

S P A I N GOURMETOUR

FOOD, WINE & TRAVEL QUARTERLY MAGAZINE



THE COSTA BRAVA DALÍ'S HAVEN

WHITE TUNA. PRIZED CATCH OF SPAIN'S NORTHERN FLEET
THE CASK-AGED WHITE WINES OF THE RIOJA

Anecoop: Symbol of quality

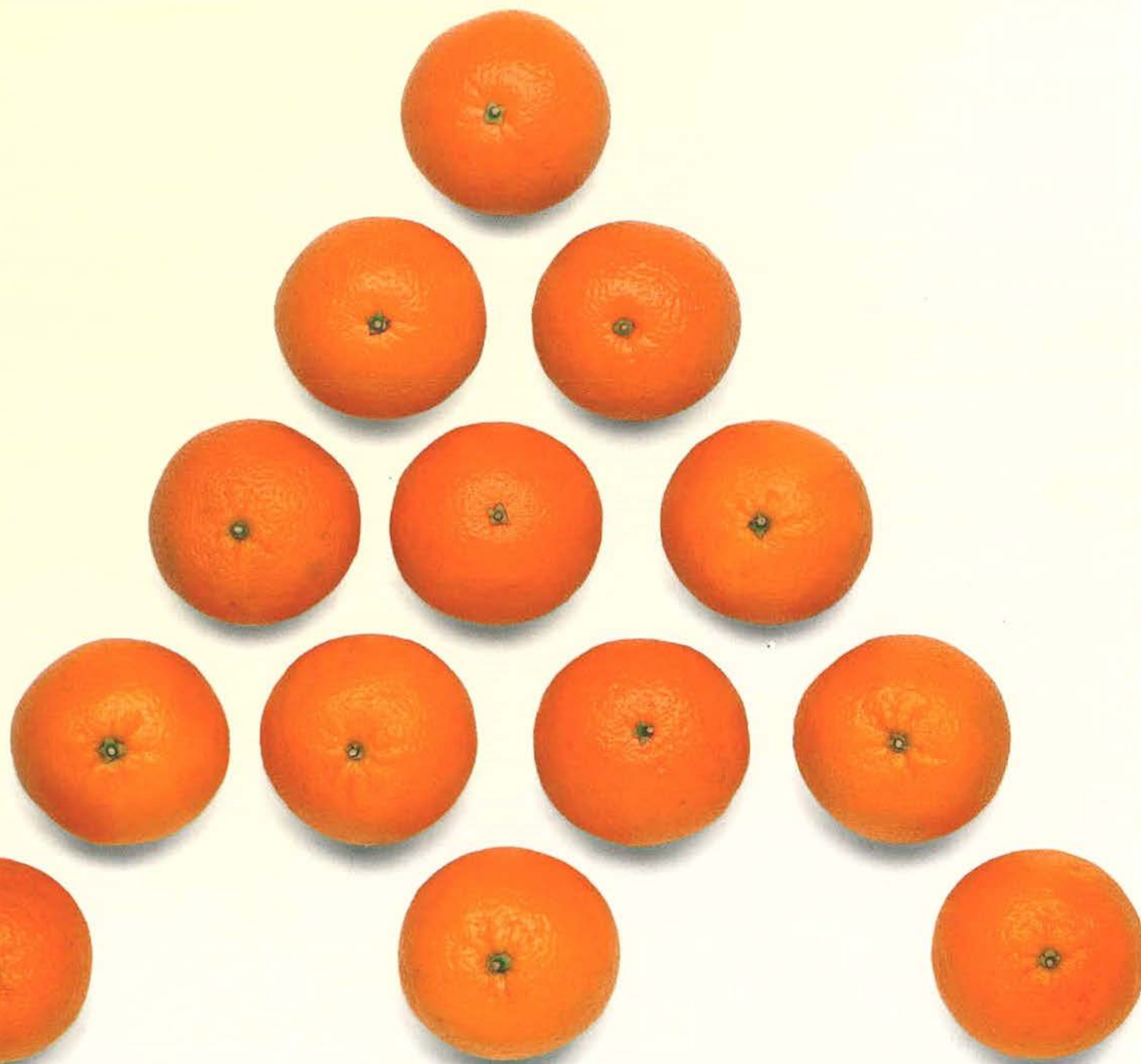
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S P A I N GOURMETOUR

The Costa Brava is probably one of the parts of Spain that sounds most familiar to foreigners. This is hardly surprising given that thousands of tourists flock there every year, mostly from the rest of Europe, attracted by the beauty of the landscape and the Mediterranean which for so long has made this part of the coast the haunt of so many artists, Dali among them. In addition to its natural beauty—now sadly spoiled in parts—the Costa Brava also offers good local food. It is basically Mediterranean, with fish and other seafood playing an important part. One particular local speciality are the delicious anchovies from L'Escala, which are still salted and packed in the old traditional way.

An equivalent gourmet delicacy from northern Spain is the *bonito*, or «white» tuna, caught in the Bay of Biscay and the Atlantic. This is considered the finest of the tuna-type fish, and factories in Galicia and other northern coastal regions can the best cuts in olive oil.

Gourmets throughout the nation—and beyond, if they get a chance to taste it—love the exquisite cured ham known in Spain as *jamón ibérico*. It is made from the meat of the exclusively Spanish Ibérico pig, and its flavour is deliciously unique. It is featured, along with other items of charcuterie, in our Country Cousin series which in this issue deals with Andalusia and Extremadura, the area of Spain where Ibérico pig rearing is concentrated.

Our wine section looks at a little known product of the D.O. Rioja—matured whites—while the subject of the latest Best of the Bunch interview is that veritable institution of the Spanish wine-world, José Ignacio Domecq.

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GALIA MELON

A SLICE OF LIGHT

Text: **Meg Campbell**
Photos: **Pim Martell/ICEX**
Production: **Servivi, S. A.**

In the last five years, Spain's production of the Galia melon has gone from fledgling industry to one of the country's major exports. A unique melon with a taste and texture all its own, the Galia is a favorite in Britain and Holland, and is starting to make inroads in other northern European countries.



One of the most interesting things about melons in Spain is the way they're eaten. When Americans eat melon, they generally make a sloppy job of it: they grab hold of the tapered ends of long, drippy slices, stick their faces into the middle and eat their way straight through to the rind. They finish with their fingers and faces sticky with juice, and their mouth corners tender from the effort.

Spaniards, on the other hand, have developed a method of melon eating that saves on napkins and wear and tear on the face. After carving out a slice and scraping off the seeds, a Spaniard cuts a series of notches onto one side of the slice. He then snaps off a segment at the notch, eats the small piece of melon down to the rind, and then snaps off the next segment. No puddles, no chapped chins.

In these hot summer months, Spain's southern regions are providing an ample supply of fruit to practise the fine art of melon eating. Melon growers throughout southern Spain have been supplying their own country, and many northern European countries, with a wide variety of melons since early April, and will keep at it well into the fall.

Among the different types of melon grown in these southern Spanish provinces of Almeria and Murcia is the Galia melon. Although the name would indicate a French origin, the Galia actually comes from Israel, although it is grown in France. In fact, Spain, France and Israel are the world's principal producers of Galia melons, and competitors for a growing export market.

A FAST-GROWING CROP

To the south of Spain's Levante region lie the provinces of Almeria and Murcia. Both have beautiful coasts on the Mediterranean Sea, that are popular tourist spots. Their inland regions look more like deserts, however, and in fact, many American westerns have been filmed in Almeria, due to its resemblance to the southwestern United States.

Nevertheless, a sunny, mild climate year round and a steady supply of water that comes from a combination of rivers, wells, and well-developed irrigation systems make these regions, starting about twenty miles in from the coast, ideal for growing a wide variety of crops, from eggplant to tomatoes, and of course, melons. The immense production of fruits and vegetables in the region has earned it the nickname of Europe's fruit basket.

In Almeria, Galia melons are grown in vast greenhouses, giving them an early start. Almeria's Galia melons start reaching markets in early April, and the region continues shipping through June.

In Murcia, the vines are grown in the open air, although they are protected while

young by long sheets of plastic pitched about one metre (three feet) above the seedlings. Murcia starts its crop cycle a bit later, and begins shipping the melons in June, shipping through August and into early September.

Although Spaniards are big melon fans, the Galia is not a well-known variety within the country. This is perhaps because Spaniards are more used to eating melons as a dessert in slices, and thus prefer larger melons than the Galias, says Antonio Hernández, managing director of Hernández Zamora of Murcia, a company that grows and exports Galia melons, and tomatoes. The majority of the Galias grown are thus exported, primarily to England and Holland, and to a lesser extent, Germany.

Over the past five years, the cultivation and export of the Galia have gone from being nearly anecdotal to being a major export product of Spain. Production has doubled in the last five years, and further growth is expected. In fact, growth has been so tremendous that the province of Almeria has seen its water resources stressed. Thus production increases are now concentrating on increasing the yield per hectare, rather than expanding fields.

Figures for the Galia melon are elusive, because all melon types are generally reported as a single figure, or are reported by individual growers or associations. Nevertheless, according to estimates given by the Spanish federation of associations of produce exporters, some 70 thousand tons of Galia melons were exported in 1991 compared with only about 40 thousand in 1985.

The Galia melon is somewhat delicate to raise, more so than other melons, says Antonio Hernández, although favourable conditions generally make for yields as high as 40 tons to the hectare. The vines are generally grown on strings, to keep the melons from burrowing into the ground while they grow, which in turn keeps them from developing skin blemishes that make them unattractive at market.

The melons are also complicated to ship, because they bruise easily and over-ripen quickly. They must thus be packed closely together in crates so that they don't knock about, and must be shipped in refrigerated trucks or railroad cars.

Neither France, Israel nor Spain has any particular advantage when growing or shipping the melons, says Hernández. The three countries enjoy similar growing conditions and overlapping harvest times. Where Almeria gains a little due to an early harvest, France gets back by producing later in the fall. Melon quality is also similar from country to country, Hernández explains.

Spanish grower associations and promoters are thus working to increase their product's visibility abroad, and also to establish rigorous standards so that melon buyers can count on consistent quality from the Spanish fruit. Smaller growers





are being taught to strictly monitor such characteristics as size, sugar and water content, and coloration of the melons. To date, the export efforts have been confined to Europe, and the country currently targeted is Germany. According to Hernández, there are no plans to begin promoting the fruit in the United States in the near future. «There's still a lot of unexplored market potential in Europe that we need to concentrate on first», he explains.

A DISTINCTIVE FLAVOUR

Melons have, in general, a cloudy history. Although some horticulturists insist that melons were originally introduced from Asia, others believe that they come from Africa, and arrived in Europe via northern Africa and Egypt.

A hybrid of the cantalope family, the Galia melon is smallish, a little bigger than a softball. It weighs about one kilogramme (two pounds) and is easily gripped in one hand. It has a thick green skin that turns yellowish when ripe, and has raised lines running across the surface, called netting.

The flesh is a very pale green, almost white, and the taste is tricky to describe: juicier than cantalope, more pungent than honeydew, the Galia melon has its own unique flavour.

Like other melons, the Galia is best eaten when it's firm, not too hard and not too soft. In England, Holland and Germany, people enjoy the melon cut in half and filled with a liqueur or port wine. It can be served as an appetizer also, however, with thin slices of cured ham, or in a fruit salad, or alone or sprinkled with brandy as a dessert, which is how the Spanish most frequently enjoy it. It is about 90 per cent water, and has a sugar level of about 10 to 14 degrees.

Like other watery fruits, the Galia melon is naturally low in calories, so feel free to gorge. It works great in fruit shakes, sherbets, or filled with fruit salads, and is a nice addition to the tastes of summer.

Meg Campbell is a staff writer for the Spanish communications weekly *Noticias de la Comunicación* and contributed to *Insight Guides: Spain*, winner of the 1988 Vega-Inclán prize from the Secretary of Tourism of Spain.

RECIPES

Galia Cocktails (Banderillas de melón)

Cut a Galia into wedges or slices, remove skin and seeds. Cut flesh into bite-sized pieces and, using cocktail sticks, spear and combine with two or three other ingredients such as grapes, cubed cheese, cherry tomatoes, olives, serrano ham, strawberries, kiwi fruit —the variations are endless.

Use as a delightful and unusual first course for a dinner party, as a centrepiece for a buffet or simply as canapes to serve with drinks.

Melon with Ham (Melón con jamón)

Serves 6:

1 large galia melón
300 g Serrano ham

Cut the melon into slices and simply put very thin slices of ham on top of each slice. Serve.

Melon and Prawn Cocktail (Cóctel de melón y gambas)

Serves 4:

1 small galia melon
225 g peeled prawns

For the sauce:

150 ml good mayonnaise
juice 1/2 lemon
1/2 teaspoon curry powder
2 tablespoons mango chutney, chopped
salt
freshly ground black pepper

To serve:

1 small iceberg lettuce, shredded
slice of lemon
sprig of parsley
whole prawn

Cut the melon in half, scoop out and discard the seeds. Cut into wedges and cut the flesh from the skin. Dice the melon flesh and place in a bowl with the prawns. For the sauce: blend the mayonnaise

lemon juice, curry powder, chutney and seasoning together in a bowl. Pour over the melon and prawn and toss lightly until evenly coated with sauce. Cover with clingfilm and chill in the refrigerator for several hours to give the flavours time to develop. Serve the cocktail on a bed of lettuce decorated with a slice of lemon, sprig of parsley and a whole prawn.

Melon Sherbet (Sorbete de melón)

Serves 6:

1 galia melon
juice 1 lemon
1 rounded teaspoon ground ginger
4 egg whites
100 g castor sugar
sprig of mint

Cut the melon in half, scoop out and discard the seeds. Scoop out the flesh and place in a processor or blender with the lemon juice and ground ginger. Process until smooth then turn into a clean empty ice cream container, cover with a lid and freeze for about 4 hours until beginning to set. Whisk the egg whites with an electric or rotary whisk until they begin to form stiff peaks then whisk in the sugar, a teaspoonful at a time. Turn the frozen mixture into a bowl and whisk until thick and slushy then fold in the egg whites until thoroughly blended. Return to the ice cream container, cover with a lid, label and return to the freezer until required. Serve in scoops and decorate with mint sprig.

Melon Oloroso

Serves 4:

4 small or 2 large Galias
8 tablespoons Oloroso Sherry

If using small Galias, remove the top; if using large ones, cut them in half. Gently remove the seeds, add two tablespoons of Sherry per portion and allow to macerate in the fridge for 2 to 3 hours, removing half an hour before serving. Instead of Oloroso Sherry you can also use Fino Sherry.









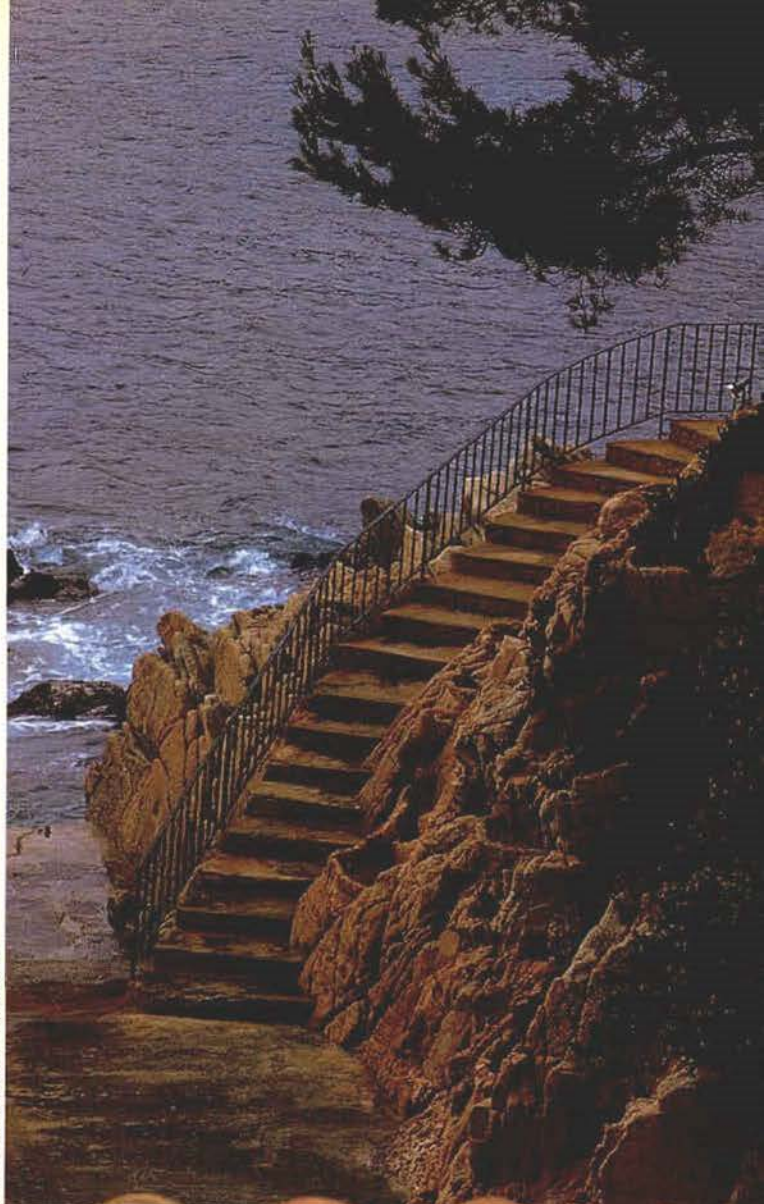
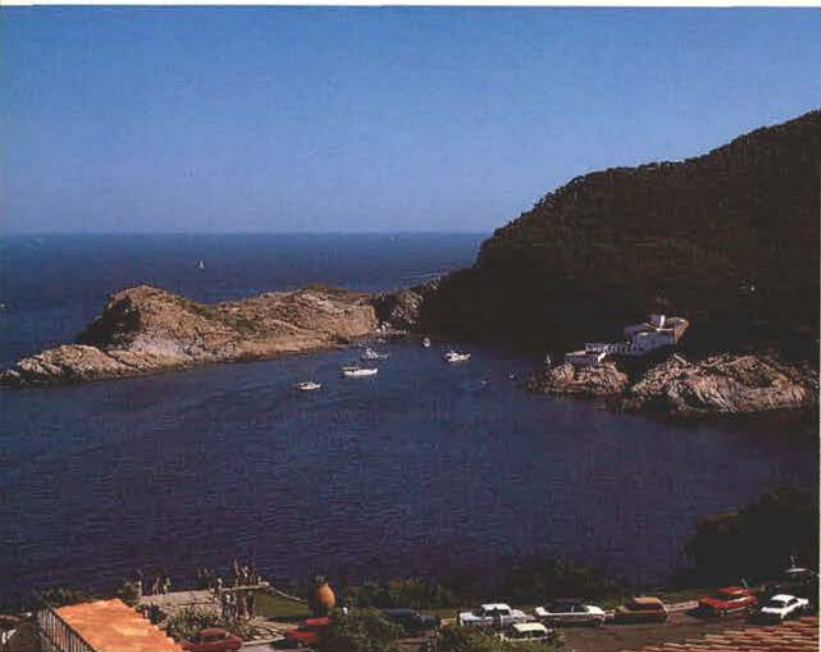
COSTA BRAVA

STILL LOVELY AFTER ALL THESE YEARS

Text: **Ken Welsh**

Photos: **P. Sancho-Mata/ICEX**

Costa Brava means «Rough Coast», a curiously intimidating name for this winding stretch of coastline with its clumps of green pine trees, fishing villages, tiny coves and a pleasant climate. Unfortunately, large urban developments and speculative building have now spoiled it in parts. Even so, if you avoid these mass tourist resorts you can still find places where, over a delicious fish *suquet*, you can still recapture the charms of what was once a little piece of paradise.



FRANCISCO ONTANOL/THE IMAGE BANK

The Costa Brava, Spain's northernmost stretch of Mediterranean coast, has long been a favourite target of snooty travel writers who have built careers on lecturing readers about where they *shouldn't* go for their holidays.

«Sausages and chips», goes the old cliché. «Tea like Mum makes. Tattoos and yahoos.» What a bore.

The truth is that the Costa Brava —like any Mediterranean mass-tourism destination— offers the traveller equal portions of dross and delight. The latter is more likely to be found if you choose May or June to visit. The weather is normally warm and clear and the hundreds of thousands of tourists who in August fill every bed between Barcelona and the French border are still safely ensconced in their jobs and dreaming of the summer to come.

The Costa Brava's two southernmost towns, Blanes and Lloret de Mar, have supplied more material for «Costa bashing» stories than the rest of the coast put together. Yet even these are towns with proud history and customs which have

survived the worst rampages of the reckless tourist industry.

Best visit in Blanes, once the home of Columbus's map-maker Jaime Ferrer, is to the Marimurtra (sea and myrtle) botanical gardens founded by the German botanist Karl Faust in 1928. Since Faust's death in 1952 (he died in the gardens to which he

The Costa Brava may not be what it used to be when it was discovered by so many artists and writers. But if you avoid the mass tourist resorts you can still find places where you can recapture the charms of what was once a little piece of paradise.

had devoted so much of his life), Marimurtra has been administered by a trust. The more than 3,000 plants and trees which grow there and the gardens' romantic view over the sea brings tens of thousands of visitors a year.

In Lloret de Mar there are frequent exhibitions of Catalonia's national *sardana* dance during summer, and every July 24 local fishermen decorate their boats and row to nearby Santa Cristina in an event called *S'amorra, s'amorra* (To the beach, to the beach). At Santa Cristina (where you will find one of the Costa Brava's quietest hotels) is a hermitage built in honour of the saint whose body, legend says, was found in the sea by Lloret fishermen months after she had been martyred, and was still not decomposed.

The battlements and towers, which featured so evocatively in the 1951 James Mason and Ava Gardner movie «*Pandora and the Flying Dutchman*», helped put nearby Tossa on the map, but destroyed it as a hideaway for writers and artists who had adopted the practically unknown town as home. Although heavily into tourism,



Tossa has exiled the more tawdry evidence of its trade well away from the magnificent fortifications which once defended it. The 12th Century walled city known as *Vila Vella*, with its metre-thick ramparts, now guards a clutch of private houses and discreet restaurants and bars which blend in well with the medieval surroundings.

On the road which winds north towards San Feliu de Guixols a high lookout point commands exhilarating views of rocky, pine-clad promontories jutting into the deep, clear Mediterranean waters with Tossa clinging around its bay on the horizon.

San Feliu is a world apart. The town, which was the first resort on the coast and which styles itself «capital of the Costa Brava», offers none of Tossa's drama or Lloret's blatant razzle-dazzle. San Feliu dwells amidst an aura of old-fashioned elegance, accented by tree-lined esplanades and streets which have endeared it to generations of visitors. It is host to the package-tour trade, but politely ignores the phenomenon, as if such an anomaly simply did not exist.

San Feliu is high on the list of discerning travellers who want to stay in the magnificent, five-star Hostal de la Gavina in neighbouring S'Agaro. The Hostal, part of one of Spain's most exclusive urbanizations, is very expensive. But for your money you get genuine period furniture.

One of the more curious features of Costa Brava food is the combination of sea-food with poultry. One example is chicken with lobster, a classic dish of the Lower Ampurdan where it is known as mar y montaña (sea and countryside)

Like many Costa Brava towns, neighbouring Palamos has been sidestepped by modern times yet can fill a book with its history. These days, the bustling seaside town is centred on an important fishing fleet and a long, wide beach which attracts a useful share of Catalonia's tourists. But over the centuries Palamos experienced great and sometimes terrifying events. In the 13th Century, the Catalan fleet set out from here to conquer Sicily. Spain's ships which fought in the Battle of Lepanto sailed from her port. Palamos was sacked by the pirate, Barbarossa, captured by the French, bombarded from the sea by the English, and, in the Civil War, bombed from the air.

While in Palamos you can visit the municipal museum and see exhibits related to the cork industry which still plays an important role in the local economy. The mountains behind Palamos, the wild and empty Sierra de les Gavarres, are covered with cork trees which make the area one of Spain's most important cork-producing centres.

Aiguablava Parador

Unlike most paradors, which were established in buildings already in existence, often historic ones, Aiguablava's was purpose built in 1964. It originally had just 40 rooms, but it has grown gradually and now has 87.

Aiguablava parador stands on a rocky outcrop. Surrounded by pines and looking out onto the sea on one side and sea and countryside on the other, it is imbued with an atmosphere of peace and quiet. Though set apart, it is not so secluded as to make exploring the area a problem. It is an excellent base from which to get to various natural hideaways and coves with fine white sandy beaches and shallow crystalline water; or to Tamariu, Calella, Cabo Roig; or to suitable places for water-sports or fishing; or, inland, the whole of the Lower Ampurdán. People who just want to stay put can just lounge beside the pool, enjoying the views and peace, lulled by the sound of waves and seagulls.

As is the general policy within the Paradors chain, the restaurant specialises in the food of the region. Unsurprisingly in the case of Aiguablava, fish dishes take pride of place, though there is also an «international» menu for the less adventurous.

Aiguablava's parador is a classic example of the Paradors chain's stated intention when it was set up. Its hotels would be for «... long stays, in locations conducive to relaxation and strategically placed for exploring the surrounding area».

Parador Nacional de Aiguablava
17255 Bagur (Gerona - Spain)
Tel.: (72) 62 21 62
Fax: (72) 62 21 66

Recipes

Palamós Prawn Salad with Truffle Vinaigrette (*Ensalada de gambas de Palamós a la vinagreta de trufas*)

Serves 4:

1 kg fresh prawns
6 ripe tomatoes
1 lettuce heart
200 g runner beans
1/2 truffle
olive oil
cava or white wine vinegar
salt and pepper

Bring a pan of salted water to the boil. Drop in the prawns, and remove them as soon as the water comes back to the boil again. Drain well and leave to cool. Remove the heads and shells, and set aside the tails.

Peel the tomatoes and chop the flesh finely. Shred the lettuce and grate the truffle.



Aiguablava Parador stands on a rocky outcrop, surrounded by pines and looking out onto the sea.

Prepare and slice the beans and boil them for about 5 minutes, or until they are just *al dente*, then cool them immediately in running cold water.

Arrange the beans in the centre of a serving dish, and surround them with first tomato and then lettuce. Arrange the prawn tails on top of the tomato, then dress the whole dish with a vinaigrette made of oil, vinegar, salt, pepper and the grated truffle. The dish can be served with

the prawns still slightly warm, or at room temperature.

Seafood with Romesco sauce (*Romesco de pescado y marisco*)

Serves 4:

750 g of seafood (king prawns, crayfish, etc.)
750 g of any close-textured fish (sea bream, monkfish, turbot, skate...)

For the sauce:

6 cloves garlic, crushed
3 dried red peppers, soaked and chopped
2 slices French bread
3 ripe tomatoes, peeled and chopped
handful toasted almonds
3 tbsp white wine
12 tbsp olive oil
water, salt

After trimming off any fine tendrils, fry the seafood lightly in the oil. Remove from the pan and set aside. In the same oil, fry the garlic, the bread, the tomatoes, the peppers and the almonds. Beat the mixture with a pestle and mortar or in a blender, then return it to the pan and allow to cook a little longer.

When it has thickened enough to stick to the pan, add the wine. At the same time, add the raw fish and just enough water to cover. When the fish is nearly cooked, add the seafood and cover the pan. Cook gently until the seafood is done. Serve in an earthenware dish.



Aiguablava Parador was built in 1964. It originally had just 40 rooms, but it has grown gradually and now has 87.

unforgettable



Cava Vintage Sparkling Wines are made in Spain by the traditional method of creating the second fermentation in the bottle. The wines are then kept for a minimum of 2 years before release.

Pinord · Marrugat Brut Reserva

Bodegas Pinord is a family business established 150 years ago and produces and ages the Cava wines at the cellar in Vilafranca which bears the family name Marrugat.

Castellblanch · Dos Lustros

Castellblanch have been producing Cava since 1908, always with the maximum possible care and attention to detail. This stretches even to developing their own strain of yeast, something evident in the bouquet and taste of Dos Lustros.

Codorníu · Vintage Brut Chardonnay

Codorníu is one of the largest producers of "Méthode Champenoise" sparkling wines in the world. José Raventos, whose family married into the Codorníu family in 1659, uncorked the first bottle of Cava wine in Spain in 1872.

Covides · Duc de Foix Brut Vintage

Covides is a co-operative founded in 1964. Massive investment in the last four years in vinification equipment has helped to guarantee the consistent high quality of the wines produced in the bodegas.

Cavas Masachs · Carolina Brut Reserva

Cavas Masachs was founded in the early 20th Century and now produces 2,000,000 bottles annually, many of the grapes coming from their own vineyards located near Vilafranca in Barcelona province.

Freixenet · Baroque

Baroque, a distinctive cuvee from Freixenet, who recently celebrated their Centenary. The 1986 was made from the three traditional white Cava varieties. The grapes were harvested in prime vineyards and pressed immediately. Fermentation was controlled and the cuvee bottled in June, 1987.

Marqués de Monistrol · Gran Tradición

The Monistrol family has been producing wines in the village of Monistrol de Noya since 1882. In 1980 the company was purchased by Martini and Rossi who have continued the tradition of the family.

Mont Marçal · Vintage Gran Reserva

The Mont Marçal estate was bought in 1975 by Manuel Sancho and has since undergone extensive modernisation, making the cellars one of the most technically advanced in the region.

Masia Vallformosa · Brut Vintage

Masia Vallformosa is an independent family-owned estate making high quality Cava wines. Their estate has 6 vineyards covering 300 hectares from which the grapes for Brut Vintage are selected.

Parxet · Brut Extra

Parxet began making Cava wines in 1920. The new production plant was established in 1981 and is equipped with the latest examples of advanced technology. This is reflected in the excellent quality of the wines.

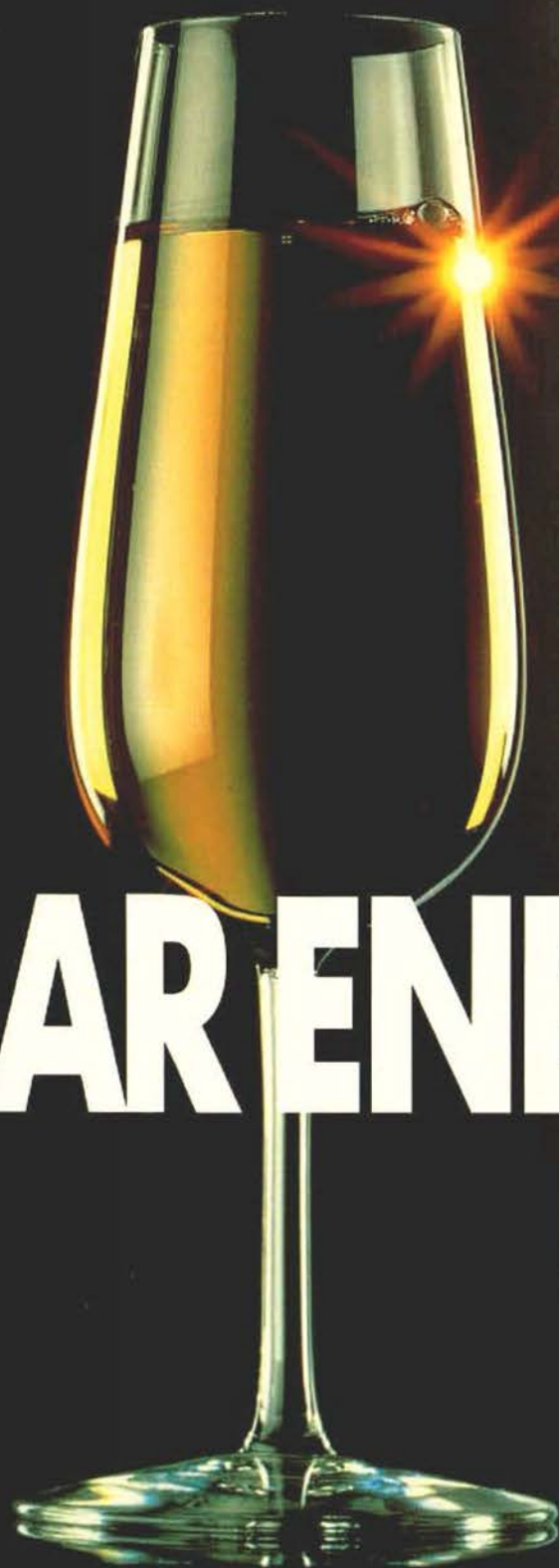
Raimat · Brut Chardonnay

The Raimat estate of 3000 hectares was bought in 1914 by Manuel Raventos and has been transformed from a wilderness into magnificent vineyards with an impressive bodega.

Segura Viudas · Aria

Segura Viudas Winery began to make Cava commercially in 1969. Using grapes from their own estate and the best technology available, they recently created the renowned vintage 'Aria' Cava.





SOLAR ENERGY.

Have a little pick-me-up before you get back to work. Iberia's Business Class always welcomes you with a glass of sherry. A taste of Spanish sunshine to whet your appetite for the delicious meal ahead. And afterwards, relax and take advantage of our unique, multi-lingual,

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WARM TO THE EXPERIENCE.

FISHING VILLAGES

Nearby Palafrugell is another beneficiary of the cork trade and an important market town, but sticks in a traveller's memory as the point from which you can visit three of the prettiest of all Costa Brava villages—Calella de Palafrugell, Llafranc and Tamariu.

Each town began life as a fishing village—Llafranc's first fishermen may have been the Greeks—and even now local fishermen bring in their catch every day. Llafranc and Tamariu cling to the periphery of tiny coves, their surrounding cliffs heavy with tall, green pines and dotted with walking trails.

Calella, the most substantial of the three towns, boasts several beaches and a church whose spire still dominates the village's low-level skyline. In the lazy spring-time months these tiny towns are the nearest thing to paradise to be found on Spain's mainland; secluded, quiet and gentle, perfect oases for contemplation and absolute relaxation. There is no entertainment whatsoever apart from a few bars, the beach, the pinewoods, a warm and gentle sun and whatever you happen to have brought in your car.

The ideal spot to stay while you explore these classic Costa Brava bays is at yet another evocative cove, Aiguablava, site of one of Spain's most attractively located national paradors (see box).

Two kilometres from tiny La Escala, just north of leisurely Estartit, are the ruins of Ampurias, an essential visit during any Costa Brava trip. The Greeks first settled here 3,000 years ago. The Romans came 200 BC, and 500 years later Ampurias was the most important Roman town in Spain. Wander across the ruins of two cultures, visit the museum, but most of all enjoy Ampurias's wonderful location overlooking the sea.

Rosas is a substantial and modern town looking west across a magnificent bay famed for the nightly drama of incredible sunsets, and because of that bay has a history worthy of a town 10 times its size—the usual 3,000 years of barbaric bludgeoning right through from the Greeks until the 20th Century. But if time is short,

THE FOOD OF THE COSTA BRAVA

Text: P. Sancho-Mata

The Costa Brava may not be what it used to be when it was discovered by so many artists and writers. It is no longer the perfect retreat, with its isolated villages, little-trodden beaches and secluded coves, described so vividly by observer and chronicler of Catalan life Josep Plá (1897-1981). Villages along the coast that have always lived by fishing have now to a large extent sold out to the tourist trade, and there is no guarantee that areas that have so far survived unscathed will carry on doing so. But despite all this, there are some aspects of the Costa Brava, apart from the eternal sea, that will never change. One of these is good food.

As you would expect, fish provides the basis of the local cuisine. The range of dishes is vast, using both oily—or «blue»—fish (sardines, anchovies, mackerel) and «white», these latter appearing in a huge variety of fragrant, and sometimes piquant, sea-food soups. The most typical local dish is *suquet*, a rich fish stew. It can feature all sorts of fish but the sauce of fresh tomato, onion, garlic, olive oil and parsley is as important as the fish itself.

One of the more curious features of Costa Brava food is the combination of sea-food with poultry. One example is

chicken with lobster, a classic dish of the Lower Ampurdán (Palafrugell, Palamós, San Feliú and S'Agaró) where it is known as *mar y montaña* (sea and countryside). Sometimes, even more curiously, the recipe includes snails.

In both the Lower and Upper Ampurdán there are marshlands where rice was cultivated for many centuries. This explains why rice, such a simple ingredient and yet so difficult to cook perfectly, predominates in traditional dishes hereabouts. It appears in countless guises: with fish, shellfish, conger eel, peas, lobster... One particular speciality is *arroz negro*, or black rice, so called because it is cooked with squid or cuttle-fish ink (they do an excellent *arroz negro* at the Parador in Aiguablava).

Contributions from inland come in the form of charcuterie (the fat beige sausages known as *butifarra de perol* and *butifarra dulce* are specialities), and dishes such as *manos de cerdo con caracoles* (pigs' feet with snails).

Typical desserts include *cocas*—thin rounds of bread dough with various toppings. They can be sweet or savoury or even a combination of the two: *coca de chicharrones*, for example, is sweet but has pork crackling embedded in it. Then there are marzipan pastries; little cream horns known as *canutillos*; local versions of *horrón* (a dense almond and honey paste)...

Finding genuine local cuisine is no problem. There are countless places to eat well along the coast, and inland many big country houses (*masias*) have been converted into restaurants. The white and rosé wines produced within the region's Denomination of Origin—Ampurdán-Costa Brava—complete the traditional gastronomic experience.



JAVIER BELLOSO

cut straight across the Cabo de Creus peninsula to Cadaques.

AROUND CABO DE CREUS

Cadaques has been for years, and remains, the archetypal artists' village, every writer's and painter's dream of what a haven of peace and quiet should be. One artist who made his home nearby, in Port Lligat, two kilometres north of Cadaques,

was internationally renowned Catalan painter Salvador Dalí. You can see his house now if you care to make the short trip and also, if you look across the tiny bay in front of the house, see the view from which he drew inspiration for some of his paintings (see article).

Cadaques itself, dominated by a massive 18th-Century church and exhibiting an architecture which, like several northern Costa Brava towns, appears more Andalusian than Catalan—even down to the whitewash—is built around two bays and backed by craggy hills which, until the arrival of tourism, were traversed by a road so tortuous that many locals preferred to

L'ESCALA ANCHOVIES

Text: P. Sancho-Mata

During my browsing sessions in the delicatessen shop in one of Madrid's big stores, I had always wondered why tins of anchovies from L'Escala were so expensive. I could think of only two possible reasons: either they were an «artesan» product, or they were a particularly rare type of anchovy. Having since been to L'Escala and watched them being prepared, I am now in a position to tell you that it is because both these things are true.

L'Escala is a fishing village on the Costa Brava which, like so many of its type, has been increasingly invaded by tourism. In consequence, its traditional source of livelihood, fishing, has gradually been elbowed out by the growing demands of the tourist trade. Of the 40 companies, all family concerns, which used to produce L'Escala anchovies in the 1940s only six are still in operation.

Although L'Escala anchovies have only been covered by a Denomination of Quality within Catalonia for the last five years, they have always been made in the same artisan way. Modern times have made a difference only in equipment and premises, which have been adapted to comply with Health and Safety Regulations, and in labelling, which is now done by machine for speed.

Apart from this, the process has changed very little since Greek and Roman times, as local producers are proud to point out. In the fascinating Graeco-Roman archaeological site at Ampurias, the remains of the Greek colony of Neapolis include a salting factory composed of a courtyard where the fish was cut up, tanks in which they were salted, and a store-house where the end product was packed in amphorae.

The whole process begins with anchovies caught during the spawning period by means of nets and light (torches were used in olden times) and without bait. The catch is brought into port and auctioned on the quayside, then taken to various factories in the area. This is where the close work begins. The fish are hand sorted by size, then one by one their heads are cut off—also by hand—and the fish are arranged like the spokes of a wheel in circular containers, each layer being covered with brine. When the container is full, it is closed, labelled with the date and size of the fish, and set aside for the curing process. The curing process takes a minimum of two months, but its duration varies according to the ambient temperature. Fish salted in June, for example, is cured more quickly than fish salted in September, but even summer-processed fish can take longer in cooler years.

Once the curing process is complete, the anchovies are removed from their containers and packed in fresh brine in glass jars of various sizes. These are then sealed, labelled, and distributed for sale. Nearly all the salted anchovies produced here are consumed within Catalonia itself; only a tiny proportion makes its way to other parts of Spain for sale in specialist delicatessens. L'Escala has recently started producing equally delicious anchovies in oil, for which there is a growing demand.

Tourism continues to exert its effect on the economy of the Costa Brava. For this and other reasons, there are far fewer professional fishermen and far less coastal fishing than there used to be. One can only hope that supply of these local anchovy specialities keeps up with demand.



L'Escala anchovies have always been made in the same artisan way.

A visit to the ruins of Ampurias is essential during any Costa Brava trip.

The Greeks first settled here 3,000 years ago.

The Romans came in 200 BC, and 500 years later Ampurias was the most important Roman town in Spain.

travel by boat when trips had to be made to other villages.

On the other side of the Cabo de Creus headland, an area associated with legends of the Holy Grail and said to have been visited by Saint Paul, lies Puerto de la Selva. Its name, which means «port of the forest», recalls the time when the area was so heavily forested that like Cadaques it was more easily reached by sea than land. The hills behind Puerto are uninvitingly barren now, but take the trouble to negotiate the winding road which leads you nearly 700 metres above the port for stunning views of the village, and to the isolated and beautiful, fortified Benedictine monastery of San Pedro de Roda. The crumbling, wind-swept building now slowly being reconstructed, is considered a classic of Catalan Romanesque architecture. The site is appealingly romantic now, but in medieval times the monastery must have been as inaccessible as any in Europe.

Just a few miles south of the French border is Puerto de Llansa, locally famous for its hearty *vino negro* which contains a potentially liver-splitting alcoholic content of 16 degrees. It is just one of many noteworthy wines which will accompany your experiments with Catalan cuisine. Try the famed *zarzuela*, a fish stew containing upwards of a dozen fish and crustacean varieties all covered by a rich sauce. Or *pollo samfaina*, casserole chicken topped with vegetables. Or *babas a la catalana*, fresh broad beans cooked with mountain ham.

Or ask for *butifarra con patatas*, and enjoy one of the finest pork sausages in all the land and at the same time cock a snook at those travel writers who would have us believe that the Costa Brava was invented specially for the sausages-and-chips brigade.

THE TALK OF THE TOWN



A great red has been born in the
birthplace of the whites

JAUME SERRA

TINTO RESERVA 1985



.....
The little white fishing village of Cadaqués, on the Costa Brava, has been a haven for countless artists since the beginning of this century. The classic example was

CADAQUES

certainly Dalí, who lived in an extraordinary house in nearby Port Lligat.

The presence of artists and intellectuals does not seem to have

DALI'S HAVEN

changed the village's secluded atmosphere or its charming appearance, typified by white-washed houses beside a brilliant blue sea.

It was an ocean —the Atlantic Ocean— away, in Canada, at the Festival International de Poésie in Trois-Rivières, Québec. I was chatting with the fine Barcelona poet Cinta Montagut. «Oh Cadaqués!» She said, «I have a place there». And suddenly I was back in the Costa Brava village of El Alto Ampurdán in northern Gerona.

Montagut's revelation took me by surprise though really it shouldn't have. For years Cadaqués has been the favourite retreat for Barcelona's artistic community. Indeed, few other villages in the world have attracted international artists like Cadaqués. Some say it is the most painted village in the world. It was here —or at least in the adjoining hamlet of Port Lligat—that Salvador Dalí lived most of his life, bestowing to Cadaqués an allure to last long after his death.

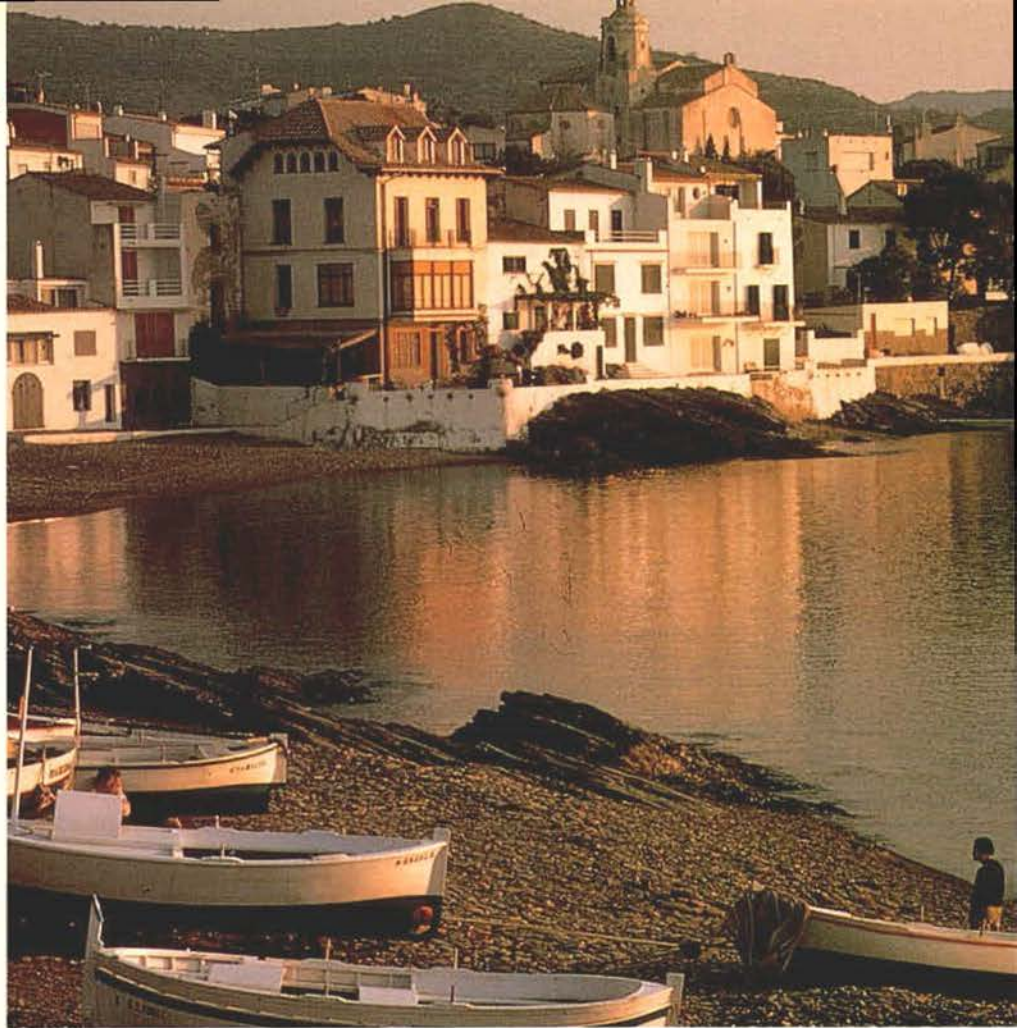
«Dalí always sat right there», says Juan Motta, pointing just a metre away from me. I sit in the Bodega Casa Anita, the most perfect of small village restaurants, the 30-year old jewel of his mother Anita Motta. Past the open grill by the entrance, is a cave-like room of white walls, fishnets and wine-barrels. Bottles of local rosado wine, Conde Bravo, sit ready on each of the few tables —tables to be shared by six to ten diners. Here eating is casual and convivial. And what eating! Impeccably grilled seafood such as *gambas a la plancha* (grilled shrimps) and their locally renowned seafood *parrillada*, sizzling with shellfish and local fish with a simple garlic and oil sauce.

«My father worked for Dalí in construction for twenty-five years. Dalí gave him those tiles on the seating there.»

There are also paintings by Dalí and on one wall, photographs of personalities who have eaten here: movie stars Samantha Eggar and Jean-Louis Trintignant; Dalí of course; even King Juan Carlos of Spain.

Juan presents me with a lovely lemon-perfumed *crema catalana*, this first evening of my fifth and most recent visit to Cadaqués.

The Alto Ampurdán which includes the dramatic heights of the Pyrenees at Cape Creus up the rocky coast from Cadaqués





ANNE RIPPY/THE IMAGE BANK



DON KLUMPP/THE IMAGE BANK

Dalí Theatre-Museum in Figueras, not only houses the most substantial collection of his work, but Dalí personally directed the «dalinization». «The museum should not be considered as a museum, it is a gigantic surrealist object, ...» Dalí said.

possesses the most striking contrasts in scenery on Spain's «Wild Coast» the Costa Brava. Here even the midsummer heat is cooled by a barrage of winds—the Garbi from the southwest, the Levante from the east, the Mediodía from the south and from the Pyrenees to the north, the powerful and legendary Tramontana.

A VILLAGE OF ARTISTS

Cadaqués is an exquisite white village spectacularly situated on the eastern shore of the Cape Creus peninsula, beneath the shadows of the Rodes Mountains. The precipitous route there is essentially the same taken by early tourists-artists and wealthy families in the late 19th Century.

«It used to take 24 hours from Barcelona in a stagecoach called a *tartana*», says Carlos Lozano, now local art gallery owner and Dalí's personal assistant and social organizer for over ten years until the artist's death. Distinguished families used to come for the whole summer with all the pain of packing china. They even brought servants. They still come. They have a house here.

«Dalí came here as a teenager with his family from Figueras and came back to live in the '20s. He had a row with his family (he refused to study law) and was thrown out of his house. He lived in Port Lligat and met a sorceress, Lidia who ran a boarding house. And he stayed there.»

It was an extraordinary era. As early as 1910 Picasso lived briefly in Cadaqués. The great surrealists visited Dalí and his wife Gala here: García Lorca, André Bretón, Paul Eluard, Max Ernst, René Magritte, Luis Buñuel, Man Ray. And so began the trail of artists, including more recently, the marvellous English artist David Hockney who created lovely paintings of the village.

Cadaques is dominated by a massive church: the church of Santa Maria. It was started in 1729 and took thirty years to build with funds from fishermen selling their fish each week.

Between 1977 and 1980 Dalí had an open house every night and a world of celebrities beat a path to his Port Lligat door.

Carlos recalls the dinners Dalí would have him organize. «He'd want things like lobster, mussels, and two special wines—a red and a white—for decoration on the table. He never drank, but would always toast. There was *mel i mato*, honey and very young cottage cheese—he would always say it was a very Biblical dessert.»

THE DALI THEATRE-MUSEUM

Figueras, the region's capital with a population of 31,500 has gained international renown as Dalí's birthplace and site of the Dalí Theatre-Museum.

It was Dalí himself who decided to convert the ruins of an historic theatre destroyed by fire in 1939 into a museum. It not only houses the most substantial collection of his work, but Dalí personally directed the «dalinization»—the conception of it as a work of art. «The museum should not be considered as a museum, it is a gigantic surrealist object...» Dalí said.

It is a riot of surprises and excess, paintings, sculptures, scenes, and wittily arranged objects. Under a fabulous geodesic dome is a gigantic painting of Gala «Gala nude gazing at the Mediterranean Sea which at 18 metres, appears to be President Lincoln». Below, a jazz band of alabaster figures sit at their bandstands. Gargoyle-like «Grotescos» stare over the garden and even a kitchen sink is wall-mounted high above like a serious frieze-work. One «display» portrait of Mae West which can be used as a living room is fabulously gaudy. The paintings of Gala are breathtaking and pure Cadaqués.

There is one of them looking out from Port Lligat to an island in the bay. Here is the ethereal surreal blue I now recognize is Cadaqués, a shimmering light which has truly inspired artists smitten by Cadaqués. It's a light to be seen first-hand. Yet few who visit Figueras take the precipitous mountain route from Rosas to Cadaqués.

That route I had once again taken. And descending the mountain, I had waited

Local building laws strictly control the appearance of Cadaqués. Buildings can only be a maximum of twelve metres high; rooftops must be red; even exterior pipes must be terracotta or iron; and doors of natural wood, or painted white or blue.

for the view which never seems to change: the white village, the church Santa María, the red rooftops of Cadaqués.

Now as I walk my first evening, leaving the Casa Anita, I head left around the curve of the bay road towards Port Lligat. I turn round. The lights of waterfront cafés are glowing. Instantly, I look across the bay to the opposite point of the curve from where I know the feeling is the same. From either point, you look back at Cadaqués, its welcoming bay, its church steeple in the sky.

The next day, I meet with my friend Patricia Unares López. Like so many of the younger generation, she has chosen Cadaqués over life in Barcelona or elsewhere.

GOING TO PORT LLIGAT

We travel the roads between Cadaqués and Dalí's house at Port Lligat. From Galaddera Cove in the north to Joncul in the south, the shoreline is rugged, marked by a series of intimate cover-protected beaches where bathers often share space with fishing boats. Through the years sailors and fishermen took refuge in the bays during storms and many people here are descended from them.

«Pirates also came here», says Patricia. In 1534, the village was ransacked by famous pirate Redbeard's men.

Between Cadaqués and Port Lligat, homes alternate between elegant villas and smaller, lovely houses. It's a stunning countryside of terraced gardens with flowers and olive trees giving way to vast open spaces of grey slate and grassy pasture.

«The gardens are tiered because there were vineyards in the past.»

Grapes had once formed the agricultural base in this community of gardeners, traders, salters and smugglers. But then steam navigation ended the importance of the port and the onslaught of phylloxera in the late 19th Century ruined the vines. Farmers turned to olive cultivation. Many people emigrated to America, often to Cuba. Some stayed there, but others eventually returned—to an economy which had turned to olives and anchovy fishing. Today, olives remain important, claiming 87% of the cultivated area and are used for oil and soap production.

As we approach Dalí's villa the view of its two gigantic busts of human heads perched next to a white egg-shaped house vaults me back to my previous visits. I'd hoped to catch a glimpse of this most remarkable of artists, but had left satisfied with just this view. Today the sole difference—the house was vacant, Dalí and Gala were dead.

His villa I am told grew from a series of *barraca*, fishermen's shacks. Adjacent there are still traditional fishermen's homes, cats and kittens laying claim to the territory.

«People love animals here. The fishermen feed the cats.»

«My brothers and sisters played here», Patricia says. «The children all knew Dalí at the beach here. He gave them candy.» Yet according to Carlos Lozano, certainly recently Dalí disliked or at least could not begin to comprehend children. Dalí loved and was part of the village, yet had little to do with most people.

STILL A VILLAGE

Although the avant-garde have long come here, Cadaqués retains its working-class village character.

«You see in Cadaqués», says Patricia «we are still a village». We walk from the shore through the small square where in the mornings women sell their husbands' catch of fish. Here residents also dance the *sardana*, the traditional circle dance of Ampurdán to the music of the *cobla*, a ten-piece wind-instrument band.

Nearby, the Casino is a large old-fashioned bar. «Since 1858, it's been the village bar. Every four years there's an auction to see who will run it—and they must keep the bar open every day of the week.»

The presence of artist and intellectuals does not seem to have changed the village's secluded atmosphere nor its charming appearance, typified by white washed houses beside a brilliant blue sea.





FRANCISCO ONTARON/THE IMAGE BANK



ORRINOZ

Through an archway, we take twisting, hilly stone streets, leading past doorways where children sit, past lush masses of purple flowers on windowsills, pass bougan-villea and orange cactus, a route which leads to the church of Santa Maria. It was started in 1729 and took thirty years to build with funds from fishermen selling their fish each week. The Baroque altarpiece is a masterpiece of polychrome and gilding. One Sunday every year, children accompany senior citizens from the Residencia L'Hospitat, to the church. It's called «Old Peoples» Day.

We look out. There is a breathtaking view of rooftops and the sea. But it is not one that has been left to simple fate. Local building laws strictly control the appearance of Cadaqués. Buildings can only be a maximum of twelve metres (39 feet) high; rooftops must be red; even exterior pipes must be terracotta or iron; and doors and shutters of natural wood, or painted white or «Cadaqués Blue».

Several of the homes now are seasonal homes owned by Germans, Italians, French and Spaniards. Barcelona's star designers, stylists and media professionals flock to Cadaqués regularly and have brought if not crass souvenir stands, interesting artisan shops, galleries and boutiques such as Queen with its trendy Barcelona fashions.

Cadaqués has built on its cultural inclinations. Now in its 21st year, the Festival Internacional de Música de Cadaqués has drawn the world's finest artists such as Narciso Yepes, Rostropovich, Jean-Pierre Rampal and the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. The Festival posters have been done by the likes of Antonio Tapiès, Dalí and Arranz-Bravo. Each summer the International Writers' Circle also brings leading poets, fiction writers and screen writers.

Later that evening I meet again with Carlos Lozano in his marvellous gallery, higher by international standards than many in major capitals.

Galleries in Cadaqués run fortnightly exhibitions through the summer. «I've been pushing to make Cadaqués into an international art centre from the 1980s», he says. But to his frustration, it hasn't pulled together in the community.

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Cadaques is built around two bays and backed by craggy hills which, until the arrival of tourism, were traversed by a road so tortuous that many locals preferred to travel by boat when trips had to be made to other willages.

CADAQUES WITHOUT DALI

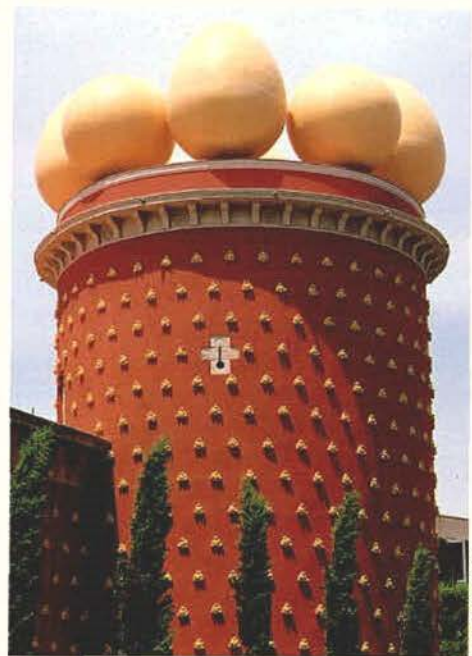
The years since the death of Gala in 1981 changed Cadaqués. Dalí left although he kept returning. But after being severely burned in a fire he was bed-ridden in Port-Bou (by the Spain-France border) for a year. He never returned permanently to Port Lligat. «He would have thought living with all those memories would be too unbearable», suggests Carlos.

Now without Dalí (he died in 1989), Cadaqués holds less attraction for the curi-

osity and star-seekers, but artists from around the world do remain. Some, such as Shigeyoshi Koyama from Japan and the Russian Geniachef, paint full-time; others like English painter Richard Hamilton use their homes seasonally.

«There's María Munz, Arranz-Bravo, Barcelona painters like Roca Sastre», Carlos says.

And what first brought early tourists and artists remains: the rocky landscape of Cape Creus, the dazzling blue of Dalí's paintings, the fierce Tramontana winds.



It was Dalí himself who decided to convert the ruins of an historic theatre destroyed by fire in 1939 into a museum, in Figueras.

Later, I am alone and drop by the Café de La Habana, the famous bar run by an old friend and chess-partner of Dalí who, if asked, might reminisce about his friend. I quietly and quickly take a drink and then head out back to the centre of the village along the bay road, again the view back to the night *cafés*. Here I notice for the first time that as I walk under a familiar arch over the road, I have seen just this spot in a Picasso painting. I am overwhelmed.

I now know much more about this small paradise, yet am unsure if I've really come to understand the mystique of this place. But clearly for me, the romance still insists. Ever since my first visit, the curve of the bay road drew me into its heart, and its image will without fail always seduce me.

Gerry Shikatani is a Canadian writer and journalist. He contributes regularly to several Canadian publications specialized in food and gastronomy.



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WHITE WINE AND OAK

THE CASK-AGED WHITE WINES OF THE RIOJA

Text: **John Reeder**

Photos: **Miguel Pérez Pardo/ICEX**

Snow was gently falling in the Rioja, falling all along the Río Oja, the river which lends its name to the region, as it flows from the medieval pilgrims' stage of Santo Domingo de la Calzada along the valley to the hilly old wine town of Haro, falling on the patchwork quilt of small vineyards that border the river Ebro as it runs on from Haro down to the commercial city of Logroño.

It was a raw, early February morning, far removed from the long, warm, golden days of October, and the bustle of the grape-harvest. Bare, leafless vines, like blackened stumps peered out from beneath the snow, and in the region's bodegas it was a quiet time, a season for reflection and vigilance. In winter, each bodega is like a world of its own, closed in upon itself, totally absorbed in its own tasks. In the Rioja's wineries, carefully watched over, the new vintage, its slow second fermentation completed, was resting in the casks and in the cold winter's morning cellarmen moved unhurriedly between the rows of oak barrels of maturing wines, checking, sampling, observing.

THE COOPER'S ART

In the cooper's shop, decayed staves were being replaced, leaky bung holes repaired, and new casks were being lovingly fashioned from the finest oak, close-pored limousin or mivernais or carefully and naturally dried American. Oak, the raw material which serves to shelter the wine during its long period of ageing, imparting to the wine subtle and distinctive aromas and flavours, protecting it from the harshly reductive effect of the oxygen in the air, slowing down the process of oxidation, yet allowing the wine to breathe through its closely textured pores and mature gradually into the fine wines we know as Rioja.

Thanks to the cooper's art, wonderfully old-fashioned classic wines are still made in the Rioja, splendidly complex cask-aged red *reservas* and *gran reservas*, and even more miraculously in these novelty-conscious times, in the more traditional of the bodegas of the Rioja, fine oak-cask matured white wines are still being made according to the canons of over a century ago.

Cask-aged whites! I hear you exclaim. But do they still make them? The 1980s saw the vogue for first year, fresh, fruity young white wines seemingly sweep their cask-aged competitors from the field. The palates of new wine-drinkers accustomed only to the perhaps simpler sensations of the freshness and fruitiness of these young wines were apt to be puzzled by the greater complexity of the cask-aged white *reservas*, and many major bodegas in the Rioja in the face of falling demand abandoned their ranges of older whites completely.

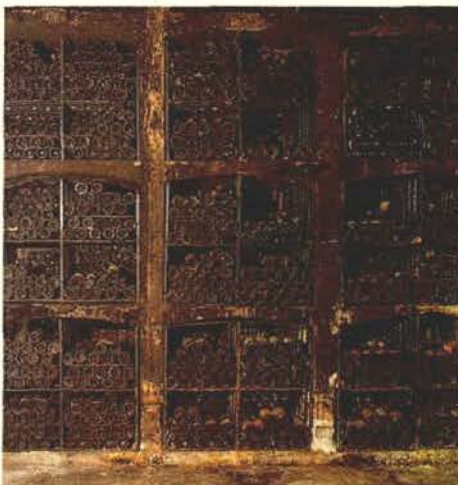
The success of one kind of wine, however, does not imply the need to abandon the making and drinking of another. In the marvellously diverse and various world

of wine, there is fortunately room for all kinds of experiences and the enjoyment of a chilled fresh young white wine with a few olives on a summer's morning does not preclude drinking a rich, golden-white cask-aged Rioja *reserva* with perhaps turkey and cranberry sauce for dinner on a wet November night.

Now those classic bodegas which stuck by their guns and remained faithful to the traditional personality of their older white wines are beginning to reap the rewards of a return to favour of cask-aged whites as the more sophisticated wine drinkers of the 1990s rediscover the subtle pleasures of these traditional wines with nearly a century and a half of history behind them.

DISTINCTIVE CASK-AGED WINES

What makes cask-aged Rioja whites so distinctive? They are made mostly from



Bodegas Murrieta holds in its caves a very old section which ironically is called el cementerio (the cemetery) —above— because of its ancient bottles. Also in Bodegas Murrieta, there is a wine museum where ancient pieces from old bodegas are displayed (below).





the indigenous Riojan thoroughbred white Viura grape variety, together with other officially permitted varieties such as Malvasía or Garnacha blanco. Wines which undergo less prolonged periods of ageing such as López Heredia's extremely dry Viña Gravonia or Bodegas Palacios, Cosme Palacio y Hermanos 1988 tend to be Viura varietals, whilst older *reserva* and *gran reserva* whites such as Marqués de Murrieta's 1985 *reserva* or López Heredia's Viña Tondonia 1976 have a small proportion of Malvasía, some 5% in the case of the Marqués de Murrieta '85 for instance. Whilst Malvasía used sparingly endows older wines with a delicately aromatic perfume, in younger wines it tends to mitigate their freshness.

How long are the wines aged for? Before we go any further, it will probably be useful to define our terms, and set out exactly what are the rules established by the Regulatory Council of the Rioja *Denominación*

de Origen governing the ageing of white *reserva* and *gran reserva* white wines.

Reserva white wines are wines which are at least two years old, a minimum of six months of which must have been spent in oak cask, *gran reserva* wines must be at least four years old, a minimum of six months of which must have been spent in oak cask.

These stipulated periods are, of course, only required minimums. Individual winemakers, in their search for their own particular style of wine will prolong these periods of ageing, in cask and in the bottle, combining varying periods of both forms of ageing long beyond these minimums. Thus, for example, López Heredia's Viña Tondonia Reserva '76 will have spent some four to five years in old oak barrels, whilst Bode-



JAVIER BELLOSO

gas Palacios Cosme Palacio y Hermanos 1988 has spent only a year in new French oak, and Marqués de Murrieta's Castillo de Ygav Gran Reserva 1970 will have spent an astonishing eighteen and a half years in the cask.

Given such a wide range of individual ageing practices, it is not then surprising

New experiments in Rioja white wine

That the complexity and subtlety of these cask-aged wines are not merely the metaphors of the winetaster's rhetoric but can be scientifically demonstrated and analysed has been the subject of a recent research programme carried out at the Oenological Research Station at Haro by one of the Rioja's leading oenologists, Don Manuel Ruiz Hernández.

How exactly does cask-ageing affect white wines? Firstly, the porosity of the oak facilitates a process known as micro-oxygenation, the very gradual seepage of oxygen through the pores of the wood gently oxidises, ages and rounds out the wine. Secondly, the wood releases aromatic substances which are absorbed by the wines, not simply what might be described as oakiness but different acids and lignine elements, which account for the characteristic vanilla taste, for instance, many different substances in minute quantities which lend aromas and subtly modify the initial grapey fruitiness of the wine. Traditional thinking held that the older the barrel, and consequently the more cured the wood, the slower the oxidation process and the less the oakiness imparted by the wood. New casks would accordingly produce oakier wines, and were therefore largely unsuited for the ageing of white wines.

Ruiz Hernández points out that this is not necessarily so. New casks made from close-pored selected oak, correctly cured for moderately long periods in the open air and not submitted to accelerated industrial drying processes, will not release those exaggerated amounts of tannin

and lignine which make the wine overwhelmingly woody. Indeed, he advocates not prolonging the ageing of the wine in oak, but fermenting the wine directly in newer, carefully cut and cured oak casks. White wines greatly benefit from



Thanks to the cooper's art, wonderfully old-fashioned classic wines are still made in the Rioja.

this according to Ruiz Hernández, emerging from the first fermentation in the wood already endowed with the delicately aromatic qualities associated with fine oak, thus rendering unnecessary any prolonged period of maturing in oak cask, and making for a finely balanced younger wine combining

the best qualities of the fresh, grapey fruitiness of a young first year wine with the subtler complexity of an aged vintage. As Ruiz Hernández says, winemakers had resigned themselves to sacrificing much of the fruit and freshness of the young wine in the interests of ageing. Perhaps this will no longer be necessary and both can be brought together in a new type of white wine, cask-fermented and submitted to a short period of cask-ageing, somewhere between unaged first year wines and the traditional third year *reserva* white wines. Experiments are taking place across the Rioja, not simply at the Oenological Research Station but at different bodegas, many not traditionally associated with cask-aged whites, in the search for this new second year wine. Hopefully, in the near future we will all be able to sample not only the fine, traditionally cask-aged Rioja white wines, but also younger cask-fermented whites. One more welcome addition to the wealth of first-class wines from the Rioja.

that there is no single answer to the question what do Rioja cask-aged whites taste like? This pleasing and fascinating diversity of styles means that happily there can be no one answer. In the finest of them the oak, whilst ever-present, does not overwhelm or impregnate. As one of the Rioja's most respected winemakers and a strong advocate of cask-ageing told us: «Wine should taste of wine, not of wood.» The

oak is there to round out the wine, to slow down oxidation in a natural way, helping the wine to evolve, to gradually acquire its own character and personality.

Thus amongst other fine cask-aged whites Bodegas Palacios's Cosme Palacios y Hermanos '88 is a pale, yellowy gold wine with a grapey fruitiness, a hint of vanilla and a pleasing touch of acidity.

López Heredia's Viña Gravonia is an elegant, well-balanced, breathtakingly dry wine, without the slightest hint of sweetness, favoured, it is said, in Spain for that reason by diabetics, slightly acidic, with spicy and herby aromas, the perfect foil for an aperitif of oysters. Marqués de Murrieta's Gran Reserva Castillo de Ygay 1970 is a deep golden wine of a thousand nuances of aroma and taste, smooth, dense and balmy on the palate, with a prolonged aftertaste: a wine to savour lingeringly. C.V.N.E.'s Monopole, probably the most popular of Rioja's cask-aged whites, is an impeccably made lemony straw-gold wine, still remarkably fresh and fruity after a year maturing in oak.

MEALS AND TEMPERATURES

To get the best from these wines, they are probably best served only slightly chilled so that their characteristically subtle aromas and flavours can be appreciated to the full. The younger *reserva* whites should be chilled to around 10°C (50°F) whilst the older *gran reservas* will need to be only slightly cooled to between 11° and 12° (52° and 54°F).

And what meals should cask-aged white Riojas be served with? The younger *reservas* perhaps best accompany white fish dishes, poultry, sea food, salads and lighter whiter meats such as veal. The older, richer *gran reservas* will do justice to almost any dish, with the possible exception of game: try them with fish dishes heavily conditioned with sauces, turkey, lamb or oysters.

That same cold February evening, it had stopped snowing in Haro. We had decided to eat our farewell dinner at Terete, a restaurant, famed amongst Rioja wine people for its spartan presentation, delicious roast lamb and superb wine list. At the rows of spotlessly scrubbed white pine tables the conversation, interspersed with the chink of glasses, was of the morning's snowfall, so beneficial to the vine in a dry winter. We ordered a shoulder of lamb apiece and a bottle of fine twenty year old *Gran reserva* white wine to accompany them. From behind us someone quoted the old Spanish country-man's saying, «*Año de nieves, año de bienes*» —a year when it snows means a year of abundance— was the heartfelt assent of the Rioja wineman seated at the next table. Amen to that, say I.

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PROEXPORT - MURCIA - SPAIN



As spring turns into summer along Galicia's rocky coastline, the squalls give way to sunshine and fishermen get ready for their favourite time of year. Beginning in early June, hundreds of boats depart from the villages tucked in the green valleys along Galicia's *rias* or estuaries. The crews are small and often include a father, son and grandfather from the same family. They are fiercely independent fishermen who have resisted pressure to sell out big companies, choosing instead to keep alive a centuries-old Spanish tradition.

Their prized catch is white tuna (*Thunnus Alalunga*), which is known in other parts of the world as albacore. It is highly valued for its firm texture and succulent meat. Only young and tender white tuna are caught off the Galician coast and although they are relatively small, white tuna will fetch a price five times higher than other varieties when comes time to unload on the docks.

As the fishing boats push out to sea, they pass Galicia's infamous *Costa de la Muerte* or Coast of Death, named for the hulks of hundreds of sunken ships that lay silently under the waves. They are testimony to powerful storms that can whip up suddenly here, dashing ships against the jagged rocks and killing many men each year. Most fishing for white tuna is done by villagers from Burela in the Galician province of Lugo, but all along the north coast of Spain, including Asturias, Cantabria and the Basque Country there are fishermen who dedicate many months a year to the pursuit of the king of tuna.

The idea is to intercept schools of fish as they migrate through the Cantabrian Sea. Once a school is located, a dozen poles are set. The fishermen grab handfuls of anchovies and sardines, throwing them overboard to attract the fish. They also pump water through a hose and spray it back into the sea to create movement that brings curious tuna close enough to bite on the feathered hooks.

Sonar is often used to locate migrating schools of fish but many fishermen also swear by the use of an old fashioned thermometer. White tuna is one of the most temperature-sensitive fish and is only found in waters between 18° and 20° C (64° and 68° F). It is also one of the world's great migrators. After wintering in the warm waters south of the Azores, the white tuna swim north as the Atlantic warms. Their voyage north usually ends near the British Isles and then they turn around and head south in the fall. Spanish fishermen get them coming and going. Once the white tuna reach five years old and sexual maturity their migratory route changes, taking them to the west Atlantic instead and ensuring that only young, tender fish are among the Spanish catch.

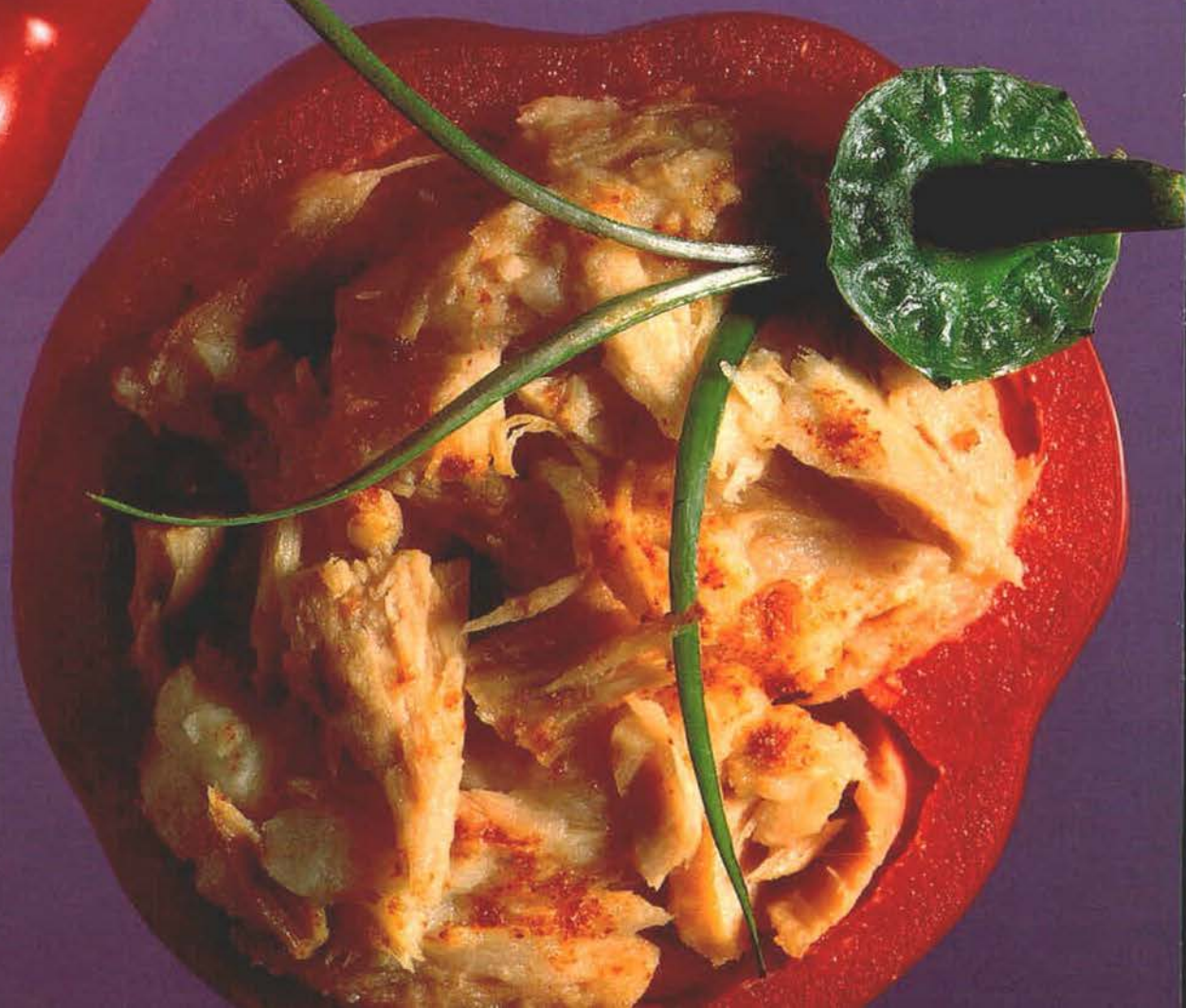
NOT JUST FOR SALADS

One sure fire-way to start a heated argument in a Spanish bar is to poll opinions of

Something magic happens when succulent white tuna from the storm-lashed coast of northern Spain is packed in fragrant olive oil from the sunny south. The delicious result is uniquely Spanish, but is beginning to win rave reviews from gourmets around the world.

WHITE TUNA PRIZED CATCH OF SPAIN'S NORTHERN FLEET

Text: **Deborah Luhrman**
Photos: **A. de Benito/ICEX**
Still Life: **Menchu Artime**



the best fish and seafood. If your companions are from Galicia, chances are that white tuna will be on their list of favourites. It certainly forms part of Spain's great culinary tradition. Enjoyed for centuries, white tuna, like most fish, was conserved in salt until 100 years ago, when the first canning plants were introduced along the coast.

In northern Spain tuna is not just for salads. White tuna is prepared fresh in season and canned white tuna is frequently combined with vegetables and potatoes for a variety of delicious main dishes. Tuna also stars in the regional speciality of Galicia, *empanadas*, which are a large savory pie. A visit to any of Spain's tapas bars will bring you face-to-face with tuna served in croquettes, turnovers and omelettes.

Spaniards are crazy about canned fish. Hundreds of varieties take up an entire aisle in most supermarkets and visiting foreigners often stock up before heading home. In fact, the average Spaniard eats 5 kg. (11 pounds) of canned fish a year, by far the highest per capita consumption in the world. A little-known gourmet speciality product also made from white tuna is worth searching out among all those cans on the supermarket shelf. It is called *ventresca* and made of fillets from the meat of the underbelly of the white tuna, the tastiest part. Sliced thin and packed in high quality olive oil, *ventresca* has a delicate taste and an elegant appearance. It is eaten only as an appetizer and has more to do with caviar than tuna fish sandwiches.

EATING HEALTHY

White tuna, along with sword fish, sea bream, mackerel, sardines, and anchovies, form a group that Mediterranean countries call «blue fish». It has nothing to do with the colour, but rather refers to the fat content, which is above 5 per cent. «White fish» are those with lower fat content.

Medical research has recently focused on the health benefits of the Mediterranean diet, which includes plenty of «blue fish» and olive oil. Both Foods contain polyunsaturated fats that have proved useful in lowering blood cholesterol and reducing the risk of heart disease. But while the fat content of white tuna is higher than some fish, it is not prohibitive for those who are watching their weight. Each 100 grams (3½ ounces) contains 150 calories if packed in water and 268 calories if packed in olive oil.

It is undeniable that white tuna is a healthy food which includes many of the essential nutrients needed by the human body. That same 100 grams (3½ ounces) also contains 20 per cent protein, important fatty acids and significant amounts of Vitamin A, Folic Acid, Niacin, and Magnesium.

DOLPHIN FRIENDLY

Since white tuna from Spain is caught by using a line and pole there is never any

SPAIN'S TUNA FAMILY

White Tuna (*Thunnus Alalunga*) is known in Spanish as *atún blanco* and is the most highly prized of the world's tuna fish. Called albacore in many parts of the world, this species weighs 8 to 10 kg (17 to 22 pounds). It is usually blue with a whitish belly and can be easily identified by its long side fins. It is found in the Atlantic Ocean. Pinkish-white in colour, the meat is compact and succulent with a mild, delicate flavour. It is brought fresh to the cannery, where whole fillets are solid-packed in olive oil.

Light Tuna or *atún claro* in Spanish, refers to Rabil or Yellowfin Tuna (*Thunnus Albacares*). This is the most common member of the tuna family and can be found in all the world's oceans. With its distinctive yellow fins, this species can reach up to 2 metres (6.5 feet) in length and weigh up to 200 kg (440 pounds). The meat is slightly darker and less compact than white tuna, with a pleasant, mild flavour. It is frozen at sea and usually canned in vegetable oil.

Tuna, simply *atún* in Spanish, is the name given to all other types of tuna. The variety is usually Listado (*Katsumonus Pelamis*), a 4 to 6 kg (9 to 13 pounds) species, which is fished in tropical waters. The meat is flaky and light brown, with a somewhat stronger taste than light tuna. This category can also include the 300 kg (660 pounds) Red Tuna (*Thunnus Thynnus*) caught with the traditional *almadraba* nets of Cadiz province.

danger of harming dolphins or other marine life, as sometimes happens with other tuna fishing methods. Each year hundreds of dolphins get trapped and die in the huge nets of large tuna fishing companies, mostly from Asia.

Ecology groups such as Greenpeace and the World Wildlife Fund have protested the killing of innocent dolphins and other sea creatures and in some places asked for tuna boycotts. Galician fishermen are on their side and since they use poles for reeling in their catch, the dolphins are left unharmed.

The enormous Asian boats are also a serious threat to Spanish tuna fishermen, underselling and driving market prices steadily downwards over the past five years. Since rock bottom prices for average quality tuna make it nearly impossible to compete with the Asians, Spain has decided to concentrate on the upscale end of the market. It is a strategy that is beginning to pay off.

Switzerland is one of the principal importers of Spanish white tuna. Consumers there consider it a «fine food», saying the meat is juicier and explaining that the solid-pack whole fillets are more pleasing to the eye than other varieties. Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom are the other important markets in Europe, where Spain also faces strong competition from the French who fish for white tuna in the same waters of

the Cantabrian Sea. The big difference, however, is that most of the French catch is canned in water «au naturel», while Spain's prize catch is canned in olive oil.

Outside Europe, the United States and Canada form a growing market for exports. On that side of the Atlantic, Spanish white tuna is sold almost exclusively in gourmet speciality shops and delicatessens.

PAMPERED TUNA

From the time it is hooked, Spanish white tuna is pampered through the canning process. The fish are refrigerated during the trip back to port, which can take up to five days from the outer migration routes.

Freezing can destroy some of the delicate taste and change the colour of the fish, I was told as the plant manager guided me through the cannery of Bernardo Alfageme, a high-quality company in Vigo (Pontevedra - Galicia) which produces 139 different canned fish and shellfish products under the «Miau» label.

Black rubber baskets of shiny cans swung above our heads as we crossed into the kitchen area. Here the fresh fish are received in «optimum» condition, cleaned and then cooked in brine to add salt to the meat. After it cools the fish is placed on a long conveyor belt where an army of white coated women remove the skin and bones. Amazingly there was no fishy smell, all the wastes were processed through a grinder that quickly produced a mountain of fish meal.

The whole fillets make their way down the conveyor belt to the next step, where they are sliced and slipped into cans automatically. The fish gets a squirt of olive oil, the lid is stamped on and the cans are hermetically sealed. After a stop in the autoclave for sterilisation, the fish is ready for labelling.

Spanish white tuna is easy for consumers to recognize because it is packed in unique oval-shaped cans. This provides shoppers with a quick visual cue, but it also makes sense. Since the can is the same shape as the fillet, there is little waste and the customer gets a product that is 100 per cent fillet.

Hermetically sealed cans can last as long as the seal remains good, which can be for decades. Some gourmets date their cans of olive oil packed white tuna as it is purchased. They store it carefully, making sure to turn over the cans every so often so the olive oil flavour «marries» completely with the fish.

Spanish white tuna may improve with age, but people who know how delicious it is usually can't wait to open it.

Deborah Luhrman was born and educated in the United States where she worked as a television news producer before moving to Madrid in 1989. She is now a freelance journalist, contributing articles on Spanish food, wine and travel to several publications. She has just finished a documentary film on Extremadura for German television.



Recipes

Peppers Stuffed with Tuna (Pimientos rellenos de atún)

Serves 4:

- 4 red peppers
- 250 g tin white tuna
- 1 breakfast cup mashed potato
- 1 egg yolk
- capers
- parsley, black pepper

Bake the peppers until they are soft but not collapsed. Cut off the top and set aside. Mix the egg yolk into the mashed potato, and then add the tuna, drained and flaked, and a few capers. Season the mixture with freshly ground black pepper and spoon it into the peppers. Top each with knob of butter and place under the grill until golden brown. Decorate with parsley, put each pepper's «lid» in place, and serve.

Note: The peppers stand up more easily if you trim the base a little before baking. They can also be used raw, just as containers for the stuffing.

Tuna and Sweet Corn Salad (Ensalada con maíz y atún)

Serves 4:

- 3 endives
- 2 mangoes
- 3 oranges
- 500 g tinned white tuna
- 500 g frozen sweet corn
- 6 tbsps olive oil
- 2 tbsps wine vinegar
- 1 tsp made mustard
- 1 tbsp chopped onion
- salt and black pepper

Boil the sweet corn in salted water, then drain and set aside. Peel the mangoes and the oranges and cut into slices. Prepare the endives, removing the hard base and separating the leaves. Open the tins of tuna and drain in a colander before cutting into cubes. In a salad bowl, place the endive leaves, then the sweet corn and the tuna, and arrange the fruit slices on top. Make a vinaigrette with the mustard, oil, vinegar, salt and pepper and pour over the salad. Sprinkle the chopped onion over the top. This recipe is excellent with any sort of tropical fruit.

Macaroni and Tuna Salad (Ensalada de macarrones con atún)

Serves 5:

- 500 g macaroni
- 250 g tin white tuna
- 1/2 dl olive oil
- 50 g stoned black olives
- 50 g anchovy-stuffed olives
- 2 pickled red peppers
- 1 stick crisp celery
- 3 hard boiled eggs, sliced
- 2 firm tomatoes, sliced
- 1/2 tsp oregano
- salt and pepper

Boil the pasta in slightly salted water until just *al dente*. Drain, wash under the cold tap for a few minutes, then drain well again. Place the pasta in a bowl and season with the oil, a little salt and freshly ground black pepper and the oregano. Add the olives, the celery cut into chunks, the peppers in strips and then the tuna in large pieces. Mix well. Transfer the mixture into a serving dish and decorate with the slices of egg and tomato, sprinkling them with a little salt and pepper and a few drops of oil. Serve chilled.

CANNED WHITE TUNA

TOTAL PRODUCTION

Year	Tons	Thousands of ptas.
1988	9,190	6,625,000
1989	9,400	6,768,000
1990	10,434	7,293,000
1991	10,642	7,511,000

EXPORTS

Year	Tons	Thousands of ptas.
1988	305	234,274
1989	301	224,378
1990	375	275,637
1991	381	265,522

Source: ANFACO (The National Association of Fish and Shellfish Canning Companies).

SPANISH CANNED WHITE TUNA EXPORTS

MAIN IMPORTER COUNTRIES (Thousands of Pesetas)

1986	
Switzerland	380,373
Germany	13,316
U.S.A.	9,642
Belgium	4,766
Uruguay	4,505
1987	
Switzerland	478,352
Belgium	22,262
U.S.A.	10,010
Germany	6,582
United Kingdom	5,757
1988	
Switzerland	192,526
Italy	9,069
Belgium	8,933
Andorra	6,323
U.S.A.	6,302
1989	
Switzerland	174,997
U.S.A.	17,199
Italy	11,086
Germany	6,959
Mexico	3,788
1990	
Switzerland	193,609
Germany	28,039
Italy	19,869
U.S.A.	14,208
Mexico	7,646
1991 (1st. semester)	
Switzerland	132,455
Italy	12,600
Germany	10,411
U.S.A.	7,274
Mexico	3,476

Courgette with Tuna (Pisto de calabacín con atún)

Serves 6:

- 1 large tin white tuna
- 1 1/2 kg medium sized courgettes
- 2 medium sized onions, chopped
- 1 medium sized green pepper, cubed
- 3/4 kg tomato, peeled and chopped
- 8 tbsps olive oil
- 3 tbsps cold water
- salt

Peel and slice the courgettes and sauté them gently in 4 tbsps of the oil. After a couple of minutes, add the water and allow to cook until very soft. Place 3 tbsps of oil in another frying pan and cook the cubes of green pepper over a medium heat until soft (about 15 minutes), then remove from the pan and set aside. In the same pan, cook the onion and the tomato until they form a puré when beaten with a spoon. Add the courgettes and the pepper, and cook all together for 10 minutes to make a pisto sauce. Serve with the tuna, drained and cut into pieces.

Tuna Shape (Pastel de atún)

Serves 4:

- 250 g tin white tuna
- 2 potatoes, boiled in their jackets
- 1 baked red pepper, cut into strips
- 2 hard boiled eggs
- mayonnaise
- black olives
- capers
- parsley
- salt, pepper, oil and vinegar

Peel the boiled potatoes and mash them with the hard boiled egg yolks. Drain and flake the tuna and chop the parsley, then mix these thoroughly into the potatoes along with a little salt, pepper and vinegar. Place the mixture in an oiled glass or china mould, weight the top, and set aside in a cool place for a few hours.

Turn out the shape just before serving. Cover with mayonnaise and decorate with olives, capers and strips of red pepper.


Tuna Roll (Tortilla de bonito enrollada)

Serves 6:

- 250 g tin white tuna
- 7 eggs
- 50 g grated cheese
- 2 tbsps chopped parsley
- 2 tbsps chopped basil
- 3 tbsps milk
- 6 thin slices boiled ham
- 6 tbsps mayonnaise
- 100 g tinned mushrooms
- 100 g tinned artichoke hearts
- salt, black pepper, olive oil

Beat the eggs thoroughly with the milk, cheese, parsley and basil. Heat 6 tbsps olive oil in a large frying pan and make a thin omelette with the mixture. When it is just setting, cover with a plate and turn it over in the pan. Turn the omelette out onto an absorbent cloth to remove surplus oil, and leave to cool.

Mash the tuna and mix with the mayonnaise. Drain the artichokes and mushrooms and chop finely. Spread the slices of ham on the omelette, topped by the tuna mayonnaise and then the vegetables. Roll the omelette and wrap in tin foil. Place it in the least cold part of the refrigerator until just before serving. Serve cut into slices and accompanied by a salad.



A JOURNEY
THROUGH
ANDALUSIA
A JOURNEY
THROUGH
TIME



For here is EXPO 92 - Spain's celebration of five hundred years of discovery; here is its invitation to the world to join in a journey of exploration, from the 15th to the 21st century. To celebrate mankind's progress through geographical voyages, through the enquiries of his mind and through the realms of art and culture - all the developments which have brought man in touch with his fellow men all over the world. And EXPO looks ahead to the next century, to the technology and imagination that is taking mankind into yet newer worlds of discovery.

Where better for this unique exposition to be located than in the heart of Andalusia - the region known as 'Al Andalus' to its Moorish rulers, who dominated the area for so many hundreds of years? Where better to celebrate discovery, technology, art and culture than in the capital of a region which was so wonderfully endowed with all of these attributes by the Moors themselves, and the Christian monarchs who finally ousted them?

And what better way to start an exploration of Andalusia itself than by boarding a train which, in its own way, encapsulates history: The Andalusian Express - "Al Andalus"?

In the city of Seville, La Giralda - the great 92 metre high tower in the centre of the city - is the viewpoint from which the finest vista of Sevilla can be seen. On "Al Andalus", the elegant carriage named after this tower - 'Giralda' - is a fine place to start getting acquainted with Spain's most beautiful train.

'Giralda' is the bar carriage. Like all the carriages which comprise "Al Andalus", 'Giralda' was built in the 1920s.

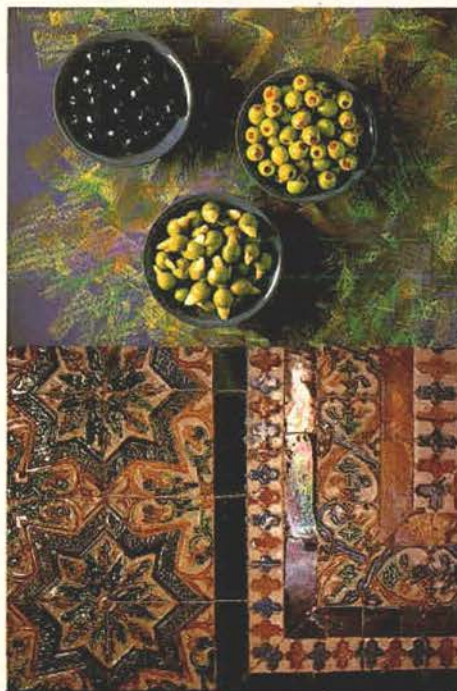
The bar car is the heart of the train; here, guests are welcomed aboard after checking in at Seville's Santa Justa station, with a glass of fino and a dish of spicy green olives. Comfortable chairs and sofas, upholstered in velvet, invite to relaxation; at night, after dinner, the lights are dimmed, and the dance floor becomes the centre of attention. The resident musician aboard "Al Andalus" plays until the last passenger has gone to bed.

Sleeping on board "Al Andalus" is peaceful; the train stops each evening, ensuring a tranquil night's rest for passengers, whether they are in twin-bunk double cabins, or the spacious suites which have their own en suite - bathroom. Double cabins have a neat basin and vanity unit, and all cabins are equipped with robes, toiletries and mineral water. Room stewards are on call day and night, transforming the compartments from comfortable day-time sitting rooms to their night-time configuration.

Passengers awake in Cordoba, the smallest of the three great cities which dominated Andalusia in the years of Moorish supremacy - the others being Granada and Seville.

Cordoba has a magic all of its own; striking evidence of the legacy of three different ages can be seen in one glance from the banks of the Guadalquivir. Across the river, the Romans built a sturdy bridge, which still carries the everyday traffic entering Córdoba; on the skyline can be seen the roof of the Mezquita - the great mosque - and towering above it, the incongruous outline of the 16th century catholic cathedral which was built in its midst. An architectural desecration to many, for others it sums up the unique history of Córdoba, once acclaimed as the ecumenical capital of the world, where Jews, Christians and Moslems lived tolerantly together for hundreds of years. Now the site of the last great mosque, and the last Jewish synagogue in Andalusia, Córdoba's flower filled streets, its courtyards redolent of orange blossom and the tranquil Guadalquivir rolling beside it, lure thousands of visitors to this very special and enchanting city.

A short distance outside Córdoba, the ruler Abd al Rahman III built, in the tenth century, a palace town of exquisite beauty - it has been called the 'Versailles of Córdoba' - which at one time had 30,000 inhabitants. He called it Medina Azahara.



SEVILLE, THE GLORY
OF MODERN DAY
ANDALUSIA - AND
ITS CAPITAL - WILL
BE THE FOCUS OF
THE WORLD'S
ATTENTION
DURING THE
SUMMER OF 1992.



Once again aboard "Al Andalus" after their expertly guided tour of Córdoba, the train's passengers will relax in a carriage of the same name. 'Medina Azahara' is the train's reception and club car, where leather chairs and tables, elegantly engraved glass panels, mahogany panelling and charming inlay panels create a library-like atmosphere for quiet reading, for sipping cocktails or playing cards before dinner. Here, too, is the concierge desk, where the train's multi-lingual hostesses take care of passengers' comfort and enjoyment.

As "Al Andalus" rolls smoothly through the darkness towards Granada, anticipation of the next morning's visit to the fabulous Alhambra stirs the imagination of the guests on this 'cruise by rail'. They, in turn, move into the 'Alhambra' dining car on board the train for one of the splendid meals served during the journey.

The 'Alhambra' and its sister dining car 'Gibralfaro' offer tables for four, or for two, ensuring either lively conversation between groups, or quieter more intimate dining 'à deux'. Fine Spanish cuisine, complemented by a range of superb Spanish wines, make dining one of the memorable delights on board "Al Andalus".

Breakfast is served on board in Granada, where the train will have stayed overnight. Passengers will have awoken refreshed, perhaps taken a long, hot shower in one of the train's two shower cars, where private shower-dressing rooms provide a luxury not found on all cruising trains.

In Granada's station highly qualified guides are waiting; today's visit to the Alhambra palace and its glorious Generalife gardens, is for many the highlight of the trip. Jewel in the crown of Moorish Spain, the Alhambra remains a unique monument of the marvels of Islamic art. So beautiful is it, that when the last Moorish ruler, Boabdil, was conquered by the Christian monarchs, he shed tears - to the scorn of his mother, who chided him for weeping "like a woman, for what you could not defend as a man".

In the gardens of the Generalife, the scent of roses fills the air; the sound of water trickling, splashing, flowing or lying in still, tranquil pools, is everywhere. The Moors, a desert people, well knew the value of water - for its soothing, cooling properties as much as its life giving properties.

Back in Seville, the planners of EXPO have heeded this wisdom; for Seville can be one of the hottest places in Europe during the summer months, and they have drawn on the age-old techniques of using water to cool the atmosphere for the hundreds of thousands of visitors who will come to the exposition.

Water is everywhere: pergolas of thick green plants, constantly watered, shade the walkways. Fountains, lakes and the River Guadalquivir itself play their part. Sophisticated technology creates clouds of cooling air to float through the site, and one of the national pavilions is designed to have a cascading sheet of water constantly flowing over it.

EXPO 92 will be a once in a lifetime experience for those fortunate enough to visit Seville during 1992; "Al Andalus", the very special train which calls Seville its home, will introduce passengers not only to the exposition (visits are included in all the train's summer itineraries) but to the beauty and history of its homeland - Andalusia.

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ALQUEZAR

THE SCARS OF HISTORY

Text and Photos: **Diego Díaz/ICEX**

Once again it is my pleasure as host, or perhaps better, as native guide, to take you on another journey through Spain's out-of-the-way, but well worth visiting, towns and villages.

Spain is among the largest countries in Europe, yet I have always felt it is impossible to really lose oneself here. Centuries of invasion and colonization have left their mark on every corner, and the traveller will surely find, no matter how remote the spot, some sign of human habitation. Well, perhaps I exaggerate, but seen from the air, I imagine Spain as a labyrinth of roads and villages, with the hand of man revealed in the farms, archaeological remains, works of art and a host of monuments and buildings. In Europe, perhaps only Italy bears so many scars and of such diversity. A wealth of culture, certainly, but we should not forget the blood shed in the course of acquiring this legacy.

To paraphrase Shakespeare, history is but chaos retold by a madman. And of that madness and horror, now consigned to the past, we can only celebrate the arts, languages and cuisine born out of this chaos.

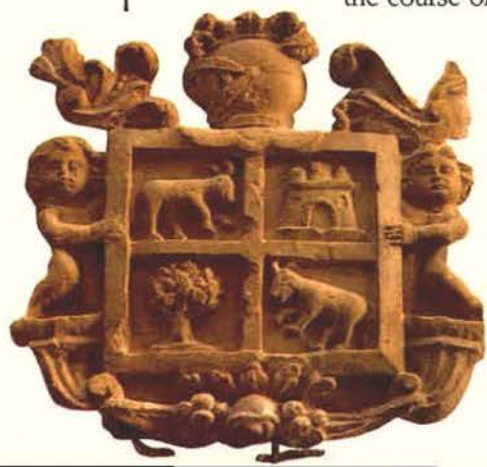
Forgive me if I seem unduly serious, but as you will see

later, these comments have a bearing on the place we are to visit.

We shall set off for the north, towards France and the Pyrenees, a natural frontier without which the past and identity of Spain would have been so different. The saying that Africa begins at the Pyrenees was coined in France in the last century, and has been attributed to several writers. Regardless of who coined the phrase, it is a statement which, even in the context of a cultural superiority based on wealth and power, reflects ignorance rather than reason. There is no good or evil that lasts for a hundred years, as the Spanish say, and let us not forget that for the 700 years prior to 1492, when Spain flourished under its Islamic conquerors, the rest of Europe lived through its own appropriately named Dark Ages.

However, to continue, it is here, in the north eastern region of Aragon, in Huesca province, that you will find the Somontano («below the mountains») area. Once there, we shall head for Barbastro, a town whose hospitality makes it the perfect base for our stay here on the lower slopes of the Pyrenees.

The shop fronts and façades of Barbastro cry out for a thorough facelift, and yet the dust and grime covering them fail to hide a wealth of modernist details. A walk through the crumbling old quarter of Entremuros (literally «between the walls»), so named because it grew up within the





old city walls, or a stroll round the Market Square, filled with colourful fruit and vegetable stalls soon reveals the warmth of the locals —as well as offering the chance to sample some delightful home cooking, more of which later.

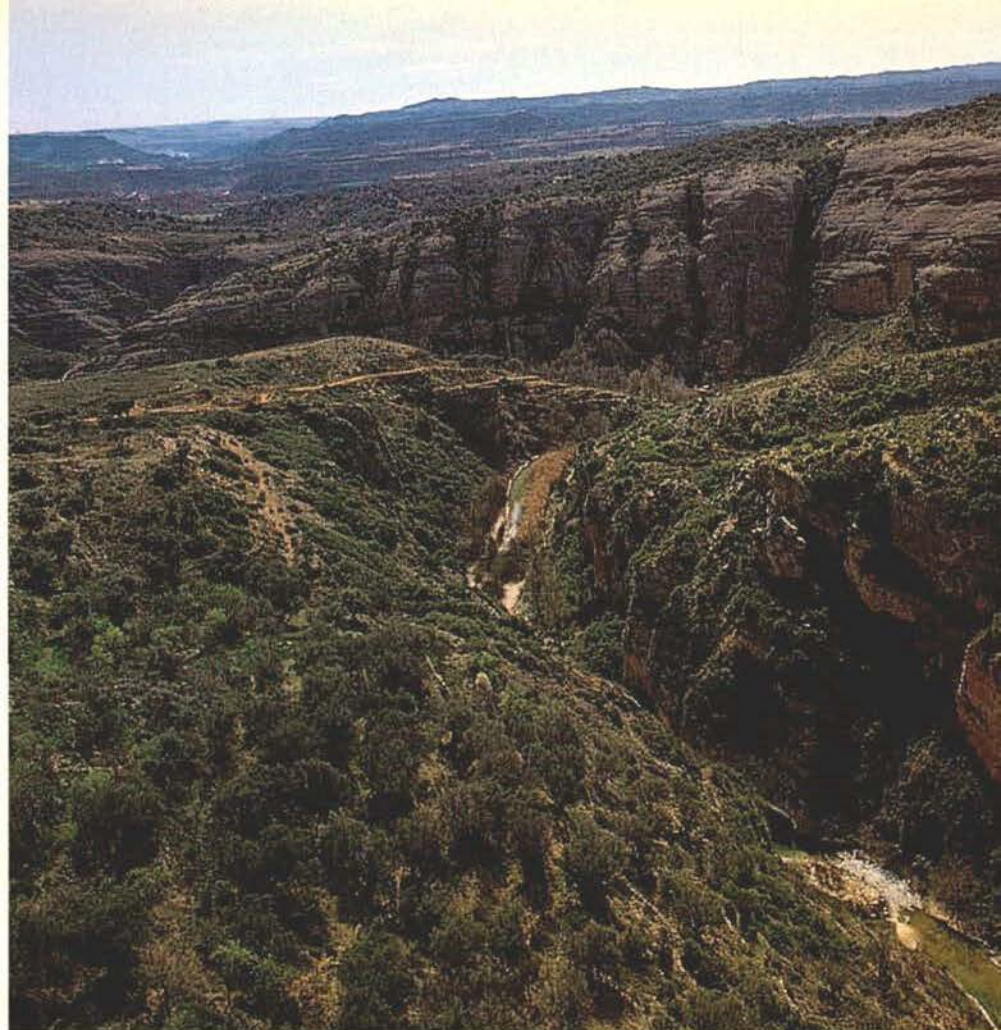
Those in search of less earthly pleasures will be more than satisfied with the Cathedral, the Argensola Palace, and the Episcopal Palace.

Barbastro stands astride a main road, and has had to put up with the advantages, as well as the disadvantages, this has brought. However, on either side of the highway can be found picturesque nooks, narrow streets, tiny shops, all combined with a friendliness which never makes you feel like an outsider. We shall leave our departure for Alquézar until tomorrow.

THE NEXT DAY, THE VISIT

Come with me along one of those remote country roads which oblige you to slow down and just enjoy the countryside, stopping now and then to stretch your legs, to breathe deeply and lose yourself as you gaze into the distance. This, lest there be any confusion, is no motorway; there are no white lines and no signs to confuse you. We are exploring not just travelling from A to B. Take your time along the less than 25 kilometres (15 miles) that separate Barbastro from Alquézar, the countryside deserves it.

As we cross the tiny Valley of the River Vero, the almond trees scattered throughout its lush meadows are in blossom, a testament to the passing of winter and the full flight of spring. The rippling sound of a tiny waterfall is heard above the car's engine and we stop, our gaze attracted by the furrows of the recently ploughed fields and the rows of vines.



Alquézar owes its name and founding to its Alcázar or fortress built on the spot where the collegiate church now stands.





The Vero River, narrow but constant, has worn away at the stone to leave an abyss. Towering over everything is the collegiate church.



Suddenly the road slopes steeply upward, and in the distance we glimpse the reason for our journey, an outcrop of rock upon which stands an imposing edifice, but it soon disappears again as the road turns.

Perhaps, reader, you have visited Cuenca and Toledo. If so, then you will probably picture Alquézar the same but in miniature. Just like its more famous relatives, Alquézar was built atop boulders more than 200 metres (650 feet) high, but perhaps it is better not to imagine, because the reality goes beyond any preconceived idea, and in searching for comparisons, one inevitably loses the sense of the original. There is nothing worse than the traveller, who, having recently arrived, says «This is just like...», and in trying to give the impression of having seen a lot, reveals just how little he knows.

The first impression of Alquézar is a little disconcerting. Leaving the car at the entrance to the village, the visitor is greeted by a rather touristy looking esplanade of cafes, with the traditional *frontón*, or handball court, typical of so many villages in northern and central Spain, to one side of it. On the right is the eighteenth century church of San Miguel, while above looms the imposing bulk of the Santa María collegiate church. The church is indeed impressive, partly for its site and size, but also for the mixture of styles and materials employed in its construction. From a distance, one fails to appreciate its beauty. Again, disconcerting.

However, we keep on, and up into the village proper. To the right there is an archway, and atop it the coat of arms of Alquézar. This is the real entrance. Passing through a small tunnel we find ourselves facing cobbled streets and a winding, medieval labyrinth. Although Alquézar was built in 1114, after the Christians had regained control of Aragon, its builders and population were *Mudéjares* or Moslems living in Christian territory.

You can be sure of getting lost in the old quarter, but it is worth it. If you stretch out your arms, you can touch the walls on either side, the houses giving the impression of reaching out to each other, the roofs crowding in above us, and each house peering at the other's coat of arms as if trying to identify it. Alquézar literally clings to the rock face, its houses clustered together like so many sheep, protecting each other from the heat and the cold, as extreme in summer as in winter.

Little by little, a delicious feeling of dizziness overcomes you: there are no straight lines here, it is all archways and passages which at times connect the tiny streets with one another. Each step seems to

increase the excitement and pleasure of being surrounded by so much beauty. Not even the ineptness of some of the so-called restorations diminishes the charm. Wandering through these crazy streets is like trying to make sense of a labyrinth without having a clue where you are going, while each feature engraves itself on the mind's eye. I was struck by the desire to take to the sky and confirm my belief that, either spontaneously or through the whim of some god, the streets of Alquézar are actually an arabesque.

Reeling, you emerge from this arabesque only to come up against the sheer drop of the ravine. Nature has shown even greater eloquence than man here, and the Vero, narrow but constant, has worn away at the stone to leave this abyss. Steep walls of rock rise up above the rush of water, while towering over everything, like some stem *señora* in constant vigil, is the collegiate church.

A visit to the church brings yet another surprise. The old lady hides a heart of gold beneath her severe exterior. Inside, a cloister supported by delicate columns encloses an exquisite garden, while the walls are covered with wonderful frescoes, sadly no longer in the best condition.

One's curiosity aroused, a visit to the church is obligatory. Alquézar invariably hides something, and around every corner there is always some new, subtle pleasure to be enjoyed. The church is no exception. There are enough treasures here to open a small but richly-endowed museum, and enough decorative material to impress even the most demanding aesthete. One cannot fail to fall in love with the delicate pathos of the stylised Romanesque Christ of Lecina, or to be impressed by the beautiful organ,





An archway, with the coat of arms of Alquézar atop, is the entrance to a medieval labyrinth of winding streets, where almost every house has a coat of arms.

and imagine its vibrant sound. Equally, the abundant gold and silverwork demands detailed scrutiny, as also the paintings from the Italian school and splendid altarpieces.

LUNCHTIME

After a morning's wandering, the time has come to eat and compare impressions. There are several restaurants to choose from, but I would recommend Casa Gervasio, not that it is particularly special. There is no menu, for example, only a set meal, and the waiters certainly do not wear bow ties. However, the apron-clad wife, or perhaps daughter, of Gervasio, the owner of the family-run establishment, will look after you, and tell you what is on offer that day.

Helpings are, to say the very least, large. A plate of cheese and charcuterie was followed by a delicious but strange cannelloni in batter, and for the main course I had, and would heartily recommend, the lamb. After that, there was a choice of desserts, then coconut pastries, coffee, a liqueur and a cigar. Included in the set price of 20 dollars were as much wine, coffee and liqueurs as you can manage. Forget the Michelin guide and accept that in the right place and at the right time, a piece of bacon can be as delicious as Beluga caviar and, more to the point, these gastronomic experiences can bring you that much closer to the people and places you visit.

A HISTORY LESSON AND A LEGEND

What better for the digestion than a good story? And there are no better stories than history and legends.

History tells us that Alquézar owes its name and founding to its *Alcázar* or fortress (built in the ninth century by local Arab ruler, Khalaf, while the area was under Arab domination) on the spot where the collegiate now stands. It would have been, even in those troubled times, a virtually impregnable position. The Arabs had conquered virtually all the peninsula, and there were but a few pockets of Christian resistance. Alquézar was forged then, out of struggle; it was a military outpost where blood would be shed, and alliances made and broken.

Khalaf formed an alliance with Bahlul, another local Arab leader who ruled over present-day Barbastro, and the two joined forces with the French emperor Charlemagne, rebelling against the seat of Arab rule in Spain, based in the Andalusian city of Cordoba. But Khalaf soon reconsidered his position and betrayed Bahlul. Bahlul took him prisoner, although Khalaf's forces managed to release him, killing Bahlul in the process. Khalaf took over Bahlul's ter-

ritory, and subsequently invaded the nearby Christian-ruled area of Sobrarbe, which was threatening Alquézar.

But despite his loyalty to his Arab overlords, Khalaf was certainly no orthodox Moslem, as the case of the martyrs Nunila and Alodia illustrates. These were two sisters, born of a Christian-Moslem marriage, who were denounced by an over-pious relative. Khalaf was supposed to hold them prisoner, but shortly after their arrest, he allowed them to go free. The relative appealed against this charitable decision, and the magistrate or *Cadi*, in nearby Huesca, upheld the charge, and the two were duly decapitated.

Khalaf's son, Abad Allah, also remained faithful to Cordoba, and fought against other Arab rebels, one of whom, Ismail,

he took prisoner. Ismail swore vengeance, and years later, when freed, married Abad Allah's daughter. When the first child was born, he invited his in-laws and their eight children to a banquet. Once they were all gathered and ready to begin eating, Ismail seized them, threw them in prison, and executed them, thus putting paid to the Khalaf line once and for all.

Around the beginning of the eleventh century, the Christian King Sancho Ramírez conquered Alquézar, continuing the already long established tradition of blood letting and violence. Intrigues between the Church and the Court, with the local kingdom of Aragon set against that of Castile, followed and Alquézar was one of the most sought-after prizes.





But that is quite enough history, although the reader will perhaps understand now my belief that Spain is a map bearing countless scars of its history. And the past has certainly left its marks on Alquézar. From the early cave-paintings in caves along the river, through the typically Arab tortuously winding streets of the old city, up to the castle and the church of Santa María, which in turn represents an amalgam formed over centuries of Christian domination during which the roles of clerics, soldiers and administrators were inextricably mixed.

But with the passing of time, the town lost its strategic military importance, and farming, trade and religion came to dominate local life. Now, centuries later, all that is left after so much bloodshed and cruelty are the delicious almonds and the wines of Somontano. Indeed, Alquézar owes its vineyards to the care and attention of priests, while another clergyman, Rafael Ayerbe, cultivated a new breed of almond tree, poetically dubbed the «fainting almond», due to its swooning, willow-like branches which enabled the species to resist the harsh Aragonese winters.

And the legend promised earlier? Although apocryphal, the story goes that the last of the Moslem rulers in Alquézar imposed harsh taxes on his unfortunate subjects. But not content with this, he also demanded that they provide him with a regular supply of maidens. However, no sooner had he satisfied his passion than the unfortunate girl would mysteriously disappear, never to be seen again. The reader will doubtless recall the «Thousand and One Nights», and guess the poor crea-

The collegiate church hides inside a romanesque cloister supported by delicate columns and candid capitals, all around an exquisite garden. The walls are covered with wonderful frescoes.



SOME PRACTICAL ADVICE

Alquézar boasts several places to stay, modest, but all with the charm of family-run establishments. If you prefer something a little more luxurious, in Barbastro there is the excellent «Rey Sancho Ramírez», which although



on the main road is very comfortable.

Alquézar also has a camp-site at the entrance to the town, very popular with climbers attracted to the region by its rocky terrain. Lovers of rafting can enjoy the delights of a journey down the Vero from Lecina to Alquézar, hurtling through ravines and gorges. Great fun if you do not mind getting wet.

Spring and autumn are the best times to visit. In summer it can sometimes be difficult to find accommodation due to the influx of holidaymakers from the neighbouring region of Catalonia and France, perhaps the real «discoverers» of Alquézar.

tures fate. Needless to say, the community was deeply unhappy about this state of affairs, but unable to rectify it. However, one candidate was a girl from the village of Buera, who although lacking the storytelling talents of Scheherazade, was certainly not wanting in courage. Concealing a stiletto in her plaited hair, she managed to cut the tyrant's throat. In a display of bravado, she leaned out of the bedroom window and showed the bloody clothing of the murdered ruler to his soldiers. Such was their devotion to him that they blindfolded their horses and set off at a gallop towards the ravine of the River Vero, and plummeted to their doom.

This is a village which inspires fantasy, and the visitor will soon be caught up in its magic. The hollows eroded in the rock bed in front of the Collegiate look as though a giant had rested there, leaving his imprint forever. But that is not the only supernatural element in Alquézar; superstitious visitors can rest easy here, secure in the knowledge that evil spirits will be kept at bay by the local custom of hanging a boar's trotter above the front door.

LA TABERNA DEL ENTREMURO

Returning to Barbastro for dinner, we decided to eat in the *Taberna del Entremuro*. There are several good restaurants in the village, but this is the best place to sample the region's specialities. Fernando Puértolas has been running this tiny but charming establishment for 10 years.

Young, and with a wry expression only partly hidden by his glasses, he will happily share his extensive knowledge of local cooking and traditions with you.

Among the regional specialities he revealed to us were *tortetas*, a dish made from maize flour, bread, and pigs blood and prepared at the beginning of winter—the traditional pig slaughtering time—and which unfortunately we were unable to try. However, we were able to sample *chiretas*, an interesting dish made from rice and lamb, and which should be generously washed down with good Somontano wine.

The meal over, it was time to relax and reflect for a while on the troubled history of this area. If you do visit Alquézar, you will find that after sharing both its treasures and scars, you are assured of peace and quiet. The clash of swords and cries of vengeance are things of the past.

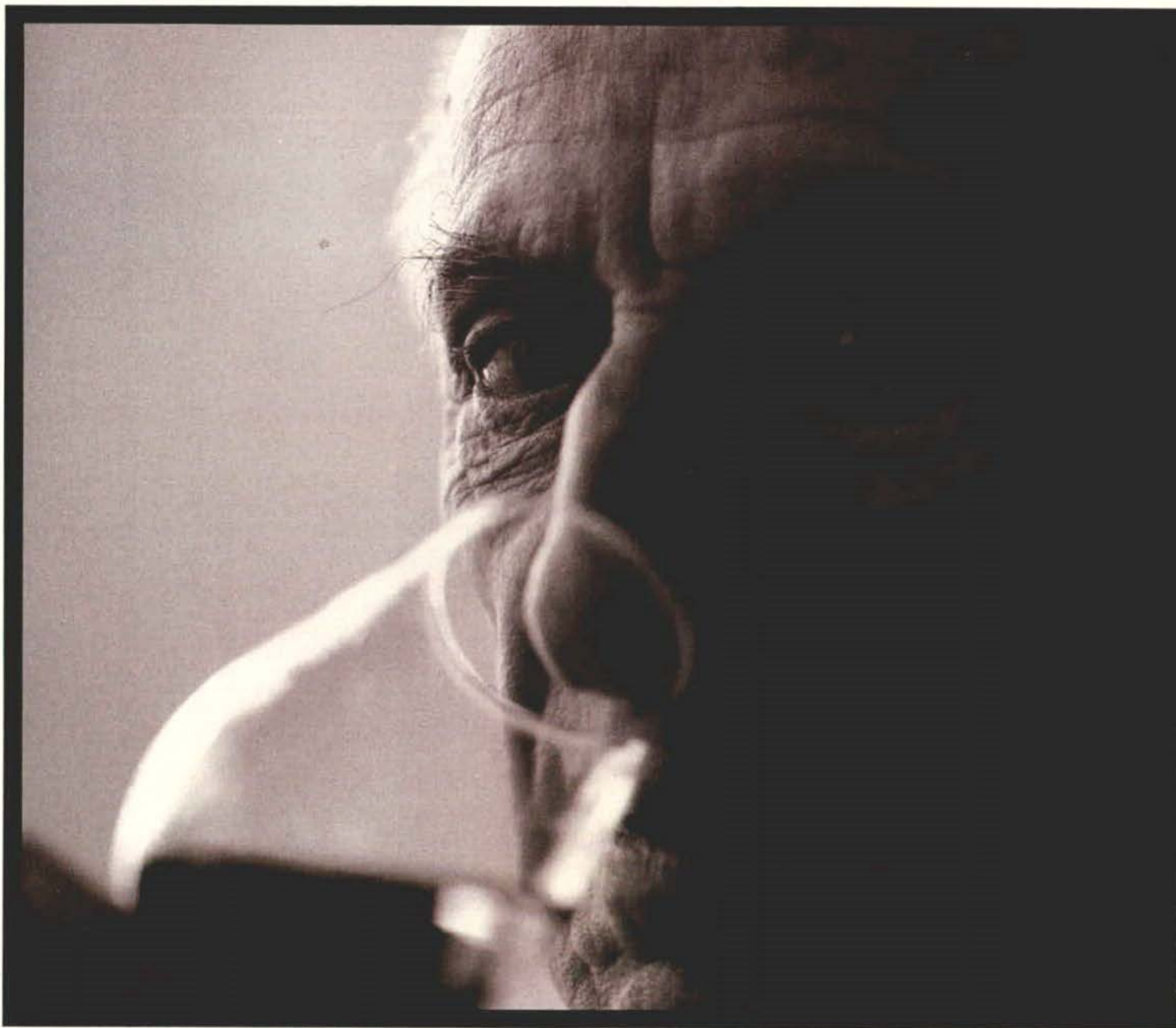


In Barbastro—very close to Alquézar—the Taberna del Entremuro is the best place to sample the region's specialities from the hand of Fernando Puértolas, its owner.





La Quinta Esencia Del Fino



WINNING BY A NOSE

For the latest in this series that peels back famous-name labels to reveal the human face of the Spanish wine world, I travelled south to Andalusia to meet official Illustrious Citizen of Jerez, Decanter's Man of the Year for 1991, septuagenarian motor-cyclist and nose extraordinary, José Ignacio Domecq.

JOSE IGNACIO DOMECQ

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

To visit the ancient town of Jerez is to step into a microcosm. This southern point of the Iberian Peninsula has been a focus of trade and settlement since time immemorial. The name Jerez —and thence our 'Sherry'— derives from Seris, the Arabic name given to the town which flourished under the Moors, whose dominion over southern Spain lasted seven hundred years until they were finally ousted by the Christian forces of the Catholic Monarchs in 1492. In that same year, Columbus' historic voyage of discovery opened up the New World to the Old, and the ports of Andalusia —first Seville and then Cadiz— became the gateways for trade and travel between the two. By this time, Jerez had been a major source of wine for England for over a century, and British influence had added yet another ingredient to an already eclectic cultural environment which is still very evident today.

The gently undulating landscape contained within the 'Sherry Triangle' formed by the towns of Jerez, Puerto de Santa María and Sanlúcar de Barrameda is curiously reminiscent of Kent in England but with important differences. The vast sky is a crystalline blue, the trees silhouetted against the skyline are palms, and the buildings that dot the landscape are white *fincas* with horse-shoe arches. How exotic all this must have seemed to Patrick Murphy, the Irish trader who founded the Domecq bodega in the mid-18th Century. Jerez, with its sun-dappled squares, orange trees in the streets, flowers in March, its gentle rhythm of life, and names that mean fine sherry the world over forming part

of its urban landscape, is still exotic today. And yet strangely familiar.

In the warm, bright patio of the Domecq building, the faint but unmistakable whiff of sherry mingled with the smell of fresh whitewash: workmen were repainting already impeccable cream and white stucco. A smilingly formal retainer escorted me along a marble-floored corridor, through an atmosphere of cool and perfect peace, to the unmarked door which leads to the office of José Ignacio Domecq, head of one of the biggest and most prestigious sherry and brandy companies in the world.

THE MAN HIMSELF

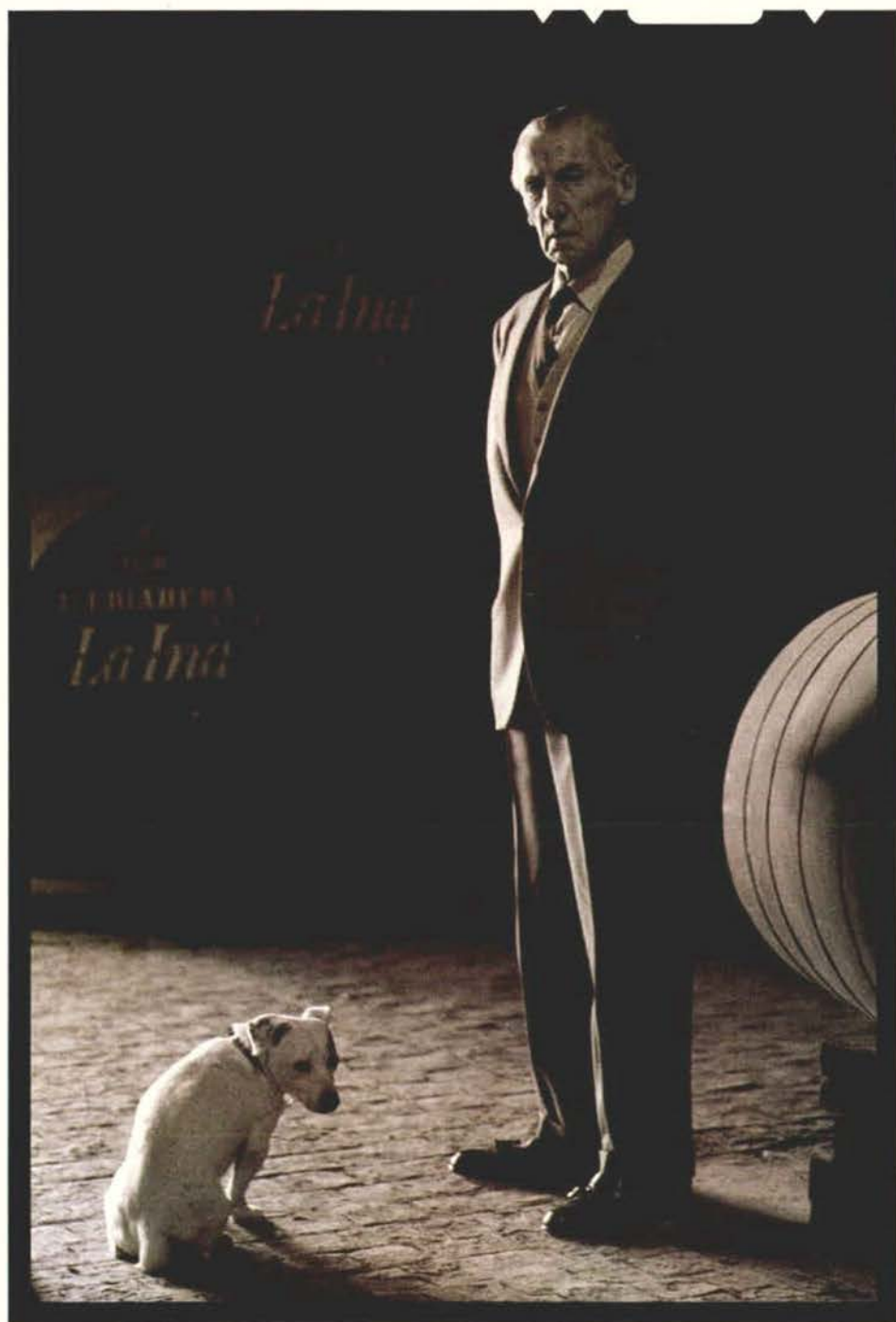
A small, slender, bespectacled figure stepped forward, impeccably groomed and, in his brown and green houndstooth jacket, looking every inch the British gentleman. One shake of an unexpectedly large, gnarled and workman-like hand was the first hint of the more surprising facets of his character. Some of these are already part of wine-world lore. There can be few in the business who don't know that Mr. Domecq rides to work every day on a natty, if battered, red motor cycle with his dog Paco in a box on the back. And that he is, at 78, still a skilful and active polo player. And that, phoenix-like, he seems to be physically indestructible, springing back into action after accidents that would leave many a younger man reeling. The thing about this sort of lore is that it makes one expect people to be larger-than-life, flamboyant, professional raconteurs...

It was with some relief, therefore, that I found Mr. Domecq to be a mild-mannered, self-effacing man. An articulate talker, he is a person whose gentle irony, accompanied by a quick glint of the specs, raises delighted smiles in his listeners—or at least in this one—rather than side-splitting mirth. Paco, on the other hand, carried understatement a little too far that day: curled up in an armchair, he displayed little canine charisma.

A British education has left its stamp on all the dynastic sherry families of Jerez and, by extension, on the local way of life. José Ignacio Domecq speaks Spanish and English with equal fluency. His English accent is, frankly, posh and, like his

manners, smacks very much of the education he received from English nannies and governesses as a child. Born in 1914, he still remembers the mortification of walking through the streets of Jerez dressed in an Eton collar, belted jacket, trousers to the knee, long woollen stockings and ankle boots, to the general merriment of local lads. He and his eleven siblings were taught, at home, in both Spanish and English (as were his own twelve children).

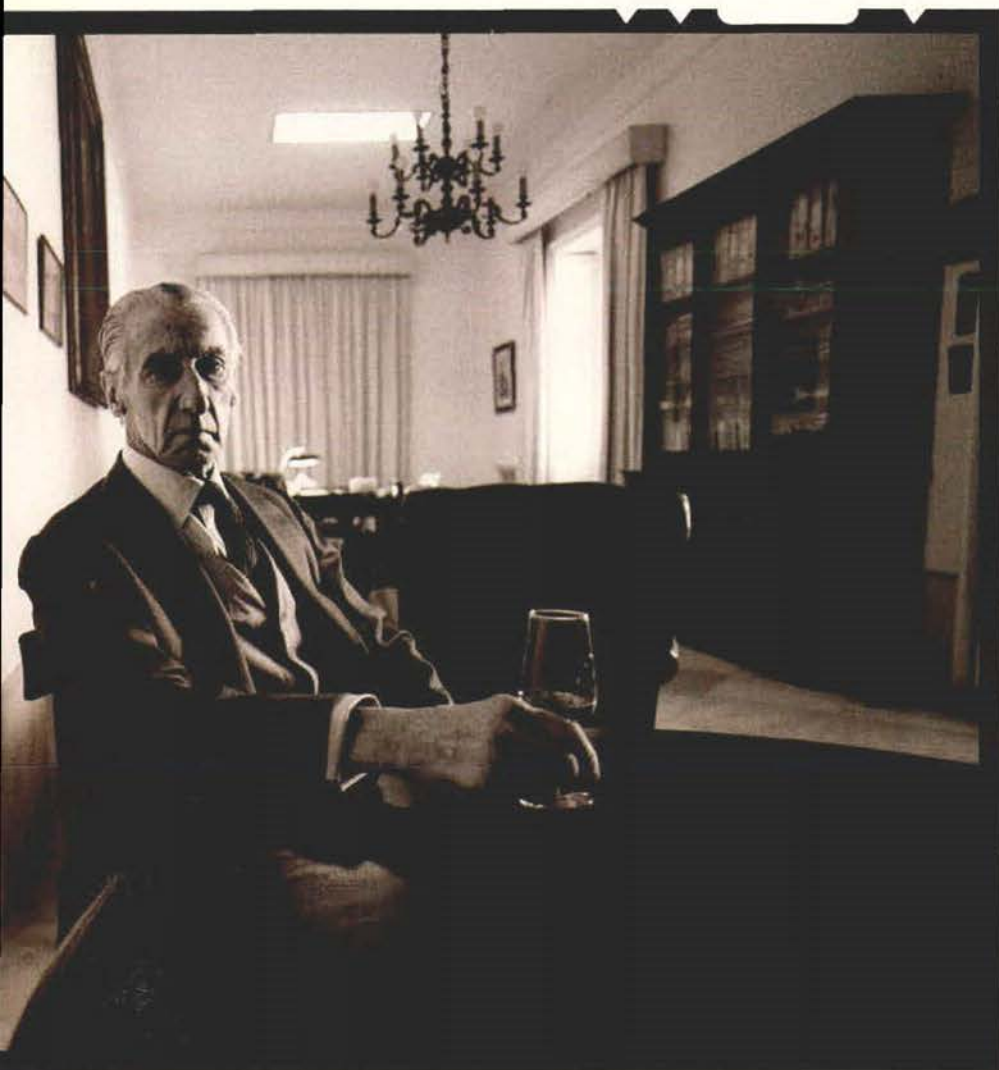
Though the Domecqs are originally an aristocratic French family from the Basses Pyrenees—the company motto is *Domecq obliga*—the British influence seems to have prevailed. Close trade links were cultural ones, too. In 1869, the game of polo



was introduced into England from India by the Tenth Hussars. By 1872, it was being played in Jerez, thanks to José Ignacio Domecq's maternal grandfather. But while the children drank their tea, played character-forming cricket, and learned to be punctual, Andalusia must surely have been forming them too. For in this part of Spain there is poetic gallantry on everyone's lips, exotic scents in the air and a calendar of fiestas which celebrate the wine-harvest, bull-fights, horses and their riders, and surely predate the Christian calendar into which many of them have now been fitted.

TWO-WAY PULL

Jerez is just a few miles inland from the Atlantic Ocean, and the Straits of Gibraltar, which separate the Atlantic from the Mediterranean, are just down the coast. José Ignacio Domecq felt the call of the sea



To be a wine taster, you need enthusiasm, determination and the urge to learn, he says, but unless you have acute organoleptic perceptions and memory, you'll never be more than average.

from an early age, and was about to launch on his training as a naval officer when the installation of the Second Republic in 1931 and the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936 gave a very different cast to his career than had been intended.

He trained, instead, as an industrial engineer and, after active service throughout the war years, entered the family wine business immediately on his return to civilian life. He still loves the sea and sails his own sloop, delighting in doing without the engine and making wind and sail work for him. Even so, he believes today that he would have ended up in the sherry business anyway. For, of all the family, he was the one with The Nose.

On hot summer days when he was a small boy, in the days before people went to the beach, his parents used to have tubs filled with salt water set out in the patio for the children to play in. When

they emerged, they were each given a little tot of sherry to complete the tonic effect. This is José Ignacio Domecq's first memory of the taste of sherry. Though he spent his childhood trailing after his father, absorbing an invaluable wine education in the process, he believes that good wine tasters are born, not made.

To be a wine taster, you need enthusiasm, determination and the urge to learn, he says, but unless you have acute organoleptic perceptions and memory, you'll never be more than average. He has these essential qualities himself, and they have made him one of the most respected sherry and brandy blenders in the business. In an emergency, he has even been known to do remote-control sherry blending—an amontillado, actually—over the telephone from New York: he can remember quite clearly the exact smell and taste of the contents of each butt and its exact position

in the bodega. I reminded him of a Domecq advertisement on Spanish TV a few years back in which he was seen applying the famous nose—remarkable both for its prominence and sensitivity—to a *copita* of sherry, while guitars strummed and castanets clacked. «Yes», he mused, «it's a shame really. Such a big family and they always choose me, the ugly one, for TV and photos.»

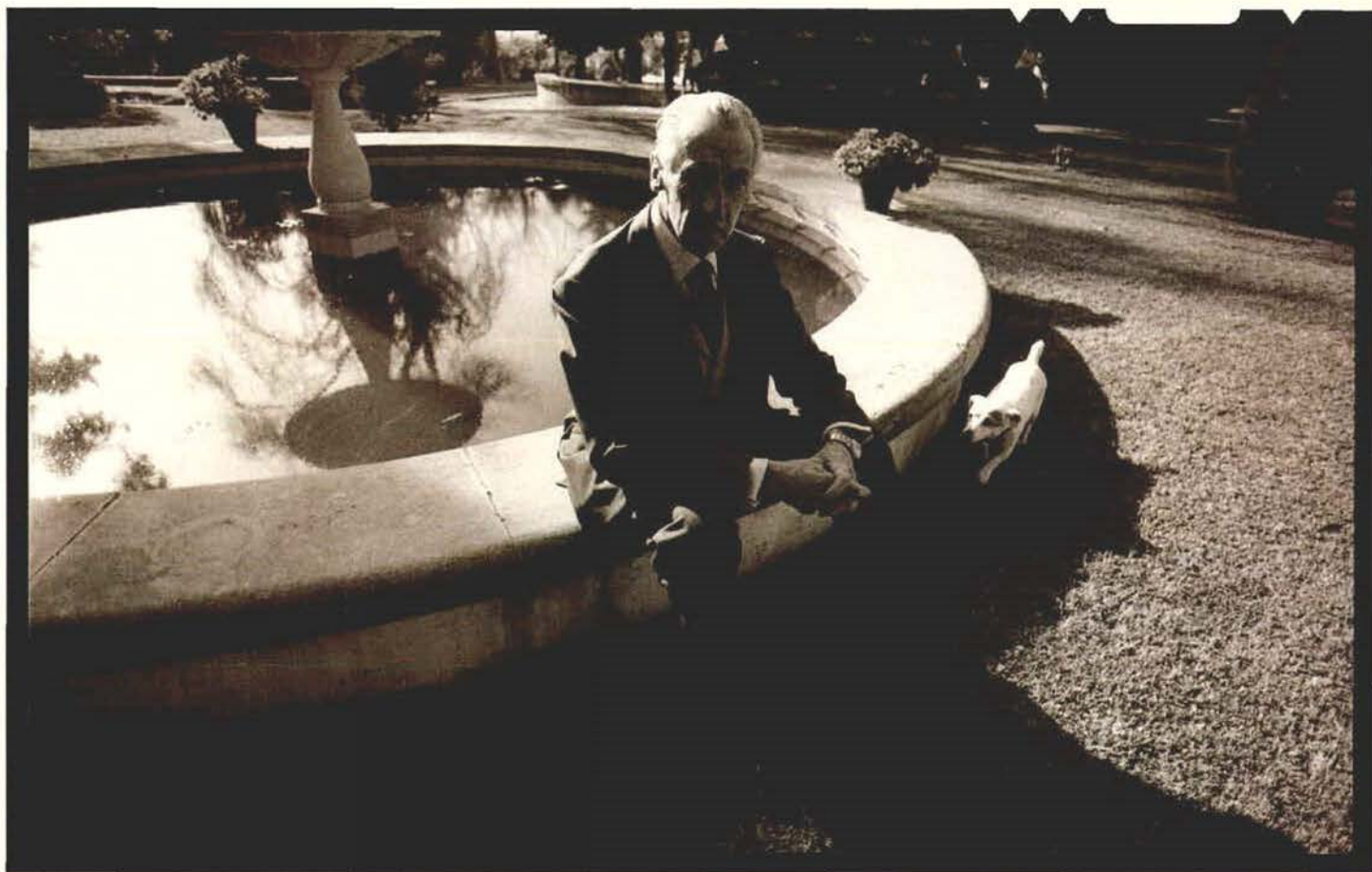
ENDURING QUALITIES

Whereas today, marketing and advertising constitute a separate entity within the Domecq empire, he still remembers a time when selling was the job of representatives. He has seen many changes in the course of his long career. When he started, grapes were still trodden, transport was by horse and cart, planting and cultivating all manual. Now, there is much more mechanization in the vineyards, though grapes are still hand-picked; plastic containers minimize damage to grapes and help avoid the risk of premature fermentation, grapes are mechanically, though gently, pressed; stainless steel fermentation tanks and temperature control (introduced some 20 years ago), make the whole vinification process cleaner and simpler. But sherry is still made, exactly as it was 150 years ago, by the *solera* system, which Domecq describes neatly as 'a natural machine'.

He must surely have seen many social changes, too. Andalusia is traditionally a region where the division between rich and poor is wide and marked. In the area around Jerez, the sherry and brandy industries still provide an astonishingly high 50% of local employment, and this figure does not include auxiliary industries such as packaging materials, labelling and corks. José Ignacio Domecq was brought up with a keen awareness of responsibility and respect for the company's employees, who were referred to as 'the family'. Domecq bodega workers and household staff were supplied with what was known as *vino de familia*, 'house wine' in the true sense of the term. In 1991, a strike triggered off by disagreements over responsibility for a local pension fund for workers within the industry paralyzed production, and for the first time in his life, Mr. Domecq saw grapes shrivelling in the vineyards, workers idle, and pickets at bodega gates throughout the area. «And nobody benefited. Everyone I spoke to, both in this company and others, was depressed and longing to get back to work.»

MARKET FORCES

José Ignacio Domecq travels the world, and has always been in a good position to observe shifts of taste and market. He even



He has seen many changes in the course of his long career. But sherry is still made exactly as it was 150 years ago, by the *solera* system, which Domecq describes neatly as «a natural machine».

attempted a one-man missionary campaign during visits to Britain, trying to persuade bar-men to serve sherry cold. 'They always say it should be served at room temperature. But this notion dates back to the time when British houses were freezing.' The British market, and the British Sherry question are hot topics in Jerez at the moment, and had to be broached. Is the sherry industry in crisis? 'Not really. Overall sales are not that badly affected, though there has been a big slump in sales to Britain.'

Mr. Domecq was present at the famous Sherry Case, whose 25th anniversary is celebrated this year, and puts forward a cogent argument in favour of exclusive rights to the use of the term 'Sherry'. But that's a story that needs an article to itself.

PERSONAL PREFERENCES

So what does the head of a sherry empire drink? 'Sherry, of course. I like *fino*, and *oloroso*, too. A *fino* is as dry as you

can get —it's drier than gin or whisky. I like our Riojas. And French wine. I sometimes have a dry martini as a pick-me-up, but sherry is the only real aperitif.' (This is uttered as an eternal truth, in the sort of tone one might use when saying

'Humans need oxygen'.) 'The thing about *fino* is that you can drink it throughout a meal. Sometimes when I'm having an aperitif on my boat and I can't be bothered to go below for wine to drink with dinner, I just keep drinking *fino*.'

Does he feel he's led a privileged life? 'I can't complain. I was lucky enough to be born into an ambience that suited me, and always to have been comfortably off. I love sailing and have a house where I can lie in bed and look out at the sea. They still let me play polo, and I'm as enthusiastic about it now as when I started. Of course, certain responsibilities have meant that I couldn't do everything I'd have liked to, but that's the same for everyone, isn't it? I can't bear showing off, and I really like to go unnoticed, but that's often difficult.' (One might argue here that

anyone who rides around on a red motorcycle with a dog in a box on the back has not exactly opted for camouflage, but then everyone knows him in Jerez anyway.) 'They made me an Illustrious Citizen of Jerez —I don't know why.' Is he a hard worker? 'Yes. And I always finish what I start.'

And how does he see the future? One son and a nephew (big names in their own right) have followed him into the business. He is confident that there is plenty of talent about —and not only within the family— to ensure that sherry goes on being made as it always has been. 'Of course, tastes change. Wine needs a certain degree of ceremony and this is being lost in some walks of life. Having said that, you can hardly pick up a magazine without reading something about wine. People are genuinely interested, and customers need to be taught about wine. But there'll always be sherry drinkers. It's the best aperitif there is.'

Hawys Pritchard is a writer and translator who lives and works in Spain. She is a regular contributor to *Spain Gourmetour* and other periodicals.



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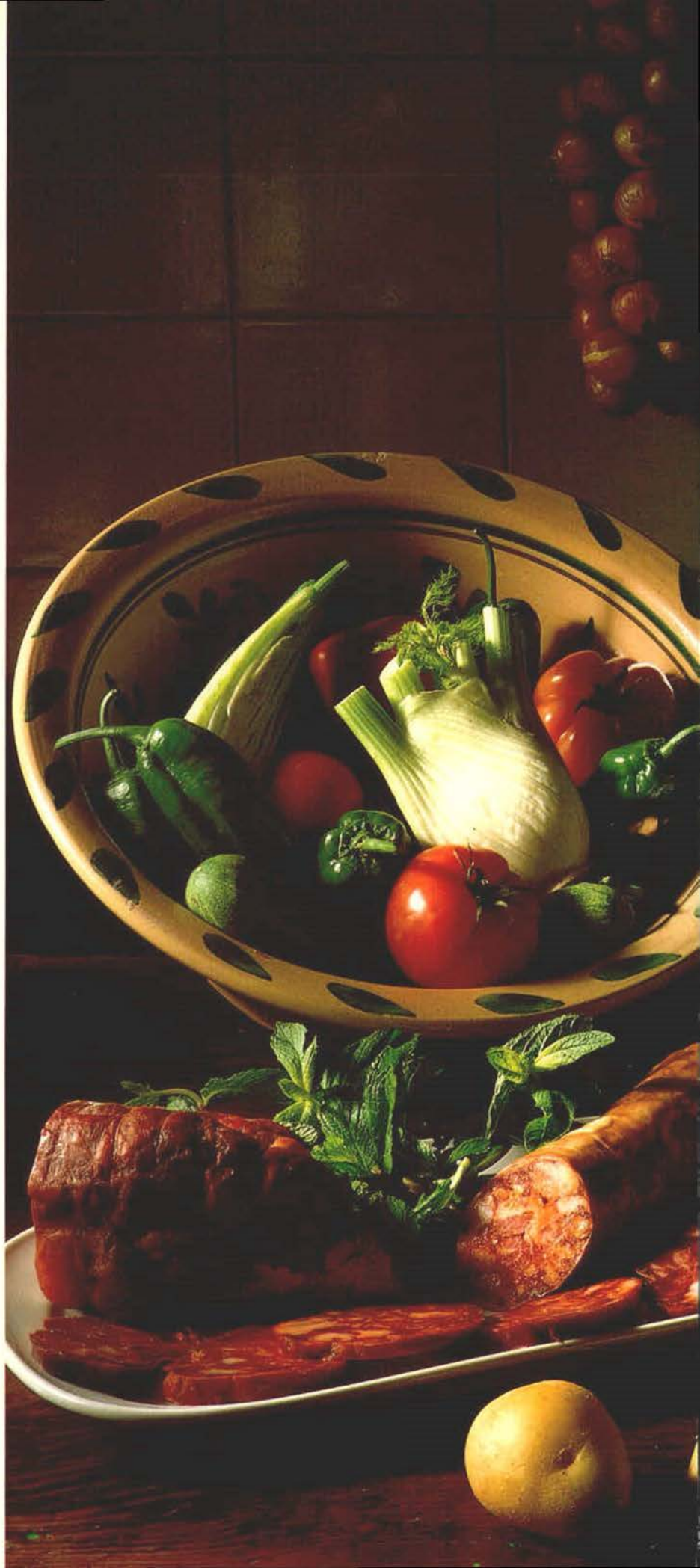
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PIGS WITH A SOUTHERN ACCENT

Text: Janet Mendel
Still Life: Menchu Arttime
Photo: A. de Benito/ICEX

Fragrant, soul-satisfying *puchero*, a meal-in-a-pot, or *potaje* laden with vegetables and chickpeas wouldn't be as good without the typical sausages which flavour and give them body. Andalusia and Extremadura, Spain's southern and westernmost regions, have a roster of delicious cured meats which find their way into these stew pots. Even today, many country families fatten a pig or two to be «sacrificed» (that is the verb in Spanish) during the cold winter months to make country hams and sausages.

Besides these homely examples of *chacinería*, southern Spain also boasts hams and sausages of exceptional gourmet quality thanks to a very special pig, the *cerdo ibérico*.





In the western part of Andalusia and into Extremadura, in a countryside of rolling hills and holm— and cork-oak trees, roam Spain's native Iberian pigs. The colour of earth, these small, bristly pigs blend right into the landscape as they scabble in the deep, dappled shade beneath oak trees. Gorging on acorns and ranging freely over rough terrain (some say they even eat vipers), these genial brown pigs make the sweetest hams and sausages in the world.

Descendant of the wild pigs which once thrived in woodland that covered much of the Iberian peninsula, the *cerdo ibérico* doesn't put on fat like ordinary porkers. Thanks to its healthy, free-ranging life, it keeps a lean figure. What makes for exceptional ham is the animal's propensity to store fat in layers throughout the muscle meat. Later, during the curing of the hams, these layers of fatty marbling bathe the meat with flavour.

Of course, there's more to ham than that. The quality of Iberico ham depends first

on how the pig was fed and then how the meat is cured. Considered the very finest are hams from pigs which were allowed to range for food, moving through the seasons from roots and bulbs to wheat and corn stubble and spending their last few months feasting on acorns. This is what produces that incredibly sweet and nutty taste. (Check the label for *bellota*, acorn.) Second best are pigs which are partially grain-fed. Third category —though, as Iberico, still considered superior to other hams— is from pigs which are penned and raised on commercial feeds.

RECIPES

Broad Beans with Spanish Ham, Granada Style

(Habas con jamón a la granadina)

Serves 4:

2 kg fresh broad beans (or 400 g frozen, shelled beans)
100 ml olive oil
150 g serrano ham, diced
4 cloves garlic, chopped
salt and pepper
chopped parsley, fennel or mint

Shell the beans. Heat the oil in a heat-proof casserole (preferably earthenware) and add the beans, ham and garlic. Fry them on a high heat very briefly, then reduce the flame and let the beans stew in the oil until they are quite tender, about 20 minutes. A little water can be added if needed. Season with salt and pepper to taste and serve with a sprinkling of chopped parsley, fennel or mint.

"Bread Crumbs" Croutons, Extremadura Style *(Migas a la extremeña)*

Serve this delicious dish with fried eggs for breakfast or supper, alongside sausage or added to soups.

Cut day-old bread, crusts and all, into very small dice. Sprinkle with salted water to just thoroughly dampen but not soak the bread. Wrap the croutons in a dampened tea towel and tie it tightly. Let set for a few hours or overnight. In a little olive oil or lard, slowly fry diced salt pork and diced serrano or Iberico ham. Add the croutons, chopped garlic, a little paprika, and continue frying until bread is slightly toasted. Serve with fried eggs or, as a cereal, with hot milk.

Andalusian Potage *(Berza cocida)*

Serves 4:

400 g chick peas or black-eyed peas (*chicharros*), soaked overnight
100 g salt pork or bacon

200 g pork or meaty pork bone
2 litres water
1/2 kg chard and/or green beans
200 g Andalusian chorizo
200 g Andalusian morcilla
2 cloves
10 peppercorns
3 cloves garlic
2tsp salt
2tsp paprika
4 medium tomatoes
1/4 kg pumpkin
4 medium potatoes

Drain the soaked chick peas or black-eyed peas and put them to cook with the salt pork, fresh pork and water. Skim the froth as it comes to a boil. Lower heat and simmer for one and a half hours. Then add the chard, finely chopped, or green beans, which have been cleaned and chopped, with the chorizo and morcilla. In the mortar or blender crush cloves and peppercorns with the garlic, salt and paprika and add to the pot. When meat and chick peas are nearly tender, about 2 hours, add the potatoes and pumpkin, both peeled and cut in small chunks. Cook another 30 minutes. Cut the pork and sausages (use kitchen scissors) into small pieces and serve the potage in soup bowls.

Chicken With Iberico Ham *(Pollo al ibérico)*

Serves 4:

50 ml olive oil
6 cloves garlic
1 chicken, jointed
200 g Iberico ham, diced
100 ml dry sherry
salt and pepper

Heat the olive oil in a large frying pan. Add the whole, peeled garlic cloves and fry until golden. Remove. Fry the chicken pieces in the same oil, turning occasionally until nicely browned on all sides, add the diced ham part way along. Then add the sherry and salt and pepper and the toasted garlic. Cover and simmer until chicken is fork-tender, about 25 minutes.

CURING MATURES THE FLAVOUR

The curing process starts when the hams, weighing between five and seven kilos (11 and 15 pounds), are packed in coarse sea salt for two weeks. After washing, they are first hung in lofts, then transferred to cellars to finish the ageing process, which takes up to 18 months. During this time, variations in humidity and temperature, alternating between the chill of rigorous winters and

In the western part of Andalusia and into Extremadura, in a countryside of rolling hills and holm and cork-oak trees, roam Spain's native Iberian pigs. They are small and the colour of earth.

melting heat in the summer, break down the fat composition. As the fat «sweats», it bathes the ham in flavour. A white penicillin mould covers the surface, contributing to the flavouring process.

In assessing hams for purchase, look for a long, thin hoof tipped in black, which identifies the Iberico —sometimes called *pata negra*, or «black foot». A hoof with well-worn edges shows the pig probably enjoyed an un-penned life. If the pig was acorn-fed, the fat, streaked throughout the meat, takes on a yellow colour.

Most Iberico products come from an area bordering the Sierra Morena, in the provinces of Huelva and Cordoba in Andalusia and Badajoz and Caceres in Extremadura. The name of Jabugo (Huelva), where superb hams are produced, is sometimes, erroneously, used as a generic name for Iberico products. Other important place names in both regions are Cumbres Mayores, Cor-

HOW TO SERVE HAM AND SAUSAGE

Use a very sharp knife with a flexible blade to slice Ibérico ham. Cut it lengthwise, with the grain, curving to follow the bone, into paper-thin slices. (Spanish kitchenware shops sell special ham boards to brace the joints while you carve.) Serve the ham raw, at room temperature, fanned out on a plate. As with wine, the aroma is an important part of the experience of tasting this special ham, thus the thin slicing is important. However, don't leave sliced ham exposed to the air for any length of time. Wrap in plastic-wrap and refrigerate any leftovers. Accompany the ham with chunks or slices of bread or, in summer, with chilled melon. Wines with a southern accent — *fino* Sherry from Jerez or Montilla-Moriles from Cordoba— best partner this fine ham. Hang the ham in a cool, dark place.

Other, less costly, *jamón serrano* is served in the same manner as Ibérico, but may also be used in cooking. A bone or chunk nicely flavours a mess of beans (though the meat becomes very stringy). Or, quick-fry it in dice or slices.

In stylish restaurants as well as country *ventas* in Spain, a favourite *entremeses* or hors d'oeuvre plate, consists of a selection of Ibérico cold-cuts — ham, *lomo embuchado*, *morcón*, *chorizo* and *morcilla*.

Soft *chorizo*, though it can be consumed raw (enjoyed, like Mallorcan *sobrasada* spread on bread rolls), is usually cooked in stews or fried, perhaps with a couple of eggs, which are coloured and flavoured by the red drippings. Another winning way is cooked in white wine or flambéed in alcohol (*aguardiente*). *Morcilla* also is eaten as a cold-cut without further cooking (try pairing it with sliced apples or grapes). *Morcilla* is an indispensable ingredient in the sturdy potages of these regions with chick peas, lentils or beans.

Salchichón, sliced to fill a *bocadillo*, or sandwich roll, makes a typical working-man's or school child's snack, or accompanies wine as a *tapa*. Try it fried too. For a quick and easy pasta sauce, cut *salchichón* in strips and add to tomato sauce.

tegana, Los Romeros, El Repilado, Cortelazor, Campofrío, Montánchez, Piornal, Ruanes, Valencia de Alcántara, Pedroches, Fuenteovejuna, Pozoblanco and Hinojosa del Duque.

A pig is more than a pair of hams, of course, so other pork products are delicious by-products. Especially delectable when made from Iberico is *capa de lomo* or *cinta de lomo embuchado*. A whole boned loin is macerated with salt, paprika and garlic, then stuffed into beef tripe and air dried for several months. Light smoking with oak seems to point up the rich, nutty flavour. The *morcón* is a sausage made up of diced meat from the loin and shoulder, combined with nuggets of fat, all allowed to marinate together, flavouring the meat with dusky overtones of sweet, dried red peppers. The mixture is then stuffed into a round, fat casing and cured. Some pieces can weigh as much as two kilos (4½ pounds).

NOT ALL PIGS ARE IBERICO

There are other hams and sausages in Andalusia which don't carry the designer-label name of Iberico. Elsewhere, where oaks don't grow, various other breeds of pig, which have a much higher ratio of growth rate/yield than the Ibérico, are

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raised. Usually fattened on commercial feeds, they are the «raw material» of charcuterie. Much of it is very small-scale, indeed—a village pork butcher who has gained a local reputation for knowing just how to flavour the *chorizo*; a city market-stall where the vendor purveys a special *salchichón*, not to be found anywhere else; a country housewife invited to all the local *matanzas*, hog butcherings, because she's got a magic touch with *morcilla* or blood sausages (and, possibly, because she's also the best flamenco singer in the vicinity, an asset which combines nicely with sausage-making in this country).

However, Andalusia and Extremadura are regions of important industrial production of hams and sausages as well. In these meat processing plants, there are methods to speed up the curing process (just as, for instance, in the production of bacon, and many other cured meats).

Price generally reflects the difference in industrial and artesanal production, with industrially produced *jamón serrano* a fraction of the cost of aged Ibérico. What it lacks in finesse, it gains in accessibility for everyday eating. Marketed in supermarkets already de-boned, these hams can be ma-

Gorging on acorns and ranging freely over rough terrain, these genial Iberian pigs make the sweetest hams and sausages in the world, thanks to the animal's propensity to store fat in layers throughout the muscle meat.

chine sliced (across the grain) and sold by weight.

One of the best-known names in ham outside the Ibérico region, is Trevelez (Granada), a village of white-washed cottages and grey slate roofs high in the snow-covered Sierra Nevada mountains. Trevelez and other towns in the Alpujarra region, which extends into Almería, were once renowned for fine hams and sausages. Capitalizing on a recognized name, producers in recent years have expanded production, bringing in meat from elsewhere in Spain for curing in the dry, mountain air.

PLUS CHORIZO, MORCILLA AND SALCHICHON

Besides, ham, *lomo* and *morcón*, Andalusia and Extremadura charcuterie products are *chorizo*, *morcilla* and *salchichón*. All three are produced elsewhere in Spain, but everywhere with a difference.

For example, *chorizo* really means two very different sausages. Both are a ruddy, brick red, coloured with paprika or dried peppers. One is a thick, hard sausage, usually a conglomerate of tiny pieces of meat and fat, which is usually served sliced as a *tapa* or sandwich filling. Whereas, traditional Andalusian *chorizo*, to be found hanging in *ristras*, long ropes of sausage tied off in links, in meat markets, is a soft sausage usually confected of meat and fat which is put through a grinder (rather than chopped). Besides paprika and garlic, *chorizo* can contain more or less hot chili pepper plus nutmeg, oregano and pepper. It gets its characteristic «sour» flavour from the fermentations during curing. Another Andalusian presentation is *chorizos* packed in *manteca colorada*, rendered lard coloured bright orange-red with quantities of paprika. The *chorizo* of Extremadura is typically a garlicky version.

Morcilla is a mellow blood sausage or black pudding with a sweet hint of cinnamon and cloves, sometimes paprika and oregano. Some versions contain onions, others, rice or even pumpkin. *Morcilla* is cooked, then dried and sometimes smoked.

Salchichón casero, or homemade style, typical of Malaga and Granada, only slightly resembles the commercial hard sausage of the same name. Flecked with pepper, it contains a mixture of chopped lean and belly fat and is a salami-red colour (from saltpetre). Only partially dried, Andalusian *salchichón* is, like *chorizo*, a soft sausage.

A few strictly regional *embutidos* merit mention. One is Granada's *relleno*, a paté of kidneys, ham, chicken breast and bread crumbs, stuffed into a fat sausage roll. Córdoba's «white» *chorizo* is another.

Thanks to the fact that some northerners have come south, Andalusia also produces some very fine *butifarra* and *sobrasada*, *fuet* and *longaniza*, sausages more typical of other regions.

Commercially manufactured sausages carry government-controlled labels which spell out their ingredients, date of manufacture and producer's registration. Sausages are graded extra, first, second and third. So, for example, extra-grande *chorizo* can have a ratio of 30 per cent meat to 57 per cent fat, while «first» is 26/60.

Janet Mendel is an American journalist based in southern Spain for more than 20 years. Since 1968 she has contributed regularly to *Lookout Magazine*, a monthly English-language magazine published in Spain. She has published two books on Spanish cooking and has had occasional articles in various world-wide publications.

(EXTREMADURA AND NORTHWEST OF ANDALUSIA)

IBERIAN PIG REARING ZONE: HAM, CAÑA DE LOMO, MORCON AND CHORIZO



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DELICIAS

PICKLES & CONDIMENTS

The Verdejo Blanco variety was introduced into Spain from North Africa by the invading Arabs. From the Muslim stronghold of Al-Andalus it was borne northwards by the migrating *mozárabes*—Christians who maintained their religion although they lived in Muslim dominated territories.

By today, Verdejo counts as a variety native to Castile in that it has adapted to local conditions to such a degree that when grown elsewhere, it loses all its special characteristics. It has become attuned both to extreme cold and drought, reducing evaporation to a minimum by producing a particular type of foliage and growth cycle, and this has been enhanced by cultivation techniques such as *en rastro* pruning and carefully calculated spacing of plants in the vineyards. Verdejo is a trailing vine, with long, sturdy shoots. *En rastro* pruning has been discovered to be the most effective: shoots are long-pruned and left trailing on the ground or nowadays, on low espaliers.

Adapted over the centuries to the conditions of Castile, Verdejo has emerged as a highly versatile grape, which does equally well in fortified wines (*vinos generosos*) as in white table wines.

A Verdejo wine will develop biologically under a film of yeast throughout the year to give fortified wines, known locally as *Palidos*, which have a penetrating aroma and are very light in the mouth. When the process is interrupted artificially, or speeded up by placing the wine in glass carboys outside in the sun before ageing it further in wood, the end product is known as *Dorado* and belongs to the type of wine known as *rancios*.

These fortified wines have been made in the area for centuries, but have now declined in popularity. This has allowed Verdejo Blanco's excellent qualities in still wines to be appreciated more fully. In young wines, its attractions are its individual primary aromas, full flavour and elegant bitter aftertaste. After moderate matura-

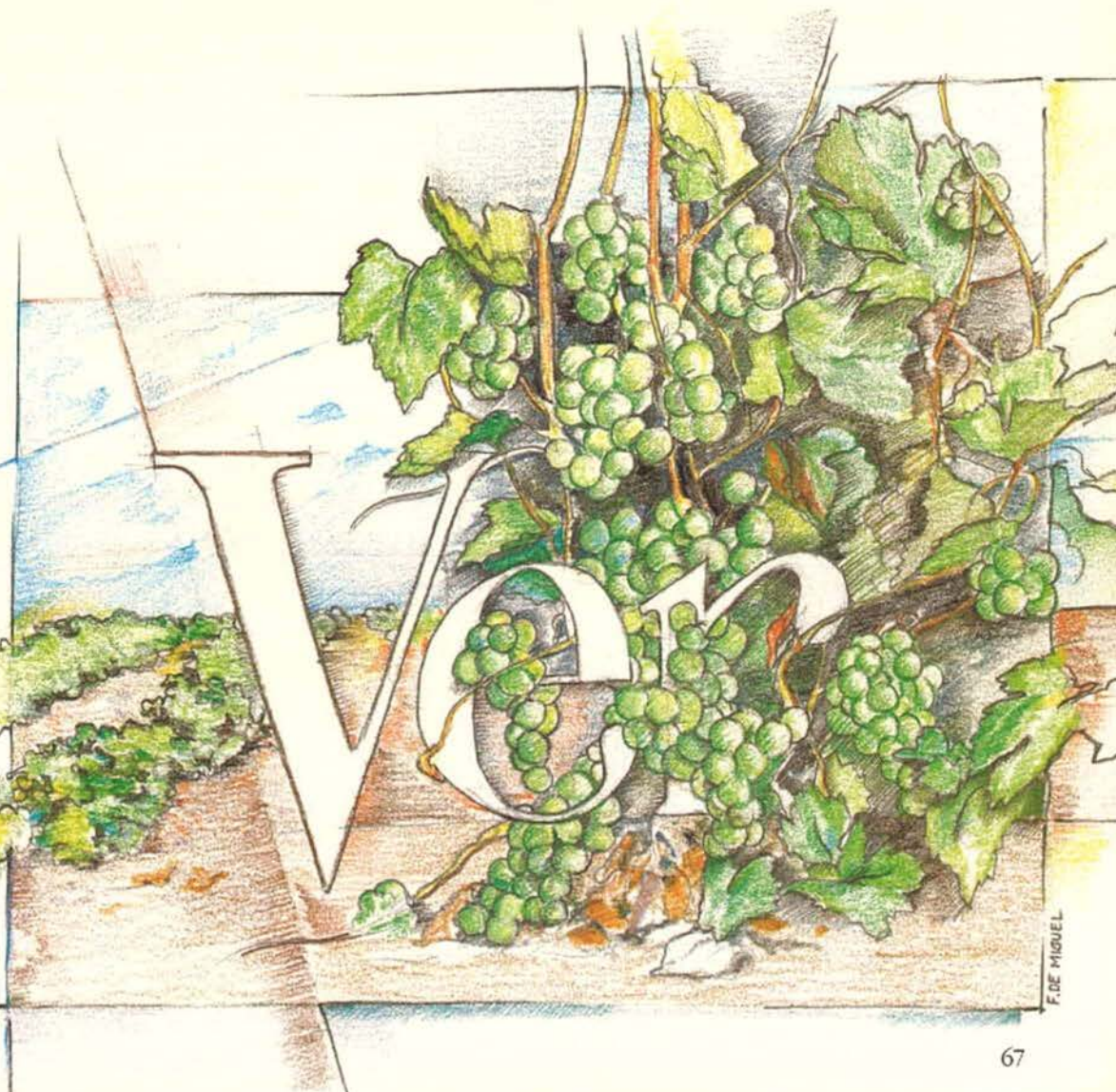
VERDEJO

The White Queen of Castile-Leon

Text: **José Serrano Cuadrillo**

Illustrations: **Fernando de Miguel/ICEX**

Verdejo rules in Rueda. The area covered by the Rueda Denomination of Origin occupies part of Castile's arid central plateau, where temperatures are extreme and conditions tough. The Verdejo grape has a virtual monopoly over its vineyards, and is what gives the wines of Rueda their singular character.



F. DE MIGUEL

tion, this variety's strong personality emerges to the full. Verdejo wines are characteristically full bodied, rich in extract and have a readily recognizable greenish tinge.

Though it was believed that this variety was particularly adept at accumulating iron, this has been found not to be the case. The main growing area is in the Castilian provinces of Avila, Segovia, Valladolid and Zamora.

DESCRIPTION AND APPLICATIONS

Growth habit: Trailing.

Fully developed leaf: Rounded, somewhat irregular, medium-sized; broad lyre-shaped or U-shaped stalk indentation; five-lobed, with V-shaped lower lateral indenta-

Although introduced into Spain from North Africa, today Verdejo counts as a variety native to Castile in that it has adapted to local conditions to such a degree that when grown elsewhere, it loses all its special characteristics.

tions; face and underside hairless, with five veins; it is a thick, slightly twisted leaf with twisted lobes, the terminal one being wide-angled; slightly embossed surface; concave/convex lateral serrations; dark green colour with a slight sheen.

Stalk: Medium, thick, rough-surfaced.

Bunch: Small, loosely packed, with the stem visible; small, regularly sized spherical grapes (6-10 mm or 0.2-0.4

inches), evenly yellowish in colour and bloomy; colourless juice; thick skin; neutral flavour.

Shoot: Long (2.39 m/7.7 ft), sturdy and multi-branched.

ENVIRONMENT

Verdejo is a grape variety whose cultivation is concentrated in the centre of the high Duero plateau. Plantations occupy a large area of Valladolid

Province and the neighbouring provinces of Segovia and Avila. The soil is sedimentary, with the upper layers composed of Miocene deposits rich in clayey-sandy strata under which lie pockets of water.

Altitude varies between 500 and 700 metres (1,640-2,296 feet) above sea level.

The River Duero and its tributaries the Eresma, the Adaja, the Zapardiel and the Trabancos, run through the area from south to north.

The climate is extreme continental: dry and cold. Winter is long with frequent frosts; spring cold with average temperatures of between 5 and 10°C (41 and 50°F) and a high risk of frost; summer is short, dry and hot; autumn is the season when most of the annual rainfall occurs and it also sees the first frosts.

The average annual rainfall is 407 mm in 83 days, though this can vary between 200 mm and 600 mm depending on the year.

The hours of sunshine for the whole year are 2,700, distributed as follows: 451 for the months of January, February and March; 620 for April, May and June; 978 for July, August and September and, finally, 441 for October, November and December.

Both *Marco Real* and *Tresbolillo* planting patterns are used, this latter in the older vineyards, with the vines spaced at distances of 2.8 × 2.8 m (9 × 9 ft) and 3 × 3 m (10 × 10 ft), at a density of from 1,100 to 1,700 plants per hectare. Yields are of 2 to 3 kg (4.5 to 6.5 lb) per vine.

Currently, experiments are being carried out with new approaches to planting, using espalier-style supports, varying plantation density and so on, with a view to updating the vineyards in line with new vine-growing techniques.

Agronomist and oenologist **Pascual Herrera García** is Director of the Castile and Leon Oenological Station in Rueda (Valladolid). He also heads the Master's Degree course in Advanced Viticulture and Oenology at Valladolid University and is Vice President of the Oenologists' Association of Castile and Leon.



VERDEJO-BASED WINES

Verdejo Blanco provides the basis for all the wines covered by the Rueda Denomination of Origin. It is used in varying proportions in various types of wine. These are:

RUEDA SUPERIOR (MINIMUM 85% VERDEJO)

- **Appearance:** Medium straw-yellow, sometimes pale with slight greenish tinges. Rich in glycerine, as shown by the way it forms «tears» down the side of the glass.

The colour can sometimes be brighter and include hints of terra cotta, brick, and even brown in slightly matured wines of this type.

- **Nose:** *Primary aromas.*—Dense and pronounced, suggestive of ripe fruit with slight floral overtones when Viura grapes are used in quantity, and with hints of aniseed at the finish typical of Verdejo.

Secondary aromas.—Few, short and weak.

Tertiary aromas.—Woody, light, spicy and reminiscent of aniseed in matured wines.

Bouquet.—Light and subtle in matured wines, with primary aromas predominating.

- **Palate:** Full flavoured and long in the mouth, with plenty of body and extract. Pronounced flavours. Good acid balance, never flaccid. The high glycerine content contributes richness. The bitter aftertaste is typical of the Verdejo grape.

- **Special characteristics:** Elegant zing of aniseed in the nose. Full bodied and well structured in the mouth. Its bitter aftertaste is its main trademark.

RUEDA (MINIMUM 50% VERDEJO)

- **Appearance:** Medium straw-yellow, with occasional golden tinges. High glycerine content.

- **Nose:** *Primary aromas.*—Fruity, reminiscent of ripe fruit, with occasional floral hints. Not particularly long but well balanced, with a barely perceptible suggestion of aniseed.

Secondary aromas.—Fairly clearly discernible in very slight vinous notes.

Tertiary aromas.—Not discernible.

Bouquet.—None.

- **Palate:** Well balanced in the mouth and fairly long, though light. Reasonable body and extract without being over-noticeable. Fruity aftertaste.

- **Special characteristics:** Depending on how the wine is made and aged, Verdejo adds a distinctive touch to characteristics typical of Palomino and Viura grapes.



JAVIER BELLOSO

PALIDO RUEDA

- **Appearance:** Deep straw yellow with strong golden and amber tones. There can also often be suggestions of caramel, brown, copper, terra cotta and brick. Very vivid and sheeny. The rich glycerine content is very evident in the way it forms «tears».

- **Nose:** *Primary aromas.*—Very light and faint, but memorable nonetheless, particularly in younger wines although they do not represent its main characteristic.

Secondary aromas.—Plentiful and developing, with aromas typical of *flor* yeast as well as the more obvious ones of alcohol and primary alcohols.

Tertiary aromas.—Pronounced, complex and very intense. Wood, spices, almonds and essences: penetrating and delicate.

Bouquet.—Very intense, long-lasting, rich and complex.

- **Palate:** Very full-flavoured. Warm in the mouth and very long-lasting. Rich and rounded, with glycerine much in evidence. Important, complex aftertaste with a very elegant dry, bitter finish. There can occasionally be a subtle hint of saltiness.

- **Special characteristics:** Biological ageing gives wines in this category a unique and unmistakable character.

DORADO RUEDA

- **Appearance:** Very intense golden yellow with hints of copper, caramel, mahogany, iodine and amber. The colour intensifies with age. The combination of glycerine and alcohol makes this a very viscous wine—it leaves «tears» down the side of the glass and is even noticeable in the still surface of the wine.

- **Nose.** *Primary aromas.*—Barely discernible, though there can be faint hints of raisin.

Secondary aromas.—Very fully developed, with a predominance of alcohol, primary alcohols and volatile esters.

Tertiary aromas.—Abundant, complex and very intense. Wood, spices, medicine, iodine, hazelnut: dense and very long lasting.

Bouquet.—Very intense, persistent, wide-ranging and complex.

- **Palate:** Very warm and extremely long (more than 30 seconds). Viscous, glycerine-rich and rounded. Long, complex aftertaste complemented by a strong retro-nasal impression of tasted liquorice and caramel. The high content of various alcohols can sometimes create an impression of sweetness.

- **Special characteristics:** The oxidative ageing process makes mature wines of this type both unique and excellent.

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CUENCA

TEETERING OVER THE ABYSS

Text: **Martin Alexander**

Cuenca, like so many in Spain, is two cities, new and old: on the flat land below, the bustling modern business centre with its lorries and noise, high-rise apartments and new supermarkets; above, on the ramparts of the rivers Huecar and Jucar, perches the old city, with its quiet courtyards, slanting cobbles, tree-lined plazas and majestic churches in marble and warm yellow stone.



There was a time when Cuenca needed the protection of its formidable cliffs and the rivers which pass on either side before joining to complete the city's moat.

We arrived in the early light of a clear, cloudless day: piercing blue above and the deep shadows and rich colours of morning, before the sudden high sun arrived to sluice away the shade and wash out the warmth of colour, leaving only bleached stone and dazzling whitewashed walls.

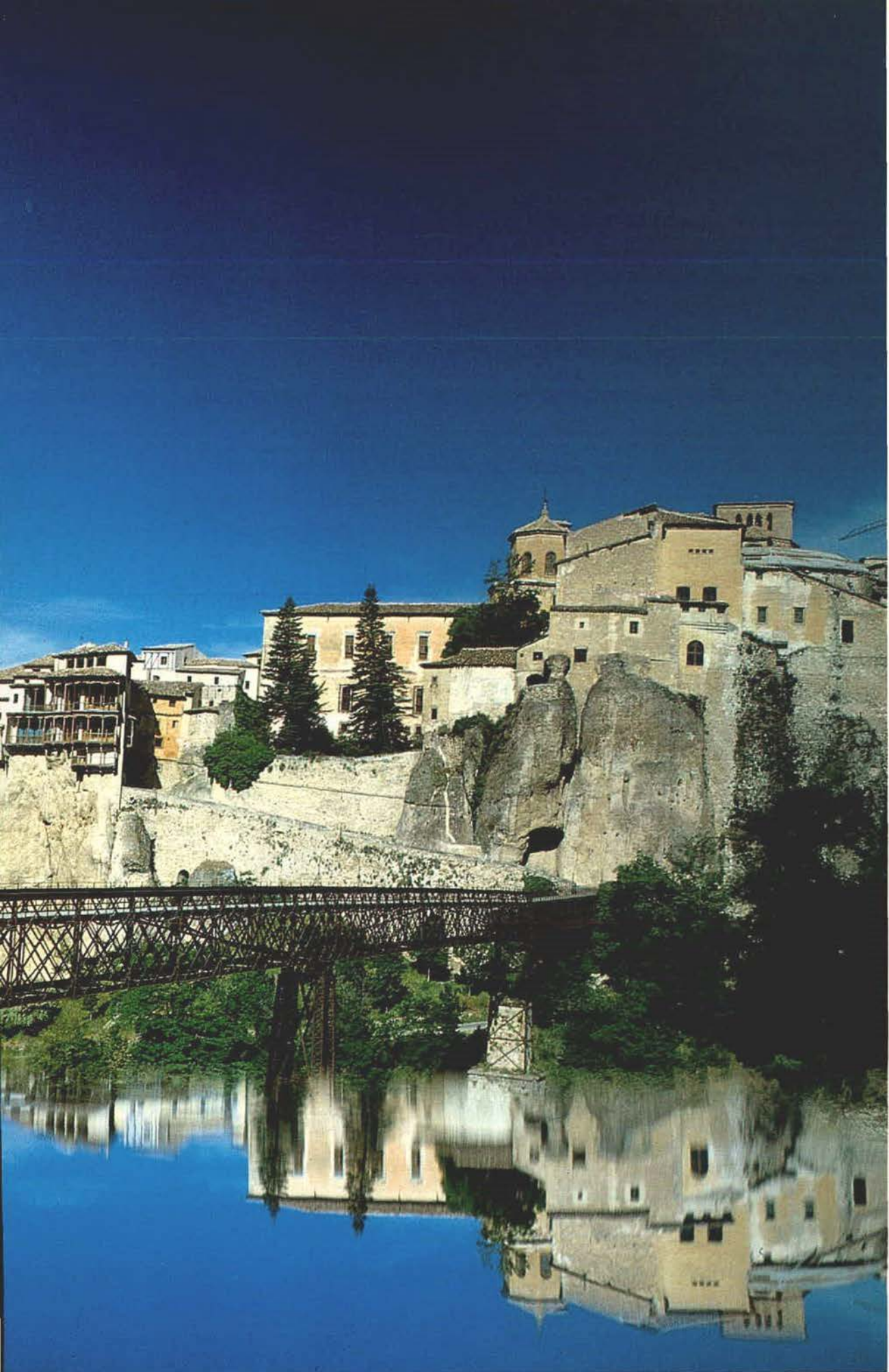
Driving along the narrow gorge bottom of the *Río*

Huécar, we looked up through trees at precarious buildings of crumbling white plaster perched on the precipice; and then we turned up and round and steeply up again; up the cliff and round a sheer rock to see in front of us Cuenca's symbol and landmark, the *Casas Colgadas*: houses hanging in tiers of balconies, each floor teetering further over the abyss than the one below. Rattling in first gear up over slippery

cobbles, we squeezed through a narrow arch next to the hanging houses and into the first of the sloping plazas. We parked in the empty square and set out to explore Cuenca's angular maze of narrow streets, cramped alleys, sudden courtyards and tumbling steps. There are easier ways into the old city, but this is the best.

The old city was silent and deserted; shops shut and shutters drawn: sleek blue-breasted pigeons strutting in circles and old women dressed in black, shuffling slowly through the *Plaza Mayor* and up the slope towards the cathedral. The only sound was the clang of the church bell, and the quiet conversation of the bar where we had breakfast: *bocadillo de tortilla*, with a plate of olives, and strong *café con leche*. Around us, the town began to stir, and the city below came to life with a distant hum of traffic. Here, though, in the old city crowding every available centimetre of the narrow promontory between the two river gorges, the awakening was quieter, more sedate, as if old Cuenca was reflecting on its past, and not

ANGEL JIMÉNEZ/CEX



In the old city, crowding every available centimetre of the narrow promontory between the two river gorges, life is sedate, as if old Cuenca was reflecting on its past.

bustling towards its future like its younger sister, the city below.

Security allows for the expansion of urban sprawl, as new cities are added to old, but there was a time when Cuenca, like Alarcón, needed the protection of its formidable cliffs and the rivers which pass on either side before joining to complete the city's moat. Naturally fortified, the earliest records show how the Moors added their ramparts to make the citadel virtually impregnable—until 1177, when the patience of Alfonso VIII over a nine-months' siege was finally rewarded with victory. From that point, Cuenca became one of Castile's most prosperous cities, thriving until its economic decline in the nineteenth

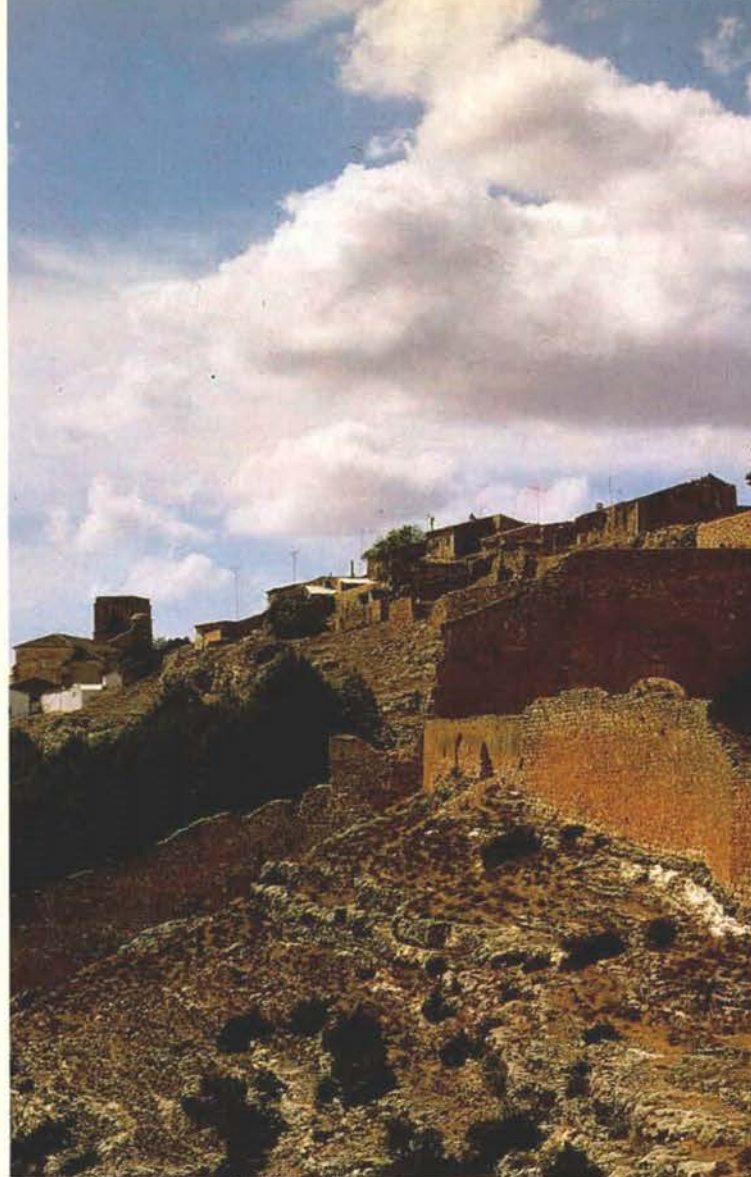
century, and then regaining some of its status in the second half of the twentieth. Those centuries of growth provided a spectacular richness of art and architecture, religious and secular, and these treasures are now given the protection they deserve in a careful programme of preservation and restoration; in a series of museums; and in the work of craftsmen, artists and writers whose adoption of the old city as their home and workplace keeps the creative tradition alive.

SQUARES: TOWERS AND CHURCHES

In the shaded *Plaza Mayor*,



ANTONIO GIRRES/SOBREMESA



A narrow strip of patched tarmac undulates across the flat countryside of the Spanish plain from the Valencia-Madrid highway. A twist, a bend, a slight drop, and there, straddling the neck of an oxbow in the Júcar Gorge, is the castle of Alarcón. Honeyed stone, high ramparts and a massive tower dominate the narrow neck across which the road squeezes on a crenellated bridge; and behind the castle, like an enormous pear-drop, the village perches, protected by its crumbling walls and the river far below.

The whitewashed two-storey houses crouch under their tiled roofs and crowd the narrow pavements into narrow cobbled streets: windows and doors in black wrought iron and weathered panelled wood lie deep in thick walls. The houses look low and flat next to the gargoyle towers of the churches, with their immense, flat expanses of stone and huge intricate arches. The square is like a reflection of that blank wall of the main church: empty space punctuated by the tiny fountain, and populated only by a black dog and an old lady, grey and black, walking bent and slow in the bright heat towards the bar.

From the 12th century Cuenca became one of Castile's most prosperous cities, thriving until its economic decline in the nineteenth century.



Preserved and restored, Alarcón's 12th century castle was built by the Moors and eventually taken in the wars of the Reconquest.

sive walls 2 metres (six feet) thick to a dizzying ledge on which I could nearly stand upright. Protected by wrought iron and cushioned on the bare stone window-seats, we drank dry cava and watched the sun set over the roofs and the churches of the town.

AN OUSTANDING CUISINE

Alarcón boasts a single and rather unremarkable bar on the square, but the *Parador Marqués de Villena* (named after one of the lords of the castle) more than makes up for this with an excellent restaurant under the direction of the *Jefe de Cocina*, Antonio López Frías. People drive over sixty kilometres (37 miles) from Cuenca to eat there, and to enjoy the atmosphere, the outstanding cooking and the fine Spanish wines under the vaulted roof of the great hall.

Though recent years have brought immense changes, Spain has suffered from an undeserved reputation for providing only oily and heavy food, to be washed down with unspeakable wines which do more than digestion can to disintegrate the stodge and destroy the stomach. This is a shame, because the country offers an astonishing range of delicate as well as substantial dishes; of sophisticated and elegant confections as well as deliciously simple country cooking. And the best Spanish red wines, particularly those of the Rioja region, are widely acknowledged to be of an extremely high quality. Some of the new cold-fermented whites are outstanding, and even the cheaper reds from other regions now becoming available around the world are fragrant and satisfying, with a good balance between oak and fruit.

ALARCON PARADOR

Castle Cuisine

Text: **Martin Alexander**

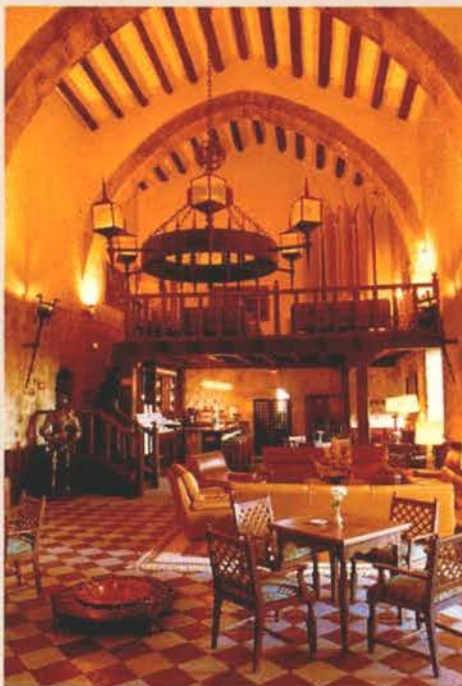
***Spain Gourmetour* featured an article on Alarcón Parador four years ago. But it would have been impossible to visit Cuenca without calling at this delightful little village again and sampling the cooking at the Parador.**

Our car intruded, and squeezed between the houses to the castle. Above us was the tower, with its projecting crown of battlements and a solitary barred window high over the town. Across the moat there is room for three cars to park; then through the castle's narrow gate and into the courtyard. Preserved and restored, Alarcón's 12th century castle was built by the Moors and eventually taken in the wars of the Reconquest. Now it's a hotel, a tiny one with room for only twenty two guests, and part of the Spanish Government's chain of eighty-six Paradors. Elsewhere in

the world, the words «hotel» and «chain» suggest enormous numbers of rooms and a smiling homogeneity of service, but while the Paradors are centrally managed, each retains the individual character of its building, its region, its restaurant and its management.

Our room looked out through that barred window across the town: there was a smoke-darkened oil painting on the wall, heavy furniture and half-tester beds; but also television, telephone, fridge and bathroom ensuite. The window, an enormous arrow-slit, narrowed through mas-

Our dinner combined modern cuisine with traditional regional dishes. The chef demonstrated his skills in presentation by preparing a variety of starters for us to choose from: smoked salmon mousse with palm hearts and avocado was amusingly presented and had a marvellous lightness of texture and a delicate distinction of flavours sharpened with a «raspberry» and «blackberry» garnish of red and black caviar.



My wife chose a *Cazuela* (casserole) *de Pescados*, which combined a variety of fresh fish —*salmón, merluza, dorada*— with prawns and potatoes in a white wine sauce. My *Morteruelo Conquense* was a hunter's stew of boar, partridge, hare and rabbit cooked in a rich sauce with pine nuts and pepper, and a hint of cloves. Both dishes came straight from the stove, were cooked to perfection, and had the freshness and fullness of flavour which we experienced in everything we ate at the Parador. The *Suspiro* (a breath or sigh) *de Alarcón* was an unusual but spectacularly successful dessert: almond meringues served with a small glass of *mistela*, a sweet



Alarcón Parador has an excellent restaurant. People drive over sixty kilometres from Cuenca to eat there, and to enjoy the atmosphere, the outstanding cooking under the vaulted roof of the great hall.

white wine. Our only disappointment —though not an unexpected one, as Spain deserves its notoriety in this instance— was the pastries which accompanied the delicious fresh egg custard, dusted with cinnamon, which is made so effortlessly throughout the country.

A chilled *Marqués de Cáceres* rosé, light and dry and with a lovely fruity flavour, accompanied the meal. We finished our dinner in the castle's second, more cavernous hall with strong, rich *café con leche*, and, for me, an enormous brandy glass of Carlos I, one of Spain's finest brandies. My wife enjoyed an equally generous glass of her favourite liqueur, known simply as 43 (because of the number of aromatic herbs it contains). Immense tapestries descended from the gloom and we were watched over by an empty, stocky and rather short suit of armour: outside, the moon was full over the town, and we walked in the brightness to the *plaza* and back over the cobbles. When we returned, the only colour among the shades of silver and grey was the light in our room, glowing in the black silhouette of the castle's tower.

we left our bar to walk round the square, past the souvenir shops selling paintings and pottery, past the genteel baroque arches of the Town Hall, and into the cathedral. Dominating the city, the imposing *Mangana* Tower reminds one of Moorish influence; while the damaged and rebuilt façade of the cathedral, begun in the twelfth century

on the site of the Arab citadel's mosque, is compensated for by the luminous compassion in the gaunt el Greco face of Christ inside.

Religious art is most evocative in its intended setting: the intensity and passion in the treasures of the Diocese have a concentration of effect that it would be hard to reproduce away from the cool, dark ech-

oing spaces and soaring architecture of the cathedral. That dark pool of passion and calm is reflected throughout the city in the numerous churches, convents and episcopal buildings which punctuate its secular architecture —majestic statements of faith, or crumbling and crooked piles of mellow stone. My favourite is St. Peter's, a massive octagon with its del-

icate tower to the side, overlooking the *Hoz del Huécar*.

St. Peter's is best seen in the spectacular vista that unfolds in a semi-circle from the middle of the narrow cast-iron footbridge that spans the *Huécar*. Standing by a cast of the city's coat of arms, our view takes in St. Peter's on the far right; in the middle a marvellous muddle of sturdy palaces and narrow terraced houses, all squeezed at different heights onto the edge of the honeycombed cliff; and on the far left the *Casas Colgadas*, built in the fourteenth century, and said to have been a summer residence of kings and queens. Dazzling in the sun, all stone and sturdy oak and deep-shadowed windows, their bearing is certainly regal, and the sturdy oak of the elegantly carved balconies would have provided a dais imposing enough to reassure any monarch that he was lord of all he surveyed. The view of the hanging houses from the bridge, however, is at best a brief one for the faint-hearted: high above the market gardens that flank the narrow stream of the *Huécar*, the bridge flexes and sways in the breeze, and the wooden planks underfoot creak and complain as they move

On the ramparts of the rivers Huecar and Jucar perches the old city, with its quiet courtyards, slanting cobbles, tree-lined plazas and majestic churches.



The construction of the cathedral began in the twelfth century, on the site of the Arab citadel's mosque, but then its façade was damaged and rebuilt.

loosely in their beds. Here, one's sense of one's own immortality is less secure.

FOOD AND MODERN ART

After breakfast in the bar on the *Plaza Mayor*, there's no better place to settle one's midday stomach after the un-

easy bridge than the *Mesón Casas Colgadas*, where one can eat excellent *manchego* food, as well as specialities from other regions of Spain. And though the floor is definitely more solid underfoot, there remains the exhilaration of dining in the extraordinary hanging houses, leaning securely (one hopes) out over the cliff as one eats. A spicy *morteruelo* (a hunter's recipe, *morteruelo* can be served cold, like pâté, spread on bread, or hot, in which case it resembles hash), perhaps, or baked fresh river trout and, to finish, the local *alajú*, made with rosemary honey, walnuts and breadcrumbs. We resisted the temptations of Cuenca's *resolí*, the flavour of which is delicious, but whose *aguardiente* base might have disturbed our balance on that cliff, and would certainly have made the drive down the precipice more hazardous than it already was.

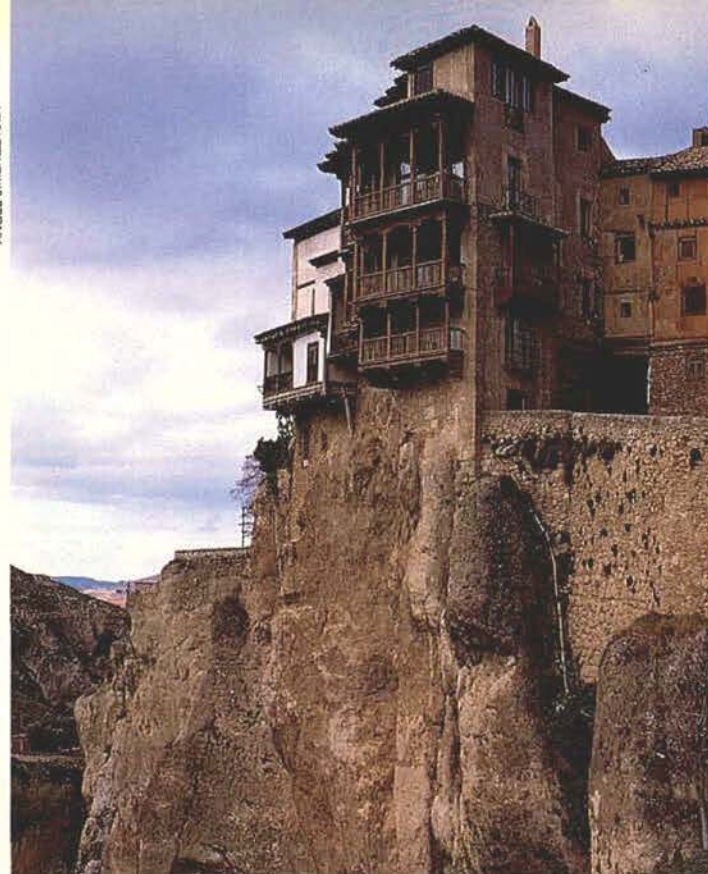
Before leaving, though, there was the rest of the *Casas Colgadas* to explore: the restaurant takes up only a



part of the building, and the remainder is the home of the *Museo de Arte Abstracto Español*. The interior of the museum has been opened up with imagination and sensitivity: the paintings and sculptures have uncluttered space and plenty of light, and the



character of the building is preserved in the exposed beams, the whitewashed walls and the Cuenca labyrinth of the rooms. While the *Museo de Cuenca* contains a worthy but provincial collection, this is clearly a national museum which contains work of international quality. It sums up



A section of the Casas Colgadas is the home of the Museo de Arte Abstracto Español. The interior of this museum has been opened up with imagination and sensitivity, preserving the character of the building.

the two faces of Cuenca and the two faces of Spain: the heritage of the past and the vitality of the present combined in the poise and balance of a fourteenth century *tour de force* and the robust vigour of modern art.

After the museum a final task remained in the late afternoon, as the colour returned to the warm stone and our long drive threatened. We took the car down into the new part of the city, in search of a delicatessen where we could buy *manchego* cheese, choose some *chorizo* and find fresh slices of *serrano* ham for our journey home. Every gourmand's dream obligingly appeared by the side of the road, complete with an empty parking



ANGEL JIMENEZ/ICEX

space: and inside there were rounds of cheeses, stacked; racks of sausages red with pepper and white with a dusting of mould; jars of preserves and huge slabs of ham. There were cakes and pastries, fresh bread and barrels of olives: the shop was packed with produce and people. I can still smell that warm company of tantalising odours, but I can't remember the name of the shop or quite where it is: unfinished business, then; and an excuse, if one were needed, to return.

Martin Alexander has lived and taught in Spain, and has visited regularly over the last twenty years. He was brought up in South America, India and the Caribbean, was educated and worked for several years in England, and now lives in Hong Kong, where he is Head of English at Island School and a freelance writer.



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G A I N I N G

IONAL SPANISH CHEESES



A N A M E

Text: Meg Campbell
Photo: Ramajo/ICEX
Still Life: Itos Vázquez

«**S**ay Spanish cheese to someone from abroad, and they say “Oh, Manchego!”», sighs Juan José Idiakez, referring to the sheep’s cheese of La Mancha made famous by Don Quixote. «Few people outside the country realize that Spain has a lot of other cheeses, all very different from one another.»

Idiakez is the commercial representative of Udala, a cheese cooperative in Spain’s Basque country that produces Idiazábal, an aged sheep’s cheese made with raw whole milk (see *Spain Gourmetour*, no. 18). Along with other artisan cheesemakers, Udala is hoping that their cheese can make it to European and American markets, and give consumers a new idea about the products and regions of Spain.

MAKING THE DISTINCTIONS

Nine regional cheese producers from around Spain have come together to form the Consortium of Traditional Spanish Cheeses. Although the cheesemakers have been working together since 1989,

principally on promoting their products nationally, the consortium was launched this year, with the purpose of promoting Spanish cheeses abroad.

The nineteen varieties offered by the consortium form a complete range of Spanish cheeses, with no overlap, so that the members don’t compete with one another, says Mariano Sanz, president of the consortium. They include cheeses made from sheep’s, goat’s and cow’s milk, and many of them have earned the label of origin certificate that links a product with its region.

The cheeses are upscale artisan cheeses, says Sanz, differing from industrial cheeses in that they are generally made in smaller volumes, and with traditional techniques that ensure that the cheese has the same taste it had a hundred years ago.

Thus, for example, the cheesemakers of Idiazábal use raw milk rather than pasteurized milk, a natural curdling agent rather than one commercially available, and age their cheeses six months, although legally they could get away with two. «If we don’t stick to these methods, the cheese simply isn’t Idiazábal», explains Idiakez.

And so it goes for each of the other cheeses, from Tetilla, the mild cow’s

cheese of Galicia, to Ibores, the sharp goat’s cheese of Extremadura.

A CHEESE FOR EACH REGION

The nineteen varieties owe their differences to the fact the country is made up of many ecosystems, according to Sanz. Spain’s regions differ dramatically from one another in terms of geography, culture and history. While La Mancha is known for its vast arid plains, Galicia is as lush and green as Ireland, while much of Catalonia is covered by mountains well above the tree-line.

The different regions support different types of livestock. Thus, the rocky regions of Catalonia are perfect for nimble goats, the rolling green meadows of the northern coast from Cantabria to Galicia make perfect pasture for cows, and the harsh climate of La Mancha suits the foraging habits of sheep. In addition, the grasses available to the animals affect the taste of the cheese, so that goat’s from Extremadura will taste very different from Catalonian goat’s cheese.

The animals also play an important part in the cultures of the different regions, and promoting their cheeses abroad is one way of protecting the local



Spain's cheesemakers have long grumbled about the worldwide fame enjoyed by their French counterparts, insisting that their own products are as rich and varied as those to the north. Now, a consortium of nine Spanish queseros (cheesemakers) is looking to launch their cheeses on the international market. The key, they say, will be getting consumers to learn not just about the different cheeses, but about the traditions and cultures behind them.

cheesemaking operations. In Catalonia, the shepherds play an important ecological role, explains Assumpta Margenat, director of Formatgeria Artesana del Baix Montseny, which makes the consortium's Garrotxa goat cheese, because they spend a lot of time in remote areas that few other people reach. «Forest fires are a serious threat to this region», she explains, «especially if there are no shepherds in the area to give the alarm.» In addition, the animals provide a natural fertilizer for the meadows, she says.

GETTING TO MARKET

The way to get consumers in other countries to buy Spanish cheeses will be by teaching them such details of the country's different regions and cheesemaking traditions, explains Sanz. «When people find that we have so many different cheeses, we hope then they'll come to understand why.» Sanz thus plans to include educational projects as part of the export strategy, such as setting up Spanish Cheese Weeks or working with hotels and restaurants to do Spanish cheese tasting.

The consortium is looking initially at the European markets, in particular Ger-

many, France and England, and later the U.S. Sanz attended the Iffa-Delicatt food show in Frankfurt recently to talk to German importers, and the Fancy Food show in Washington to make North American contacts, and at the end of October will be at Sial in Paris, one of the two foremost world's alimentation trade show.

The Spanish cheeses will be able to compete once consumers learn about them, Sanz believes. Their presentation is aesthetic, and their prices fall in the general gourmet cheese range. He considers Germany an important first step, followed by France. The French are voracious cheese eaters, he points out, and although they also tend to stick to their own products, will perhaps be open to other Mediterranean products.

The consortium will stick to representing some twenty cheeses, says Sanz, in order to be able to keep track of them all, and looks to export some 200 tons in 1992. While some varieties, such as the milder cow cheeses, can be placed in supermarkets, other stronger cheeses will be destined for gourmet shops and delicatessens, he explains. One difficulty in exporting the cheeses may be their artisan nature, Sans says, referring to a debate currently taking

place around Europe. A number of central European countries are trying to ban the use of raw milk in the manufacture of cheese, arguing that it presents a health hazard.

«This would be a great loss, because a raw milk cheese maintains subtle taste differences», Sanz says. «Consumers have the right to safe food, but the idea should be to make the process of using raw milk safe, rather than eliminating it.»

Spanish cheesemakers using raw milk, for example, must age their cheese at least two months, in order to ensure that any harmful microorganisms have died. «The artisan cheesemakers have looked to maintain the look, feel and taste of the cheeses while using modern methods that ensure safe cheese», explains Francisco Medina of Quegalsa, the Galician operation that provides the consortium with its Tetilla and Ulloa cheeses. «Our methods are slower and more labour intensive, but they are certainly safe.»

Other Mediterranean countries, such as France, have joined the effort to preserve such traditional manufacturing methods, Sanz says, although it is not yet clear what the final outcome will be. «Consumers must demand the right to enjoy these tastes and cultures», he says.



QUESO CEBREIRO
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THE CHEESES OF SPAIN, FROM THE CONSORTIUM OF TRADITIONAL CHEESES OF SPAIN

COW'S CHEESES

Tetilla: A creamy mild cheese from Galicia in the shape of a chocolate kiss, made with pasteurized milk and aged for two weeks.

Ulloa. A soft Galician cheese with a slight sharpness, made from pasteurized milk and aged for a month.

Cebreiro: A mild Galician cheese made with pasteurized milk and aged for two weeks. A distinctive shape, rather like a soufflé, with a coarse rind.

Mahón: A firm, sharp cheese from the Balearic Islands aged for three months and with an oiled brownish rind.

Nata de Cantabria: A creamy cheese from the Cantabrian coast aged one month.

Cabrales: A very strong cheese from Asturias, similar to blue and roquefort cheeses, made with raw cow's milk, or with a mix of other milks and aged for two months. An internal mould gives the cheese its marbled look and crumbly texture.

Picón: A cheese very similar to Cabrales, traditionally known for its wrapping.

San Simón: A Galician raw milk cheese aged two months with a smoked rind and the characteristic shape of a pear.

Ahumado de Aliva: A small cheese of pasteurized milk from Cantabria aged two weeks, with a smoked rind.

Quesuco: Another small cheese of Cantabria, creamy, aged two weeks with a natural rind.

SHEEP'S CHEESES

Manchego: Spain's most famous cheese comes from the plains of La Mancha. Aged at least six months and made from pasteurized milk, it tastes creamy yet strongly of sheep.

Tronchon: Also from La Mancha, a mix of sheep's and goat's pasteurized milk, aged three weeks. Easily recognized due to its roundish shape with depressions on each end.

Zamorano: From the region of Castile-Leon, a cheese made with raw milk and aged three months. Has a greyish rind and a strong taste of sheep.

Idiazábal: A sharp sheep's cheese from Spain's northern Basque country. Made with raw milk and aged at least four months, and generally having a smoked rind.

Roncal: From the northeastern province of Navarra, a cheese with the intense taste of sheep, made with raw milk and aged at least five months.

De la Serena: A cheese from the region of Extremadura with a taste influenced by a vegetable curdle. Made with raw milk and aged two months.

GOAT'S CHEESE

Garrotxa: From the region of Catalonia, a strong cheese made from pasteurized milk and aged one month in caves. Its grey mould rind gives the cheese a unique flavour.

Ibores: A tangy cheese from Extremadura made from raw milk and aged at least two months. Its flavour is influenced by paprika in the rind.

Majorero: A pasteurized cheese aged two months from the Canary Islands. The rind includes the characteristic feature of an imprinted palm leaf.



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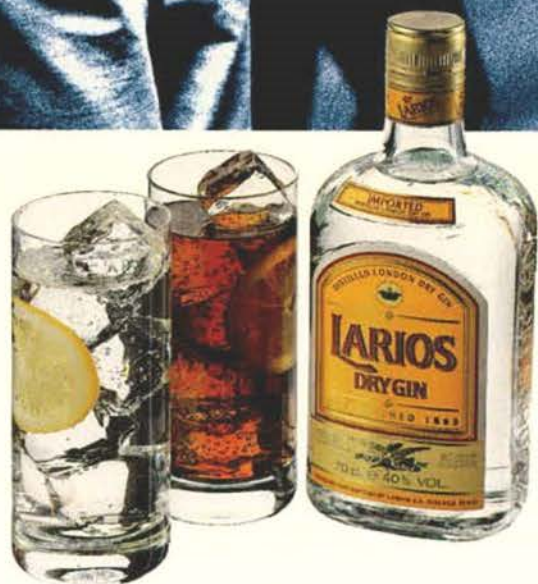
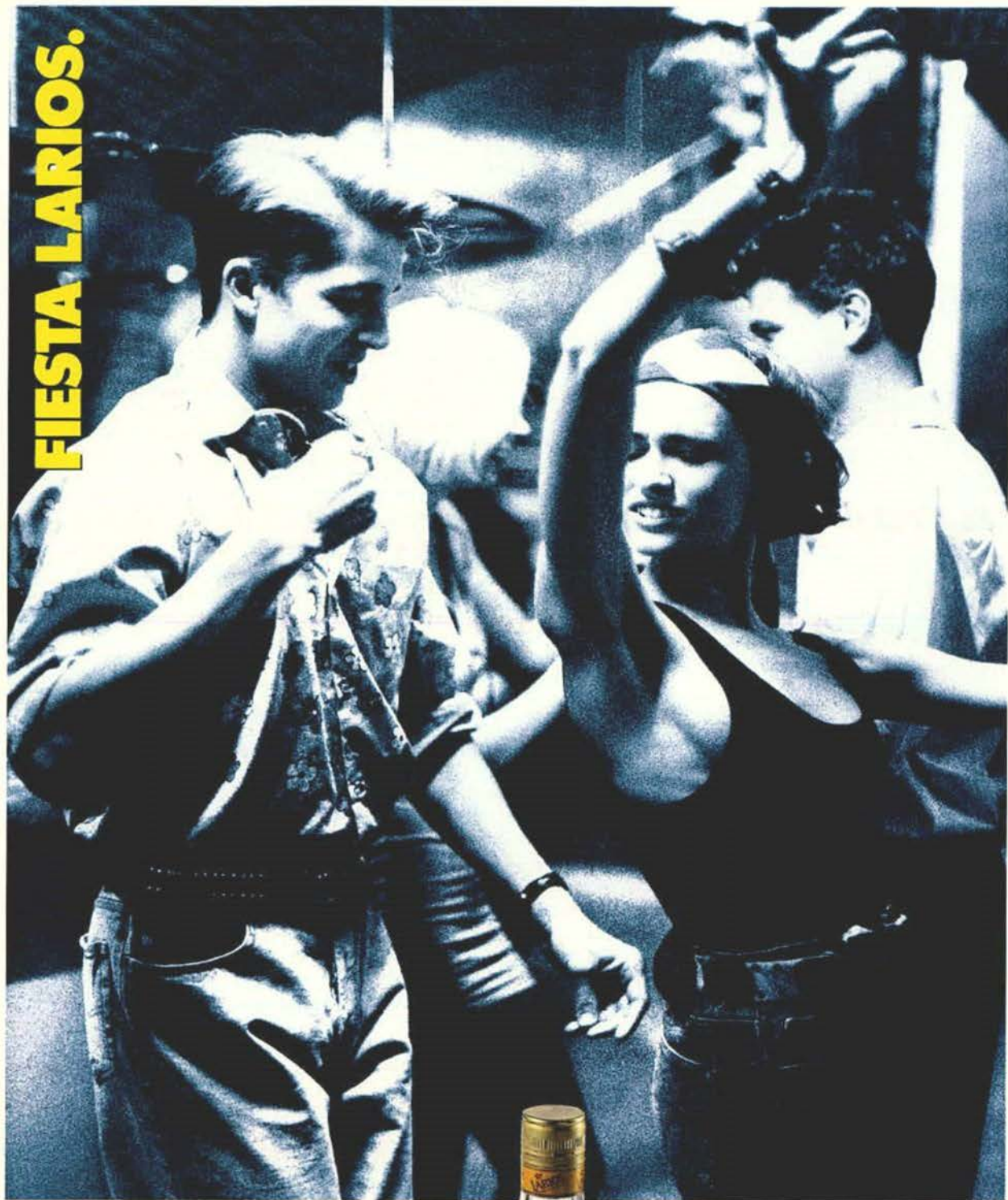
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LARIOS

THE OLIVE TREES OF SPAIN: WITNESSES TO HISTORY

**This year, 1992, has
been declared «The
Year of Spain» and as
the year unfolds, no
one contests the fact.
There is just too much
going on.**

Text: **Charles Powell**
Photos: **VEA/ICEX**

Madrid is the Cultural Capital of Europe, EXPO'92 opened April 20 in Seville, with most of the countries of the world exhibiting and twenty million of the world's people expected to come and see it before it closes October 12, 1992, five hundred years to the day from the time Columbus reached the new world. Then there are the Olympics in Barcelona this Summer and in addition to the millions who will be there, the television industry will deliver the largest world-wide audience ever for a sports event. On top of it all, millions of tourists will be visiting Spain, just as they have been doing for years.

Such a collection of activities, and all in one year! In a way, it harkens back to a time in Spain a half a millennium ago... 1492 to be exact. A united Christian country had been created in the North. The last stronghold of Spain's Moorish empire in Granada had fallen, placing the country under one rule and ending 800 years of dominant presence. Fortunately for the pleasure of the citizens and the joy of the world, much of what they built in Spain still stands today. The Inquisition also began in these times, combined with the expulsion of any and all who did not adhere to, or adopt the Christian faith. Such was the tenor of the day. This was also the year that Christopher Columbus, a Genoese living in Portugal, set sail under the sponsorship of their Majesties King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of a united Spain and began his voyage to the Indies. In the process he discovered two new worlds. All these events tumbled in upon one another in that single year.

1992 is also a momentous year and a significant part of it will focus on recognition of the Quincentenary, the 500th anniversary of the Columbus «Voyage of Discovery», as some are calling it. Others use the word «encounter». Both are right. However the event is viewed or termed, it was indeed momentous for the history of the world. For good and

for ill, nothing has been the same since.

It is true that Columbus did not discover what he set out to find. He thought he had reached the out-islands of Japan, not two new continents. And the mighty Inca and Aztec Empires in the new world knew all along where they were. In that sense, encounter is the more correct term.

OLIVE GOES TO AMERICA

The trip Columbus took was in search of food; more accurately the spices of the east. Although he did not find those spices, he and those who followed, brought back an incredible variety of foods that changed the entire culinary face of Europe (see *Spain Gourmetour*, no. 24). Take the tomato, what would Spanish and Italian cuisine be without it? Or the potato? Then there are hot and sweet peppers, could Spanish food be the same without them? Add Brazil nuts, pineapples, avocados, squash, many kinds of beans and the turkey to the list.

But such food migrations were not a one-way street. Sailing Westward with the soldiers, sailors, priests, settlers and sometimes African slaves, were sugar cane, coffee, oranges, the secrets of vinegar, grapes for wine, the concept of domesticated farm animals, garlic, almonds and perhaps one of the greatest of all foods from Spain, the olive and olive oil.

The olive and its oil has been the major export of Spain since the time of the Romans. Indeed, Rome's Hispania province became, in the first century B.C., the major supplier of quality olive oil for the entire Empire. In those days, the oil of Hispania was transported in amphora made of clay, clearly marked with the olive grower's name, the vintage, the shipper and the olive type. Down through the centuries, these recording practices have continued. Many of them can still be found in the local record halls and family archives in all the important olive growing areas of Spain. Thus in many groves, the actual age of most of the trees is on record. Here



1492 - 1992

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and there are trees planted well before Christopher Columbus began his voyages. They are still alive, still bearing the quality fruit that is pressed into the extra-virgin olive oils from Spain. The very existence of these ancient trees has provided opportunity to the great olive oil producers of Spain to create a special commemorative olive oil, pressed from the fruit of the very trees alive for over half a millennium, trees that have been witnesses to history since that voyage, which changed the course of the history of the world.

AN OIL FOR THE 500th ANNIVERSARY

The idea for such a bottling was brought to the attention of the several members of ASOLIVA, the Olive Oil Exporters

Association of Spain in 1990 and the challenge was accepted by Veá, S. A., a major grower and producer of Catalonia. The Veá family of Lerida have been growers, blenders and packers of quality olive oils for most of this century. They are one of the few growers in Spain that specialize in organically grown olives marketed as fruit and pressed into extra-virgin olive oils. Some of the groves on their properties have been in production for over a thousand years. Here and there, among their 10,000 trees, are specimens well over 500 years

of age. The fruit of some of these trees will be utilized in this very special bottling in 1992, to commemorate the important historical event that took place 500 years before. But this is not all there is to the story. With the support of the Government of Spain, quality producers of extra-virgin olive oils from other major producing areas of the country have set aside some of the best fruit from their own ancient trees to add to the blending of this important extra-virgin, 1492-1992 olive oil. Combining the great oils of many areas of Spain, each with its own particular flavour and taste characteristics, makes the final blending of this oil a most important part of the process. It is fortunate that Veá has, as their Managing Director Sr. Avelino Veá, one of Spain's re-

profile for a truly all-Spanish extra-virgin olive oil, one that combines the best flavour characteristics of the olive oils of Spain. When one learns that Spain has some 60 different varieties of olives used in making oil, the magnitude of the problem comes into focus. The Government of Spain has created in the seventies and eighties four special Denominations of Origin for the great olive oils of Spain: two from Andalusia; the Sierra de Segura and the Baena and two for Catalonia; the Borjas Blancas and the Siruana. Oils from each of these D.O. certification areas must meet strict and high standards so they retain the uniqueness of the oils. It can be said that each is the best of its kind in quality and is bound to be limited in quantity. In general, Andalusia produces

seems that the almond trees repel the fruit flies that can infest the olive trees.

THE BEST OF THE BEST

Sr. Veá had a definite flavour profile which he strove for in his Quincentennial olive oil; one that called for a well-balanced oil, deep in fruity flavours with that lingering almond taste. Many of his fellow *catadores* across Spain agree that the Quincentennial oil he has blended from the best of the country meets and indeed exceeds their critical taste test for superb olive oil flavour that can add immeasurably to special cooked dishes and important salads where the full flavour of a great olive oil is important.

Because of the limited amount of trees of suitable age, each one of which has been personally verified by Sr. Veá, the total production has been limited to a significantly timely 1492 cases of six bottles each, with each bottle containing a liter of oil. The bottles are hand-crafted duplicates of the *taberna* bottles of the fifteenth century carried to the Americas in the times of Columbus. Each bottle rests in a hand-made wooden box of Galician pine. The label name is: L'Estornell 1492-1992 Columbus Quincentenary Extra-Virgin Olive Oil. With careful handling away from light, in a cool place, the oil will last for many years and will certainly become a collector's item.

A number of the cases have been reserved, with the first of them reserved for their Majesties King Juan Carlos and Queen Sophia of Spain. Other cases are scheduled to be on display at EXPO'92.

A substantial portion of the remaining supply has been reserved for the gourmet and speciality foods market and selected food service and catering operators in the English-speaking world, especially North America and the United Kingdom.

Charles Powell is an American Chef, restaurateur and food writer. He is a member of The American Culinary Federation, America's professional chefs society.

This commemorative olive oil is pressed from the fruit of the very trees alive for over half a millennium.



nowned *catadores*, the Spanish word for a master blender. He has taken upon himself one of the most challenging tasks of his career. He has not only selected fruit of his own ancient family trees, but has blended it with fine extra-virgin oils from other estates where there are trees over 500 years old. Because the oils come from different areas of Spain, they each have somewhat different taste characteristics. His was the final decision on which extra-virgin oils to use and in which quantities. The objective was to create an entirely new flavour

oils strong in olive taste and, as the *catadores* put it, deliver «fruity shadows». The oils of the Catalonia region to the North are smooth, sweet oils that are not at all spicy. Experienced tasters can detect an aftertaste of dried fruit and a strong hint of almonds. The oils produced by the Veá family, especially those grown organically and sold under the L'Estornell label, are truly pronounced in this almond taste, as the inter-planting of almond trees in the olive groves is the organic method by which the insect pests are controlled. It

ters Association of Spain in 1990 and the challenge was accepted by Veá, S. A., a major grower and producer of Catalonia. The Veá family of Lerida have been growers, blenders and packers of quality olive oils for most of this century. They are one of the few growers in Spain that specialize in organically grown olives marketed as fruit and pressed into extra-virgin olive oils. Some of the groves on their properties have been in production for over a thousand years. Here and there, among their 10,000 trees, are specimens well over 500 years

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A HISTORY OF SPAIN FC



De aquellos polvos vinieron estos lodos», literally, «From that dust, came this mud». How wise this old Castilian saying and how apt when we talk about Spain's 20th Century. No moment in history can be entirely free of what came before. Rather, past glories or errors often come back to haunt us until

THE 20TH.

they are reckoned with. In Spain, the skeletons of the 19th Century reappeared as

the 20th Century got off to a start, and culminated in the bloody Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). What followed were forty years of military dictatorship which ended in 1975 when democracy

CENTURY:

was re-established. The Spain emerging from the 20th Century is radically different from

the Spain of a hundred years ago. Her population has increased substantially and what used to be a predominantly rural, agrarian society has gradually become an urban, industrial one. The

THE FUTURE

fifties and sixties brought with them an economic

boom and the development of a large middle class. In the last decades, Spain has shaken loose from the shackles of her past and moved forward towards a promising future in step with the

ARRIVES

new times. The Pyrenees mountains were once symbolic of the insurmountable wall of socio-

economic differences cutting Spain off from the rest of Europe. Today, they are simply a mountain chain, one which links Spain to her European neighbours.



Text: **Jesús Torbado**
Photos: **Ornoz**



Although intelligent and personable, Alfonso XIII was convinced that the crown gave him the right to impose his inexperienced criteria.

The devastating events of the last years of the 19th Century dashed the spirits of the country. After losing the Spanish-American War in 1898, Spain's borders were reduced to what they had been four centuries earlier. The hope for political stability that the restoration of the monarchy in 1875 had rekindled was all but gone as the turn of the century came round. The heir to the throne, Alfonso XIII (grandson of Queen Isabel II, who had been expelled from the country) was only two years old and was under the tutelage of his mother, the Queen Regent María Cristina.

So great was the sense of prostration that many of Spain's most important writers and thinkers of the times devoted their energies to analyzing the problems of Spain: what had gone wrong in the past and how Spain could finally be set on

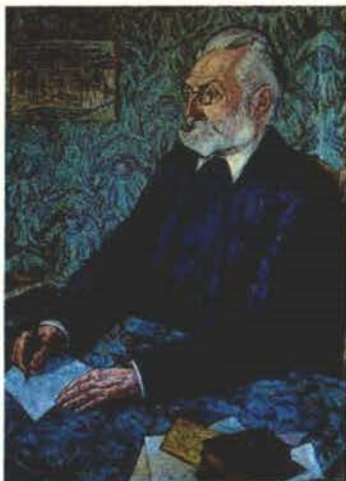
the right track to catch up with the rest of Europe. Men like Unamuno, Baroja, Azorín, Valle Inclán, Antonio Machado, Benavente and others became the living conscience of a new Spain. History later refers to them as the Generation of '98, one of the most brilliant groups in the history of Spanish literature.

The start of the 20th Century looked to be a continuation of the social tensions that had been dragging on for decades. The social and political turmoil of the 19th Century had left little room for developing an industrial revolution similar to those taking place in Europe. Spaniards were still arguing over the advantages or disadvantages of a French revolution, the role of the Catholic Church in a new society, and their successive losses in America. A Spanish colloquial expression best sums it up: «*España se miraba el ombligo*», which is to say that Spain sat staring at her belly button, oblivious to what was going on around her in the rest of Europe.

NEW TENSIONS

By the beginning of the 20th Century, some regions of the country had managed to take the initial steps toward industrialization. This was especially true in the region of Catalonia. Barcelona and the surrounding cities had been developing a more dynamic, capable industrial base than the rest of the country. Other zones in Spain later seconded this move toward industrialization, in particular, Madrid, Asturias, the Basque country and Valencia. All of this, though, brought with it tremendous social unrest. The anarchist movement, which played a decisive role in the events of the first third of the century, easily won a large number of followers, even among farm workers, who outnumbered urban workers. By 1936, the anarchist union (CNT) had more than a million and a half members and was larger than the socialist union (UGT). The anarchists, whose largest stronghold was in Catalonia, were responsible for several assassination attempts on the king and on different presidents, two of whom were actually killed. They were also behind what is remembered as *Semana Trágica*

Men like Unamuno, Valle Inclán, Baroja (from left to right) and others, became the living conscience of a new Spain. History later refers to them as the generation of '98, one of the most brilliant groups in the history of Spanish literature.



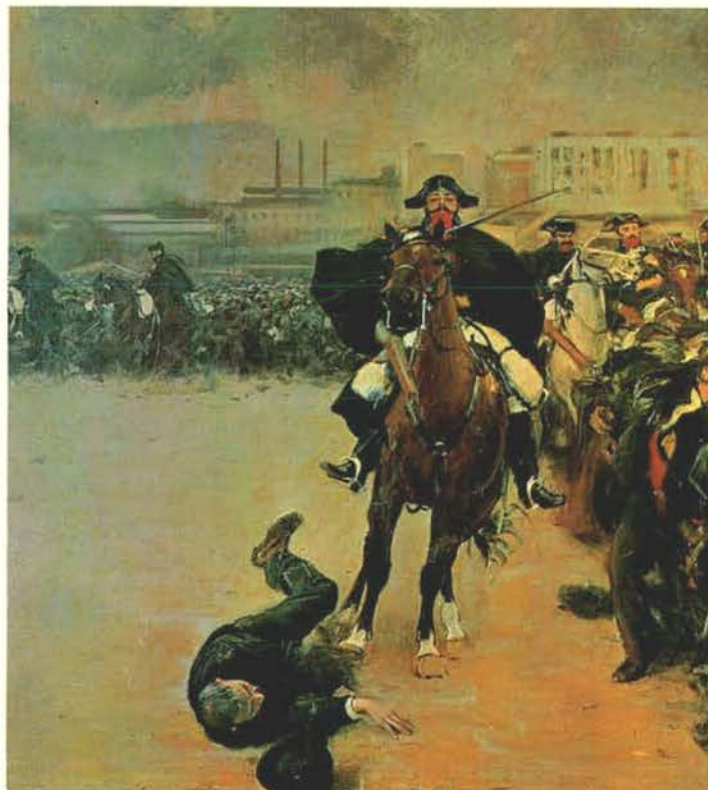
(Tragic Week) in 1919. It was sparked off by the army's using the port of Barcelona to send off soldiers to the war they were waging in Northern Africa, a war a large sector of the population strongly opposed. Fighting broke out in the streets, convents and churches were burned... once again supporters of the left and those of the right came to open blows.

With this as a social backdrop, the cabinet meetings were presided over by a king who had not yet turned twenty. Although intelligent and personable, Alfonso XIII was convinced that the crown gave him the right to impose his inexpert criteria on the people's legitimate representatives voted into office. His fascination for military matters and his relationship with generals often hostile to the civil powers led to a military takeover by General Primo de Rivera in 1923. Many believed that the situation called for drastic measures and that only the army was capable of putting an end to the wave of attempted assassinations, terrorist attacks, fires, strikes and deaths. In just the first semester of 1923, there had been more than fifty killings and around a hundred shootouts in the streets of Barcelona.

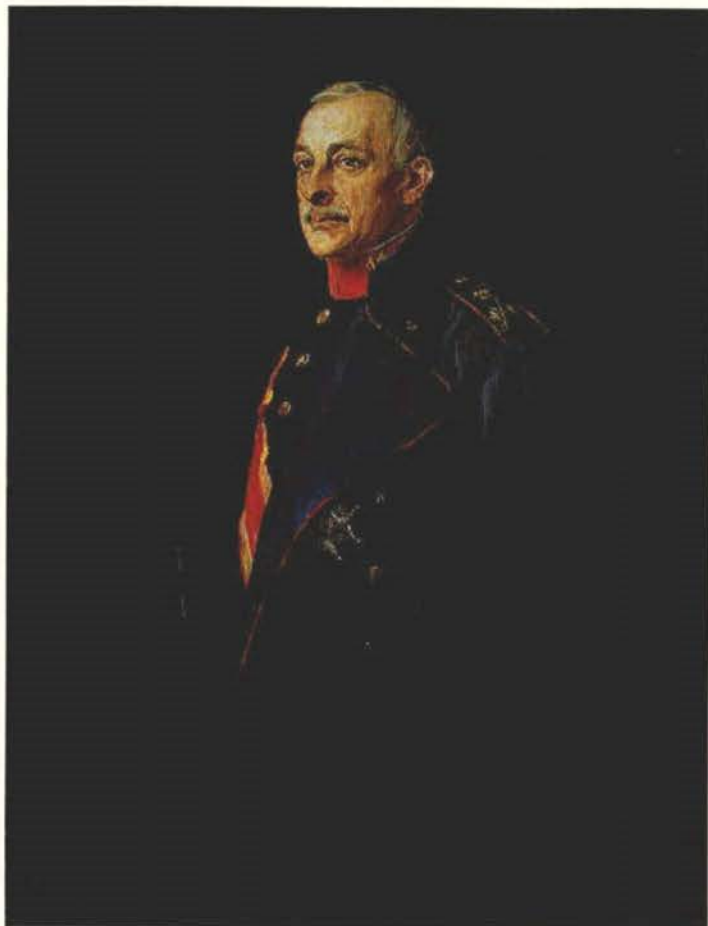
Within two years, dictator Primo de Rivera seemed to prove the conservatives right: the anarchists were brought under control, the Catalan separatist movement was curbed, the economy picked up, and peace was achieved in Morocco with the help of the French. These had been Spain's four most pressing problems that had justified the army's taking control. Although the situation had improved, Primo de Rivera, supported by the monarchy, showed no inclination toward stepping down. He stayed in power until 1930 when he was finally forced to resign.

THE REPUBLIC AND THE CIVIL WAR

In a backlash for his support of the dictatorship, Alfonso XIII (the grandfather of present-day King Juan Carlos I) was forced into exile in Rome and the Second Spanish Republic was proclaimed on April 14, 1931. Many considered this second Republic to be the last golden opportunity. For years prior, the Spanish bourgeoisie had tried to reconcile the two enemies that had fought each other in the Carlist Wars and continued to do so in daily life: the traditionalists on the extreme right and the revolutionary anarchists on the left. Although in some ways similar to its counterpart in Europe, the Spanish bourgeoisie was late-developing, relatively small and less influential. Thus, its attempts to bring Spain closer to Europe had always been thwarted by its basic weakness and the strength of the forces they were up against. Although many were committed to supporting the republic, it lasted only five years, a period in which it managed to have about five different presidents and more than twenty different governments. Hundreds of books have been written about the causes of its failure and the reasons that led to the ensuing Spanish Civil War. In short, it could be said that in the



The social tensions at the start of the 20th Century reached their worst point in 1919 with the Semana Trágica (Tragic Week).



General Primo de Rivera led a military takeover in 1923. His dictatorship was supported by the monarchy, and lasted until 1930.

Many of Spain's most important writers and thinkers devoted their energies to analyzing the problems of Spain.

The tertulia was a traditional place for discussing these. Painter Gutiérrez Solana reflects the ambience in this painting.



previous hundred years Spaniards had made very little headway in learning to govern themselves and live together in harmony.

The military continued to fall into its 19th-Century habit of trying to take over under the pretext of «saving the country». This was the case in July 1936 when a part of the military headed by General Francisco Franco rose up in arms against the government. Although some thought it would be just one more on the list of attempted coups d'état, it turned into a bloody civil war that lasted three years. On one side, there were Franco's forces supported by fascist Germany and Italy and less openly by England. On the other side, there was what remained of the Republican army backed by the Soviet Union and international brigades of volunteers. In addition, thousands of militia men on the left who had previously not supported the Republic with much conviction now joined up to defend it.

It was said to be a romantic war, the last of the romantic wars. But only for some. All Spaniards suffered and no family got through it without losing a loved one. Rather than ideology, the whims of fate often set father against

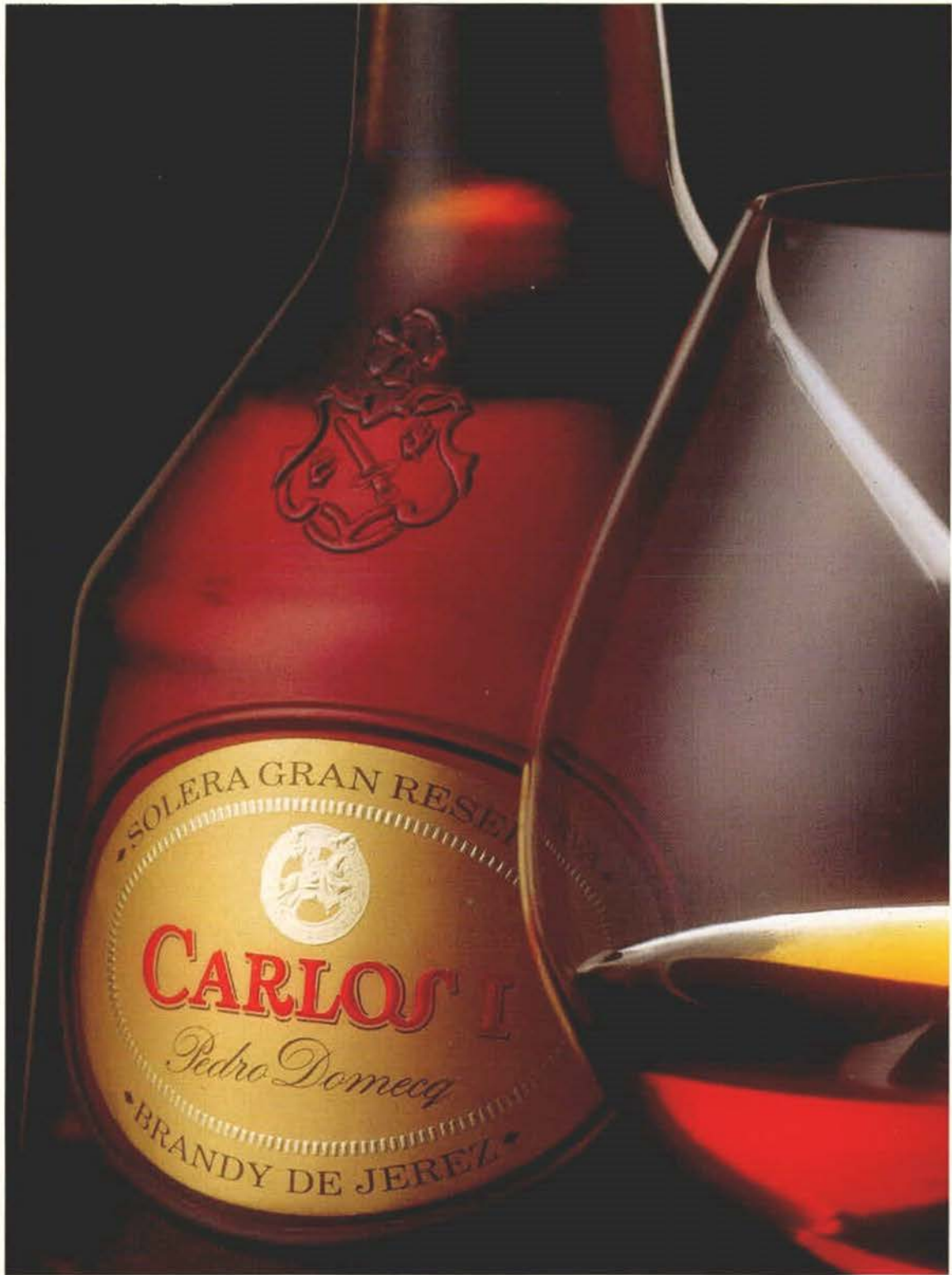
son or brother against brother on opposite sides of enemy lines. It has been said that civil wars are the worst of wars, the most cruel of all. The Spanish Civil War is, unfortunately, an example of how true that is. In some way, the Spanish Civil War was the last major confrontation between traditionalists and liberals, between Catholics and supporters of a lay Europe, between a right which had been in power for centuries and a new society which clamoured for Spain to be governed with different ideas.



Philosopher José Ortega y Gasset was one of the most important intellectuals of his time. The isolation of Spain from Europe was frequently focused in his works. This portrait was painted by Ignacio Zuloaga.

Although Spain never got involved in the two world wars that tore Europe apart, her own civil war was in some way a secret rehearsal for World War II, which would break out in Europe shortly afterwards. Certain European powers were looking for the chance to test out their new weapons, and Spanish soil became the testing ground. They washed their hands, though, of whatever destiny might befall the Spanish fighters after the war was over.

A half a million people died in the war. (The population of Spain at the time was 25 million.) The defeat of half of the Spaniards at the hands of the other half marked the beginning of a military dic-



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

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





During the Franco dictatorship, monumental constructions reflecting the regime's ideology were erected. Numerous administrative buildings are examples of this type of architecture, to be found mainly in Madrid, like the Air Force Ministry, for example.

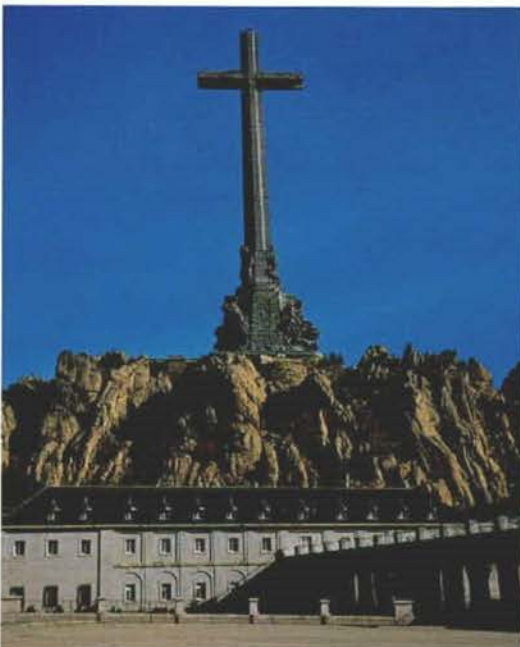
tatorship. Aside from creating a new abyss in Spanish society, the war brought on a period of stagnation which would last many years. Well-known intellectuals, artists, and scientists had to flee the country or were viciously persecuted. Respected Spanish scholars who hadn't been killed during the war left for America where they taught in American universities.

General Franco ruled the country with absolute power receiving the open support of the armed forces, the Catholic Church, and both national

and foreign capital. True, it was a long period of peace —almost half a century— especially for a country which had had such a tumultuous past. But it was more like the peace of a tomb. The regime, of course, wasn't the same in its initial stages as in its last. By the last fifteen years or so, much of its original furore and vengeance had either already been taken out on its opponents or had simply peetered out. Political parties and trade unions managed to stay alive by going underground or operating outside of the country. A new generation of Spaniards who had not taken part in the war had already grown up and was anxious to catch up with their European counterparts.

TOURISM AND DEMOCRACY

This closely controlled peace was a key factor in bringing about a radical change in Spain. A peaceful social environment was exactly what millions of European tourists were looking for as they started to pour into Spain in the late fifties. That and low prices, a good climate, and local customs which they found «quaint» or «romantic», like something out of the 19th Century (which, of course, they were). Spaniards were hospitable, gracious, warm, and good-natured. Poor for sure, but also decent, honourable people. The «*España profunda*» had made it through all the political instability, the power struggles among the ruling class, and even the civil war.



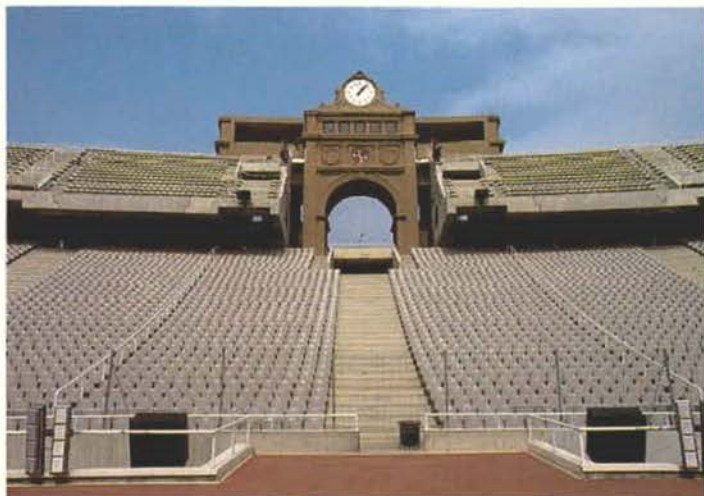
The best example of monumental constructions is the spectacular monument "the Valley of the Fallen" erected to the dead of the Civil War, near Madrid.



The 20th Century arrived with a new urbanism in Spain's older cities. In 1910 the Gran Vía was opened in Madrid and Antonio López painted it in 1974.



The World's Fair in Seville is a symbol of the new direction Spain is taking on the road to modernization.



The port city of Barcelona, one of Spain's most dynamic cities, was chosen to be the site of the 1992 Olympic Games.

If customs still seemed anchored in the past, then the setting for them even more so... untouched countryside, quiet little villages, clean solitary beaches, safe cities. The tremendous impact of tourism on this world right out of the pages of 19th-Century travel journals was decisive. In less than ten years, fishing villages and open landscapes were filled with hotels and tourist resorts, visited each year by millions of people. The southern coasts and those of Levante were practically colonized by foreign capital. All of this was paralleled by an easing up in the Franco regime and a certain opening up to foreign markets and ideas. By the time Franco died in 1975 and democracy was re-established, Spain had already made the first steps toward modernization and was ready to take on the future.

It was as if suddenly Spaniards were living in a different country. Elections were held without anyone being killed; the king as a constitutional monarch left the government in the hands of the political parties who had won the elections; the economy grew at a rapid rate and the standard of living greatly improved; and almost overnight, Spaniards enjoyed the same civil liberties as their fellow Europeans. The new constitution set up a nation of seventeen Autonomous Regions, three of them with their own language and each with a considerable degree of self-government. This solved a problem which had plagued the country for centuries.

On January 1, 1986 Spain became a member of the European Common Market, whose doors had remained closed to the Franco regime. The fact of the matter, though, is that by this time Spain was already decidedly European, sharing legal and economic institutions in common with the rest of western nations. Spain's joining the Common Market marked an end to a period of mutual lack of knowledge and a strained coexistence based on past resentments and ill feelings.

As the five-hundred year anniversary of Spain's first landing in America is being celebrated, Spain sets a new course for the future, a new voyage filled with optimism. Symbolically, the port city of Barcelona, one of Spain's most dynamic cities, was chosen to be the site of the 1992 Olympic Games. This grand event along with the 1992 World's Fair in Seville are symbols of the new direction Spain is taking on the road to modernization. Travellers who visited Spain fifty or even thirty years ago can hardly believe how much things have changed. The Spain of today is perhaps less «quaint», but it is more just. Less traditional, but richer. The country no longer lives closed in upon itself. Naturally, like all nations, it is subject to the conflicts and unsettling factors of a world in constant change, but Spain has solid reasons to view the future with optimism.

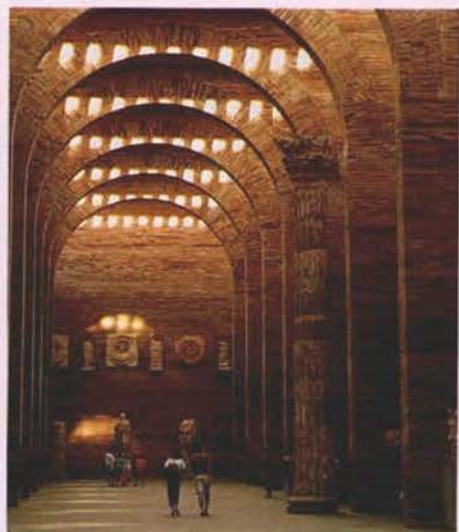
Jesús Torhado is a journalist and writer. His 25 published works include novels and travel books, which have won him prizes such as the Planeta, Alfaguara, Mariano de Cavia, and Ruta de la Plata. Some of them have been translated into nine languages.

MEMENTOES

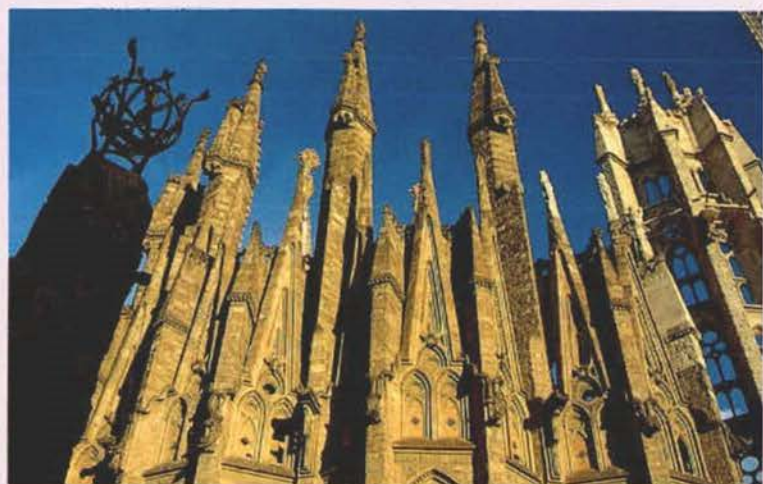
ART REACHES BEYOND BORDERS

In the first half of the 20th Century, the political and social scene in Spain had little to do with what was going on in the rest of Europe. Nevertheless, the artistic movements of the day not only made their way to Spain but Spanish artists were often the avant-garde of these new styles. Later in the century, art on either side of the Pyrenees was increasingly influenced by the other.

Art Nouveau: This style, inspired by the contours of Nature, was the first significant style of the century, producing major works of art in interior design and architecture. It especially took hold in Barcelona. There, architect Antonio Gaudí (1852-1926), one of the movement's foremost representatives, created his most famous works: the Church of the Holy Family, Güell Park, and the Milá and Batlló apartment buildings. He also left behind buildings inspired by medieval Gothic style in the cities of Leon and Astorga. Other followers of Art Nouveau working principally in Barcelona were Domenech,



The Roman Museum in Mérida is one of the many new museums created in recent years.



The Church of the Holy Family is one of Gaudí's most famous works. It is in Barcelona, where his most famous works are.

TAYO ACURAJICEX

Montaner, Puig, Cadafalch, and Berenguer. Architect José Luis Ser, who has many works in the United States, was especially noted for his use of the new materials which had become available.

Fine Arts: Spain had always produced great painters and the 20th Century would turn out to be no exception. Four of the most important painters of this century—Picasso, Dalí, Miró and Juan Gris—were Spanish. And, naturally, there were others: Sorolla, Vázquez Díaz, Solana, Palencia, Zuloaga, and Ortega Muñoz. Today, contemporary Spanish painters like Tapies, Antonio López, Saura, Sempere, Villalta, and others receive international recognition. The same can be said for sculpture as for painting. A list of well-known Spanish sculptors might begin with names like Benlliure, Pablo Serrano, Alberto Sánchez, Clara, Llimona, Hugué, Julio González, Oteiza, Chillida, Chirino, Subirach and go on to include many others. In music, we have only to recall the Spanish composers Manuel de Falla, Albéniz, the Halffters, Calsals, and Joaquín Rodrigo to realize Spain's important contribution to this art.

Architecture: During the dictatorship, monumental constructions reflecting the regime's ideology were erected. A good example of this is the spectacular monument el Valle de los Caídos (the Valley of the Fallen) erected to the dead of the Civil War and set in the Guadarrama mountains near Madrid. The University of Gijón and numerous administrative buildings in Madrid (the Air Force Ministry, for example) are other examples of this type of architecture. Apart from this ideologically inspired architecture, prestigious architects like Fisac, Sáenz de Oiza, Moneo, Carvajal,



Leoz, Molezún created works in many Spanish cities and in other countries.

New Urbanism: While the tourist boom in coastal areas brought on an often merely functional, eclectic architectural development, Spain's older cities were concerned with urban development plans to deal with continued growth. From the Gran Vía in Madrid (1910) to more recent original creations like the planned town of Riaño in Leon, the development of modern Spain is readily visible in her architecture. A good case in point are the many new buildings erected for the Olympics in Barcelona and the World's Fair in Seville.

Museums: Many new museums have been created in recent years: the Roman Museum in Mérida, the Valencia Museum and the Reina Sofía Museum in Madrid. Others have undergone remodelling in order to better exhibit works of art both past and present.

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

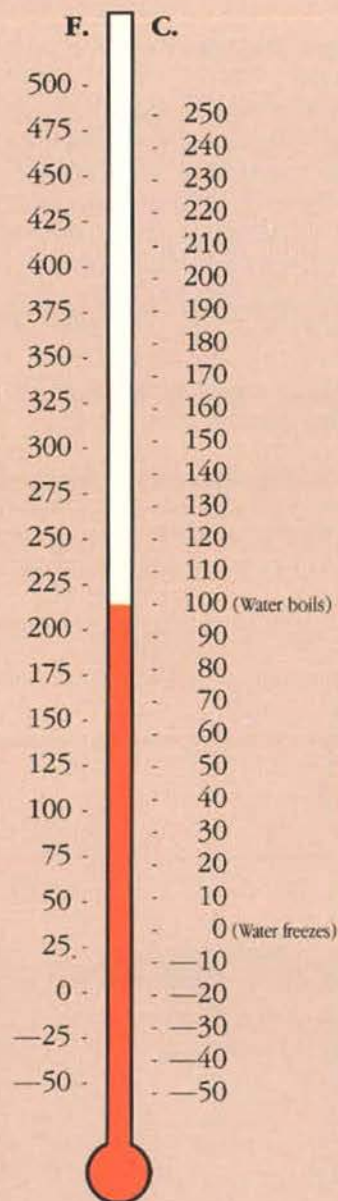
TEMPERATURE	DIAL NUMBER
VERY SLOW = 250F/120C.	= 1/4
SLOW = 300F/150C.	= 1
MODERATE = 350F/180C.	= 4
HOT = 400F/200C.	= 6
VERY HOT = 450F/230C.	= 8

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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GOURMETOUR

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S P A I N
GOURMETOUR

THE SEVENTH INTERNATIONAL GOURMET CLUB SHOW

Madrid, 23, 24, 25 and 26 April 1993

THIRD WINE FORUM

What is the Gourmet Club Show?

It is the event where product manufacturers, elite gastronomes, artisans and industrialists can meet the owners and chefs of the best restaurants, head buyers from hotel chains and large select food chains, special shops and experts which are lovers of a good table (members of wine clubs, readers of magazines for gastronomes and users of tourist and good food guides).

Access to the Show is only through invitation or as a professional. Under no circumstances are those under 16 years of age admitted.

Activities and conferences

During the period of the Show, a number of talks will be given related to quality products and good food, among which the THIRD WINE FORUM stands out.

The results of the Sixth Show

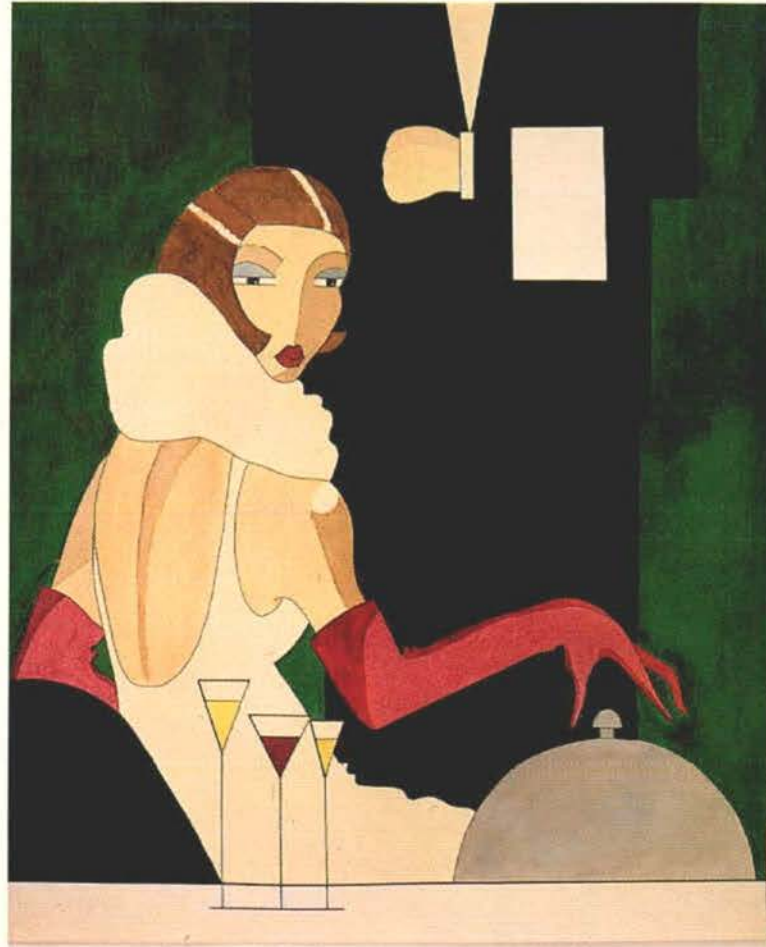
The Sixth Show occupied a total net area of 4,500 m² with 252 stands shared among the 197 companies which were exhibiting —of which 55% were from the food sub-sector and 45% from the drinks sub-sector. Throughout the four exhibition days almost 23,000 professionals visited the show.

Forecast for the Seventh Show

Exhibitors: 300
Professional visitors: 25,000

Products to be shown

Wines, spirits and liqueurs
Sweet, chocolates and biscuits
Condiments, spices, oils and vinegars
Apéritifs and beers
Cheeses
Meat, fish and vegetable conserves
Charcuterie
Patés, foie-gras and duck and goose by-products
Accessories for the table (china, glass, linen, etc.)
Various (kitchen utensils, books, specialized magazines, etc.)



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

Firm

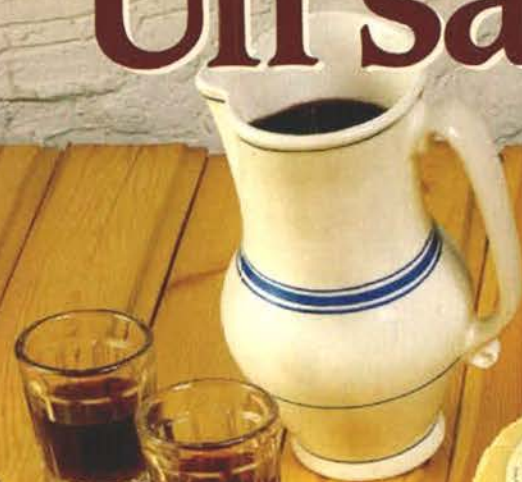
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Person to be contacted and post held in the firm

Un sabor muy familiar



The title of this book might lead you to expect a collection of maps. However, though it does contain many, and good ones at that, there is a lot more to it.

Dutchman Hubrecht Duijken is a wine expert with 25 books on the subject to his credit (the excellent *The Wines of Rioja* among them), and his thorough knowledge of his subject stands him in good stead in this exhaustive *Atlas*.

He has made many visits to Spain, collecting information at first hand from bodega owners, oenologists and official bodies in all its wine-growing areas. As he explains in the introduction, this compendium is intended to serve as a handbook for travellers, a source of information for lovers of good wine who prefer to stay at home (...) and also as a buyer's guide.

Duijken is convinced that, after a long period in the wings, Spanish wines are now ready for stardom. New, up-to-date methods and approaches are paying off, and Spanish wines deserve to be more widely known, both in Spain itself and abroad.

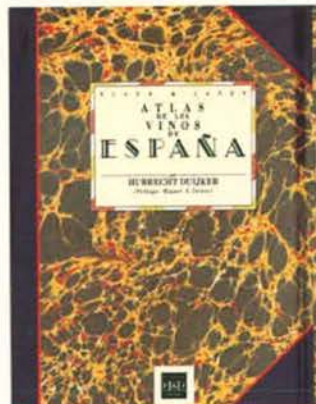
After a general introduction to wine-growing Spain (History, Vineyards and Varieties, Regulations and Labelling) by Richard Mayson, Duijken goes on to provide detailed profiles of every one of Spain's 40 wine Denominations of Origin (D.O.).

He divides the country into four main blocks (north, east and centre, south, and the islands), dividing each in turn into their respective administrative regions and providing condensed information—geographical and cultural as well as wine-related—about them all.

He writes at greater length about each region's D.O.s and the past, present and future of their wines. He also gives information about their main producers, and points of tourist interest, including suggested «wine-routes». All this, and maps too. ■

The Wine Atlas of Spain.

Hubrecht Duijken.
Mitchell Beazley Publishers, 1992.
Artists House, 14-15 Manette Street,
London, W1V 5LB.



Three years after her first book, *Life and Food in the Basque Country*, María José Sevilla now brings us *Spain on a Plate*, a collection of over 100 Spanish recipes, some traditional and others modern. The selection is a personal one, culled from family recipes and others adopted from friends and other cooks.

After a brief introduction to the essential regional characteristics of Spanish food, the book is given over to recipes. These are presented in the usual categories (Appetisers, Soups and Stews, Vegetables...), and each is accompanied by an explanation of its particularly Spanish character, where it comes from, why it was chosen, and so on.

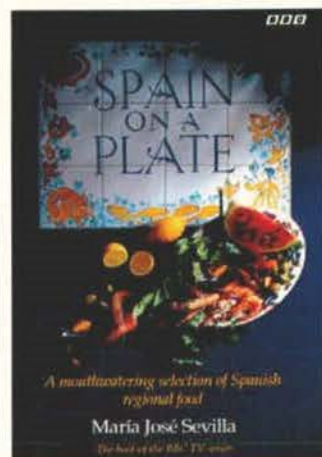
As we have come to expect from María José Sevilla, the recipes and comments are well, and simply, presented, and backed up by a thorough and practical knowledge of Spanish food. The personal touch provided by the anecdotes and comments which punctuate the book make it a charming read.

Spain on a Plate is the companion volume to the highly successful five-programme series of the same name which appeared on BBC Television in Spring 1992.

Though aimed at a British readership (the author is a member of the UK's Food and Wine from Spain Promotion Office), the measurements in *Spain on a Plate* are given in both imperial and metric systems. It is a good buy for any cook interested in Spanish food beyond *gazpacho* and *paella*. Sevilla tells you how to give even simple, everyday potato dishes a Spanish touch. ■

Spain on a Plate.

María José Sevilla.
BBC Books, 1992
Woodlands,
80 Wood Lane, London W12 0TT.



Anyone hoping to experience every single fiesta that makes up Spain's festive calendar would have to be prepared to devote a good ten years of their life to the task. María Angeles Sánchez has devoted twenty of hers, thus qualifying as one of the very few experts on this subject.

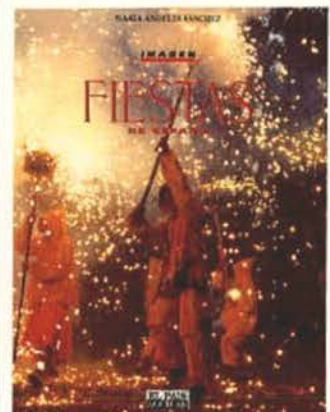
In the course of those twenty years, Sánchez travelled the length and breadth of Spain, taking part in fiestas pagan and religious, vast and tiny, with her camera always at the ready and acquiring a collection of some 50,000 slides in the process. Her experiences provided the basis for her pioneering *Guía de Fiestas Populares de España* which, published in 1981, catalogued over 3,000 fiestas.

A journalist by profession, María Angeles Sánchez has worked in various media, almost always in the field which is her enduring passion: fiestas, crafts and folk traditions. At last she has decided to exhibit some of the treasures accumulated on her travels over the years and publish a visual record of the fiestas of Spain. Inevitably, she had to hone her collection down. «One has to make choices. (...) The criteria I applied in making this absurd selection were more intuitive than cerebral, made more with the heart than with the head. Just like a fiesta, really.»

Be that as it may, the result is superb. Following the cycle of the Christian year, with its intrinsic echo of the natural rhythm of the seasons, a procession of vivid events—Christmas, carnivals, Holy Week rituals, Moors and Christians pageants, country pilgrimages, San Juan bonfires...—parades through the pages of a book which encapsulates what is surely one of the most intact traditional festive calendars in Europe. Over 150 photographs are accompanied by a text in which the author avows her preference for fiestas which, despite all odds, still retain their authenticity. ■

Fiestas de España.

María Angeles Sánchez.
El País-Agular, 1991.
Juan Bravo, 38, 28006 Madrid.
Tel: (1) 578 31 59.
Fax: (1) 578 32 20.



The subtitle of this book, *An Uncommon Guide*, is appropriate for various reasons. It is uncommon, for example, for a book of this scope to be the work of just one author; guides are generally researched by a team, with each member contributing a particular section (history, hotels, gastronomy, and so on). The advantage of sole authorship is that readers are given a consistent overview rather than a fragmented one. Better still, we get warm, personal impressions of various facets of Spanish life rather than a collection of impersonal data.

Penelope Casas is an American who fell in love with Spain on her very first visit, 30 years ago. It has been an enduring enthusiasm. Casas, who is married to a Spaniard but lives in the US, has returned to Spain annually over the last 30 years, revisiting favourite haunts and discovering new ones. This is what makes this guide more than just the itinerary of standard cultural and historical features that one would find in a «Common Guide». Here, we are introduced to little-known corners of the country, remote monasteries, restaurants... places that you, and many Spaniards, would never know about were it not for this book.

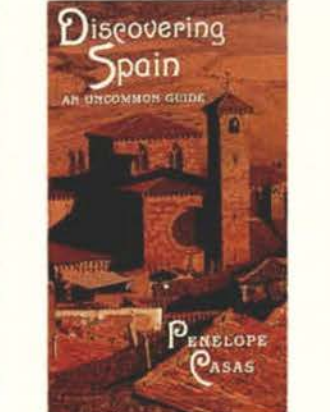
Penelope Casas' love of Spanish food—celebrated in her two excellent books on the subject, *The Food and Wines of Spain* and *Tapas*—shines through in *Discovering Spain*, too. References to dishes, restaurants and recipes accompany every place visited.

Clear, stylish visual presentation make this a pleasant book to read: its 600 pages are illustrated with lovely sepia drawings by David Cain, and maps. Little notes here and there highlight gems of local historical information, legends and anecdotes.

Perhaps the most engaging characteristic of this guide is its authenticity. The author has explored Spain thoroughly, she knows what she is talking about, and it shows: the information is up-to-date and trustworthy. All in all, a marvellous guide book—particularly for North American visitors to Spain. ■

Discovering Spain. An Uncommon Guide

Penelope Casas.
Alfred A. Knopf Inc., 1992.
201 East 50th Street,
New York, N.Y. 10022 USA.
Tel: (212) 751-2600
Fax: (212) 572-2593



LA BISBAL CERAMICS

A Long Tradition of Artistry

La Bisbal D'Emporda, located in Catalonia in the area of Lower Emporda, has a long tradition of artisanal ceramics. Not surprisingly, since the region where it is located has an abundant supply of clays of optimum plasticity. Pottery-making in the area was well underway by the late Middle Ages, turning out earthenware pitchers, jugs, decanters and the like. As commerce grew over the centuries, La Bisbal pottery made its way to places as far off as Cuba and the Philippines. In the 17th Century, a ceramic guild was set up in the city to oversee the trade.

The traditional colours for La Bisbal pottery are red and white, with one colour serving as background and the other used to decorate. Birds, flowers and, more recently, fish serve as decorative motifs. The most characteristic pieces are also some of the most delicate to make: *payés* dessert plates and soup bowls (*«payés»* is the local word for farmer), pitchers, mortars, jugs, and washbasins. Halfway through the 19th Century, a new black ceramic was introduced and mainly used for jugs and washbasins.

Artisan potters weren't the only ones to discover the excellent quality of the local clays. Before the 19th Century came to an end, ceramic factories had also set up shop and

were busy producing ceramic floor tiles. The thin, resistant, iron-speckled tiles they achieved were sold both in Spain and exported to other countries. Today, perhaps the most representative of La Bisbal's industrial ceramic production is the glazed wall tile, which is in demand both at home and abroad. In recent years, production has quadrupled, and at present one of its many destinations is the state of California where it is highly valued.

With the coming of Art Nou-

veau at the beginning of this century, ceramics was put to work in the form of glazed floor tiles in buildings of modernist design like Barcelona's Palacio de la Música, San Pablo Hospital, and many others. The techniques for producing this type of tile were later further refined to allow for mass production, which today is geared toward meeting the needs of the construction industry.

ARTISTIC CERAMICS

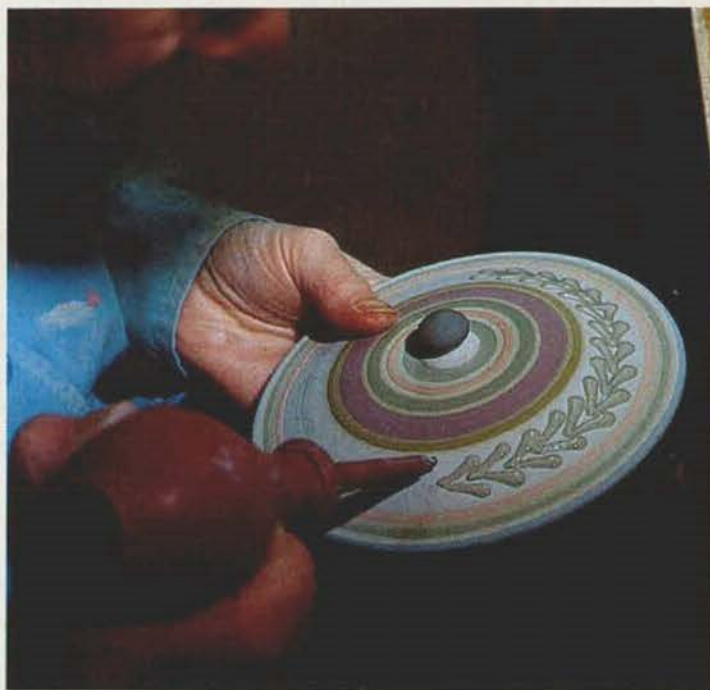
Today, La Bisbal has a thriv-

ing ceramic industry whose artisanal production offers a wide selection of highly valued artistic pieces without forgetting functional pieces like, for example, the famous La Bisbal chinaware. Artistic pieces are presently experiencing a big come back. Traditional shapes and colours have been skilfully adapted to a new look, one which has an alluring simplicity that easily explains the increasing demand for these works of art.

A total of about twenty-four pottery workshops belong to the La Bisbal Ceramic Artisans Association. Their major thrust is on creating ornamental pieces without, of course, leaving behind functional pieces like plates, serving dishes, coffee service, and so on. Artistic inspiration for these pieces calls upon traditional motifs and innovative designs alike.

The city now has a ceramics school, which has already made a name for itself in the rest of Europe. At the school, future ceramicists study both the technical and artistic aspects of their trade. The city has also opened a Ceramic Museum, which is housed in a former terracotta factory. There, the public can learn all about the history of pottery making in La Bisbal, a city whose name goes hand in hand with ceramics.

María José Blanco



P. SANCHEZ-MATA/ICEX

Spanish Masterpieces



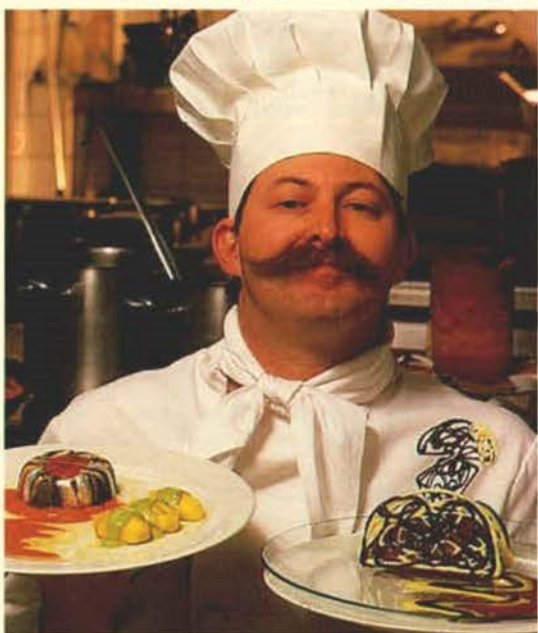
GONZALEZ BYASS

SHERRY & BRANDY



In Spain, we have a Secret Cooking Ingredient.

NOWADAYS, the kitchens of *Spain* are full of artists. They work with raw materials of unrivalled richness on a canvas as big as Spain itself. They pick all manner of exotic fruits and fresh vegetables from the *Levante* orchard of the East coast. They dip into the *Atlantic* and the *Mediterranean* for a bewildering variety of fish. They stalk the succulent game and meats of the *Meseta*. And the end results have put *Spain* well and truly on the European culinary map. In raiding the history books for traditional



recipes from all the regions, Spanish chefs have produced a "nueva cocina" with the wholesome delights of country cuisine. And all done with the appetising addition of one mystery ingredient. A dash of passion.

Imagination

The real beauty is, you can discover the art of Spanish cooking in tapas bar, small family restaurant or internationally renowned watering hole. And once you've developed a taste for it, *Spain* can prove to be exceedingly moreish.

