, increased in size and became monumental, and not always satirical in flavor. The powerful bourgeoisie of the 19th cent., who had not been able to eliminate the *fallas* with prohibitions and duties, gained control of the situation and was able to take commercial advantage of its tourist impact.

Being larger and more expensive, the people had to get together to raise the necessary funds, besides permits and duties from the municipal authorities. Bureaucracy marched on: commissions, presidents, secretaries, treasurers, accountants, speakers, generally all neighbours and residents of the quarter, and they discovered the most adequate manner of increasing revenues: selling shares, lottery and raffles, balls and personal contributions. During February and March home collections traditionally appear to this end.

The City of the *Falla* Artist, the museum and a school to teach this difficult art were established.

The *falla* commissions order the *fallas*. The artists whose projects have been chosen set to work. A year will elapse until the process is completed. First, drawings are made, then a first model of clay or plaster.



The only way the ninot can escape the flames is to be chosen ninot indulted of the year. Only one among so many shall be rescued.

The plaster mold is filled with a specially prepared cardboard paste. This mold may be used again the following year.

Once the cardboard is dry, it will be pried away from the mold, retouched, sanded down, polished, whitened, painted and set in its place.

PARDONED FIGURES. So much work and love and sweat for a fistful of ashes! We know that life is the beginning of death, but how can a creator live with the knowledge that this work is so short lived? Just four days...

The *ninot*, which at the start of the century was rather like-life, with cloth suits, real hair and wax face, has become a cartoon, completely made out of sculpted cardboard. The only way he can escape the flames is to be chosen *ninot indulted* of the year. Only one among so many shall be rescued by the commissions and exhibited to the public in the Museum. These should be more, they so deserve it!

Created by man, the fallas are a means of conveying our collective madness; they are a true reflexion of ourselves.

The complex work of constructing a *falla* requires the sculpting, modeling, engineering, carpentry, painting, humorist and cartoonist abilities of all involved. Even though the professionals are sometimes accused of acting only for the prizes, the possibility of oscar for these men should be taken into account, since the commissions are the real recipients of the prizes. The commissions are the real owners of the *fallas* and not the artists (who only remain owners of the drawings, the models and the molds). The persons at the drawing board, the crane handlers, the musicians, they all deserve awards.

It is understood that today, the artists of the *fallas* do not work for posterity. Is it a case of artistic greed? To create, burn and recreate just for the fun of it? To admire and then throw it out? What has the feast become? Nothing more than the perfect symbol of modern consumer society. Could it be one of the rare instances in the history of art where artistic creation is moved solely for the love of creation? To construct and destroy for the pleasure of doing it again, more beautiful, larger, beyond the possible and the imaginable. To take up the challenge, to surmount the possibilities and to make dreams come true...

Created by man, the *fallas* are a means of conveying our collective madness; they are a true reflection of ourselves.



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ANOTHER LITTLE GEM?

Text: **María-José Sevilla Taylor**
Photos: **P. Sancho-Mata**

Silence and serenity, blue skies, light straw colours. This was the ambiance as I travelled from New into Old Castile and approached the outskirts of the historic town of Valladolid.

Madrid was approximately two hours away. The day ahead appeared full of promise and wonderful wines as I turned right onto the road to Soria. Just a few hours to understand what the Ribera del Duero had to offer to the palate and the writing pen.

The Ribera del Duero D.O., one of Spain's 30 *Denominaciones de Origen*, lies on both sides of the Duero River between Tudela del Duero and El Burgo de Osma. A total of 15,000 ha. occupies the terraces between the river bank which have been given over to irrigated cultivation and the high barren lands planted with cereals, where the vines would freeze.

Nothing is terribly dramatic about this land, but it favours the right microclimatic conditions needed for the vine if it is to produce wines of race and strong character. High altitudes, the right type of soil and sharp differences in temperature between night and day lead to more complexity and higher acidity, the key to extra life. The results are some of the best wines of the Iberian Peninsula.

VEGA SICILIA

Driving along the small road leading to *Vega Sicilia* in Valbuena del Duero, I

looked at the old building and noticed something missing. The sign *Bodegas Vega Sicilia* so obvious in black and white had been removed and an extension in the same style as the rest of the building had been added. I wondered whether the new impulses and dramatic changes taking place in the Spanish wine industry were touching one of the most traditional bodegas of all.

Mariano García, responsible for the production of this unique wine soon cleared any doubts I had. *More space had to be created to house further ageing casks and the new bottling plant. The bodega is expanding*, he said. After a brief visit to the plant and cellar, I moved to the vineyard, a sight which has long captured the heart of the wine lover.

The estate grape varieties are planted on the slopes opposite the bodega, away from the river. Production is broadly Tinto Fino (55%), Cabernet Sauvignon (30%) and small quantities of Merlot, Malbec and the white Albillo. The Tinto Fino which is the Tempranillo de La Rioja and the Albillo are local grapes, whilst the French varieties are imported directly from Montpellier.

I have often wondered whether the planting of French and other foreign noble varieties in many of the main Spanish wine regions was the right thing to do, but I must confess that in the case of the wines of *Vega Sicilia* I have no doubts.

The marriage of local grapes and the foreign grapes, well adapted to the regional conditions has achieved a level of perfection which is strictly maintained. Thus



The Denomination of Origin-Ribera del Duero is in fashion in Spain today. In its short existence, it has become one of the most promising on the Spanish winemaking scene. This wine-producing area lies just within the northernmost limit for vine-growing, but the vines of the Ribera del Duero have challenged Nature and won, giving forth their very best a fine quality wine.



***SILENCE AND SERENITY.** Nothing is terribly dramatic about this land, but it favours the right microclimatic conditions needed for the vine.*

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the style of the wines of *Vega Sicilia* remain forever truly Spanish.

The health of the vine and the vintage will determine the proportion of grapes vinified together each year. Again I discovered that there are no secrets about wine making in the village of Valbuena — just common sense, the right husbandry for the area and correct decisions taken at the right time from fermentation to maturation to bottling.

I tasted the wines *al fresco* with the wonderful early morning sun warming the face. Beginning with the '84 and '85 straight from the vats; although in its infancy, the '85 vintage is already showing great character, whereas the '84, from a difficult November vintage (usually the harvest in the Ribera takes place at the end of September or first two weeks of



The sign Bodegas Vega Sicilia so obvious in black and white has been removed.

October), appears to be more uncertain in terms of lifespan.

There were no doubts about the wonderful '73. Rich, full of life and fruit, and in perfect balance. With the prolonged after-taste and overwhelming character still fresh in my mind, I regard this wine as one of the most unrivalled companions to a perfect meal.

At present, *Vega Sicilia's* output represents 220,000 bottles a year, and once the new installations are finished and in working order production will be increased to 30,000 bottles a year. In an average season, 60 % of the overall production will be made into the young styles of the House — the *Valbuena* 3rd and 5th year. The rest, from high quality coupages, will be vinified and matured to become the bodega's supreme achievement — The *Vega Sicilia Unico*.

The *Valbuena* are wines of excellent quality, full of colour and fruit, with an almost sweet characteristic given them by the Tinto Fino and the backbone of the Cabernet. The *Unico* is selected only from vintages and coupages of quality and not necessarily produced every year, as for ex-

Vega-Sicilia: A Legendary Wine

The setting is a small corner of the earth hidden by a veil of fog along the banks of Spain's Duero river. The wine is *Vega-Sicilia*, one of the most famous and highly valued in all the world. The *Vega-Sicilia* wine cellars are the heart of a 1,000-hectare farm, which also produces beets, sheep, and honey. The history of this wine begins in 1864 when farm owner Eloy Lecande decided to branch out from stockbreeding and cereal production and make room for winemaking. Fields were ploughed up, vines were planted, and a winery was built. Since Bordeaux wines were popular in France at that time, he imported vine varieties like Cabernet Sauvignon, Malbec, Merlot, etc. from the French region of Gironde. The next chapter in the story of *Vega-Sicilia* wines occurs years later when the phylloxera plague hit Spain's northern Rioja wine-producing region. In 1905, winemaker Chomín Garramiola came down from the north to *Vega-Sicilia* in search of new vine sources. Before ten years had passed, he had bought the farm and come up with a wine that received nothing but acclaim from the discriminating palates of participants in Royal hunts — a wine whose personality was part Bordeaux and part Rioja, a wine which was simply superb!

Since that time the winery has passed through the hands



of different owners but the quality of the wine remains the same. This is in part due to the efforts of Jesús Anadón, who carried on the work of Chomín Garramiola after his death. In the early 1960's only 25,000 bottles a year were coming out of the *Vega-Sicilia* wine cellars. By 1980 this number had increased to 125,000 and today

it is around 220,000. Present improvement and expansion of the installations — always within the framework of their basically artisanal nature — should raise the production ceiling to 300,000 bottles by the year 2000.

The *Vega-Sicilia* winery has never spent a penny on advertising and this policy is not like-

ly to change any time soon. The owners feel that advertising could even be counterproductive and would most likely not sit well with long-standing customers — customers which, by the way, number less than three thousand in all the world. And the years go by before those on the waiting list finally get to join this exclusive club. At the beginning of each year, regular customers receive a description and price list of the vintages for sale that year. No one is allowed to order more than his traditional quota, which in some cases has been the same for as long as 80 years and has been handed down from father to son just like a treasured family heirloom. Twenty thousand cases of *Vega-Sicilia* wine are sent abroad every year and end up in exclusive restaurants or the homes of millionaires. Wine collectors and investors will pay fabulous sums at auctions just to own a *Vega-Sicilia* wine while a look of ecstasy will come across the wine connoisseur's face whenever the conversation turns to those unforgettable vintages — 1948, 1959, 1964, and 1970. Vintage after vintage, the high standard of quality is always maintained, and if ever the smallest fault is found, the entire harvest is instead converted to make other alcoholic products. In this way, the legend of *Vega-Sicilia* wine lives on.

ample in 1971 and 1978 vintages. The wine is matured for many years with great care to ensure the longevity they are going to enjoy. Two years in *tinajas* (wooden vats of 20,000 litre capacity) following fermentation; two years in 600 litre *bocoyes* (casks); 4-6 years in new and old 225-litre casks, and many more in bottle is the pedigree of this wine of the little village of Valbuena.

PEÑAFIEL: CASTLE AND WINE

Time was pressing and friends at the *Cooperativa Bodega Ribera Duero* in Peñafiel were awaiting my arrival.

The castle at Peñafiel soon appeared

ahead. It was then that I remembered that during my last visit to the area some three years ago, the new bodega was still under construction. Considerable amounts of money and many hours of work have been invested in the local cooperative by its 230 members. The new building, dug into the rock directly beneath the old castle is impressive and well equipped with modern vinification systems, storage tanks and substantial wood maturation capacity. The Cooperative in Peñafiel markets red and *Rosé* wines under the *Denominación de Origen* label, and light white wines without *Denominación*. Wines for everyday enjoyment as well as other quality wines *sin y con crianza* (with and without wood mat-

uration) are made primarily from the Tinto Fino grape variety. The *Gran Reserva* '64 is the top range but perhaps slightly past its prime.

The Cooperative movement is of great importance to the overall Spanish output and no doubt the *Bodega Ribera Duero* proves that it makes sense.

Taking to the road once again, I headed north towards the small village of Pesquera del Duero just a few kilometres from Peñafiel. This was my first visit to the *Bodega Alejandro Fernández* and although I had been tasting its wines fairly recently in London, the successes of the wines from Pesquera had awakened my appetite and my interest.

As I parked in the small courtyard, Alejandro's daughter Lucía welcomed me. We then joined a small group of enthusiastic (to say the least) wine *aficionados* from the United States, where the wines of Pesquera are enjoying an excellent and noisy reception by the Press and the wine trade. This man from Old Castilla had a vision which he cleverly turned into reality. From agricultural machinery distribution (one of his previous activities) to the success of the purplish-colour red has been just a matter of a decade.

Today, Sr. Fernández is trying to increase the size of his vineyards as the 60 ha. belonging to the estate are insufficient to supply the market requirements. 300.000 bottles per year is the bodega's present production. If you have a few bottles, do hold on to them as they may well represent an interesting investment in a few years time.

The very personal styles of the wines of Alejandro Fernández are the result of a very slow process of fermentation which takes place in contact with the solids for an unusually long period.

The bodega has invested heavily in new wood which is badly needed to placate the young '86 Pesquera. Since my return I have tasted the '81 and '82, their evolution in bottle is certainly very positive and will keep improving.

Spain needs to have other reputable names in the foreign markets, from areas other than Navarra, Rioja and Penedés. As far as I am concerned, the Ribera del Duero is a strong candidate.

GOOD WINES FOR A GOOD LUNCH

By two o'clock, feeling slightly weary and decidedly hungry, I stopped for lunch. Lucía Fernández recommended the restaurant *Casa Mauro* in Peñafiel, where I would be able to taste some of the local specialities. Luckily I managed to find a parking space in the Plaza Mayor and walked directly to *Casa Mauro*, a typical family concern which specialises in roast baby lamb. How can one resist the wonderful aromas coming from the large oven which is the house's *piece de resistance*. I enjoyed a simple but healthy meal of roast lamb and a side salad of delicious tomatoes and onions. To quench the thirst and ease my long suffering tongue (too much of the youthful Pesqueras methinks), I chose a rosé wine from the *Cooperativa* — perfect!

In his book *The Wines of Spain*, Jan Read writes about the Queen of Spain and *Vega Sicilia*. Let me tell you a short anecdote about something that happened a

few years ago when, as a wine student of the Wine and Spirit Education Trust (I was researching Spanish grape varieties), I had the chance to visit the newly formed bodega of the *Hermanos Pérez Pascuas* in Pedrosa. Sense of direction is not one of my strong points and I eventually arrived at the bodega at 4.30 pm (my appointment was for 4), having somehow lost my way from Aranda. One of the brothers came to meet me and as I apologised to him for my delay he asked me whether I would mind waiting half an hour as the buyer from the Spanish Royal Household, the *Casa Real*, was tasting the wines. "Not at all", I replied as I sat in the car to listen to the local radio news. In May 1987 I asked the same brother if the Royal envoy was still tasting the wines, the answer was a definitive yes!!

The bodega *de los Hermanos Pérez Pascuas* was established in 1980. Their own vineyard planted with 90 % Tinto del País (one more name for the Tempranillo) and 10 % between Garnacha Tinta, Albillo (the white variety of the river), Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Viura and Malbec, allows this small but well organised and clear concern to produce 200-220.000 litres per year.

Crianza wines, reds of the year and rosé wines are the present styles of the house. The extreme youth retained by the

TINTO PESQUERA

RIBERA DEL DUERO

WINES

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wines throughout the maturation is probably the most distinguished characteristic of the *Crianzas*. It is due to the high acidity of the grapes planted at high altitudes in the right soils and the effect of the favourable microclimatology of Pedrosa.

The *Estación de Enología y Viticultura* (the Viticultural and Oenological Station) of the *Denominación de Origen* Ribera del Duero, has recently been opened in Pedrosa. My very positive feelings toward this Denomination were further confirmed as we toured the new installations and talked to the young oenologist in charge. I tasted two excellent examples of *rosé* wines which are best described as a cross between the style of *rosé* from the Loire and Tavel. That cannot be bad, I thought, the British market is so partial to anything with a French accent! Outside, the experimental vineyard was in full swing. Baby vines were growing in the red clay, many foreign grape varieties were trying to compete with the local ones. There and then I promised to return in three years time.

ELEGANT WINES

Leaving Pedrosa I travelled to the *Bodegas Peñalba López*. The *Torremilanos* estate of *Peñalba López* is situated on the outskirts of Aranda de Duero. This estate comprises a small but well-equipped bodega surrounded by a beautiful vineyard. Lovely memories of harvest time, picking and eating the irresistible deep coloured Tinto Fino grape, came flooding back to me. A few years ago I had spent several hours in that same vineyard during the most important time in the wine producing calendar.

The red and *rosé* wines of *Torremilanos* produced from the Tinto del País and a very small percentage of the white Albillo and Garnacha were quite different to any of the wines previously tasted that day, although they retain the almost sweet characteristic given by the the main grape variety. I would describe the wines of *Torremilanos* as the most elegant of the Ribera del Duero production. The *rosé*, also known in the area as *claretas* have an excellent colour and structure, perfect to accompany fish in rich sauces and light meats.

The bodega also markets a red of the current year, very attractive and full of fruit, which indicates the high standards which can be achieved by the perfect combination of quality raw materials and the expertise of fully qualified oenologists. Back in 1980/81, Ruiz Hernández, then in charge of the Viticultural and Oenological Station in Haro, was responsible for the style and personality of the first-borne *Torremilanos* wines. Now, in 1987, although no longer the responsibility of Sr.

Agenda

Wine-Producing area: Extending over 15,000 hectares and following the course of the Duero river, the vineyards take in part of the provinces of Valladolid on the west, Burgos in the center, Soria on the east, and Segovia on the south.

Climate: The region is characterized by an Atlantic-Continental climate with relatively short summers with hot days

and cool nights. The river microclimate is characterized by persistent fog. The average annual rainfall is 450 mm.

Soil: The soil bordering the river is alluvial and is preferred for irrigated crops. The higher land areas have a calcareous soil while the lower areas have a somewhat ferrous, clayey soil; intermediate zones have a combination of these.

Vines: The predominant grape variety is Tinto del país (Tinto fino or Tempranillo), followed far behind by red Garnacha and white Albillo.

Wine characteristics: The area falling within the province of Valladolid chiefly produces fuller-bodied, more tannic, and deeper-colored red wines having an alcoholic content of 12 to 13.5 degrees. The mid-lying area of Burgos produces

rosé and red wines which are less tannic and have a lower alcohol content. More acidic *rosé* and red wines with a minimal alcoholic content are common to the zone within Soria. The wines are classified into four grades: *vino del año* (first-year), *crianza*, *reserva*, and *gran reserva*. In general, these wines are similar to Rioja wines.

Serving suggestions: First-year red wines should be served slightly chilled at or below 16 degrees centigrade. Crianza reds can be served slightly warmer but never to exceed 18 degrees centigrade.



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Rosés are best when chilled to 7 to 12 degrees. First-year and crianza red wines are a perfect complement to roasts, game and grilled meats. Rosés should be served with fowl, pasta, and pickled foods.

Shelf life: Crianza red wines conserve their properties for fifteen years. The less tannic first-year reds should be drunk within the first five years, and the rosés, within the first two.

How to get there: The best way to get to Peñafiel from Madrid is to take the Segovia-Cuellar road. The best route to Aranda is to take the Madrid-Burgos highway. The largest and most complete wine exposition and sale is found at the Tudanca Area Motel, just a few kilometres south of Aranda on the highway to Madrid.

Hernández, the operation is still conducted and overseen by a Riojan hand.

The 1981 *Crianza* reds from the bodega and the '79 and '76 are wines of youth and, although slightly lighter in colour than the typical reds of the Ribera, they are full of matured fruit and have a lengthy and complex aftertaste.

Driving back to Madrid, weary but encouraged by the day's findings, I came to

the conclusion that I had to return to visit the rest of the bodegas of the region which today's public enemy number one, time, had denied me.

The *rosé* and red wines of the Ribera del Duero are not only appreciated nationally but now have an international reputation. One well-justified and in my view one which will remain so for many years to come.



Torremilanos

In 1903, a few kilometres from Aranda de Duero, in the heart of the Ribera, Don Calixto Seija Ruiz Zorrilla constructed the bodega of Torremilanos surrounded by vineyards and leafy woods. The present owners, the Peñalba López family, have completely reconstructed the bodega and adapted it to present day technology. In collaboration with one of the most renowned oenologists of Spain, Manuel Ruiz Hernández, they are getting highly positive results in the production of new wines in this region: more fruity wines, thanks to early harvests and careful control of temperatures of fermentation; storing in barrels of new oak during much shorter periods than the traditional; keeping longer in bottle so that the wine develops its bouquet.

To guarantee the quality of the wine, Torremilanos use only their own grape. Vineyards of 200 hectares in total with a density of 3.000 vines per hectare, producing only 7.000 kg of grape/hectare, scant yield to achieve, in compensation, excellent wines.

At the end of September, during the harvest, grapes selected by our oenologist arrive at the bodega. They are first put into automatic hoppers that separate the grapes from their stalk and stem. Then fermentation occurs in temperature controlled tanks in order to preserve the fruit.

After fermentation, the new wines are emptied into lined concrete vats. As the wines cool, a second fermentation (malolactic) takes place in which malic acid, which has a harsh taste, is transformed into lactic acid, which tastes softer and smoother. Then they are transferred to small French or American oak casks. Here

the wines rest for 12, 18 or 24 months to mature. Two or three times a year they are transferred to clean barrels, and samples are taken to the laboratory for analysis and tastings.

Finally, our oenologist has the wines bottled. Fine red wines need to age in the cool darkness of the cellars for several more years to develop their character, complexity and maturity. Only time can give harmony to the large range of flavours of a great wine.

The annual production is 1.000.000 litres; 2.000.000 litres is stocked in barrels and bottles to age to achieve our smooth RESERVA and RESERVA ESPECIAL wines. These wines are put on the market only when they are at their best to be enjoyed.

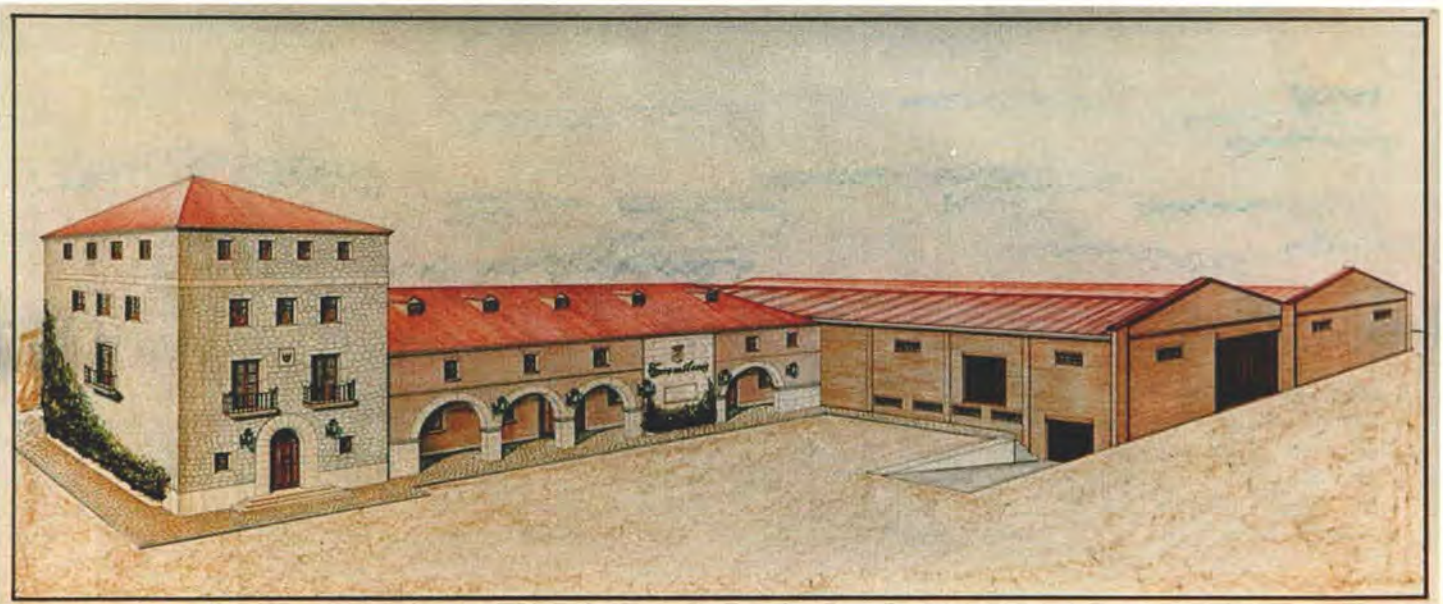
THE WINES OF TORREMILANOS

The soil, the climate and the grape determine in great part the quality of the wines: Finally, man, the oenologist with his knowledge and experience creates, from the best natural resources, an excellent product.

Torremilanos 1983 is a young wine, without aging, deep purple, with a fruity aroma and a very fresh taste.

Torremilanos 1981 has been aged in oak casks. The colour changes only slightly owing to the great stability of TINTO FINO. But the characteristic aroma of the oak gives a smooth note to the bouquet and taste of the wine.

A few barrels in exceptional vintage years, are selected to produce the RESERVA 1979 and RESERVA ESPECIAL 1976 which Torremilanos prides itself in offering.





VINO DE LA RIBERA DEL DUERO



FINCA
Torremilanos

Bodegas Peñalba López
Aranda de Duero
Burgos - España

RESERVA

Reserva 1976
VINO FINO DE LA RIBERA DEL DUERO
BODEGAS PEÑALBA LÓPEZ
Tinto

Reserva 1976
VINO FINO DE LA RIBERA DEL DUERO
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It is no easy task to choose among the excitement of Spring's lush budding colors, the serenity golden browns, or the profound white silence of Winter's snow.





of Autumn's shades of



THE RONCAL VALLEY

THE LAND OF EVERYONE

Text: **Gonzalo Sol**
Photos: **Pablo Neustadt**



This beautiful valley in the Spanish Pyrenees was for centuries lost to the world and so poor that its people used to say, *We're so poor we haven't got any wine*. Today, this prosperous timber-producing valley enjoys better times, without having given up its rich cultural heritage nor natural beauty. The Roncal valley is one of the few remaining places where the traveller can experience the harmony of man and nature untouched by time.

The British travel writer Richard Ford once said that the best time to visit Navarre was in the summer since the springs were rainy and the winters were cold, especially in the mountains. This is not quite the case, however, in the Roncal valley: given its particular geographic location, it clearly has a continental climate with very cold winters which blanket the valley in snow and extremely hot summers which can parch even the highest grasslands —those same lands which in autumn and spring seem to be eternally green. It is certainly no easy task to choose among the excitement of Spring's lush budding colors, the serenity of Autumn's shades of golden browns splashed across the wooded mountainsides, or the profound white silence of Winter's snow. A point in Summer's favor, aside from the fact that this is the ideal season for fishing enthusiasts, is that the visitor will have the chance to taste the variety of Roncal cheeses freshly made by artisans at this time. Whatever the season, though, the future traveller to the Roncal valley will probably find the way of life of its people even more intriguing than the beautiful countryside.



Whatever the season, the future traveller to the Roncal valley will probably find the way of life of its people even more intriguing than the beautiful countryside.

The social manifestations of this way of life —the tradition of cheesemaking among them— are certainly unique since there are probably few other places in the world that have a social structure similar to the one set up by the millenary ordinances of the Roncal valley.

Not all Roncalians, however, are fully aware of the uniqueness, of their social institutions. Instead, they seem prouder of the fact that it was they who defeated and killed the Moorish king Abderraman I (they say it was a Roncalian maiden who killed him) or of the fact that this was the birthplace of Pedro Navarro (1460-1528), one of the more interesting figures of the Renaissance who left his homeland as a shepherd to become a traveller with Genoan merchants, an experienced seaman, and finally a military engineer famous throughout Europe for his skill with explosives.



The mayor of the town of Roncal and president of the Valley General Council opens up a worn, leather-bound book and reads: *The commonwealth of the seven towns which make up the Roncal valley—Uztárróz, Isaba, Urzainqui, Roncal, Garde, Vidángoz, and Burguí— determines that every resident is entitled to*

use at no charge any of the pastures to graze any kind of local livestock or to freely use any firewood, timber, or other natural resources found on the communal lands falling within the jurisdiction of the seven towns. In addition, every resident has the right to plough up and sow any of the communal fields or mountain slopes subject to the limitations and regulations set forth herein. It is further determined that once the crops on private farms have been harvested, the fields will then be open for use by all valley residents with no one being allowed to fence them off since

they are subject to communal grazing rights. Said commonwealth, whose origin dates back to time immemorial, has always been respected and upheld by the courts as can be seen in different rulings, principally the one handed down by the Supreme Court on March 1, 1862. With these words, the mayor carefully closes the book

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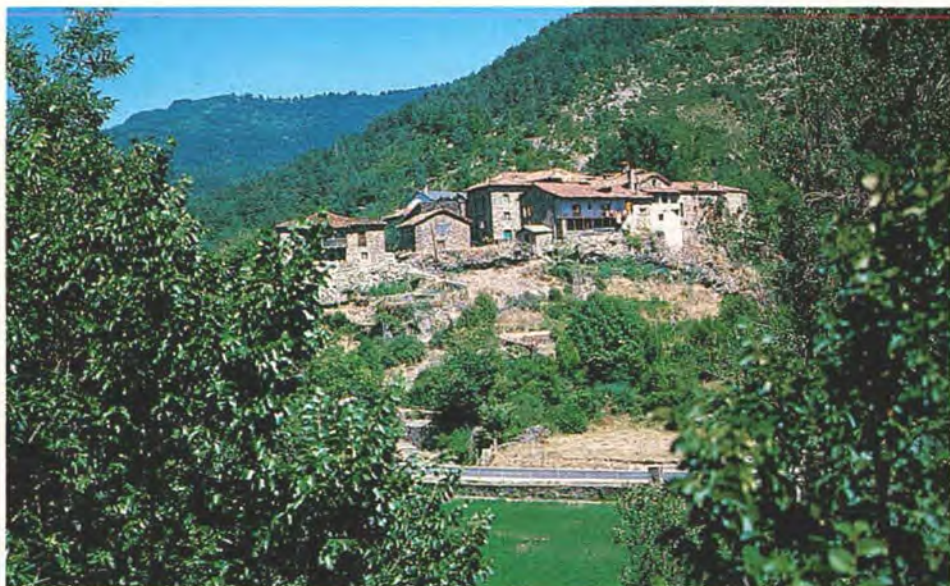
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and looks up to answer a question about community property. *You'd find the other articles interesting, too. It's practically impossible to improve these regulations; our grandfathers and great grandfathers have worked out the rough spots over the years. The last change was made in 1957. I'm sure you'd find all of our files quite interesting.* We're sitting in the Valley Meeting House in the town of Roncal where the council meets in special session whenever the need arises. Its regular scheduled meetings are held in Isaba every July 14th and in Urzainqui every August 24th. Amidst a large presidential table, lateral benches, glass showcases displaying each of the town's traditional dress, paintings, and banners, the mayor goes on speaking: *We hold the public auction of wood in this room, according to the age-old convention... Wood is the life of this valley, you know. It's our principal source of income, ... and of our troubles with royalty ever since Spain needed wood for her ships and tall trees for the masts... I'll show you a beautiful document,* he gets it out of a cabinet and carefully holds it out, *At the beginning of the sixteenth century we were given the -honor- of choosing the best tree from our forests to be used for the mast for the captain ship of the royal fleet. Of course, this was a way to wheedle it out of us since they still hadn't paid us for other trees they'd previously bought. These disputes with the Crown would sometimes go on for a hundred years or so. We have historical documents dating as far back as Carlos II of Navarre (1332-1387)...*

PROUD OF THEIR INDEPENDENCE

The people of the Roncal valley have always been proud of their independence and of their communal system, which they call «solar corporation or university». Centuries back, when by popular vote they chose to become part of the Spanish central state, they set the condition that their nobility always be recognized and respected. This centuries-old agreement is recorded in the Navarre Law Code: *We shall honor you as King and you, in turn, shall swear to defend our liberties and rights... All Roncalian men are, without exception, noblemen of greater or lesser rank and are entitled to use as their own the valley coat of arms and to directly deal with the King.* In addition, they won the right to graze their herds in wintertime on the royal lands between the Ebro and Aragón rivers known as the Bârdenas Reales.

For a people locked in between mountains and under heavy snows, the river



For centuries, the Roncalians have sought to protect their unique heritage from the influence of newcomers.

served as an escape valve, taking them on to new adventures and open horizons. From way up in the valley practically at the source of the Ezca river, rafters would ride the flowing crystalline waters down to the town of Tortosa. Every March when creeks and river would brim over with melted mountain snows, loggers would guide huge articulated rafts called *almadias* down the river to take the wood out to the plains or on to the sea where it would be turned over to buyers.

Drying foods as a means of preserving them is a common practice in the valley, although less so today than in the past. It grew to be more of a ritual than a simply practical measure. On long winter days, the heat given off by the perennial fire glowing in the fireplace is a perfect way to dry foods. Young green beans and other vegetables, *rovellones* and other mushrooms are strung together and hung up to dry by the fireplace to be later eaten during those months when cabbages are all to be found in the snow-covered gardens. *The more it freezes, the better the cabbages*, an old timer explains as he carefully tends his handsome vegetable garden on the outskirts of Isaba. *The Navarran mushrooms are excellent, but most of them end up in France or Catalonia where, besides bringing in a higher price, they're better appreciated.* The best-tasting mushrooms found growing in this valley are the *zizari* or *cantarella*, the *tricoloma terreum* or *negrilla*, the *matacandelas*, and the *rovellon* or *esnegorris*. There are many more—a good number with culinary possibilities—but Roncalians, unlike the French, the Catalonians, or even the Guipuzcoans, aren't really mushroom-lovers. Perhaps this is because in the forest where mushrooms grow there lives a tall human-like monster who is quicker than a deer; he's the feared Lord of the Forest, the legendary Baso Jaun!

Baso Jaun, however, has not been able to scare these people out of their fondness for hunting game nor from hanging camouflaged nets in the pine and beech trees along the edge of the glen to trap the sea-blue ringdove, a specimen as important in Iberian cosmogony as in Navarran cuisine. It is hard to say which of the different valleys was the first to come up with the various recipes used to prepare this bird come October every year: it is still a matter of disagreement, just as the recipes for cooking the woodcock are. Hunting wild boar goes way back in Navarran history as can be seen in the hunting scenes sculpted in Navarran Romanesque churches. Years ago, bears were also hunted for food, but this is fortunately no longer the case as they are slowly dying out. Bears wouldn't usually attack the flocks but whenever they did, the people



A Cheese on the Move

Text: **Enric Canut.** Photos: **Pablo Neustadt**

The Pyrenees mountains, with peaks reaching up as high as three thousand meters, form an impressive massif stretching from the Bay of Biscay off the Atlantic ocean to the Costa Brava on the Mediterranean sea. Even though this imposing mountain range acts as a natural border between France and Spain, the peoples on each side have, for centuries, shared many things in common, some of which survive to this day. Cultural anthropologists use the term *mountain culture* to refer to this set of similar cultural characteristics determined by factors implicit in a mountain environment. This is not to say, however, that there are no differences. The rugged terrain, physical isolation, and the events of history have all helped to leave a special mark on each of the individual communities.

In the westernmost zone coinciding with the Basque and Navarran Autonomous Communities (historically known as the Basque Country or *Euskal Herria*), we find open valleys with moderate slopes and a climate strongly influenced by the nearness of the Atlantic ocean. Short, gently rolling rivers, shaded over by the leafy greens of beech, oak, and pine trees, flow through meadows and pastures. In the spring, high up where the rivers sprout the winter snows melt into a multitude of

brooks and streams which excitedly find their way to lower ground, bringing water and life to the open pastures where semi-wild horses, cows, and sheep leisurely graze until the first snows fall again. Winter pushes them on in their annual exodus to grazing grounds on the flat, peaceful plains resting at the foothills of the Pyrenees.

A VERY SPECIAL VALLEY

The Roncal valley, crossed from north to south by the Esca river, is one of these Navarran valleys. It is home to seven towns, which centuries ago joined together to form a political unit to communally govern the valley, its mountains and pasture lands. The ruling Valley Council not only regulated the use of the summer alpine pastures but also set the dates for going up and coming down from these pastures (July and September, respectively) and for the beginning and end of the seasonal migration to other grazing grounds. Thanks to a privilege the Roncalians were granted way back in the early Middle Ages, they could graze their sheep seven months of the year from October 15 to May 15 in the royal lands in southern Navarre known as *Bárdenas Reales*.

Life for the Roncalian, or better yet, for the Roncalian shepherd was a continual coming and going with long stretches of

THE RONCAL VALLEY

time away from home, family, and friends. A shepherd would spend eight months of the year—whether it be down below in the Bardenas in the winter or high up in the mountains in the summer—living alone, only accompanied by his sheep and the occasional contact with other shepherds. It was a hard life, which people immersed in an ancient, timeless culture were willing to accept; it was a way of life which modern times have pushed aside to be displayed in museum showcases. But the seasonal migration of more than 100,000 sheep must have been a spectacular sight... thousands of sheep making their way over hill and mountain, led on by shepherds and shepherd boys across imaginary highways amidst baaing and barking, shattering the quiet stillness of the countryside.

A CHEESE AS GOOD AS MONEY

Records dating as far back as the thirteenth century reveal the importance of the valley's large and small livestock industry. The economy of the Roncal valley, like that of other Pyrenean valleys, was based on self-sufficiency and the exportation of the limited surplus generated by forestal and pastoral activities: timber, firewood, wool, meat, cheese, draught horses and lambs. The sale of cheese was a good way for shepherds to supplement their salary or to round off the income from the sale of sheep. Along with pork, cheese was the principal source of protein in the rural diet and so it was always a good bartering item. In the winter months in the Bardenas, shepherds would trade it for wine, cloth, oil, etc. to take back home every spring.

Roncal cheese—one of the most prized and expensive on the Spanish market—has the flavor of a mountain culture while at the same time it is very much its own. It is made from raw sheep's milk and is moderately to fully cured with the minimum time being three months. Cheese-making goes on from December to July when the ewes lamb. In the past, the lambing season started before Christmas, a season when suckling lamb would bring in an especially good price. Cheese would then be made during the subsequent, short milking period. Another group of lambs was born in March in time to be sold for Easter before shepherds started the approximately week-long trip back home. Every evening along the way, they would milk the ewes and make the cheese before

dinnertime in order to move out early the next day with the cheeses already salted and bound up in molds. Once they were back in the valley, the milking season would last all through spring and sometimes well into summer to the end of July when man and animal climbed up to higher pastures where the choicest and tastiest grasses could be found. Everyone agreed that the cheeses made here were the most delicious. When the Valley Council authorized the ascent to the *puertos*, the highest mountain passes bordering with France, the sheep were no longer milked. They were allowed to roam freely under the watchful eye of the shepherd, who lived in stone shelters built into the nooks and crannies of the mountainside.



This was man and animals' only vacation from such a hard, nomadic life. Here in these alpine pastures shepherds could leisurely enjoy the outdoors, the sun, and the conversation with fellow shepherds from France and Aragón. Meanwhile, cows, horses, and sheep wandered about, chewing the cud and following their hormonal impulses. Below in the valley, the pantries in each of the houses eagerly awaited the return of the cheeses taken up to mature in the fresh, humid mountain air—cheeses which were safe from the fateful hot, dry wind which could blow in from the south and spoil them beyond repair.

THE SECRET OF A GOOD CHEESE

The process for making Roncal cheese is similar to that used in making Basque cheeses like Idiazábal and Urbasa, and other mountain cheeses like those produced in Serrat in the Catalanian Pyrenees and in the neighboring valleys of Ansó and Hecho in Huesca. The cheese is made from warm fresh milk still at the sheep's body temperature (35 to 37° C). The milk comes from *Rasa* sheep, a variety which,

although not very large, holds up well in extreme weather conditions. *Rasa* sheep produce a high quality milk rich in fat, but the amount of milk they produce is relatively small. Because they essentially graze in the wild, their milk has a wonderful smell and flavor. Once the milk has been obtained, an animal curdling agent is then added and the milk is left to curdle for at least an hour, thus allowing time to do its work. The goal is a compact curd which has not formed too rapidly. Once the curd has formed, it is then cut up into tiny bits until it has a mush-like consistency. The next step is to drain off the whey and to this end, the curd is sometimes slightly reheated. The curd is then shaped by hand as more whey continues to be released. It is then placed into a flexible, beechwood rectangular mold called a *xiera*, which has two halves which fold together to form an interior cylinder whose diameter can be adjusted according to the size of the cheese being made (generally 1.5 kilograms and up). Next, the cheese is punctured with wooden needles and mechanically compacted so as to extract the last drops of whey trapped in the interior. This helps to produce a firm, compact, eyeless cheese. The smooth, air-tight, brownish-black rind is formed by placing the cheese on a wooden board which has been warmed up over a fire and pouring hot water over the cheese. The last step is to rub the top and bottom of the cheese with salt over a period of a couple days while it remains in the *xiera*. And then, it is up to time and nature to decide if each step has been done just right.

This is the way Roncal cheese has been artisanally made for centuries. Today, however, it is getting harder and harder to find shepherds who still make cheese in this way, and so, the supply of artisanally-made Roncal cheese is limited. In response to the gradual dying out of the pastoral system, a cheese factory was set up in 1974 in the town of Roncal with the support of the Navarran regional authorities. In 1981 the first Denomination of Origin for Spanish cheese was created and awarded to Roncal cheese. The continued artisanal production and the recent industrial production, regulated by the Denomination of Origin Regulatory Board, are the keys to the future of Roncal cheese. This hardy cheese—rich in fat and slightly piquant—whose unique personality your taste buds never forget is one of the most prized gastronomic treasures among the rich variety of Navarran products.



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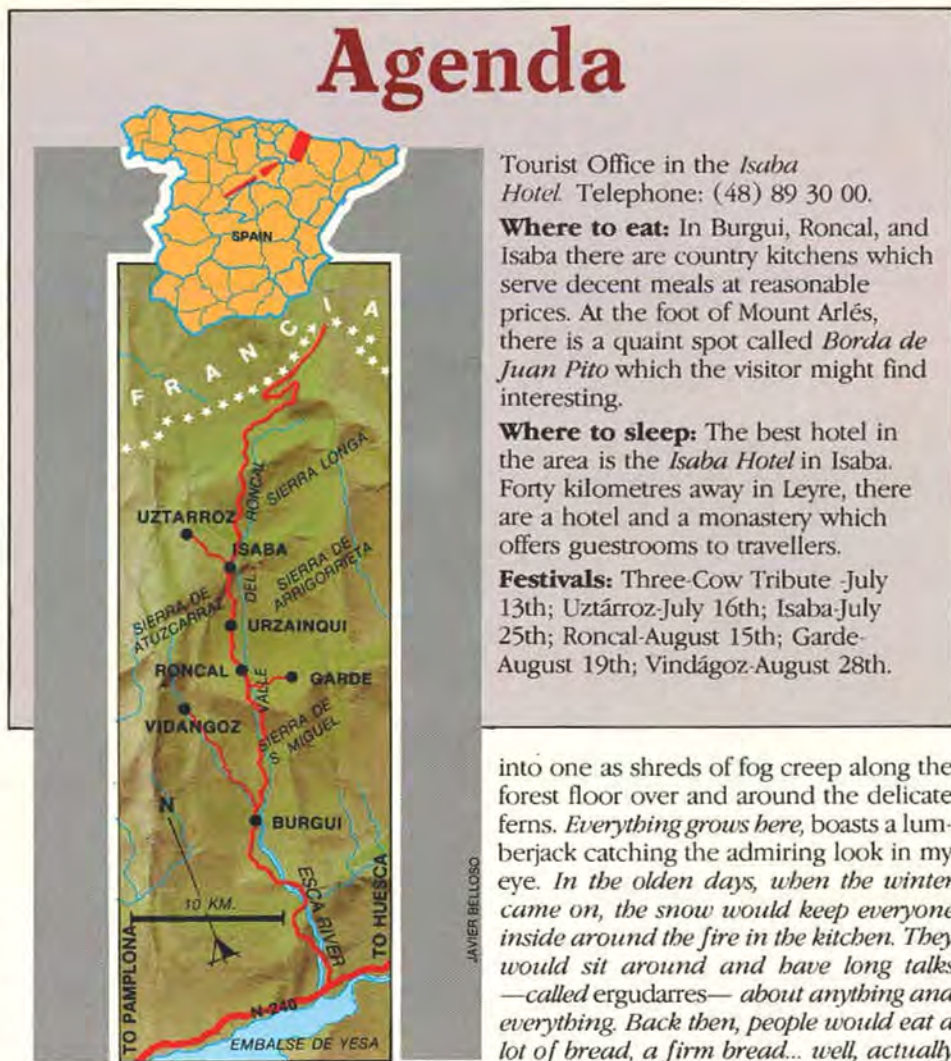
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would say, *That one came over from France*; when the attack occurred across the border, the French would likewise say, *That one came over from Spain!*

WE HAVEN'T GOT ANY WINE

The people of the Roncal valley are proud of their long history; it is said that this was the land where Túbal introduced his Iberian language, what is today the Basque language. For centuries, the Roncalians have sought to protect their unique heritage from the influence of newcomers. Lawyer Juan Cruz Aranguren, whose doctoral dissertation was on the history of the valley commonwealth, gives an example: *Outsiders had to have a yellow band bordering their traditional cape to distinguish them from natives, whose capes were bound in red. Don't think for a minute that the standard of living in the valley was always what it is today. It's physical isolation and harsh climate meant many hardships. Over the centuries, in document after document, the argument to show how poor they were and thus avoid paying taxes was always the same: This valley is so poor that we haven't got any wine. Quite poetic, isn't it? Well, they weren't exactly taxes —noblemen don't have to pay taxes to anyone— but rather shares, which were in the form of livestock not money. These people even stand out as far as their livestock is concerned: in all of Navarre they raise the coarse-wooled sheep, here they raise the lacha sheep.*

Higher up in the pastures of Belagua, sheep, horses, and handsome grey or tan-colored cows alternately dot the landscape. Here, a shepherd and artisanal cheesemaker named Marengo explains: *I have lacha sheep and some rasa... I even have a crossbred one with horns, which always seems to give the most milk. Marengo is a heavy-set and bearded thirty-year-old who chose to live amidst these green and white peaks with his wife and daughter. He has about one hundred and thirty sheep and a modest, recently constructed sheepfold where he protects his animals from the cold, milks them, and prepares his superb cheese. He is originally from Isaba, the last Spanish town before reaching the French border, and feels right at home living on the Belaguan cirque surrounded by majestic mountains. *Nowadays a lot of people claim to be ecologists, but we shepherds have always been ecologists. We've always protected our surroundings, an environment we've grown to love and respect.* Later the conversation turns to cheesemaking: *The size of the cheeses we make has always been the same —one and a half kilograms. It's an old custom. The process has been regulated for centuries; this way**



we avoid any problems and everyone gets along. We're proud of our ways and are working on setting up an artisanal cheesemakers association for the entire Roncal valley. The Commonwealth Ordinances take up the matter of cheesemaking in article 77: *In order to dispel any question as to the right to use the different cheesemaking sites, the following is set forth: the first to arrive in the morning, ready-dressed and tools at hand, will have preferential use if the livestock which are to produce the milk for the cheese are brought to the site that same afternoon. Otherwise, said right will be forfeited. No one may claim the right to use more than one site in the same day; any such claim is automatically nullified.*

Only minutes ago, the *boira* —a heavy fog— rolled in over the barren mountaintops along the border and descended upon the Belaguan cirque suddenly cutting it off from view. More than a fog, it seems like a mass of tiny, cold, wet drops capable of penetrating everything to the bone. Now it begins to move down into this part of the valley wrapping the beech, oak and walnut trees in a grey mist. The infinite shades of green of only moments ago fade

into one as shreds of fog creep along the forest floor over and around the delicate ferns. *Everything grows here*, boasts a lumberjack catching the admiring look in my eye. *In the olden days, when the winter came on, the snow would keep everyone inside around the fire in the kitchen. They would sit around and have long talks —called ergudarres— about anything and everything. Back then, people would eat a lot of bread, a firm bread... well, actually more on the hard side. Bread was such an important part of the generally poor diet that to make sure there was enough, wheat was planted even on the steepest slopes, which were almost inaccessible. They were called -sunlookers- because since they faced south, they always got plenty of sun. I think that being shut in all winter long probably lead to the conservative ways of the Roncalian family. You'd hardly ever see the women... well, in my time, yes, but my father used to tell me about how during the town festivals the women would stay inside and be content just to look out from behind the curtains.*

A FUTURE RESERVE?

The following day, the blue skies have shaken off the last bits of fog and are once again home to a multitude of birds of prey. At times, they suddenly dive down to the river and skim over the water. Some, like the lammergeier, the falcon, and the sparrow hawk, are quite large. The valley seems to be crying out for the merited status of National Park or Reserve so as to be able to better protect its extraordinary flora and fauna. The Magna Carta of Nature drawn up by the 1972 Stockholm Declara-



In these alpine pastures shepherds could leisurely enjoy the outdoors, the sun, and the conversation with fellow shepherds from France and Aragón while their sheep wandered about.

tion on environment declared protectable—the Larra highlands in the uppermost part of the valley. This should shield it from the devastation so often caused by man. Not the Roncalian man, of course; he is always careful to maintain the delicate balance of his natural surroundings. He thinks twice whenever a woodcock, a ptarmigan, a pheasant, a wild goat, or maybe even the last surviving bear comes within the range of his shotgun. One local, old fisherman laments: *Ever since the old roads were improved and everyone has a car to get up here to do a little fishing, the fishing hasn't been so good. There are still plenty of trout, of course, but there are also plenty of fishermen!*

Back in the town of Roncal at the *López Pensión* (also called *Fonda Conchita*), a crowd of fishermen still decked out in their elaborate fishing outfits pours into the guesthouse dining room. While waiting for their catch to be fried up with or without ham and brought to them, they talk of the thrill of that huge trout... the one that got away, of that great fishing hole found by accident, of that day last year when the

The seasonal migration must have been a spectacular sight... thousands of sheep making their way over hill and mountain, led on by shepherds across imaginary highways.

fish were really jumping, and on and on. And for those who don't bring in their own catch, this dining room is famous for its chicken *cbilindrón*.

The valley's seven towns gradually fade into the distance as the sky opens up with each clearing along the road down toward Yesa Reservoir in Aragón. Behind remains an enchanting valley and its unforgettable people—a valley which exists in an almost virgin state despite all, a people who have resolved man's eternal conflict over land

rights by conserving the wise, just solutions put forth by their forebearers. Seven hundred years ago, they even found a way to get along with their northern French neighbors: on October 16, 1375 the Three-Cow Tribute was instituted. It required five towns in France's Bearn valley to pay three cows a year to five towns in the Roncal valley. This age-old ritual is celebrated every July 13th at Saint Martin's Rock under the gaze of the Arlés and Anie mountain peaks with the towering pines of the Larra heights nearby. Once the Roncalians have checked over and accepted each of the three two-year-old cows having no defects nor injuries which the French have handed over, the festivities begin. Colorful tablecloths are spread out over the green fields and inviting aromas fill the air as the delicious foods provided by the Roncalians are set out. Year after year, the same traditional dishes are served at this grand country banquet: roasted suckling lamb, stews, Roncal cheeses, and fine wines. The French—to show that their tribute is paid all in good spirit—provide the brandy and, more recently, the coffee.

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A THOUSAND AND
ONE GRAINS OF

RICE

Text: Gonzalo Sol
Photos: Anna Löscher

This ancient grain which sprang up in the East and later took root in foreign lands can be called Nature's gift to man. Rice is the basic food for millions of people around the world. Its multiplicity of forms and culinary possibilities seems nothing short of a miracle.

On one occasion the god Siva created a woman whose beauty was so great that he fell in love with her and named her Retna-Dumila, -Radiant Jewel-. Captivated by her dazzling beauty, he decided to make her his wife. This, however, was easier said than done: Retna-Dumila would not agree to marry her creator and ardent suitor until he had met several conditions. One of these was that he provide her with a food that she could eat day after day without getting tired of it. Despite his supernatural powers, Siva was at a loss to find a food that would suit the fancy of this beautiful woman. Desperate, he sent one of his most trusted advisors down to earth to search for what was impossible to find in heaven. But alas, it was to no avail. His advisor, upon experiencing the beauty and charm of earthly women — who, by the way, had no need to envy the women in the realm of the gods — quickly forgot



his important mission and instead spent his days courting these beauties. Meanwhile, Siva's patience was wearing thin and, in a moment of exasperation, decided to ignore Retna-Dumila's conditions. Force would achieve what his wisdom and power could not. But once again he was to fail: his beloved died before he could carry out his wish. Overtaken with sorrow, Siva had her buried in a special tomb guarded by his princes. Forty days had gone by when a mysterious glow enveloped the tomb and an unusual plant began to grow. The heart-stricken Siva proclaimed: *The spirit of my beloved one lives on in this plant. It shall be called Padi.* And so it was. Padi (rice) has since become man's principal food.

The last line of this ancient Hindu tale is certainly true: rice has been the principal food in oriental cultures for more than forty centuries. Its cultivation has been traced as far back as 2500 B.C. An interesting fact showing the fundamental importance of rice is that in many oriental languages the word for -rice- is the same as the word for -meal-, with there being a distinction for the morning, noon, and evening meals. For centuries, the earth has given up its gift of rice to appease man's hunger. In the East, the widespread rice consumption is undoubtedly due to the lack of animal calories imposed by extreme poverty or religious beliefs in reincarnation. Rice was relatively slow in coming to the West. It first made its way into Mediterranean cultures carried in the packs of Alexander the Great's troops returning from their invasion of the Orient. This grain did not fall on fertile ground, though, until the Islamic expansion.

AL-RUZZ, ARROZ, RICE

With the Arabs, rice cultivation and its culinary applications definitively took root, spreading throughout Europe from Spain, a centerpoint of Islamic culture. (The Spanish word for rice *arroz* is derived from the Arabic word *al-ruzz*.) What had previously been a rare food — from the Greeks we find only the name *oriza* and from the Romans a single recipe for a refreshing rice drink — had become an integral part of the European diet by the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Another theory, supported by Gaubert in his book *Byzantine Spain* and by Corominas in his etymological dictionary, claims that the Byzantines who reached coastal Spain in the sixth century were responsible for popularizing the cultivation and consumption of rice. This seems unlikely, but the Byzantines did most certainly help to lay the groundwork — as did the Romans — for the later rapid acceptance of rice. The Spanish region of Levante — its climate, its lands, and its peoples — welcomed this grain as

their own. And so rice had travelled a long way, from the fields of Asia to the shores of Europe. Later, it would move on to the Americas, where by the eighteenth century it had become an established food. Today, as a result of this expansion, rice is the number two grain consumed by man.

According to an old Chinese proverb, rice grows half of the time in the ground and the other half in the hands of the farmer. How true this is for a crop that needs manual tending throughout its growing season. The familiar scene of workers bent over in the rice paddies transplanting the rice seedlings one by one can be found all over the world. Over the years, as rice was exposed to different climates and soil types, new varieties sprang up. Today, with over one thousand three hundred varieties, rice comes in all shapes and forms whether it be oblong, round, ridged, ridgeless, and so on. Each culture has its preferred type, which fits right in with its culinary tradition. Rice-producing countries like Spain generally produce a wide range of varieties in order to meet the current diversified demand. The rice varieties grown in Spain can be distinguished by the locality where they are grown — Valencia, Sueca, Calasparra, Cullera, etc. Each has its special properties which, as the experts advise us, are particularly suited to a given type of rice dish.

The nutritional value of rice (100 grams has 360 calories, 7g protein, 86g carbohydrate, & 1g fat) is only one of the reasons for its success worldwide. Rice is one of the best ways — Italian pasta is a close competitor — to experience the flavor of other foods. Combined with meats, seafood, vegetables, or simply broths, each grain of rice soaks up the flavors and carries them to our appreciative taste buds.

The years ahead look even more promising for this ancient grain. Its nutritional value, great taste, low cost, and ease of shipping and storing all go in to make for a very bright future.

Recipes

Codfish and Rice Casserole

- 400 grams rice
- 200 grams codfish
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- snipped parsley
- cut tomatoes
- olive oil

Desalt and boil codfish. Remove bones and skin, and flake into pieces. In a clay casserole dish, sauté codfish, onions, and garlic over medium heat. Add rice, parsley and tomatoes. Add hot water (double the

volume of the rice) and lightly shake casserole until water begins to boil. When a good part of the water has been absorbed, bake casserole in a medium oven for 15 minutes. It will be somewhat soupy when done. Makes 4 servings.

Rice with Mushrooms

- 1/2 kilogram rice
- 1/4 kilogram mushrooms, cleaned and soaked
- 1/4 kilogram lean pork or ribs
- 1 red pepper
- 1 tomato
- garlic (2 or 3 cloves)
- salt
- saffron
- olive oil

In a *paella* pan, sauté meat and mushrooms in oil until done. Remove and set aside. In same oil, sauté garlic and tomato. Add water (double the volume of the rice), salt, and saffron. Boil for 3 minutes before adding rice. Simmer about 20 minutes. Makes 4 servings.

Arroz a la Cortijera (Farm-Style Rice)

- 1/2 kilogram rice
- 1 onion, separated into sheaths and sautéed
- 3 baked green peppers, cut into strips
- 2 sliced fresh tomatoes
- 200 grams olive oil
- snipped parsley
- white pepper
- salt

In a large pan, sauté the rice in oil. Add water, salt, and white pepper. When the rice is half-done, mix in onion, green peppers, and tomatoes. Sprinkle parsley over rice shortly before it is done. Makes 4 servings.

Belgian Endive, Avocado, and Rice Salad

- 200 grams long-grain rice
- 12 cooked green asparagus
- 2 heads Belgian endive (blanched endive)
- 1 avocado, peeled

Salad Dressing:

- 1 cup mayonaise
- 2 dessertspoons mustard
- 4 dessertspoons catsup

In a saucepan, bring 1 litre of salted water to a boil. Add rice, stir, and cook over medium heat for 12 to 15 minutes. Test for doneness. Using a colander, quickly rinse under cold water. Drain and put in a glass bowl. Fluff to keep rice from sticking together. Cut

up asparagus, Belgian endive, and avocado. Add to rice. For the dressing, combine mayonaise, mustard, and catsup in a blender. Serve on the side. Makes 4 servings.

Rice with Squid and Mussels

- 250 grams rice
- 300 grams squid, cleaned and cut in rings
- 300 grams mussels, removed from shells
- 1 sliced onion
- 3 sliced garlic cloves
- 4 dessertspoons crushed tomato
- olive oil
- salt
- pepper

Boil rice in abundant water. When cooked *al dente*, remove from heat and drain well. Sauté onion and garlic in oil till tender. Add squid and cook till done. Stir in mussels, tomato, salt, and pepper and cook for a few more minutes. Stir in rice and serve at once.

Rice Pudding

- 200 grams rice
- 150 grams sugar
- 25 grams butter
- 1 litre milk
- 2 egg yolks
- 1 vanilla bean or stick of cinnamon grated
- lemon peel

Rinse rice and cook for 5 minutes. Drain. In a saucepan, bring milk to a boil and add rice. Add vanilla or cinnamon, and a pinch of salt. Cook over low heat for 30 minutes. Stir in sugar and then remove from heat. Mix in butter and egg yolks. Pour into a serving dish and allow to cool. If desired, decorate with candied fruits.

Apple Rice

- 350 grams rice
- 1 1/4 litres hot broth (approx.)
- 1 small Golden apple
- 50 grams butter
- 3 dessertspoons dairy cream
- grated cheese
- dry white wine
- salt
- pepper

Peel, core, and dice apple. In a pan, sauté apple over low heat for about 10 minutes, stirring often. Add rice. When rice becomes transparent, sprinkle with wine. Add a tablespoon of boiling water to cover. Slowly add hot broth as rice absorbs liquid. Cook for 18 more minutes, stirring often. Remove from heat. Mix in cream, remaining butter, and cheese until rice is well coated. Salt and pepper to taste. Cover and let stand for 1 minute before serving. Makes 4 servings.





V A L E N C I A

THE LAND OF RICE

Text and photos: **Restauradores**

Spanish cuisine is as diverse as Spain's many landscapes. Over the centuries each region has developed recipes for preparing the foods they produce. In Valencia, the magic word is rice: recipe upon recipe revolves around this grain, whose varieties are distinguished by the method of cooking.

Rice cultivation goes way back in the history of Valencia, a region along the eastern coast of Spain. The Arabs were probably the first to grow it, and by the time Christian troops under the banner of King James of Aragon conquered the region in the thirteenth century, rice was thriving in the wet low-lying areas. Unfortunately, however, so were mosquitoes, and consequently, malaria was a constant threat to the population, often taking its toll. Many people blamed these outbreaks of disease on rice cultivation while other more rational-minded souls knew that growing rice was one of the best ways to improve marsh-like terrain. Nonetheless, the former belief won out, and over the centuries royal prohibitions on the



growing of rice were a common occurrence. In the eighteenth century rice came up against one of its toughest enemies: a botanist named

Cavanilles condemned the cultivation of rice and warned against its negative effects in his monumental book *Observations on the Natural History, Geography... of the Kingdom of Valencia*. As it turned out, however, neither royal mandates nor scholarly dissertations could dissuade farmers from growing this profitable crop. They were quick to find ways to deal with fines and other punitive measures imposed upon them. It is important to mention that back then rice was principally considered a substitute for wheat: it was ground up into flour for use in making bread

or porridge. Cookbooks of the day might have included only a single recipe for rice cooked in a meat broth or one for rice pudding. Even as late as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when rice was grown in abundance in Valencia, the typical regional dish was a meat and chick-pea stew, a variation of the traditional *cocido* — delicious but with not a single grain of rice!

101 WAYS TO MAKE RICE

At first glance, it seems as if there are dozens of Valencian rice varieties and a hundred or so ways to prepare them. On taking a closer look, however, we can sort such a wide selection into three basic groups based upon the cooking method. Valencians make rice in either a stewpot, a casserole (tradition calls for one made of clay), or a large, round, shallow pan called a *paella*. In this last case, we have an example of how the name of the cooking vessel has given its name to the food prepared in it. A minor clarification, though, is in order: in Valencia the term *paella* actually refers only to the small pan while the large one used to prepare what is now internationally known as *paella* is called a *caldero*.

The first method — cooking rice in a stewpot — is similar to that followed in other parts of Spain: the rice is cooked in abundant stock along with vegetables and just the right touch of pork in any of its different forms. Because of its soup-like consistency, rice made in this way is given the generic name *caldoso* or -soupy-rice-. Soupy-rice dishes are characteristically winter meals and are traditionally only served in the home. Recently, however, they are beginning to appear on the menus of a few area restaurants.

The second way to prepare rice is in a casserole dish, either baking it in the oven until all the liquid is absorbed or cooking it in abundant liquid to produce a soupy-rice dish. Oven-baked rice dishes are the most popular and are a favorite item on restaurant menus since besides being delicious they are inexpensive. Rice cooked in a casserole with seafood calls to mind the original rice dishes prepared by sailors and fishermen at sea. As the boat bounced up and down with the waves, it was, of course, impossible to cook with the shallow *paella* pan. The situation called for something deeper: either a stewpot or a casserole. Rice with seafood is always -dry- (the liquid is completely absorbed) and referred to by the generic name *secano*.



Although paella is the most famous of the Valencian rice dishes, it has not been around as long as the others. It was originally made with codfish and eaten during Lent.

The third method of making rice is to use a metal *paella* pan. A short aside at this point can help us better understand this method. We are referring to what might be considered a curious culinary custom regarding rice: rice dishes are considered to be either -feminine- or -masculine- based on which sex does the cooking. For example, soupy-rice dishes made in a stewpot or oven-baked rice dishes

are traditionally made by women, probably since these are made at home where women rule the kitchen. The *paella*, on the other hand, was originally an outdoor, country meal and the man was in charge of the preparations from beginning to end. He would collect the firewood, build the fire, and tend to the *paella*. This custom is still carried on today, and it is not unusual to find many a man ceremoniously preparing a *paella* with all the proper fixings on weekend country outings... these same men who would probably never be caught in the kitchen during the rest of the year! Housewives do make *paellletes* (small *paellas*) and will usually improvise according to their imagination and the dictates of their budget. The large *paella* — the pride and joy of Valencia gastronomists — is served in all its splendor on special occasions and at holiday feasts. What was once a no-frills country meal — no tablecloths, no plates, just everyone sinking his wooden spoon into the one large *caldero* under the shade of a friendly tree — has now become a main dish in hundreds of

restaurants around the world. In town after town throughout Valencia, you can always find a handful of men who are looked upon as experts in the art of making a perfect *paella*. Whenever the occasion calls for a *paella*, townspeople turn to these maestros to save the day.

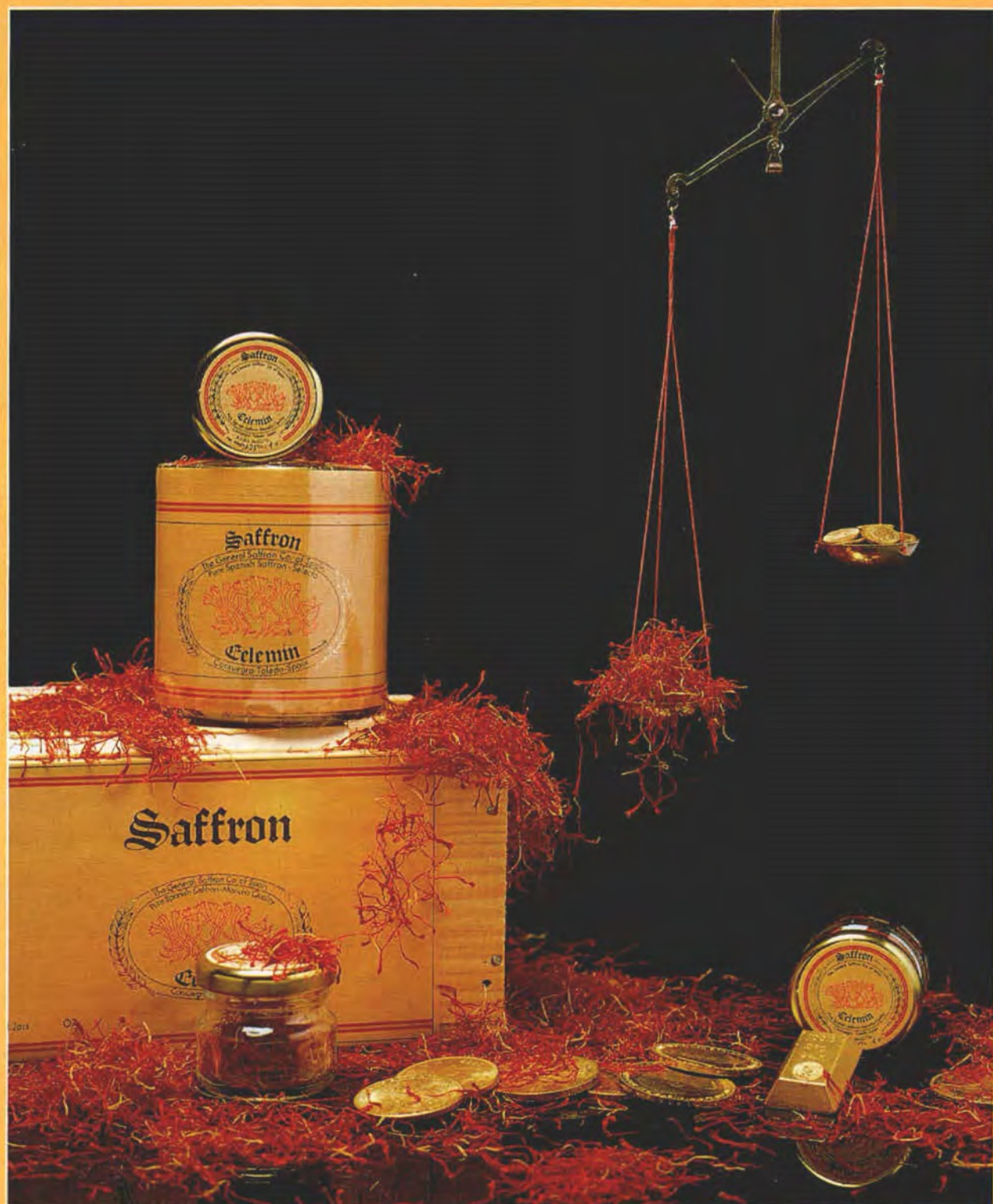
OLD-TIME RECIPES, MODERN MEALS

One exceptionally good soupy-rice dish is *Arros amb fesols i naps* (rice with kidney beans and turnips). The rice, beans, and turnips are cooked in a stewpot

along with blood sausage and pieces of pork. Another noteworthy rice dish, whose simplicity and lightness is always pleasing to the palate, is *Arros amb bledes* (rice with Swiss chard). The rice and chard are slowly cooked in a casserole along with snails and a tender, buttery bean called *garrofó*. The key to its excellence is in the slow cooking; it is best when eaten as soon as it is done. This dish used to be a common, everyday meal in workers' homes, but it doesn't seem to have fared very well with the quicker pace of modern life. *Arros al forn* (baked rice) can be made in two different ways. The first uses leftovers from a previous day's meat stew, which are combined with the rice and put into a wide clay casserole to bake in the oven. This variant is called *de puchero* (*puchero* means -stew-). The second way to prepare baked rice, called *de ayuno*, is to cook the rice with chickpeas, potatoes, sliced tomatoes, and raisins (optional). Garlic and parsley are added for flavoring. Another recipe for baked rice is *Arros amb costra*

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GALBIS PAELLA

THERE'S ENOUGH FOR EVERYONE!

The Galbis family has been in the restaurant business for three generations. They have come a long way from grandmother's country kitchen of almost a century ago to the present-day Galbis Restaurant in L'Alcudia, one of the best in Valencia serving traditional regional cuisine as well as international favorites. But it is not this restaurant's excellent food which has spread its fame far and wide: the Galbis Restaurant is king when it comes to making gigantic *paellas*!

Such a unique distinction came about on a whim, on a friendly sort of personal challenge. The town of Guadassur was holding its annual *paella* contest, and Antonio Galbis decided to enter and make a *paella* large enough to serve one thousand people. And that's exactly what he did. He consulted local craftsmen and had a special *caldero* made (a *caldero* is the metal pan the *paella* is made in) and rounded

Text and photos: **Restauradores**

This Valencian family has been in the restaurant business for over a century. One day not too long ago, Antonio Galbis took on the seemingly impossible task of making a *paella* for one thousand people! Success was his and what started out as a personal challenge has now brought him international fame. There is no denying that the Galbis family have today become ambassadors of Spanish gastronomy the world over.

up a group of enthusiastic, adventurous helpers ready to take on the challenge. But the prospects did not look good: most people, including top representatives of Valencian cuisine, predicted that the *paella* would

certainly flop given the unorthodox size of the *caldero*. By day's end they had been proven wrong for the *paella* was a tremendous success. The Galbis family had hit upon just the right formula for making a



(rice with a crust) or, sometimes called, *Arros ressejat* (golden rice). This recipe calls for lots of pork. The golden crust is achieved by brushing the top with beaten egg yolks. The townspeople of Elche and the surrounding area are especially adept at preparing this meal since it is their regional dish. *Arros a banda* (rice on the side) is a seafood rice dish. Different types of fish are first cooked in water and then set aside. The stock from the fish is then used to cook the rice in a *paella* pan. The rice is eaten separately, and the boiled fish is usually served with a garlic-mayonaisse or *salmorreta* sauce to spice it up a little.

Although *paella* is the most famous of the Valencian rice dishes, it has not been around as long as the others. It was originally a meal eaten during Lent, and in tune with the austerity of the occasion, the only accompanying ingredient was codfish. Later, as *paellas* became associated with festive country outings, they took on a livelier profile. Vegetables from the nearby garden — especially those tender beans called *garrofó* and *tavella* — and chickens and rabbits from the nearby *corral* went into the making. In some

The Galbis family had hit upon just the right formula for making a paella in a huge pan and having it retain the same exquisite quality of one made in a traditional-size caldero.

areas, duck was preferred since its high fat content helped to save on oil, a commodity which always seemed expensive to the farmer. The trick was to make the *paella* using only home-produced ingredients and avoid at all costs having to make a trip to the store!

paella in a huge pan and having it retain the same exquisite quality of one made in a traditional-size *caldero*. News of the giant *paella* quickly spread and before long it had become a -must- for town festivals and other grand events. For example, on his visit to Valencia, Pope John Paul II was honored with a giant *paella*. New and bigger *calderos* — some with a capacity for 2000 servings — had to be made.

After only two years, Spain had become a little small for the Galbis family's gigantic *paellas* so off they went to France, Italy, Germany, Austria, Holland, and Switzerland, delighting diners with the novelty and great taste of a giant *paella*. Their *paellas* have even made it all the way across the ocean to Brasil and to Florida in the U.S.A. It is no exaggeration to say that the Galbis family have become ambassadors of Valencian rice cuisine around the world.

VARIATIONS ON THE SAME THEME

Although the ingredients mentioned so far are the most typical, cooks are, of course, free to improvise with other vegetables and meats. A party of hunters might celebrate a hard day's hunting by cooking up their catch — perhaps a partridge — in the *paella* pan. As far as other vegetables are concerned, artichoke hearts make a nice addition. In addition to the main ingredients, a few mountain snails are sometimes thrown in to enhance the flavor while a touch of saffron is added to give the rice a rich golden color. Some cooks add cubes of lean pork to enhance poultry meats, but purists shake their head at this practice. Coastal restaurants have made their contribution by coming up with the shellfish *paella*. The *paellas* with lobster are always in demand and so are those in which meat and seafood, like eels, for example, go in together to make a perfect duo.

And so, as we see, the sky is the limit when it comes to the variety of rice dishes. Each with its particular combination of ingredients is delicious in its own way, providing, that is, it is cooked just right!

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TORO WINES

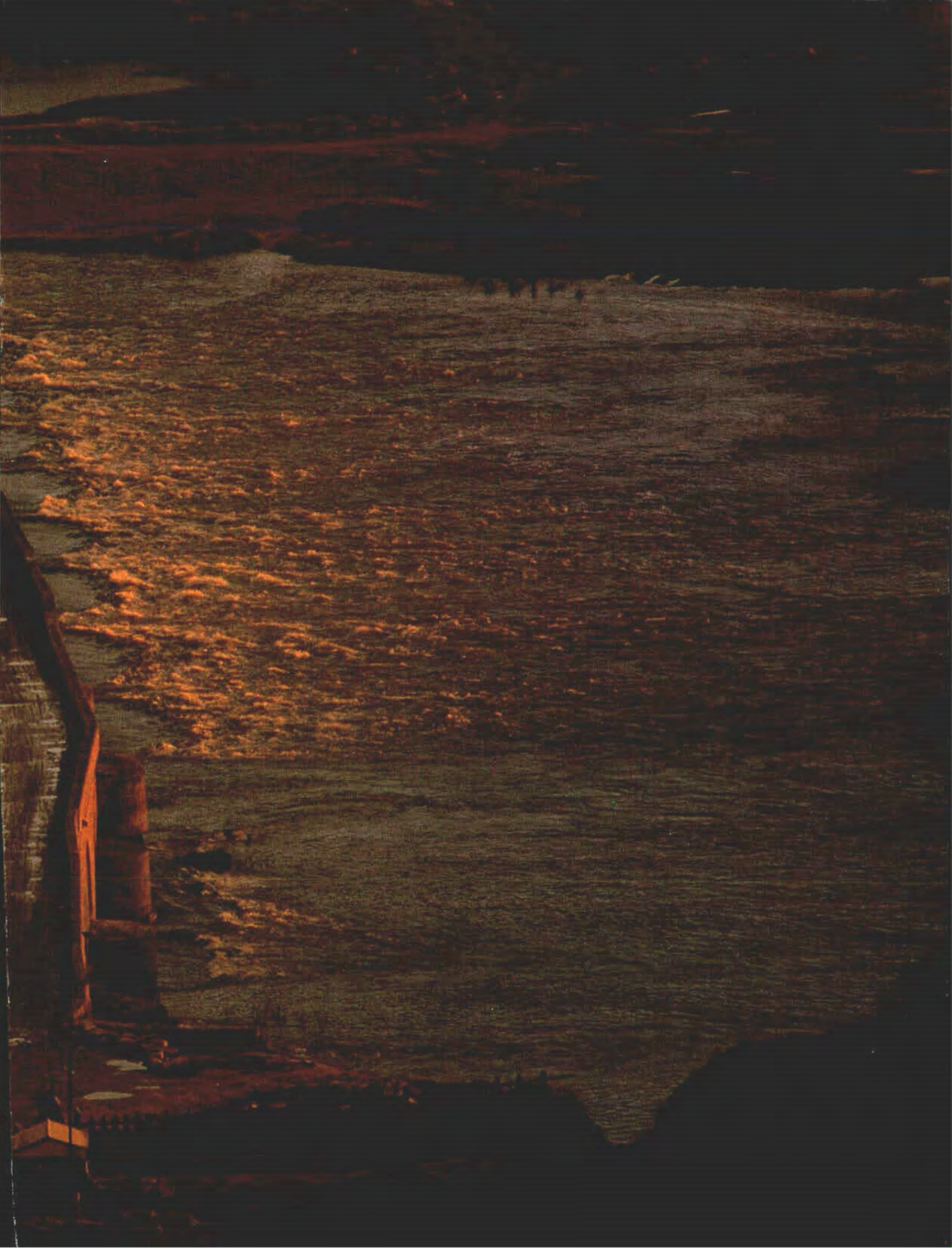
FROM MEDIEVAL TO MODERN TIMES

Text: José Carlos Capel
Photos: P. Sancho-Mata

For centuries, the classic Toro wines—robust, full-bodied, strong and heady with their unmistakable palate—were crafted according to traditional methods. This deep, noble liquid, almost as black as the night and twinkling with magical purples, is brimming with life and legend. Its roots reach deep into the past glories and defeats of the old Kingdom of Castile.

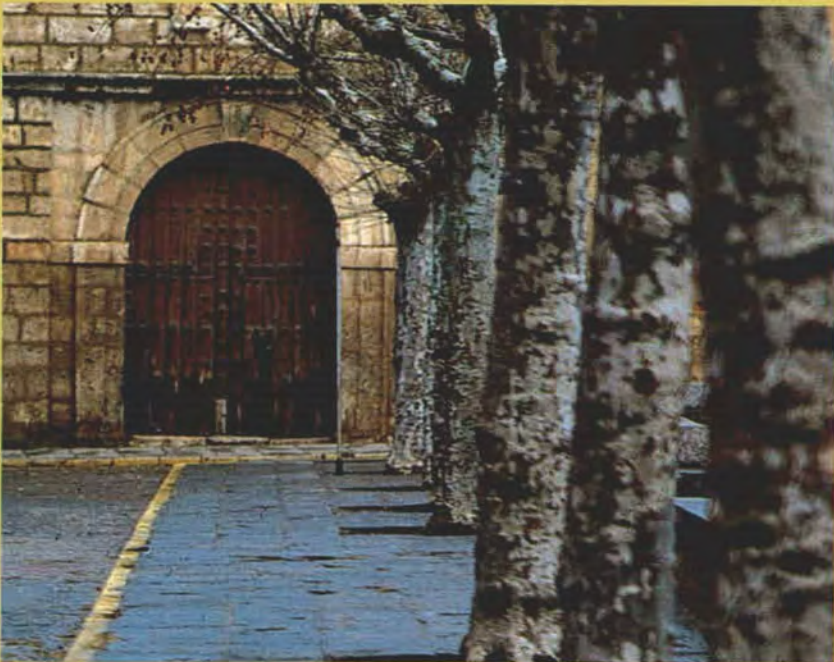
In Castile in the late Middle Ages, the neighboring towns of Toro and Alaejos along the banks of the Duero river produced the most well-known wines at both ends of the spectrum. The vineyards of the former gave forth the most superb reds while those of the

latter served as a nucleus for producing famous white wines (this center would later shift to the town of Rueda in Valladolid). These wines were born to travel and be appreciated beyond the borders of Castile. So, it is not surprising that numerous thirteenth and four-

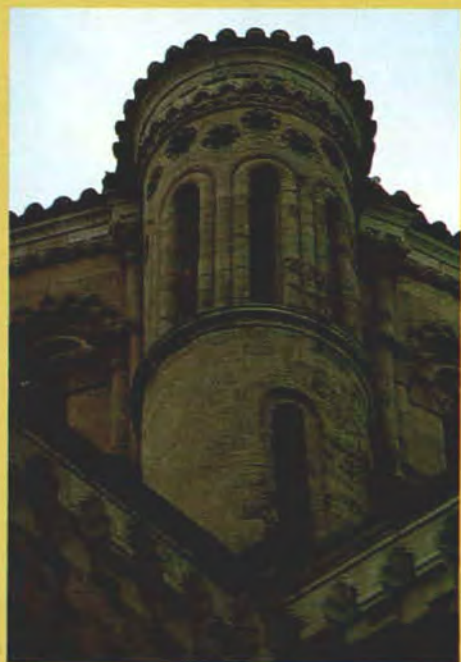




Toro's arcaded town square lined with shops and bars.



A quiet corner from the past.



A Romanesque church.



Wood, stone



Buildings with a traditional Castilian look.



A closed balcony fashioned in Gallegan style.



and history.



A Romanesque bridge.

teenth century manuscripts make reference to the wines produced in the area of Toro. One better known mention is found in the popular classic *The Book of Good Love* written by the Archpriest of Hita in the fourteenth century.

Vine-growing in and around Toro was probably the first commercial vineyard on the Spanish meseta. The wines produced were sent up to northern Spain where the demand was high along the pilgrimage route to the shrine of St. James in Santiago de Compostela. Plenty of wine was needed to quench the thirst of the constant stream of weary pilgrims slowly making their way to what was then almost the ends of the earth. Northern areas which didn't have vineyards of their own looked to the interior to meet their needs, espe-

*In medieval times,
Toro wines became a highly valued commodity.*

cially to those areas known for the quality and quantity of their wines. By the thirteenth century, powerful religious orders in the north had already set up vineyards in the region of Toro. For example, old documents show that in 1208 the king of León, Alfonso IX, ceded 20 *aranzadas* (1) of vineyard and 50 measures of untilled land located in Valdeloba near Toro to the Cathedral at Santiago de Compostela. Another document reveals that in 1216 the Church in the Galician town of Santa María de Arbas was

(1) Aranzada: land measure generally equivalent to the land which can be tilled by a team of oxen in one day (approx. 4,470 square meters.

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granted 100 *aranzadas* of wine-producing land on Novel-las mountain.

ONE FOR THE ROAD

In medieval times, Toro wines became a highly valued commodity. They travelled here and there and, thanks to their high alcohol content, when they got to their destination they were just as splendid as when sent off. It is no wonder their reputation quickly grew. For example, in 1274 an ordinance of the city of Oviedo, the capital of Asturias, called on merchants to bring in wines from the areas south of León, preferably from Toro or the adjacent *Tierra del Vino* (land of wine). Further proof of the importance of Toro wines can be found in Palencia's city records. In 1437 at a

time when the city —also a center of wine production— was experiencing an excess wine supply, a city ordinance nevertheless authorized the importation of Toro wines whose supposed therapeutic qualities were used in curing the sick.

In a certain sense, Toro wines can claim to have played their part in the discovery of America. It is true that while passing through Salamanca, Columbus ordered a couple of barrels of the regional wine to take along on his journey, but whether they actually ever got on board is another question. There's no doubt, though, that the regional wine customs were responsible for naming the *Pinta*, one of the three caravels which sailed off on that bold expedition and would later be the first to sight land on that now famous day, October 12, 1492.

Agenda



Wine-producing zone:

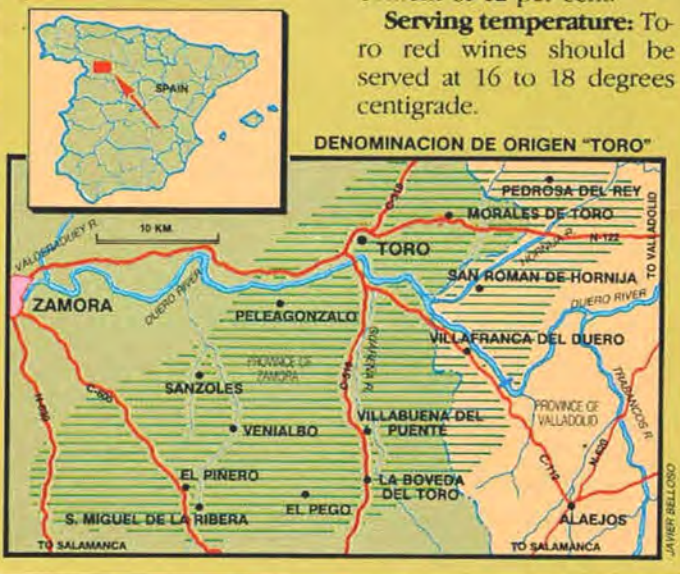
The Denomination of Origin-Toro includes the municipalities of Bóveda de Toro, Argujillo, Morales de Toro, El Pego, Peleagonzalo, El Piñero, San Miguel de la Ribera, Sanzoles, Toro, Valdefijar, Venialbo, and Villamena del Puente in the province of Zamora and the municipalities of San Román de Hornija, Villafranca de Duero, and Pedrosa del Rey in the province of Valladolid.

Climate: Extreme continental with an average annual rainfall of 350 to 370 litres.

Soil: Alluvial deposits which are stoney, at times deep, and generally poor in organic matter except for those areas near rivers or streams.

Vine varieties: The primary vine is the indigenous variety Tinta de Toro, which produces a deep garnet-red, full-bodied wine whose alcohol content ranges between 13 and 14 per cent. Clarets are also produced from this variety. White wines are elaborated from the Malvasía grape, which produces a very aromatic wine with an alcohol content of 12 per cent.

Serving temperature: Toro red wines should be served at 16 to 18 degrees centigrade.



As the story goes, friar Diego de Deza, a native of Toro and confessor to Queen Isabel, came up with the name to christen the ship. At that time, the term *pinta* referred to a liquid measure used to pour out and measure wine. Today in Toro you can still hear the colloquial expression *-echar una pinta-* (drink a pint of wine), which calls to mind what the British say when treating themselves to a beer.

From the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries, Toro wines—reds and whites alike—continued to reap praise wherever they went. And this sometimes meant beyond Iberian borders to other European countries. So famous were they that it is not hard to find many references to them in literature of the period. As examples, we have Lancelot de

Casteau's *Ouverture de Cuisine* published in 1605 and much of Spain's Golden Age literature, especially works by Francisco de Quevedo. Also, foreign travel writers visiting Spain never failed to be impressed by Toro wines. One such writer was Richard Ford, who in his book *Gatherings from Spain*, published in 1846, puts Toro wines right up there with the best. And so, for centuries Toro red wines from the vine variety Tinta de Toro and white wines from the highly esteemed Albilla grape were foremost among Spanish wines. In 1845 the annual wine production in Toro had reached as much as 200,000 *cántaras* (1 *cántara* equals 16.13 litres) as recorded in Pascual Madoz's *Statistical Geographic Dictionary*. In the last third of the nineteenth century production rose even

higher as Toro wines exported in great quantities to France, where the phylloxera plague had devastated hundreds of vineyards. This trade, however, would later ultimately die out.

CLIMATE, SOIL & VINE

The region of Toro is located in the southeastern part of the province of Zamora on the western corner of the Castilian meseta. It is characterized by moderate hills ranging from 620 to 750 meters in altitude and tertiary sedimentary deposits with lime stratum. The soil is brown and somewhat stoney. Despite a relative Atlantic influence, the region is one of the hottest and driest areas along the Duero river. It has an extreme Continental climate characterized by hot and dry summers and very cold winters

with frosts occurring as late as May. The average annual rainfall is one of the lowest in all of the Iberian peninsula. Two basic subareas can be distinguished: the western section south of Zamora which comprises the *Tierra del Vino* (land of wine) and the eastern section whose nucleus is Toro and which lies south of *Tierra del Pan* (land of bread), so named for the vast expanse of cereal fields stretching between Valladolid and Palencia across *Tierra de Campos*.

The vine variety Tinta de Toro grows over almost 40% of the vineyards. This choice, noble vine is native and exclusive to the region as a number of ampelographic studies have shown. Similar to the well-known Tempranillo, which lends its personality to the famous Rioja wines, it determines the astringency, color intensity, body, and alcoholic strength of the area's wines. The typical Toro wines are garnet-red with a blue iridescence and moderately to mildly acidic yet dry with a dense, fruity palate. After the second year, they become smooth and silky but still conserve their natural vigor. These traditional characteristics of the wine soon found their echo in popular sayings like *Tomando vino de Toro, más que comer devoro* (When you drink Toro wine, you devour more than dine) or *Vino de Toro es oro, aunque prieto como moro* (Toro wine is gold you pour, but it's darker than a Moor). Toro wines, by the way, just happen to share their name with the mythical symbol for the Iberian peninsula—the Bull.

The second vine variety is Tinto Madrid (also called Negral); it is somewhat rougher and is used to give color to the wines. The third and last red grape variety grown in the region is Garnacha. With modern technology, white wines with a delicate bouquet and a pleasing palate are made from the grape varieties Malvasía and Verdezo. Mixing reds and whites has long been a common practice since it is a way to tone down color, reduce density, and enrich the bouquet.

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WINES FOR TODAY

For a good part of this century, the vineyards of Toro and the greater area of Old Castile, fell into decline. With the passage of the Wheat Law in the early 1940's, cereal-growing meant greater returns and, thus, won out over vine-growing. In recent years, Toro wines have been making their comeback. The Specific Denomination granted to the zone in 1985 served to regulate the wine-making process and its quality control. These efforts to restore the reputation of Toro wines crystallized in 1987 when the Denomination of Origin-Toro was created. At the present time, it includes 11,000 hectares extending over 15 municipalities —12 in the province of Zamora and 3 in the province of Valladolid.

Below ground, Toro is a maze of galleries where wine-filled casks silently lay in wait. In days past, throughout Castile and especially in areas along the Duero River these cool underground cellars protected the wines from the scorching summer heat, the light and other distorting elements. The cellars used to be filled with huge hazel or cherry wood barrels, each capable of holding up to 1,000 *cántaras*. Later, these would be put aside to make way for the more shapely, classic Bordeaux casks. Today, these centuries-old caves, each with its own vent popping up to the surface for air, are progressively being abandoned for modern, above-ground structures.

The winds of change and modern times have come to Toro... changes which go deep but, at the same time, respect traditional ways and the basic characteristics of the region's classic red wines. A number of wineries are completely overhauling their facilities and investing in the latest technology. Shiny stainless steel is the new look —from the reception hopper to the fermentation tanks— with commendable aseptic conditions everywhere. New techniques include harvesting the grapes earlier, reducing the contact between the must and the pomace in elab-

orating red wines, the necessary settling and racking off of the must in elaborating white wines, the strict temperature control of fermentation in modern stainless steel vats and so on. All of these are quickly changing the image of Toro wines. What are emerging from the cellars today are choice, elegant wines for the modern palate. The red wines are lighter in body, more balanced, and bolder than the ones in the past. They have a lower alcohol content, a more attractive appearance, and a more pleasing palate. Winegrowers have meticulously worked out the perfect formula for elaborating and aging these red wines with just the right time in cask and bottle. And then there are the young white and rosé wines obtained through temperature-controlled fermentation using selected yeasts. These light, fresh, fruity wines fit right in with the current popular demand and are always a success. And so, this Castilian wine, which was once an inseparable companion to muleteers and wayfarers and was served up in clay pitchers in inns and old time pubs, is now a perfect addition to the most distinguished tables. The days when Toro wine travelled anonymously in wooden barrels to be sold in bulk or to be mixed with other wines to fortify their aroma, extract, and fruitiness are days gone by. Bottling is required by the Regulatory Board of the Denomination of Origin, whose seal on every bottle is the buyer's guarantee of quality.

Wine-making in the region of Toro is keeping up with the times and sometimes moving ahead of them. One enterprising winery came up with the -revolutionary- idea of elaborating the first sparkling wine from the vine variety Malvasía using the *champeonoise* method. The first bottles are due to see the light in the near future. Also, it is now common to find the highly valued vine Cabernet Sauvignon growing alongside Tinta de Toro in the region. When blended together, they are sure to create new and surprising experiences.

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The Route of the Conquistadors

Text: **Sonia Ortega**
Photos: **TURESPAÑA**

I*N western Spain along the border with Portugal, the region of Extremadura waits to be discovered by the millions of tourists who visit Spain every year. This is the land that gave forth hundreds of intrepid explorers — some world-famous and others anonymous — who sailed off to discover the New World five centuries ago. The Route of the Conquistadors retraces the origins of these men to their hometowns in Extremadura — towns whose beauty and rich architectural heritage are sure to reward the traveller who decides to explore them.*

The region of Extremadura is a land alive with history. It witnessed the rise and fall of ancient peoples — Tartessians, Celts, Romans, Visigoths, Arabs — which each contributed to the region's rich heritage. Extremadura is many things, but perhaps more than anything, it is the birthplace of many of those great men who wrote one of the most important chapters of world history, the discovery of the New World. Famous names like Francisco Pizarro, Hernán Cortés, Núñez de Balboa, Francisco de Orellana and many more are all connected to towns

like Guadalupe, Trujillo, Medellín, and Jerez de los Caballeros.

Guadalupe, a name which has travelled far and wide, is probably the best known corner of Extremadura. It grew up out of the miraculous appearance of a statue of the Virgin, became influential in the direction of Spanish history, and later crossed over the ocean to the New World. The origin of the statue is lost somewhere in the past; legend has it that while on his way to Seville, Saint Lucas carved the statue to give to Archbishop Leandro as a gift from the Pope. Whatever its begin-





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nings, its later movements seem a little clearer. In 711 when the Arabs invaded southern Spain, priests fleeing from Seville took the statue with them to save it from desecration. In their flight, they buried it in a river valley in Extremadura (the Arabs later named this river Guadalupejo, which means 'hidden river'). Centuries later, a herdsman named Gil Cordeiro was tending his cows in this same area when he noticed that one of them was missing. After looking around, he found it, but it was dead. He started to skin the animal to take advantage of its hide, but as soon as he had cut a cross on its breast,

the cow came back to life and jumped up. At that moment, the Virgin appeared and told the herdsman not to be afraid. He was to go and get the priests and tell them to dig at this spot where they would find her statue. A miracle was proclaimed and thus was born the religious devotion to the Virgin of Guadalupe — a devotion soon rendered by common people and royalty alike. In the fourteenth century, King Alfonso XI, who had on several occasions hunted in the vicinity, ordered that a church and monastery be built on the site. The shrine was completed in 1340 and the town of Puebla de Guadalupe soon grew up around it. Years later in 1389, the monastery was entrusted to the Hieronimite Order of monks, under whose direction it flourished. Hospitals were built, artisan workshops were set up, and studies in medicine, surgery, pharmacy, and the letters were promoted.

THE GLORY OF A MONASTERY

On the way into Guadalupe from a point in the road called *El Humilladero*, pilgrims' eyes would fall upon the monastery for the first time. What an awe-inspiring sight — the soldierly bearing of a fortress and the peaceful presence of a sanctuary. For the traveller coming upon Guadalupe today, the view is just as impressive: the large monastery complex is surrounded by the town's houses and palaces, set in the middle of silver greens of olive groves with the Villeucas mountains in the distance. Once in the town, we take the steps leading up to the church right off the main square. The front of the church, flanked by two towers, is fashioned in Gothic and Mudejar styles. The two embossed brass doors, crafted by Paolo de Colonia in the fourteenth century, lead the way in and



For the traveller coming upon Guadalupe the view is impressive: the large monastery complex is surrounded by the town's houses and palaces.

let us know right from the start that our visit to this shrine promises a magnificent display of art treasures. This is not surprising, though, since from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries, the monastery enjoyed the privilege of *manda forzosa*. This meant that well-to-do church members had to will part of their property to the church upon their death (the shrines at Jerusalem, Rome, and Santiago de Compostela also had this privilege). On the wall behind the main altar, we find altarpieces by Carducci, Caxés, Merlo, and Jorge Manuel Theotocópuli (El Greco's son). A huge, intricately designed wrought iron gate, made in three sections by Dominican monks in the sixteenth century, separates the chancel and side altars from the rest of the church. The choir stalls in the chancel are beautifully carved from walnut wood.

The sacristy, built from 1636 to 1645, is a rectangular room whose walls are ornately decorated with floral and fruit motifs without resulting overelaborate or excessive. The paintings on the walls are by the famous seventeenth century Extremeñan painter Zurbarán, who so often chose Hieronimite friars as his subject matter. In his paintings, white takes on the meaning of

color and chiaroscuro brings these monks to life, immortalizing them on canvas. From the sacristy we move into the reliquary, where the most treasured items — principally donations from kings — are kept. They include enamelwork, ivory statues, relics, robes for the Virgin and so on. This collection is very appropriately named the 'Virgin's Treasures'. The small room where statues are dressed is located near the reliquary. It is shaped in the form of a Greek cross and is a splendid example of baroque with lavishly decorated walls and ceiling. The walls are also adorned with nine

paintings by the seventeenth-century painter Lucas Jordán. This room lies directly behind the vaulted niche where the Virgin holding the Christ Child in her lap is displayed on her revolving throne. It is a Romanesque, polychromated statue carved from cedar wood. It most likely dates from the twelfth century as its features correspond to the iconographic values of that age: frontality, straight nose, large eyes, and hieratic posture.

A visit to the monastic quarters begins in the former dining hall where the Needlework Museum is now located. Here the visitor can admire the priests' chasubles, altar cloths, and all kinds of sacred vestments which were created in the embroidery workshop set up by the Hieronimites in the fifteenth century. We witness four centuries worth of craftsmanship — every thing made from only the finest materials and skilfully embroidered with silk and gold threads. Some of the designs are so elaborate with such fine shading that they seem as if they were painted on rather than sewn. The marvels of needle and thread are here truly at their best; in fact, this museum is considered one of the best of its kind in the world. From here, the visitor goes next door to the former meeting room where the Choirbook Museum is now located. Huge choir books — so large that monks standing eight or nine metres away could still read them — are on display. They have wooden covers and sheepskin pages which are illuminated with brilliant colors, colors which are still in perfect condition despite the passage of time. The illuminators and miniaturists from Guadalupe were so famous that Queen Isabel turned to the monastery whenever she required books — with fine writing and parchments.

The tour continues to other rooms, each with its special artistic interest. The last

stop is the cloistered courtyard, the monastery's most unique work of art. Here the artistic sensitivity of the Orient combines with Gothic and Renaissance features to create a space shimmering with light, arches, and foliage. Fashioned in Gothic-Mudejar styles, a unique ornamental pavilion surrounded by thick green hedges and orange trees majestically presides over the courtyard.

Leaving the monastery complex, we find ourselves back out in the town's busy main square. It is bordered by a charming arcade and has a Gothic fountain in its center. But this is not just any fountain: its waters were used to baptize the two Indians that Columbus brought back to Spain with him in 1492. Old streets lined with picturesque houses whose balconies overflow with colorful flowers lead off the main square. In some of these houses, copper and brass artisans are still busy at their trade, crafting pots, kitchen utensils, and ornamental objects. Visitors are welcome to stop by and browse.

TRUJILLO: A MAGNIFICENT PLAZA AND MUCH MORE

Located eighty kilometres from Guadalupe, Trujillo stands tall on a granite hill which was at one time home to Celts, Romans, and Moslems. In 1232, Christians won it back from the Arabs who had ruled it since the eighth century. The city has been called Turgalium, Torgiela, and Truxillo, but whatever its name, it is most famous for the many great men who were born there. They include Francisco Pizarro, who conquered Perú; Orellana, who discovered the Amazons; García de Paredes, who founded the city of Trujillo in Venezuela; and at least 600 more who took part in the discovery of America.

Present-day Trujillo is an urban center made up of three perfectly distinguishable sections dating from different periods of history. The first is called *La villa* and is located within the remains of the old city walls. Thirty-two of the original towers are still standing and two of the seven gates which used to lead into the city are in perfect condition. Through these same gates, the town gradually grew towards the south to flatter ground; this is considered the second nucleus. The third and most recent section fills in the gaps between the first two.

Life in Trujillo revolves around its main square, which has a reputation for being one of the most interesting in Spain. This plaza promises the visitor a splendid display of architectural magnificence. On one side stands the Duques de San Carlos Palace with its baroque doorway and beautiful porch, dating from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. At present, it is a cloistered convent, but visitors are allowed to

see the patio and its curious stairway whose suspension seems a mystery. Peeking over the roof of the palace are many different Moorish brick chimneys. Next door, we find the fifteenth century San Martín Church, which boasts one of the best organs in the world. Across the way, the Marqués de la Conquista Palace looks on to the square with its elaborate plateresque-style facade. An escutcheon with the coat-of-arms granted to Pizarro by Emperor Charles V is emblazoned on a corner balcony and is bordered by four faces sculpted into the stone. A short aside is in order at this point. Pizarro had two children by an Incan princess named Inés Yupangui. One of them, Francisca, came to Spain when she was 18 years old and later married her uncle Hernando Pizarro. These four faces appear on the balcony and represent the fusion of the races. A bronze equestrian statue of Pizarro by



the American sculptor Carlos Rumsey occupies a place of honor in the center of the square.

It is easy to lose count of all the palaces that are to be found in Trujillo: *Casa de las Cadenas*, *Casa del Paso Real*, *Palacio de Piedras Alba*, *Palacio de Justicia* and on and on. For the most part, they are now private homes and so can only be admired from the outside. A magnificent view of the city awaits those adventurous visitors who climb the steep, narrow streets up to the Arabic castle, which was built over Roman ruins and later enlarged by Castilian armies. On the way down, a walk along the nearby Palomas Street holds in store a famous row of homes full of historic and artistic interest like, for example, the home of Orellana and the palace belonging to Rol-Zárate y Zúñiga. Trujillo invites the visitor to explore its narrow streets which stop and turn at every corner and slip through archways like *Triunfo*

and *San Andrés* adorned with heraldic escutcheons recalling victorious days gone by... its quiet intimate corners where the past still seems to linger on and history awakens from the silence of centuries.

AND THE ROUTE GOES ON

As we go south along the Route of the Conquistadors, we come to the town of Medellín, birthplace of Hernán Cortés (1485-1547), conquistador of México. Medellín is a peaceful, agricultural town along the Guadiana river, but the rich greens of fertile gardens are not the only sight to be seen. Above the town stands one of the most interesting Extremean castles, strong and impregnable in its strategic location. Its square, masonry keep, dating from the fourteenth century, looks out far into the distance. There are also a lot of churches to see here; San Martín, Santa María, Santiago, and Santa Cecilia churches are all certainly worth a visit. And in the town square, the visitor can stand before the statue of Hernán Cortés and read on its pedestal names that echo history — Méjico, Otumba, Tlaxala, Tabasco...

The town of Jerez de los Caballeros in the province of Badajoz in southern Extremadura is another important stop along the Route of the Conquistadors. (The reader should not confuse this town with Jerez de la Frontera, famous for its sheries). Two famous explorers were born here: Núñez de Balboa, who discovered the Pacific ocean, and Hernando de Soto, who explored Florida. This pretty town, nestled among the rolling hills of olive and cork trees, has seen ancient peoples come and go. Proof of its primitive existence is the prehistoric Toriñuelo dolmen found nearby. Important Roman remains are the mosaics at the Villa del Pomar, the old Alto del Empedrado road, and the Viejo and Porton bridges. Medieval remains bear witness to the town's importance in the Middle Ages. Among these are the city walls and the Templars' castle, where the last members of this religious military order were executed in the tower appropriately named 'Bloody Tower'. And of course, beautiful churches are to be found here. The San Bartolomé and the Santa Catalina churches are splendid examples of the elaborate Spanish baroque style. Life in Jerez de los Caballeros has been influenced by the neighboring region of Andalucía, given the town's geographical proximity. This is especially evident during Easter week when the town puts on its Semana Santa celebrations.

The Route of the Conquistadors does not stop here. The traveller who has time can go on discovering the many other Extremean towns which were home to many other less famous but, nonetheless, intrepid conquistadors.

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GUADALUPE AND TRUJILLO

Two Paradors that Conquer the Heart

Text: **Sonia Ortega.** Photos: **A.T.E.**

T

hese two Paradors along the Route of the Conquistadors invite the visitor to travel back in time and experience the glories of an earlier age.

Thick stone walls full of history give shelter from the night, and beautiful cloistered courtyards overflowing with orange blossoms give a special inspiration to the day.

The *Parador Zurbarán* in Guadalupe is housed in two adjacent fifteenth-century buildings, which in their day had a very different use: the *Hospital de San Juan Bautista* and the *Colegio de Los Infantes*. In 1402, Fernando Yáñez, prior of the Guadalupe Monastery, founded the *Hospital San Juan Bautista* to meet the needs of the many pilgrims who flocked to the town to worship at the shrine of the Virgin of Guadalupe. In a certain way, hospitals in Guadalupe can boast of just as much history as its famous

shrine. A commemorative plaque on a wall in the former hospital reads: *Having been granted a special dispensation from the Vatican, this hospital performed the first dissection of the human body in all the kingdoms of Spain.*

The former *Colegio de los Infantes*, where in times past the children of nobility dedicated hours to learning the principles of Grammar and Music, makes up the main body of the *Parador* and is an outstanding example of Mudejar architecture. The beau-





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The former Colegio de los Infantes makes up the main body of the Parador of Guadalupe and is an outstanding example of Mudejar architecture.

tiful cloister —the covered arcaded passageway bordering the courtyard— serves as the main artery connecting the two floors of the building. Looking around downstairs, we find the reception area, the bar, the restaurant, and the lounges. Everywhere the decor is in perfect harmony with the architectural style of the building. In the restaurant, decorative green and white ceramic tiles lend a touch of regional color (green, white, and black are the colors of the Extremeñan flag) and beautifully handcrafted brass light fixtures hanging from the ceiling give a special glow to the occasion. On the menu, typical regional dishes are the order of the day, and there are plenty to choose from. Over the centuries the monks at the monastery carefully collected and copied down regional recipes and thus preserved the

area's rich and varied cuisine, so clearly marked by Arabic and Jewish influences. For example, *muégado*, the typical dessert in Guadalupe, is of Jewish origin. (See recipes.)

Going back out to the cloister, we find the stairs leading upstairs tucked away in one corner. The courtyard exudes the fresh fragrance of orange trees bubbling over with ripe, juicy oranges —the same oranges which are used to make the morning juice. Upstairs, lovely country furniture adorns the long corridor. What used to be the old rooms and cubicles are now comfortable guest rooms, tastefully furnished with all the essentials. Just out the door on the balcony overlooking the pool and gardens, pretty tiles and climbing vines add splashes of color to the white walls. Large, rolled-up *esparto* shades invite the

light to come in but hang ready for those hot and sunny Extremeñan summer days when a cool shade brings a sigh of relief.

The *Parador*, named after the Spanish painter Zurbarán for the collection of his paintings hanging in the monastery sacristy, was inaugurated in 1965. Architect José Luis Picardo was given the job of adapting the old buildings to their future use while at the same time conserving their original style and structure as much as possible. Later, in 1984 the *Parador* underwent more changes: general improvements were made and a new wing of guest rooms was added on, bringing the total number of rooms to forty. For guests at the *Parador* a visit to the Guadalupe Monastery, replete with history and artistic treasures, is just footsteps away. Afterwards, a pleasant stroll up and down the hilly



The Parador in Trujillo is housed in the former Convento de Santa Clara, founded in the sixteenth century by the religious Order of the Conceptionists.

streets of Guadalupe will build up your appetite for a delicious meal at the *Parador* restaurant. No better way to top off another interesting day in the life of a tourist.

Convento de Santa Clara

The *Parador* in Trujillo is housed in the former *Convento de Santa Clara*, founded in the sixteenth century by the religious order of nuns, Order of the Conceptionists. In 1809 the nuns were forced to give up their peaceful convent life when Napoleon's troops reached Trujillo and the convent was shut down. It wasn't until two years later that the few remaining members of the order could finally return to their convent walls—walls which had suffered in the meanwhile and were in desperate need of repair. Over the years, the convent gradually fell into disuse and was ultimately abandoned to the mercy of time and the elements. Under the direction of architect Manuel Sainz de Vicuña, restoration work began in 1982 and was completed in 1984. This makes this *Parador* one of the newest members of the national *Parador* network.

The simple, unpretentious design of the convent—a two storey structure built around a square, cloistered patio—communicates its silent nobility. Here again, a cloister—in this case it is three-sided with round Renaissance-style arches—forms the main artery of the *Parador*. The round arches downstairs flatten to right angles in the upper gallery where lintels rest atop Tuscan columns. Granite is everywhere;

even the central well and the patio floor are dressed in this sober, grey stone. Two stone stairways lead up to the second floor where spacious guest rooms look out over the city. And for those romantics who dream of days gone by, canopy beds are waiting in some of the rooms to watch over your sleep.

When the convent was restored, a new wing was added on to the original structure to give the *Parador* plenty of room. The downstairs floor of this wing was designed for conventions. And speaking of conventions, a rather unusual one took place here in December 1985: the Columbian-Period Gastronomy Conference. Gastronomy writers and history-buffs alike came together for three days to discover and taste the most intriguing dishes which were prepared in Spain and abroad at the time the new world was discovered. The conference was a real challenge for the kitchen staff at the *Parador* because, of course, they were the ones who would be doing the cooking. First, they had to find and select the recipes, and then they had to tackle the difficult task of tracking down all the ingredients, which included a whole assortment of rare spices. In some cases, the only solution was to go right to the source and order it from foreign countries or go through their embassies. The unusual names of some of the dishes must have made even the coolest in the group doubt for a moment. For example, the name *Go'o-Yosopy* gave absolutely no clue as to what was in store while the dish Wolf on Bread seemed a little frightening until it was discovered to be harmless me-

dallions of sea bass baked between thin slices of bread. Old recipes called for old drinks and so past concoctions like barley water, cinnamon water, and *bipocrás* were also served. *Hipocrás*, a popular period drink, was a curious combination of claret wine, ginger, cinnamon, cloves, sugar, and orange blossom water. When the three days were over, all the hard work had certainly paid off as the conference was a tremendous success. There is even talk of repeating it again in the not too far off future.

The enterprising spirit of the kitchen staff, however, does not stop here. Since 1984, the *Parador* in Trujillo and other institutions have organized the International Cheese Gastronomy Conference in May of every year. Specialists, people in the restaurant business or from the world of commerce, and so on come together to savour dishes prepared with some of the world's best cheeses, including the wide variety produced right at home in Extremadura. For the length of the conference, the *Parador* restaurant and the other principal restaurants in Trujillo offer special menus whose central theme is cheese-based dishes. Recipes like Iber Cheese Souffle in a Shrimp Sauce and Iber Cheese-Eggplant Torte are sure to make the mouth water. But of course it is not necessary to wait for a special occasion to enjoy a delicious meal at the *Parador*. The varied regional cuisine assures visitors that no matter what time of year you stop by, there will always be something on the menu to suit your fancy. (See recipes for some delicious Extremeñan favorites.)



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RECIPES FROM THE PARADIA IN GUADALUPE

Onion Soup

Serves four
1 large onion, chopped;
1 litre chicken broth;
1 chunk bread;
olive oil.

Cut the bread in thin slices, toast, and set aside. Sauté the onion in oil until golden. Pour in boiling chicken broth and add bread. Season with salt and serve very hot.

Monastery-style Cod

Serves six
1 kilogram cod fillets, cut up into pieces;
1/4 kilogram cooked chopped spinach (equiv. to 2 Kg. raw);
3 cloves of garlic;
1 decilitre milk;
1 decilitre mayonaisse;
olive oil.

Previously desalt cod for 24 to 48 hours depending on thickness. Drain and dry. Using a mortar and pestle, crush garlic. Add mayonaisse and then pour in milk little by little. Lightly sauté cod in oil. Mix in spinach and mayonaisse mixture. Cook over medium heat for about 8 minutes.

Extremeñan Lamb Stew

Serves six
1.2 kilograms lamb, cut into pieces;
150 grams lamb's liver;
150 grams red pepper, finely chopped;
150 grams onion, finely chopped;
2 bread rolls, sliced;
1 garlic bulb;
1 teaspoon paprika;
4 bay leaves;
1/2 litre strong red wine;
olive oil.

The simple, unpretentious design of the Convento de Santa Clara communicates its silent nobility. Restoration work began in 1982 and was completed in 1984.

Lightly brown the lamb in oil. Mix in onion, red pepper, half of garlic (chopped), and bay leaves and stir until coated with oil. Pour in wine and cook over low heat until lamb is tender. If liquid evaporates too quickly, add a little water. Meanwhile, fry liver, bread, and remaining garlic, and then puree in a blender. Add this paste to lamb once it is tender. Cook for a minute. If the sauce is too thick, add a little water. Sauce should be thick and scarce.

Muégado de Guadalupe (Honey Ring)

300 grams flour;
6 whole eggs;
2 half-eggshells olive oil;
1/2 kilogram honey;
2 egg whites, beaten stiff;
olive oil for frying.

Beat whole eggs for 3 minutes. Add oil. Beat in flour little by little. Put dough into a pastry funnel (attach small mouthpiece) to form 10-centimeter-long strips. Fry in hot oil. Cook honey over medium heat for about 15 minutes. It is done when a small amount dropped into cold water immediately becomes hard. Remove from heat. Break the fried strips into pieces and mix into honey. Shape into a large ring. Decorate with beaten egg whites using a cake-decorating funnel.

RECIPES FROM THE PARADIA IN TRUJILLO

Tomato Soup with Figs

Serves four
100 grams small fresh figs, peeled;
400 grams chopped tomatoes;
100 grams slightly hard bread, cut in thin slices;
2 cloves of garlic;
1 litre broth or water;
olive oil;
paprika.

In a saucepan, sauté the garlic in a little oil. Add tomatoes and continue to sauté. Add paprika and then pour in broth or water. Cook for 10 to 15 minutes. Stir in bread slices. Season with salt and remove from heat. Serve with the figs on the side.

Old-fashioned Green Lamb

Serves four
1.2 kilograms lamb, cut up in pieces;
1 head of lettuce;
100 grams green peppers, cut open;
1 small bunch of coriander;
50 grams pine kernels or almonds;
1/2 litre white wine;
1/2 litre broth;
olive oil;
pinch of cinnamon.

Season the lamb with salt and cinnamon. Brown in oil. Chop up lettuce, coriander, and pine kernels (or almonds). Wrap this mixture up using green peppers to form a -pineapple- shape, and then secure with a string. Next, brown this -pineapple- in the pan with the lamb, remove, and crush using a mortar and pestle. Add wine to lamb and cook for approximately 1/2 hour to allow wine to boil down. Then add broth and crushed -pineapple-. Cook over low heat until lamb is tender, approximately 1 hour.

Bienmesabe del Convento

Almond Tarts:
1 kilogram ground almonds;
1 kilogram sugar;
12 egg yolks;
1/4 litre water.

Combine the sugar and water and boil until it forms a thin syrup. Remove from heat and mix in ground almonds, stirring with a wooden spoon always in the same direction. Add the egg yolks one by one, mixing well after each one. Return to a low heat until it begins to bubble (about 5 minutes). Remove and spread mixture into wafers (see recipe below).

Recipe for Wafers:
100 grams ground almonds;
100 grams corn flour;
50 grams sugar;
3 eggs.

Combine all ingredients to form a dough. Roll out very thin and cut out round wafers. Bake in a medium oven for three minutes. Upon removing from oven, place in hollow molds (little bowls or cups can be used) so that they take on a pretty shape. Once shaped and cooled, remove from molds. They are now ready to be filled with 1 or 2 spoonfuls of bienmesabe.



FOR TWENTY-SEVEN YEARS NOW, the staff at the Delfin Restaurant have worked together to build up the reputation this restaurant now enjoys. The experience serves as a model for a gastronomic renaissance in the region.

Everything at Its Best

Text and Photos: **Restauradores**

The region of Valencia is home to a good part of the Spanish population and an attractive vacation spot for a large tourist population; it has fertile farmlands and excellent fishing and hunting. Despite this, however, the number of top-quality restaurants is still relatively limited. One of the most outstanding is the *Delfin* Restaurant, located on the waterfront in the sunny city of Alicante. Thanks to the dedication and adventurous spirit of its owner-manager and its first-class team of professionals, this restaurant enjoys tremendous success. It started out in 1961 in a modest locale in the port section of

the city known as the *Explanada*. Right from the beginning, people thought this was a foolish decision since this part of the city was looked on as -the wrong side of town-: the better restaurants were, for the most part, located along the *Rambla* in the direction of Postiguet beach. But for a businessman willing to take risks the location did have its advantages;



with not a single competitor in sight, the field was wide open. *I started in this business with little to my name, but, as they say, where there's a will, there's a way,* reminisces restaurant owner Miguel Martínez, *I had to find something since my previous business activity had gone bad for reasons outside my control. So I picked up and came to this marvelous city to start anew. Of course, I had to start small, but I had big plans. I knew that if I wanted to one day have a really good restaurant, it would take a lot of dedication and hard work. And for this, I needed a team of people committed to this goal. So, I'd burn the midnight oil studying up on the restaurant business, and I set out to find just the right people, especially the head chef, the maitre d's, the administrators, and others. And I must say, as far as choosing the staff is concerned, I was right on the mark!*



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This is especially true when it comes to the head chef José Manuel Varó, an Alicantean who as part of the original team turned out to be key to the restaurant's success. As the restaurant grew, so did the skill of its head chef, who was capable of being both conservative and bold in this art. With the encouragement and support of the owner, José Manuel's talents found their fullest expression. The proof lies in the special character of the cuisine served at the Delfin. *Miguel and I see things the same way, explains José Manuel Varó, and that's the key to my professional success. To be a good cook, you, of course, need to have a certain amount of natural talent, a permanent interest in learning the tricks of the trade and its golden rules, and a love for your work. But that's not enough. If you don't have someone backing you up at the business end — someone who motivates you and pushes you on, someone who believes in you — you won't get very far. I'm convinced of it.* Owner Miguel Martínez sets up opportunities for his chef to visit the major restaurants in Spain, Italy, and France. He believes that it is important to find out what is going on at the best establishments and keep up with the latest gastronomic trends so as to selectively incorporate new ideas, adapting them to the particular personality of the restaurant. The goal is to strike a balance between the old and the new, holding on to time-tested culinary traditions of the region (often requiring a more laborious preparation) while at the same time evolving a cuisine of international standing. *Regional gastronomy is our point of departure; at least that is what we try to do. From it, we move on to create a top-quality cuisine capable of pleasing both the client looking for tradition and the one looking for innovation. After all, it's the clients who make a restaurant. And with our regular customers, it's a two-way relationship, with each contributing to the other. At least that's the way I understand this business.*



Fifteen years after the restaurant opened, the locale was completely redone and expanded.

A GASTRONOMIC RENAISSANCE

Time has shown that Manuel Martínez found just the right formula for success. Fifteen years after the restaurant opened, the locale had to be completely redone and expanded in order to keep up with its rapidly growing fame. Boasting the honor of "Best Restaurant" in the region of Valencia, it reopened its doors in 1977. Before long it was considered one of the best in all of Spain as can be seen by the high ratings it receives in the principal gastronomic guides. *Now that we're established and our cuisine is highly appreciated, we're moving into the second phase, explains Miguel Martínez, I want to improve the table service, the decor, the equipment, the wine and liqueur list, etc. ... in short, to bring the quality of our customer service up to the high standards of our cuisine. We want the customer to know we're out to please him, not only in the food we serve but also in the service we offer.* And this is exactly where the talents of two first-class maitre d's come

in. José Gumiel and Francisco Ramón — two Alicanteans who have been with the restaurant since the beginning — are masters at their trade. In times when maitre d's are either totally absent or overbearingly present, these two stand out for the artful way in which they assist and make suggestions to customers.

For twenty-seven years now, the staff at the Delfin Restaurant have worked together to build up the reputation this restaurant now enjoys. The experience serves as a model for a gastronomic renaissance in the region of Valencia — a renaissance capable of imagining new rice dishes without leaving behind the traditional ones. At the Delfin, we find the innovative Rice with Cuttlefish in its Ink, Rice with Veal, and Rice with Tuna and Rabbit alongside the traditional Baked Rice, Rice on the Side, and Paella. In addition, a renaissance should bring in new flavors of haute and nouvelle cuisine as the Delfin Restaurant does with its superb Lobster in Whisky Sauce, its exquisite Shrimp-Stuffed Gilthead in a Pastry

Shell, or its Grilled Pigeon with Truffles. As the theme of this present issue is rice, we've decided to include for you some of the popular rice dishes served at the Delfin Restaurant. Bon Appetit!

Recipes

Alicante Paella

- Serves six
- 1.2 kilograms chicken
 - 300 grams burbot
 - 300 grams shrimp
 - 750 grams rice
 - 250 grams red pepper, cut into 6 pieces
 - 300 grams crushed tomato
 - 1 bulb of garlic
 - 1/4 litre olive oil
 - saffron

Cut up chicken and boil with garlic for about 10 minutes. In a paella pan or large frying pan, fry the red pepper and shrimp in oil. Set aside. In same oil, fry chicken, fish, tomato, and garlic. Add rice and lightly sauté. Pour in chicken stock and season with salt and saffron. When done, garnish with red pepper and shrimp. Cooking time is approximately 20 minutes.

Baked Rice

- Serves six
- 500 grams rice
 - 600 grams chicken, cut up
 - 250 grams sausage, cut up
 - 250 grams pork ribs, cut small
 - 250 grams meatballs
 - 100 grams chickpeas
 - 200 grams crushed tomato
 - 1 fresh tomato, cut into 6 slices
 - 1 bulb of garlic
 - 1 1/2 decilitre olive oil
 - salt
 - saffron
 - meat stock

Cook chickpeas until tender. In a clay casserole dish, heat oil and fry tomato slices.

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Remove and set aside. Do the same for meatballs and sausage. Then fry garlic, chicken, and pork ribs. Add crushed tomatoes and boil to reduce liquid. Mix in chickpeas and rice and lightly sauté. Add meat stock, tomato slices, meatballs and sausage. Bake for about 20 minutes.

Arroz a Banda (Rice on the Side)

Serves eight
 3 kilograms fish, various types
 1 kilogram fish offals
 300 grams peeled shrimp
 1 kilogram rice
 1 crushed tomato
 4 dry red peppers
 2 whole fresh tomatoes
 1/4 litre olive oil
 garlic
 parsley

Boil fish offals in water to obtain a fish stock. In a casserole big enough to accommodate fish, fry red peppers in 1 decilitre of oil. Remove and set aside to cool. Put crushed tomato and fish in casserole and cover with fish stock. Cook for about 15 minutes or until fish is done but not falling apart. While fish is cooking, add the 2 whole tomatoes (they will be used to make the *salmorreta* sauce). In a *paella* pan or large frying pan, sauté shrimp, rice, and two spoonfuls of *salmorreta* sauce (recipe below) in 1/4 litre oil. Add enough strained fish stock to cook rice, which should be dry and golden when done. Let stand for 3 or 4 minutes. Cooking time is about 20 minutes.

Salmorreta Sauce: With a mortar and pestle, crush red



Rice with tuna and rabbit.



Baked rice.

peppers, garlic, parsley, and peeled and deseeded tomatoes. Macerate in olive oil, salt, and the juice of half a lemon. Pour over fish before serving. A garlic mayonnaise sauce can also be served with the fish.

Note: The rice is customarily eaten before the fish.

Rice with Tuna and Rabbit

Serves six
 500 grams rice
 500 grams diced tuna
 1 rabbit (1 kilogram)
 100 grams red pepper, cut into 6 strips
 200 grams crushed tomato
 100 grams chickpeas
 1 bulb of garlic
 2 peeled cloves of garlic
 2 decilitres olive oil
 rabbit liver
 saffron
 salt

Cook chickpeas with bulb of garlic in enough water so as to later have sufficient stock to use in cooking rice. In a *paella* pan, heat oil and fry rabbit liver. Remove. Using a mortar and pestle, crush liver and 2 cloves of garlic to make a fine paste. Fry the red pepper and tuna, and set aside. Lightly fry rabbit till done. Add crushed tomato

and allow liquid to reduce. Mix in chickpeas and rice. Sauté till rice is coated. Add chickpea stock, liver paste, and saffron. After rice has been cooking for five minutes, add tuna, pepper, and salt. Cooking time is approximately 20 minutes.

Rice with Small Cuttlefish

Serves four
 400 grams rice
 1 kilogram small cuttlefish
 1 decilitre olive oil
 1 dry red pepper
 1 bulb of garlic
 3 ripe tomatoes
 parsley
 olive oil
 lemon juice

Clean cuttlefish. Cook (do not remove their ink) in a moderate amount of water. In a *paella* pan, heat oil and fry red pepper. Remove. Using a mortar and pestle, crush red pepper, garlic bulb, tomatoes, parsley, oil, and lemon juice to make a *Salmorreta* sauce. Add a couple spoonfuls of this sauce along with rice to oil in *paella* pan. Lightly sauté and then add cooked cuttlefish and its stock. Season with salt and saffron. Cook for 18 to 20 minutes.

Serve with a mayonnaise garlic sauce.

Rice with Veal

Serves four
 350 grams rice
 2 veal legs, slit open (approx. 2.5 kilograms)
 100 grams salami
 50 grams black pudding
 1 ham bone (approx. 200 grams)
 2 onions
 3 ripe tomatoes
 200 grams cooked chickpeas
 2 peppercorns
 6 cloves
 4.5 litres water
 1 decilitre olive oil
 salt
 saffron

In a pressure cooker, put veal, ham bone, 1 tomato, 1 onion, peppercorns and cloves in 4.5 litres of water. Cook for 2 hours. Once done and cooled off, remove bones and cut veal into small pieces. Put aside. Strain the stock (there



Arroz a banda.

should be about 2 litres). In a saucepan, heat 1/2 decilitre olive oil and sauté remaining chopped onion, 1 chopped tomato, salami, and diced black pudding. Add veal and 1/2 litre stock. Cook for 10 minutes. Meanwhile, in a clay casserole, heat 1/2 decilitre olive oil and sauté garlic till golden. Mix in remaining chopped tomato and reduce. Add chickpeas and rice, and lightly sauté. Pour in remaining stock and cook for 5 minutes. Stir in veal mixture. Cook for 15 more minutes. Remove from heat and let stand for 5 minutes (it will continue to cook).

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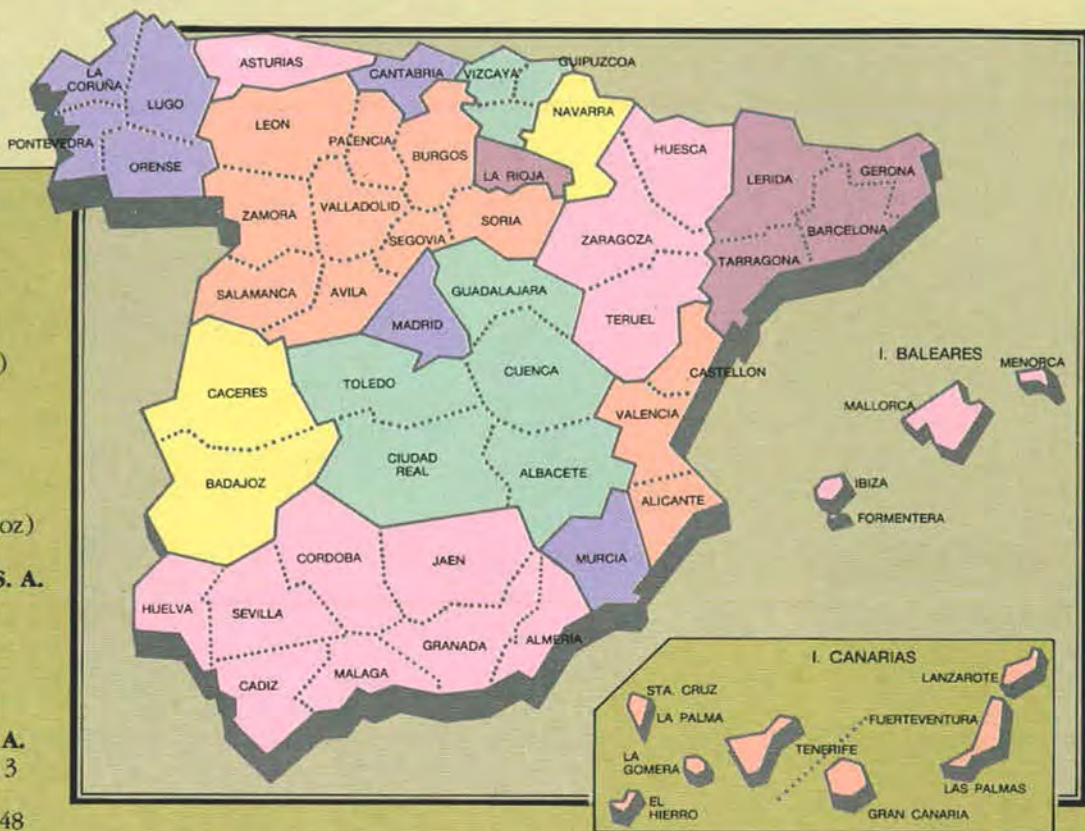
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A Painter for All Seasons

Luis Meléndez chose to devote his talents to painting still-lives even though this genre was not highly regarded by many of his contemporaries. Meléndez followed in the steps of the great Spanish painters of the seventeenth century and was faithful to the direction marked out by them. He did not allow himself to be influenced by the Italian and French styles encouraged by the Royal court and in fashion at the time.

This painting, *Bowl of Cherries with Pitcher and Cheese*, is one of a series of still-lives which Meléndez painted for the Royal Palace in Aranjuez. They were part of a project whose central theme was the four seasons and in which the artist sought to reflect on canvas the variety of foods produced in Spain throughout the year. As we can see in the sober, basic quality of this painting, Meléndez was greatly influenced by traditional Spanish realism. Here we find nothing of the more frivolous *bel air* or *grace* in vogue at that time. The painting's simplicity and austerity reveals the artist's admiration for two earlier painters, Sánchez Cotán and Zurbarán, although its mood is quite different. The spiritual or mystical atmosphere of his



Text: **Joaquín Pacheco**
Photo: © **Prado Museum, Madrid**

predecessors' paintings here solidifies into pure realism. Meléndez depicts each object with an almost scientific precision, reflecting his background as a miniaturist and the growing scientific interest of the age. In this painting, an intense light accentuates the color of each object and brings out its textural qualities. In the meticulously geometrical composition we can divine the harmonious, almost

musical interconnections among the different elements. For example, the triangle formed by the plums at right interplays with the adjacent three faces of the block of cheese; the cord-like imprint on the rind of the cheese ties in with the ceramic cord handle of the pitcher; the flower on the pitcher then comes together in a virtuoso line which blends into the stems of the cherries, and these in turn

bring the eye back to the cheese. The large, open background space lends a monumental quality to the objects, and in the lack of open space on each side, the objects move toward us as if in a camera close-up. All of these things bring us closer to the artistic sensitivity which is later found in followers of Cezanne and in the metaphysical painters.

Short Biography

Luis Meléndez de Ribera was born into a family of painters in 1716. During the first years of his life, his family lived in Naples, Italy, where his father worked for a number of years. They later moved to Madrid where Meléndez's artistic development began at an early age. As a young man, he studied at the San Fernando Art Academy but was expelled in 1748 when his father had a nasty falling out with the academy. In the following years Meléndez worked alongside his father as a jewelry and book miniaturist, on occasion painted portraits, travelled throughout Italy, and finally ended up specializing in still-lives. Throughout his life he strove to be commissioned as a royal court painter (a position held by his uncle) but never realized his dream. He died in poverty in 1780.

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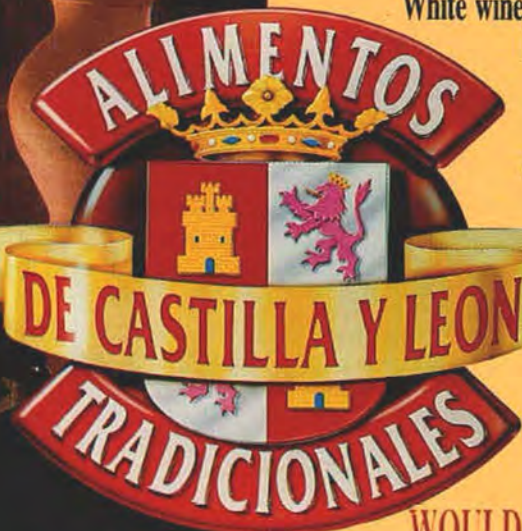
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The Masachs family secret

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.



José Masachs

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.

Cava
Louis de Vernier

Spain: where the party's never over.

Tambores de Calanda (Teruel).



Feria de Abril (Sevilla).

Los Verdiales (Málaga).



Torre Humana (Villafranca del Penedés-Tarragona).



Fallas (Valencia).

TANDEM 4008



Spain. Everything under the sun.

Music, people, colour, fun, wine, fireworks... these are the main ingredients of a "fiesta" in Spain. And you'll find them all even in the smallest of our villages.

So don't be surprised to learn that there are more than 3000 "fiestas" a year.

Can you imagine what it's like to work for a whole year on beautiful sculptures made from wood and papier-mâché, just to burn them in one day? You can't. Well, you should see it for yourself at the "Fallas" in Valencia.

... Or can you picture yourself at a "Fiesta on the move", with horses, carriages, Sherry and flamenco? You just have to be in Sevilla during the "Feria de Abril". These are just a few examples.

Come to Spain whenever you like. Whatever the season, one thing's sure: there'll be a "fiesta" starting.

When it's over, don't worry. The next one is about to start.