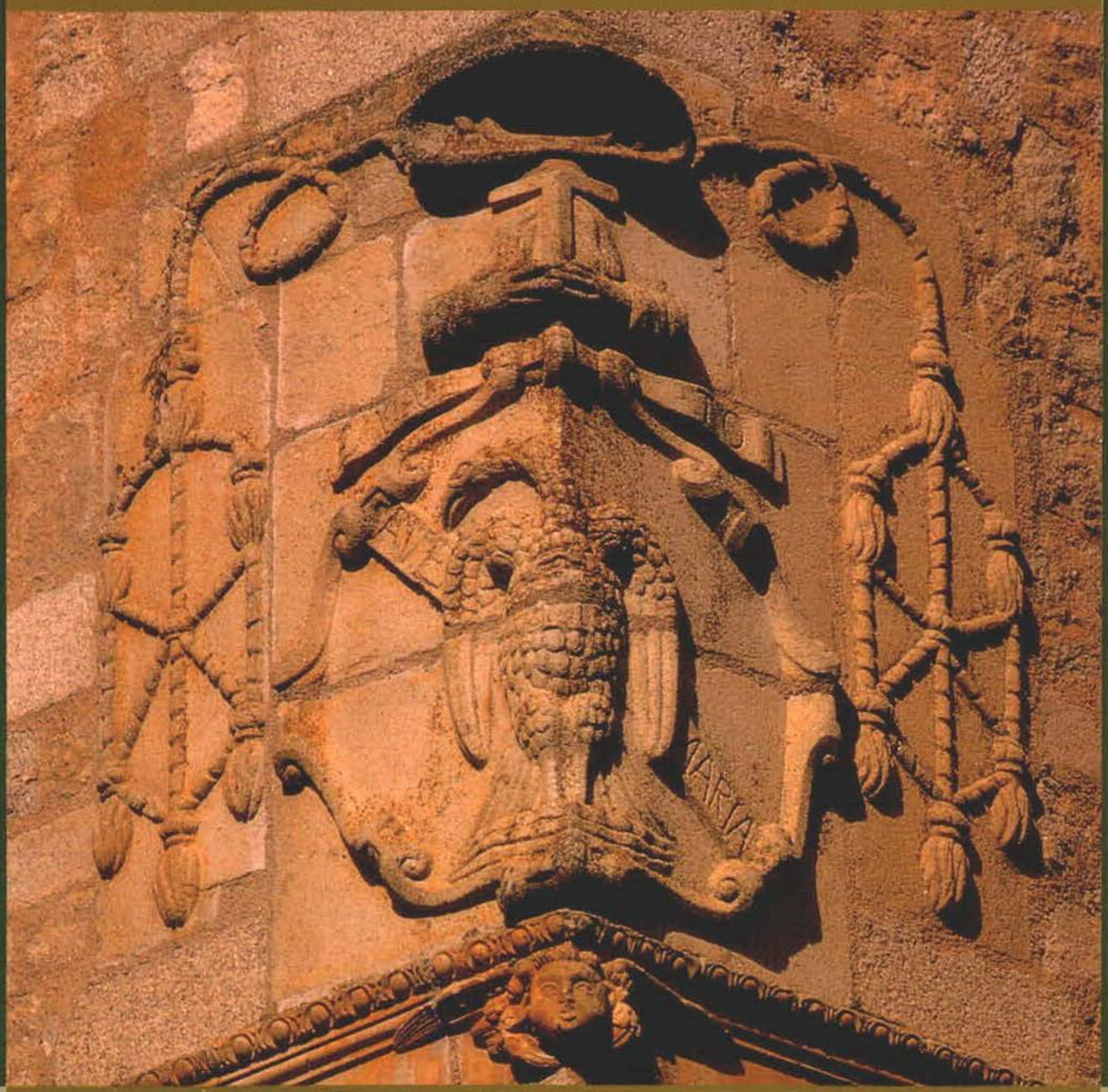
SPAIN GOURMETOUR

FOOD, WINE & TRAVEL QUARTERLY MAGAZINE



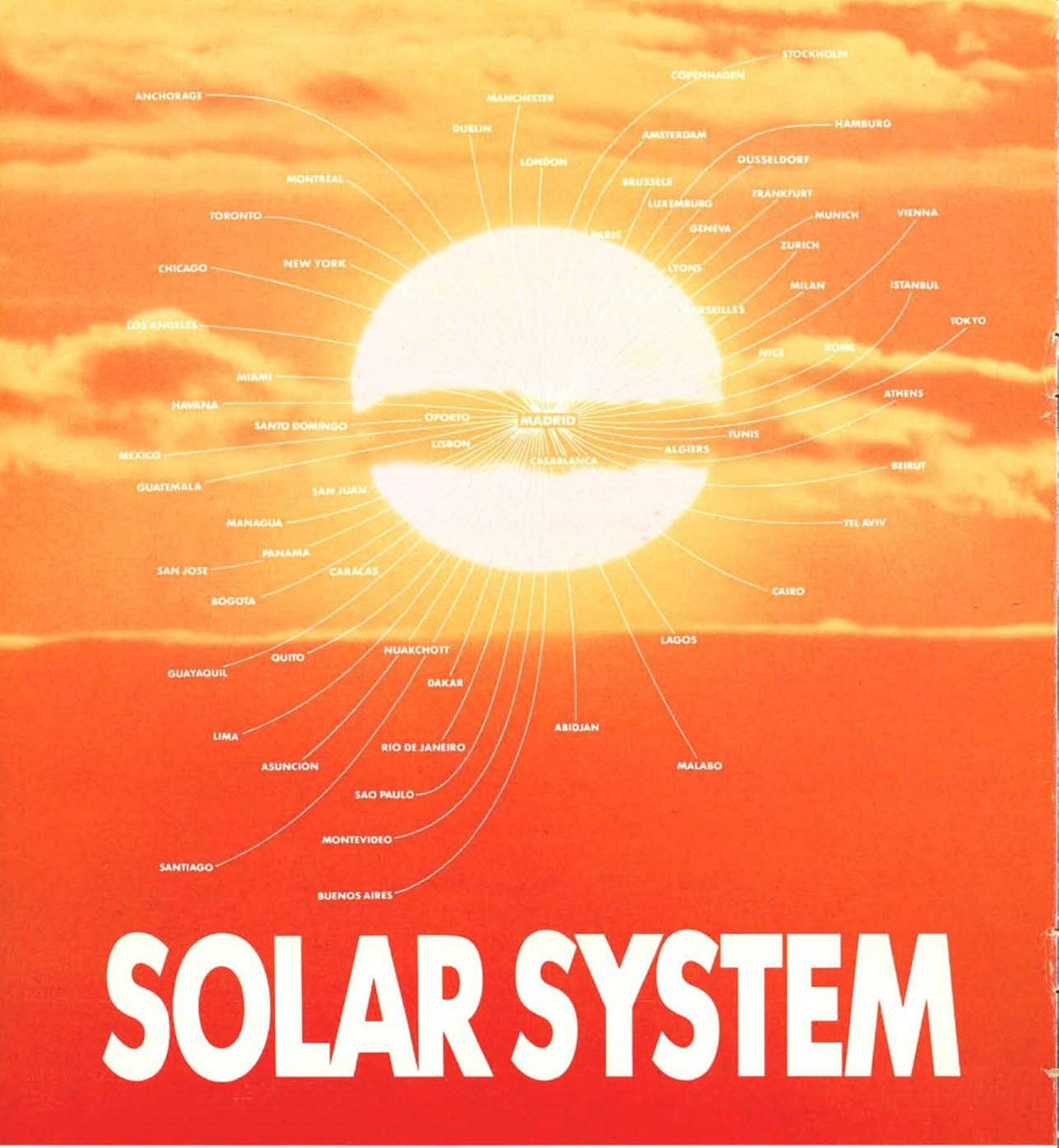
No. 19-2nd quarter 1990 - US $ 2

CACERES

RELIVING SPAIN'S HISTORY

THE RUEDA REVOLUTION

CANNED MUSHROOMS: ACCESSIBLE LUXURY



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Ayer

SPAIN GOURMETOUR

Summer's on the way, and all the luxuries the notion conjures up, like relaxing in the sun, with ripe fresh fruit, chilled wine and cooling ice creams close at hand. No wonder so many people head for Spain at holiday time.

And more and more are beginning to penetrate beyond its famous holiday costas and into the interior. There, in historic towns such as Cáceres, its palaces and plazas redolent of a glorious past, one of the major facets of the "real" Spain is waiting to be explored. And not just by culture-vultures: in Spain you can combine a top-notch golfing holiday with visits to cultural treasures with no problem at all.

In this issue we look, too, at relatively new Spanish commmercial products such as canned mushrooms and ice-cream, and at time-honoured ones like the famous cherries of the Jerte Valley.

Our wine section is devoted to Rueda where, in the heart of Spain's great central plain, a veritable wine revolution has been taking place over the last twenty years, producing white wines that are making a name for themselves world-wide.

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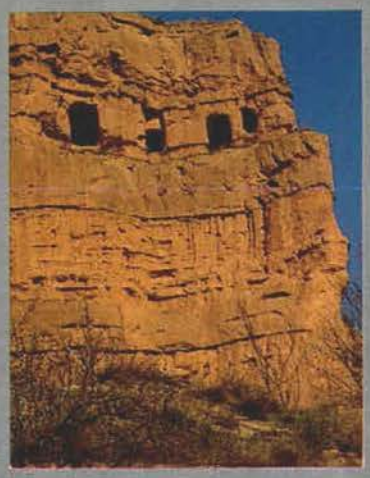
CANNED MUSHROOMS



ACCESSIBLE LUXURY

Over the last thirty years, Spain's mushroom business has... well... mushroomed.

The main growing areas are Cuenca, Albacete and, especially, La Rioja whose famous wine-cellars have also been known to serve as mushroom nurseries. Over half Spain's mushroom production is canned and exported to various foreign markets.

Fresh or canned, mushrooms are versatile little vegetables —a zesty addition to any main meal, indispensable in oriental cooking and a favourite pizza topping. With a practically zero calorie count, they are also a weight watcher's delight.

Text: **Ana Westley.** Photos: **M.ª Luisa Assens / S.C.**

Mushrooms have long been regarded as a delicacy in Europe dating back to ancient Greece and Rome. No ancient Roman dinner party was without them. Theodoric, King of the Ostrogoths had them on his favourite menus and King Richard II of England was known to be fond of them. Oriental cooking has also savoured mushrooms since the dawn of civilization.

Mushrooms are perhaps the best known fungi plants. The common table variety, *agaricus campester,* which gets its generic name from the Latin word for fields, *campus,* springs up occasionally in damp fields or pastures after soggy rainy days in spring or autumn. The French word for mushroom, *champignon,* and the Spanish adaptation, *champiñón,* originate from the fungi's Latin generic name for fields.

The English word mushroom, as well as the old fashioned name mushromp, is thought to derive from the French word for moss, as mushrooms frequentlly pop up in dark mossy places in forests. In Spanish edible wild mushrooms are called *setas* whereas in English there is no different word to distinguish wild mushroom from cultivated ones, although poisonous mushrooms are generally called toad stools. The Spanish word *champiñón* refers only to the cultivated variety.

Since time immemorial, mushroom fanciers also risked death if they happened to




Mushrooms have a peculiar growing process which lasts 90 days plus a month of compost preparation. After pasteurization, the compost is seeded by robot machines with mycelium and then packed into low cut plastic bags and stored in the mushrooms artificial tunnels to await the first sprouts.

eat poisonous mushrooms that were confused with the harmless varieties. Czar Alexis of Russia died from eating the fly mushroom, or *Fly amanita*. Even today, there is still a risk involved in eating wild mushrooms that have not been picked by experts, as newspaper accounts sadly testify.

FROM SINFUL EXTRAVAGANCE TO AFFORDABLE LUXURY

Yet, in spite of the fatal risks involved in picking wild mushrooms, mushroom cultivation did not develop until the Middle Ages. Legend has it that mushroom cultivation began in France 400 to 500 years ago when castles and the great cathedrals were being built. Horse manure dropped in stone quarry tunnels got trampled and mixed with straw. This mixture created the ideal compost for mushrooms which, much to the delight of the French, sprang up spontaneously -like mushrooms- in the dank quarry tunnels. Cultivation had begun.

By the 18th century, there was so much mushroom cultivation around Paris that table mushrooms became known as -Paris mushrooms- throughout Europe. The delicious French delicacy was even considered to be an almost sinful extravagance linked to the famous decadence of 18th century Paris. Indeed, to this day, Europeans still refer to the cultivated mushroom as -mushrooms from Paris-. By the end of the 19th century, cultivation techniques had been perfected to grow reliable mushroom crops around the world.

Today, thanks to modern agriculture, mushrooms are a luxury within everyone's price range. And, unlike other culinary delights, mushrooms can be enjoyed without a guilty conscience: they have practically no calories, no cholesterol, no fat and are high in fibre. Good news for weight watchers... but watch out for those rich tasty sauces!

CULTIVATION IN SPAIN

Mushroom cultivation in Spain is relatively recent, though wild mushrooms had long been a part of Spanish cuisine. Mushroom cultivation began in Spain about 30 years ago in the Rioja region and in the provinces of Cuenca and Albacete in La Mancha region (middle-east of Spain). In the famed Rioja wine region, mushroom cultivation began in old bodegas or wine cellars that had been carved out of the sides of rocky hills. According to local legend, the numerous caves hidden through the towns and villages were originally living quarters centuries ago. Some say that the first caves were carved into the face of cliffs by the Moors when Spain was under Arab domination (8th to 15th centuries). Once the caves were no longer inhabited they became ideal wine cellars. But as local wine producers formed co-operatives or were bought out by larger producers in the 1960s the caves were emptied, and were transformed into muhroom beds.

-Mushroom growing started out here in the Rioja and Navarre regions as a sideline family business-, recounts Juan San Miguel of Unichamp, a co-operative in Ausejo, Rioja, that has become one of Spain's major producers and exporters in just 12 years. Families converted their moldy bodegas into mushroom caves, -but you only get a good crop in the first few years-, he explained. Mushrooms don't grow without a throrough sterilization of the cultivation room, something that is almost impossible in ancient caves. Growers soon abandoned artisan cave cultivation and went professional with artificial tunnels. Eventually producers banded together in co-operatives such as Unichamp to finance a compost pasteurization plant, the basis of modern mushroom cultivation, and a canning processing plant.

The caves were emptied again, and became family bodegas or wine cellars used for special family feasts. One of the highest honours in the Rioja area is to be invited to a meal or banquet in someone's bodega cave.

BOOMING EXPORTS

In spite of Spain's economic recession in the 1970s and early 1980s, modern mushroom production thrived with better commercial cultivation techniques and large processing plants. Although domestic demand




The mushroom is hand picked and in two hours is already processed. Most of the processing is done by machines that cut off roots, chop, wash, scald, and even classify by size. But a final selection must be done by hand to weed out defective or discoloured mushrooms.

for cultivated mushrooms grew rapidly, producers couldn't meet demand until the end of the 1970s and Spain had to import canned mushrooms. But Spain's Rioja region was soon exporting to over 25 countries spread out over 5 continents. Nevertheless, Spanish consumption is still below the average European consumption, but is catching up fast. For example, West Germans consume about 3.5 kilos (8 pounds) per person a year (fresh and canned); the French just under 3 kilos (7 pounds), whereas Spanish per capita consumption is just below 1 kilo (2.2 pounds).

Last year, the Rioja produced some 25,000 metric tons of mushrooms out of a total national production of 70,000 tons. Most of this production, some 40,000 tons is canned while 30,000 tons are sold as fresh produce. Slightly less than half of Spain's total production, from 20,000 to 25,000 tons is exported, almost entirely as canned mushrooms, although a growing amount is exported as fresh frozen produce. The Rioja region cans 15,000 to 17,000 tons of mushrooms alone, most of which is exported. Spanish mushrooms are highly esteemed in Europe and the Middle East where they are considered far superior to cheaper and less flavourful Oriental imports. Spain's main clients are the U.S., Israel, Scandinavia, Switzerland, Germany, Italy, other European countries, and Arab countries. Restaurants and pizza houses are big customers.

Mushrooms are actually plants called fungi which have a peculiar growing process quite different from other vegetables. The main part of the mushroom plant actually grows underground and looks like a moldy web of fine threads packed together like a mass of felt. This part of the plant is called mycelium and grows from mushroom spores or spawn, a fine powder of microscopic -seeds-.

PECULIAR GROWTH

Fungi do not have chlorophyll and therefore, unlike green plants that produce carbohydrates directly from sunlight through photosynthesis, a fungus must obtain nourishment from other green plants or organic matter, such as old tree stumps, logs, decaying leaves, or even rich soil. With abundant moisture, the mycelium thrives entirely inside the material that nourishes it eventually causing rot.

With cultivated mushrooms, the entire process from spawn to canned or frozen product is strictly controlled to obtain reliable crops of the best quality and takes about 90 days plus a month of compost preparation. The basic compost ingredients for mushroom growing haven't changed much over the past 500 years: horse manure, straw, and some chicken manure (15 %, 75 % and 10 % respectively). What has changed is the mecanization and pasteurization of the compost mixture.

First, the straw and manure are sprinkled constantly for 3 days with recycled water, then are mixed together and wetted down again for another 3 days to promote anaerobic fermentation. Every 3 days machines stir up the compost which is piled in giant block-long rows measuring 6 feet (2.5 m) high and 6 ft. (2.5 m) wide as it is conveyed toward the pasteurization chambers. Steam seeps through the fermenting mass and is a visual reminder that the compost is -cooking- already at 60 degrees C (140° F.). Four kilos (9 pounds) of compost will produce 1 kilo (2.2 pounds) of mushrooms.

After pasteurization in which all bacteria, insects, and mold are killed, the compost is seeded by robot machines with mycelium which, in Unichamp's case, were rye seeds dusted with mushroom spawn. To an untrained eye, the rye seeds look molded. Other grains such as wheat seeds can also be used. The grain must be previously cooked to prevent germination. The seeded compost is then packed into low cut plastic bags and stored in the mushroom tunnels to await the first sprouts. After 17 days in which the mycelium has grown out like webby threads throughout the compost bed, a 5 cm. (2 inch) topping layer of peat or turf mixed with coarsely ground gravel is added. It takes an average of 40 days to see the first -pinheads- or tiny knots or heads of new growth shaped like a miniature ball. Within a few days, the pinhead turns into a tiny button which then seems

Recipes

RESTAURANTE PALACIOS
Ctra. Zaragoza, 6
Alfaro, Rioja
Tel.: (41) 180-100
Owner: José Palacios

This restaurant is a must for anyone wishing to taste excellent local Rioja wine along with distinguished cuisine. For hurried travellers there is a main level dining room with a standard, but tasty, meal of the day. But for a real treat, try the downstairs bodega/museum restaurant. Ask to visit the wine and bodega museum to appreciate how wine was made in days of old. There is also a fossil and mineral collection upstairs that is worth a stroll.

The well designed underground restaurant has the perfect atmosphere for a memorable meal. Decorated with selected wine-related antiques, a few rare minerals and crystals, and original paintings, you soon feel at home. Try their own Herencia Remondo wines which are all superb. José Palacios suggests a rosé wine to accompany his favourite mushroom recipes which follow.

Although Palacios uses fresh local mushrooms for his restaurant, canned mushrooms may be substituted with almost equal results.

Mixed mushrooms, artichokes, and carrots
(Revuelto de champiñón, alcachofas y zanahorias)

Serves 2

10 large sliced mushrooms
8 sliced artichoke hearts
1 carrot, slivered
Salt to taste, small glass of brandy, olive oil

Lightly sauté artichokes in olive oil. Add carrot slivers and sliced mushrooms. Season with a dash of salt to taste, then add a small glass of brandy, flame, and continue cooking for two minutes. Serve immediately.

Sauté mushroom with shrimp
(Champiñón a la plancha con gambas)

Serves 2

8-9 large mushroom heads
16-18 shrimp
(2 shrimp per mushroom head)
Salt, olive oil, lemon juice

Try to obtain mushroom heads that are about the same size. Chop off stem and wash.

Separately, peel the shrimp bodies. Lightly grill with olive oil and parsley.

Place mushrooms gill side down on grill for 5 minutes. Salt, turn over and sprinkle with a little olive oil. Add two shrimp in each mushroom cup. Squeeze some lemon juice and let grill for another five minutes. Serve hot.

Mushroom with garlic
(Champiñón al ajillo)

Serves 2

10 mushroom heads, finely sliced
Salt, olive oil, garlic, to taste

Clean, wash, and slice mushrooms. Sauté on low heat. Salt to taste. When almost browned add garlic slivers and parsley. Brown together and remove from heat. Serve at once.

Mushrooms fried in batter
(Champiñón rebozado)

Serves 2

8 mushrooms, sliced
1 egg
flour, lemon, salt, and olive oil

Clean and wash mushrooms, slice. Separately, beat 1 egg. Dust mushrooms with slightly salted flour, then dip in egg. Heat abundant oil in frying pan. Add mushrooms and fry for about 5 minutes. Remove mushrooms and place on a plate with a cloth or paper towel to absorb excess oil. Serve with lemon.



Canned mushrooms are versatile vegetables for cooking: mushroom with garlic, mushroom fried in batter, sauté mushrooms with shrimp.

to shoot up quickly. Within a week the buttons reach the small button stage, with the head or knob measuring 1 cm. (half an inch) across. It takes another 40 to 45 days for harvesting from the first pinheads to the last mushrooms. That makes a total of 90 days from seeding to harvesting, not including the month of compost preparation.

HARVESTING TWICE A DAY

Yet once a mushroom appears as a small button, growth occurs rapidly, the cap develops quickly, growing wider as the stem shoots up. The mushrooms must be harvested before a veil covering the gills breaks away to expose the ridges or -gills- that carry the spores for future reproduction. One mushroom carries millions of microscopic spores in its gills. Growers say that a mushroom that is a button one day, can be too big for harvesting the next, growth is so fast. Hence, it is not surprising that harvesting is done twice a day. The mushroom is hand picked and pulled from the compost bed by a slight twist of the wrist to break the stalk away from the mycelium.

The concrete tunnels that house the *champignonnière* or mushroom beds measure about 35 metres (115 ft.) long by 5 metres (16 ft.) wide. The average tunnel contains some 1200 plastic bag baskets or beds. A moldy but not unpleasant damp smell permeates the air which is circulated through automatic ventilation -chimneys-. Moisture and temperature must remain constant, ideally between 16-18 degrees C (63° F.). Automatic sprinklers maintain the correct moisture. Even though the tunnels are covered with 3 to 5 metres (10 to 16 ft.) of earth and insulation to replicate natural caves, a warm day in spring or fall can ruin a crop. For that reason mushrooms are not grown in the hot summer months. Nevertheless, there are still three crops a year from October to June.

FAIRY RINGS

After 40-45 days of harvesting, the mushroom beds are discarded, even though they may still be producing mushrooms. For some reason, after this amount of time, growth slows, and the mushrooms tend to become easily diseased. The tunnel is then washed down and sterilized with strong disinfectants for the next generation.

In the wild, mushroom spawn is also not able to grow in the same place for a long time. In the spot where mushrooms grew, the mycelium threads out and the mushrooms grow in wider and wider rings. Grass above mycelium tends to be thinner creating so called -fairy rings- that have so fascinated children around the world. In Anglo-Saxon folklore, fairies were supposed to have danced on the grass creating the mysterious circle. As the spawn decays, this fertilizes the soil, creating another dark green magic circle.

Off the rocks.
(It's Tío Pepe)

To really enjoy what's going on, it's a good idea to get off the beaten track now and again.

There's a special sensation to be found in discovering something a little out of the ordinary.

That's Tio Pepe, the best fino sherry produced in Jerez de la Frontera. Just sip it, chilled and dry.

Produced by **GONZALEZ BYASS**
SHERRY & BRANDY

TIO PEPE
It's the mood.

Fresh mushrooms have the most limited shelf life of almost any vegetable, as any housewife can testify after trying to preserve fresh mushrooms in the refrigerator for more than a couple days. Mold sets in almost immediately. In the Unichamp factory, mushrooms must be processed, canned or frozen in just 2 hours after being picked. That means that the tunnels must be near the processing plant to ensure top quality.

HIGHLY PRIZED ABROAD

Asian producers process mushrooms by storing them in brine where the mushrooms ferment. The brine is changed several times to whiten the mushroom, and then washed out. "With this process, most of the flavour and nutrients are lost", explained a Unichamp technician, who insisted that Spanish canned mushrooms are highly prized abroad for their exquisite and distinct flavour. "That's because we process almost immediately and don't use brine for storage. Asian cultivation is also done in the open air, making it more prone to brusque temperature changes, or total loss due to bad weather.

As in the rest of the industry, two independent laboratories control quality and sterilization. Most of the processing is done by machines that cut off roots, chop, wash, scald, and even classify by size. But a final selection must be done by hand to weed out defective or discoloured mushrooms. From then on, human hands do not need to touch the mushrooms. Stems and second quality mushrooms are separated for slicing or dicing for use in cream soups and sauces.

More recently, Spanish mushroom processing plants have also started deep freezing mushrooms for export as well with excellent results.

Composition of mushrooms in percentage

Water	88.00
Proteins	2.95
Fat	0.25
Carbohydrates	6.80
Fibre	1.00
Minerals	1.00

Comparative nutritious value of mushrooms compared to other foods:

Chicken	59	Mushroom	22
Beef	43	Cabbage	17
Pork	35	Cucumber	14
Soy beans	31	Corn	11
Spinach	26	Potato	9
Milk	25	Tomato	8

$$\text{Nutrition value} = \frac{\text{essential amino acids} \times \text{total proteins}}{100}$$

Source: Professional association of Rioja mushroom growers (Asociación profesional de champiñoneros de La Rioja)

LOW CALORIE NUTRITION

Since mushrooms have such a low calorie count, many gourmet cooks hardly considered them as a food but rather a prized condiment or embellishment to a dish. But this is hardly true as far as food value is concerned. Though low in calories, mushrooms are high in essential minerals and salts. The nutrition value of *agaricus campester* (essential amino acids times total proteins divided by 100) is not bad, just below spinach and well above corn, potatoes or tomato (see chart). A kilo (2.2 pounds) of fresh mushrooms is worth 310 calories (or 3.10 calories per 100 gram [3½ ounces] servings) and supplies large amounts of the B vitamins.

In Spain, mushrooms have become increasingly more popular as an entrée instead of as a garnish to another dish. Anyone trying the following recipes based on mushrooms as a first dish is bound to impress the most demanding gourmet guests.

REGISTERED WINE TRADE MARK
RUEDA

AGRICOLA CASTELLANA SDAD. COOPERATIVA
47491 La Seca (Valladolid).
Tlfno. 983-86 81 54.
Rueda Superior: **Cuatro Rayas.**
Rueda: **Veliterra y Pámpano.**
Dorado Rueda: **61.**
Pálido Rueda: **Campo Grande.**

ANGEL RODRIGUEZ VIDAL
47491 La Seca (Valladolid).
Tlfno. 983-86 81 17.
Rueda Superior: **Martinsancho.**

VINOS BLANCOS DE CASTILLA, S.A.
47490 Rueda (Valladolid).
Tlfno. 983-86 80 29.
Rueda Superior: **Marqués de Riscal y Reserva Limousin.**
Rueda: **Viña Calera.**

BODEGAS VEGA LA REINA, S.A.
47490 Rueda (Valladolid).
Tlfno. 983-86 80 89.
Rueda Superior: **Vega de la Reina.**
Rueda: **Vega de la Reina.**
Dorado Rueda: **Viña Rebelde.**

VINOS SANZ, S.A.
47490 Rueda (Valladolid).
Tlfno. 983-86 81 00.
Rueda Superior: **Vinos Sanz.**
Rueda: **Vinos Sanz.**

ALVAREZ Y DIEZ, S.A.
47500 Nava del Rey (Valladolid).
Tlfno. 983-85 01 36.
Rueda Superior: **Mantel Blanco y Mantel Nuevo.**
Rueda: **Nava Real, Escriño.**
Dorado Rueda: **Mantel Dorado.**
Pálido Rueda: **Mantel Pálido.**

BODEGA LOS CURROS, S.A.
47494 Fuente El Sol (Valladolid).
Tlfno. 983-82 40 16.
Rueda Superior: **Castical.**
Rueda: **Viña Bocu.**
Dorado Rueda: **Comunero.**

BODEGAS CERRO SOL
40460 Santiuste de San Juan Bautista (Segovia)
Tlfno. 911-59 60 02.
Rueda Superior: **Doña Beatriz y Cerro Sol.**

BODEGAS DE CRIANZA CASTILLA LA VIEJA, S.A.
47490 Rueda (Valladolid).
Tlfno. 983-86 81 16.
Rueda Superior: **Castilla la Vieja y Marqués de Griñón.**
Rueda: **Viña Colagón.**
Dorado Rueda: **62.**

ANGEL LORENZO CACHAZO
47220 Pozaldez (Valladolid)
Tlfno. 983-82 20 12
Rueda Superior: **Martivilli.**
Rueda: **Lorenzo Cachazo**

FELIX LORENZO CACHAZO
47220 Pozaldez (Valladolid).
Tlfno. 983-82 20 08.
Rueda Superior: **Carrasviñas.**
Dorado Rueda. **Delatierra.**
Rueda. **La Rua.**

FELIX JAVIER LLANOS BAYON
47490 Rueda (Valladolid).
Tlfno. 983-86 80 30.
Rueda Superior: **Viña Cimbrón.**
Rueda: **Blanco Rueda.**

S.A.T. LOS CURROS
47490 Rueda (Valladolid).
Tlfno. 983-85 80 97.
Rueda Superior: **Cantosan, Zapardiel.**
Dorado Rueda: **Dominus y Viejo Medina.**
Rueda: **Young Life.**

S.A.T. LAGAR NOBLE
47491 La Seca (Valladolid).
Tlfno. 983-86 82 39.
Rueda Superior: **Lagar Noble**

BODEGA J. PIMENTEL Y CIA., S.L.
47490 Rueda (Valladolid).
Rueda Superior: **Castilla**
Dorado Rueda: **El Montico**

WHITE WINES

CONSEJO REGULADOR DE LA DENOMINACION DE ORIGEN
RUEDA

Santísimo Cristo, 20
Tel. (983) 86 82 48
47490 RUEDA (Valladolid)

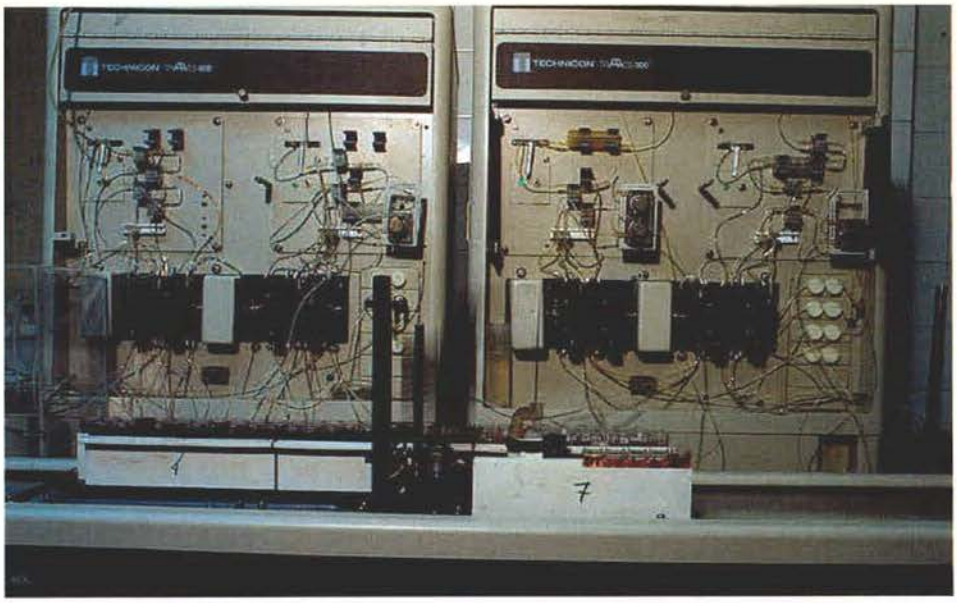
THE RUEDA REVOLUTION

Text: **Richard Lorant.** Photos: **Piedad Sancho-Mata**

The people of Rueda were making quality wines from the tangy Verdejo grape when Queen Isabel was born in nearby Tordesillas more than 500 years ago. But it is only over the last few years that the industry has modernized around the success of its fresh, young whites.

The cellars are everywhere. But as early as the 14th century, their arched passageways stand as testimony to the Rueda area's illustrious winemaking past. If you visit a winery in Rueda, La Seca or Pozaldez, chances are your tourguide will show you two things: an old cellar and a new piece of equipment for the already gleaming winery.

-See? You can see the pick mark. All this was done by hand-, Jesús



The Castile-Leon Oenological Research Station mixes traditional wisdom with technological wizardry to get the most out of this region.

González Yllera says, as he roams the cellars deep underneath S.A.T. Los Curros, the winery he owns with his brother in Rueda.

Several tunnels are still lined with the giant oaken barrels used to age the Medina del Campo wine that was already popular more than 500 years ago. Now the barrels are empty, happily sacrificed victims to the astounding success of Rueda's young white still wines.

González is a fourth-generation vintner. Thirty years ago, when his father ran the business, he and his brother crushed grapes with their feet. Last year, they spent more than $2 million to build a new cold-fermentation winery. Now, a pneumatic vacuum press does the crushing.

The warehouse that houses the white-wine operations of S.A.T. Los Curros is one of many that have sprung up in Rueda since the Marqués de Riscal winery settled here to produce a white wine to complement his prestigious Rioja red.

In 1972, after a long search with the assistance of French oenologist Emile Peynaud, Riscal set up its Vinos Blancos de Castilla winery on the outskirts of town, a few miles from the Duero River on the Castilian plateau.

Vinos Blancos de Castilla began paying bonuses to farmers who planted the autoctonous Verdejo grape, whose distinctive, low-slung vines dot the rocky soil. The Verdejo had been in decline ever since the late 19th century, when the phylloxera epidemic destroyed tens of thousands of hectares of vines in the region. The Verdejo offers a relatively poor yield, but its wine has a unique character, with a tangy touch that lingers on the palate.

The first Riscal whites produced by Vinos Blancos de Castilla in 1974 were smoky and subdued, aged in wooden cask and bottle. They were also very successful. Soon, the Riscal group was joined by another winemaker with noble origins, the Marqués de Griñón, who arranged for Bodegas de Crianza de Castilla la Vieja to produce his white. By 1980, when Rueda won status as a Denominación de Origen, D.O. (Denomination of Origin), most local wineries had become converts to the potential of an aromatic white still wine based principally on the Verdejo.

In a success story common to several Spanish regions, most notably in nearby Ribera de Duero, the decision to make Rueda a controlled winemaking denomination increased prestige by restricting production and improving quality.

In order to win the right to affix one of the D. O. Rueda back labels on their bottles, producers must use grapes from the 4,728 hectares (11,683 acres) registered with the Consejo Regulador (Regulator Council), a watchdog agency made up of vintners, growers and government officials. Rueda wine must contain at least 40 per cent.

Verdejo grapes; Rueda Superior must be at least 60 per cent Verdejo. In addition, the Consejo's tasting committee rejects each year those wines that do not reach their standards.

Since the Verdejo's sharp flavour —prized locally— takes some getting used to, most vintners prefer to blend it with must from the white Viura grape, also found in Rioja. There are also back labels for Pálido Rueda and Dorado Rueda, traditional fortified wines made from the Palomino grape, the same used in the Jerez triangle.

The real Rueda revolution did not come until the mid-1980s, when the demand for new, fruity wines convinced the wineries to eliminate ageing altogether and sell their wine fresh, immediately after bottling. The cold-fermentation process unloosed the full potential of the delicate Verdejo and gave the wine a lighter, more international flavour.

Bottled wine shipments tripled in five years, from 95,835 cases (each containing 12 bottles of 0.75 litres) in 1984 to 325,000 in 1988. The proportion of bulk shipments, meanwhile, has gone down as wineries increase their emphasis on quality. In 1984, bulk shipments made up 82 per cent of all production. By 1988, nearly half of all Rueda wine was bottled. About 20 per cent of the bottled wine was exported to 24 countries in America, Europe and Asia.

-Rueda has transformed itself very quickly, especially in the last five years-, says Pascual Herrera, director of the Castile-Leon Oenological Research Station located in the centre of town. -People here have a real entrepreneurial spirit.

The Wine Wizards

CASTILE-LEON OENOLOGICAL RESEARCH STATION

If today's best wineries are those that mix traditional wisdom with technological wizardry to get the most out of their soil and climate, the Castile-Leon Oenological Research Station is the great equalizer.

Located since 1987 in a beautifully restored 16th-century farmhouse in Rueda, the Research Station itself reflects the blend of old and new it promotes among vintners in Castile-Leon's nine provinces.

Hidden behind its thick, stone walls is one of the best-equipped oenological laboratories in Europe and a modern mini-winery where the Station produces own experimental wines.

The entryway, with its stone floor, sparse furnishings and high beamed ceiling, evokes past centuries. But as you, venture deeper inside, the hand-hewn oaken beams and wrought iron chandeliers give way to bubbling flasks, computers and stainless-steel deposits.

The mission of the Research Station is as vast and complex as Castile-Leon, which sweeps down from just below the northern Cantabrian mountains to the Sierra de Guadarrama in central Spain.

The Duero river, which cuts across the sunny plateau that covers much of Castile-Leon, is the region's main artery. From vineyards around the Duero and its tributaries comes wine bearing the labels of two well-known denominations.

Ribera de Duero (See Spain *Gourmetour,* no. 10) and other areas full of promise, like Toro (See Spain *Gourmetour,* no. 10) and Bierzo.

The Research Station acts simultaneously as a technical adviser, a quality control centre, an early warning system and a sophisticated soothsayer for vintners and growers all over the region —and it does so at prices that even the most humble of them can afford.

-People who don't have access to technology are left to their own devices-, says Pascual Herrera, the Research Station's director. -We can give them valuable help.-.

In his two decades as an agricultural engineer specialized in viticulture, Herrera has witnessed enormous changes

In a laboratory filled with bubbling flasks and computers, the technicians of the Castile-Leon Oenological Research Station help chart the course of wineries in one of Spain's most promising wine regions.

in the region, chiefly the spectacular rise of Ribera de Duero —long the home of Vega Sicilia, Spain's most expensive and, arguably, its best red— and Rueda, where the experiments of Marqués de Riscal spawned a modern industry devoted to producing fresh, fruity whites.

Ribera de Duero, Rueda, Toro and Bierzo wines are now protected by *Denominación de Origen* status, which groups representatives of wineries, growers and the government into *Consejos Reguladores* that chart the industry's course, regulate quality control and fix production limits.

The Research Station works closely with the *Consejos Reguladores,* conducting laboratory analyses, and supervising the yearly blind tastings that determine which wines win the right to bear Ribera de Duero or Rueda labels.

The Station's 13 staffers also provide general advice to the *Consejos,* and to individual growers and vintners in other areas.

The laboratory is internationally certified and can conduct content analyses required for exportation to certain countries, as well as check for the presence of dangerous chemicals or confirm cases of fraud. In addition, it offers 24-hour service to growers who want to check the sugar content of their grapes.

The Station grows grapes in 35 experimental plots scattered around the region, where it tests varieties, pesticides, trellising, spacing and watering techniques.

From the vineyards, the grapes go to the winery, located in a revamped former grain warehouse behind the main building. Here, the Research Station conducts experiments that commercial wineries shy away from due to lack of equipment or immediate cash returns.

The Station also bottles its wines for promotional use at agricultural and trade fairs.

-We never sell our wines-, manager Carlos González Huerta says as he points out the modern features of the winery, which has a capacity of 60,000 litres and can produce 45 completely different wines a year.

-Our idea is to improve technique, help the vintners, and organize tastings so consumers can learn about the wine that comes from our soil.-

This year, 40 wines from 12 different areas fill the temperature-controlled stainless steel tanks that line the winery, according to González, a 34-year-old chemist with two decades of winemaking behind him.

The operation is designed to produce a maximum-quality product, from the grapes' arrival in 20-kilo-capacity crates to the wine's trip by hydraulic lift down to the medieval cellars for ageing.

Downstairs, dozens of oak barrels sit in the arched passageways of the cellars. Behind an ancient iron grate, hundreds of bottles lie in cubbyholes, carefully classified. When they are finally uncorked, they may convince vintners in a certain area to switch yeasts, modify the fermentation process or even begin producing a different type of wine.

If the winery is a window on the future, the laboratory offers more imme-

diate results for both growers and producers.

The Research Station's technicians performed some 20,000 analyses last year, half of them to test for fraud and dangerous substances, according to chemist José Luis Galván.

Galván and José Antonio Fernández Escudero tick off the names of machines and chemicals in their two-room domain: this one checks for iron, lead and other metals; that one measures alcohol levels in two minutes; this one is an atomic absorption spectometer; that one's a gas chromatograph.

-I don't know which is my favourite, but this one is very good-, Galván says, pointing to a clicking unit that simultaneously measures malic acid, lactic acid, residual sugars and sulphurous anhydride at a speed of 80 tests-per-hour. -You can do in a morning what used to be a month's work.-.

Like other staffers of the Research Station, Fernández, who is on the tasting committee of the Rueda *Consejo,* combines a lifelong passion for wine with a belief in the value of technological advances.

He says the machines not only confirm the judgement of a good oenologist but allow him to go beyond what is humanly possible to determine by taste, smell and sight.

-The hand of the technician has a tremendous impact. His work is essential; you can taste the difference when a winery hires an oenologist, or switches from one to another-, Fernández says. -In the laboratory, we offer a chance to use equipment that can help the oenologist improve his work..-

-In the experimental winery, we can take risks that others cannot.-

The Research Station is one of the best-equipped oenological laboratories in Europe.

In order to win the right to affix one of the D.O. Rueda back labels on their bottles, Rueda wine must contain at least 40 per cent Verdejo grapes and Rueda Superior 60 per cent.

They have completely revamped the machinery-.

Although everyone in Rueda agrees that their future success is tied to the unique characteristics of the Verdejo, several wineries have begun making a varietal from French Sauvignon Blanc grapes, which have adapted extraordinarily well to the local climate.

MARQUES DE RISCAL

Once again, the Marqués de Riscal winery led the way. Riscal sold its first Sauvingnon Blanc varietal in 1985, after seven years of experiments with Chardonnay, Riesling and other varieties, operations chief Pedro Aznar says before showing off two new 28 tons capacity pneumatic vacuum presses.

The Vinos Blancos de Castilla winery, just north of the centre of town on the Madrid-Corunna highway and across the road from S.A.T. Los Curros, produces 3 million litres of wine a year, although only a fraction of that carries one of the three Marqués de Riscal labels.

In addition to the Sauvignon Blanc, the winery produces a young Rueda Superior, its best-seller, and a second Rueda Superior which is aged briefly in French oak and marketed in smaller quantities. Both are 80 per cent Verdejo. Fifty per cent of all Marqués de Riscal is sold abroad.

Across the highway, where the first of 110 acres of vineyards bought by the winery in Rueda and La Seca is ready to enter into production, Managing Director Felipe Ruiz surveys the land from a four-wheel-drive vehicle. In seven years, the rest of the vineyards will have been phased into production and fulfil half the winery's needs.

-The wine here is very personal. You could never find it anywhere else-, Ruiz, a Rueda native, says. -We could have sold a Rioja white, but it wouldn't have been as good-.

MARQUES DE GRIÑON

Antonio Sanz, the general manager and chairman of Bodegas de Crianza de Castilla la Vieja, couldn't agree more. His generation is the fifth to sell wine based on the Verdejo grape and he owns a 300-year-old cellar in La Seca to prove it.

Sanz produces white wine for the Marqués de Griñón and his own Bodegas de Crianza de Castilla la Vieja label in a rapidly expanding operation at the other edge of town, where workmen are erecting a building that contains a new set of vacuum presses and temperature-controlled stainless steel deposits.

This year, Sanz produced 5,800 cases of the Marqués de Griñón's young Rueda Superior. The Marqués de Griñón also expects to release a barrel aged Rueda Superior this year.

In addition, Sanz sells his own Rueda Superior, Castilla la Vieja, Solera 62 (Dorado) and a bottle-fermented sparkling wine called Palacio de Bornós. He exported 20 per cent of last year's production, which totalled 125,000 cases, mostly to Britain, West Germany and the United States.

Sanz also plans to begin producing a Sauvignon Blanc varietal from the vines he has planted on 22 hectares (54 acres) in Rueda. He owns 10 hectares (25 acres) of Verdejo and hopes to supply

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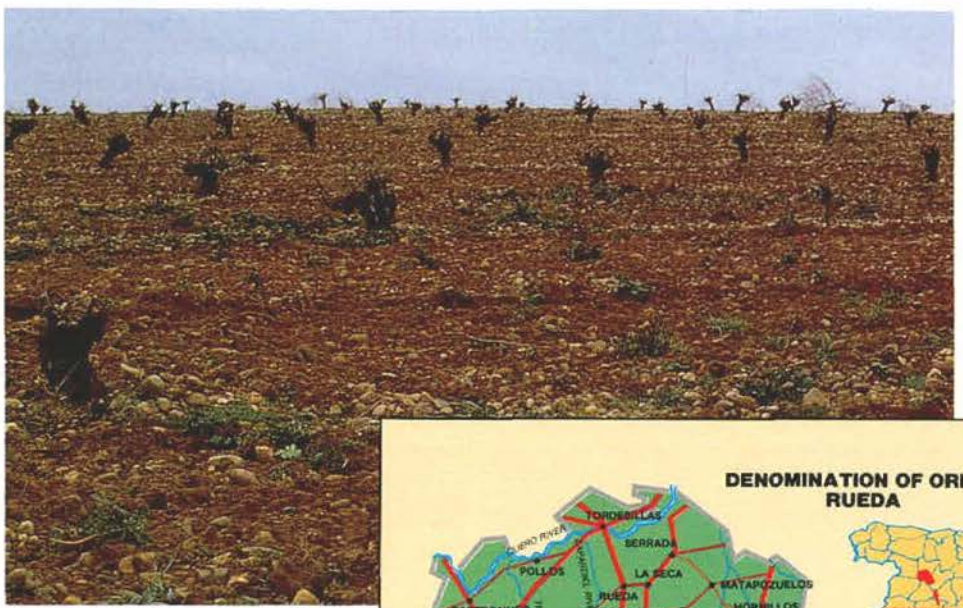

The Verdejo grape offers a relatively poor yield, but its wine has a unique character.

40 per cent of his own needs 10 years from now.

OTHER WINERIES

Next door to Bodegas de Crianza is Vinos Sanz, run by Antonio's father, Segundo, who owns the business along with Massimo Galimberti, the Italian owner of the Vinoselección wine club.

Vinos Sanz sells about 50,000 cases a year of Rueda Superior, Rueda and Sauvignon Blanc varietal, a quarter of it abroad. Segundo's 25-year-old grandson, Juan Carlos Ayala Sanz, took over the day-to-day management of the modern warehouse last year, after four years studying oenology in Valencia and apprenticeships in Bordeaux and Armagnac.

Last year, 30 per cent of the grapes it used came from its own vineyards, a figure that should rise when 70 new hectares come into production over the next several years. Ayala and his grandfather hope to relocate the winery's modern equipment and build a chateau-style operation around the family farmhouse, which is nestled in the vineyards close by the town.

Back on the other side of town, S.A.T. Los Curros is negotiating to buy 80 hectares (198 acres) of land adjacent to its 10 hectares of vineyards. Production last year was 48,000 cases, with exports to West Germany, Italy and Switzerland in the nascent stage.

The winery makes Viña Cantosán, a Rueda Superior that got its first boost when it was selected as Zalacaín's house white in 1980 (Zalacaín is one of the best restaurants in Spain. See Spain Gourmetour, no. 9), a Rueda, Tierra Buena, and a slightly bubbly Rueda Superior called Young Life. In addition, Los Curros this year released a bottle-fermented sparkling wine, Cantosan, and an excellent red from Ribera de Duero, Yllera.

Inside the new, 1-million-litre capacity winery, González is preparing a Sauvignon Blanc varietal for release this year. «I like Verdejo better, even though the Sauvignon is more expensive», he says. «But there's nothing wrong with experimenting. You can't fall behind the times.»

In the tiny towns around Rueda, several small vintners have been producing attention-getting wines over the last few years.

One is Angel Rodríguez, who began bottling Martinsancho from his own Verdejo grapes since 1981, and began exporting to the United States in 1987 when he produced a bit more than 2,000 cases of Rueda Superior.

The newest head-turner comes from a winery in the town of Pozález owned by Angel Lorenzo Cachazo and run by his son, Javier, a 25-year-old oenologist, who has set up a small, modern operation and drawn raves with his Rueda Superior, Martinvillí. Angel Lorenzo says his 20 hectares (49 acres) of Verdejo supply half his needs. The rest comes from growers in the town of 400 with whom he has a longstanding relationship.

In 1988, they bottled 5,000 cases of Martinvillí and 8,300 of their Rueda, called Lorenzo Cachazo. The former was one of the wines chosen by the Spanish Secretary of State for Commerce to serve at his delegation's official dinner at Vinexpo in Bordeaux last July. It also made the Sobremesa and Club de Gourmet lists of Spain's best 100 wines.

This year, 500 cases of Martinvillí are slated for export to the United States. And, according to members of the Consejo's tasting committee, the 1989 wine is even better.

Angel Lorenzo also has some hand-dug cellars below his home. But these do not date back to the middle ages. They were carved out by soldiers in 1874 under orders from Gen. Eulogio González Iscar, first citizen of Pozáldez and Spanish war minister.

THE SPAIN JUST WAITING TO BE TASTED.

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MAHON

A TASTE OF THE

CHEESE

Text: **Enric Canut**

The island of Menorca, in the heart of the western Mediterranean, exudes history from every pore, its very stones and place-names evoking a chequered past. This tiny paradise was invaded over the centuries by a succession of imperial powers, making it something of a cultural crucible.

It is famous for, among other things, its local cheese —Mahón— which has been made there for hundreds of years.

Still life: **Menchu Artime.** Still life photo: **Antonio de Benito**

MEDITERRANEAN

ENRIC CANUT

ENRIC CANUT

The chopped curd is transferred to a square of fine cloth (the* fogasser*) whose four corners are tied together to form a bag and the contents are then manually drained by pressing the bag in on itself.

The little island of Menorca, strategically placed in the western Mediterranean, has been occupied in the course of its long history by the Carthaginians, Romans, Arabs, French and English. And not just for its location: small, and therefore easily dominated, it also boasted one of the best ports in the whole Mediterranean and a gentle landscape and microclimate in which agriculture and livestock-rearing flourished, making it an ideal source of supplies.

These successive invaders are remembered in the local place-names. *Portus-Magonis*, today's port of Mahón, took its name from the Carthaginian general Mago (brother of Hannibal) who once wintered there. The town of San Luis was founded by the French and Georgetown (later to change its name to Villa-Carlos in honour of Charles III when it returned to Spanish hands) by the British, while estate names like Bini, Rafal, Cudía and Lluch date back to Arab times.

The landscape is undulating rather than mountainous, with little valleys and plains set among hills. The island is small but fertile, with a distinct difference between the rocks, hills and pine woods of the north and the deep gorges and rushing streams flanked by areas of fertile land in the south.

Menorca's enviable climate —temperately warm all the year round and with relatively high rainfall for a Mediterranean island (some 600 mm. a year)— make it something of a market garden. Its just over fifty thousand inhabitants live in neat little townships such as Mahón, Ciudadela, Alayor and Mercadal or in rural farms known as *llocs*. The *lloc* is the domain of the *payés*, as land-owning peasant farmers are traditionally known in the Balearics, and is also the original fount of Menorca's famous local cheese, Mahón.

NATURAL BOUNTY

Evidence has come down to us from nearly all periods of Menorca's history of the importance of agriculture in the island's economy. The Romans imported farming implements to improve the cereal yield and their own sheep to cross with the native breed to upgrade the quality of its wool. Arab historian Ashashaskandi relates that during the period of Islamic occupation, Menorca produced wine, meat and cheese which were sold on the Barbary Coast and to visiting traders from Provence, Genoa and Pisa.

In 1232, three years after the conquest of Majorca by Jaime I of Aragon (known as The Conqueror), the Arab ruler of Ciudadela paid a tithe of "three thousand *cuarteras* of wheat, a hundred cows, three hundred goats and sheep, two *quintales* of butter and two hundred boats for transporting the livestock". Later, after the death of Jaime, one of his sons, Pedro III of Aragon, called at Mahón with his fleet en route for a raid on the Barbary Coast. On that occasion he was presented with "livestock, eggs, cheese, butter and bread baked that day". This suggests that even then cattle (with the by-products of milk, cheese and butter) and sheep (cheese and wool) played a vital role in the island's livelihood. These, along with honey, wheat, pulses and wine were all highly exportable products on the busy trade axes of the western Mediterranean at the time of the Aragon monarchs. In the 15C, the Tuscan Datini brothers, traders from Lucca, arrived in Menorca to buy wool and were offered home-made cheese by the locals.

The islanders were to continue rearing their livestock as they always had until Menorca was taken over by the British in the 18C. Its first British Governor, Lord Kane, introduced new breeds of cows and sheep from France, Italy and North Africa to improve the native strains. Cattle took on an increased importance from this period on: cows were not only useful for farm work, but were also a good source of milk, cheese and butter. These commodities were by then in greater demand than wool which had declined in importance in favour of new natural fibres.

An English agronomist named Armstrong posted to Mahón, then the administrative capital of Menorca, observed in a monograph on the island that "its (cow's) milk, though not abundant, is good for making a cheese which is exported to Italy where it is preferred to Parmesan". Writing in 1742, Armstrong also provides a head-count of the island's livestock which amounted to over six thousand head of cows, mares and mules, sixty thousand sheep, twenty thousand goats and four thousand pigs.

MARKET FORCES

From the 1850s on, the nature of Mahón cheese was changed by the emergence of a commercial figure known as the collector who, for reasons about to be explained, was also a cheese finisher. The collectors were middle-class urban traders concentrated mainly in Alayor, though there were some in other towns, who acted as distributors of farm produce and foodstuffs in general. In return, the farmers made them a weekly payment in the form of fresh cheese produced on their *llocs*, which they would deliver personally to the collector's house.

There, in basements and cellars prepared for the purpose, the collectors finished and cured "genuine Mahón cheeses", capitalising on natural conditions within and without (the winds on Menorca can vary from cold and damp to warm and dry) and producing soft air-dried or mature cured cheeses which they would then export to other islands and to mainland Spain.

There are still cheese collectors and finishers in Menorca, though the whole business of milk and cheese production was to move into a different league when Industrial Quesera Menorquina, a big cheese company which sells under the El Caserío label, was established in the island in November 1930.

This was to provide a major shot in the arm for Menorcan agriculture. Its effects were to provide guaranteed sales for all the cheese farmers could produce, to improve their herds by breeding-in high milk-yield strains and to bring the whole area of livestock management, feeding and health up to date.

Today, Menorca's herds are genetically highly selected and disease-free, their average annual milk-yield (used entirely for manufactured dairy products) among the highest in Spain. There are over six hundred dairy farms in Menorca producing an estimated seventy million litres of cows' milk (a hundred thousand litres per square kilometre) a year, the

Recipes

The following recipes are typical of Menorcan cooking, all featuring Mahón cheese as a key ingredient.

Vegetable and fresh cheese rolls
(Feixet de verduras al queso fresco)

Serves 1

1 carrot
1 1/2 leeks
1/4 courgette
1 slice boiled ham
1 slice fresh Mahón cheese cut into strips
blue cheese
top-of-the milk or single cream

Clean and slice the vegetables and soak for several hours in water with an assortment of fresh herbs such as marjoram and tarragon. Boil each vegetable separately in the herb-flavoured water until just tender. Drain well and place on the ham along with the cheese strips. Roll up the ham, secure with a cocktail stick, and bake in a pre-heated oven until the cheese melts.

Meanwhile, prepare a smooth sauce with the blue cheese and the top-of-the-milk or cream and pour over the roll. Serve warm or cold.

Recipe by Restaurante S'Engolidor (Menorca).

Menorcan soufflé
(Greixera menorquina)

Serves 4

350 g. fresh or soft Mahón cheese
5 eggs
1 bread roll
milk
2 cloves garlic
chopped parsley
breadcrumbs
butter
200 g. belly of pork, boiled

Grate the cheese and soak the bread roll in milk. Separate the egg yolks and whites and cut the pork into small dice. Mix together the yolks, cheese, chopped garlic and parsley to form a smooth paste, then add the soaked bread and the diced pork. Now beat the egg whites until stiff and fold into the mixture. Butter an earthenware dish and sprinkle with breadcrumbs so that the soufflé does not stick to the bottom, then pour in the mixture. Bake in a preheated moderate oven for about 45 minutes or until the soufflé has risen. This light dish makes an excellent first course and can be eaten either straight from the oven or cold.

Recipe by Rita Pons.

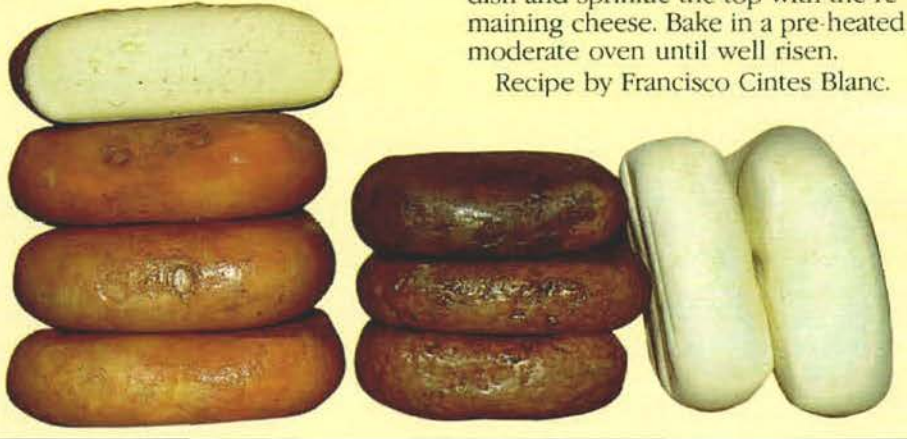
Pig's foot soufflé
(Greixera de peus de porc)

Serves 4

450 g. soft Mahón cheese, grated
2 whole pig's feet
4 eggs
1 dl. milk
2 cloves preserved garlic or a little garlic paste
fine breadcrumbs

Boil the pig's feet in well-salted water, then remove the meat from the bones and cut it into small pieces. Mix most of the grated cheese with the breadcrumbs, the milk, the egg yolks and the meat, in that order. Soak the preserved garlic cloves in a little milk then add to the mixture (you could also use garlic paste to taste), then beat the egg whites until stiff and fold in. Pour into a buttered earthenware dish and sprinkle the top with the remaining cheese. Bake in a pre-heated moderate oven until well risen.

Recipe by Francisco Cintes Blanc.



FELIX LORRIO

ANTONIO GIRBES/SOBREMESA

After it has matured for a month, the skin of the cheese is spread with cow's milk butter and pure olive oil mixed with paprika.

vast majority of which is turned into five million kilos of Mahón cheese, both farm and factory-made.

HOW IT IS MADE

Historically and traditionally, Mahón cheese varied little from other Mediterranean cheeses. It was made seasonally of untreated milk, initially sheep's or sometimes mixed with cow's (as we have seen from historical evidence), allowed to coagulate after each milking taking advantage of the animal's body temperature; the curd was thoroughly dried, both during moulding and pressing, heavily salted on the outside (a classic method of short-term preserving in a self-sufficient society) and allowed to mature naturally, a process which varied according to environmental conditions. These are the typical characteristics of many originally Mediterranean cheeses. Even the shape is typical:the cheese takes its form from the cotton or linen cloth (or *fogasser*) in which it is wrapped, as is the case with Catalonia's *mató* and Valencia's *queso de servilleta*.

Nowadays, Mahón cheese is made with untreated cow's milk sometimes, though rarely, with a little sheep's milk added. It is made twice a day, after each milking. The coagulation temperature is just below that of freshly expressed milk (32-33 degrees C, 90-92 degrees F). The milk is placed in a receptacle shaped like a truncated pyramid known as an *alfabia*. After the addition of rennet it takes between forty and sixty minutes to set, and the curd is then chopped and allowed to rest. The chopped curd is then transferred to a square of fine cloth (the *fogasser*) whose four corners are tied together to form a bag and the contents are then manually drained by pressing the bag in on itself. A cord, or *lligam*, is then tied tightly round the knot so that the cloth becomes extremely taut and completely sealed. The bag is placed in a manual lever press where it remains under pressure for at least two to three hours. The cheese is then salted by immersing it in brine, known as *salera*, for twelve to twenty four hours.After salting, the cheeses, still in their *fogassas*, are arranged on a hurdle and turned periodically so that all their surfaces are aired. Should any mould develop, it is cleaned off carefully.After it has matured for a month, the skin of the cheese is spread with cow's milk butter and pure olive oil mixed with paprika. A month later, it is ready for eating.

D.O. STATUS

In 1985 a Denomination of Origin was constituted for Queso de Mahón, covering both the farm-made cheeses made from untreated milk and factory-made ones using pasteurised milk. Concerted effort to improve dairies and to standardise quality has brought about a certain homogeneity in a product which, traditionally, varied according to the season and weather conditions.

The rind of Mahón cheese is smooth and rather stickily greasy, and varies from pale yellow to orange in colour. Its rounded-edged block shape results from the pressing of the traditional *fogassa*. The interior is compact in texture, not very elastic, with irregular holes caused by manual pressing, and is brilliant ivory white in colour. The flavour is acidic, sharp and very characteristic, not fatty but intensely aromatic and long-lasting on the palate. Older cheeses are reminiscent of Italian Parmesan.

Given the tiny population of Menorca, the main market for Mahón cheese is elsewhere, although the locals eat it in considerable quantitites both in fresh and cured form since it features in many traditional local dishes.

They have, of course, been exporting it for centuries. Although it has adapted along the way to accommodate current events, Mahón —one of Spain's classic cheeses— still shows unmistakable signs of its Mediterranean pedigree.

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PATRONATO DE TURISMO DE CACERES

CACERES

RELIVING SPAIN'S HISTORY

Text: **Tom Burns**

Caceres, first Roman, then Arab and finally home to warring Christian knights who set forth to conquer the New World, is a perfect medieval city that sparkles with history and legend.

An old town like Caceres where storks strut about like pigeons and build almost as many lofty nests as there are battlements has to have a decent legend. The one they tell in this walled-in jewel of a city is about a Moorish princes' who loved a Christian captain and ended up as a chicken. It is as good a legend as any you are likely to come across in historic Spain.

Nobody seems quite sure of the princess' name but her father was the Caliph of Hizn Quazris. She was, one can be sure, beautiful, sensual and headstrong. Nor does anyone appear to know the captain's name but he was a trusted officer of King Alfonso IX of Leon. One can be just as certain that he was handsome, valiant and virile.

The princess and the captain met when he was sent by his monarch to meet her father early in April in the year 1229 in order to negotiate the surrender of Hizn Quazris. The young Christian Knight failed to persuade the Caliph to hand over the city but he clearly made a considerable impact on the Moorish ruler's daughter.

In the ensuing days Alfonso kept up his siege, the Caliph continued to resist and the captain and the princess began to meet just outside the city's walls at the foot of the tower that is called the Torre de los Pozos.

ROMAN AND ARABS

The Arco de Cristo looks today much as the princess-come-chicken must have known it. Already in the 12th century this particular entrance to the city had been standing for more than 1,000 years. The arch was raised by the Roman consul Caius Norbanus Flaccus, who, with due respect to his own importance and that of his emperor, gave the name of Norba Caesarina to the city that was later to be known as Hizn Quzris and later still as Caceres.

More than a city Norba Caesarina was in reality a retirement camp for elderly legionnaires who had faithfully served the Roman empire in the province of Lusitania, an area that encompasses modern day Portugal and Extremadura. The Arco de Cristo is all that remains of the original Roman wall and it stands behind the Casa de las Veletas, to the left of the looming Pozos tower that the Moors built.

Sections of Caceres' wall and half a dozen defensive towers are what are immediately visible of the Arab period. Just as Barbarian invasions virtually flattened Norba Caesarina in the fourth and fifth centuries, so did the 13th century Christian conquest destroy Hizn Quazris' Alcazar and its mosques. The Casa de Las Veletas, today the city's Fine Arts museum, was built on the site of the Alcazar. If you want to properly recapture the age of the love-smitten princess, you have to go underground and enter the Moorish water cistern that occupies the basement of the Casa de las Veletas museum.

Caceres' nobles first competed against each other building stout towers. Then they played one-upmanship by showing off heraldic shields above doorways.

HEINZ HEBEISEN

The counterpoint to the Pozos tower, to the razed Alcazar and to the impressively gloomy cistern which constitutes the fortress' sole remains is to be found by the entrance to the old city, by the Plaza Mayor, Caceres' main square, which lies outside the city's walls and is flanked by them.

The oblong-shaped Plaza would be nondescript but for old Caceres which looms above it. Your attention is totally taken by three singular architectural highlights: the low slung, castellated Arco de la Estrella gateway that leads, at a curiously oblique angle, into the old town; the Torre de Bujaco that lies on the left of the entrance; and the turreted Torre de los Púlpitos that stands on its right.

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Like everything that is made of old stone, Caceres has its story to tell. And the stories here are about Roman, Arab and Christian Spain.

Like everything that is made of old stone piled upon old stone, each of these three highlights has its story to tell. And the stories here are emphatically about Christian, medieval Spain.

The Arco de la Estrella gateway is also called the Puerta Nueva because it was built in the 18th century to replace a smaller one that made it difficult for carriages to enter the old city. This particular traffic problem 200 years ago was the reason for the arch's angled shape.

MEDIEVAL TREASURES

The original gateway served as the site of a celebrated oath taken in 1477 by Queen Isabel of Castile, the Catholic Queen. It was here that the redoutable lady, who 15 years later was to conquer Granada and to send Columbus to the New World, swore before the assorted gentry of Caceres to uphold all the city's long-standing privileges and freedoms.

One of the key points about Caceres is that the local nobles who rebuilt and populated the city after its conquest by Alfonso IX remained only loosely connected to their titular lords, the monarchs of Leon, and they reinforced their independence when the Leon kingdom was merged with the crown of Cas-

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tile. It was this freemen status, with its accompanying exemptions from feudal dues, that allowed Caceres to generate a vigorous local nobility that in turn built up the dozens of medieval town mansions which constitute the city's chief artistic treasure.

The Torre de los Pulpitos, a fine 14th century tower that stands 16 metres (52 feet) high and is almost perfectly square, was used by the senior nobles and their ladies as the presidential box from which they viewed jousting tournaments that were held in the meadow down below where the Plaza Mayor now lies. In one such tournament, held in 1468, the rivalries among the proud local nobility degenerated into serious civil disorders.

The tournament was held in honour of the marriage between Francisco de Hinojosa, an upstanding young man from the nearby town of Trujillo, and Juana, the sister of Gómez de Solís who was grand master of the chivalric military order of Alcantara and one of the leading Caceres nobles. Hinojosa took it into his head to challenge one of the Alcantara order's leading knights, Alonso de Monroy, who, for reasons best known to himself, decided to humiliate the braggart bridegroom by turning up to the duel with his left arm strapped behind his back.

A brawl, naturally, ensued, Hinojosa almost lost his life and Monroy was dispatched to prison in the military order's Alcantara headquarters. The knight escaped soon enough, returned to Caceres and was a chief player in a series of mini-civil wars that pitched one half of the city's nobility against the other.

BATTLES BETWEEN NOBLES

One of the features of Caceres' fortified mansions is their defensive ramparts, technically called machicolations, that were expressly built for the use of archers and of pourers of burning oil. These medieval rocket launchers leaning out over the street below show just how serious the nobles of Caceres were when they got down to the business of fighting each other.

PATRONATO DE TURISMO DE CACERES

The New World allowed the local nobility to return to Caceres laden with wealth and so take full advantage of the plateresque exuberance that was the chief feature of the Spanish Renaissance (Casa de los Golfines de Abajo).

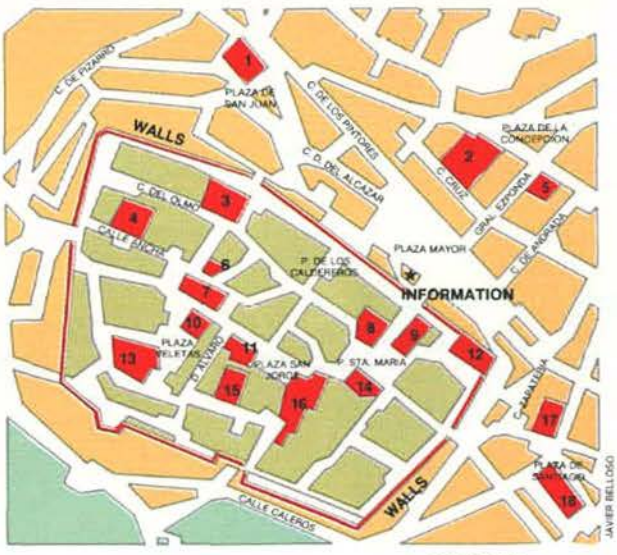
Diego de Ribera, a close adviser to the crown of Castile was killed by an arrow shot by a supporter of Monroy as he stood next to the grand master Gómez de Solís on the balcony of the Torre de los Espaderos. This is a particularly fine tower that lies within the walls and close to the Palacio Toledo-Moctezuma.

Monroy and his men surged on up into the high part of the town where they were beaten back by the arrows shot from the machicolation that defended the Gómez house, the Casa de Solís which lies at the top of the steps that start in the Plaza de San Jorge.

Queen Isabel soon tired of these quarrel some nobles and forgot all about the promises she had made to respect the city's integrity. She ordered a number of fortified turrets to be knocked down, among them the upper battlements of the Espaderos tower and those of the Torre de los Sande which lies across the street from the Solís mansion and has no less a menacing machicolation.

Returning to the entrance to the old town by the Plaza Mayor, the 25 metre (82 feet) high Torre de Bujaco, on the left of the Arco de la Estrella, is generally thought to be Caceres' finest. Built in the 12th century by the Arabs using the foundations of what used to be a Roman tower, it was re-fortified in the 14th century when two machicolations were stuck on to the upper reaches of its walls, and its threatening appearance was softened in the 18th century when a Renaissance-style decorative balcony was opened up closer to ground level.

This tower was a Christian stronghold for a brief period in the early 1170s when Hizn Quazris was taken by the crown of Leon before its definitive conquest half a century later. The name Bujaco is a corruption of Abú-Ya'qub, the Calip who stormed back to retake the town, and the tower was



JAVIER BELLOSO

CACERES

1. CHURCH OF SAN JUAN
2. PALACE OF THE ISLAND
3. PALACE OF THE GOLFINES OF ARRIBA
4. HOUSE OF THE COMENDADOR OF ALCUESCAR
5. HOUSE OF GALARZA
6. TOWER OF THE PLATA
7. CHURCH OF SAN MATEO
8. PALACE OF MAYORALGO
9. EPISCOPAL PALACE
10. PALACE OF THE STORKS
11. CHURCH OF SAN FRANCISCO JAVIER
12. HOUSE OF THE TOLEDO-MOCTEZUMA
13. HOUSE OF THE VELETAS (PROVINCIAL MUSEUM)
14. CHURCH OF STA. MARIA
15. «LUISA DE CARVAJAL» RESIDENCE
16. PALACE OF THE GOLFINES DE ABAJO
17. PALACE OF GODOY
18. CHURCH OF SANTIAGO

PATRONATO DE TURISMO DE CACERES

By the middle of the 16th century Caceres' nobility wanted to impress, not to impose. Instead of adding machicolations to towers and to façades, they built fancy balconied corner windows.

the site of the last Christian defence. It was here that 40 members of a clerical-knightly order that was modelled on the Templars and was called the Congregation of Caceres, had their throats cut one after the other when they eventually surrendered on the 10th of March 1173.

The unfortunate members of the Congregation had adopted as their emblem the red, sword-shaped cross that was later to become the symbol of the chivalric order Santiago and they are considered to be the forerunners of this grandest of all Spains's military-religious institutions. Caceres, like all old Spanish towns, has its church dedicated to Santiago, St James the Apostle, the patron saint of Spain, and a fine-looking 16th century building it is too.

Lying outside the city's walls, north-west of the Plaza Mayor, the Templo de Santiago de los Caballeros de Caceres was designed by none other than Rodrigo Gil de Hontañón, architect of the Cathedrals in Salamanca and in Segovia, and its impressive altarpiece was sculpted by the master-carver of the panish renaissance, Valladolid-borr Alonso de Berruguete.

Santiago Matamoros, the Moor-slayer, makes a grand appearance in the centre of the altarpiece. As every Spaniard knows, Santiago was sighted atop a white charger rallying the Christian troops against the Moors during the keynote battle of Clavijo in 844. The miracle proved to be a turning point in Spain's long-drawn-out crusade against the Arab invader.

Just above the West door of the church, Santiago is represented in an altogether more peaceful guise. A charmingly primitive stone carving has the saint as Santiago Peregrino, the pilgrim; with a cockle-shell jauntily attached to his wide-brimmed hat, his staff and his gourd. St James is wearing the garb of those who undertook the medieval pilgrimage to his shrine in Santiago de Compostela *(See Spain Gourmetour,* no. 17).

Battles between Moors and Christians and battles between nobles who were quick to take offence compose two giant canvases that allow you to come to terms with the Caceres you walk about in today. The Conquistadors and their New World epic forms a third.

The differences between the strongly fortified, essentially gothic, town mansions that were built cheek by jowl up to the end of the 15th century and the highly decorated edifices that came later are all too obvious. Caceres' nobles first competed against each other building stout towers. Then they forgot all about the indented ramparts and they played one-upmanship by showing off heraldic shields above doorways and friezes on the rooftops.

The contrast is perhaps greatest when you compare the earlier style of adding machicolations to towers and to façades to the later one of building fancy balconied corner windows. By the middle of the 16th century Caceres' nobility wanted to impress, not to impose.

The New World allowed the local nobility to work off their warlike natures far away from home. It also gave them the opportunity to return to Caceres laden with wealth and so take full advantage of the plateresque exuberance that was the chief feature of the Spanish Renaissance. They became, if anything, nouveau riche rather than noble.

The palace of one branch of the Golfines family, called the Casa de los Golfines de Abajo, cn the edge of the Plaza de Santa María by its exit to the Plaza de San Jorge, is the best example in town of the transition from one style to another. Alongside an earlier tower, complete with what were then the all too necessary rampart-balconies, a highly refined 16th

PATRONATO DE TURISMO DE CACERES

A moorish water cistern occupies the basement of the Casa de las Veletas, built on the site of the Arab Alcazar, and today the city's Fine Arts museum.

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century palace was built that has not a whiff of civil strife about it. The stone carvings, imitating the filigree work of the silversmith, *platero* in Spanish, are the quintessential feature of the plateresque style.

More architecturally sober, the Casa de Carvajal, at the other edge of the Plaza and by the Church of Santa María, makes much the same point about that period. Alongside this palace lies a 12th century cylindrical tower. The Carvajal family, who switched sides during the rivalry between the Monroy and the Gómez de Solís factions, clearly had a real need for the tower during that civil-war troubles. Later they were able to build themselves a comfortable home embellished by a fine corner window.

The Carvajal house is today the local tourist office. Guides show off the upper storey rooms which unfortunately lack period furniture but at least give the visitor a hint of the internal design of a Caceres mansion. The walled garden, with its roses, yellow jasmine and geraniums is exquisite. It has a fig tree, reputedly 1,000 years old, whose roots play havoc with the city's sewage system.

Pride of place of Conquistador Caceres goes however to the Casa de Toledo-Moctezuma that stands near the walls below the Plaza de Santa María. This vast palace, currently undergoing restoration, was orginally a smaller, no-nonsense, fortified mansion like so many others in the city and it belonged to Juan Cano de Saavedra.

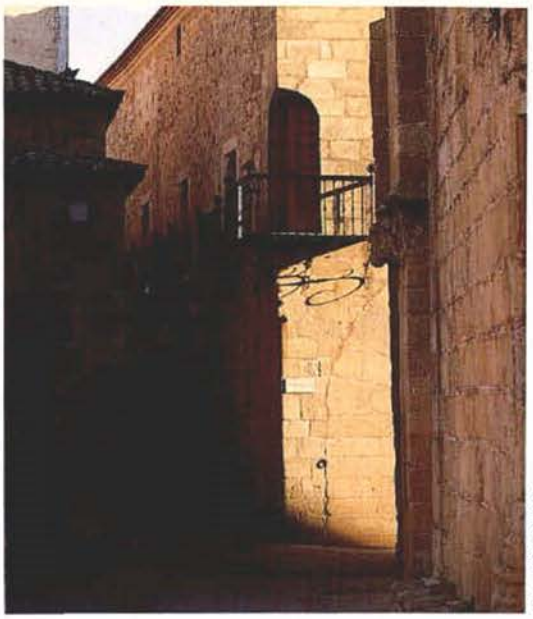
Cano left Caceres in 1502 to accompany a fellow local noble Nicolás de Ovando who had been named governor of Hispaniola, the island that today is shared by the Dominican Republic and Haiti and which had been Columbus' first landfall in the New World ten years earlier. Ambitious for gold and glory, Cano joined the subsequent expedition to Mexico commanded by Hernán Cortés and, the Mexican conquest completed, he ended up marrying princess Tecuixpo Ixtlaxochitl, the daughther of the defeated emperor Moctezuma II.

The following century a grandson of Cano the Conquistador, Juan de Toledo y Moctezuma, who was linked by marriage to just about everyone who was anyone in Caceres, totally rebuilt the family home. Now brick replaced stone, there was a cupola in place of battlements, colonnades instead of ramparts and fine, balconied windows where before there were slits for archers. The Renaissance was firmly installed.

A VERY SPECIAL CASTE OF FAMILIES

Cano, Golfín, Carvajal, Solís, Ovando and a handful of other surnames such as Ulloa and Aldana who were also to make their mark felt in the New World (the Aldanas fought with Pizarro in the conquest of Peru and one of the family members, in an unusual gesture, left all his lands to the indians on his death) crop up again and again in Caceres.

Practically nowhere else in Spain has there been such a caste of families whose individual and collective history, for they were constantly either fighting or marrying each other, spans six centuries and remains so tangibly present to this day. The visitor, having delved into their past, admired their houses and taken note of their heraldry, can tread all over them for the majority of them are buried beneath the flagstones of the



A. L. PALOMINO

The Carvajal house is today the local tourist office. Guides show off the upper storey rooms which unfortunately lack period furniture but at least give the visitor a hint of the internal design of a Caceres mansion.

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A. L. PALOMINO

Caceres' Parador

A HISTORICAL FEEL

Text: **Tom Burns.** Photos: **A.T.E.**

You reach the Parador in Caceres by driving through the Arco de la Estrella on the Plaza Mayor and then burrowing your way along narrow one-way streets. Fortunately every intersection has a sign pointing towards your destination. Eventually, after passing the Plaza de San Mateo, where you will leave your car after you have unloaded, you enter a street that is implausibly called Calle Ancha, or wide, because it is as narrow as all the others: your temporary home in Caceres lies halfway along it.

A historic town house right in the middle of the old quarter, Caceres' Parador is exactly what it should be. You don't want a view here, or parkland and a swimming pool. You want to get deep into the narrow streets and put up in a solid stone mansion with a stork's nest on its tower and a heraldic shield denoting ancient lineage over the main door.

The tower, the oldest part of the Parador, dates from the original building, built by Diego García de Ulloa in the 14th century.

Opened in October 1989 with 27 double rooms, the Parador was formerly a Hostería, a restaurant run by the Tourism department, which had served as a focal point for locals and visitors to Caceres alike since 1971. Because of this, although it is the latest in the Tourism department's extensive chain of hotels, the Parador has the reassuring feel of a place that has had a long experience in welcoming and entertaining guests.

It also, obviously, has a historical feel to it. It was built by Diego García de Ulloa, one of the 14th century's most powerful knights who was Comendador, or royal lieutenant, of Alcuescar, a baronial holding that belonged to the military order of Santiago. The tower, the oldest part of the Parador dates from the original building.

Diego, who played a leading role in the civil wars that put the Trastamara dynasty onto the throne of Castile, eventually died in battle but his descendants never looked back, becoming better connected and richer. One of them, Gonzalo de Ulloa, was 200 years later a prominent member of the court of Charles V and obtained the marquisate and lands of Torreorgaz from the monarch. Others married into top families such as the Carvajals.

MIXED STYLES

Over the years the building itself underwent extensive reforms, particularly in the 15th, 17th and 18th centuries and lost its severe fortified looks. Like most of Caceres' old houses, the Parador mixes gothic with Renaissance and later neo-classical styles, shakes up the architectural cocktail and adds a few stone shields and wrought iron railings as if they were olives and slivers of lemon for a final decorative flourish. The result is a total harmony of tastes.

It may all sound very grand but it is not. The town mansions in Caceres are deceptive in that they are really fairly small houses as indeed they have to be for there are so many in so confined a place. The Parador, for all its glamour, is really quite cosy.

The bar is friendly, and there is a small garden for summer-time drinks. The rooms, moderately spacious and equipped with a mini-bar and a satellite-linked television, lead off from a central courtyard and look out on to narrow, and surprisingly quiet, streets. The service is courteous and uniformly good.

The restaurant, which serves some 60 lunches and about half as many dinners, is excellent. There is a first rate haute cuisine, if that is what you want, but a better bet is to let yourself be guided through the local Extremaduran specialities and sup on the likes of red pepper salad, paprika spiced lamb stew and a magnificently tangy goat's cheese with a creamy texture, called the Torta del Casar; you will have no difficulty in washing such a meal down with the fruity, young red wines of the region.

Like most of Caceres' old houses, the Parador mixes architectural styles and adds some beautiful wrought iron railings.

Once you have sorted out all the Parador's charm and facilities, it is time to go exploring. It may be a good idea to hire the services of a guide for your initial sortie into the surrounding old quarter. The Parador has several on call who speak a variety of languages.

You can -do- Caceres in a morning if you hurry but, as in any historic city, you can also spend a lifetime discovering it. Most serious travellers who are genuinely interested in all that Caceres represents spend two to three nights at the Parador and explore at leisure.

Parador Nacional
Calle Ancha, 6
1003 Cáceres
Phone: (27) 21 17 29
Fax: (27) 21 17 29

Recipes

Extremaduran red pepper salad
(Zorongollo extremeño)

Serves 4

4 large red peppers
1 onion
2 hard boiled eggs
1 small glass olive oil
salt and vinegar to taste

Bake the red peppers until the skin comes away easily then peel and cut into strips, saving the juice. Slice the onion and add to the pepper strips, dressing with the juice from the peppers, the oil, salt and vinegar. Sprinkle with chopped egg before serving.

Rabbit in salmorejo sauce
(Conejo en salmorejo)

Serves 4

1 rabbit
1 kg ripe tomatoes
5 cloves garlic
1 small glass olive oil
salt and vinegar to taste

Roast or grill the rabbit (this is traditionally done on a grid-iron over the fire). Peel the tomatoes and whizz in the blender with the garlic, then add the oil and vinegar and salt to taste. Cut up the rabbit and place the pieces in a casserole (preferably earthenware), pouring the salmorejo over the top. Allow to stand for several hours, then serve from the same dish.

Extremaduran stew
(Caldereta extremeña)

Serves 8

2 kg lamb (breast, leg and best end of neck)
1 large glass olive oil
200 gr lamb's liver
1 glass white wine
1 head garlic
1 slice fried bread
3 bay leaves
1 teaspoon hot paprika
salt

Cut up the lamb and fry the pieces in the oil until brown. Place in a casserole, add the white wine and cook on top of the stove for 10 minutes. Now add the liver, paprika and bay leaves and mix in. Add water to cover and cook gently until the meat is tender. Meanwhile, fry the garlic. Remove the liver from the casserole and crush it in a mortar along with the garlic and fried bread. Stir the mixture into the casserole, season with salt and cook for a few minutes more until the sauce has reduced and is nice and rich. Serve.

Milky fritters
(Repápalos en leche)

Serves 6

6 eggs
2 l milk
olive oil for frying
1 glass dry aniseed liqueur
1 coffee spoon aniseed
1 stick cinnamon
powdered cinnamon
grated lemon and orange rind
300 g bread crumbs
250 g sugar

Heat the milk with the aniseed liqueur, the cinnamon stick, the lemon and orange rind and the sugar (except for 50 g). Once it has come to the boil, pass through a sieve and set aside. Beat the eggs with the remaining sugar and the aniseed. Gradually add the bread crumbs until the mixture forms a soft, spongy dough, then fry spoonful by spoonful in hot oil until golden. Drain well on kitchen paper to remove excess oil, then add the fritters to the hot milk until they soften. Remove from the milk, cool, and serve in glass dishes, sprinkled with a little powdered cinnamon.

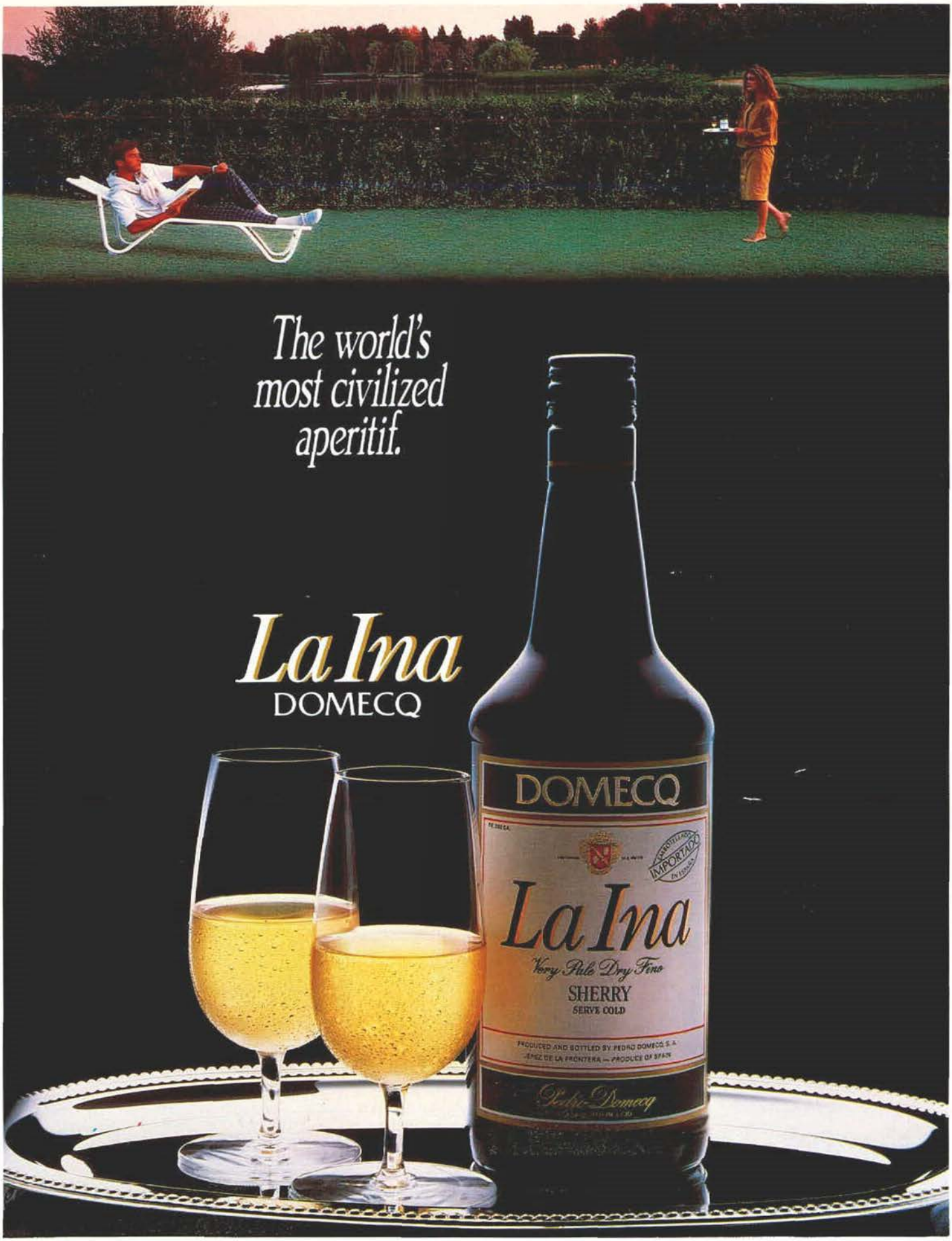
church of Santa Maria, in the heart of the walled city.

Caceres nobles chose to be interred in the church, but in their lifetime they did not show much commitment to it. It is surprising that with all the wealth of civil architecture that it is able to boast, Caceres lacks a massive religious edifice. Santa María, which is a co-cathedral for it shares the see of Caceres-Coria, is charming but definitely on the humble side. For wanting, it lacks a carved tympanum within the delicate archivolts of the north door that gives out on to the Plaza de Santa María opposite the episcopal palace.

A late gothic building, completed early in the 16th century, Santa María is nonetheless worth visiting, especially at mid-morning when the sun shines through the glazed glass rose window on the Eastern façade and brings delightful colours into the darkened interior.

The altarpiece was carved in the mid 16th century out of cedar wood in the fussy plateresque style and Santiago and St George, one with the Moors and the other with his dragon, have panels to themselves on its lowest level. There is more plateresque showiness, in stone this time, at the entrance to the sacristy on the right of the main altar, and on the left there is a very remarkable crucified Christ, large, dark and primitive.

The imagination is however gripped by the flagstones with their timeworn inscriptions and shields and with the legends, like that of the Moorish princess-chicken, that they must contain.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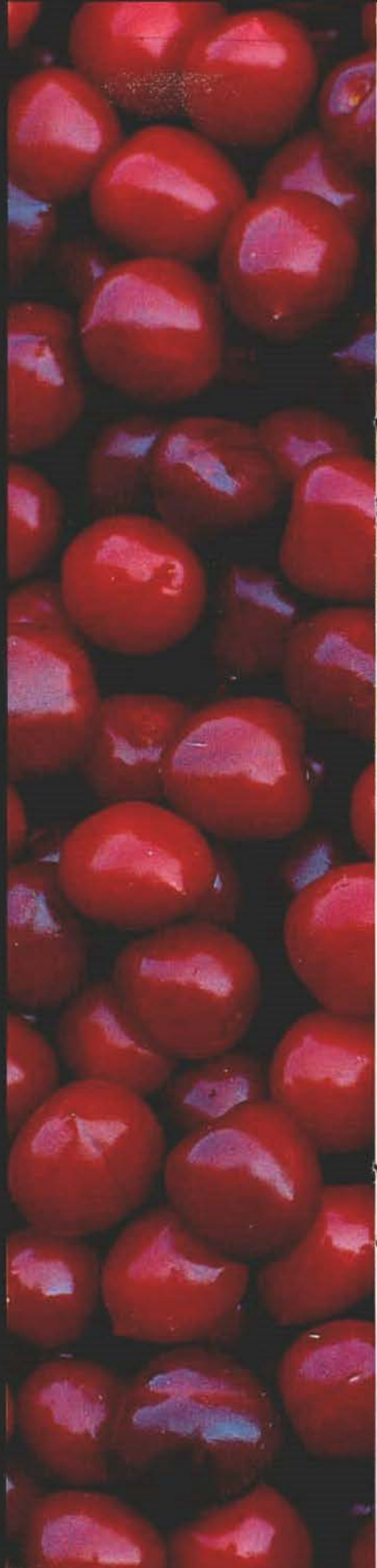
Text and photos: **Piedad Sancho-Mata**

JERTE VALLEY

A CHERRY ORCHARD

Once upon a time there was a valley full of flowering cherry trees, where the grass grew lush and green and streams coursed gently down from the surrounding hills. Its people lived in peace and harmony and spent their time cultivating their land...

No, not the start of one of the Grimms' Fairy Tales but a reasonably factual description of the Jerte Valley in Extremadura. This little corner of western Spain enjoys a benign microclimate on which, down the centuries, its inhabitants have learned to capitalise producing bumper crops of cherries in the process.



A delicious sweet fragrance becomes more and more pronounced as we drive further and further into the valley. By the time we reach the orchards themselves, we can smell it even from inside the car, around which white petals of cherry blossom swirl in a sort of scented snowstorm. It's springtime in the Jerte Valley.

Surveyed from the Tornavacas Pass between Avila and Plasencia, the Jerte Valley looks from above as if it has been painted white. The cherry-trees in blossom form a dense band of white extending from the valley floor to half-way up the hillsides, contrasting with the vivid green of the higher pastures. The oaks, poplars, elms and chestnuts are not yet even in leaf and the higher peaks of the surrounding *sierra* are still snow-capped. Deep below, the fast-flowing River Jerte from which the valley takes its name courses determinedly towards Plasencia.

MOORS AND CHRISTIANS

During the period of Spanish history known as the Reconquest, when the Christian monarchs of the north fought constantly to reclaim the areas of Spain still under Muslim domination, the Jerte Valley was a place of settlement by Castilian subjects from Burgos, attracted by the fertility of its riverside land, while traditionally livestock-rearing highlanders from the kingdom of León took advantage of the abundance of pasture in the two surrounding *sierras* to install themselves in homesteads on their upper slopes: Piornal on the right, and El Torno on the left. Though we have little information about this period of the valley's history, from the 10C to the 12C, like most regions of Spain, it was the scene of an inconclusive push-pull struggle for dominance between the Moors and Christians.

Folk etymology has it that Tornavacas Pass takes its name from an incident in the 10C when the Christian troops of King Ramiro II pursuing the Saracen hordes through the Tormes Valley caught up with them at Vega del Escobar and engaged them in battle. Finding themselves outnumbered, the Christians called on the hill herdsmen for support.After nightfall, they cunningly tied burning brands to the horns of their cows and sent them off downhill. Seeing so many points of light coming towards them out of the darkness, the Saracens took them to be reinforcements coming to Ramiro's aid and fled without putting up the slightest resistance. In celebration of the success of this ploy, the king is said to have named the pass *Torna Vacas* (meaning, roughly, "Cows' Turnabout"), a name it retains to this day.

Exported varieties of cherry from the Jerte Valley

Aragón, or Ramón Oliva: Early flowering and medium ripening (15-30 May). Travels well. Medium to large in size. Heart shaped with crisp, bright red skin darkening to deep red when fully ripe. Cream-coloured soft flesh with bright pink juice.

Mollar: Intermediate flowering, ripening in the first fortnight of June. Rounded fruit, wider than its height and medium to large in size. Pale red in colour, sometimes tending to pale yellow. Creamy-white, firm, slightly crunchy flesh with lots of very sweet, colourless juice.

Jarandilla: Intermediate flowering, ripening between 10 and 25 June, Medium to large in size and blackish purple in colour. Quite juicy, sugar flesh with a touch of sharpness. Travels well.

Pico Limón Negro: Intermediate flowering and late ripening (late June — early July). Large, heart-shaped fruit with a pronounced lower point. Deep purple in colour, turning black when fully ripe. Very firm, crunchy, wine-red flesh which is sweet and juicy. Travels well although susceptible to splitting caused by rain.

Ambrunes: Early flowering, ripening between late June and mid-July. Large in size and oval in shape. Pink darkening to deep red as it ripens with wine-red flesh, which also darkens with ripening. Travels very well.

Pico Colorado: Late flowering, ripening in late July. Medium to large in size, the fruit is a wide heart shape with a pronounced lower point. Vivid red when fully ripe, it has creamy-white, firm, sweet flesh. Travels very well.

Pico Negro: Late flowering, ripening in late July. Medium sized, rounded heart-shaped fruit with a pronounced lower point, like the Pico Colorado. Jet black skin and firm, purple flesh with a bitter-sweet taste. Travels well.

AN OASIS IN THE EXTREMADURAN DESERT

The Jerte Valley, 45 kilometres (28 miles) long, today contains eleven townships. originally agricultural and livestock-rearing, the valley has gradually concentrated on growing and selling cherries as its main source of livelihood though it also produces chestnuts, dried figs, raspberries and olives in smaller quantities.

Of the valley's eleven towns, ten have a co-operative which belongs to the *Agrupación de Cooperativas del Valle del Jerte*, the local Co-op Association, which has a total of 3,921 members.Last year, the valley harvested 16,000 tonnes of cherries, 1,000 tonnes of raspberries, 1,500 tonnes of chestnuts, 1,000 tonnes of table olives and 2,000 tonnes of oil olives, 300 tonnes of dried figs and 100 tonnes of blackberries, quinces and other fruits.

Two key factors explain the existence of this fertile oasis in notoriously dry and arid Extremadura: one is a damp, mild, almost Mediterranean climate though with Atlantic influence, and the other is the difference in altitude between its upper and lower reaches, the temperature increasing and rainfall decreasing progressively the lower you go. The valley's lowest point is 350 metres (1,148 feet) above sea level while the highest is at 2,374 metres (7,787 feet), and this variation of altitude in combination with the local microclimate provides conditions in which some thirty varieties of cherry thrive.

With so many varieties involved, flowering and ripening are staggered so that the cherry season actually lasts for three months as opposed to the usual one. Different varieties are therefore referred to as early, intermediate, medium and late, the most important being Aragón, Mollar, Pico Limón, Ambrunes, Pico Colorado, Hedelfinger, Bourlat and California (see chart for details). These all have their own characteristics when it comes to shape, size, colour (pale red, blackish purple, bright red, blackish, black...), flesh (cream-coloured, off-white, soft, firm...) and flavour (sweet, sharp, sugary...).

Some of the cherry-trees in the orchards are very old indeed and have been allowed to grow tall in the traditional way. This makes harvesting diffi-

There are certain things in life
one doesn't do just for money

LEPANTO

BRANDY de JEREZ, Solera Gran Reserva

GONZALEZ BYASS

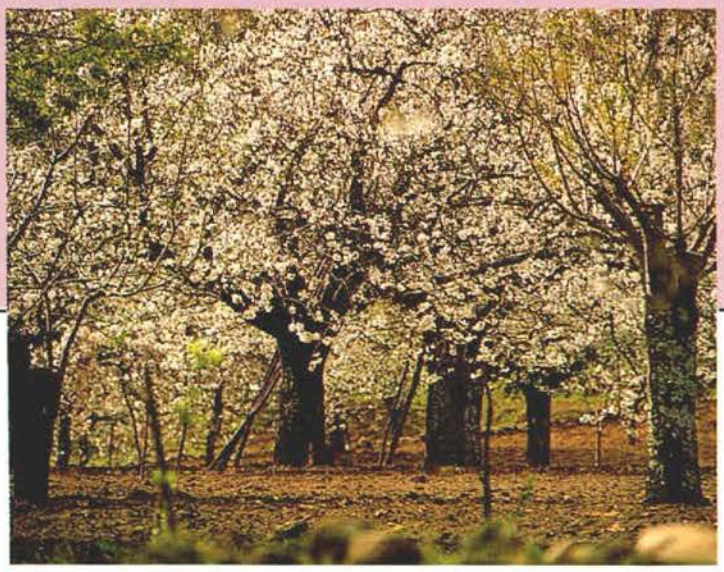
Kirsch from the Jerte Valley

Concerted local effort has added a new string to the Jerte Valley's commerical bow: it now produces distilled cherry alcohol, or kirsch. Six years ago, the valley's Co-operative Association took the decision to stop exporting its cherry surpluses to other European countries which used them for distilling into kirsch and to start making their own. The Association took technical and scientific advice, sent envoys to visit the top French and German distilleries, and engaged the servies of Miguel Muñoz, a young chemist from Madrid who has now been adopted as an honorary local. Distilling began initially on a very small scale but with such encouraging results that in 1989 the Association decided to invest some 1,000 million pesetas (9 million US dollars) in a new distillery. The new plant combines the latest technology, such as cold fermentation (controlled temperatuures produce a top quality cherry wine), and age-old traditional equipment such as copper stills so that when the temperature is raised, the wine retains its aroma and forms what is known in the trade as *la flor* (aromatic distilled liquor of some 65 degrees in strength) which is the essence of all distilling processes. The new distillery can handle up to 1,000 tonnes of fruit in the fermenting section and 25 tonnes a day in the distilling section. In 1989, about 600 tonnes were processed which distilled into 80,000 litres of kirsch.

TASTING NOTES

Very intense nose giving off a flowery aroma, retronasally reminiscent of bitter cherry. Smooth in the mouth, it is very clean with no hint of roughness —a sign of good distilling. This is a quality *aguardiente*, where experience in the vinification of various types of cherries and a well-judged selection of yeasts have paid off.

Although the distillery is orientated primarily towards the production of top quality cherry *aguardiente*, or kirsch, plans are also being considered for distilling other valley fruits, such as raspberries, William pears and plums. Initial tests with plums are already underway: the results will be known within a few months.



cult, so more recently-planted trees are being grown to reach low or medium heights. Once the young tree has reached a certain size, the main trunk is pruned so that future growth is directed outwards rather than upwards. This not only makes for much easier harvesting but also increases yield per branch and per tree as well as calibre and quality of fruit. The most widely-used root stock is Colt (Santa Lucia 64 is also used) onto which Bourlat and California-type varieties are grafted.

Originally agricultural and livestock rearing, the valley has gradually concentrated on growing and selling cherries as its main source of livelihood.

CHERRY RIPE

In late May to early June, the *cereceda*, or cherry-harvest, begins. For several months, the life of the whole valley revolves around just one activity: picking cherries. The gates of the co-ops' depots are almost permanently open, the fields are full of workers and the roads busy with lorries, often jostling for space with herds of cows being moved to pastures new up in the Sierra de Gredos.

At dawn each day, men and women, young and old, head for the orchards laden with ladders, ropes, baskets, weighing scales and wooden boxes, Having reached their patch, the younger pickers tie a rope around their waists, hitch the traditional chestnut-twig basket over their shoulders, and shin up to the top of the tree. There they carefully hand-pick the ripe cherries, lowering the full basket at high speed to the bottom of the tree where waiting women empty it and send it back up again. Meanwhile, the less nimble are picking the fruit from the lower branches, either from ladders or at ground level. The women work at a table sorting out the picked fruit according to size, degree of ripeness and quality. The sorted cherries are placed in standardised wooden boxes, weighed and classified by quality into *extra, primera* and *segunda* categories.

At mid-morning, when the heat of the sun starts making its presence felt, the pickers head down to the co-ops where they deliver the fruits of their morning's work. At the depot, the type, weight and quality of the fruit are checked and a receipt is issued. The pickers now take a few hours' rest until mid afternoon, when they will pick on until after sunset. This is the pattern of daily life until the middle of August, the end of the cherry season, though the exact date can vary from year to year. Then, the co-operative depots close their gates and the roads are free of lorries again. Though the main work of the year is over, there are still other crops to be picked: raspberries first, which last into autumn, then wild mushrooms and chestnuts, with the olive harvest just rounding off the year.

The Jerte Valley, so pristine in spring, is even more stunningly beautiful in autumn when it seems as if a colour-wash of reddish gold spreads gradually down from the hilltops to the valley floor. Its whole texture seems to change as its many different trees are thrown into relief by the colour of their leaves. Meanwhile, the Jerte, major contributor to all this richness, flows timelessly on.

CHARACTER
SHERRY

TASTING NOTE:

Character is mellow but ultimately dry on the palate

Text: **Deborah Luhrman.** Still Life: **Menchu Artime.** Photos: **Antonio de Benito/Sobremesa**

THE INSIDE SCOOP ON

SPANISH ICE CREAM

Not too long ago ice cream was just a simple summer treat, but in less than 10 years it has boomed into a sophisticated Spanish industry with annual sales well over 600 million dollars. Competition is fierce, successful ideas are shamelessly copied, millions are spent on advertising and new products are cloaked in secrecy. Surprisingly many homemade qualities remain.

A short drive through the almond groves surrounding the Mediterranean city of Alicante brings us to a mid-sized brick building with crates of fragrant lemons the size of grapefruit stacked in front. Inside, the factory bustles with activity. A cluster of workers in white coats and bakery hats scoop the flesh from the fruit to make a refeshing lemon ice cream. Then they refill the rinds, wrap them up like presents in clear cellophane and tie them with green ribbons.

Clouds of cold steam bellow from the freezers as another cluster of white-clad workers fill and slice big green Spanish melons. Others spread chocolate frosting on ice cream cakes and roll cylinders of ice cream in a crunchy almond topping.

Nearby, robot-like machines feed cookies into a trough to assemble ice cream sandwiches and dip endless rows of vanilla ice cream bars into a bath of chocolate.

This is the factory of Alacant, a mid-sized Spanish ice cream company typical of an industry that is working at full speed to meet booming demand in Spain and abroad while striving to maintain homemade quality.

Alacant, founded in 1972, is unusual in that it is owned by an association of 188 Spanish ice cream makers and distributors. All profits are plowed back into the company to pay for expansion and new product development.

Sunny Spanish oranges and lemons filled with real fruit ice cream were the first gourmet innovation, a runaway success unveiled in the seventies by the Menorquina ice cream company.

Vanilla ice cream with chocolate sauce.

LEGACY OF THE MOORS

Spanish ice cream, although not as well known as Italian varieties, has an equally rich heritage that dates back hundr eds of years. Marco Polo is said to have brought the sweet secret of ice cream to Italy from China, but it is likely that the Moors first introduced ice cream to Spain.

Persian kings were fond of slushy combinations of fruit, honey and ice which they called -sharbets-, the origin of today's sherbets or sorbets. In Spain's Moorish kingdom of Granada, the Arab caliphs and their courts at the palace of the Alhambra ordered snow and ice to be transported from the nearby peaks of the Sierra Nevada mountains to cool their wine and make sharbets.

Over the centuries the practice of transporting snow from the mountains in mule packs or wagons grew in popularity. By the 1700s, officially licensed icemen plied their trade, bringing snow from the high peaks and no large Spanish city was without its underground ice houses. In Madrid, a man named Pablo Xarquies grew rich and famous operating the city ice deposit under the busy intersection now known as Glorieta de Bilbao, in the Chamberi district. The ice was used to freeze fruit, almond and milk drinks, but snowmelt was never drunk itself because it was considered unhealthy.

IMPULSE ICE CREAM

Nowadays Spanish ice cream companies make most of their sales betwen April and September when hot afternoons make it nearly impossible to resist a stop at an ice cream stand for refreshment. Sweet popsicles, lollies, cones and sandwiches sold by 140,000 street vendors throughout the country are called -impulse- sales and account for 48% of Spain $636 million a year ice cream industry.

Impulse or novelty products come in a staggering array of shapes and enough varieties to give children a new treat to beg for every day of the summer. Past seasons have included ice cream molded into fingers, toes, flying saucers, Popeye, and even Dracula — blood-red ice inside a chocolate shell.

Manufacturers spend heavily to advertise their novelties and new products are guarded before their release like state secrets. This summer's innovations include ice cream bars and popsicles shaped like a motorbike, a Batman symbol and a pink lightbulb!!

Despite their originality, Spanish ice cream makers cannot export these novelties for the simple reason that milk and sugar, the main ingredients, cost at least 20% more in Spain than in the rest of Europe. So what they have done, with the aim of spreading their business throughout the year, is to turn their creativity to speciality gourmet novelties targeted at the restaurant diner and home consumers.

ORANGES AND LEMONS

Sunny Spanish oranges and lemons filled with real fruit ice cream were the first gourmet innovation, a runaway success unveiled in the seventies by the Menorquina ice cream company.

-Spain doesn't have a strong tradition of baking and we saw that people were simply tired of the typical desserts of flan or fruit, so we stepped in to fill the hole-, explained Juan Sintes Carreras, director of Menorquina.

Other ice cream makers were quick to follow suit, adding additional filled fruits such as melons, tangerines, apples, peaches, pineapples, kiwis and coconuts.

Next came a series of frozen desserts sold in take-home popular of these is called Symphony or Musician's dessert and contains ice cream flavoured with sweet Malaga wine topped with a mixture of dried fruits and nuts. It was inspired by the Spanish after dinner custom of serving a glass of sweet wine with small bowls of nuts and raisins, which according to legend was a favour ite with musicians.

Quemada, literally burnt ice cream, is another favourite. It is a variation on a popular custard dessert called *Crema catalana* and made with a bowl of

Natural fruit-ice
in its own husk

Single ice-cream
desserts

HELADOS
Alacant

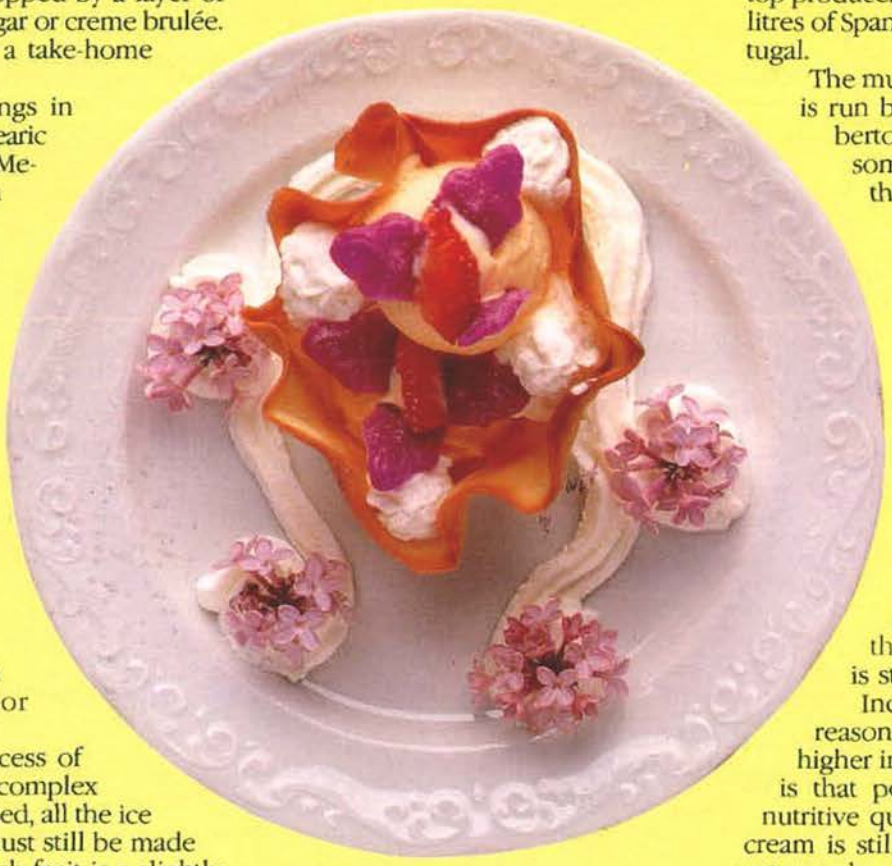
Partida Canastell, 302
03690 S. VICENTE RASPEIG (Alicante) SPAIN
Telf. (96) 566 14 54 - Fax (96) 566 64 53

custard ice cream topped by a layer of hard caramelized sugar or creme brulée. It is also served in a take-home ceramic bowl.

From its beginnings in the 1940s on the Balearic island of Menorca, Menorquina has grown into one of Spain's largest industrial ice cream manufacturers, specialising in the restaurant and hotel business. Inside the modern factory on the outskirts of Barcelona, row after row of gleaming stainless steel tanks are supervised from a sophisticated control room filled with blinking indicator lights and gauges.

Although the process of making ice cream is complex and highly mechanised, all the ice cream filled fruits must still be made by hand because each fruit is a slightly different size and no one has been able to invent a machine that can handle the variations.

Spanish ice cream fruits and other gourmet specialities are the most popular export items, because consumers appreciate the homemade quality and they are too difficult for foreign ice cream makers to bother with.



Ice cream tulips.

THE COLD FACTS

Foreign markets are an enticing prospect because despite the warm climate, ice cream consumption in Spain is way below the average of northern European countries. Swedes eat 12.6 litres of ice cream a year and West Germany consume an average of 6.6 litres a year, compared to Spaniards who slurp up only 3.1 litres a year.

Portugal, Italy, France, Britain, West Germany, Austria, Sweden and Switzerland are the main countries which import about 8.7 million litres of Spanish ice cream products a year, worth more than $25 million.

Industry leaders, Frigo, Camy and Miko — all linked to multinational companies — export through their affiliates in Italy, France and Switzerland.

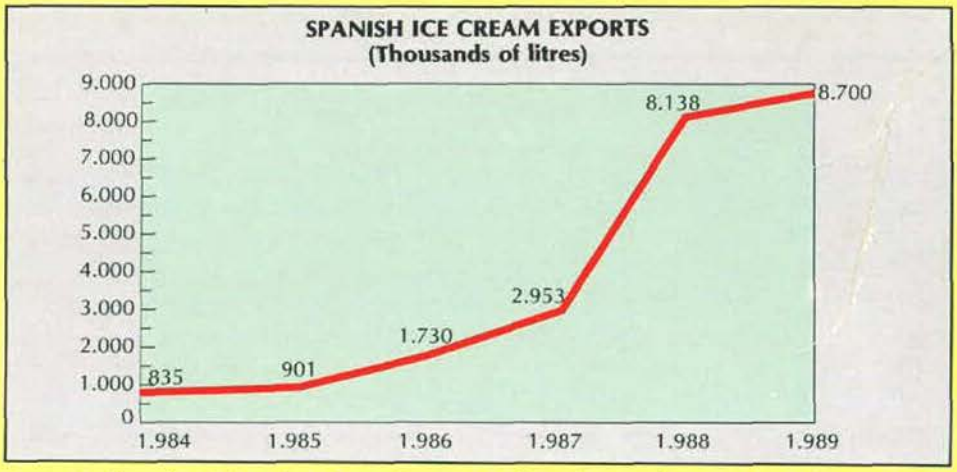
The family-owned Avidesa/Luis Suñer company of Valencia, also among the top producers, exports some 1.5 million litres of Spanish ice cream a year to Portugal.

The multi-million dollar company is run by 28-year-old whiz kid Alberto Campos Suñer, the handsome and genial grandson of the founder. Portugal is an odd market, said Campos, because there people prefer strawberry ice cream to the Spanish favourites of chocolate and vanilla.

Avidesa began by selling frozen poultry in 1959 and only started making ice cream five years later, because the freezing equipment was already in place. Nowadays ice cream accounts for about 60% of their business, while the rest is still in frozen foods.

Industry analysts say one reason ice cream consumption is higher in other European countries is that people there recognise its nutritive qualities, while in Spain ice cream is still considered a treat to be eaten only on Sunday afternoon.

Ice cream, although not for those on a diet, is rich in calcium and contains significant amounts of protein, vita-



Source: Alimarket Magazine (State Customs Office data) and Spanish Ice Cream Manufacturer's Association.

ICE CREAM'S NUTRITIONAL VALUE
Single portion (125 ml.) vanilla ice cream

	Nutritional value of ice cream	Daily requirement	% provided by 125 m. ice cream
Calories	145	2,000	7.25 %
Protein	3 g.	65 g.	4.6 %
Fat (lipids)	4.5 g.	71 g.	6.3 %
Carbohydrate (glycogen)	16 g.	275 g.	5.8 %
Calcium	180 mg.	1,000 mg.	18 %

BE PROMOTED TO GRAN CAPITAN

BRANDY DE JEREZ

Bobadilla

min A and fats, which are important in children's diets.

By law Spanish ice cream labelled as «made with cream» must contain 9% butterfat, while ice cream labelled as «made with milk» must contain 2.2% butterfat. Products labelled as «fruit ice creams» must contain 5% real citrus fruit or 10% for all other types of fruit. All Spanish ice creams must weigh a minimum of 475 grams per litre.

Government norms are almost always exceeded at the small Farggi ice cream factory in an elegant hillside suburb north of Barcelona. Store rooms are stacked with blocks of butter and big milk cans of fresh cream. In the factory, which looks more like an overgrown bakery, bottles of Catalan Cava and imported French Calvados are poured into batches of sorbets.

Workers say owner Jesús Farga Munto is a man obsessed with quality. He has already earned a reputation as Barcelona's best pastry and candy maker, selling products from his four luxury tea rooms, and his quality ice creams and sorbets are increasingly popular. They are considered some of the best in Spain and served in exclusive restaurants.

Spain's large industrial ice cream makers and small «artisan» producers agree that exports will continue to grow as long as they maintain high quality and continue to develop innovative frozen desserts.

Recipes

Pears Belle Hélène
(Peras Bella Helena)

Serves 4

4 large pears
1/4 l water
750 g caster sugar
1 coffee-spoon vanilla essence
8 crystallised violets
1 l hot chocolate sauce
vanilla ice-cream

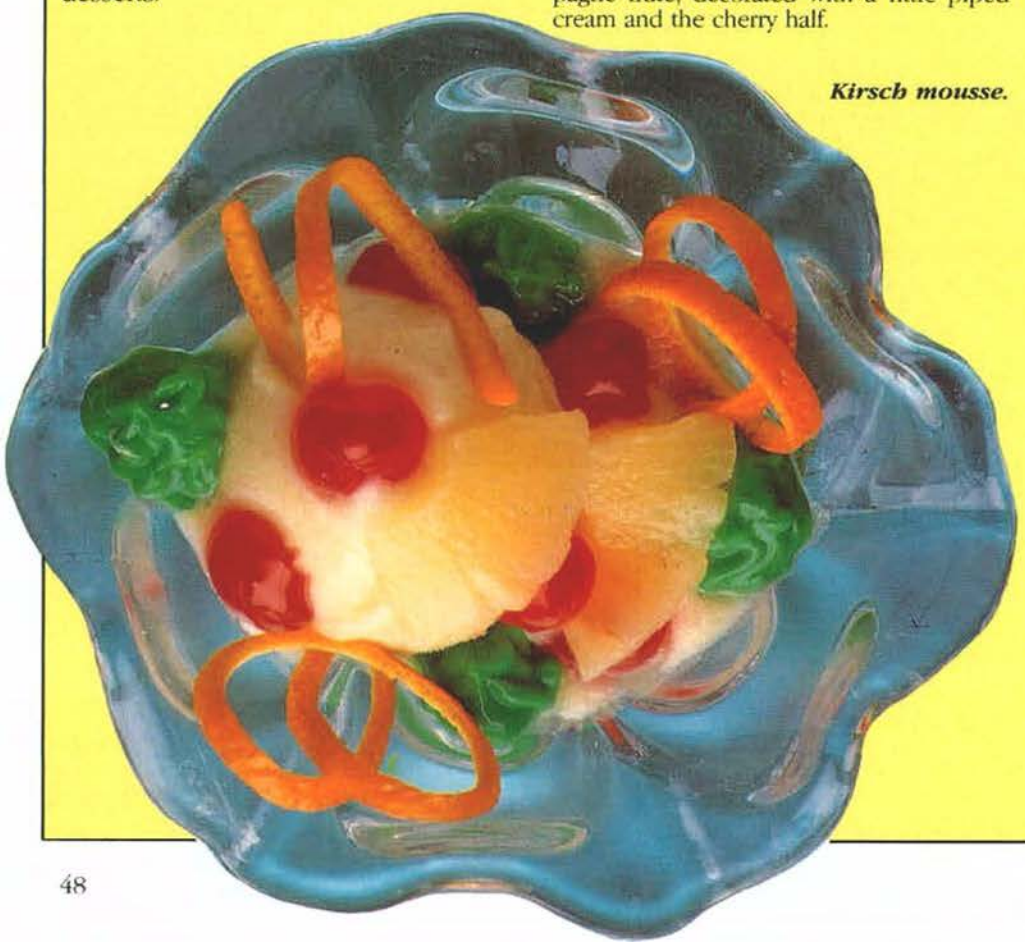
Make a syrup with the sugar, water and vanilla essence. Peel the pears carefully (they are to be used whole), then dip into the hot syrup, drain and allow to cool. Place each pear in a goblet with some vanilla ice-cream and decorate with the crystallised violets. Serve the hot sauce separately.

Kirsch mousse
(Mousse al kirsch)

Serves 1

2 scoops vanilla ice-cream
3 tablespoons whipping cream
4 bottled cherries
1/2 dl kirsch

Chop the cherries (keep half of one for decoration) and macerate in the kirsch for several hours. Soften the ice-cream slightly, whip the cream and beat the two together until the mixture is smooth. Now mix in the macerated cherries and the kirsch in which they have been soaked, and freeze the mixture for a couple of hours. Serve in a champagne flute, decorated with a little piped cream and the cherry half.



Kirsch mousse.

Ice-cream tulips
(Tulipanes helados)

Serves 8

150 g flour
150 g icing sugar
2 egg yolks
3 egg whites
1 fresh pineapple, peeled and cut into chunks
2 liqueur glasses kirsch
8 scoops vanilla ice-cream
1 dl double cream, whipped
1 large orange for use as a mould

Sieve the flour and sugar into a bowl and stir in the egg yolks. Now add the whites and beat vigorously. Grease a baking tray and use an upside-down cup to mark four circles on it. Place a dessert spoon of mixture on each circle, spreading it with the back of the spoon. Place in a low oven for 5 to 6 minutes until the biscuits start to turn golden at the edges. Remove them carefully from the tray then mould each hot biscuit over the orange, protecting your hand with a cloth. Use up the rest of the mixture in the same way, making 3 or 4 cups at a time (otherwise they will cool before you have time to mould them) —these quantities should give you 12 to 16. They keep well in a tightly sealed tin.When you are ready to serve, fill each tulip with pineapple chunks macerated in kirsch, topped with a scoop of ice-cream and a little whipped cream.

Musician's dessert
(Postre de músico)

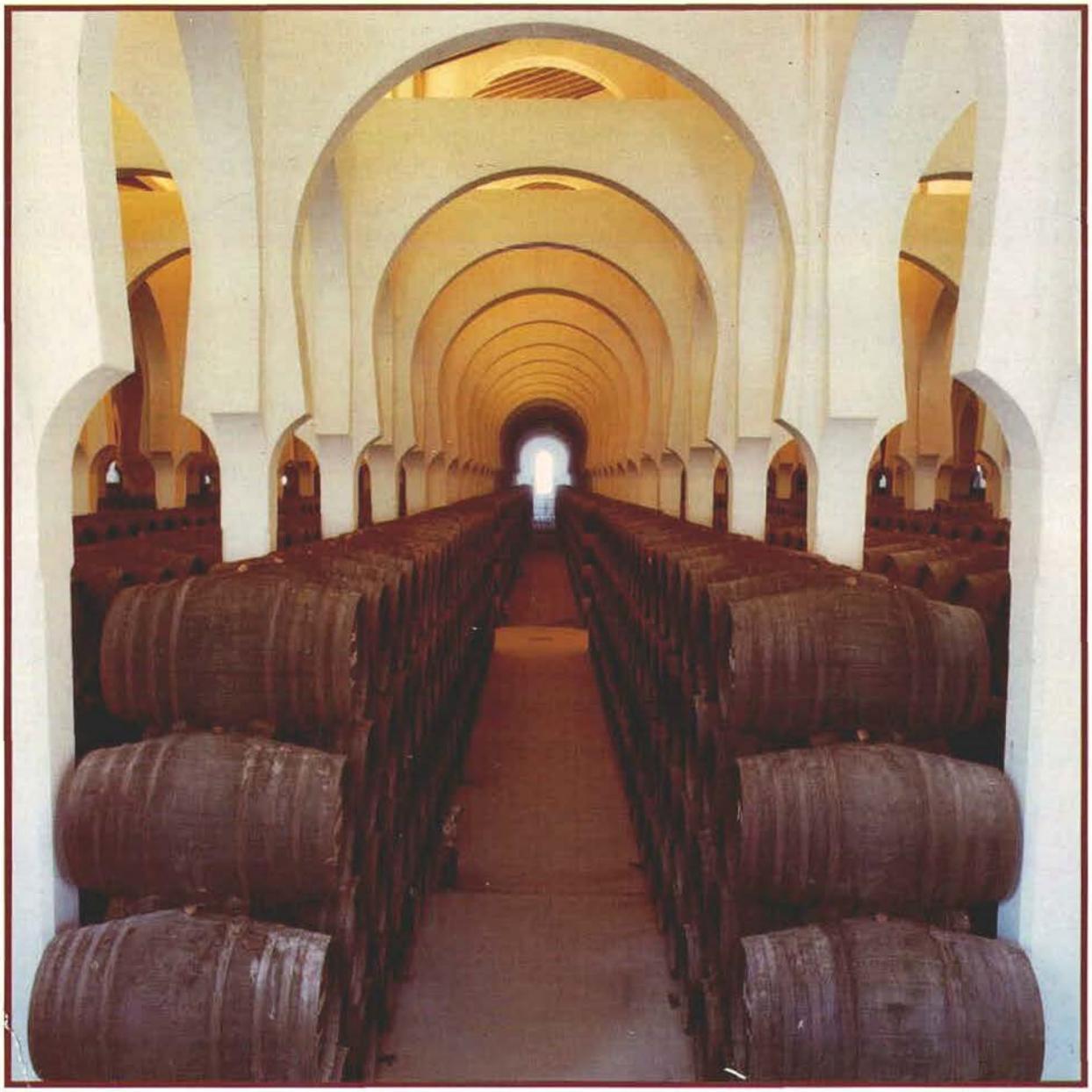
Vanilla Ice Cream
Malaga dessert wine
Raisins
Almonds
Hazelnuts
250 g. sugar

Place a handful of almonds and a handful of hazelnuts, with their skins on, in a heavy pot and stir until heated. Pour in the dry sugar and continue stirring as the sugar melts and coats the nuts. Remove from pan, cool and break up large pieces. Put three scoops of ice cream in each bowl, pour in a shot of Malaga wine and sprinkle with raisins and nut mixture.

Quemada

Vanilla custard ice cream
Sugar

Press softened ice cream into shallow, wide-mouth bowls so that the top is flat. Refreeze in the coldest part of the freezer. Heat a metal spatula red hot, take ice cream from freezer one bowl at a time and sprinkle with a layer of sugar, then caramelise it by pressing quickly with the spatula. Serve immediately or refreeze. This dessert can also be made by cutting circles of aluminium foil the size of the top of the bowls. Place the foil on a cookie sheet and sprinkle with sugar, then place under the broiler in a oven to caramelise. Remove from oven and when cool peel off the foil and place on top of the ice cream.



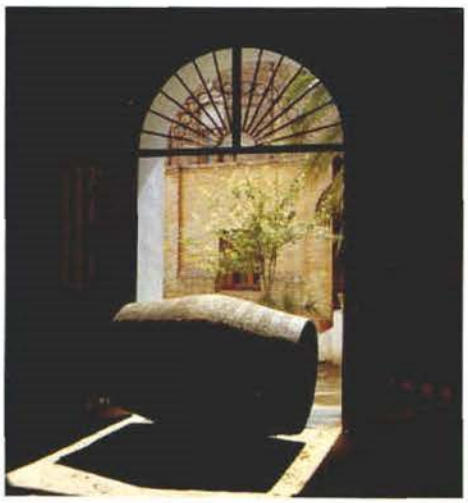
BRANDY DE JEREZ

THE ORIGINAL BRANDY

Text: **J. R.**
Photos: **C. R. D. O. Brandy de Jerez**

Spain has more than a thousand years of history of distilling fine spirits. Its magnificently complex oak cask-aged *de luxe* Brandies de Jerez are the result of a millennium of accumulated experience and skill, passed down through generations to us today. Now, a selection of eight of the finest limited production *Solera Gran Reserva* Brandies de Jerez — Jerez's most prized category of its oldest brandies — is being launched on the United States market. A feast of superlative Brandies de Jerez, the original Brandy to taste and savour, each one with its own personality and character.

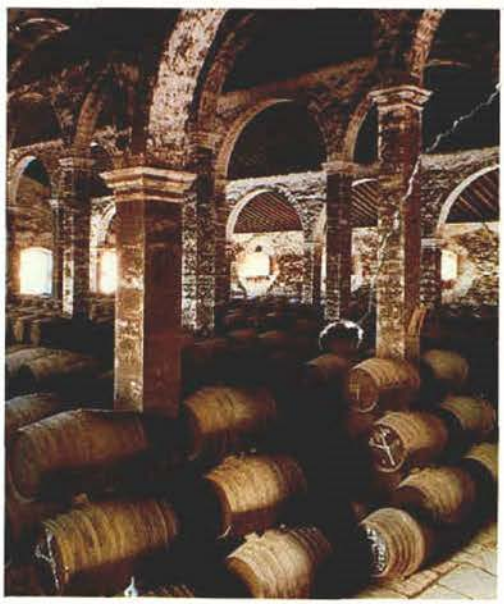
Europe's oldest brandy, Brandy de Jerez's origins are to be sought in the medieval past of *Al-Andalus*, the Arab-ruled province of Southern Spain, when the city of Jerez was known as Sherish. The Arabs brought with them distilling techniques from the Middle East — indeed the word alcohol is arabic in origin — and for five hundred years distilled alcohol in their alembics in Cordoba and Granada, in Seville and Jerez. After the Christians reconquered Andalusia, the secret art of distilling was passed on to learned monks in their monastic apothecaries. All Europe was to learn how to distill alcohol from these monks.



Already by the sixteenth century white spirits distilled from local wines were being produced commercially in the Jerez region, probably as a side-line of the sherry-wine producing *bodegas*. The white spirits were stored in the same oak butts as were used for ageing sherry-wine — Shakespeare's beloved sherris sack — and then, exported above all to the damper colder climes of Northern Europe. The brandy distillers noticed that the longer the spirits were stored in the barrels, the finer and more subtle became their taste, and the deeper and richer the beautiful amber gold colour of the precious liquid.

The brandy distillers noticed that the longer the spirits were stored in the oak barrels, the finer and more subtle became their taste, and the deeper and richer the beautiful amber-gold colour of the precious liquid.

By the nineteenth century firms specifically specialising in distilling cask-ageing and selling Brandy de Jerez had sprung up all over the area, the forebears of the great family *bodegas* of today, the producers of this fine range of eight Solera Gran Reserva Brandies de Jerez.



SOLERA GRAN RESERVA

What exactly is a Solera Gran Reserva Brandy de Jerez? These are brandies made in the officially delimited Jerez-Xeres-Sherry wine-producing area from distilling high quality table wines — and not inferior

Brandy
CARDENAL
MENDOZA

A feeling for the best.

BRANDY DE JEREZ
SOLERA GRAN RESERVA · SANCHEZ ROMATE HNOS · JEREZ

PUBLICSA-COMUNICACION

poor quality wines unsuitable for drinking at table as is the case with many other brandies. These Brandies de Jerez are then aged in butts — in Jerez the huge five hundred litre oak casks are known as butts — on average for at least three years. It should be stressed that this average period of ageing is only a minimum requirement. In fact. Brandy de Jerez producers extend this ageing period far beyond the stipulated minimum in their search for an ever more satisfyingly complex and balanced brandy, so that, for example, most Solera Gran Reserva brandies are between ten and fifteen years old, and some even older.

The ageing process takes place in what is known in Jerez as a system of *criaderas* and *soleras,* a method of fractional blending completely different from the static vintage system. In the *criaderas* and *soleras* the brandy is stored in *scales* or series of oak butts, of progressively older spirits. These spirits are constantly being transferred along the scale so that the younger fresher spirits are continually being blended with the older, more mature ones, refreshing and replenishing them.

Solera Gran Reserva

EIGHT FINE OLD BRANDIES DE JEREZ

A representative range of the finest *Solera Gran Reserva* Brandies de Jerez has been selected for the U.S. market, eight superb *de luxe* very limited production brandies, each one of which has been slowly mellowing for long years in oak casks, each one the culmination of a thousand year old tradition of the distiller's art. Let's taste them one by one.

Conde de Osborne is an unsweetened brandy de Jerez, light, and elegant on both nose and palate, which comes in the famous Dalí designed bottle. Osborne specially commissioned the great surrealist artist Salvador Dalí to design a highly distinctive and original bottle for this, their premium brandy de Jerez.

Carlos I is the flagship of the Domecq brandies de Jerez, a name synonymous with the highest quality. Full, well-balanced, silkily smooth on the palate and pleasingly oaky, Carlos I has a marvellously complex prolongued aftertaste. Domecq have designed an elegant glass decanter-style bottle for Carlos I.

Gran Duque de Alba of Díez Mérito is one of Jerez's most famous brandies, renowned throughout Spain. Beautifully presented in its characteristic old-fashioned lacquer-sealed bottle, it is a deep mahogany colour, warm, rich and velvety on the palate, with a persistently satisfying aftertaste.

Gran Capitán is another fine limited production brandy de Jerez made by Bobadilla. It is a dark, mahogany brown coloured brandy, full and yet elegantly smooth on the palate, a shade drier than many Solera Gran Reserva brandies.

Gran Garvey from the celebrated sherry house of Garvey is a special reserve brandy de Jerez made from selected quality spirit. A rich deep gold in colour, this brandy de Jerez is warm and silky on the palate with that characteristically pleasant caramel nose.

Terry Primero is from another famous sherry-wine bodega, Terry. A deep amber-gold in colour, it is especially rich in texture with the velvetiest of smooth aftertastes.

For those who prefer perhaps a slightly drier, lighter style of brandy de Jerez, González Byass **Lepanto** in its eighteenth century style gold decorated decanter bottle will be to their taste. It is straw-gold in colour with a delicate elegant nose and a subtle drier flavour, with just a hint of vanilla.

Cardenal Mendoza, a Solera Gran Reserva brandy de Jerez made by Sánchez Romate is thought by many to be a prototype of the individual personality of brandy de Jerez with its deep mahogany colour, its unmistakable oaky nose and the lingering taste of fine old *oloroso* sherry. A highly distinctive and original brandy.

What better way then to bring a perfect meal to a fitting conclusion than by savouring slowly and lovingly one of the world's great digestifs, a fine old Solera Gran Reserva brandy de Jerez?

Most Solera Gran Reserva brandies are between ten and fifteen years old, and some even older.

Prestige has no age

Brandy GRAN DUQUE D ALBA

MARCOS EGUIZABAL

Diseño ACLE


TURESPAÑA

GOLF

At the beginning of 1986 there were 81 golf courses in Spain. Today, four years later, this figure has

TEES

risen to 110 with twenty more under construction. While they are mostly concentrated in the south,

OFF

on the Costa del Sol, there are courses all over Spain, where golf is enjoying something of a boom.

THE IMAGE BANK/GUIDO ALBERTO ROSSI

Spain has been a fount of world-class golfers for many years now. The successes of the Invincible Four —Severiano Ballesteros, José María Olazábal, Manuel Piñero and José María Cañizares— have captured the popular imagination to such an extent that Spaniards have been taking to the greens in their thousands.

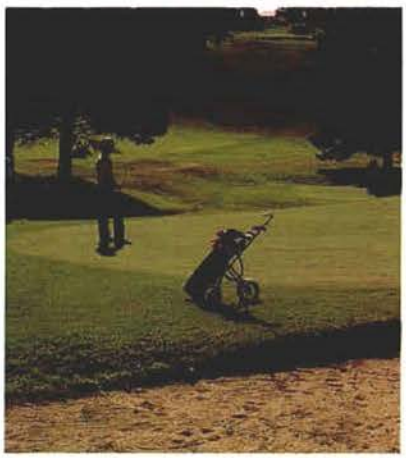
In 1989, the Spanish Royal Golf Federation issued over 50,000 licences. Not all that impressive a figure compared with the huge numbers involved in football (soccer) or basketball, but significant insofar as it has multiplied threefold in just ten years.

But all these new courses are not just for the Spanish. Every year, thousands of tourists head for golfing holidays in Spain lasting up to several weeks. The marvellous climate of the east coast, and particularly the Costa del Sol, have turned it into something of a golfer's mecca, attracting sportsmen from all over the world, though mainly from the

Text: **Sonia Ortega**

rest of Europe. During the high season, which in this part of the world lasts from October to May, you can be hard put to it to hear a word of Spanish on the greens. They are invaded by foreign golfers from Britain (62%), Scandinavia (15%), Germany (12%), France (5%) and other countries (6%).

Many of these are far from fleeting visitors. All along Spain's Mediterranean coast there are colonies of foreign residents who choose to spend the whole winter in the sun. And many of these are golfing enthusiasts. All in all, the sudden proliferation of golf courses is hardly surprising.



FRANCISCO ONTAÑON/CLUB DE GOURMETS

Every year, thousands of tourists head for golfing holidays in Spain lasting up to several weeks. During the high season you can be hard put to it to hear a word of Spanish on the greens.

And there are more on the way. There are 21 in the process of being built, though this figure represents only the ones already affiliated to the Spanish Golf Federation. Many more, either still at the design stage or already underway, have not yet joined.

Some Spanish golf courses —already in use or still under construction— form part of residential complexes, a trend which has become more and more common in recent years. Apart from the obvious convenience for resident golfers, it offers them the additional advantage of being shareholders in the golf course.

This type of arrangement has its supporters and detractors. The latter would argue that it runs the risk of giving precedence to commercial interests over course quality. The suggestion is that a rather run-of-the-mill golf course can be used as bait to achieve quick sales of the houses around it. Defenders claim that no serious golfer would be attracted by this type of offer. "Overall, a complex which offers a quality course is more successful than cases where the course is there just to fulfil the specifications of the planning brief', observes José Luis Bastarreche, a partner in Integral Golf Design. IGD is a company which designs and constructs golf courses

The following is a list of what the Spanish Royal Golf Federation considers to be the twenty best golf courses in Spain. Four of them are in Madrid, five on the Costa del Sol, seven in Catalonia and Levante, three on the Cantabrian coast and one in Zaragoza.

Some of them have hosted important competitive events. In November 1989, the World Cup was played at Marbella's Las Brisas Golf Club, and seven of the more than thirty heats which make up this year's European Tour have been or are to be played on Spanish courses.

ALOHA GOLF
Nueva Andalucía
29600 Marbella (Malaga)
Tel.: (52) 52(81 23 88/89/90
Established in 1975
Par: 72
Course designer: D. Javier Arana

CAMPO DE GOLF DE EL SALER
Parador Nacional Luis Vives
El Saler (Valencia)
Tel.: (6) 161 11 86/24/44
Established in 1968
Holes: 118
Par: 72
Course designer: D. Javier Arana

CLUB DE CAMPO DE MALAGA
Apdo. 324
29080 Malaga
Tel.: (52) 38 11 20/21
Telefax: (52) 38 21 41
Established in 1925
Holes: 18
Par: 72
Course designer: Mr. Simpson

CLUB DE CAMPO DEL MEDITERRANEO
Urbanización La Coma, s/n.
12190 Borriol (Castellón)
Tel.: (64) 32 12 27
Established in 1978
Holes: 18
Par: 72
Course designer: D. Ramón Espinosa García Bermúdez

CLUB DE CAMPO VILLA DE MADRID
Crta. Castilla, Km. 2
28040 Madrid
Tels.: (1) 357 21 32/33/34/ 35/36 - 549 07 26
Established in 1932
Holes: 27
Par: 72-70-60
Course designer: D. Javier Arana

CLUB DE GOLF DE PALS
Playa de Pals

17256 Pals (Gerona)
Tel.: (72) 63 60 06
Established in 1966
Holes: 18
Par: 73
Course designer: Mr. F. W. Hawtree

CLUB DE GOLF EL BOSQUE
Crta. Godolleta, Km. 4,100
46370 Chiva (Valencia)
Tels. (6) 251 10 11 - 251 11 01
Telefax: (6) 251 10 09
Established in 1975
Holes: 18
Par: 72
Course designer: Mr. Robert Trent Jones

CLUB DE GOLF ESCORPION
Apdo. 1
46117 Betera (Valencia)
Tel.: (6) 160 12 11

Spain's top twenty golf courses

TURESPAÑA

Established in 1975
Holes: 18
Par: 72
Course designer: Mr. Ron Kirby

CLUB DE GOLF LA PEÑAZA

Apdo. 3,029
50080 Zaragoza
Tel.: (76) 34 29 00/04
Telex: PEÑAGOLF
Established in 1973
Holes: 72
Par: 72
Course designer: Mr. F. W. Hawtree

CLUB DE GOLF LAS BRISAS

Apdo. 147
29660 Nueva Andalucía (Malaga)
Tels. (52) 81 08 75 - 81 17 50
Telex: 77783 MIGO E
Established in 1968
Holes: 18
Par: 72
Course designer: Mr. Robert Trent Jones

CLUB DE GOLF LOMAS-BOSQUE

Urbanización el Bosque
Apdo. 51
28670 Villaviciosa de Odon (Madrid)
Tels.: (1) 616 21 70 - 616 23 82
Established in 1973
Holes: 18
Par: 72
Course designer: D. R. Putman

CLUB DE GOLF SOTOGRANDE

Paseo del Parque, s/n.
11310 Sotogrande (Cadiz)
Tels.: (56) 79 20 50/29 51
Established in 1964
Holes: 27
Par: 75
Course designer: D. Robert Trent Jones

CLUB DE GOLF VALDERRAMA

Apdo. 1
11310 Sotogrande (Cadiz)Tel.: (56) 79 27 75
Telefax: (56) 79 29 67
Established in 1975
Holes: 18
Par: 72
Course designer: Mr. Robert Trent Jones

GOLF LA MORALEJA

28100 Alcobendas (Madrid)
Tel.: (1) 650 07 00
Established in 1976
Holes: 18
Par: 72
Course designer: Mr. Jack Nicklaus

LA MANGA CAMPO DE GOLF

30385 Los Belones (Murcia)
Tel.: (68) 56 45 11
Telex: 67798 MGOF
Established in 1971
Holes: 36
Par: 70 (north course) and 72 (south course)
Course designer: D. Paull Putman

REAL CLUB DE GOLF EL PRAT

Apdo. 10
08820 El Prat de Llobregat (Barcelona)
Tel.: (3) 379 02 78
Established in 1954
Holes: 27
Par: 72-73
Course designer: D. Javier Arana

REAL CLUB DE LA PUERTA DE HIERRO

Avda. de Miraflores, s/n.
28035 Madrid
Tel.: (1) 316 17 45
Established in 1904
Holes: 36
Par: 72-68
Course designer: Mr. John Harris
and Mr. Simpson

REAL GOLF CLUB DE SAN SEBASTIAN

Apdo. 6
280080 San Sebastian (Guipuzcoa0
Tel.: (43) 61 68 45/46/47
Telefax: (43) 61 68 45
Established in 1910
Holes: 18
Par: 72
Course designer: D. P. Hirigoyen

REAL GOLF DE PEDREÑA

Apdo. 233
39080 Santander
Tels.: (42) 50 00 01/02 66
Established in 1928
Holes: 18
Par: 70
Course designer: Colt, Alison & Morrison

REAL SOCIEDAD DE GOLF DE NEGURI

Apdo. 9
48990 Algorta (Vizcaya)
Tel.: (4) 469 02 00/08
Established in 1911
Holes: 18
Par: 72
Course designer: D. Javier Arana

REAL FEDERACION ESPAÑOLA DE GOLF

Capitán Haya, 9, 5.°
28020 Madrid
Tels.: (1) 555 26 82/27 57
Telefax: (1) 556 32 90

THE IMAGE BANK/FRANCISCO ONTAÑON

with the guidance of José María Olazábal as consultant, and also a partner of IGD. The company, which is currently engaged in building a 27-hole course in Masía Bach near Barcelona, is just one of several similar companies responsible for building Spain's new golf courses, some of them using big-name golfers (Ballesteros and Olazábal among them) as advisers.

BEST GOLF COURSES OF SPAIN

JAVIER BELLOSO

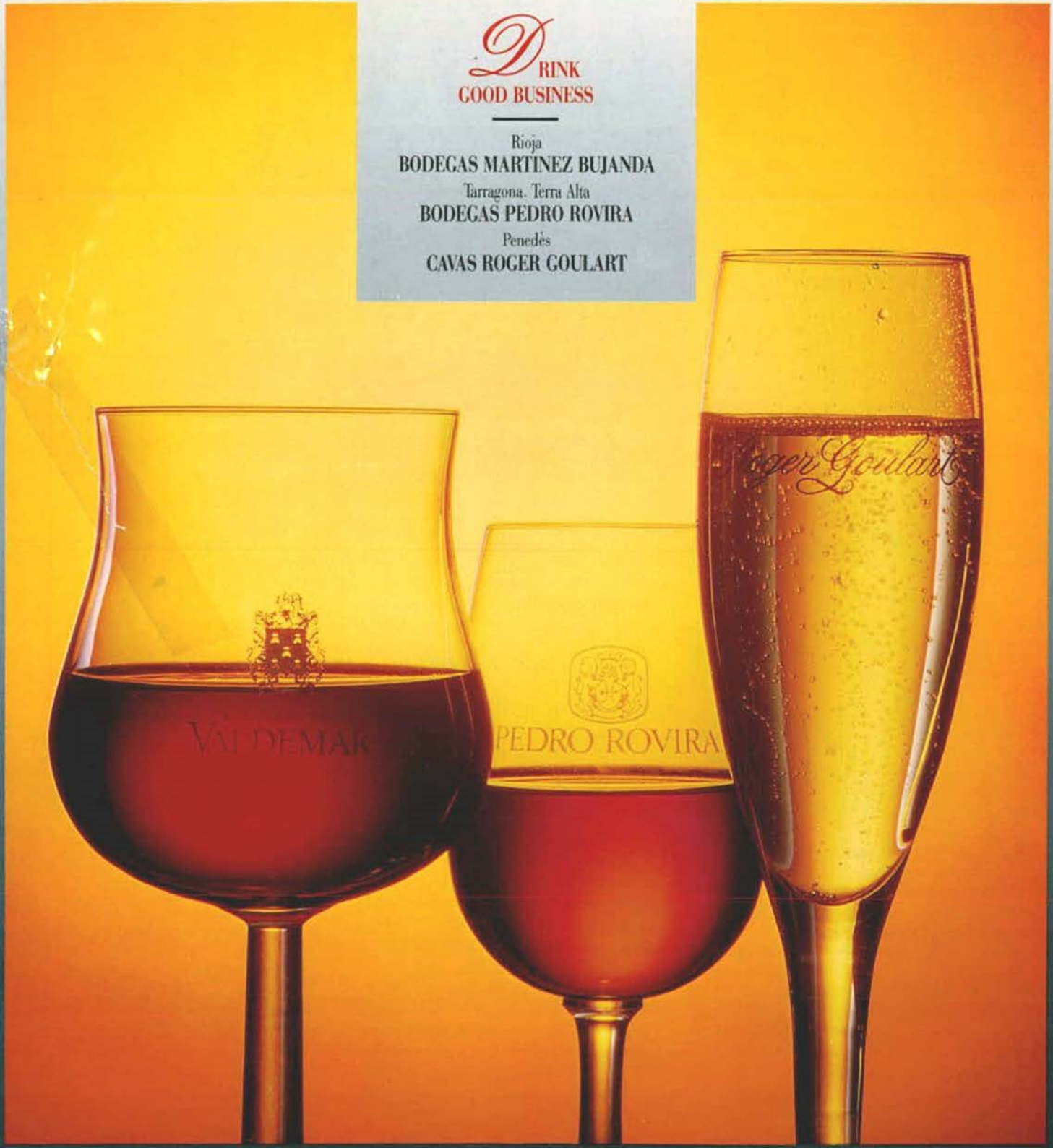
PROSPECTS FOR THE YEAR 2000

A study carried out by Spain's Department of Tourism reveals that to sustain the current ratio of 520 players per course, between 23 and 27 new courses a year would need to be inaugurated between now and the year 2000. Fantastic though this may seem at first glance, this is precisely the present rate.

What this means is that golfers will continue to enjoy the same uncrowded conditions they have become used to. The pleasant, relaxing surroundings and atmosphere are surely among the chief attractions of golf. Then there is the fact that it is a sport at which from children to the elderly can get very good indeed. Not to mention the social aspects of belonging to the golf club.

The south is unquestionably the main magnet for foreign golfers visiting Spain. Its guaranteed sunshine, stunning countryside and outstanding sports and hotel facilities attract golfers in their thousands. Statistics for 1986 show that even then, over 400,000 rounds of golf were played on the Costa del Sol alone.

But undeniable though its charms are, the south by no means has an exclusive on golf. Madrid, Barcelona, Seville and the northern cities of San Sebastian and Santander (home of Seve Ballesteros) all have excellent courses and offer the added advantage to visitors who are not golf fanatics to the exclusion of all else of being well-placed for exploring Spain's many other attractions.



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LA HACIENDA

THE CUISINE OF THE SOUTH

Text: **Sobremesa**
Photos: **Antonio Girbes/Sobremesa**

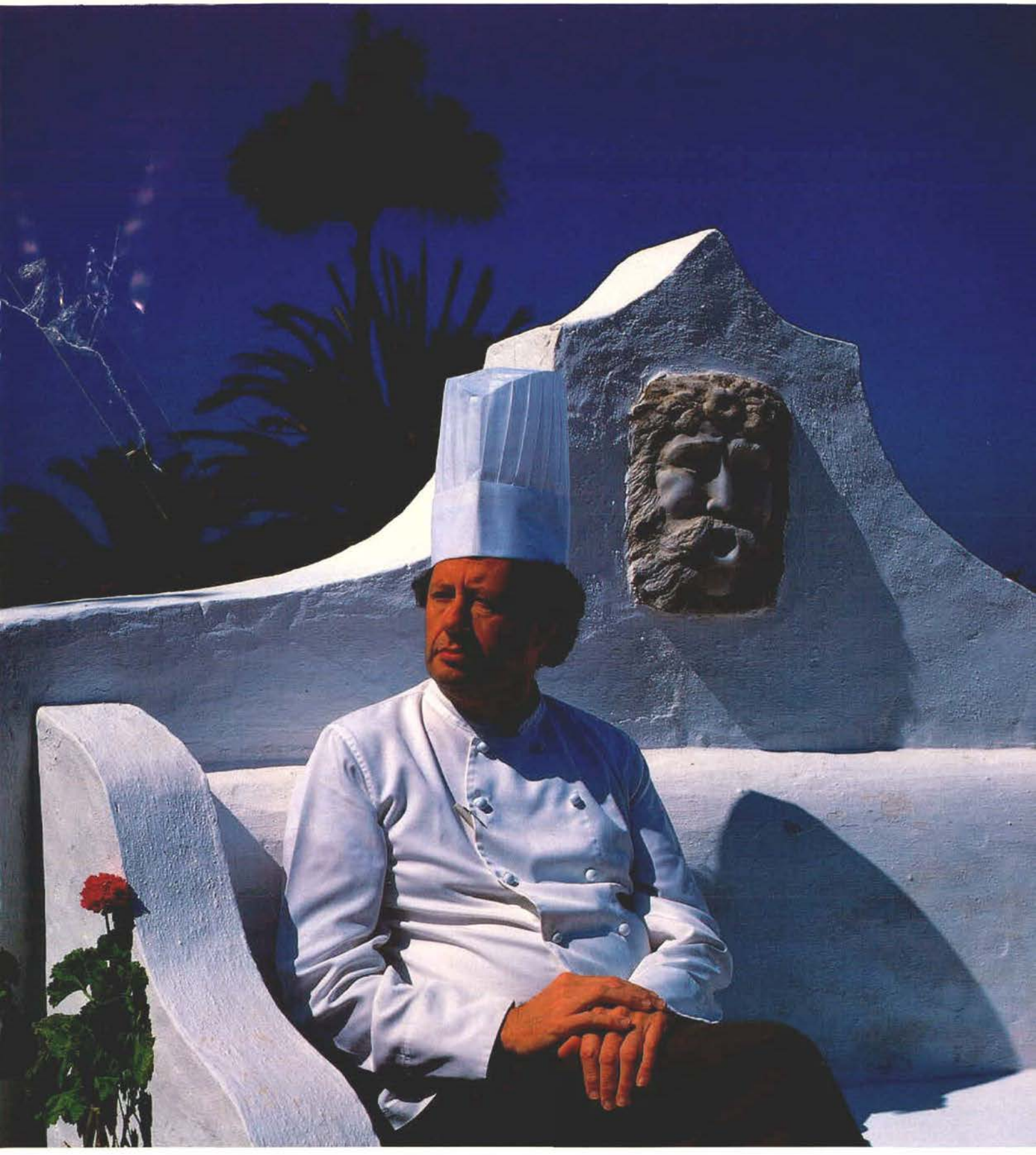
Paul Schiff arrived in Marbella, Malaga, for the first time one distant October. In Brussels the rain fell in torrents and when it stopped, fog would settle over the city for days at a time. In Marbella, Schiff discovered the sun and the sea. For some time he had been weary of Brussels and he wanted a change. He had been thinking of Canada. But, unexpectedly, one of the partners of La Hacienda, a luxury development in Marbella, proposed that he should take charge of the restaurant there and Paul Schiff went down to the shore of the Mediterranean and suddenly forgot about Canada. Like so many other travellers to the south, he had arrived.

He settled his affairs in Brussels and two months later he was installed, together with his wife and children, in this superb spot, overlooking the pine-trees and the sea. -I wouldn't change it for anything- he says more than twenty years later. -I like my profession, and I believe that I can practise it here wonderfully well.- His wife is French and his children, although they were born in Belgium, have Spanish nationality. Paul Schiff, for his part, has become the father of the Andalusian *nouvelle cuisine*.

He was born in Luxembourg in 1937. His father was of Polish-Belgian origin and his mother was from Luxembourg. His father worked in catering, but the chef has few memories of him from his childhood, -practically none-, affirms Paul. He was mobilised during the Second World War and died in 1944. Schiff said goodbye to him when three years old and never saw him again.

However the child has inherited his father's vocation. He was admitted to the School of Catering and began to work, when still very young, in catering as both chef and maître. At twenty-eight he had begun to tire of Brussels and had been considering Canada as an alternative, to revive his enthusiasm. One day, a client in his restaurant offered him the possibility of running a restaurant in an out of the way little place known as Marbella. The client was a shareholder in the construction company and the restaurant on the luxury estate which they had embarked upon in Marbella was closed because the professional who was going to manage it had failed to come to an agreement with the company. Paul Schiff arrived in Marbella, attracted by the possibility of leaving Brussels, and surrendered to the delights of the sun and the Mediterranean sea.

At first, progress was difficult. The young chef brought with him his training in French cuisine, with its foie-gras and its *crèmes*, and he suddenly found himself in a backwater in which it was little short of impossible to obtain any of the basic ingredients for his recipes. For years, Paul Schiff created an imposing logistics network. He wanted a luxury restaurant in a town which only boasted a poor village market. -Until a little while ago, I used to buy my meat in Madrid- — explains Schiff — -and I have always brought my vegetables from Barcelona. The market in Barcelona is unquestionably the vegetable garden of Spain. From the first I used to buy fish in the nearby markets of Fuengirola and Algeciras-. Keeping up the quality of La Hacienda was a challenge which demanded an almost superhuman effort.



Schiff has created a new cuisine with the feel of the sun and the south. In his cooking, he has become Andalusian.

Recipes

Crayfish and mushroom salad
(Ensalada de cangrejos de río y champiñones)

Serves four:

32 crayfish
2 l. stock *
16 large mushroom heads
8 dessertspoons mayonnaise
2 dessertspoons of cream
Shellfish sauce (or lobster bisque)
Cayenne
Cognac
Lettuce strips

Cook the crayfish for 3 minutes in the stock which has been prepared at least half an hour beforehand so that the full flavour of the ingredients is absorbed. Reserve and allow to go cold. Meanwhile, prepare the sauce.

Preparation of the sauce: Reduce the shellfish sauce or lobster bisque, thickening with a little cornflour to give it a good consistency, and add the cayenne and cognac. Allow to cool. Add this preparation to the mayonnaise and adjust the seasoning with salt and cayenne.

Rinse the mushroom heads thoroughly and slice finely. Mix into part of the sauce, leaving the other part for serving. Arrange the mushrooms in the centre of the dish and around them the crayfish, having first shelled the tails. Decorate with watercress and cherry tomatoes.

* For the stock: water, 1 chopped celery stalk, 1 clove, 1 bag with 2 bayleaves, a sprig of thyme and black peppercorns; white wine, vinegar and salt.

Crayfish and mushroom salad.

Fillets of dorada with lemon thyme.

Fillets of dorada with lemon thyme
(Filete de dorada al tomillo de limón)

Serves four:

4 small fillets of dorada *
1/4 l. of cream
1 dl. of fish fumet
1 dl. of Montilla wine
6 sprigs of lemon thyme **
Salt
White pepper

Steam the fillets of dorada for 4 or 5 minutes. Reduce the fish fumet together with the cream, half of the sherry, salt, white pepper and two sprigs of thyme.

When reduced, taste, adjust the seasoning and add the rest of the sherry, allowing it to boil once.

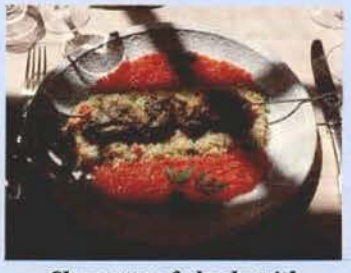
Arrange the fish on the plates, cover with the sauce and one sprig of lemon thyme.

This dish may be accompanied by a pastry or a potato or carrot purée.

* Mediterranean fish.

** This is to be found in the mountains in the east of Malaga. Although it grows wild, it has now begun to be cultivated.

Vol-au-vent of strawberries, oranges and raisins.



Skewers of duck with semolina and spicy tomato.

Skewers of duck with semolina and spicy tomato salad
(Brocheta de pato con alcuzcuz y tomate picante)

Serves two:

2 magrets of duck
250 g. of semolina
Salt
Black pepper
5 tomatoes,
skinned and seeded
1 chilli
Olive oil
2 finely chopped onions
1 medium size green pepper
100 g. cooked chickpeas
1 red pepper
Peas
1 clove of garlic

After soaking the semolina in warm water for 5 minutes, rub in a little oil and steam for some 10 minutes. Remove from the heat and work with a fork in order to separate all the grains.

Heat some oil in a frying-pan and fry gently the onions, peppers and garlic. When soft, add the peas and chickpeas together with the semolina.

Cut the *magrets* of duck into medallions 2 cm. thick, double them over to put on the skewer, season with salt and a little pepper, sprinkle with oil and grill. The grilling time will depend on whether the meat is to be rare or well-done.

Chop the tomatoes and fry in oil with the onion, chilli, salt and a sprinkling of sugar.

Serve the semolina on a dish with the skewers on top and the tomato round the edge.

Vol-au-vent of strawberries, oranges and raisins
(Hojaldre de fresas, naranjas y uvas pasas)

Serves two:

2 vol-au-vent
50 g. wild strawberries
2 medium oranges, sliced
10 raisins, soaked overnight
1 dl. of syrup

In an empty vol-au-vent case of very light puff pastry, warmed through, arrange the fruits, pour on the hot syrup, scented with orange peel. Serve directly onto the dishes.

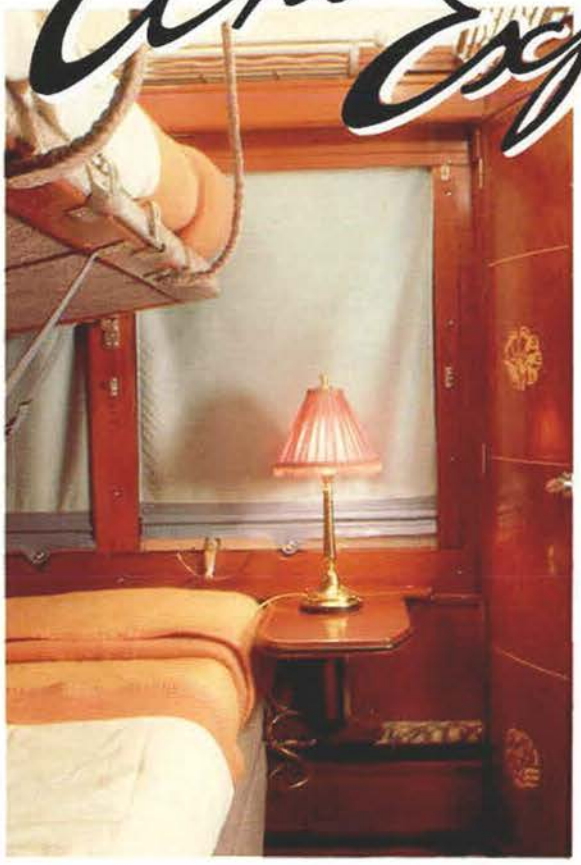
Little by little the chef realised that it was necessary to adapt the cuisine which he had brought from the north to the products and customs of Andalusia. He discovered Seville asparagus, crayfish, the light cooking of Andalusia, the fish of the Mediterranean coast, the *semolina*... -I believe that I was the first to discover Seville asparagus, which is marvellous. Eight years ago I used to go to Huelva to buy fresh asparagus. The season begins there around the 20th February, when there still isn't any anywhere else. What happens is that the big plantations produce exclusively for export, mainly to Germany. When I arrived in Marbella in 1969 I suffered. I was trying to recreate the cuisine I knew, the French cuisine. Three or four years went by before I realised that I had to work with the materials that I had around me, that I had to adapt my cooking to this climate, and to the possibilities. It is practically impossible to produce a cuisine outside its own medium. Imagine, if, even now, it is difficult to find certain products, what it must have been like seventeen years ago when I arrived.-

Little by little, Schiff discovered Seville asparagus, crayfish, the light cooking of Andalusia, the fish of the Mediterranean coast, the semolina...

Paul Schiff has made an art out of necessity by creating the dishes which have made him famous; dishes in which there are surprising mixtures, and in which, together with elements of the great traditional cuisine are to be found the products of the Mediterranean and of Andalusia, including the wines: the detail of fresh vegetables, of herbs and spices delicately applied and of the truly Mediterranean meats, pork and lamb. Schiff has created a new cuisine with the feel of the sun and the south. It could almost be said that he has invented modern Andalusian cuisine. It could almost be said that in his cooking, he had become Andalusian.

His wife, Teresa, and his son work with him in the restaurant. His younger daughter, after spending a year in a French confectioner's, learnt pastry-making in Barcelona, and the elder one, who has a rather different philosophy on life, helps him in the concern which he has set up for the distribution of quality produce: all kinds of duck products, strawberries, wild asparagus, and soon, snails' eggs. Paul Schiff, in Marbella, has found a taste for difficulties.

Al Andalus Expreso



Since the 11th century, millions of pilgrims have walked to Santiago de Compostela in north-west Spain from the Pyrenees or even further afield. Today, about 3.500 a year make the journey by foot, on horseback, or by bicycle —the only ways that legitimately classify you as a pilgrim on the Route to Santiago to visit the crypt of St. James. Times change, and so do means of travel. This year, the Al-Andalus Expreso, Spain's answer to the Orient Express, moves north to offer a unique experience - to cover the Route to Santiago in a luxury hotel-on-wheels.

The legend of St. James (Santiago in Spanish) began in 813 when a divine light directed a pious hermit to a sarcophagus containing the remains of St. James the Apostle, washed ashore near present day Santiago. Centuries earlier, Herod had ordered St. James beheaded, and it is said his body was smuggled out of Palestine by followers with the aid of angels.

The importance of the "discovery" cannot be underestimated. It was a spiritual boost to Catholic Europe in the fight against the infidel Moor who had occupied most of Spain and threatened France. The pilgrims brought to Spain new ideas, Romanesque art and architecture. Knights and religious orders constructed dozens of monasteries, hospices and inns to acommodate pilgrims, and many still stand to be admired.

After setting out from barcelona, the Route to Santiago starts at Pamplona, famous for its running of the bulls in early July. Burgos is the city of El Cid, the first of three stunning cathedrals en route, and the 800-years-old Monastery of Las Huelgas. Leon was the capital of Christian Spain from 914 to 1085. Today, it offers two peerless spectacles —the 13th-century stained— glass windows in the cathedral and the 12th-century wall paintings in the San Isidoro Church.

But Santiago is the real treasure, a beautiful town straight out of the Middle Ages with the magical Plaza del Obradoiro at its centre. The square is framed by splendid buildings, but the 12-th century cathedral containig St. James'crypt is the crown amid this sea of jewels.

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BEST OF THE BUNCH (II)

It was a sunny spring-like late winter's morning in Andalusia, and the air was fresh and clean. We had come to Jerez to talk with Don Mauricio González, Marqués de Bonanza, head of the González family, owners of one of the leading sherry-producing wineries, González-Byass. A lifetime dedicated to sherry has not diminished Don Mauricio's enthusiasm, one might almost say passion, for his wines. Who better then to talk to us about the marvellously rich world of sherry, its history, its present and its future.

Text: **John Reeder**
Photos: **Piedad Sancho-Mata**

A GENTLEMAN OF JEREZ

MAURICIO GONZALEZ GONZALEZ BYASS

Wending our way through a spotlessly clean *bodega* of sand - floored, whitewashed wine cellars and still, silent rows of oak sherry butts —in Jerez, the 110 gallon oak casks used for storing, ageing and maturing sherry are always known as butts— we were received by Don Mauricio with that old-world courtesy, now alas all too rare, but fortunately still the norm in Jerez. Perhaps what first impresses an English-speaker about Don Mauricio is his impeccable command of the English language.A tall elegant man in his late sixties, he speaks English with all the ease and fluency of the English country gentleman he in many respects appears to be. Let him explain in his own words how this came to happen:

"I was born in England in fact, many years ago, in a little village called Hampton Hill, near the palace of Hampton Court with its famous vine, which is why my father used to say that I was born under a vine. I came back home to Jerez however, when I was about four or five months old, so I don't think I had much time to pick up much English. Later we had an English nanny, and in my family we learnt English at the same time as we learnt Spanish. At home we spoke both languages."

The company González Byass is yet another example of that remarkable cross-fertilisation between Andalusian winemen and European importers, English and French, Irish and Scots, which has made Jerez the most international of all Europe's wine-producing areas. Whereas many companies actually carried this partnership even further, intermarrying and creating the international dynasties of wine families for which Jerez is famous, the relationship between the Andalusian González and the English Byass families remained purely commercial, as Don Mauricio explained to us.

A FAMILY BUSINESS

"This company was originally founded by my great grandfather, Manuel María González in 1835. Then later he named an English agent, a Mr. Robert Blake Byass, and some few years after decided to form a company with him. The production side of the company, González Byass Limited, was in Jerez, and originally the commercial side was handled by the Byass family. For many years they looked after the important British market for our sherries. More recently, for that company is now 155 years old, over the years the González family interest continued to expand, while that of the Byass family dwindled, so that eventually the González family shareholders bought out the remaining Byass shareholders.

Originally, the Jerez wine trade was essentially the shipping of sherry in cask to be bottled in England. In our own case, for instance, González Byass has its own bottling facility in England, but this over the years has been changing and very soon all sherry will be bottled at source in Jerez. González Byass is at present transferring its bottling plant to Jerez."

González Byass produces one of the most extensive ranges of fine sherries in all Jerez, from a bone dry thirty year old Amontillado, Amontillado del Duque, through a dry oloroso like Alfonso to a rich cream sherry such as Nectar Cream, not forgetting the splendid range of brandies, of which Lepanto, a Solera Gran Reserva Brandy de Jerez is possibly the most renowned. If, however, one had to choose one wine synonymous with the name González Byass, it would have to be that most popular of all finos, Tío Pepe. We asked Don Mauricio to tell us about the tradition of specialising in the making of fino at González Byass and the story behind Tío Pepe.

THE STORY OF TIO PEPE

"Finos have, of course, been González Byass' line for very many years. Right from the beginning great grandfather decided in 1840 something to lay down his first fino *solera* (a *solera* in Jerez is a term usually used to describe a series of butts where the wine is transferred along the scale from butt to butt, the older wine being constantly refreshed by the younger as it matures before bottling). One of his uncles, Tío Pepe —literally Uncle Joe— was especially partial to a glass of fino and asked great grandfather to lay down a small fino *solera* for him so that he could come with his friends in the evening —Tío Pepe was an old bachelor— to have a drink.Great grandfather gave him a key to the bodega and chalked on the butts of the fino *solera*, Tío Pepe. When the solera got low, Tío Pepe would ask his nephew to top it up for him. Soon this fino became well-known in Jerez, and people would say, let's go and have a glass of Tío Pepe's wine, and the name stuck.

When registered brand names became legally obligatory for bottled wine in the second half of the nineteenth century,

A lifetime dedicated to sherry has not diminished Don Mauricio's enthusiasm, almost passion, for his wines.

Great Grandfather didn't have a brand. As Tío Pepe was famous in Jerez he adopted the name of his uncle as the name of his fino, thinking also that it was a name easy to pronounce in any language, and well suited for the export market.

For many years, however, it was mostly sold locally in Andalusia. When we started to sell Tío Pepe in important quantities in England was during the Second World War. At that time Jerez was only permitted to ship a quota of one specific type of sherry to England —a medium sherry— so that everybody in Jerez had to ship the same basic kind of sherry at the same price. But you were allowed 10% of the quota of a higher price wine of the type the shipper chose, and we at González Byass bet on fino as the type of sherry of the future.

In the late 1950s González Byass began a private oenological research programme to try and find out more about the scientific evolution of fino, into how the biological maturing process known as *crianza en flor*, which makes fino unique in the world as a wine, takes place.

But all that of course sounds rather dry and scientific. You shouldn't make the mistake in winemaking to think that science can decide everything for you, it can help, but the man and his sensory perception of nose and palate will always be the final judge of a good wine, thank goodness! The proof of the pudding is in the eating, isn't it?"

THE FUTURE OF SHERRY

What then, of the future of sherry. Will the lighter, drier finos gradually replace the sweeter darker sherries on the world market as consumer preferences change? And what of the older vintage sherries currently so much in vogue in London? Has indeed sherry weathered the storm of the last decade or so, and are more sophisticated winedrinkers moving back to sherry? Who better to answer these questions than a man with a lifetime's experience of sherry. Firstly then, we asked Don Mauricio how important he thought the current trend towards the drier sherries.

"I think there is indeed an overall trend towards lighter and drier drinks in general, not just in sherry. People are apt nowadays to want everything less full, shall we say, in every way, in alcoholic strength, in colour and in sweetness, but I think that's only a partial tendency amongst some consumers. I don't think that any one part of the wide spectrum of sherries from the dry fino through the medium sherries to the creams will ever dwindle away to nothing, but I do think that dry sherry will occupy an increasing proportion. In fact, the market is broadly divided I think between 25% finos and other dry sherries, 40% medium and 35% sweeter sherries. So you see there is still a large demand for what we might call the middle way, the medium sherries."

What about the new ranges of vintage sherries thirty and forty years old, oloroso secos, Pedro Ximenez varietals, and very old amontillados, which have recently become so popular amongst wine connoisseurs in England and America?

"These vintage sherries —wines as you say essentially for connoisseurs— don't of course exist in large quantities. In our case, at González Byass we have always laid down an important number of butts in the *añada* system, maturing the wines on their own without blending at all, for many years. Once these wines reach an extremely old age, they are then used for our vintage sherries. Although there aren't great amounts of these vintage wines, our production is stable —we thought about laying down these wines many years ago—. This long term view

Gourmets Club IV Show

Madrid 25th, 26th, 27th, and 28th of May, 1990

II Spanish Chefs Championship

As in other years, the IV Show will be the meeting point for the best gastronomic products from Spain and abroad, high-quality goods produced by both craft and industrial techniques.
The Gourmets Club IV Show has found it necessary to double the area needed to house the exhibition. It will be held simultaneously in the Convention Hall and in "La Masía" of the Corporation of Madrid, both of which are to be found in the enclosure of the Casa de Campo.
At the same time, the final of the II Spanish Chefs Championship will be held, the winner of which will represent Spain at the World Chefs Championship, the Bocuse D'Or trophy (January 1991, Lyon).

95 % OF PROFESSIONAL VISITORS

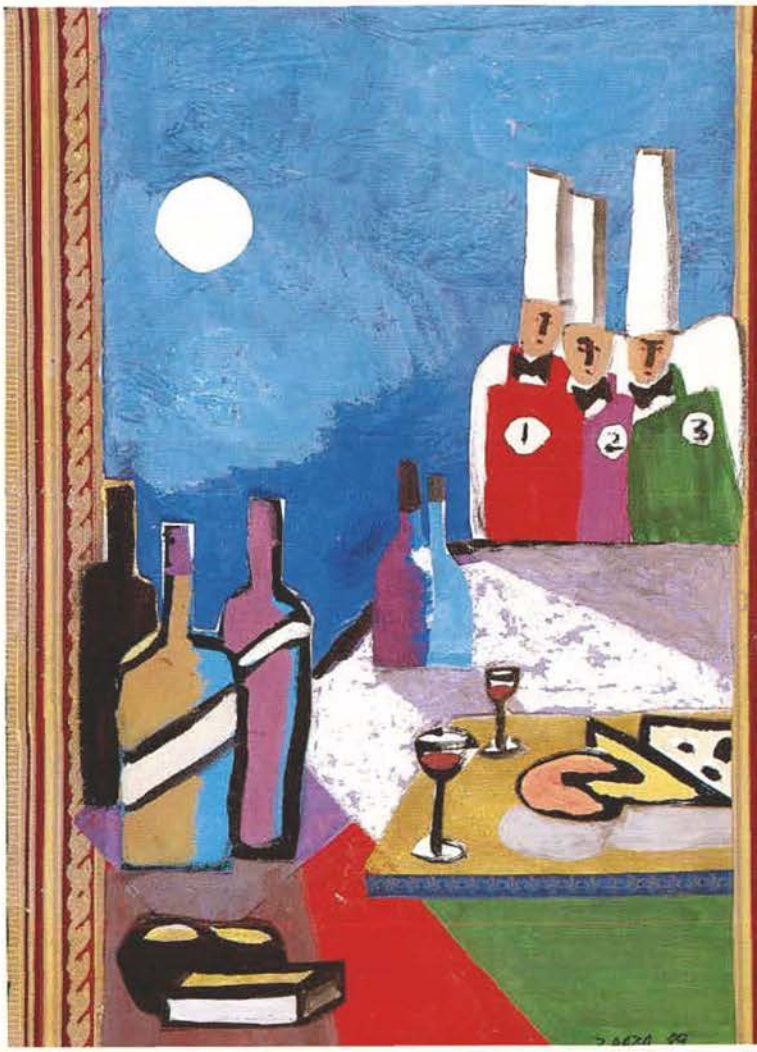
In 1989, 130 exhibitors participated and 10,452 people visited the Show, 95 % of which were professionals (owners and managers of the best restaurants, hotels, bars and gstronomic shops in Spain, as well as purchasing managers from the big supermarkets and chains of select food stores.)

SELECTION OF PRODUCTS TO BE EXHIBITED

As in former editions, the Organizing Committee will maintain a rigorous quality control of the products to be exhibited.

Products to be exhibited:

— Wines, spirits and liquors.
— Sweets, chocolates, biscuits, etc.
— Condiments, spices, oils and vinegars.
— Aperitives and beers.
— Cheeses and perishable products.
— Preserves, vegetables, fish and meat.
— Smoked products, caviar, etc.
— Pork products.
— Patés, foie-gras and duck and goose products.
— Tableware (dinner services, glassware, tablecloths, trolleys, and accessories).
— Various (kitchen utensils, gastronomic publications, computers, etc.)



For further information about the Gourmets Club IV Show, send this coupon to Progourmet, S. A. Calle Velayos, 4 (bajo). 28035 Madrid, Spain. Tel.: (1) 373 60 42. Fax: (1) 373 60 77.

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of things is part of the personality of our *bodega*.

"The future of sherry?We have, as we say in sailing circles, been going through a patch of rough water. But I am optimistic.We at González Byass believe that once people are introduced to fine quality sherry, when they discover it, when they try it, they like it. We shouldn't think that the future of sherry can simply be solved by spending a lot of money on publicity. You've got to convince people in a different way —it is a difficult slow job, travelling the world, introducing people to sherry, wearing out a lot of shoe leather, as my father used to say, but it has always brought us good results in the long run.

"This is not so much a commercial strategy, as the belief, the absolute certainty, that quality sooner or later gets there.And so if you simply dedicate yourself to producing good quality wine —and you know you do it in the last analysis because you love good wine— in the end that will be also good business."

ELEVEN O'CLOCK

It was around eleven o'clock and we paused in our conversation to celebrate the mid-morning González ritual of a small glass of that fine oloroso seco, Alfonso, taken together with a biscuit. There is an old Jerez saying which playfully suggests that this mid-morning oloroso is only a prelude to more serious drinking. "One before eleven, and eleven after one", the saying goes. More in the nature of a little Andalusian joke rather than words of advice perhaps. The conversation strayed to the anti-alcohol campaigns currently fashionable worldwide which rightly, although perhaps with just a suggestion of unnecessary puritan fervour, attempt to discourage the abuse of alcohol.I think we would all agree that it is definitely not advisable to down a pint of vodka before breakfast, for instance, or drink a litre of whisky before going to bed. A glass of fino before lunch with a small plate of olives, or a glass of a fine Gran Reserva red Rioja with dinner would seem, however, to be quite another story. There would appear to be a valuable distinction to be made between use and abuse. As Don Mauricio remarked, "Measure in all things should be the watchword". Don Mauricio is unusually well-qualified to comment on this question, his father having lived to 93 and his grandfather to the ripe old age of 99, confirmed sherry drinkers both. I thought it therefore appropriate that we conclude our conversation with the cautionary tale of Don Manuel González as told by his son, Don Mauricio González.

"When Father was very small, he was a very sickly infant and grandfather called in the doctor to look at him. Having examined the child, the doctor said that he would not last the week. Extremely upset grandfather called in another doctor for a second opinion. This second doctor said his first colleague was indeed mistaken, the child wouldn't last two days. The distraught father —my grandfather— did not however forget his Jerez sense of hospitality, even at such a delicate moment, and took the two doctors into another room and ordered them to be brought some sherry. As the servant went through the room where the mother and child were, carrying the decanter on a tray, the sunlight must have struck the cut glass of the decanter for the tiny child raised its hand. The mother called for a spoon and gave the child a spoonful of the sherry.As the child seemed to enjoy the dose it was repeated for several weeks during which time the child miraculously recovered. From that day on Don Manuel took his medicine, a glass of *oloroso*, every morning of his life. My father used gleefully to finish his story saying —"I am now over ninety and the doctors are all dead!"

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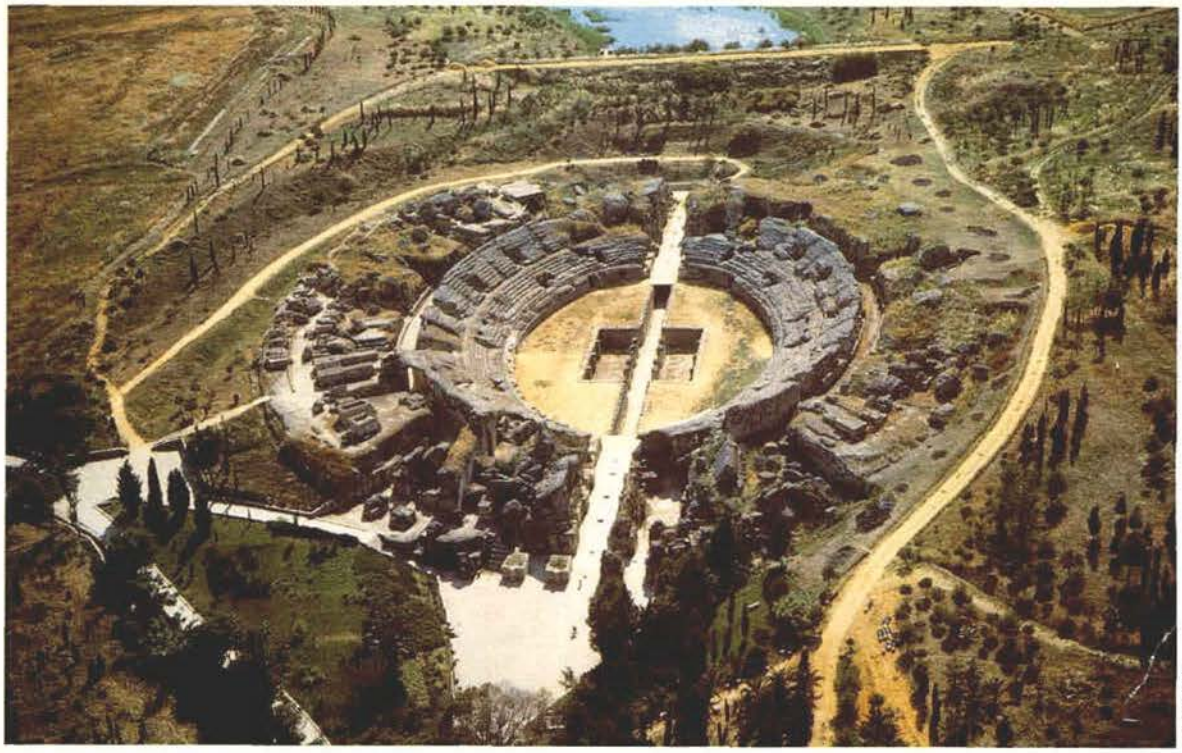
A HISTORY OF SPAIN

LIFE UNDER THE ROMANS

Like invaders and colonisers everywhere, before and since, when the Romans entered Spain in 219 BC it was neither as tourists nor philanthropists. Their aim was to oust the African Carthaginians from their position of control and to tap the sources of wealth —particularly the mines— from which they were currently benefiting. The war which ensued was to last two hundred years and the indigenous inhabitants of the Peninsula were to play an important part in it. Composed of isolated tribes, often hostile to each other, the native population had as yet developed no sense of national identity and consequently lent their services to both warring parties.

Text: **Jesús Torbado**



TURESPAÑA

Anyone exploring Spain today constantly comes upon relics of the Roman invaders. Near Seville, there are the ruins of Italica and the imposing theatre.

The first conquerors had given their colony the name *Span,* a Phoenician word meaning "hidden land" or "land of rabbits"; for the Romans it now became *Hispania.* This curious derivation probably refers to the good hunting the early settlers found in this new outpost of their empire. Spain has evidently always been good hunting territory —it was subsequently to become the sport of many of its kings as the royal portraits by Velázquez and Goya show. Though its rabbits and many other animal species no longer roam as free as they once did, Spain is still Europe's main attraction for hunters. The central plains (Castilla-La Mancha, Castilla-León and Extremadura) and Andalusia are particularly rich in game: not just rabbit but also hare, partridge, dove, deer, wild boar, mountain goat, moufflon (wild mountain sheep), even brown bears in the Cantabrian mountains. Bears and other rare creatures (capercaillie, fox, great bustard, lynx) are today legally protected species to spare them from extinction. Unsurprisingly, they survive in the least populated areas of the Peninsula.

When Rome finally triumphed over Carthage, Spain had some four million inhabitants, a tenth of its present-day population. They were grouped along the south and east coasts and in the richer areas of the north. Roman Galicia alone had some seven hundred thousand inhabitants, sustained by its fertile soil and productive mines. The two great plateaux of the interior were practically uninhabited.

MUSEO ARQUEOLOGICO NACIONAL

There were Roman villas all over Spain, and in some of them, the original mosaics still survive. This one called «Mosaic of the seasons» belongs to a Roman villa near Palencia.

GUERRILLA WARFARE

The two centuries of continuous confrontation had been a period of hardship and drama, incidents from which inevitably entered the folk memory. The two great powers of the period had clashed in a country which was foreign to both of them and whose inhabitants shifted their support from one side to the other and sometimes withdrew it completely. The resistance produced heroic figures —Viriathus, Indíbil, Mandonius— and a style of military strategy which the Spanish were subsequently to use often (against Napoleon, for example) and indeed to bequeath their word for it —*guerrilla*— to the rest of the world. The guerrilla fighter is essentially a soldier who finds the traditional tactics of war too complex and the discipline they require too constricting for his free and proud spirit. The Spanish character emerged early.

The invaders were baffled by the natives' resistance and spoke of them with a mixture of amazement, admiration, disdain, and more than a touch of impotence. Remember that while Rome under Julius Caesar took only nine years to conquer Gaul (present-day France) its legions were vigorously engaged for over two hundred years in Spain and even so never managed to dominate it completely.

"Their coarseness and savagery", wrote Strabo of the Basques, "are due not only to their warrior customs but also to their isolation". Five centuries on, another Roman commentator, bishop Meropius Paulinus (later canonised), described the inhabitants of the north in even more disparaging terms. It is hardly surprising. He was describing the enemy, and a tough one at that:not even the Emperor

Augustus when he "pacified" Spain in 19 BC was able to subject them to his power completely.

The Romans managed their final victory by capitalising on their vast, well-organised army and, more important still, on the disunity of the Iberian tribes. There were three important nucleii of defence, in Lusitania (present-day Extremadura and Portugal), the mountains of the north, and the centre of the Peninsula, yet each fought independently of the others. Earlier, in 205 BC in the Ebro delta, one of the most beautiful areas of eastern Spain, the Romans had defeated various eastern tribes led by Indíbil and Mandonius, folk heroes who are commemorated to this day by a fine monument in the city of Lérida.

The war against the Lusitani was to be more prolonged. These tribes from south of the River Tagus invaded Baetica (Andalusia) which was already in Roman hands, and even launched attacks on some North African cities. General Galba resorted to devious tactics "in a manner unworthy of a Roman", in the opinion of official chronicler Appian, murdering envoys and leaders and finally engineering the assassination by his own aides of Viriathus, head of an army of ten thousand Lusitani. The war had lasted fifteen years (154-139 BC) and had cost Rome dear.

THE SIEGE OF NUMANCIA

The other major rebellion was staged by the Celtiberians of the centre. After twenty years of hostilities, Rome opted for a general offensive backed up by support from the kings of Pergamum, Syria and Numidia. Scipius Emilianus (Scipius Africanus' adopted grandson) was sent with a force of sixty thousand soldiers to quell a population of little more than four thousand. The siege of the Iberian city of Numancia was an epic event of its time: the city was of vital strategic importance in the conquest of the troublesome central plateau and for the defence of the coastal cities againt attacks from the tribes of the interior. Scipius diverted the course of the River Douro, girded the city with a nine-kilometre (six-mile) wall, installed fortifications and camps —of stone-built houses rather than tents— and, after ten months, the city finally fell, vanquished by hunger, thirst and disease.

A civilian population, many of them nomadic shepherds who roamed the *meseta* with their herds, had managed to keep the Roman legions, led by eight different generals, at bay for a quarter of a century. In the end, it was Scipius Africanus that took the city. Its exhausted inhabitants had set fire to the city and many then killed themselves before the final defeat, a gesture that entered the realm of legend and is recounted in one of Cervantes' only two surviving plays —*La Numancia*. Appian recounts that "the majority died by their own hands in a thousand different ways and the rest presented a strange and appalling spectacle, their emaciated bodies filthy, dishevelled and foul-smelling, their nails and hair grown long and their clothing repellent. If their miserable condition stirred the pity of their enemies, the anger, pain and fatigue engraved upon their faces inspired their awe." The year was 133 BC. A contemporary archaeologist studying the ruins of the city was moved to write: "The heroes of Numancia may well have had to eat human flesh to stay alive, but they ate from vessels artistically painted with birds and flowers". These were no primitive savages but civilised, industrious people.

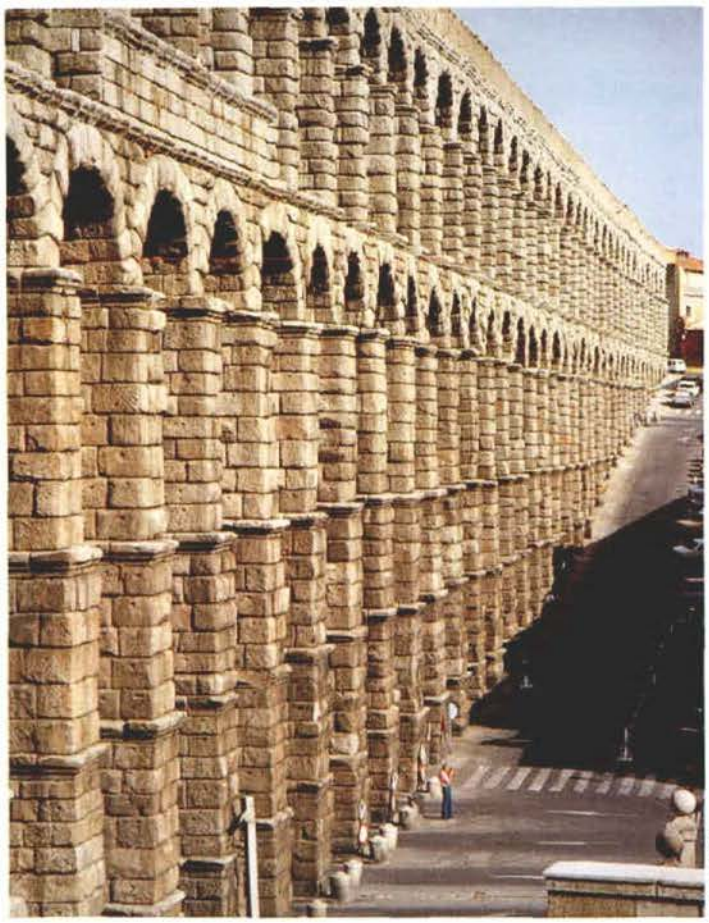
The remains of the city of Numancia, immortalised in the Spanish imagination as a symbol of defiance and independence, can still be seen today on a hilltop just a few kilometres from Soria in the centre of the uncompromising landscape of the *meseta*. Little of the original Iberian city, or indeed of the city the Romans later built on the same site, has survived. The foundations of its houses and irregular streets, the occasional column... it seems a poor monument to such heroism but anyone knowing its tragic history will find the site charged with significance.

Not far away, near the lovely town of Soria, romantic and peaceful today, are the remains of another last redoubt of resistance to Rome by the people of the *meseta*. The city of Termancia was destroyed sixty years later and its inhabitants slaughtered or taken as slaves.

The war still dragged on, particularly in the north, and episodes of heroism in the face of death are still remembered: mothers begging their sons to kill them rather that let them fall into the hands of the Romans, crucified soldiers still singing their battle-songs as they hung on the cross...

Then came the Roman civil wars which took place on Spanish soil: Caesar against Pompey and his sons, Galba against Nero, Sertorius against Sulla... Sertorius, who defied the Roman senate and became independent ruler of most of Spain, established his stronghold in Clunia (75 BC), of which major Roman ruins still survive (Peñalba de Castro, in Burgos).

Spain has one of the most spectacular of all Roman aqueducts: it spans the city of Segovia and is still very much part of the living urban landscape.



TURESPAÑA

When Rome finally triumphed over Carthage, Spain had some four million inhabitants. They were grouped along the south and east coasts and in the richer areas of the north.

VICTORS AND VANQUISHED

Many have compared Rome's occupation of Spain with Spain's conquest of America fifteen centuries later and indeed there are many similarities although the colonisation of America was deeper-reaching, more all-embracing and took place on an infinitely larger geographical scale. In both cases, however, there was close fusion of the victors with the vanquished and it was at this level that the greatest success was achieved by both invading forces. Rome's colonisation of Spain lasted six hundred years and Spain's of America three hundred; in both cases one nation succeeded in imposing its religion, language and culture on another, taking in return a rich haul of booty and a high toll in human lives.We now know that Rome took more gold from Spain than Spain from America and also that in both cases the gold in question was squandered. Rome was to spend it on fripperies (cloth and adornments) in India and China, while Spain poured her new-found wealth into wars in Europe fought in the name of religion or for personal motives of the ruling dynasties. Both colonies were to produce major representatives of the imperial power. In the course of the 450 years of occupation which succeeded the wars between Rome and the Celitberians, Spain was completely transformed. Two of the greatest Roman Emperors —Trajan and Hadrian— were Spanish-born, as were many philosophers, scientists and poets, among them Seneca (a native of Cordoba), Lucian, Columella, Quintilian, Prudentius and Martial.

It could be argued that the Romanisation of the Peninsula did not penetrate all that deeply. Despite the fact that the entire territory was administered according to Roman law and governed by a tight and effective power structure, the common people carried on much as before, speaking their own dialects, worshipping their own gods, cultivating their land and tending their herds. The more go-ahead enrolled as legionnaires and fought for Rome in all quarters of the known world.

But the fact of Spain's being under the total military and administrative control of Rome made it a vital part of its empire. For six centuries, until a wave of new invaders entered the Peninsula via the Pyrenees in 409, Spain was part of Rome and the life-style of its ruling classes was similar to that in Italy or Greece.

ROME'S LARDER

Under Rome, Spain both gave and received a great deal.After the conquest, it became a veritable larder for Rome which soon gave up importing wheat from Egypt (a complicated business for the long distances and navigational difficulties involved) in favour of Spanish cereal.Many rich Romans with estates in Spain took their produce back to Italy with them.A hundred years before the birth of Christ, Spanish wine and oil —particularly from Andalusia and Tarraco (present-day Tarragona)— and wool from the mountains of the north were already prized products in Rome. Along the coast, numerous factories were set up (vestiges still remain) to produce garum, the concentrated sauce made of fish scraps macerated in brine and herbs which was a staple flavouring in Roman cooking.

Then there were precious metals, particularly gold and silver.In the region of El Bierzo (Las Médulas) in the north west of the Peninsula, one can still see the huge heaps of red soil which the Romans —or rather Spanish slaves directed by Roman engineers— shifted in the process of extracting what is estimated at a million and a half kilos of gold. The underground rivers and chambers of their mines are still to be seen. The River Sil, a scene of unperturbed calm today was once the site of tremendous activity, and nearby Astorga, a city-camp established by Augustus from which to control the mines, still preserves its former slaves' prison. Some of the mines sunk in the times of the Romans (in the Sierra Morena and Ciudad Real's Alcudia Valley, near Cartagena and in Río Tinto, Huelva) are still being exploited, or were so until not long ago.

The well-to-do inhabitants of Hispania echoed Rome's taste for owning pieces of sculpture. Archaeological museums throughout the country have good collections of them.

SPAIN'S ROMAN HERITAGE

With the installation of Roman administration, Latin became Spain's cultured language and the Peninsula's three main modern languages —Castilian, Gallego and Catalan— all derive from it. The Romans imposed their religion only superficially and the Iberians essentially continued to worship their own gods under new names, the sun becoming Apollo and the moon Diana. But Christianity was to take its place: St. Paul is believed to have evangelised along the eastern coast. Later, the Arabs called the Spanish they

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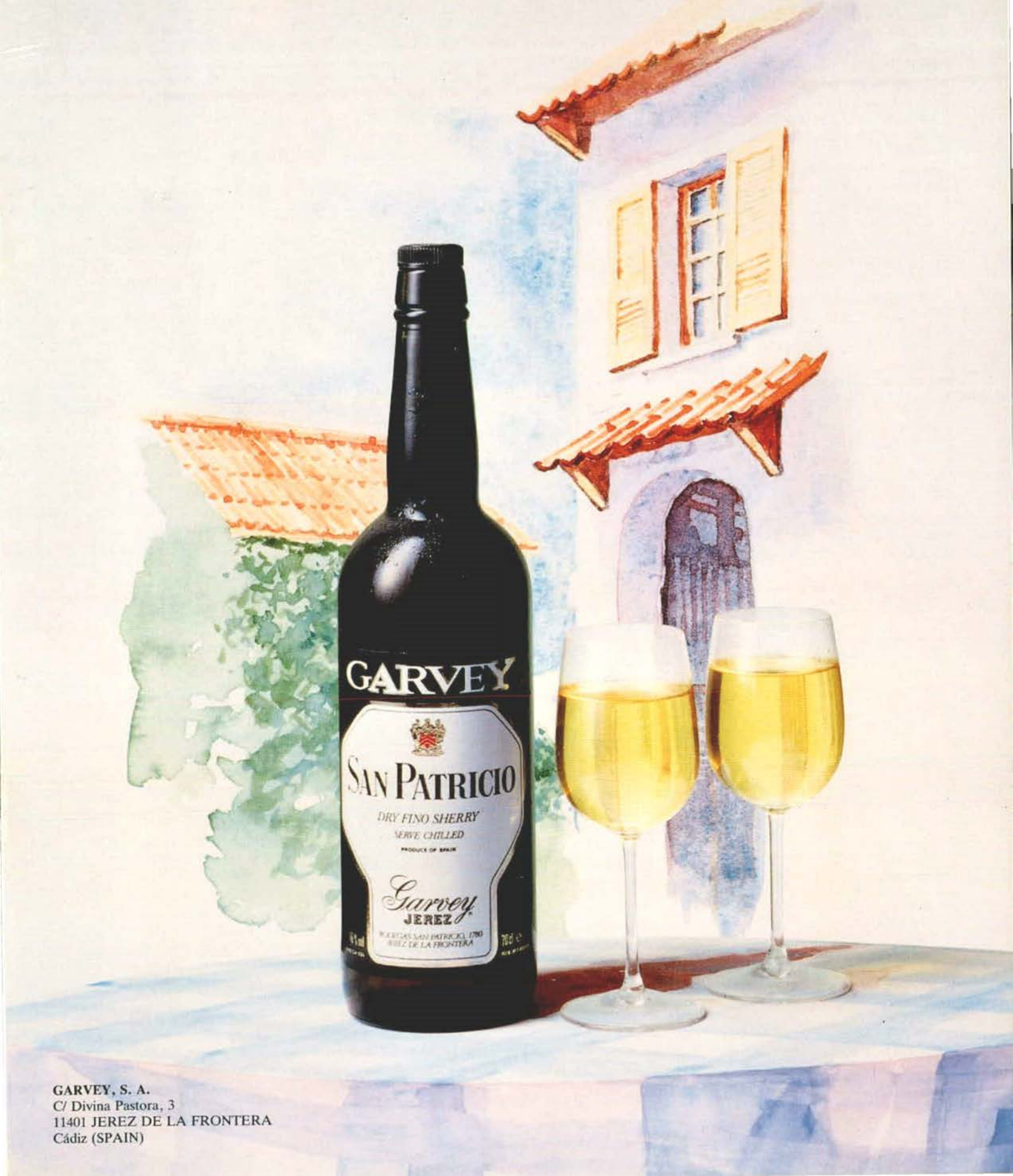
The Taste Experience



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MEMENTOES

Roman Spain

The vast number of major buildings constructed by the Romans in Spain convey some idea of the nation's importance within the Empire. Though many have been lost with time, the ones which remain reveal much of the art and way of life of the early centuries of our history.

Roman cities: Of those which have survived only as ruins, the most important are Italica (Seville), Clunia (Burgos), Numancia and Termancia (Soria) and Segobriga (Cuenca). Among those which are still thriving, Tarragona and, particularly, Merida, are the richest in Roman buildings and relics. Each of these has an excellent archaeological museum where smaller pieces (mosaics, sculptures and coins) found during digs are exhibited.

Aqueducts: Spain has one of the most spectacular of all Roman aqueducts: it spans the city of Segovia and is still very much part of the living urban landscape. Merida and Tarragona also have exceptionally fine examples.

Theatres and amphitheatres: Italica, Merida, Sagunto, Malaga, Tarragona, Pollentia (Balearic Islands) all have important ones.

Arches: The finest in Spain is in Bara (Tarragona). There are others in Medinaceli (Soria), Cabanes (Castellon), Merida (Cáceres) and Capera (Caceres) where it is the only relic of a lost Roman city.

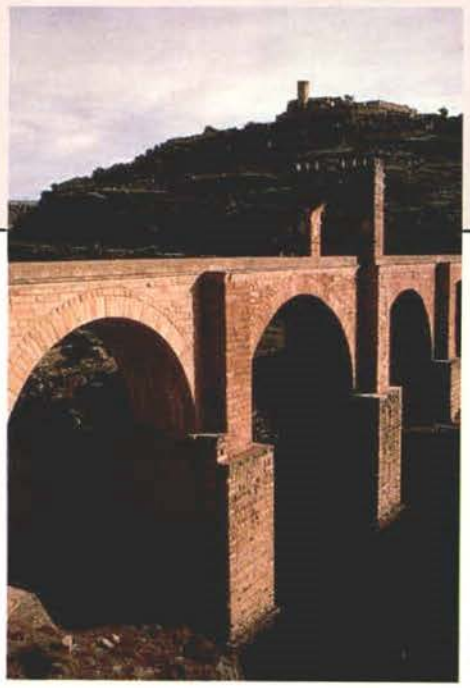
Bridges and roads: There are countless fragments of Roman roads is Spain, the most interesting being in Gredos (Avila), Italica (Seville) and near the Bejar Pass in Bejar (Salamanca), part of the *Vía de la Plata,* or Silver Route. Many of Spain's hundreds of Roman bridges are still in use, notably the ones in Manresa and Martorell (Barcelona), part of the *Via Herculea;* the two (restored) in Toledo, and one in Cordoba. The bridges in Salamanca, Merida and Alconetar formed part of the *Via de la Plata.* The best of all is the 200-metre (219 yards) six arch bridge in Alcantara (Caceres).

Baths and reservoirs: Many of the thermal spas still in use today date back to the time of the Romans, though their structure has been modified considerably over the centuries. Among the most interesting are the Caldes de Montbui (Barcelona). There are two Roman reservoirs still functioning today near Merida —the one dedicated to goddess Proserpina is particularly impressive.

Fortifications: Many of the defensive city walls which survive in Spain are Roman in origin. The most purely —in some cases exclusively— Roman of them are in Lugo, Barcelona and Tarragona. There are also fragments in Leon, Astorga, Zaragoza and other cities.

Temples and burial monuments: Parts of temples survive in Merida and Barcelona; the best examples of burial monuments are to be found in Fabra and Sabada (Zaragoza), Zalamea (Badajoz) and Tarragona.

Sculpture: The well-to-do inhabitants of Hispania echoed Rome's taste for owning pieces of sculpture. There were Roman villas all over Spain —remains have been found from El Bierzo to Cadiz, Ampurias to Malaga— and in consequence archaeological museums throughout the country have good collections of Roman sculpture, particularly in Merida, Tarragona, Madrid, Italica and Barcelona. The same is true of pottery, coins and other everyday objects, and of mosaics, of which the finest examples are to be seen in Ampurias, Merida and Italica.



JUANTXU RODRIGUEZ / GEO

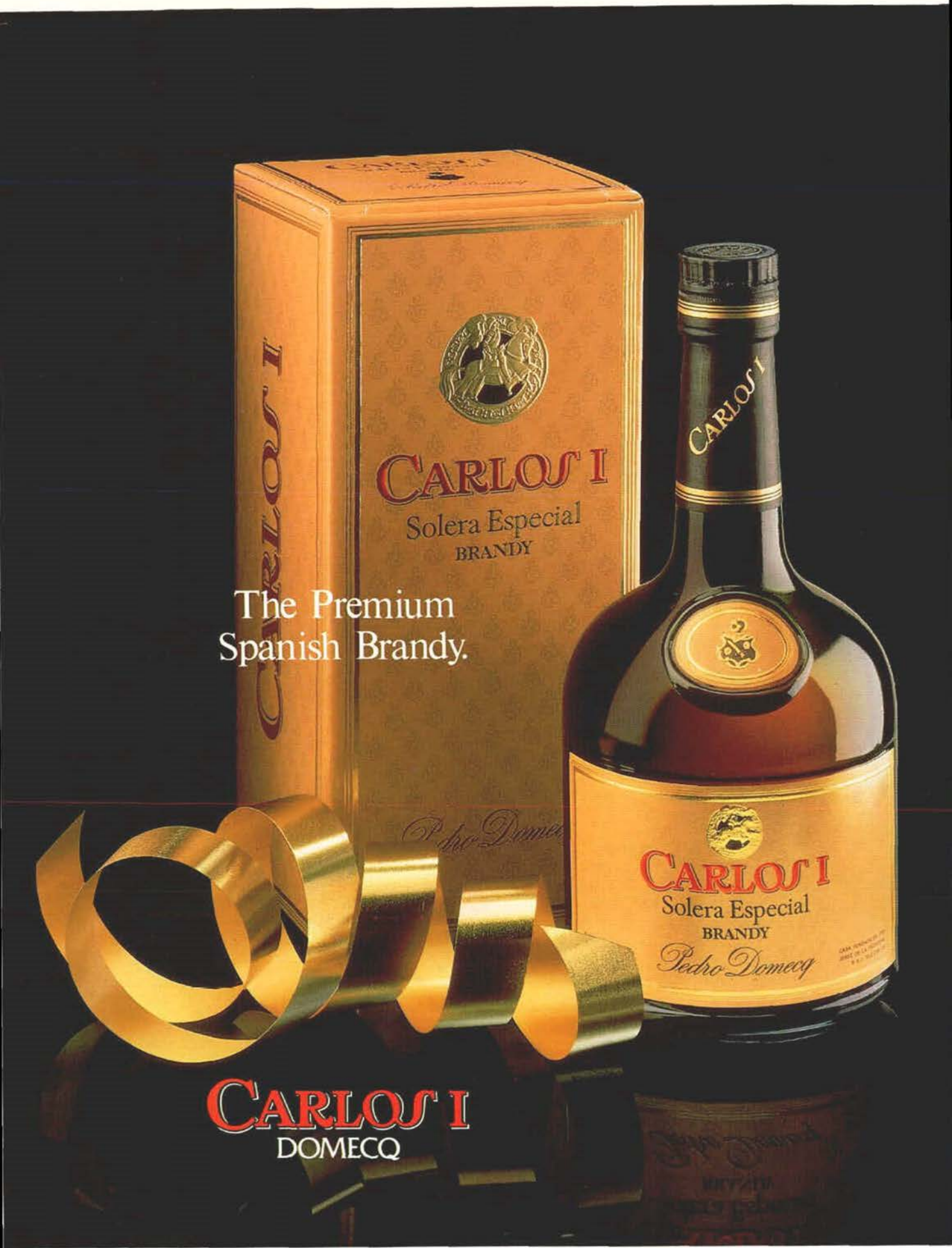
Many of Spain's hundreds of Roman bridges are still in use. The best of all is the 200-metre (219 yards) six arch bridge in Alcantara (Caceres).

were attempting to conquer *rumi* a coverall word meaning both Romans and Christians.

Many of Spain's modern-day cities are originally Roman, in some cases founded on the sites of still earlier settlements. The legions' main camps gradually evolved into cities (León, formerly the camp of the *Legio VII Gemina* is one example) and urban nucleii also formed at the junctions of the Peninsula's Roman roads, as at Zaragoza, Cordoba, Astorga, Zamora and Tarragona.

Veteran soldiers were rewarded for their loyalty with allocations of cultivable and urban land and from the pattern of settlement which this custom produced, two cities emerged whose ruins provide the finest examples of Roman architecture in Spain today: Italica, founded in 205 BC, and *Emerita Augusta* present-day Merida), founded in 26 BC. The latter grew to such importance in its time that it became the ninth biggest city in the Roman Empire, above Athens, as the poet Ausonius informs us. Italica, ousted in importance by nearby Seville has survived only as a fascinating collection of ruins. Merida, on the other hand, is still a flourishing town with an incomparably rich heritage of Roman monuments. One traveller writing four centuries ago reported: "I saw in Merida notable relics of what it had been in times gone by, and I know not whether in all of Europe, apart from in Rome, there is anywhere which, despite destruction and pillage, better speaks of its former majesty and grandeur."

Anyone exploring Spain today constantly comes upon relics of the Roman invaders. The very roads they travel may have been laid and paved by them. Roman roads and bridges are everywhere, many of them still in use in their original form.Nearly all local museums display mosaics, sarcophagii, statues and other treasures from Spain's Roman period, though the most spectacular features of this heritage are the examples of the public works at which the Romans were so skilled, such as aqueducts, theatres, triumphal arches and public baths.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QUICK CONVERSION

In our recipes, quantities are given in metric measurements. The charts on this page show approximate equivalents between Imperial or American measures, and metric measures.

FLUID MEASURES
METRIC/BRITISH STANDARD

10 MILLILITRES = 1/3 OUNCE	1 TEASPOON = 5 MILLILITRES
50 MILLILITRES = 1 3/4 OUNCES	1 TABLESPOON = 18 MILLILITRES
100 MILLILITRES = 3 1/2 OUNCES	1 OUNCE = 28 MILLILITRES
250 MILLILITRES = 8 1/2 OUNCES	1 PINT = 570 MILLILITRES
500 MILLILITRES = 17 1/2 OUNCES	1 QUART = 1.14 LITRES
1 LITRE = 1 3/4 PINTS	1 GALLON = 4 1/4 LITRES

FLUID MEASURES
METRIC/U.S. STANDARD

10 MILLILITRES = 2 TEASPOONS	1 TEASPOON = 5 MILLILITRES
50 MILLILITRES = 3 TABLESPOONS	1 TABLESPOON = 15 MILLILITRES
100 MILLILITRES = 3 1/2 OUNCES	1 OUNCE = 30 MILLILITRES
250 MILLILITRES = 1 CUP + 1 TABLESPOON	1 CUP = 235 MILLILITRES
500 MILLILITRES = 1 PINT + 2 TABLESPOONS	1 PINT = 475 MILLILITRES
1 LITRE = 1 QUART + 3 TABLESPOONS	1 QUART = 950 MILLILITRES
	1 GALLON = 3 3/4 LITRES

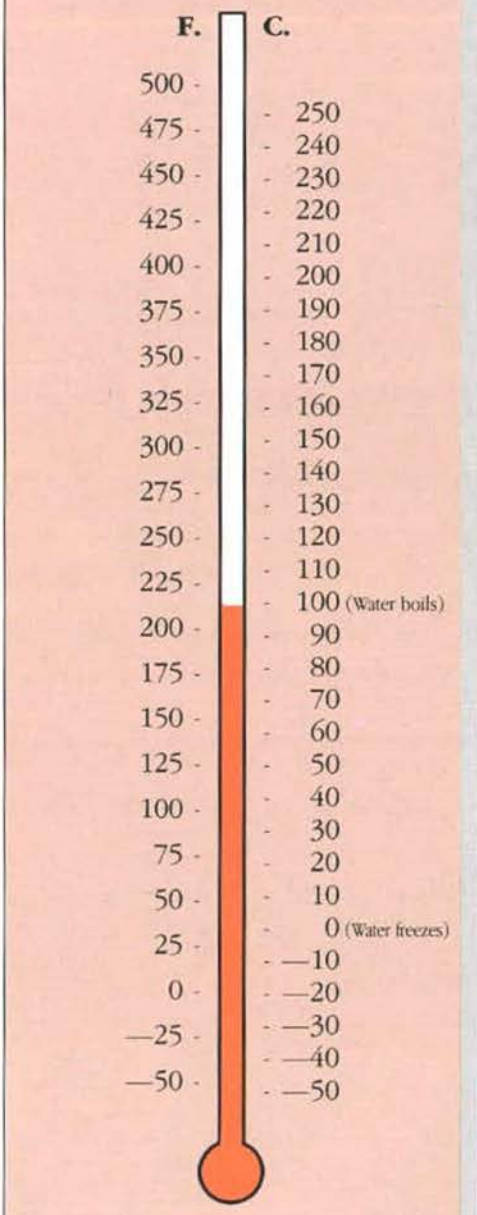
OVEN TEMPERATURE

TEMPERATURE	DIAL NUMBER
VERY SLOW = 250F/120C.	= 1/4
SLOW = 300F/150C.	= 1
MODERATE = 350F/180C.	= 4
HOT = 400F/200C.	= 6
VERY HOT = 450F/230C.	= 8

WEIGHT
METRIC/OUNCES & POUNDS

10 GRAMS = 1/3 OUNCE	1/2 OUNCE = 14 GRAMS
50 GRAMS = 1 3/4 OUNCES	1 OUNCE = 28 GRAMS
100 GRAMS = 3 1/2 OUNCES	1/4 POUND = 110 GRAMS
250 GRAMS = 8 3/4 OUNCES	1/2 POUND = 230 GRAMS
500 GRAMS = 1 POUND + 1 1/2 OUNCES	1 POUND = 450 GRAMS
1 KILO = 2 POUNDS + 3 1/4 OUNCES	

TEMPERATURE



Erratum

In the last 1989 issue of Spain Gourmetour (No. 17), the "Spain on your Christmas Table" article featured embroidered Lagartera tablecloths which we wrongly said come from the province of Salamanca. In fact they come from Toledo.

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A Basket of Cherries

BLAS DE LEDESMA

THE PAINTER...

Very little is known about the life and work of Blas de Ledesma, a painter whose oeuvre and personality have been blurred for us by dubious attributions and outright forgeries. What we do know, however, is that he played a vital role in the emergence of the still-life as a genre in Spain.

He worked during the first half of the 17C, a period when still-life painting in Andalusia was still in its infancy, as the outstanding Sevillian painter of the time, Francisco Pacheco, recounts.Even so, two distinct tendencies were already discernible. One, inspired by the Italian fresco painters and decorators, Giulio di Aquilis and Alessandro Mayner, was characterised by its luminosity and harmonic composition. This is where Ledesma's work belongs. The other tendency was modelled on the Flemish still-life, a genre in which the importance of the object took precedence over symmetry and even personality.

This painter of whom we know so little was probably born in Granada. He certainly lived there in 1602: documentary evidence exists of his having bought two houses from sculptor Antonio Gómez who was moving to Málaga. Around 1614, he was still in Granada and produced a design for a decorated elliptical plaster dome for the Mozarab Hall in the Alhambra. This suggests that he knew something about architecture, or at least about architectural decoration.

Apart from this drawing, the only other work which can confidently be attributed to Blas de Ledesma is the still life featured here. Two other still-lifes attributed to him are unsigned.Other, signed, works which have appeared on the Madrid and Barcelona markets would seem to be forgeries. But although we have only such a tiny fraction of his work to go on, his reputation as a virtuoso has survived better. Granada poet Soto de Rojas compared him to the 5C BC Greek painter Zeuxis, known to have painted genre pictures with unprecedented skill.

... AND THE PAINTING

So what we have here is not only the most representative work of this artist, but the only one of which we can be really certain. It is known, however, that it was one of a pair and that the other was less rigid in composition.

In this picture, a basket of cherries, gently side-lit from the right, occupies the centre of the composition. It stands on a sort of parapet, apparently a low garden wall, with fruit which has fallen from the basket lying almost symmetrically on either side. Behind, providing a backdrop, iris and lupins are arranged with studied order and symmetry and the whole work seems to emanate an atmosphere of delicacy and harmony.

The precise, detailed brushwork is suggestive of pointillist technique. A follower of the Italian *candelieri* and *grutesco* painters inspired by the decorative painting of Classical Rome, Ledesma is clearly also influenced here by Toledan painter Sánchez Cotán. The hushed atmosphere, the use of light and shade —almost tenebrist, though not to the degree typified by Caravaggio— and especially the lilies, are reminiscent of the *Inmaculada* painted by Cotán for Granada's Carthusian monastery in 1603.

In consequence, the idealist conception and quest for formal order so typical of the *candelieri* take on an additional strength of vision and atmosphere. It achieves, in short, a synthesis that is far from easy in the still-life genre: harmony and symmetry of composition charged with lively realism. The marriage of symmetry and sensitivity in this simple yet beautiful painting offers no mean clue as to what the rest of his oeuvre must have been.

José M.ª Ortega Sanz

Blas de Ledesma

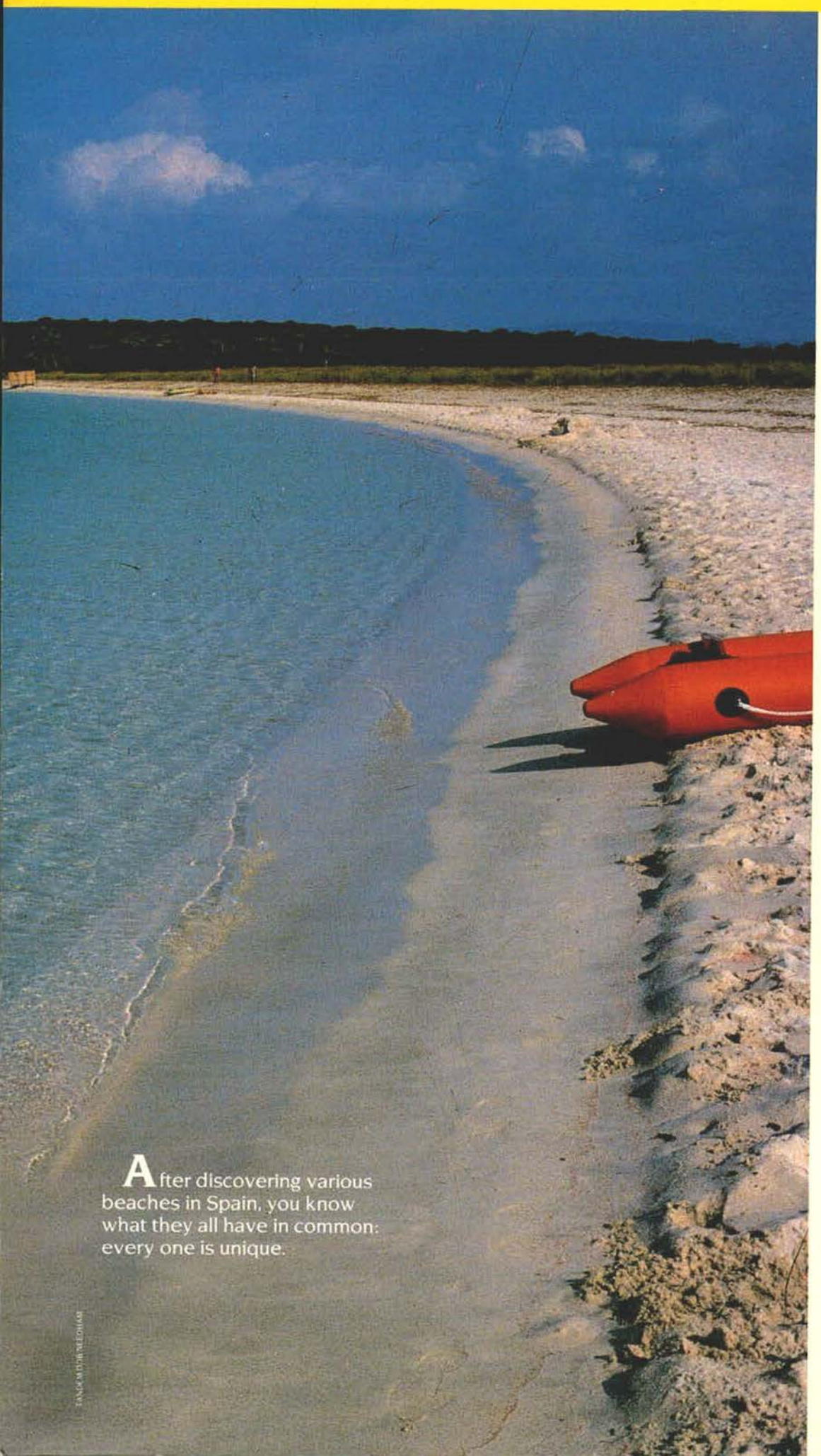
Spanish, active late 16th and early 17th century.

Still Life with Cherries, Lupin, and Iris, ca. 1610.

Collection High Museum of Art, Atlanta, Georgia; Great Picture Fund purchase in honor of Reginald Poland, 57.11.

MMLB

A MASTER PIECE BY OSBORNE DRESSED BY SALVADOR DALI



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