

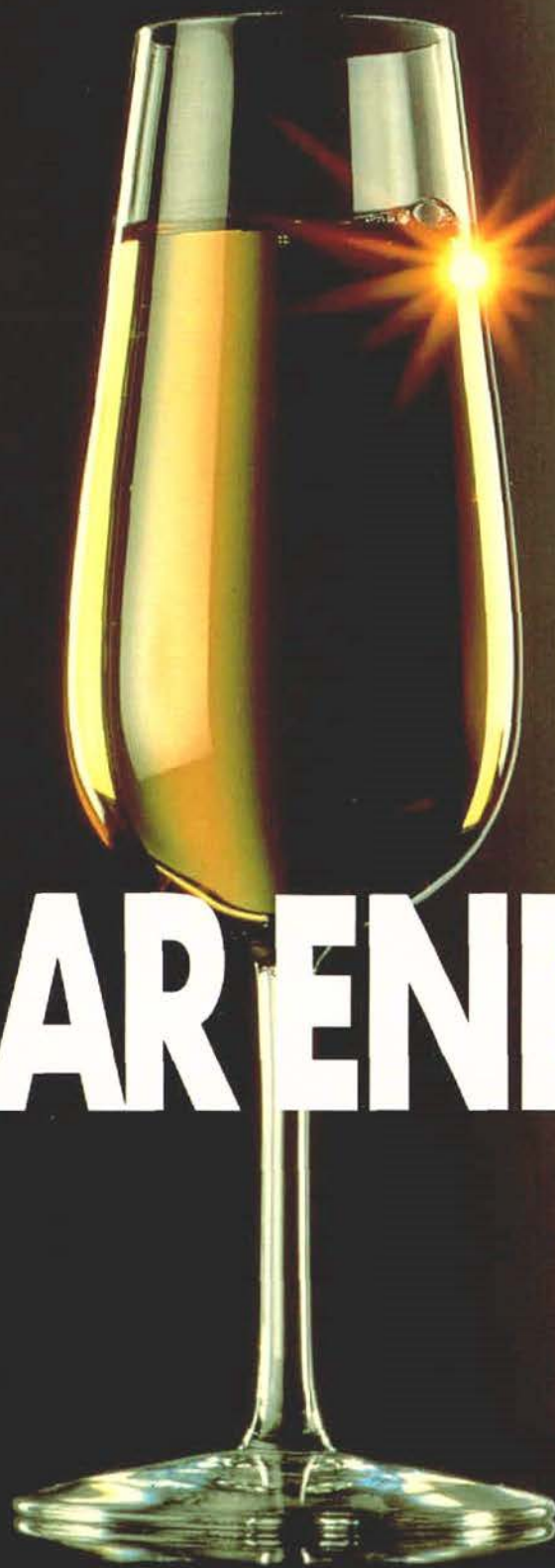
S P A I N GOURMETOUR

FOOD, WINE & TRAVEL QUARTERLY MAGAZINE



MADRID, MADRID, MADRID

MALAGA WINE, COMING ROUND THE MOUNTAIN
QUESO DE CANTABRIA, THE CREAM OF CHEESES



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WARM TO THE EXPERIENCE.

S P A I N GOURMETOUR

The year 1992 is to be a special one for Spain, with three major events planned: EXPO 92 in Seville, the Summer Olympics in Barcelona, and Madrid occupying the role of Cultural Capital of Europe for the whole year. Though preparations have been underway for quite some time, 1991 is when the build-up reaches a climax and the time when the finishing touches are applied.

Spain Gourmetour will be taking a look at all three cities in the course of this year, starting with Madrid—a city whose urban landscape and pace of life have changed radically over the last few years.

Change is also affecting the coast of Almeria, though fortunately there is still plenty of it that is little known, including beaches where you can swim and sunbathe in perfect solitude.

In this issue we bring you the last in our series on Spanish Denomination of Origin cheeses with an article on Queso de Cantabria, a mild cheese produced in northern Spain. We also go south to Andalusia, home of Malaga's sweet wine, of great renown in centuries past and still by no means forgotten. Still in Andalusia, in this case the province of Cordoba, we visit the Núñez de Prado family who have been producing olive oil there for generations. Made from only the very finest olives, their product is generally recognised by connoisseurs as one of the best olive oils in Spain.

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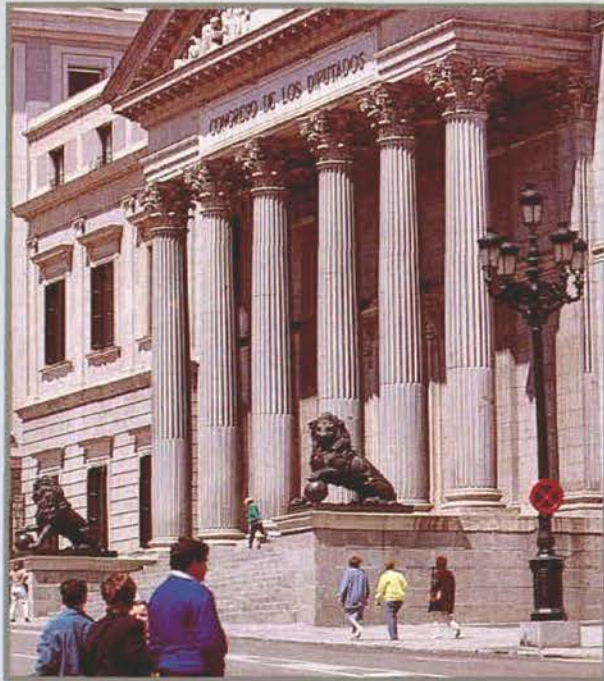
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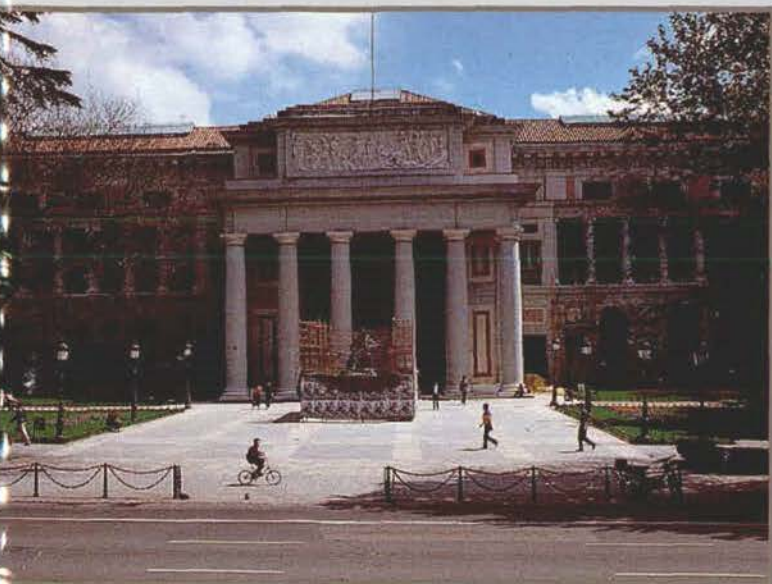
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There can be few cities where culture and leisure in general have experienced such a boom as they have in Madrid over the last few years. Its selection as Cultural Capital of Europe should reveal still further facets of the capacity for culture, leisure and just plain fun that Madrid has discovered itself to possess.





For any *madrileño*, «Madrid, Madrid, Madrid ...» is the chorus of a popular song by Agustín Lara which, to the rhythm of its traditional dance, the *chotis*, extols the delights of the city and its people. In 1992, this chant is to be adopted as Madrid's motto during its year-long spell as Cultural Capital of Europe.

The notion of selecting different cities to be Europe's Cultural Capital for a year was launched in 1985 by the EC's Cultural Council, and Athens, Paris and Brussels are among those which have already fulfilled the role. The selection of Madrid for 1992 coincides neatly with two other major events in Spain in that same year: the Summer Olympic Games in Barcelona, and the Universal Exposition (EXPO 92) in Seville.

There can be few cities where culture and leisure in general have experienced such a boom as they have in Madrid over the last few years. Though by no means a cultural desert before, Madrid was certainly less dynamic than other capital cities of Western Europe. Its selection as Cultural Capital of Europe should reveal still further facets of the capacity for culture, leisure and just plain fun that Madrid has discovered itself to possess.



MADRID MADRID MADRID

Text: **Sonia Ortega**
Photos: **Félix Lorrio**



THE 92 COMMITTEE

Early in 1989, a Committee was set up to ensure the efficient programming of the Cultural Capital project. It incorporates the Madrid City Council, the authorities of the Autonomous Region of Madrid, and the Spanish Ministry of Culture. Known as COM 92 (*Consortio para la Organización de Madrid Capital Europea de la Cultura*), it has HM Queen Sofía as its Honorary President and the Mayor of Madrid as acting President. COM 92 has set itself a double objective: to demonstrate the cultural aspects of Madrid to Spaniards and foreigners alike and also to attract other nations of the world, particularly the European nations, to make use of Madrid as a showcase for the best of their own culture.

But COM 92 has to do a lot more than simply present top names from, say, the world of ballet or music. The fact is that they already come to Madrid regularly anyway. The Committee has to create a cohesive programme, calling for interchange of ideas with cultural institutions such as museums, galleries, foundations, and so on. Another function is to provide backing so that top-level events such as international congresses and debates can use Madrid as their base in the course of that year. The rounding out of the programme will be achieved by productions and coproductions to be planned around four basic ideas. The first of these is multiple small-scale programmes for the various districts of Madrid. The second is the recovery of Madrid's cultural heritage, involving historians and researchers in various areas of culture, science and the arts, and seminars chaired by Madrid's cultural observers, writers and thinkers. A season of regular performances of *zarzuela* (Spain's own genre of light opera), and overviews of their history and activities presented by Madrid's many scientific and cultural institutions.

In addition to features focused on the cultural heritage of Madrid itself, there will also be more widely-based cycles and activities dedicated to the artistic activity of Spain, Europe and America (these series are to be known as *La Hora Española*, *La Hora Europea* and *La Hora Americana* —namely, A Key Period for Spain, Europe and America, respectively), and others dedicated to the extent and diversity of European culture (*Las Ciudades de Europa* —The Cities of Europe; *La Cultura Viajera* —The Mobility of Culture) as well as programmes about specific themes. A key one of these is to be the environment.

Also under preparation is a series of singular productions which include one of Calderón de la Barca's religious work «*El gran teatro del mundo*» (The Great Theatre of the World, written in about 1635 and intended for open-air performance) in the Plaza Mayor, and a *naumaquia*, or naval battle in miniature, staged on one of Madrid's lakes, both conceived as Baroque entertainments. A cycle entitled

Los últimos descubrimientos (Latest Discoveries) will present major productions of contemporary music and opera and exhibitions of the plastic arts, architecture and natural sciences.

All in all, the Committee intends to give full prominence to culture in all its manifestations —music of all styles and periods, ballet and dance, drama, the plastic arts, cinema, video, philosophy, literature...

FIESTA TIME IN MADRID

In addition to the activities being co-ordinated by COM 92, Madrid's City Council is also preparing a wide range of events for presentation in the course of 1992. Basically, its aim is to create a cultural infrastructure which will survive beyond the Cultural Capital year. One particular area of attention is the environment. Five major parks are being planned, one of which, to be known as Juan Carlos I Park, will cover an area of 220 hectares (543 acres) and, weather permitting, provide a scenario in which many of the programme's events can be held in the open air. Some of these new parks will also provide the setting for large-scale sculptures —something which Madrid has hitherto lacked. Under the title *Simposio de escultura monumental al aire libre* (Symposium of Outdoor Monumental Sculpture), thirty top sculptors (10 Spaniards and 20 from other countries), among them Dennis Oppenheim, Martín Chirino, Antoni Tapies, Chillida and Erik Dietman, will have their work on permanent display in Madrid.

Children are also to be catered for in a big way, with the creation of a Children's City where, rather as in Paris' La Villette or Disney World's Epcot Centre, they can become familiar with the world of science, thought and knowledge of their planet in an enjoyable and approachable way. They are also to be provided with a circus, re-establishing an old tradition in Madrid which for many years had its own permanent circus.

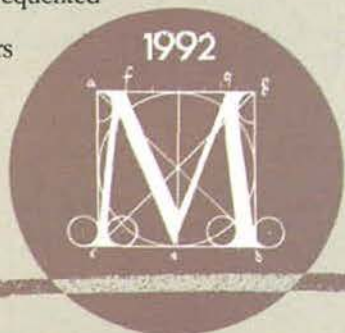
The *Salón de Arte de Vanguardia* (Avant-Garde Art Salon) is another of the projects underway and is to be dedicated to the very latest contemporary painting, including some 500 works produced during the last 15 years by painters from all over the world. The works will be exhibited for a minimum of two years and a maximum of six —a guarantee that the exhibition is constantly updated.

A *Museo de la Ciudad* (Museum of the City) is currently under construction near Madrid's new National Concert Hall, and the Conde Duque Centre (a vast and ancient former barracks in the heart of Madrid which is already functioning as an arts centre) will be undergoing further renovations and being equipped with new facilities.

The Fifth Centenary of the Discovery of America could not be allowed to pass uncelebrated. To coincide with the anniversary, two new Latin American centres are to be inaugurated —the *Casa de América* (Latin America House) in central Madrid's Plaza de Cibeles, and the *Centro Iberoamericano de Artesanía* (Latin American Craft Centre) which will combine exhibitions and sales of all sorts of crafts produced throughout Latin America.

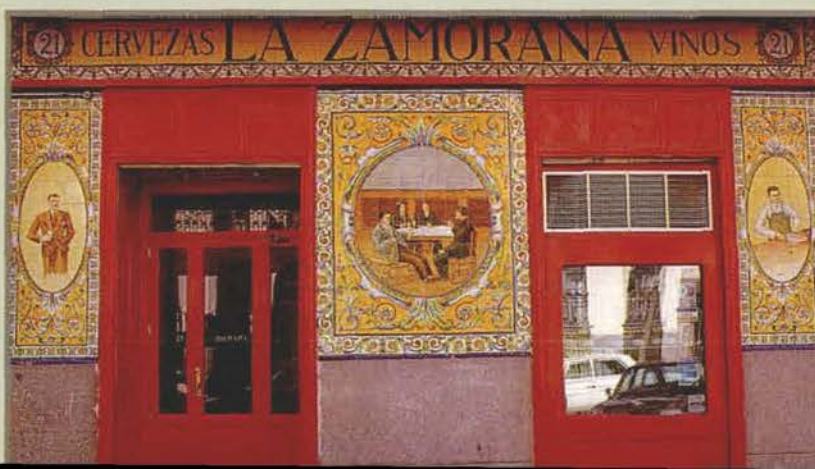
As a technique of bringing the history of Madrid alive, the city is to be marked out for 1992 with historical routes related to important cultural figures who lived and worked in the city, albeit unrecognised in their time in some cases. Entitled *Memoria de Madrid* (Madrid Mementoes), this scheme will involve placing commemorative plaques on the buildings where these figures lived, and also creating routes named after, for example, Lope de Vega, Cervantes, and even Monet (it is a little-known fact that he lived for a while in Madrid) which will lead visitors around places frequented by the personages in question.

Though this brief resumé by no means covers the whole range of activities to be offered by Madrid '92, it is enough to give some fore-taste of that year's cultural flavour. The motto *Madrid, Madrid, Madrid* (its *chotis* rhythm the merest fragment of a much wider culture) holds promise of an urban festival fascinating not only to *madriños* but, as befits the city's role for 1992, to Europe as a whole.



AN IMAGE FOR
MADRID'92

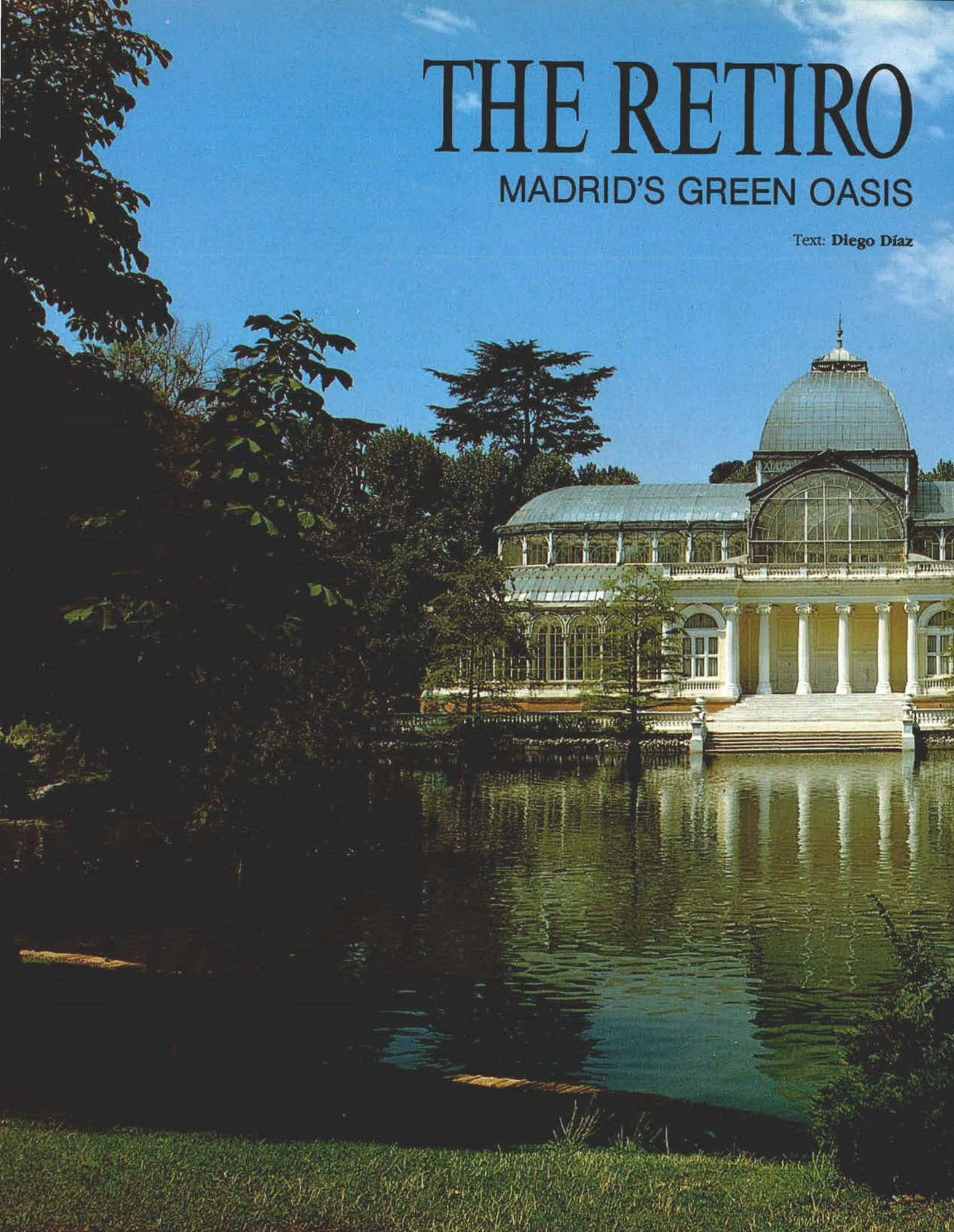
The title of Cultural Capital is something really important for the city. This event made it necessary to think of a graphic symbol. The one chosen shown here (far left), is the work of Roberto Turégano. Madrid'92 holds promise of an urban festival fascinating not only to *madriñenos* but, as befits the city's role for 1992, to Europe as a whole. Music of all styles and periods, ballet and dance, drama, the plastic arts, cinema, video, philosophy, literature... all in all, Madrid'92 intends to give full prominence to culture in all its manifestations. Gastronomy will be also another interesting point for visitors, because Madrid is a city of *tapa*-lovers.



THE RETIRO

MADRID'S GREEN OASIS

Text: Diego Díaz



No great city is complete without a really big park. Madrid has a splendid one, and its very name, *El Retiro* — The Retreat — sums up perfectly the function it serves amid the concrete and incessant noise of the metropolis: natural greenery, shade and precious peace and quiet.

The park also provides the people of Madrid with a backdrop that reflects the changing seasons, and this is where they head when city life gets too much for them.

As classic a feature of Madrid as the Cibeles Fountain or the Alcala Gate, the Retiro is the part of the capital where human values reign supreme.





PHOTOS: DIEGO DIAZ

It was with my hand in my grandfather's — going back a few years now — that I made my first explorations of Madrid's park, El Retiro. Or rather El Buen Retiro (The Pleasant Retreat), as my grandfather liked to make a point of calling it, using its original name from the reign of Philip II (1556-1598), when it served as a place of spiritual revitalisation for the Spanish monarchs.

Despite his meagre education, my grandfather tended to exhibit flashes of erudition about things that interested him, and our perambulations around the park were always accompanied by gems from his wide store of oft-repeated anecdotes about what we saw around us. He it was who told me that the Palace and Park of the Buen Retiro date back originally to the Royal Hieronymite Foundation established by the Catholic Monarchs, Ferdinand and Isabella, in the 16C. The Foundation's church still survives and is often

The Retiro, verdant refuge for escapees from the pressures of the metropolis, could be seen as a centuries-old showcase for triumphs of the human spirit—the arts, unbounded fun, love... Today it has the most sylvan and peaceful atmosphere in Madrid.

used as the sumptuous setting for smart Madrid weddings.

Of the original buildings which, after successive extensions and alterations, constituted the Palace, only two dependencies now survive. One is the Army Museum, formerly the *Salón de Reinos*, and the other is the Casón, originally built as a ballroom and currently used as an art museum containing the Prado's 19C collection as well as works by Juan Gris and Picasso (among them his famous *Guernica*). The Casón stands in present-day Calle Alfonso XII which, from 1868 on — when it was known as Calle Granada — marked a definitive frontier between the gardens and the old palace buildings.

The 17C and 18C, a period during much of which the Palace was occupied, constituted a high point in Spanish culture. Paintings by Velázquez, Zurbarán and others of similar calibre hung in the royal salons, and the most prestigious Italian gardeners of the time were called in

to design and construct the gardens. The very gardens to which modern-day strollers retreat to take a breather from the pressures of the city, once provided the setting for literary events and theatrical productions of works by Calderón de la Barca, Lope de Vega, Fernando de Rojas... and for the premières of the emerging Italian opera. On its canals and pools, a veritable aquatic maze, decorative gondolas glided about bearing members of a court dedicated to a life of *dolce far niente* and avid for pleasure. Bullfights and circus performances were among their favourite diversions.

Towards the end of the 18C, Charles III had an iron railing erected around the park and imposed conditions of entry, with stipulations as to how strollers should dress and guidelines on the taking of refreshment. Later, during the Peninsular War, Napoleon's troops were to set up a headquarters in the royal enclave. When the French capitulated on 12 August, 1812, the Span-



ish troops were confronted with a scene of total desolation.

A PARK FOR THE PEOPLE

On the return of Ferdinand VII, in 1815, a gradual replanting of the Retiro's trees was begun, and an elaborate, vivid tapestry of new gardens was laid out. But the Palace was never restored. In 1868, Isabella II fled to France after her dethronement during the Carlist Wars, and the use and enjoyment of the park were handed over to the populace, a concession subsequently solemnised with the signature of Alfonso XII, who occupied the Spanish throne from 1875 to 1885. At that time, the park covered 143 hectares (353 acres), now reduced to 120 hectares (296 acres).

During this century, a little zoo with an exotic aviary, known as the *Casa de Fieras* (Wild Animal House), was set up in the Park. No child's excursion was complete

without visiting the zoo, particularly in 1970 when Boni, a baby hippopotamus, was born there. In 1972, it was moved to a new location elsewhere in Madrid and its old site was filled in with gardens which join on to the Cecilio Rodríguez Gardens, a floral homage to the Retiro's one-time head gardener.

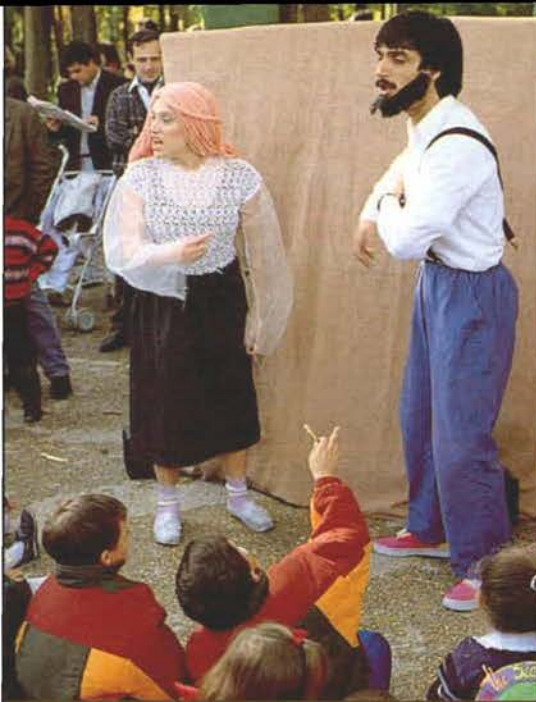
The Seventies saw a major change of conception in the landscaping of the Retiro, the French approach being replaced by the English one. Lawns were enlarged to open up wider vistas of the Park's woodland, populated by venerable lindens, cedars, oaks, acacias, elms, planes, horse-chestnuts and many types of conifer. In their dense foliage, countless birds nest, and it is said that if you are lucky you can sometimes hear the trill of a nightingale at dusk. Despite the change of approach, the Park is still a place full of arbours and tucked away places, perfect for reading, meditating and lovers' meetings.

Dotted throughout the gardens is a fine collection of 20C sculptures, including works by Victorio Macho, Benlliure and Coullat Valera. From the Alcalá Gate outside the Park there is a fine view of the Puerta de la Independencia — Independence Gate — one of the Retiro's main entrances. The Alcalá Gate was built to a design by Francisco Sabatini (architect of parts of Madrid's Royal Palace) in 1778. This granite gateway has five archways topped by lions' heads, and its columns still bear the scars of cannon fire inflicted during the war against the French.

The monument to Alfonso XII on the banks of the main lake stands

The very gardens to which modern-day strollers retreat to take a breather from the pressures of the city, once provided the setting for literary events and theatrical productions.





PHOTOS: DIEGO DIAZ

on the site once occupied by Fernando VII's jetty. Unveiled in 1922, it is a kind of museum of the sculptural art of its period.

The Park has two buildings known as "palaces": Velázquez Palace and the Crystal Palace. Both were designed by architect Ricardo Velázquez Bosco for the Philippines Exhibition of 1887 and are currently used for art exhibitions and other similar events. The first of these is built in brick of two colours with a glazed roof and façades decorated with vivid tiles made by Daniel Zuloaga. The Crystal Palace, a supremely elegant iron-framed glass building, overlooks a little pool on which swans and other birds swim about.

Another of the Park's singular features is the monument to the Fallen Angel by Ricardo Bellver. It depicts the Devil entwined in the coils of a snake, and is believed to be the only sculpture dedicated to the Prince of Darkness. It won first prize at the 1878 International Exhibition in Paris before being installed in the

The Retiro's gates are open to everyone, all year round, and they make full use of it, but it is with the arrival of spring that the Retiro is at its most popular when boats bearing would-be oarsmen from all corners of Madrid zig-zag on the main lake.

Retiro in 1880. Close by is the Rose Garden, designed in 1914 by the then head gardener of the Park, Cecilio Rodríguez, and still unaltered today.

FULL OF LIFE

This was the itinerary which encompassed my grandfather's personal selection of the Retiro's historical and cultural highlights and which we traced together so often and so pleasurably. But the Retiro has also always been a lively, bustling place, both while still a royal protectorate and later when in the possession of the people — a park full of laughter and playing children. The Retiro's gates are open to everyone, all year round, and they make full use of it, from courting couples seeking leaf-shaded privacy to the organisers of cultural events of all sorts (including an annual Book Fair and a Dog Show). But it is with the arrival of spring that the Retiro is at its most popular.

Boats bearing would-be oarsmen from all corners of Madrid zig-zag about the main lake, while the Municipal Band performs in its bandstand opposite the landing-stage.

The Retiro — the Buen Retiro, as my grandfather would have it — verdant refuge for escapees from the pressures of the metropolis, could be seen as a centuries-old showcase for triumphs of the human spirit — the arts, unbounded fun, love. Take a walk there next time you're in Madrid. Along the lakeside walkways, puppeteers, fortune tellers, clowns, painters, groups of musicians, magicians and other amazing examples of the multi-faceted art of entertainment perform for the price of a small (optional) contribution. All the while, at the tables of the *terrazas* around the refreshment kiosks scattered throughout the huge park, families and friends satisfy both their thirst and their need to drink in life, in the relaxed surroundings of the most sylvan and peaceful atmosphere in Madrid.

Temptation

Temptation proceeds from Castile and León.

Seductions cultivated without haste and favoured by the climate: kidney beans from El Barco de Avila.

Dishes fit for the gods that are a provocation. Iberian lomo,

red sausage from Cantimpalos, cured ham from Guijuelo... the pleasures of the flesh.

And what cheeses. Fresh, cured. From Valdeón, from Villalón, from the



Tiétar goat... A little bite of very cured sheep's cheese: impossible to say no! And for original sins, the wines of Castile and León. From Rueda, from Cigales, from Toro, from El Bierzo and from the

Ribera de Duero. For all tastes. Temptations with certificates of origin. To taste them is to surrender to their charms. The fact is that there are temptations... that are natural.





TRADITIONAL RESTAURANTS OF MADRID

Text: Jane Walker
Photos: Diego Diaz

Madrid, like so many other capital cities is a city of immigrants. Many of its inhabitants originated, either this generation or earlier ones, in other parts of the country. The new arrivals brought their traditional dishes, or even opened such restaurants to serve their homesick compatriots.

Madrid has thus become a melting pot for cuisines from all over the peninsula (as well as other countries), and it is often hard to distinguish exactly what is Madrileño and what has become Madrileño by adoption. Visitors and residents alike can enjoy dishes from all regions and in virtually all price ranges. In Madrid today it is possible to eat a *paella* every bit as good as in Valencia or a *fabada* as delicious as one would find in Asturias. Probably the most typical food from any region is to be found in the taverns of Madrid, where the cooking is usually simple, concentrating on the dishes which have been traditionally served in Spanish homes. There are hundreds of taverns in the city, many of them small and excellent but relatively unknown to anyone except to those living or working nearby. But others have built up a reputation for quality and value for money—although always with the proviso that top quality products are never exactly cheap—and here are just a few of them...





LA BOLA

Many of Madrid's traditional restaurants are still going strong more than a century after they first opened their doors. One of the oldest of these is La Bola, which was originally a *botellería* (superior wine shop), opening in 1802. La Bola began to serve *tapas* and simple food along with the wine, and became a fully-fledged restaurant in 1873.

La Bola has remained in the same family throughout its history. The current owner, Antonio Verdasco is the sixth generation, and he proudly points to the seventh and eighth generations (his nephew and great nephew) waiting in the wings. In addition, the same cook, Jesusa, has been in charge of the kitchen for more than 40 years.

Sr Verdasco remembers that *cocido madrileño* was the everyday dish in the majority of Madrid households, served every day of the week except fiestas (containing more or less meat according to the family's budget). La Bola has continued to observe the tradition of a daily *cocido*, serving one considered by experts to be about one of the best in Madrid. The sight (and smell) of the dozens of earthenware crocks of *cocido* simmering over a wood fire is enough to make anyone's mouth water. The *cocido* is served as a two course meal; first the broth with *fideos* (fine pasta), followed by the platters of different meats and sausages and vegetables and chickpeas. Plenty of crusty bread and red wine complete what is surely one of the best of winter meals. *Cocido* is essentially a midday meal and is only served at La Bola at lunchtime, although the delicious broth with rice and chickpeas is available in the evenings.

Another of the Bola's specialities, whose recipe the Verdasco family guards jealously, are the crisp *buñuelos de manzana* (apple fritters), which are surprisingly light and digestible after even the richest meal. They are also proud of the fact that their menu is almost exclusively made up of traditional Castilian dishes such as might have been served in any Madrid household, and the excellent *pochas con codorniz* (quail braised with white beans), or roast shoulder of baby lamb are examples of some of these dishes. But there are also a few modern touches, such as sole with a brandy sauce or a succulent pepper steak.

La Bola's has three separate dining rooms, the first one being the oldest dating back to the 1802 wine shop. The walls are panelled with dark red wood, with a blue porcelain chandelier, and the old carved bar lines the walls. The other two rooms, with a similar decor, were added to the restaurant in the 1950s. There is an excellent house Valdepeñas wine, both red and white, as well as a good selection of Riojas.

LA BOLA. Guillermo Rolland, 1. Telephone: (1) 247 69 30.



La Bola (above and far left) was opened in 1802 as a *botellería* (superior wine shop) and has remained in the same family throughout its history. Casa Paco (left and below) is famous for its meat, served on plates so hot that the meat continues to cook long after it is served.





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CASA PACO

Casa Paco is famous for its meat, both the hefty entrecôte which covers the whole plate or a mammoth fillet steak, served on plates so hot that the meat continues to cook long after it is served. Paco, now a sprightly and elegant 82, still keeps an eagle eye on affairs, and greets diners as they arrive. His son, Paco Jr. and daughter, Charo, are now the friendly and efficient hosts and run the day-to-day business.

Standing only a stroll away from the Plaza Mayor, Casa Paco has remained faithful to its origins. Waiters slop out the tumblers of a good Valdepeñas wine from the long zinc bar, as they have been doing for years, and the original decorated tiles still adorn the walls. Although Paco came from an agricultural family, he started in the catering trade at only 10 years old, working in the Mess of the King's Hussars where he had a box to stand on behind the bar because he was too short to reach the counter. In 1933 Paco opened his restaurant, serving plain home cooked food, and although Paco himself spent several of the Spanish War years in France, his wife kept the restaurant open and it has remained so ever since. There are four dining rooms in the restaurant, the original two downstairs, and two later additions upstairs.

In addition to being a first-class restaurateur who has built up an international reputation over almost 60 years, Paco is also an excellent butcher. Long before steak restaurants became popular in Madrid, Casa Paco was one of the first to serve correctly hung and properly butchered beef. In the early 1960s Casa Paco was already well-known in the international movie and theatrical world, and photographs of visiting stars of the era adorn the walls alongside those of present day personalities.

But steaks are not the only dishes served in Casa Paco; homecooked stews, such as the *callos* (tripe), or the hearty *cocido madrileño*, garlic soup, *angulas* (baby eels) or *gambas al ajillo* (prawns in hot oil with garlic) are nearly always available and highly recommended. The wine list is short but varied, from a carafe of the house Valdepeñas at only 450 pesetas and going up to a Vega Sicilia at 12,000 pesetas a bottle.

CASA PACO. Puerta Cerrada, 11. Telephone: (1) 226 31 66.



San Mamés (two above) bears all the hallmarks of a typical local restaurant, but the quality of the food served is exceptional. The Taberna de Antonio Sánchez (two below) is the oldest tavern in Madrid. Little has been changed in the old bar, with the zinc bar counter, and the walls lined with bullfight posters, photographs and memorabilia.



SAN MAMES

At first glance San Mamés bears all the hallmarks of a typical local restaurant. Its small unprepossessing exterior is like thousands of small neighbourhood cafes or bars in Madrid, and even its simple interior with a tiny bar, tiled walls, only half a dozen cramped tables belie the

FIRST CLASS

LARIOS DRY GIN:
ABSOLUTELY
UNMISTAKABLE
FOR ITS QUALITY.



LARIOS

Recipes

Empedrado Madrileño

Serves 4:
400 g *judias pintas* (a form of dried haricot beans)
100 g rice
2 onions
pinch salt
3 tbs oil
1 head garlic
1 bay leaf
1 tbs flour

Leave the beans to soak overnight. Next morning rinse and cover beans with cold water and bring to boil. Add garlic, 1 onion, bay leaf and salt. After it has returned to boil add rice and allow to simmer until water is almost absorbed. Make a *sofrito* by frying chopped onion in oil with paprika. Add to beans and rice and allow to cook a further 10 minutes.

(This dish gets its name (empedrado means paved) from the old method of dry-stone building of houses where small pebbles or gravel were pushed into the cracks between the stones. It is said that the beans, with their red stains, resemble the stones and the rice is like the gravel inserts.)
(Recipe from Casa Paco.)

Cocido madrileño

Serves 6:
1/2 kilo stewing beef
1 ham bone (chopped)
150 g chorizo
6 medium potatoes
garlic, oil, salt & pepper
1 boiling fowl
350 g chickpeas
200 g salt pork
1 white cabbage
handful fine pasta

At least 5 hours before serving, put beef cut into chunks and quartered fowl into earthenware pot, cover with water. Add chickpeas in string bag, and simmer all together for at least 4 hours, preferably over a wood fire. 1/2 hour before serving cook potatoes and pasta separately in some of the broth.

Boil cabbage in salted water until partly cooked. Cut into large chunks and saute in olive oil with chopped garlic. Serve broth and pasta as first course, followed by different meats, then cabbage, chickpeas and potatoes.
(Recipe from La Bola.)

Madrid-style Tripe (Callos a la Madrileña)

Serves 6:
2 kilos veal tripe
2 onions
4 bay leaves
2 tbs flour
250 g chorizo
250 g cured ham
1 calf foot
1 head garlic
2 chili peppers

1 tbs Spanish paprika
250 g *morcilla* (black pudding)
1/2 litre white wine
lemon and vinegar

Preparation and cooking should be carried out a day in advance.

Clean tripe by scraping it with a blunt knife and cut into small chunks. Rinse it in cold water, which should be changed several times. Soak in bowl of cold water with vinegar, salt and several sliced lemons. Repeat washing several times until tripe is completely white.

Put the tripe in a pan and cover with water and bring to boil. After 10 mins, remove from heat and drain. Return to heat with clean water to which you add the whole onion, garlic, pepper and bay leaves. When it is half cooked (about 2 1/2 hrs), add chopped onion, flour, wine and paprika. Then add chorizo, *morcilla* and ham cut into thin slices. Return to boil and continue to simmer slowly for a further 2 to 2 1/2 hrs, stirring occasionally, until tender taking care that it does not stick to pan. Adjust seasoning.
(Recipe from Casa Paco.)

Braised ox tail (Rabo de buey)

Serves 6:
2 kilos ox tail
4 chopped carrots
Small glass brandy
Salt & pepper
2 chopped onions
Large glass wine
Seasoned flour
Olive oil

Chop ox tail into large chunks. Roll in seasoned flour and brown in hot oil. Put in heat-proof casserole with onions, carrots, red or white wine and sufficient water to just cover. Bring to slow boil and simmer about 3 hours until tender. About 1/2 hour before it is cooked, add the glass of brandy and adjust seasoning. Improves if prepared a day in advance and chilled so that fat can be removed. Reheat and serve in hot dish, sprinkle with parsley.
(Recipe from Taberna de Antonio Sánchez.)

Bread fritters or French toast (Torrijas)

Stale bread in thick slices
2 tbs sugar
cinnamon
1/2 glass water
1 glass milk
1 egg
olive oil for frying

Mix milk, 1 tbs sugar, pinch cinnamon and egg, heat gently until slightly thickened. Dip slices bread in custard. Fry in oil until crisp.

Make a syrup mixing together a glass of water, 1 tbs sugar and pinch cinnamon. Bring to boil and simmer 5 mins. Pour over fritters and serve at room temperature.
(Recipe from Taberna de Antonio Sánchez.)

The sight (and smell) of the dozens of earthenware crocks of cocido simmering over a wood fire in La Bola is enough to make anyone's mouth water.



The bullfight tradition continues in La Taberna de Antonio Sánchez: the current owner is himself a retired bullfighter.

quality and sophistication of the food served.

To local residents it is still a local bar where they meet for a drink and chat. There was an important soccer match being played the night we visited San Mamés, and customers and staff were crowded around a television set cheering on their team. Despite popular belief, the name San Mamés does not refer to the homeground of Athletic Bilbao Football Club but comes from the Church of San Mamés, near the Plaza Oriente, where Santi's father opened his original bar-restaurant.

Although Santi has received no formal training as a chef, he has been in the restaurant trade all his life. Cooking is his hobby, and he enjoys experimenting with new dishes on his friends—many of whom are chefs themselves.

Many of the dishes in San Mamés come from traditional Spanish cuisine. Although the menu is short, it changes almost daily according to what is best in the market. Amongst the regular favourites are *callos* (tripe in piquante sauce) or an original version of sweet *piquillo* peppers, stuffed with fillet steak and cured ham. On a recent visit, we particularly enjoyed a starter of tender cardoons with raisins and pine nuts, a winter speciality, and another of the party enthused over the *merluza con angulas* (hake with baby eels).

The house dessert of sliced bananas in fresh orange juice is a perfect combination after such rich fare.
SAN MAMES. Bravo Murillo, 88. Telephone: (1) 534 50 65.

TABERNA DE ANTONIO SANCHEZ

Tucked away behind The Rastro (Madrid's flea market) down a pedestrian street one finds another of the old style



REGIONAL RESTAURANTS IN MADRID

ANDALUSIA

El Rabo de Oro (Casa Díaz). Ayala, 85. Telephone: (1) 402 57 50. Specialities: Braised bull's (ox)tail, fried fish. Good home-style cooking. Favourite with bullfighters and aficionados.

La Giralda I, II & III. Hartzenbusch, 15. Telephone: (1) 409 72 61. Excellent fried fish, attractive tiled decor. Good for *tapas*.

La Dorada. Orense, 64-66. Tel.: (1) 270 20 02. Exaggerated nautical decor, including waiters dressed like the chorus of «HMS Pinafore». If you can put up with the frantic rush, the service is fast and efficient. Top quality fried fish and excellent bream baked in salt.

ASTURIAS

La Máquina. Sor Angela de la Cruz, 22. Telephone: (1) 572 33 18. Elegant, good but expensive.

Luarqués. Ventura de la Vega, 16. Tel.: (1) 429 61 74. Crowded and lively. Excellent *fabada asturiana* and other homecooked food. No bookings taken.

BASQUE

Currito. Pabellón de Vizcaya, Casa de Campo. Telephone: (1) 464 57 04. Traditional Basque cooking. In summer an attractive shady terrace with charcoal grills for excellent steaks, sardines and other fish.

Basque. Alcalá, 60. Telephone: (1) 435 10 60. Basque cuisine with a French touch. Popular with visiting Basque businessmen who patronise the Hotel Alcalá in the same building.

Or-Dago. Sancho Dávila, 15. Tel.: 246 71 85. Out of the way restaurant serving very traditional Basque cooking. Only opens at lunch time and booking essential.

CATALAN

La Fonda. Príncipe de Vergara, 211. Tel. (1) 577 79 24. Good Catalan cooking, although service inclined to be erratic.

Pedralbes. Basílica, 15-17. Tel.: (1) 455 30 27. Large res-

taurant on various levels. Friendly service.

GALICIAN

Casa de Troya. Virgen del Portillo, 3. Tel.: (1) 404 64 53. Rather hard to find in an out of the way area. Simple decor, but food excellent. *Empañada gallega* (Galician fish pie) or *pulpo* (octopus), as well as perfectly fresh fish, all highly recommended.

El Pescador. José Ortega y Gasset, 75. Tel.: (1) 402 12 90. Serves only fish and shellfish, but all excellent. *Lenguado Evaristo* (grilled sole for two people) highly recommended.

MALLORQUIN

Café Balear. Sagunto, 18. Tel.: (1) 447 91 15. Pleasant bar on ground floor, basement restaurant with traditional Mallorquin dishes. Friendly service.

VALENCIAN

La Barraca. Reina, 29. Tel.: (1) 532 71 54. One of Madrid's oldest Valencian restaurants. Somewhat touristy, but excellent rice dishes.

St. James. Juan Bravo, 26. Tel.: (1) 575 60 10. In spite of its Anglicised name its rice dishes are genuine Valencian and superb. Elegant and pricey.



Madrid has become a melting pot for cuisines from all over the peninsula and here you can enjoy dishes from all regions.

taverns of Madrid. Antonio Sánchez was a famous bullfighter in the early days of this Century, and although a bar-restaurant has existed on the same site since 1830, Sánchez decided to give it his own name when he took over on his retirement in 1920.

In addition to being one of the great bullfighters of his day, Antonio Sánchez was also a talented painter and a pupil of the famous Spanish maestro Zuloaga. Both these talents are evident in the decor of the restaurant today, with a gallery of portraits of all the great toreros of the last century (and this) sharing wall space in the restaurant with some of Sánchez' own work. Little has been changed or modernised in the old bar, where many of the customers are content to simply enjoy *tapas* and a glass of the excellent

house Valdepeñas wine. A giant ornate chromed till presides over the zinc bar counter, and the walls are lined with bullfight posters, photographs and memorabilia.

It is fitting that this bullfight tradition continues in La Taberna de Antonio Sánchez; the current director, Francisco Cies is himself a retired bullfighter. He retired from the ring in 1972 and decided to forget the bulls and devote himself to the restaurant business. However, his 15 year old son Juan José Cies is already a promising young bullfighter.

The menu in La Taberna contains many traditional satisfying peasant dishes. Two particular specialities of the house are the braised *rabo de buey* (bull or ox tail) and a tasty *morcillo al borno* (stewed shin of beef). The restaurant also

serves other filling casserole dishes such as the *cocido madrileño* or *olla gitana*, similar to a *cocido* but with the addition of dried beans (lunch time only), *ropa vieja*, a vegetarian cocido-type dish and a delicious braised leg of lamb. The desserts are traditional too, with flan and custard sharing space with the ubiquitous sorbets and ice cream. But the special house dessert is *torrijas*, a heavily cinnamon Spanish version of French toast.

The service is efficient and friendly, and during the bullfight season the tables are often filled with members of the profession who meet there to discuss past fights and future plans. Antonio Sánchez lives on in the Taberna which bears his name.

TABERNA DE ANTONIO SANCHEZ. *Me-són de Paredes*, 13. Tel.: (1) 239 78 26.



**CORDOBA, SEVILLE,
GRANADA ...
ANDALUSIA, A LAND
WHICH THE
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CROSSES CALMLY,
INTERTWINING A PAST
OF MOSQUES,
RITUALS AND CATHE-
DRALS WITH THE
DAWNING OF THE
21ST CENTURY.**



The Andalusian Express, with the elegance of its authentic 1920's rail cars, sumptuous furnishings and internationally acclaimed cuisine is more than a train ride or a means of getting from A to B—it is an experience. A five star luxury hotel on rails, it enjoys a view that is the envy of many a stationary hotel or modern mode of transport taking in the beautiful Andalusian landscape and the historical, artistic and cultural richness of Spain's most vibrant and colourful cities. Despite its name, speed and urgency are not key words in the vocabulary of the Andalusian Express. Time is for immersing yourself in the luxury and sophistication of its lovingly restored compartments and relaxing in the mahogany panelled 1920's dining cars.

The train travels through some of Spain's most spectacular scenery - lush and green northern Spain with its snow capped mountains and medieval towns and the sunny, magical plains of Andalusia in the South.

From the energetic city of Seville, where the world fair -Expo 92 will be staged, the Andalusian Express travels through the former capital of Moslem Spain, Cordoba, journeying across the Guadalquivir and taking in the magnificent Mosque "La Mezquita", built in the 8th century.

From there, the train moves on to Granada with its fabled Alhambra and the stunning palaces which stand as a lasting monument to the Moors in Spain. Next stop, Malaga and the Costa del Sol, with the opportunity to spend a few days at one of its renowned resorts. Alternatively, enjoy a tour of Malaga with the Andalusian Express before returning to Seville with another evening of superb cuisine, live music and dancing on route.

Within its exciting southern itinerary, the Andalusian Express offers a varied programme from one to 3 nights with daily sightseeing ex-

cursions including Segovia, Toledo, Madrid (El Escorial) and Salamanca -all named by UNESCO as World Heritage sites.

On its northern itinerary in July and August, the Andalusian Express departs from Barcelona, Spain's capital of fashion, finance and commerce and the stage for the 1992 Summer Olympics. The train heads for the rugged wine country of Rioja, the cities of Pamplona, Burgos and Leon, and the stunning scenery of the Galician coast.

Programmes again range from

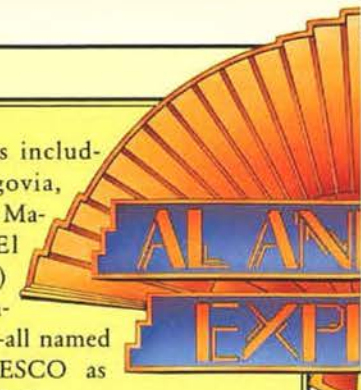
two to three nights. Whichever itinerary you choose you will travel aboard authentic, vintage 1920's rail cars built in England, France and Spain for Europe's luxury trains.

The "Alhambra" dining car was built in France in 1929 and arrived in Spain in 1941. The "Gibraltar", built in Britain in the same year, often carried dignitaries and members of the Royal family on official outings.

Both are totally

A five star luxury hotel on rails, it enjoys a view in the historical, artistic and cultural richness of Spain's most vibrant and colourful cities.

The widest, most comfortable carriages in Europe. Each lovingly restored to its original Belle Epoque splendor.






ALANDALUS EXPRESO

restored: the gleaming wood parquetry, the delicate pink Art Deco lamps, the sumptuous velvet brocade upholstery. What an inviting way to dine!

The bar car, the "Giralda", built in France by Wagons-Lits in 1928 for the most sophisticated trains of that time, features live music and a parquet dance floor. Unlike other European luxury trains, The Andalusian Express also features a Club Car, the "Medina Azahara",

Speed and urgency are not key in the vocabulary of the Alandalusian Express. Time is for immersing yourself in its luxury and sophistication.



with leather-upholstered tables and chairs, an area for viewing films or reading, and a small retail shop.

The train features completely restored deluxe sleeping cars, each panelled in deep rich mahogany. The cabins are equipped with vanities and sinks, and luggage racks. The double cabins sleep two on upper and lower berths, and spacious suites include two lower berths with private toilet and shower. All cabins are supplied with bottled mineral water, towels, terrecloth robes, slippers and toiletries.

To cater to your every need, a staff of cabin stewards and English-speaking hostesses is on duty around the clock.



This is a truly vintage train - but that does not mean you should be deprived of modern day conveniences. It also features two shower cars, 20 showers in all, each with its own private dressing room.

The train is fully air-conditioned and features a cellular telephone for outgoing and incoming calls, if you must keep in touch with the outside world. To cater to your every need, a staff of cabin stewards and English-speaking hostesses is on duty around the clock. Officially inaugurated by Princess Cristina two years ago, the sleeping cars of the Andalusian Express combine maximum comfort with the most refined craftsmanship. Covered in nobly worked wood with windows decorated with attractive ground designs and bevell-ed edges, these compartments, unusual in a trains, are the ideal setting for a night travelling through time.

The Andalusian Express sleeping cars were built in France in 1929, and even then merited the praise of European nobility. Some of these carriages were used by the King of England in his trips from Calais to the Côte d'Azur. Today, these same compartments, reconstructed in the belle epoque style but preserving their original decoration, can be used by travellers of the 1990's.

To guarantee that its guests sleep well, the Andalusian Express stops at night time. In this way, the passengers enjoy a quiet and comfortable night embellished by the little lanterns in the rooms, more fitting in a five-star hotel than in a train. A night to relax with vivid sensations, to be swept along by your imagination. Until the following day.

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FOR CENTURIES ON
THE ARTISTIC, RELI-
GIOUS AND SOCIAL
MAP OF EUROPE



MADRID AFTER DARK

STARRY, STARRY NIGHT...

Text and photos: **Diego Díaz**

The traditional attractions of the city of Madrid are well known. Foreign visitors to the capital of Spain «do» the Prado, stroll about the Retiro, explore the Habsburg Quarter and do a little shopping. All too often, sampling the culture of the capital takes the form of a fleeting visit before heading for the coast or more exotic parts of the country. Fun tends to be associated with the Mediterranean or picturesque Andalusia. Few realise what they are missing: Madrid is a jumping city.

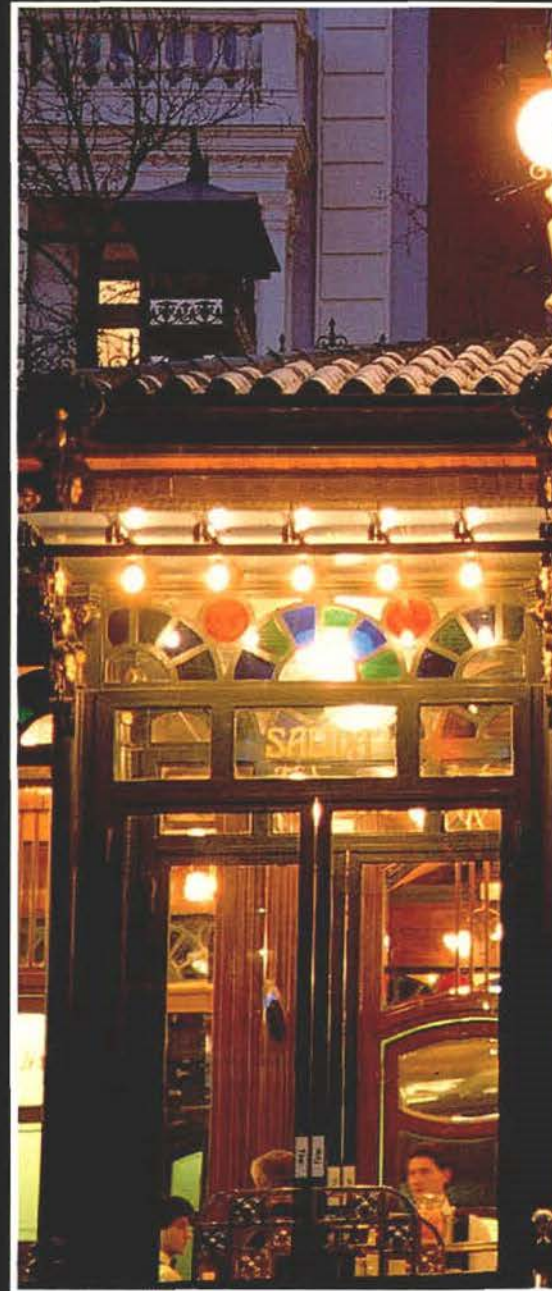
Years ago, Madrid was thought of as a grey, aloof city of civil servants and politicians, with not a lot of frivolity, about, and that image was not all that inaccurate. Today, nothing could be further from the truth. Madrid certainly used to lag behind Barcelona and was definitely less lively than Seville. For at least the last ten years, however, Madrid has overtaken them both, and now sets the pace. Its culture is no longer just museums and monuments; it now embraces social and artistic activities which are lively to an exhausting degree.

So what happened? A miracle wrought by the new democracy? Miracle no, but certainly a consequence. The thing about freedom is that it allows submerged phenomena to rise to the surface. Barcelona, whose response to the obscurantist attitudes of the central

administration was to turn its gaze to Europe, found the freedom to recover its own, previously suppressed Catalan language and culture. Seville found itself confronted with the tough task of tackling the underdevelopment that had been allowed to undermine a region far from the major centres of economic activity. Meanwhile Madrid, unimpeded by any comparable problems, blossomed. In this city of relatively few traditions and customs, urban to the very core, and with a richly heterogeneous population from all corners of the Peninsula, there was nothing to stand in the way of the Europeanist and modernising aspirations that characterised the new politics. It was a city where change was not only welcomed with open arms but actually demanded vociferously.

SPANISH ACCENT

This all happened in the early Eighties, and it was the generation born from the Fifties onwards that provided the impetus behind the explosion of life-embracing, fast-moving activity known in Spanish as *la movida*. It found its expression in countless ways. Fashion designers, painters, filmmakers, rock musicians and photographers, people concerned primarily with the world of style and image, began daubing their hitherto drab backdrop with vivid splashes of colour. They were



Night-time in Madrid is always over far too quickly. It has a magic all its own, a contagious general appetite for fun and colour ... Then all too soon it's over and, like awakening from an enjoyable dream, you can't help wishing it could have gone on just that bit longer. Here we take a look at what goes on in Madrid by night and who and what make it happen.



Except for rare exceptions you are unlikely ever to find yourself alone either in the city centre or in its other quarters. Well into the night, you can expect a ready welcome in any one of the innumerable bars, from the more modest to the more sophisticated.

the avant-garde, but the whole younger stratum of society followed them enthusiastically. Free, with tolerance as their byword and with an insatiable appetite for anything new, they created their own venues as the setting for a night life which, though reminiscent of Rome's *dolce vita*, Britain's new wave and the New York scene, had an accent all its own.

But all this novelty was based on old foundations. Spain is famous for keeping late hours. Dinner is eaten from ten on, and there is nothing strange about making a date for a drink at midnight. Street life, a delight in meeting up with friends and chatting, and a benign climate, are all traditionally Latin characteristics. All these ingredients have combined to produce literally hundreds of bars, cafés with live entertainment, late-night restaurants and discos.

Another important factor is the fact that in the rest of Europe and North America, having fun tends to be a separate activity from daily or working life. It is allocated to certain days, limited to certain times, events and a circle of friends: in short, contained within certain clearly drawn limits of time and place, and ritualised. This is not true of Spain. For the Spaniard, the whole of life has an underlay of fun just waiting to be let out. After an exhausting work session, instead of heading for their respective homes, the team will adjourn to the nearest bar and unwind over a few beers. True, there are some public venues which fit the foreign pattern, but not all that many. Some combine several functions without the slightest difficulty. For example, one group may be talking business, another may be having a meal, and yet another ordering cocktails, all in the same place, yet at the most unlikely times and quite unsynchronised.

Meeting up, chatting, communicating, are vital activities for *madrileños*, as Madrid-dwellers are known, and the simple fact of going out seems to be more important than the actual drink.

When are the usual times for going out? Friday and Sat-



Music, whether background or live, is an important factor in deciding where to go, and is also a useful clue as to the kind of people and atmosphere you can expect to find there.



Friday and Saturday, of course, is when most nightlifers go out on the town, but even during the rest of the week the city is by no means deserted at night.



Madrid is full of dozens upon dozens of little places catering for all tastes: jazz, classical music, rock... but live entertainment is also usual.

urday, of course, is when most nightlifers go out on the town. On those days, in the most popular areas, it's difficult to find a parking place at three in the morning, the pavements are crammed with people and traffic jams are the norm. But even during the rest of the week the city is by no means deserted at night, and the «in» lot, committed night owls, prefer Wednesdays and Thursdays when there is still plenty of company without all the crowds.

WHERE TO GO

Given that general context, now for a rough sketch-map of night-time Madrid. It should be pointed out that, except for rare exceptions, you are unlikely ever to find yourself alone either in the city centre or in its other quarters. Well into the night, you can expect a ready welcome in any one of innumerable bars, from the more modest ones on the outskirts to the more sophisticated ones in the centre. The centre is, of course, the best bet in that this is where the most and the best places are. Whatever time it is, you can always get a drink, often have dinner too or, at one of the many 24-hour drug-stores, buy presents, drink, food, newspapers ... though, in my experience, not screws. Well, nothing's perfect.

Of all the different quarters of town, the most lively at the present time is the area around Calle Huertas and the Plaza de Santa Ana. This is the long-established theatre-going part of town and therefore has a tradition of night-life: indeed, it's still not a bad idea to follow the pattern of going to the theatre first and then on for dinner or drinks afterwards. Calle Echegaray has various *mesones* and restaurants, not all that luxurious but perfectly satisfactory. The beer-bars in the Plaza Santa Ana are a good alternative for a quick snack.

From here, the range of possible drinking places is enormous. Take, for example, the «Hemingway Route», a concept just invented by me, which includes three of the famous Hispanophile's favour-

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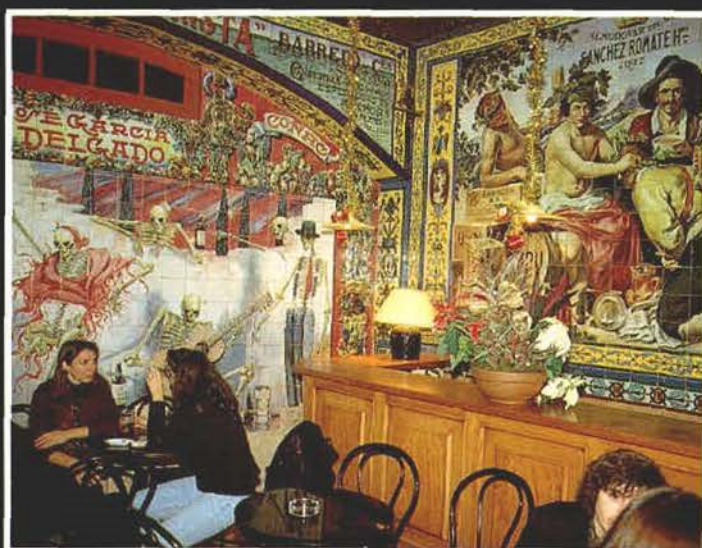
The Café Central puts on top quality jazz performances daily, and its atmosphere is an agreeable one of old mirrors and good service.

Another favourite part of town is Malasaña. Though not what it used to be ten or fifteen years ago, there is still plenty of its old atmosphere left and the variety of bars and so on is as wide as around Huertas. Though it is impossible to stick a generic label on this area, here are some good places to visit, though their style should not be taken as typical of the whole. **Ardosa** the best and oldest beer-bar is

ites: **Viva Madrid**, **Los Gabrieles** and **Villa Roda**. Decorated with old-fashioned tiles depicting scenes of bullfighting or the everyday life of bygone days, these bars also have coffered ceilings and Arab-style horse-shoe archways. But Hemingway would be disappointed if he returned today hoping to find intact the bullfighting and flamenco atmosphere he loved so much. Nowadays, the background music is modern and the clientele are well-off thirty to forty year olds. The first two of these bars are open all day and are ideal meeting and chatting places. **Villa Rosa**, though, is bigger and more luxurious and opens only at night. It has a dance-floor but it is not a disco in the international sense.

Jazz fans will find Madrid's jazz mecca in this area: the **Café Central** puts on top quality performances daily, and its atmosphere is an agreeable one of old mirrors, good service and an informed audience. Nearby is **El Despertar**, decorated in the same, though even lovelier, old-style café decor though it puts on no live entertainment.

This whole area of town is full of dozens upon dozens of little places catering for all tastes: jazz, classical music, rock ... even a Hawaiian bar. The variety is enormous and you are sure to find something that appeals to you. My particular favourite is **Yesterday**, presided over by a flamenco dancer and with just the right quiet atmosphere for long conversations.



Around the Plaza de Santa Ana there are some beautiful bars decorated with old-fashioned tiles depicting scenes of bullfighting or the everyday life of bygone days.



The smart set patronise Archy, a bar-disco-restaurant, where the clientele is yuppie, though the atmosphere is enjoyably informal and pleasant. It's a great place.

here, for example. It serves draught beer, slowly drawn, and the best Czech, Belgian and British brands. No beer-lover should miss it.

Then there are **La Habana**, **Maravillas**, **Café Manuela** and **Café del Foro**. All these have live entertainment and an adult, relaxed atmosphere where you can chat, get to know new people and forge new relationships. The shows tend to be of the kind that combine humour and sentiment.

The rest of the places around are a mixture, though perhaps with a predominant tendency towards the rock scene: **Malandre**, **Vía Láctea**

and **Agapo** have guaranteed raunchy music. It is also the sort of area where creperies and pizzerias thrive, and there are lots of them.

Nostalgia lovers will adore **Noches de Cuplé**, with music to remind them of more innocent times. To give you some idea of the tone, it's the sort of place that Nat King Cole would enjoy.

The area around the Glorietta de Bilbao is full of cinemas, and one classic venue for after the film is **Area**, with its individual decor combining pop and surrealism and where you can dance, have dinner or just drink. For really late birds—it opens at 5 am!—and acid house fans, there is **Warhol'd**. Emerging from this disco at 10 in the morning, buying the paper and stopping off for breakfast is a deliciously bohemian experience.

The part of town around Chueca and Hortaleza is where the city's gay bars are concentrated, but there is a lot more there, too. **Hanoi** is one of the most modern, avant-garde places and you can be sure of mixing with the «in» crowd, though this recommendation, like all the rest, must be considered as valid right now. If you are not coming to Spain for a while, check again because what's «in» today may well be «out» by tomorrow. **Libertad 8**, though, is one of the places likely to last. A lovely place furnished with antiques, it is just the place for lovers of literature and culture in general. **Vaivén** is a newly designed venue where you can dance as you did years ago.

TERRAZAS

I have now covered the city's main all-year-round focuses of night life, though in summer the whole pattern changes when the city brings out its *terrazas*, or open-air bars. The highest concentration of them appears along Madrid's main artery: the Paseo de la Castellana and its prolongations, Recoletos and the Paseo del Prado. *Terrazas* are set up all along this strip just for the season. Well-known architects and designers compete every year to create the most exotic and so-

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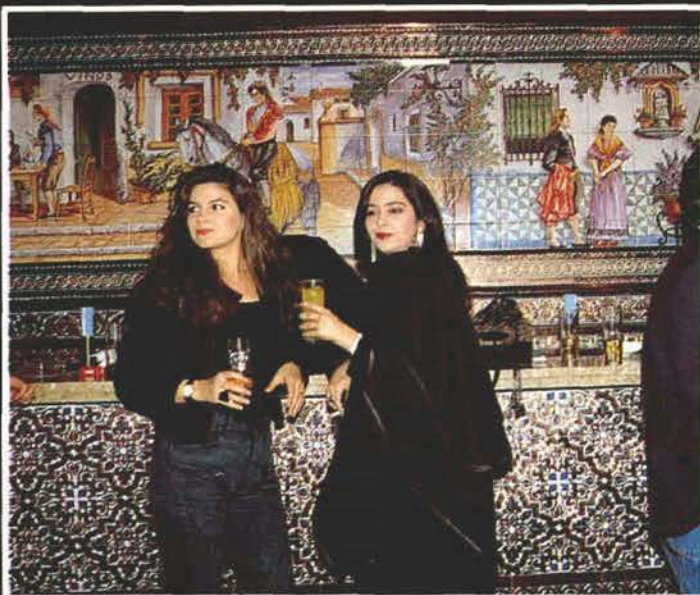
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Hemingway loved the bars with old-fashioned tiles and flamenco atmosphere. But now the background music is modern.



Years ago, Madrid was thought of as a grey, aloof city of civil servants and politicians. Now, Madrid is a jumping city.

phisticated ones. Beautiful, elegantly clad bodies take advantage of the warm nights to show themselves off as much as possible, parading up and down the avenue and dropping in to a *terrazza* occasionally.

Meanwhile, the *terrazas* in the great park on the outskirts of town, the Casa de Campo, offer cleaner air and a car-free atmosphere as an alternative to the Castellana, while the **Hipódromo**, the race-track also just outside town, has night-time racing and a very cosmopolitan atmosphere in

which to enjoy open-air night-life.

These are the most outstanding areas, but *terrazas* spring up all over the city in summer. *Madrileños* shun the indoors, preferring the pleasures of the relative cool of the evening under the stars. To recommend particular *terrazas* is an impossibility since they change every year like nomads tents according to the whims of fashion.

When the *terrazas* close, at about three or four in the morning, the thing to do is to head for one of the open-air



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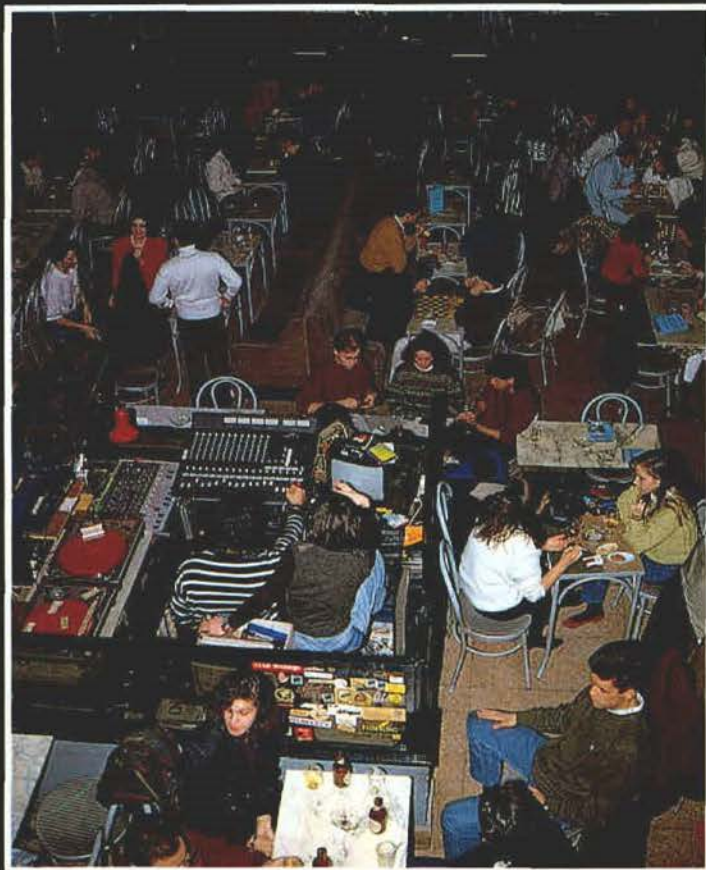
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The variety of bars is enormous and you are sure to find something that appeals to you.

discos on the roads leading out of Madrid, often with their own swimming pools. **Oh, Madrid!** is a good example, and has the advantage of being near the **Casino**, considered a smart place, where you can stake your holiday money.

STYLES

Having specified location and type, it is important to know something about the style of these places. The smart set patronise **Archy**, a bar-disco-restaurant. The clientele is yuppie, though the atmosphere is enjoyably informal and pleasant. It's a great place. People who like **Archy** should choose the curiously-named **Cock** as their bar, and **Pachá** as their disco. Then there is **Teatríz**, a former theatre which has been made over and is now a rather select venue. All of these are classy without exhibiting class



A BRIEF MUSICAL GUIDE

Music, whether background or live, is an important factor in deciding where to go, and is also a useful clue as to the kind of people and atmosphere you can expect to find there. Here is a brief guide.

Jazz: Don't miss the **Café Central**. **Clamores** and **Whisky Jazz Club** are also worth a visit. The latter of these has red velvet upholstery, black and white photographs, bow-tied waiters but, being longer-established, has lost a bit of its verve. All of them stage live performances.

Classical music: **La Fídula**, in Calle Huertas, stages night-time chamber music concerts in an informal, almost jazzy atmosphere. Round the Plaza de la Opera there are various venues, with **Solesmes** among the leaders, decorated with exquisite charm and with piano concertos or waltzes being played.

Rock: The top concerts are put on at **Universal Club**. Smaller venues include **Ya'sta** and **La Nave**. Though it puts on few concerts, the **Templo del Gato** is well worth visiting for both its decor and its music.

Flamenco: This reporter admits his ignorance of this genre of music, as is the case with many non Andalusian Spaniards. However, I am reliably informed that the **Café de Chinitas** (lovely decor, elegant, but a bit conventional) and the livelier **La Carcelera** and **Casa Patas** are the places to go.

distinction, thanks to skilful public relations.

More extravagant tastes will enjoy **Escueto**, an original cabaret disco reminiscent of Berlin in the Twenties though it would be difficult to define its rather crazy atmosphere with much precision.

Good dancers will like **Aire** and the **Café del Mercado**. The second of these is particularly recommended: it has good salsa music and very varied live performances. It is in an ultra-modern shopping mall of antique shops and designer boutiques —very tempt-

ing for anyone with a healthy credit card.

Having mentioned the decor of some of the venues above, two particular gems are **Libre**, decorated in an avant-garde style and, contrasting sharply with an equal visual treat, **El Café de los Espejos**, with its classic Parisian-style pavilion.

If you have stamina enough to withstand an all-night session on the town, the last port of call should be the appropriately named **Eclipse** on Calle Doctor Esquerdo.

You see what I mean? The range is vast. The fun-lovers of this world should not overlook Madrid: they risk being punished by Bacchus and Dionysius. As is well known, though you can repent of your sins, turn your back on pleasure and you never get a second chance.

Note: Madrid has a weekly magazine called *La Guía del Ocio* (Leisure Guide) which, like London's *Time Out* and Paris' *Pariscope*, lists restaurants, bars, cinemas with their addresses, opening hours and so on. Most newspapers also publish a similar weekly supplement.

Madrid, Center of Spain

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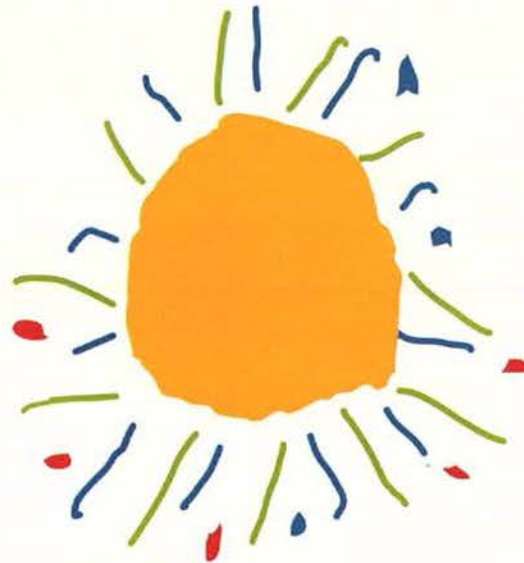
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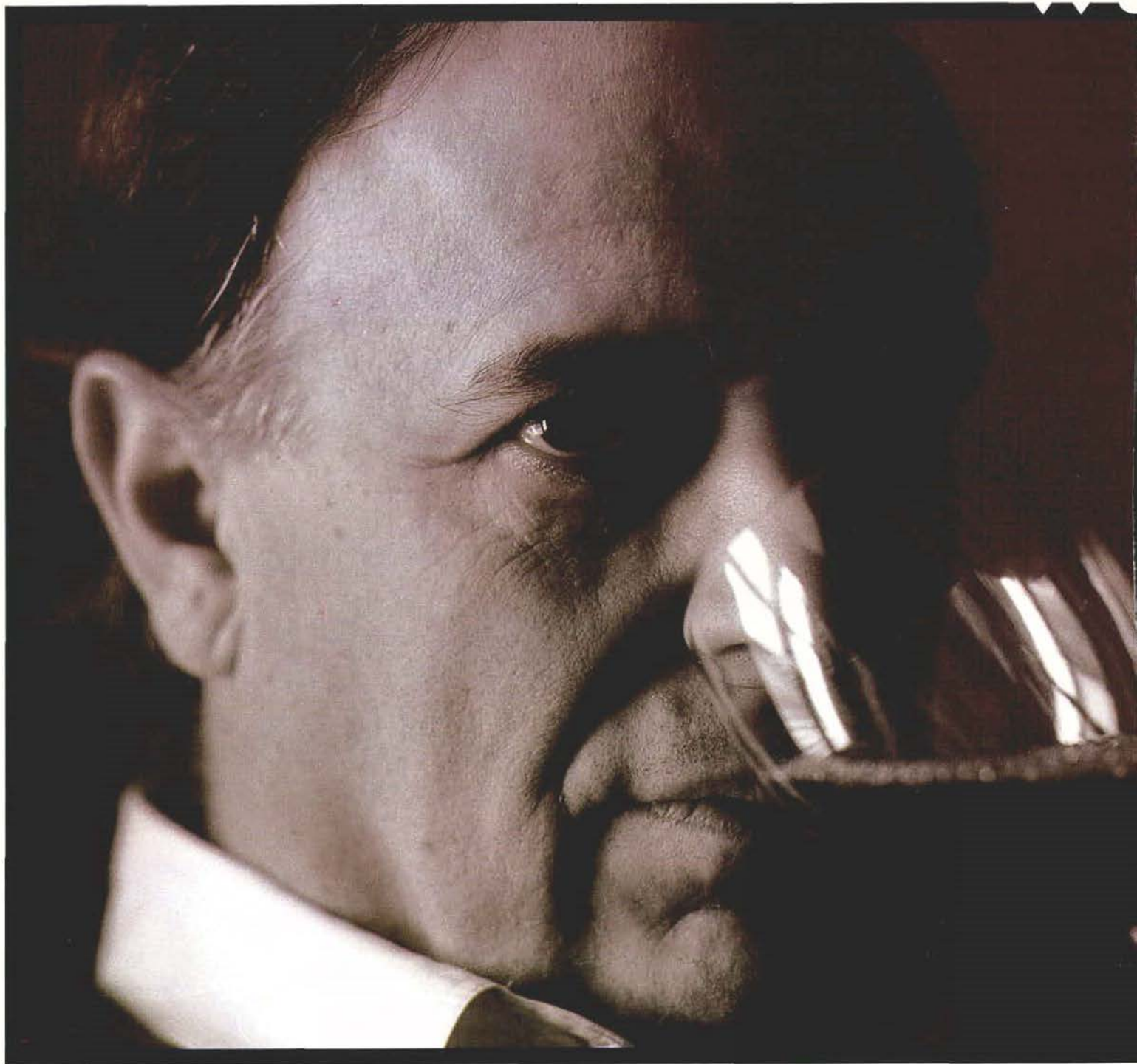
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Madrid, the sunniest city in Europe, is the breakwater of diversity that characterizes the Spaniards. Vital, zealous and cosmopolitan, Madrid is the center of Spain..., for business, too.

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Carlos Falcó is not just in wine for the business. He derives huge enjoyment from the whole wine-world and loves to see wine being treated with respect.

MARQUES DE GRIÑÓN

Text: **Hawys Pritchard**
Photos: **Pablo Neustadt**

WINES WITH PEDIGREE

Carlos Falcó, Marqués de Griñón, is one of Spain's three hundred remaining Grandees, now a titular honour though in times gone by one which commanded considerable power and privilege. Ten years ago he launched himself in the wine world and today the Marqués de Griñón label has come to command international respect from the cognoscenti and high prices in the marketplace. I set off for the Falcó Group's headquarters in Madrid's smart Calle Serrano to find out more about the man behind this intriguing success story.

At first sight, Carlos Falcó could be taken for an Englishman. A surprising observation to make about any Spaniard, but particularly so when the Spaniard in question is a member of the aristocracy with a noble pedigree dating back to the Middle Ages. On closer consideration, I decided that this initial impression had to do with a combination of attitude and wardrobe. This tall, middle-aged, apparently reticent man with his impeccable manners and clothes (navy pin-stripe suit, pale blue shirt, maroon tie with tiny white spots) has about him just the slightest hint of engaging dishevelment that is difficult to pinpoint. It is particularly unusual in Spain, a country where personal grooming is an art form carried to often intimidating extremes. But think of some of the nattier British Conservative politicians —Michael Heseltine, for example— and you'll know the sort of quality I mean.

THE BACKGROUND STORY

Our initial interview took place in the boardroom, and Carlos Falcó told the story of how he went into wine with practised ease. A degree in Agricultural Engineering at Louvain (Belgium), where he studied from the age of seventeen, was followed by a Master's from the University of California at Davis in the 1960s. Returning to his thirteenth century family estate at Malpica in the province of Toledo, his first enterprise was a commercial plantation of blonde tobacco at a period when Spain, then still a nation of corporal smokers, was avid for all things American. (I must say I hold this albeit partial contribution to the blonde take-over very much against him —abroad just isn't what it used to be any more without the incense-like whiff of black cigarettes.)

Meanwhile, however, in the late '60s/early '70s, there were fascinating viticultural experiments going on in the States. Californian research into European varieties had revealed their untapped potential in hitherto untried conditions, and the great Maynard Amerine was expressing the then amazing opinion that Cabernet Sauvignon was the ideal variety for Spain. This was at a time when Spain was awash with wine made from varieties grown for their high yield and, except for a few notable exceptions, had yet to achieve dependable, not to speak of up-market, quality and image. Torres, León and Falcó, each with American connections of one sort and another, were all to recognise the significance of the American experiments and to pioneer the planting of noble varieties in Spain. In Falcó's case, this took the form of a small-scale and quite unauthorised plantation of Cabernet Sauvignon cuttings smuggled in from Bordeaux in 1974.

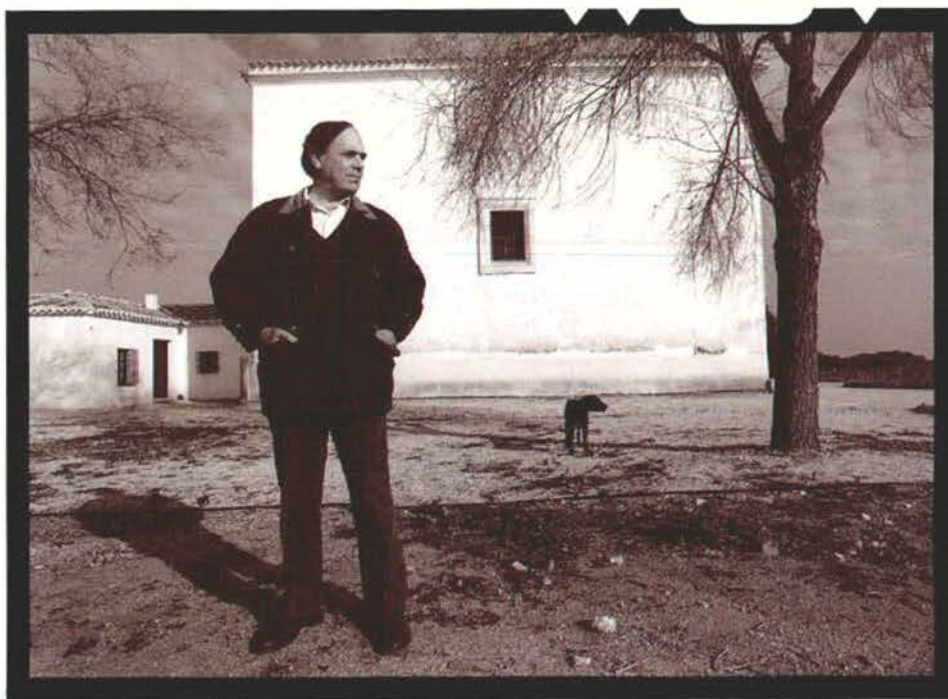
His first harvest in 1979 met with little enthusiasm from potential buyers, but was eventually taken up by Antonio Sanz of Rueda for his own use. In 1981 Sanz made a very successful 50% Cabernet (Falcó's grapes)/50% Tinto Fino red which met with such a favourable response that the following year Falcó began selling under his own Marqués de Griñón label. A conversation with Margaux Hemingway over dinner one evening in 1981 led to the contacts which gave him the confidence to do so. She turned out to be a friend of the great, now sadly late, Alexis Lichine, wine critic and owner of the Château Prieuré in Bordeaux, himself no mean pioneer in his time. She arranged an introduction which was to lead to Lichine's tasting and being so impressed by the '81 red that he presented Falcó to the legendary Professor

Emile Peynaud of Bordeaux, who subsequently became his adviser.

The association with Antonio Sanz of Rueda continues. Until 1989, the wine continued to be sent to Rueda for maturation and bottling, but Malpica now has its own fully functioning bodega so that Marqués de Griñón reds are now all estate bottled. Meanwhile, Falcó's varietal whites are entirely Rueda based. He buys in Verdejo grapes from local growers and uses the Sanz winery to produce a fresh, new-style white which is generally bracketed with Marqués de Riscal for quality. This venture was begun in '82, again with Peynaud as adviser. The '89 harvest is even now maturing in new French barricas where it will stay for the best part of a year to give a longer-lasting wine.

Last year's overall production amounted to some 20,000 cases which, while the highest proportions represent the now classic Cabernet Sauvignon and Rueda Superior, also embraces new departures such as the «Durius» line which includes

A tall, fit-looking man, the Marqués de Griñón doesn't have the look of a bon viveur, yet he is clearly no ascetic either.



a 100% Tempranillo red and a rosé. Future plans include further experiments with varietals under the supervision of California's Randall Graham. Falcó is even thinking of branching out into chateau-produced olive oil (his various business interests include some in the food sector). Meanwhile, Marqués de Griñón wines currently sell to twelve countries, with Western Europe in the lead, and including the US, Canada and Australia.

Though he must have recounted this story a thousand times, Carlos Falcó managed to deliver it with admirable spontaneity. This, one felt, was the official version. But Best of Bunch aims to provide

a glimpse behind the scenes. The question of his public image could be put off no longer...

IN THE PUBLIC EYE

What, you will be asking yourself, does this mild and charming person *do* to get himself into the gossip magazines? For, to the average Spaniard, Carlos Falcó is, or more accurately was, a familiar figure in the gossip magazines. In brief, he was once married to and subsequently divorced from, the ex-wife of international crooner Julio Iglesias. This glamorous woman, a committed socialite who has since gone on to become the wife of an ex-Cabinet Minister, willingly occupies prime space in the gossip glossies and, during their relationship, took Carlos Falcó there with her. His appearances there nowadays are only very occasional.

I had hoped to take advantage of this interview to find out something I long to

know —what do the Jet Set (known here as *La jet*) find to talk about at their constant social events?— but it was not to be. «Who are *La jet* exactly?» I asked, for openers. «A strangely eclectic collection of publicity-seekers, show business personalities, footballers, bullfighters ... that sort of people», he replied, looking and sounding so unlike any of these himself that it was quite clear that he certainly felt in no way involved in it personally. Had the publicity surrounding his marriage and subsequent divorce left him the target of unwelcome media attention? Yes, but it was of no interest to anyone beyond Spain. In this sense it had affect-

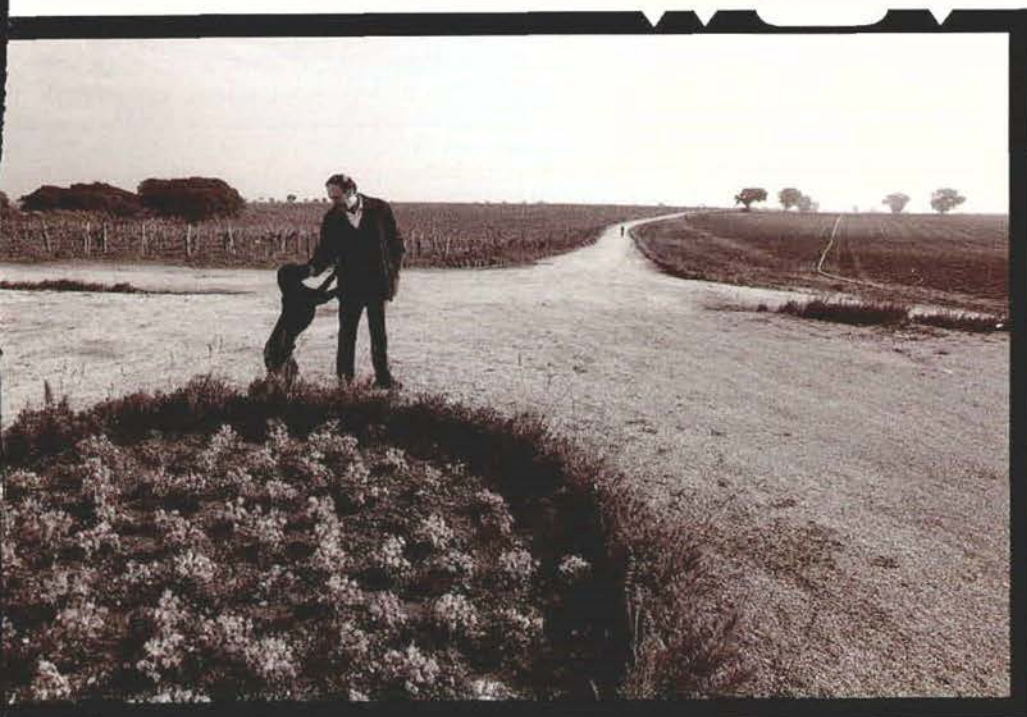
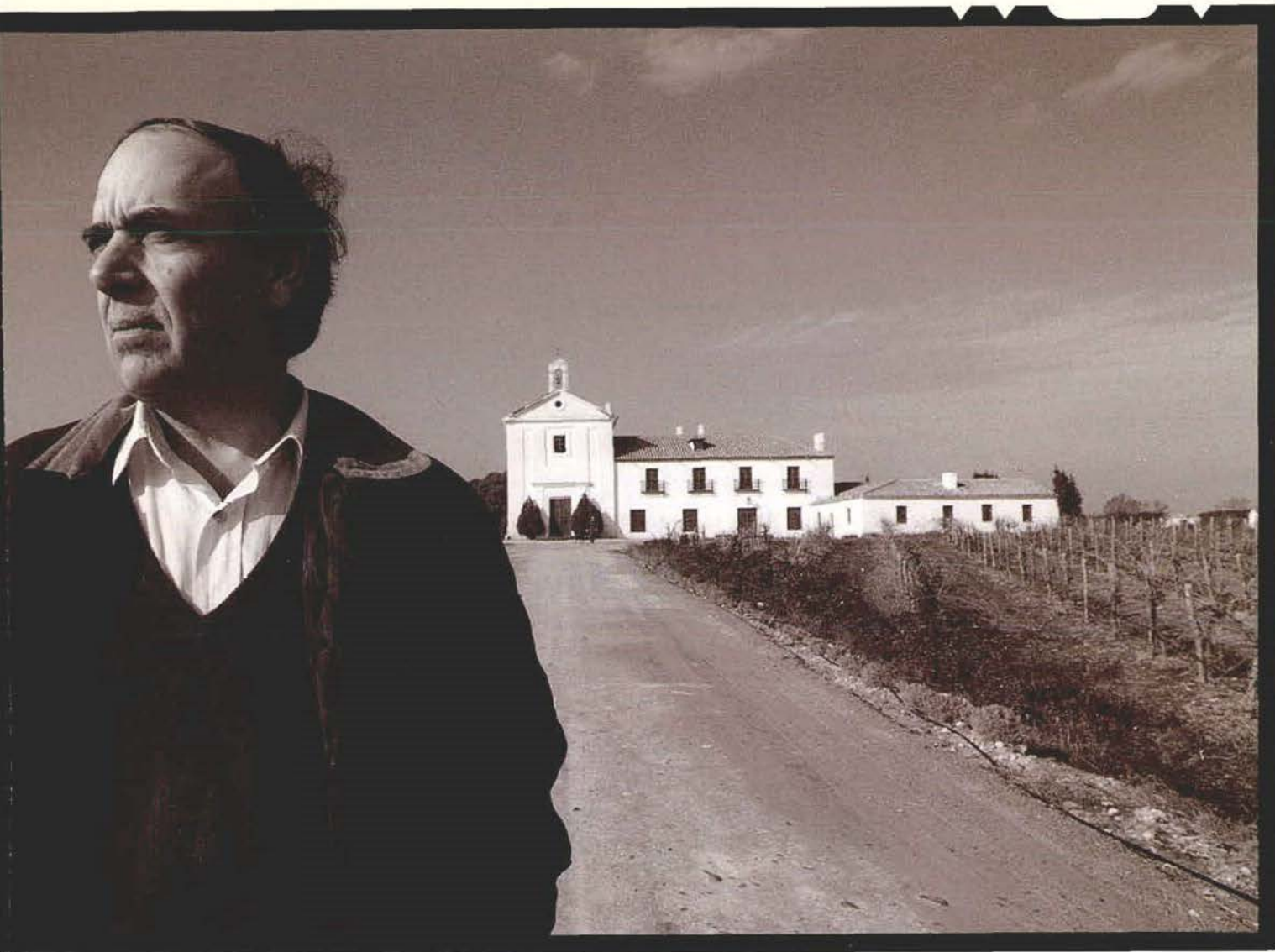
The vineyard extending in front of the lovely old country house from 18C is divided in two by the drive.

On the one side is the Cabernet Sauvignon, and on the other, recently-planted Syrah.

The vineyard occupies only a part of his Malpica estate, some of the rest being given over to other crops and livestock.

TODAY'S ARISTOCRAT

While delighted by the everyday common sense of all this, I was reminded by



his use of the formal phrase «His Majesty the King» that Carlos Falcó moves in royal circles, as his family has done for centuries. I asked him about his upbringing and what being a member of the aristocracy means in this day and age.

Born in Seville (in the house of Antonio Machado, Spain's revered turn-of-the-century poet) he was brought up chiefly in Madrid in the care of a sequence of nannies —Swiss, French, and English—in a very pro-British household (his father was British educated). He describes his upbringing as traditional, very country orientated, and as a time during which he received attitudes which he maintains to this day —ecological awareness, conservatism, and an affection for all things English. He took on a solemn expression as he spoke of the social obligations that an aristocratic title implies and of his belief that leaders of society are there to provide continuity.

But was the title a hindrance or a help in business? Here again came the sound

good sense. People are at last getting used to the notion of the working aristocrat, but of course it helps. It looks good on the label and has made his own particular approach to marketing possible. He uses no standard publicity measures, is represented by his distributors at the big wine fairs, but goes to the smaller events himself. Similarly, he launches his wines in new markets by personally introducing them into the best restaurants around. (Remember, this is a man with an international social entrée and contact network that few business rivals could match.)

Does he apply his «green» attitudes in winegrowing? Yes indeed. The vineyard occupies only a small part of his Malpica

with its own chapel attached, as I later discovered). Its whitewash gleamed in the December sunlight, as did the dark green Daimler parked alongside. Looking more English than ever dressed in rustic tones of green and brown, Carlos Falcó could not have been more welcoming. His jet black and enviably obedient Labrador Alegre bounding about his feet, he showed us around the relevant parts of the estate.

The bodega, excavated beneath a complex of outbuildings, and boasting highly sophisticated computer-governed moisture and temperature control equipment, is now fully operational, though the aesthetics are still to be attended to. The outbuildings above, organised around a

beamed as I quoted Tony Lord's description of a wine as having a «good grip at the finish» (his own 1985 Cabernet, as it happens). While agreeing that the layman would be by no means sure whether this was a desirable quality or not, he defended the need for a special language to describe intangibles. He thought the mystique protected high standards, and cited the importance of bodies such as the International Gastronomic Academy (he is an elected member of several) in serving much the same function. A tall, fit-looking man, the Marqués de Griñón doesn't have the look of a *bon viveur*, yet he is clearly no ascetic, either.

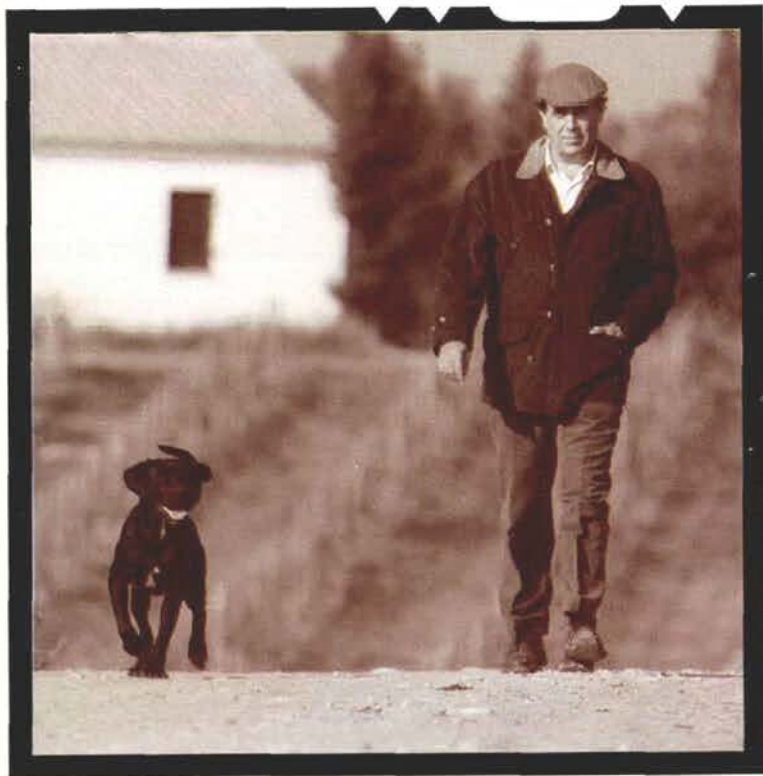
SIMPLE EXCELLENCE

This became still clearer when we went indoors for a welcome *aperitivo*. As we made our way to the sitting-room up steps eroded into bow shapes by two centuries of feet, delicious smells wafted from the big old kitchen leading off the flagged hall below. A fragrant log fire awaited us in a room of the sort of informal charm that makes you feel at home at once. Walls lined with books (leather-bound series of Spanish history and literature, a nice early edition of *Eminent Victorians*, coffee-table art-books, a few paper-back novels, a whole section on wine)... squashy sofas covered in English fabrics... baskets of pot pourri... old family paintings ... and, from the two tall windows, a view out over the vineyard.

We were served a classic country *aperitivo* —chorizo, cheese, the most delicious *tortilla de patata* (Spanish omelette) I have ever tasted, and wine, in this case an excellent '85 Cabernet. Simple and perfect, it turned out that everything, not just the wine, was estate produced.

The marqués had to rush off to an appointment with some Japanese clients. «Wine?» I asked, impressed. «Golf links, actually», he replied. «As you see, I'm in the business of helping people enjoy themselves.» As we polished off the remains of the *tortilla*, we caught a brief glimpse of the green Daimler roaring off in a cloud of dust down the drive between the vines.

Falcó is a shy man and shyness, a quality which always disarms, does so particularly when status and reputation have led one to expect the contrary. Yet he zips about the world promoting his wine right, left and centre, no event seeming too insignificant. He has achieved international recognition for the unquestioned quality that the Marqués de Griñón label signifies through a marketing technique that is individual to say the least. The man is a veritable Public Relations artiste, though whether by design or accident it is impossible to tell.



Falcó describes his upbringing as very country orientated, an attitude which he maintains to this day, with a clear ecological awareness.

estate, some of the rest being given over to other crops and livestock, and he makes use of the plentiful organic fertiliser generated by the rest of the farm. There in the board-room this seemed incongruous talk, though he swore that he had had his working wellingtons on that very morning before heading back to town after a weekend on the estate.

THE COUNTRY SEAT

A week later, I was to see the *marqués* in his country context. Photographer Pablo Neustadt and I, following a very necessary hand-drawn map, eventually turned off a remote country lane and onto the pale dirt track that led through the vineyard itself up to the façade of a lovely old country house (18th century, and

square paddock, are to be converted for use as offices, a kitchen and dining room for entertaining guests, and a tasting room. The vineyard extending in front of the house is divided in two by the drive. On the one side is the Cabernet Sauvignon, grown high off the ground and drip-irrigated, and on the other, recently-planted Syrah —another new departure, not only for Falcó but for Spanish winegrowing in general.

As we chatted between photographs, it became clear that Falcó is not just in wine for the business. He derives huge enjoyment from the whole wine-world and its assortment of personalities, and loves to see wine being treated with respect. I asked his opinion of wine-speak: was this an expression of respect or just a mystique-creating secret code? He



El Brandy, de Jerez.



Consejo Regulador de la Denominación Específica BRANDY DE JEREZ

Q U E S O R D E



T H E C R E A M

CANTABRIA



STILL LIFE MENCHU ARTIME PHOTO A. DE BENTO

OF CHEESES



M. A. TABORGA



Up in the north of Spain, nestling between sea and mountains, lies the little region of Cantabria, an area of evergreen pastures with a local cheese-making tradition that dates back to olden times. Since 1985, one of the many of the cheeses made there has enjoyed Denomination of Origin status: *Queso de Cantabria*, which means simply «Cantabrian cheese», is a smooth, soft, creamy cheese whose mild flavour and texture give it mass appeal.

Text: Enric Canut

In 1843, a Santander shopkeeper, Jaime Diestro, set up a little cheese factory in the Pas valley. This little item of historical information is more than a mere anecdote —it has its relevance as evidence of how long ago cheese-making became an industry in the area and where this occurred.

The choice of the Pas river valley was no accident. From time immemorial, its inhabitants had been known as rearers of milk-cows and as makers of and traders in fine dairy products.

The figure of the *pasiego*, as the valley dweller is known, wending his way along mountain paths or ready for trade in the markets of northern Castile with his tree-bark pannier of cheeses and butter at his side, appears in many engravings of the period.

There are written references dating back as far as 1647 to the professional approach to trade shown by these pioneer cheesemERCHANTS who sold their wares at the markets in Burgos, Logroño, Vitoria, Bilbao, and even provided a regular supply to the Royal Household in Madrid, 400 kilometres (250 miles) away.

Jaime Diestro, revealing astute commercial vision in pioneering in the industrialisation of cheese manufacture, chose with care the place to do so.

At that period, the whole northern extreme of Spain was predominantly given over to rearing livestock, in the main local breeds of cattle which both provided and functioned as beasts of burden. Breeds now lost or rapidly dying out such as the *campurriana*, the *tudanca*, the *casina* and even the *pasiega*, which were then kept as working animals and producers of meat and young steers, meanwhile provided milk which was made into excellent creamy fresh cheese and rich, sweet butter.

The Pas factory was revolutionary in its time, introducing the technique of pressing cheeses by mechanical means. Thus, the pressed *pasiego* came into being, as opposed to the unpressed, original, version. It was still described as such in the first catalogue of Spanish cheeses published by the Ministry of Agriculture in 1967.

Later, towards the end of the 19C, other enterprising industrialists gradually set themselves up in the dairy produce business in other areas of Cantabria, transforming the rich local milk into butter and pressed cheeses of the Edam and Port-Salut type. Meanwhile, rapid changes were

occurring in the region's agricultural sector. Traditional multi-functional local breeds were quickly replaced by other breeds from outside selected for their high milk yield. Throughout Europe, dairy produce had become big business as it did so in Spain, beginning in Cantabria.

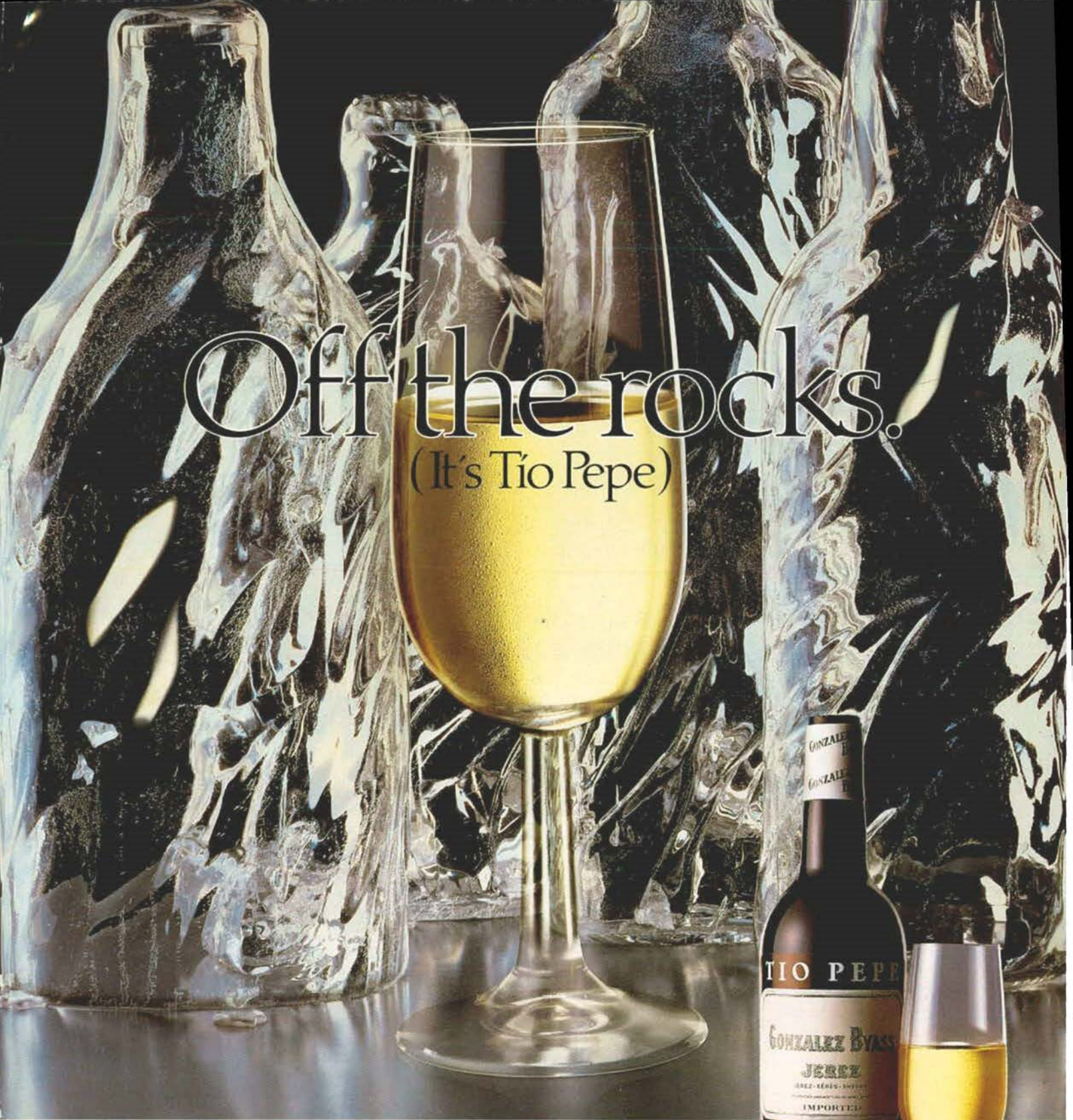
Significantly, as early as 1905, the Swiss Nestlé company established a factory in the village of La Penilla for the manufacture of powdered milk and milk-based baby-foods. Meanwhile, another cheese factory was set up in Vega de Pas and its type of pressed or cream *pasiego*, as it began to be known because of its buttery quality, was adopted through the whole central zone of Cantabria.

Lierganes, Oruña, Revilla, Colindres and many other traditional cattle-rearing towns established their own little factories which, over the years, have evolved into medium-sized cheese factories though with their origins and methods firmly rooted in the artisan tradition.

One of the most interesting of these is the factory at the Cistercian monastery of Cobreces, founded in 1908 as an agricultural college specialising in cheese production with the financial backing of the Quirós Foundation, a fund created by a local man who, having made his fortune in Latin America, spent some of it on improving the resources of his home area. The monks began by manufacturing a cheese of the Dutch «boule» type, known as Guillermina, later graduating to a Port-Salut type using the technique and experience brought into Cobreces by friars from elsewhere in Europe.

Off the rocks.

(It's Tio 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

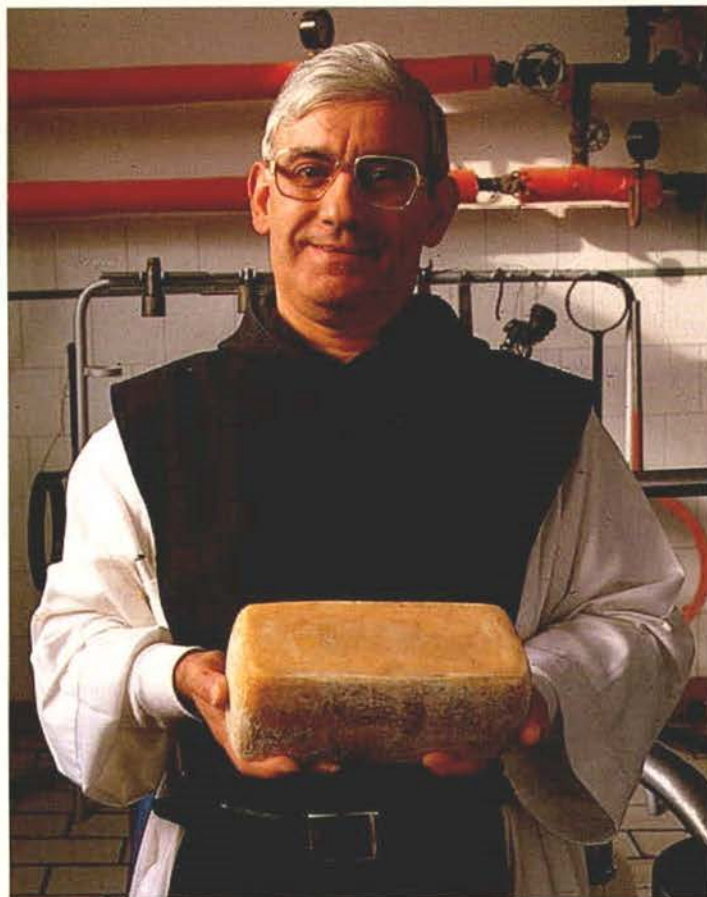
It's the mood.





MARIA GORREÑA

Coagulation occurs enzymatically with the use of animal rennet and the curd is pressed and uncooked.



A. DE BENTOS/SOBREMESA

Monks at the Cistercian monastery of Cobreces produce an interesting cheese, but it is not under the D.O. Queso de Cantabria.

The quality of these artisan cheeses and the idiosyncratic image of their being produced by monks was another ingredient in promoting the region as one which produced pressed cow's milk cheeses of high quality and creaminess: Santander or Cantabrian cream cheese became familiar names on the Spanish market.

NEW CHEESES FOR NEW DEMAND

Since that time, the changes have been rapid and revolutionary. Cantabria, along with Asturias and Galicia (collectively known as «Green Spain»), have become Spain's main cow's milk producing area on the basis of its selected and refined herds, centuries of relevant experience, and capitalising on the splendid verdant landscape which characterises the whole northern end of the Iberian Peninsula, from the sea to the lowland and highland pastures of the imposing Cordillera Cantábrica mountain range.

Time and market demand have gradually transformed the earlier pressed *pasiego* into today's cream cheese. In 1985, the «Queso de

Cantabria» Denomination of Origin was constituted, consolidating the status of a cheese which was by then a very familiar sight in Spanish shops.

Queso de Cantabria is made exclusively with whole, pasteurised cow's milk produced within the Autonomous Region of Cantabria. Coagulation occurs enzymatically with the use of animal rennet and the curd is pressed and uncooked. The cheese is made in two shapes, a cylinder and a parallelepiped, in weights varying between half a kilo and three (one to six pounds). It is always a soft cheese with a smooth, dense, clean, pale yellow rind which gives it a pleasantly fresh and hygienic look. The interior is dense, with occasional irregular holes caused by the production of carbonic gas by the *streptococcus diacetylactis* bacteria. It can range from off-white to intense yellow in colour and is very sheeny with a soft, elastic texture produced by the method used to wash the curd.

Cured for a mere 10 to 15 days, its taste is direct and fresh, clean and slightly acidic with a milky background flavour, quite unsalty and buttery on the palate with a noticeably buttery smell (hence «cream cheese»).

It is a typical mild cheese with a wide, uncomplicated appeal which al-

ways finds takers on any cheese board. Its clean, neutral properties and the ease with which it melts also make it an excellent cooking cheese. These particular qualities of taste, smell and practical application explain the continued increase in demand.

When the Regulatory Council established the Denomination of Origin, its first task was to publicise the new name which made reference to its geographical origin —Cantabria— as opposed to the traditional generically descriptive one —creamy. Currently, its preoccupation is with increasing production in the face of very encouraging market prospects.

Production in 1988 was something over 200 tonnes in the six cheese factories covered by the D.O. A year later, their production had exceeded 300 tonnes, and it is estimated that last year's production was between 330 and 350.

Little did the *pasiegos* of times gone by imagine that their skills as dairy producers and traders was to provide the basis for one of the strongest economic sectors of their northern home territory in years to come.

Editor's note: This article is the last in the series dedicated to Spanish D.O. cheeses. It has featured, in order of publication, the following cheeses: Manchego, Idiazábal, Mahón, Cabrales and Roncal.





*The world's
most civilized
aperitif.*

La Ina
DOMECQ



Drawing on three generations of family tradition, Spanish honey producer Bernardo Sorribes has transformed one of nature's most basic foods into a unique gourmet speciality and turned consumers into connoisseurs who can appreciate quality honey in a variety of single-flower flavours.

Bouquet. Flavour. Colour. Vintage years. Mr. Sorribes uses the language of winemakers when he talks about his passion for single flower honeys.

«You have to let it warm up on the tongue and dissolve, then the bouquet starts to rise and you can smell the oranges, the rosemary or the eucalyptus forest,» he explains.

El Brezal single flower gourmet honeys were introduced in 1990 by the Mielso company of Castellon de la Plana, located on Spain's fertile Mediterranean coast between Barcelona and Valencia.

It is a business that could only have blossomed in Spain, one of the last places in Europe where there are still huge tracts of wilderness and a variety of climates that ensure flowers will be blooming somewhere each month of the year.

Single flower honeys are produced by moving the beehives by truck to follow the seasonal flowerings throughout Spain's most isolated regions. The system was originally introduced to increase production and it can boost the output of one hive from 15 kg (33 pounds) a year to over 100 kg (220 pounds), but beekeepers quickly learned that a good meadow abounding in a single type of flower can also produce an exceptionally fine honey.

A TASTE OF SPAIN

Itinerant beekeepers begin the year by placing their hives in the fragrant eucalyptus forests of Huelva province at the southern tip of the Iberian peninsula. In March it is off to remote hills in Catalonia and Aragon in search of fields of tiny rosemary flowers. Then in spring they move on as the orange blossoms begin to open and spread their magical scent

through Levante (the eastern Spanish coast on the Mediterranean Sea).

Beekeepers migrate inland as springtime warms up and meadows explode with colourful wildflowers in the heart of Old Castile and western Extremadura.

As summer comes the hives are moved still farther north to

take advantage of the heaths in Soria and the forest flowers in the humid woods of Galicia, Asturias, Cantabria and the Basque region.

Hives remain in one region as long as it is in bloom, usually 30 to 50 days, and then honey is extracted before the hives are installed in a new location. The best «vintage» honeys are produced in years when the weather contributes to an exceptional quantity of flowers.

The practice of moving hives was not used when the Mielso company was founded by Mr. Sorribes's grandfather in 1910 in the

Single flower honeys are produced by moving the beehives by truck to follow the seasonal flowerings throughout Spain's most isolated regions.





GOURMET HONEY

A SWEET SUCCESS

Text: **Deborah Biringer Luhrman**
Photos: **Mielso**

small village of Esilda, outside Castellon. But single flower honeys were always a part of the business in Levante due to the miles of orange groves planted on the coastal plain.

The company prospered and moved to Castellon in 1950 to be near the port. Today the fourth generation of Sorribes offspring is being groomed to someday take over the family tradition.

SELECTING THE FINEST

Drawing on generations of beekeeping experience, Mielso has succeeded in turning single flower honeys into a gourmet product. First of all, its skilled apiculturists can predict where the geographical and climatic conditions will combine to produce the best flowerings and consequently the top quality honey. The choicest hive sites throughout rural Spain are selected by Mielso, always trying to stay far away from industry and towns.

After the honey is extracted and brought in barrels to the packaging plant, it is sampled by a taster with 35 years experience. He makes the initial decision whether it will be packed under the elite El Brezal label or sold as another brand. This is where flavour, bouquet, texture and colour are thoroughly considered.

Less than one per cent of the honey that goes through the tasting process is deemed acceptable for the gourmet, single flower label.

The final determination takes place in a state-of-the-art analysis laboratory, where technology lends a hand to the human process. A sample of the honey is analysed under a microscope to make sure it meets world standards for single flower honeys. Pollen is the fingerprint of honey and since each species of flower has a different shaped pollen, it is easy to see which flowers predominate in the honey.

Highly sophisticated spectrography and chromatography techniques are also being used to determine the exact chemical components of the best honeys, in research that may someday lead to an improved product. Mielso's biologist is Spain's representative on the European Community's honey policies committee.

A TASTE OF HONEY

A Connoisseur's Guide to six flavours

ORANGE BLOSSOM HONEY.—The light coloured honey is produced in the Levante region including Tarragona, Valencia and Murcia. It has an orange blossom fragrance and a taste somewhat like marmalade. The flavour goes well in yoghurt and with mild white cheeses. It is a natural sedative.

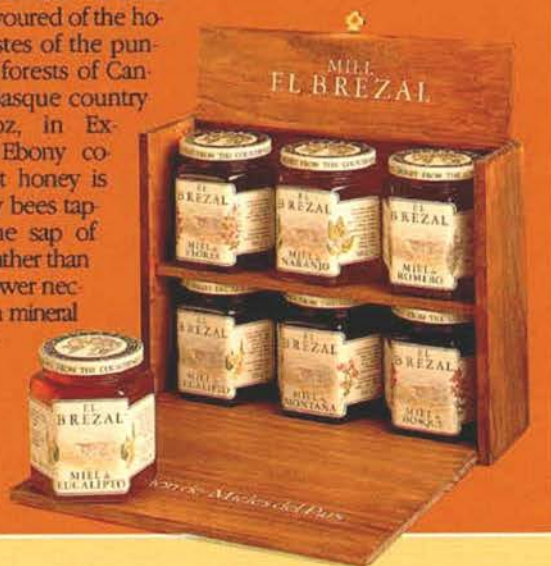
ROSEMARY HONEY.—Collected in the hills of Catalonia, Aragon and Castile, it is light in colour with the wild aroma of rosemary blossoms and a delicate taste. Rosemary honey can add herb flavour to cooking and is naturally soothing to the stomach.

WILDFLOWER HONEY.—This golden-coloured honey captures the fresh grassy aroma of nature in springtime. It is produced in the meadows of Castile and western Extremadura. Wildflower honey is a natural stimulant to relieve physical and emotional exhaustion.

EUCALYPTUS HONEY.—Amber in colour, it comes from the eucalyptus groves of Huelva province and Galicia. It is an aromatic honey with a slight menthol aftertaste and often used in herbal teas. Eucalyptus honey is known for relieving respiratory ailments.

MOUNTAIN HONEY.—Dark in colour with a robust taste, mountain honey is collected in hives placed at altitudes above 450 metres (1,500 feet) in cool northern Spain. Mountain honey is good on toast and is known for its diuretic properties.

FOREST HONEY.—It is the strongest flavoured of the honeys and tastes of the pungent mossy forests of Cantabria, the Basque country and Badajoz, in Extremadura. Ebony coloured forest honey is produced by bees tapping into the sap of forest trees rather than gathering flower nectar. It is rich in mineral salts and beneficial in the treatment of mild anemia.



A WINNING LOOK

In choosing a jar and label for El Brezal, Mielso insisted on packaging that measured up to the quality of the honey. Dozens of designs were presented and rejected before the company came up with the distinctive style they were looking for.

El Brezal, which in Spanish means heather heath, is packaged in honeycomb-shaped hexagonal jars with appetising green and cream coloured labels that feature drawings of the type of flower from which the honey is collected.

The six varieties of honey currently produced by El Brezal are

also available in a two-level wooden sampler pack with a brass latch that is hard for consumers to resist. The pretty jars and upscale packaging were a big hit when the gourmet honey was introduced at Spain's food fair in March of 1990.

«We knew we had a great success in the packaging», said Sorribes, «But what we had doubts about was if the consumer would be able to appreciate the honey for its own qualities, the different bouquets, flavours and smells, this is what we didn't know. Imagine how pleasantly surprised we were to find out that consumers could distinguish the

honeys and pick their favourites from among the six varieties we launched on the market the first year.»

SIX VARIETIES

Orange blossom, rosemary, eucalyptus, wildflower, mountain and forest honeys are being produced under the El Brezal label, with a heather honey to be introduced this year. In Spain they are sold exclusively in delicatessens and gourmet food shops. They are also being exported to speciality shops in Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Britain and the United States, but no sales figures are yet available.

El Brezal tastings have been held in gourmet food shops in the United States and more are planned for 1991 to turn consumers into connoisseurs by teaching them the subtleties of fine honey. Customers are also reminded that although honey can come in a variety of colours and flavours it continues to be a 100% natural product with nothing at all added. It is truly the product that best captures the essence of nature.

Once a favourite variety is selected it is important to know how to eat it. Mr. Sorribes chooses orange blossom honey to put on yoghurt or serve with a mild dessert cheese. Eucalyptus is used as a sweetener for herbal teas, while the stronger flavoured mountain honey is often eaten by Spaniards on their breakfast toast.

Single flower honey can even be used in cooking. A chef in the U.S. capital has been experimenting with meat sauces flavoured with rosemary honey, while other cooks are dishing up gourmet honey ice creams. Imagine, for example, orange ice cream made with orange blossom honey.

Honey is the most ancient treat known to man; it was used in the Egyptian civilization and references to honey abound in the Bible and Koran. Transforming such a timeless product into something extraordinary was a dream that Mr. Sorribes had harboured for years. The market for a gourmet line was a big unknown, but he has quickly discovered that others share his passion for fine honey. «Acceptance», he says proudly, «has been better than we ever would have believed.»

GOURMETS CLUB V SHOW

Madrid 25th, 26th, 27th, and 28th of April, 1991
II WINE FORUM

As in other years, the V Show will be the meeting point for best gastronomic products from Spain and abroad, high-quality goods produced by both craft and industrial techniques.

The Gourmets Club V Show has found it necessary to extend the area needed to house the exhibition. It will be held simultaneously in the Convention Hall and in another two pavillions annexed of the Corporation of Madrid, which are to be found in the enclosures of the Casa de Campo.

At the same time, the II Wine Forum will be held with the participation of great personalities.

98% OF PROFESSIONAL VISITORS

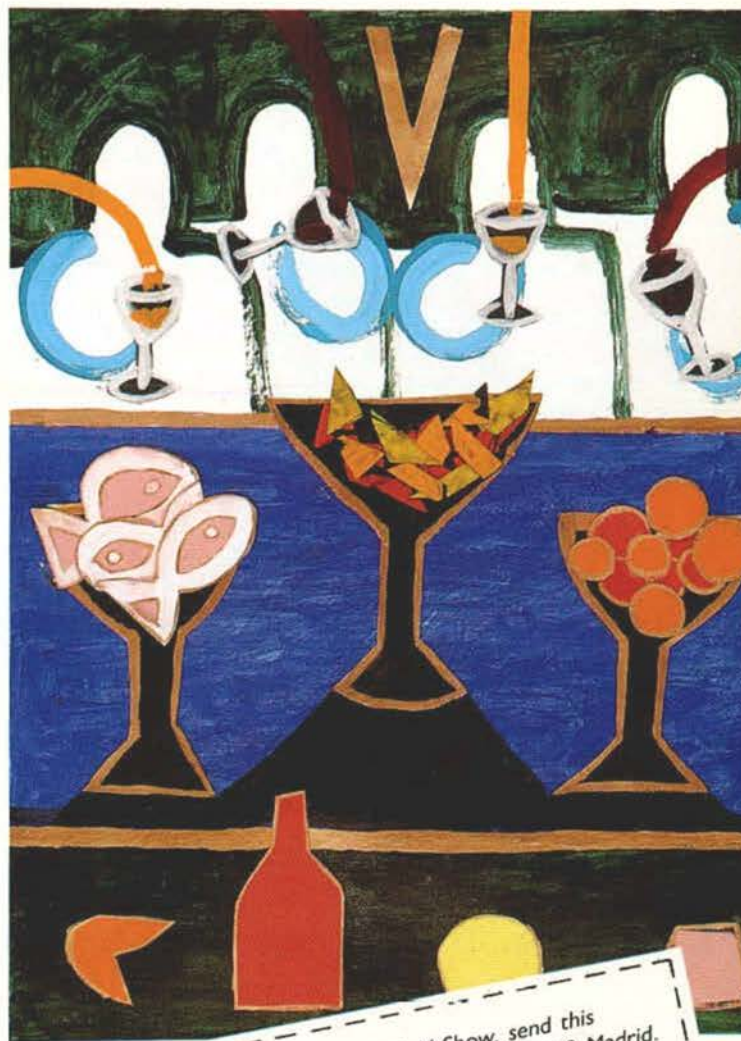
In 1990, 180 exhibitors participated and more than 15.000 people visited the Show, 98% of which were professionals (owners and managers of the best restaurants, hotels, bars and gastronomic shops in Spain, as well as purchasing managers from the big supermarkets and chains of select food stores).

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 V Show, send this coupon to Progourmet, S.A. Calle Arturo Soria, 329, 2º C. 28033 Madrid. (Spain). Tel.: (91) 767 24 99. Fax: (91) 767 27 10.

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MALAGA WINE

COMING ROUND THE MOUNTAIN

Text: **Richard Mayson**
Photos: **Pablo Neustadt/Sobremesa**

Mention Malaga and the thought of an airport on the way to the great Costa del Sol immediately springs to mind. But mention Malaga to someone one hundred years ago when Mediterranean holidays were the preserve of the adventurous few, and thoughts would be of a famous wine. In Victorian times, decanters filled with Malaga or «Mountain» as it used to be called, rubbed shoulders with Sherry, Port and Madeira. Sadly, one of the decanters is now empty: Malaga, like Marsala, has fallen from favour. Ornate decanter neck labels bearing the word «Mountain» puzzle antique dealers, most of whom have never heard of, let alone tasted, the wine.

Malaga is situated at the foot of the Sierra de Alhambra at the mouth of the river Guadalmedina on the southern coast of Andalusia. Its strategic position during the Islamic occupation between the eighth and fifteenth centuries meant it was an important fortress and port. The city reflects the several cultural influences of that period in its layout, buildings and associations with the arts. A little known fact is that

A hundred years ago, the *phylloxera* epidemic put paid to what was then one of Spain's most famous wines. But in the mountains above Malaga, the sweet grapes which generated demand from as far afield as Czarist Russia and Victorian England are still being grown. It's a wine worth rediscovering.

Picasso hailed from Malaga. In 1881 as the popularity of the wines was fading, this great figure of the 20th century was born.

But Malaga wines deserve to be re-discovered. Surprisingly, it was the Moors who were the first to find out that the spectacular stretch of Andalusian coast around Malaga was perfect for making wine. They called it *Xarab al Malaqui*, Syrup from Malaga in deference both to the Koran and the extraordinary richness and sweetness that emanated from super-ripe grapes.

Malaga's golden era came early in the last century when Britain and the United States began importing thousands of litres of sweet, fortified wine. By the mid-nineteenth century, 60,000 hectares (148,000 acres) of fertile vines covered the mountains overlooking the coast producing between 30 and 40 thousand butts, nearly two million cases of «Mountain». In Britain, sales exceeded those of Sherry, and Malaga became a boom town supported by over 10,000 smallholders making wine.

Then, in 1876, disaster struck. Malaga, one of the oldest vine growing regions in Spain, was the first to be at-

tacked by phylloxera, the root munching louse that ravaged the vineyards of nineteenth century Europe. Overnight the economy was in tatters. Whole families left destitute fled the country for South America abandoning their terraced vineyards on the mountains east of the town. Malaga never really recovered and the warm climate that attracted the early wine-makers began to attract tourists seeking sunshine and sand.

STAYING ALIVE

Thankfully, a few growers remain, intent on keeping Malaga alive. There are now around 3,000 hectares (7,400 acres) of vines, principally on the rocky hills around Axarquía to the south east and on the Antequera Plateau, 500 metres (1,600 feet) above the Mediterranean coast. Before phylloxera wiped them out, over thirty different grape varieties were used in the making of Malaga wines. Today the Consejo Regulador set up in 1933, permits just two grape varieties: the intensely sweet Pedro Ximénez and the luscious, grapey Moscatel Fino.

Small pockets of Lairen, the local name for La Mancha's Airen, are also planted though the wine is mainly used for adjusting colour. The harvest starts in mid-September and the sweet, sticky grapes are taken straight to small bodegas in the mountain vineyards. In the past, poor roads made it impossible to deliver grapes to wineries in the city and so the Malaga producers established their own fermentation bodegas on site. Vats, rather like the Roman style earthenware *tinajas*, are used for making the wine though a few producers ferment in oak casks.

In the autumn some producers keep a proportion of their grapes up-country to dry in the late summer sun for 15-20 day.



The Consejo Regulador, set up in 1933, permits just two grape varieties: the intensely sweet Pedro Ximénez and the luscious, grapey Moscatel Fino.

In the autumn after the vintage, the new wine is brought down from the mountains to the city where it must mature for a minimum of two years if it is to be entitled to the Malaga Denomination of Origin. But a few conscientious producers keep a proportion of their grapes up-country to dry in the late summer sun. The grapes are laid out on mats made from *esparto* grass and turned over at frequent intervals. After 15-20 days basking



in the sunshine the shrivelled grapes are pressed to extract a tiny quantity of concentrated juice. This is then fermented to around 8 degrees of alcohol and fortified with grape spirit making a rich, syrupy wine which is used for blending.

Four other wines are made for blending. *Arrope* and *Vino de Color* must concentrates made by heating unfermented grape juice until it boils down to a rich, caramelised paste. *Vino Tierno* is a wine made from sun-dried grapes allowed to ferment to almost natural strength while *Vino Maestro* is fortified before fermentation to make an intensely sweet wine. All four are used by wine-makers to create different styles of Malaga wine.

THE SAFEGUARDS

Two producers are safeguarding traditional Malaga. Both weathered the phylloxera storm and, a hundred years on, they are champions of a Malaga revival. The oldest is Scholtz Hermanos founded by a young German, Christian Scholtz, in 1807. The company recently moved from old cellars in the heart of the city to a modern building near Malaga airport. Scholtz buys grapes from farmers on the Antequera plateau in the Sierra de Alhambra, ferments them there and then transports the wine to their bodega in Malaga where it matures in 800-litre casks. Scholtz makes a number of different styles of wine ranging from an unusual

dry Malaga, the *Seco Añejo*, to a pungent, grapey *Moscato Pálido* made entirely from Muscat. Their leading brand, the *Scholtz Solera 1885*, is a heady blend of all three Malaga grapes. It includes a small amount of the incredibly concentrated 1787 «Lágrima Bisabuelo» made from the free-run juice (Lágrima or «tears») of very ripe Pedro Ximénez. Deep amber in colour, the wine combines the concentrated flavours of dried figs and apricots with a nutty character from ageing in oak.

The second company is López Hermanos who started their business in 1885, towards the end of the Malaga boom. The firm has kept going through thick and thin. Four generations on, it remains in family hands with a reputation for making fine Malaga wines. López combine tradition with some of the most up-to-date production practices in the region. Wines from their own vineyards in the mountains, are matured in casks made from oak by the firm's own cooper. There is also a small amount of Russian fir dating back to pre-revolutionary days when Russia was an important market for Malaga. López have moved towards making lighter, more commercial styles of wine but they still retain a full range. *Trajinero* is a dry Malaga with an aroma and flavour reminiscent of toasted almonds from ageing in casks left outside in the fierce sunshine, watered by a sprinkling system to prevent them from drying out.

But López are pinning their hopes for a Malaga revival on two dessert wines, a luscious «Málaga Virgen» and a fragrant Moscatel. Both wines share Malaga's distinctive honeyed aromas and the bitter-sweet flavour of almonds and apricots that comes from prolonged ageing in cask.



After the vintage, the new wine must mature for a minimum of two years if it is to be entitled to the Malaga Denomination of Origin.

Exports of these wines are on the increase. Austria, Switzerland and Germany are all important markets with interest being shown once more in Britain. Far from being down and out, there is evidence that Malaga's «Mountain» wines are making a welcome comeback.



ALMERIA

THE DESERT COAST

Text: Nick Inman & Clara Villanueva

Photos: Guillermo Asian

The south-east corner of Spain is a hot dry land and Europe's only true desert. In many ways it has more in common with North Africa than the rest of the Iberian peninsula. For centuries, the austere beautiful scenery of ravines, barren areas, shimmering hills and scorched scrub of Almeria has fascinated an unending stream of settlers and travellers from neolithic men through Phoenician traders to film directors.

In Almeria you get away from the crowds and enjoy the sunniest place in Spain at your pace.

Sometimes you can even get a long sandy beach to yourself.

Almeria is one of Spain's least known provinces and one most worth getting to know. It's not on the main tourist treks —nor is it on the way to anywhere else— and many visitors in Spain ignore it altogether. Some guidebooks give it barely a passing mention.

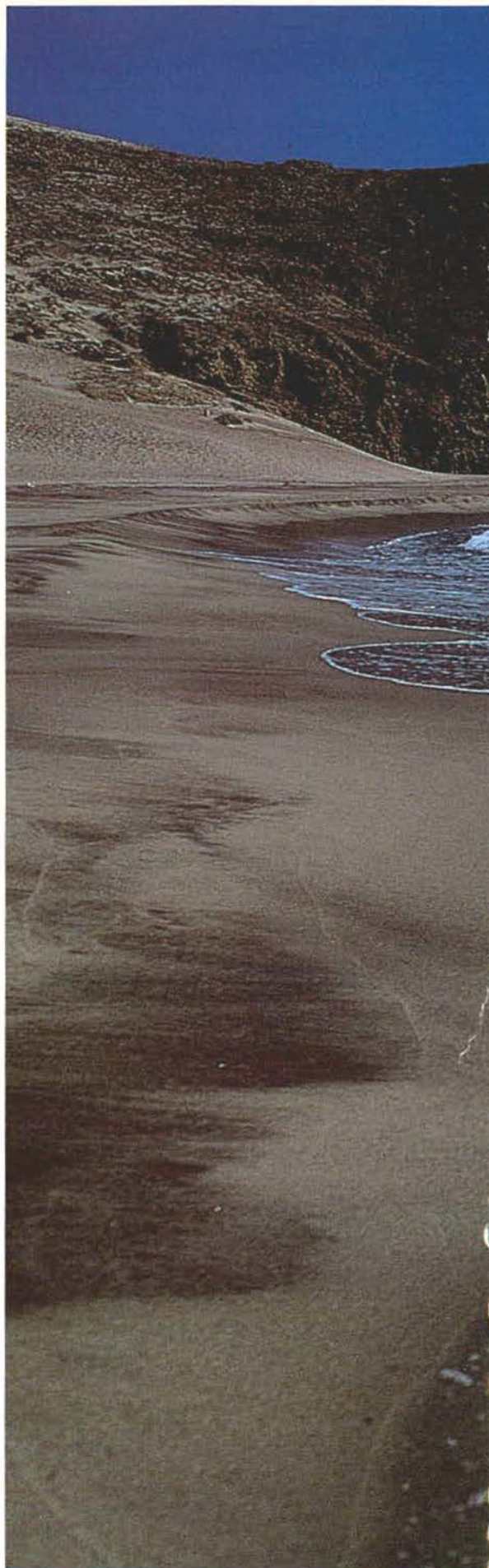
But there's more to Almeria than its famous desert. The image of arid backwater hides a fast-developing province full of interest. Historically this region was an important home for early man and was closely involved in the economic development of the Mediterranean. After centuries of decline and neglect, modern Almeria is now emerging as both an important agricultural region and a tourist destination. Spain's «Deep South» is at last being rediscovered.

Almeria is full of little known corners to explore and hidden secrets. Every hill seems to have a castle on top and every whitewashed town or village to be as old as time. Much of Almeria has been relatively untouched by the twentieth century. Communities, their crafts and traditions still survive as living history.

Travelling down its still largely undeveloped east coast —and venturing inland when the urge takes you— you can still get a glimpse of the Old Andalusia off the beaten tourist track. Here you get away from the crowds and enjoy the sunniest place in Spain at your own pace. Sometimes you can even get a long sandy beach to yourself. Find the right spot and it isn't hard to see why the Arabs named it Al-Mariya, or «the mirror of the sea», after the clearness of its coastal waters.

Entering Almeria from southern Murcia the singular landscape —severe and arid, moodily lit in washed out tones, punctuated by infrequent towns and the occasional lush oasis of date palms, sugarcanes, bananas, orange trees or rice plantations— never fails to impress at first sight. And it steadily grows on you.

Property development, which has transformed so many other







WHITE MOJACAR

The centre of property development, Mojacar, a few kilometres further south, must also be the most curious place on the coast of Almeria. This white village on top of a rocky hilltop two and half kilometres from the coast is a tight conglomeration of ancient and modern buildings. Distinctly reminiscent of Moorish architecture, it looks as if it has been assembled in cubes. From a distant it looks slightly unreal like one of M. C. Escher's impossible mathematical designs.

Mojacar almost disappeared in the 1950s as its inhabitants emigrated in search of better times. It then became home to a fashionable artistic community and since then it has been flourishing. The character of the village itself hasn't been spoiled, but its flat coastal strip has become a paradise of residential tourism.

As if its site and construction weren't fascinating enough, Mojacar has mysterious associations. It is known as the «Village of the Covered Ones» as for centuries its women were kept veiled. (It has even been claimed that some wore veils within living memory.) There is a delicate white statue of one of «the covered ones» outside the church.

Distinctly reminiscent of Moorish architecture, the white Mojacar, on top of a rocky hilltop, looks as if it has been assembled in cubes.



Almeria is one of Spain's least known provinces and one most worth getting to know, even though some guidebooks give it barely a passing mention.

coasts, is only just beginning here. San Juan de los Terreros, near the frontier with Murcia, with its sandy beach and small islet, has only a few new apartments —not yet enough to spoil it. For several miles southward the main coast road—and then a minor road—runs parallel to the sea, next to invitingly deserted beaches.

CAVES AND MARBLE

At last the road turns inland, into the scorched hills. Cuevas de Almanzora, a short way from the coast, is one of the best places in Spain for prehistoric finds. The town is named after the numerous caves—some of which date from the

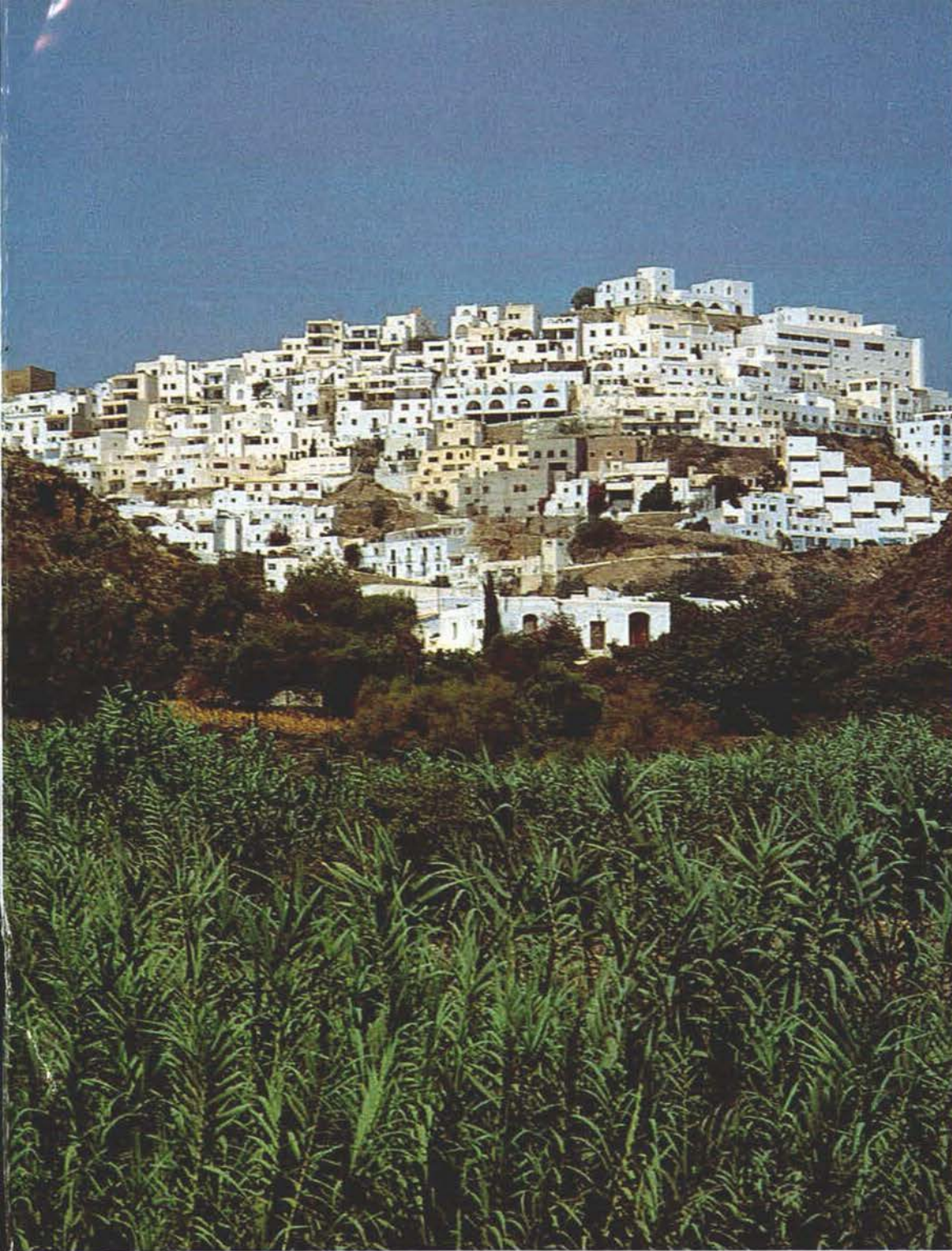
Stone Age—that honeycomb its soft hillsides. Many are inhabited by gypsies and if you dare—you can recruit a local guide to take you on a memorable tour.

The mountains further into the interior are famous not for the softness of their rock but quite the opposite. For over 2,500 years they have been quarried for their highly-valued marble which was taken to the Alhambra, the mosque in Cordoba and the Escorial.

Back on the coast, tourism has made its mark along one long stretch and its impact is increasing. Plans are underway to turn some of the western Mediterranean's last virgin beaches near Vera into the lively tourist Ciudad del Ocio or Leisure City with large housing estates, five hotels and two big shopping centres.

Garrucha has already changed beyond recognition. Ten years ago it was a fishing village with a handful of small factories. Its fishermen are still said to land the best prawns in Spain but the factories have given way to bars, discotheques and fast-food outlets. Pleasure yachts now berth alongside the big ships in the port. It is clear that the town now makes its best living from tourism.





from jewellery to newspapers, from souvenir shops to lorries.

The coast south of Mojacar, fringing the expanses of the Sierra Cabrera Natural Park, is still very much in its wild state. There are no settlements until you reach Carboneras, a place which has managed to combine industry and tourism. The cement factory and the power station are sufficiently detached from the town not to cast a shadow. As if in reflection of Mojacar, much of the new architecture from here southwards to the cape is in the brilliant white «cubist» style—simple and functional with smooth domes and curves—that is becoming characteristic of this part of Almeria. There's something troglodyte about it: with its blank whitewashed walls and windows reduced to a minimum you can imagine life going on out of sight in dark, cool interiors. The market in Carboneras is in the same style, the bunches of basil hung outside contrasting with the glare of the walls.

With few other towns north or south, this is a good place to look for your own beach. We asked for somewhere quiet. «Go two kilometres out of the town and you'll have a beach to yourselves», one of the locals told us. She wasn't exaggerating. Round a couple of corners, just north of the town we had a long stretch of sandy beach to ourselves. The cobalt blue water was clear, clean and warm—the sort of place you normally only see in advertisements.

The main road inland takes you to Nijar, a hilltop village still haunted by the Moors. You can see that they were here from the typically white houses and the tight, narrow street that shut out the summer sun. The village is renowned for two crafts: rugs and pottery—and it's the right place to come for souvenirs.

If you keep going away from the coast you go deeper into the famous desert interior of Almeria. In Moslem times, caravans used to cross these lunar landscapes on their way from Africa to Europe, hopping from oasis to oasis, well to well. But



The Natural Park of Cabo de Gata-Nijar with its unique fauna and flora is one of the most ecologically important sites in the western Mediterranean.

It is also famous as a village of witches and faith-healers. Should you encounter one you might find the Indalo Man, who stands with his feet astride holding an arc above his head, useful to ward off the evil eye. Mojacar has managed to expropriate this ancient symbol—which is also the provincial logo—the original design of which was found in a Los Letreros cave, far away inland to the north west near Velez Blanco. You will see the Indalo Man everywhere in Almeria

ORONOX

MOJACAR PARADOR

Text: **Sonia Ortega**

The picturesque village of Mojacar, named *Murgis Acra* (High Hill) by the Greek explorers of old, is a gem not to be missed by anyone travelling the «desert coast» of Almería.

Spain's Parador network recognised its appeal in the late Sixties and built yet another link in its nation-wide hotel chain at the foot of the eponymous hill dotted with white cubical houses.

The Parador is set against Mojacar's strip of the fertile Mediterranean coast, extending here from the lower slopes of the hill right down to the sea. In almost constant sunshine, prickly pear, figs, oranges, lemons and olives thrive.

The 98-room Parador, white and cubical as its context demands, stands looking out onto the sandy beach. Among its attractions are a garden vivid and fragrant with oleander, jasmine, palms and geraniums, a swimming pool and tennis courts. Life is led in the open air all year round in this part of Spain, but when tourists need to put their feet up and relax, there are spacious lounges indoors with wooden beamed ceilings and an intriguing suspended fireplace.

The sea off Almería is always a pleasant temperature and is

also rich in marine species, so that water sports and diving enthusiasts find the area particularly attractive. Those with an interest in archaeology will also enjoy Mojacar: nearby, at Los Millares is a ridge where excavations of a neolithic burial ground have exposed tombs containing vessels decorated with deer-eye motifs and others containing amber and ostrich eggs whose provenance is still an unsolved mystery among experts.

Mojacar itself is a maze of steep streets, and from the top of the village one looks

down over a scene of brilliant white cubes set against the consistently azure blue backdrop of the Mediterranean. It is easy to understand why artists and bohemians from all over Europe have chosen to settle here, just as foreign settlers of different kinds did many centuries ago.

In winter, Mojacar with its 2,000 inhabitants is a quiet, sunny village. The pace accelerates considerably in summer, when its night-life goes on until the early hours of the morning. Every afternoon, a fish auction is held on the quayside of the nearby village of Garrucha. Vera, with its idiosyncratic town centre, Carboneras beach, guarded by the fort of San Andrés, and the Cabo de Gata headland (not to be missed) are all within easy reach of the Parador, and give prospective visitors just some idea of what to expect from the Almerian coast.

Mojacar Parador, like the rest of the chain, includes local cooking on its menu. It is simple, healthy food featuring the area's abundant fish and seafood and a version of *gazpacho*, the cold vegetable soup so popular throughout Andalusia (and indeed the rest of Spain), which in Almería is sprinkled with croutons just before serving.



Mojacar Parador, white and cubical, looks out on the sandy beach

now the area is more famous for its filmography.

The gravelly deserts and sun-burnt scrubland of drought-resisting plants around the junction of the C3326 and the N340 near Tabernas —marked on the map as Mini Hollywood— first provided the backdrop for «Lawrence of Arabia». Then, in the 1960s, the apparent similarity with Arizona and Dakota led to this area becoming the land of the «Spaghetti Western». Today you can visit the fading sets of Yucca City —complete with its mock cemetery, saloon and Indian teepee reservation— and of two peeling Mexican *pueblos*.

GREENHOUSES IN THE DESERT

Returning towards the coast, the land looks no less arid. But

here there is an agricultural revolution under way. When you first see it, you will be forgiven for thinking that it's a mirage. Vast seas of transparent plastic sheeting reflect the bright light as if water or snow had been spread across the landscape. These «greenhouses», located wherever there is sufficient water for irrigation, have become as typical a part of the Almerian landscape as the once infertile desert. The further south you go, the more of them you will see.

What was once a thirsty land is now an important agricultural producer. Almería's greatest natural resources, unending quantities of light and sunshine, have been cunningly harnessed to grow out-of-season —even all-year-round— fruits, vegetables and flowers. The plastic lets the sunlight through but keeps the essential moisture in, ensuring

that nature photosynthesises to order. Much of the output is exported to overcast northern countries. Almería, it is said, has become «the greenhouse of Europe».

The east coast continues with a series of small resorts and attractive locations: first, the rocky vantage point of the Mesa de Roldan with its colony of cormorants and its infamous Punta de los Muertos, or Deadmen's Point, where the bodies of shipwrecked sailors would be washed up; then San Pedro with its pirate fort and giant carob trees; after that Las Negras; and finally San Jose, set in its own small cove and well known among scuba divers.

THE CABO DE GATA

But the best of all is still to come. From San Jose a dramat-

The severe and arid landscape of Tabernas' desert never fails to impress at first sight.





Vast seas of transparent plastic sheeting reflect the bright light. These greenhouses have become a part of the Almerian landscape.

ic road sets off for the climax of the east coast of Spain: the spectacular headlands, cliffs and isolated beaches of the Cabo de Gata which have only escaped exploitation by the tourism industry because of the lack of fresh water. This is where Almeria's two very different coasts meet.

It is also one of the best locations to enjoy Almeria's exceptional wildlife. «The province of Almeria», wrote the distinguished plant-hunter, Oleg Polunin, «has in all probability a richer flora than any other part of Spain». It's parched deserts are deceptively alive and nowhere more so than here around this waterless cape.

In 1987, an area of 26,000 hectares (6,500 acres) was declared a natural park to protect its unique fauna and flora. It is

one of the most ecologically important sites in the western Mediterranean. Some 149 species of migratory birds stop over here on their way to and from Africa. Around 20 species of plants have their closest relatives in North Africa or grow nowhere else. Some are relics of the Tertiary era. It's a fragile natural community threatened by increasing human disturbance. Make sure that the only shooting you do —on land or underwater— is with a camera.

The landscape is no less spectacular than its wildlife. An unsurfaced road takes you round the wild coast giving you splendid views at every corner. Here you can see the only volcanic mountains in the Iberian peninsula (happily dormant). There are also two beautiful, secluded beaches at Monsul and Genoveses —a gracefully circular cove where, according to medieval chronicles, two roving Christian knights once killed a pair of wolves with their lances.

From here the road climbs up to the high, exposed headlands and lighthouse of Cabo de Gata. Above are enormous dry slopes dotted with prickly pears and dwarf cabbage palms —Europe's only indigenous palm trees. Below, great cliffs fall into the sea.

Then, from the great and grand wilderness, the road suddenly rounds a last corner and descends to a costal plain of salt pans. These are an impor-

tant stopping point for migrating birds and you may be lucky enough to see a flock of pink flamingo. From here, the land sweeps away around the great curve of the Gulf of Almeria towards the capital city and into the Costa del Sol.

The journey along the desert coast has finished. Almeria's untamed grandeur, however, won't be there for ever. It seems to be doomed by progress. Soon the «gaps» in the coast will be filled with tourism developments and even larger areas of the desert will have been covered over. The dramatic impact of a landscape in which man's settlements are thin on the ground will have been diluted. Human presence will disrupt wildlife and another

Nijar's pottery craft. Natural pigments are used for painting the vessels.



er of Spain's great open spaces will have been brought under control. But there is still time to see Almeria before it races into the twenty-first century with the rest of a rapidly modernising Spain. It may be out of your way, but you won't regret it.





In the Núñez de Prado's Santa Lucía factory where the family has been making olive oil for seven generations, little has changed with the passage of time. Huge stone wheels like those used by the Romans twenty centuries ago are still used for grinding olives. Only the best fruit is used to produce an outstandingly fine oil. The family has kept using traditional artisan methods not out of nostalgia but because they are convinced that this is the only way of getting the superior quality that places their product at the top of the olive oil league.



OLIVE OIL BY MUÑEZ DE PRADO

NATURAL QUALITY

Text: **María José Sevilla Taylor**

In the Santa Lucía factory, the Muñoz de Prado family has old trujales (wells where unfiltered oil is kept) with different types of oil to taste.

Olive oil is in fashion in a world where health and good eating are considered important. This is so even in countries where the olive, so much a part of life in Spain, has always been foreign and consequently little used in their national cuisine.

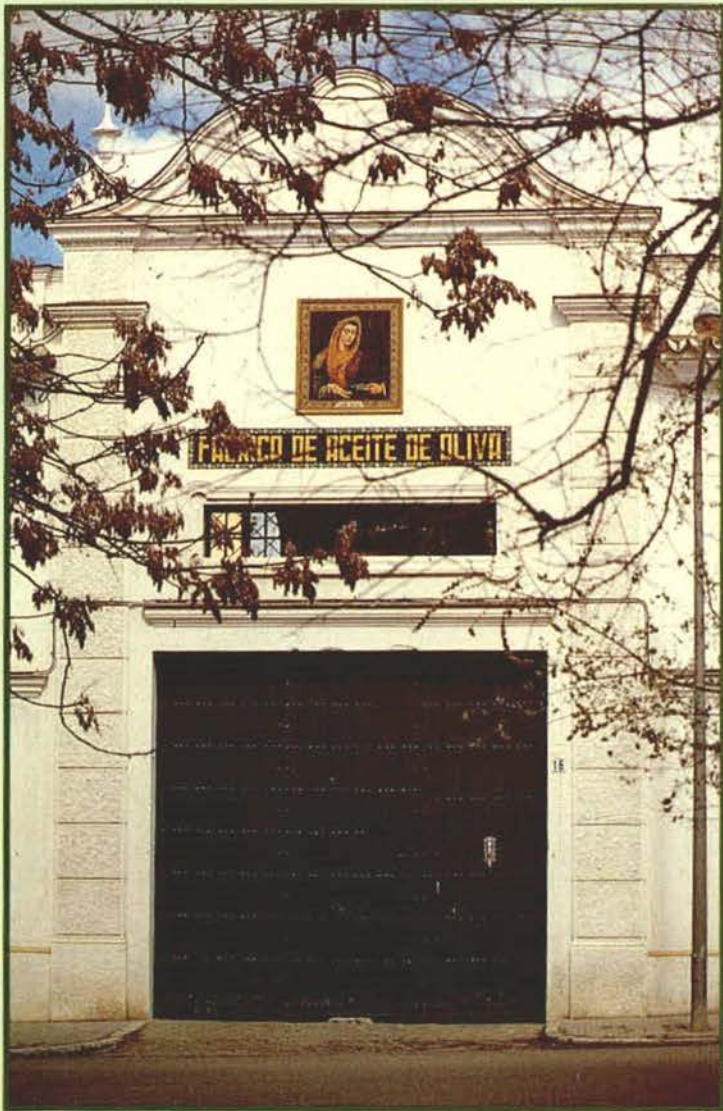
Traditionally, markets such as the UK have been kept supplied with this typically Mediterranean product by Italy, whose olive oil has enjoyed almost exclusive occupation of the shelves of small specialist shops and the big chain stores alike. However, the last two years have seen the arrival of top-label high quality Spanish oils which have done much to improve the image of olive oil from Spain in the eyes of the food press and trade.

Spain is more than just the biggest olive oil producer in the world: the range of its production areas and cultivated olive varieties mean that many of its oils can readily hold their own against the best other countries — Greece, Portugal, Italy or the South of France — can offer. This being the case, the success achieved by a Spanish company, Muñoz de Prado of Andalusia, has proved that their opting for quality and their marketing strategy have been wise moves in establishing Spanish olive oil on foreign markets.

Only olives collected by hand off the branch are used for making the Nuñez de Prado oil. After washing them, the olives are crushed by three huge granite stones. Then, the crushed olives are fed into drums, fitted with a very fine filter, which revolve slowly for some 20 minutes. The oil obtained in this way —partial extraction— is the only type which will be bottled, by hand, under the Nuñez de Prado label, and their corks sealed with sealing wax.



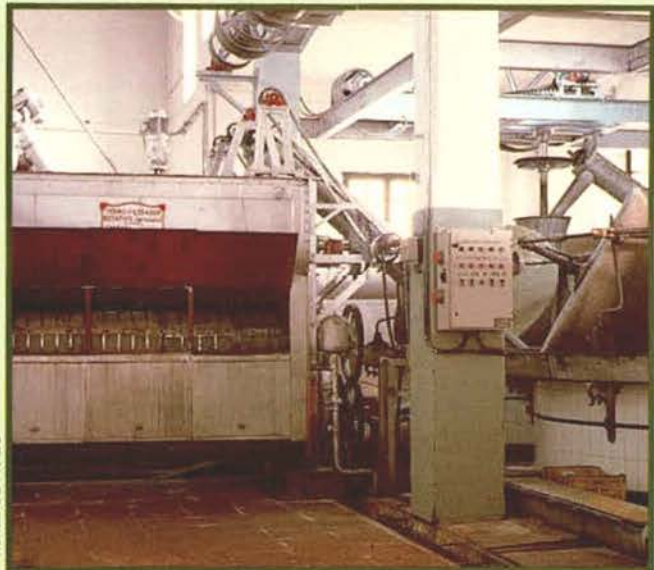
MARIA JOSE TAYLOR



NUÑEZ DE PRADO



MARIA JOSE TAYLOR



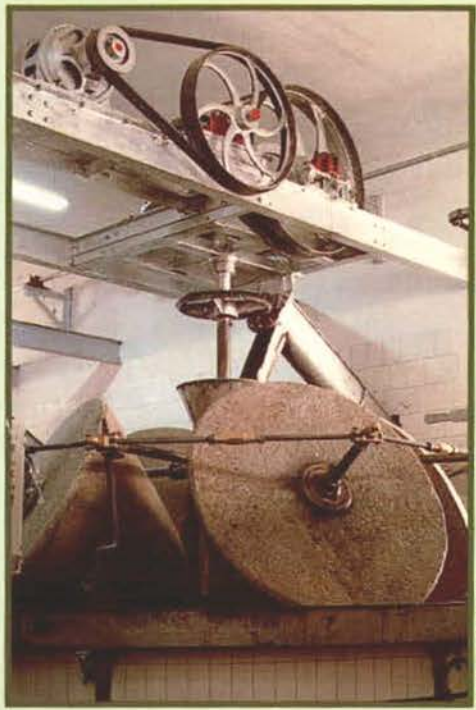
NUÑEZ DE PRADO



NUÑEZ DE PRADO



NÚÑEZ DE PRADO



NÚÑEZ DE PRADO



NÚÑEZ DE PRADO

«We're not interested in increasing production, just in producing quality», states Francisco Núñez de Prado, the company's marketing director and one of the four brothers currently involved in making what informed opinion consider to be one of the best oils in Spain.

SEVEN GENERATIONS OF OIL PRODUCERS

Three years ago, I set foot for the first time in the Santa Lucía factory where the Núñez de Prado family has been grinding olives for seven generations.

I had come to Baena with a group of British journalists, and we all found the visit to the old mill a fascinating experience. It was a typical late November morning, cold but sunny. The family received us in Francisco's office. Sitting by a blazing fire of old olive logs and sampling broth of the sort made for «visitors and the unwell» had set us up to explore the more relevant features of the enterprise. It was when we found ourselves in a beautiful olive grove surrounded by rows of small trees laden with fat healthy olives that we began to get into our subject.

The official harvest was not to take place for a few more weeks, but understanding how important it was for us to see all the steps involved in the oil-making process, production manager Andrés Núñez de Prado had selected a number of fully ripe trees which members of his staff set about harvesting carefully there and then. Once picked from the trees, the olives were placed one by one in woven esparto-grass baskets hanging around the harvesters' necks.

Currently, the company has 600 hectares (1,500 acres) of olive groves, planted with the Picudo and Picual varieties. Though there are still some old trees, company policy is to plant single trunk olive trees about 7 metres (23 feet) apart instead of the 3 and 4 trunk trees 12 metres (40 feet) apart which used to be grown until relatively recently. The smallness of the trees, reminiscent of the pattern of Valencia's orange groves, makes both quality control and harvesting easier. Only olives collected by hand off the branch are used for making oils sold under the Núñez de Prado label, covered by the Denomination of Origin of Baena. Olives which fall to the ground are sold to other mills for crushing. The hand-picked olives are given their first wash in the grove itself before being transported by lorry to the mill on the same day.

OLD METHODS FOR TODAY'S OILS

Back in Baena, the chute built in the yard outside the mill was in action, and the

fruit began to be fed into the continuous screw device which places them on a conveyor belt where they are also washed for the second time. This gradually removes the film of clay which might still be adhering to them. We now went into the building itself and there were the great mills and several hydraulic presses. Three huge granite stones spinning at a dizzy speed were already being fed with fruit. We were watching the Roman method of olive crushing, albeit helped by modern technology.

About 15 minutes later, the first load had been totally crushed and looked like a dense sticky dark purple mass which was now scooped along towards the exit holes and the next stage in the process, partial extraction. This system, invented by the Marqués de Acapulco y Quintillana at the turn of the century, makes possible the extraction of a small amount of free-run oil which is known as *yema* (yolk) of *flor* (flower) in Spanish, before the paste is cold pressed.

The method used is simple but efficient. The crushed olives are fed into drums fitted with a very fine filter. The drum revolves slowly for some 20 minutes before the first drops of oily liquid drip out and fall into a channel placed beneath the drum. This is free-run oil produced without pressure. It takes 11 kilos (24 pounds) of paste to produce 1 litre of oil by partial extraction. The oil obtained in this way is very low in acidity and is the only type which will be bottled by hand with the name of the company in the bottle specially designed to complement the quality of the product. The bottles bear a numbered label which certifies the quality and provenance of the oil. For greater protection, their corks are sealed with sealing wax.

The Santa Lucía mill also makes oil by the traditional method using hydraulic presses. Also a cold process, this method preserves aromas and vitamins in the final product. Once the partial extraction is complete, the paste inside the drum emerges through a lateral opening and is deposited on circular baskets made of coconut matting. These are piled up one on top of the other until the press is fully loaded. When pressure is applied, a mixture of oil and olive juice drains out of the stack of baskets





MARIA JOSE TAYLOR



NÚÑEZ DE PRADO

The Santa Lucía mill also makes oil by using hydraulic presses —but is sold for bottling to other local mills. Once the partial extraction is complete, the paste is deposited on circular baskets made of coconut matting, piled and then pressed. The mixture of oil and olive juice drains into tanks set into the ground where the juice is separated off.

and into channels leading to the pressed oil tanks set into the ground where the juice is separated off. This type of oil, also virgin and high quality, gives a much higher yield than the free-run type: it takes only 5 kilos (11 lbs) of paste to give 1 litre of oil. Even so, it is not sold under the Núñez de Prado name but is sold for bottling to other local mills.

Our visit was at an end. We had tasted five oils from different *trujales* (“wells” where unfiltered oil is kept), and had realised what a skilled business assessing the qualities of olive oil is. A true challenge for the future! After the tasting, we had lunched on delicious local dishes —*salmorejo* (Cordoba’s version of *gazpacho*), *gazpachuelo* (a hot soup with fish, potatoes and mayonnaise) and truffle-stuffed turkey in aspic, a speciality of the mother of the Núñez de Prado family, famous locally for her cooking. The meal was rounded off with orange slices dressed with a few drops of olive oil. Delicious!

It was dusk as we set off back to base in Cordoba and as we looked back at the groves of olives, so vital a part of Mediterranean history, it was with a new regard.

GUESS WHAT IS MISSING ON THIS DISH...



ANYTHING BECAUSE...

You can use MUJJOL with any type of fish, dishes, pasta, sauces, pies or any other delicacy you can think of. MUJJOL is the only existing CAVIAR that can support high baking or cooking temperature without breaking down in shape or in colour.

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Paternina



Greatness from Rioja.



At 1.30pm on 4th December, the Iberia flight IB630 from Bilbao landed at Heathrow Airport. Four Spanish chefs, the Paniego family, had arrived along with 18 containers of ingredients for two gastronomic events. These were to take place on 5th December at one of the most prestigious hotels in the world, The Dorchester in London.

Presenting, on this occasion, the foods and wines of Rioja, the events are a continuation of the programme on Spanish gastronomy which began in London in 1986. On previous occasions, these galas have featured the Basque country, Valencia and Jerez.

The Paniegos are worthy representatives of the best aspects of gastronomy in Rioja. Living in Ezcaray, they operate a family-run business at the Hotel Echaurren. Marisa Sanchez, the chef, is the driving force behind the success of the restaurant which deservedly has a reputation far beyond the boundaries of Rioja. Felix Paniego, her husband, looks after the splendid cellar whilst their children, Francis, Marisa and Marta, each with specific tasks, contribute to the smooth running of both the restaurant and the hotel.



It was 4 o'clock in the afternoon on 4th December and the Paniego team were already in the splendid new kitchen at The Dorchester which had re-opened its doors on 22nd November after a two-year period of refurbishment.

Coupled with the enormous difficulties of preparing a complicated menu was the problem of the language. In The Dorchester's kitchen, under the guidance of William Elsener the Executive chef, English, German and French are spoken but only two members of the staff speak Spanish. However, within minutes Marisa settled herself in and communicated in the most international of languages, that of the cooking pot. She began the preparation of a menu

which would complement the Rioja wines which were to accompany each course.

Francis took charge of cleaning the freshly caught fish (monkfish, hake, Cantabrian clams) packaged less than 12 hours previously in the market in Bilbao. Marta added the rice to the warm milk for the preparation of a rice pudding with lemon while Luisa chopped the vegetables for the broth which was to be served as a first course. Marisa was placing the lamb pieces (the preparation of which was started the previous day in the kitchen at El Echaurren) into an enormous pan.

SPECIAL GUESTS FOR A SPECIAL MENU

Everything was ready at 12.30pm on the dot and with the usual British punctuality, the first of the 50 guests invited to the lunch arrived. All were members of the British wine and food trade.

Whilst enjoying a glass of young, fresh Albor white from Campo Viejo or a red crianza from Bodegas Navajas, the canapés and other specialities of the chef arrived from the kitchen. Canapés of scorpion fish

AT THE DORCHESTER HOTEL IN LONDON

THE TASTE OF RIOJA

Text: **María José Sevilla Taylor**
Photos: **ICEX**

After two years under wraps while it underwent alterations, London's Dorchester Hotel reopened its doors at the end of 1990. What better occasion to present a group of connoisseur guests with a meal of Riojan cooking —prepared by the skilled staff of the Restaurant Echaurren of Ezcaray— accompanied by a section of Rioja wines?



The Paniego family arrived at London along with 18 containers of ingredients for two gastronomic events. Presenting, on this occasion, the foods and wines of Rioja, the event was a continuation of the programme on Spanish gastronomy which began in London in 1986. Whilst enjoying a glass of Rioja wine, the canapés and other specialities of the chef arrived from the kitchen.

and marinated fish, roasted peppers, tasty warm *croquetas* and a special chorizo which Marisa had prepared especially for this unforgettable occasion. Half an hour later, everyone was seated and the first course arrived. A broth (*potaje*) with chick-peas, vegetables and fish — and the guests began to appreciate the serious nature of the occasion. The broth was followed by a traditional Basque fish recipe, the meat, the cheese and then the dessert. It was 4 o'clock in the afternoon, glasses were almost empty but the table conversation was lively and discussion continued on Riojan food and wine.

It is 8 o'clock in the evening and with the reception over the new guests are seated in the Orchid Room for a gala dinner. Flowers and candles, dinner jackets and

glamour. The same wines and the same canapés have been tasted as were served before lunch, the warm *croquetas* once again being the subject of much favourable comment.

For the evening menu, Marisa introduces a change and substitutes the broth with a substantial fish and vegetable soup. A cream, garnished with clams will be served with a powerful Marqués de Riscal rosé wine. The second course is a dish of baked fillets of hake (*loimos de merluza con refrito*). The fish has been lightly baked and a dressing of garlic, olive oil, lemon and cider vinegar added just before being plated. Marisa has also decided to use a little less garlic in the evening menu. An excellent oak-aged Siglo white wine is served with the fish. The light hint of wood



in this wine is needed to balance the taste of the *refrito*.

The waiters replace the glasses and it is time to serve the reds, the most prestigious wines of Rioja. A Monte Real Reserva 1984 accompanies the meat — a fullsome, balanced wine from Bodegas Riojanas with the richness and colour of Rioja at its best.

Once again, as has happened during lunch, the *Idiazábal* and its *torrija* is acclaimed by the guests and served with the star wine of the evening, the Reserva 904 Gran Reserva 1978 of La Rioja Alta. At the same time, a Lander Gran Reserva 1975 from Bodegas Lan is being served. It is always difficult to select a wine to accompany a smoked cheese but in this case the combination works. The *torrija*, a speciality of the chef which she had prepared with

old bread and milk, is deep fried in olive oil and decorated with a dash of cinnamon. Some experience the taste of apples, others a hint of exotic flavours, but everyone is surprised by the simplicity of the ingredients used. To finish, the dessert has already been plated in the kitchen. The dessert, Marta's own creation, is a rice pudding tart and is served with a flute of Cava from the House of Faustino Martínez in Oyon in Alava.

The guests are impressed and by unanimous decision glasses are raised to toast the health of the chefs. As Marisa, Marta, Francis and Luisa enter the Orchid Room they are warmly greeted. It is question time, and Marisa takes the floor. Which greens are in the soups? What is a typical lamb recipe from the 19th century? Where

Coupled with the enormous difficulties of preparing a complicated menu was the problem of the language. In The Dorchester's kitchen, under the guidance of William Elsener the Executive chef, only two members of the staff speak Spanish. However, within minutes, the international language of the cooking pot began to work.



The Paniegos are worthy representatives of the best aspects of gastronomy in Rioja. Living in Ezcaray, they operate a family-run business at the Hotel Echaurren. Marisa Sánchez, the chef, is the driving force behind the success of the restaurant which deservedly has a reputation far beyond the boundaries of Rioja.

did Marisa learn to cook? and above all, what is the secret of the light touch that she imparts to the normally more aggressive tastes of Rioja without losing its character and overall flavour?

Now it is 11.30pm. In the kitchen, Marisa and Willi Elsener are sharing a well deserved meal with all those who have helped in making the occasion such a success. In the salon, a few guests remain enjoying a last glass of Cava and talking about the delights of Rioja and the menu itself.

The memory of the events called appropriately «The Taste of Rioja» will remain for some time to come with guests who look forward to a future visit to the restaurant of El Echaurren in Ezcaray.

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THE CANDLELIGHT FLICKERED
OCCASIONALLY
CATCHING THE RICH COLOURS
OF THE FINE RIOJA WINES.

AS ALWAYS, ON OUR FIRST
NIGHT BACK IN SPAIN,
WE FELL UNDER THE SPELL OF
ITS TRADITIONAL
HOSPITALITY. THE PARADOR,
WHERE WE DINED,
OFFERS ACCOMMODATION TO
TRAVELLERS AND SOME
OF THE BEST LOCAL DISHES.
WE NATURALLY SELECTED
THE WINES OF RIOJA. A REGION
WHERE THE WINEMAKER'S
ART HAS PROSPERED FOR OVER
800 YEARS.
TONIGHT, WE COULD HAVE
CHOSEN ONE OF THE
FRESH, YOUNG WOOD-AGED REDS.
BUT INSTEAD, CHOSE
A RICH, FULL-BODIED RESERVA,
WITH THAT UNMISTAKABLE
RIOJA STYLE AND CHARACTER.
THE MEAL SOON TURNED
INTO A MEMORABLE OCCASION.



UNMISTAKABLY
RIOJA.

*Parador Carlos V in the Sierra Gredos
Luis Rey Zamora '90*

A HISTORY OF SPAIN



From the year 718 on, after the first Christian victory in the mountains of Asturias, six small, separate Christian kingdoms gradually took shape in Spain. Despite apparently interminable warfare both amongst themselves and against the Arab invaders, they eventually succeeded in establishing dominion over Spain and in unifying the nation. The Romanesque and Gothic periods of the Middle Ages were brought to a close by the final recapture of Granada in 1492.

THE Over a hundred Christian monarchs ruled in Spain between the first to confront the Muslim invaders in 718 and the last who eventually ousted them from the Peninsula in 1492. This total does not include counts and overlords, some of whom were to end up as kings, or the Portuguese monarchs who, at one period, were Spanish too. By the law of averages, this vast number was bound to embrace an eclectic assortment — saints and sinners, great and insignificant, enduring and ephemeral, men and women, good and bad. Not for nothing has Spanish history applied nicknames in many cases to help distinguish certain monarchs from the rest, suffixing epithets such as The Fat, The Wise, The Bad, The Saint, The Impotent, The Cruel, The Chaste, The Hairy, The Strong, and so on, to their names.

CHRISTIAN In the course of this period, six principal kingdoms applied themselves with varying degrees of enthusiasm not so much to combating an alien religion as is often claimed, but to reclaiming territory that the invaders (Arabs, Syrians, Yemeni and, above all, North Africans) had snatched with such speed and efficiency from the Visigothic Christians. Asturias, Leon, Castile, Portugal, Navarre and Aragon were to take nearly seven centuries to restore the Roman culture to the Iberian Peninsula. This long period is generally known as *la Reconquista*, The Reconquest, and is a fascinating and labyrinthine saga of events, further complicated by being deeply engrained with legend. Not only are its events far distant in time but historical accounts are anything but precise, given that the protagonists and their followers relate the version most in tune with their own interests or allegiance.



Spain is generally described as having been divided at this time into two sectors, the Christian and the Muslim. There were, in fact, dozens of subdivisions. But even between the two major groups marked by difference of religion (not counting here Spain's one to two hundred thousand Jewish inhabitants) there was not always such enmity as is usually supposed. Many rich Castilians, including bishops, adopted refinements of behaviour and fashion from the

Text: **Jesús Torbado**

Muslims. Even Ferdinand III, The Saint, one of the most fervent enemies of Islam, is known to have dressed in Moorish silks. Members of the Castilian nobility sometimes married Arab princesses or gave their daughters' hands in marriage to their southern overlords, while intermarriage was far from uncommon lower down the social scale. Small wonder that this period features so frequently in romantic literature.

The same pattern was evident in art, though the Muslim was more influential over the Christian than vice versa, being richer in general except for the art imported from France. In religion too, the same tendency occurred. It is believed that the vast majority of the populace found little difficulty in accepting the African invaders (hence the speed with which their relatively small armies achieved the conquest), and were also not unready to convert to their religion. It was, after all, the religion of men who were richer, more cultured and more generous, and the adoption of it also entitled one to exemption from certain taxes. When, with the passage of time, the situation was reversed, they were equally ready to convert to Christianity, along with thousands of formerly Muslim North Africans.

The Pórtico de la Gloria of Santiago de Compostela cathedral is considered the masterpiece of the Romanesque sculpture.

THE BIRTH OF DEMOCRACY

The Reconquest was a period of constant change. Bursts of fierce warfare were interspersed with prolonged spells of peace. Lesser civil wars within the larger one were also frequent, with the

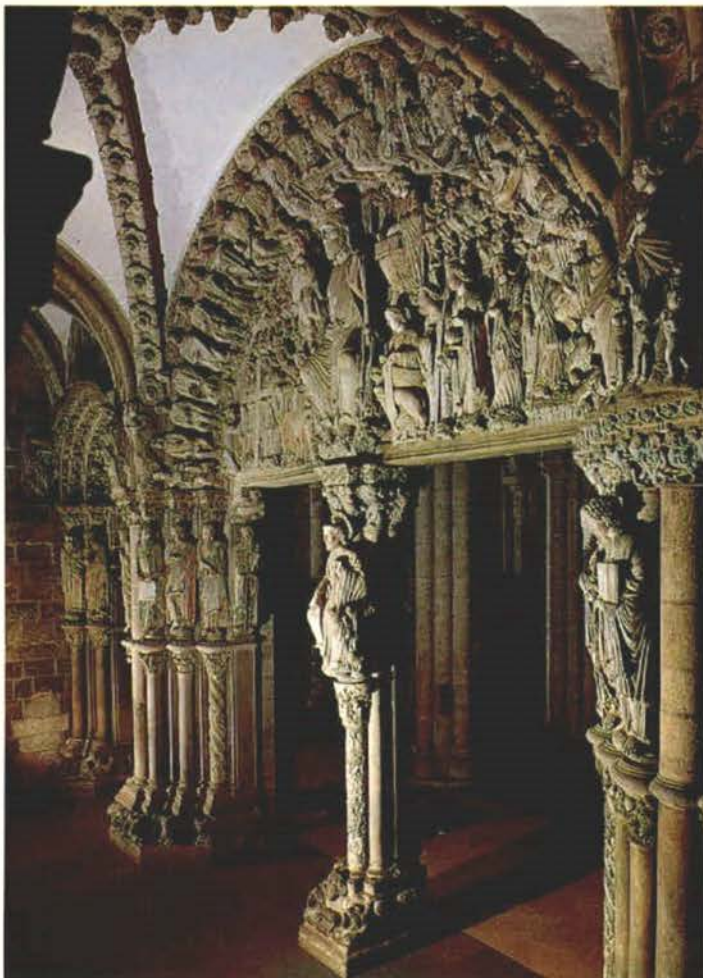
Christian kingdoms fighting among themselves, generally over dynastic issues. There were even cases of three-tiered civil war: two aspirants fighting for the same throne of a kingdom which was at war with its neighbour while both these kingdoms were at war with the invaders. Pacts were signed between Christian and Muslim monarchs against others of their own religion; at some periods, kingdoms were in vassalage to their enemies only to confront them in bloody battle at other times when supported by allies.

These events took place with the whole of Spain as their backdrop, from Santiago de Compostela to Almeria, and from Barcelona to Seville. In the course of the Reconquest struggle there were three main frontiers which are still marked by many relics in the form of towns, castles and, especially, churches. The first and most extensive of these was the present-day cereal-producing valley of the River Duero. One of the hundreds of its castles which changed hands countless times still stands at Gormaz, in the province of Soria. Another section of this same frontier was La Rioja, best-known today as Spain's leading wine-growing area, which separated the Kingdom of Navarre from the Arab territories. The second frontier was the River Tagus, with Toledo as the most disputed prize along it. The third was made up by the southern mountain range of Sierra Morena and the valley of the River Guadalquivir.

The long struggle to recover territory began in the then densely populated and still beautiful mountain area which today is the Covadonga National Park. This was where, in 718, the first victory over the invaders was won, seven years after their entering Spain across the Straits of Gibraltar. A Visigothic noble, Pelayo, possibly having taken refuge in the forbidding Picos de Europa mountains along with indomitable followers whom even the Romans had failed to subjugate, won a skirmish against a combination of troops sent from Cordoba and the supporting forces of the Governor of the northern coastal city of Gijon, already under Islamic rule.

Thus the Kingdom of Asturias came into being. It was to be known as the Kingdom of Leon from 910 on when the kings changed their capital, by then having conquered nearly a quarter (the north west) of the Peninsula and repopulated the territories along the Duero frontier. By this time, the first Romanesque cathedral of Santiago de Compostela had been built. Leon, which immediately became the most important of the Peninsula's Christian kingdoms and the only one not in vassalage to the Caliphs of Cordoba, was to end up a subjugated part of the former county, later Kingdom, of Castile. Meanwhile, Leon had created Europe's first system of government that could be called democratic, featuring a Parliament. Though a feudal kingdom like the rest, its serfs achieved a greater degree of freedom much earlier than in its neighbours because of the less authoritarian attitudes of its nobility.

Their other Christian kingdoms — Navarre, which at one time included part of Pyrenean France, and Aragon, which gradually absorbed the various counties of Catalonia — emerged almost in parallel. Together or individually, between mutual alliances and hostilities, they forged their way



ORONÓZ

The Pantheon of the Kings in San Isidoro (Leon) is representative of Spain's wealth of Romanesque painting.



ORONOX



ORONOX

During the 12C a plethora of Romanesque churches appeared in Spain. The cloister of Gerona cathedral is an example.

southwards, taking over Arab possessions as they did so. The war provided a source of income for these kingdoms, far poorer than the thriving Caliphate. Their population was basically engaged in agriculture and livestock-rearing and was frequently devastated by the Black Death, plagues of locusts, drought and other recurrent scourges, and many manufactured products had to be brought in from outside, some even from the Muslim kingdoms.

Their populace was under the control of the nobility and the clergy. The power of the Church, and even the personal influence of the Pope far away in Rome, were immense in the Christian Spain of that period. The many monasteries which were established in the liberated territories exerted an astonishing degree of power to the extent that the peasantry sometimes lived in a state of semi-slavery to them. Meanwhile, however, these same monasteries were highly important as practically the only centres of culture and intellectual activity.

Protected by the monarchy, they intervened in politics in a decisive way, their influence even exceeding that of the monarch on occasions.

Many of their early monastic occupants were reformed French Cluniacs, under the direct authority of a Pope who intervened to an excessive degree in local affairs. They contributed to the spread of the Romanesque and Gothic styles which endowed Spain with an architectural heritage unrivalled in the rest of Europe. Dozens of beautiful Romanesque buildings, particularly churches, appeared along the Way of Santiago, the pilgrimage route leading from various points of France across the north of the Peninsula from east to west, to distant Galicia. It was believed that the remains of the Apostle Saint James had been discovered there in 829, and the same saint occasionally appeared on horseback and wielding a sword in the heat of battle to spur the Christians on to victory against the Infidel. Even before 900, the city of Santiago de Compostela had become a European centre of pilgrimage on a par with Rome and Jerusalem.

Even now, a thousand years later, pilgrims still make their way there across Navarre, Castile, Leon and Galicia, passing along the route the countless historic hospitals, inns, cathedrals, churches, palaces and other monuments which were built along it in the Middle Ages (See Spain Gourmetour no. 17). At the height of its popularity, between the 10C and 14C, the pilgrimage was responsible for the introduction into Spain of cultural and

Many museums —like the Archaeological Museum of Leon— have rich collections of art objects of all kinds dating from this period.



ORONOX

MEMENTOES

THE CHRISTIAN RECONQUEST

Spain's artistic inheritance from the Middle Ages is recognised as being among the most important in Europe, particularly that of the northern half of the Peninsula. There are very few towns, or even small villages, which have no outstanding relic, particularly of a religious nature, from this period. Many museums also have rich collections of art objects of all kinds dating from this time.

Preromanesque art and architecture:

Fostered by the first Asturian kings and revealing a certain Byzantine influence, the only examples of this type of art are to be found in Asturias and date from the 9C. The most notable buildings are Santa Maria del Naranco and San Miguel de Lilo (Oviedo) and the churches of Valdedios and Santa Cristina (Pola de Lena). Several fine crosses have survived as examples of the goldsmithery of the period.

Mozarabic art and architecture:

The Christians who lived in areas under Muslim domination invented their own style of popular art and architecture known as "mozarabic". The finest examples of it are in churches in the province of Leon: San Miguel de Escalada, Santiago de Peñalba and Santo Tomás de las Ollas. Other outstandingly beautiful examples include churches in Berlanda (Soria), Wamba and Mazote (Valladolid) and Celanova (Orense). This category of art also includes the expressive miniatures illuminating books, especially of the type known as *Beatos*, or devout works: the *Beatos* of Liebana (Cantabria), Gerona and Burgo de Osma (Soria) are the most notable. The painting in Catalonia's San Quirce de Pedret are also in the mozarabic style.

Romanesque architecture: Emerging in the 10C on either side of the Pyrenees, this

style spread quickly through the whole northern half of Spain, especially along the Way of Santiago pilgrimage route. The earliest examples are the church in Leyre (Navarre) and the cathedral in Jaca, then capital of Aragon. In 1045, the church of San Isidoro in Leon was built, and shortly afterwards today's cathedral of Santiago de Compostela. During the 12C, buildings similar in style to the early Romanesque were erected in Catalonia, the cathedral of Seo de Urgel, cloisters in Gerona and San Cugat among them. During the same century, a plethora of Romanesque churches appeared in Leon and Castile, including Fromista, Segovia, Soria, the cathedrals of Zamora, Salamanca and Toro and, somewhat later, in Galicia (Tuy, Orense and Vigo). A few civic buildings — in Estella (Navarre) and the castle of Loarre (Huesca) — also belong to this period and style.

Sculpture and painting: Sculpture and painting during this period were so prolific that one can only cite a few outstanding examples. Aragon (Jaca, Huesca) and Leon and Castile (Carrion, Silos) preserve some of



After a period of transition the Gothic replaced the Romanesque. The cathedral of Burgos was built in the more purely Gothic style

these, while the portico of Santiago de Compostela cathedral (1188) is generally considered the masterpiece of the religious sculpture of the period. The Pantheon of the Kings in San Isidro (Leon) and the decorative pieces in Santa Maria and San Clemente de Tahull (Lerida) are representative of Spain's wealth of Romanesque paintings, generally recognised as the finest in the world.

Gothic architecture. While the Romanesque was fostered by the Cluniac monastic order, the Cistercians were responsible for the spread of the Gothic. Between the 12C and 13C, the monasteries of Poblet, Fitero, Santes Creus and Burgos' Las Huelgas were built. Later came the great cathedrals, clearly influenced by the French. The transition period between the two styles is represented by Avila, Tarragona, Lerida and Cuenca cathedrals. Later, and more purely Gothic, came the cathedrals of Leon, Burgos and Toledo. In the 14C, Catalonia became the seat of Gothic architecture with the building of the cathedrals of Barcelona, Palma, Gerona, etc. The following century, protagonism returned to the kingdom of Castile with the building of Seville Cathedral. The style endured as late as the 16C, with great new Castilian cathedrals being built in Salamanca and Segovia. Meanwhile, many civic buildings — palaces, mansions and universities — were also built in the Gothic style.

Sculpture and painting. The finest examples of Gothic sculpture are to be found in the porticoes, choir-stalls, tombs, and so on, of the cathedrals mentioned above. Others include the famous figure known as the *Doncel*, or Pageboy, in Sigüenza cathedral, and the *Cartuja de Miraflores* in Burgos. Gothic painting first appeared in the book of poems by Alfonso the Wise known as *Las Cantigas* (now kept in the library of El Escorial), and was developed in altarpieces, panels and murals. Here again, nearly all the examples are religious works and the finest examples are to be seen in the churches, cathedrals and cities cited above, though there are splendid examples throughout Spain.

artistic tendencies from throughout Europe. Similarly, the scientific discoveries of the Spanish Muslims and Jews, along with other influential cultural phenomena (translations of books made at the Toledo School of Translators founded by Alfonso the Wise transmitted out of Spain and into Europe. Romanesque architecture also evolved under the influence of France in the Pyrenean area of Catalonia, while elsewhere (Sahagun in Leon, for example) a version of the Romanesque style built in brick, known as *mudéjar*, emerged.

HEROES, COLONISTS AND CONQUERORS

Meanwhile, the Latin language which was still cultivated in the monasteries was being ousted in the streets by new languages which gradually took over at all cultural levels. This was the period the first poets writing in the Castilian language appeared, and many chronicles of the time are written in the languages of the populace. While these chronicles reflect the facts, albeit interpreted

through the chroniclers' personal spectrum, many other written works celebrate the daring deeds of great contemporary heroes. Consider, for example, that the conquest of Granada by the Catholic Monarchs, the final episode in the centuries' long struggle against the Moors, took ten whole years to achieve, «and during these years, there were as many exploits as during the War of Troy», to quote one of the chroniclers of the time.

The best-known hero of the whole period is probably El Cid Campeador, a Castilian nobleman who fell out with his king and spent many years fighting, along with his followers, both as a mercenary and on his own account, often in the pay of the Moorish kings. Indeed, his very name is Arabic: El Cid derives from *Sidi*, meaning "lord". An account of his life and deeds entitled *El cantar del mto Cid* — a combination of fact and fantasy dating from around 1080 — is an epic poem of outstanding importance in the European literature of the time and a key event for the Castilian language, to say nothing of its poetic qualities.

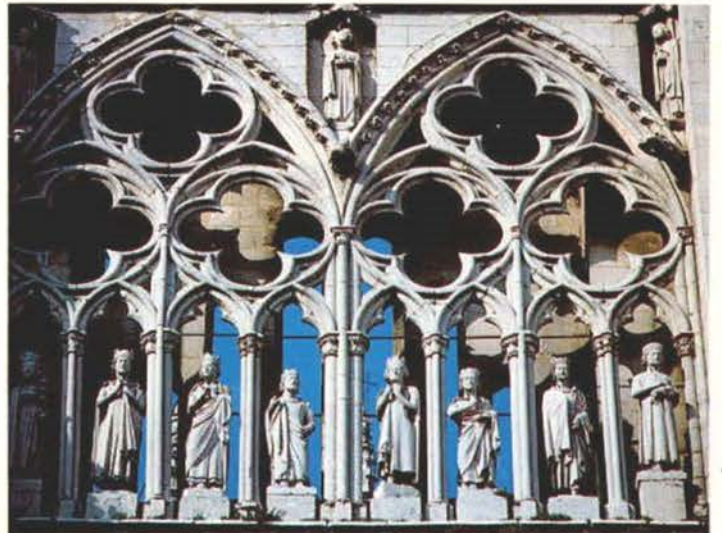
To both north and south of the line dividing the opponents, history appeared to repeat itself. Distinct bands — Syrians, Berbers and Arabs on the one side, Leonese, Castilians, Aragonese and Navarrese on the other — now in agreement against the common enemy and now not only at war among themselves but also in temporary alliance with their permanent enemies against their momentary ones. The Aragonese ventured so far as to make conquests on the other side of the Mediterranean, in Naples and Sicily. The Muslims in Spain put up stronger resistance to them, needing at all costs to maintain their hold over the Ebro Valley and the rich cultivable land of Levante. This explains why the city of Valencia, in its fertile surroundings, was among those that took the longest to reconquer (1238). The Castilians sent ambassadors to the distant Mongol empire of Tamberlaine. None of the kingdoms took part in the European crusades to liberate Jerusalem from the Infidel, being too busily engaged in their own crusades at home. On one occasion, European crusaders arrived to provide support but abandoned the exercise when the Castilian monarch forbade them to kill the vanquished and to settle for booty.

Between the years of the founding of the first Spanish universities, among the earliest in Europe — Palencia in 1210 and Salamanca in 1230 — there took place one of the most decisive battles between the reunited Christian kingdoms (including Portugal and with the support of Pope Innocent III) and the Almohad Caliphs. It occurred in July 1212 near the town of Navas de Tolosa in the province of Jaén, on the very threshold to Andalusia. The victory opened the way for the Christians to the heart of the invaders' territory. The great Christian offensive coincided with the gradual loss of power of the North Africans resident in Andalusia. Ferdinand III, The Saint, who achieved the definitive unification of Castile and Leon in 1230, succeeded in conquering Cordoba and Seville (in 1236 and 1248, respectively). Christian victory can really be considered absolute from that time on insofar as the Muslim kingdom of Granada was tolerated for another 250 years. The Muslims were expelled from the Guadalquivir Valley, as they had



ORONOX

The Christians who lived in areas under Muslim domination invented their own style of art known as "mozarabic".



TURESPANA

Nearly all the examples of Gothic sculpture are religious works to be seen in churches and cathedrals.



ORONOX

Many civic buildings — the university of Salamanca, for example — were also built in the Gothic style.



From the year 718 on, after the first Christian victory in Asturias, six small, separate Christian kingdoms gradually took shape in Spain.

been from other places previously, and people were transported from the north to repopulate the area.

It should be borne in mind that these conquests or captures of cities were rarely excessively violent. In most cases, they were a question of surrenders or simple pacts between monarchs. This is shown by the fact that the Catholic Monarchs themselves, like their antecedents, allowed the Moors defeated in 1492 to remain in Granada, still owners of their houses and other possessions, and even King Boabdil the Younger was allowed to remain for over a year in Spain entirely unmolested after the final defeat which marked the long-awaited end to Muslim dominion of the Iberian Peninsula. Particularly in the last five hundred years of the Reconquest, namely from 1000 on, and with the exception of famous battles in open country, the interchange of power in the more important towns and cities took place, contrary to popular belief, without violence from either party.

The two strongest kingdoms in the Peninsula, Castile-Leon and Aragon-Catalonia became united

by the marriage between their respective heirs to the throne, Isabella I of Castile and Ferdinand II of Aragon, in 1469. Though each continued to reign in his/her respective territory and filled the role of royal consort in the other, they could be said to have brought about the final political unification of Spain. This included the Canary Islands, conquered by Castile in 1478, and, later, the former kingdom of Navarre, bloodlessly invaded by Ferdinand after the death of his wife Isabella of Castile.

The only part of the Peninsula not included in the unit was Portugal, which had hitherto acted in parallel to the other four. The struggle to oust the invaders was one of the historical causes which contributed to the difficulty of uniting the various Christian kingdoms of Spain. It took a long time and was only achieved after temporary unions and divisions of territory among their heirs by unlightened monarchs with limited political vision. The only Peninsular kingdom which managed early on to achieve the unity it maintains today was Portugal as a result of strategically placing itself under the protection of the Pope (1143) which rendered it inviolable. In peace and in war, in alliance with or pitted against Castile and the other kingdoms, after a final victory of the Castilians in 1385, it achieved definitive independence. There would later be further attempts at unification, but all failed.

Even taking into account the finer points of what political unity signifies, Spain was, along with Portugal, the first European nation to achieve identity as a State, albeit at the cost of a fair amount of suffering and bloodshed. After the conquest of Granada in 1492, there were to be no further invasions (except for a short invasion by Napoleon) and the same people who had been conquered and colonised by so many was now to begin its own career of conquest and colonisation. Castile discovered America in the very same year as the taking of Granada. For good or ill, these are the patterns which forge the destiny of nations.

One of the finest examples of Gothic sculpture is the famous figure known as the Doncel, or Pageboy, in Sigüenza cathedral.



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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

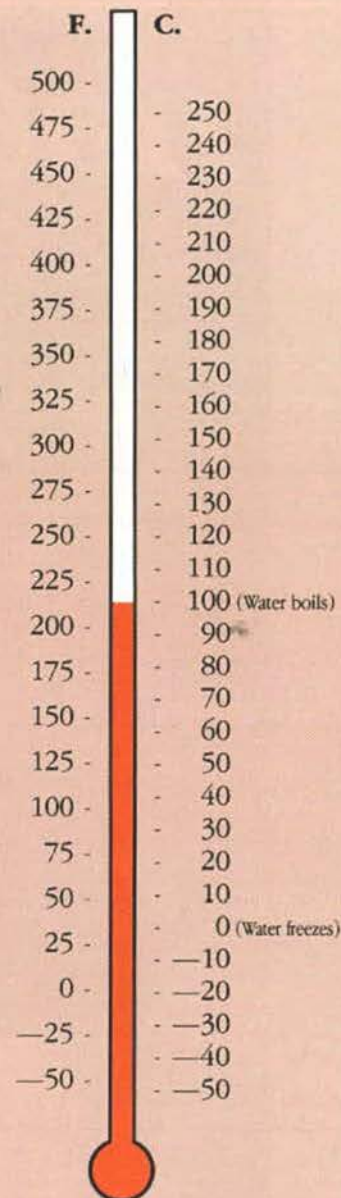
TEMPERATURE	DIAL NUMBER
VERY SLOW = 250F/120C.	= 1/4
SLOW = 300F/150C.	= 1
MODERATE = 350F/180C.	= 4
HOT = 400F/200C.	= 6
VERY HOT = 450F/230C.	= 8

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



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Francisco Padilla

THE SURRENDER OF GRANADA

THE PAINTER...

The 19C, in Spain as in the rest of Europe, saw the emergence of a new pictorial genre: historical painting. The rise of the new bourgeoisie to a position of political and economic power took its effect on artistic taste. The resultant tendency was an essentially escapist one which craved evocations of distant landscapes, exotic countries and an idealised past. This latter in particular reflected the period's lust for ostentation and for emulating the grandeur of bygone times. These, then, were the ingredients which moulded the sensibilities of the 19C.

Some painters also called on symbols and archetypes from the past to express support of the new nationalistic movements which characterised the entire century. It was out of this eclectic environment with its tendency towards «revival» that historical painting emerged.

Francisco Pradilla y Ortiz is one of the best representatives of this genre in Spain. Born in Villanueva de Gallego (Zaragoza) in 1846, he began his painting career as a follower of Mariano Pescador. A work entitled *Doña Juana la Loca velando el cadáver de su esposo, Felipe el Hermoso* (Joan the Mad Keeping Vigil over the Body of her Husband, Philip the Fair) was to turn him into a key figure among the painters of his time.

His next work, *La Rendición de Granada* (The Surrender of Granada), earned him the honour of the «Grand Cross of



Photo: © Senate. Madrid.

Isabella the Catholic». His prestige established, he was to become, successively, a Member of the Arts Academy of San Fernando, Director of the Spanish Academy in Rome and Director of the Prado Museum. He died in 1921. As well as historical genre paintings, he produced decorative pieces in both fresco and oils, and also made successful incursions into portraits, water colours and genre pieces, such as his *La recolección del maíz en las lagunas pontianas* (The Maize Harvest in the Pontian Pools). His oeuvre also includes *costumbrista* Moorish paintings, as does that of his fellow Spaniard, and Galician pieces.

... AND THE PAINTING

This picture was painted in Rome in 1882. In it, Pradilla aims to recreate one of the major events of Spanish history, the recapture of Granada. This event, which took place in January 1492,

was the culmination of eight centuries of struggle against the Moorish invaders known as the Reconquest. The defeat and expulsion of the last Muslim monarch in Spain was to enable the Spanish Crown to defray the costs of what was to turn out to be the Conquest of the Americas.

The picture captures the moment when Boabdil, nicknamed *El Chico* (The Little One), the last Moorish king of Granada, hands over the keys of the city to the Catholic Monarchs, Ferdinand and Isabella. Though the historical reconstruction may not be entirely accurate, (—the event is actually believed to have taken place at the gates of the Alhambra, not at the gates to the city, and Queen Isabella was apparently not present. Some historians even cast doubt on whether Boabdil made the hand-over to King Ferdinand at all) —the painting is nevertheless hugely successful in its evocation of atmosphere and is also beautifully composed against a magnificent *mise-en-scène*, all

very much attuned to 19C taste.

Under lowering wintry skies, against which the city of Granada is silhouetted, and with the ground underfoot muddy and churned up by carriage wheels and cavalry, the two armies are shown ranged on either side of the picture.

To the left, we see the olive-skinned Boabdil and entourage dressed in exotic oriental garments. To the right, beneath the leafless trees of the Granada plain, the Catholic Monarchs surrounded by their courtiers

—nobles, clergy, ladies, and knights in armour. In the background, massed soldiers, and behind them the walled city and the Alhambra, lit up by the sun. And in the most distant plane, the mountains of the Sierra Nevada.

Despite its typically 19C grandiloquence, the work has a realism, freshness and an undeniable expressive force. The treatment of the fabrics and armour, the facial expressions, the movement and disposition of figures and horses, the light, and the atmosphere of the whole reveal considerable painterly skill and are the ingredients which endow the work with its verisimilitude, realism and vigour.

The work has its parallels in other Spanish paintings depicting famous scenes of surrender, most notably *La rendición de Breda* (The Surrender of Breda), by Velázquez, and *La rendición de Bailén* (The Surrender of Bailén) by Casado Alisal.

José María Ortega Sanz

A black and white advertisement for Montecillo wine. The background is dark. In the center, a wine bottle is partially visible, with its neck and cork extending upwards. In front of the bottle is a large, elegant wine glass filled with red wine. The text 'Scarce resource.' is written in a large, white, serif font across the middle of the image. In the bottom left, there is a paragraph of text. In the bottom right, there is a detailed view of the wine label, which is ornate and features the brand name 'Montecillo' and 'Viña Monty' in large letters, along with 'Gran Reserva' and 'Rioja' in script. The label also includes 'Denominacion de Origen' and 'Bodegas Montecillo, S.A.'.

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