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# SPAIN

FOOD, WINE & TRAVEL QUARTERLY MAGAZINE

SPAIN GOURMETOUR

Nº30 May-August 1993



## SPAIN'S FLOWER AND PLANT TRADE. GROWTH INDUSTRY

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MULTINATIONAL  
AHEAD OF THE  
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THE ROAD TO  
SANTIAGO,  
A EUROPEAN  
ROAD

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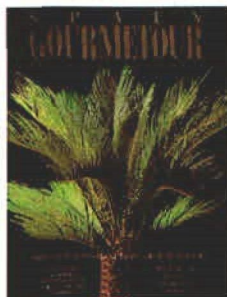
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**Director**

Manuel García-Aranda

**Editor**

Cathy Boirac

**Publication Coordinator**

Sonia Ortega

**Editorial Secretary**

Angela Castilla

**Publisher**

ICEX

Pº de la Castellana, 14

28046 Madrid, Spain

Tel.: (1) 431 12 40

Fax: (1) 431 61 28

**Art Direction and Design**

Luis G. Artime (AN&C)

**Desk-top Publisher**

AN&C

Pilar Nadales  
and Eva Márquez

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28004 Madrid Spain

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# EVERYTHING BUT THE ELEPHANT...



*The twelfth-century castle of Peñafiel, in the heart of Ribera del Duero.*

**I**n 1501, the city of London enjoyed a week of festivities to celebrate the arrival of a Spanish Princess, who was to marry the King's brother.

*Her name was Catherine, Infanta of Castile, and the locals turning out for the beer and fireworks in her honour were cheerfully convinced that they were going to the south-London district where she was staying to see the Elephant and Castle ...The rest is history.*

Everyone knows the story, but how many know the Castile from which the Infanta took her title? There's not a lot in the way of elephants to be found here, but the historic countryside still has its share of castles, as well as the heritage of a thousand years of history provided by the Royal houses of León and Castile.

The river Duero flows through a lush green landscape of fertile soils and rolling hills under a crisp, alpine-blue sky. This is a land of wildflower meadows and sheep-farms as well as castles and kings, known as the breadbasket of Spain for its production of quality cereals...And soon to be known for another of its outstanding contributions to gastronomy: the wines of the Denominación de Origen Ribera del Duero. The vine thrives in the

chalk and sandstone soils here, at an altitude of 2,500 feet: the very limit at which grapes can be grown and ripened anywhere in Spain.

The high, cool spring, hot summer and autumn, and very cold winter ensure that only the healthiest vines survive to produce grapes, and the combination of freshness, acidity and ripeness of those grapes is unique in Spain, and the

rest of the world. The vine is the Tinto Fino, or Tempranillo, which has evolved its own unique characteristics in this high Castilian

plâteau – characteristics which have been much prized by those in power in the major cities of the region: Burgos, where El Cid launched his campaigns against the Moors; Segovia, where Isabella – mother of the Infanta Catherine – was proclaimed Queen; Valladolid, former capital of Spain and Soria, for many years the frontier between Christian and Muslim Spain.

These proud Castilians demanded – and could afford – wines which matched their elevated tastes and the hearty foods which nature provided in such abundance.

In the countryside, too, people had a healthy thirst for good wine, and in

almost every village you'll see *luceras* – strange towers like giant spears of petrified asparagus which stick up almost everywhere, between the houses and on the hillsides.

These provide light and fresh air for the labyrinthine cellars burrowed into the soft bedrock below, where every family, no matter how humble, would tread its ration of grapes and store their beloved product.

Add to this an explosion of new technology in the wineries, new ideas from young winemakers who are masters of their craft, and new investment in the land, and you'll understand why there's an atmosphere of excitement in Ribera del Duero.

The region's winemakers, the Consejo Regulador which polices the quality, and some pretty impressive international wine experts believe that one of the world's greatest wines is emerging here. You will, too.

*It was, after all, good enough for the Infanta – and you can enjoy it with or without an elephant!*



WINES FROM



---

## *Flower Power*

**T**he quantity of plants and flowers a country consumes is an indicator of its degree of development. In most developed countries, bringing home a bunch of roses or a potted plant is no longer something we do just for special occasions. We buy them along with the rest of the shopping as a contribution to the comfort factor at home and at work.

A high proportion of the flowers and, especially, potted plants, bought in Europe come from Spain, particularly from the Valencian Region and the Canary Islands, where long experience and enviable climate generate a huge range of top quality produce.

Another of Spain's industries that prides itself on its range is the canned fish industry. The top of the range, up at gourmet level, features the best cuts of tuna, the biggest mussels, clams and select sardines, presented in a wide variety of ways: in finest olive oil or *escabeche*, in piquant sauces, dressed with lemon...

Spain's fishing and canning traditions stretch back a long way, so it is hardly surprising that canned fish is very much a part of the national diet. It is served both at home and in bars and restaurants, sometimes as part of a more elaborate dish but more often straight, as *tapas* or quick snacks. Simple and delicious.

This is Jacobean Year, so our tourist section in this issue looks at the pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela. This year, 1993, has seen frontiers fall within the European Community. But over eight hundred years ago, the confluence of routes along St. James' Way also brought together many diverse cultural, artistic and commercial influences. These, over time, were to provide the basis for the Europe we know today.

# **T**HE MOST COMPLETE AND RELIABLE GUIDE TO SPANISH EXPORTING FIRMS

*It contains information on more than 10,000 firms, classified alphabetically and according to the merchandise exported. By consulting this census, two basic questions can be answered:*

*What products does a specific Spanish firm export and to which countries?*

*What Spanish firms export a specific product?*

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## SALICAL'S SECOND YEAR

Between April 19 and May 2 of this year, the Regional Government of Rioja, in cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of this Spanish region, held the second year of SALICAL, the International Fair of Quality Certified Food Products.

At this year's food fair, focused exclusively on top-quality products with Denominations of Quality, Origin or Specific Characteristics, visitors were able to view 66 stands set up by Spain's various regions, regulatory bodies and a wide range of international exhibitors, including distributors of products coming from Austria, Germany, Denmark, France, Holland and the United Kingdom.

## ENLARGEMENT OF THE NAVARRA DENOMINATION OF ORIGIN

By decree of the Regional Government of Navarre, the "Navarre Denomination of Origin" has been broadened to authorize a number of new townships in the north-eastern area of Spain to engage in the production and *crianza* (aging of wine). That is not all. In the past, several wine-producing areas were not allowed to age their own products. With this new decree, the Department of Agriculture has decided that the authorization to age their own wines should be extended to all of the Navarre Denomination of Origin area.

Source: *Marco Real* (No. 113, April 1993)

303 fine food companies -from Spain and abroad- displayed their products at SALICAL'93, which ranged from Spanish cured hams to frozen potato omelette, as well as the Rioja region's famous food preserves and, of course, its fine wines. Scheduled at the same time as the fair was the Ninth Technical Meet-

ing of La Rioja, entitled "Quality standards in food production", which drew a large number of industry representatives, who discussed every aspect of food production quality standards, from the standpoints of packing, marketing and general management.

## THE EC PROTECTS SPANISH TURRONES

The Court of Justice of the European Community, sitting in Luxembourg, recently passed a motion protecting the Specific Denominations of Jijona and Alicante *turrones*, or nougat. These two denominations had been waging a legal battle for the past four years with two nougat manufacturers in the French city of Perpignan, who had been selling their products under the "Jijona" and "Alicante" names.

The offending companies are now being taken before the Court of Montpellier, in France, for final sentencing.

*Barbadillo*  
ES MI VINO

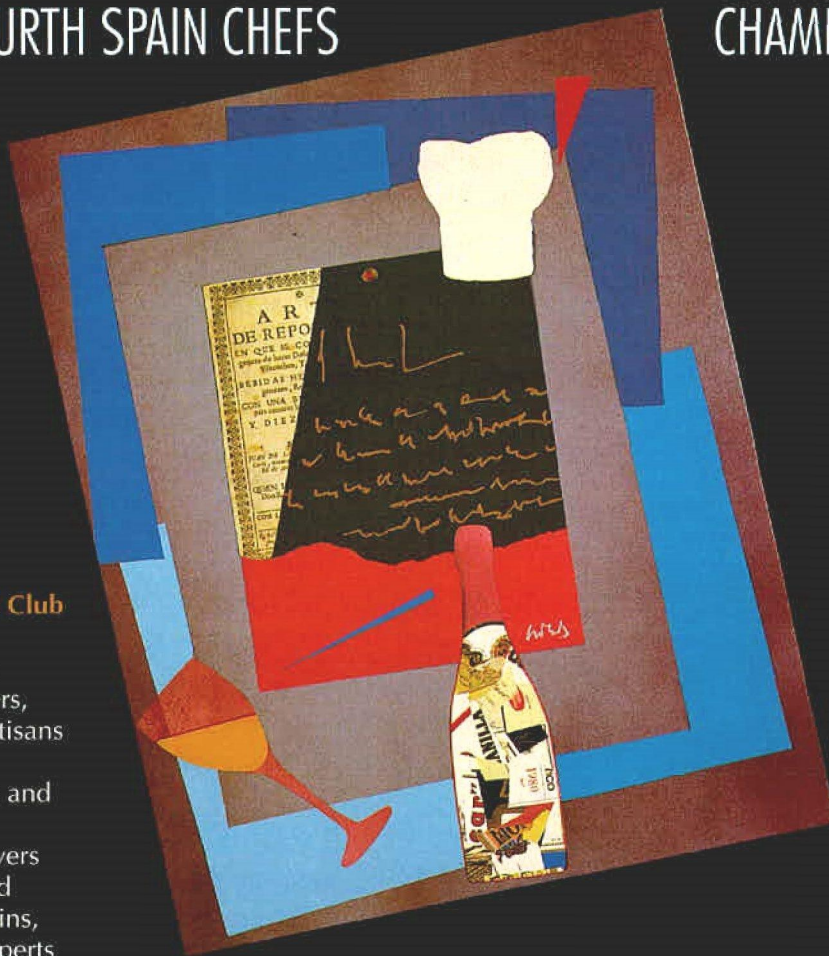


# THE EIGHTH INTERNATIONAL GOURMET CLUB SHOW

Madrid, 15, 16, 17 and 18 April 1994

## FOURTH SPAIN CHEFS

## CHAMPIONSHIP



### 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 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 FOURTH SPAIN CHEFS CHAMPIONSHIP stands out.

### The results of the Seventh Show

The Seventh Show occupied a total net area of 9,000 m<sup>2</sup> with 320 stands shared among the 360 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 25,000 professionals visited the show.

### Forecast for the eighth Show

Exhibitors: 390  
Professional visitors: 26,000

### 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.)  
Variours (Kitchen utensils, books, specialized magazines, etc.)

For further information about the Eighth International Gourmet Club Show, send this coupon to Progourmet, S.A. Cuesta de San Vicente, 4, 6ª Planta. 28008 Madrid (Spain). Tel.: (1) 542 76 60. Fax: (1) 559 45 75.

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# STOP PRESS

## SPAIN'S HISTORICAL PARADOR CHAIN - NEW ADDITIONS AND RE-OPENINGS

Spain's network of historical Paradors - hotels and restaurants installed in ancient castles and monasteries - is undergoing a thorough overhaul and refurbishing, aimed at bringing it up to the sophisticated requirements of current-day travelers. Work was recently begun on two new Paradors: one in Siguëenza (Province of Guadalajara) and the other in the Monastery of Santo Domingo de la Calzada (Province of Rioja), which will soon be able, once more, to provide rest and refreshment for pilgrims on their way to the medieval shrine of Santiago de Compostela. The network was further enlarged

last April with the inaugurations of a new Parador in the picturesque city of Cuenca, situated in a 16C. monastery facing the famous "hanging houses" which overlook that city's plunging river gorge.

## VALENCIA DRIED FRUITS COMPANY SET OUT TO CONQUER THE WORLD

The Valencia-based dried-fruit producer, Productos Churruga, is currently negotiating with a number of foreign distributors for the purpose of broadening its range of international outlets. Churruga, which already has faithful customers in France, Portugal, the UK, Switzerland, Denmark and Sweden, now hopes to make new conquests in Poland, Belgium,

Italy and several countries of the Middle East.

Source: *Dulces Noticias... y algo más* (No. 49, March, 1993)

## CANCELLATION OF VIBEXPO'93

In the light of the current economic difficulties, the management of the Instituto Ferial de Madrid (IFEMA) has decided to cancel VIBEXPO'93, the Exhibit of Wine, Beverages and Related Industries (Spain Gourmetour No. 29) which was scheduled for September 19 to October 3 of this year.

## VINEXPO 1993: IN VINEXPO VERITAS!

From June 21 to 25 of this year, VINEXPO turned Bordeaux into the world's wine capital, bringing together exhibits from 42 different countries around the world.

Spain's presence was second in volume only to France's, and with the exception of the Catalonia and Galicia regions, was centered in an ICEX pavilion. Major Spanish brands on display with their own individual stands were Osborne and Marqués de Riscal, and Freixenet Cava was Spain's representative in the Great Brand Club, alongside the world's leading producers. The wide range of Spanish products included a kosher wine made by Bodegas Luis Megia S.A., of Valdepeñas, marketed under the name Tikvah and prepared under the supervision of a group of rabbis, to certify that manufacturing procedures are in compliance with Jewish religious laws. Wine merchants, tasters, producers and experts from all over the world all sniffed and sighed, "In VINEXPO veritas".

# SEÑORIO DE SARRIA

## DELICATESSEN

Puente la Reina. Navarre. Spain

One of the best known brand for high quality products in preserve from Spain is Señorío de Sarria Delicatessen

This family owned business distribute and market all over Spain and also overseas, a range of 58 different products of the "Delicatessen" type under its own brand Señorío de Sarria. This name also refers to a 1100 hectares agriculture farm located in Puente la Reina, in the province of Navarre, that is also owned by the same family.

The products offered are classified as follows:

- Asparagus (from Navarre): white and green.
- Truffles and mushrooms.
- Preserve fruits of different kinds.
- Jam and preserves.
- Foiegras and pates.
- Vegetables: "Pimientos de Piquillo", Artichokes in olive oil, green beans, etc...
- Capers, olives and onions.
- Cooked dishes such as confit of duck, quails, beans, stuffed red pepper, etc...
- Canned fish and crawfish.

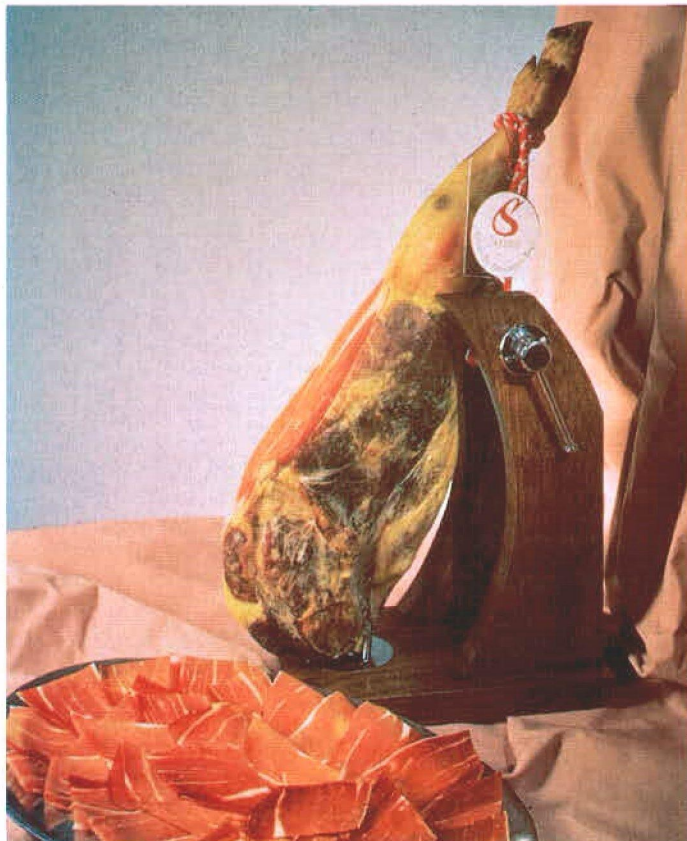
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## YOUNG RESTAURANT OWNERS OF SPAIN

The Association of Young Restaurant Owners of Spain has recently been created, in the framework of the group Young Restaurant Owners of Europe. It thus joins a network of similar associations in Germany, Belgium, France, Great Britain, Italy, Luxembourg, Holland and Switzerland. The guiding purpose of the founders of this association - which includes some of Spain's leading restaurant-owners - is to safeguard the native cuisines of each country, since these are considered to be an essential part of national and international levels, as well as organizing exchange programs and training courses. Its first official guide was presented to the media in June.

Source: *Vino y Gastronomía* (No. 97, April 1993) and ICEX

## SPANISH SHORTBREAD GOES TO RUSSIA

The *mantecados* of Seville - the delicious short-bread-like biscuits made of flour, sugar and pork-lard shortening, traditionally eaten at Christmas time - may soon find new fans in Russia, thanks to a new agreement between the Association of Producers of Mantecados of Estepa (Seville Province) and the El Patriarca company, which plans to export the delicacies to Russia. The Seville Chamber of Commerce, which is managing the deal, declares that further agreements are in the works for the export of other top-quality local products such as oranges, olives and olive oil.

Source: *Alforja* (No. 173, March 1993)

## RAVENTOS SCORES A SUCCESS IN BORDEAUX

Raventos i Blanc, the Catalan wine-grower, recently received a top French award for its Chateau d'Aiguilhe, of the Côtes de Castillon Denomination of Origin, elaborated in the Bordeaux region of France.

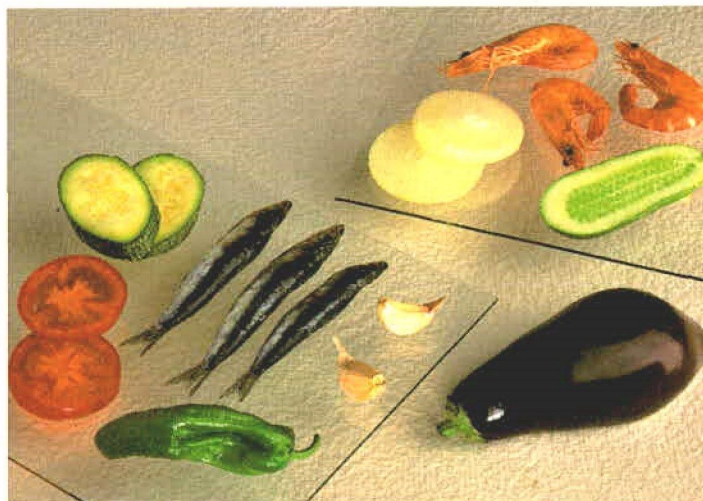
First prize was the Golden Medal of the French Agricultural Ministry's "General Agricultural Contest", one of Europe's most coveted awards because it is the only prize recognized by the European Community. The wine also won top marks in the 1993 Hachette Wine Guide's blindfolded tasting - as a result of which it was declared to be a model of excellence for its specific Denomination of Origin.

Source: *Gran Reserva* (No.70, April 1993)

## RIOJA WINES GO UPMARKET

Wine cellars marketing their products under the Rioja Denomination of Origin experienced significant sales increases last year, and this in spite of a generally shaky market. As well as this improvement on the home front, sales of Rioja wines outside of Spain increased sharply - by 22%. Another encouraging development is the creation of a new Rioja wine-producer, Viña Ijalba. Its vines are planted on typically poor and shallow Rioja soil types and currently produce young wines to be sold in a new and distinctive 35 cm. high bottle, which should help get them off to a flying start.

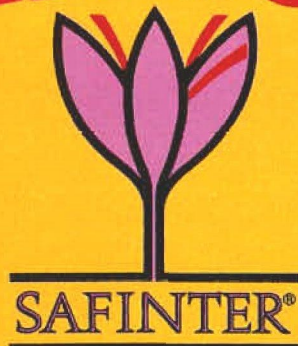
Source: *Marco Real* (No. 114, May 1993)



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### ► 20 YEARS OF VINOSELECCION, SPAIN'S LEADING WINE AND GASTRONOMY CLUB

Spain's oldest wine club, Vinoselección, celebrated its 20th anniversary last year. Although it began its career with an exclusive focus on wines, over the years it has branched out into sausages, cheeses and preserves, as well as all types of Spanish and foreign gourmet food products. Over the past two decades, Vinoselección membership has grown to 30,000 - and new adepts are joining every day.

Vinoselección publishes Sobremesa, one of Spain's most prestigious gastronomical magazines, which recently brought out its 100th edition.

### ► NEW PRODUCTS

Over the past months a number of new fancy food products have appeared on the Spanish consumer market: wines from famous domains, liqueurs, precooked meals and desserts.

Some of the new wines are the *Viña Alcortia Crianza 1989*, elaborated with *Tempranillo* grapes in *La Rioja*; *Las Medallas de Arguëso*, a *manzanilla* produced by the *Bodegas Herederos de Arguëso* in *Sanlúcar de Barrameda*; and from the same area, a *moscatel* called *Pale Fruit*, a sweet wine made with very ripe *moscatel* grapes, produced by *Antonio Barbadillo*.

In the liqueur department, the *Ruavieja* company has recently put its new *Licor Xacobeu* on the market - a *fruity grape liqueur* (23 degree proof). The name "*Xacobeu*" is a tribute to the pilgrims to the shrine of *Saint James* in *Santiago de Compostela*.

New pre-cooked gourmet meals include a well-known Spanish delicacy, "*Stewed quail with kidney beans*", composed of *quail*, *kidney beans*, *onion*, *carrots*, *peppers*, *spices* and *olive oil*, and now being produced by *Conservas Artesanas Rosara*.

What better way to end this list of new products than a traditional Spanish dessert, currently being marketed in attractive glass jars by *Laboratorios Productos San Antonio, S.A.*: the deceptively simple *Nuts in Honey*. "*D'Arso Nuts in Honey*" is prepared from carefully selected ingredients, all 100% natural and without any artificial food additives.

Sources: *Financial Food* (No. 79, January 1993); *Vino* (No. 98, May 1993); *Alforja* (No. 173/174, March/April 1993).



► **Colección Alimentos de España (12 titles)**

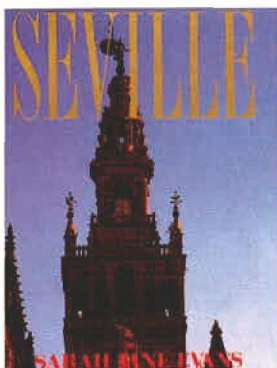
Ediciones El País/Agular y Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación, 1992  
 Juan Bravo 28  
 28006 Madrid  
 Tel.: (1) 322 47 00  
 Fax: (1) 322 47 71

Published in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, this collection covers the main products of the Spanish diet, all of which are typical, too, of the Mediterranean diet. Tasty, healthy and natural products that are the raw material of the special Spanish gastronomy. Olive oil, Pulses, Cereals, Rice, Vegetables, Fruit, Meat, Fish and shellfish, Ham, Cheeses, Pork products and Wines are the 12 titles published

in a format slightly larger than a paperback and fully illustrated with good photographs.

The texts are written by specialist food journalists and writers and all have a common structure: a brief journey through the history of each food in general, and in Spain in particular; a thorough study of the main characteristics of the food in question and its nutritional value; production in Spain, etc. Finally, a double recipe book - the first section covering recipes which are part of the classic repertoire, and the second, entitled *Recetas con firma*, giving the recipes prepared by selected chefs, with new ideas and suggestions.

Lovers of good, wholesome food, who like to know about what they are eating, will enjoy this attractive and readable collection.



► **Seville**

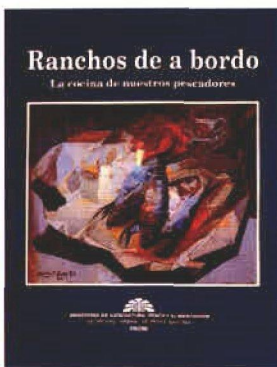
Sarah Jane Evans  
 Sinclair-Stevenson Ltd., 1992.  
 7/8 Kendrick Mews  
 London SW7 3HG  
 Tel.: (71) 581 16 45  
 Fax: (71) 581 16 99

1993 is undoubtedly the best time to visit Seville. The city has quieted down after all the festive events of 1992 and can now be seen in all its splendour after the many changes and improvements introduced for the EXPO. Seville by Sarah Jane Evans paints a fascinating picture of a vital city rich in history with exceptionally brilliant periods, such as the 16C. when it was receiving all the gold from America, alternating with other darker periods.

The first part of the book covers the historical side of the city and, although this is not a conventional guidebook, the historical background given also includes references to Seville's monumental heritage.

The protagonists of the second part are everyday Seville and the Sevillians. Sarah Jane Evans knows her subject because she has lived amongst these people and has understood the essence of their character, which is sometimes far from the stereotype. The *hermandades* or religious associations, the aristocracy, the religious and pagan celebrations, the gastronomy, the convents where the nuns made traditional sweets, etc. combine to give a true portrait of Seville and its inhabitants.

Either as a readable travel book or actually as a guide book to prepare a visit to Seville, this is an excellent introduction.



► **Ranchos de a bordo  
 La cocina de nuestros pescadores**

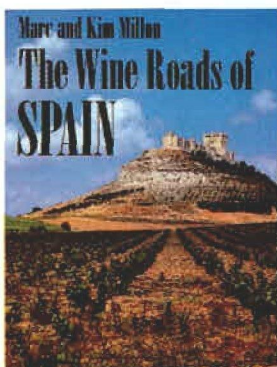
Texts: Cristino Alvarez  
 Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación, 1993.  
 Secretaría General de Pesca Marítima, FROM  
 Estébanez Calderón, 3 y 5  
 28020 Madrid  
 Tel.: (1) 572 02 01  
 Fax: (1) 571 45 62

Although not for sale in bookshops, we felt this book should be included here because of its rather special nature. It is a collection of 122 recipes for fishermen's meals collected by the F.R.O.M. (the Spanish fish marketing board) in a sort of tribute to the seamen who, in spite of tough working conditions, were able to produce inspired recipes.

The coastal fishermen working on sailing boats before the thirties prepared their daily meals on board, generally basing their dishes on those fish, or parts of the fish, which had little market value because of their bones, appearance, etc. But these characteristics had, and have, no bearing on taste and this book shows how the fishermen made the most of this taste.

Some of these recipes for onboard cooking, such as the *marmitako*, *suquet de peix* or *caldereta*, have become classic Spanish dishes but other less known, local and sometimes unusual recipes would most likely have disappeared had this F.R.O.M. publication not rescued them from oblivion.

The food writer, Cristino Alvarez, has adapted the recipes and accompanies each with an interesting explanation of the dish itself and the type of fish used. The introduction also gives a brief but interesting history of Spanish seafood cooking which, undoubtedly, is the most varied in the western world.



► **The Wine Roads of Spain**

Marc and Kim Millon  
 Harper Collins Publishers, 1993  
 77-85 Fulham Palace Road  
 Hammersmith, London W6 8JB

The authors rightly state that in Spain, in spite of the enormous variety of Spanish wines, "The concept of wine as an object or source of intrinsic interest for the foreign tourist, is still something of a novelty..." This is perhaps why the wine tours which are so common in France or Italy are practically unknown in Spain, with just a few exceptions, and the very few travel guides on the subject of wine are almost all the work of foreign writers whose approach to the wine world is different. But lovers of this type of tourism who are keen to visit Spain will be pleased to

know that in *The Wine Roads of Spain* they will find what they were looking for. The Millons, who have already written similar guidebooks to Italy, France and Europe, provide all the information necessary, region by region, to organize this type of trip: wine-growing areas, itineraries, Denominations of Origin, different types of wine and wine production, history and trends of the wines in each area, the bodegas that are open to visitors with their opening hours, wine-related fiestas and celebrations, wine museums ... and much more.

But since man cannot live on wine alone, the above is complemented with interesting and carefully-selected tourist information with special emphasis on gastronomy.

This is a welcome book, well-documented and with first-hand information. Its many charts full of curiosities and anecdotes are of special interest. Many maps - though these are slightly disappointing - and photographs complete this delightful handbook, full of valuable, practical information.

# BLANCOS DE RUEDA

## RELACION DE BODEGAS CON DENOMINACION DE ORIGEN RUEDA

### LA SECA

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## THE VII INTERNATIONAL SALON OF THE CLUB DE GOURMET IN MADRID

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TEXT:  
ISABEL MARTOS

**M**adrid was international gastronomy capital for the seventh consecutive time during the International Salon of the Club de Gourmet from April 23 to 26. 362 exhibitors from Spain and other countries showed delicatessen products on 315 stands in the exhibition center in the Casa de Campo in Madrid. Organized by Progourmet, also publishers of the Club de Gourmet's monthly magazine, the Fair was a success for all concerned, receiving over 25,000 visitors, with 90% of the exhibitors expressing their satisfaction at the contacts made and planning to return next time. Just over half of the exhibitors were from the food sector, with the rest representing drinks companies, many of them being famous international names, and offering not only their traditional products but also products which were new to the Salon. The exhibitors, 64% of whom were direct producers, were keen to be present in this international Fair for gourmet products and the visitors, most of whom were trade visitors, expressed their surprise at the quality of the products being offered.

A first glance at the exhibition gave an idea of the great variety of products on show. This year, for the first time, the whole exhibition was held in one venue, which made the visit easier as well as giving a better overall impression, and products were amply displayed, some on video screens.

**Novelties** One of the main points of interest of this VII Edition of the International Salon of the Club de Gourmet was the new products. Visitors were able to taste all sorts of food and drink - from the goulash, mini-meatballs in tomato sauce or *boeuf bourguignon* presented by the Norwegian company Theo Coertjens, to the authentic mozzarella made from buffalo's milk produced by Aceites Veá and the wild white salmon introduced by the Calatan company Alitor.

Agromar this year presented octopus and baby eels in olive oil, which perhaps could be accompanied by Lagar de Canin cider or apple juice. There were new packs from Joferca for anchovies, first preserved in

salt then desalted and placed in refined olive oil, and for cockles and mussels.

Products that were completely new included tuna fish cooked in cider, a typical dish from the north of Spain presented by Agromar, or paté made of green olives, black olives or capers produced by the Spanish company Suroлива but only marketed so far in Italy. Salgado presented spices.

All novelties were equally appetizing for the visitors to the stands. There were also surprising elements in some typically Spanish products, such as the low-cholesterol Burgos *morcilla*, or blood sausage, as presented by Ortega, and the *marrons glacés* in brandy by Torres Import or the "diet" *marrons glacés* in a light syrup by Jorge Rodríguez.

The Antonio de Miguel stand drew the attention of visitors with its white truffle flour paste and its truffle-flavored olive oil and butter, and Berzal Hermanos presented a cheese made with cholesterol-free

non-dairy cream. There was also a mousse made of duck's *foie gras*, and smoked Icelandic cod presented by Sefrisa, as well as liqueurs made following traditional methods from gooseberries and blackberries by Licores La Hoja.

Most of the international companies were represented by their agents in Spain although three countries brought the producers themselves - France, with 23 stands under the name of Sopexa, Belgium and Portugal.

But there was more to the exhibition than just the visits to the stands. One of the highlights of the Fair was the III Wine Forum which included four talks by experts, including Philippe Faure Brac, the champion sommelier for 1992, under the title "Profiles of wine in the Europe of the nineties; its image and trade". This was followed, needless to say, by a wine-tasting session.

The VII Edition of the Gourmet Fair was clearly a success from the point of view of organization, novelties and visitors.

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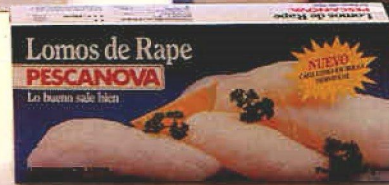
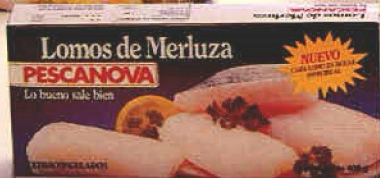
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**Contact persons:**

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**Contact persons:**

D. Miguel de Kanter / Amy Kass

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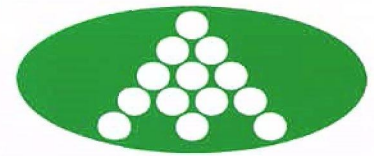
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S P A I N ' S  
**FLOWER & PLANT**  
T R A D E  
**GROWTH INDUSTRY**

Text: Nick Lyne

Photos: Félix Lorrio/ICEX





*Spain's three main flower export successes are roses, chrysanthemums and carnations.*



*The Canaries' growers' association, Asocan, was founded in 1977, and coordinates efforts in finding new export markets.*









**T**he trend is definitely towards specialization and reducing the variety of plants or flowers produced.



*The European Community  
is the natural outlet  
for Spanish  
plants  
and flowers.*









*It takes up to five years to produce some of the larger, and more popular palms.*

# SPAIN'S FLOWER AND PLANT TRADE

**Spain's flower and plant growers have established a well deserved reputation abroad for high quality products and rapid, responsive delivery. They also know they can rely on a generous offering of priceless sunshine throughout the year, a resource they intend to make good use of to keep their hard won place in an increasingly competitive market.**

Spain has been producing flowers and ornamental plants since World War I. The business started off in the Maresme region of Catalonia, and spread to Andalusia, Valencia, Galicia and later on, the Canary Islands. Aside from plants and flowers, Spain has also become a respectable exporter of cuttings. Today, Catalan and Galician production is mainly for local sale. Andalusia exports 80% of its carnations, although its producers are small-holders with a cash crop that goes directly to auctions in the Netherlands via Dutch mediators located in Andalusia. The growth export regions are Valencia and the Canaries, where a green revolution is underway as producers improve all aspects of the production cycle, as well as honing their marketing skills.

Of the three sectors, flowers face the stiffest competition, not only from fellow European producers, but particularly from Latin American and African exporters, all of whom seriously undercut European growers' prices.

Spain's three main flower export successes are roses, chrysanthemums, and carnations, although in the Canaries bird of paradise are on an equal footing with

chrysanthemums and roses. In 1991, exports of cut flowers and ornamental plants amounted to 36,025 tonnes, down 7 percent in 1990. However, although the amount of land dedicated to cut flower production fell from 3,745 hectares (8,988 acres) in 1989 to 1,770 (4,248) in 1991, the area given over to ornamental plants grew from 1,145 (2,748) hectares to 2,012 hectares (4,828), a 76 percent increase. Since then, flower cultivation has leveled off, and ornamental plants have continued to rise, although less steeply.

Spain's flower production is centered on Tenerife, and dates back some 30 years. Ibérico Tenerife, run by Joachim Ritter, is one of the island's main exporters. They produce some 35 different varieties of flowers, but roses are the main money earner. Two thirds of their sales come from flowers produced by small holders with concerns of around 0.1 to 0.5 hectares (0.25 to 1.2 acres). There are some 500 such family-run businesses on Tenerife, selling their produce to companies such as Ibérico. However, Ibérico has some 60,000 square meters (15 acres) under glass producing roses, mainly the *Mercedes* variety, which travels well, is resistant to disease, and available in colors ranging from a delicate white, a rich cream, through to yellow, orange, red, and classic pink.

The flower grower's busy season is between October and May, taking advantage of the winter in Europe, where production costs soar due to heating.

Spanish flower growers have, by their own admission, been slow to react to the boom in imports from

non-EC nations; by far the biggest challenge. As Joachim Ritter explained: "The problem is not so much the Dutch producers, they have always had the lion's share of the European market, yet there was still a demand we could satisfy, and a price level at which we could be competitive. However, with the arrival of African and Colombian flowers we find ourselves undercut."

Canarian producers have also had to accept an annual 2,700 tonne limit imposed by the EC, which only disappears this year, while GATT trade liberalization measures have meant that Latin American and African producers have been able to sell to Europe without tariffs or trade ceilings.

However, the European market is still far from saturated, and consumption grows each year. The rest of Europe still has to go some way to match the 13,000 pesetas that the average Dutch citizen spends per year on plants and flowers.

Talking to producers, the trend is definitely towards specialization and reducing the variety of plants or flowers produced. At the same time, research in The Netherlands reveals that the public's tastes have changed over the last decade, with customers moving away from an average quality product, and demanding high quality, even at a higher price. Tomás Ferrer, of Orvifrusa, one of Valencia's leading ornamental plant cultivators, explained: "Growers producing 20 or up to 30 different species have discovered that 80 percent of their revenue is generated by just 20 percent of their stock. Naturally, they have begun to cut back on less profitable items, and to

concentrate on a few, high demand articles." Another tendency has been the move towards individual growers keeping the entire production cycle in house, as it were. In other words, as Evaristo Almudéver of Tenisplant outlined: "We want our customers to know that the high quality product they buy can be guaranteed time and time again. We can do this by supplying our own seeds and maintaining absolute control over the entire production cycle."

As with most plant and flower enterprises, the Almudévers started out as a family business, dating back to two generations, and have kept things that way. Which doesn't mean they are closed to outside ideas, or that they don't provide valuable employment locally. In recent years growers in Valencia and the Canaries have been carrying out major restructuring, and investing in new technology. Among the developments are computer-controlled watering systems, and the move towards "containerization", whereby the plants' entire growth cycle takes place in pots. Tenisplant's technical director José Vicente Almudéver, pointed out the benefits in "reduced stress to the plant."

Surprisingly, although many growers have invested in laboratories for tissue reproduction, the natural advantages of climate have meant that nurseries such as Tenisplant have found it more efficient to continue traditional production. However, they still use their laboratory for investigation into better composts and cutting down on disease.

In Valencia, the regional government has provided aid to the tune of 15 percent

of total investment, while in the Canaries, which has less of a tradition, the EC's Regis Programme has funded some 40 percent of growers' investment.

It takes up to five years to produce some of the larger, and more popular palms which are increasingly the export staple of Spanish growers. Species such as the *Kentia*, *Cycas*, *Chamaerops* or *Phoenix Canariensis* are ideally suited to cultivation in Valencia or the Canaries, where their lengthy growing time is speeded up, and costs kept down by year-long sunshine. "You can't predict economic ups and downs, a good part of these seedlings you see now won't be ready for sale until the end of the century," says Tomás Ferrer. *Tenisplant*, although involved in the field of ornamental plants for many years decided in 1986 to specialize in *Palmaceae* and Mediterranean plants such as the *Nerium Oleander*, Lavender, and aromatic herbs Rosemary and Thyme. They have found that concentration on fewer species allows for greater professionalization among staff.

Standing in a covered area about the size of a football field, filled by a dense green sea of some 750,000 *Kentias*, Jose María Pérez Ortega, current president of Asocan, the Canary Islands' plant and flower producers' association, spells it out in no uncertain terms: "The future is in specialization; you have to find a product ideally suited to your conditions; concentrate investment and resources on that article, and establish a growing, year-round market." The Pérez Ortega plantations are clearly the model for Spanish plant growers. He is now the world's largest single

producer of *Kentias*, with some 30 hectares (72 acres) turned over to this attractive palm. Although he still produces a few other species, José María Pérez Ortega is winding down production on other species and within a few years will dedicate his export efforts exclusively to *Kentias*. Each year the Pérez Ortegas (another family-run enterprise run by Mr Pérez' four sons and one daughter) turn over some 10,000 square meters (2.4 acres) to covered cultivation, using the *umbráculo* system, a frame covered with mesh netting which allows air to circulate and filters sunlight.

The major problem facing cuttings, plant and flower producers in the Canaries is transport. Located in the Atlantic Ocean 320 kmts (200

miles )off the Moroccan coast, and some 1,600 km (1,000 miles) south of Madrid, exporters face high transport costs, and the constant battle against time with perishable goods. Until recently almost entirely dependent on national carrier Iberia for connections to Europe's major cities, in recent years producers have been able to spread the load using tourist charter flights, which has been key in responding rapidly to orders.

Yet despite its distance from mainland Europe, growers here are convinced that the islands have a bright future as a major exporter of ornamental plants, flowers and cuttings.

In the words of Regina Gimeno Herrmann of Aguadulce, the island's leading cuttings producer: "The Canaries

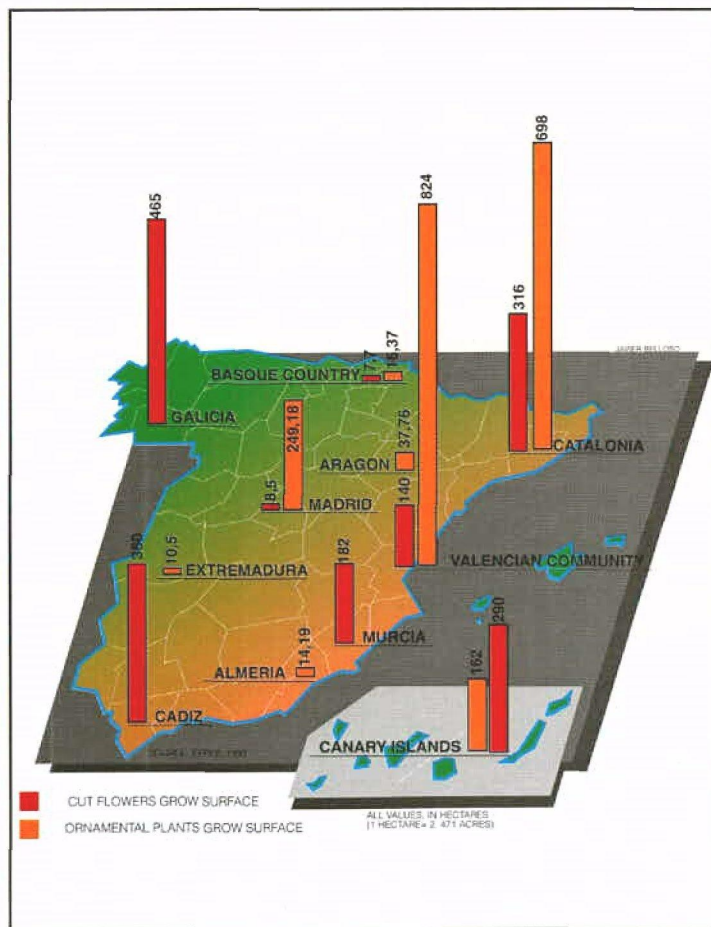
should be Europe's greenhouse," and it is worth remembering that the Canaries are but a few degrees north of the Bahamas, and that Tenerife is blessed with a mean yearly temperature of 23 degrees Centigrade (73°F) and abundant rainfall.

Some 452 hectares (1,092 acres) is turned over to plant and flower production in the Canaries, with cut flowers occupying 290 hectares (696 acres), 105 hectares (252 acres) to ornamental plants, and 57 hectares (136.8 acres) dedicated to cuttings. Of that, some 125 hectares (300 acres) is under cover.

Some 70 percent of Canarian flowers and cuttings go to export, while only 21 percent of ornamental plants go to export, the rest to Spain.

Given the close-knit community on Tenerife, the island's producers, along with fellow growers on Gran Canaria, stick together, and have worked hard to find common markets, as well as sharing new ideas and solving joint problems together. The islands' growers' association, Asocan, was founded in 1977, and coordinates efforts in finding new export markets. Asocan represents growers at international fairs, as well as at Spain's yearly Iberflora trade show in Valencia, a vital window display for foreign buyers. Equally, the organization has been able to improve handling terms for its members with Iberia, as well as overseeing the more than 850 million pesetas investment over the last two years which growers have carried out.

To meet the challenge of the future, Spanish flower producers have hammered out a program aimed at exploiting their natural advantages: namely their closeness to the vital North Euro-



**SPANISH EXPORTS OF FLOWERS AND PLANTS IN 1989 - IN KGS.**

	FRANCE	BELGIUM LUXEMBURG	HOLLAND	GERMANY	ITALY	U.K.	IRELAND	DENMARK	GREECE	PORTUGAL	TOTAL EC	TOTAL EFTA	WORLD
BULBS	22,331	188,840	298	2,834	17	1,363	62,099	268,219	8,355	284,195	8,355	284,195	
CUTTINGS	263,176	6,238	357,923	54,444	133,613	1,363	36	890,373	96,140	1,010,460	96,140	1,010,460	
TREES & SHRUBS	180,410	928	13,951	132,333	29,469	1,079,948	2,500	1,457,839	27,024	1,617,712	27,024	1,617,712	
ROSE BUSHES	297,643	3,880	28,770	1,419	2,236	94,406	428,353	480,916	42,203	480,916	42,203	480,916	
OUTDOOR PLANTS	1,852,654	160,203	187,612	944,128	6,078	531,570	4,258,156	7,484,491	98,901	7,911,769	98,901	7,911,769	
INDOOR PLANTS	2,395,024	473,762	1,737,558	751,554	7,234	18,007	112,926	25,079	25,079	25,079	25,079	25,079	
RHODODENDRONS & AZALEAS	800	7,072	22,880	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	
OTHER LIVING PLANTS	4,989,707	652,083	2,044,585	1,906,758	178,530	1,394	1,830,392	14,569,471	264,276	15,469,836	264,276	15,469,836	
<b>TOTAL LIVING PLANTS</b>	<b>755,438</b>	<b>156,168</b>	<b>11,470,286</b>	<b>448,123</b>	<b>3,701,191</b>	<b>6,815</b>	<b>38,782</b>	<b>20,763,292</b>	<b>1,015,949</b>	<b>21,009,378</b>	<b>1,015,949</b>	<b>21,009,378</b>	
CARNATIONS	33,033	158,361	590,500	14,602	44,011	10,291	1,887	853,540	799,188	1,664,139	799,188	1,664,139	
ROSES	28,362	1,014	41,087	19,909	60,408	192	1,283	265,286	18,694	284,365	18,694	284,365	
ORCHIDS	175,628	347	144,493	4,548	1,157,853	58,482	52	1,791,607	68,001	1,853,500	68,001	1,853,500	
CHRYSANTHEMUMS	2,378	8,192	17,417	728	1,040	818	12	32,775	20,720	196,533	20,720	196,533	
STREPTIZIAS	3,045	150	69,590	1,877	79,692	1,666	208	167,606	31,988	203,147	31,988	203,147	
DRIED FLOWERS	119,886	5,054	462,348	46,340	58,787	1,666	208	1,223,400	74,302	1,343,407	74,302	1,343,407	
OTHER FLOWERS	1,117,770	162,733	12,467,231	535,936	5,104,052	70,242	40,929	25,096,634	2,027,708	27,353,350	2,027,708	27,353,350	
<b>TOTAL CUT FLOWERS</b>	<b>84,519</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>92,819</b>	<b>83,018</b>	<b>137,063</b>	<b>6,000</b>	<b>160,887</b>	<b>686,183</b>	<b>30,125</b>	<b>823,063</b>	<b>30,125</b>	<b>823,063</b>	
POLLAGE	6,214,327	815,009	14,793,475	8,414,865	5,419,852	79,636	221,755	40,620,507	2,330,464	43,932,452	2,330,464	43,932,452	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,100,285</b>	<b>1,099,540</b>	<b>12,190,951</b>	<b>7,266,254</b>	<b>3,796,458</b>	<b>120,686</b>	<b>224,984</b>	<b>35,582,562</b>	<b>2,334,482</b>	<b>38,860,197</b>	<b>2,334,482</b>	<b>38,860,197</b>	

**SPANISH EXPORTS OF FLOWERS AND PLANTS IN 1990 - IN KGS.**

	FRANCE	BELGIUM LUXEMBURG	HOLLAND	GERMANY	ITALY	U.K.	IRELAND	DENMARK	GREECE	PORTUGAL	TOTAL EC	TOTAL EFTA	WORLD
BULBS	29,630	1,300	219,061	784	2,848	2,863	2,931	254,156	543	256,196	254,156	256,196	
CUTTINGS	329,947	17,011	85,004	311,041	130,313	138,986	6,016	1,024,552	138,503	1,176,454	1,024,552	1,176,454	
TREES & SHRUBS	206,803	16,370	10,287	184,970	1,891	542,181	77,039	962,502	20,676	1,132,176	962,502	1,132,176	
ROSE BUSHES	607,009	31,723	31,723	6,579	6,579	34,500	53,843	722,350	5	728,108	722,350	728,108	
OUTDOOR PLANTS	1,962,701	321,191	205,079	1,203,992	839,021	63,564	373,737	5,014,060	53,843	5,338,537	5,014,060	5,338,537	
INDOOR PLANTS	2,948,082	605,964	2,512,836	1,945,500	942,303	28,094	262,181	9,348,896	124,412	9,693,472	9,348,896	9,693,472	
RHODODENDRONS & AZALEAS	11,610	950	39,258	1,479	1,479	2,900	2,900	44,587	55,227	55,227	44,587	55,227	
OTHER LIVING PLANTS	6,066,152	945,116	2,090,270	3,472,299	2,103,186	232,535	2,863	117,142	1,264,054	17,128,557	11,610	18,135,506	
<b>TOTAL LIVING PLANTS</b>	<b>777,372</b>	<b>149,625</b>	<b>8,277,600</b>	<b>2,166,388</b>	<b>88,202</b>	<b>2,189,262</b>	<b>32,553</b>	<b>13,770,798</b>	<b>647,512</b>	<b>14,433,911</b>	<b>13,770,798</b>	<b>14,433,911</b>	
CARNATIONS	25,390	74	122,084	566,976	5,461	31,106	7,575	794,897	1,109,072	1,902,395	794,897	1,902,395	
ROSES	60	2,691	9,897	21	16,404	2,115	8,926	2,757	8,926	2,819	2,757	2,819	
ORCHIDS	18,137	821	143,235	148,514	6,834	1,127,874	75,624	1,612,391	28,020	1,643,070	1,612,391	1,643,070	
GLADIOLI	107,870	20	9,772	33,110	888	1,530	334	48,251	37,372	190,003	48,251	190,003	
CHRYSANTHEMUMS	274	560	5,262	3,350	316	2,922	784	15,228	49,587	73,770	15,228	73,770	
STREPTIZIAS	560	2,649	365,336	433,167	72,028	97,463	235	1,014,054	71,036	1,136,475	1,014,054	1,136,475	
DRIED FLOWERS	40,837	153,009	8,934,701	3,361,551	173,349	3,469,560	117,105	17,306,705	1,951,525	19,455,802	17,306,705	19,455,802	
OTHER FLOWERS	970,510	35	146,929	431,820	54,850	95,363	718	693,144	45,518	1,011,613	693,144	1,011,613	
<b>TOTAL CUT FLOWERS</b>	<b>41,987</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>146,929</b>	<b>431,820</b>	<b>54,850</b>	<b>95,363</b>	<b>718</b>	<b>693,144</b>	<b>45,518</b>	<b>1,011,613</b>	<b>693,144</b>	<b>1,011,613</b>	
POLLAGE	7,100,285	1,099,540	12,190,951	7,266,254	3,796,458	120,686	224,984	35,582,562	2,334,482	38,860,197	2,334,482	38,860,197	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,100,285</b>	<b>1,099,540</b>	<b>12,190,951</b>	<b>7,266,254</b>	<b>3,796,458</b>	<b>120,686</b>	<b>224,984</b>	<b>35,582,562</b>	<b>2,334,482</b>	<b>38,860,197</b>	<b>2,334,482</b>	<b>38,860,197</b>	

**SPANISH EXPORTS OF FLOWERS AND PLANTS IN 1991 - IN KGS.**

	FRANCE	BELGIUM LUXEMBURG	HOLLAND	GERMANY	ITALY	U.K.	IRELAND	DENMARK	GREECE	PORTUGAL	TOTAL EC	TOTAL EFTA	WORLD
BELLS	47,866		76,418		416	466				375	125,541	3,675	139,871
CUTTINGS	202,982	3,234	112,634	328,018	66,778	73,868	228	3,546	57,386	13,451	862,125	80,784	966,650
TREES & SHRUBS	219,743	13,000	345	1,506	90,340	102,056				182,175	609,165	8,541	1,047,716
ROSE BUSHES	331,261									83,180	414,441	0	424,931
OUTDOOR PLANTS	2,526,947	368,190	59,897	300,797	1,341,814	20,665	221	2,833	173	612,269	5,173,806	55,344	5,593,787
INDOOR PLANTS	2,889,624	597,883	1,973,710	2,920,324	1,385,655	91,290	1,712	14,850	456	248,391	10,123,895	68,729	10,495,991
RHOODENDRONS & AZALEAS	89	4,545	68,653	765	49,936						123,988	0	151,572
OTHER LIVING PLANTS	86,780									28,130	114,910	0	150,455
<b>TOTAL LIVING PLANTS</b>	<b>6,257,426</b>	<b>926,852</b>	<b>2,215,239</b>	<b>3,551,410</b>	<b>2,934,523</b>	<b>287,879</b>	<b>2,161</b>	<b>21,229</b>	<b>58,015</b>	<b>1,167,596</b>	<b>17,422,350</b>	<b>213,398</b>	<b>18,831,102</b>
CARNATIONS	461,337	278,501	8,035,126	1,771,329	255,489	1,233,249	17,129	1,188	2,023	26,579	12,081,950	409,113	12,496,096
ROSES	35,231	1,371	98,994	424,646	12,013	34,105	9,611	27,501	187	1,425	615,084	666,943	1,326,691
ORCHIDS											0	0	17
GLADIOLI	10,282	3	30,074	14	2,617	3,993		26		698	47,737	69	47,806
CHRYSANTHEMUMS	44,978	2,821	21,399	23,454	20,430	745,756	60,485	410		647	920,380	12,077	932,482
STRELTZIAS	289	1,453	8,319	41,457	1,731	1,180	1,631	3,858	1,013		60,931	46,374	165,996
DRIED FLOWERS	916	6,000	1,216	3,462	1,000	6,128			1,664		35,247	68,550	119,553
OTHER FLOWERS	50,026	14,861	562,430	235,348	115,203	11,980	180	392		601	991,021	40,318	1,109,744
<b>TOTAL CUT FLOWERS</b>	<b>603,059</b>	<b>305,010</b>	<b>8,757,558</b>	<b>2,499,710</b>	<b>408,513</b>	<b>2,036,391</b>	<b>89,036</b>	<b>33,375</b>	<b>4,887</b>	<b>44,811</b>	<b>14,782,350</b>	<b>1,243,444</b>	<b>16,198,185</b>
FOLIAGE	50,382		54,734	433,694	53,778	70,282		4,382	1,728	55,012	723,992	82,793	856,262
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,958,733</b>	<b>1,231,862</b>	<b>11,103,949</b>	<b>6,484,814</b>	<b>3,397,230</b>	<b>2,395,018</b>	<b>91,197</b>	<b>58,986</b>	<b>64,630</b>	<b>1,267,794</b>	<b>33,054,213</b>	<b>1,543,310</b>	<b>36,025,420</b>

**SPANISH EXPORTS OF FLOWERS AND PLANTS IN 1992 - IN KGS.**

	FRANCE	BELGIUM LUXEMBURG	HOLLAND	GERMANY	ITALY	U.K.	IRELAND	DENMARK	GREECE	PORTUGAL	TOTAL EC	TOTAL EFTA	WORLD
BELLS	6,922		33,750	65	560	62,665				2,644	43,941		93,633
CUTTINGS	182,279	2,677	63,731	315,049	45,556	1		1,661	57,015	99,907	830,538	66,446	933,393
TREES & SHRUBS	128,150		12,190	5,329	97,623				49,867	335,101	628,261	5,200	826,251
ROSE BUSHES	265,501				41,490					71,105	398,506		431,548
OUTDOOR PLANTS	2,079,233	287,032	50,407	278,588	1,893,199	96,370	706	3,669	2,090	442,298	5,045,592	76,640	5,716,275
INDOOR PLANTS	2,104,978	696,131	1,930,116	2,624,178	2,039,252	167,932	873	7,632		378,790	9,949,882	161,011	10,470,566
RHOODENDRONS & AZALEAS		4,630	43,900	8,174							56,704		56,704
OTHER LIVING PLANTS	323,440				2,632						326,072		410,487
<b>TOTAL LIVING PLANTS</b>	<b>5,090,503</b>	<b>990,470</b>	<b>2,154,504</b>	<b>3,231,383</b>	<b>4,030,312</b>	<b>326,965</b>	<b>1,579</b>	<b>12,962</b>	<b>108,972</b>	<b>1,329,845</b>	<b>17,277,496</b>	<b>309,297</b>	<b>18,938,857</b>
CARNATIONS	190,735	284,816	9,773,239	1,087,645	184,270	651,221	315	21,379		27,144	12,220,764	315,922	12,539,404
ROSES	21,848	2,846	92,405	351,764	10,365	12,339	6,685	4,940	420	4,265	507,877	538,233	1,068,057
ORCHIDS											120		120
GLADIOLI	5,887		17,740	217	110	2,295				14,815	41,062	8,402	49,464
CHRYSANTHEMUMS	5,101	143	9,966	23,627	7,111	597,401	39,026	310	154	4,735	687,574	3,603	691,205
STRELTZIAS	94	572	7,175	25,737	598	282	479		741		35,678	26,058	97,005
DRIED FLOWERS	1,104	97	1,981	4,845	5,900	40	24			94,295	108,286	3,552	121,986
OTHER FLOWERS	47,226	898	379,279	123,745	88,147	20,009	877	1,002	1,421	10,561	673,165	103,516	888,519
<b>TOTAL CUT FLOWERS</b>	<b>271,995</b>	<b>289,372</b>	<b>10,281,785</b>	<b>1,617,580</b>	<b>296,501</b>	<b>1,283,585</b>	<b>47,406</b>	<b>27,631</b>	<b>2,736</b>	<b>155,935</b>	<b>14,274,526</b>	<b>999,286</b>	<b>15,455,760</b>
FOLIAGE	118,357		36,955	320,842	42,728	62,550		3,333	6,356	78,412	669,533	145,817	861,855
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,480,855</b>	<b>1,279,842</b>	<b>12,473,244</b>	<b>5,169,805</b>	<b>4,369,541</b>	<b>1,673,101</b>	<b>48,985</b>	<b>43,926</b>	<b>118,064</b>	<b>1,564,192</b>	<b>32,221,555</b>	<b>1,454,400</b>	<b>35,256,472</b>

## INDUSTRIAL QUESERA CUQUERELLA, S. L.

The company was founded 40 years ago, fight now it is located in Malagón (Ciudad Real) LA MANCHA, where you can find an excellent ewe's milk, probably the best one in Europe, which gives to the Manchego cheese its characteristic bouquet.

We can offer to you and excellent service, the trucks leave to the rest of Europe on wednesdays and you will receive the merchandise next monday/tuesday.

Please contact: Fax: 34.1.620.93.59



Products Carried by the Company:

### MANCHEGO CHEESE

The Manchego Cheese is elaborated with 100% pure ewe's milk it can be recognized its rounded shape (wheel) with a weight of approximately 3 kgs and a special coating that originates from the straw stripe (pleitas) used by the farmers a long time ago, today this coating is given by molds in modern factories.

To give an idea of the Antiquity of this cheese, it was mentioned in the chapters X and XX of «El Quijote» a book written more than 380 years ago.

A genuine Manchego cheese has to comply with the following:

1. To be elaborated with 100% ewe's milk from La Mancha Region.
2. To have the official seal of «Origin Denomination» issued by «El Consejo Regulador de Denominación de Origen».
3. To have its special characteristics of shape and coating.
4. To be elaborated in «La Mancha» Region (provinces of Albacete, Ciudad Real and Toledo).

Maturation 4 and 9 months.

Sizes: 3 kgs and portions of 250 and 400 grms.

### BLENDED CHEESE

This type of cheese has the same external characteristics of the manchego cheese but it is elaborated with a mixture of cow's, sheep's and goat's milk.

Naturalization: mild, semi-cured and cured.

Sizes: 3 kg Mini (1 kg) and baby 0,5 kg also portions of 250 & 400 grms.

### GOAT'S CHEESE

Elaborated with 100% goat's milk, it is matured with paprika in natural caves for approximately 6 weeks.

Sizes: 1,7 kgs Mini (1 kg) and baby (0,5 kg).

## Industrial Quesera Cuquerella, S.L.

**CHEESE FACTORY:** Ctra. de Toledo, s/n. Teléfs.: 34 - 26 - 80 12 15 y 34 - 26 - 80 02 06  
Fax: 34 - 26 - 80 13 01 - 13420 MALAGÓN (Ciudad Real)

**HEAD OFFICE:** Albaida, 14. P. O. Box: 65 46700 GANDIA (Valencia)  
Teléfs.: 34 6 - 286 17 93 y 34 6 - 286 17 12

pean markets in regard to foreign competitors; the lifting of trade ceilings this year, with an expected jump of up to 5,000 tonnes exported; and their ability to respond to European wholesalers' "just in time" demands with a high quality product delivered rapidly. Spanish producers are all too aware of the need to understand the changing nature of wholesalers' requirements. Firms like Orvifrusa in Valencia, or Ibérico Tenerife have over recent years been at the forefront of "just in time" delivery, working hard to supply foreign customers at short notice with the quantities and types of product they need. At the same time, plans are afoot this year to begin labeling Valencian and Canarian plants and flowers in an effort to establish a brand identity - which would naturally be associated with top quality.

Spain's main customers are Germany, France, the UK, the Netherlands, and particularly in the case of the Canaries, European Free Trade Association members Switzerland, Sweden and Austria. Britain, France, Portugal and Italy are regarded as the potential growth markets.

The European Community is the natural outlet for Spanish plants and flowers, given its proximity, purchasing power, and inability to produce exotic species cheaply. Yet of the twelve member nations, Britain, France, Germany and The Netherlands make up 80 percent of exports, still leaving enormous potential for further sales in the remaining eight members. Germany is the EC's main consumer, and imports some 572,602 tonnes per year.

*Nick Lyne is a British freelance journalist living and working in Spain. He has worked for the EFE news agency, and currently works for specialist trade and finance magazines in Britain and the United States.*

# *Signed Originals*



*Our four masterpieces,  
each wine individually conceived and created.  
An original worthy of our family signature.*

*F. Chivite*  
F. CHIVITE Cenologist

*Julian Chivite*  
Bodegueros-viticultores since 1647

## Gourmet canned fish and shellfish

**T**he gourmet canned fish and shellfish – usually marked “*extra*”, “*seleccionada*” and “*calidad superior*” – are among Spain's most distinctive canned products. As with any fine foods, their quality rests on carefully selected ingredients of optimum flavor, texture and size.

This, in turn, depends on the place where the fish are caught, the time of year and in some cases the fishing method. An August sardine, for example, has double the oil-content of one caught in April, while white tuna from cold Atlantic waters has a much firmer, finer texture than that from warm Mediterranean waters.

**FINE** Freshness is also vital. Here the Spanish have a head start primarily because of the abundance and variety of fish and shellfish in its offshore waters but also because the canning factories remain dotted along the coast close to the ports where the catches are landed. This means that with the exception of white tuna caught in international waters and anchovies for salting, products are cleaned, processed and sealed in the can within 24 hours. Likewise, deep-sea tuna is immediately deep-frozen on board ship and anchovies are beheaded, tailed and salted as soon as they're landed.

**ART** Apart from the fish itself, of course, the quality of the liquid covering it and any other flavoring ingredients is also important. Here again Spain has a distinctive tradition, this time of preserving in olive oil, which has had a recent revival for many canned fish and shellfish. It enormously improves the quality of the final product, and not simply by adding flavor because gourmets and producers recommend aging fish and shellfish packed in olive oil – particularly, those with a drier and firmer flesh such as anchovies, sardines, tuna and octopus – to mature the texture (for aging times, see below). And, of course, the oil itself is so good that it is delicious mopped up with a piece of bread.

**OF** In the health-conscious nineties, it's also worth noting that Spanish canned fish is an entirely natural product, with none of the colorings or other additives allowed in some other countries.

**CANNING** As one old hand in the business put it, “I always say to people that the only preservatives used are the heat for sterilization and the cold for freezing.”

Growing precision in processing has also gone hand in hand with rising nutritional values, so that the mineral, vitamin, protein (generally over 20%) and fatty acid content of canned fish is now equal to that of fresh fish cooked at home or in a restaurant.

*In the 1860s, half a century after Frenchman Nicolas Appert discovered how to preserve food in a glass jar, the first Spanish canning factories opened on the coast of Galicia. Out of these small, family-owned businesses grew not only one of the largest fish canning industries in the world but also the gastronomic skills which have transformed Spanish canned fish and shellfish into unique gourmet products.*

Text: Vicky Hayward  
Still Lives: Menchu Artime  
Photos: A. de Benito/ICEX



*As with  
any fine  
foods,  
quality  
rests pri-  
marily on  
carefully  
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prime in-  
gredients.*

#### IBERIAN TRADITIONS

**T**he flourishing of gourmet canned fish and shellfish products is also a reflection of much longer Iberian traditions. Ever since Greek and Roman times, the Spaniards have been experts at salting, drying and preserving fish in olive oil, brine or vinegar. With the arrival of Moslem colonizers in the 8C. came the art of *escabeches* – wine or vinegar marinades with flavoring herbs and spices – which remain widely used in the recipes for canned fish.

**I**t was onto this tradition that canning was grafted in the last quarter of the 19C. By then the technological know-how had moved on considerably from Appert's basic discovery that sealing food in a container while heating it would preserve it. Metal containers, and sterilization at over 100° C were giving greater flexibility and reliability.

**T**he Spanish industry initially grew up around fried sardines in oil, *al estilo de Nantes*, to supply the Catalans whose own supplies of Mediterranean sardines were dwindling. But as the home market grew, so too the products grew in number. Today Spain not only has the highest average per capita consumption in the world – some 6 kilos per head, over double consumption elsewhere in Europe – but also produces an astonishing range of some 170 products, more than any other country.

**L**ike so much else in today's Spain, the industry combines the best of old and new. On the one hand, it is one of the most advanced canning industries in the world, exporting both machinery and technology around the world. On the other hand, traditional fishing and quality-control methods – for example selecting and packing fish by hand – are still used where they keep quality high. This has been possible largely because the industry remains in the hands of long-established Spanish companies. Indeed, Galicia still dominates production, with 61% of the country's total output.

**T**he balance of new and old is equally the characteristic of the varied styles of packaging and of the products themselves, which range from traditional regional



specialities to new gourmet products with vegetables or sauces designed for modern tastes.

#### SARDINES

**T**he best quality sardines are fished by net in Portugal and Spain between July and September, and have a fat content of around 20-22%, which gives them their richness of flavor and aroma. The finest of all are considered to be the small *sardinillas*. Before steaming, they are dipped in brine to firm the flesh, add flavor and remove the blood clots along the spine. Both the selection of fish and the packing are done by hand to avoid damaging the flesh.

**G**ourmet sardines in olive oil usually do not leave the factory for a year to give the flesh time to mature. They are also available filleted and flavored with hot peppers, lemon slices, mushrooms, or sweet peppers.

#### WHITE TUNA

**D**ense and moist with a subtle flavor, the highest quality tuna comes from the *bonito* (or *atun blanco*) fished in cold Atlantic waters. The smooth, delicately firm meat of the underbelly, called *ventresca de bonito*, is the best of all and may be found filleted as well as in chunks. Both are canned in olive oil.

**T**op-quality Spanish *bonito* is fished between July and September from the waters off the Cantabrian coast, but much now comes from further afield. Spain was one of the first signatories of the various agreements to safeguard dolphins in tuna fishing, and all its canned tuna is reliably dolphin-safe.

**I**n recent years, prepared dishes have begun to arrive on the market. One Basque company, Bastarri, has pioneered gourmet preserves sold in old-fashioned glass jars: bonito in *Txakoli* white wine; Basque fishermen's *marmitako* stew; and an *escabeche* made with cider and sherry vinegars. Elsewhere, you find onions stuffed with white tuna, a regional dish from Asturias, and peppers filled with tuna. More generally, canned white-tuna salad with peppers and onions is now widely available.

*Spain  
boasts an  
astonish-  
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of around  
170  
canned  
fish and  
shellfish  
products,  
more than  
anywhere  
else in the  
world.*



## ANCHOVIES

The best quality anchovies for brining and canning come from the Mediterranean coast of Catalonia and the northern Atlantic coast of Cantabria and the Basque country. In both places the anchovies follow the same process, with three months to a year's salt-curing followed by packing whole in brine or filleting for canning in olive oil. This, strictly speaking, makes them a semi-*conserva* since the fish is preserved through maturing before canning.

The Catalan "Anchoa de la Escala", made since Greek times and now registered as a local quality denomination, is in very limited supply. Cantabrian ones, slightly larger in size, are produced in greater quantities. Anchovies are also now being canned with cheese, or rolled around capers, in olive oil.

## MUSSELS, COCKLES AND CLAMS

The canning of mussels, cockles and clams is centered on the Galician *rias* which, because of their micro-climate and the region's exceptionally high and low tides, are extremely rich in the plankton which give the

shellfish its flavor. While nearly all the mussels are farmed, the cockles and clams are gathered.

The best mussels are fished in late summer and the autumn and are fried before canning. Gourmet preparations, such as mussels in *escabeche*, spicy-hot *escabeche*, scallop sauce, white wine and vinaigrette as well as olive oil, have proliferated in the last few years.

Clams, the largest and best of which reach huge prices in Spain, and cockles are usually canned in their own juices, although clams are now also found in scallop sauce.

## GOURMET FAST FOOD

Few products can match high-quality canned fish and shellfish as gourmet fast food. Easy travelers, they need only a toothpick or fork to become delicious food on the move.

Always check the product is in prime condition before opening the can. Sardines and tuna need at least a year in olive oil; high-quality tuna will go on improving for at least 4 years, and sardines for 5 to 7 years (turn the cans gently from time to time). Products in *escabeche* or other acidic

sauces should be matured for up to only 3 years maximum. Anchovies should be eaten within 6 to 12 months.

Generally speaking, the products are best served at room temperature. If there's an *escabeche* or other sauce involved – say squid in their ink – shake the can gently first to emulsify the sauce. Good quality white tuna should be left in large chunks, not flaked into small pieces, and served with a little of its olive oil.

The Spanish, being long-standing *aficionados*, have found many ways of turning canned fish and shellfish into quick *tapas* or snacks. In bars and restaurants, you often find salted anchovies in olive oil with finely chopped garlic and parsley sprinkled over the top. A Basque friend spirits up a delicious, almost instant snack from filleted tinned sardines sprinkled with a mixture of finely chopped sweet onions, red peppers and parsley. Clams, cockles and mussels need less to accompany them: perhaps some lemon quarters for eaters to squeeze over to taste.

There is then the more substantial *montado*, a kind of relaxed bread or toast

canape, especially good to catch oil or juices. Mussels in *escabeche*, or squid, octopus and baby elvers in olive oil are excellent served this way. A first cousin to this is the Catalan famous *pa amb tomaquet* – bread or toast rubbed with garlic and a sliced ripe tomato then dribbled with olive oil – which is very good finished off with a couple of anchovy fillets draped over the top.

Good quality white tuna, or bonito, lends itself to be a main ingredient in all kinds of salads. A favorite Basque combination is *ventresca de bonito* with canned roasted red peppers, either simply served together or with the fish used to stuff the peppers.

Among newer gourmet products, octopus or squid in olive oil are excellent added to fish salads, while sea urchin coral is good spread on toast, added to scrambled eggs and fish sauces, and used in salad garnishes. Be careful not to swamp the delicate flavor.

*Vicky Hayward lives in Madrid and is writing a book about Spanish food. She works as freelance feature journalist, travel writer and book editor.*

## ELEVEN SPECIALITIES

Among Spain's wide range of canned seafood are the following gourmet specialties. Limited production sometimes scarcely meets local demand, but they are well worth looking out for if you're in Spain.

**Fresh fried anchovies:** Fried and canned without liquid, traditionally packed *boquerones fritos* come from Málaga in Andalusia and are served as *tapas* or accompanied by salads and vegetables.

**Bullet tuna:** This small tuna, called *melva* by the Spanish, is fished in the

Straits of Gibraltar during brief spring and autumn migratory seasons. Its sought-after pink flesh, the finest of all tunas, is canned in olive oil.

**Crawfish:** In Galicia, crawfish or small *langostillos*, are canned in brine in small quantities.

**Elvers:** Baby eels, or *anguilas*, are one of Spain's greatest gastronomic luxuries, and are now being canned in olive oil, as are the surprisingly appetizing fake surimi elvers.

**Hake roe:** A semi-handcrafted product, sliced by hand to avoid damaging its delicate texture, this is available in vinaigrette, in its own juices, or in olive oil.

**Octopus:** A recent addition to gourmet products, slices of boiled octopus, or *pulpo*, are now canned in plain olive oil, or with paprika and oil in the Galician way.

**Razor clams:** Also called razor-shells, or *navajas* in Spanish, these long clams are canned in brine or their own juices.

**Salt-cod:** *Bacalao a la vizcaina*, a classic Basque dish in which the salt-cod is cooked in a dried sweet and hot pepper sauce, is an excellent cooked fish dish that reheats well.

**Scallops:** The greater and smaller scallop are both produced in large quantities in Galicia, where they are also

canned – the larger ones in white wine sauce and the smaller ones in tomato sauce, scallop sauce and spicy-hot sauce.

**Sea urchins:** Eaten fresh for centuries in north-western Asturias, canned sea-urchin caviar or coral has had great success since it was first launched commercially in 1988. Since some 15 kilos of sea-urchins are needed to produce 1 kilo of caviar, it is an expensive product. A sea-urchin pate is also made.

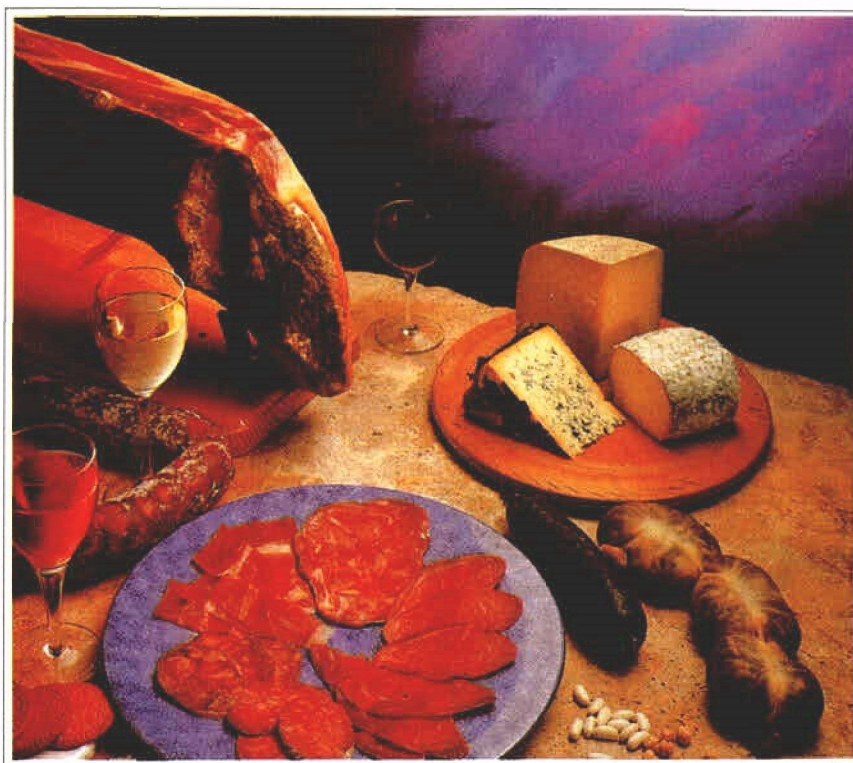
**Squid:** Small squid, or *chipirones*, are canned either filleted or whole and stuffed with their tentacles, and either in olive oil or cooked in their ink.

# Temptation

Temptation  
proceeds from  
Castile and León.

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

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



Tiétar goat...

A little bite  
of very cured  
sheep's cheese:  
impossible to  
say no!

And for original  
sins, the wines  
of Castile  
and León.  
From Rueda,  
from Cigales,  
from Toro,  
from El Bierzo  
and from the

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.



# BEST OF THE BUNCH

(XIII)

SPARKLING

PERSONALITY

To think of Catalonia's wine-growing region of Penedes is to think of Penedes is to think of Big Names: cava giants Freixenet and Codorníu, the pioneering Torres family...Dynastic names all, and there are plenty more who have been making wine for generations albeit on a lesser scale. A daunting environment in which to set up as a novice, one would have thought. Yet this is just what Manuel Sancho did when he founded Mont Marçal in the mid 1970s. By today, his bodega has carved itself a considerable niche in the Spanish and international marketplaces, exports half its production world-wide, and has won the respect of its once sceptical neighbors. How did Manuel Sancho and Daughters S.A. do it? The personality and approach of 28-year-old Blanca Sancho, one of the eponymous daughters, and company director in all senses of the term, provides major clues.

Text: **Hawys Pritchard**

Photos: **Pablo Neustadt/ICEX**



They currently export to twelve different countries, and have plans to extend their overseas market much further.

Blanca Sancho is one of those people whose reputation goes before her. "A character"! is the stock response when you ask what she's like. Habitues of wine trade fairs tell you that the Mont Marçal stand is always one of the most popular, and that Blanca, flamboyant and hilarious, is as much of an attraction as the wine. Mont Marçal's publicity material is a talking point, too. Among other publications, the bodega issues a quarterly magazine entitled the "Mont Marçal Tribune". Its content is eclectic to say the least: information on how the grapes currently on the vine and how various vintages are developing is interspersed with in-house news items (visits from customers, PR receptions, employees' weddings, complete with photographs) and philosophical musings on the world in general. The technical contributions come from resident oenologist Pedro Muñoz, the PR and social news from Blanca, the philosophy (and original idea for the Tribune) from Sr. Sancho. There's even the occasional touch of poetry from his wife. Eccentric? Certainly, but a welcome change from the standard leaflet or catalogue, and all the commercial information you need is there, gently disguised.

Manuel Sancho and his daughter Blanca run the company together. The physical resemblance between them is strong, and they seem to have a similar cast of mind, too, since they clearly work hand in glove. Now, though, he is gradually ceding more and more responsibility to his daughter. As he is still only in his fifties and a fine figure of a man, one can only assume that there are other things that Sr. Sancho wants to get on with and that he has enough confidence in his daughter's abilities to feel that he can leave her to it. While her role in the company is primarily commercial (she works closely with the export manager), and she shares the overall managerial, administrative and accounting functions with

her father, PR is Blanca's particular forte. Plump and duskily attractive, she is surprisingly brisk. With her smooth olive skin and glossy black hair beautifully set off by a simple black jersey and leggings and deep fuschia jacket, her whole appearance was somehow laid-back, suggestive of warmth and wine. However, the firm handshake and "Let's get on with it" approach to being interviewed more than hinted at the busy, hard-headed businesswoman she must surely be. A practiced and ready talker, she presents herself as very down-to-earth; even so, at least some of the more whimsical features of Mont Marçal's printed output emanate from her.



Blanca Sancho has been in promotion and advertising all her working life (she started off in the family record business). Except for a year of business and personnel management courses, she has no formal training for what she does so successfully today. What she knows about wine she picked up as she went along. For a start, she knows that she likes it. Not just wine, but the whole environment of the wine world. She likes the fact of dealing in a fun-inducing product and believes firmly in the efficacy of personal contact with customers and sales staff. She organizes and hosts three or four lunches or dinners a week – *paella* feasts with a *flamenco* floor-show go down particularly well with foreign guests, apparently. She admits that these events are exhausting – lunch in Spain can go until 7 pm if people are enjoying themselves – but worth it. "If people come here it's because they want to see us. And they're more likely to be loyal to us than to a display of bottles".

She also travels widely with her export director – a Dutch emigré to Spain – attending trade fairs in Japan, the States, Italy, Germany, the UK... Denmark is a particularly loyal customer, apparently: statistics show that one Dane in five drinks Mont Marçal! They currently export to twelve different countries, and have plans to extend their overseas market much further. This year started on a promising note for Mont Marçal, as customers and others on their mailing-list were informed by a "Flash Informativo". Not only had *Club de Gourmets* magazine's tasting panel chosen their Cava Extra Brut for an honorable mention, but quality newspaper *El País* had included both their 1988 Cabernet Sauvignon and their Brut Nature Cava among its new year selection. Not bad going after only 15 years in the business.

"We bought the estate in 1975" she explains. She can have been no more than ten at the time, but one could al-



# SPARKLING PERSONALITY BLANCA SANCHO

most believe that she was instrumental in clinching the deal. This was when the family moved to Catalonia from Madrid, where Sr. Sancho has his record business. Mont Marçal, meanwhile, was a crumbling *masía*, as Catalan farmhouses are known. It had been no more than an investment property for many years, the size of the estate around it fluctuating with property prices. Way out in the countryside, some 50 km (30 miles) from Barcelona, it stands just on the border between the Upper and Lower Penedes, which together make up Catalonia's biggest D.O. It took three years to get the place into productive order. The huge house is now impeccably restored and its bodega, having been started from scratch, is ultra modern. The air of prosperity about the whole complex is discernible the minute you enter its gates from the dusty country track that leads up to it. The bodega is 80% self-sufficient in grapes, and buys the remaining 20% from the adjoining estate, where conditions are all but identical. Envidable views of undulating vine-planted landscape stretch as far as the eye can see.

One of Mont Marçal's springboards to success was its invention and launching of *vi novell* in 1978. "*Vi novell*" means "new wine" in Catalan, and it is similar in principle to Beaujolais Nouveau. Mont Marçal's *vi novell*, however, is a young white wine made of native Penedés varieties Xarello, Macabeo and Parellada. Bottled before the fermentation process is complete, and therefore slightly *pétillant*, this wine is on the market by November, almost immediately after harvest-time.

Though it met with little but scepticism from local wine-makers when it was launched, it has been a huge success: the output of 8,400 bottles produced in 1978 had increased to 250,000 by 1991. And these sales are all domestic: *vi novell* has a bottle life of nine months at most, which makes it an impracticable export. The fact that at least four other local bodegas now include a *vi novell* among their products also speaks volumes.

Blanca believes that Mont Marçal's *vi novell* – "light, delicious, and excellent value for money" – seduced many customers into trying, and subsequently buying, their other products (cavas, whites, rosés, young and matured reds...) so it holds a particular place in her affections. But the seduction process is skillfully supported by highly personalized marketing, too. In October 1990, for example, a series of apparently hand-written picture postcards featuring views of Mont Marçal was sent at weekly intervals, informing recipients ("Dear friend...") that the current vintage was progressing well, the bougainvillea around the porch was looking beautiful, that there were only 28 days to go before that year's *vi novell* became available, that from the veranda one could now look out over new plantations of Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon, and that, incidentally, Mont Marçal's varietal Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon wines were well worth trying...

So who is the strategist behind Mont Marçal's highly successful production and marketing policies? Blanca denies that they have any consciously strategic approach. She puts it all down to team work and good luck. They have employed experts from the start. The family and their team – oenologist, production manager, sales director – meet fre-

quently, discuss all aspects of the business together, and when necessary call in specialists to put ideas into practice. This generates mutual loyalty and an atmosphere of enthusiasm in which everyone feels free to suggest new ideas with a very good chance of being given a free hand to try them out. At only 58, Manuel Sancho is by far the team's elder statesman. Its sales director is just 32, and his salesforce ranges in age from 20 to 40; the bodega workers are mostly in their twenties. But what about age and wisdom? What about craftsmanship? This is where Blanca reveals herself as something of a sceptic. She's all for modern technology. "The Penedés isn't the Rioja, you know. The oldest established wine around here is cava. The méthode champenoise with hand rémuage and degorgement may all be very picturesque and traditional, but let's face it – machines do it better. Much of the work around a bodega is purely routine". But how do customers feel about things being so mechanized? Don't people like to associate wine with tradition? Don't they expect gnarled craftsmen and the occasional cobweb? "When people look around our bodega and see uniformed young people working happily in an impeccably clean environment they are surprised, but pleasantly so".

This same common sense approach applies in Mont Marçal's publicity material, too. Nearly all its Spanish-language publications, the Tribune included, parallel texts in Catalan. Though Manuel Sancho himself is not Catalan, the rest of the family is, so it seemed a fair assumption that this linguistic policy reflected solidarity with Catalonia's regionalist tendencies, in which keeping the language alive is a key issue. Engagingly, Blanca explained that as far as they were concerned, it was

pure expediency: why put local backs up if you can avoid it?

Mont Marçal has reached a watershed. Except for the giants, it is now the biggest exporter in the Penedés, and is pushing its limits unless it is to change its whole character and approach. For Blanca, the choice is clear. She feels that the advantages of being relatively small-scale far outweigh the attractions of joining the giants. As things are at present, Mont Marçal enjoys the benefits of close communication both within the company and with its customers. Her target is to reach annual production figures of a million bottles of cava and a million of wine and then stop growing.

Blanca is soon to be married. Will this change her degree of commitment to family business? Certainly not. She'll organize her marriage around the business rather than the other way around. What does she do in her time off? "Believe it or not, embroidery", she says, with the first hint of shyness detected so far. "I find it helps balance up the hectic pace. And I love going to the opera in Barcelona, and to the cinema...". And what does she like best about her work? "Being the boss. Not in the sense that everyone has to do as I say. I love the responsibility, and being able to see things through". Has being a woman in a traditionally masculine field ever been a problem? Only very occasionally. "When I go abroad with my sales director, customers often assume that he's Mr. Sancho and I'm his assistant. But the misunderstanding never lasts long".

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

# THE GREATNESS REFLECTION



## GRAN DUQUE D ALBA

A **Brandy Liqueur** is born, unique in the world today. It's the result of a renowned Solera Gran Reserva, Gran Duque de Alba **Brandy**, from which it takes the name and character. The child of age and experience, it stands out as the faithful greatness reflection.



ACLE

  
MARCOS EGUIZABAL



## ALBARRACÍN: SHADES OF HISTORY

**H**istorical contrasts are common in Europe. Nuclear reactors share the skyline with Gothic cathedral spires and sleek BMWs cross rivers over bridges whose arches date back to the time of the Emperor Augustus. A hundred kilometers of landscape can embrace several different centuries.

We decided to do this trip by night, and to take it easy. A couple of cans of coke, some raunchy Springsteen tapes

and the foot just resting gently on the accelerator. I know I'm not a jeans person and, yes, I have probably got more in common with Ovid than with an American trucker, but let's face it: a motorway is a motorway and not a Roman road, and you have to adapt accordingly.

Four hours' driving later, we were back in the Middle Ages. The Middle Ages was a period when much of the Iberian Peninsula was Arab territory, and it was the Arabs that gave this little town its name and built the fortified walls that still crown its center, though no longer defensively. We had traveled north, to Abarracín.





The predominant color is warm domestic ochre, in all its tones, from russet to near yellow.

It was night when we arrived and, shrouded in darkness, the whole town seemed asleep. This was no time to go exploring. We parked in front of the hotel and were given our keys by a sleepy porter who appeared for just long enough to do that and no more. Huddled under the chilly sheets, we felt like excited children on Christmas Eve, knowing that there were treats in store for the morning.

I had been in Albarracín before, breaking my journey on the way to somewhere else, but I had retained only the vaguest fleeting impressions. That's the trouble with traveling in a hurry: like tourists who try to take in too much, I hadn't seen what was under my nose.

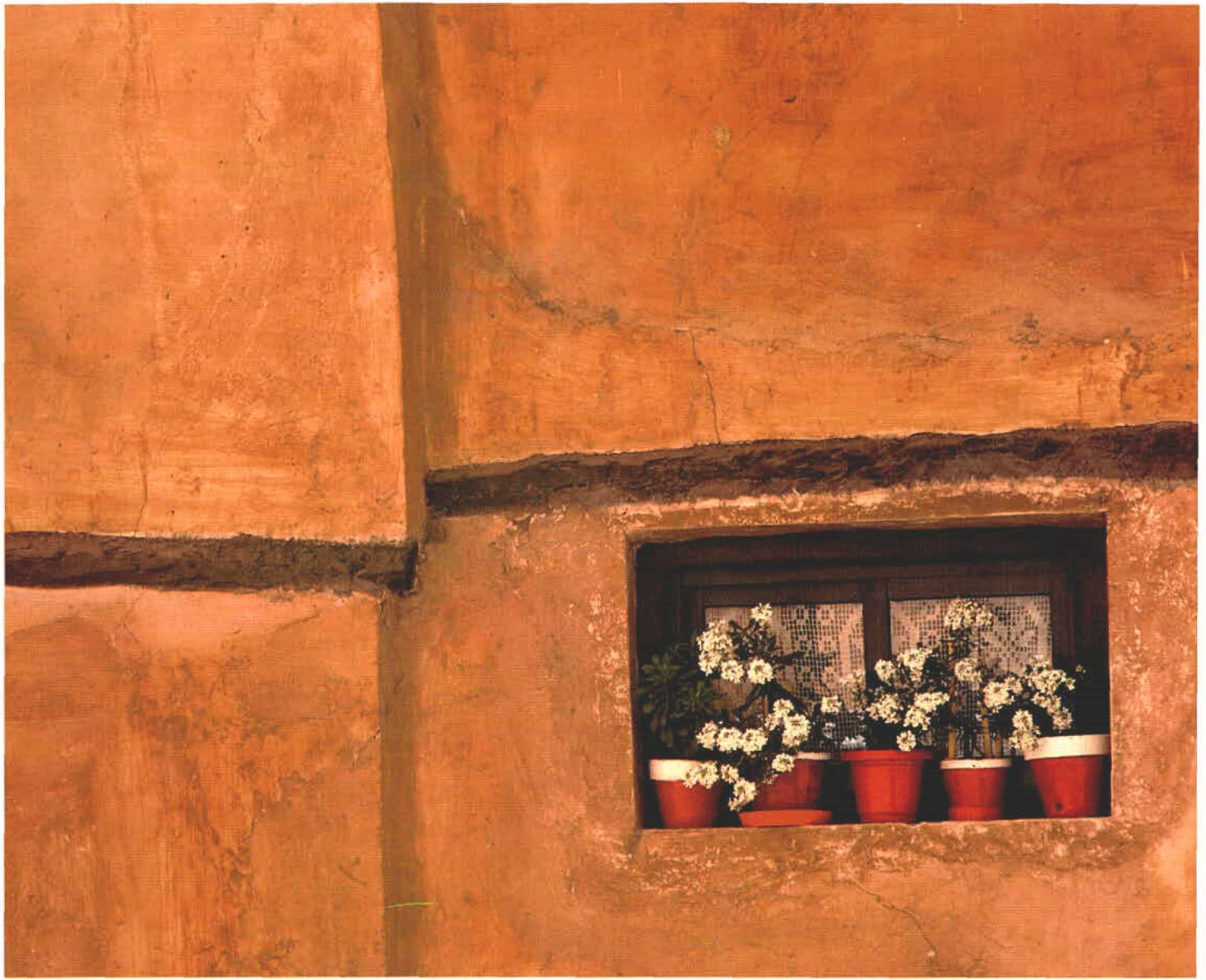
#### ART LESSON

This time was different. We spent three days wandering the streets of Albarracín, with plenty of time to happen upon its little hidden-away plazas and to take photograph after photograph in an attempt to capture its colors. Yes, despite the cold, dry climate of these northern highlands, far from the coast, it is vividly colorful. Not at all what you would expect in this part of Spain, still less in a Medieval town.

Not that it is completely atypical. Its winding cobbled streets are dark and narrow, its windows wrought-iron grilled, many of its buildings adorned with noble escutcheons, but its walls are not of the usual bare stone. They are color-washed. The predominant color is warm domestic ochre, in all its tones, from russet to near yellow, varied here and there with greys and browns which







lend a sober, melancholy touch, and the occasional perky highlight of white or pink. Such is the pastel-shaded harmony of the whole effect that even the ill-advised ferocious indigo blue in which the Navarro de Arzuriaga house has been painted fails to jar, seeming rather to provide an intentional contrast.

I sound like an art critic, don't I? It's hard not to. Albarracín is the sort of place where, if you held up an empty frame almost anywhere, you would look through it at a perfectly composed picture. It is visually exciting as much for the juxtaposition of its planes of contrasting colors, some rain-washed, others freshly painted, and their variations according to the time of day, as for its rich, dense textures. One of Albarracín's curious characteristics is that its buildings are timbered, the old wooden beams of their structure exposed in their outer walls tracing parallel or perpendicular lines across patches of solid color. Mondrian immediately springs to mind, but there are Rothkoesque touches about it, too.

No doubt you'll be imagining some sort of "best kept village" effect. Albarracín undeniably is well kept, and care has been taken with restoration work and new buildings so that they blend in with the old. There's many a picture postcard scene of flower-filled pots, posing cats, lace-curtained windows and wooden balconies, yet miraculously they manage not to look twee. Albarracín also has its derelict houses and others with flaking, patched and cracked façades, but even they, perversely, make their own contribution to its charm.

Let's move on from painting to architecture. Albarracín's most salient architectural feature is not a cathedral or a hermitage - this is not the place to come

**A**lbar-  
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as a whole.



**A**lbarracín's finest features are the homes of its ordinary inhabitants, making up compositions.

for imposing examples of the Gothic or the poetic Romanesque. Its finest features are the homes of its ordinary inhabitants. Squashed up together, sometimes superimposed one on another, these houses make up cubist compositions, their surfaces curving inward or outward, propped up one up against the other like drunks, and with a sublime disregard for symmetry in the arrangement of their little sunken windows, like deep-set eyes.

You may think I'm going on rather, but I just have to tell you about the town overall. Albarracín forms a semi-circle, set halfway up a hillside. The hilltop above it is crowned by the ancient fortified walls, and beneath it extends the alluvial plain on either side of the River Guadalaviar. The town stands on a steep precipice, some of its houses clinging to the edge, with balconies overlooking the river beneath and the poplars along its banks. As you will have gathered, the setting, with its juxtaposition of dramatic rockscape and botanical green, is every bit as stunning as the town itself.

Albarracín has no monuments as such: it is one in its own right. Its enduring character was forged in its Arab past. Neither the Church nor the Christian aristocracy have left much by way of ostentatious architectural bequests here. The town's heritage is an amalgam of the work of skilled craftsmen going about their jobs: masons erecting beams and laying bricks, carpenters creating coffered ceilings and light-filtering jalousie window screens. It is, too, the beauty of its little streets, a maze which has no focal point but a typically Arabic overall harmony.



18

Fabrizio

Albergo  
Alcornoque  
de Chorro





### ALBARRACÍN'S PAST

Looking backwards into the past, it is not easy to make the leap required to leave behind our contemporary political preconceptions and imagine what Medieval Spain was really like. Different ethnic and religious groups – Jews, Arabs and Christians – then inhabited the Iberian Peninsula. The Jews were involved mainly in trade and finance and had no political or military power. The Arabs – as divided among themselves as the Christians were – represented progress in all areas cultural, technological and artistic. The might of Christianity, as represented by the Church and military force, was pitted against them. All three groups coexisted, fought and intermingled. The many Muslim and Christian rulers involved on either side signed and broke allegiances according to ambition and expediency regardless of religious creed. Not until the final Christian victory in 1492 was the policy of “ethnic cleansing”, with a view to achieving religious and political unification, applied. Albarracín played an active part in those centuries of history. Let's see how.

Although it falls geographically within the dramatic landscape of Aragon, Albarracín is very close to Castille from which it seems to absorb a certain serenity. Given, however, that both these regions are known for their austerity it comes as a surprise to look up and see that its bell-towers are tiled in green, blue, white and yellow. This Mediterranean use of color has its explanation: historically, Albarracín had east-coast connections.

It was from the Levante, the east coast of the Peninsula, that Albarracín's Stone Age inhabitants made their way. Archaeological relics of this period can

The town's heritage is an amalgam of the work of skilled craftsmen going about their jobs.

## ALBARRACIN: SHADES OF HISTORY

still be seen four kilometers (2,5 miles) outside the town. In a pine-wood tucked between high hills are caves containing ancient and marvellous paintings: stylized hunting scenes charged with poetic movement depict bulls, deer and bow-carrying warriors, painted in white, black and red, especially red. Walking enthusiasts will also appreciate the chance to enjoy the natural environment while exploring the caves and their setting.

The next historical period of which there are remains in Albarracín is the Roman: there is an aqueduct carved out of rock, and a bridge but, in a country rich in Roman remains, they are not particularly noteworthy. It has been suggested that Albarracín was known as Lobetum under the Romans.

Next oldest is the church of Santa María, built by the Christian Visigoths who gave the town the pretty name of Santa María de Oriente. The Christian population stayed put when the Berber Arabs arrived and subsequently lived peacefully side by side with them.

It was under the Arabs that the town enjoyed its finest hour. They began by building the fortifications and watch-tower on top the hill during the Caliphate, a rare and short-lived period of political unity among the Muslims. It was governed by the Beni-Rasin family which, in 1007, proclaimed its possessions a *taifa*, or independent kingdom, and gave the town its name (Beni-Rasin evolving into the present-day Albarracín).

Its first ruler was Hudail, who built the town, starting with the tower, and ex-

tended the fortified walls to protect it. He is said to have been handsome, charming, brave and generous. He loved music, poetry and the singing of slave-girls, and built the Villa de las Fuentes (Villa of Fountains), a flight of Oriental fantasy, as a recreational retreat. Sadly, no trace of it survives. Hudail is said to have killed his mother with his own hands during a quarrel in the Villa gardens. Was it that she disapproved of so much leisure?

He was succeeded by his son, Abu Merwan. The fact that he was known as "the saber of the dynasty" suggests that he did not share his father's character. He belonged to that category of princes who "never went near his women until the enemy was vanquished". In alliance with the Muslim king of Toledo, he successfully led his cavalry troops in attacks on other Arab kingdoms. But a fateful event forced him to change allies: Toledo fell into Christian hands. Abu Merwan rendered homage to the Christian King Alfonso VI and was even obliged to pay 10,000 dinars in "protection money" to El Cid, the legendary Christian mercenary leader.

He joined El Cid in a bid to conquer the coveted prize of Valencia, then in Arab hands, promising to share the spoils but with the secret intention of not doing so. Now an ally of El Cid, Abu Merwan not only no longer paid him protection money but even went so far as to attempt to exclude him from the Valencia campaign and the sacking of the city. He tried instead to involve the king of Aragon with a view to a further change of alliance. On discovering this deception, El Cid organized a punitive operation against Abu Merwan. Though El Cid was wounded in the

neck by a lance during the ensuing battle, neither side emerged victorious from the encounter. Recognizing their mutual dependence, they made peace and, together, took Valencia in 1094.

But Abu Merwan's ambition still burned. A new and powerful army, the Muslim Almoravids, having just arrived in the Peninsula, he allied himself with them in an attack on El Cid and was defeated. But even this did not deter him. Together with other Arab emirs, he went to the aid of Huesca on which Christian forces were advancing. He and his allies were defeated by King Pedro of Aragon. Old and exhausted, Abu Merwan retired once more to the safety of Albarracín where he sought comfort in wine and in poetry, recalling past glories to blot out recent failures. But there was further bitterness in store in the form of an attempt on his life by one Obeidala, a nobleman of his court. Though the in-palace coup failed, Abu Merwan's face was disfigured by wounds inflicted during the attempt. In an appalling act of revenge, he had Obeidala's eyes put out and his feet and hands severed. One feels that Shakespeare could have found a place for a character like Abu Merwan who defined himself, in one of his own poems, in words that could have served as his epitaph: "I have possessed the five qualities by which one lives or dies: intelligence, wisdom, energy, knowing when to speak and when to be silent".

Abu Merwan's son later ceded power to the Almoravids. Albarracín peaceably became part of the Kingdom of Murcia. Equally peaceably it later passed into the hands of the Navarrese Christian Azagra family; donated as a gift by the Moorish king in recog-

nition of their support against the Christian king of Aragon.

Under the Azagras, Albarracín repeated its own history, albeit under the sign of the crescent moon rather than the Christian cross: the ruler of Albarracín declared it independent in 1134. Its heterogeneous population continued to live in peace despite the change of government, but circumstances had changed for this independent Christian kingdom. It could no longer be on terms of easy friendship with its neighbors, sandwiched as it was between the two great royal powers of Aragon and Castile. Fortunately, the Azagras were gifted diplomats and they used their skills to maintain their autonomy. This involved sometimes supporting its powerful rivals when they fought in alliance, and sometimes taking advantage of the feud between them. They also cleverly maintained a degree of military power which not only would have made the conquest of Albarracín a disproportionately costly business but also made the Azagras desirable allies.

The first two Azagra rulers were Don Pedro Ruiz and Don Fernando. Both ensured their positions with external support: Don Pedro Ruiz obtained a bishopric for Albarracín from the Church, and Don Fernando enrolled his family in the military religious order of the Knights of Santiago. They were succeeded by Don Pedro Fernández, during whose reign Albarracín was besieged by the troops of Jaime I of Aragon, known as The Conqueror. Despite his nickname, King Jaime did not succeed in taking the town, and he and Don Pedro Fernández eventually became companions in battle and in the hunting field.

But the course of history was inexorable and, in the late 13C., the tiny kingdom was annexed by King Pedro III of Aragon. Aware that it had little option, and true to historical pattern, Albarracín put up no heroic resistance. It capitulated in return for preserving its privileges, which it retained until the early 18C.

Don Pedro Fernández de Azagra had donated the land of Albarracín to its inhabitants. In consequence its woodlands were communally owned and exploited, and timber and livestock were the town's chief resources for a long period. When the wave of enforced Christianization swept through Spain, Albarracín, once a model of inter-cultural tolerance, had no option but to succumb. The Jews were expelled at the end of the 15C. and the *moriscos* (earlier converts from Islam to Christianity) in 1610. Women accused of witchcraft were tested by being given red-hot irons

to hold: only if their hands remained unburned were they declared innocent. How many survived can be imagined.

The arrival of Napoleon's troops in 1809 marked the beginning of the economic decline of Albarracín and its surrounding highlands. Again true to pattern, the town had unheroically collaborated with the French, but in one gesture of resistance, the captain of an invading troop of privateers was killed in an ambush. In reprisal, his men destroyed the basis of Albarracín's industrial activity – looms, fulling mills and flour mills – and, with the assistance of local liberals, set fire to the Dominican monastery.

The Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) brought further tribulation to the town. Nationalists took refuge in the cathedral, provoking repeated and unsuccessful attacks by the anarchist Tierra y Libertad brigade.

## USEFUL INFORMATION

**Transport:** Good by road. From Madrid, you can go via Cuenca or Guadalajara. If you are going to break your journey, Cuenca is a very attractive place to stop, but otherwise the Guadalajara route is preferable. Both routes are about 300 km (190 miles).

**Information:** There is an efficient Tourist Office with very helpful staff just as you enter Albarracín. They will provide you with an invaluable guide book for finding your way around the town. Tel: (74) 71 02 51

**Hotels:** There is a good choice of top and middle bracket hotels. Casa Santia-

go, a brand new little hotel at the top of the town, has been attractively renovated and tastefully furnished. Well worth a try. It has very few rooms, so be sure to make reservations. Tel: (74) 70 03 16

**Restaurants:** The best places for eating out in Albarracín are the restaurants of the good hotels. We ate particularly well at Casa Santiago.

**Gastronomy:** The local cuisine is very simple. Charcuterie is its most interesting feature, particularly the ham: try pork, wild boar, venison, duck and cured beef products. Traditional local dishes are trout and, for dessert, *almojábana* biscuits.

**Excursions:** Don't concentrate exclusively on Albarracín: the whole of Teruel Province is worth

## MY HIGHLIGHTS

Albarracín is a place to be explored on foot. It has no single outstanding feature - it is just beautiful as a whole. Here are a few of my own favorite highlights, though I stress that the choice is strictly personal and far from exhaustive:

The wooden corner balcony on the Plaza Mayor.

The St. Peter altarpiece, also wooden, in the cathedral: beautifully carved with delicacy and realism by 16C. artist Gabriel Jolí.

In the cathedral museum, whose collection includes liturgical pieces and elaborate Flemish tapestries by Geubels, my favorite exhibit is the extravagant Venetian rock-crystal fish decorated with pearls and rubies.

The Torre de Doña Blanca, a fortified tower which once served as library. It stands in the unbeatably romantic location of a cemetery on a promontory jutting out into the river.

Of all Albarracín's hig-

gledy-piggledy houses, my favorites (and most people's) are the Casa de la Julianeta and the Casa del Postigo. They are incredible, like an architectural balancing act.

The Portal del Agua, one of the gates in the town walls, is the perfect place to sit and appreciate the silence. On emerging the other side, the view uphill is amazing. This corner of town is known locally as "The Fan", and it is easy to see why: the houses have gradually accumulated upwards, and their façades slot haphazardly into each other.

Shades of the Middle Ages?: Calle Azagra and the Portal de Molina.

Off the tourist itinerary and outside the old town is the hermitage of Cristo de la Vega, a tiny spiritual sanctuary. Note the lovely pulpit.



exploring. I recommend a visit to Mirambel, a beautifully preserved little Medieval village. Stop at Mora de Rubielos and Rubielos de Mora on the way there.

**Best buys:** The area's typical white pottery decorated in blues and greens. Local craft shops are good.

**Fiestas:** An intriguing fiesta known as *Los Mayos* is celebrated on the night of April 30, namely May Day eve. Local lads do the rounds of the town serenading the girls with rhymes written specially for the occasion and traditional folk songs.

## SUCCESS ABROAD (II)

### CAMPOFRIO: A SPANISH MULTINATIONAL AHEAD OF THE MARKET

Any Spanish school child can recognize the Campofrío trademark and think of favorite snacks, sandwiches and meals. While the trademark has long been associated in Spain with quality processed cooked meats, it



Campo-Mos, in  
Moscow.



Agrocarne,  
in the Dominican  
Republic.

Text: Ana Westley  
Photos: Campofrío

is fast becoming a symbol of quality in countries as varied as the Philippines, Russia, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic. In Europe, Campofrío's cured hams and sausages are gourmet treats while in Spain, where the

family-run company has long dominated the market, new innovations such as vacuum cooked ready-to-eat dishes fit for gourmets have become lifesavers for today's working parents and busy households.



Campofrío, in Mexico.



Joint venture in the Philippines.

# CAMPOFRIO: A SPANISH MULTINATIONAL AHEAD OF THE MARKET

Campofrío has come a long way from its early beginnings as a family-run slaughterhouse in the northern city of Burgos, back in 1952, to its multinational status today with branches in half a dozen countries around the world with overall sales of some 50,000 million pesetas and a worldwide production now over 125,000 tons.

"We have always wanted to be a leader in our market, which for us means not selling the most, but being ahead of the market," explained Federico Sarmiento, Export Director. With this philosophy, the small slaughterhouse of the 1950s soon went into meat processing and was the first company in its sector to introduce the latest technology of processing York hams in plastic packaging with a particular shape for the top quality brand.

Lagging behind the bustling development of northern Europe, "Spain never really went through the meat canning process so common in the rest of the industrialized world," Mr. Sarmiento explained. Instead, Spain practically skipped this middle level technology and sailed directly from the age old method of laboriously curing hams and meats with salt to cooked meats in plastic coverings. And Campofrío was one of the first to take this leap.

Heavy investments in the latest technology boosted productivity by quantum leaps and, not surprisingly, catapulted Campofrío to the number one meat processor in sales and market share.

**A multinational philosophy and internalization.** By the late 1970s, Campofrío was already a major player in the Spanish market that would be attractive to any foreign multi-

national. In 1978 the U.S. multinational, Beatrice Foods bought a 50% stake from founder José Luís Ballvé. Ahead of the frenzied multinational buying sprees of the 1980s in Spain's food sector, Campofrío was attracted by the chance to gain international marketing methods and technology transfer in the joint venture.

The partnership worked well until Beatrice Foods was itself sold off and divided up. "We were interested in a multinational partner to learn from, but not to be passed from one hand to another and we did not need financing from a foreign partner," Mr. Sarmiento recounted. In 1988, Pedro Ballvé rebought the foreign owned shares in what was termed a spectacular financial operation. Today the company is majority owned by the Ballvé family with Banco Central Hispano holding 24% and various other private shareholders holding minority stakes.

The Beatrice Foods era, however, deeply influenced Campofrío's president, Pedro Ballvé, and was to imprint a multinational philosophy for the company in a sector composed of over 4,000 small, mostly family-run enterprises. Today, the top ten companies account for 35% of all sales. Already Spain's number one meat processor, internationalization and expansion abroad became a top priority. Exports jumped spectacularly from 413.9 million pesetas to 1,618 million pesetas in three years, while Campofrío began joint ventures abroad at a dizzying pace.

Distribution companies were bought in Portugal, France, and Mexico. Joint ventures for meat processing

were set up in Russia, the Philippines, Dominican Republic, and Mexico. By 1992, Campofrío's foreign operations already represented 5% of the parent company. Exports now by volume constitute 5% of Campofrío's sales, a share that the company hopes to increase fivefold within the next few years. Campofrío products are distributed in over 20 countries. "We have a clear and determined will to be a truly international company with overseas sales soon representing 25% of our total," affirmed Mr. Sarmiento.

At the same time, Campofrío has also invested heavily in Spain, with a new 6,000 million peseta ultra modern processing plant in Burgos with the most advanced robotic technology in Europe. In fact, the new Burgos project is the only European food company to be part of the EU-REKA research and development program of the European Community.

Although Campofrío is best known in Spain for its processed products such as frankfurters, cold cuts, and cooked hams, Campofrío is making a name for itself in gourmet salt cured products in Europe. The company has three main areas of production: gourmet cured products which have been highly successful in Europe, cooked processed meats in Spain and in foreign companies, and a third area of new products and innovations.

**Cured Serrano hams for Euro-gourmets.** "In our international strategy, we could see that European countries would be most interested in our gourmet line of cured meats," Mr. Sarmiento explained. According to Mr. Sarmiento, the art of salt curing hams has practically been

forgotten in northern European countries after canning technologies were introduced to conserve food without refrigeration. Southern countries such as Spain and Italy, however, continued and perfected the centuries-old techniques of dry-curing meats with salt and spices.

As tourists began to flood Spain in the 1960s, the reputation of Serrano ham, Spanish *chorizo*, salamis, and sausages spread, but fears over pork diseases prevented exports of these products in Europe until 1989. Campofrío, however, decided to gain time by setting up a Serrano ham plant in Taninges, France, two years earlier.

Once Spanish imports were authorized, Campofrío discovered that European customers actually preferred a "Made in Spain" Serrano ham or *chorizo*. "Since Spain already had the fame, customers wanted "the real thing" rather than what they thought would be a French version, even though the methods were identical," Mr. Sarmiento justified.

Hence Campofrío traded its stake in the production plant to wholly own a distribution center in France. Today, Campofrío can barely keep up with European demand for Spanish Serrano hams and *chorizos*. But, like a true multinational, Campofrío has made some adjustments to local preferences. "For example, in addition to our regular *chorizos*, we sell a spicy hot *chorizo* in France that we do not market here," Mr. Sarmiento pointed out. The French living in Algeria had spread the fame of a spicy *chorizo* that Spaniards had been making in neighboring Morocco, once partly under Spanish colonial control.

"So many French have the

## CAMPOFRIO EXPORTS

Source: Campofrío

	1989	1990	1991	1992
TOTAL sales in MT	87,614.0	91,359.0	90,870.0	NA
TOTAL sales in million of pts.	36,255.0	40,529.0	42,220.0	44,120.0
Exports in MT	1,416.9	1,919.9	2,163.0	NA
Exports in million of pts.	413.9	647.8	683.3	1,618.0
Exports of cured hams in MT		51.0	91.0	310.0

idea that Spanish *chorizo* should be spicy hot," Campofrío's Export Director explained. Adaptable to market demands, France alone imports Campofrío's hot *chorizo*. "In spite of the recession, we see an ever growing market potential for gourmet cured meats in Europe, now that the import ban has been lifted," Mr. Sarmiento continued. Since exports began in 1989, sales of gourmet cured meats have soared dramatically.

#### Moscow hams and franks.

Campofrío realized that competition in European markets for standard products such as hams and frankfurters would be fierce even with the latest technology. But new and developing markets are another story. In spite of the political upheavals in Russia, Campofrío decided to go ahead in 1990 with its joint venture in Moscow to build a modern meat processing plant.

"We saw a need for good quality protein at reasonable prices where we could contribute," Mr. Sarmiento said. With Spanish technology and efficiency the Moscow venture, called Campo-Mos, was able to fill a much needed market demand "with more protein and better quality" for competitive prices. Within a year Campo-Mos bought another plant increasing production capacity to 10,000 tons. With a potential market of 40 million consumers, Campofrío has high hopes for its investment. "It's an incredible market that will continue to boom," Export Director Mr. Sarmiento affirmed.

#### An eye on the U.S. market and on the future.

Campofrío looked to developing countries with high demographic growth rates for expansion with the possibility of using that country as a

springboard to other nearby areas. The Dominican Republic venture, Agrocarné, was set up not only to supply the Caribbean area, but with an eye on the nearby U.S. market, especially in Miami. It has a production capacity of 8,000 tons.

In Mexico, Campofrío already had a distribution company and last year inaugurated an 8,000 ton capacity factory and announced plans early this year for two more plants within the next two years.

Campofrío is currently still awaiting a positive response from the U.S. authorities to allow the import of Spanish salt cured hams and sausages within perhaps a year or two. The Burgos company has collaborated with the authorities to demonstrate that the Spanish method of curing destroys all disease-carrying organisms or microbes.

A green light for the U.S. market will have a tremendous influence on other markets such as Canada, Mexico, and other Latin American countries that would follow U.S. approval. Once the U.S. market is opened, Campofrío, in fact, sees more of a market for Serrano hams and Spanish *chorizos* in Mexico due to closer cultural ties.

For the Far East, Campofrío chose the Philippines as a base in a joint venture called San Miguel Campofrío Corporation with a production capacity of up to 20,000 tons. In each country, Campofrío is adaptable to local preferences in tastes and products, varying ingredients and flavors. "We maintain the best protein percentage at locally competitive prices," Mr. Sarmiento insisted.

The third line of products of Campofrío are termed "new innovations" and are

generally one step ahead of the market.

"Once they are successful, other companies will copy us and the product may then become banalized, but we pride ourselves on being the first," he said. New marketing ideas began with the idea of a top quality York ham in a specially shaped plastic packaging, which was soon copied by most major makers for their "Extra quality" varieties.

Campofrío was the first to introduce low fat cooked turkey products that had become attractive in the United States and northern Europe. "We knew the health wave of low fat and low cholesterol meats would reach here as well, so we were the first," boasted Mr. Sarmiento. This sort of vision paid off as Campofrío now controls over 75% of the cold cut turkey market. The Burgos based company dominates almost half of the frankfurter market and 13% of the York ham sector.

Campofrío's most recent innovations include new products such as its "top chicken nuggets", vacuum packed breaded chicken and cheese "Cordon Bleu", and the latest new line of "Cocina Placer" or "Kitchen Pleasure" vacuum packed ready-to-eat gourmet meals prepared by renowned Basque chef Ramón Roteta.

"The *Cocina Placer* line of a wide variety of vacuum cooked meals of haute cuisine followed several years of technological and marketing investigation. With this new method, Campofrío has shown that industrial preparation can be combined with the skills of a gourmet chef without any loss of quality or delicate flavor. Thanks to vacuum cooking, the product is elaborated without

preservatives and coloring agents and preserves a "just cooked" flavor not found in frozen preparations.

The new invention, which followed years of investigation, won the international Sial D'Or food sector prize last year in Paris for introducing "original solutions and innovations to the international food market."

"Unlike other industrialized countries long accustomed to frozen prepared foods, Spanish households do not tend to have large freezer capacity," Mr. Sarmiento explained. But with today's hectic pace there was a growing need for a top quality no preparation product. "Working parents are tired of pizzas and fast food and frozen meals don't offer the same quality as freshly cooked meals," Mr. Sarmiento insisted. Campofrío has high expectations for its new line of *Cocina Placer* that was just introduced in 1991.

For the future, Campofrío plans to consolidate its foreign investments before additional expansions, although offers arrive almost daily from Eastern block and Latin American countries. "We want to expand our export presence in Europe with prestige products of cured meats," Mr. Sarmiento emphasized. Large outlays in research and development will continue to keep Campofrío ahead of the market with new technology and new products.

*Ana Westley is the Spain correspondent for The New York Times. She has been too the correspondent in Spain for the U.S. weekly news magazine Businessweek since 1988. Previously, from 1982 to 1988, she was the correspondent for The Wall Street Journal. She also has contributed regularly to various other publications.*

Text: **John Reeder**  
Photos: **Félix Lorrio/ICEX**

**W**hilst I was taking coffee in a quayside tavern one wintry Atlantic morning in the Puerto de Santa María, Jerez's seaport, an old fisherman, clearly fresh from his night's labors, marched in, strode up to the bar and asked for *una morenita* - a little dark lady. What was my surprise when he was served what was unmistakably a dark cream sherry. He downed it briskly, lingering only slightly longer over a second before leaving.

What was an Andalusian fisherman doing drinking a cream sherry, a sherry according to tradition intended for consumption as a nightcap for elderly ladies from Boston and Bristol, Dublin and Dundee, Rotterdam and Reykjavik?

It had been previously

thought that cream sherry, a blend of older dry *oloroso* or *amontillado* sherry matured in the *solera* system, with the rich sweeter Pedro Ximénez wine, was originally a wine tailor-made for export to North-European customers, the English and the Dutch essentially, in the 17C. The story went that the inhabitants of the colder, damper climes of the north had sweeter palates and that Spanish sherry producers, although themselves addicted to drier styles of wine, were nevertheless only too pleased to provide the northerners with any kind of *sheries sack* they should desire. Thus came about what were known in 17C. England as *milk sheries*, so called perhaps because of their density of texture and supposed nutritional value.





# IN PRAISE OF CREAM SHERRY

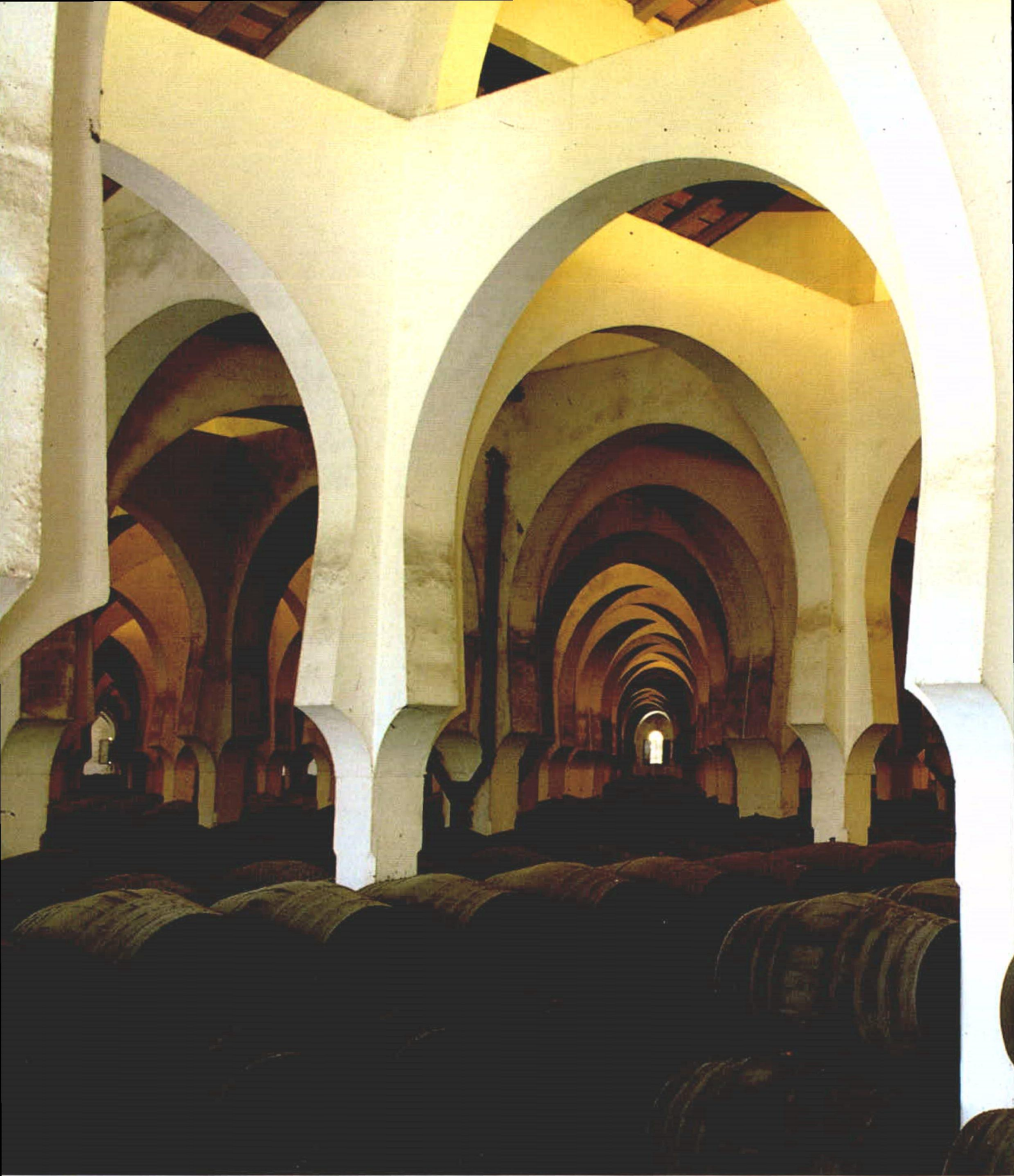
Each winemaker  
will aim for a  
different house style.



**W**E CAN  
DISTINGUISH TWO  
BASIC CREAM SHERRIES  
TYPES,...



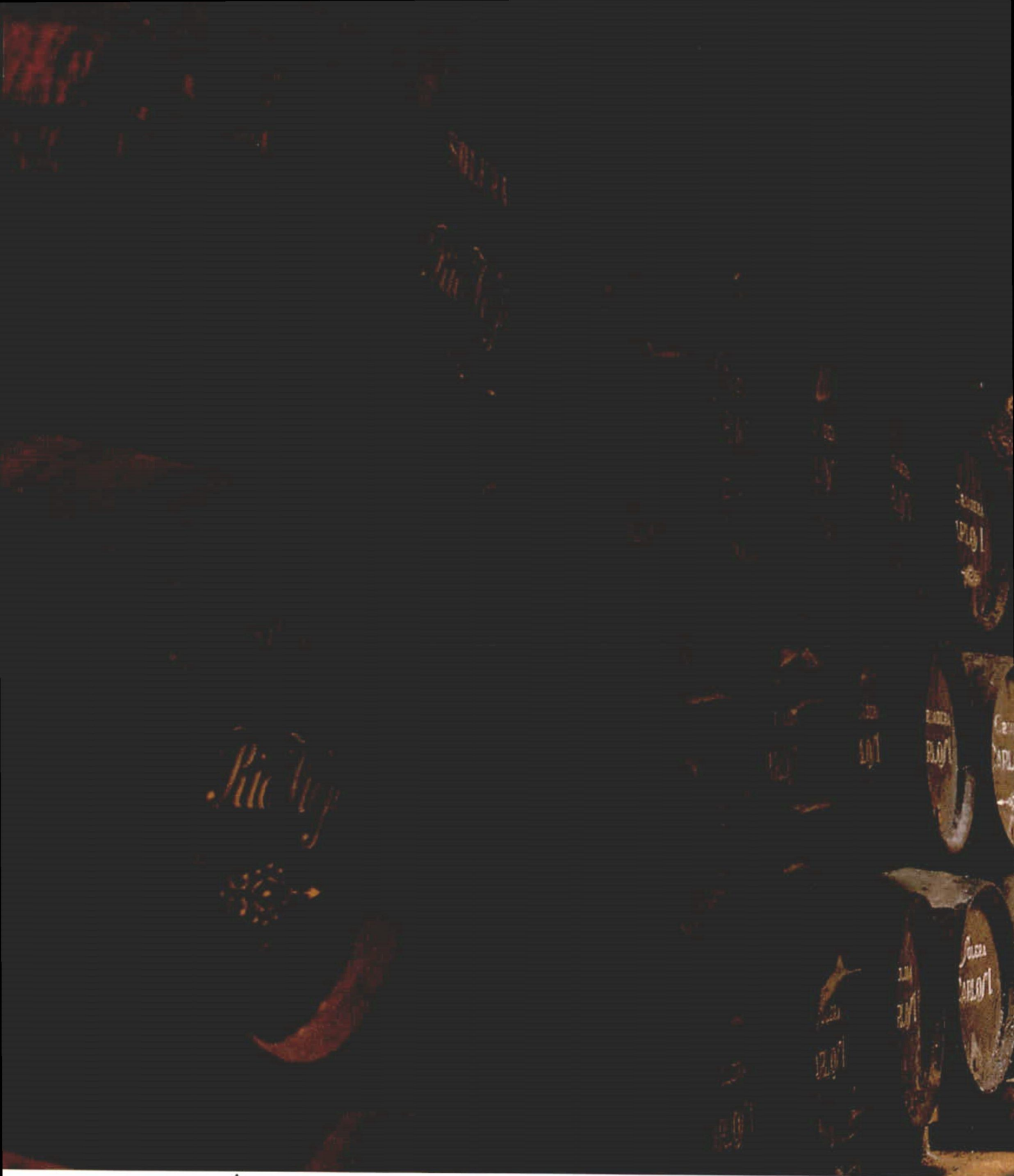
Cream Sherries  
are the result of careful  
and prolonged  
blending.



...THE FULLER-BODIED  
TRADITIONAL DARKER  
CREAMS AND THE PALE  
CREAM.



The time has come  
for those who  
enjoy sweet wines  
to stand up.



**A** PALE CREAM SHERRY,  
SERVED CHILLED,  
MAKES A SPLENDID  
APERITIF,...



Some old special  
reserve creams are still  
remarkably cheap  
for wines of such age.



...THE IDEAL FOIL TO  
*FOIEGRAS*, OR  
STRONGER CURED  
CHEESES.



The amount of sugar  
these wines  
contain will not result  
in obesity.

This, however, appears not to be the whole truth. Within the extensive range of sherries made by Andalusians for their own consumption was the so-called *morenita* - the little dark lady - a winter warmer traditionally breakfasted in the Atlantic seaports of the Bay of Cadiz. Within living memory local seamen would of a morning make up a king of *ad hoc* blended cream sherry by the simple process of pouring into their glass from two bottles two equal measures of dry *oloroso* sherry and Pedro Ximénez, and giving them a stir.

What did the original *morenita* taste like? We can of course have no way of knowing but the curious might like to try a sherry made by Domecq called La Raza that they describe as a sweeter old *oloroso* (*oloroso viejo abocado*), which is, unfortunately, rather difficult to obtain outside of Spain. At 19<sup>th</sup> this is a fine big wine with a drier finish than most creams and probably the closest we can hope to get to the old seamen's *morenita*.

Cream sherries are today of course the result of much more careful and prolonged blending. Varying the proportions of old dry *oloroso* or *amontillado* (aged from anything from five to forty years in the vast *soleras* of the sherry wineries) that are blended with Pedro Ximénez wines (wines made from sun-dried grapes, i.e. raisins, not fresh grapes), which have either been similarly aged by the *solera* system, or perhaps simply matured directly in a single oak butt. The resulting blend will then be left to marry in oak casks. Some cream sherries will also contain a little muscatel to enhance their aromatic nose. One of the secrets, therefore, of a fine

cream sherry is the extensive *soleras* of old *olorosos*, *amontillados* and *amontillado-finos* held by the sherry bodegas to be used as a base for their blended creams. These *soleras*, often consisting of thousands of butts of sherry guarantee the long-term quality, stability and homogeneity of the finished blend.

Variations in the proportions of the wines used in the final blend, together with differences in the ages of the respective constituent wines, will, therefore, make for a variety of finishes. Thus, the greater the proportion of *oloroso*, and the older the *oloroso solera*, the drier will be the finish of the cream. Substituting *amontillado-fino* for *oloroso* in the blend will make for a paler colored wine. The more Pedro Ximénez used in the blend, the deeper and more raisiny will be the resultant cream. Each winemaker will aim for a different house style and a range of different blends and finishes, each one made with the differing respective tastes of different consumer markets in mind. William and Humbert's Walnut Brown, then a sherry much beloved in Scotland, is a deep mahogany color and has a distinctive fruity muscatel aroma and a raisiny flavor, which betrays the relatively high proportion of Pedro Ximénez it contains. The same house's Canasta cream, the biggest selling cream sherry in Spain, on the other hand, is a lighter-colored amber wine, altogether lighter in texture than Walnut Brown. Interestingly, the name *canasta* seems to confirm the ambiguity surrounding the origins of cream sherry: for an English-speaker *canasta* is a Victorian card game and conjures up im-

ages of crinoline ladies in lushly-upholstered drawing-rooms. In Spanish however, *canasta* means a wicker work basket and probably refers to the chianti-style basket in which the bottle of Canasta cream is presented. To translate is to betray, as the Italians say.

Within the wide variety of nuances and styles amongst cream sherries we can distinguish two basic types: the fuller-bodied traditional darker cream, fine examples of which are Domecq's Celebration Cream, Gonzales Byass' Nectar or the World's brand leader, Harvey's Bristol Cream and, secondly, the Pale Cream, a more recent innovation developed by Crofts in the late sixties. The remarkably successful Croft's Original is a cream sherry with a lighter, pale *fino*-style color that appears to belie its sweetness.

Harveys, one of the grand old 18C. English sherry houses, is perhaps the name that springs to mind when one thinks of cream sherry. They owe their origins to a legendary English shipmaster named Captain Tomas Harvey, who perished with his whole family in an Atlantic hurricane.

It is probably to Harvey's that we are indebted for the generic term cream sherry to describe what is known in Spanish as *oloroso dulce*. As we mentioned above, the sweeter blended sherries of the 17 and 18C. were known in England as milk sherries. Legend has it that a lady visiting Harvey's cellars in Bristol sometime in the mid-19C. was given Harvey's Bristol Milk to taste, followed by a finer sample of the same kind of sherry. Rather fulsomely, she is reported to have remarked of this second superior wine:

"If that is Milk, then this must be the Cream!"

Impeccably made from its extensive *soleras* of *olorosos*, *amontillados* and Pedro Ximénez, Harveys offers what is perhaps the largest range of dark creams in Jerez, from Bristol Cream, still the dark cream par excellence in Northern Europe, the traditional sherry for Christmas toasts, the bottles bought on Christmas Eve to be sipped at lovingly throughout the rest of the winter, to special reserve older creams such as the Rare Oloroso, only 600 cases of which were bottled to be sold on the American market to celebrate the fifth centenary of the discovery of America.

Unfortunately, another of the wines that makes up the mythology of 19C. dark sherries, the East India Brown, only survives on Lustau's exclusive *Almacenista* sherry list. One of the glorious old Victorian pudding wines like Malsey and Marsala, Mountain and Muscat, East India Brown sherry is a nostalgic trip to great-great-grandmother's heavily draped front parlor. I can do no better than to quote from the description given of Lustau's wine in the noted London wine-merchant's, Berry Brothers and Rudd of St. James, current list: "a deep bronze colour with a rich, almost honeyed nose and a lovely taste of rich fruit cake."

Casks of East India Brown were originally, it is claimed, shipped as ballast in the sailing ships on their trips to the East Indies. On their return to England their quality had reputedly improved considerably. What, of course, had happened was that the movement of the ship speeded up blending and oxidation, and constituted a simulated experiment in accelerated aging.

## IN PRAISE OF CREAM SHERRY

In the early 1970s, Crofts launched a completely new style - at least visually - of cream sherry - Croft's Original, the first of the so-called pale creams. Made from extensive *soleras* of *finos*, and biologically aged under the *flor* - a protective veil of yeast which slows down oxidation, under which they develop into *finos-amontillados* and *amontillados*, these delicate wines form the base of the new pale cream sherry. This base is then cold-treated to conserve its freshness before being carefully married with small quantities of old *oloroso* and Pedro Ximénez.

The result is a pale straw-yellow-colored wine, with the almond nose typical of a fine *amontillado*, clean, fresh and sweet on the palate - a kind of *fino cream*, baptized Pale Cream. Appealing to those who really like a sweeter sherry but prefer to be seen holding what is perceived to be a more elegant paler colored drink, Croft's Original has been the most recent commercial success story among the world of sherry, sales rivaling those of the most popular dark creams.

Breaking accepted molds, a pale cream sherry, served chilled, makes a splendid aperitif, the ideal

foil to *foiegras* or stronger cured cheeses.

Strictly speaking, I suppose, there exists a third category of cream sherry, the extremely old special reserve creams defined firstly by the age of their constituent wines, very old *olorosos*, *amontillados* and Pedro Ximénez, often from thirty- and forty-year-old *soleras*, and secondly, by the prolonged period of time the blend is left to marry. Marvelously subtle, complex old wines such as Sandeman's Royal Corregidor, one of my particular favorites, a rich, velvety wine, the base *oloroso* of which is drawn off from a *solera* originally set up in 1897; or such as the Very Old Cream, made by that most traditional of Jerez's family bodegas, the miraculously unchanging house of Valdespino and supplied by them to the Wine Society of London or such as Gonzalo Byass Mathusalem, similarly made from wines taken from thirty- and forty-year-old *soleras*. These glorious old cream sherries are still remarkably cheap for wines of such age - compare their prices with that for instance of a forty-year-old *grand cru classé* claret! - and make the most satisfying of after dinner *digestifs*.

Some years ago in response to a rather naive statement on my part concerning the supposed underlying long-term trend on the part of consumer preferences towards drier sherries, that living encyclopedia of the world of sherry, Don José Ignacio Domecq, once told me that he had been hearing predictions about the terminal decline of the sweeter medium and cream sherries since the 1930s and yet still several million bottles of these sherries were consumed every year. To borrow from Mark Twain, reports of the death of cream sherry have been greatly exaggerated. Harvey's Bristol Cream sold around three million cases on the British market alone last year, and the story of Croft's Original is one of the marketing successes of the wine trade of the last two decades.

Perhaps the time has come for all those who enjoy sweeter wines in general and cream sherry in particular, to stand up and be counted and not allow themselves to be made to feel in some way inferior by some ignoramus of a wine snob. The current orthodoxy that dry equals sophistication and sweet equals boorishness is really nothing

more than silly snobbery.

Firstly, perhaps it ought to be said once and for all that there is nothing intrinsically superior or more sophisticated about a dry wine, or inferior or less sophisticated in a sweet one. Sauternes, Tokay, older cream sherries, vintage ports and old madeiras are all sweeter wines and the epitomes of subtlety and organoleptic complexity and richness. Secondly, one should add for the benefit of the health conscious, that the amount of sugars these wines contain will not result in obesity unless vast quantities are consumed.

There is no need for any shamefaced skulking around then if you enjoy sweeter wines. The discerning wine buff can be safely seen drinking a fine cream sherry without fear of loss of face or ridicule be he or she rock or rap musician, successful businesswoman, professional boxer, gnarled sea-dog or even maiden aunt from New or Old England.

*John Reeder is a wine writer who has published in the most important English and Spanish wine journals. He is associate professor at the University of Madrid, where he lives.*

## A BRIEF SHERRY GLOSSARY

**Amontillado:** an aged *fino*, almondy in flavor and amber in color.

**Bodega:** a winery

**Bota:** an oak cask of between 600 and 650 liters.

**Fino:** an elegant, light, straw-colored aperitif sherry

which keeps its freshness for years in the *solera* thanks to the *flor* under which it matures.

**Flor:** a veil of natural yeasts which grows spontaneously on the surface of *fino* sherry in the bodegas of Jerez (and only in the Jerez winemaking area) whilst they are maturing in the oak casks. The *flor* protects the wines, slows down the oxidation process and keeps the wine fresh. See Spain Gourmetour No.15.

**Oloroso:** a darker colored, walnut flavored sherry, aged without *flor*; usually dry.

**Pedro Ximenez:** a sherry made from sundried grapes, i.e. raisins. Deep mahogany in color, with a full velvety sultana taste, Pedro Ximenez is often used in small proportions to blend with old *olorosos* to produce cream sherry.

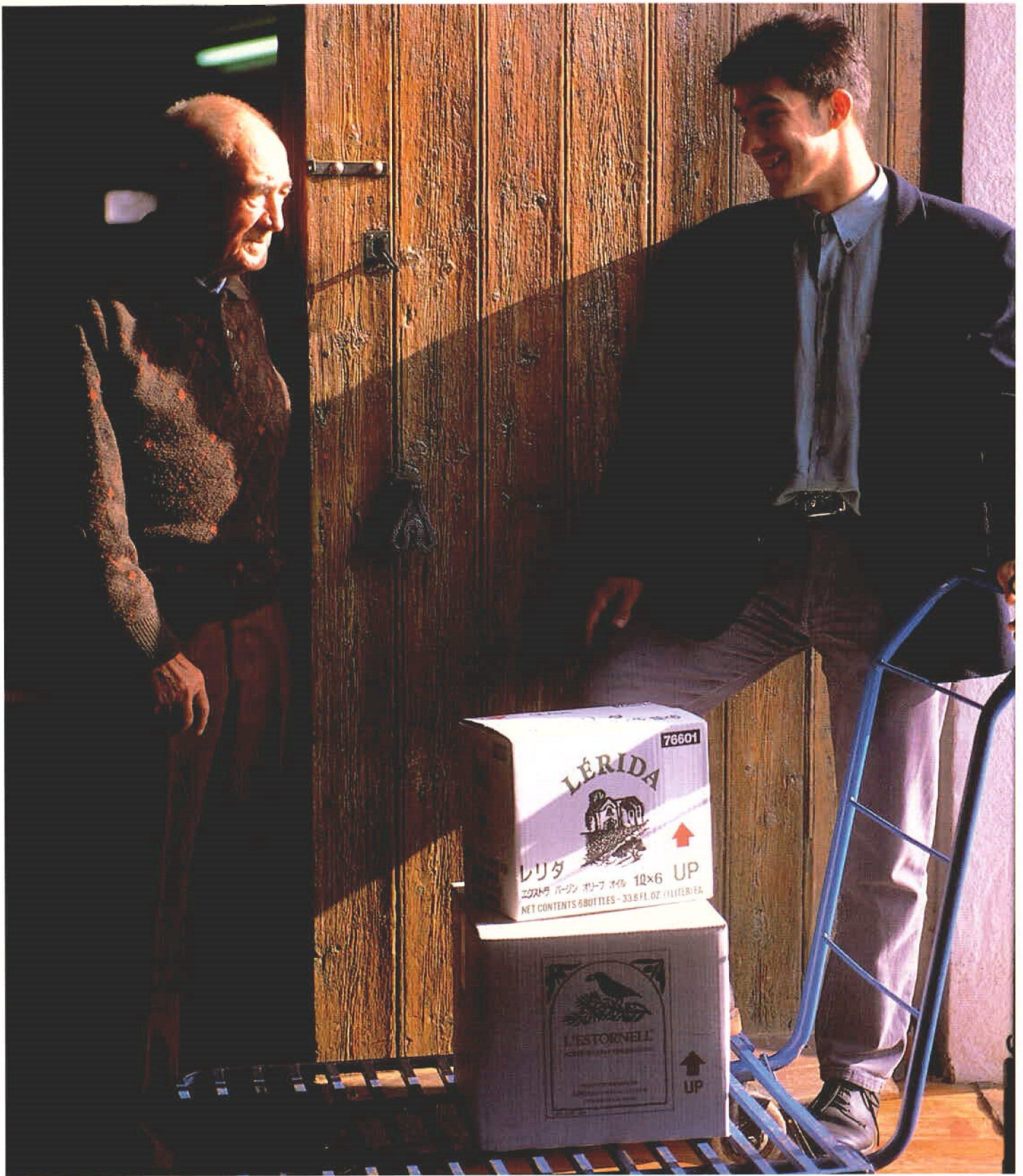
**Solera, the solera system:** more correctly known

as the system of *soleras* and *criaderas*. A system of fractional blending and maturing whereby sherry is aged in scales of butts, from which wine is constantly being drawn off and transferred to butts of more mature wine further down the scale. The original casks are at the same time replenished and refreshed with equal quantities of younger wine.

# Portraits of a Family Business

Text: Charles Powell  
Photos: Nelson Souto/ICEX

**V**ea, S.A. of Sarroca de Lleida has become a rather large fish in a pretty small town. This ninety-year-old family business in the province of Lérida has gained a world-wide reputation among olive oil connoisseurs, chefs and specialty food merchants in over 30 countries, due to their dedicated and superior work in the cultivation, harvesting, pressing, blending, packaging and shipping of premium extra-virgin olive oils. In all of those years, since its founding in 1902, the three generations of Veá men who have controlled the company's destiny have always adhered to the principal that to make something perfect, one must perfect each and every step along the way. Such perfection is evident in the quality of the olives used in making the Veá oils, the organic cultivation of the lands, the speed with which the olives are pressed after harvest, the sanitary means by which the oils are produced, the temperature-controlled way in which the unfiltered oils are stored underground until blended and very carefully filtered, and finally, the skill with which they are blended to achieve consistently high quality products year after year. But if that were all, the company could still remain a small artisan producer, one among many in a region known the world over for the quality of its olive oils. Two other important elements have come into play in recent years which have helped bring the Veá company and the oils they produce to a position of dominance as a world class supplier of Catalan olive oils. These two elements are clever and aggressive marketing and superior sales work. In the American vernacular, Veá is "on a roll!"



**T**

his ninety-year-old family business has gained a world-wide reputation among olive oil connoisseurs.



**A**

s a taster, Avelino Veá has been able to create many different

oils, each to the needs and specifications of the customer.





**V**

eá has also blended a special restaurant quality extra-virgin

oil for the food service trade.





**N**

o pesticides or chemical fertilizers are used. Organic methods

have set the Veá groves apart from others in the region.

**VEA S.A.**

TEL.12 60 00 - TELEX.50796

FAX 73-126225

SARROCA DE LLEIDA

**A**t the center of all this success is one person who makes all the rest of it fall neatly into place. His name is Avelino Veá, the third family member to manage the company and probably the one most responsible for the quantum leap that has brought the company to its present importance. Sr. Veá is a *Gran Catador*, one of an elite few in Spain who are recognized for their abilities as tasters, endowed with a palate that can detect the nuances of taste which allow for the blending of olive oils in truly superior ways. As a taster, Avelino Veá has been able to create many different oils, each to the needs and specifications of the customer. He was responsible for creating a blend of extra-virgin olive oils from all the important olive growing regions of Spain into the 1492-1992 quinquennial bottling of oil in commemoration of the historic voyage of Christopher Columbus from Spain to America 500 years ago. This bottling was restricted to the fruit of trees alive at the time Columbus started his voyage and was a first for an extra-virgin olive oil (see *Spain Gourmetour* nº 27).

The oils blended by Avelino Veá have become increasingly important in specialty and gourmet food stores in Spain and the rest of Europe, the Americas and Asia. Their Lérida and L'Estornell brands are on the tables of many of Spain's restaurants, on the shelves at Fauchon and the Galeries

Lafayette in Paris, at Dean & DeLuca and Balducci's in New York, in Macy's food halls in America and featured in many leading restaurants on both sides of the Atlantic as well as in Asia, especially in Japan, which has taken to L'Estornell and Lérida Extra-Virgin Olive Oils in a really big way. Veá has also blended a special restaurant quality extra-virgin oil for the food service trade that has become something of a standard of excellence by which to judge other oils. Indeed, in perhaps the most prestigious chef's school in the United States, The Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York, Veá oils are used in courses offered on cooking in the Spanish style. But that isn't all: Veá is also a major supplier of quality oil to Italy. Avelino has been able to provide oils the Italians want to market and Veá trucks leave for Italy on a regular basis.

**H**ere's how it is all done. Every morning, before taking any food and with only a few sips of black coffee, Sr. Veá retires to his tasting laboratory to sample the oils that are held in the deep, underground *cup* (pronounced *coop*), cisterns that hold the unfiltered oils. His objective is to retain a consistent flavor profile of the oils in each of his brands, and to create the new oils that have been requested by his special customers. Tasting oil is only part of it. There has to be an ability to

remember the flavors tasted the day before, the week before, even the year before, to maintain a consistency when each vintage varies depending on the amount of rainfall, the days of sun, when that rain fell and a hundred and one other variables. It is this ability that makes blending an art. But before this begins to sound like some impossibly laudable description, let it also be said that Avelino Veá has the very good fortune to be able to work with some of the best olives in the world.

Avelino is a complex person to say the least. Beyond his work in the laboratory tasting rooms and managing his growing business, he is a virtual fanatic about machines that move; cars, go-carts, motorcycles, airplanes (he has a pilot's license), gliders and powerboats. Avelino's son, Gerard, who is studying business, now has taken his father's lead with a Kawasaki to run around in. Oddly, Avelino's wife Montserrat (Montse), who is also active in the business, will not even go up in a plane if she can help it. It is also important to note the important formative work done by Don Domingo, Avelino's grandfather who bought the original olive groves and founded the company in 1902, and his son Don José Veá, now in his eighties, who added to the family properties and began incorporating more advanced techniques into the olive pressing process to ensure better sanitation.

Don José's role now is to manage the estates, because of his virtually encyclopedic knowledge of olive tree husbandry. It is almost as if he knows every tree by name, if they had names (possibly for him, they do).

**I**t is Don José's continuing reliance on organic methods that has set the Veá groves apart from others in the region. No pesticides or chemical fertilizers are used. To build the fertility of the groves, every two years "virgin earth" from the hills is laid up around the trees. This not only provides fertilizer but reduces the tendency of the trees to send up shoots that reduce the tree's ability to produce a bumper crop. In addition, in alternate years, there is a spreading of natural manure which adds to the productivity of the oil. It is the fruit of these trees that is used to produce the Certified Organic Extra-Virgin Olive Oil marketed under the L'Estornell brand.

In our meeting with José Veá, he attributed his active longevity to a frequent consumption of olive oil and to his yearly trips to Northern Lérida for the curative waters of the Caldes de Bohí Spa. He was particularly excited about the 1992/93 crop, telling us that; "This year will be the best harvest in decades, in quantity and in quality". It seems that the weather in the Lérida region was nearly perfect; it rained when it should have and was dry when that was best for the trees, in short, the

# Portraits of a Family Business

olive grower's dream season come true.

In a ceremony in Barcelona last Summer, Sr. José Veá was honored by the Catalan government as one of ten farmers who had contributed the most to Catalan agriculture. Only one person from each sector of the farming industry was selected, so this was an important recognition of his life work.

**T**wo other members of the Veá company deserve mention when adding up the contributions of the many who helped to bring the company to the prominence it enjoys today. The first is Joseph Quaid, the Export Director. Quaid is an American from Hawaii who has spent a good part of his working life in Spain. After a number of years as Sales Manager for American Honda Motor Co., Inc., and as V.P. Marketing for Lotus/New York, he helped some friends import wines and almonds from Spain, then went to Spain and became involved in exporting bulk olive oils to the United States before joining Veá. An important part of his work today is international, participating in many of the worldwide fancy food shows; from New York to California, from Singapore to Tokyo. A story he told us about how L'Estornell and Lérida were smoothly and successfully launched into the Japanese market is not only indicative of the careful work in building sales but

instructive on how to develop a business partnership with Japanese companies.

Quaid first met representatives of the Nakano Vinegar Company, Ltd. at a trade fair in Tokyo. They expressed an interest in the Veá oils and subsequently requested numerous samples during the next few months. They also asked dozens of questions such as what is the very best method to taste olive oil, how it should taste, what to look for, etc. They obtained samples from a number of other suppliers in Italy, Spain and France as well. Then they consulted with top European and Japanese chefs to help in their ratings. Comparisons were made with numbered samples only, so as not to reveal the source of the oils. The Veá products ended up with four other finalists and eventually won out as the only olive oils Nakano Vinegar Co., Ltd. decided to import. As Quaid put it; "We answered everything they asked as fully and as promptly as possible, the process was very lengthy and expensive for us, but we proved that we definitely wanted to be their long-term partners in marketing top quality olive oils from Spain to the Japanese consumer".

The other Veá partner in the expansion is Antonio Millon, the Sales Manager for Spain. Antonio is known by and knows almost all the great chefs in Barcelona and many throughout Spain. He formerly worked for Miguel

Torres Wines in Penedés and is a well-known personage in the Boquería Market in Barcelona, where all the agricultural riches of Spain can be found. It was his work that helped put bottles of L'Estornell Extra-Virgin Olive Oil on the dining room tables of top restaurants in Spain.

Other sales successes have increased awareness of the Veá products such as their use in the Pavilion of France restaurant at the Seville World's Fair. This restaurant received the first prize for the best kitchen at the fair from an international jury of chefs and restaurateurs. In America, an article in *Food & Wine* magazine cited both the Lérida Early Harvest and the L'Estornell Certified Organic Extra-Virgin Olive Oils particularly high quality and flavor. The quincentennial 1492-1992 bottling was awarded first prize for the most outstanding gift pack of the year at the 1992 Fancy Food Show in Washington, D.C.

In the BBC television series on the foods and wines of Spain, sponsored by ICEX (Spanish Institute for Foreign Trade) one of the episodes featured Lérida oils, the Veá Estates and their processing facilities.

As we said earlier, Veá is on a roll even though the total oil production in the province of Lérida is exceeded by most of the other oil producing provinces in Spain. However, Lérida produces a substantial quantity of quality extra-virgin olive

oils that have been sought after and prized since the days of Imperial Rome. Indeed, one of the four Denominations of Origin awarded by the Spanish government for olive oil is Borjas Blancas. It is named after one of the more important oil producing towns which lies along *La Ruta del Aceite*, the roads to the south of the provincial capital of Lérida that comprise the olive growing areas of the province.

It is not likely that you will find anything about this road, or even much about Lérida in English-language travel guidebooks. It's not that they have been forgotten, but that authors who compile such books have so much else to cover. In addition, they are heavily into big cities, like Barcelona 160 km. (100 miles) to the east, the ski areas to the north and picturesque regions like Lerida's Vall d'Aran. They are also intent on covering important cultural and architectural sites. The fact that each and every one of the twenty-nine towns along the route of olive oil has an interesting church, a ruined castle or a beautiful square just isn't enough to lure too many tourists. But on the other hand, if it is superior olive oil you seek, Lérida may be just the place to go!

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

Text: **Luis Palacio**  
Translation: **Jenny McDonald**  
Photos: **Félix Lorrio/ICEX**

The first  
scheme in the  
history of Spain for  
political and religious promo-  
tion was  
designed over 800 years ago.  
Taking advantage  
of the magnetic attraction of the  
discovery of  
the remains of the apostle St  
James in Galicia  
for Christians throughout

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# A EUROPEAN ROAD: THE ROAD TO SANTIAGO

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Europe, the Pope,  
the abbot of Cluny and the  
archbishop of  
Compostela, with the support  
of the king  
of Castile, set up a large-scale  
operation to  
encourage pilgrims and settlers  
to the north  
of the Iberian Peninsula.  
This stream of  
travelers fluctuated over the  
centuries but has  
continued uninterrupted until  
1993, the Holy Year of Santiago  
(Santiago  
is the Spanish name for St  
James), which  
also happens to be a year of  
great symbolic  
significance for Europe in that  
January 1,  
1993 marks the disappearance  
of its internal  
frontiers. These frontiers, more  
or less following  
natural boundaries, were  
brought by  
nationalism and broke up the  
Road to Santiago,  
not only a religious itinerary  
but also a commercial  
and cultural route, the origins  
of which are lost  
in time.

# TO SANTIAGO





THE  
APPEARANCE  
OF THE CODEX  
CALIXTINUS

led to  
the consolidation  
of the St James  
pilgrimages  
during the Middle  
Ages.







**FROM THE 12 C.  
TO THE 15 C.  
BETWEEN 300.000  
AND 500.000  
PEOPLE**

traveled to  
Santiago each year.  
Many  
settled along the road.

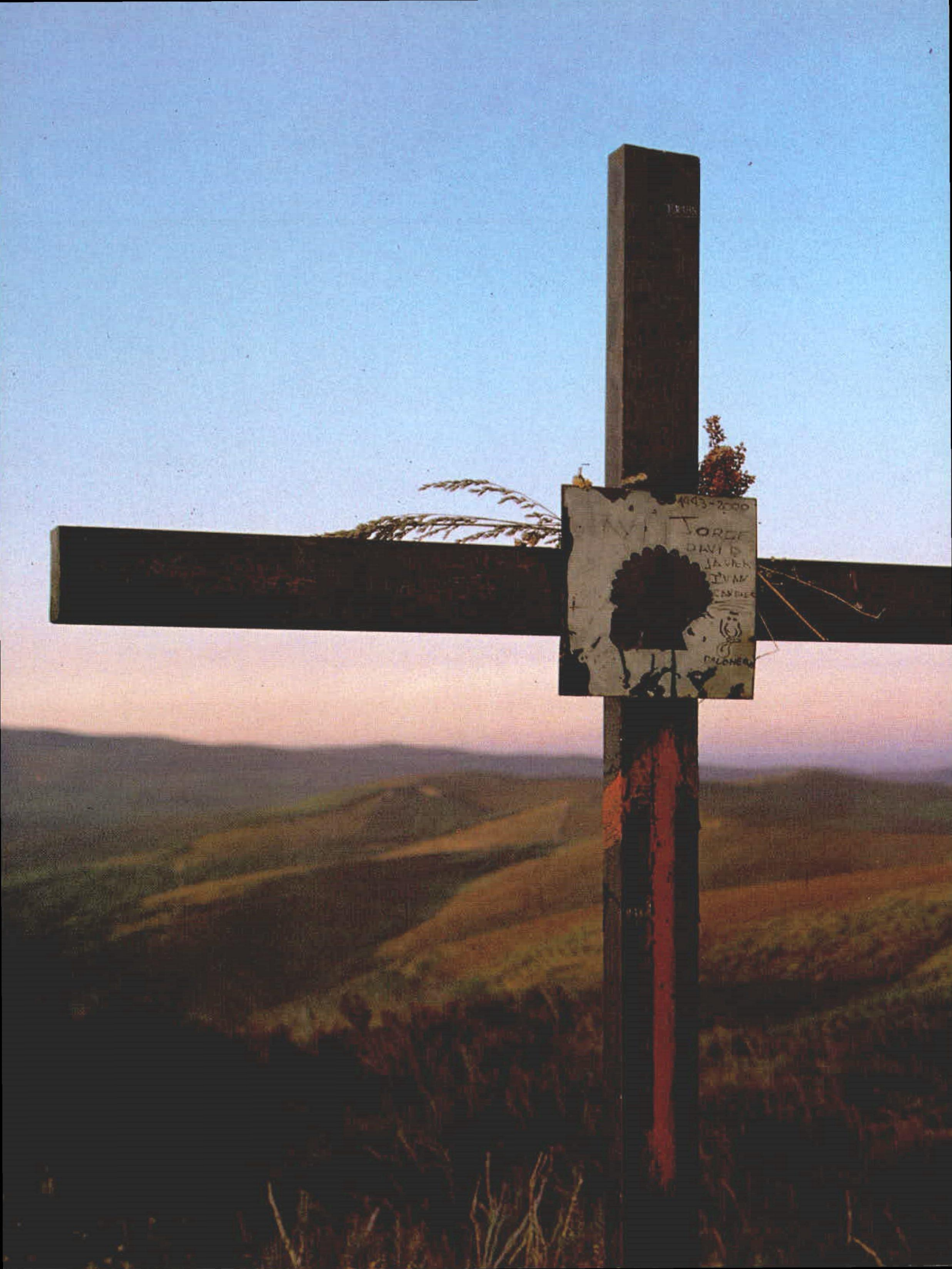
THE GERMAN  
ROMANTIC WRITER  
GOETHE IS  
SUPPOSED TO HAVE  
SAID

“Europe was  
built walking towards  
Santiago”.

Ligonde



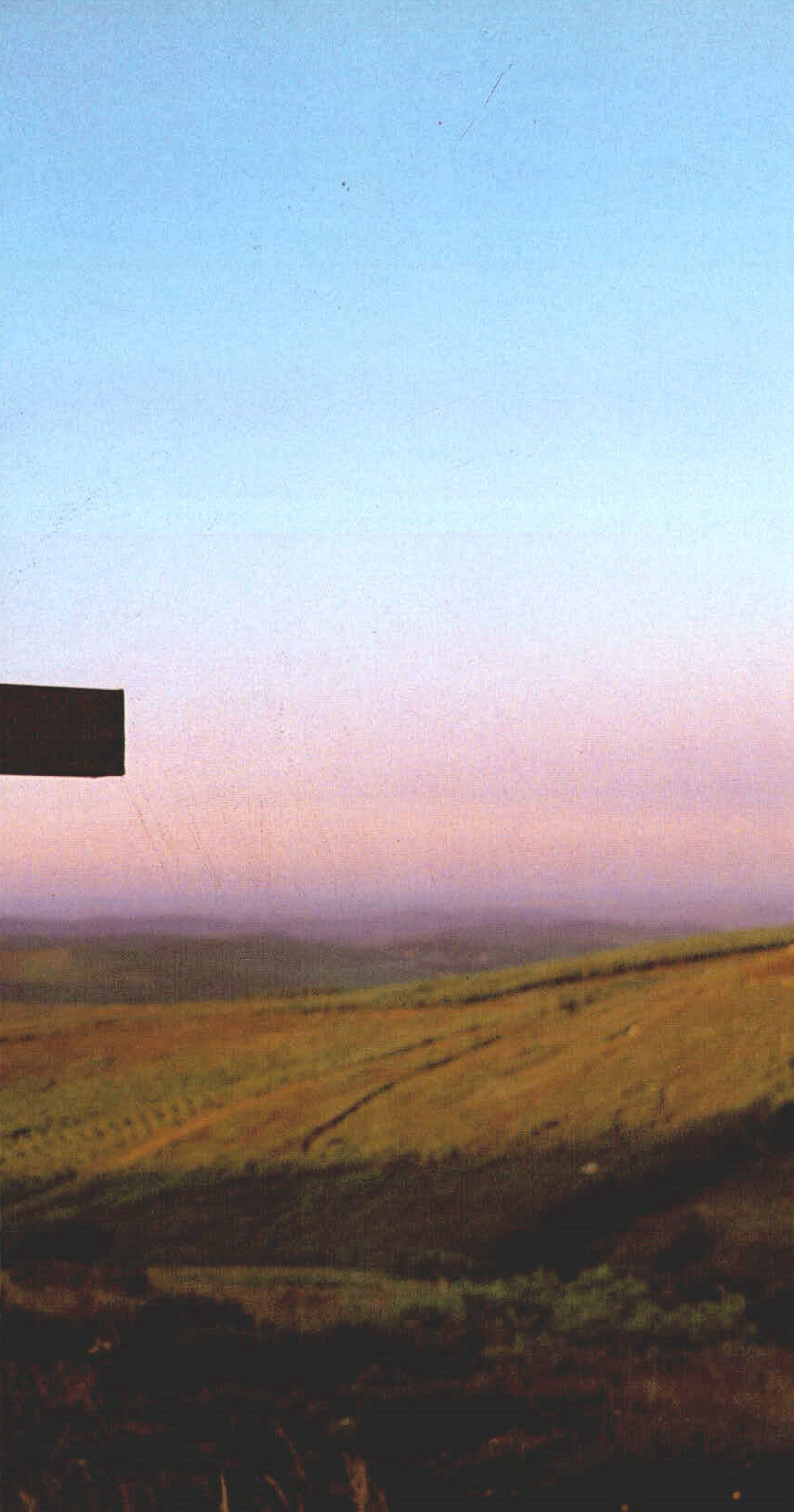




1898

1993-2000

JORGE  
DAVID  
JAVIER  
IVAN  
CENDE  
PALOMERA



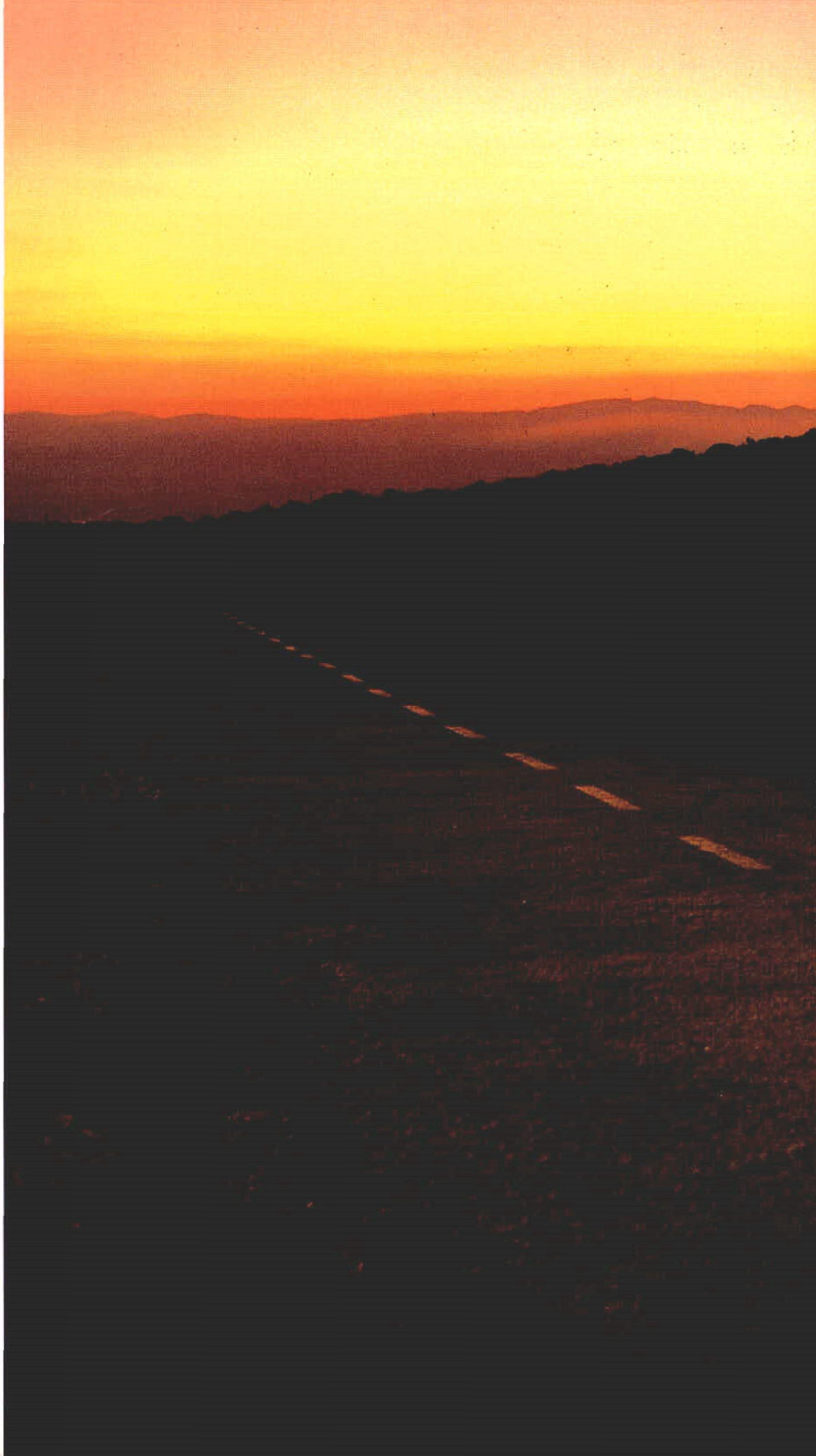
# MANY PILGRIMS SETTLED IN THE TOWNS

along the  
Road  
to Santiago  
to benefit from the  
privileges  
granted by the  
special  
local statutes.

**IN 1987  
THE COUNCIL  
OF EUROPE**

declared  
the Road to  
Santiago the first  
European Cultural  
Itinerary.

**Ponferrada**





# THE ROAD TO SANTIAGO

In recent years, the whole of the Road to Santiago has been given new signposts in the same blue color as that of the European Community flag. These signs remind travelers and pilgrims that they are journeying along a road that over the years has carried people, goods, political ideas, cultural and artistic movements, customs ... originating all over the continent. In 1987, the Council of Europe declared the Road to Santiago the first European Cultural Itinerary, 800 years or so after the first "promotion" scheme.

In about 1160 the *Codex Calixtinus* was written, or compiled, to be more exact. This is a collection of texts centered on one subject - the life and miracles of the apostle St James and the vicissitudes of the transfer of his remains from Jerusalem to Galicia. It also includes the *Liber Peregrinationis*, possibly the first travel guide ever written and certainly the first, and the basis of all subsequent guides, to the Road to Santiago.

The compiler of the *Codex Calixtinus* was the priest, Aymeric Picaud, from near the French city of Poitiers, who had close links with the abbey of Cluny. Picaud figures as having presented this codex to the church of Santiago de Compostela, to which he seems to have made a pilgrimage in the company of his woman friend, Gerberge, from Flanders, and Olivier d'Is-cam, from Vézelay. The ini-

tiative, which clearly had great political and religious significance and perhaps even touristic importance, was "sponsored" by several higher authorities. Those at Cluny played the greatest part because they were keen to promote pilgrimages to Santiago as a means of extending their presence and power in new areas of Christianity. They were assisted by the man who was responsible for the revival of Compostela during the 12C., Diego Gelmírez, and who had been consecrated as archbishop of Santiago by a former abbot of Cluny, Guy of Burgundy, later to become Pope Calixtus II. Just how close the links between them were can be seen in the fact that Picaud was to become Chancellor, which is the equivalent to a modern-day Secretary of State, for Calixtus II, and Gelmírez had occupied the same post for his brother, Raymond of Burgundy, Count of Galicia. The latter was married to the daughter of one of the monarchs most favoring Europe during the Spanish Middle Ages, Alfonso VI.

The remains of the apostle St James the Great had been found (or were said to have been found, because there were several interpretations) near Iria Flavia inland of the Galician Arosa during the early part of the 9C. They immediately became a cult and the destination of regional pilgrimages. A hermit had discovered the remains of

the apostle lit up by some mysterious lights giving the place its name - first Campus Stellae (Field of Stars), and later Compostela - and this 'miraculous' apparition became an element of cohesion for the inhabitants of the kingdom of Asturias who at the time were striving to defend themselves from the Muslim invaders.

Compostela soon became a center of attraction for pilgrims from all over Europe. The Bishop of Le Puy, Godescalco, is said to have been the first to make the pilgrimage in the year 951. Little by little, the flow towards Santiago de Compostela grew and, as the phenomenon consolidated, accommodation began to be provided in monasteries and churches for travelers who often risked their lives to reach Santiago. However, it was when the *Codex Calixtinus* appeared that the pilgrimage to Santiago acquired prestige and became a real social phenomenon. It turned into a political and religious reality of enormous significance for the whole of Europe.

At that time a European effort was needed to fight off the threat of Islam. During the 11C. and 12C., there were numerous expeditions from France in support of the Spaniards. Military actions were supplemented by demographic actions with an enormous influx of people from the other side of the Pyrenees - Franks, although not all of them

were French, some of them coming from Piemonte, Lombardy, Swabia or Brittany - who either reached the apostle's tomb and then settled in the towns along the pilgrims way or went directly to the small settlements which were emerging in the territories gradually being re-conquered from the Muslims.

The *Codex Calixtinus* is behind this demographic movement and gives it its ideological backbone. Professor Millán Bravo, Director of the Centre for Studies on the Road to Santiago, wrote recently in an article about this Code: it was necessary to provide "hagiographic and liturgical material to support the cult of the apostle. Devotion to the saint had to be encouraged and his power for intercession stressed (...). A meaning and a structure had to be given to the pilgrimage, giving an example of how it could be carried out (...). And, obviously, the miracle itself had to be related since the mysterious transfer of the body of the apostle from Palestine was the starting-point of the St James tradition in Compostela."

One century later, in 1181, Alexander III granted the privilege of the jubilee to the Compostela basilica, so that pilgrims arriving there in a Holy Year - that in which the day of St James (July 25) fell on a Sunday - obtained full indulgence and forgiveness for all their sins.

The pilgrimage to Santiago was a growing phenomenon when Aymer-

ic Picaud wrote his guide, as can be seen from the fact that there were already four routes from different French regions which met in Puente la Reina in Navarre.

These four routes were also taken by pilgrims coming to Santiago from further afield. Those from the East and Italy reached Arles and entered Spain at Somport, traveling via Montpellier and Toulouse. The "Burgundians and Teutons", according to Picaud, took the route starting in Le Puy and passed along the Conques valley. The Limousine Road was taken by those coming from Champagne and Lorraine who started off in Vézelay and passed through Limoges. Finally, pilgrims from northern Europe joined the route which went from Paris via Tours and Bordeaux. These three routes came together in Ostabat and through Saint Jean Pied de Port and Valcarlos, entered Navarre.

Inside Spain, the two roads from France came together to form the so-called *Camino Francés* (or French Way) which led to Santiago via Estella, Santo Domingo de la Calzada, Burgos, Sahagun, Leon and Villafranca del Bierzo.

This was the main route but pilgrims also traveled to Compostela along the Cantabrian Coast Road, while those from the south came through Portugal and along the *Camino de la Plata* (Silver Way) which started in Seville and passed through Salamanca and Zamora.

But, in addition to the overland routes, Santiago de Compostela could also be reached by sea. Galician ports had always been ports of call for ships heading for the Mediterranean coasts from the north of Europe. It is therefore not surprising that, after the discovery of the remains of St James, Galicia began to attract seafaring pilgrims and the *Historia Compostelana* mentions that in 1130 a trade expedition from England disembarked in Padron with cargo for Santiago which was so valuable that it had to be protected by the archbishop himself and a band of armed men.

Parallel to the political and religious consequences of the *Codex Calixtinus*, the kings of Aragon and Navarre first, and those of Asturias and Leon later, decided to promote the presence of foreign residents and especially to encourage the pilgrims to Santiago to settle in the towns and villages along the pilgrims' way. Special statutes were drawn up giving economic and political privileges for the Franks who decided to settle along the route. The first of these statutes was that of Jaca in 1063 but they were soon obtained by important towns along the pilgrims' way such as Pamplona, Estella, Logroño, Najera, Burgos, Carrion de los Condes, Sahagun, Villafranca del Bierzo, and Santiago de Compostela itself. Of all the settlements of Franks, one

of the best-preserved is that in the Navarre city of Estella. It is located close to the Church of San Pedro de la Rua - with its excellent Romanesque cloister - and boasts some of the most outstanding buildings in the town, such as the Palace of the Kings of Navarre, which is one of the few examples of civil Romanesque architecture existing in Spain.

The new settlers, who mostly earned their living in trade and industry, contributed to the renovation of urban life in Spanish towns that was taking place through western Europe. As stated by Professor Millán Bravo, the *Crónica de Sabagún* written in 1085 listed the craftsmen working in this Castilian town, including furriers, leather tanners, tailors, shield makers and shoemakers.

While it is difficult to give exact figures for the number of St James pilgrims, it has been calculated that from the 12C. to the 15C., the most important period for pilgrimages, between 300,000 and 500,000 people traveled to Santiago every year. Figures are much lower today, although, according to data given by the office of the Archbishop in Santiago - which registers those pilgrims requesting a pilgrimage certificate called a *Compostela* or *Compostelana* - they have been growing steadily over recent years, with 2,905 being registered in 1987 and 9,764 last year. These figures, however, will be surpassed this year - Holy Year - because 12,000 *Compostelas* were issued in the

month of May alone. From the time of the earliest pilgrimages, the arrival of foreigners meant that the Compostela chapter had to provide suitable services for them. The pilgrims coming from distant lands had a special doorway, as stated by Picaud in the *Liber Peregrinationis*. "When those of us from France want to enter the cathedral, we go in from the north" - that is through the *Door of France*, located in what is now the *Azabachería*. To the left of this door, in the chapel of The Savior, the *lenguajeros* (linguist) priests assisted or confessed those pilgrims who did not speak Castilian.

Just a few centuries later, in 1479, the Catholic King and Queen, Isabel of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon, were to confirm the European nature of the Road to Santiago when they published a document for all Christians, not only in Spain, but also in Italy, France, England, Germany, Hungary, the Danubian States, Sweden, Norway and any other kingdom, who planned to visit the Church of St James. This document stated that the pilgrims were under the sovereigns' protection, according to the official chronicler of Santiago, Diego Muros, in his *Notas Compostelanas*.

Spain was not alone in receiving influences from other countries because the St James phenomenon was to impregnate several aspects of European life for centuries. Yves Bottineau, a contemporary French author, for example, described in one of the classic books on this subject,

impregnate several aspects of European life for centuries. Yves Bottineau, a contemporary French author, for example, described in one of the classic books on this subject, *The Road to Santiago*, how at the beginning of the 15 C. the Spanish merchants who had settled in Bruges had a common seal with the following inscription, "Seal of the Spanish nation", showing an image - that of the apostle St James.

**N**ext December, the UNESCO is to decide on a request made by Spain that the Road to Santiago be declared Cultural Heritage of Humanity. This request seems well-founded and perhaps architecture is the aspect which makes the biggest contribution to confirming the European and international nature of the pilgrims' way. Traces of some of the masterworks of European architecture can

be seen in the churches and monasteries along the Spanish section of the route, just as Spanish influences can be seen in other cities of Europe.

When entering through Somport, and after leaving behind the cathedral of Jaca and the monastery of San Juan de la Peña (St John of the Rock), one of the first buildings calling the attention of pilgrims is the church of Santa María la Real in

Sangüesa. On one side, a virgin holds in her hands a book which reads "*Leodegarius me fecit*", this being the name of the builder of the portal. According to Michael Jacobs, a contemporary English writer and author of a guide to the architecture of the Road to Santiago, this Leodegarius was probably French and, whether this is true or not, the French influence in this portal is obvious, being in-

## FROM PILGRIMS' HOSPITAL TO LUXURY HOTEL

In honor of their common etymology - *hospital* and *hotel* come from the Latin word *hospes, hospitis* - several of the old pilgrims' hospitals along the Road to Santiago have been turned into luxury hotels for travelers, many of whom are journeying along the pilgrims' way. The most important are the Parador de Santo Domingo de la Calzada in the Rioja area, the Hostal de San Marcos in Leon and the Hostal de los Reyes Católicos in Santiago de Compostela. All three belong to the Red Nacional de Paradores, the State-owned hotel system. The Parador in Santo Domingo de la Calzada (Rioja) is located in one of the key points of the *Camino Francés* which, paradoxically, is the name given to the pilgrims' way within Spain. It was built by Santo Domingo, who also built the 24-arch bridge over the rio Oja as well as other buildings in the same town.

The former pilgrims' hospital was built using the structure of an old palace of the Kings of Navarre by the "builder saint" in about

1100. It stands in the shadow of the Cathedral, the dominant building in the town, and has undergone several alterations over the centuries, so that the present building has little in common with the original. However, the large stone arches in the hall remind us of its initial design.

The parador is in a privileged position, not only for visiting other towns along the pilgrims' way, such as Najera, Logroño and Burgos - all within a radius of under 100 kilometers (60 miles) - but also as a center from which to travel around the whole Rioja area. Only 15 kilometers (9 miles) away are the Mozarabic monasteries of Suso and Yuso in San Millán de la Cogolla, built in the 14C. and 11C., respectively, and obligatory ports of call for the St James pilgrims. This was the birthplace of the Castilian language for here the first documents were written in this language and one of the first Castilian poets, Gonzalo de Berceo, lived here.

Although traditionally the former pilgrims' hospice in Leon is associated with the present-day Hostal de San Marcos - one of the most popular road and hotel guides to Spain still makes this mistake - in fact these are two separate, though adjacent, buildings.

The Hostal is housed in a former monastery founded in the 12C. which was the base of the Order of the Knights of Santiago and was substantially altered between the 16C. and 17C.

Although initially used exclusively as a convent by the order, it was converted over the years to a number of different purposes, even that of prison. Francisco de Quevedo, the Spanish poet, writer and humanist, was imprisoned here from the end of 1639 until 1643. At the end of the last century, however, the building was in such ruinous state that the Leon Town Council even considered demolishing it. Fortunately, this never happened and in 1961 the decision was taken to convert it into the luxury hotel in use today.

The most outstanding features of the Hostal de San Marcos, which has approximately 200 rooms, are the façade and the church. The former, about 100 m (328 feet) in length, is one of the glories of the Spanish plateresque style and was built by several architects although the original design was by Pedro de Larrea. According to Michael Jacobs, this facade should be seen not as an architectural work but rather as "a magnificent tapestry, covered all over with the full range of clas-

sical plateresque ornament", including the pilgrims' scallop shells.

The church today houses an archeological museum, and its chancel - reached via the cloister of the Hostal - has the most elaborately worked wooden choir stalls in Spain revealing the handwork of the sculptor, Juan de Juni, who worked for a time in the monastery of San Marcos.

The hospital was a much more modest building on two floors and is situated to the right of the present-day Hostal. Although within the St James hospice tradition it attained great renown - in 1528 it had 17 beds, each one curtained off to protect the honesty of the pilgrims - the decline in pilgrimages meant that the building was left abandoned for many years. The municipal and regional authorities have recently undertaken its renovation to convert it once more to a pilgrims' hospice and tourist information center.

Finally, on arrival in Santiago de Compostela, pilgrims found a third hospital, later transformed into the luxury Hostal de los Reyes Católicos. Isabel of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon ordered it to be built at the end of the 15C. and the work was carried out between 1501 and 1509 under Enrique de Egas. With this hospital, the

spired by the Cathedral of Chartres and by buildings in Moissac and the south-east region of France.

Both French and German influences are also clear in the Gothic style of the Burgos Cathedral. The building work was supervised by the bishop Maurice - an Englishman who had lived for many years in France - and Juan, Simón and Francisco de Colonia - all from the Ger-

man city of Cologne.

With respect to the influence of Hispanic architecture beyond the Pyrenees, according to Millán Bravo, "the most important influence is seen in Hispano-Arabic ornamentation and in elements such as ribbed vaults which were taken to other areas of Europe by artisans returning from Santiago". This influence is especially visible in the churches around Poitiers. And several of the most im-

portant churches related to the St James pilgrimages have similar ground plans and elevations, such as Santiago Cathedral and the churches of Saint Martin in Tours, Saint Martial in Limoges, Sainte Foy in Conques and Saint Sernin in Toulouse.

But the mission of the Road to Santiago in the integration of European culture and life is not only to be seen in architecture. Poets and writers also

traveled to Santiago, as well as goldsmiths and silversmiths and painters. The German Romantic writer, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, is supposed to have said "Europe was built walking towards Santiago".

*Luis Palacio, a journalist specializing in communication, is an enthusiast of the Road to Santiago which he has covered by bicycle.*

monarchs hoped to resolve the situation awaiting the pilgrims in Santiago who, as they themselves had seen during a visit made to Galicia, had to sleep in the doorways and naves of the cathedral. For the same reason, these monarchs ordered that another hospice be built at the mountain pass of Cebrero for travelers entering Galicia from the Bierzo region of Leon.

However, the funds pro-

vided to maintain the hospital as a pilgrims' hospice soon ran out and the building was reconverted into a hospital for sick patients, and it was used for this purpose until its transformation in 1953 into a hotel. It still preserves certain features from its past as a hospice for poorer pilgrims, such as the obligation to provide three meals for any pilgrim carrying the *compostelana* - the certificate

issued by the Archbishop of Santiago confirming pilgrim status.

Built slightly earlier than the monastery of San Marcos de Leon, the plateresque façade of the Hostal de los Reyes Católicos opens onto the plaza del Obradoiro, between the Rajoy and

Gelmírez palaces and very close to Santiago cathedral. Inside the former hospice are four patios, two of which are Baroque, with a 16C. chapel at the center.





*La Quinta Esencia Del Fino*

# Spanish Masterpieces



## GONZALEZ BYASS

SHERRY & BRANDY



# The

In the dead center of modern-day Madrid, in an area filled day and night with the din of traffic and glare of neon lights, lie tucked away two small oases whose inhabitants have not pushed through the crowded sidewalks in forty years. They are cloistered nuns who live in royal convents founded some four hundred years ago, and who still maintain the tradition-

al lifestyles of the convents' original inhabitants. Today, the convents—the Monastery of the Descalzas Reales and the Royal Monastery of the Encarnación—form part of Spain's Royal Patrimony, and the small portions open to the public allow a glimpse of a life now rarely seen, and also of artistic treasures that were gifts of royal families from generations past.

# Secret

## *THE MONASTERY OF THE DESCALZAS REALES*

It's not easy to get from one part of Madrid to another without crossing through Sol. The large, open plaza is the literal heart of the city. A big bronze disk inlaid on a sidewalk says so, and the city's streets even start their numbers on the end closest to Sol. Day and night, it is jammed with people, sidewalk vendors, lottery hawkers, tourists, shoppers, and strollers.

Up a small side street from this busy center, flanked on one side by the department store El Corte Inglés and on the other by the neon lights of the Gran Vía, is a structure over four hundred years old, the Monastery of the Descalzas Reales (literally, the

Monastery of the Royal Barefoot Sisters).

Almost unbelievably, within the building live twenty-eight cloistered nuns who have not ventured out into the city that is at their threshold in more than forty years.

The city of Madrid may have swallowed the convent with its inexorable growth, but this has had little effect on the daily routine of the nuns within. The women spend a good deal of their days praying, and the rest doing various other tasks, such as cleaning, sewing, baking, and tending the convent's interior garden, where they grow their own vegetables and have fruit trees. During visiting hours, they keep out of sight, retreating to the private parts of the convent.

# Gardens

Text: Meg Campbell  
Photos: Félix Llorio/Patrimonia Nacional

The convents are part of Spain's Royal Patrimony.



Only a part of these monasteries is open for public visits; the rest is still used as a convent.

**The** convent was originally a mansion belonging to Alonso Gutiérrez, finance minister to Emperor Charles V. The mansion was located in what was then the outskirts of the city, although it was later absorbed by the part of city now known as Madrid of the Austrias.

In 1535, the Emperor's wife, Empress Elizabeth, stayed in the mansion, where she gave birth to a daughter, princess Joan of Austria, who years later would come to found the convent in the house where she had been born.

Joan married Prince John of Portugal in 1552, at the age of 17, but was left a widow less than two years later. She was called back to Spain by her father Charles V, to help govern the country in the absence of him and her brother Phillip II, who was in England marrying Mary Tudor.

Like her father and other members of the Austrian Habsburg family, Joan was a fervent and austere Catholic. In 1555, she bought the Gutiérrez mansion, in order to found a convent where she herself could go to pray, and live, when duties of state permitted. Her idea of founding a convent was part of a more complete project that would also include a school for orphaned girls and a residence for retired priests. She also wanted the complex to be self-sufficient, with its own gardens, livestock, and ovens.

The Monastery of the Encarnación gives the first hints of the Baroque style.







BATON... INI MIVOMNIN SCISLERA DRE

ADO SEA... Y LA INFA... ORIGINAL EN EL PRIMER INSTANCIA DE AY...



For nearly two hundred years, the only inhabitants of the convent were member of royalty.

Converting the mansion into a convent required a lot of work, such as the addition of the church, and in fact, Joan died before the transition was complete. The project was the work of architect John Baptist of Toledo, also the first architect of the Escorial Monastery, in the mountains north of Madrid, and one who spent many years working with Michelangelo in Italy before returning to Spain.

For nearly two hundred years after its founding in 1559, the only inhabitants of the convent were members of royalty, such as single or widowed princesses and queens, or the illegitimate daughters of princes and kings. For generations, these women received gifts from their families—their dowries—in the form of artistic treasures which today make up the impressive collection of fine art exhibited in the convent. Much of the art chronicles the history of the convent, such as the portraits of its founder, portraits of illustrious visitors, or such as an oil painting relating the winter sojourn of Joan's sister, Mary of Austria, from Prague to Madrid, when she returned to live in the convent.

The staircase is a vestige of the convent's former life as a palace.

For generations, these “royal” nuns received gifts from their families in the form of artistic treasures.

The art collection of the Descalzas Reales boasts works of the masters, from Rubens to Titian, works that were locked away for centuries, until 1984, when the Spanish government began a long-needed restoration of the convent, and decided to open parts of it up to the public. The work included modern touches, such as new water and electrical installations, as well as fire and burglar alarms, but it also recaptured a good deal of the convent's past. Paintings, sculptures, friezes and tiles were all cleaned and retouched, while original woodwork and plastering that had been buried under previous modifications were uncovered.

The country was rewarded for its restoration efforts in 1988, when the monastery was chosen for the European Museum of the Year award. The judges' decision was based not only on the convent's collection and on the restoration work, but also on the fact that it is still a working convent.

The relic room at the Encarnación is the most outstanding one.









The art collection of the Descalzas Reales boasts works of the masters, from Rubens to Titian.

**This** symbiotic relationship gives added significance to the collection, and makes the museum all the more interesting for its unconventionality, the judges explained during the presentation of the award.

Among the artistic works are a magnificent series of tapestries done from drawings of Rubens in order to commemorate the triumphs of the Spanish armies in Europe in the 16C.

When the convent was restored, a collection of Flemish paintings was assembled in one room, while in another are a number of Italian works, such as Titian's *Caesar's Coin*. Still another room contains a collection of portraits of the Austrian House of Royalty, painted by Rubens, Sánchez Coello, Moro, Pantoja de la Cruz, Portbous, and others.

A visit to the museum starts in the vestibule, where a bit beyond hang five oil paintings done by the 17C. artist Bartholomew Roman. Near the cloister is a sweeping baroque staircase, a vestige of the convent's former life as a palace.

Collections here include works by Da Vinci, Ribera and El Greco.

The Monastery of the Encarnación's first stone was placed in June of 1611.

One of the most interesting parts of the convent is the series of tiny chapels along the upper cloister, each dedicated to a saint, and containing a varied collection of medieval religious icons. In one chapel lies a wooden sculpture of Christ on a Cross by Gaspar Becerra with a compartment in the chest designed for holding the communion host, surrounded by emeralds.

The monastery's relic room is a fascinating one, with a collection of religious relics from Rome, others gifts to the royal nuns, others brought by Mary of Austria when she returned to the Monastery. From an artistic point of view, the relics are important because they often arrived in jewel-encrusted boxes, or chests made of precious metals.

Much of the convent's church was destroyed by a fire in 1862. In the church is a portrait of Joan, and legend has it that the baptismal font on the high altar is the one used for the baptism of the convent's founder.

Within these convents, in the dead center of modern-day Madrid, live cloistered nuns.





# The Secret Gardens

**The** Royal Monastery of the Encarnación (Incarnation) is only a ten-minute walk from the Descalzas Reales, still in the Madrid of the Austrias. Like the Descalzas Reales, the convent was founded by a Habsburg queen, also deeply religious, is still inhabited by twelve cloistered nuns, and holds countless artistic treasures collected over the centuries.

At one time, the Encarnación had a lot of land, as did the Descalzas Reales, and in fact the gardens of the two touched. The monastery would lose much of this land in the 18C., however, when it was taken by the state.

The story of the Encarnación is rather a sad one. The monastery was founded by Queen Margaret of Austria-Estiria, wife of Phillip III, who was the nephew of Mary Joseph of Austria. Phillip chose Margaret as his wife because she came from a deeply religious family, and also because of the fact that she was one of fifteen brothers and sisters, a good sign that she would provide him with an heir. The two married in Valencia in 1599, a year after the death of Phillip's father, Phillip II.

Queen Margaret was a woman of energy and altruistic ambitions who dreamed of undertaking charitable projects, such as a hospice for servants taken ill, homes for injured soldiers, and a foundation for orphaned servants.

Such plans were cut short, however, by the queen's death during childbirth in 1611. Queen Margaret died at the age of 27, giving birth to her sixth child, after twelve years of marriage.

As a result, the only project the queen lived to see was the start of the Royal

Monastery of the Encarnación, and in fact, she only saw the first stone laid. Nevertheless, her husband, King Phillip, took care to see the project finished according to his dear wife's wishes.

Two circumstances moved Margaret to found the Monastery, one practical and the other spiritual. The Queen had long looked for a project that would foster monastic activities, and one close to the castle, where she herself could go pray. After meeting with the Mother Superior from the Convent of the Encarnación in the northern city of Valladolid, who spoke of her order's need for a new convent in Madrid, Queen Margaret chose the present spot for a new convent, close by the castle and tucked then between a school and the palace of a marquis. There was even a tunnel made between the castle and the convent for the royal members to go to pray, and years later, when the castle burned to the ground in a fire, the fire travelled through the tunnel and burned the church of the convent.

The convent's first stone was placed in June of 1611, only months before the death of the queen. Four-and-a-half years later, construction of the convent was completed, and the sisters of the order of the Incarnation of Augustine filed in a solemn procession from their old convent to their new quarters.

Like the Descalzas Reales, the inhabitants of the Encarnación were the daughters and widows of nobility, although of a somewhat lower order than those of the Descalzas. They were, however, all well-enough off to pay the expensive dowry required to enter the convent.

**Parts** of the architecture and decoration of the Monastery give the first hints of the baroque style that would come to dominate Madrid under the reign of the Bourbon kings. The convent is considered a transition between the sober, severe characteristics of the Habsburg dynasty and the more elaborate decor of the French Bourbons.

Like the Descalzas Reales, only a part of the monastery is open for public visits, as the rest of the building and surrounding grounds are still used as a convent. Once opened to the public, in 1964, several of the rooms were converted to display the artworks belonging to the monastery. For instance, one of the workshops, where nuns gathered for centuries to do needlework that would later decorate the palaces of Europe, is now an exhibit room for paintings.

Although the monastery has fewer artistic treasures done by European masters than has the Descalzas Reales, its collection includes works by Da Vinci, Ribera, and El Greco.

The most outstanding room in the convent is the relic room, with its sumptuous baroque decoration and collection of religious, and often morbid artifacts. The ceiling is an elaborate mix of painting and sculpture done by the artist Vicente Carducho, while the walls are made up of gilded, windowed cubicles, each containing a religious relic.

The most famous of these relics, and the one for which the monastery itself is best known, is a small flask said to contain the blood of Saint Pantaleón. The blood is solid, but each year on July 27, the day of Saint Pantaleón,

the blood turns liquid. According to the same legend, the years that the blood doesn't turn liquid mark years of bad luck. The blood remained solid, for instance, during the years of the first and second world wars.

**The** Royal Salon in the Monastery of the Encarnación is one of the most interesting rooms in the convent, bringing to life the characters of the Habsburg dynasty. The salon was used in the 19C. as a schoolroom when the monastery was obligated to have a girls' school, and now displays the portraits of members of the Austrian royalty, which are especially interesting for the detailed accounts they give of the dress of the period.

One of the portraits depicts Anne of Austria, wife of France's Louis XIII, who is well-known for having employed the services of The Three Musketeers. Another is Mary Theresa of Austria, daughter of Phillip IV and married to Louis XIV. The portrait of Mary Theresa shows her as a full-figured woman with puffy cheeks. In fact, she was quite thin, despite the fact that she adored chocolate, obtained from the New World, which she introduced to the French court. According to documents, she appears in the portrait with puffy cheeks not because she was fat, but because she spent the long hours posing for paintings stuffing herself with chocolate.

*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.*



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## SPANISH EYES

(II)

# CRISTINA HOYOS

## SPIRIT OF THE SOUTH

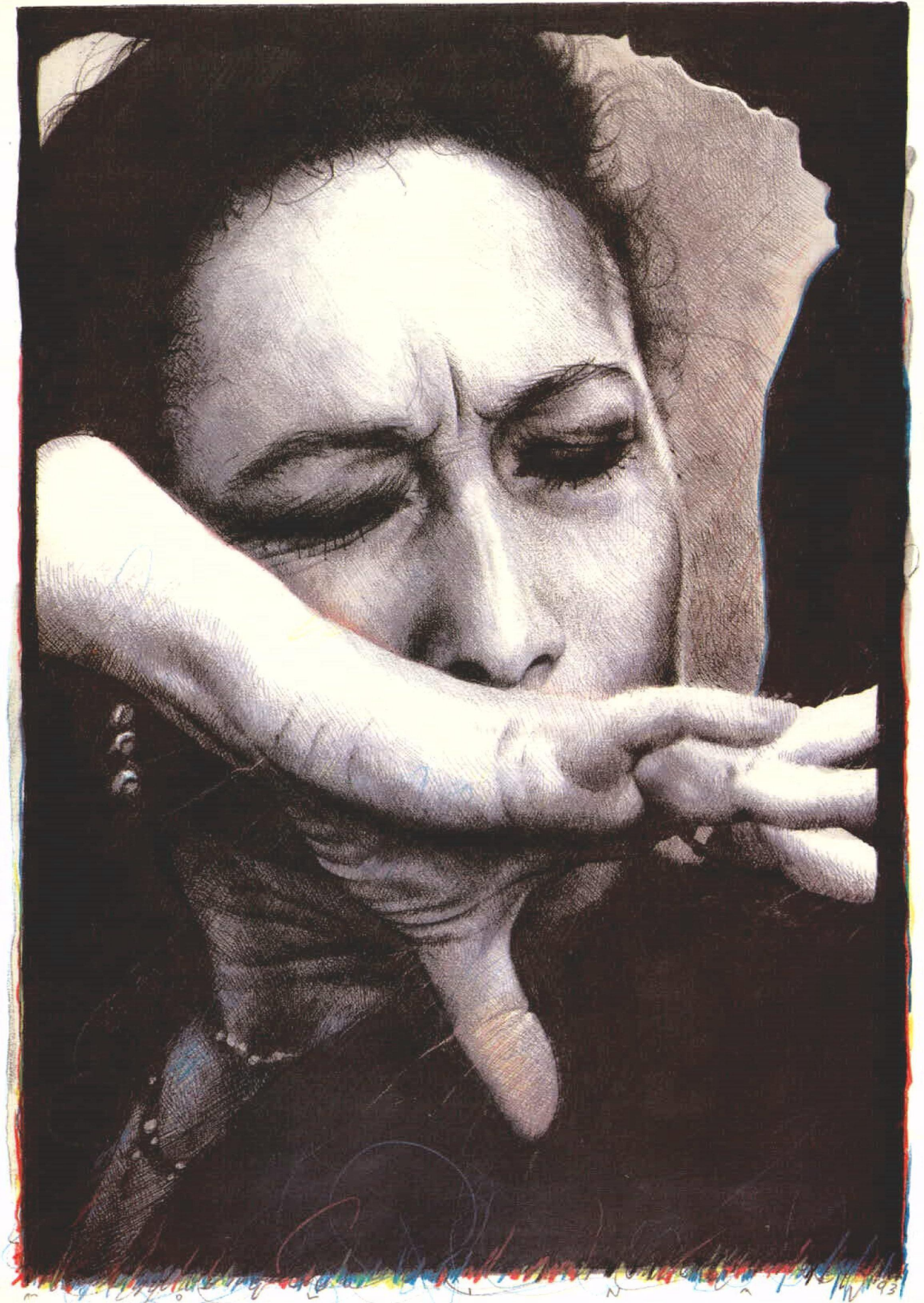
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he Cristina Hoyos Ballet's presentation of *Sueños Flamencos* (Flamenco Dreams) at the Paris Opéra in 1990 was flamenco's all-time debut on that hallowed stage. The fact that it met with a rapturous reception stamped an additional seal of approval on an occasion that marked the accession of flamenco to classic art form status. It was a proud and significant moment for Hoyos herself: throughout her career, one of her missions has been to win recognition for her chosen genre.

Born in Seville, Cristina Hoyos has been dancing on stage since she was twelve. She specialized in flamenco when she turned professional at sixteen, and has been working continuously ever since. There was never any question of her doing anything else: she maintains that she didn't choose dancing, it chose her. Her family had no theatrical connections, but even today it is impossible to grow up in Andalusia without hearing the rhythms of flamenco a hundred times a day. Her response to it was to dance: "I was lucky enough to be born with a flexible body and a good ear", she explains. "I dance as I do because of what I heard around me as a

Text: **Hawys Pritchard**

Illustration: **José M<sup>a</sup> Sánchez-Molina**  
/ICEX



**I**n 1988, she set up her own company, the Ballet Cristina Hoyos, which she launched at the 1989 Paris Festival.

child, but I know that I'd have been a dancer even if I'd been born in England...or Russia. It was a sort of magic. It was just in me."

Now still only in her forties (at a guess), she has a long and impressive career behind her. She began as a child performer in Seville's *Galas Juveniles*, a hugely popular Andalusian theatrical institution in their time and still of cherished memory. The *Galas* were vaudeville shows that incorporated a comic play, dance, Andalusian popular songs, operatic highlights and the like. Performed by adult actors and singers along with amateur youngsters and children, they were aimed specifically at an audience of children and their mothers (note "mothers", not "parents": I quote Ms. Hoyos). Even then, Hoyos was already developing her skills as a choreographer.

At sixteen, she danced at the Spanish pavilion of the New York World Fair and has not stopped traveling the world since. By 1969, her exceptional talent was so obvious that she was invited to join the Dance Company of Antonio Gades, one of Spain's most gifted male flamenco dancers, as his dancing partner. The partnership lasted on and off until 1988, when Hoyos left to work on various film projects and to set up her own company, the Ballet Cristina Hoyos, which she launched at the 1989 Paris Festival.

In 1974, she danced the female lead in an interpretation of García Lorca's play *Bodas de Sangre* (Blood Wedding). This was the beginning of an artistic allegiance to the playwright and

folk hero whose work, for her, captures the quintessence of Andalusian culture. Hoyos finds Lorca particularly apt for interpretation through dance: "He deals with eternal themes - birth, death, love, loss - in simple language which is easy to translate into movement. And they are universal. People respond to them in the same way, are moved by the same moments, in whatever part of the world I perform." In 1985, she played one of the leading roles in Carlos Saura's film version of Lorca's *El Amor Brujo* (Love the Magician), and in 1992 Hoyos and her Ballet Company presented her own adaptation of Lorca's *Yerma* at both Seville's Expo and the Edinburgh Festival. In between, there have been spells as an acclaimed solo dancer touring the cultural festivals of Europe and even Japan, a key role - as herself - in Saura's 1983 film version of *Carmen*, a non-dancing role in a prize-winning drama series for Spanish Television. In 1991 she choreographed Nurias Espert's acclaimed production of *Carmen*, conducted by Zubin Mehta, at London's Covent Garden.

Over the years, there have been awards galore, and they are still coming in: in 1992 she won the Spanish Ministry of Culture's National Dance Prize and was named Andalusia Woman of the Year for her artistic contribution to the Barcelona Olympics and for her personal role in winning worldwide recognition for genuine Andalusian dance. Even so, Cristina Hoyos denies that she is a star. Indeed, she seems almost to go out of her way to be unstarry. Her

Seville office is an unpretentious affair adapted from a little first-floor flat reached from a very ordinary side street in the heart of one of Spain's most picturesque cities. Only a Japanese poster, a model of a stage-set, and the fact that the bookshelves contain art and dance books suggest show-business connections.

Ms. Hoyos arrives slightly late but full of apologies, explaining that the Company has just got back from Chile and her husband caught a cold on the plane so she had to see to him before setting out. Trim but sturdy rather than lithe and muscular, she doesn't look like a dancer in either physique or posture. Her clothes - gray flannel jacket with a silk scarf at the neck, knee-length skirt - are a respectable middle-class uniform, and here in Seville even the center-parted jet black hair drawn back into a low bun is such a typical hairstyle that it offers no clue either. She looks smaller and younger (beautiful skin) and is altogether gentler than her impassioned stage and screen personae would lead one to expect.

It is when she starts talking about dance that the clues begin to appear. She explains that little is known about the origins of flamenco, and since it has always been a spontaneous form of dance, there is no classical form. Only the basic *zapateado* - expertly, she demonstrates the sole/heel/toe technique from a sitting position - had a set form and rhythm that was inherited. Flamenco dancers use their entire bodies to express emotion and this can only be taught to a certain degree.

"I've always danced in my own way, and people have always said it was different. Of course there were dancers I admired when I was starting out - Pilar López, Carmen Amaya, Antonio Ruiz - but I never wanted to dance like them. I wanted to be as good as them, to dance at the same theaters that they did, but dancing in my way, introducing new movements, expressing my own feelings. I've always wanted to keep the tradition alive but to help it develop. I'm not alone in this, and the genre has developed. The bodily movements used to be more brusque - and now they are far more aesthetically pleasing and expressive."

But isn't she concerned that the art is becoming less authentic by being popularized by, for example, films? "The real threats to authenticity are the people who become flamenco dancers overnight for the tourist trade. The 1960's, when the tourist boom hit Spain, were the worst time for that. But it's still going on."

"Obviously you can't be as spontaneous on film as you can on stage. There's always a technician moving lights about, or the director tells you that you can't do so and so with your arm because it doesn't fit in the frame. It has to be a different approach. On film, you can convey emotion through facial expression that only the first ten rows would see in a theater. On film, you communicate with hundreds of thousands. Even so, I always feel that the camera lens filters out something of the emotional charge. Dancing on stage is completely different: you feel quite alone in the

concentrated silence of the theater. Sometimes you dance brilliantly, other times not, but you never repeat it exactly. On film, the director chooses the parts of your performance he wants (and they're not always what you would choose), and fixes them forever."

Does dancing flamenco feel as erotic as it looks? "Yes. But the audience feels the eroticism of a couple dancing together more than the dancers do. It's more erotic to dance alone than with a male partner. When a woman dances alone, she directs her sensuality at the audience. Both sexes find watching flamenco dancing thrilling: the men look so viril in their tight trousers and they move their pelvis in such a sensual way. Men don't move their hips when they dance - it's the pelvis.

And there's the way their chests seem to inflate - they look like peacocks...like bullfighters..." Without stirring from her chair, Cristina Hoyos has begun to dance as she speaks: her upper body has taken on a marvellously poised elegance and her hand movements are pure ballet.

Despite her huge success, Hoyos believes that flamenco is still a male-dominated genre. "We tend to idolize from afar more than men do, don't we? It's easier for men all around. Even if they're married they can pay compliments to other women. We're more restricted in that way."

Cristina Hoyos has traveled the world so widely and so often that she feels at home anywhere, yet she still retains many traditional Andalusian attitudes. She

**O**n film, you can convey emotion through facial expression that only the first ten rows would see in a theater".

is very home and family oriented, though she has no children of her own. When not touring or filming, she leads a very "normal" life, shopping, cooking, doing the housework, reading and watching TV. She watches her diet, but no more than any health-conscious person would. She loves wandering about the old quarters of Seville, popping into a bar for a drink and a chat. Yes, people do recognize her and sometimes come up to her in the street. "No, it's never a nuisance. I'm not that sort of famous. When people tell me they're proud that I'm a Sevillana, or that I'm the best dancer there is, it makes me feel wonderful. And there are advantages: I'm always given good tables in restaurants!"

And the future? A flamen-

co dancer's career is about as long as a classical ballet dancer's. Hoyos is already a teacher and choreographer as well as a dancer, and loves both disciplines. Her company is made up of dancers from Seville, Cadiz and Jerez, chosen not only for their talent but also for their adaptability to her particular approach to dancing. "However much talent you have when you're young", she says, "there are certain things you can only learn from experience. I've learned a lot, and I'll pass it on."

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

## P E R S O N A L P L E A S U R E S

### Where would you choose to spend some days of relaxation?

I'd choose a village in Andalusia, near the sea. I'm not going to name any particular one: one of the whitewashed villages we call the *pueblos blancos*.

### Why?

I love watching the sea - it makes me think and day-dream.

### At what time of year would you go?

I wouldn't mind as long as it was warm - spring or early autumn, perhaps. I don't like the cold.

### How would you spend your stay?

In a house. A family house with a patio. Somewhere traditional that would remind me of my background and Andalusia's Arab heritage.

### How would you spend your time there?

Walking, thinking, day-dreaming, reading poetry. I enjoy Lorca, Alberti, Salinas, Neruda... Yes, I prefer poetry to prose.

### What would you eat and drink?

I'd eat at home or, if not, in a restaurant where they serve home-style food. Simple food. Definitely fish - I love fish - and potatoes or

rice in any style. The only time I drink alcohol is with food, and I'd choose a good local red or cold dry white. No, not *fino*. The restaurants I go to in Seville tend to be ones run by friends of mine. "El Tenorio" (right near the Cathedral) is one, but I could name you plenty more.

### What would you take home with you as a souvenir of your stay?

I'd buy a piece of local pottery - it's very typical of Andalusia.

### What do you miss most about Spain when you are abroad?

My family, of course. I'm often away for months but I

stay in constant contact with the family by phone. Although I'm very much a Sevillana, I also feel very much a citizen of the world. When I'm abroad, I steep myself in wherever I am, and I don't miss Spain. I eat what they eat there, and try and communicate as much as possible with the people. I started traveling very young, so I'm at ease abroad.

**El Tenorio.** Mateos Gago, 9. 41004 Sevilla.

Tel.:(5) 421 40 30. Closed Sunday and August 16-31.

From: 12 to 17 and from 19 to 24 h.

# JET

## The Compostela Connection

Text and Photo:  
Angel Cardin

**J**et, that beautiful semi-precious stone, has been known to mankind since pre-historic times. A very particular carbon compound, it is formed by the fossilization of tree trunks in the alluvial deposits along river deltas. At 70-million-years-old, it is much younger than other carbons. High quality jet is found only along the Cantabrian coast of Spain and Yorkshire, England. A light, compact mineral it is smooth to the touch and is just sufficiently hard to withstand the vigorous polishing that gives it its characteristic deep matte sheen.

Jet has been in consistent use since prehistoric times up to the present day, and not only for these physical characteristics: it has also been credited with magical properties. Both Aristotle and Pliny mention its protective and defensive qualities in addition to its uses in medicine and palmistry. By the Middle Ages, when pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostela in Galicia were at the height of their massive and far-reaching popularity, jet was being crafted into artefacts in which pagan and Christian symbolism intertwined: the scallop shell, once symbolic of Venus and fertility, had become the emblem worn by Santiago de Compostela pilgrims; the *biga*, a lucky charm in the form of a clenched fist which, though banned for many years like many other "superstitious" symbols, is still worn by many people today, albeit sometimes only decoratively; and the figure of Saint James himself in the guise of a traveler, a token in which pilgrims trusted for their protection along the route.

Jet artefacts became the classic memento-cum-amulet associated with the pilgrimage and took on a



huge economic importance for the city of Santiago. A powerful guild of jet craftsmen grew up there, commemorated today in the street that bears its name – Azabachería – and in the popular name of one of the entrances to the Cathedral. Since that time, the word *azabache* (jet) has been synonymous in Spain with Santiago de Compostela. Run-of-the-mill pilgrims returned from Compostela with simple jet mementos: rings, hearts, shells, medallions, rosaries and the like. But more important pilgrims bought figures of the saints, particularly St. James, depictions of the Descent from the Cross, crosses and large carved rosaries. This explains why, despite its being a

relatively delicate material, so many Medieval jet artefacts, particularly figures of St. James the Pilgrim, survive in the museums of Europe.

Jet craftsmen organized themselves into a brotherhood with regulations sanctioned by the archbishop and, by the early 15C., had their own chapel in the Cathedral. The pilgrimage's popularity lasted five centuries, during which time some fifty or so workshops sold many thousands of pieces. In the late 16C., the guild's output decreased dramatically in parallel with a sharp decline in interest in the pilgrimage. This was attributable to three causes: the Protestant Reformation, which stanchied the flow of pilgrims from half of Europe; the deadly epidemics which plagued the turn of the century; and the huge shift in attitude caused throughout Europe by the colonization of the Americas.

There are still jet craftsmen at work today, still using the same centuries-old methods of carving their material with fine-bored gouges, polishing it, and mounting the resulting piece in filigree or other worked silver, and sometimes gold or coral. Luckily, there are three outstanding master craftsmen working in jet who apply their singular skill to producing very classic miniaturist pieces. Jet is a difficult medium to work since it cracks and breaks easily, and the craftsmen use tools – traditional precision gouges – that they make themselves. There are some thirty or so other jet craftsmen who produce small pieces such as rings, bracelets, necklaces and brooches, and some fifty jewelers and other shops selling jet in the Old Quarter of Santiago de Compostela. They still do a brisk trade in jet.



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El Escorial: paint on copper; artist unknown; c 17th century; El Escorial

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