SPAIN

GOURMETOUR

FOOD, WINE & TRAVEL QUARTERLY MAGAZINE

GREAT VEGETABLE DISHES FROM SPAIN

RIBERA DEL DUERO. KEEPING THE PROMISES

LA CERDANYA. HIGHLAND RETREAT

SPAIN GOURMETOUR
No. 32 January-April 1991

Bodegas Bilbainas, S. A.

HARO · RIOJA ALTA · ESPAÑA

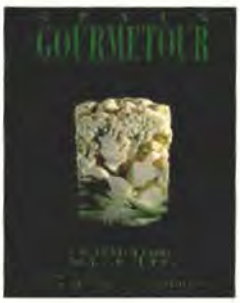
Gran Tradición

ESPAÑA
Dpt. Comercial - Fax: (94) 415 00 59

LONDON
Deinhard & Coltd. - Fax: 44-71-261 95 69

NEW YORK
Vintwood International Ltd. - Fax: 516-424-97 49

SPAIN
GOURMETOUR



Director
Manuel García-Aranda
Editor
Cathy Boirac
Publication Coordinator
Sonia Ortega
Editorial Secretary
Angela Castilla
Publisher
ICEX
Pº de la Castellana, 14
28046 Madrid
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
Circulation
ICEX, Madrid
Advertising
CEDISA, Almirante, 21
28004 Madrid
Tel.: (1) 308 06 44
Fax: (1) 310 51 41
D.L.
M. 45.307 - 1990
ISSN
0214-2937
Color Separations
Progreso Gráfico
Recoletos, 12
28001 Madrid
Printed in Spain
Raycar, S.A.
Matilde Hernández, 27
28019 Madrid

COVER
Photography: A. de Benito
Still Life: Menchu Artime

CONTENTS

January - April 1994

THE SHINING STAR OF STRAWBERRIES.

FOR MORE THAN A DECADE NOW, STRAWBERRIES FROM PALOS HAVE BEEN RECOGNISED AS A TRULY EXCEPTIONAL PRODUCT. EVERY SEASON, MILLIONS OF EUROPEAN TASTE BUDS ARE SEDUCED BY THIS FRUIT'S FRESHNESS AND EXQUISITE FLAVOUR. IT ALL GOES TO SHOW WHY THE BRAND - FRESÓN DE PALOS, HAS BECOME THE TRUE STAR OF TODAY'S EUROPEAN HOMES AND MARKETS.
NOW YOU CAN INVEST IN SOMETHING THAT'S SURE TO KEEP ITS VALUE - FRESÓN DE PALOS.

Fresón de Palos

WE TINGLE THE TASTE BUDS OF EUROPE.

COUNTERFOIL IN

Vegetarians and Carnivores

By coincidence this issue of Spain Gourmetour features one article about Spanish vegetables and another about meats and their respective cuisines. Vegetarian or carnivore? This division, so prevalent in some countries, has not yet taken hold in Spain. In any case, there is such a selection of meats and vegetables and such a variety of recipes in our country that neither vegetarians nor carnivores should get bored with their daily fare.

It is no exaggeration when Spain is called the "garden of Europe". In addition to a traditional cuisine in which vegetables are more than just a "mere side dish", Spain enjoys especially favorable climatic and geographic conditions that allow a wide variety of produce to be grown year round.

Regarding meats, following a long period in which pork could not be shipped abroad, it is now possible to export it to some countries as well as beef, veal and lamb.

And can't you just imagine a superb Castilian-style roast lamb with a bottle of Vega Sicilia or one of the other excellent wines of the Denomination of Origin Ribera del Duero? Our wine section in this issue is dedicated to the wines of this D.O. and to the legendary winery Vega-Sicilia, and with this issue our series "Best of the Bunch" is replaced by a new one focusing on the special relationship select Spanish restaurants have established with the wine world, looking at sommeliers, cellars and, of course, wine lists.

Have you ever visited a Spanish market? If so, surely you would have been drawn to those stands offering a great selection of olives with a variety of different seasonings. These treasures, which are understandable given Spain's status as the world's number one olive producer, are barely known outside our borders, partly because they are highly perishable. However, new research is solving some of the canning problems and several varieties are beginning to be exported.

Finally, in the tourism section, we present rural Cerdanya, in the Catalan Pyrenees of northeast Spain and a new series - Spanish Luxury - dedicated to hotels that are an authentic indulgence.

THE 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?

US$ 110
13 th Edition

Address your order to:
Instituto Español de Comercio Exterior
Dpto. de Edición y Comunicación
Pº. de la Castellana, 14 - 28046 MADRID - SPAIN
Tel.: 431 12 40

Order form
Company name.....Post code.....
Address.....Country.....
City.....
TITLE: "OFFICIAL CENSUS OF EXPORTERS OF SPAIN" (13 th edition)

PAYMENT:
☐ Please, mail a crossed check to the order of ICEX attached to this order form.

Signature

Secretaría de Estado de Comercio Exterior. MINISTERIO DE COMERCIO Y TURISMO

ICEX
Instituto Español de Comercio Exterior

STOP PRESS

Compiled by NICK LYNE

SIX SPANISH CITIES, HERITAGE OF MANKIND, WORK TOGETHER TO PROMOTE TOURISM AND PROTECT ARCHITECTURE

The historic cities of Avila, Segovia, Santiago de Compostela, Toledo, Cáceres and Salamanca have decided to pool their resources and work together to promote tourism. At the end of 1993, in the presence of the Infanta Doña Cristina, the mayors of the six cities signed a protocol aimed both at protecting these ancient centers, recognized by UNESCO as being of outstanding historical and architectural value. At the same time, the agreement foresees cooperation in the field of tourism, with special tours for visitors taking in the six cities. The Grupo de Ciudades Patrimonio, as the initiative is known in Spanish, was present at the Madrid International Tourism Fair (FITUR) in January, as well as in Milan and Berlin in February and March respectively.

Tel.: Avila (20) 21 13 00

FELIX LORRIO

NEW VOUCHER SYSTEM OFFERS EASY ACCESS TO RURAL ANDALUSIA

The Andalusian Rural Hotels Association (AHRA) has come up with a new voucher system which makes travel in rural Andalusia easier and more economical. The Association, the first of its kind in Spain, plans to take advantage of the growing interest in off the beaten track traveling. AHRA offers a wide range of accomodation, from individual cottages to converted country houses, and even staying in a working farm. Two voucher systems allow either an open travel as you please system, or a fixed date and pre-arranged hotels at a lower price. Details from travel agents or direct from AHRA.

Tel.: Almeria (50) 27 16 78 Fax : (50) 27 04 31

WINE TASTING TRIPS TO THE RIOJA

The Rioja Specific Denomination Regulatory Council has established a Rioja Wine Information Office aimed at helping visitors to get the most out of their trip to this legendary wine producing region. At the same time, they have also published a handy pocket sized guide with a complete list of wineries, special routes, maps and other essential information for the traveling would-be wine buff.

Tel.: Logroño (41) 24 11 99 Fax : (41) 25 35 02

EXPERIMENTAL OLIVE PLANTATION YEILDS RECORD HARVEST

Scientists from the Cordoba Center for Agrarian Investigation and Development have achieved a world record olive crop of 18,279 kg (40,000 pounds) and 3,699 kg (8,300 pounds) of olive oil per hectare (2.7 acres) in an experimental cultivation which they established in 1984. The center discovered that the ideal density of olive trees per hectare was 200, as opposed to the traditional figure of 80 trees per hectare. A further break with the past was the use of a single tree, rather than the normal use of husbanding a single trunk out of three saplings tied together, using a total of 240 saplings.

AFTER 20 YEARS, SPANISH SAUSAGES AVAILABLE IN US

After a more than 20-year-ban imposed by health authorities in the United States on Spanish pork products, consumers there can now enjoy the flavor of authentic, Spanish made charcuterie. The Spanish company JPG imports Danish pork into the northern Spanish region of Asturias, where the meat is then prepared in traditional and tasty fashion into *chorizo* sausages and morcilla blood puddings. Since setting up the business last year, JPG, which markets in the US under the name El Asturiano, has won contracts until 1998 to provide 200,000 kg (440,000 pounds) of *morcilla* and 300,000kg (660,000 pounds) of *chorizo*.

NEW WORK ADDED TO BRANDY DE JEREZ ART COLLECTION

The Jerez Brandy Regulatory Council, which monitors the quality of Specific Denomination brandies, has a new addition to its art collection, launched two years ago, of paintings capturing the essence of this king of spirits (See Spain Gourmetour no. 29). *Brandy Sour*, by Chilean artist Keka Raffo, evokes the sense of maturity so essential to a fine brandy, while capturing the sharp, yet sensual and essentially Spanish qualities of lemon, the element which makes this wonderful cocktail so unique. For those interested in trying their hand at a brandy sour, here is the recipe:

1 part lemon juice
3 parts Jerez brandy
1 teaspoon of sugar
plenty of ice
blend thouroughly in a cocktail shaker and serve with a cherry

LEARN WHILE YOU TRAVEL; LUXURY HOLIDAYS WITH A DIFFERENCE

Janet Mendel, expert on Spanish cuisine and author of several books on the subject, has organized for English-speakers a series of cooking holidays in southern Spain, which offers hands-on experience in learning the essentials of Spanish regional cooking, set in a beautiful country house in the interior of Andalusia. In addition to the cookery courses, other holidays led by experts include photography, bird watching, creative writing, painting, herbal medicine and Mediterranean gardening.

Tel.: Fuengirola (5) 246 09 50
Fax : (5) 246 10 22

A TASTE OF SPAIN IN THE BIG APPLE

Spain's Institute of Foreign Trade (ICEX) has organized a special series of events this September to widen interest and awareness in Spanish cooking at New York's Culinary Institute of America, the nation's largest teaching center for the restaurant trade. Among the activities are a three day demonstration by top Spanish chef Luis Irizar; a course in Spanish cooking; and a competition for recipes using Spanish products.

Tel.: New York (212) 661 49 59
Fax: (212) 972 24 94

NEW PRODUCTS

GARLIC IS NOW "AN UNREPEATABLE FLAVOR"

Innovation has become the battlecry of those who aim to conquer the marketplace. In the food sector, the experts who search for new markets and new products to make life easier for consumers never cease to amaze us. Nevertheless, inventing new natural flavors is a difficult task. Difficult but not impossible.

Using the slogan "An Unrepeatable Flavor" and the Serpis brand, the company Cándido Miró SA has jhust launched a new type of garlic, or rather cloves of garlic bottled in oil that do not sting and do not repeat.

Cándido Miró SA, a commpany that specializes in appetizers such as olives, began searching for alternative products two years ago as part of a diversification strategy aimed at increasing the firm's national presence and helping them to expand within the EC and other countries. They were looking for something new and unique, with a wide consumer appeal and Spanish ingredients. They chose garlic.

Apart from meeting the firm's basic criteria, garlic was selected because it combines nutritional and medicinal qualities not found in other similar products. When the selection process was over, work focussed on converting it into an attractive product for the consumer. There was one basic goal: a natural canning process that retained all of garlic's nutritional and medicinal values.

Once the cloves are cleaned and sorted they get a "personal treatment " developed over the past few years. The finished garlic is bottled in glass jars while at the same time maintaining its appearance and nutritive qualities.

Serpis Garlic Cloves in Oil were unveiled to the public during the last edition of the Anuga International trade fair in Cologne, Germany, and they were also nominated for the 1993 Valencia Innovation Award.

FILLABOA PRESENTS ORUJO SPIRIT

Fillaboa, one of the best Albariño wines from Galicia, in northwest Spain, has just unveiled its very own orujo spirit made from Albariño grape deposits. Fillaboa have spared no effort in producing what must be one of the smoothest orujos on the market and comes in a distinctive frosted green bottle.

Club de Gourmets, (Nº. 212, December 1993)

TORRES LAUNCHES GRAN VIÑA SOL 1992

Torres, one of Spain's leading wineries, has just launched its Gran Viña Sol 1992, a blend of 85% Chardonnay and 15% Parellada grapes. At 12% specific gravity, and with a fine pale yellow complexion with greenish tones, the wine boasts a deep, aromatic bouquet, and served at between 8-10° C (46-50ºF) is the perfect accompaniment to oysters, caviar and smoked salmon.

Alforja (Nº 182 Dec 93 Jan 94)

CIGRAVI ANNOUNCES NEW WINE

The Cigravi wine company, based in Barcelona, has announced a new white wine, made entirely from muscat grapes. The *Giro Ribot* muscat grapes have been cultivated in the Penedes region, and the wine offers a fruity but dry bouquet, with a an elegant and bright tone.

Alforja (Nº 182, Dec. 93 Jan 94)

QUALITY NATURAL PRODUCTS RANGE

The Consorcio Gastrónomico Alimentario, a specialist gourmet company, has a new range of bottled products made of the finest ingredients. The new series includes extra virgen olive oil, and extra virgen with rosemary; sherry vinegar and white wine vinegar with saffron; sweet roasted red peppers, apricots and currants in brandy; plums and pine nuts in orange liquor; figs in whiskey; dates and hazel nuts in rum; and traditionally-made marmalade and strawberry, peach and plum jam.

SPANISH AGRICULTURE MINISTRY PRESS AWARDS

Spain's Agriculture Ministry announced its annual press awards in February. The awards are given in recognition of the "promotion of Spanish Foodstuffs through the media". Among this year's winners, were Franciso Grande Covián, internationally known dietician.

Francisco Grande Covián is best known for his work on the so called Meditarrenean diet, with its emphasis on olive oil, and other products typical of southern Spain.

An honorable mention was also given to María José Sevilla, a writer who has worked closely with the ICEX over the years. The magazine Spain Gourmetour published by ICEX won the Agriculture Ministry's press award in 1990.

María José Sevilla has been promoting Spanish Foods for 20 years, working with the ICEX, and its predecessor INFE, in London, and will be familiar to British television viewers for his occasional programs, among them the award-winning BBC production "Spain on a plate".

MORE THAN 4,000 COMPANIES ATTEND BARCELONA'S ALIMENTARIA '94

More than 4,000 companies from around the world attended the week-long food and drinks trade fair Alimentaria '94, held in Barcelona between March 1 and March 6. Alimentaria is one of Europe's top three such trade fairs, and this year the organizers went all out to make the affair a hit. Aside from the usual eight halls, the Barcelona salon hosted Caterama, aimed at the catering trade. Among the other highlights was a strong showing for Portuguese, German, French and Italian products.

NAVARRA D.O. TOUGHENS QUALITY CONTROL AMID EXPECTATIONS OF EXCELLENT VINTAGE

Wines from the northeastern Navarre region hoping for Denomination of Origin status this year will find standards higher than in previous years. Although a very good or even excellent vintage is expected, wine tasters at the Qualification Committee will, from now on, have the right to reject a wine if only two of their members are not satisfied with its quality, whereas before, three negative votes were required. At the same time, a wine can be disqualified simply for its poor quality, even though it presents no faults in terms of the usual criteria of color, cleanliness, flavor or type.
Financial Food: no 90, January 1994.

RIOJA EXPORTS UP BY 20 PERCENT IN 1993

Exports of Rioja Denomination of Origin wine for the first ten months of 1993 rose by 19.48% on the previous year. Overall sales rose by 4%, while the national share of the market dropped slightly by 0.38%. In total, some 119 million liters were sold in 1993, up from 114 million liters on 1992. Younger wines made up 65% of sales in Spain, and 45% abroad. The biggest growth area was in reserves, up 26%, while sales of grand reserves tended to decline.

SPANISH RESTAURATEUR HONORED BY FRENCH CULTURE MINISTRY

José María Arzak, who owns and runs Arzak, one of Spain's top restaurants, was awarded a medal by the French culture ministry's prestigious Order of the Arts and Letters for his contribution to the culinary arts.
Mr. Arzak was honored with the award by the French ambassador in Spain at a ceremony in February in the town hall in the Basque city of San Sebastian. Mr. Arzak is the third generation of his family to run the San Sebastian located restaurant specializing in Basque cuisine and founded in 1898, and is one of only two establishments in Spain to merit three Michelin stars.

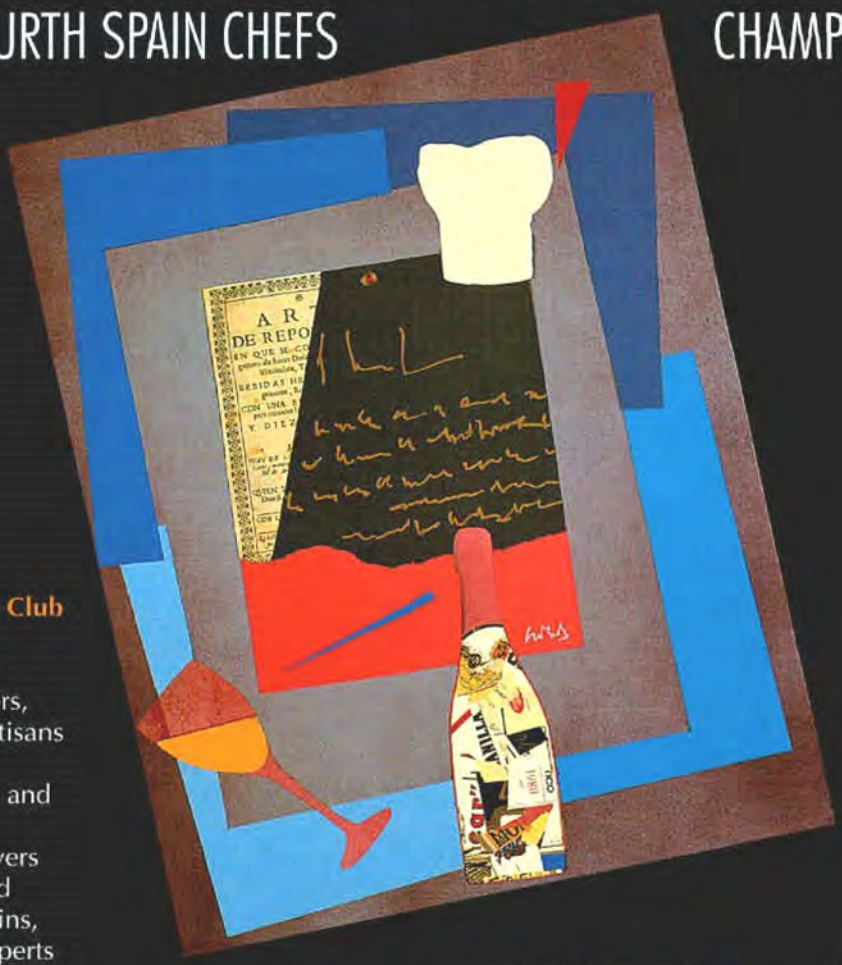
VIII INTERNATIONAL GOURMET CLUB SHOW

Madrid was recently host for the eighth year running of one of the major events of the trade fair calendar: the International Gourmet Club Show. This year's event, held between April 15 and 18, generated even more interest than last year, with some 400 stands, up from an attendance of 320 participants in 1993. Among the attractions was the IV Spanish Chefs' Championship, as well as the area showcasing new products, which as usual attracted considerable attention. Foreign participation was up, continuing the trend of recent years, with a noteworthy presence from France, the United Kingdom, Italy, Portugal and Colombia.

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 m² 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
Codiments, 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.

Firm .....

Address. Town and country ..... Telephone .....

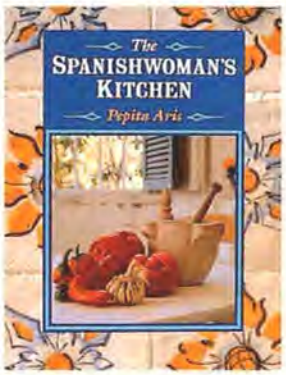
Postal code .....

Fax .....

Person to be contacted and post held in the firm .....

LASTING IMPRESSIONS

SONIA ORTEGA



The Spanish Woman's Kitchen

Text: Pepita Aris - Photos: David George
Cassell, 1994
Villiers House, 41/47 Strand WC2N 5JE London - Tel. (71) 839 49 00 - Fax: (71) 939 18 04

"Spain, its women and cooking are the three themes I have explored in this book," says Pepita Aris in introducing her unique and entertaining volume - half cookery and half customs. Its structure is original: Spain is divided into 12 regions and after a general introduction to the history and cuisine of each zone, the author has selected slices of life in Spain, customs, and interviews with unusual personalities, all sprinkled with recipes that people - mostly women - have given her throughout her travels in Spain.
A trip to the markets of Madrid, the Asturian cider taverns, a stand selling snails in Valencia or the saffron harvest in La Mancha are only a few examples of Spanish culinary life that have amazed Pepita Aris, despite the fact that she has owned a house in one of the prettiest villages of Andalusia for the last 20 years.
A total of 125 recipes, some of them traditional and others updated, all collected first-hand and suitably illustrated with David George's well-executed photographs. Together they form a true reflection of the enormous variety that Spain manifests through its cuisine.
Only problem: the Canary Islands, it seems they do not exist!

La Cocina del Quijote. Recetario Gastronómico de Castilla-La Mancha

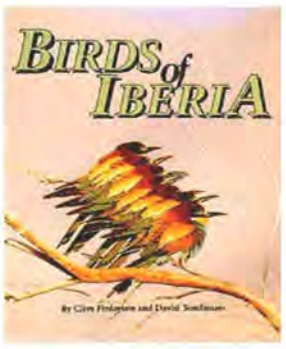
Lorenzo Diaz
Servicio de Publicaciones de la Junta de Comunidades de Castilla-La Mancha, 1993
Trinidad, 8-45072 Toledo - Tel. (25) 26 74 00 - Fax: (25) 26 74 89

The land of Don Quixote, La Mancha, is a large region in south-central Spain, with a very flat landscape and a continental climate of scorching summers and fierce winters. The cuisine of the entire zone is simple and robust, but reliable and well-seasoned. It is a cuisine that has tried to make the most of what the often unyielding land provides.
Don Quixote has been used as a literary framework to sing the praises and underscore the goodness of this cooking, created by shepherds, mule drivers, farmers, etc. It is a cuisine that over more than five centuries has exerted a powerful influence on the food of Madrid, with its roast meats, sauces, stews, sweets and Valdepeña wines.
Lorenzo Diaz is a sociologist, journalist, gourmet and winner of the National Gastronomy Award for his book Madrid: *Bodegones, Mesones, Fondas y Restaurantes*. He is a passionate man of La Mancha who has compiled this interesting and ample collection of recipes from all the dishes he enjoyed in this land throughout his childhood and youth. Recipes from family, friends, and restaurants, all with an authentic flavor, help us recreate the world of Don Quixote. Recipes and history are interwoven throughout these pages, beautifully illustrated with historic photographs.

Guía de Vinos Gourmets 1994 (IX edition)

Club de Gourmet, S.A., 1993
Cuesta de San Vicente, 4 - 28008 Madrid - Tel. (1) 542 76 60 - Fax: (3) 559 45 75

The first edition of the *Guía de Vinos Gourmets* appeared in 1983. In just this decade, this publication has earned a reputation as the most practical and indispensable guide for those who want to be up-to-date on Spanish wine. Wine lovers, sales professionals, and those in the restaurant industry have found the guide to be an accurate reflection of the evolution - almost a revolution in some cases - that Spanish wines have undergone in the past few years.
In this new edition, the *Guía de Vinos Gourmets* continues with its habitual format: the various chapters of the first part are dedicated to the wine world - winemaking procedures, Spanish grape varieties, dictionary, bibliography, consumption, etc.; while the second part is comprised of 18 chapters: one for each of Spain's wine regions and another chapter specifically dedicated to sparkling wines.
Each of these chapters contains general information on the wine world of each region and a mini-guide to the best specialist shops and wine-related *fiestas*. It also includes descriptions and maps of each denomination of origin that indicate the sub-regions in each, as well as listing the wineries and their wines.
Statistically, this "bible" of Spanish wine includes: the characteristics and prices of 2,310 wines; 581 wineries and their output; descriptions and ratings of 843 wines; 237 specialist shops; and 111 denominations of origin and wine sub-regions.



Birds of Iberia

Clive Finlayson and David Tomlinson
Mirador Publications S.L., 1993
Pueblo Lucía - 29640 Fuengirola (Malaga) - Tel. (52) 46 09 50 - Fax: (52) 46 10 22

The Iberian peninsula is a privileged place to practice birdwatching: on one hand its varied geography provides a habitat for many species that are not found in other parts of Europe; and on the other hand it is the corridor for most migratory birds on their annual trips between Europe and Africa.
Birdwatching, a typically English pastime, is hardly practiced at all in Spain. That's why, despite the variety of birds in the region, there are few books published on the subject. Clive Finlayson, born in Gibraltar, was captivated in his childhood by the spectacle of migrating raptors and since then he has traveled the Iberian peninsula birdwatching, especially in southern Spain. Since graduating with a doctorate in ornithology from Oxford University, he has written several books on the subject. David Tomlinson, another passionate birdwatcher, is a freelance writer, photographer, and organizer of birdwatching tours.
They describe their book as "simply a guide which aims to inform the reader about the status and distribution of birds in Iberia, with a few clues as to where and when to look for certain species". So it is not a field guide.
The book examines 150 bird species of special interest and the main areas where they can be found. The descriptions give an indication of the status of each species within Iberia and of their more global context. Other bird species which have been recorded in Iberia are also listed and their status summarized.
More than 150 color photographs and complete indices enrich the book.

Text: John Radford
Photos: ICEX

Caballeros del vino A celebration of excellence

Ten years on, it's still one of the best-attended dinners in London. The organization, by Wines From Spain (ICEX-UK, the Spanish Institute for Foreign Trade), the support given by the UK wine trade and press, and the manic competition for tickets shows that the Annual Investiture Dinner of the Gran Orden de Caballeros del Vino is perceived by all concerned as the premier annual celebration of excellence in Spanish wines throughout northern Europe.

Each year, the Spanish wine trade offers more and better and grander wines for selection by the Caballeros - the world's only national wine order; each year head chef Eric de Blonde and the kitchen brigade at the Four Seasons Hotel (formely the Inn on the Park) in London outdo their previous best in creating a menu to match those wines; and each year the event marks a reaffirmation of faith in the perpetual love affair between the UK wine trade and the wines of Spain.

The Gran Orden de Caballeros del Vino was founded in 1984 "to thank and honor those people in the British wine trade who had dedicated themselves to promoting quality in Spanish wines above and beyond the call of duty". It is the only national wine order in the world and there were originally seven members, drawn from UK wine-importing, the restaurant business, wine-writing and publicity, and the founders of what was then Vinos de España in the UK (subsequently Wines From Spain). In 1989 the order's membership was extended to include people in Spain who had shown the same commitment to quality wines - but on an international basis.

The first dinner was held in 1985 at Vintners' Hall - home of one of London's oldest livery companies - and, after outgrowing the modestly-sized medieval apartments there, the Gran Orden moved its annual dinner to the then Inn on the Park, and has returned there every year since. With each passing year the menu has become more inspired and inventive as more and more of Spain's fine wines become available in the UK.

The tenth anniversary dinner was the most spectacular yet, with twenty-one of the twenty-four surviving Caballeros able to attend and, as always, anyone who is anybody in Spanish wine was there.

Greeted by Javier Burgos, Commercial Counselor at ICEX-UK and Jeremy Watson, Marketing Director of Wines from Spain, resplendent in their scarlet-and-gold robes as ex-oficio members of the Gran Orden, guests went in to enjoy the magnificient Aria Brut Vintage Cava 1988 - one of the best of the "new generation" Cavas - from Segura Viudas. The room reverberated with the conversation of old friends reunited in a common cause, and excellent tapas circulated in generous measure.

Into the dinning room, and the company stood for the entrance of the Gran Orden and its honored guests, including the Spanish Ambassador to the Court of St James, H.E. Don Alberto Aza and the guest speaker, Lord Archer of Weston-super-Mare. The dinner's raison d'être is, of course, the introduction of newly-elected members to the Gran Orden, and Jeremy Watson read out the citation for this year's new Caballero, Peter Dominic Dauthieu, whose name is eponymous with the former retail organization (now part of the Thresher Group); who founded Viniberia and who is now chairman of the Ehrmanns group, responsible for shipping more than a million cases a year of Spanish wines to the UK.

The induction and presentations completed, Christopher Fielden (elected Caballero 1993) said grace, and the gastronomic adventure began, acompanied by the sparkling Agua de Mondariz, from Galicia, which was to be with us all throughout the meal.

A perfect match

Once again, the chef and his team had taken a fresh and innovative approach to the menu, aided and abetted by María-José Sevilla from Food from Spain. It would have been easy to 'cherry-pick' the best of Spanish cooking from Andalusia to the Basque country, and Galicia to Catalonia, but the chef's brief was to demonstrate that great Spanish wines are the perfect match for dishes from anywhere in the world. The Caballeros chose the wines, and then the chef chose the menu...

The first wine selected by the Gran Orden was the Dry Muscat 1992 from Vicente Gandía in Valencia - a love-

ly wine, almost peachy fruit with all the herbal musk of the grape, and yet completly dry on the finish. The slightly smoky perfume and the Levantine 'weight' of the wine were the perfect foil for a dish called *Plato de Salmón Este Oeste* served elegantly garnished and with wooden Japanese chopsticks. The 'eastern' element was a delicious salmon sushi, counterpointed by a beautifully-presented confection of gravadlax, soused in a piquant sauce and served with strands of orange zest and raw carrot.

The next wine was the sublime Marqués de Murrieta 1988 Reserva white Rioja, which has an almost religious following amongst its aficionados (amongst whom your correspondent counts himself, so don't look for criticism here!). Realizing that he was dealing with a heavyweight, the chef came out fighting with *Pimientos con gambas en Jugo de Pescado y Pimentón* - a brace of peppers stuffed with prawns and served with a seafood sauce spiked with a delicate mustard. It's a testament to his skill that both wine and food emerged the victor from this encounter.

The crowning glory of this particular dinner was the Gran Reserva Rioja, and on this occasion it was the Conde de Valdemar from 1982 which, if not the very finest of the vintages of that period is nevertheless drinking at the peak of its soft and silky maturity - especially with *Costilla de Cordero Asado y Soufflé* a la Albahaca. This was a very English-looking rack of lamb, cooked deliciously tender and perfectly pink and served with a basil soufflé of quite powerfully-perfumed proportions. Raimat's Cabernet-Sauvignon Costers del Segre from the excellent 1989 vintage was served next, with a trio of Spanish cheeses: Mahon from Menorca, Garrotxa from Catalunya and Idiazabal from the País Vasco, made respectively from cow's, goat's, and ewe's milk. There are those who argue about the Cabernet-Sauvignon as it is grown in northern Spain, but the combination of blackcurrant fruit and the delicate oakiness, from a splendid vintage year and with the right amount of bottle-age was a consummation devoutly to be wished to match the rustic flavor of the Spanish country cheeses.

Dessert Time

Apart from the magnificent liqueur wines of Andalusia (Montilla, Málaga and the ancient Olorosos of Jerez) Spain's reputation for good pudding wines tends to lie in the shadow cast by its red wines. However, light-wines for the dessert deserve a wider profile on the showing of the Carraixet Moscatel de Valencia from Bodegas y Bebidas. This has a power and depth of sweetness combined with all the floral overtones of the grape, and on this occasion was partnered with a tartlet of rice with orange salad served with a chocolate-orange sorbet - putting fruit up against fruit with delightful results.

The final flourish was provided by a choice almost too difficult to achieve - indeed, your humble correspondent solved the situation quite neatly by asking for both (purely in the interest of journalistic research, of course). The first choice was Gran Barquero Pedro Ximenez from Montilla, as rich, dark and raising as an English Christmas pudding with a lingering, powerful and yet ultimately gentle sweetness mellowing out to infinity on the palate. This was admirably followed by Osborne Magno Solera Reserva Brandy de Jerez - as good a way as has been devised by hand of man to finish off a classic meal.

And then there were toasts and speeches, generous tributes from John Hawes (one of the UK's longest-established importers of Spanish wine - elected Caballero 1986), witty ripostes from Lord Archer, and a raffle whose proceeds are, by Lord Archer's request, to go to the International Red Cross to help in its work with the Kurds in Iraq, as well as making a contribution to the UK Wine-Trade Benevolent Fund.

After the formalities, the bar opened for business and good friends and colleagues mingled together in a common interest, shared enthusiasms and a joint hope that there would still be taxis to take them home in the small hours of the morning.

Once again the Gran Orden, the Spanish wine-trade and the Four Seasons had provided that unique blend of excellence and enthusiasm that always characterizes the annual dinner. And now there are only ten months to go before the quest for an invitation begins again...

***John Radford** is an English wine, food and travel journalist. He writes on a regular basis for several newspapers and magazines including Wine and Decanter, the UK's foremost wine publications.*

MAIN EXPORTERS

Main D.O.
Ribera del Duero
Wine Exporters

BODEGAS ALEJANDRO FERNANDEZ
Crta. Peñafiel - 47315 Pesquera de Duero (Valladolid)
Tel.: (83) 87 00 37 - Fax: (83) 87 00 88

BODEGAS FELIX CALLEJO, S.A.
Crta. Burgos-Roa, s/n - 09441 Sotillo de la Ribera (Burgos)
Tel.: (47) 53 23 04 - Fax: (47) 53 23 12

BODEGAS HERMANOS PEREZ PASCUAS
Crta. Roa, s/n - 09314 Pedrosa de Duero (Burgos)
Tel.: (47) 53 01 00 - Fax.: (47) 53 00 02

BODEGAS ISMAEL ARROYO, S.L.
Los Lagares, 71 - 09441 Sotillo de la Ribera (Burgos)
Tel.: (47) 53 23 09 - Fax: (47) 53 23 09

BODEGAS MONTEVANNOS, S.A.
Santiago, s/n - 09450 Baños de Valdearados (Burgos)
Tel.: (47) 53 42 77 - Fax: (47) 53 40 16

BODEGAS PASCUAL, S.A.
Crta. Santa Cruz de la Salceda - 09471 Fuentelcesped (Burgos)
Tel.: (47) 50 81 22 - Fax: (47) 50 20 59

BODEGAS PEÑALBA LOPEZ
Plaza Primo de Ribera, 4-5º - 09400 Aranda de Duero (Burgos)
Tel.: (47) 50 13 81 - Fax: (47) 50 80 44

BODEGAS RIBERALTA, S.A.
Nacional I , s/n - 09471 Gumiel de Izán (Burgos)
Tel.: (47) 54 41 01 - Fax: (47) 52 57 22

BODEGAS VALDUERO, S.A.
Crta de Aranda, s/n - 09440 Gumiel de Mercado (Burgos)
Tel.: (47) 54 54 59 - Fax: (47) 54 56 09

GRANDES BODEGAS, S.A.
Crta. La Cueva - 09300 Roa de Duero (Burgos)
Tel.: (47) 54 08 90 - Fax: (47) 54 07 90

HIJOS DE ANTONIO BARCELO, S.A.
Crta. Valladolid-Soria, s/n - 47350 Quintanilla de Onésimo (Valladolid)
Tel.: (83) 52 10 11 - Fax: (83) 52 05 13

PROTOS, S.A.
General Sanjurjo, 63 - 47300 Peñafiel (Valladolid)
Tel.: (83) 88 00 16 - Fax: (83) 88 12 72

SEÑORIO DE NAVA
Crta. Valladolid-Soria, s/n - 09318 Nava de Roa (Burgos)
Tel.: (47) 55 00 03 - Fax: (87) 20 98 00

VEGA SICILIA, S.A.
47359 Valbuena de Duero (Valladolid)
Tel.: (83) 68 01 47 - Fax: (83) 68 02 63

VIÑA BUENA, S.A.
Avda. Portugal, s/n - 09400 Aranda de Duero (Burgos)
Tel.: (47) 50 66 94 - Fax: (47) 50 66 94

Main Meat Exporters

CARNES DE REINOSA, S.A.
Matadero Municipal - Concha Espina, s/n - 39200 Reinosa (Cantabria)
Tel.: (42) 75 38 02 - Fax: (42) 75 47 61

CARNICAS J. COLOMER, S.A.
Avda. Antonio Gaudí, s/n - 17800 Olot (Gerona) - Tel.: (72) 26 40 53 - Fax: (72) 26 83 10

CARNICAS TONI JOSEP, S.A.
Sant Llorenç Desmunts, 28-32 - Pol. Industrial Vic - 08500 Vic (Barcelona)
Tel.: (3) 889 17 06 - Fax: (3) 886 19 55

CARNICAS URGELL, S.A.
Avda. Antonio Gaudí, 6 - 17800 Olot (Gerona) - Tel.: (72) 26 53 00 - Fax: (72) 26 58 04

CONSERVERA CAMPOFRIO, S.A.
Apdo. Correos 84 - 09080 Burgos - Tel.: (47) 28 31 00 - Fax: (47) 28 31 36

CORTADORES DE CARNE, S.A.
Pol. Industrial de Guarnizo, 79 - 39610 El Astillero (Cantabria)
Tel.: (42) 54 28 46 - Fax: (42) 54 10 18

DCA 85, S.A.
Orense, 11 - 28020 Madrid - Tel.: (1) 556 05 65 - Fax: (1) 555 21 77

FRIBIERZO, S.A.
Barrio Martina, s/n - 24400 Ponferrada (León) - Tel.: (87) 42 83 90 - Fax: (87) 40 23 08

FRIGSA, S.A.
Lamablanca-Coeses - 27181 Lugo - Tel.: (82) 22 95 99 - Fax: (82) 22 96 91

GESTION DE PRODUCCIONES CARNICAS, S.A. LABORAL
Pol. Industrial de Rabade, s/n - 27370 Rabade (Lugo)
Tel.: (82) 39 09 66/10 08 - Fax: (82) 39 10 03

GONZALEZ ORTEGA, MARIANO
Camino Viejo Simancas, km. 3 - 47008 Valladolid - Tel.: (83) 35 64 05 - Fax: (83) 37 06 97

INDUSTRIAS FRIGORIFICAS DEL LOURO, S.A.
Avda. Buenos Aires, s/n - 36400 Porriño (Pontevedra)
Tel.: (86) 33 01 00 - Fax: (86) 33 59 41

JOSE FRIGULS CLARIANA, S.A.
Longitudinal, 7 - 08040 Barcelona - Tel.: (3) 335 92 12 - Fax: (3) 263 06 47

MATADERO FRIGORIFICO DE MONTELLOS, S.A.
Ctra. Betanzos Santiago, km. 3,3 - 15319 Montellos (La Coruña)
Tel.: (81) 77 28 00/54 - Fax: (31) 77 08 74

MATADERO FRIGORIFICO RUBIO, S.A.
Ctra. General de Xinzo de Limia - 32630 Xinzo de Limia (Orense)
Tel.: (88) 46 23 96/7 - Fax: (88) 46 00 18

MAIN EXPORTERS

Main Pickled Olives Exporters

ACEITUNAS GUADALQUIVIR, S.A. (AGSA)
Camino de la Alcoba, s/n - 41530 Morón de la Frontera (Sevilla)
Tel.: (5) 485 12 02 - Fax: (5) 485 25 13

ACEITUNAS SEGOBRIGA, S.L. (ASEGO)
Camino Albase, s/n - Apdo. 13 - 12400 Segorbe (Castellón)
Tel.: (64) 11 21 21 - Fax: (64) 11 39 55

CANDIDO MIRO, S.A.
Oliver, 56 - 03800 Alcoy (Alicante) - Tel.: (6) 552 35 11 - Fax: (6) 552 18 08

CETRO ACEITUNAS, S.A.
Camino de Oromana, s/n - 41500 Alcalá de Guadaira (Sevilla)
Tel.: (5) 568 18 88 - Fax: (5) 568 33 33

COMERCIAL EGABRENSE AGRICOLA, S.L.
Ctra. Cabra-Monturque, km 16 - Apdo. 21
14940 Cabra (Córdoba) - Tel.: (57) 52 07 67 - Fax: (57) 52 00 02

INTERNACIONAL ENVASADORA, S.A. (IESA)
Avda del Pilar, s/n - 41530 Morón de la Frontera (Sevilla)
Tel.: (5) 485 11 50 - Fax: (5) 585 01 45

JUAN PEREZ MARIN, S.A. (JUPEMA)
Orilla de la Vía - Barrio de los Dolores - 30011 Murcia
Tel.: (68) 26 02 11/22 - Fax: (68) 26 10 55

LA ESPAÑOLA ALIMENTARIA ALCOYANA S.A.
Arzobispo Domenech, 7
03800 Alcoy (Alicante) - Tel.: (6) 533 08 01/02/03 - Fax: (6) 533 08 73

LLORENXPORT, S.A.
Ctra. Arahal-Morón, km. 0,4 - 41600 Sevilla - Tel.: (5) 484 05 88/03 75 - Fax: (5) 484 03 75

SUROLIVA, S.A.
García de Vinuesa, 22 - Apdo. 4006 - 41001 Sevilla
Tel.: (5) 422 31 15 - Fax: (5) 456 24 59

TEPESA
Ctra. Madrid-Cádiz, km. 547 - 41013 Sevilla - Tel.: (5) 461 20 50 - Fax: (5) 461 28 50

Main Vegetables Exporters

AGROPONIENTE, S.A.
Ctra. Nacional 340, km. 87 - 04700 El Ejido (Almería)
Tel.: (50) 48 41 11 - Fax: (50) 48 43 06

ANECOOP, SDAD. COOP.
Monforte, 1 - 46010 Valencia - Tel.: (6) 362 18 65 - Fax: (6) 393 22 19

BONNY, S.A.
Urbanización La Font - 03550 San Juan de Alicante
Tel.: (6) 565 37 00 - Fax: (6) 565 57 69

CEHORPA, S.A.
Ctra. Nacional, 340, km. 415 - 04700 El Ejido (Almería)
Tel.: (50) 58 14 46 - Fax: (50) 58 00 10

COOPERATIVA HORTOFRUTICOLA EJIDOMAR
Avda. Nicolas Salmerón, 68 - 04700 El Ejido (Almería)
Tel.: (50) 48 14 50 - Fax: (50) 48 40 78

FRANCISCO OLIVA, S.L.
Partida Altabix, 4 - Pol. II 116 - 03291 Altabix (Alicante)
Tel.: (6) 545 32 76 - Fax: (6) 545 69 59

FRUCA, S.A.
Ctra. de San Javier, 21 - 30570 Beniajan (Murcia)
Tel.: (68) 82 01 62 - Fax: (68) 82 41 04

HERNANDEZ ZAMORA, S.A.
Camino de los Rincones, s/n - 30870 Mazarrón (Murcia)
Tel.: (68) 59 00 01/18 - Fax: (68) 59 07 69

JULIANO BONNY GOMEZ, S.A.
Juan Rejón, 89 - 35008 Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (Las Palmas)
Tel.: (28) 46 27 70/33 51 - Fax: (28) 46 70 39

PASCUAL HERMANOS, S.A.
Cronista Carreres, 11 - 46003 Valencia - Tel.: (6) 351 38 62 - Fax: (6) 351 80 75

S.A.T. ABEMAR
Diputación de Cazalla, s/n - 30800 Lorca (Murcia) - Tel.: (68) 48 21 21 - Fax: (68) 48 23 48

S.A.T. AGRO MURGI
Avda. Almerimar Santo Domingo - 04700 El Ejido (Almería)
Tel.: (50) 48 46 64 - Fax: (50) 48 43 08

S.A.T. HORTICHUELAS
Barrio Ojeda, s/n - 04740 Parador de las Hortichuelas (Almería)
Tel.: (50) 34 00 54 - Fax: (50) 34 23 58

S.A.T. SAN CAYETANO
Ctra. El Mirador, 15 - 30592 San Cayetano Avileses (Murcia)
Tel.: (68) 58 01 11 - Fax: (68) 58 02 37

SURINVER, SDAD. COOP. LDA.
Ctra. de Orihuela, s/n - 03190 Pilar de la Horadada (Alicante)
Tel.: (6) 676 60 68 - Fax: (6) 676 62 43

INFORMATION

If you would like to know more about any subject dealt with in this magazine - except for tourist information - please write to the SPANISH COMMERCIAL OFFICE marking the envelope REF. SPAIN GOURMETOUR.

AUSTRALIA, Edgecliff Centre, suite 408 - 203 New South Head Road - EDGECLIFF NSW 2027
Tel.: (2) 362 42 12 - Telefax: (2) 362 40 57 - Telex: (071) 122194 OFCOME

CANADA, 55, Bloor St. West, suite 1204 - TORONTO Ont., M4W 1A5 - Tel.: (416) 967 04 88
Telefax: (416) 968 95 47 - Telex: (021) 0623525 - OFCOMES TOR.

CHINA, 14, Liangmahe NanLu - Tayuan Office Building, 2-2-2 - Post Code 100600 BEIJING
Tel.: (1) 532 20 72/31 03 - Telefax: (1) 532 11 28 - Telex: (085) 22413 OFCOM CN

DENMARK, Vesterbrogade 10, 3º. - 1620 COPENHAGEN V - Tel.: 31 31 22 10/11 42
Telefax: 31 21 33 80 - Telex: (055) 27322 MINCO DK

HONG KONG, 2004 Lippo Tower, Bond Centre - 89 Queensway Road, Central HONG KONG
Tel.: (852) 521 74 33/6 - Telefax: (852) 845 34 48 - Telex: (0802) 67573 OFCOM HX

IRELAND, 35, Molesworth Street - DUBLIN 2 - Tel.: (1) 661 63 13 - Telefax: (1) 661 01 11
Telex: (0500) 91854 OFCO EI

ITALY, Via Fatebenefratelli, 5 - 20121 MILAN
Tel.: (2) 657 29 15/6/7 - Telefax: (2) 657 51 37 - Telex: (043) 313019 OFCOMI-I

JAPAN, Ark Mori Bldg. 17th fl. West - P.O. Box 544 - 12-32 Akasaka, 1-Chome Minato-Ku
TOKYO 107 - Tel.: (3) 35 82 46 67/8/9 - Telefax: (3) 35 87 08 07 - Telex: (072) 27551
OFCOMES J

MALAYSIA, 20th Floor. Menara Boustead - 69, Jalan Raja Chulan - 50200 KUALA LUMPUR
P.O. Box 11856 - 50760 KUALA LUMPUR - Tel.: (3) 248 73 00/05/09 - Telefax: (3) 241 50 06
Telex: (3) (084) 32855 MA OFCOME

NETHERLANDS, Burg. Patijnlaan, 67 - 2585 THE HAGUE
Tel.: (70) 364 31 66 - 345 13 13 - Telefax: (70) 360 82 74 - Telex: (044) 33406 OFCOM NL

NORWAY, Akersgaten, 35 - 0158 OSLO
Tel.: (2) 241 41 28 - Telefax: (2) 242 96 79 - Telex: (056) 76022

SINGAPORE, 15, Scotts Road - Thong Teck Bldg. 05-09 SINGAPORE 0922
Tel.: (65) 732 97 88/89 - Telefax: (65) 732 97 80 - Telex: (087) 55047 OFCOM

SWEDEN, Sergels Torg. 12 - S-111 57 STOCKHOLM
Tel.: (8) 24 66 10 - 20 90 93 - Telefax: (8) 20 88 92 - Telex: (054) 10790 OFCOM S

TURKEY, Kirçiçegi Sok, 3/1 - Gaziosmanpasa - 06700 ANKARA
Tel.: (4) 446 68 14/15/16 - Telefax: (4) 446 68 17 - Telex: (0607) 47013 OFCOM TR

UNITED KINGDOM, 66 Chiltern Street - Floors 2-3 - LONDON W1M 1PR
Tel.: (71) 486 01 01 - Telefax: (71) 487 55 86 - 224 64 09 - Telex: (051) 266406 OFCOM G.

UNITED STATES, 405 Lexington Av.- 44th & 45th floors. NEW YORK, N.Y. 10174-0331
Tel.: (212) 661 49 59/60/61/62 - Telefax: (212) 972 24 94 - 867 60 55
Telex: (023) 5106014778 OFCOME NY UQ

For *tourist* information, contact your nearest TOURIST OFFICE OF SPAIN

AUSTRALIA, 203 Castlereagh Street, suite 21 a P.O. Box A - 685 - N.S.W. 2000 SYDNEY SOUTH
Tel.: (2) 264 79 66 - Telefax: (2) 223 58 14

CANADA, 102 Bloor Street West, 14th floor TORONTO, ONTARIO M5S 1M8
Tel.: (416) 961 31 31/40 79 - Telefax: (416) 961 19 92 - Telex.: (-21) 06218206

DENMARK, Store Kongensgade, 1-3 - 1264 COPENHAGEN V
Tel.: (33) 15 11 65 - Telefax: (33) 15 83 65 - Telex.: (055) 16165 SPATUR DK

ITALY
- Piazza del Carmine, 4 - 20123 MILAN - Tel.:(2) 7200 46 25 - Telefax: (2) 7200 43 18
- Piazza di Spagna, 55 - 00817 ROME - Tel.: (6) 679 82 72-687 31 06 - Telefax: (6) 679 82 72

Telex.: (043) 620841

JAPAN, Daini Toranomon Denki Bldg, 4F - 3-1-10 Toranomon - MINATO-KU, TOKYO 105
Tel.: (3) 3432 61 41/42 - Telefax:(3) 3432 61 44 - Telex.: J26936 TURISPAN

NETHERLANDS, Laan van Meerdervoort, 8-8^{3} - 2517 THE HAGUE
Tel.:(70) 346 59 00/01 - 360 92 05 - Telefax: (70) 364 98 59 - Telex.: (044) 33435 ONET NL

NORWAY, Ruselokkveien, 26 - 0251 OSLO 2
Tel.: (2) 83 40 92/50 - Telefax: (2) 83 19 22 - Telex.: (056) 74861 TUNOR N

SWEDEN, Grev Turegatan, 7-1TR - 11445 STOCKHOLM
Tel.: (8) 611 19 92/41 36 - Telefax: (8) 611 44 07 - Telex.: (054) 17606 TURSPAN S

UNITED KINGDOM, 57-58 St. James' Street LONDON SW 1A1LD
Tel.: (71) 499 11 69/09 01 - Telefax: (71) 629 42 57 - Telex.: (051) 888138 TURESP G

UNITED STATES
•Water Tower Place, Suite 915 East - 845 North Michigan Avenue - CHICAGO, IL 60611
Tel.: (312) 642 19 92 - 944 02 16/25/26 - Telefax: (312) 642 98 17 - Telex.: (023) 0332020 NTOS
•6383 Wilshire Blvd. Suite 960, BEVERLY HILLS, CA 90211
Tel.: (213) 658 71 88 - 658 71 92/93/95 - Telefax: (213) 658 10 61 - Telex.: (023) 470092
•1221 Brickell Avenue, MIAMI, FLORIDA 33131 - Tel.: (305) 358 19 92 - Telefax: (305) 358 82 23
•665 Fifth Avenue, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10022
Tel.: (212) 759 88 22 - Telefax: (212) 980 10 53 - Telex.: (023) 426782 SNTO UI

AD INDEX

AGRUCAPERS, S.A. (DELICIAS)
P.O. BOX, 14 - 30880 AGUILAS (Murcia) - Telf.: 68 41 04 50 - Fax : 68 41 29 55

ANECOOP SDAD. COOP.
Monforte, 1 Entlo. - 46010 VALENCIA - Telf.: (6) 362 16 12 - Fax : (6) 362 19 00

ANGEL CAMACHO, S.A.
Avda. del Pinar, 6 - 41530 MORON DE LA FRONTERA (Sevilla)
Telf.: (5) 485 12 00 - Fax : (5) 585 01 45

ASOCIACION DE INDUSTRIAS CARNICAS CANTIMPALOS
Domingo Soto, 3 - 40001 SEGOVIA - Telf.: (11) 42 15 00 - Fax : (11) 42 15 50

B.T. EXPORTADORA DE ACEITUNAS, S.A.
Salado, 7 - 41010 SEVILLA - Telf.: (5) 427 12 06 - Fax : (5) 427 28 94

BODEGAS BILBAINAS, S.A. (VIÑA POMAL)
Particular del Norte, 2 - 48003 BILBAO - Telf.: (4) 415 17 41 - Fax : (4) 415 00 59

BODEGAS JULIAN CHIVITE
Ribera, s/n - 31592 CINTRUENIGO (Navarra)
Telf.: (48) 81 10 00 - Fax : (48) 81 14 07

BODEGAS MONTECILLO, S.A.
Ctra. de Fuenmayor a Navarrete, Km. 3 Apartado 1 - 26360 FUENMAYOR (La Rioja)
Telf.: (41) 44 01 25 - Fax : (41) 44 06 63

BODEGAS SEÑORIO DE NAVA, S.A.
La Vega, s/n - 24190 ARMUNIA (León) - Telf.: (87) 20 98 00 - Fax : (87) 20 97 90

CANDIDO MIRO, S.A. (EL SERPIS)
Oliver, 56 - 03800 ALCOY (Alicante) - Telf.: (6) 552 35 11 - Fax : (6) 552 18 08

CENSO OFICIAL DE EXPORTADORES ESPAÑOLES / ICEX
Pº de la Castellana, 14 - 28046 MADRID - Telf.: (1) 431 12 40 - Fax : (1) 431 61 28

THE EIGHTH INTERNATIONAL GOURMET CLUB SHOW
Cuesta San Vicente, 4-6º - 28008 MADRID - Telf.: (1) 542 76 60 - Fax : (1) 559 45 75

CONSEJO REGULADOR D.E. CARNE DE AVILEÑO
Plaza Sofraga, 1 - 05001 AVILA - Telf.: (18) 21 33 62 - Fax : (18) 25 08 02

CONSEJO REGULADOR DE LA DENOMINACION DE ORIGEN RIBERA DEL DUERO
66, Chiltern Street - LONDON W1M 1PR
Telf.: (71) 486 01 01 - Fax : (71) 487 55 86 - 224 64 09
Telex : (051) 26 64 06 OFCOME G

CONSEJO REGULADOR D.O. ZAMORANO
Cardenal Mella, 7
49009 ZAMORA
Telf.: (88) 51 17 15
Fax : (88) 51 17 15

CONSORCIO DEL JAMON SERRANO ESPAÑOL
Moralzarzal, 80 Esc. Centro 1º A - 28034 MADRID
Telf.: (1) 735 05 01 - Fax : (1) 735 05 03

CORA - SDAD.COOPERATIVA SANTA MARIA DE LA RABIDA (FRESON DE PALOS)
Camino de la Cocola, s/n - 21810 PALOS DE LA FRONTERA (Huelva)
Telf.: (59) 35 02 67 - Fax : (59) 35 05 15

FEDERICO PATERNINA, S.A
Avda. Santo Domingo, 11 - 26200 HARO (La Rioja)
Telf.: (41) 31 05 50 - Fax : (41) 31 27 78

GONZALEZ BYASS, S.A. (LEPANTO / TIO PEPE)
Manuel María González, 12 - 11403 JEREZ DE LA FRONTERA (Cádiz)
Telf.: (56) 34 00 00 - Fax : (56) 33 20 89

GRUPO ELOSUA, S.A.
Rosario Pino, 14 - 16 - 28020 MADRID - Telf.: (1) 571 05 58 - Fax : (1) 571 96 08

HIJOS DE ANTONIO BARCELO (VIÑA MAYOR)
Avda. de Córdoba, 21 2º Nave - 28026 MADRID
Telf.: (1) 475 63 13 - Fax : (1) 476 15 25

I F E M A (INTER-SICOP)
Parque Ferial Juan Carlos I - 28067 MADRID
Telf.: (1) 722 50 00 - Fax : (1) 722 57 90

INSTITUCION FERIAL FEREX (FERIA NACIONAL DEL QUESO DE TRUJILLO)
Ctra. Madrid - Lisboa, s/n - 10200 TRUJILLO (Cáceres)
Telf.: (27) 32 14 50 / 54 - Fax : (27) 32 26 04

OLIVE OIL
405 Lexington Avenue, 44th floor
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10174 - Telf.: (212) 661 49 59
Fax: (212) 972 24 94 - Telex : 5106014778 OFCOME NY UQ

PEDRO DOMECQ, S.A. (CARLOS I / FINO LA INA)
San Ildefonso, 3 - 11404 JEREZ DE LA FRONTERA (Cádiz)
Telf.: (56) 34 18 00 - Fax : (56) 34 26 01

RIOJA WINES
405 Lexington Avenue, 44th floor - NEW YORK, N.Y. 10174
Telf.: (212) 661 49 59 - Fax: (212) 972 24 94
Telex : 5106014778 OFCOME NY UQ

UNION VITIVINICOLA, S.A. (MARQUES DE CACERES)
Ctra. Logroño, s/n - 26350 CENICERO (La Rioja)
Telf.: (41) 45 40 00 - Fax : (41) 45 44 00

WITH THE

USE OF

MUSTARD, HABANERO & CURRY

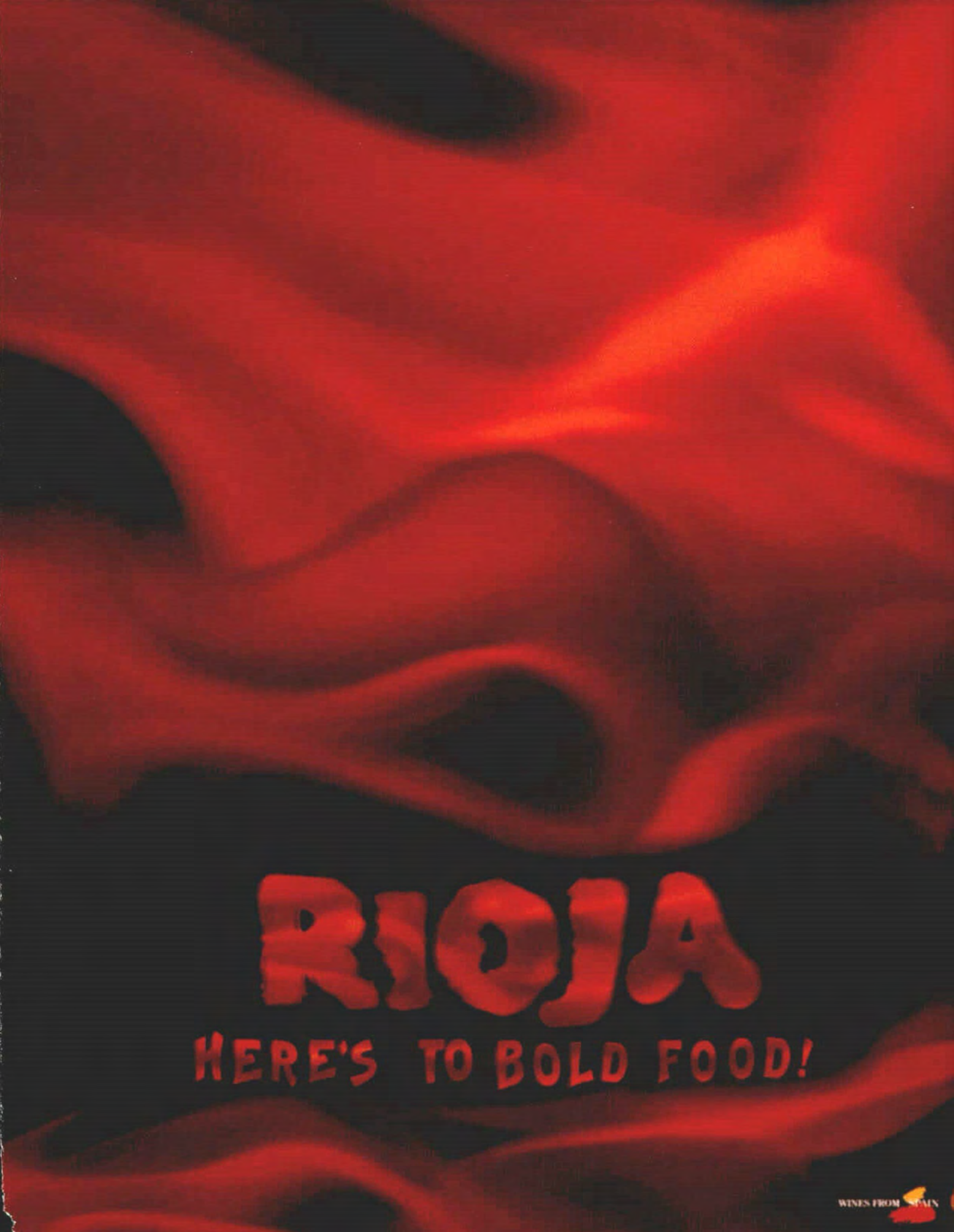
ON THE RISE

DON'T BE SURPRISED IF YOUR

CHARDONNAY

TASTES

LIKE TAP WATER


RIOJA
HERE'S TO BOLD FOOD!
WINES FROM SPAIN

Great Vegetable Dishes from Spain

Text: **Janet Mendel**
Still Lives: **Menchu Artime**
Photos: **Antonio de Benito/ICEX**

The Spanish market is a veritable cornucopia of fresh vegetables, changing with the seasons. Straight from the huerta, or market garden, vegetables come to market at the peak of freshness. Such wonderful variety has inspired many great dishes in Spanish cooking.

Because of Spain's temperate climate, many regions of the country enjoy a year-round growing season, alternating three or even four vegetable crops a year in rich river-bottom land and in coastal areas where irrigation makes intensive farming possible. Warmer weather allows Spanish market gardeners to get a jump on the season, sending produce to northern European markets way ahead of local supplies, and to produce out-of-season crops, such as tomatoes, in winter.

While modern agriculture, transport and storage make possible a wider, year-round variety of produce, vegetables are, still, in Spain, a seasonal affair, with each to be enjoyed in its turn.

Just take a look at a typical Spanish market. If it's springtime you'll find spindly spears of wild asparagus, inspiration for *tortilla de esparragos trigueros,* asparagus omelette, as well as fat, cultivated asparagus, both green and white, so good sauced and gratinéed. Springtime also brings heaps of plump broad beans, peas, and dusky artichokes, the makings for *menestra,* a mixed-vegetable medley, finished off with a spring-like touch of fresh mint leaves.

In summer the market is a riot of color with tomatoes, red and green peppers, purple-black aubergines, courgettes— a tempting palette for *escalivada,* a Catalan mélange of charcoal-grilled vegetables, or *pisto,* a dish similar to the French *ratatouille,* of aubergines, courgettes and tomatoes stewed in olive oil. The fragrance of summer's vine-ripened tomatoes reminds us it's high time for *gazpacho,* that refreshing Andalusian salad-soup made with uncooked tomatoes, peppers and cucumbers. Green beans, too are snappy summer fare, perhaps sautéed with red peppers and garlic or stewed with chick peas and sausage.

The *menestra de verduras*, (a dish of mixed vegetables) comes from the Ebro Valley (Rioja, Navarre and Aragon). The quality and variety of vegetables grown in this area is highly regarded throughout Spain.

The use of dried fruits and nuts is characteristic of Catalan cooking, as in this dish in which spinach is accompanied by pine nuts and raisins.

The *pisto manchego* (a vegetable stew from La Mancha similar to *ratatouille*) with its courgettes, peppers, tomatoes... is a most versatile dish. It can be eaten either hot or cold, on its own or accompanied. It combines perfectly with eggs.

Great Vegetable Dishes from Spain

Come fall, the leafy greens, spinach and chard, come round again. They make tasty topping for *coca*, Spain's version of pizza. Then follow the various members of the cabbage family—cabbages of several types, cauliflower, broccoli and Brussels sprouts—just in time for hearty cold-weather *potajes*. Giant pumpkins are cut open and sold by the slice. Winter brings root vegetables such as carrots, turnips and beets. Cardoons are an unusual vegetable, traditional for Christmas dinner. In Galicia, winter is the season of *grelos*, the flowering stalk of the turnip, which is stewed with *lacón*, cured pork shoulder, and potatoes for a wonderfully warming winter dish.

So the seasons turn. By January, in Andalusia it's already springtime. Families go out to stalk the wild asparagus. The first tiny broad beans come into the market.

But Where Are The Vegetables?

While vegetables are rampant in the markets, visitors to Spain are sometimes puzzled as to why they don't appear on the dinner plate. The answer is that they do, but in disguise. Spanish meals aren't like the typical American or English dinner—meat, potatoes and two veggies, with the vegetables probably simply boiled and buttered. In Spanish cooking, the vegetables turn up in salads, soups, omelettes, in starring roles as starters and, for the main course, in combination with meat and pulses in one-pot meals.

For example, that vegetable medley, *menestra*, might be served as a starter for the main meal (usually midday), followed by meat or fish accompanied by potatoes. The same dish, with the addition of a little meat or topped with egg, could serve as the main dish for a lighter supper, possibly preceded by a salad.

And while it's hard to imagine a Spaniard consuming a heap of plain spinach, he will happily consume lots of it in a *tortilla*, omelette, stewed with sausage and chick peas in a *potaje*, or puréed in a smooth soup.

Furthermore, in Spain, salads aren't a little green stuff to pick at before the steak comes. Salads are consumed with enormous gusto as a *tapa*, a first course, or a side dish. Besides the usual mixed salad—lettuce, cucumber, tomatoes, peppers and onions—there are marinated artichokes, beans with vinaigrette, roasted pepper salad, cauliflower with *ailioli* garlic sauce, asparagus with mayonnaise, carrots with mint vinaigrette, plus many salads of vegetables plus seafood or meat. Parsley is much more than a garnish, but, used lavishly in salads as well as cooked dishes, is almost a vegetable in its own right.

Although the *al dente* trend in vegetable cooking never caught on in Spain, at least not in home cooking, the Spanish manner of cooking vegetables has much to recommend it. The most typical way to cook vegetables is *salteado*, meaning sautéed. The vegetables are not fried, but gently cooked in olive oil with the addition of only enough water to keep them from scorching and create a small quantity of sauce. Beans or artichokes might be first par-boiled, so they keep their color, but others such as cauliflower, sprouts, spinach, peas and the like are put in the oil with chopped garlic and perhaps some chopped ham, salt pork or bacon, maybe onion or tomato in season. Because they aren't boiled and drained, vitamins and minerals are still intact in the sauce. Once cooked, serve the vegetables with a garnish of chopped parsley and chopped hard-cooked egg. A splash of vinegar sets off flavors nicely.

Pot Vegetables

The other favorite way of cooking vegetables is in the *cocido*, or one-pot dinner, certainly Spain's national dish. Although it varies from one region to another, the cocido usually contains stewing chicken, beef and ham bone, fat pork and sausages simmered with vegetables, potatoes and chick peas to make a rich soup, which is served as a first course. This is followed by platters of the meats and vegetables. The usual vegetables are cabbage, carrots and turnips, but variations on the basic theme call for green beans, leeks, chard, courgette, peas, pumpkin, tomatoes, watercress, lettuce—in other words, whatever the cook finds fresh in the garden or in the market. So, too, *paella* and other rice dishes in Valencia and Murcia include, besides poultry or seafood, seasonal vegetables from the *huerta*—in the spring, broad beans, peas and artichokes; in the summer, green beans and peppers.

While the Spanish repertoire abounds in vegetable dishes, not all of them are strictly vegetarian. Many vegetable dishes contain just a bit of meat, ham or seafood, almost as a flavoring ingredient. For instance, Granada's famous dish of broad beans, *habas con jamón*, combines the beans with bits of flavorful local ham; the sturdy vegetable soup of Navarre, *garbure*, has, besides broad beans, peas, green beans and cabbage, pork sausages, and *salpicón*, a salad of finely chopped tomatoes and peppers, invariably contains bits of prawns, mussels or other shellfish.

While *verduras*, greens, is the usual word for vegetables, perhaps the alternative *hortaliza*, meaning garden produce, is more all-inclusive. *Legumbre* also means vegetable, usually dry beans, lentils and peas.

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

The Vegetable Roster

Artichoke
Whole, fresh artichokes taste very different from frozen or canned artichoke hearts. To prepare them, cut off the stem and snap off a few of the outer leaves. To prevent them from darkening after trimming, rub with a cut lemon and place in water to cover with a squeeze of lemon juice. The artichokes can be quartered and braised, as in *menestra* or beef stew with artichokes, or they can be boiled. They are done when a leaf pulls off easily. To serve them, drain well, spread open the leaves like a rose and scoop out the fuzzy choke with a spoon. Add a spoonful of mayonnaise or vinaigrette to the center. To eat the artichoke, pull off a leaf, dip it in the sauce and pull the leaf between the teeth. Each yields a bit of soft flesh from the underside. Discard the leaf. The "heart" or bottom can be eaten in its entirety.

Asparagus
The wild *triguero* asparagus with its slightly bitter taste is usually sautéed and combined with eggs in an omelette or *revuelto*, soft-scrambled eggs. To prepare cultivated fresh asparagus, snap off the butt ends; thinly peel the stalks, if desired (not really necessary). Either steam the spears or cook in boiling salted water. Drain and refresh in cold water. Serve cold with two sauces, one of minced green and red peppers, onions, parsley, garlic, hard-cooked egg and olive oil, another of lemony mayonnaise. Or wrap cooked ham around the cooked asparagus, top with a bechamel sauce and bread crumbs and gratiné in the oven.

Aubergine or Eggplant
If to be fried or sautéed, sprinkle the cut-up aubergine with salt and let set for 45 minutes, This removes excess water and any possible bitterness. Instead of frying aubergine slices for such dishes as *moussaka*, brush them with olive oil and bake until softened before layering with sauce. This greatly reduces the amount of oil they absorb. Aubergine is exceptionally good roasted, either on the charcoal barbecue, in the oven or under the grill. Pierce it with a skewer to prevent its exploding as steam accumulates. When the skin is charred, peel it off and cut the flesh into strips. Dress with olive oil and lemon juice and serve hot or cold. Aubergines, a vegetable brought to Spain by the Moors, are essential to the Catalan sauce, *samfaina*, which accompanies chicken, meat and fish dishes.

Beans
Green beans come in several varieties, from skinny round ones to wide, flat ones. Tender, they may be boiled or sautéed. Otherwise, remove the strings and slow cook them, such as in the Andalusian potage, *berza*, with chick peas and sausage.

Broad Beans
Like peas, these are especially delicious freshly picked, straight from the garden, before the natural sugars turn to starch. Small, tender beans can be cooked without shelling, pods and all. Otherwise shell the beans. They can then be sautéed, stewed or braised. If very large, they need to be partially cooked in boiling water, then skinned.

Cabbage
This sturdy vegetable goes into the many one-pot *cocidos* and *potajes* and is also good stuffed with ground meat.

Cardoons
Like the artichoke, a member of the thistle family. The stalks are braised and served in almond sauce. Another of the thistle family, tagarninas, is gathered wild for braising or cooking in an omelette.

Carrots
Essential for the *cocido*. If served as vegetables in their own right, Spaniards like them well-flavored.

Cauliflower
Try cauliflower *rebozado*, partially cooked in flowerettes, then batter-dipped and fried crisp in oil, or *ajo arriero*, dressed in a garlic-paprika sauce, typical of Aragón and Navarre.

Celery
Also for the cocido pot.

Lhard
A white stalk topped with a broad, spinach-like leaf. Remove strings from stalks. Stalks can be cooked and sauced as for asparagus, batter-dipped and fried or scrambled with eggs. Or chop stalks and leaves together and sauté with the addition of Málaga raisins and pine nuts.

Courgette or Zucchini
Does not need to be peeled. In Murcia, area of intensive vegetable farming, courgette goes into *zarangollo*, an omelette with scallions. Use large courgettes for stuffing.

Cucumber
In gazpachos, also in *pipirrana*, a summer salad of chopped tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers and onions.

Leeks
In the soup pot, such as the Basque *porrusalda*, of leeks and potatoes plus salt cod. Leeks also can be braised and sauced.

Lettuce
Salads. End-of-season lettuce is sometimes cooked with broad beans or peas and added to *menestra*.

Peas
Best when freshly picked. Tiny, tender ones can be blanched in boiling water, drained and refreshed in cold water. Add them to *paella* rice at the very last minute. Older peas are best slowly braised, in a stew or *menestra*.

Peppers
Red or green. In Spain, the big, meaty bell peppers are wonderful roasted, peeled and dressed with olive oil, while the smaller, pointy and piquant *piquillo* peppers are superb for stuffing or frying in oil.

Pumpkin
Hard-skinned winter squash with bright orange flesh. Bake, steam, braise or sauté it. Pumpkin makes a savory soup or vegetable side dish. Sautéed in olive oil, it's finished with oregano and vinegar.

Radishes
Pep up salads.

Spinach
Wash it in several changes of water and cook until leaves wilt without additional water, or sauté in olive oil until wilted. Also good raw as a salad green.

Tomato
Year-round, Spanish tomatoes go into sauces, such as pollo con tomate, chicken in tomato sauce, and soups, such as *sopa de mariscos*, seafood soup. In summer, sweet vine-ripened ones appear in dozens of salads and *gazpachos*.

Turnip
Hardy root vegetable used in the *cocido*. Especially appreciated in Galicia, where the flowering stalks, *grelos*, go into many of the region's soups and stews, such as *lacón con grelos*, cured pork shoulder with potatoes and greens.

Editor's Note: We would like to express our thanks to Artespaña for lending the pewter plates and the table linen and to Grupo 13 which lent the rest of the plates.

See recipes page 157.

THE SOMMELIER
THE PERSONAL TOUCH

In this first of three articles on wines served in Spanish restaurants Spain Gourmetour examines the craft of the sommelier, the wine waiter who helps diners decide on what to drink with their meals. The second article will take a look at wine cellars in the best restaurants and the final article will discuss the most prominent wines tasted at various establishments.

Text: **Andrés Proensa** Translator: **D. Cemlyn-Jones**

The wine scene in Spain has changed radically since the early 1980s. Clear evidence is provided by the heightened prestige of the sommeliers.

JUAN RAMON YUSTE/ICEX

Rafael Marañón
Restaurant Reno (Barcelona)

JUAN RAMON YUSTE/ICEX

Custodio López Zamarra
Restaurant Zalacaín (Madrid)

PABLO NEUSTAD/ICEX

Salvador García Ramos
Restaurant Zortziko (Bilbao)

PABLO NEUSTADT/ICEX

Jesús Flores
Restaurant La Cava Real (Madrid)

PABLO NEUSTADT/ICEX

The future of the sommelier is linked to the customers' growing demand for quality service

The wine scene in Spain has changed radically since the early 1980s. In fact it would be no exaggeration to say that it has undergone a revolution.

This upheaval has coincided with other equally important developments. Restaurants, essential showcases for wines, have also been transformed. The numerous new establishments that have opened in the past decade bear little resemblance to former traditional restaurants. Many old-fashioned houses realize that they too must adapt to modern demands.

Evidence abounds of how restaurants are renovating. Improvements have been made in every direction, including decoration, the use of traditional products, and the adoption of more creative approaches and a more professional attitude.

Another indication of the changing picture is provided by the heightened prestige of the sommelier and a growing appreciation for Spanish wines. A new generation of sommeliers, determined to restore respect for the profession, is emerging.

This new breed of wine connoisseurs faces an arduous task. But an appreciation of their talents has already been noticed and the French word sommelier has been replaced by the Spanish *sumiller*, a term that is gradually acquiring acceptance in the best restaurants. The recovery of Spanish terminology runs parallel with a new-found respect for the sommelier's skills and an interest in restaurant experiments. Restaurateurs are brimming with new ideas and are investing heavily in quality and professionalism.

Wine also plays an important part in the image of today's restaurants. Many new labels have appeared, new production areas are flourishing and the import of numerous foreign wines has vastly increased the range of choice.

Restaurants run by their owners

Restaurants managed and run almost entirely by their owners are now adapting to more practical structures. A good example is the Arzak restaurant in San Sebastian, the proud possessor of the coveted Michelin three stars whose proprietor and chef, Juan María Arzak, was recently awarded France's Medal of the Order of Arts and Letters.

"Previously I could handle the wine side of the restaurant alone," Señor Arzak commented. "There were few producers, customers usually ordered Rioja and were faithful to a handful of labels. But things changed with the emergence of new Rioja wines, high quality labels from other Spanish regions and the introduction of foreign wines."

To deal with the more varied choice, Arzak decided to hire a sommelier. He now employs two: Mariano Rodríguez and José Manuel Hernández.

"It was essential," he says. "As we sought to improve ourselves it became absolutely necessary to hire a sommelier."

Yet Arzak's practice is an exception in the Basque country, where wine is treated with great respect and whose restaurants boast magnificent wine cellars. However, the sommelier is still a rarity in this region.

Another exception is Zortziko, a restaurant that started almost by accident in Bilbao, the Basque country's other major city.

Run as a family business, Zortziko includes one of Spain's best sommeliers among its members. He is Antonio García Gómez, a wine lover who was attracted to this side of the trade since he started working in the restaurant business at the age of 14. Antonio cannot explain why there are so few sommeliers in the Basque country "where the people's care, knowledge and appreciation of fine wine has always existed".

Most Basque restaurants follow the same pattern, whereby the proprietor, who is nearly always the chef, oversees all activities. Wines are generally evaluated by their price, but are rarely given much presentation or advertisement. By dividing its work load among the family, Zortziko has allowed one of its owners to work at what he enjoys doing most.

The situation is similar in Catalonia, a region of great gastronomic tradition which has numerous good restaurants but few sommeliers. Until recently there were only a handful of Catalan sommeliers and the profession did not attract a following. Today, a whole new generation of well-trained and enthusiastic sommeliers is coming forth.

Their appearance is largely due to specialized courses provided by two schools in Barcelona, one run privately and the other with government funds. Some of the best Catalan sommeliers have formed the "Impitoyable" society, named after a peculiarly-shaped wine-tasting glass. Founded less than three years ago, the society is energetic in promoting wine and organizes excursions and various activities associated with vineyards.

Scarce resource.

Traditionally, choice and selectivity have always been key ingredients in the wines of Bodegas Montecillo. And traditionally, demand has always exceeded supply. Particulary so this year. We're presenting our 1985 vintage. A year the experts classify as «Very Good». Viña Monty 1985. SCARCE RESOURCE.

BODEGAS MONTECILLO.
THE PRIDE OF RIOJA.

The new creative approach of Spanish restaurants has heightened the prestige of sommeliers

especially wine-tasting sessions. Every week the society stages one or two tasting sessions for a great variety of products.

The sommeliers' strongholds

The sommelier has always had a strong presence in Madrid, where there are a large number of luxury establishments that fall into the classic fine restaurant category and first class hotels that have helped promote the training of top professionals.

Clearly, such an environment encouraged the appearance of good sommeliers, even though they were not very numerous at first. Among the most distinguished are Aniceto de Miguel of the Ruperto de Nola restaurant, which has since closed, and Martín Iglesias of the Hotel Meliá. This couple, together with Antonio Vilella of Barcelona's Reno restaurant, form the "old school" of Spanish sommeliers.

Chasing on their heels is a new generation of wine experts who have come to prominence with the changes and new ideas that are sweeping through the culinary arts. Most were trained at special courses organized in 1978 by major wine producers and conducted by Martín Iglesias.

Some of the graduates of these courses include Jerónimo Ingelmo, sommelier at the Cuatro Estaciones restaurant, and Custodio López Zamarra, of the famed Zalacaín. Another eminent sommelier who should be mentioned is José María Ruiz, who worked at the Mesón de Cándido in Segovia until 1975.

The arrival of Jesús Flores, La Cava Real's energetic sommelier-manager, transformed the profession. He and the previously mentioned sommeliers as well as other distinguished masters such as Luis Miguel Martín of El Amparo, and Santiago Nieto, formed the Spanish Association of Sommeliers in 1987.

Self-educated experts

The lack of proper training had been the greatest obstacle facing Spanish sommeliers. There were no specialized teaching centers, and existing hostelry schools did not dedicate enough attention to wine. Apart from a few exceptions like Jesús Flores, an oenologist, a small number of graduates from Catalan schools, most Spanish sommeliers have had to discover for themselves the secrets of fine wines.

An example is provided by Custodio López Zamarra, one of the most prominent Spaniards in the profession. He lectures at numerous training courses and is active in promoting any professional initiatives. Yet Señor López Zamarra had to train himself with little help from others.

He is proud of his long connection with hostelry and boasts that he was born into the business. His grandfather owned a bar and many relatives worked in hostelry. He worked his way up from a lowly kitchen hand until 1973 when the acclaimed Michelin three-star restaurant Zalacaín opened in Madrid. After a trial period owner Jesús Ouarbide took key decisions on staff disposal and appointed López Zamarra sommelier in what was to become Spain's top restaurant.

In 1978 he attended Martín Iglesias' wine courses where he met Jerónimo Ingelmo, now the sommelier-manager of the Cuatro Estaciones restaurant.

"That seminar sharpened my interest," López Zamarra recalls. "It made me enjoy my work more every day and I studied harder by attending courses, visiting vineyards, reading and by tasting more wines."

Most well-known Spanish sommeliers today have achieved their success through lone efforts. Luis Miguel Martín, sommelier at El Amparo, another great Madrid restaurant, describes the struggle in bullfighting terms:

"A sommelier is like a *maletilla* (a young, aspiring bullfighter with little means of advancing his career) who wants to become a matador. If he wants to learn he has to do it in his own time, investing long hours and money."

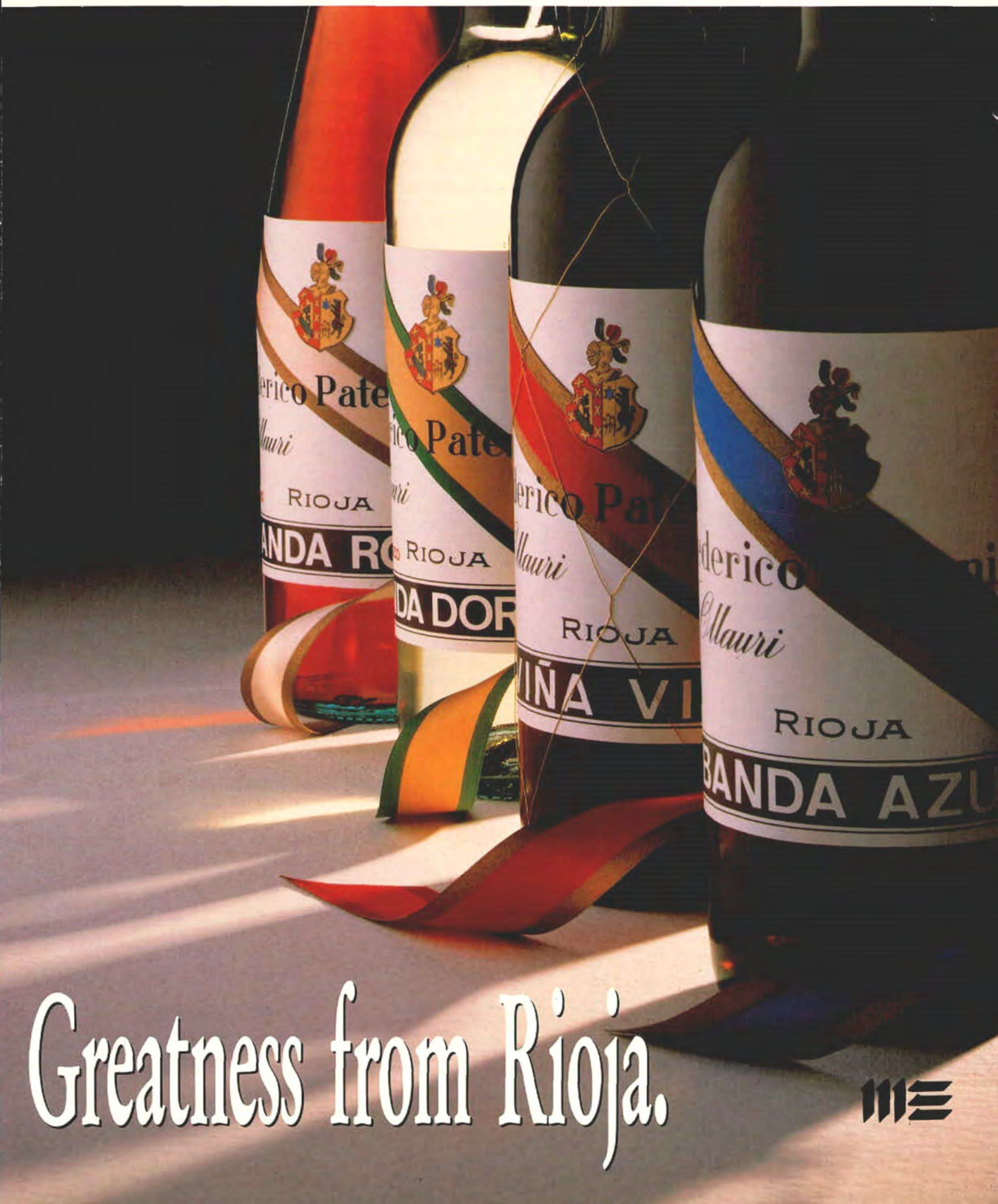
Señor Martín started out as a waiter himself "although I was fortunate to work in the wine section from the beginning".

"In 1980 I had another lucky break when I was taken on by the El Amparo restaurant where I could immerse myself in the world of wine," he added. "There I took advantage of the teachings of such experts as Rafael Ruiz Isla (former technical director of the National Institute of Denominations of Origin) and Javier Rueda (former technical director of a wine club)".

The Sommelier-Manager

The veteran master Jerónimo Ingelmo followed a similar course, although he had to wait longer to be appointed sommelier at the Las Cuatro Estaciones which opened in 1984. Since 1993 he has al-

Paternina



Greatness from Rioja.

Restaurateurs are beginning to realize that sommeliers can boost profits

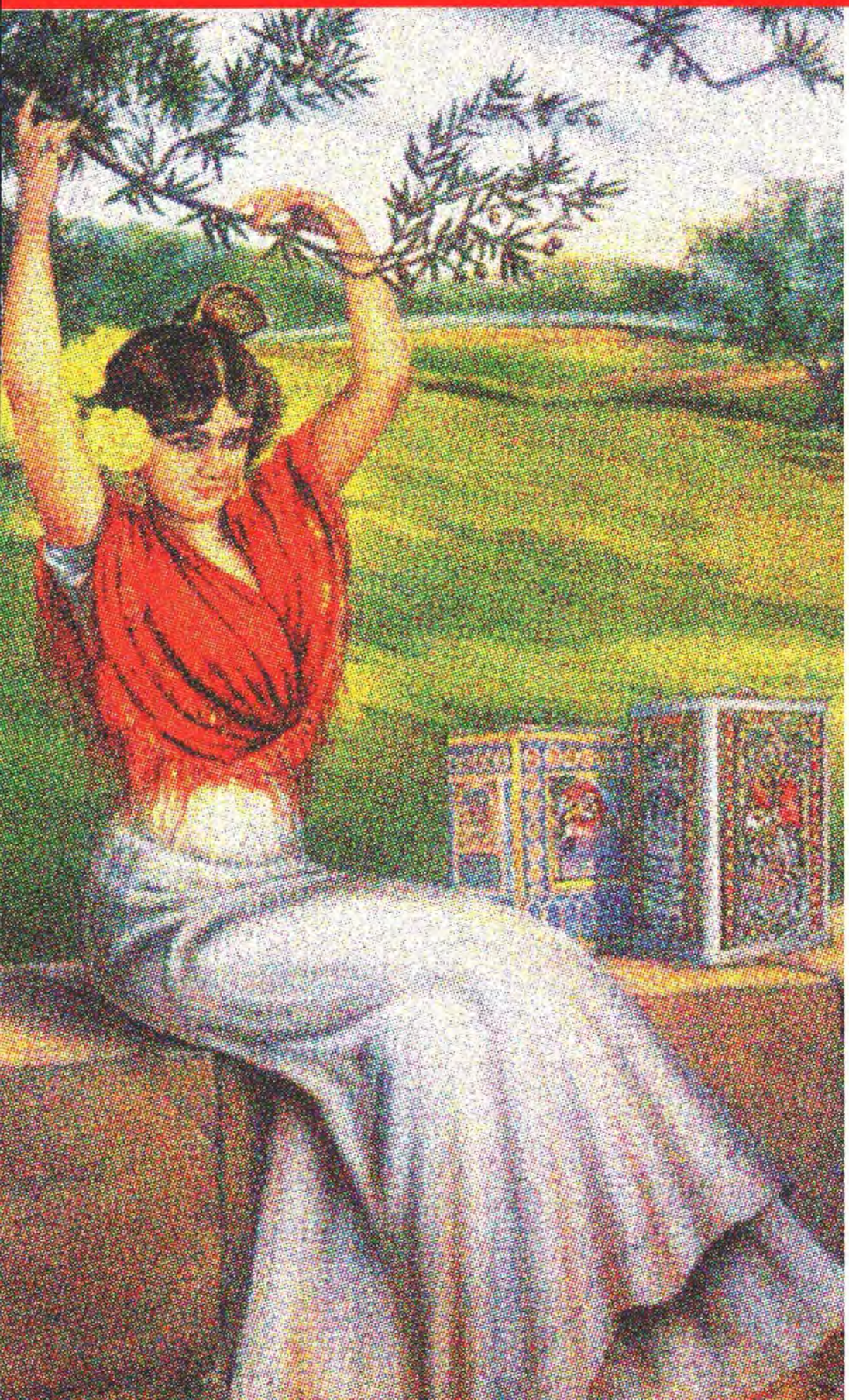
so managed this restauarant.
Combining the responsibilities of sommelier and manager appears to be a fashionable trend, although it is not new. Jesús Flores was sommelier at the La Rioja restaurant in 1983 before moving over as sommelier-manager to the newly-opened La Cava Real, part of the Vinoselección group (Spain's oldest wine club). This relationship emphasizes the importance that the restaurant attaches to wine, reinforced by the fact that it has always been managed by a sommelier.
Jesús Flores is unusual among sommeliers because of his more technical, rather than practical, background in the hostelry business. He is probably the only sommelier to hold a degree in oenology and was one of the founders of the Spanish Association of Sommeliers. Formed in 1987, it now has 200 members throughout Spain, a considerable number given the Spaniards' lack of enthusiasm for associations.
The Spanish Association of Sommeliers is actively supporting its members in Spain and has been helpful in attracting new blood to the profession.
Pablo Martín, president of the recently formed Castile and Leon Association of Sommeliers has had a good deal of experience in this area. Self-educated and determined, Señor Martín is one of a long line of polished waiters to emerge from the legendary Mesón de Cándido in Segovia, 90 kilometers (56 miles) north of Madrid.
With 20 years' experience at the restaurant, Pablo Martín has gradually taken charge of the wine cellar, filling a gap left in 1975 by José María Ruiz, the Mesón de Cándido's only previous sommelier.
Pablo Martín began his training by attending classes given by Custodio López Zamarra and Jesús Flores in 1985. He continued to broaden his knowledge by forming the so-called "Segovian clan" with a group of fellow wine connoisseurs from Segovia, now the sommelier capital of Castile and Leon.
Señor Martín and his companions were also lucky to be able to count on the support of Castile and Leon's Viticulture and Oenology Center. Since Pascual Herrera, one of Spain's most highly regarded wine experts, took charge of the center, a wide range of courses have become available. Since 1990, Pablo Martín and some of his colleagues have joined the tasting committee of the Regulatory Council of the Ribera del Duero Denomination of Origin.

Bright Outlook

Segovia's Mesón de Cándido provides a good example of how the sommelier's art has developed. It is a classic among classic restaurants that has gradually changed its attitude toward wine.
Lorenzo Cañas is following the same path at his La Merced restaurant in Logroño, capital of the Rioja province. He is slowly handing over responsibility to Juan Marcos Gutiérrez, a young man who faces a daunting challenge — how to maintain the quality of a restaurant cellar that is representative of the main Spanish wine producing region.
There are numerous examples of how the importance of sommeliers is now recognized in Spanish restaurants. Custodio López Zamarra still believes that there are not enough sommeliers, but admits that their number is growing.
"Almost all the new mid-to-high level restaurants have a sommelier and many traditional restaurants are taking them on," he says. "Restaurateurs are beginning to realize that a sommelier can boost profits."
The future of the sommelier is linked to the customers' growing demand for quality service.
"In the past few years customers have become more wine-conscious," according to Jerónimo Ingelmo. "They are looking more and more to the professionals for guidance. They constantly ask for explanations about wine."
Custodio López Zamarra said an indication of how times were changing was illustrated by the fact that diners were showing curiosity about the lesser known wine producing areas and many were "going so far as to often order wines they hadn't yet tried".
"Wine is taking a leading role in eating out habits and some customers have already decided what wine they are going to drink before they sit down and ask us to prepare a meal that will go well with their selection," he noticed.

Andrés Proensa *is a journalist who writes about food and wine. He makes regular contributions to publications specializing in this subject.*

Carbonell didn't become such a fine olive oil overnight. It took 128 years of practice



Ever since 1866, Carbonell has chosen plump, juicy olives from the fertile land of Andalucia, in the South of Spain, to produce an exquisite olive oil.

An olive oil known throughout the world for its colour, delicacy, nutrition and succulent taste.

Even today, we press our olives and filter the juice very much the way it was done in ancient times.

Experience, Tradition, Selection. These are the secrets which make Carbonell olive oil, the number one brand in the world.

Add a delightful touch of flavor to any dish with Carbonell's Olive Oil, Extra Virgin Olive Oil, Olives and Gourmet Wine Vinegars.

They are available at your local supermarket.

Carbonell

Aceites Carbonell, S.A.
Rosario Pino, 14 • Madrid • Spain
Tel. 34-1-571 05 58 - Fax.:34-1-571 96 08

Off the Beaten Track (V)

PEDRAZA. PERCHED ON A HILLTOP

Pedraza was an important cattle-raising and woodland area. Its period of splendor was in the 16th and 17th centuries when the wool from its merino sheep brought walth to the town

I decided to make the journey on a week-day. The city simmered gently in its haze of smoke, horn-blasts and the latest news. Gray faces moved heavenwards up the escalators, or sank into the black hell-holes of the underground. The percussion of road-works shook the tarmac, setting the pace for the people of Madrid as they ran to catch a bus or slowed to a halt at a red traffic light.

I turned my back on them indifferent to the chaos, finished my breakfast orange juice and fried eggs, and unfolded the map to find the best route to Pedraza, far from the turmoil. I felt an unhealthy satisfaction as I glanced at my watch in the knowledge that I would be leaving my fellow citizens behind in the ant-hill. I whistled, chirping happy as a cricket to think that I was traveling not on business but just for the pleasure of the trip. The aromas of leisure are so much more poignant when others are hard at work!

Such were my uncharitable thoughts as I opened the back of the van for the dog, who was barking and wagging his tail in anticipation of a country outing. I have never been able to fathom how he knows we are leaving, for I never put on corduroy walking trousers or pick up a gun or perform any other ritual beforehand. As city-dwellers we seldom have the chance to improvise. Our tyrannical diaries display endless working days and a few dates marked in red for equally obligatory collective enjoyment. If you ever have the chance to escape and make a break in the program, do so, particularly if you plan to visit Pedraza. This small village is within easy reach of Madrid and consequently is regularly overrun by visitors at the weekend but this may well be the key to its prosperity and possibly even to its survival.

Escapades such as this, when the roads are free from traffic, make driving a rediscovered pleasure. There are two routes to Pedraza from Madrid, but the true traveler instinctively knows which to take. I chose the mountain pass of Navacerrada, and I recommend you to do the same.

The old car climbed up the mountain road. The beautiful landscape and snowy peaks of the mountain range caught my attention and my gaze was drawn away from the road. I slowed down, easing the car round the bends so that the noise of the engine would not shatter the peace. When surrounded by magnificent, undisturbed nature, I inevitably feel like a stranger tiptoeing round a church, trying to make no sound. I soon stopped to enjoy the panoramic view and to look down to where mankind dwelt, way below. A deep breath of cold, crystal air provided an injection of oxygen and euphoria and helped me on my way.

After crossing the Guadarrama mountain range, I passed La Granja, an aristocratic retreat formerly frequented by the Spanish monarchy. This time I did not stop, for winter days are short and I wanted to get to Pedraza while there was still plenty of light. But the palace and gardens of La Granja are well worth a visit,

Text: **Diego Díaz**
Photos: **Fernando Briones/ICEX**
Translator: **Jenny Mc Donald**

as travel agencies will recommend to clients arriving in Madrid (see Spain Gourmetour No.18).

I soon reached my destination, some 120 Km (72 miles) from the capital city, the perfect distance if one is not to feel tired by the drive, and the minimum distance to feel far from the urban jungle, for during the last part of the journey you begin to enjoy the rural atmosphere of the country road and the tiny villages along the way.

Although the journey is clearly a delight in itself, Pedraza makes an extraordinary final reward. It comes into view unexpectedly, squatting on a steep outcrop, to all appearances more for self-protection than as a means of dominion over the surrounding countryside. Two rivers, the San Miguel and Los Batanes, have cut into the sides of the rock it stands on. I drove up a short, steep bend to the only entrance, the gateway into the walled town. And so it is that, on the brink of the 21st century, you still have to pass through the walled gateway to enter into Pedraza ... and into the 16th century.

I don't know whether in summer or at the weekends, when the place is thronging with visitors, the feeling of its historical past is as strong as I sensed it then. It is not just the cobblestones, the heraldic stone shields of the nobility, its excellent state of conservation, the absence of modern signs or buildings. No, it is the pure, crisp air, the sacred stillness of the atmosphere, an unreal transparency in its wide-open spaces, and a miraculous silence, the silence particularly, that crystal bell with a chime so pure that the roar of our epoch has shattered to smithereens.

I enjoyed a special magical moment beside the castle, on a balcony known as El Gurugú. My dog and I sat down at the edge of the gorge to contemplate the panoramic view over the river Cega. The most distant sounds - a cow-bell, the murmur of water - were clearly audible. There was a metallic ring and my dog answered back. A moment later a double echo rose from among the junipers on the hillside opposite and sent back a multiple bark, which started off an irrational dialogue, at which stage my own voice and laughter joined in with spontaneous enthusiasm. After our playful dispute with the mountainside, we trotted back to the village square for lunch.

I later discovered, to my surprise and delight, that I was not the only person to experience these emotions in Pedraza. Miguel de Unamuno (1864-1936) writer and philosopher, in an article published in the daily paper Ahora in 1934, wrote: "We entered through a gateway in the ruined walls, into the silent solitude and the lonely stillness of this mighty, abandoned eyrie. An awe-inspiring sight!"

No monument stands out especially but the age and harmony of tiny Pedraza is quite remarkable.

VISITING THE VILLAGE

Pedraza is tiny; not ten streets in all. The hilltop supporting it is small and the houses are tucked together within the walls, right on the edge of the precipice. Yet it should not be underestimated. Its buildings are not ostentatious but many are noblemen's mansions, and its castle is certainly more than a mere bastion

for defence. All this denotes its historical significance. There are no great artistic monuments, but the overall age and harmony of the buildings is quite unusual.

From the Town Gate I went up the Calle Real to the Plaza Mayor, one of the most beautiful squares in Spain. Its design is not the work of an architect, for its quaint haphazardness is the making of chance, yet this and the simplicity of its beautiful portico accentuate its role as a local public space and distinguish it from other, grander squares of Castile. It is made up mainly of demolition material; for instance, the eleven columns supporting the overhanging galleries of the porticos are all different. Presumably they are remains from the ruins of the castle. It is worth taking a seat on the portico bench - a eight meter-long (26 foot) span of wood - to 'drink in the fresh air', as we say in Spain, not looking too carefully at the badly-restored Romanesque tower of the church of San Juan. But it is the only eyesore for, thank goodness, Carmen Abad, mayoress in the 1970s, banned cars from entering the square.

The green balcony beneath the tower is a curiosity in itself. It does not belong to a room, and the only access to it is through an outside door just below it. It was the whim of arrogant Don Antonio Pérez de la Torre y Zúñiga, Knight of the Order of St. James, whose house did not look out onto the square, and who had it built, like a theater box, to watch the festivities in the square without having to mix with the rank and file. He even engraved this inscription over the doorway: "This place and this balcony belong to Don Antonio Pérez de la Torre". At least he shortened his name!

Bull-fights have been held in this Plaza Mayor from 1550. If your love of animals does not prevent you from watching, I can assure you that a bull-fight in this setting is an impressive, traditional spectacle, history in the raw, and proof that the Spain described by the romantic travelers has not yet died out altogether.

I left the square by the Calle Mayor which leads to the castle (13-15th century). A wide esplanade separates it from the village. The Lord High Constables of Castile, its past proprietors, were not magnanimous feudal lords but the much-hated owners and lords of the lives, souls and possessions of the local peasants. Perhaps this explains its menacing, fortress-like appearance. I remembered visits to other castles, high on hill-tops, protecting the humble dwellings huddled below. This was different, standing face-on to the village, both isolated and arrogant.

In 1561 the villages governed by the Lord High Constable sent a long scroll to the king censuring his acts of abuse, such as forcing them, unpaid, to tend to the feudal lord's vineyards, to make the wine and buy it all back from him, whether they wanted it or not, and at the price paid for the best wine of the year. An early example of how to rig a market. They won their claim.

At the beginning of this century, the family who at that time owned the greatly deteriorated castle sold it, for 12,999 pesetas to the painter, Ignacio Zuloaga (1870-1945), famous for his portraits of Spaniards and Spanish customs. The artist was superstitious and did not want the figure 13 to appear on the deed.

Zuloaga was party to another curious anecdote involving a Mrs. Lydig, a North American millionairess admirer of his, who was entranced by the idea of his owning a castle. The painter invited her to visit but told her she had to get to Pedraza before ten at night because that was when the town closed. Mrs. Lydig didn't take him seriously and said that towns didn't close. But Zuloaga insisted so she made a bet with him that it couldn't be true. She crossed the Atlantic and when she eventually reached the gate and dismounted from her donkey she found, to her amazement, that it was locked fast. She knocked and Zuloaga himself smugly opened up to her.

HISTORY

The origins of Pedraza are remote. Its name descends from Roman times: Petracia. Some say it was the birthplace of the Emperor Trajan but its real identity stems from the 8th century when the Reconquest of Spain by the Christians began at last to definitively reclaim territory from Arab hands. Its tradition is that of an austere, devoutly Christian and feudal people. The family of the Fernández de Velasco, Dukes of Frías and Lord High Constables of Castile, were the lords of the town for four centuries. The six churches that came to exist in such a small town and the prison of the Inquisition in which we can still see the stocks used to punish prisoners tell us plenty about the town's history.

Pedraza was an important cattle-raising and woodland area. The shepherds migrated with their flocks every winter down to the milder climate of Andalusia, only returning in spring. Its period of splendor came with the 16th and 17th centuries, thanks to the wool trade. The wool of the merino sheep that pasture and are shorn in the region was woven on the looms in Segovia but also much farther away, in Bruges and Florence. Wealthy cattle-raisers settled in Pedraza to live on the rent paid for their pastures in the summer. And by claiming ancient roots in "old Christian families", many of them obtained the status of nobles, which explains the large number of aristocratic homes.

The most relevant historic event in the town during that period was when François I, King of France, was captured in the battle of Pavía (1525). He negotiated his freedom with Carlos I, the Spanish king, in exchange for the dukedom of Borgogne giving as hostages his sons - François de Valois, the Dauphin, and Henri, Duke of Orléans. But he didn't keep his word and the two boys, aged eight and seven, were held prisoner in the tower of Pedraza castle for four years under the custody of Iñigo Fernández de Velasco. They were only freed in 1530, after the Cambrais peace treaty, when Henri succeeded to the French throne as Henri II.

In the 18th century, Pedraza, with the rest of Spain, went into decline. In the 19th century it was in ruins and was practically uninhabited with the population dropping to around 30. And so it remained - dilapidated but intact and today, thanks to tourism, prosperity has returned.

Its beauty has drawn many artists and intellectuals to purchase homes and the architectural harmony of its streets has made Pedraza the ideal backdrop for historical films - Orson Welles filmed several scenes of *Chimes at Midnight* in Pedraza, and Bo Derek, Christopher Lee and Richard Chamberlain are just some of the actors who have heard the call of "Action!" here.

THE SHEEP

Sheep have long been the *raison d'être* of Pedraza. In imperial times the town owed its prosperity to the wool trade and few of today's visitors leave without trying its roast lamb. In times past, Pedraza was official supplier of lamb to the Royal Household and, in return, its young men were exempt from military service.

There are plenty of restaurants in Pedraza with the traditional wood-burning ovens, and roast lamb has made the town famous throughout Spain. But there's a limit to how much roast lamb one can eat in a day and, as no recommendations were forthcoming from the very diplomatic townspeo-

ple, I chose the most famous and most long-established restaurant - El Yantar de Pedraza. The service was exasperatingly slow but the lamb was just perfect.

A LEGEND

Every town has to have a famous legend to tell, and that of Pedraza is a frightful love story.
Elvira was the most beautiful young girl in the whole region and her beauty made up for the lack of riches in her family. Of all the hearts she conquered, the most seriously smitten was that of the young Roberto, as poor and as lowly of birth as she. But the devil was to send along a richer suitor - Sancho Ridaura, a powerful warrior of high birth with whom Roberto could never even dream of competing.
So, rather than having to witness the inevitable marriage or drowning his sorrows in the arms of another woman, he left the town to enter a monastery but a few years later he was sent back to Pedraza to replace the chaplain of Sancho Ridaura's castle, after his death. And during one of the many absences of the feudal lord, when he was in fact fighting with the troops of Alfonso VIII in the battle against the Moors at Las Navas de Tolosa (1212), the inevitable occurred in Pedraza castle - Roberto and Elvira consummated their love.
The husband's return was a triumphant one after the victory of the Christians, but rumor was soon to dampen his euphoria. Sancho Ridaura kept his head and devised a cruel and callous vengeance.
As part of the celebrations, a banquet was held which came to an abrupt halt when two beefy axemen came in bearing on an oak board a silver platter holding an iron crown with sharp, red-hot spikes. In the shocked silence, Sancho Ridaura stood up, put on protective gloves, calmly took the crown then suddenly forced it onto Roberto's head. Elvira fled and was found later in her room with a dagger piercing her heart.

***Diego Díaz** is a free-lance journalist and photographer. He collaborates with different publications.*

RECOMMENDATIONS

Visits:
The museum and home of Zuloaga, the painter: Although from the outside the castle looks fairly grim, it is surprisingly pleasant inside. Zuloaga restored the tower and converted it into a delightful, well-furnished home that is open to visitors. Several excellent paintings of his hang on the walls. Visits are guided but the castle is still the private property of the Zuloaga family and may be closed if the owners are in residence.

Shops:
Be warned! Pedraza is a dangerous place to go with a credit card. There are several, very tempting establishments: Natura, a most unexpected craft shop that lovers of good taste will be unable to leave empty-handed; Muebles Artesanos, certain to please those who appreciate skilled woodwork; and Estaños de Pedraza, which sells all sorts of objects made out of tin, the local speciality.

Interiors:
It is also worth seeing the interiors of some of the Pedraza homes and this is possible without having to disturb anyone's privacy by visiting Natura, the former palatial home of the Marquis of Pineda, or the Taberna del Alcalde, the former seat of the Miranda family in the Plaza Mayor, or La Hostería, once the headquarters of the Inquisition and today a restaurant.

Food:
The problem in Pedraza is how to choose from the plentiful supply of restaurants. Below is a list of the best-known of those that specialize in the typical roast lamb. It is advisable to telephone in advance because some only open at weekends when it is wise to book.

BODEGON MANRIQUE,
Procuradores, 6.
Tel.: (21) 50 40 79

EL JARDIN, La Calzada, 6.
Tel.: (21) 50 98 62

EL SOPORTAL,
Plaza Mayor, 10.
Tel.: (21) 50 98 26

EL YANTAR DE
PEDRAZA,
Plaza Mayor.
Tel.: (21) 50 98 42.

HOSTERIA DE TURISMO
DE PEDRAZA,
Matadero, 1.
Tel.: (21) 50 98 35.

MOLINO DEL MONTE,
Real, 5.
Tel.: (21) 50 99 26.

Accommodation:
Pedraza has just one establishment:
La Posada de Don Mariano,
Tel: (21) 50 98 86.

Not to be missed :
Everyone has different tastes but the following are the sights that most caught my eye.

- The gargoyles on the Castro palace in the Calle Real.
- The pointed corner balcony on the Casa de Pilatos in the same street.
- The large home of the Marquis de la Floresta. In spite of the grand name, it has no shield and is a beautiful example of popular architecture. Also in the Calle Real.
- Although Pedraza is so small it is impossible to get lost or to miss anything, a small guidebook can be bought in Natura or the tobacconist's.

Fiestas:
The Pedraza fiestas are held between September 7 and 12 in honor of the Virgen del Carrascal and include bull-running, bullfights, a religious procession and folk dancing.

ORO MAGINA

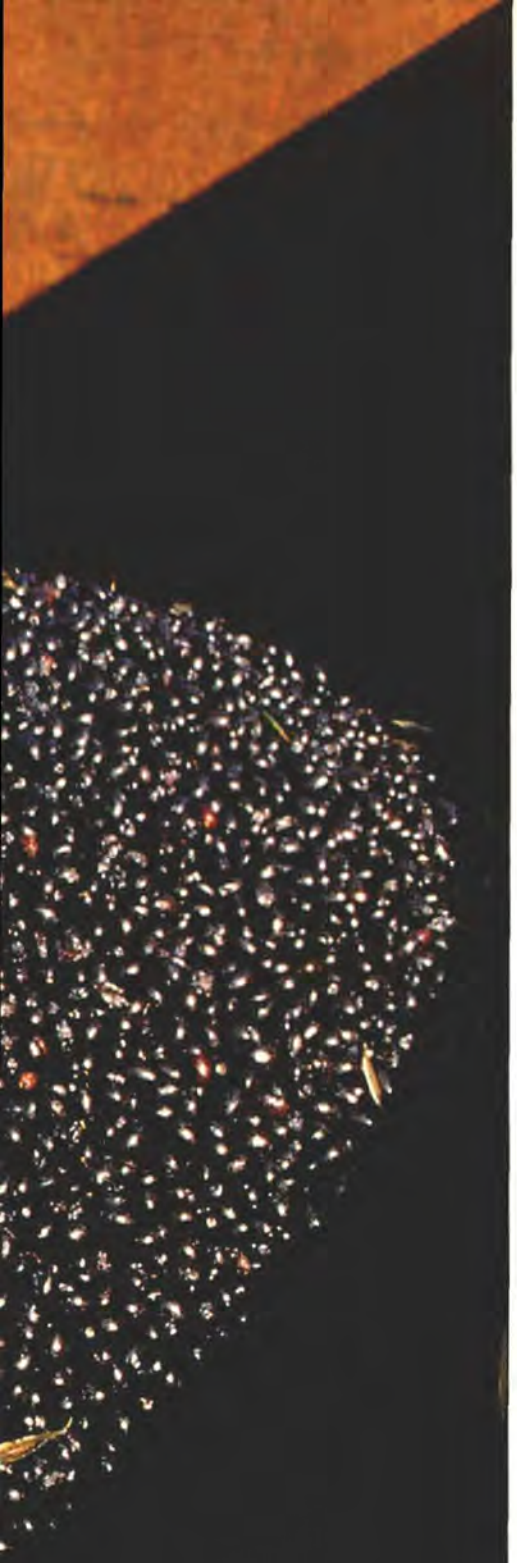
A Man Of the Mountains And His Olives

You can take the boy out of the country but it is much harder to take the country out of the man he will one day become. Juan José Viedma Gallardo of Jaen is resounding proof of this. He is the Chairman of the recently formed Oro Magina, one of the few vertically structured companies of the Jaen Province that owns and grows olive trees, harvests, then presses the fruit in their own plant and markets one of the finer extra-virigin olive oils of Spain.

Our story begins some forty years ago, when the young Juan José left his home and family in the Magina mountains. The great wealth of the province lay in the rich olive groves but his family was not part of the landholding class. They owned but a few hectares of mountain property, planted with just enough olive trees for the family's needs.

In those days and indeed until very recently, it was mainly the landed aristocracy who benefited from growing and selling the olives of Jaen. Most of the best olives went to Italian olive merchants, to be blended with Italian oils for sale in the markets of the world. Second pressings and small batches of olives were pressed by co-operatives for bulk sales and local consumption. As the landowners often said: "This is

Text: **Charles Powell** Photos: **Félix Lorrio/ICEX**



Thus By Necessity As Well As Choice, In Sierra Magina Trees Were Always Grown Organically, as today, Juan Jose and Javier Viedma still do.

the way we have been doing it since the days of the Caesars."

With the prospect of a bleak future in store if he stayed in Jaen, our young hero set out for Madrid to seek his fortune. He began as a construction laborer and eventually saw a better opportunity in the printing field. As the decades spun by, he became increasingly successful, eventually owning envelope-making and printing factories that made him a wealthy man. And always, there was the pull of the Magina mountains of Jaen beckoning him homeward. So home he went in the late 1980s, bringing with him the street and business smarts of a "Madrileño," a wider outlook on the world and a dream to build a company that could own the olive groves, process the fruit and market a quality extra-virigin olive oil. But we are getting ahead of our story.

In Tune with Nature

The Majestic Magina mountains have been scraping the skies of Southern Jaen since time began. In the 1950s it was inhabited by mountain folk who tended and harvested their semi-wild olive trees that clung precariously to the hillsides. They knew that their Picual olive trees, planted at elevations over 1,400 meters (4,200 feet), produced superior olives that were less susceptible to olive pests. They knew that their olives produced a higher percentage of oil than irrigated trees. They knew that the virgin earth of the mountains was far richer in nutrients and deeper in loam, making for better quality olives, even though the yield was less. On the other hand, their precarious hillsides were hardly suited to olive grove machinery that made growing and harvesting a simpler task at lower elevations. Thus by necessity as well as choice, their trees were invariable grown organically, though the work was more labor intensive.

In those days, the great majority of olive groves of Jaen were planted in neat, orderly rows on the rolling plains. Up in the mountains, the groves were much more in tune with nature. Wild boar roamed the hills making it a hunter's paradise. Those who lived in the mountains relied on a successful hunting season to supplement their diet. The meat became fine cured hams, superior roasts or well flavored sausages. Wild goats were everywhere, posing on rocky crags or grazing the upland meadows. The kids became holiday roasts and their droppings were used to fertilize the earth around the olive trees.

ORO MAGINA

The mountain air, cooled by altitude even on a hot summer day, was filled with the scent of thyme that French perfumers came to gather every summer, before chemical analogs were developed. Wildflower honey could be found easily if one knew how to make a beeline to their hives and many tended their own bee-hives. In those hills fig trees grew, drooping with fruit through summer, ready to be eaten out of hand or taken home for he mid-day meal. Rough roads of the day wound past the hillside olive trees and down the mountains, beside streams that fed wild blackberry bushes. Here and there, caperbushes grew. In spring there were tiny flower buds to be picked and cured into capers. Later in the season, after the fruit sets, there were caperberries to be had. Two weeks of brining in water and sea salt turned them into the kind of snack that was a perfect accompaniment to a cold glass of beer or a sip of chilled sherry.

Back to the Future

This was what it was like some 40 years ago in the Magina Mountains and was what drew Juan José Viedma back to the land of his birth. It is all still there, in the government area called the Parque Natural Sierra Magina. We can verify this because that is exactly how we experienced it just a few months ago, as we toured the Viedma Gallardo mountain groves, drove through the natural park and visited the processing plant where Oro Magina extra virgin olive oil is pressed and bottled. Last year, a provisional Denomination of Origin was issued to the oil produced in the Sierra Magina area.

Turning this dream into reality was not done in a day. The first step after purchasing the olive groves was to choose the name, Oro (gold) Magina. With our less-adaptable English tongue, the closest we can come to the proper pronunciation of Magina is "ma-hee-na," with a slight guttural sound to the "hee", as if clearing the throat. The next step was to design the bottle and label. They chose a bottle with the conical shape of an *alcuza*, a traditional container of Moorish origin, in earthenware or tinplate used to keep the oil at home.

The label represents the image of a peasant loading with olives the saddlebag on a donkey, an essential animal to climb the Sierra Magina mountains. Meanwhile, Juan José and his brother Javier Viedma Gallardo continued their search for a processing plant to complete the circle from groves or trees to finished olive oil.

An under-used processing plant came on the market, just outside the small town of Belmez de la Moraleda. They bought the plant and were ready to begin the marketing and sale of Oro Magina extra-virgin olive oil. To do it with the best chance of success, they joined a consortium that marketed fine foods from several areas of Spain. The products include Conservas Busto of Pais Vasco, processors of an olive-oil-packed white tuna fished along the Cantabrian coast, the Martiko Company from Navarre, who prepare *magret* and *foie gras*, a Segovia Serrano Ham maker and Bodegas Antaño, vintners in the D.O. of Rueda, Valladolid. For the English-speaking market, they called the company the "Spanish Delicious Morsels Consorcio," managed by Fernando Mailler.

A tour of the processing plant was a revelation, combining ancient and modern facilities, equipment and processes to create the extra-virigin oils of Oro Magina. On our visit, the plant stood silent in the October sun, waiting for the harvest that would begin in a matter of months. By December, the receiving machinery will start up, bringing olives to the washing and sorting stations atop the two story building. Cleaned, sorted and devoid of stray leaves and twigs, the olives will descend to a giant stone slab with heavy rollers that will grind them into a thick paste. This paste will then be layered onto giant presses, interspersed with grass mats called *esparto*. Gentle yet powerful pressure will be applied and the olives will give up their water and oil, which runs along canals to tile-lined tanks where the oil rises to the top to be siphoned off. There are a total of eight such tanks and as the oil flows from one to another, it becomes clearer and more golden in color. Only then is it transferred to large stainless steel holding tanks to await a final filtering and bottling. The actual bottling is done on order, by a machine that takes oil from the tanks, measures precise amounts of oil into sterilized bottles, which are then capped and packed by hand. After the inspection tour, we drove back across the mountains to the town of Baeza for a late lunch. The history of this charming town goes back to Roman times and there were strong Moorish connections as well. There are many historic buildings and a university that predates the discovery of the new world. Viedma's selection was the Casa Juanito, a most popular Andalusian restaurant and inn. A walk down the hall to the dining room, filled with pictures of contented patrons from His Majesty King Juan Carlos on down, makes one feel as though entering a true temple of gastronomy. We were not disappointed. There were *garbanzos* (chick peas) in olive oil to start, followed by *bacalao* (codfish) stuffed with *piquillo* peppers, poached partridge pâté in olive oil and grilled fish lightly seasoned with paprika, pepper and lemon. It was obviously a favorite of the Oro Magina people as a table by the dining room was filled with bottles and tins of Oro Magina extra-virigin olive oils.

At lunch, the conversation turned to the philosophy of marketing Oro Magina. Juan José Viedma told us that "just as one has to feed a pig to get the best meat, so one must feed the olive tree rich land to get the best olives." He also observed that "For the best olive oil, the olive must go from the tree to the press to the pantry and anything that slows down that process will hurt the oil." With total control from the trees to the bottles on a store shelf in the hands of one comapny, Oro Magina is in the right position to ensure that its oils meet the best criteria of great olive oil, quality not quantity.

We said our farewells at the Viedma Gallardo mountaintop home just as the sun was setting. He proudly showed us his boar's head trophies, at least one for each year he has been back in his beloved mountains of Jaen. His parting words were; "Before, our best olives were taken by the Italians but now we are creating great oils from the best olives of Jaen." We had to agree.

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

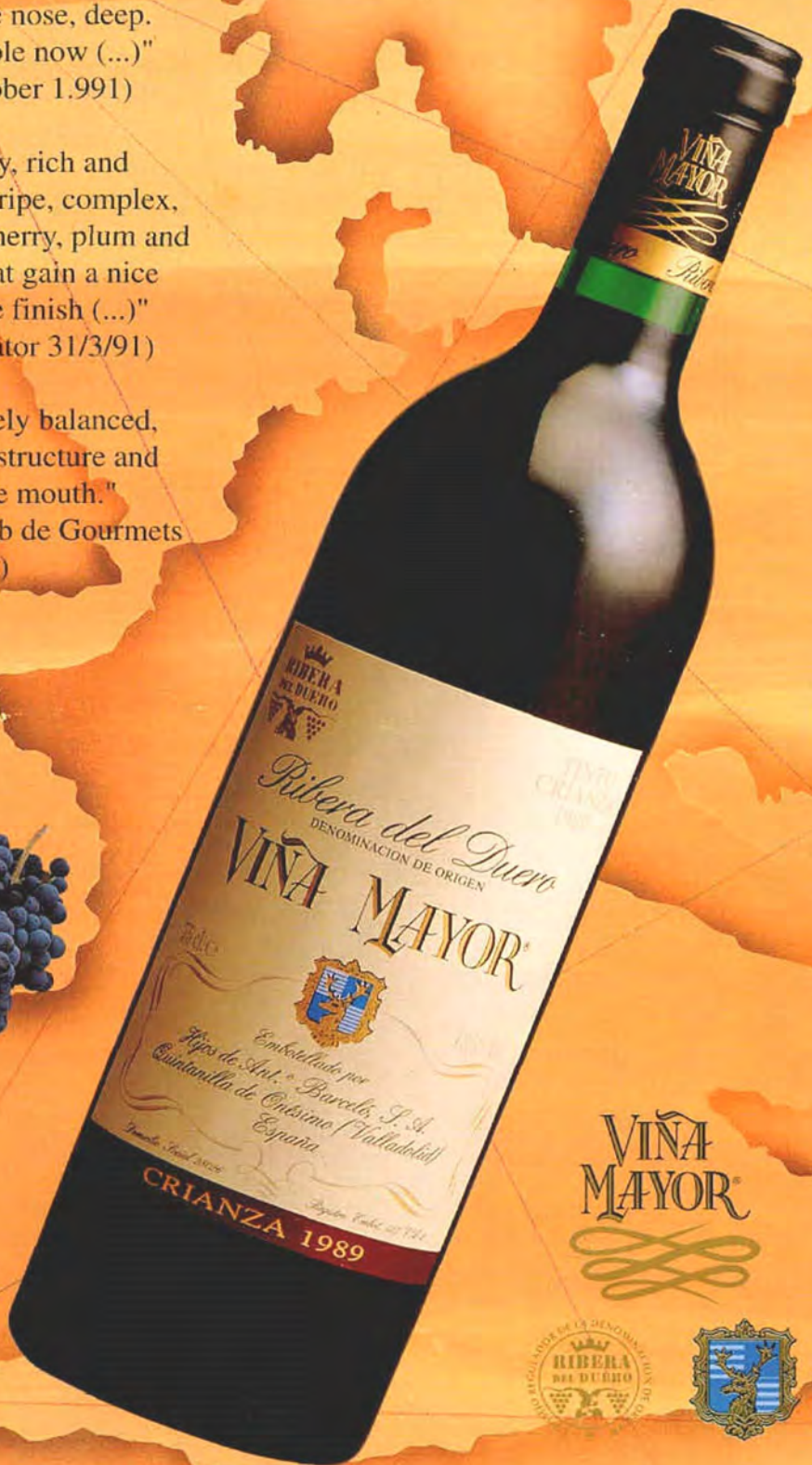
BY DECANTER ● "BEST SPANISH WINE" BY STICHING WINE ● "BEST BUYS"

"SEE WHAT THE CRITICS ARE SHOUTING ABOUT"

"Very drinkable, purple colour. Good fruit on the nose, deep. Certainly drinkable now (...)"
(Decanter, October 1.991)

"Intensely fruity, rich and concentrated, with ripe, complex, well proportioned cherry, plum and currant flavors that gain a nice spicy edge on the finish (...)"
(The Wine Spectator 31/3/91)

"Potent, tasty, finely balanced, with an excellent structure and character in the mouth."
(Wine Tasting - Club de Gourmets Guide)



VIÑA MAYOR

RIBERA DEL DUERO

EQUIPO TRES

● "BEST RIBERA DEL DUERO" BY DECANTER ● "TOP VALUE" BY WINE AND SPIRIT ● "HIGHLY RECOMMENDED"

BY THE WINE SPECTATOR ● THE GOLDEN HOOP AWARD IN THE NATIONAL WINE FAIR ●

AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN THE INTERNATIONAL WINE FAIR IN PARIS

Peñaranda de Duero boasts the Church of Santa Ana with its baroque portal. The three busts at the top and the columns are Roman and come from the nearby town of Clunia, founded at the time of the Emperor Augustus.

The river Duero is the lifeblood of this area seen here in its winter colors - a patchwork in shades of brown.

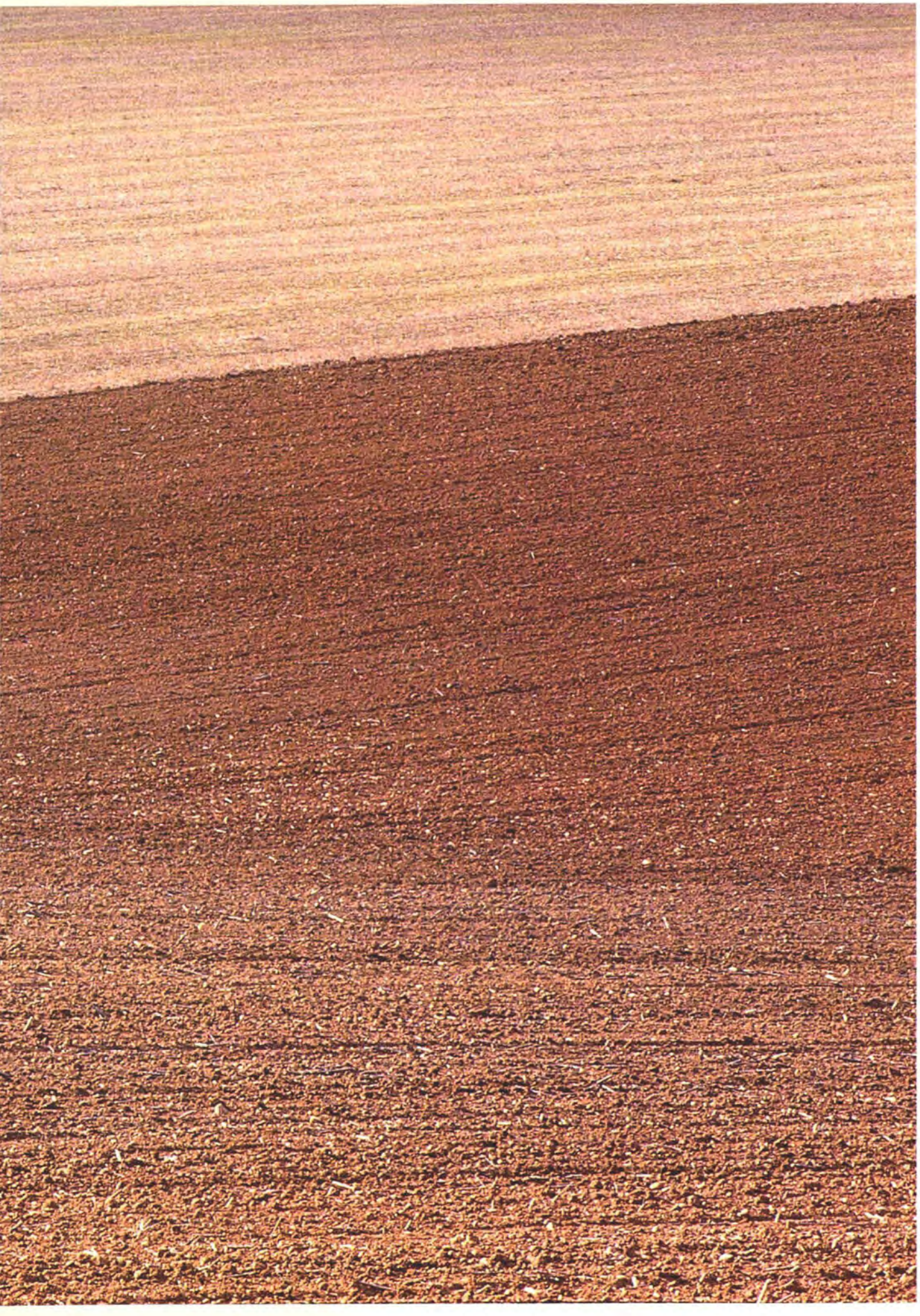
Ribera del Duero

KEEPING THE PROMISES

In spring, the southern part of Castile-Leon takes on an almost alpine look, with roadside verges carpeted with wildflowers in every imaginable color, crystal-clear blue skies and rippling fields of green crops waiting for the summer sunshine to ripen them. The soil is fertile, the air is clean and crisp, and the altitude - if not exactly alpine - is about as high as it's possible to go in Spain and still make a living out of growing vines.

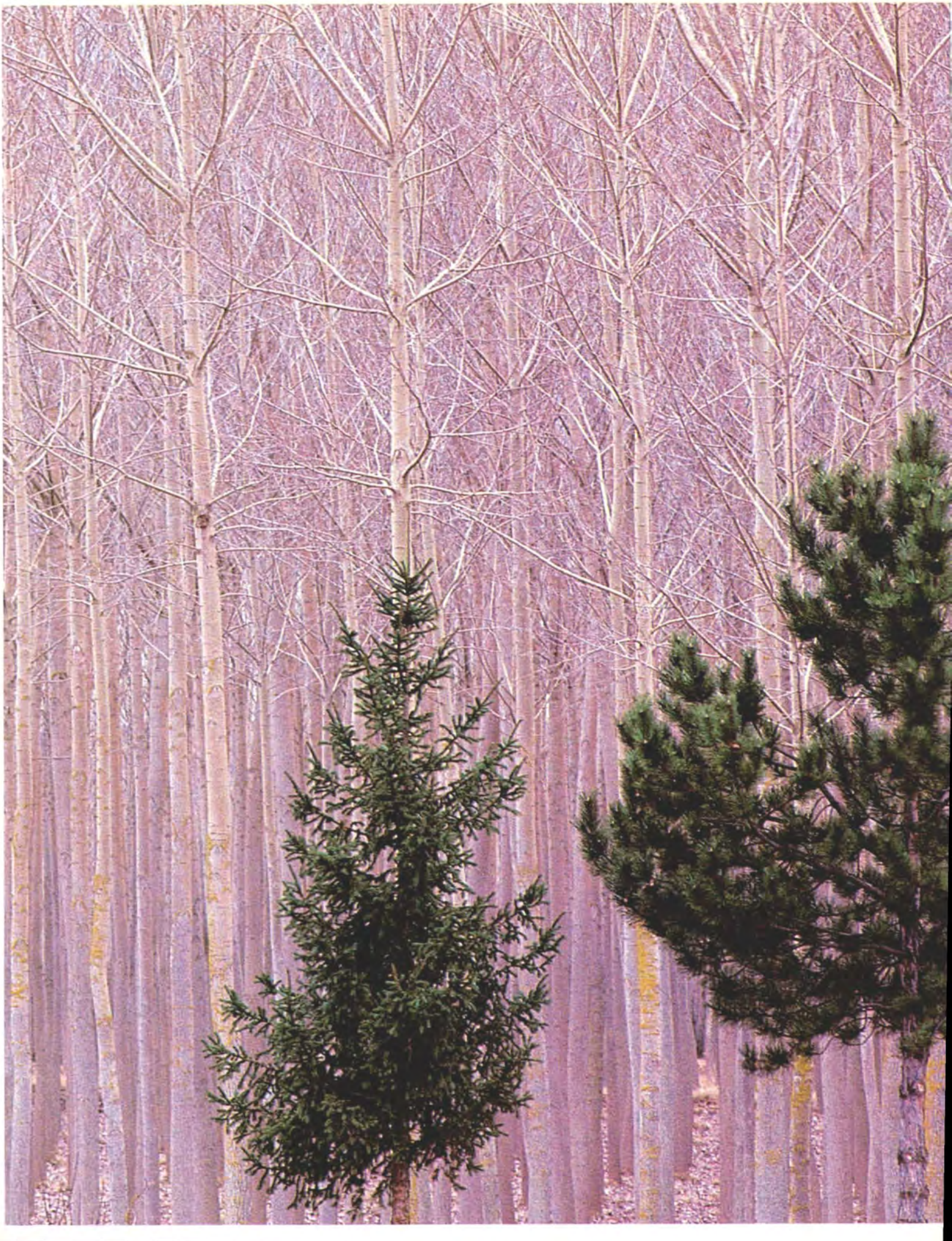
The river Duero rises in the Urbion mountains at an altitude of 2,200 meters (7,216 feet) to the northwest of the city of Soria. It flows southeast through the city, then south to Almazan and finally and inexorably west, descending gently from El Burgo de Osma in the province of Soria towards Quintanilla de Onésimo in the province of Valladolid, and it is amongst the alpine meadows and mountain valleys of this highland stretch of the river that the vineyards of Ribera del Duero are to be found.

Text: **John Radford**
Photos: **Carlos Navajas/ICEX**



The austere landscape of the Castilian meseta reflects a climate of extremes - scorching hot summers, freezing winters and scarce rainfall.

The Plaza del Coso in Peñafiel in the province of Valladolid is an unusual square with a wooden structure and just one entrance. Bullfights used to be held here.



Pines and poplars are the most common trees here. The dense poplar groves along the banks of the Duero are a typical feature of the Castilian landscape.

The combination of soils, altitude, climate and grape in this area make it one of the most exciting in Spain, and potentially one of the finest in Europe.

The combination of soils, altitude, climate and grape in this area make it one of the most exciting in Spain, and potentially one of the finest in Europe.

However, the history of Ribera del Duero wine began long before there were experts to analyze the soil and monitor the meteorology. In the middle ages when the kings and queens of Castile ruled from Valladolid, the trade was already governed by regulations concerning how the grapes should be harvested, and the wine made. The soft, chalky bedrock of the region is easily worked, labyrinthine cellars were tunneled underneath the countryside to store the wines in a cool, stable environment, and the industry did well.

The modern history of Ribera del Duero begins in the mid-19th century. In the 1850s Bordeaux was the world's biggest wine port, and most of Europe's investment, development and expertise was concentrated there. Noblemen from every country, whilst disporting themselves in Paris, enjoyed the wine of Bordeaux, and a number of them set out to prove that they could do just as well at home. There are plantations all over Europe to this day which show the Bordeaux legacy, from southern Russia to northern Italy, and, most successful of all, Rioja. The pioneers imported Bordeaux vines, techniques and, perhaps most importantly Bordeaux *barricas:* good, sound oak casks of 225 liters.

In Ribera del Duero the pioneer was Don Eloy Lecanda Chaves, who established a bodega in the village of Valbuena at a place called Pago de la Vega de Santa Cecilia y Carrascal, in 1864. He brought with him not only Bordeaux technology but also a winemaker called Txomin Garramiola, who had trained in France. They planted Cabernet-Sauvignon, Merlot and Malbec from Bordeaux, and, just for experiment's sake, some of the local grape, known simply as the Tinta del País - the 'region red'.

Three Key Discoveries

The first thing that Don Eloy discovered was that the soil was ideal for vines: plenty of chalk, well-drained, rich in trace-elements and easily worked. The second thing he discovered was that the climate at this altitude was unforgiving: the summer heat is powerful in the Duero valley, but the nights can be very cool indeed, and frost is a peril right into early June, when it can damage the flowering, and again from mid-September when it can reduce a potential harvest to nothing. Only the healthiest vines and the most exact vineyard care would produce good enough grapes for the kind of quality wine he wanted to make.

The third thing he learned was that, under these conditions, the 'Region Red' grape had the potential to be an outstanding performer. Indeed, in drier years, because of its acclimatization to the area, it made better and more reliable wine than the Cabernet-Sauvignon. We now know that the Tinta del País - or Tinta Fina as it's also known - comes from the same stock as the excellent Tempranillo of northern Spain. However, several hundred years of separate development have bred a different strain in the Duero - thinner-skinned and earlier-ripening, when fully mature it gives up its juice under the most gentle of pressings, providing the most tender and delicious of wines when young, yet with the inner strength to mellow out in the cask into something quite magnificent.

By the turn of the 20th century the original Lecanda plantation - with its name now truncated to Vega Sicilia - was internationally known as one of Spain's very finest and rarest wines. Don Eloy's neighbors might not be able to go to Bordeaux for vines, but they had seen what kind of prices his Tinta del País wines were commanding, and had been investing in *barrica* technology of their own.

So these, then, were the factors which formed the foundation of Ribera del Duero's success as a wine-producing region: the right climate, with plenty of sunshine but unforgiving winters and cold summer nights; good soil, with plenty of active chalk and useful trace elements; a native grape - the Tinta Fina - which, handled well, performs splendidly under these conditions; and a pioneering search for quality which demonstrated early on that there was more money to be earned by producing a small amount of good wine than a large amount of *vino corriente* (ordinary wine).

New Bodegas for the New Century

New bodegas were founded throughout the 20th century: Peñalba Lopez in Aranda de Duero was one of the earliest, in 1903. The cooperative movement began in 1927 with Bodegas Ribera-Duero, in the cellars beneath the castle at Peñafiel, and the last co-op to be established was Virgen de las Viñas in 1963, at Aranda. Meanwhile, private bodegas had also been founded to take advantage of the area's unique qualities, from Bodegas Valduero in Gumiel de Mercado (1957) to Perez Pascuas in Pedrosa de Duero in 1980.

By now, there was a groundswell of opinion amongst the *bodegueros* that Ribera del Duero could only proceed further in the market-place if it had the *Denominación de Origen*. This, however did not prove to be an instant passport to export success. The DO was awarded in 1982, but export-minded bodegas quickly discovered that northern Europe, the prime market for their wines, was in the grip of recession and, although the wine market was still buoyant, it was newcomers from Australia, New Zealand and California that were pulling down the headlines and being reviewed in the gastronomic columns of the fashionable color-supplements.

As bodegas eased back on their production to ride out the situation, some contract vine-growers - particularly smaller, family-owned concerns - decided to get out of the wine business altogether, grubbed up their vines

In the Middle Ages the trade of Ribera del Duero wine was already governed by regulations concerning how the grapes should be harvested, and the wine made.

and planted other, more profitable crops. Some bodegas were sold, some cooperatives were closed or their premises taken over by private companies, and many people in the area wondered if it had all been worthwhile.

However, patience is a virtue, and those bodegas that had taken the longer view were rewarded in the second half of the 1980s, when the export market was, once again, looking for something new. One of the great success stories of this period was that of Alejandro Fernández in Pesquera (See Spain Gourmetour nº18), whose 1986 vintage was acclaimed by the American wine-critic Robert Parker as being "Spain's Château Pétrus".

Suddenly, sleepy old bodegas woke up to the fact that, after all this time, they still had the potential to make one of the world's great wines. By 1989 Ribera del Duero was at least on the agenda of major wine-buyers from all over Europe and America, and in the early 1990s the wines began to win prizes in international competitions in numbers out of all proportion to the size of the region.

In addition, something else was happening, out in the countryside. A new generation of farmers was taking over from the one that had worked so hard to obtain the DO for Ribera del Duero wines. Many of these younger people suddenly realized that the ten or twenty hectares of cereals or cabbages which had passed to them from old Uncle José were actually registered as vineyard land under the DO in 1982, and Uncle José had replanted them. With the new interest in Ribera del Duero wines, the land was vastly increased in value, and could be planted with vines once more. Some families took things a stage further. Having inherited or replanted some vineyards, why should they continue to sell their grapes to the local bodega? Why not establish a new winery and go into business for themselves?

Quality ... and competitivity

Increased land values helped many of these aspirants to win the investment to build their own, new 'boutique' wineries and 1992 saw the first wines made in many of them: by husband-and-wife teams such as at Bodegas Rodero in Pedrosa de Duero, or brothers such as at Bodegas Viña Sastre, or mixed family and outside investors such as Pago de Carraovejas in Peñafiel, Vega Izan at Aranda de Duero and La Cepa Alta at Olivares de Duero. Larger-scale new investment is in evidence as well, such as the space-age winery of Hacienda Monasterio, in the privileged soils of the village of Pesquera. Inside five years the bodegas of Ribera del Duero have evolved even beyond the successes of the late 1980s. As confidence flooded back into the market, so confidence has returned in the intrinsic quality of the wines. Even some of the biggest cooperatives - which are not known for their speed in reacting to market conditions elsewhere in Spain - are turning out better and better wines with an ever-stricter attention to quality control.

So what does this imply in terms of price? Javier Zaccagnini, Director of the Consejo Regulador (Regulatory Council) in Roa de Duero, is as keen to keep Ribera del Duero wines out of the low price-bracket as he is to prevent bodegas from getting over-enthusiastic and asking for too much.

"We're a small, high-quality area," he says. "Our wines offer tremendous value for money to the kind of people who know good quality and are prepared to pay for it - say £5-£10 a bottle in the UK, or $10-$20 in America - and we must remain competitive. At the same time, wine that's sold off cheaply because it's of poor quality or has gone out of condition has no right to bear the *contraetiqueta* (back-label) of the Consejo Regulador. We believe that the name Ribera del Duero stands for quality above all else, and it's our job to maintain that quality at all costs." Zaccagnini is currently campaigning for the back label to be awarded for a six-month period only, with wines having to be retasted for renewal of the *Denominación* on a regular basis until they're bottled - that's how seriously the Consejo Regulador takes quality control.

Before the end of the century, the replanted vineyards will be mature, the new wineries seasoned and fully operational, and the market fully aware of the wines of Ribera del Duero. If the region keeps the promises of its pioneers, its commitment over the years, and its new spirit of confidence, then the results are likely to be spectacular.

John Radford *is an English wine, food and travel journalist. He writes on a regular basis for several newspapers and magazines including Wine and Decanter, the UK's foremost wine publications.*

THE MOST EXCLUSIVE OF WINES

The River Duero bisects the northern half of Spain's high central plateau known as Castile-Leon. Fed by tributaries whose sources lie high in winter snow-capped 1,500 and 1,800 meter (5,000 and 6,000 foot) mountain ranges, the Duero flows across central northern Spain, down through northern Portugal, where it becomes the Douro, and out into the Atlantic.

This is the river along the banks of which some of the Iberian

VEGA SICILIA

Text: **John Reeder** Photos: **Carlos Navajas/ICEX**

VEGA SICILIA

peninsula's finest wines are made: from mature old vintage tawny ports to the fine distinctive red wines of Toro, from the highly individual Verdejo-varietal whites of Rueda to the thoroughbred elegant red reservas of the Ribera del Duero. A river with an exceptional wine-producing pedigree.

The flagship of the Ribera del Duero

In the Castilian uplands, just across the river Duero from the 13th century monastery of Valbuena where Cistercian monks planted their vineyards to make communion wine, lies that most exclusive of all Spain's bodegas, Vega Sicilia. The flagship of the Ribera del Duero Denomination of Origin, Vega Sicilia is a family winery whose entire production is already sold before it is bottled - demand for the superb red *reserva* Valbuena 5th year and Vega Sicilia Cosecha Unica (single vintage) outstripping supply by approximately four times. The bodega has a list of over a thousand desperate winelovers waiting to join those privileged few long-time customers who receive their annual ration of a case or two.

In the savagely competitive world of wine producing (and selling) such an extraordinary state of affairs requires some sort of explanation. At this point perhaps a little historical background to the Vega Sicilia story would not go amiss. The bodega's origins go back to 1848 when the Marquis of Valbuena bought the vineyards known as the Sicilia Meadows and set up a winery called Bodegas Lecanda. At some time towards the end of the 19th century or the very beginning of the 20th, a transfusion of winemaking technology and noble grape varieties from phylloxera-stricken Bordeaux took place. Borelais grape varieties such as Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Malbec were planted alongside the indigenous black Tinto fino grape and the resulting coupage was aged in oak casks according to Bordeaux traditions. The still small family winery seems to have acquired mythical status in the years around the outbreak of the First World War, the first bottle of that red reserva wine called Vega Sicilia being made by a Basque winemaker then employed at the winery, Domingo Garramiola, in 1915. The then owner, Luis Herrero, a hunting and shooting man, used apparently to give away bottles of Vega Sicilia to his aristocratic fellow sportsmen. In fact, more wine appears to have been distributed as presents than the amount he actually sold, which was the beginning of the myth of the exquisite wine only available to a select group of friends, virtually unobtainable through the trade of cash.

The Alvarez family

Since 1982 the winery has belonged to a family of successful entrepreneurs: the Alvarez. Far from seeking short-term profit maximization and falling into the temptation of over-increasing production, however, and despite having made a more than a million dollar investment in the bodega and vineyards since 1984, the Alvarez family have stabilized production at the level of earlier times, at a figure of around two hundred to two hundred and forty thousand bottles a year, a quantity of wine if anything, slightly less than that made in the 1970s. The distribution and commercialization of Vega Sicilia has, however, been rationalized and a more significant quota of production, between a fifth and a quarter, allocated to export markets. A new, younger generation of grape growers on the estate has been professionally trained to the highest standards, older vines have been replaced in an extensive replanting program and new vineyards have been acquired and planted in an effort to control directly all the stages of wine production from vine to bottle on the *Château* estate principle. Once again, the temptation to overextend vineyards to less suitable terrains has nevertheless been firmly resisted and the nucleus of the Vega Sicilia estate remains essentially within the same territorial limits as always.

The drive to control the whole process of grape-growing and wine-making also led the Alvarez family to set up their own cooper's workshop to make their own casks and repair and care for the huge wooden vats and French and American oak barrels used for storing, aging and maturing their wines. Having their own coopers enables Vega Sicilia to carefully select the kind of wood they need, close-pored Nevers oak, for example, open-air dry and cure it to their own satisfaction - and to fashion their own barrels to their own specifications, all processes vitally important to a winery which places so much emphasis on barrel-aging.

Of course, the production of a first class wine is always subject to one variable over which the winery can have no control: the weather. It is a costly decision to make but in order to guarantee that their wine will always be of the highest possible quality, in years of poor vintage Vega Sicilia does not vinify. Nor is there any question of the salvage from poorer vintages being blended in with wine from better years to fill out production: the grape harvest is simply sacrificed and no Vega Sicilia or Valbuena 5th year is made that year.

A renowned oenologist

The author of Vega Sicilia, although he would almost certainly be horrified by the term, since 1970, is one of Spain's more renowned oenologists: Mariano García. A self-effacing Castilian still only in his late forties, García is in many senses the Keeper of the Ring: the man who has prolonged and kept alive the older winemaking traditions of Vega Sicilia, remaining faithful to barrel-aging, to the tried and tested proportions of the different grape varieties which go to make Vega Sicilia, eschewing cold fermentation and excessive clarification of the wine, which would detract from its personality. Yet this respect for traditional wine-making is tempered with a profound knowledge of, and use of, current oenological practice and winemaking technology as befits a relatively young winemaker.

It was he who took us round the bodega. What first impressed was a cleanliness more appropriate to an operating theater than a winery. Contrary to popular imagination, fine wine is rarely made in those mold encrusted, cobweb bedecked, picturesquely disheveled wineries which claim to be artisanal. Cleanliness is essential to, and symptomatic of, careful winemaking practice.

Vega Sicilia makes two red *reserva* wines: Valbuena 5th year is wine in its fifth year, i.e. more than four years old, which has spent two years in oak cask, followed by at least twelve to fifteen months in the bottle; Vega Sicilia is a red wine which undergoes a more prolonged period of barrel aging, four years, followed by a minimum of three further years in a bottle. Before some of my readers throw up their hands aghast at those four years in oak - But surely the wine will be completely maderized and taste of nothing but wood? I hear them exclaim - let me explain about the casks used. These are made of selected French close-pored Nevers

oak which itself impedes any rapid process of oxidation. Secondly, the casks are old barrels which have become impregnated with wine -*envinado* in the parlance of the winemen. That is to say that the pores of the wood have virtually become sealed, the wood hardly breathes in any air at all and the amount of woody substances the old casks impart to the wine, the tannins and lignins, is, thanks to this permeation of the wood with wine, negligible. In fact, there is probably little difference between the evolution of the wine in these old casks and aging the wine in the bottle. But a slight and significant difference there is. Those years in old oak round out the wine, allow for a very, very, slow aging process which lends the wine that infinitely subtle, inimitable, silky finish, typical of Vega Sicilia.

The coupage

Vega Sicilia's two red wines are the product initially of the judicious blending of wines from different provenances. The coupage is made both of wine made from the different authorized grape varieties, and of wine made from grapes coming from different vineyards, previously separated out in huge oak vats, the *tinas*. Only experience and a detailed knowledge of how that year's vintage evolved, vineyard by vineyard, will tell the winemaker what portions and proportions to blend to obtain the wine he wants.

Very broadly, however, Vega Sicilia's red wines are made from a blend of grapes which roughly correspond to the composition of the grape varieties planted in its around two hundred hectares (500 acres) of vineyards: 60 - 65% Tinta fina, 20 - 25% Cabernet Sauvignon and the rest Merlot and Malbec. The basis of the individual character of the wines of Vega Sicilia is then an indigenous noble grape variety, the Tinta fina (the Ribera del Duero's version of the thoroughbred black grape of the Rioja, Tempranillo) which is blended with the long acclimatized Bordeaux grape, Cabernet Sauvignon, and in smaller proportions, with other Bordeaux varieties, Merlot and Malbec.

Notice, however, that the key words here are "long acclimatized" - Cabernet Sauvignon is not here a recent arrival, the product of a belated attempt to jump on the bandwagon of the variety's current fashionableness and recent world-wide commercial success. After around a century in residence, Vega Sicilia's Cabernet Sauvignon is in reality an indigenous Ribera del Duero grape variety.

Acclimatized noble grape varieties, the raw materials of wine; a long individual tradition of careful winemaking, blending and aging; long experience of cask aging techniques. We asked Mariano García what above all would he single out as the differential factor which determined the exceptional quality and unique personality of the wines of Vega Sicilia. Obviously we were asking for the impossible; no one factor exists in isolation from the others, all go to make up a specific and unrepeatable combination. Nevertheless, García surprised us by talking about the micro-climate of the Ribera del Duero - above all the conditions in the Ribera in September and October, the period of the final phase of the ripening of the grapes and the *vendimia*, the grape harvest: long, sunny, hot, dry days followed by short, cold, often very cold nights. It is this which at least partly explains why such an elegant, and not at all corpulent, red wine with that necessary touch of acidity can be made so far south in Europe. And with similar care, attention and imagination devoted to their winemaking, there is no reason whatsoever why the other winemakers of the Ribera del Duero cannot similarly capitalize on this micro-climatic idiosyncracy, and as they are beginning to show, make first-class quality wines.

Prestige projects

What then of the future for Vega Sicilia? The Alvarez family have recently set up a small new winery in the Ribera del Duero, Bodegas Almez. Thirty hectares (75 acres) of vineyard planted with the same varieties as Vega Sicilia have been used to make thirty thousand bottles of a red reserva wine, Alion. A little younger than Valbuena 5th year, Alion will have spent eighteen months in new French oak and twelve months in the bottle. The first vintage, 1991, will be on the shelves during the winter of 1994 / 1995.

The Ribera del Duero has never been a white-wine-producing area and Vega Sicilia have until now been unwilling to offer a white wine from another D.O. The ideal complement to a vintage Bordeaux red was always thought to be a white Sauternes to be drunk as a dessert wine, and a similar line of thought seems to have played a part in Vega Sicilia's choice of a white wine for the bodega. What better partner for a Vega Sicilia than a dessert white made from grapes which have undergone the process of *pourriture noble*, the botrytic noble rot? The Alvarez family, after lengthy and complex negociations, decided on one of Europe's great white dessert wines as a stable mate for their legendary red wines: Tokay of Hungary.

In a joint venture with the Hungarian government, Vega Sicilia has acquired a 74% controlling interest in one of Hungary's finest Tokay bodegas. A transfer of commercial, oenological and viticultural expertise from Vega Sicilia to Hungary is taking place under the watchful eyes of the Alvarez family and Mariano García, which should make the half-bottles of the new Vega Sicilia Tokay to be called Oremus well worth waiting for.

These widening dimensions of the world of winemaking - as in other activities, national frontiers are becoming less and less commercially relevant - have led to the setting up of a kind of international club of the world's twelve most prestigious family-owned and run wineries. Vega Sicilia had already acted for some years as representatives on behalf of *Romanee Conti* and has now been asked to join their French friends in the *Primum Familiae Vini* other members of which include family names such as Rothschild, Antinori or Mondavi, and also Torres.

Okay, the wines of Vega Sicilia sound mouth-watering, but how, I hear my readers wail, if it's so fiendishly exclusive, do I get my hands on a bottle? Well, the good news is that more and more Vega Sicilia is finding its way onto export markets, so keep asking your favorite importer for some. And then I'll let the globetrotters amongst you into a secret. If you are ever in Madrid - an interesting city for a visit, by the way - there are two places you can always count on finding a bottle or two of Valbuena 5th year and a good range of Vega Sicilia vintages in optimum condition: the finest of the city's traditional restaurants, Zalacaín, and a little wineshop near the city center called Siguero. Happy hunting.

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.*

Spanish Meat

Away from wealthy tables, fresh meat has been a strictly seasonal luxury in Spain until modern times. "The cow for nobility, sheep for wealth, pig for hidden treasure and goat when all else fails," ran one proverb, summing up Spanish tastes. In the last thirty years, though, all that has changed. Now meat-producing is the most important agricultural sector, although it has hung on to traditional ideas of quality.

A Cut above the Rest

In court and aristocratic meals from medieval times onwards, meat was as much a display of wealth as something to eat. Since more often than not it came roasted in large hunks, there was much interest in carving. Indeed early medieval books, such as the Marquis of Villena's 15th century *Arscisoria*, were often mainly carving manuals. His itemization of meats which made their way onto Spanish tables included various animals found only in safari parks: buffalo, camel, wild sheep and badgers.

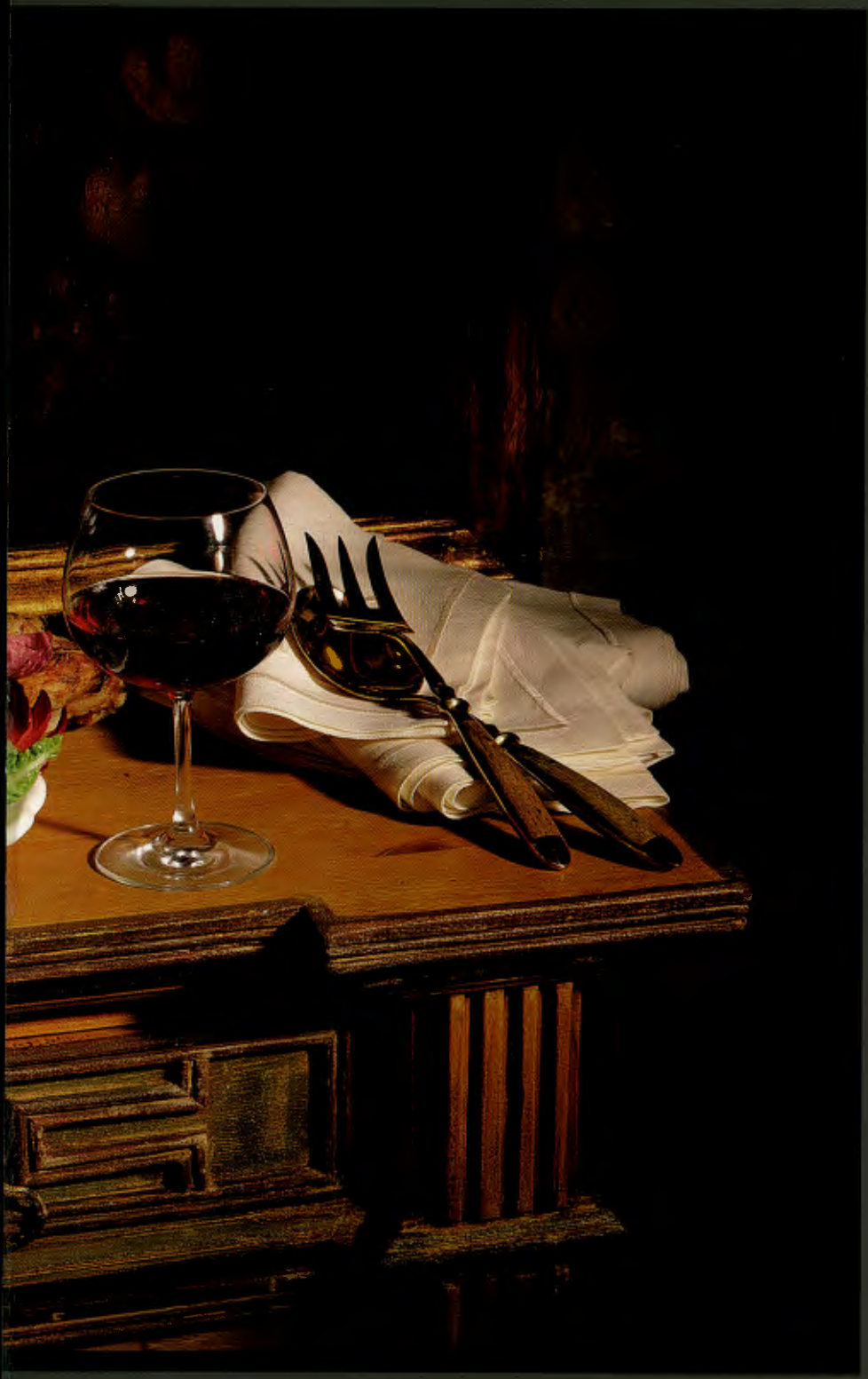
With the arrival of the Bourbons in the 18th century, French sauced dishes became fashionable among the rich. But the roasts and grills survived as popular food and, even today, woodsmoke is the most characteristic flavor of Spanish meat cookery. Likewise, carving remains a modern

Text: **Vicky Hayward** Still Lives: **Menchu Artime** Photos: **Antonio de Benito/ICEX**

Even
today, woodsmoke is the most
characteristic flavor of Spanish
meat cookery.

Veal is much appreciated in Spain and often forms part of succulent dishes. Breeders are now going back to raising traditional local breeds of cattle.

In Castile, the meat of young lambs is traditionally roasted in wood-burning ovens. The lamb is roasted for a short time at a very high temperature resulting in tender and juicy meat beneath a crisp, golden crust.



Roast suckling pig is another classic Castilian dish. As with lamb, young animals are preferred for their tender meat.

A Cut above the Rest

Iberian art, whether it's the slivering of thickly cut, smoky chops or the slicing of Segovian suckling pig so tender it cuts with a plate.

Away from wealthy tables, fresh meat was eaten only occasionally. Country families might slaughter a veal-calf when it was weaned or a lamb for Christmas, Carnival - a major meat-eating festival - or Easter. But oxen were for work and sheep for wool, usually killed only when they met some mishap or had come to the end of their working lives. So, for most of the year, meat came mainly from the family pig, slaughtered in winter to be turned into sausages and hams with the loin preserved in fat and the bones and other chunks salted. One or other of these would be used to flavor a stew of beans and vegetables, then taken out and eaten after the stew as the second course.

Another fallback was *cecina* or *tasajo,* salted and dried jerk -beef or mutton, veal, goat or mule - which can still be found in butchers in Castile-Leon, although these days it is a gourmet product. Religious fast-days - not only Lent, but also three days a week till the last century - helped to gloss over the lack of meat. Even so, the poor often turned to bones for flavor or pure fat, which was highly rated for the amount of energy it gave.

MODERN PRODUCTION, TRADITIONAL TASTES

This pattern of meat eating began to change around thirty years ago, as Spain emerged from the long years of hunger following the Civil War (1936-1939). In the ration books of the 1940s, even tinned meat didn't figure. But between 1960 and 1975, total meat production tripled. Intensive methods were increasingly adopted. Economically, meat production has become the most important agricultural sector, employing 42% of the workforce and representing the same proportion of output.

Nonetheless, methods are still not as intensive as elsewhere. Some 10% of meat is not produced intensively and many country families still keep their own pigs. The use of growth-promoters, antibiotics, and other feed additives is rare, and Spain has as yet had no cases of BSE or other such diseases arising from these methods.

At the same time, tastes have remained traditional. Pork, veal and young lamb are the most prized meats, and it is here that producers excel. Since tenderness is preferred to flavor, beef is eaten young and with rosy-colored flesh rather than the mature red meat preferred in France and Britain. In northern Spain, meat is often grilled under a huge chimney hood and in the central meseta it's roasted in the domed brick ovens which date back to the Moslem period.

In recent years it has also become clear that the Spanish consumer - who spends 20% of his or her food budget on meat - is now becoming as concerned with quality as quantity, and is prepared to pay for it.

BEEF

Beef production in Spain took off in the 1970s after government subsidies encouraged rearers to leave their veal calves to mature into beef. These days Spaniards each eat an average of 12 kilos a year, three-quarters of it *carne añojo* - that is young, light red beef from animals aged between 10 and 18 months when slaughtered.

Traditionally, the highest quality beef comes from cool northern regions, especially Galicia and neighboring Asturias, which have lush pastures for grass-feeding. Over three-quarters of Galicia's agricultural land is dedicated to grazing pasture, primarily for beef cattle. Although some breeds are imported - Charolais, for example, is found in the Basque country - the majority are native. Both the tawny-brown and white Rubia Gallega and the mountaineering Asturian are fine meat breeds with flesh evenly marbled by fat.

Since landholdings are small-scale, herds are too. Often, there may be less than a dozen cattle on a family farm that operates as it has done for a century. This produces high quality, slowly matured beef, but is scarcely economically viable. In recent years, cattle-rearers have begun to group together to share centralized slaughtering, distribution and quality control. One such operation, Asturiana de Carnes, founded in 1990, brings together 250 cattle-rearers who sell top quality free-range mature beef. This is one way production is likely to move in the future.

Outside the green north, cattle-rearing is largely intensive, with grain-fed herds in Castile, Andalusia and Catalonia. The meseta also has native breeds. Both the black Iberian *Avileño* and the bison-like *Morucha* from Salamanca - which are said to be distant relatives of undomesticated Asian cattle - give the richly colored, strong-flavored meat of rough-grazing animals adapted to the sparsely vegetated flatlands.

In the last five years all these native breeds have come into their own to become the basis of quality-labels registered through the EC (similar schemes are also pending for Retinta and Pirenaica, from the central and eastern Pyrenees). Quality control starts at birth, carries through rearing processes and diets - from natural milk to additive-free grain - and extends to spot-checks on retail outlets. Slaughtering in all cases has to meet EC standards and be stress-free. Although still in their early years and with very small production, these denominations already have a good market for their meat.

The pattern of meat exports since entry into the EC in 1989 reflects Spanish tastes. Since they like younger meat, it's older beef from dairy animals *(vaca)* that is exported, principally to France. Now, some *añojo* (young beef) is also being exported to Italy.

VEAL

While in many countries the whiteness of veal flesh is a sign of desirability, Spain prefers its veal *(ternera)* pink. For this reason, controversial intensive rearing systems have never been introduced here: all Spanish veal comes from calves which are grass and - or - grain-fed after weaning. As a result, the meat has more flavor and a thicker protective layer of fat than white milk-fed veal.

The main producing area is, again, Galicia. Here, 300,000 veal calves are reared every year, within which 35,000 are reared within DO controls set up in 1989. This year, the denomination - called *Ternera Gallega* - received subsidies from the EC as part of a Europe-wide scheme to encourage humanely reared meat. Calves must be free-range and

spend all their lives with their mother before being slaughtered at 7-8 months of age. They weigh 220-230 kilos. Some 5,000 producers now work within these controls, but if the scheme continues to follow the same pattern of expansion, that number is expected to triple in the next few years.

On a much smaller scale, quality-label veal is produced in the green valleys around chilly medieval Avila, and in Gerona and its neighboring provinces in Catalonia. These are milk and grain-fed calves, without any additives, and weigh between 160 to 260 kilos. The Basque Country is planning a similar quality label.

Because national production hardly keeps up with demand, little veal is currently exported. But with the growing importance of humane rearing systems, *Ternera Gallega* is likely to come into demand in veal-eating countries such as Belgium, France and Italy.

PORK

Pork has long been a part of the Spanish diet, but especially from the time of the Inquisition, when eating it became a handy way of averting trouble if you were under suspicion of not being a Christian. Literary references abound to Moslem and Jewish converts eating pork chops in the street or carrying ham-bones around with them on their travels as a safety measure.

Still today, pork *(cerdo)* is very much the favorite national meat. Production - some 17 million pigs, over 15% of the EC total - is three times that of beef. Half of that goes into cured hams, spiced sausages and other bits of charcuterie you see hanging in butchers and bars. Pigs reared at home are almost entirely used this way too. Fed on scraps, fruit, grain and products of the kitchen-garden, they're butchered under veterinary controls. After the *matanza* - or slaughter - family and neighbors work for several days to make the sausages, hams and other pork products.

At the other end of the scale, commercial pork production is large-scale and intensive, using covered stabling. It began in the 1940s, and in the following decade production grew by nearly 70%. The black Iberian breed which makes such superb ham is not used for fresh pork because of the high proportion of fat. These days, 35% of pig-rearing is in Catalonia and nearly all animals are a cross between Landrace, Duroc and Large White. Castile, especially the provinces of Burgos and Segovia, still specialize in suckling pig *(tostón or cochinillo).*

After the ban on the export of Spain's pigs and pork products began to lift in 1991, both production and export have boomed. In 1993, some 70,000 tonnes were exported, three times the quantities for 1992, with the largest exports (mainly as live animals) to France. Italy, the United Kingdom and Netherlands are secondary European markets, while Russia, Argentina and Mexico are new markets outside Europe.

LAMB

Think of Spain's tablelands and *sierras*, and its flocks of sheep moving like specks against a bare landscape come to mind. No coincidence: Spain has the second largest sheep population of the European countries, some 24 million, more or less exactly what Napoleon estimated when he arrived here in 1805.

Some fifty years later, Alexander Dumas wrote, perhaps with a pinch of exaggeration, 'The abundance and cheapness of lamb is such that, according to a friend ... who had eaten it during a whole month, he found himself obliged to leave the country in order to be able to eat something else.'

Now, as then, nearly all graze extensively over open *sierras* and lowlands. Spanish breeds - such as *Merina, Castellana, Churra, Segureña, Manchega* and *Aragonesa* - are primarily wool and milk producers, hard to fatten for meat. As a result, lamb *(cordero)* has always been eaten very young in Spain, traditionally for *fiestas*. Today, still, the younger the animal, the more highly prized the meat: as a result, around 80% of all lamb is slaughtered at only 12 kilos weight.

The categories of lamb are differentiated by size. The first is *lechal*, entirely milk-fed, slaughtered between 25 and 40 days with a live weight between 9 and 14 kg. These are the *lechazos* from the famous Castilian roasting-houses and are traditionally eaten at Christmas. Basque *cordero lechal*, now a regional DO, comes from one of two long-haired mountain sheep breeds, *Latxa* or *Carranzana*, has to be entirely fed on its mother's milk and weighs only 5-8 kilos.

The second category is the larger *cordero recental* or *pascual*, so named because it was traditionally killed for Easter (*Pascua* in Spanish). Milk-fed and fattened on grain, less tender but with more flavor, it is killed after 70 to 90 days at a weight of 20-25 kilos. Around the country, you find it under different names such as *churrasco, macaco*, and *ternasco de Aragón*, the latter now also protected under a quality-control label.

Because of Spanish lamb's particular character - reared for tenderness, light color, flavor and aroma - it is exported to other markets where baby lamb is highly prized: Mediterranean countries, Islamic communities within the EC and the Middle East.

KID AND GOAT

In the roughest Spanish lands where no other animals can survive, Spain's goat population can be found. The dry Alcarria east of Madrid, the inland provinces of Galicia, the western Murcian sierras and the Canary islands all have large herds, which come tinkling over the hills, announcing their arrival with the bells around their necks. But above all, you will find them in Andalusia: "beef from Galicia; kid from Ronda," runs one saying.

Reared mainly for their wool and milk, they are slaughtered young for meat. Some 20,000 tonnes are produced annually, but at the moment none is exported. Most goat is infact kid *(cabrito, choto)* usually weighing 7 to 11 kilos at the time of slaughter and roasted whole as a delicacy. In Andalusia, where there were large herds during the Arab centuries, you find older meat *(chivo)* in rich stews.

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

Editor's Note: We would like to thank Artespaña for lending the chinaware, furnishings, tapestry and paintings for the still lives.

See recipes page 154.

Professional Spanish Guide to Meat Cuts

Spanish butchery has developed primarily around the carcass-structure of its native animal breeds. From these come its most distinctive cuts: whole milk-fed lamb and suckling pig, with or without the pluck; a wide variety of beef, veal, lamb and pork chops or cutlets, such as tiny milk-fed lamb cutlets and Basque Vilagodio beef chops as thick as steaks; and *añojo* beef cuts, smaller versions of those from older cattle.

Since nothing of the pig is scorned or wasted, ears, trotters and tails are always found in Spanish butchers. The leg and shoulder (*jamón* and *paletilla*) are with all or part of the rind and the hoof for curing, since they're rarely eaten or sold fresh. Fattier cuts, such as backfat and belly (*tocino* and *panceta*), are valued for enriching stews and soups and making sausages. You will often also find several cuts of fresh pork left soaking in a light brine with paprika, herbs and perhaps garlic - that is, *adobado*. This is a traditional Castilian way of making dry cuts juicy - but not fatty - for frying or roasting.

Names of cuts vary considerably between the regions. You may well also come across French *tournedos* and *entrecôte* steaks, English roast-beef cuts, or Italian *osso buco* for example.

The first professional Spanish guide to these cuts was published last year. It gives their names in seven languages, and each is illustrated twice: in a diagram showing where the cut comes from on the animal, and in a color photograph. Both Iberian and international cuts - for example, Spanish, Dutch, German, Lyonnais and Parma legs of pork - appear. Published in 1993 by Cecarnex (Spanish Confederation of Meat Exporting Companies), this catalogue is an excellent reference work for chefs, those in the meat trade, or simply dedicated carnivores. For further details on obtaining it:

ANAFRIC - GREMSA
Gran Vía de las Cortes Catalanas, 631-6º
08010 Barcelona
Tel.: (3) 301 33 74
Fax: (3) 317 16 44

APROSA
López de Hoyos, 169
28002 Madrid
Tel.: (1) 413 63 47
Fax: (1) 416 29 04

ASOCARNE
Infanta Mercedes, 13-4º
28020 Madrid
Tel.: (1) 571 68 55
Fax: (1) 571 68 54

FECIC
Vía Layetana, 36
08003 Barcelona
Tel.: (3) 268 42 63/26 31
Fax: (3) 268 03 90

Signed Originals

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

F. Chivite

F. CHIVITE Cenologist

Julián Chivite
Bodegueros-viticultores since 1647

A BUBBLY MULTINATIONAL

Success Abroad (IV)

In hundreds of countries around the world, the sparkling wine uncorked at celebrations is produced by the Catalonian family-run company, Freixenet. But behind the world's most popular bubbly there is over a century of history marked by an obsession to crack international markets. Today, Freixenet's cava, a bubbly wine which rigorously follows the champenoise method developed by the 17th century French monk Dom Perignon, is savored around the world, thanks to the determination, innovation and vision of the Ferrer family. Based in Sant Sadurni d'Anoia in the rolling hills of Catalonia's Penedes wine region, Freixenet is the world's leading sparkling wine producer and exporter with its own branches and distribution offices in nine countries and production centers and wine cellars in the wine regions of California in the United States, in Mexico, and in the heart of France's Champagne region. In the words of chairman José Ferrer, Freixenet is "the world's first champenoise method multinational."

Text:
Ana Westley
Photos:
Pablo Hojas/Freixenet

A firm believer in advertising and marketing, Freixenet's ads were among the first commercials to be aired on Spanish television and the company has continued to invest heavily in television advertising, both in foreign markets and in Spain. Above, a special Year End program organized and sponsored by Freixenet in TV Moscow.


FREIXENET
REALIZADOR
A. RINOS
Dtor FOTOGRAFIA
N ALMENDROS
FECHA
NAVIDAD 88
SECUENCIA
TOMA
15
1
1
CARTA NEVADA

Freixenet was founded in 1928 by Pedro Ferrer and his wife, Dolores Sala who correctly predicted the immense possibilities of champenoise method wines in which a second fermentation takes place in the bottle instead of in large vats (or granvas method). Coming from a wine producing family that exported Penedes wines to South America in the 19th century, Dolores Sala surely contributed an early vision of export potential for sparkling wines as well as an unusual business acumen for a woman of her time.

By 1935, Freixenet had already opened up an office in England and in New Jersey in the U.S. after the repeal of Prohibition in 1933. But with the Spanish Civil war of 1936-1939 and later the Second World War, the dream of foreign expansion had to be shelved for decades. Both Pedro Ferrer and Dolores Sala, however, never gave up their dream of having wineries in the Champagne region of France and in the U.S.

Although they would not live to see their dream fulfilled, a half-a-century later, their son, José Ferrer, who has headed the company since the death of his mother, Dolores, in 1978, made their dream a reality with the purchase in 1985 of the champagne Henri Abelé, in Reims, in the heart of champagne country in France, and a $12 million investment for a new California winery in the famed Sonoma valley. A few years earlier Freixenet had also purchased a vineyard for cava production in Queretaro, Mexico, which launched a sparkling wine called Sala Vivé, in honor of the founding mother in 1985.

Today, the Sant Sadurni d'Anoia installations produce 86 million bottles annually, a figure that will soon top 100 million bottles when construction finishes on new additions.

Don Johnson and Kim Bassinger, like all the other Freixenet stars, toast the New Year with Carta Nevada. Each year there is a certain amount of expectation to see the year's celebrity.

Christmas with Celebrities

A firm believer in advertising and marketing, Freixenet had already become Spain's leading cava producer in the 1960s by introducing the product to Spain's burgeoning new middle classes. Freixenet's early advertisements featuring a little red-capped boy with a bottle of Freixenet under his arm are still identified with the brand name even today. Ahead of its time, Freixenet's were among the first commercials to be aired on Spanish television and the company has continued to invest heavily in television advertising, both in foreign markets and in Spain. In the late 1970s, Freixenet introduced its now traditional Christmas season television commercials with world famous stars who have replaced the now quaint little red-capped boy. The first international star of a Freixenet commercial on Spanish TV was Liza Minelli in 1977 followed by a long string of celebrities that include Gene Kelly, opera singers Plácido Domingo and José Carreras; Shirley MacLaine, Paul Newman, Raquel Welch, Jacqueline Bisset, Christopher Reeve, Don Johnson, Antonio Banderas, and Sharon Stone, among others, and last Christmas, Kim Bassinger. All toast the New Year with Carta Nevada. Each year there is a certain amount of expectation to see the year's celebrity. In the U.S. Freixenet has based its commercials on its classy Cordón Negro black bottle, which market research had indicated would catch on, and its exotic and hard-to-pronounce brand name, Freixenet. The unorthodox advertising approach worked and almost any American consumer can recognize Freixenet's Cordón Negro as "the black bottle with the unpronounceable name."

In the late 1970, Freixenet introduced its now traditional Christmas season television commercials with world famous stars. The first international star of a Freixenet commerical on Spanish TV was Liza Minelli in 1977 followed by a long string of celebrities that include Gene Kelly, Paul Newman and Spanish opera singer José Carreras.

Technology and Exports

As domestic market demand grew, Freixenet invested heavily in new technology in 1973 to become one of the first champenoise method wine producers in the world to install low temperature fermentation wine cellars, and automated remuage, the characteristic riddling or racking of the bottles. Now, most cava producers and champagne producers in France have adopted the adjustable rock racks that gradually increase the slant of the bottle with the cork downward, while maintainaing the principles of immobility, constant temperature and adequate light.

"Our investment in technology paid off in better quality and increased productivity," recalls José Ferrer. Today, Freixenet is Spain's largest producer by far and is the world's biggest exporter of champenoise method wines, representing over 70% of all cava exports to Germany, the United States, Switzerland, Denmark and Norway, and over half of cava exports to Great Britain, Sweden, Canada, and Japan.

In addition to Carta Nevada and Cordón Negro, Freixenet also produces the brand names Brut Barroco, Brut Nature, Reserva Real and D.S.

In 1984 Freixenet acquired several cavas and wineries from the privatization process of the Rumasa holding. These include: Segura Viudas, S.A. which produces 11 million bottles of Segura Viudas and Brut Aria; Castellblanch, S.A. which began exporting in the 1930s and now produces 13 million bottles a year under the Castellblanch brand name; and René Barbier, S.A. (with a table wine of the same name), a producer bought by Segura Viudas which produces 9.6 million bottles. Other wineries include Conde de Caralt and Canals & Nubiola.

On a hunch that René Barbier would sell well in the United States, Freixenet began to export it in 1991 selling 2 to 3 thousand cases. By 1992, Freixenet was exporting 70,000 cases and last year over 120,000 cases, surpassing even the wildest estimates of its possible success.

Exports represent 11% of Freixenet's production but account for 40% of total sales, although this percentage may vary somewhat in 1993 after three devaluations that have helped boost export sales. Foreign operations represent 30% of Freixenet's business.

Ferrer attributes Freixenet's success abroad to the product's reasonable price for a quality product. A bottle of Freixenet in the U.S., for example, costs around six dollars compared to a twenty dollar bottle of French champagne. "Once people try our product and savor the quality, they don't want to spend more for similar quality French champagne," Ferrer points out.

Sophisticated marketing and advertising help contribute to success, Ferrer adds. He also claims that family-run companies are more willing to make sacrifices than companies listed on the stock market that must always push for a high dividend for shareholders. "Families always try to improve what they inherited and are not as pressed to increase prices just to get a higher profit," Ferrer argues. He is confident that his children, nephews, and grandchildren will carry on in the same way he has dedicated his life to the family company.

Expansion Abroad

While continually boosting exports, Freixenet began its international expansion in the 1980s, first with the purchase of a 50 hectare (123 acre) vineyard in the wine region of Queretaro, Mexico, 300 km (186 miles) north of the capital city. The cavas produced there have been termed the most spectacular of Latin America, according to the company. Sala Vivé, which was launched in 1985, is gaining a market foothold in the United States within the Hispanic community. The Mexican winery currently produces some 400,000 bottles. In the United States, Freixenet bought a 153 hectare (380 acre) vineyard in Los Carneros in the Sonoma wine valley of California in 1985. Its Gloria Ferrer has already obtained numerous international prizes, including the San Francisco Fair 1986 Sweepstakes Award, the Los Angeles County Fair Gold award for 1991, the Tasters Guild Gold for 1991, and the 1992 Gold awards for both the American Wine Competition and the American Wine Society. The U.S. subsidiary produces 600,000 to one million bottles a year.

Also in 1985, Freixenet's "expansion abroad" year, the Catalonian cava company bought the Henri Abelé champagne winery in Reims, in France's famed Champagne region. After heavy investment to improve and modernize installations, the French subsidiary makes 400,000 bottles of champagne a year and has given Freixenet a boost to its commercial network and provided a strategic advantage in international competition.

In the 1990s, Freixenet had planned to expand its international production to both Russia and China, but the fast evolving political events in both countries have shelved the plans for the time being. "In China we were prepared for a joint venture to build a winery in Shadong for cava production," Ferrer recalls. The climate and soil conditions were suitable for cava production and the center would serve as a base to export to the Far East. "Just when we were ready to discuss details, the student revolt took place in Tiannamen Square and we decided to abandon the project," Ferrer explains. Downgraded to a distribution center for Penedés-made cava, Freixenet has ruled out a Chinese cava production center until the political situation improves significantly.

In Russia, Freixenet has recently set up a commercial office in Moscow as a first toehold in the country. "Installation in Russia will be slow due to the precarious economic situation," Ferrer justifies. But exports to Russia are expected to increase, in spite of the country's dire economic straits.

Freixenet directly owns its distribution and commercialization centers abroad, which the company feels has helped market penetration. By the 1970s Freixenet began setting up distribution subsidiaries abroad, with its first branch in England: the direct Wine Suppliers-Freixenet, in 1973. Freixenet USA followed in 1980, then Freixenet Alemania GmbH (1984), Freixenet Mexico (1984), Freixenet Pacific (1986), Freixenet Atlantic (1989), Freixenet France (1990), Freixenet Japan (1991) and Freixenet Australasia (1992).

Diversification

Although exports to the U.S. of over a million cases in recent years have slacked off somewhat due to the economic recession and a shift away from all alcoholic beverages, sales to Europe between 1984 and 1992 jumped 700%. Last year, Germany may have

Ten most important foreign markets for Cava (1991) (In millions of bottles) Source: Freixenet

	Total Exports of Sector	Total Freixenet Exports	% Freixenet of Total
United States	14.20	11.90	83.80%
Germany	10.90	8.00	73.39%
Great Britain	3.10	2.20	70.97%
Switzerland	1.90	1.60	84.21%
Canada	1.80	1.10	61.11%
Sweden	1.70	1.10	64.71%
Japan	1.70	0.70	41.18%
Italy	1.00	0.60	60.00%
Holland	0.90	0.50	55.56%
Denmark	0.80	0.70	87.50%
Total	**44.38**	**31.83**	**71.72%**

Ten most important foreign markets for Cava (1992) (In millions of bottles)

Germany	13.07	8.62	65.95%
United States	12.58	10.08	80.13%
Great Britain	3.06	2.13	69.61%
Sweden	2.14	1.37	64.02%
Switzerland	1.97	1.67	84.77%
Canada	157	0.99	63.06%
Japan	1.24	0.62	50.00%
Italy	1.16	0.51	43.97%
Norway	0.93	0.68	73.12%
Denmark	0.83	0.64	77.11%
Total	**45.43**	**30.95**	**68.13%**

Ten most important foreign markets for Cava (1993) (In millions of bottles)

January-September

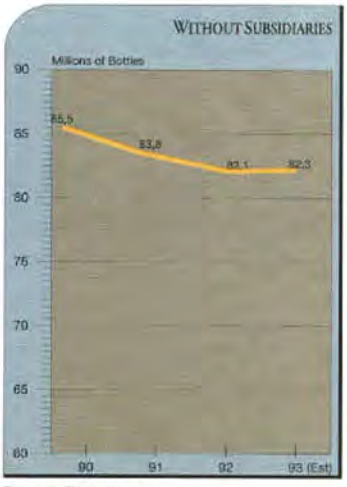
Germany	9.99	7.08	70.90%
United States	6.91	5.08	73.55%
Great Britain	2.61	1.81	69.56%
Russia	1.88	0.08	4.09%
Sweden	1.35	0.83	61.22%
Canada	1.20	0.78	6477%
Switzerland	0.89	0.77	86.70%
Japan	0.64	0.36	56.32%
Denmark	0.57	0.49	85.00%
Norway	0.47	0.36	76.24%
Total	**30.76**	**19.65**	**63.89%**

replaced the United States as chief foreign market with sales of over seven million bottles for the January-September period compared to only five million bottles sold to the U.S. in this period. Overall sales in 1992 amounted to 27.6 billion pesetas. Foreign markets accounted for over 9.3 billion pesetas of this amount. Last year exports jumped to 12 billion pesetas aided in part by the staggered devaluations that resulted from the year's currency turmoil. Total sales figures for 1993 were not available at this writing.

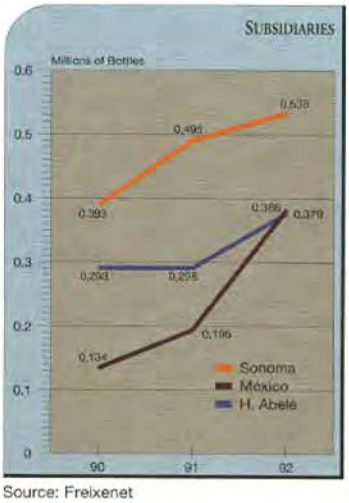
Plans for the future include diversification to other food products, although an agreement with Nomen rice for the sale of precooked meals in the U.S. did not turn out as well as expected. The company is now toying with the idea of sweets.

"We have always tried to adapt to market needs," Ferrer notes. Therefore it is not surprising to learn that Freixenet has come up with a cava with a lower alcoholic content for the Chinese and Far East market, which prefers several percentage points less of alcohol. "This involved a considerable technological problem, but we did it," Ferrer boasted. A "cava-light" or very low alcohol bubbly is not impossible for the future, especially for the U.S. market. Freixenet has not given up on its long-held dream to acquire a Rioja winery. Negotiations with Bodegas Berberana failed recently, but Ferrer says he still hopes for a presence in the Rioja in the future."That would fulfill another old dream of my parents," he sighs.

Freixenet Group Production 90/93



Source: Freixenet



Source: Freixenet

***Westley** is the Spain correspondent for The New York Times. She has been 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 has also contributed regularly to various other publications, including The Boston Globe, The San Francisco Examiner, The Denver Post, The Christian Science Monitor, and Lookout, an English- language publication in Spain.*

"Fresh and tastefully made"

Sectors and products

- Raw materials.
- Consumer goods.
- Machinery and equipment for making goods.
- Sales room equipment.
- Service companies.
- Various.

INTER SICOP

Bakery, pastry, ice-cream and confectionery exhibition.

7th - 11th October 1994

Parque Ferial Juan Carlos I

·FICOP·

IFEMA
Feria de Madrid

PABLO NEUSTADT/SOBREMESA

The Land of the Hundred Cheeses (I)

Ewes' Milk Cheese

The north of the peninsula is the green Spain, with fairly heavy rainfall and permanently green pasturelands

Spain has about a hundred different varieties of cheese. Every corner of the land offers one cheese or another and the whole range of cheese types is covered: from fresh to cured cheeses and from curd to pressed and semi-cooked cheeses, including fermented or 'blue' cheese. But one of the most important characteristics for defining the different types of cheese is the type of milk used.

Depending on the time of year, the location, climate and tradition, Spanish cheeses are made with cows', goats' or ewes' milk, or all three, or with a mixture of two types of milk (cows'/goats', cows'/ewes' and goats'/ewes').

This great versatility is, to a great extent, due to the geo-climatic and socio-cultural diversity of the Iberian Peninsula and the Balearic and Canary Islands.

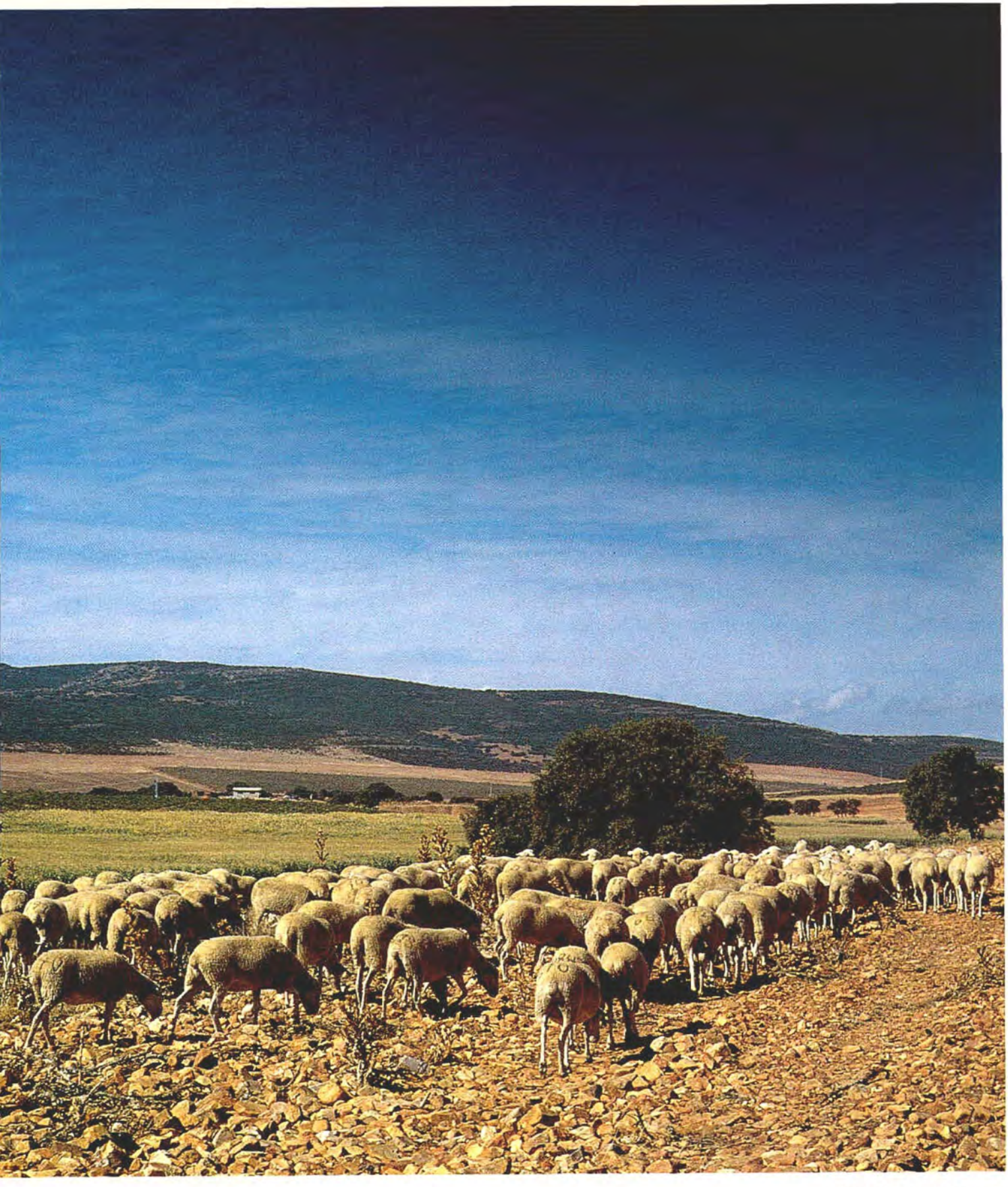
Text: **Enric Canut**
Translation: **Jenny McDonald**

From 1273 to 1836 the Honorable Council of the Mesta grouped together the sheepowners of Castile and Leon and obtained extensive rights to grazing lands and thoroughfare for the periodic, long migrations.

Spain is the second largest country of the European Union, with a surface area of over half a million square kilometers (193,000 square miles) and distances between the farthest limits (north/south, east/west) exceeding 1,000 kilometers (620 miles). The peninsula is surrounded by an immense open ocean on one side and a small, closed sea on the other. It is a mountainous country criss-crossed with mountain ranges, valleys and plateaux and an average height above sea level of 600 meters (2,000 feet) making it the second most mountainous country in Europe. There are climates of all types - from alpine to desert-like and a low level of population giving rise to internal deserts.

Spain is at the farthermost tip of Europe, the western *Finis terrae* where the columns of Hercules stood almost linking it with Africa; all the main cultures and civilizations this side of the Atlantic have converged in Spain. It is a melting-pot that has occasionally lived at peace but it has also been the scene of bloodshed and upheavals, where every culture has left its mark because they all came planning to settle...

These historical reasons explain its cultural diversity which in turn explains the diversity of its agriculture and stockbreeding. But the main features can be classified geographically, coinciding more or less with the stock most widely bred (cow, goats or sheep) :



ANTONIO DE BENITO/SOBREMESA

Central Spain is home to the sheep. Some of the most important breeds in the world graze there.

PABLO NEUSTADT/SOBREMESA

Made of full-cream Latcha or Aragonese Rasa ewes' milk, Roncal was the first cheese to be awarded the Denomination of Origin, in 1981.

Very linked to the ancient custom of transhumance, the Roncal cheese is elaborated in Roncal Valley, in Navarre, in the north east of Spain

GREEN SPAIN:

Along the north of the peninsula, from Galicia (Atlantic) to the Cabo de Creus (Mediterranean), stretches a very long chain of mountains (the Cantabrians almost linked to the Pyrenees); the climate is predominantly Atlantic. This is green Spain, with fairly heavy rainfall and permanently green pasturelands. Dairy cattle predominate with dozens of native breeds and, to a lesser extent, sheep. Almost 50 varieties of cheeses of all types are produced here, with extreme variations from one valley to the next.

MEDITERRANEAN SPAIN:

On the east is the Mediterranean coast - narrow, extensive and separated from central Spain by the coastal mountain chains reaching an average height of 2,000 meters (6,560 feet). This is the goat's paradise. Goats flourish on the rocky slopes where thyme, rosemary and oregano flavor their very white, dense, floral milk. The climate is temperate and mild, and the easy access to the sea and to trade gave rise to large urban settlements, where milk and fresh goats' milk cheeses always formed part of the daily diet and were commonly used in barter and cattle dealing.

CENTRAL SPAIN:

The Spanish interior, the *Meseta,* stretches from the northern mountain chains to the eastern coastal systems and has a continental climate. Here there are vast extensions of flat or rolling land at a height of over 600 meters (2,000 feet) above sea level, with very cold winters, very hot summers and scarce rainfall amounting to extreme conditions. This is the dominion of the sheep, with several of the most important breeds in the world, including the merino sheep. Here plain cheeses are produced, medium-sized and suitable for long curing as a keeping method. The cheeses have a cylindrical shape and the typical markings of the esparto grass band used during pressing and are similar, though not the same, to those sold in the large medieval markets that grew up along the drovers' tracks, under the protection of *La Mesta* - the large, medieval sheep-breeders' organization that survived for almost six centuries and governed the Spanish economy of the second millennium through the trade in merino sheep's wool.

SOUTHERN SPAIN:

Extremadura and Andalusia - is an intermediate area because of the confluence of different climates with mountains, valleys and rangelands growing holm oak and cork oaks. The climate is Mediterranean/continental or continental/Mediterranean, as you will, and it is therefore a land of both goats and sheep.
Here fresh, soft cheeses can be bought, which the locals consume after ripening, conserved in olive oil.

THE CANARIES, JUST OFF AFRICA:

Finally, the special case of the Canary archipelago, over 2,000 kilometers (1,250 miles) from mainland Spain and off the western coast of Africa. There are seven separate islands, all of volcanic origin, with the rocky, dry magma of Lanzarote and the Teide volcano on Tenerife, the highest summit in the whole of Spain at 3,718 meters (12,200 feet).
Only goats can settle in conditions like these with pine forests 2,000 meters up (6,560 feet) or the desertlike sands of Fuerteventura. They offer aromatic milk from autumn to spring to be made into fresh or ripened cheeses, some of them smoked or coated with red pepper or *gofio* (toasted cornflour).
This article is the first of a series of three covering the Spanish cheeses according to the type of milk used. Ewes' milk cheeses will be followed by those made with cows' milk and finally by goats' milk cheeses.

PABLO NEUSTADT/SOBREMESA

The great variety of cheeses stems mainly from the geo-climatic and socio-cultural diversity of Spain.

Central Spain. Home to the sheep

If we describe a circle around Madrid, the geographic center of the Iberian peninsula, giving it a radius of 400 kilometers (250 miles), all the area inside the circle is what can be called central Spain or the *Meseta*. It is a high plateau with an extreme continental climate, an average height of over 600 meters (2,000 feet) and is enclosed by chains of mountains. This vast area, both flat and undulating, with its fields of grain, its fallow and stubble lands, its moorlands and fertile valleys, crossed by three of the great Spanish rivers (the Duero, the Tajus and the Guadiana), is home to the sheep.

The origin in Spain of this quiet, gregarious animal is lost in time, and its implantation and development is closely tied up with Spanish history. In 711 the Arabs disembarked to conquer Spain and, in approximately ten years, they had pushed the Christian peoples up into the northern third of the peninsula. Spanish history from that time on comprises a succession of periods of domination and integration, of invasions and retaliations. During those years, sheep farming was one of the main economic activities because of its many uses - wool, meat, milk and cheese - and its easy breeding.

Sheep flocks were easy to handle with just a shepherd, a boy and a couple of trained dogs. They could be made to travel easily in groups to browse on any type of pasture in any place and at any time. They were the ideal commodity for a poor, self-sufficient economy continuously on the move on account of historical vicissitudes.

Little by little, during the *Reconquest* (a period lasting from the 8th to the 15th century when the Christians gradually took back the lands occupied by the Arabs), large extensions of land became available in the northern half of Spain but the frontiers were never fixed and there was a permanent risk of Saracen incursions.

As sheep became more important, so their owners became more powerful and they determined to secure the mobility they needed for their flocks. They therefore set up in 1273 the Honorable Council of the Mesta grouping together the sheep-owners of Castile and Leon and obtaining extensive rights to grazing lands and thoroughfare for the periodic, long migrations. This came to be a very powerful organization that exercised its rights from Extremadura, in the south-west of Spain to the high mountain ranges in the north.

The Mesta thus defined the Spanish agricultural economy for a whole era until it was abolished in 1836.

As with any other human activity, this had both negative and positive effects. On the positive side, it led to specialization and the development of several native breeds of great genetic value and mixed uses - mainly the Manchegan, Castilian, Churro and Merino breeds. These were not only perfectly adapted to their environment but also, in addition to wool and meat, offered excellent milk - dense and fatty - with which some of the best and most representative of the Spanish cheeses were, and are, produced.

The northern plateau

In the north of the *Meseta*, in the area now called Castile-Leon, there are two typical breeds - the Churro and the Castilian, both bred essentially for their milk. It is in this area that the Zamoran cheese (granted Denomination of Origin status in 1992), Castilian, Villalon or *Pata de Mulo* and Burgos are made.

Zamoran cheese, like Castilian cheese, is a classic Spanish ewes' milk cheese: cylindrical in shape, with zig-zag marks on the sides printed by the *esparto* grass band tied around the cheeses during pressing and the faces typically marked with the "ear of wheat"; each cheese weighs about two or three kilos.

It is made with full-cream ewes' milk, either raw or pasteurized, coming mainly from Churro sheep. The ripening period is a minimum of three months but can last a year or more. It is defined as a pressed, uncooked cheese.

The flavor is strong, well-developed and it is very creamy on the palate.

It is made in the province of Zamora by 14 small-and medium-sized cheesemakers and annual production amounts to almost 1,000 tonnes.

Castilian cheese is another classic ewes' milk cheese, with very similar characteristics to the Zamoran cheese.

It is also produced with full-cream ewes' milk, either raw or pasteurized, mainly from the Castilian breed, but over a much wider area and in much larger quantities in eight provinces of Castile-Leon. It is well known on the Spanish market.

Within this large area, there are another three types of ewes' milk cheese - all different and with a distinct identity. These are Burgos, Bureba and Villalon or Pata de mulo. Burgos cheese takes its name from the famous market in the provincial capital of Burgos, famed for its majestic Gothic cathedral. It was originally made in the surrounding villages and taken weekly, as fresh cheese, to be sold directly to consumers.

It is now produced all over Spain, and its characteristics have been maintained - it is a fresh, white, moist and gelatinous cheese with a slightly sweet flavor, hardly salty at all and fatty on the palate. Its shape is between

QUESO ZAMORANO

Consejo Regulador Denominación de Origen

Quesos de pura leche de oveja, de las razas Churra y Castellana, seleccionadas para conseguir una inmejorable materia prima.

Su aroma, textura y sabor intenso y persistente al paladar, denotan una cuidada elaboración, a la antigua usanza, sin prisas.

La etiqueta numerada del Consejo Regulador, garantiza su Denominación de Origen.

QUESO ZAMORANO

Cardenal Mella 7,
Tel. (980) 51 17 15
49009 Zamora.

ALIMENTOS DE CASTILLA Y LEON TRADICIONALES

Immortalized in El Quixote, Manchegan cheese is the classic Spanish cheese.

cylindrical and conical and one cheese weighs from one to three kilos.
To the north of Burgos is the Bureba region, a wild and mountainous area in the foothills of the Cantabrian Mountains. Here they produce a Burgos-type cheese with a long ripening period.
Another of the best-known fresh ewes' milk cheeses is the Villalon or Pata de mulo. Villalon was another important market town where the shepherds of the Castilian region of Tierra de Campos took their cheeses every week or fortnight. This cheese is cylindrical but lies flat on one side with a rough surface produced by rolling the curd by hand in a cloth. This gave it its other name - *Pata de mulo,* meaning "mule's leg". It is more compact and drier than Burgos cheese and slightly more acidulous and salty.

The southern plateau

To the south of the *Meseta,* in what is now the autonomous region of Castile-La Mancha, the most important, prestigious and best-known of the Spanish ewes' milk cheeses is produced - the Manchegan cheese immortalized by Cervantes in El Quixote.
Although it looks similar to the Zamoran and Castilian cheeses, it has several distinguishing features. It is commonly produced in six Spanish provinces from full-cream milk, either raw or pasteurized, and only from sheep of the Manchegan breed.
The climatic conditions of this area, more extreme and drier than in the northern Meseta, giving drier pastures with many grain stubble fields, result in a very fatty and more acidulous milk. The cheese is therefore mild, full-tasting and fragrant, with a compact texture but with small eyes throughout and fattier, more piquant, acidulous and salty than its relations from Castile-León. It was granted Denomination of Origin status in 1985.

Extremadura, "land of extremes"

In the southwest segment of the circle we drew earlier is Extremadura, literally the "land of extremes", where the flocks of the Mesta spent the winters.
Here two very individual and inimitable ewes' milk cheeses are produced, strongly rooted in their environment - the rangelands - and associated with one particular breed - merino. These are the Torta del Casar and La Serena. Both are made only from autumn to spring when the moderate rainfall and warm weather convert the dry lands into green meadows.
These cheeses are still made by hand with raw merino ewes' milk, coagulated with vegetable rennet taken from the pistils of the local 'milk-curdling' grass *(Cynara cardunculus).*
The Extremaduran plateau slopes down towards the west, is not as high as the central plateau and its climate gives rise to one of the most important ecosystems in Europe - the rangelands. These are vast areas of open woodland with age-old holm oak and cork oaks giving shade to extensive pastures for the flocks of merino sheep. The sheep graze naturally on the fresh grass and acorns and produce very small quantities of milk containing a large proportion of dry extract (over 20%) and fats (over 10%). These characteristics, together with the vegetable rennet and manual artisan production are the secrets of the Extremaduran ewes' milk cheeses.
The *Torta del Casar* is made mainly in and around the small town of Casar de Caceres. The Serena cheese, which was awarded the Denomination of Origin in 1992 (see Spain Gourmetour No.31), is produced in the south-east by over 1,000 breeders reaching an annual production of almost 1,000 tonnes.
Both are small, disc-shaped cheeses weighing around one kilo with smooth, waxy faces and convex sides marked by the *esparto* grass band. When cut, the cheese is soft and buttery with occasional little holes. It melts in the mouth and has a well-developed flavor which is not at all acidulous, somewhere between tart and bitter on account of the vegetable rennet and only very slightly salty.
The difference lies in the fact that the *torta* (meaning a flat cake) ferments intensely and proteolysis turns the paste into a liquid mass that can be eaten with a spoon. The Serena cheese is rather more compact and tight although its texture is soft.
From Extremadura we pass to the north of Spain and the Basque Country lying between the Cantabrian Mountains and the Pyrenees. This historic land has carefully preserved one of the most ancient stock-farming cultures in Europe, stemming from the first inhabitants of the Peninsula and the Indo-European migrations from eastern Europe right at the start of our civilization. It is a tremendously mountainous country, wild and untamed, and is the home of one of the most important breeds of sheep in Spain, the Latcha, specially bred for its milk.
The cheese produced here is Idiazábal - a thick, well-pressed cheese with a compact center that lasts well, whether it is smoked or not. It was granted the Denomination of Origin in 1987 (see Spain Gourmetour No.18).
Made exclusively with full-cream, raw ewes' milk and coagulated with natural lamb's rennet, it has an intense and slightly piquant flavor.
The practice of smoking is optional and gives the rind of the cylindrical cheeses a

NEEDS NOTHING ELSE

List of Manufacturers

ALIMENTOS REFRIGERADOS, S.A.
Ctra. San Rafael, 68. 40006 Segovia
Telf. 34-21-42 15 00

BERNARDINO POSTIGO E HIJOS, S.A.
40360 Cantimpalos (Segovia)
Telf. 34-21-49 60 23

DOMINGO DE PEDRO M.
40175 La Matilla (Segovia)
Telf. 34-21-50 40 36

DOMINGO HERRANZ DE P.
40390 Valseca (Segovia)
Telf. 34-21-49 31 30

EMBUTIDOS OLMOS, S.A.
40190 Bernuy de Porreros (Segovia)
Telf. 34-21- 40 00 02

EMBUTIDOS POSTIGO, S.A.
40360 Cantimpalos (Segovia)
Telf. 34-21-49 60 50

FRUCTUOSO LLORENTE E HIJOS
40270 Carbonero el Mayor (Segovia)
Telf. 34-21-56 00 06

GAMAR
40360 Cantimpalos (Segovia)
Telf. 34-21-49 60 71

HNOS. LOPEZ GARRIDO
40360 Cantimpalos (Segovia)
Telf. 34-21-49 60 30

HIJOS DE FLORENCIO SANCHO, S.L.
40270 Carbonero el Mayor (Segovia)
Telf.34-21-56 00 00

JESUS PALOMO PASCUAL
40360 Cantimpalos (Segovia)
Telf. 34-21-49 60 02

JOSE ESCORIAL CARRETERO
40153 Fuentemilanos (Segovia)
Telf. 34-21-48 51 26

MARIANO OLMOS HERRERO
40190 Bernuy de Porreros (Segovia)
Telf. 34-21-40 00 07

MARIANO PASCUAL LLORENTE
40270 Carbonero el Mayor (Segovia)
Telf. 34-21-56 00 12

MARTIN MARTIN, S.L.
40360 Cantimpalos (Segovia)
Telef. 34-21-49 60 13

MENDOZA SERRANO, HNOS., S.A.
40360 Cantimpalos (Segovia)
Telef. 34-21-49 01 01

TEODORO EGIDO MARTIN
40150 Villacastín (Segovia)
Telf. 34-21-10 74 05

ZACARIAS MUÑOZ GARCIA
40420 La Losa (Segovia)
Telf. 34-21- 48 01 46

JUAN LLORENTE PASCUAL
40270 Carbonero el Mayor (Segovia)
Telf. 34-21-56 0125

LA PRUDENCIA
40150 Villacastín (Segovia)
Telf. 34-21-10 70 30

NARCISO POSTIGO E HIJOS, S.L.
40360 Cantimpalos (Segovia)
Telf. 34-21-49 60 06

PRO. CAR. FUENTEBLANCA, S.A.
40421 Ortigosa del Monte (Segovia)
Telf. 34-21-48 02 33

ALIMENTOS DE CASTILLA Y LEON TRADICIONALES

Fine cut, cured
Turns every dish
into a real pleasure

DENOMINACION ESPECIFICA DE ORIGEN
CANTIMPALOS CHORIZO
segovia

Ewes' Milk Cheese

color that varies between straw yellow and coppery-brown depending on the type of wood used and the intensity of the smoking process.
At present about 1,500 tonnes are produced annually on small farms and in small factories that follow the traditional production and ripening processes.
Related to Idiazábal is Roncal cheese from northwest Navarre. Similar in shape and characteristics, it is not smoked and is made of full-cream Latcha or Aragonese Rasa ewes' milk .
It is linked to the ancient custom of transhumance that took the Roncal shepherds from the Bárdenas Reales in the south of Navarre where they wintered to high pastures in the Pyrenees to spend the summer. Roncal was the first cheese to be awarded the Denomination of Origin, in 1981

Other ewes' milk cheeses

Spain also produces some other unusual ewes' milk cheeses. In Cantabria and Asturias, also in the north of Spain, we can find *quesucos* - small, cylindrical cheeses weighing approximately one kilo and with a short maturing period.
One of these, in the small district of Liebana in the Picos de Europa, some of the highest peaks in Spain, holds the Denomination of Origin.
Another ewes' milk cheese is the *Serrat* produced in the Catalonian Pyrenees. This is a pressed cheese, with no eyes (from whence its name - *serrat* means tight in Catalan), a medium ripening period and an individual, mature flavor.
From these pressed cheeses - the *Serrat*, the *Quesuco* or the *Idiazábal*, long fermentation cheeses can be produced having a strong taste and a spreading texture. These are the *Tupí* (a vessel, in Catalan), the Basque *Gaztazarra* or old cheese, and the *Quemón* or *Picañón*, so named because of its strong taste.
In the Maestrazgo district between Teruel and Castellon another traditonal ewes' milk cheese is produced called the Tronchón. Its main characteristic is its volcano shape with the rind being engraved with attractive flower or anthropomorphic designs.
Finally, Andalusia is the home of two unusual artisan cheeses that are produced in very small quantities. These are the cheeses from Calahorra (Granada) on the northern slopes of the Sierra Nevada and from Grazalema in the middle of the Serrania de Cadiz, at a height of over 1,000 meters (3,280 feet).

Enric Canut *is an Agricultural Engineer specialized in dairy farming, who has devoted most of his professional life to the world of cheese. He has published two books on the subject :* A handbook of cheeses, cheesmakers and cheese experts and Cheeses in Catalonia *(written in Catalan), he has been a regular contributor to publications specializing in gastronomy for more than a decade.*

The market of Trujillo

Thursday is market day in Trujillo. Every week on Thursdays the Calle Fernán Ruiz around the central market fills up with stalls. It is something of a festive occasion with visitors from surrounding towns mingling with the locals as they all look around, if not to buy or sell, just to see what is to be seen.
From the early hours, inside the market building gather the reserved but smiling local herdsmen, wearing the typical Extremaduran felt hat: they are there to sell their fresh goats' cheeses to the cheese-dealers that have come from all over Extremadura.
There, amidst the brisk, noisy conversations and the loading and unloading of cases, the cheeses are inspected, tasted, weighed and valued in commercial dealings that have been going on longer than anyone can recall. More than 70 farmers and almost 10 wholesalers exchange fresh cheeses for fresh money in the most basic of all marketing operations.
For an austere economy like that of the Extremaduran countryside, the Trujillo market is a center of attraction and wealth.
In 1986 the Trujillo Town Council and the Cattle Show authorities decided to establish an annual Cheese Fair. Held over the weekend closest to 1 May - Labor Day and a holiday throughout Spain - the Plaza Mayor with its arches and the palace of the Marqués de la Conquista put on their best finery. The bells of St. Martin's Church and the croaking of the storks accompany the artisan cheesemakers from all over Extremadura and much of Spain as they display the products of their livestock and their craftsmanship.
Hundreds of people wander amongst the stalls - tens of thousands over the whole fair - tasting and debating the virtues of the Serena, Ibores and Casar de Caceres cheeses or any other of the dozens of varieties on offer.
Glasses of wine, small chunks of cheese and slices of bread circulate in profusion all day long for several days in a unique gathering of cheese-makers and consumers paying tribute to an ancestral custom and an age-old food.
Meanwhile, the loudspeakers around the square interrupt the music to announce the results of the professional cheese-tasting sessions, any cultural activities taking place, the conclusions of the debates on cattle-raising and cheese-making or interviews with the many celebrities, restaurateurs or representatives of the local authorities that are present at the cheese fair, by far the most important in Spain.

WE HAVE THE FLAVOUR OF SPAIN

We have the authentic Spanish "Serrano" Ham, processed using traditional methods which have made this product famous worldwide. Each ham is put through quality control checks and is endorsed by the Spanish "Serrano" Ham Consortium.

So, if you want authentic "Serrano" Ham, make sure that it bears the SPANISH "SERRANO" HAM CONSORTIUM seal of guarantee.

And you will discover why it is said that, in Spain, life has another flavour.

Serrano

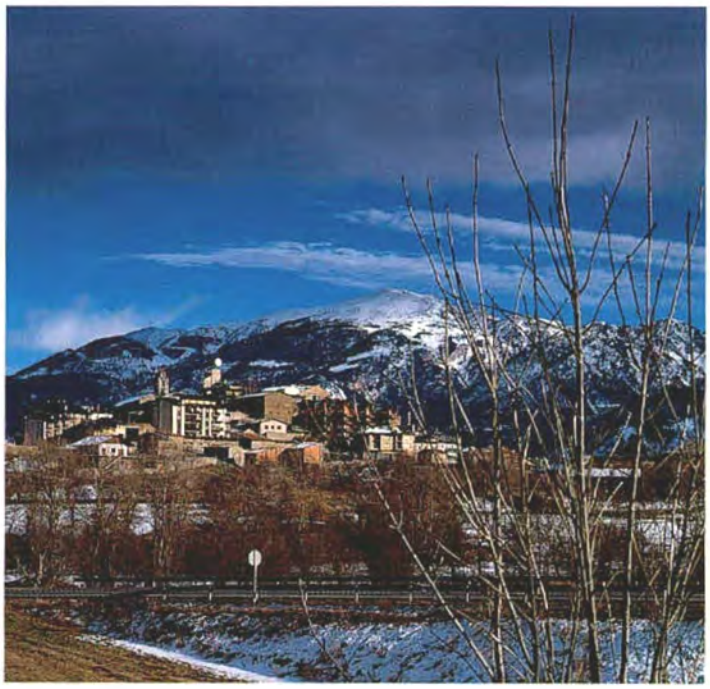
CONSORCIO DEL JAMON SERRANO ESPAÑOL

Moralzarzal, 80 - Escalera Centro - 1.º A. 28034 MADRID. Tel. 735 05 01. Fax 735 05 03.

LA CERDANYA

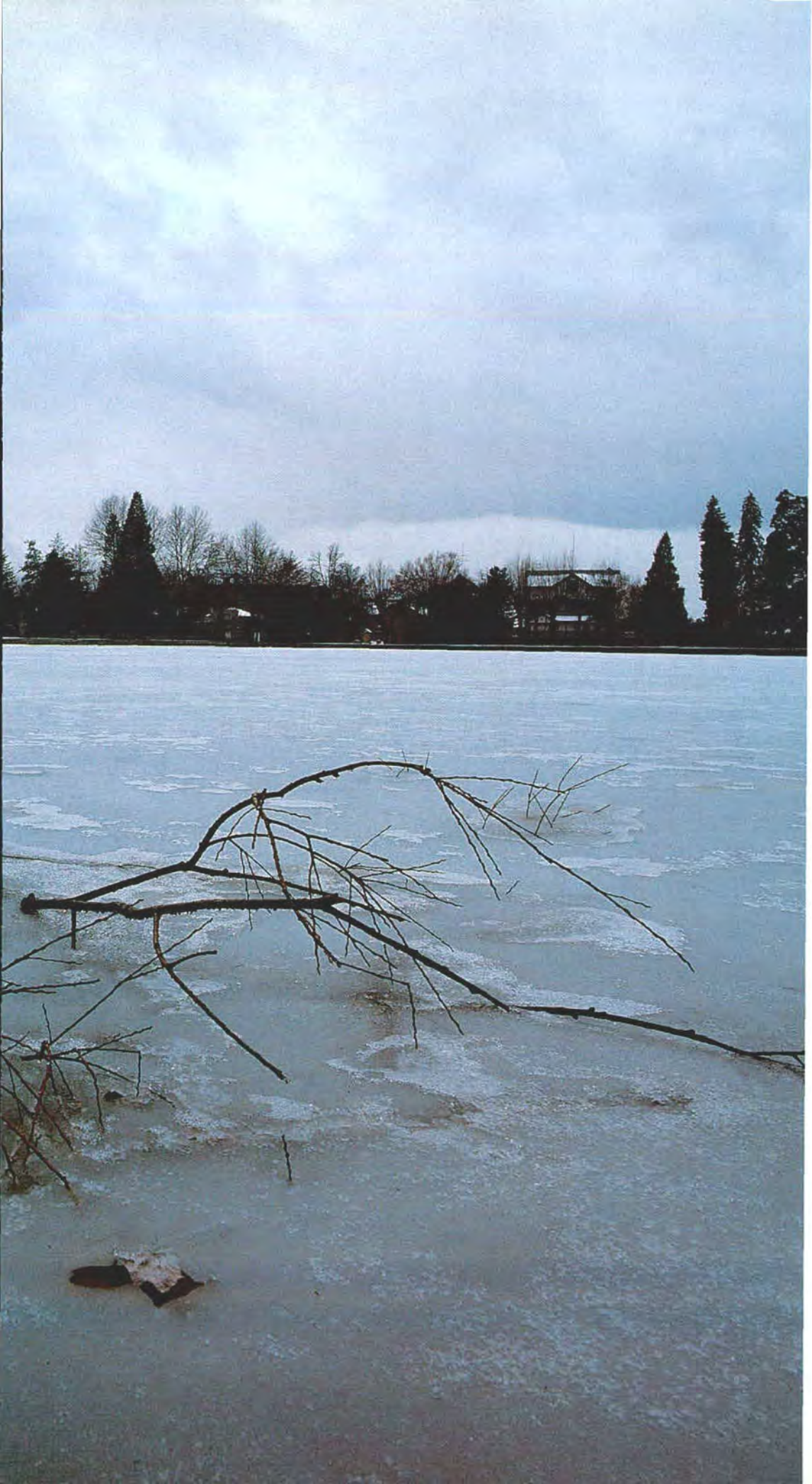
HIGHLAND RETREAT

The valley of the Cerdanya is surrounded by towering peaks and is unique among valleys of the Pyrenees in that it runs east to west rather than north-south, meaning that it enjoys more hours of sunlight than most.



Half in Spain and half in France, La Cerdanya is Catalonia's mountain refuge in the heart of the Pyrenees Mountains. Skiers flock to its snow covered peaks in winter, while its sunny green valley, crystaline streams, and fragrant pine forests are a magnet for nature lovers throughout the rest of the year.

Text: **Deborah Luhrman**
Photos: **Juan Ramón Yuste/ICEX**



In the mid-1800s the valley became a favorite summer residence for Barcelona's social elite. Some 35 wealthy families built elaborate mansions here, many of them around the lake in Puigcerda.

I first heard of the Cerdanya through its foods. "Smell these," said a poet friend of mine named George as he handed me a big basket filled with tiny dried mushrooms.

"Aren't they just the essence of the forest? They're called *bolets* and we gathered them in this place I know in the Pyrenees called La Cerdanya," he explained.

The basket of wild mushrooms did smell something like a walk down a mossy forest path after the rain. And it conjured up primitive images in my mind of families in the wilderness stockpiling foods to see them through a harsh winter.

"What's the Cerdanya like?" I asked, and that's when the conversation turned, as conversations with George invariably do, to trout fishing. He went on about mountain brooks spilling down from high peaks and the icy Segre River carving a path through this highland stronghold.

That evening George and his wife, a wonderful cook, prepared a feast of pasta in butter sauce laced with the wild mushrooms and Segre River trout caught just a few days earlier and poached in white wine. It was then I decided that this place called La Cerdanya must be an enchanted forest and vowed to visit it someday.

Filled with these wilderness images, it was quite a surprise when I finally did get a chance to explore the Cerdanya and find that it was not exactly the rustic, undiscovered spot I expected. It was late at night in January when our car emerged from the Cadi tunnel, which leads up from Barcelona. Instead of the enchanted forest I had

There are countless small villages to explore in Cerdanya. All contain good examples of typical Pyrenean architecture: gray stone, slate roofs and rustic wood.

imagined, I saw below a wide snowy valley studded with star-like clusters of lights. In fact, it seems half the inhabitants of Barcelona have built second homes in the Cerdanya and use this idyllic mountain valley as a retreat, a place to recharge their batteries on the weekend and unwind from the stress of city life.

It was not until morning that I could appreciate the grandeur of the landscape, with its ring of craggy peaks and intriguing forested slopes. The valley floor remained peaceful and bucolic, despite the new housing developments. Small and sturdy Cerdanya horses foraged under patches of snow for a bit of grass and an evocative white mist rose from the Segre River. What I discovered in the next few days is that a tourism boom over the past 15 years has unalterably changed the Cerdanya. But that along with tourism have come many advantages, such as good roads, excellent restaurants and top-flight sporting facilities. The mountain wilderness I expected still exists as well in the Cerdanya, off the main highways and up in the hills, where there are timeless villages, wood-shuttered stone houses with slate roofs and forest trails that smell of wild mushrooms.

Sunlit Highlands

The valley of the Cerdanya has a wide open field. It is 40 km long by 8 km wide (24 miles by 5 miles) and lies at 1,100 meters (3,575 feet). It is surrounded by towering peaks, many of which reach over 2,900 meters (9,425 feet) and is

Spain's first ski lift opened at La Molina in the Cerdanya in 1911 and from then tourism flourished as an important part of the valley's economy.

unique among valleys of the Pyrenees in that it runs east to west rather than north to south, meaning that it enjoys more hours of sunlight than most. It is also relatively close to the Mediterranean Sea (150 km -93 miles- to Barcelona through the Cadi tunnel). All of these factors combine to give it a dry and mild climate. While the upper peaks are snow covered much of the year, the valley floor is immobilized by snow only a few times each winter. Spring comes late and is marked by a profusion of wildflowers in June, while summer lingers and melds with a warm autumn, during which the normally green Cerdanya is transformed by fall foliage into a spectrum of rust reds, ochres and browns. The main artery of the Cerdanya is the fast-flowing Segre River, a tributary of the Ebro, which slices through the center of the valley and connects most of the major towns. Deposits from flood waters of the Segre over the centuries are responsible for fertile farmlands, which nowadays are used primarily for growing hay to feed local milk cows and horses throughout the winter.

Although the Cerdanya is small and geographically well defined, man intervened in the 17th century to divide it between Spain and France. The 1659 Treaty of the Pyrenees was devised by representatives of Spanish King Philip IV and Louis XIV of France as a way to end regional feudal warfare, and gave rise to the popular refrain: "Half in France, half in Spain, there's no other country like the Cerdanya." There is even a small corner of the Cerdanya that belongs to Andorra, and the Spanish part of the valley is divided further between the provinces of Gerona and Lerida. Residents of the entire valley speak Catalan and regard these artificial political boundaries with a certain disdain.

"People here have always identified first with being a Cerdanyan, even though

our valley has been divided among three countries and two provinces," said Salvador Torrent i Masip, president of the Institute of Ceretan Studies.

Ceretano was the name given to inhabitants of the valley by the Greeks and Romans. Historians think that the name refers to Ceres, the Goddess of agriculture.

Salvador grew up in Puigcerda, the unofficial capital and largest city of the valley. By day he chews on the end of a slender cigar as he waits on customers in an eccentric dry goods shop, in which his displays of fabrics and ladies' lingerie are being squeezed out by a growing stock of antiques and ceramic reproductions.

He is the son of Magdalena Masip, the Cerdanya's most celebrated poetess. While she never considered herself a professional poet and was never published during her lifetime, Magdalena used to scribble down verses on bits of paper to give as Christmas or birthday presents. Her poems demonstrate a love for nature which is shared by most residents of the Cerdanya and rarely fails to infect visitors.

I Wish...
and I wish that I could have my house beneath a firtree with all the woods for a garden,
and all the sky for a roof.
And flee from the world around me
it's too much and confuses me
and stay there quiet like that
drinking the woods in great gulps,
with clods of earth for a pillow
and a bed made of golden leaves.
Magdalena Masip (1890-1970)
(translated by George Semler)

In his spare hours Salvador devotes time to the Insitute of Ceretan Studies, which has taken on the task of investigating and promoting the Cerdanya's heritage. A recent project backed by the institute investigated historical evidence that the warrior Hannibal and his army of elephants passed through the valley in 218 BC on the march from North Africa into modern-day France to do battle with the Romans. The army was apparently using the Cerdanya as a way to cross the Pyrenees while avoiding settlements friendly to the Romans along the coast in Ampuries, now the Costa Brava. Hannibal's elephants must have made quite an impression on local residents; coins unearthed from that era show an image of a pachyderm on one side.

Throughout history the Cerdanya has always been a mountain pass. A Roman road from the Aquitaine to Lerida led through here and you can still see the remains of it near the Perxa pass on the French side of the border.

"Local residents used to charge a toll to let the Romans pass through the valley," said Salvador, "People here have always been able to make money off invaders, but nowadays most *Ceretanos* make money off the weekend invaders: the tourists."

Tourist Sanctuary

Tourism is not just a recent phenomenon in the Cerdanya. In the mid-1800s the valley became a favorite summer residence for Barcelona's social elite. Some 35 wealthy families built elaborate mansions here, many of them around the lake in Puigcerda. The trip up from the city would take three to four days and the families would stay for the entire summer season, entertaining the leading literary and artistic personalities of the times.

It was the summer people who began Puigcerda's most popular tradition, the annual Festival of the Lake, which takes place the third weekend of August. The festival features fireworks and a parade presided over not by a queen, but by someone dressed as the old lady of the lake. A legendary figure from the Cerdanya and a symbol of virtue, the old lady is said to live at the bottom of the lake and wander the town in the dark of night, checking on neighbors to make sure they have been treating each other kindly and fairly. In the Cerdanya, children caught lying are told, "Watch out, the old lady of the lake is coming tonight."

The Torre de Remei, 4 km. (2 miles) west of Puigcerda, was one of these summer mansions full of rich architectural detail and touches from Barcelona's turn-of-the-century Modernist movement. It was restored and opened in 1991 as a luxury hotel and restaurant by the Cerdanya's most renowned chef Josep María Boix (see separate article on page 122).

Spain's first ski lift opened at La Molina in the Cerdanya in 1911 and from then tourism flourished as an important part of the valley's economy. But it wasn't until construction began on the 5 km-(3 mile) long Cadi tunnel in the late 1970s that the valley's touristic future was sealed and the current boom really began.

The tunnel, which opened in 1983, cut driving time from Barcelona to about an hour-and-a-half and allowed motorists to avoid the tortuous hairpin curves of the old highway over the Toses pass, which is frequently closed due to snow in winter.

José Pous and his late wife Mercedes were among those who got in on the ground floor of the Cerdanya's tourism boom. They were involved in launching La Masella ski resort and operated a hotel there until several seasons without snow brought them close to financial disaster. Then in 1969 they opened the 70-room Hotel Llivia, a lodge-like kind of place where kids clomp down to breakfast in their ski boots.

"Most people come here to ski, there are 19 ski resorts within a half-hour drive of Llivia," he says, "But other times of the year we get hunters and fishermen and some hikers in the summer months."

The chatty hotel owner has a decidedly alpine look with his graying hair and dark green boiled-wool jacket. After so many years in the business, most of Sr. Pous' guests have become friends and return season after season. Clients who used to come with their

GONZALEZ BYASS

SHERRY & BRANDY

Producto de ESPAÑA Jerez - Xérès - Sherry

parents now bring their own children.

The hotel has sweeping views of the Cerdanya valley with the snow-clad peaks of Puigmal, Finestrelles and Tossa d'Alp beckoning in the distance. Of the two major ski resorts in the Spanish part of the valley, La Molina is the largest with 18 lifts, 60 km (37 miles) of pistes, and a cross country ski circuit. It is popular with daytrippers from Barcelona as well as with visitors to the Cerdanya. La Masella just down the road is a family-style resort, with fine downhill pistes that pass through a pine forest, and 11 lifts.

Following their success with the hotel in Llivia, the Pous family lovingly restored a 17th century stone farmhouse on the town's main square, turning it into a restaurant called Can Ventura. Can Ventura, along with Can Boix in Martinet and Can Borrell in Meranges, are responsible for rescuing a regional cuisine in the Cerdanya, which is wildly popular with visitors.

Mountain cuisine

The cuisine of the Cerdanya is built around mouth watering local ingredients such as wild mushrooms, pears, rabbit, duck and fresh trout, with a few time-honored recipes thrown in for good measure. Its most distinctive feature is a method of searing meat or fish at the table on a hot slab of slate. The stone is heated in the oven and brought to the table embedded in a wooden tray so that diners can finish cooking the food to their specifications. This type of cooking, which in Spanish is called *a la piedra* (on the stone) and in Catalan becomes *a la llosa* , has gained widespread popularity in the Pyrenees.

Wild mushrooms, locally called *bolets,* are the other cornerstone of Cerdanyan cuisine. They grow abundantly in local forests from the end of summer until the first snowfall and come in an astonishing variety of sizes, tastes and textures. Their uses are just as varied. They go into sauces and star in their own dishes such as salads, tarts, omelettes and raviolis. But perhaps the best way to appreciate the rich, foresty taste of *bolets* is to try them on their own, sauteed with just a bit of garlic and parsley.

Also worth trying is the most authentic of Cerdanyan dishes called *trinxat.* It is a patty made of diced potato and dark green leaves from winter cabbage, sauteed in bacon fat - a hearty and delicious kind of farm food perfect for a cold winter night.

Other foods typically found on the menus of Cerdanyan restaurants include: trout, served dozens of different ways; stews of venison or wild boar, in the fall and winter hunting season; *anec amb naps,* duck with locally grown turnips; and for dessert Puigcerda pears, which are famous throughout Catalonia for their sweetness and smooth texture.

Besides skiing, mushroom hunting and fishing, the Cerdanya offers a number of towns and villages to explore, notably Llivia, Puigcerda, and Bellver de Cerdanya.

Perhaps the most interesting is Llivia (see next pages), a Spanish enclave 5 km (3 miles) inside France. Because of its status as a town, Llivia remained Spanish even after the Treaty of the Pyrenees ceded all the land surrounding it to France. It has a Romanesque church typical of the Cerdanya, a 15th century tower that once formed part of a fortress and boasts a 15th century apothecary shop said to be the oldest in Europe.

Puigcerda, the largest town of the Cerdanya and the major commercial center, attracts young people with a vibrant nightlife that pulses until dawn. It has an impressive hilltop location with great views of the valley from the square in front of the city hall and was founded for its strategic location by King Alfonso I in 1177.

Puigcerda's lake is actually a spring-fed reservoir dating back to the days of King Alfonso, but now has been converted into a park surrounded by the old mansions of the Cerdanya's early tourists.

Presiding over the city is a 42-meter (137 foot) bell tower that blends Romanesque and Gothic styles. It was once attached to the parish church of Santa Maria and managed to survive an attack during the civil war (1936-39) in which the church was razed. The city also has a series of impressive 14th century Gothic paintings which can be seen inside the church of Santo Domingo.

The town of Bellver de Cerdanya is perched on a cliff over the Segre River and retains a fortress-like look. Bellver is perhaps the most unspoiled of the large towns in the Cerdanya. Its Romanesque church and porticoed main square have recently been restored and its cobbled streets with wood-balconied houses have a medieval feel.

Also worth visiting is the Romanesque basilica of Santa Maria de Talló about 1 km (.5 miles) outside Bellver. It sits in isolated splendor amidst pastures and against a backdrop of high peaks.

In addition to the larger towns there are countless small villages to explore. Some of the most typical are Lles, Meranges and Guils de Cerdanya. All contain good examples of typical Pyrenean architecture, gray stone houses with pine wood shutters and slate roofs. Farmhouses tend to be narrow and tall. They are always attached to an immense barn several times bigger than the house itself, filled with bales of hay for the cattle and surrounded by squawking geese and ducks. From these villages trails depart for the upper reaches of the Cerdanya. A spectacular excursion on foot or in a four-wheel-drive vehicle can be made from Lles up forested slopes to the alpine Lacs de Pera.

While residents and visitors to the Cerdanya cherish the valley for its tranquility, the pressure for additional tourism development is growing. The new 5 km (3 mile) Puy Morens tunnel is set to open in May on the French side of the valley and will put the Cerdanya just an hour away from the city of Toulouse. It will also put the valley smack in the middle of the fastest route from Barcelona to Toulouse. Nowadays most local conversations concern not fishing nor mushroom hunting, but the proposed route for the new super-highway that will pass through the valley connecting the Puy Morens and Cadi tunnels.

While the days of bucolic isolation are gone and villages which once housed 100 farmers now swell to 1,000 visitors on weekends, it is heartening to remember that these newcomers have come to enjoy the natural peace and beauty of the Cerdanya and that there are now thousands more people with a personal interest in protecting it. I have become one of them.

American journalist ***Deborah Luhrman*** *is based in Madrid and writes on Spanish food, wine and travel for several publications, including Spain Gourmetour, Lookout, Fodor's Travel Guides and Travel Trade Gazette.*

The world's most civilized aperitif.

La Ina
DOMECQ

LLIVIA

THE SPANISH OUTPOST INSIDE FRANCE

Text: **Charles Powell**

Llivia is a Spanish enclave inside France. Its 15th century tower once formed part of a fortress.

Beyond the great cities in Spain that tourists flock to, in their quest to gather their own personal memories of ancient monuments, classic architecture and priceless art, there are thousands upon thousands of smaller Spanish villages with a host of interesting things to see and experience. Unfortunately, most travelers whiz by with a quick, admiring look at the orchards, olive groves or fields surrounding these towns, perhaps noting the patchwork collection of houses clustered around the church and its dominating spire. Not checking out these smaller towns can be a mistake, as an important part of the flavor and feel of Spain is so often to be found there.

This is the story of one of these villages: a very special, very different, very interesting village called Llivia. The village is located in the Northeast corner of Catalan Spain in a region called the Cerdanya. Our story is also about a fine, rich, full-fat cow's milk cheese made there called, in Catalan, *Fromatge Llivia*.

A visit to the village of Llivia belongs to every intrepid tourist's collection of geographic and political oddities, for Llivia is the result of a political bit of "gerrymandering" going back to the days of Cardinal Mazarin and Louis XIV. It is a part of Spain totally surrounded by French territory. After three hundred years, all seems forgiven and France provides a customs-free "international road" from Puigcerda in Spain to Llivia, supplies water for the town and grazing lands for the citizens' cattle. In this sense, one might say that Llivia's cheeses are made from milk produced in France, even though they are Spanish cows.

Being totally surrounded by France, Llivia ranks with such places as the feudal autonomous enclave of Andorra to the west, which swears allegiance to both the president of France and the Catholic Bishop of Seu Urgell in nearby Catalonia. It is not unlike the independent city states of San Marino within Italy, Lichtenstein in Switzerland or the town of Campione d'Italia near Lugano and entirely inside Switzerland. Even the Western hemisphere has one: Point Roberts, part of the United States yet totally surrounded by Canada. Such places are collected by many a tourist as a sort of "merit badge," a place few have heard of, much less visited.

In many ways Llivia is like the thousands of other smallish Spanish towns one passes through on any trip beyond the great cities. Llivia has its old Church, dating from 1617, with an impressive crucifix, the fortress-like tower of Bernat de So housing a diorama of the flora of the Cerdanya that gave rise to Europe's oldest chemist's shop, dating from the 15th century. It is now a museum with an amazing collection of apothecary and herb jars along with an array of medical gadgets patients and doctors used down through the centuries to cure their ills. Llivia also has its Roman ruins, as it was the fortress outpost Julia Lybica. Llivia the town is not just a museum of the past however. It has a lively arts program focused on the August Music Festivals, which have seen such international greats as Spanish opera diva Montserrat Caballé, a Bartok ensemble from England, a quartet from Moscow and the Hungarian Virtuosos, to name just a few. Llivia is also a center for winter sports. Some 14 state-of-the-art ski areas are nearby and the town attracts the sports-minded from all over Europe.

The agriculture of Llivia is dominated by cattle and the cheese and butter factory at the north end of town, surrounded by fields actually in France. The Llivia cheese factory, sited in a smallish building, was purchased seven years ago by Dispasa, successors to the Braut

Dairy Farms, founded in 1943 in Ripollet near Barcelona. They are major suppliers of butter, cream, ice-cream mixes, specialty cheeses and frozen desserts for the catering and food service trades and supermarkets in Spain.

The Llivia cheese factory makes essentially one kind of cheese, from the milk of Holstein cows. Differences in shape, aging, curing and marinating with herbs and olive oil create several interesting varieties, for the connoisseur as well as for the making of more ordinary ham and cheese sandwiches.

Jaime Ribot Flix, Llivia's Master Cheesemaker took us through the plant and described some of the processes. He told us he learned much of his craft right at the factory; "with some considerable help from a Swiss cheesemaster on what to do and help from a La Mancha Manchego cheese works on what not to do!" He was careful to point out that although some of the Llivia cheeses have the size and surface impressions of a Manchego cheese, it is definitely not Manchego. "First, it is cow's milk, not sheep's. Though our herringbone wax coverings and Manchego's are alike, that is traditional for many Spanish cheeses."

Although Llivia cheeses are made utilizing most modern production techniques, they have been adapted to retain the ancient methods of Cerdanya cheesemaking. Aging from 3 weeks to a matter of months provides several nuances of flavor. For the true cheese connoiseur, the longer aged or *curat* cheeses offer the most intense sampling experience.

One of the more interesting Llivia cheeses is made by taking cubes of Gorguja cheese, a traditional Cerdanya style of cheese, and marinating them in pure olive oil flavored with mountain herbs of the Cerdanya, particularly oregano and thyme. In another version, peppercorns are added. These cheeses are packed in 500-gram jars, half seasonings and half cheese. The jars are capped and covered with attractive checked gingham cloth. As Luis Roca, Director of Export Marketing for the Company, said; "the herbal oil is excellent in a vinaigrette salad dressing after the cheese has been eaten. Indeed, once a customer has tried our cheeses, we invariably have a customer for life!"

Over 8,000 liters of milk are delivered daily from 20 different dairy farmers and brought to the factory for pasteurizing. Fortunately, the milk is invariably close to or over 4% butterfat. This makes for richer cheeses and often leaves butterfat for butter production as well.

The cheese-making process continues in tanks where rennet separates the curds and whey in about an hour-and-a-half. The whey is drained away to be fed to area pigs and the curds are washed and squeezed dry before being pressed in loaf pans or wheels, depending on the type of cheese being made that day. Next comes salting with natural sea salt, 24 hours for the loaf cheese and 6 to 12 hours for the round cheeses, depending on size; 1 or 1.5 kilograms.

The cylindrical cheeses to be aged are covered with wax and then stored in temperature-controlled rooms for up to six months before being shipped to company warehouses near Barcelona for trans-shipment to all of Spain, and, in order of export volume, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom and now, the United States.

The making of cheese -truly good cheese- is a craft. Even made thousands of pounds at a time, it is still the skill of the master cheesemaker and the quality of the milk that counts the most in making a fine cheese. It seems that the folk of the Cerdanya perfected this skill well and have the fine milk necessary to continue making *Fromatge Llivia:* a fine cheese for cheeselovers everwhere to enjoy.

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

Editor's Note: At the time of printing, we were informed that the LLivia cheese factory has been temporarily closed.

It takes all sorts to make a traveler. Some pack cathedrals, museums, ancient monuments and landscapes in between sandwiches and snacks. Others think it perfectly reasonable to travel 500 km. to track down the world's best paella. And there are some travelers for whom pleasure is settling into one of those unique places that most of us just read about, surrounded by comfort and good taste and in a privileged location. And from this vantage point they can either set out to explore or just sit back and lap up the relaxed atmosphere.
It is this type of setting, of which there are several in Spain, both inland and along the coasts, that we will be describing in this short series of articles, entitled "Spanish Luxury". The first is about a hotel bought on an impulse. In the heart of La Cerdanya in Catalonia, at the foot of the Pyrenees, Josep María Boix, the owner of a renowned hotel and restaurant in the area, has made his dream come true - the Torre del Remei hotel and restaurant. Anyone already familiar with his cuisine will be sure not to miss the experience of a night or a meal there.

TORRE DEL REMEI

THE HEIGHT OF PERFECTION

Text: **José Ramón Martínez Peiró/Sobremesa**
Photos: **Juan Ramón Yuste/ICEX**
Translator: **Jenny McDonald**

Reconstruction work was based on the new owners' idea that total respect for the original features should be combined with an audacious update of the decor and fittings.

"It happened eleven years ago. We had often noticed the towers from a friend's home but had never visited the house even though both my wife and I were born locally. One day when out for a walk we saw the gate open and the temptation to enter was too great to resist. I remember the wind was banging the shutters as we pushed our way through the overgrown garden beneath the rustling lime trees. At the front door, one of our companions reminded us of Hitchcock's *Rebecca*, and its opening sentence, 'Yesterday I dreamed I was going back to Manderley...'. It seemed such a waste for a beautiful building like this to have been left to go to rack and ruin. We then thought of those small Central European castles where we had stayed on occasion during our holidays. And that was the start of our dream, soon to become an obsession." This is how Josep María Boix tells of his discovery of the house that, with time, was to become a remarkable hotel - the ideal place to enjoy the countryside and the pleasures of the table in an atmosphere of genuine refinement.

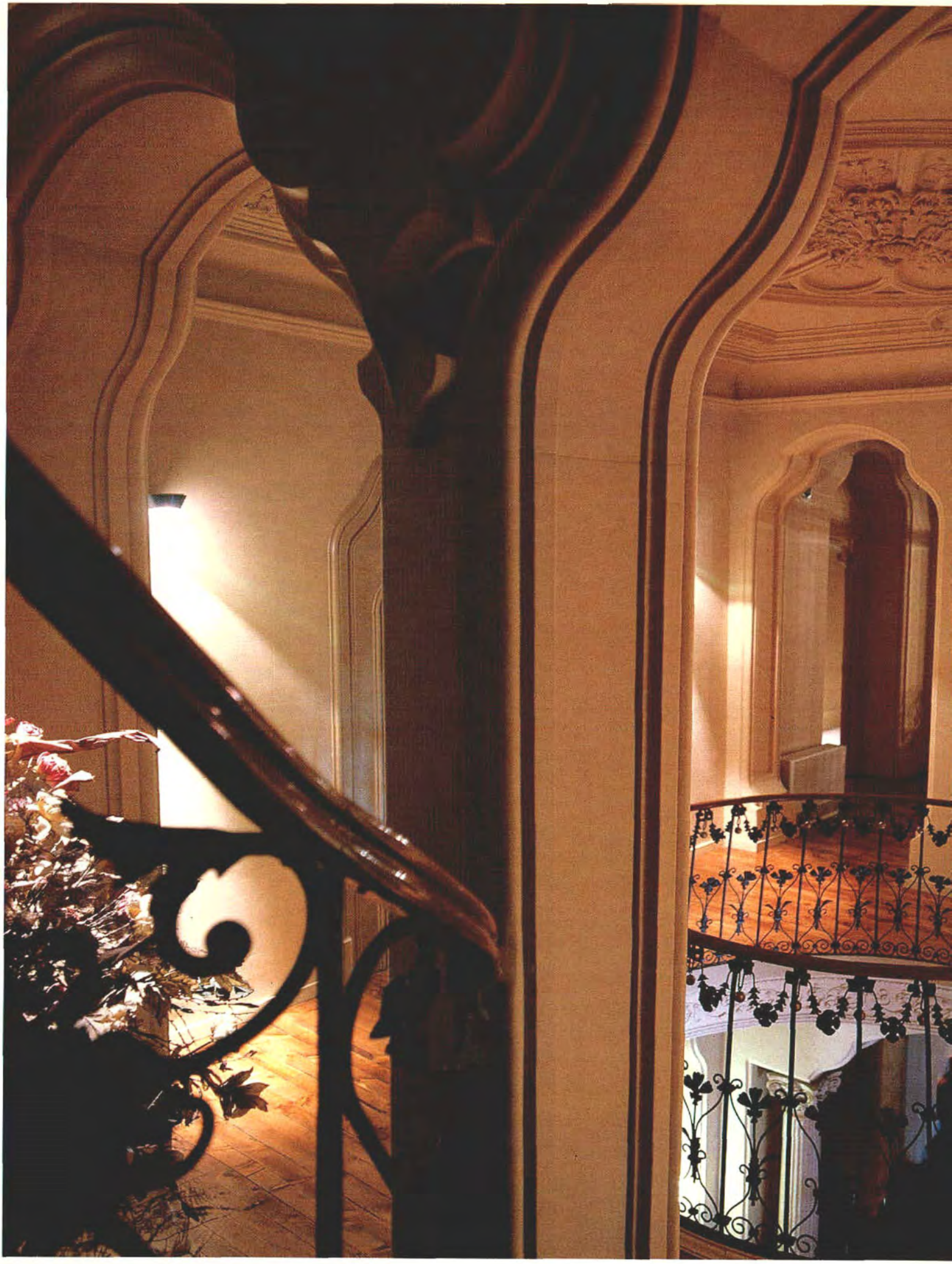
For many cooks, opening a small luxury hotel is the culmination of a secret ambition, a logical progression in their careers. But when Josep María Boix and Loles, his wife, decided to open a new hotel - they already had a magnificent one - it was just because chance had led them to discover this abandoned mansion, once the holiday home of a Barcelona banking family with its roots in this remote part of Catalonia known as La Cerdanya (see article on

The former owners had used the mansion for summer holidays since 1910. During the Spanish Civil War (1936-39), the building was converted into a school first and then a hospital.

page 112). "The truth is," explained our host "that we had no plans to open a new hotel. If we hadn't seen this building, we would have been perfectly happy to continue in our Boix in Martinet that we are still looking after carefully and that has enabled us to embark on this financial adventure. You could say we bought Torre del Remei on an impulse. But these things happen. If you fall in love with something or someone, you don't stop to think of the cost of getting it." The impulse cost the Boix six years of conversations with the previous owners and a further two years on the restoration work and fitting out.

The former owners had used the mansion for summer holidays since 1910 when the building was completed. During the Spanish Civil War (1936-39), the Republican government converted it into a school first and then a hospital. "But they treated the building and its contents with great respect," says Josep María Boix. "They even took the furniture up to the top rooms to protect it from damage." Nobody ever returned to the Torre del Remei after the war. The harsh winters of the Cerdanya and the passing of time left the property in a lamentable state.

Reconstruction work began in 1989 under Miquel Espinet, one of the Boix' friends and an architect with a special interest in restaurants and interior design and responsible for the Neichel restaurant in Barcelona and Luculo in Madrid. The architect fell in love with the building and was given *carte blanche* to



The end result is a small château surrounded by a big garden, with eleven rooms, each decorated individually, and all the latest in fittings.

draw up a project based on the new owners' idea that total respect for the original features should be combined with an audacious update of the decor and fittings.

The end result is a small *château* surrounded by two hectares (five acres) of garden with eleven rooms, each decorated individually, and all the latest in fittings. These include videos, night guidance lights, hydromassage and underfloor heating in the bathrooms. Interior design is by Espinet-Ubach, with exclusive chinaware by Villeroy, glassware by Christofle, upholstery by Gancedo and paintings by Casamada y Sala... And a long list of names from the orchids in the main hall to the uniforms of the waitresses.

Obviously, in a hotel belonging to Josep María Boix, one of the great Spanish chefs today, the restaurant is the mainstay. Boix' career as a cook is well-known and widely admired. Perhaps the best word to define it would be coherence. Coherence in his loyalty to the products of his birthplace, Cerdanya - wild mushrooms, game, herbs from the Sierra del Cadi, goose, river products. Coherence in following the principles of great cuisine, in using only top-quality raw materials and in believing that life is just one long apprenticeship. His career has received the highest recognition that a professional in his field can obtain. And all this was achieved just a few miles from the Torre del Remei in Puigcerda, in his Martinet restaurant, so he is now faced by the dual challenge

of attaining the height of perfection while not becoming his own worst enemy or competitor.

"There is no danger," says Boix confidently. "I have never had a family home. I was born in a hotel room, the old hotel in Martinet, and for forty-four years I have slept in hotel beds. I trust that my vocation will help me to run this new business venture. And regarding cooking, I think I know what it is I want to do. It would be ridiculous for me to try to make any sort of drastic change at this stage. I consider myself bound to remain faithful to the products of my land, a land I have never left, and my working philosophy here is the same as in my Martinet restaurant: top quality raw materials, special emphasis on the products of the Catalonian Pyrenees and a personal, creative touch. If I had to single out a difference between the new restaurant and the old one, I would say that here I try to produce slightly more refined cuisine, more in line with the setting and with what we might call *haute cuisine sans frontières".*

The gastronomic offering of Torre del Remei is not a leap in the dark. It is the natural prolongation of a cuisine that has survived the test of time, and has very firm roots. But it is designed to go hand in hand with the space in which it is conceived, with the snow on the windowsill of the main lounge, the smooth, Art Deco lines in the second dining-room, the silky touch of the sheets in the bedroom, and with the service of those who are incapable of treating customers as anything but guests. This is the end result of that impulse.

TORRE DEL ROMEI
(***** GL)

11 ROOMS. OPEN YEAR ROUND.

Double room: 22.000 (VAT included)
Suite: 35.000 (VAT included)

Camí Reial. Bolvir de Cerdanya
(5 Km. from Puigcerdá). Gerona
Tel.: (72) 14 01 82 - Fax: (72) 14 04 49

José Ramón Martínez Peiró *is a journalist. He is editor of* Sobremesa, *a Spanish monthly food, wine and travel magazine.*

EVERYTHING BUT THE ELEPHANT...

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

In 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 SPAIN

66 CHITERN STREET, LONDON W1M 1PR

The Arabic baths, with their raised floors and Mudejar lacework, are perhaps the best part of the visit to Santa Clara.

ARABIC OASES IN MEDIEVAL CASTILE

The Castilian monasteries of Las Huelgas and Tordesillas are the oldest of Spain's Royal Sites, dating back to medieval times, from the 12th to 14th centuries. They are also perhaps the most surprising: both possess a number of Arabic elements, despite the fact that they were founded not by Moslem caliphs, but by Christian kings of Castile who spent most of their years in Holy Wars, battling to drive the Moslem from the northern plains.

ONTAÑON/PATRIMONIO NACIONAL

Text: Meg Campbell

FELIX LORRIO/PATRIMONIO NACIONAL

ONTAÑON/PATRIMONIO NACIONAL

The tombs of the Royal Pantheon of Las Huelgas have yielded an outstanding collection of Royal garments.

The Monastery of Santa Clara de Tordesillas sits on a hill in the small town from which it takes its name, overlooking the swollen Duero River. On a cold day in January, the courtyard in the front is empty except for two noisy storks chattering in their nest on the church steeple. The convent's thirteen cloistered nuns have retreated to private inner chambers to avoid contact with tourists, although few brave the wintry morning to visit the convent.

The monastery, on the road to Galicia (northwest Spain) in the province of Valladolid, dates back to the 14th century.

ONTAÑON/PATRIMONIO NACIONAL

When Alfonso VIII founded Las Huelgas Monastery, the abbess came to be the most powerful figure in the land after the king.

Although at first glance it appears to be a typical Castilian convent of Gothic architecture, a first step inside reveals what is so unique about the monastery: a beautiful Arabic patio that might easily have been found in the Alhambra of Granada or the Alcazar of Seville. Curved arches are decorated with intricate plaster geometric patterns of vines, leaves, fruit and other objects of nature typical of the Mudejar style, while painted tiles cover the lower part of the walls, and friezes of the same natural patterns cover the upper part.

This courtyard is one of the few vestiges that remain from when the monastery was a palace, built to imitate the Arabic palaces constructed by the Moslems. It is one of the earliest and best preserved examples of the Mudejar architecture, a style that combines Catholic Gothic and Arabic elements, and which was done by Spain's Moslem artisans, according to Carmen García Frías, curator of the monastery. It is also one of the few examples of civil architecture that remain in the country, and particularly in Castile.

A Sumptuous Palace

The Castilian king Alfonso XI ordered the palace built in 1340, where he lived with his favorite concubine. He brought Mudejar artisans from Toledo and Seville to do the work.

"King Alfonso XI considered Arabic palaces to be much more comfortable than the Christian military castles of his time. He preferred the sunny courtyards, the cushioned alcoves, and the luxurious baths of the Moslems to the cold, draughty halls of the Christians," explains Isabel Febrero, a guide to the monastery, referring to the building's founder. "Also, the Moslems used building materials that were cheaper and easier to work with, such as plaster and brick, rather than stone". According to García Frías, this is the principal reason that so few of these palaces remain today.

To build an Arabic palace seems a paradoxical thing for a Christian king to do, considering that Alfonso spent most of his days waging war to push the Moslem ever further south and back to North Africa, their land of origin. The palace of Tordesillas was even financed by a booty won in a battle against Arab troops.

"These were times of tolerance in Castile. Moslem, Jews and Christians lived and worked peacefully in the same towns, despite the Holy Wars," says Isabel. "Alfonso XI was fascinated by Arabic culture, by its science and architecture. Legend has it that he even dressed up as an Arabic prince during his leisure hours."

The palace is located on the route between Valladolid, the capital of Castile, and the city of Medina del Campo, making it an important site. This region is one of rolling plains, criss-crossed by rivers, and known for its cereal production and vineyards. The smell of cookies baked with the wheat of Castile follows the traveler to Tordesillas, as do signs for such well-known wine labels as Rueda, Cigales and Ribera de Duero.

The winters of Castile are harsh, which may well have prompted Alfonso to seek the comforts of an Arabic palace, and its summers hot and arid. The fare of Castile is typical of its climate: roast lamb, pork, and good, crusty bread.

After Alfonso's death in 1350, his son Peter I, known as "Peter the Cruel", used the palace for the same purposes, until 1362, when he transformed it into a monastery for the cloistered order of Clarisa nuns. His illegitimate daughter Beatrice entered the convent, where she spent the rest of her days.

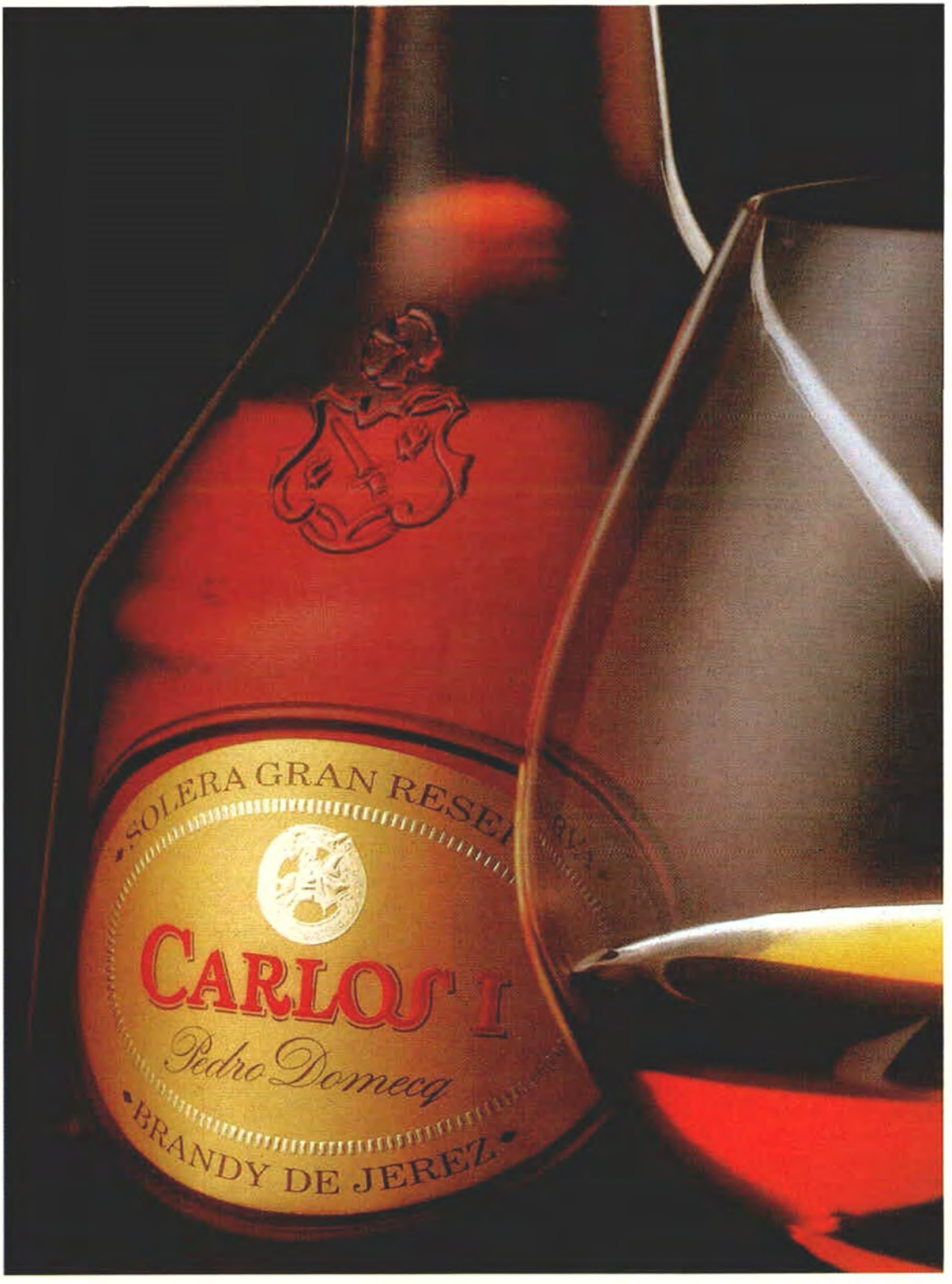
As the monastery was expanded to meet the needs of the nuns, much of the palace was lost or converted into functional parts of the convent. Nevertheless, the palace's layout is still clearly seen in the monastery, and important restoration efforts have uncovered many previously hidden elements, says Carmen García Frías.

Among these are a small Arabic courtyard; the Mudejar chapel, originally the palace vestibule; the gilded chapel; and the Moslem arches leading to the cloister courtyard, which was formerly the Arabic garden of the palace. Each of these areas has well-preserved the plaster designs of intertwining geometric patterns so characteristic of the Mudejar art.

The other important Mudejar element is the outstanding ceiling at the front of the convent's church, a high wooden dome covered with carved laced patterns brightly painted and gilded, with a series of 43 paintings of the Virgin Mary, Christ, Saint John and 40 other saints. The fact that the Mudejar style was chosen for this part of the church, when the rest of it was done in classic Gothic style, further reveals the tolerance and admiration for the Arabic arts, García Frías points out. "The Mudejar work in the palace actually served as an example for the Alcazar in Seville," she comments.

The Arabic Baths

Perhaps the best part of the visit to the Monastery is the area of the Arabic baths. (Visits to the baths are restricted to the first hour of the morning and the afternoon to prevent further deterioration). The baths, which were discovered in 1911, are separated from the rest of the monastery, and are at a lower level. This was to let water run down from the palace's cistern to fill the baths. The baths are composed of three rooms. There is the cold room, which served as the dressing room. The room has three tiny chambers built into the walls which served as changing rooms, and deep, star-shaped holes in the ceiling to let in light. The next room is the warm room, used for meetings or as resting area. The room's vaulted ceiling is sustained by four columns, and has the same star-shaped holes, which were once covered by colored glass. Underneath the floor of the warm room is an



The Premium Leading Brandy From Spain

A first step inside Tordesillas reveals an Arabic patio that might easily be found in the Alhambra of Granada or Alcazar of Seville.

empty crawl space of about one meter (three feet).

The warm room leads to the hot room, which is where the actual bathing took place. The floor was marble, and like the warm room, had a crawl space between it and the ground. In this space, servants built fires, and when the fires were hot, they threw buckets of water onto the marble floor above, creating steam. On one side of the baths was a large tub for cold water, and on the other side one for hot water. Fires were not built under the warm room, but rather bellows were used to push the warm air from under the hot room to the warm room. Friezes painted onto the walls and ceilings of the rooms are still partially visible, although much has been lost.

"The baths were enjoyed really for very few years, only by Alfonso and Peter", Isabel explains. When the nuns came, the baths were converted into living quarters for visitors. This is because the idea of stripping down and bathing was unthinkable for the Catholic nuns, says Isabel. "They'd wash their hands and faces, but not much else, and certainly not with their clothes off."

The lifestyles of the nuns living in the monastery today is obviously much changed from 600 years ago, although they share many similarities with their predecessors. The Clarisas continue to maintain fairly strict rules of cloister, although they are now allowed to leave the monastery to go to the doctor, and have visits from their families. Such contact is kept to a minimum however, and only when necessary.

The nuns receive government subsidies for the upkeep of the monastery. Other expenses are covered by the sale of baked goods. The monastery supplies cakes and buns to the city's pastry shops and takes special orders, according to Isabel.

The nuns have kept a low profile throughout the centuries, and it is difficult to learn the stories of intrigue that must have existed at the monastery, particularly when it was home to royal women pretenders to the throne. The only anecdote Isabel can recall is from the 19th century, when French troops overran the country under Napoleon. "Napoleon was staying in the town, very close to the monastery, and the abbess broke cloisters to invite the emperor for tea," Carmen García Frías explains. "She asked that several prisoners be pardoned from a death sentence, and then asked for his assurance that the monastery would not be touched by his troops, and he promised that it would not, giving the order to his men to stay clear of the monastery. It was one of the few monasteries not pillaged by the French."

Las Huelgas Monastery

The other medieval monastery of Castile touched by the Mudejar style is Las Huelgas, located in Burgos, the thriving capital city of Burgos province. Las Huelgas is the oldest royal monastery, and historically the most important.

Burgos straddles the Arlanzon river and is best-known for its cathedral, an outstanding example of 13th century Gothic architecture. The city itself is lively, even in winter. Locals gather at night in the plazas near the cathedral, and stand with jackets unzipped, puzzled by tourists bundled up with hats and mittens. The fare is like Tordesillas', hearty roasted meats, thick soups served in tureens at the table, and a typical dessert of white Burgos cheese, much like farmer's or hoop cheese, served with honey and walnuts. Here again, the food is served with the wines of the region.

On the outskirts of the city is Las Huelgas Monastery. Like Tordesillas, it is a massive and imposing Gothic structure.

Las Huelgas was founded by medieval King Alfonso VIII in 1187, three centuries before Ferdinand and Isabella created a united Spain.

Alfonso VIII was a devout Christian and a fierce warrior, and is credited with the decisive victory against the Moslems in the Batalla of Las Navas de Tolosa (1212), although he also suffered several devastating defeats. He married at the age of 14 Eleanor of England, daughter of Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine, and sister of the legendary Richard the Lionhearted and of John Lackland.

Eleanor was only nine when she arrived in Castile to marry, and according to legend, was far less bellicose or political than her mother and brothers. It was she who asked that a monastery be built for the Cister order, and her husband complied. Alfonso also decreed that the monastery was to be the royal pantheon, where the kings and queens of Castile and their children would be buried. It was actually due to this status as royal pantheon that the monastery was excluded from the governmental seizure and breakup of many monasteries in the 19th century.

The tombs of the pantheon are now located in the church of the monastery, and each tells its own story. Nearly all were opened and pillaged during the French invasion last century, but some of the clothing worn by the royalty was salvaged and is now exhibited in a museum within the monastery, perhaps the best part of the visit. (See box).

The monastery was built on the site of an Arabic palace that Alfonso VIII had previously ordered constructed. Little remains of the palace, but the monastery still retains a number of excellent examples of early Mudejar decoration, such as the ceiling of the cloister of San Fernando. Here, each section of the ceiling has a separate design of the Mudejar plaster lacework, the best being a pattern of peacocks within circles, each peacock in a different pose. There are also a number of Mudejar arches, and a beautiful Mudejar frieze and sculpture in the small chapel of Santiago.

In this chapel stood a homely anonymous sculpture of Santiago, Spain's patron saint, a large wooden doll really with a jointed arm. In

Anecoop: Symbol of service

To achieve success in our sector of business, a series of skills and values are required -creativity, accuracy and professionalism. Based on these principles, we are building a new culture which focuses on service to the customer, offering new and attractive products, together with consistent individual attention. In ANECOOP we are striving to achieve a genuine group spirit that is at the service of our customers. This is why we want this, our new symbol, to also be a symbol of service.

ANECOOP
Symbol of a reality

COUNTERFOIL

ANECOOP S. COOP.
C/. Monforte, 1 Entlo.
46010 Valencia - Spain
Tel. (34 6) 362 16 12
Fax (34 6) 362 19 00
Telex 64199 Coop E

ANECOOP FRANCE S.A.R.L.
M.I. Saint Charles-Mag. 46-50
66030 Perpignan - France
Tel. 33 68 56 60 25
Fax 33 68 56 87 42
Telex Aneco B 500808 F

FESA U.K. Ltd.
Hawthorn Bank
Spalding Lincs.
PE11 1JZ - England
Tel. 44 775 71 47 00
Fax 44 775 71 47 20
Telex 32806 FESA G

IFTA GmbH (International Fruit Trade of ANECOOP)
Milinowski Str., 26
D-1000 Berlin, 37 - Germany
Tel. 49 30 814 10 84
Fax 49 30 813 79 13

FRUCHTPARTNER GmbH
Neulandstrasse 25 A
D 74889 Sinsheim (Germany)
Tel. 49 7261 15500
Fax 49 7261 15501

AGRICONSA
Agricultura y Conservas S.A.
Ctra. Valencia-Játiva, km. 28,5
46680 Algemesi (Vcia. - España)
Tel. (96) 248 29 10
Fax (96) 248 29 85

MERCATO GmbH
Neulandstrasse 25 A
D 74889 Sinsheim (Germany)
Tel. 49 7261 15500
Fax 49 7261 155004

The smell of cookies baked with the wheat of Castile follows the traveler to the monastery.

medieval times, the sculpture was used to knight knights when the king was unavailable. A nun would stand behind Santiago and make the arm move, lowering its sword onto the knight's shoulder.

When Alfonso VIII founded the monastery, he also decreed that the convent's abbess would have authority over the land's other Cister monasteries. Although the other monasteries initially resisted, the king enforced the rule, and the abbess of Las Huelgas came to be the most powerful figure in the land after the king. She presided over 12 convents and 50 villages with the power of an archbishop, with civil, penal, ecclesiastic and jurisdictional authority, particularly in the 13th and 14th centuries. This authority caused a well-known historian to note that "if the Pope were to marry, he would marry the abbess of Las Huelgas".

Today's abbess no longer wields this authority, nor is she, nor any of the other nuns, required to be of noble birth in order to enter the convent. "All that has changed," says Sister María Asunción, one of the monastery's 48 nuns. "Before, either you were of noble birth, and brought a huge dowry to support your life in the convent, or you were a sort of nun-servant, and had to do the menial tasks. Today, everybody shares the work, and no one brings dowries."

Sister María Asunción is 67 years old, and has lived as a cloistered nun since she was nineteen. She speaks from the other side of iron bars, commenting that when she entered the monastery, the nuns had to wear veils when speaking with the outside world. "The cloister is more flexible now, we can leave for doctor's and dentist's appointments, or to visit an ailing parent. Years ago, though, it was nearly impossible. Even medical operations were done here, in a small operating room we have."

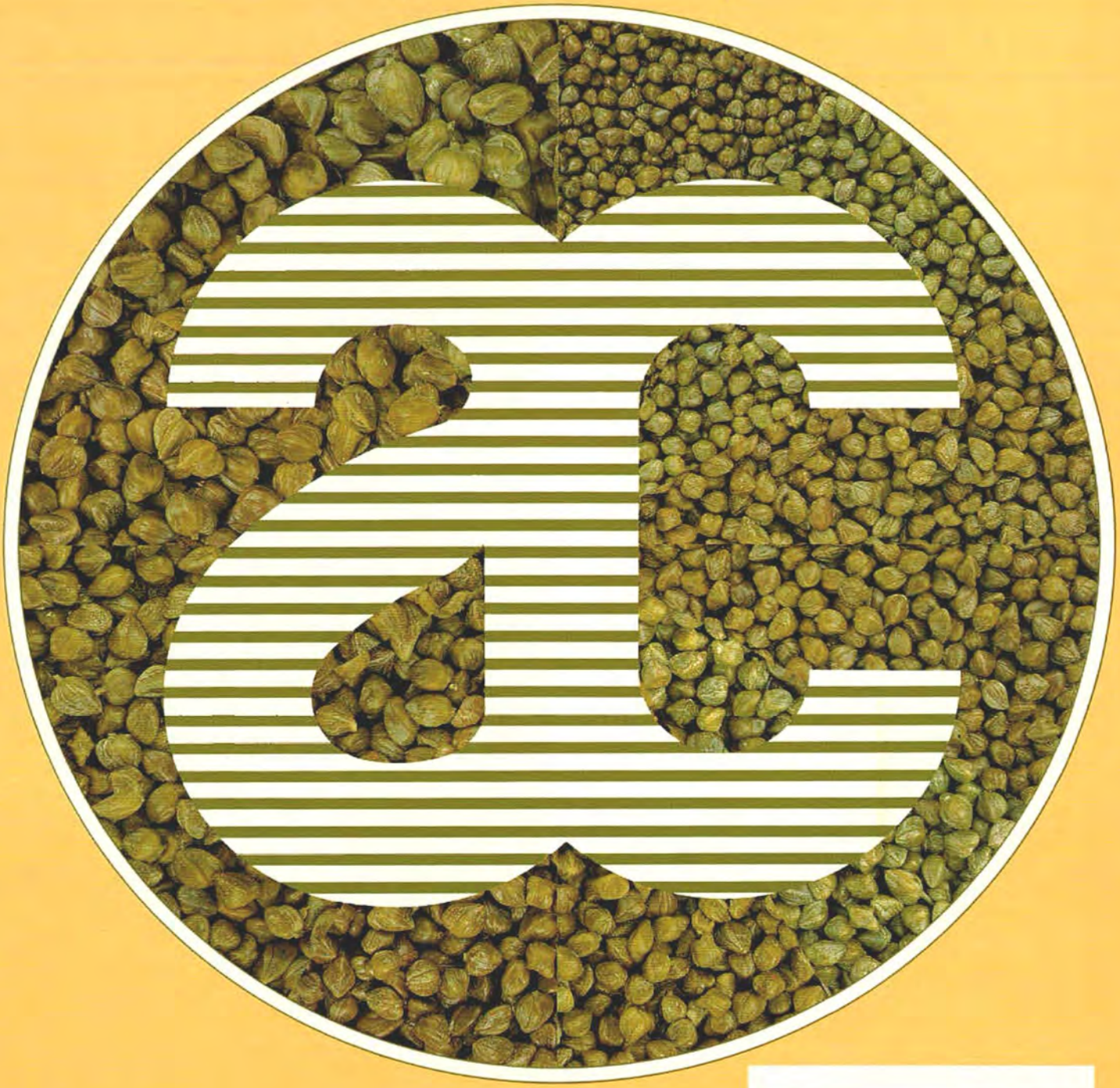
Despite the cloistered living, the nuns are well aware of what goes on beyond the gates. "The young novitiates always bring something of their world, and we read the papers and discuss the news," she explains.

The nuns divide their days into hours of prayer and manual labor, taking turns at such chores as the cooking and cleaning. They also have several small businesses: they do laundry for the city's hotels and restaurants, bake pastries, and decorate ceramics. "We used to be very busy, but right now, the crisis affects even us," she says with a rueful smile.

Meg Campbell *is an American journalist based in Spain. She contributed to Insight Guides : Spain, winner of the 1988 Vega-Inclán prize from the Secretary of Tourism of Spain.*

AGRUCAPERS, S.A.

'The Caper Specialists'
'Les Spécialistes en Câpres'



DELICIAS

PICKLES & CONDIMENTS

AGRUCAPERS, S.A.
P.O. Box 14 AGUILAS (MURCIA) SPAIN
Phone: (68) 410450
Tx.– 67129 caper e
67108
Telefax: (68) 412955

The clothes and tapestries in Las Huelgas Monastery's Museum of Fine Fabrics are almost all made of raw silk, sewn with thread plated with silver and gold. This collection is the only one of its kind in the world.

THE MUSEUM OF MEDIEVAL VESTMENTS

It was in 1942 that a team of historians, church officials and archeologists lifted the lid from the tomb of Fernando de la Cerda, a Castilian prince who had died in 1275. Inside was a tapestry covered coffin, and within the coffin lay the perfectly preserved mummy, fully dressed and holding a sword.

"It was a really exciting discovery," says Concha Herrero, curator of the National Patrimony's collection of medieval fabrics. "Fernando's tomb was the only one that had not been previously opened, and it was completely intact, with his clothes, jewels, crown and sword."

The researchers carefully lifted the mummy from its coffin. In order to remove the clothes, they had to break an arm. The mummy was then dressed in a white habit, and, once the tapestry was removed from the coffin, he was placed back into his coffin and tomb.

The articles taken from the mummy are the centerpiece of the Las Huelgas Monastery's Museum of Fine Fabrics, located in the renovated granary of the convent. The museum itself is perhaps the most interesting part of a tourist's visit to the monastery, because it gives a clear idea of what life was like in medieval times.

"The collection is the only one of its kind in the world," says Concha Herrero. "Nowhere else can you find garments dating back to the 13th century worn by royalty."

The clothes and tapestries in the collection are almost all made of raw silk, sewn with thread plated with silver and gold. The clothes were almost all sewn by Mudejar artisans, and a close look shows rich Mudejar patterns and Arabic inscriptions.

Fernando de la Cerda's vestments show clearly the style of the time. The prince wore a long-sleeved garment like a dress that dropped below his knee, with a wide pleat in front. The garment is covered with the crest of Castile. Over this, he wore a *pellote,* a sort of jumper or frock that slipped over the head, and consists of a narrow strip of fabric down the front and back until waist level, where it meets with a wide skirt that was bunched with a belt. The *pellote* is of the same fabric as the dress, and was originally lined with fur. Fernando also had a sweeping cape, again with the same fabric, and a beautiful belt believed to be a gift from his father-in-law.

On his head, Fernando wore a *birrete,* a type of beaded crown. On his finger was a ruby ring set in gold surrounded by tiny emeralds.

ONTAÑON/PATRIMONIO NACIONAL

Juan Gris, *The Breakfast*, 1910-1915. Oil on canvas. Giraudon/Art Resource, NY. ©1993 Foods From Spain.

Oil Painting by Gris. Oil Collection by Spain.

In Spain, making the world's finest Olive Oil is an art. Try Olive Oil from Spain. We're sure you'll be inspired.

OLIVE OIL FROM

SPAIN

A Most Inspirational Food.

For recipes or more information call Foods from Spain (212) 661-2787.

"A taste older than meat, older than wine," wrote Lawrence Durrell, the English novelist. "A taste as old as cold water." To him, the Mediterranean's moons and palm trees, art and history were condensed in the earthy bitterness of an olive.

Olives: All in a Pickle

Text: **Vicky Hayward** Still life: **Menchu Artime** Photo: **A. de Benito/ICEX**

Until recently, Spain's traditional brined, pickled or marinated olives rarely left the regions where they were made. On the one hand, they are so plentiful that they've always been taken for granted. In every olive-growing region - and Spain is the most prolific of all the Mediterranean countries - enough are brined after harvesting to provide supplies for the following year. On the other hand, the short lifespan of such olives has made them poor travelers, difficult to commercialize on the same scale as Spain's more smoothly manicured cocktail olives.
Now, though, all that's beginning to change. In city-center markets around Spain, it's usual to find stalls with a dozen or so different types of traditional cured olives from around the country: grassy-green, new-season Gordals

from Andalusia cracked open in a garlicky marinade; fleshy purple giants from Castile; small, mild black olives in a thyme-flavored brine from Aragon. And in supermarkets and gourmet shops, you find their equivalents in glass jars. Preserved in herby, lemony or paprika-tinted marinades, these pasteurized olives can keep like traditional table olives for up to four years.

Varieties and Ripeness

This range reflects in large part how many different varieties -over two dozen in all - grow in Spain. Among eating olives, the Manzanilla and Gordal families predominate. Small-stoned and fleshy, they include varieties by other names such as Cacereña and Obregón. But lesser known olives with stronger flavors pickle especially well; two examples are the pointed Cornicabra in Castille or the fruity, sharp Zorzaleña from Andalusia. Oil olives - for example, Verdial from Extremadura and Arbequina in Catalonia - can also make excellent eating.

Ripeness at the time of picking gives other differences. Bright green, early-season olives keep their color and a grassy tang for several months after brining. Most, however, are picked just as they're turning from green to purplish-black, either when they're still green, called *envero*, or have already become milder mottled *pintonas* or fully ripe *moradas*. Generally speaking, the riper the olive, the fuller and softer the flavor.

The Pickling Process

Finally, flavor is determined by the preserving method itself.

The first important stage is removing the fruit's bitterness. Originally this was done, and sometimes still is at home, by repeated rinsing in water and/or a long soak in brine. Such Andalusian olives *del año* can have a bitter-sharp punch that knocks your tastebuds sideways unless you're used to it. But if the olives are left so their bitterness can leach out slowly for anything up to a year, as in Catalonia and Aragon, they can also be exceptionally mild.

These days, though, it is more usual for the olives to be given a quick bath in an alkaline solution. This method, called cooking, is typical of Seville and produces an olive that is mild but fully fermented and keeps well. Said to have been discovered by chance by two brothers who tipped ashes into a barrel of olives, it's now a finely judged process using caustic soda.

Whichever process is used, the olives always finish up in brine to ferment until the sugars break down into lactic acid. This is both the preserving medium and gives the olives their sweet-sour, bitter-salt flavor. Occasionally, the brine is left plain, or natural as the Spanish call it, but usually herbs, spices, pieces of lemon and vinegar are added, effectively turning it into a marinade. Olives treated this way are called *aliñadas*.

The longer the olive is marinated like this, the stronger and more complex its tastes become and the darker its color turns.

Most fresh pickled olives keep for somewhere between 25 days and 2 months before the marinade attacks the olive to the point that it is no longer edible. The only stabler ones are those sweetened, cured and preserved in plain brine.

Regional Recipes

Handed down by word of mouth over the centuries, the marinating recipes range from the very plain in Aragon and Catalonia, where only thyme and sometimes fennel are added, to the pungently powerful ones of Andalusia. Sometimes the olives are left whole, in others the flesh is neatly cut with a knife - these are called *rajadas* - and in others, especially very large olives, the flesh is broken open with a hammer to help it absorb the marinade's flavors.

These cracked olives, called *aceitunas partidas*, are especially typical of Andalusia, where they're also known as *machacadas*. Here, where neatly groomed olive groves often roll away as far as the eye can see, every village and home has its own recipe. Nearly always, it includes a base of crushed or whole raw garlic cloves and oregano, but there's usually a crowd of other flavors too. At J.J. Galocha, Seville's oldest *casa de aceitunas*, or olive-pickling store, cumin, thyme, green pepper and salt are pounded along with the oregano and garlic, and the mortar is then washed out with good wine vinegar from Huelva. Elsewhere, you'll find bay leaves, savory, lemon chunks and - most distinctive of all -the bittersweet rind of Seville oranges.

Olives from other regions also have their own character. In Extremadura, they come specked with smoked red *pimentón*, or paprika, and in the Balearics with bits of sea fennel and lemon leaves. In Teruel province, in Aragon, the olive can be left on the tree till very ripe, wrinkled and blackened. It's then simply dried off in the sun and salted - or 'killed' as they say locally - to give a nutty, oily olive best eaten within a month or two. Where the same method is used at home in the Balearics and Seville, a little garlic or chili pepper may be added with the salt.

At the same time as chefs are rediscovering olive flavors, researchers are refining their curing techniques.

Where to Begin Choosing?

Out of all these differences - tree, harvesting, region and curing - comes the range of cured olives that are now beginning to emerge from the regions.

"It's a question of personal taste, as for olive oil," comments French chef Jean-Pierre Vandelle. He keeps a changing selection of four or five different marinated olives - all Spanish - at the bar of his restaurant El Olivo, in Madrid.

"A young, mild olive can hit one person's tastebuds spot-on, while an olive that's heavily spiced and fermented appeals to another person."

Vandelle's own favorite is Cornezuela, a very bitter olive from Jaen with a long stone like a date, which is prepared cracked and flavored with bitter orange, rosemary and thyme. Since the restaurant's menu is built around the flavors of olives and their oils, he uses them as a garnish and as a main ingredient - for example, black stoned olives ringing a monkfish in tomato compote. Likewise, at Eldorado Petit, in Barcelona, owner Luis Cruañas uses cured olives in local dishes such as *esquiexat* (marinated slivers of raw salt-cod) or the Catalan salad of *empedrat* (white beans, salt-cod, roasted peppers and olives).

"Each variety is good in a different type of dish: Manzanillas and black Aragonese for cooking, bitter Arbequinas for an aperitif. When we had a restaurant in New York, our clients were really surprised by the quality and range. And as Mediterranean cuisine develops, I think a lot more use will be found for them in cooked dishes."

But equally, one of the pleasures of olives is that you don't have to be a great cook to enjoy them. Jean Pierre Vandelle's own favorite combination is herby Andalusian *machacadas*, with the stones removed but the herbs and flavorings kept in, all sandwiched between rough country bread drizzled with extra-virgin olive oil.

Old Tastes, New Techniques

At the same time that chefs have been rediscovering olives' flavors, researchers in Seville have been refining the old preserving techniques to extend their keeping time. For while over the centuries the containers for brining and pickling have changed - from tall earthenware jars called *tinajas*, to wine barrels and plastic vats - the processes themselves have remained essentially the same until the last few years.

Over the last two decades, though, a team of food biotechnologists working under Luis Rejano at the Instituto de Grasas y sus Derivados have been finding ways of adapting these processes to make marinated olives a more stable product but without changing their character or quality.

They have followed two main lines of investigation. One is removing bitterness by combining alkaline treatment and brining -lactic and yeast fermentation respectively - to eliminate the chance of secondary fermentation. The olives can then be mildly acidified or, for absolute security, very gently pasteurized. The second is to replace a proportion of the most volatile flavorings with natural essential oils in powder form.

Some of this research is already being successfully applied to top-quality jarred pickled olives by companies such as La Española and Carbonell. They are finding that the market grows year by year in Spain and, abroad, as far afield as Japan. The herbs and other flavoring ingredients are bought from separate small-scale suppliers in the sierras, and added in measured doses on a production line. But the pickles and marinades follow local centuries-old formulas.

Likewise, the black Bajo Aragon olives, fermented gently in brine with thyme for a year, are now being exported to France, Italy and Germany. Catalonia's subtly bitter Arbequiña olives in brine are also in increasing demand and exported in small quantities, but production is limited by the value of their excellent oil.

"At the moment, the possibilities are just beginning to unfold,' comments Luis Rejano. "Certainly, the commercial interest is there and over the next four or five years, a much wider range of products will appear. For example, as yet nobody has applied our methods to more traditional pickling without pasteurization."

Until these olives become more widely available, the best time to try them is when you're traveling around Spain. In Castile Leon, look out for black Monte Reals with chopped sweet onion, sweet paprika and a drizzle of olive oil over the top; in Catalonia, for Arbequinas simply drained from a mild brine; in the Balearics, for fruity black olives shiny with oil and vinegar, garlic, pepper and salt.

This, of course, is when you also have to learn how to eat them. Andalusian food-writer Enrique Mapelli takes a firm line. "Olives must never be eaten with a toothpick or, heaven forbid, a fork. They should always be eaten with the fingers" and be enjoyed.

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

In Spanish markets, it's usual to find stalls with a dozen different types of brined, pickled or marinated olives.

"I've lost none of my motivation and...

SPANISH EYES (IV)

MIGUEL INDURAIN

LIFE ON A BIKE

So what does it feel like to have mountains rearing up ahead of you, the gradients steeper than a pyramid's, and to know that you have to climb the summits and to crown them ahead of the man who is shadowing your wheels ? What does it feel like to stand up from the saddle and to pump the pedals until every muscle screams and your lungs shudder as they stretch to the breaking point ? "It's just a job" says Miguel Indurain, "a profession in fact".

A gangling gentle giant, who like all cyclists looks somewhat unsteady and out of place when he is off his bike, Indurain is down to earth and matter of fact. He is a champion alright, certainly a fully paid up member of cycling's hall of fame, and he is a natural schoolboy hero. But as his soft and shy manner makes perfectly clear, stardom has not gone to his head and if heroics are involved, they don't bother him.

And yet it is undeniably true that his job, or profession, as a road racing cyclist is little short of awesome. Few can remain unmoved by this sport with its fine-tuned tactical skills and unique blend of individualism. Nor can they fail to be mightily impressed by the gut-breaking tenacity, scorched by the sun one week and whipped by snow blizzards the next, of those who practise it.

Head and Shoulders above the Rest

It is difficult not to get hooked by professional cycling. The big races in the cycling calendar — the *Tour de France*, the *Giro d'Italia* and the *Vuelta a España* — that have a hundred or more steel-rod strong athletes, their legs going like pistons, snaking their way up hill and down dale make for compulsive television viewing. The cameras mostly focus on one cyclist and it is this same cyclist that the crowds crane their necks to catch sight of as the colorful caravan flashes past the finishing line at the end of each daily stage. There are no prizes for guessing that the object of so much attention is Indurain.

Indurain is a champion, a competitor in a class of his own. The winner of the past three Tours of France and of Italy's past two Giros he is known in every Spanish household as Miguelón, a term that combines affection and a tribute to his size. Professional cyclists can size up not much taller than jockeys. Indurain towers over team mates and rivals.

They have measured Indurain, of course, and in every conceivable way too, because that is part and parcel of being a champion. He stands 1.84 m (6 ft) in his socks, well above the 1.70 - 1.75 m (5.5 - 5.7 ft) that is considered usual for cyclists and at 80 Kg (176 pounds), not a miligram of it surplus, he is a good 10 kilos (22 pounds) heavier than the norm in the cycling fraternity.

What is really freakish about Indurain is his 32-36 pulse rate, well below half the average. That sort of body engineering gives him a several kilo-

Text:
Tom Burns
Illustration:
José María Sánchez Molina/ICEX

... that's partly because every season there...

meters-long edge when it comes to individual time trials, an inbuilt feature of every big race and one at which Indurain excels. Alone against the clock with a very long road and more than an hour's cycling stretching out ahead of him he appears, with effortless ease, to achieve a cruising speed that rival professionals only dream about.

At the Training Camp

And yet, Indurain is terribly normal for all his accolades and attributes. His life is the bike and he was on it when I arrived to spend a day in his company at his team's training camp near Almería (Southern Spain). I should have known that. Nobody can spend much of a day with Indurain unless he is willing to get on a bike as well and succeeds in the well-nigh impossible task of keeping up with him. Together with his fellow members of the Banesto team, Indurain can easily spend eight hours a day cycling up and down the province of Almería and put in 150 kilometers (93 miles) between an early breakfast and a late lunch.

The team has chosen to base its training camp at a resort hotel south of Almería. The training camp's backdrop was the majestic Sierra Nevada which was suitably snow capped; Mulhacen, the highest peak in peninsular Spain, reared to its full 3.478 meter (11.400 ft) height and on the bright January morning the peak seemed so close you could reach out to touch it. The hotel had the Mediterranean lapping away on one side and possibly the flattest and least strenuous nine-hole golf course in the world on the other.

South Africas' Gary Player, who designed the golf course, must have had very lazy golfers in mind when he laid out the fairways and certainly those who were swinging a club here and there were low on energy and enjoying every minute of it. The golfers, mostly elderly North Europeans, presented a remarkable contrast to their fellow hotel guests, the young athletes of the Banesto cycling team. One group was shuffling in from the greens, jerkily tugging their trolleys; the other was gracefully gliding into the hotel car park where a posse of waiting mechanics were waiting to pick up their ever-so sleek racing machines.

Working for the Champion

Indurain was warming up for the season with his team. This meant spending at least half the day cycling with the 24 members of the Banesto squad and spending most of what was left "living together" with the team, as he put it, chatting about everything under the sun but mostly about shared tactics, plans and dreams. Road racing is a team sport in which each member of the unit has special skills and plays an appointed role.

The star, the leader, is naturally Miguelón and essentially everyone on the Banesto team works for him. Every team has a mix of sprinters, of mountain climbers, of time trial experts and of all-rounders, and the combined efforts of the different members work to gain the team event in a given competition and in ensuring that the team's leader wins the individual event.

To keep Indurain up front, the rest of the team will be supporting him and keeping check on each and every one of his potential rivals. Should Miguelón lose concentration and fall behind, one of the team will hold back to bring him forward again; should a rival break away from the pack and attack, one of the team will spurt ahead with the challenger to neutralize the threat; should Indurain himself make a bid to get ahead, one of the team will accompany him to pace him forward.

The Season Ahead

Indurain and the Banesto team faced their first event of the season —a minor race in Majorca— in three weeks time. Ahead lay the big money competitions: the tours of Spain, in April-May; the tour of Italy, in June; the *Tour de France* in July, which each involve 20-odd daily stages; a score of shorter tours spotted around Europe involving a week or so of hard riding; and classics such as the Paris-Nice and the World Cup in the Autumn near the end of the season. In any given year Miguelón, like his rival top cyclists, will spend up to 140 days competing.

The prospect of such a hard grind doesn't appear to worry him in the least. He wants to win the Tour of France again, and also Italy's Giro, and he knows that the fans not only expect him to but will term his season a failure if he does not. But if he feels psychologically pressured, he doesn't show it —perhaps that extraordinary pulse rate contributes to his unaffected and easy calm. He has an "if you win, you win, if you don't, you don't" attitude which he rounds off by saying that the important thing is to compete, to work well together with the team, to give your best and enjoy doing it. It may not sound a very competitive attitude for a champion, but the fact of the matter is that it works, at least for him.

"I've lost none of my motivation and that's partly because every season there are new rivals coming up. I set my targets year by year and you have to have a special objective, the Tour or perhaps the One Hour cycling record. Then at the end of the season you sum it all up together and work out how it has all gone".

The truth is that Indurain at this point in his life can think of little else than being on a bike. He will be 30 in July and is in his prime as a professional cyclist with possibly three good seasons at the top still left in him. What's left of the 140 or so days of the year when he is not competing or traveling to and from an event, he will spend anyway in the saddle, either clocking up a daily eight hours cycling at a team training camp such as the Almería resort one or on his own.

A Dedicated Diet

Just about everything is sacrificed to a chosen sport. Family life is limited, for instance, and that is not much fun for he is recently married. To compensate and make ammends, Miguelón splashed out last year and took his wife on a short holiday in the South Pacific. And then there is the small matter of diet.

Greasy foods, fats and more or less anything that has an elaborately delicious sauce is most definitely out. "Before they used to have us eating proteins but that's all gone

... are new rivals coming up".

now and the fashion is carbohydrates", says Indurain. When he is competing, and even when he is not, it is pasta and rice one day, rice and pasta the next day, lots of cereals and salads and the odd grilled and lean meat or fish thrown in to cheer things along.

Drinking habits have also changed; "They used to keep us off water in a race and you were only supposed to sip some when you were really thirsty. Now you can drink all you want and you drink water with minerals and with glucose when the going gets tough". There appears to be a constant new thinking not just about diet but also about training. There is a lot more of the latter than there was in the old days when champion cyclists were wont to coolly hang up their bikes for a couple of months in the winter and take things very easy. Indurain now takes at most 20 days rest a year and it is then that he will allow himself a bit of honest home cooking and a little wine with his evening meal.

At Home

Time off is time spent in Villava, the village where he grew up and which is now almost a suburb of Pamplona. As you might expect, Indurain believes his home province of Navarre to be something completely "different". He is uncharacteristically lyrical about the place —"I love it, that is where I was born"—and he warms to the theme when he talks about its valleys. "Everything changes between one valley and another", he says. The point about valleys is that each has got its special tone of green, the green of its meadows when the sun catches them in different ways and the green of the layout of its oaks, its birches and its conifers. Indurain notices this time and again because he knows "every meter" of them thanks to his cycling expeditions. Navarre, he says emphatically, "is the best possible place to train".

A lot of people would look upon Navarre's Valley of Roncevalles as the place where Roland blew his mighty horn in vain to summon Charlemagne's aid and the entry point to Spain of the medieval pilgrimage route to Santiago. Indurain knows about all that as well but he also reckons it is the ideal place to get into top cycling shape because it's "flat, steep, less steep, very steep and flat". When he is working those home turf gradients, the job, or profession, is really enjoyable.

Tom Burns *first came to work in Spain as a Reuter correspondent in 1974. A former Washington Post and Newsweek Magazine correspondent, he is a director of Spanish Trends, a business newsletter he helped to found in 1985, an associate editor of Lookout, a long established English monthly that deals with travel, food, and lifestyles in Spain and a frequent contributor to London's Financial Times. He has contributed to a number of other publications, among them, the Penguin Guide to Spain.*

PERSONAL PLEASURES

Where would you spend your holidays?
At home, near Pamplona, because I'm almost always away from it for the rest of the year.

When would you go?
In November. That's at the end of the season and I take 20 days off.

How would you spend your time?
Hanging around the home and enjoying my friends.

What would you eat and drink?
The food I grew up on and that I don't eat for the rest of the year. Greasy and protein dishes like fried eggs and cured ham and a homemade tomato sauce. I'd also drink a bit of red wine.

What would you give a guest as a souvenir?
Good Navarre produce like asparagus, peppers and chorizo. Perhaps also a bota, a leather wine bottle.

Where would you go out to eat?
If it were for a posh dinner, I'd go somewhere like the Restaurante Europa in Pamplona. But what I really like are the ventas, the roadside taverns, and I'd go with friends perhaps to the Venta de Ulzama in the Puerto de Velate.

RESTAURANTE EUROPA. Espoz y Mina, 11 31002 Pamplona
Tel.: (48)221800 Closed Sunday.

VENTA ULZAMA. Puerto de Velate
Crta Pamplona-Francia Km. 31
Arraitz - 31797 Navarra
Tel.: (48) 305138. Open every day.

SPANISH MEAT, A CUT ABOVE THE REST

The wood-roasts of Castile are Spain's classic meat dishes, but Spanish home-cooking has a good choice of other recipes for cheaper cuts more easily found outside Spain. These below are a selection from around the country.

BEEF

Asturian Braised Beef (Estofado de buey a la asturiana)

Beef stews used to be common in northern Spain, as a way of cooking the meat from older animals, but today most of it gets made into hamburgers. Flavors change from east to west. In Catalonia the classic *estofat* has bitter chocolate, wine and local *butifarra* sausage in it; in Galicia, the beef may be cooked with local white wine and potatoes. In this Asturian version, wine vinegar helps to tenderize the meat and calf's foot gives extra flavor and body. You can also make this as a pot-roast, using rump larded with pieces of fat and cured ham.

Serves 4-6
1 kg braising beef (eg blade, skirt, flank, chuck), cut into large steaks
salt
50 g lard
100 g streaky fatback, cut into pieces
1 calf's foot, boned
500 g onions, skinned and cut into rings
250 g carrots, peeled and finely sliced
1 glass of red or white wine
1 glass of wine vinegar
1 teaspoon sweet paprika
sprig of thyme
1 bay leaf
sprig of fresh parsley
salt
pepper

Season the beef with salt. In a spacious flameproof casserole large enough to take all the ingredients, sauté the beef in the lard until well-browned. Add the fatback and calf's foot; sauté them for a few minutes and stir in the onions and carrots, paprika, thyme, bayleaf and parsley. When the vegetables are lightly done, pour over the red wine and vinegar. Leave to cook over slow heat - or in a slow oven - until the meat is tender.

Check the seasoning. Before serving, chop up the calf's foot. This is often served with boiled potatoes, and a squirt of lemon juice.

Wood-grilled Beef Steaks (Chuletas de buey a la parrilla)

One of the things that Spaniards love to eat when they go out to restaurants is prime beef roasted on a grill over a wood-fire. Throughout the country, but especially in the north, there are specialist *asadores* with huge grills under open chimneys and the aromatic smell of wood-smoke. You usually order by weight rather than portion, and the meat comes in the center of the table to share.

In his classic book, *La Casa de Lúculo*, the Galician food writer Julio Camba wrote that three things were essential for good wood-grilled meat. One was the caramelization of the sugars, another the odd singed bit of meat where a flame had licked it, and the third the flavor of wood resin. The best is considered to be *encina* - holm-oak - but pine, chestnut and oak are also good.

Sometimes the beef is marinated in olive oil for a few hours, and has garlic, parsley and salt rubbed in before grilling. Another good basting mixture is water, vinegar, thyme, chopped garlic and salt, made up the day before. In any case, the fat should be crunchy and the lean meat juicy.

Make sure the grill is heated first, and oiled, so the meat doesn't stick. Once the flames have died down, put the grill fairly low over the glowing embers to brown the meat on both sides and seal in the juices. Then lift the grill to allow the meat to cook more slowly till the meat is done to your taste. Season after cooking.

VEAL

Veal with Turnips (Ternera con nabos)

This recipe comes from the mountainous region of La Cerdanya, one of several Catalan areas where veal-calves are reared. It's usually cooked here with one of two local ingredients: wild mushrooms or the baby gray-skinned turnips from the village of Talltendre, famous for their concentrated flavor and aroma.

Serves 4
400 g veal fillets
300 g pork fillets
1 kg baby turnips, peeled
flour
100 ml olive oil
1 large onion and 3 cloves of garlic, skinned and finely chopped
50 ml brandy
30 ml sweet sherry
2 ripe tomatoes, peeled and chopped, seeds removed
a little chopped fresh parsley
2 cloves of garlic
2 tsp flour

Ask for the fillets to be thinly cut. Boil the turnips in water with a little salt. Once tender, drain them, leave them to cool and dry. Sprinkle with flour and fry in plenty of oil. Remove, drain and keep on one side.

Remove any burned pieces from the frying oil and sauté the onion and garlic in it. When they begin to turn golden-brown, add the meat fillets and sauté gently for a few minutes. Pour on the cognac and sherry, reduce a little over the heat and add the tomatoes and parsley. Continue to cook over slow heat for 10 minutes.

Add 250 ml water and leave to simmer for another 15 minutes. Then add the prepared turnips and leave for another 10 minutes. Meanwhile, pound the garlic cloves in a mortar, stir into the stew and leave to cook for a few more minutes. Serve hot in the same casserole.

Veal Braised with Orange and Almonds (Ofegat)

Tourism has ousted most of the beef and dairy cattle from the Balearic islands, and three-quarters of their meat is now imported from the mainland. Before that Menorca was famous for its cattle; indeed, the Greeks named it Meloussa (meaning "cattle") for its cattle. Both their milk - which goes to make Mahón cheese - and meat are said to take a saltiness from the grazing pastures close to the sea. This recipe comes from Caty Juan's *Cocina Balear. Las Cuatro Estaciones.*

Serves 4
600 g leg of veal
1 teacup of extra-virgin olive oil
allspice
150 g whole almonds
juice of 3 oranges
1 tablespoon sweet paprika
ground black pepper and salt

Divide the meat into 8 pieces. Heat the oil in a flameproof dish and fry the meat. Season and sprinkle with the allspice.

Pound the almonds in a mortar (you can do this in a food processor, but be careful not to overdo it) and stir in the orange juice. Pour the mixture over the meat, cover and cook over moderate heat. The meat should be tender in the finished dish and the sauce thick and concentrated, almost like a confit.

PORK

Sautéed Fresh Pork with Sweet Paprika (Picadillo salmantino)

This is typically made to eat for lunch or supper on the day of the pig-killing, with the *magro*, or trimmings, left over from the ham and sausage-making. It's found under various other names - such as *zorza* - throughout Castile-Leon.

Serves 6
1 kg lean pork trimmings (eg shoulder, leg, loin, belly)
250 g fatback
100 g cured ham
sweet paprika
fruity olive oil, as needed for frying
1 onion, skinned and finely chopped
2-3 cloves of garlic, skinned and finely chopped
2 fresh tomatoes, peeled and chopped
salt
hard-boiled egg, to garnish

Chop up the pork, fatback and cured ham very finely. Sauté them together, without any oil at first, in the grease that runs from the fatback.

Then add the paprika and the oil, the onion, garlic and tomatoes. Salt to taste and add a cup of water, allowing the whole thing to simmer until the meat is tender and the water has been completely absorbed. This can be served with very finely chopped hard-boiled egg sprinkled over the surface. Good to eat with plenty of bread.

Pork Fillet Braised in Milk (Lomo de cerdo con leche)

An unusual recipe from Juan José Lapitz Mendía's book *La Cocina Vasca*. Most of the *caseríos*, or farmsteads, of the Basque countryside produce both their own milk and a few pigs. I've seen other recipes for this with the bone kept in the pork. You can also add a squirt of lemon juice to the milk, as it speeds up the process.

Serves 4-6
1 kg boneless loin of pork
4-5 garlic cloves, skinned
100 g lard
flour
ground cinnamon, optional
1 liter of milk
salt
100 g ground almonds

The evening before you want to make this dish, truss the loin with string to give it an even shape. Rub it all over with garlic cloves cut in half.

When you're ready to start cooking the next day, remove the garlic cloves and dry off any liquid from the meat. In a heavy-based frying pan, sauté the garlic until golden and put on one side. Dust the meat with flour and - if you like - cinnamon, and sauté it in the same pan until it is well-sealed and golden brown on all sides.

Transfer the pork to a casserole large enough to hold it. Add the milk and the sautéed garlic, season and put over slow heat so that it cooks very slowly until the meat is tender. The milk will darken to a toasted beige. Reduce and thicken.

Check that the meat is done by sticking in a knife horizontally at one end. Put the milk and garlic through a sieve, mix in the ground almonds, reheat and serve with the meat. Lapitz Mendía suggests serving this with potato purée, red peppers and raisins soaked in cognac.

LAMB
Shepherdess's Lamb (Cordero a la pastora)

This is a dish for braising lamb meat rather than the prime cuts of young lamb not easily available elsewhere. While the *calderetas* and *chilindrones* from Castile, Navarre and the Rioja are usually flavored with peppers and tomato, this version from Sigüenza is milder, enriched with cream or milk. It comes from *Cocina Seguntina* by Juan Antonio Martínez Gómez-Gordo.

Serves 4
500 g braising lamb
4 tsp mild olive oil
4-5 peppercorns
thyme, rosemary, bay leaf
2-3 cloves of garlic pounded with parsley and salt
glass of white wine
500 g new or small potatoes
125 ml cream, or rich fresh milk
chopped fresh parsley, to finish
For the marinade:
2-3 fat cloves of garlic
small handful of fresh parsley
1/2 glass white wine
1/2 glass water
salt and pepper

The day before you want to make the casserole, cut up the lamb into pieces and marinate it for 24 hours. To make the marinade pound the garlic and chopped parsley together, mix it into the white wine and water, and add salt and pepper to taste.

When you're ready to make the casserole, remove the meat from the marinade and dry it well. Sauté the meat in the covered casserole over low heat, stir in the seasonings, more freshly pounded garlic, parsley and salt. When the meat is sealed (but it shouldn't be browned), add the wine and half a liter of water, and continue braising very slowly. If you see the casserole drying up, add small quantities of hot water.

Finally, 20 minutes before the end of cooking time, stir in the potatoes and the cream or - in its absence - a glass of milk.

Since this is a pale stew, you might like to finish it off with some chopped parsley scattered over the top.

GREAT VEGETABLE DISHES FROM SPAIN

Summertime Vegetable Dish (Pisto)

Serve this hot or cold. It makes a good side dish with grilled chicken, lamb, tuna or fried eggs. Also, for a light luncheon or supper dish, put the *pisto* in an oven-proof casserole, top with one egg per person and bake until they are set.

50 ml olive oil
1 onion, sliced thinly from stem to root
2 green peppers, cut in squares
2 cloves garlic, chopped
1 large aubergine, cubed
2 small courgettes, cubed
4-5 tomatoes, peeled and chopped
1 tsp salt
Pepper
1/2 tsp crumbled dry oregano or basil

Heat the oil in an earthenware casserole or in a frying pan and sauté the onions, green peppers, garlic and aubergine. Cook gently until most of the oil has been absorbed, then add the courgettes, tomatoes, salt, pepper and oregano. Cook on a medium heat, stirring occasionally, until vegetables are tender and tomatoes reduced to a sauce, about 15 minutes. If the *pisto* is to be served cold, drizzle it with a little extra virgin olive oil and a squeeze of lemon juice before serving.

Vegetable Medley (Menestra de verduras)

8-10 small artichokes
500 gr broad beans (weight unshelled)
500 gr peas (weight unshelled)
75 ml olive oil
8-10 tiny onions (or 1 regular onion, chopped)
2 carrots, diced
2 cloves chopped garlic
150 gr diced ham (optional)
8-10 tiny new potatoes (or regular potatoes, cubed) or turnips
Salt and pepper
1/2 tsp paprika

Trim artichokes of outer leaves and cut off leaves just above the chokes. Drop the trimmed artichoke bottoms into acidulated water to prevent their turning dark. Cook them in boiling water just until tender, about 10 minutes. Drain and set aside. Shell the broad beans and cook them in boiling water until just tender, about 8 minutes. Shell the peas and set aside. In an earthenware casserole or non-aluminum pan, heat the oil and very slowly cook the onions, diced carrots and garlic about 10 minutes. Add the ham, if used, shelled peas and the potatoes, salt and pepper and paprika. Cover and let the vegetables stew in the oil very gently, stirring occasionally. Then add the cooked artichokes and broad beans and just a little boiling water. Cook just until all the vegetables are tender. Serve garnished with chopped parsley or sprigs of fresh mint.

Carrots Braised in Malaga Wine (Zanahorias con vino de Málaga)

1 kg carrots
4 tbsp olive oil
2 tbsp stock
100 ml Málaga wine
Salt and pepper

Peel the carrots, slice them crosswise and partially cook in boiling water, about 8 minutes. Drain. Heat the oil in a frying pan and sauté the carrots, turning them with a fork so they brown lightly. Add the stock, wine and salt and pepper and cook until the liquid is partly evaporated and carrots are very tender, about 20 minutes.

Catalan Vegetable Salad (Xato)

1 head loose-leaf lettuce
1 head escarole
3 stalks celery, sliced
2 scallions, chopped
4 artichoke hearts, cooked and quartered
2 ripe tomatoes
3 cloves garlic
1 tsp sweet paprika
Pinch of chili pepper or red pepper flakes
2 tbsp chopped parsley
50 gr skinned almonds and/or hazelnuts
70 ml extra virgin olive oil
3 tbsp vinegar
Salt
Tinned anchovies or tuna
Green olives

Wash the lettuce and escarole, discarding outer leaves. Drain well and shred into a bowl. Add the sliced celery, chopped scallions and cooked and quartered artichoke hearts. Peel and seed one of the tomatoes. Put it in a mortar, blender or processor with the garlics, paprika, chili, chopped parsley, almonds or hazelnuts, olive oil and salt and grind to a paste, adding water to make a sauce the consistency of thick cream. Pour this over the vegetables, stir to combine and let the salad macerate an hour before serving. Top the salad with drained strips of anchovies or tuna chunks and the olives. Sprinkle with more chopped parsley and garnish with wedges of the remaining tomato.

Navarre Vegetable Soup (Garbure navarro)

3 tbsp oil
100 gr chopped ham or bacon
1 onion or 2 leeks, chopped
2 carrots, chopped
2 cloves garlic, chopped
150 gr shelled peas
150 gr green beans, cut up
1 small cabbage or cauliflower, chopped
1 small bunch spinach or lettuce leaves, chopped
Salt and pepper
2 1/2 litres water or meat stock
2 potatoes, diced
150 gr pork sausage or chorizo sausage, cut up
Toasted slices of whole-meal bread

In a large soup pot heat the oil and brown the chopped ham with the chopped onion, carrots and garlic. Add the peas, green beans, chopped cabbage or cauliflower, chopped greens, salt and pepper and water or stock. Bring to a boil, then simmer, covered until vegetables are nearly tender. Add the diced potatoes and cut-up sausage and cook another 30 minutes. Put the soup in a oven-proof tureen or casserole, add the toasted bread, drizzle with oil or fat and put in a hot oven or under a grill until the top is crusted.

Cauliflower, Mule-Driver's Style (Coliflor al ajo arriero)

1 medium cauliflower
75 ml olive oil
4 cloves garlic, coarsley chopped
1 tsp paprika
1 tsp salt
1 tbsp vinegar
75 ml water
2 tbsp chopped parsley

Cut the cauliflower into flowerets. In a frying pan or earthenware casserole, heat the oil and put in the cauliflower. Sauté gently for 5 minutes, then add the chopped garlic and sauté another few minutes. Add the paprika, salt, vinegar and water. Stir well to blend, then cover and cook until cauliflower is tender, about 15 minutes, adding more water as necessary so a little liquid always remains.

Spinach Catalan Style (Espinacas a la catalana)

1 1/2 kg spinach or chard
3 tbsp olive oil
3 cloves garlic, chopped
50 gr pine nuts
100 gr Malaga raisins, seeded
Salt and pepper

Chop spinach (or, if using chard, remove strings from chard stems and chop stems and leaves together) and cook in a little water until tender. Drain well. In a frying pan or casserole heat the oil and sauté the chopped garlic and pine nuts. Add the raisins and cook briefly, then add the cooked spinach. Season with salt and pepper and cook a few minutes. Serve with a squeeze of lemon juice.

Stuffed Courgettes (Calabacines rellenos)

2 medium courgettes (zucchini)
3 tbsp olive oil
1 onion, chopped
1 green pepper, chopped
3 medium tomatoes, peeled, seeded and chopped
2 cloves garlic, crushed
1 tbsp chopped parsley
1/2 tsp paprika
2 tbsp brandy
1/2 tsp salt
1 hard-cooked egg
50 gr grated cheese

Wash the courgettes and cook them whole in boiling water for 5 minutes. Drain. Cut them in half lengthwise. With a spoon hollow out the pulp. Salt the shells and leave them upside-down to drain. Heat the oil in a frying pan and sauté the chopped onion and chopped green pepper until the onion is soft. Add the tomatoes and the chopped pulp of the courgettes. Add the crushed garlic, chopped parsley, paprika, brandy, salt and chopped egg. Cook the mixture until liquid has evaporated, about 15 minutes. Spoon the mixture into the courgette shells and place them in an oiled oven dish. Sprinkle with grated cheese and bake in a hot oven until the cheese is melted, about 10 minutes.

Green Beans Sautéed With Red Peppers (Judías verdes salteadas con pimientos morrones)

1/2 kg green beans
1-2 red bell peppers
4 tbsp olive oil
50 gr ham or bacon, diced (optional)
3 cloves garlic
1/2 tsp salt
Pinch of cumin seed
Black pepper
1 tbsp chopped parsley

Snap ends off beans and remove strings if necessary. Put them to cook in boiling salted water until crisp-tender, about 8 minutes. Drain and refresh in cold water. Roast the peppers by spearing them on a fork and holding over gas flame or put them under the grill, turning, until they are blackened and charred on all sides. Cover them with a cloth until cool enough to handle, then peel off all the charred skin. Discard stems and seeds and tear the flesh into strips. Heat the oil in a casserole or frying pan and sauté the diced ham or bacon with the chopped garlic. Add the beans and fry for a few minutes, then add the strips of red pepper, parsley, salt, cumin seed and pepper.

SPANISH SECRETS

For a delicious Spanish wine with more than a hint of French flavour, try Marqués de Cáceres Rioja

SERVING TIPS

- Serve both white and rosé Riojas lightly chilled; an hour or so in the fridge should suffice (much longer and the wine will be numbed and flavourless).
- Red Rioja should be served cool. It does not need decanting, as there should be no sediment in the bottle.
- White or rosé Rioja make a great choice for a cold buffet. Both complement cold meat, fish and salads. Versatility is one of their characteristics – they are also excellent aperitifs.
- Red Rioja is at its best with hot buffet dishes or red meat.

In 1970 Henri Forner, the founder of Bodegas Marqués de Cáceres, began a revolution in Spain's celebrated wine region – Rioja. For generations, the Forner family have been dedicated to wine production, but at the start of the Spanish Civil War they moved to France, working in a variety of regions before settling in Bordeaux where they bought Chateau Larose-Trintaudon and Chateau Camensac, Grand Cru Classé.

A French accent

During their 35 years in France they established a reputation for producing some of the finest wines in the region, learning new techniques of vinification. Here they decided that the future lay in quality wines. So when in 1970 Henri Forner felt it was time to return to Spain he took with him one single objective – to produce the very finest Rioja wines, applying his Bordelais experience to his home country.

To achieve this he enlisted the support of a group of professionals including Professor Emile Peynaud, a leading consultant and guru of the Bordeaux wine trade.

Regional flavour

The vineyards of Rioja are broadly divided into three regions, Rioja Alavesa, Rioja Alta and Rioja Baja. It's believed that the Rioja Alta vineyards produce the finest wines and it is here, at Cenicero, that Henri Forner founded his bodega.

While most Riojas are a blend from all three regions, Marqués de Cáceres has adopted a Chateau system, selecting the best vineyards around the bodega which are planted with mainly older vines. As a result, the wines have a distinct and consistent character with a certain finesse.

Traditionally all Riojas, be they white, red or rosé, are aged for several months, if not years, in American oak barrels – with an additional period of ageing in the bottle. The result is a Crianza (oak-aged) wine with a heavy body and strong oaky flavour.

Dramatic changes

Henri Forner enriched Rioja's best traditions using his long professional experience acquired in France. All the wines are fermented under strict temperature control to preserve the grape's fruity character. All the red wines, as well as a limited production of an excellent Crianza white wine, are aged in French oak. The time spent ageing in the bottle has been increased to produce rounder, lighter wines which have lost the marked oaky character, in order to maintain a perfect balance between the fruit and delicate vanilla tones from the oak.

But it is with white wines that he has really achieved a dramatic transformation. The use of cold fermentation and the selection of only one grape variety, the Viura, produces a fresh and fruity wine with lively acidity. The rosé is made with equal care and similar technique, resulting in a fresh strawberry flavour with a rich bouquet. Many other bodegas have followed Henri's example, but Marqués de Cáceres remains one of Spain's leading wine producers.

Photographs/Gus Philgate Home Economist/Liz Trigg Stylist/Maria Jacques

JUAN SANCHEZ COTAN

ORONOZ

(Colección Várez Fisa - Madrid)

Juan Sánchez Cotán was born in Orgaz (Toledo) in 1560. He studied in Toledo with Blas de Ledesma, one of the first Spanish still life painters. In 1603 Cotán entered a monastery in El Paular (Madrid) as a Carthusian lay brother. He was transferred to Granada in 1612 and remained there until his death in early 1627. It was during this period that he painted his monastic cycles (depicting the lives and martyrdom of the members of a religious order) and numerous religious scenes.

Cotán left two types of work: firstly, the religious works which are not especially relevant having a certain tenebrist atmosphere owing to the influence of the Italian painters working in El Escorial, such as Luca Cambiasso and the Bassanos. But in his still lifes, Cotán excelled and can stand alongside the best of the universal painters.

His compositions are innovative and his painting skills masterly, with his most famous painting being the "Still life with thistles".

He enhanced the fruits and vegetables he chose to portray with an almost metaphysical light, making them seem bigger than life. The influence of tenebrism here bore its best and most original fruits.

And the way he arranged his objects almost geometrically was very personal. Each object stands on its own, unlike the heavy accumulations of objects in the Flemish still lifes.

In this picture, as in almost all his compositions, the objects are arranged in the opening of a window. A couple of lemons, an orange, a cabbage and five carrots hang in the window space and, on the sill lies a thistle, one of his favorite vegetables which he painted skillfully and frequently, alongside a slice of orange, a lettuce and a pomegranate.

He took great care to show every detail of the objects painted but at the same time created mystery and spirituality in the atmosphere and luminosity. His composition surprises us with its harmony and beauty, and his love for representing reality invites us to search for something beyond what the eye can see.

José María Ortega Sanz

Carne con carné

Meat lovers always choose CARNE DE AVILA Beef and veal. As we say in Spain it's CARNE CON CARNÉ (Meat with license). Guarantee of natural Quality. The Regulating Board, through permanent systems of control, guarantees the origin and quality of the product you buy. Bright, red beef and veal, firm, tasty and tender.

This brand makes sure you are getting CARNE DE AVILA Beef, so ask for it.

CARNE DE AVILA

Carne con carné. Guarentee of natural quality.

THE LOOK OF A NEW GENERATION.

From 1926, the first olive stuffed with anchovy.
EL SERPIS quality, as ever in everybody's mouth.

That's the way EL SERPIS is, and this, the look of the new generation.

DESDE
EL SERPIS®
1926